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Gender Differences in Spirituality and Subjective Well-being among working couples in Indian Society

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ABSTRACT

Every human being is seeking bliss and pleasure in his own experiences and understanding. Spirituality involves exploring certain universal themes – love, compassion, altruism, life after death, wisdom and truth, with the knowledge that some people such as saints or enlightened individuals have achieved and manifested higher levels of development than the ordinary person. Perception of Happiness and Satisfaction with life varies from person to person. So goes with the extent to which a person believes or feels that her /his life is going well. The current study aimed to examine the gender differences in spirituality and subjective well-being among working couples between 25 to 45 years of the age range (working men =50 and working women =50). The total sample consisted of 100 working couples. The Subjective Well-being Scale developed by Ed. Diener and Spirituality scale developed by S.S Haidari was used for the collection of data. Exploratory analyses and t-test of variables across gender and marriage categories were carried out. Correlation analyses were carried out in order to have a better understanding of the relationship among variable. Results indicated that there is a non-significant difference between working males and working females subjective wellbeing and working females are comparatively more spiritual and satisfied with life than their working male spouse.

Keywords: Gender differences, Subjective well-being, Spirituality, Working Couples

INTRODUCTION

Every human being is a spiritual being on their terms. As exemplified by the founders and the sacred texts and religious scriptures of the world, traditionally, spirituality refers to a

religious process of re-formation which “aims to recover the original shape of man,” oriented at “the image of God. The traditional Indian way of life has helped in the evolution and growth of

spiritualism. Spirituality involves exploring certain universal themes – love, compassion, altruism, life after death, wisdom and truth, with the knowledge that some people such as saints or enlightened individuals have achieved and manifested higher levels of development than the ordinary person.

Spirituality is all about alertness, definitive awareness or the genuine cognizance in himself, and endeavours to join his awareness with that extreme awareness. With the rise in increasingly capitalistic and materialistic life all over the world, the quest and urgency for spirituality grow more and more. The traditional Indian way of life has helped in the evolution and growth of spiritualism. The Modern systems of spirituality emphasize the belief in a supernatural (beyond the known and observable) realm, a quest for an ultimate or sacred meaning, personal growth, religious experience, or an encounter with one's own "inner dimension." Spirituality involves the deeper recognition, observation and understanding of a feeling or sense or belief that there is something greater than myself, something more to being human than sensory experience, and that the greater whole of which we are part is cosmic or divine in nature.¹

The evolution of Indian spiritualism is copied back to the sacred writing age, which was non secularly coded and therefore the same spirit was nurtured by nice spiritual thinkers like Yajnavalkya, Maitereyi, Gargi and Nachiketas. Spiritualism, a philosophy of values if tailored at giant by individuals, would start a civilization that's socially simply (Satyam); showing emotion integral (Shivam); and esthetically lovely (Sundaram). However, each man and ladies have completely different approaches to observe spirituality in their life. the foremost necessary issue is that the feminine approach to spirituality is what's normally called spirituality. That's what everyone implicitly assumes to be spirituality – fight ego, be nice and emoticon and type, meditate, please God, attempt to be acceptable to God, that sort of stuff. The male approach is to coach with a master as Associate in Nursing apprentice, to accumulate skills and to become a worthy trained worker and eventually a master.²

The second variable of the study is subjective well-being. It is also referred to as Happiness which could mean pleasure, life satisfaction, positive emotions, a meaningful life, or a sense of contentment, among other concepts. In fact, for as long as philosophers are discussing happiness, its definition has been debated. one among the earliest thinkers on the topic of happiness, the pre-Socratic philosopher Democritus, maintained that the happy life was enjoyable, not due to what the happy person possessed, but due to the way the happy person

reacted to his/her life circumstances³. Subjective well-being designed to capture information about how people experience their lives.³⁻⁶ They are based on individual's self-reports, and common measures include questions about whether people feel satisfied, content and fulfilled in their lives overall, as well as a range of more day-to-day emotions, such as happiness, worry, depression and sadness. According to Ed Diener, an American psychologist, subjective well-being is multidimensional and includes positive and negative emotions (e.g. the frequency, duration and intensity of joy, pleasure, happiness but also anger, guilt, fear, depression, sadness), also as global life satisfaction, and satisfaction with different aspects of one's life (partnership, income, friends).⁷ Aspects of good psychological functioning (including feelings of autonomy, competence and purpose) can also be seen as part of a person's subjective well-being. "Well-being, which we define as people's positive evaluations of their lives, includes positive emotions, engagement, satisfaction and meaning." The determinants and consequences of happiness are often treated as unitary but they ought to be measured separately.

