

Marital Satisfaction and Spiritual Personality: A Relational Overview

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Abstract

Family is the generator of manpower and an institution for society. Overall growth of society depends on this social institution. Marital satisfaction is one of the factors that influence the stability and persistency of family. The aim of this study is to identify relation between marital satisfaction and spirituality. The population under study consists of married couple living in national capital region. 500 questionnaires were circulated to seek response whereas after removing incomplete responses and cleaning of data it results in to sample of 382 individuals consisting of 225 male and 157 female respondents. Marital quality index (Norton, 1983)²⁴ and Daily spiritual scale (Underwood, 2002)³¹ are used to seek responses. Reliability analysis and exploratory factors analysis is used to check the reliability of the scale in Indian Context. Additionally, a confirmatory factor analysis is performed to validate the scale and develop a model. The study provides an insight that will help in improving marital satisfaction in institution of family.

Keywords: Daily Spiritual Scale, Family, Marital Satisfaction, Marital Quality Index, Spirituality

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1. Introduction

Marriage is all about ownership and sense of belonging between the couple. Marriage certainly is not just a task to gain social acceptance, but also aims at companionship for lifetime. The partner is the prime support system. The partner cannot have exactly similar personality traits, but certainly a team can be formed with the partner to live life completely. Marriage is all about attempting to unite with the partner in all life situations. This unification is always mutually beneficial. The fights and arguments are as normal part of any relationship as good times in the relationship. Though the expectation is there in every mind that the partner should always listen and do as expected, but that is not a reality. Most of the times there can be difference of opinions which arise because of different personality traits, childhood experiences, likes and dislikes, aspirations, value systems, perception and beliefs. And those who are not able to accept these differences in thinking and behavior end up creating negative experiences in the marriage.

Marriage in Indian society is believed to be a religious institution. It is understood as relatively permanent unions of two people implying a number of interlocking status and roles. Family is never merely a personal matter, because society is so much affected by the quality of its families. Even the breaking up of a family is not a personal concern alone. Statistically marriages

in India have shown a much better survival rate than marriages in other countries (Bharat, 1996 p.8). However, many marriages today are like “house built upon sand”. Staying together in a house does not necessarily mean that they are happy. We must acknowledge the fact that today quite a number of marriages fail, some form an uneasy compromise and others end in divorce or in separation. The stability of marriage depends on many factors like adjustment, communication, expectation etc. Some well-known counselors like Fincham and Linfield’s (1997)⁶ are of the opinion that religious belief has a decisive role in minimizing the possibility of dissolution of marriage. Satisfaction in marriage is critical. The relationship a man has with a woman in marriage is perhaps the highest form of relationship, because it involves physical, emotional, spiritual and social aspects of life. Marital satisfaction is an outcome of components like – Affective Communication; Time spent together; Sexual Satisfaction, Problem Solving, Roles, Satisfaction with children and effective child rearing. Marital satisfaction is more intricate than it seems. Two marrying people need to modify themselves according to each other in terms of “sensory, motor, emotional and intellectual capacities”. Moreover, one of the dimensions affecting marriage quality can be spouses’ value and belief systems and similarities and differences between beliefs and values within this marital discipline. Many researchers have emphasized on religiousness and marital satisfaction (Hunler & Gencoz, 2005)¹⁶.

Definitions of marital satisfaction appear to be as individualized as the study being conducted, and at times as simplistic as asking a single item response as to degree of self-reported satisfaction. Religiosity has been operationally defined by several researchers as religious beliefs and behaviors that are part of an individual's behavioral patterns. There are plentiful indications signifying the impact of 'spirituality' on 'marital relationship', it is hence significant to analyse the spirituality dimension amidst married couples. Some authors have made efforts to define spirituality in more rigid sense when it comes to interpersonal relations. Davis et al., (2009)^{4,5} termed it as "relational spirituality", while Giblin; (1997)⁹ called it "marital spirituality". This practice of finding a specific definition Spirituality for couples shows that it is a different phenomenon for couples juxtaposed with personal spirituality. What is to be noted is that there is a certain degree of similarity for the characteristics among the different definition of marital spirituality provided by different researchers (Giblin; 1997). Such characteristics are "love for each other", "love for the Transcendent or Divine" and "obedience to His teachings or laws", and the "sharing of the love to others and the community". There are a lot of factors which are important for a healthy marriage, and spirituality is one of them. Even the professions such as counselling and therapy have accepted spirituality to be considered in therapies etc, due to growing significance of spirituality among married couples. Several researchers have also proven the importance of spirituality for mental health (Giblin; 2004)²⁰. Spiritualism is the most integrated and most comprehensive psychological worldview which is ingrained in the minds of the people. Spirituality infers that even if individuals are by nature "restless, unstable, greedy, selfish, and impulsive" and so on, they may still be inclined to "self-transformation" by attaining higher abilities which are spiritual in nature (Roland, 1988) which they can attain through refinement of an "observer" (drashta) in their mind. The observer permits them to assimilate numerous actions and emotions, increase consciousness, obtain purity in belief and deed and excel it similar instincts to convert entirely liberated of all those concerns, which restrain self-transformation.

