



# Spiritual Diary, Spiritual Growth, and Well-Being in Korea

Suk-Sun Kim <sup>a</sup>, Minji Gil<sup>a</sup>, Yeoun Soo Kim-Godwin<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> College of Nursing, Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

<sup>b</sup> College of Health and Human Services, School of Nursing, University of North Carolina, Wilmington, NC, USA



## Background

- Writing therapy is known for promoting self-exposure, which leads to improve psychological well-being, and physical health (Henry et al., 2010; Travagin et al., 2015).
- Spiritual diary is writing down what God has done in the life and how walk with Jesus in everyday or every moments including not only thoughts, feelings, and events, but also Bible meditation, prayers, and gratitude (Yu, 2017).

## Purpose

- To examine differences of spiritual growth, psychological and physical well-being in relation to the frequency of writing spiritual diaries.

## Methods

- Study Design: **A mixed methods design**

### ➤ Quantitative Study

- **Aims:** To examine differences of spiritual growth, psychological and physical well-being in relation to the frequency of writing spiritual diaries.
- **Sample:** A total of 385 adults who were writing spiritual diaries on spiritual diary app. The specific inclusion criteria was to have experience in participating in writing a spiritual diary through a spiritual diary website more than once.
- **Analysis:** The participations were divided into three groups according to the number of times they wrote spiritual diaries. Data were analyzed using one-way ANOVA.

### ➤ Qualitative Study

- **Aim:** To explore the experience of daily spiritual diary.
- **Interview questions:** 1) What motivates you to write spiritual daily every day? 2) Are there any differences in your life after writing spiritual diaries daily?
- **Sample:** A total of 51 adults from 6 focus groups who were writing daily spiritual diaries.
- **Analysis:** Thematic and interpretive analysis method was used.

## Results

### Quantitative Findings

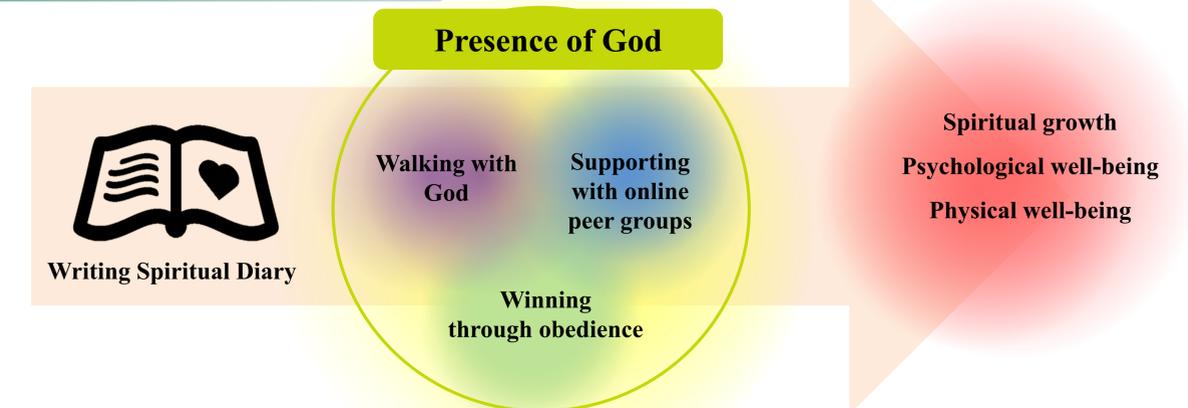
- The sample was 385 individuals with 37.1% male and 62.9% female. The ages ranged from 20 to 77 years with a mean age of 69.47 (SD = 10.16).
- The result showed significant differences in spiritual growth, psychological and physical well-being among the three groups (Table 1).
- Statistically, those who wrote spiritual diaries' 'almost every day' had significantly higher scores in spiritual growth, psychological and physical well-being than those of '1~4 times a week' and 'less than once a month' groups.

<Table 1> Differences of Variables according Frequency of Writing Spiritual Diaries (N = 385)

Variables		Groups			F (p)	Post hoc Scheffe / Dunnett T3 <sup>†</sup>
		Less than once a month <sup>a</sup> (n=25)	1~4 times a week <sup>b</sup> (n=172)	Almost every day <sup>c</sup> (n=188)		
Spiritual growth	DUREL <sup>†</sup>	22.84 ± 2.64	24.38 ± 1.90	25.05 ± 1.65	18.40 (<.001)	a < b < c
	DSES	69.60 ± 12.52	74.42 ± 12.59	79.04 ± 12.21	9.53 (<.001)	a, b < c
	SPS <sup>†</sup>	53.68 ± 4.99	55.85 ± 4.00	56.22 ± 3.93	9.11 (<.001)	a, b < c
	STS	47.20 ± 5.78	49.23 ± 5.14	50.91 ± 5.21	8.34 (<.001)	a, b < c
Psychological well-being	PIL	94.92 ± 20.30	103.92 ± 17.21	110.61 ± 15.52	13.87 (<.001)	a < b < c
	SWLS	19.32 ± 7.35	22.92 ± 6.85	24.86 ± 7.40	8.16 (<.001)	a, b < c
	CES-D <sup>*</sup>	13.88 ± 13.56	9.28 ± 9.42	7.20 ± 7.87	7.01 (.001)	
Physical well-being	Physical Symptom Checklist <sup>†</sup>	26.40 ± 13.58	22.27 ± 9.52	20.17 ± 8.74	5.78 (.003)	

Note = DUREL: Duke University Religion Index. DSES: The Daily Spiritual Experience Scale, SPS: Spiritual Perspective Scale, STS: Self-Transcendence Scale, PIL: Purpose in Life, SWLS: Satisfaction with Life Scale, CES-D: Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression,

## Qualitative Findings



<Figure 1> The Experience of Spiritual Diary

- The main theme, the presence of God, was identified with three categories, (a) walking with God, (b) supporting with online peer groups, and (c) winning through obedience (Figure 1).
- **The presence of God**  
Participants reported that they could be aware of God's constant presence in their lives when they were writing spiritual diaries every day. Also, they experienced changes on spiritual growth, psychological and physical well-being by walking every moment along side God, supporting with online peer groups, and winning through obedience.
- ❖ **Walking with God:** Walking with God means that writing a spiritual diary on a daily basis led them to be closer to Jesus and to live with Jesus 24 hours a day.
- ❖ **Supporting with online peer groups:** Supporting with online peer groups means that participants experienced deeper connections and support from sharing groups of the spiritual diary homepage (<http://www.diarywithjesus.net>).
- ❖ **Winning through obedience:** Winning through obedience refers that writing a spiritual diary with obedience even in one's busy life gives them the power of victory, wining over the temptation such as drinking, anger, depression, and etc.

## Conclusion

These results indicated that by continuing their intimacy with God through writing spiritual diaries every day, not only can they experience spiritual growth but also promote their psychological and physical well-being. Findings suggest that writing a spiritual diary is a useful way to focus on Jesus and experience the presence of God.