- Life evaluation – which refers to reflective assessments of a person's life as an entire, or some specific aspect of life. For example, classic evaluation measures can include questions on satisfaction with life as an entire, or satisfaction with specific domains of life (such as health or income).
- Affect – which refers to both positive and negative feelings and emotions, like happiness, contentment, worry, sadness, depression, anger, fear, etc. Affect measures are usually captured concerning a specific period (such as feelings "yesterday" or feelings "in the last four weeks").
- Eudaimonia – a diverse and (as yet) less well-defined construct, often used to refer to feelings of meaning and purpose in life (capturing the idea of life "lived well"), but which may even be utilized in the context of excellent psychological functioning or "flourishing" (including feelings of autonomy, competence, social engagement, caring, and interest in learning/ personal growth).⁷

Association between Spirituality and Subjective wellbeing.

According to the report of the US General Social Survey on gender differences in spirituality and subjective well-being in 2006, results suggested that spiritual practices are significantly associated with the well-being and life satisfaction of the people. Furthermore, this

relationship was stronger for men than women. It reported there are marked gender differences in spiritual qualities and pattern^{6,7}. Some authors have supported the association between spirituality and relationship satisfaction, whereby more spiritual individuals are more satisfied with their romantic relationships.^{4,7}

According to the report a study was conducted on male and female hostlers on spirituality and quality of life. The results revealed a positive relationship between spirituality and quality of life. Results also show the difference between male and female hostlers on spirituality and quality of life. Reviews the satisfactions (happiness) of relationship and common life of the working women and housewives and their husbands in Pishva city. The results showed does not exist no significant difference between the happiness of spouses of working women and the happiness of spouses of housewives.

According to a study conducted on Subjective Well-Being and Adaptation to Life Events: The findings show that life events have very different effects on affective and cognitive well-being, which for many events the consequences of life events on cognitive well-being are stronger and more consistent across samples.^{8,9} Since the findings are mixed and very limited studies have been conducted on gender differences in India and therefore starting from these premises the present study aims at (1) To examine the relationship between spirituality and subjective wellbeing among working couples. The interest was to examine the gender differences in spirituality and subjective wellbeing among working couples(2) Findings or works on this area is limited in India.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Measures

Spirituality scale

The Spirituality Scale is developed by SS Haidari et. All.in 2011 is used to assess spirituality. The Spirituality Scale consists of 20 items, 5 items for each dimension i.e. belief in

God, look for meaning, mindfulness and feeling of security. The subscales have good reliability (.78 to .97) and medium positive inter-correlations (.26 to .57) . It is a five-point rating scale ranging from 1 to 5 in which 1 stands for not true at all, 2 stands for hardly true, 3 stands for don't know, 4 stands for rather true and 5 stands for Absolutely true. High scores indicate a highly spiritual person and a low score indicates a less spiritual person.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) may be a self-reported measure of well-being, typically obtained by questionnaire. Ed Diener developed a tripartite model of subjective well-being in 1984, which describes how people experience the standard of their lives and includes both emotional reactions and cognitive judgments. The scale includes five items that assess the general level of the individual's satisfaction with life. Respondents answer in a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Items are added up to yield a complete score of life satisfaction. The possible range of scores is between 5 and 35, with greater scores signifying higher satisfaction with life.

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between Spirituality and Subjective wellbeing among couples. It was Hypothesized that

1. There will be a difference in the degree of spirituality and subjective wellbeing among working couples
2. There is a positive correlation between spirituality and subjective well-being among working couples.

A total of 100 working couples (men =50 and women=50) were included in the study and within the 25 to 45 years of age range.

