The International Journal of
INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Research Paper

Family Rituals, Assertiveness, and Self-Compassion among Emerging Adults in India

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: Family routines and rituals are one family practice that has drawn attention for its potential protective role in generating healthy outcomes for emerging adults, which may help with personal development. This study was intended to study the influence of family rituals on the development of assertiveness and self-compassion among emerging adults in the context of India. **Methods**: Our research involved a sample of 372 participants (312 females and 60 males) aged 18 to 25, drawn from diverse regions of India. We employed a correlational research design, encompassing descriptive analysis, correlation and regression analysis. **Results**: Family rituals, particularly those related to "Celebrations," displayed statistically significant positive associations with both assertiveness and self-compassion among emerging adults. Gender related differences were not reliable due to homogeneity in the sample. **Conclusion**: This research unveils the role of family rituals in the development of assertiveness and self-compassion among emerging adults in India. It emphasizes the significance of joyous family gatherings and celebrations in fostering these essential personality traits. This study contributes valuable insights for families, educators, and practitioners seeking to promote positive personality development in the emerging adult population of India.

Keywords: *Family Rituals, Assertiveness, Self-compassion, Gender Differences, Indian Context*

Family Rituals

Research shows that if a family incorporates a goodnight hug, handshake, or bedtime story into their child's night routine, it can profoundly impact the child's development (Fiese, 2002). A mother may provide dinner to the child every day at 7:30 and put them to sleep at 9:30; it is a routine. However, if she incorporates personalized moments like those mentioned above, it transforms a simple routine into a meaningful ritual. Similarly, having the meal together may not hold any significant value for the family members, but rehearsing a short prayer before beginning to eat probably binds the family members together emotionally.

Family rituals can be experienced in numerous ways, such as family dinners, weekend practices, yearly vacations, birthdays, and ethnic traditions (Fiese & Kline, 1993; Wolin & Bennett, 1984).

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Mercedes Bern-klug (2011) groups rituals into three categories: everyday, annual, and life-transition. Everyday rituals comprise essential things a family engages in, in their day-to-day lives. Annual rituals comprise certain meaningful things that the family does yearly, and life-transition rituals encompass significant milestones of life, such as graduation, birth, weddings, parenthood, retirement, and death.

Frisen (1990) talks about family rituals in three different contexts. First, all families celebrate holidays from their religion, culture, or ethnicity. Moreover, all families practice rituals that symbolically bind their families and tie them to their preceding and upcoming generations. Lastly, all families have rituals which mirror the exceptional relations of the family.

There are several powerful benefits related to family rituals. Fiese and colleagues (2002) reviewed 50 years of research on family rituals. They reported that family rituals account for several benefits, as shown in Figure 1, as opposed to the proposed risks of non-traditional families.
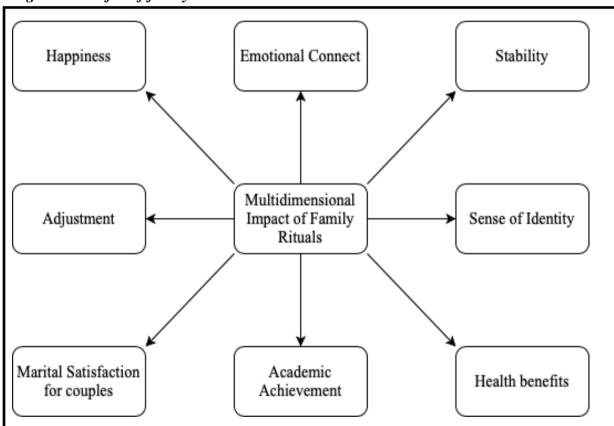
Figure 1 Benefits of family rituals

Source: Fiese, Tomcho, Douglas, Josephs, Poltrock, & Baker. (2002). A review of 50 years of research on naturally occurring family routines and rituals: Cause for celebration? Journal of family psychology, 16(4), 381.

Both adolescence and emerging adulthood are crucial transitional stages subject to various developmental changes and difficulties. Routines and rituals, which families use to maintain order and stability, may be crucial factors that encourage healthy growth. Routines and rituals within the family tend to foster a more stable environment, which may result in better

individual outcomes (Crespo, Davide, Costa & Fletcher, 2008; Fiese, 2007). Family rituals help adolescents control their emotions by offering precise and predictable family interaction patterns that offset the instability seen during developmental transitions (Fiese, 2006; Morris et al., 2007; Stocker, Richmond, Rhoades, & Kiang, 2007). Hence, rituals allow families to connect at an emotional level and slow down.

