

Spiritual Intelligence and Rumination among Young Adults: a Mediation Analysis of Positive Psychological Constructs

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ABSTRACT

True spiritual intelligence lies in understanding the profound meaning of life, embracing detachment from material attachments, and finding inner peace in the pursuit of a higher purpose. The present study attempts to decipher a model that finds the optimum spiritual intelligence, rumination and positive psychology constructs that are essential for human flourishing. 219 young adult participants in the age group of 18 to 24 years were selected by simple random sampling. Spiritual Intelligence Questionnaire (Abdollahzadeh 1 et al, 2009) Rumination Response Scale (RRS) (Treyner al, 2003) and C.A.R.E Inventory (Sudha and Gayatri Devi, 2021) were administered to all the selected participants. Structural Equation Modelling was attempted using SPSS and AMOS graphics software. Results indicated that a model for lower ruminating is an optimum combination of spiritual intelligence along with positive psychology constructs such as compassion, achievement of purpose in life, good relationships, positive emotions, which all together help to lower rumination and hence promote well-being.

Keywords: *Spiritual Intelligence, rumination, positive psychology constructs, young adult*

The ability to comprehend the world and oneself via a God-centered perspective and modify one's life appropriately is considered spiritual intelligence. All other abilities are shaped and guided by this fundamental skill. The ability to transcend, enter into heightened spiritual states of consciousness, imbue daily activities, occasions, and interpersonal relationships with a sense of the sacred, draw on spiritual resources to address life's challenges, and exhibit virtuous behaviour are all considered components of spiritual intelligence. (Zohar, and Marshall, 2000). Humans are special because of our spiritual and emotional intelligence, which enables us to connect with others, delve deeper into the human experience, and look for meaning and purpose in life. The two diverse types of intelligence that pertain to various facets of the human experience are emotional and spiritual intelligence. It requires abilities like introspection, self-awareness, and feeling a part of something bigger than oneself. It is crucial for both personal development and the cultivation of a feeling of meaning and purpose in life. By mastering these abilities, people can grow in their capacity for self-awareness, empathy, and connection to others as well as to something more than themselves (Sadatmiri, Davari, and Dortaj, 2021).

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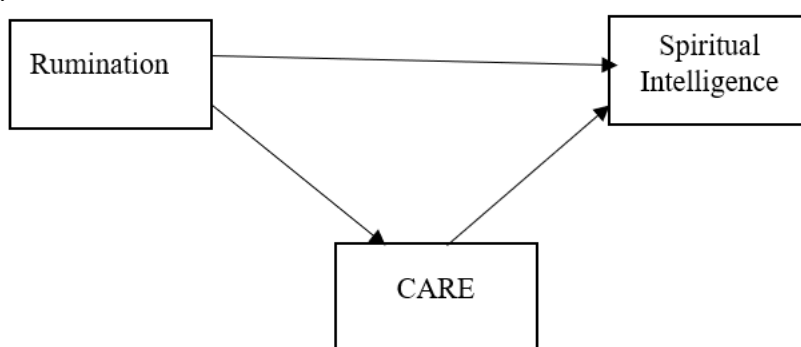
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But numerous factors pose a threat to developing and thriving spiritual intelligence. One of the major obstacles to developing the skill of spiritual intelligence within oneself is rumination. Rumination is the act of thinking about unpleasant emotions and suffering repeatedly, as well as the reasons behind and effects of such emotions. Rumination's negative, repetitive nature can exacerbate pre-existing illnesses such as anxiety or depression as well as help them grow. Some repetitive thoughts such as “Why is this happening to me?”; “Why am I such a big loser?”; “I am a hopeless person/ The situation is hopeless.” etc can cause significant amount of distress. (Watkins and Roberts, 2020). Rumination is the term for thinking about a bad experience repeatedly and uncontrollably. People who ruminate generally repeat upsetting ideas in their minds like a mental loop, which frequently causes worry and other forms of emotional suffering.

