

Effect of Spiritually Dimensions on Martial Satisfaction

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Abstract

Spiritually is an essential part of our physical and mental well-being. Spirituality dimensions also effects marital quality. This paper presents evidences that there exists a positive effect of spirituality dimensions on marital satisfaction. The results are proved through structural equation modeling among the latent variables- direct relationship with God, relationship with God through others and martial satisfaction- in a cross-sectional study of 382 married adults aged 18 to 48 years comprising of 225 males and 157 female respondents. Data was collected in Delhi NCR region through self-administrated questionnaire formulated through marital quality index (Norton, 1983)¹⁵ and daily spiritual scale (Underwood, 2002)¹⁹. Results of structural equation modeling suggest that there is a positive impact of spirituality dimensions on marital satisfaction.

Keywords: Dimension, Latent, NCR, Spiritual, Variables

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1. Introduction

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. Similarly one needs to nurture the relationship and remain committed to the partner and the relationship. And when with spiritual practice all this is maintained diligently, in the times of crisis, a couple is able to mutually discover the solutions to any problem. Crises are a part of any system and so for the marriage as well. With spiritual practice the couple has awareness that change is an obvious characteristic of the whole creation – i.e. the universe and thereby it is an important dynamic in the relationship also. This makes them capable of accepting the different phases and situations in life and their marriage. So they do not get as much excited as others who do not follow any spiritual practice. And also they tend to indulge in discussions in a positive way. Love, friendship and compassion starts from the relationship at home in the relationship between the couple. And this spreads in the whole world. A happy couple leads to a happy world. A happy couple will interact the world positively and this way if all couples are happy the world will be a happier place. Under a contractual marriage, the married couple would be legally obliged to perform certain duties unless they seek divorce. In ancient times, societies required an atmosphere which would promote the preservation of the individuals, which would contain rules regarding property rights, defense of blood-lines etc, which were handled securely by 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 inter locking 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 has shown a much better survival rate than marriages in other countries (Bharath,1996.p.8)². Marital satisfaction between a husband and wife has been the subject of much research, beginning in the late 1930's with (Lewis Terman's ;1939) work on marital happiness.

There are plentiful indications signifying the impact of 'spirituality' on 'marital relationship', it is hence significant to analyse the spirituality dimension midst married couples. Some authors have made efforts to define spirituality in more rigid sense when it comes to interpersonal relations. Davis et al., (2009)³ termed it as "relational spirituality", while Giblin; (1997)¹⁰ called it "marital spirituality".

Human nature is quiet inquisitive about investigating about various specification and types and concepts of spirituality. One aspect of spirituality is to measure/identify impact marital relationship and satisfaction. This research aims to examine the association among martial satisfaction and spirituality.

2. Literature Review

The existing body of knowledge shows association among the quality of marriage and religion has been snowballing in 1999-

2009 (Mahoney, 2010)^{12,13}. Most of this research has shown that religiousness is correlated with higher marital quality and stability. 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)¹⁷, 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. According to Spanier and Cole (1976)¹⁶, evaluation of marital quality should be subjective, comprising of different parts. Different facets of marital quality incorporated in this study are: ‘dyadic satisfaction’, ‘dyadic cohesion’, ‘dyadic affection’ and ‘dyadic consensus’.

Hughes et al. (1992)⁷ found ‘marital disagreement’ and ‘companionship’ as elements of marital quality. Zuo (1992)²⁰, 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)⁹ marital quality is a “stable phenomenon”.

Hatami et al. (2009)⁵ proved that marital satisfaction is one of the influential factors in the stability and persistency of fam-

ily and also relating to mental hygiene of couples and children. Murray et al. (2011)¹⁴ identified the factors which may decelerate the decline in marital satisfaction is of particular importance. As defined by Nasel (2004), spiritual intelligence is an individual’s ability to utilize spiritual talents to know more, searching for the meaning and analyzing the existential, spiritual and practical issues (Hosseini et al, 2010)⁶. Individuals with higher spiritual intelligence have little more flexibility, self-awareness, insight and holistic approach in life (Ebrahimi et al, 2012)⁴. Literature review suggests that there exists a relationship between spirituality and marital satisfaction but most of the studies are conducted outside India. Based on existing body of knowledge we can hypothesize a model shown in figure 1.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To construct a new structural model in determining the marital satisfaction of Indian couples Shown in Figure 1.

4. Hypothesis

- There is a positive effect of Direct Relationship with God (DRG) on Marital Satisfaction (MS) of the Indian couples.
- There is a positive effect of Relationship with God through Others (RGO) on Marital Satisfaction (MS) of the Indian couples.