2. Literature Review

Marriage is a "social system" where a man and a woman are driven closer to one another and begin to reside with each other. Harmonious marriage relations are important not only for mental health of the individuals involved, but also for their children, and for the society in general. However, if the relation is indecisive and demanding it results in emotional turbulences and disturbances in marital relation. This section examines the studies which analyses elements associated with marriage quality. The investigation in the area of marital relationship examines the factors such as "marital satisfaction, marital success, consensus,

companionship, or some such synonym reflective of quality of married life". According to Houseknecht and Spanier (1980)¹⁴, quality of marriage is the most commonly studied factor in the field which studies marriage relationship psychology. It has been realized that marital quality is a multidimensional concept. However, a difference has been established among "marital satisfaction" and "marital quality". Marital satisfaction encompasses "intrapersonal" occurrence and the second was both a measure of an "interpersonal" and also an "intra-personal" phenomenon. "Marital satisfaction" is a subjective understanding of a marriage. Marital quality is a broader concept which encompasses sub-concepts such as 'satisfaction', 'communication', 'integration' and 'happiness' with the relationship. Johnson et al. (1986) in his research stated five main mechanisms of 'marital quality' as "marital instability disagreements happiness, problems and interaction". Hughes et al. (1992)¹⁵ found 'marital disagreement' and 'companionship' as elements of marital quality. Zuo (1992)³³, incorporated two scopes of 'marital quality' ('marital happiness' and 'marital adjustment') as distinct ideas and inspected the shared relation among 'marital happiness' and 'marital interaction'. A "marital interaction" contains of the subsequent constituents: regularity that spouses shared the resulting actions collectively: "eating, going shopping, visiting friends, doing household projects, and going out". The constituents of "marital happiness" are: 'the extent of acceptance derived from the other spouse, the contentment with the spouse's company, the contentment of the extent of love and regard derived from the spouse, and the strength of love for the spouse'. According to Johnson and Talitman (1997) marital quality is a "stable phenomenon".

2.1 Marital Satisfaction and Spirituality

'Spiritual values' and 'religion' play a significant part in people's live around the world. There are a numerous reasons and motivations for why people chose to be religious. For numerous individuals religion is a base on which they can rely their lives, their faith and their actions. Nevertheless, religion is complex concept which is extremely tough to describe. According to Swenson (1996), the relationship between relation and family relations has been only marginally studied. The philosophy of materialism assumes that matter is the only reality in the world, which forms all the matter and its constituents. Such philosophers believe that it is only the physical variations in the human body and our brain which results in all mental processes. They defend this argument by indicating that a person can realize only what he "see, hear, smell, or touch". They out rightly refute the presence of 'soul or mind' and claim that judgements, thoughts, sensations and determination do not exist separately from the brain. Mahoney et al. (1999)²² performed a research on 97 couples to understand the impact of 'spirituality' on 'marital relationship'. The participants did a survey, in which they had to answer about their involvement

in religious actions and their insights concerning the commitment of marriage, including the spiritual and religious aspects of the marriage. Juxtaposed with 'individual religiousness' and 'religious homogeneity' these religious factors straightforwardly present an assimilation of marriage and religion and they were related to larger worldwide marital adjustment, more apparent paybacks in marriage, fewer marital struggle, more oral partnership, and, fewer oral hostility and lesser differences among couples. Poloma (1993) conducted a study in which it was found that playing regularly was related to greater satisfaction with life and happiness among married couples. Swenson (1996)²⁹ also found a strong association among religion and family relations. In his research Weber's (1978)'s³² study was considered to shape up a theoretical relation amongst "personal religious worldviews, personal religious experiences and religious social action" that are projected to impact marriage. While analysing the association among marriage and religiosity, Lacy (1998)¹⁹ found a strong association between marital satisfaction and religious beliefs.

