

Spirituality, Mindfulness, and Marital Satisfaction Among Married Individuals

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to learn more about the relationship between spirituality, mindfulness and marital satisfaction among married couple. The study aims to find the effect of spirituality and mindfulness on marital satisfaction. A sample of 165 participants between the age group of 25-40 was taken for the study based on the exclusion and inclusion criteria of the study. Purposive sampling was used for collecting the sample. Index of marital satisfaction (IMS), Daily spiritual experience scale (DSES) and the mindful attention awareness scale (MAAS) were used to assess spirituality, mindfulness, and marital satisfaction, respectively. Spearman ranks correlation, Mann Whitney U test and regression analysis were used to test the null hypotheses. The analyses indicate that there is a significant relationship between Spirituality and marital satisfaction whereas there is no significant relationship between Mindfulness and marital satisfaction. There was a slight significance impact of spirituality and mindfulness on marital satisfaction. The results of the study have implications for future studies and understanding of the effects of spirituality and mindfulness on marital satisfaction.

Keywords: *Spirituality, Mindfulness, Marital Satisfaction*

Spirituality is the study of life's meaning and purpose as well as a person's intimate connection to a higher power (Petee, 1994). Spirituality appears to be a wide notion that encompasses a person's attempts to pursue existential aims or goals. Finding significance, wholeness, inner potential, and connections with others may be some of these goals (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). While Soeken and Carson (1987) defined spirituality as a belief in a connection between an individual and the world that offers purpose and definition Goldberg (1990) viewed spirituality as a search for universal truth. A conclusion that can be derived from the definitions given is that spiritual individuals value personal and intimate relationships with a supreme being and with others over institutional and socially motivated approaches. Spiritual people, as contrasted to religious people, are more constant in their ideas and activities, which are directed toward establishing meaning and purpose in

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life, provided that the focus is the quest for truth as a private life principle (Anthony, 1993; Goldberg, 1990; Emblen, 1992).

Mindfulness

The awareness that arises from focusing attention on intent, in the present moment, and without judgement is known as mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2015). A psychological state of consciousness has been referred to as "mindfulness." A nonjudgmental awareness of one's own experience in the present moment is what is meant by the term "mindfulness". In this situation, mindfulness is a condition rather than a context. It is not the same as or related with some activities or habits, such as meditation, even if they support it. Researchers have shown that mindfulness meditation promotes metacognitive awareness, improves attentional abilities through improvements in working memory and lessens rumination by removing oneself from perseverative cognitive activities. These cognitive developments make effective emotion-regulation approaches feasible. Numerous research has demonstrated that mindfulness may alleviate stress.

Marital satisfaction

A person's marital status can be used to determine whether or not they are married. Weddings and marriages are fundamental aspects of society. It suggests a couple's union and their pledge to live their lives together. A person who is wed lawfully is said to be married. We define satisfaction in marital life as "people's global subjective judgement regarding the quality of their marriage" in the dynamic goal theory of marital satisfaction. Most individuals no longer view marriage as a must-fulfill responsibility in today's society. The couple's love and desire to be together are symbolized by the marriage, which now becomes more voluntary in nature. In this situation, marital pleasure becomes a crucial element that significantly affects the quality and longevity of marriages (Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997). In the early years, a variety of indicators were employed to assess marriages, including marital success, adjustment, stability, quality, happiness, and satisfaction. These indices reflected different but related notions, which caused a lot of confusion in related studies (Bradbury, 1995; Fincham & Bradbury, 1987).

METHODOLOGY

Sample and techniques:

A sample of 150 Married individuals (n=150 where men=75, women=75), between the age range of 25-40 will be taken for the study. The sampling used will be Purposive for collecting the sample.

Tools for the study:

- **Index of Marital Satisfaction (IMS):** This measure was introduced by Hudson & Glisson in 1976, It is a 25-item self-report of the degree, severity, or extent of a marital relationship problem that one spouse or partner has. There are two cutting scores in the IMS. The IMS has an outstanding (low) Standard Error of Measurement of 4.00 and a mean alpha of .96, showing great internal consistency.
- **Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES):** A 16-item self-report survey created by Dr. Lynn G. Underwood which was meant to examine every day experiences of connection with the transcendent in daily life. It contains concepts like awe, appreciation, mercy, discernment/inspiration, and a profound inner calm. The scale has been translated into over 40 languages and has been used in over 200 published investigations. Using a 6-point Likert-type scale, participants were asked how frequently they encountered each item.