5. Research Design

A structured questionnaire based on marital quality index (Norton, 1983) to measure marital satisfaction and daily spiritual scale (Underwood, 2002) to measure spirituality index was prepared for data collection. Various factors were recognized and a structural model is formulated on the basis of figure 1. Eighteen variables were used to collect data are given in table 1. Questions are measured on 5-point likert scale which ranged from ‘1-strongly disagree’ to ‘5-strongly agree’. Questionnaire

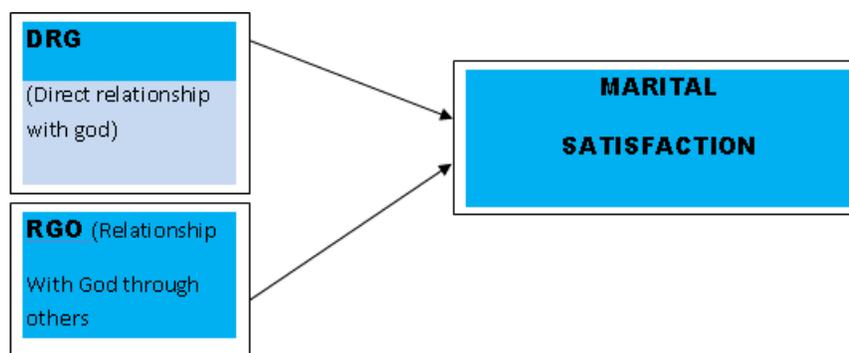


Figure 1. Hypothesized model.

Table 1. Relationship with God

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

also includes demographic factors of the respondents including gender, Age, Education and Occupation.

6. 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.

7. Statistical Tool

The theoretically grounded cause-and-effect relationship among the various dimensions of spirituality and marriage satisfaction with the help of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and graphically presented with the help of path diagram.

‘Structural Equation Modeling’ (SEM) is a very robust method of “multivariate data analysis”. It is a statistical procedure for approximating the values for a series of relationships between

dependent and independent variables. SEM assimilates such relationships in a model using various ‘qualitative causal assumptions’ and statistical data. SEM is also termed differently, such as: “causal modelling”, “latent variable analysis” and “covariance structure analysis”. A SEM model comprises of two models: The ‘structural model’ and the ‘measurement model’. The measurement model portrays how the “observed” (‘measured’) variables characterise constructs. However, a ‘structural model’ shows how the constructs are interconnected together, often with multiple dependence relations.

8. Data Analysis

Initial model(Shown in figure 2) is formulated based on hypothesized model (Figure 1). Structural equation modelling was applied to identify cause and effect of spiritual personality on marital satisfaction using Amos V 21. The ‘full measurement model’ comprises of three constructs and 18 ‘measurement items’.

The initial model is good but on some parameters it is on borderline hence the model is improved using co-variances of error terms and Modification indices. Then, the original model was reviewed based on the overall ‘fit indices’ in the results. The fit of the structural models was measured using ‘fit indices’ such as “Incremental Fit Index (IFI)”, “chi square statistics”, “Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)”, “Comparative Fit Index (CFI)”, “Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)”, “the root mean squared error of approximation” (RMSEA). The Figure of improved model is shown below in Figure 3.

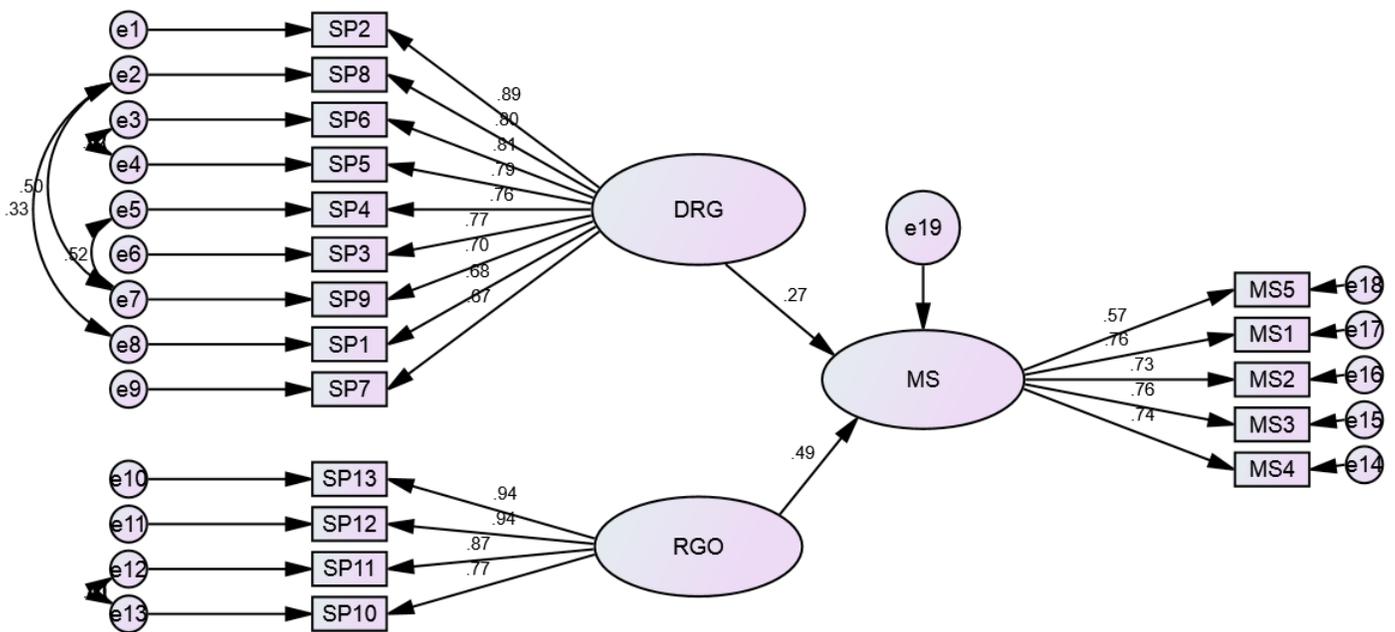


Figure 2. Initial Model.