Even though family rituals and routines are distinct, they are interwoven in daily interactions. Family rituals can be understood as traditions that communicate the idea "that's who we are" as a family, providing continuity and meaning across generations. Both the terms "family routines" and "family rituals" relate to certain recurrent behaviours involving two or more family members. However, they are distinct and can be contrasted regarding continuity, dedication, and communication (Fiese et al., 2002).

Doherty (1997) identified three central aspects of a family ritual; each must be present in a routine to be considered a family ritual. First, the routine must be coordinated. There needs to be coordination between the family while engaging in an activity for it to be a ritual. For instance, if just one family member eats a meal daily, it cannot be considered a ritual. The whole family must eat some meal together to be considered a ritual. Second, it should be a repeated activity. For instance, having a meal together for one day will not make it a ritual; however, it is a daily family dinner that the members can plan and anticipate that would count as a ritual. Third, the routine activity must have meaning and significance for the members. The member's actions should be symbolic and meaningful instead of instrumental.

Puterbaugh (2008) reported that families who have a solid and positive ritual pattern are well-adjusted as compared to those who lack meaningful rituals are often chaotic. The study also reported that rituals help in experiencing a sense of normalcy when other areas of life may be in chaos.

Assertiveness

Environment, personality, and genetics all have an impact on assertiveness. It is the capacity to defend one's rights and communicate ideas, emotions, and opinions in a suitable, direct, and honest manner without violating the rights of others (Olanrewaju, 2014). It is the most readily available source of knowledge that teaches people how to interact with others (Porreco, 2010).

The most fundamental element in the development of assertiveness is family. Family communication is a significant predictor of adolescents' assertiveness. Parents can help their children become more assertive by making their home environment open enough to encourage them to speak and express their thoughts and feelings. Assertive adolescents are more resistant to peer pressure and health risks (Khademi & Mehrabi, 2015). Adolescents who strongly value themselves and others are active, do not let others abuse their skills, and have more solid social networks. Parents typically advise their children to employ social assertiveness to temper the harmful effects of peers (Shimizu, Kubota, Mishima, & Nagata, 2004; Onuoha & Munakata, 2005).

A study by Demirbilek & Otrar (2014) assessed the assertiveness and self-respect of adolescents who lived with a single parent compared to those with a whole family and reported that assertiveness, self-perception, and self-esteem of adolescents were higher for those who lived with the whole family.

Adolescents' self-efficacy can be increased by assertiveness (Mohebbi, Shahsiah, Moshki, Delshad, & Matlabi, 2011), positively impacting their internal control, interpersonal connections, self-esteem, and personality (Shimizu et al., 2004).

A study by Larijani, Aghajani, Zamani, and Ghadirian (2017) found that participation in decision making in family, and attitude towards the parents is related to Assertiveness. They also tested the relationship between assertiveness, child's birth order, family income, parent's attitude towards child's discipline and residence.

Siddiqui, Sanyal, and Agarwal (2021) studied gender differences in the impact of family environment on assertiveness. They found positive correlations between assertiveness and social connectedness in boys and girls were higher in all dimensions of social connectedness and assertiveness.

Xien and Zakaria (2022) reported a significant relationship between assertiveness and the attitude of seeking professional psychological help, which was mediated by parenting styles. Their study has an important implication that counsellors may need to consider the assertiveness of their clients and the parenting styles in promoting counselling services to build positive attitudes towards the services rendered.

Self-Compassion
Self-compassion is "being compassionate and empathetic towards oneself in situations of suffering or failure rather than harshly self-critical" (Neff, Kirkpatrick, & Rude, 2007, p. 140).

Three elements comprise self-compassion: mindfulness versus overidentification, common humanity versus isolation, and self-kindness versus self-judgment (Neff, 2003). Self-compassionate people speak to themselves with warmth and empathy during challenging times rather than harshly criticising themselves. Common humanity refers to embracing the viewpoint that all people experience sorrow and make mistakes, as opposed to the notion that "I am the only one suffering," which manifests as isolating behaviour. Being mindful means allowing ideas, and Overidentifying with challenging thoughts and emotions can lead to rumination; becoming more conscious of one's current experiences enables one to deal with challenging thoughts and emotions in a more sensible, balanced way.

Self-compassion encourages emotion control by (1) embracing negative emotions through retaining awareness of and understanding emotions; (2) extending a warm, patient, and supportive tone towards oneself, as opposed to trying to replace negative thoughts and emotions with positive ones (Neff, 2003, 2011). Self-compassion increases positive affect and decreases negative affect to effectively manage emotional distress, ruminating, and brooding (Heffernan, Griffin, McNulty, & Fitzpatrick, 2010; Neff et al., 2007; Neff & Vonk, 2009; Raes, 2010).