The results of the study conducted by Hashemi (2004), Hatami et al (2009), and Haditabar et al (2011), who shows that the components of spiritual intelligence have positive influences on marital satisfaction. Amram (2005)¹ believes that SQ includes meaning and duties in life, holy feeling of life, balanced understanding of materials and beliefs about the better world. Family is the biggest generator of manpower and the pathway of other social institutions such that normality or abnormality is mainly dependent on the general conditions of family and none of the social harms could occur without the influence of family (Hamidi et al., 2009). There are many studies which have proved that marital satisfaction is one of the influential factors in the stability and persistency of family and also relating to mental hygiene of couples and children (Hatami et al., 2009)¹². The relationship of marriage has been the major source of social support for many individuals and acts as a protective factor against mental diseases as well as destructive consequences of negative measures and trials of life (Perrone-Mc Govern et al, 2012)²⁵. In a study conducted by Booth and Hawkins it was revealed that individuals who are not satisfied with their married life get significantly distress assessments of higher grades and lower grades in life satisfaction assessments compared with individuals who are happy and satisfied with their married life. If the married life is unstable it puts individuals' mental and physical health completely in danger. Therefore, identifying the factors which may decelerate the decline in marital satisfaction is of particular importance (Murray et al. 2011)²³. Rostami & Gol (2014)²⁸ predicts marital satisfaction based on spiritual intelligence.

Even though preceding studies substantiate the presence of an association among 'marital satisfaction' and 'spirituality', comparatively lesser is known regarding the association between

several dimensions of the two factors. Even though a lot of research has been conducted studying different dimensions of marital satisfaction, there is a paucity of such studies in Indian context. Our research inspects the association among spiritual personality of Indian couples and their marital quality.

2.2 Objectives of Study

1. To identify the constructs that defines marital satisfaction and spiritual personality through review of literature.
2. To validate the identified factors that defines marital satisfaction and spiritual personality.

3. Data and Methodology

3.1 Research Design

In order to collect data, a questionnaire with structured form was prepared. 'Exploratory study' was conducted in order to point out various factors on the basis of literature and 'face validity' was used in order to test the validity of the questionnaire. Eighteen variables were selected for the survey through literature review. Questions involved were measured on a 5-point likert scale which ranged from '1-strongly disagree' to '5-strongly agree'. The final questionnaire was pretested on 35 married people.

3.2 Data Collection

Primary data have been collected for the purpose of present study. The primary data has been collected with the help of a questionnaire and have been filled by the people living in Delhi and NCR in the age group of 18-48 years. The questionnaire was self-administered by the respondents in Delhi NCR and was sent through emails and social networking sites. Five hundred questionnaires were distributed but Three hundred ninety two questionnaires were elucidated and used for the final analysis after eliminating those that were partially completed. After data cleaning Three hundred eighty two questionnaires were used for final analysis comprising of 225 males and 157 female respondents.

3.3 Statistical Tools

"Factor analysis" is a "multivariate" analytical process which determines fundamental dimensions among calculated factors and latent factors, thus permitting the building and improvement of the concept. It delivers validity of the construct of "self-reporting questionnaires". The "Exploratory Factor Analysis" (EFA) and "Confirmatory Factor Analysis" (CFA) are considered as the two major modules of factor analysis. "Exploratory Factor Analysis" is a technique for examining if various factors of importance are

linearly associated to a lesser number of ‘unobservable factors’ whereas, in CFA testing of an anticipated theory, or model is permissible. CFA also has assumptions grounded on ‘priori theory’ concerning the number of variables which propose the best ‘fit’ for the model.

4. Analysis and Interpretations of Results

“Exploratory Factor Analysis” was used to cultivate an instrument for measuring the effect of spiritual personality and marital

satisfaction using SPSS V 21. For this pool of 18 items comprising of “I feel God’s presence” (SP1), “During worship, or at other times when connecting with God. I feel joy which lifts me out of my daily concerns” (SP2), “I feel strength in my religion or spirituality” (SP3), “I ask for God’s help in the midst of daily activities” (SP4), “I feel guided by God in the midst of daily activities” (SP5), “I feel God’s love for me, directly” (SP6), “I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation” (SP7), “I feel thankful for my blessings” (SP8), “I desire to be closer to God or in union with the divine” (SP9), “I experience a connection to all of life” (SP10), “I feel God’s love for me, through others” (SP11), “I feel a selfless caring for others” (SP12), “I accept others ever when they