However, there are certain constructs which serve as preventive and protective factors that help individuals to overcome rumination and build on their spiritual intelligence. Positive psychology is a branch of psychology that gives importance to human flourishing and well-being through deliberate cultivation of constructs such as happiness, hope, optimism, compassion, purpose in life and many more such factors which help in building positivity within. This positivity then works like a screen that filters in positive emotions, heightens them and hence cultivates well-being, while filtering out negativity and despair. (Seligman, 1994, 2000, 2002).

This study attempts to create an ideal model where the negative effects caused by rumination are nullified or reduced by introducing positive psychology constructs. The positive psychology constructs taken up for this study are compassion and self-compassion, achievement of purpose in life, relationship building and enhancing positive emotions. These four constructs are measured by the CARE inventory, that has been validated in our institute. (Sudha and Gayatri Devi, 2021). The theoretical framework attempted is represented as follows:



A brief review of available literature was conducted to understand the constructs taken up for study. A study was conducted on the mediating and causal factors of rumination by Sadatmiri, Davari, and Dortaj (2021). The results suggest that spirituality and emotional control may play a significant role in a person's ability to cope with stress and may also be useful in reducing rumination. As a result, using the aforementioned factors while creating more suitable therapies benefits students' researchers and therapists, the study recommends. A study on the COVID related rumination was conducted by Nikolova, Caniëls, and Curseu, (2021). The findings indicated that workers with lower levels of education, women, and older people ruminated on COVID-19 significantly more. We found that COVID-19 ruminative thoughts can trigger withdrawal coping reactions (i.e., self-handicapping) and

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deplete an individual's energy (i.e., causing emotional exhaustion), which is consistent with previous theoretical and empirical work on stress and coping.

A study was conducted on 50 UG and PG level college students in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, by Pant and Srivatsava, (2014) with the aim of the present study is to examine the level of spiritual intelligence, mental health and quality of life and also to see relationship among these three variables. Integrated spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS), Mithila mental health status inventory (MMHSI) and WHOQOL-BREF are used to observe the level of these three variables among college students. The study revealed that spiritual intelligence and mental health are correlated significantly, there is a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and quality of life and finally mental health and quality of life are correlated significantly with each other among college students. A similar study by Gupta (2012) reported on emotional and spiritual intelligence in relation to self-efficacy and self-regulation among college students. The results showed a favourable and significant correlation between self-efficacy and self-regulation and spiritual and emotional intelligence. Male and female students' levels of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and self-regulation were shown to differ significantly. Additionally, it was discovered that male pupils outperformed female students in terms of emotional and spiritual intelligence.

The ill effects of rumination on mental health has been demonstrated by some studies. Even up to 18 months after the traumatic event they are ruminating on, patients who ruminate report greater rates of depressive symptoms (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000). A plausible explanation for why some patients who ruminate also claim to receive little social support from their friends and family is that these individuals' support network may believe that the patients should have "made peace" or moved past the experience by now (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000). Some research has also been conducted to analyze the protective effects of positive psychology constructs in reducing and preventing rumination. A meta-analysis of 39 trials (n = 1,140) validated the effectiveness and usefulness of therapy involving mindfulness exercises. When comparing the end of treatment to the beginning, respondents with identified depression and anxiety shown a discernible improvement in their mood and anxiety symptoms (Hofmann, Sawyer, Witt, & Oh, 2010). Hvenegaard et al., (2015) demonstrate the positive effects of positive affirmations and rumination-focused cognitive behaviour therapy for better mental health and well-being. Seligman (2011) reports the effect of optimism and hope to reduce negative thinking and build flourishing.