Self-compassion levels are favourably impacted by social support, particularly familial support, which positively impacts well-being (Jeon et al., 2016). Previous research reveals that self-compassion levels may be influenced by family functioning and communication. Higher levels of family warmth and lower levels of family conflict are linked to greater self-compassion (Kelly & Dupasquier, 2016; Neff & McGehee, 2010; Pepping, Davis, O'Donovan, & Pal, 2015; Potter, Yar, Francis, & Schuster, 2014), that also mediate the link

between family functioning and mental health outcomes (Jeon, Lee, & Kwon, 2016; Westphal, Leahy, Pala, & Wupperman, 2016).

A study by Neff & McGhee (2010) that studied self-compassion in adolescents and young adults found that adolescents and young adults who originate from harmonious and closely-knit families were more self-compassionate than those who come from stressful and conflict-ridden families that were less self-compassionate. Family experiences shape how individuals treat themselves in stressful situations or at times of failure. For instance, if parents are cold, angry, and critical of their children, they may be even more critical of themselves. At the same time, if parents are supportive, caring, and warm, this is usually reflected in children's inner dialogues.

Research shows that self-compassion partially mediates hostile parenting and increased mental health issues (Westphal, M., Leahy, R. L., Pala, A. N., & Wupperman, P. 2016). A study Berryhill, Harless, & Kean (2018) by reported that cohesive family environment fosters positive communication, which is in turn related to higher self-compassion, that is related to lower levels of depression and anxiety.

Following unfavourable situations, such as family conflicts, individuals with lower levels of self-compassion are more prone to act negatively toward themselves (Leary, Tate, Adams, Allen, & Hancock, 2007). Eventually, they may also see their parents as imperfect (Neff & McGhee, 2010). Research shows that individuals with high self-compassion are more inclined to demonstrate empathy by compromising to resolve issues (Yarnell & Neff, 2013). By reacting to themselves in a more supportive, kind, and balanced way through the elements of self-kindness, mindfulness, and basic humanity, people can deal with the emotional distress caused by family problems.

Teaching compassion-focused therapy significantly impacts female students' assertiveness (Ghafarian & Khayatan, 2018). Mindful self-compassion practices increase women's assertiveness and interpersonal relationships (Aliado, 2022). These practices also assist women in achieving greater clarity in what they think, feel, want, and need; becoming more confident in asking others in an interpersonal relationship; and increasing their self-worth. It is reported that all the dimensions of self-compassion help increase assertiveness in interpersonal relationships.

Family Rituals and Transitioning Emerging Adults
Emerging adulthood is a transition phase between adolescence and adulthood, ranging from ages 18 to 25 (Arnett, 2000). One of the overriding tasks during emerging adulthood is establishing a stable life structure, but individuals experience considerable change and instability (Levinson, 1978). There is evidence of different mental health trajectories for emerging adults, which indicates that psychological adjustment in emerging adults may be a function of individual differences and other life factors (Howard, Galambos, & Krahn, 2010).

One such factor may be the presence or absence of parental support during adolescence and emerging adulthood. Diminishing levels of parental support were associated with increased depressive symptoms for people in their twenties (Meadows, 2006). On the other hand, physical proximity to parents was inversely related to the quality of relationships between emerging adults and parents (Dubas & Petersen, 1996). Therefore, separating from the family of origin can be seen as both a positive opportunity for psychological and social

growth or a loss of support leading to poor outcomes (Arnett, 2000; Dubas & Petersen, 2006; O'Connor, Allen, Bell, & Hauser, 1996).

During emerging adulthood, individuals are further individuating and frequently launching from their family of origin, sometimes through entering and transitioning out of college or working part-time or full-time. A study by Kimble, Marsh, Kiska (1984) reported that older students are more assertive than younger students.

During this phase of change and identity exploration, some individuals strive to obtain a broad range of life experiences when they are less likely to be constrained by role requirements, expectations, and parental supervision and before they are expected to take on more enduring or limiting responsibilities in adulthood.

Emerging adults have the highest rates of residential changes, with living situations varying from living alone, a combination of independent living and continued reliance on adults (e.g. college dormitories), cohabiting with a romantic partner, or living with their family of origin while working. The financial situation of emerging adults may vary considerably as well, with some individuals remaining economically dependent on their parents or others who are economically emancipated. This can be seen in the higher prevalence of risky behaviours that peak during emerging adulthood, such as unprotected sex, substance use, and risky driving behaviours (Bachman, Johnston, O'Malley, & Schulenberg, 1996).