Table 1. Rotated Component Matrix

Factor Labels	Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach alpha
Direct Relationship with God (DRG)	SP2(“During worship, or at other times when connecting with God. I feel joy which lifts me out of my daily concerns”)	0.850	0.929
	SP8(“I feel thankful for my blessings”)	0.841	
	SP6(“I feel God’s love for me, directly”)	0.830	
	SP5 (“I ask for God’s help in the midst of daily activities”)	0.800	
	SP4 (“I ask for God’s help in the midst of daily activities”)	0.786	
	SP3 (“I feel strength in my religion or spirituality”)	0.785	
	SP9 (“I desire to be closer to God or in union with the divine”)	0.782	
Relationship with God Through Others (RGO)	SP1 (“I feel God’s presence”)	0.712	0.937
	SP7(“I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation”)	0.679	
	SP13 (“I accept others ever when they do things I think are wrong”)	0.898	
	SP12 (“I feel a selfless caring for others”)	0.893	
	SP11 (“I feel God’s love for me, through others”)	0.859	
Marital Satisfaction (MS)	SP10 (“I experience a connection to all of life”)	0.824	0.842
	MS4 (“My relationship with my partner makes me happy”)	0.782	
	MS3 (“Our marriage is strong”)	0.771	
	MS2 (“My relationship with my partner is very stable”)	0.766	
	MS1 (“We have a good marriage”)	0.761	
	MS5 (“I really feel like part of a team with my partner”)	0.661	

do things I think are wrong” (SP13), “We have a good marriage” (MS1), “My relationship with my partner is very stable” (MS2), “Our marriage is strong” (MS3), “My relationship with my partner makes me happy” (MS4), “I really feel like part of a team with my partner” (MS5) were designated on the basis of literature review as mentioned above. The data for the questions was gathered on a 5-point scale. “Principal Component Analysis” was used with ‘varimax rotation’. The correlations amongst different variables and the various questions articulated using ‘factorial loads’ were significant. The “Kaiser- Meyer-Olkin” technique of ‘sampling adequacy’ came out to be 0.878 with chi-square value of “Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity” being significant (chi sq= 5179.421, p = .000). This implies that the ‘factor analysis’ was acceptable. The ‘factor analysis’ produced three constituents with eigenvalues above 1 with 68.62% total variance explained. The factor loadings along with Cronbach alpha and factor labels are shown in Table 1.

On the basis of exploratory factor analysis a diagram depicting the preliminary measurement model was designed. The model displayed ten measured indicator variables and three latent variables which were subjected to CFA with AMOS V21.

The latent variables were identified as

1. Direct Relationship with God (DRG) consisting of SP2 (“During worship, or at other times when connecting with God. I feel joy which lifts me out of my daily concerns”), SP8 (“I feel thankful for my blessings”), SP6 (“I feel God’s love for me, directly”), SP5 (“I ask for God’s help in the midst of daily activities”), SP4 (“I ask for God’s help in the midst of daily activities”), SP3 (“I feel strength in my religion or spirituality”), SP9 (“I desire to be closer to God or in union with the divine”), SP1 (“I feel God’s presence”), SP7 (“I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation”).
2. Relationship with God through Others (RGO) consisting of SP13 (“I accept others even when they do things I think are wrong”), SP12 (“I feel a selfless caring for others”), SP11 (“I feel God’s love for me, through others”), SP10 (“I experience a connection to all of life”).
3. Marital Satisfaction (MS) consisting of MS4 (“My relationship with my partner makes me happy”), MS3 (“Our marriage is strong”), MS2 (“My relationship with my partner is very stable”), MS1 (“We have a good marriage”), MS5 (“I really feel like part of a team with my partner”).

The major task in Confirmatory model is to conclude the “goodness of fit” among the hypothesized model and model determined by the sample data. The adequacy of model was evaluated using the ‘Chi square’ statistic, “Confirmatory Fit Index” (CFI) and “Root Mean Square Error of Approximation” (RMSEA). Preliminary model did not provide a good fit for the data (Figure 1), with value of CFI being 0.884 (Chi square value =727.8, p=0.00). Hence the preliminary model was amended to improve the model fit. Modification indices and standardized

residuals calculated through AMOS V 21 were used to modify the model resulting in the final model (Figure 2).

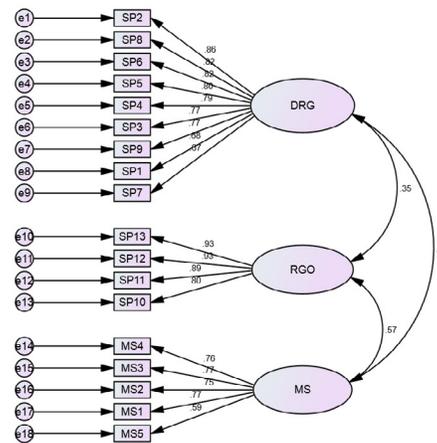


Figure 1. Preliminary Model.