Need for the Study

The above conducted review demonstrates the negative effects of rumination and its ability to increase anxiety and depression among individuals. Hence, it is necessary especially among young adults to reduce the ill effects of rumination and promoting positivity by cultivating positive psychology constructs and help build spiritual intelligence, all of which lead to flourishing, good mental health and psychological well-being.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study began with research question of, "Do positive psychology constructs help in reducing rumination and build spiritual intelligence?" The objectives for the study were to identify the levels of rumination, spiritual intelligence, and CARE constructs in young adults, to assess the relationship between these constructs and then to identify a possible structural equation model to identify the mediating effects of positive psychology constructs

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on the relationship between rumination and spiritual intelligence. The hypotheses for the study were as follows:

- There will be a significant relationship between rumination, spiritual intelligence, and positive psychology constructs among the young adults
- There will be a significant mediating effect of positive psychology constructs on the relationship between rumination and spiritual intelligence.
- Rumination levels will significantly predict the level of spiritual intelligence and positivity among the young adults

Sampling

The sample for this research consists of 219 young adults in the age group of 18 to 24 years. The sample was selected using simple random sampling. The study was conducted using google forms for the purpose of data collection. The participants all belonged to colleges in Tamil Nadu.

Inclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria for the present study are

- Young adults in the age group of 18 to 24 years were included in the study
- The young adults willing to take part in the study were included

Exclusion criteria

- The exclusion criteria were participants who gave their consent but could not complete the assessment due to any personal reason were excluded

Tools

The study used the following tools:

- Spiritual Intelligence Questionnaire (SIQ) by Abdollahzadeh., et al (2009) consists of 29 items with a five-point rating scale. This scale measures spiritual intelligence in two factors. The first factor with 12 question was called “understanding and communicating with the source of universe and the second factor with 17 items was called spiritual life or reliance on the inner core." The entire scale has a Cronbach alpha value of 0.87 and its validity has been established by the authors.
- Rumination Response Scale (RRS) (Treyner, 2003) The RRS is a 22-item, 4-point Likert scale (4= almost always; 1= almost never) self-report instrument that was designed to measure the tendency to ruminate in response to feelings of sadness and depression. The authors of the scale have established sufficient reliability and validity.
- C.A.R.E Inventory (Sudha and Gayatri Devi, 2021) they are "C" stands for Compassion, "A" stands for Achievement of purpose in life, "R" Relationship building and "E" stands for Enhancing Positive Emotions in life. Its used to understand ones Compassion and Self-Compassion, your sense of Achievement of Purpose in life, Good Relationships and Positive Emotions in your life. consists of 36 items and five rating they are” always,” “often”, “sometimes”, “rarely,” “never”. The scale has a reliability established through Cronbach Alpha value of 0.87. The concurrent and discriminant validity has been established by the authors.

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RESULTS

The data was collected and analysed using SPSS version 25 and AMOS Graphics version 22. The results are presented below. The demographic data of the participants is presented in the Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic Data of the Participants *N= 219*

S. No.	Gender		Age			Marital Status		Occupational Status	
	Male	Female	18-20 yrs	21-22 yrs	23-24 yrs	Married	Unmarried	Employed	Unemployed
1	98	121	75	68	76	54	165	49	170

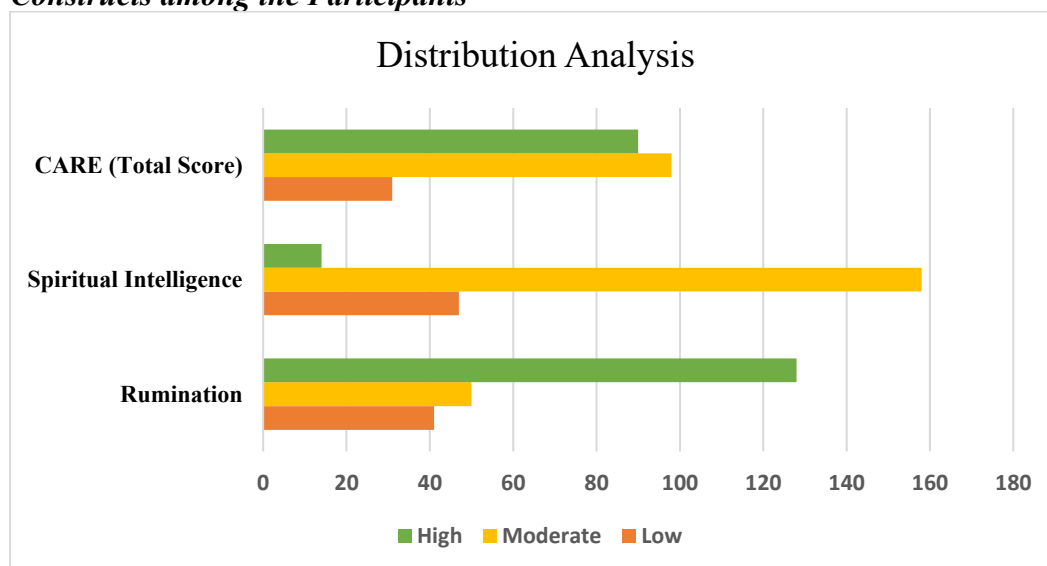
The distribution analysis for the variables was computed and presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Distribution Analysis of Rumination, Spiritual Intelligence and CARE Constructs among the Participants *N= 219*