There is evidence that family routines and rituals enhance the outcomes of adolescents; therefore, these positive family experiences during adolescence may also facilitate emotional development and self-regulation in emerging adulthood. Theoretically, emerging adults who previously experienced meaningful family routines and rituals during childhood and adolescence are more likely to demonstrate the positive long-term effects of their family interactions in future interactions (Yoon, 2012).

Whether family routines and rituals may have detectable consequences for emerging adult development has yet to be explored in detail. Examining what pieces of the past and specific positive characteristics from the family context may extend to positive development in emerging adulthood is essential.

Problem statement
Years of evidence have suggested family rituals play a role in the healthy development of adolescents and emerging adults. However, there still exists a need for further evidence that will suggest a strong relationship between family rituals and personality traits of assertiveness and self-compassion. Moreover, a clear relationship between these variables has not been studied in the Indian context. The effects of family rituals are yet to be studied in emerging adults as much as they have been studied in adolescents. Lastly, gender differences in assertiveness and self-compassion due to family rituals have not been studied in detail.

The Present Study
The fundamental rationale of the study arises from the fact that several favourable consequences of healthy family rituals have been reported. Assertiveness and self-compassion are two such desirable personality traits that lead to healthy developmental outcomes during developmental transitions. The primary purpose of this study is to

understand if family rituals can effectively impact assertiveness and self-compassion among emerging adults. Further, it aims to identify if gender differences exist for the same.

We aim to study if there is a relationship between family rituals, assertiveness, and self-compassion among emerging adults. Further, we attempt to study if there is an impact of family rituals on assertiveness and self-compassion of emerging adults. Lastly, we attempt to see if any gender-related differences in the perception of family rituals vis-à-vis assertiveness and self-compassion exist.

Significance of the study

First, a third of college students receiving counselling services from college counselling centres report family issues as one of their reasons behind seeking counselling services (Center for Collegiate Mental Health [CCMH], 2018). This makes it essential to study the impact a family setting can have on an individual.

Second, family interaction patterns, family cohesion, and expression of coherence and flexibility while an adolescent is transitioning into adulthood and entering college may encourage self-compassion. This would prevent the onset of conditions such as anxiety and issues such as adjustment into a new life phase.

Third, mental-health practitioners can offer psychoeducation regarding various changes the family system undergoes during this transition and subsequent methods for adjusting and preserving cohesion within the family. For instance, some parents whose children are in college may be over-involved by keeping a close eye on them, solving their problems, and making decisions for them. Such parents may not trust their children as they enter adulthood, thinking they cannot make decisions appropriately. Such family interaction patterns may prevent emerging adults from exploring new situations, adjusting to the adult world, and developing effective coping mechanisms. Hence, families can be psycho-educated about establishing healthy boundaries and giving liberty to their children entering adulthood so they can be more assertive.

Fourth, mental-health practitioners can also assist in enhancing communication skills, as research shows that healthy communication is a powerful strategy for behaviourally expressing a family's adaptation to developmental transitions (Olson & Gorall, 2003).

Considering these potential outcomes of studying families and personality traits among emerging adults, this study holds excellent significance and can have multiple favourable implications.

METHOD

Sample

The sample consisted 372 participants, in which 312 were females and 60 were males from age group of 18 to 25 years (M = 21.05 years). The participants were selected during June 2023. The participants are Indian citizens, and have stayed within a family setting for their life, especially during adolescence.

Procedure

The study deemed to follow a correlational cross-sectional research design as the aim was to understand the relationship between family rituals, assertiveness, and self-compassion, during June 2023 in India.

The proposal to carry out this research was proposed to the Institutional Review Board, and once the approval was granted, the study was carried out. Participants were approached using online platforms and offline by visiting colleges and mental health institutes in India during June 2023. Participants were screened to check who fits the inclusion criteria. Those who fit the inclusion criteria were briefed about their rights and ethical considerations that will be taken care of. After briefing them, an informed consent was taken from them. Online data was gathered using RedCap, an encrypted data collection website. Once the data was collected, it was analysed using Jamovi (version 2.3.21.0).

Measures
Permission to use the scales was taken via e-mail from respective authors before use.
Family Rituals Questionnaire (FRQ)
"Family rituals are special events such as celebrations, traditions, and patterned family interactions, with a symbolic meaning shared by the whole family, which suggests 'this is who we are as a group' and provide continuity in meaning across generations" (Fiese et al., 2002).