The final model as shown in figure 2 was significantly better fit in comparison to the preliminary model with Chi Square value = 274.706, p=0.000. The CFI for the final model was 0.971, representing that the model provided a good fit. Other indices CMIN=2.163, AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit =0.902, RMSEA=0.055, NFI=0.948 and PCLOSE=0.162 are also meeting the threshold limits. Hence all the parameters are good and we are able to achieve the model Fit. All the indicators had moderate to strong standardized factor loadings ranging from 0.59 for MS5 to 0.93 for SP12 & 13. Squared multiple correlations provided information about the extent of variance of observed variables the factor can account for. The R2 statistics was found highest at 0.8836 for SP12 & 13, 0.7921 for SP2 and 0.5929 for MS1 and MS3 corresponding to all the three latent variables identified in the final model. Table 2 shows that critical ratio (CR) for all the three constructs DRO, RGO and MS are greater than 0.7, ‘average variance extracted’ (AVE) of all the three constructs DRO, RGO and MS are greater than 0.5, ‘mean shared variance’ (MSV) < ‘average variance extracted’ (AVE) for all the three constructs DRO, RGO and MS. Thus all the three constructs has discriminant validity, convergent validity and reliability.

5. Summary and Conclusion

Marriage is not only a legal contract but also a social one among two persons who ties their lives emotionally, economically and lawfully. Marriage is all about ownership and sense of belonging between the couple. Marriage certainly is not just a task to gain social acceptance, but also aims at companionship for lifetime. Marriage is an ongoing entity that needs to be kept healthy as similar to the concept of health of the body. One needs to take

care of the emotional and physical well-being of the body so as to keep the body disease free. Statistically marriages in India has shown a much better survival rate than marriages in other countries. Satisfaction in marriage is critical. The relationship a man has with a woman in marriage is perhaps the highest form of relationship, because it involves physical, emotional, spiritual and social aspects of life. Marital satisfaction is an outcome of components like – Affective Communication; Time spent together, Sexual Satisfaction, Problem Solving, Roles, Satisfaction with children and effective child rearing. Marital satisfaction is complex than it may appear. Two marrying individuals need to adjust to one another’s capabilities regarding emotions and behaviours alike.

Table 2. Validity

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	RGO	DRO	MS
RGO	0.933	0.777	0.312	0.219	0.881		
DRO	0.927	0.586	0.176	0.150	0.354	0.765	
MS	0.851	0.535	0.312	0.244	0.559	0.419	0.731

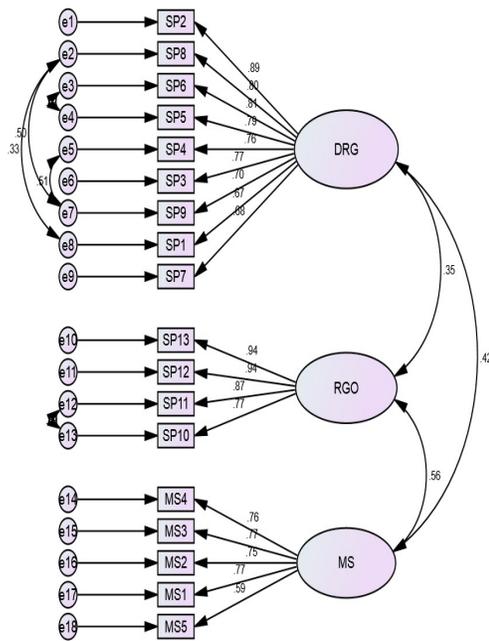


Figure 2. Final Model.

On the basic level comprising of each other’s personality, the need to adjust simultaneously to the broader social atmosphere on various matters including those pertaining to family, friends, household, work etc (Fonseca, 1966, p.200)⁷. Some studies indicated that component of spiritual life in reliance on inner core of spiritual intelligence had the largest contribution in predicting marital satisfaction and after that the component of “perception

of and communication with the origins of the universe” increased this contribution significantly. The present study also develops a model involving marital satisfaction, direct relationship with god and indirect relationship with god. This communication is similar to communication with people in some way, in that it causes satisfaction in married life. Individuals, who believe in religion by heart and are successful in acting based on their religious beliefs, will be more prosperous in terms of empathy, perception, responsibility and flexibility. Therefore, such individuals have great capabilities in improving their relationships and interactions and as a result, they will have more consistency and satisfaction in their marital relationships (Roohani & Manavipour, 2008)²⁷.

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