S.N.	Levels	Rumination		Spiritual Intelligence		CARE (Total Score)	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Low	41	19	47	22	31	14
2	Moderate	50	23	158	72	98	45
3	High	128	58	14	6	90	41

The above Table 2 indicates that 19 percent of the participants score low, 23 percent score moderate while 58 percent of the participants score high in rumination. Also, 22 percent score low, 72 percent moderate, while 6 percent of the participants score high in spiritual intelligence. The table also indicates that 14 percent of the participants score low, 45 percent score moderate, while 41 percent score high in the CARE constructs. The same data is shown figuratively below:

Figure 1 Distribution Analysis of Rumination, Spiritual Intelligence and CARE Constructs among the Participants



Next, the correlation analysis was carried out. Product Moment Correlations between the variables were computed. The results are shown below.

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Table 3. Correlation Coefficients of Rumination, Spiritual Intelligence and CARE among the Participants

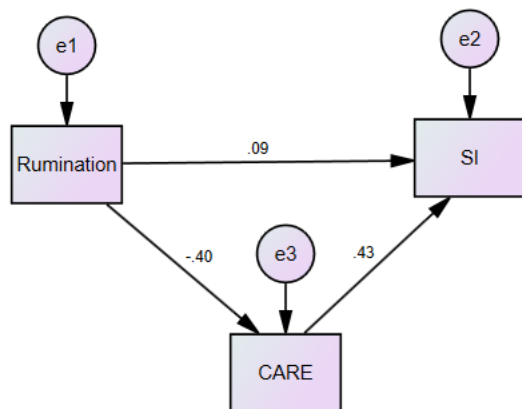
Variables	Rumination	Spiritual Intelligence	CARE
Rumination	1		
Spiritual Intelligence	-0.80**		
CARE	-0.41**	0.40**	1

**= significant at the 0.01 level

The above table 3 indicates that there is a significant negative correlation between rumination and spiritual intelligence, and rumination and CARE. Also, there is a significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and CARE. Hence the hypothesis, “There will be a significant relationship between rumination, spiritual intelligence, and positive psychology constructs among the young adults” is accepted.

Next the Structural Equation Modelling was attempted to understand the mediation effects of CARE constructs in the relationship between rumination and spiritual intelligence. Spiritual Intelligence here is taken as the outcome factor.

Figure 2. Structural Equation Model of Mediation of CARE in the association between Rumination and Spiritual Intelligence



The above diagram indicates that the relationship between rumination and spiritual intelligence is -0.80, indicating a negative direct effect. However, when CARE is taken as a factor of mediation, there is an indirect positive effect (0.40 and 0.43 respectively). The model fit indices are indicated below. Hence the hypothesis, “There will be a significant mediating effect of positive psychology constructs on the relationship between rumination and spiritual intelligence.” is accepted. The model fit indices of this mediating model is shown below.