Family Rituals Questionnaire (FRQ) is a 56-item forced-choice questionnaire developed by Fiese & Kline (1993) has been used. It measures the meaning of family rituals across seven settings, such as dinnertime and celebrations and eight dimensions, such as occurrence and affects. An updated version of FRQ with 21 items was used that studies family rituals across three dimensions, Dinnertime, Weekends, and Celebrations. The Family Rituals Questionnaire evidences significant psychometric properties. The Cronbach's alpha for the settings of family rituals is .87 for dinner time, .76 for weekends, .74 for annual celebrations. The test-retest reliability is reported to be .88 over four weeks (Fiese, 1992).

Functional Assertiveness Scale (FAS)
"Interpersonal communication that occurs when a speaker encounters interpersonal problems that should be resolved or has objectives that should be achieved, and the speaker's message is perceived as appropriate by the listener" (Mitamura & Matsumi, 2009). Functional Assertiveness Scale (FAS) is a 12-item scale developed by Mitamura (2018) to measure assertiveness. The FAS measures assertiveness along two components, i.e., object effectiveness (6 items) and pragmatic politeness (6 items). Cronbach's α coefficients for FAS total, OE, and PP were .84, .81, and .84, respectively, demonstrating appropriate internal consistency of each scale. Moderate test-retest reliability has been established for the scale, and the internal consistency of the FAS total is adequate.

Self-compassion Scale (SCS)
"Self-compassion is an emotionally positive self-attitude that involves being kind to oneself when confronted with personal inadequacies or situations; difficulties, framing the imperfection of life in terms of common humanity and being mindful of negative emotions so that one neither suppresses them nor ruminates on them" (Neff, 2003; Neff, K. & Beretvas; S., 2012).

Self-compassion Scale (SCS) is a 26-item scale developed by Neff, K. (2003). The scale is appropriate for individuals over 14 years of age. A short form of the SCS, SCS-SF, was developed by Raes, F., Pommier, E., Neff, K. D., & Van Gucht, D. (2011) which is a 12-item scale with a near-perfect correlation ($r \geq .97$ all samples) to the original 26-item scale. The SCS-SF was used, which evidences adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha $\geq$

.86 in all samples). The SCS-SF is a reliable alternative to the long-form SCS, especially considering overall self-compassion scores.

RESULTS

The aim of the study was to study the relationship between family rituals, assertiveness and self-compassion, among emerging adults. The hypotheses concerning the aim and objectives of the study were tested through multiple differential analyses, including normality testing, correlation, regression, and independent sample t test.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics along with normality checks

	N	Mean	Median	SD	IQR	Minimum	Maximum	Shapiro-Wilk W	p
Family Rituals	372	-	66.0	13.142	17.0	25	99	0.992	0.032
Assertiveness	372	-	42.5	7.317	10.0	12	60	0.989	0.008
Self-compassion	372	-	36.0	8.340	9.00	12	56	0.985	< .001
Age	372	21.05	21.0	1.995	3.00	18	25	-	-

The above table shows the demographic details and normality of the collected data. The total data consists of 372 participants, in which 312 were females and 60 were males (M = 21.05 years). The above table indicates that the data is not normally distributed for all the scales, i.e., Family Rituals Questionnaire (p = 0.032) with m=66.00 (IQR = 17.00); Assertiveness Scale (p=0.008), with m = 4 2.50 (IQR = 10.00); Self Compassion Scale (p = <0.001) with m = 36.00 (IQR=9.00). Hence, non-parametric test will be done for inferential statistics.

The reliability of the scales according to this data was checked by Cornbach's alpha, and results indicated that the data is highly reliable (FRQ- Cronbach's alpha = 0.823; FAS- Cronbach's alpha = 0.761; SCS- Cronbach's alpha = 0.768).

Table 2 Intercorrelation matrix showing relationship between variables

		Dinnertime	Weekends	Celebrations	Family Rituals	Assertiveness
Weekends	Spearman's rho	0.433***	—			
Celebrations	Spearman's rho	0.377***	0.375***	—		
Family Rituals	Spearman's rho	0.785***	0.786***	0.717***	—	
Assertiveness	Spearman's rho	0.077	0.042	0.179***	0.12**	—
Self-compassion	Spearman's rho	0.212***	0.242***	0.175***	0.28**	0.176***

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Spearman's Rank correlation was performed to test if there is a relationship between between family rituals, assertiveness and self-compassion among emerging adults in India.

