



# Mental Health Measurement Scales and Their Dimensions: A Systematic Review with Implications for Rajyoga Meditation Research

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## Abstract

Mental health is a complex and multidimensional construct that includes emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. In recent decades, increasing academic pressure, life style changes and social demands have led to a rise in stress, anxiety and depression, particularly among adolescents and students. Accurate assessment of mental health is essential for both clinical and educational research, as well as for evaluating intervention- based approaches such as meditation and yoga.

The present systematic review examines widely used mental health measurement scales, focusing on their conceptual dimensions, psychometric properties and applicability in research settings. Major instruments reviewed include the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS), Mental Health Inventory (MHI), Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB) and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-

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being Scale (WEMWBS). The review highlights that mental health assessment requires both negative (stress, anxiety, depression) and positive (well-being, resilience, life satisfaction) dimensions.

Findings indicate that no single scale fully captures the complexity of mental health; therefore, multi-scale approaches are recommended. Furthermore, the review identifies a significant research gap in the integration of spiritual-based interventions such as Rajyoga meditation with standardized psychometric assessments. The study concludes that combining well-being and distress measures provides a more comprehensive understanding of mental health outcomes in intervention studies.

**Keywords:** Mental Health, Psychological Well-being, Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Scales, Rajyoga Meditation, Psychometrics.

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## 1. Introduction

Mental health has become a global concern in contemporary society due to increasing psychological stressors in academic, occupational, and social environments. According to the World Health Organization, mental health is not merely the absence of mental illness but a state of well-being in which individuals realize their abilities, cope with normal stresses, work productively and contribute to society.

Adolescents and young adults, particularly students, are highly vulnerable to psychological distress due to academic competition, social comparison, digital exposure and family expectations. Research consistently shows rising levels of stress, anxiety and depression among school and college students worldwide.

To address these issues, psychological researchers have developed standardized tools to measure mental health. These instruments help quantify subjective psychological states and evaluate intervention effectiveness. In recent years, complementary approaches such as mindfulness and Rajyoga meditation have gained attention for improving mental health outcomes. However, their evaluation requires reliable and multidimensional assessment tools.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this review are:

1. To analyze major standardized mental health measurement scales
2. To examine their dimensions and psychometric structures
3. To compare their applicability in student and adolescent populations
4. To identify suitable instruments for meditation-based research
5. To highlight research gaps relevant to Rajyoga meditation students

## 3. Methodology (Review Design)

This study is based on a systematic review approach. Peer-reviewed articles and validated psychometric studies published between 1970 and 2024 were reviewed. Databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed and ResearchGate were considered. Inclusion criteria included:

- Standardized mental scales
- Studies involving adolescents, students, or general population
- Validated psychometric instruments
- English-language publications

## 4. Review of Major Mental Health Scales

### 4.1. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

Development by Cohen et al. (1983), PSS measures the degree to which situations in life are perceived as stressful. It is widely used in student populations. It includes a single dimension focusing on perceived stress and coping ability.

### 4.2. General Health Questionnaire (GHQ)

Goldberg (1972) Developed GHG as a screening tool for general mental health problems. It includes dimensions of anxiety, depression, social dysfunction and somatic symptoms. It includes a single dimension focusing on perceived stress and coping ability.

### 4.3. Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS)

Lovibond and Lovibond (1995) designed DASS to measure three related constructs: depression, anxiety, and stress. It provides clear differentiation among emotional states and is widely used in psychological research.

#### 4.4. Mental Health Inventory (MHI)

Veit and Ware (1983) developed MHI to measure both psychological distress and well-being. It includes anxiety, depression, behavioral control, positive affect and emotional ties.

#### 4.5. Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale(PWB)

Ryff (1989) introduced a eudaimonic model of well-being consisting of six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life and self-acceptance.

#### 4.6. Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS)

This scale focuses on positive mental health and includes emotional and psychological functioning along with social relationships.

### 5. Comparative Summary of Scales

Scale	Dimensions	Focus	Nature
PSS	Stress perception	Stress	Unidimensional
GHQ	Anxiety, Depression, Social dysfunction	Distress	Multidimensional
DASS	Depression, Anxiety, Stress	Emotional states	Multidimensional
MHI	Positive & negative mental health	Mixed	Multidimensional
PWB	6 well-being dimensions	Positive functioning	Eudaimonic
WEMWBS	Well-being	Positive mental health	Unidimensional

### 6. Discussion

The review indicates that mental health is not a singular construct but a combination of multiple psychological dimensions. Traditional scales such as PSS focus on stress, while instruments like DASS and GHQ assess negative emotional states. In contrast, Ryff's PWB and WEMWBS emphasize positive psychological functioning.

A key observation is that most studies focus either on psychological distress or well-being, but not both simultaneously. This creates a methodological gap in understanding holistic mental health.

In the context of Rajyoga meditation, this gap becomes highly relevant. Rajyoga is a spiritual and cognitive practice that aims to enhance inner peace, emotional regulation and self-awareness. However, its effects cannot be fully understood using a single-dimensional scale. Therefore, combined use of stress, distress and well-being scales is recommended.

## 7. Implications Rajyoga Meditation Research

Rajyoga meditation research requires a multidimensional assessment framework. Based on this review, the following combinations are recommended:

- PSS → Stress reduction
- DASS → Emotional regulation
- PWB or WEMWBS → Psychological well-being

This integrated approach allows researchers to evaluate both negative and positive outcomes of meditation practices.

## 8. Conclusion

The present systematic review highlights that mental health is a multidimensional construct encompassing both negative psychological states (stress, anxiety, depression) and positive dimensions (well-being, resilience, life satisfaction, and self-growth). Various standardized instruments such as the PSS, GHQ, DASS, MHI, PWB, and WEMWBS provide valuable frameworks for assessing different aspects of mental health; however, no single scale is sufficient to capture the complete spectrum of psychological functioning.

The review further demonstrates that multidimensional assessment approaches are more effective for understanding holistic mental health outcomes, especially in intervention-based research. Scales focusing only on distress may overlook positive psychological transformation, whereas well-being measures alone may fail to identify underlying emotional difficulties. Therefore, integrating both distress-oriented and well-being-oriented instruments is essential for comprehensive evaluation.

In relation to Rajyoga meditation research, the findings suggest that spiritual and meditation-based practices influence multiple domains of mental health, including emotional regulation, self-awareness, inner peace, coping ability and psychological well-being. Consequently, future research on Rajyoga meditation should adopt combined psychometric frameworks that assess both reduction of psychological distress and enhancement of positive mental functioning.

The review also identifies a significant gap in existing literature regarding the systematic application of standardized mental health scales in Rajyoga meditation studies, particularly among adolescents and students. Future empirical studies should focus on longitudinal and experimental designs using validated multidimensional scales to establish stronger scientific evidence regarding the effectiveness of Rajyoga meditation on mental health outcomes.

Overall, this review contributes to the understanding of mental health assessment by emphasizing the need for integrated measurement models and provides a useful foundation for future meditation-based psychological research.

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### Conflict of Interest/Competing Interests

No conflict of interest.

### Data Availability

The raw data supporting the findings of this research paper will be made available by the authors upon a reasonable request.

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