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Table 4. Model fit indices of the mediation model

Model Fit Indices	Obtained Values	Suggested values
Normed Chi-Square	1.97	<5
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	0.90	>0.90
RFI (Relative Fit index)	0.91	>0.90
IFI (Incremental Fit Index)	0.94	>0.90
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	0.97	>0.90
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.98	>0.90
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.06	<0.08

The above table indicates that the model fit indices are significant. The various fit indices indicate that the model arrived is fit. Also, the model indicates significant regression coefficients.

Table 5. Regression coefficients indicated through mediation analysis

Variables	Effect	Estimate	Standard Error	Critical Ratio	P
CARE and Rumination	Direct	-0.581	0.093	-6.268	0.001
Spiritual Intelligence and CARE	Direct	0.490	0.078	6.241	0.001
Spiritual Intelligence and Rumination	Direct	-0.346	0.015	-3.275	0.002
SI – CARE - Rumination	Indirect	-0.121	0.002	-0.289	0.005

The above table indicates that the critical ratios between rumination and CARE is significant. The critical ratio is a negative value indicating that higher rumination predicts lower positivity measured by CARE and vice versa. Also, rumination negatively predicts spiritual intelligence (-3.275), meaning higher rumination predicts lower spiritual intelligence and vice versa. Hence the hypothesis, “Rumination levels will significantly predict the level of spiritual intelligence and positivity among the young adults” is accepted. The indirect effects shown in the above table further shows that the values for indirect effect of rumination through CARE on spiritual intelligence (-0.12) is much lower than the direct effect of rumination on spiritual intelligence (-0.346). This indirect effect further proves that CARE constructs mediate the relationship between rumination and spiritual intelligence.

DISCUSSION

The present study indicates that rumination is significantly negatively correlated with both spiritual intelligence and positive psychology constructs measured by CARE; also, rumination significantly predicts the levels of spiritual intelligence and presence of positive psychology constructs measured by CARE inventory. The study also indicates that presence of positive psychology constructs like compassion and self-compassion, achievement of purpose in life, relationship building and enhancing positive emotions, all together mediate the relationship between rumination and spiritual intelligence. That is, even if there is a

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significant amount of rumination in the individual, presence of such positive psychology constructs can be a protective factor and still cultivate spiritual intelligence in the person. A supportive finding by Hodgetts et al., (2021), where the authors studied the effects of self-compassion on rumination and spirituality among older adults. This study reports that self-compassion reduces rumination significantly. Another very recent significant study reported that the association between rumination and psychological health is moderated by aspects of self-compassion, which may either aggravate or protect psychological health (Yamasaki, et al., 2024). This study was done among college students in Japan. A supportive finding on the benefits of purpose in life for Chinese youth has also been reported by Wang, Gai, and Li. (2023). Another supportive meta-analysis on the various interventions available for self-compassion and compassion by Stutts, (2022) also underlines the benefits of such interventions in alleviating negative psychological impact and improving overall psychological health and well-being. Amirian and Fazilat-Pour, (2016) also report the relationships between spiritual intelligence with general health and happiness. The benefits of improving spiritual intelligence by improving factors like optimistic thinking, hope and happiness including compassion, was reported by Pinto, et al., (2023). The above supportive studies bring forth the importance of positive psychological constructs in reducing rumination and in improving spiritual intelligence is clear.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above study:

- There is a significant negative relationship between rumination and spiritual intelligence; and rumination with CARE positive psychology constructs
- Rumination significantly predicts the levels of spiritual intelligence and CARE positive psychology constructs
- The CARE positive psychology constructs mediate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and rumination

Limitations of the Study

The present study had limited number of participants. Also, there was no detailed analysis on the significant predictors of the CARE positive psychology constructs as to which of these constructs predict lowering rumination, or improving spiritual intelligence. This can be taken up for further study.

Implications of the Study

The present study can be used as foundational research for further studies on improving positive psychological constructs to improve spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, and many other psychological variables. Moreover, this research can open further doors to study the protective and preventive features of various positive psychology constructs against negative psychological issues such as anxiety and depression.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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