The above table represents the correlation between the variables of the study. Assertiveness has a weak positive correlation with Family rituals (Spearman's rho = 0.12), however, the relationship is significant at p = 0.02. Assertiveness has a weak positive correlation with Self-compassion (Spearman's rho = 0.176), which is highly significant at p < 0.001. Family Rituals has a weak positive correlation with Self-compassion (Spearman's rho = 0.28), that is highly significant at p < 0.01.

Dinnertime, a dimension of family rituals questionnaire is weakly correlated with Assertiveness (Spearman's rho = 0.077), but is insignificant at p = 0.14; and weakly correlated with Self-compassion at Spearman's rho = 0.212, but is highly significant at p < 0.001.

Weekends, the second dimension of family rituals questionnaire is weakly correlated with Assertiveness (Spearman's rho = 0.042), but is insignificant at p = 0.417; and weakly correlated with Self-compassion at Spearman's rho = 0.242, but is highly significant at p < 0.001.

Celebrations, the third dimension of family rituals is weakly correlated with Assertiveness at Spearman's rho = 0.179, but is highly significant at p < 0.001, and weakly correlated with Self-compassion with Spearman's rho = 0.175, but is highly significant at p < 0.001.

The correlation between the three dimensions of the family rituals questionnaire, can be observed as, a moderate correlation between Dinnertime and Weekends (Spearman's rho = 0.433), a weak correlation between Dinnertime and Celebrations (Spearman's rho = 0.377), and a week correlated between Celebrations and Weekends (Spearman's rho = 0.375). All the correlations are highly significant at p < 0.001.

From the above table, it can also be seen that all the correlations between variables, and dimensions, are positive in nature. Based on the findings from correlation matrix, we can say that there is a weak, but positive correlation between the variables under study.

Table 3 Regression Analysis testing the predictive capacity of Family Rituals towards Assertiveness

Predictor	β	t	p	R	r²	F	P	DW
Dinnertime	-0.01254	-0.206	0.837	0.167	0.028	3.54	0.015	1.89
Weekends	0.00904	0.15	0.881					
Celebrations	0.16863	2.887	0.004					

Note. DV = Assertiveness.

A regression analysis was performed to study if family rituals impact assertiveness and self-compassion among emerging adults. The above table indicates the regression analysis of Family Rituals and Assertiveness. The correlation between Family rituals and Assertiveness is weak (R = 0.167), which means that as family rituals become meaningful, Assertiveness tends to increase, but not strongly. The model accounts for about 2.8% of the variance in Assertiveness (r² = 0.028), suggesting limited predictive accuracy. This suggests that only 2.8% variance in Assertiveness can be explained by dimensions of Family rituals, i.e., Dinnertime, Weekends, and Celebrations.

Dinnertime is associated with a decrease in Assertiveness, but with a small effect size, as (β = -0.01254). Dinnertime is not a significant predictor of Assertiveness (p = 0.837).

Weekends is not a statistically significant predictor of Assertiveness (β = 0.00904, p = 0.881). Celebrations is a significant predictor (β = 0.16863, p = 0.004), indicating that an increase in Celebrations is associated with a corresponding increase in predicted Assertiveness.

The F-test is significant (F = 3.54, p = 0.015), indicating at least one significant predictor in the model, indicating that the model is statistically significant. The Durbin-Watson statistic suggests relatively minimal positive autocorrelation (DW = 1.89) in the residuals.

Overall, the model's explanatory power is limited, and only the Celebrations dimension significantly predicts Assertiveness.

Table 4 Regression Analysis testing the predictive capacity of Family Rituals towards Self-compassion

Predictor	β	t	p	R	r²	F	p	DW
Dinnertime	0.0947	1.59	0.113	0.257	0.0661	8.68	$< .001$	1.79
Weekends	0.1612	2.73	0.007					
Celebrations	0.0617	1.08	0.282					

Note. DV = Self-compassion.

The above table shows the regression analysis between dimensions of Family Rituals and Self-compassion. It can be seen that there is a weak positive correlation (R = 0.257) between the variables. This suggests that as family rituals become meaningful, self-compassion tends to increase, but not very strongly.

The model explains about 6.61% of the variation in self-compassion (r² = 0.0661), which means that only 6.61% variance in Self-compassion can be explained by the dimensions of Family rituals.

Weekends dimension of Family Rituals is a significant positive predictor of self-compassion (β = 0.1612, p = 0.007). It indicates that the effect size is small but significant. Dinnertime and Celebrations dimensions are not statistically significant predictors (p > 0.05; β =0 .0947 and β = 0.0617 respectively).