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- The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS):** It is a 15-item scale that is introduced by Brown, K. W. & Ryan, R. M. in 2003. It is intended to evaluate a key aspect of mindfulness, namely a receptive mental state in which attention, guided by a sensitive awareness of what is happening in the present, merely observes what is happening. There are 15 items on the 6-point Likert scale. Excellent internal consistency was demonstrated by MAAS (Cronbach Alpha = 0.92).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic details of the participants

A total sample of 165 married individuals (N=165) between the age 25 to 40 were collected for study in which 51.50% was males and 48.50% was females. Under the age group, the range were 25-29, 30-34 and 35-40 with the percentage of 40.60%, 25.50% and 33.90% respectively.

Table 1: Result of spearman's rank correlation among Spirituality and mindfulness and marital satisfaction among married couples.

	IMS
MAAS	-0.047
DSES	0.243**

** - Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows the results of spearman's rank correlation between Spirituality, Mindfulness and Marital Satisfaction. The correlation coefficient (r value) of -.047 (p=0.548) indicates a low negative correlation that is higher the mindfulness higher the marital satisfaction but there is no statistically significant relationship between Mindfulness and Marital satisfaction, accepting the null hypothesis. Whereas between Spirituality and marital satisfaction the r value is 0.243 indicating positive correlation, the null hypothesis is rejected showing that there is a significant relationship between Spirituality and marital satisfaction. Since the Marital satisfaction scoring interprets low score as high satisfaction and vice versa, the results indicate that the individuals experience lower satisfaction in marriage when there is high score in spirituality. The possible explanation can be that some people may have a tendency to overemphasize the idea of spirituality and place more value in that than spending quality time with their spouse; as a result, this can have an impact on how satisfied they feel. One of the studies “have found that the relationship between marriage satisfaction and happiness in life was somewhat mediated by spirituality. In other words, it was found that life happiness was influenced by marital satisfaction both directly and indirectly through spirituality (Yabanigül, 2018).

Whereas in mindfulness, the results of correlation conclude that there is no significant relationship between Mindfulness and Marital satisfaction even though a very low negative correlation has been found as shown in Table 1. The contradicting earlier studies state that there was a stronger correlation between mindfulness and marital satisfaction. (Langer, 2005).

Table 2: Mann Whitney U Test between males and females for Spirituality among Married individuals.

Spirituality	N	Mean	Mann Whitney U	Sig(2 tailed)
Males	85	91.49	2678.000	0.018
Females	80	73.98		

Note: * $p > 0.05$, U = Mann Whitney U

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Table 2 reveals that Spirituality received a Mann Whitney U test score of 2678.000 ($p = 0.018$), indicating that there is a significant difference in Spirituality between males and females. Thus, null hypothesis, there is no significant difference between males and females is rejected. The mean Spirituality score for males and females was 91.49 and 73.98, respectively. A total of 165 married people were included in the sample. When looking at the mean value, it is clear that males have a greater mean than females. As a result, we understand males to having a stronger sense of spirituality than females. The possible reason for females to have lesser spirituality score than males might be because they are pre occupied with occupation or career options and family that they have lesser time to invest or focus on the aspect of spirituality. According to the findings of Rich's study, "Marital Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction: The Mediating Effect of Spirituality," there was hardly any statistically significant difference between men and women's spirituality test scores. This shows that there isn't a difference in women's spirituality compared to males, but rather that men and women just display their spirituality differently.

Table 3: Mann Whitney U Test between males and females for Mindfulness among Married individuals.