RESULTS

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and t-value of Working male and females on Spirituality.

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
sprt	MALE	50	63.82	10.386	-2.361
	FEMALE	50	68.60	9.852	

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations and t- the value of Working males and females on subjective wellbeing

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
swb	MALE	50	51.96	9.055	-1.508
	FEMALE	50	54.92	10.525	

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of scores on Spirituality and Subjective wellbeing among couples

Variables	Males	Females
Spirituality and Subjective wellbeing	.284**	.789**

The comparison of scores of working males and working females on spirituality is performed in table 1.1, which shows that there is a significant difference between working males and working females spirituality ($t = -2.361$, $d.f = 98$). Table 1.2 represents the scores of working males and working females on subjective wellbeing, which shows there is a non-significant difference between working males and working females subjective wellbeing ($t = -1.508$, $d.f = 98$). This finding partially supports our first hypothesis that working males and working females differ from each other in spirituality but there is less difference among them in subjective wellbeing. Based on descriptive statistics it was found that the couples who are spiritual [$M = 66.21$, $SD = 10.35$] were observed to be significantly less satisfied with life in terms of swb [$M = 53.44$, $SD = 9.88$]. It was found that there is a highly significant difference in spirituality and subjective wellbeing between female targets [$M = 54.9$, $SD = 10.52$ in swb and $M = 68.60$, $SD = 9.85$ in spirituality] and male targets [$M = 51.96$, $SD = 9.05$ in swb and $M = 63.82$, $SD = 10.38$]. It indicates that working females are comparatively more spiritual and satisfied with life than their working male spouse. Though the difference for subjective wellbeing among the two genders is very less this is not in the case of spirituality.

Results presented in Table 1.3. indicates that there is a positive correlation between the two measures. The table suggests that the correlation of Spirituality and swb is $r = .29$, ($**p < .01$) for working males. It indicates that if spirituality is high in males then their satisfaction with life will also be high and vice versa. On the other hand, the correlation and swb are $r = .79$ ($**p < .01$) for working females. It indicates that if spirituality is high in females then their satisfaction with life will also be very high. Therefore, our hypothesis regarding this relationship is supported.

DISCUSSION

The research was undertaken to investigate the gender differences in spirituality and subjective wellbeing among working couples in Indian Society. The study hypothesized that 1. There will be a difference in the degree of spirituality and subjective wellbeing among working couples and findings partially support the hypothesis because both the couples differ in spirituality but there is less difference among them on subjective wellbeing.⁹⁻¹¹ It means even if males are comparatively less spiritual than females but the degree of satisfaction with life is quite the same among them. This can be supported by the report of the US General Social Survey on gender differences in spirituality and subjective wellbeing in 2006, results suggested that spiritual practices are significantly associated with the well-being and life satisfaction of the people. Furthermore, this relationship was stronger for men than women. Though the working women do face challenges to manage their household works along with their job.^{11,12} The findings are interesting as it is different from a study conducted on. Some authors indicated that husbands experience more life satisfaction and frequent joy as compared to their wives. Compared to men, women are expected to work more as homemakers and caregivers.¹³

The findings support our second hypothesis "There is a positive correlation between spirituality and subjective wellbeing among working couples". Comparison of working males and working females between spirituality and swb found to be positively correlated. The results indicate that working females are highly spiritual and satisfied with life as compared to working males. Daniela Villani, Angela Sorgente (2019) reported spirituality had a positive impact on subjective well-being (except for the dimension of Interconnection) which this relation is unaffected by the individual's religious status.

Gallup World Poll, a globally representative data set of over 150 countries. Their results indicated that men and women did not statistically differ in terms of positive affect.¹⁴

CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be concluded from the above discussion that there is even if males are comparatively less spiritual than females but the degree of satisfaction with life is quite the same among them. The results indicate that working females are highly spiritual and satisfied with life as compared to working males. Results also indicate that there is a positive correlation between spirituality and subjective wellbeing among working couples. It concludes that both, working couples differ from each other in spirituality and subjective wellbeing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

I hereby declare, on behalf of myself and my co-authors that:

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

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