The overall model is significant (F = 8.68, p < 0.001), indicating at least one significant predictor in the model, indicating that the model is statistically significant. The Durbin-Watson statistic (DW=1.79) suggests a minimal positive autocorrelation in the residuals.

Based on the interpretation of the regression analysis for family rituals with assertiveness and self-compassion, following can be concluded:
1. Family Rituals and Assertiveness:
For the predictor "Dinnertime," the coefficient is not statistically significant (p = 0.837), implying that changes in dinnertime are not associated with changes in assertiveness. Similarly, for the predictor "Weekends," the coefficient is not statistically significant (p = 0.881), indicating that changes in weekends do not impact assertiveness. However, for the predictor "Celebrations," the coefficient is statistically significant (p = 0.004), suggesting that changes in celebrations are associated with changes in assertiveness. Overall, only "Celebrations" has a statistically significant impact on assertiveness.

2. Family Rituals and Self-Compassion:

For the predictor "Dinnertime," the coefficient is not statistically significant (p = 0.113), suggesting that changes in dinnertime do not significantly impact self-compassion. The predictor "Celebrations" is also not statistically significant (p = 0.282), indicating that changes in celebrations do not significantly impact self-compassion. For the predictor "Weekends," the coefficient is statistically significant (p = 0.007), indicating that changes in weekends are associated with changes in self-compassion. Hence, only "Weekends" has a statistically significant impact on self-compassion.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, some dimensions of family rituals have a minimal impact on assertiveness and self-compassion.

Table 5 Independent sample t test of gender differences in family rituals, assertiveness, and self-compassion

		Statistic	p
Assertiveness	Mann-Whitney U	9112	0.745
Self-compassion	Mann-Whitney U	8426	0.221
Family Rituals	Mann-Whitney U	9171	0.805

Mann-Whitney U test was performed to study if gender differences exist in the perception of family rituals with regard to assertiveness and self-compassion. The above table shows that there are no significant gender differences among the variables, as p>0.05 for all the variables, for assertiveness (p=0.745), for self-compassion (p=0.221), and for family rituals (p=0.805). Thus, there are no gender differences in the variables.

Based on the findings from the above table, it can be seen that there are no gender differences in family ritual experience, assertiveness and self-compassion among emerging adults.

DISCUSSION

Our primary aim was to understand the relationship between family rituals, assertiveness, and self-compassion among emerging adults within India. Family rituals are deeply ingrained in the Indian society, reflecting a rich tapestry of traditions, customs, and values. Our analysis has provided a nuanced understanding of how these variables intersect in the Indian context, shedding light on both expected and unexpected findings.

We found that Family Rituals is positively related to Assertiveness, and though the correlation is weak, it is statistically significant. Within our sample, we found that 2.8% variance can be explained by dimensions of Family Rituals (i.e., Dinnertime, Weekends, and Celebrations). Our results are consistent with previous research which reported that a person's position in the family system has a little clear influence on their assertiveness (Kimble, Marsh, Kiska. 1984).

Demirbilek & Otrar (2014), have reported that individuals who live with all the family members have high assertiveness. Another study by Larijani, Aghajani, Zamani, and Ghadirian (2017) reported that family characteristics like marital status, number of family members, children's birth order, residence, family income, and the attitude and interest of parents' towards children's discipline, has a weak relationship with assertiveness. Especially within the Indian context, where generational differences add complexity to the family dynamics, gives us some insight into how Assertiveness would build in children. For instance, how the younger family members assert their ideas in front of elder family

members, while obeying and respecting them, might shape how family rituals influence the development of Assertiveness.

We also discovered that Family Rituals is positively related to Self-compassion, and though the correlation is weak, it is statistically significant. Only 6.61% variance in self-compassion could be explained by dimensions of family rituals (i.e., dinnertime, weekends, and celebrations). Previously, research has indicated that family functioning predicts self-compassion (e.g., Kelly & Dupasquier, 2016; Neff & McGehee, 2009), i.e., young adults from families that are cohesive and close, are more self-compassionate than those who originate from conflicting and stressful family environments. Similar to our findings, Jeon et al., (2016) found that familial support boosts self-compassion. Another study by Berryhill, Harless, & Kean (2018) reported that the more chaotic and enmeshed families are, the lower the self-compassion and higher the anxiety of college students; and on the other hand, if the families have healthy functioning, the self-compassion of college students was higher and anxiety was lower. In this light, our results align with the idea that meaningful family rituals, which often serve as binding agents in Indian families, contribute to the development of self-compassion. Though the correlation between family rituals and self-compassion in our study may be modest, it underscores the ways in which family rituals impact emotional well-being in the Indian context.