Mindfulness	N	Mean	Mann Whitney U	Sig(2 tailed)
Males	85	77.34	2919.000	0.117
Females	80	89.01		

Note: * $p > 0.05$, U= Mann Whitney U

According to Table 3, Mindfulness received a score of 2919.000 ($p = 0.117$) for the Mann Whitney U test. As a result, there is no statistically significant difference in mindfulness between men and women. As a conclusion, the null hypothesis, that there is no significant difference between men and women, is accepted. The mean Mindfulness score for men and females was 77.34 and 89.01, respectively. A total of 165 married people were included in the sample. The fourth hypothesis suggests that there is no significant difference in mindfulness between men and females, whereas the data show that there is no significant difference in mindfulness between males and females. As a result, the null hypothesis has been accepted. When the mean value is considered, it is clear that females have a greater mean than males. As a result, we conclude that females have a higher level of mindfulness than males. A prior study from 2020 ("Influence of Age and Gender on Mindfulness-Cognitive Science," 2020) came to the conclusion that there is a tendency toward increased mindfulness with age and that females demonstrate stronger levels of mindfulness than males. According to the research done by Alispahic & Anic this is accurate. In their study, there was a statistically significant gender difference for the Observing subscale, where women performed better than men.

Table 4: Result of regression analysis predicting Marital Satisfaction by Spirituality and mindfulness among married individuals.

Variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Beta	F	p
Marital satisfaction	0.315	0.099	0.088		9.906	
Mindfulness				-0.032		0.670
Spirituality				0.313		0.000

The regression analysis shows that Mindfulness and Spirituality predicts 8.8% variation in affect among married individuals, since $\beta = -0.032$, $t = -0.426$, $p = 0.670$ (mindfulness) and $\beta = 0.358$, $t = 4.191$, $p = 0.000$ respectively where $F = 8.906$ and $p = 0.000$.

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The fifth hypothesis states that There is no significant impact of spirituality and mindfulness in Marital satisfaction. A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict Marital satisfaction on Spirituality and Mindfulness. A significant regression equation was found ($F(2, 162) = 8.906, p < 0.000$), with an R^2 of .099. Participant's predicted marital satisfaction is equal to $9.754 + 0.358$ (spirituality) -0.546 (mindfulness). Both spirituality and mindfulness were significant predictors of Marital satisfaction. A study done by Burpee and Langer in 2005 have done a regression analysis that concluded with high probability that the relation between mindfulness and marital satisfaction exists and In another research from Kasapoğlu and Yabanigül (2018), the regression analysis conducted to determine the mediating effect of spirituality in the relation between marital satisfaction and life satisfaction and it was found that marital satisfaction had both a direct and indirect effect via spirituality on life satisfaction. It may thus be suggested that spiritual beliefs help married people form emotional ties that promote marital satisfaction. Married people endure a variety of stressful occurrences during their life and must adjust to these circumstances.

SUMMARY

The aim of the research is to study was find the relationship between spirituality and mindfulness and marital satisfaction and also to understand the difference between genders for the score. The research question was, whether spirituality and mindfulness have any relation with marital satisfaction. Each participant gave their permission. The data obtained was graded manually and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). First, the normality of the data was evaluated, and it was determined that the data was not normal, hence non-parametric tests such as spearman correlation, Mann Whitney U test, and multiple linear regression were used.

CONCLUSION

Since the major purpose of this study was to examine relationship between Spirituality, Mindfulness and Marital satisfaction among the married couples and also the difference according to the gender. Depending on the findings of the study, the following concluding notes were made:

- There is a significant relationship between Spirituality and marital satisfaction.
- There is no significant relationship between mindfulness and marital satisfaction.
- There is a significant difference on Spirituality among males and females.
- There is no significant difference on Mindfulness among males and females.
- There is a slight significance impact of spirituality and mindfulness on marital satisfaction.

Implication of the study

The findings suggest that the marital satisfaction has been influenced by the spirituality and mindfulness of the partners even though it was of little or no correlation when examined. The findings from the study has thrown a new light to the existing understanding as this study has contradicting results when compared with the previous studies as here it interprets higher the spirituality, lower the marital satisfaction which can be because of the changes seen in today's marital lifestyle and beliefs. It is also interpreted that the mindfulness has no significant relationship even when there is a very slight relationship seen during the analysis.

Limitations of the study

- The participants had difficulty understanding some of the questions in the scale as they found it as hard to comprehend.

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- The data was collected only from different districts of Kerala; hence it cannot be generalized to the whole population.
- Participants had to fill the questionnaire online. This also could have affected the concentration of the participants resulting in inaccurate responses.

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Conflict of Interest

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