Lastly, we found that Assertiveness is positively related to Self-compassion, and though the correlation is weak, it is statistically significant. Aliado (2022) reported that mindful self-compassionate practices helps in building assertiveness in women. When consistent and meaningful family rituals are established, it increases the comfort, closeness, and harmony among its family members (Leyba, 2017). Parents who work to establish meaningful family rituals for their family, they are likely to be warm, caring, and supportive. When children see that their parents are kind towards themselves, they learn to be kind towards their own selves as well, hence, learning to be self-compassionate (Neff & McGehee, 2009). As older adults, these children have a higher likelihood to be assertive, while being self-compassionate, as opposed to others who might have difficulty in balancing assertiveness and self-compassion (Yoon, 2012).

Interestingly, previous research has found that oxytocin increases the feelings of trust, generosity, and connectedness (Feldman, 2007). Compassionate and supportive family interactions increase oxytocin levels, which leads people to be more self-compassionate (Neff & McGehee, 2009). The researchers have also proposed the idea that healthy family relationships could foster self-compassionate inner dialogues among children.

Our study also sought to explore potential gender differences in the perception of family rituals and their impact on personality traits. As the limited and inconsistent sample size is concerned, no differences were found between males and females. Similar to our findings, it has previously been reported that level of assertiveness doesn't change with gender (Hadiye & Kemal, 2020). Similarly, Eksin (2003) found that assertiveness sense of wellness doesn't depend on gender. However, some contradictory evidence also suggests that family relationships are more important for females than males (Fuligni & Masten, 2010).

Research to date has not studied how specific kind of family rituals, such as dinnertime, weekends, and celebrations, influence personality traits of assertiveness and self-compassion. We found that while celebrations can significantly predict assertiveness, weekends can significantly predict self-compassion among emerging adults.

CONCLUSION

Our study aimed to understand the influence of family rituals on assertiveness and self-compassion among emerging adults in the context of India. We found that family rituals have a positive relationship with assertiveness and self-compassion in emerging adults, indicating that having meaningful and predictable family rituals as adolescents, increases the likelihood of being assertive and self-compassionate as young adults. Particularly "Celebrations", a kind of family ritual, can impact assertiveness; and "Weekends", another kind of family ritual, can significantly impact self-compassion, shedding light on the crucial role of joyous family gatherings in shaping these personality traits. Despite the overall weak correlations, our results underscore the cultural and emotional significance of family rituals in the lives of individuals in India. These findings contribute to our understanding of the profound impact of familial traditions on personality development and emphasize the importance of preserving and nurturing these cherished rituals within the dynamic landscape of Indian families.

Implications, Limitations and Future Scope

Our study highlights the importance of family rituals, which can encourage families to actively engage and create meaningful rituals that will strengthen family bonds, and contribute to the emotional well-being of family members. Moreover, parents can be made aware of the potential long-term effects of family rituals on their children's personality development, thereby encouraging them to preserve and nurture these rituals. Second, educators can acknowledge the role of families in students' lives. They can create an educational environment that respects cultural and familial traditions. Third, family rituals are an avenue for therapists to be explored in counselling sessions, which might help them in understanding the foundation behind the client's identity and personality.

Our research considered the perspective of young adults who reflected onto family rituals they had as children. A focus on the perspectives of parents, would bring richness to such a study. Our study relied on cross-sectional data about family rituals and did not consider changes in the family dynamics over time. Moreover, significant life events or adverse childhood experiences that might considerably impact findings were not considered. The sample also posed a great limitation on our findings. Homogeneity in the sample restricted us from reliably studying gender differences. Furthermore, sample only included the Indian population, hindering the findings from being generalised elsewhere.

Researchers willing to study the variables in the future can consider controlling socioeconomic status, consider family constellation, and significant life events to have more sound findings for causal relationship exploration. Future researchers can also conduct a longitudinal study to examine how the impact of family rituals on personality traits like assertiveness and self-compassion evolve over-time. A research exploring the long-term effects of family rituals during different life-stages could yield fruitful results in the field. A mediating or moderating impact of family dynamics such as communication, leadership, conflict resolution, could be investigated while examining family rituals with assertiveness and self-compassion. Moreover, an intervention study could be conducted in which interventions aimed at enhancing specific personality traits through deliberate promotion of meaningful family rituals could be created. The effectiveness of such interventions in different family contexts could be studied. Lastly, researchers in the Indian setting can study how family rituals differ in nuclear, joint, and extended families, and how does that impact the assertiveness and self-compassion of young adults.

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