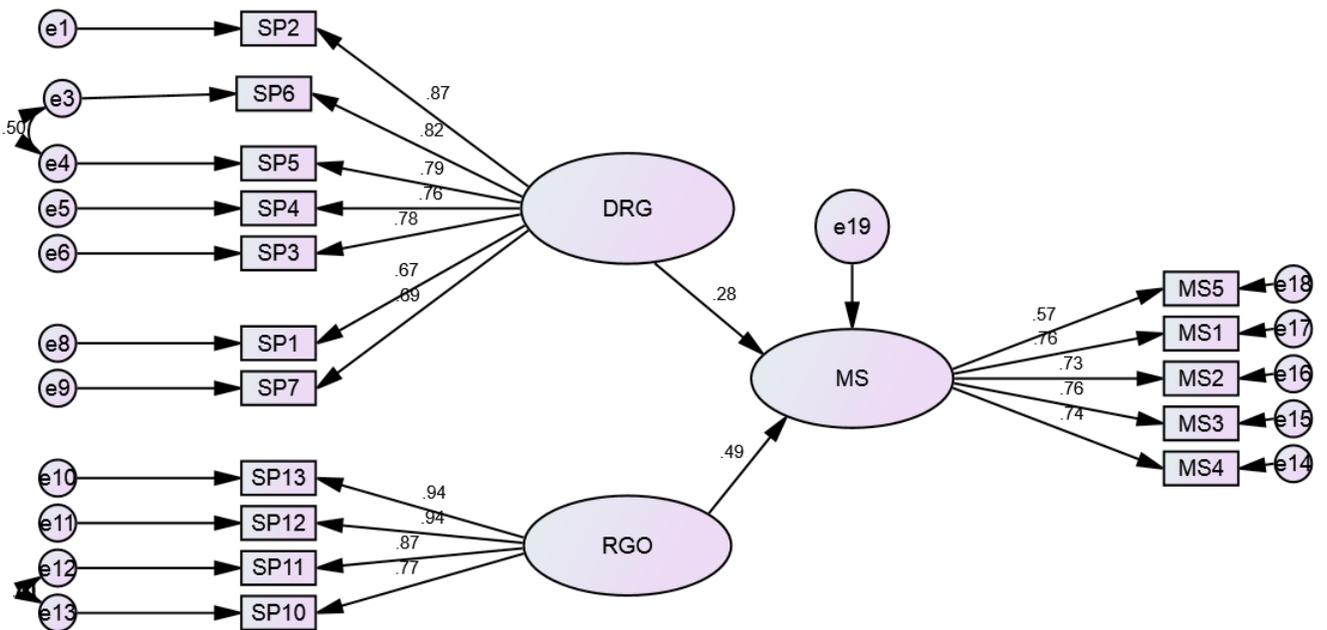


Figure 3. Final model.

9. Structural Model and Relationship Test

In order to examine the entire structural model which comprises of both the ‘measurement model’ and the ‘structural model’ which suggests the hypothesized associations between the variables, the originally suggested model was verified using ‘structural equation

modeling’ analysis. Then, the original model was reviewed based on the overall ‘fit indices’ in the results. The fit of the structural models was measured using ‘fit indices’ such as “Incremental Fit Index (IFI)”, “chi square statistics”, “Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)”, “Comparative Fit Index (CFI)”, “Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)”, “the root mean squared error of approximation” (RMSEA). After evaluating model fits, path analysis was carried on to analyze the associations between constructs (hypotheses 1 and 2).

10. Test of Direct Relationships

“Path coefficients” and the associated “t-values” attained in the examination of the final structural model are depicted in Figure 3. Hypothesis 1 projected that direct association with God (DRG) would be positively related to marital satisfaction (MS). Outcomes of the ‘structural equation model’ offered support for this hypothesis ($\beta = 0.28$), signifying that spiritual people have more satisfying marriage. Hypothesis 2 proposed a positive association among relationship with God through others (RGO) and marital satisfaction (RGO). The path coefficient between spirituality two and marital satisfaction ($\beta = 0.49$) was significant, supporting Hypotheses 2.

Hence both the hypothesis is supported by the analysis and it is concluded that Direct Association with god and Association with God through others two have significant impact on marital satisfaction.

11. Conclusion

In many places across globe, mass of people benefit from religion in order to enhance interpersonal and marital relationships, and believe that religious beliefs are of special importance to them. Agreement on religious issues is an important factor in stability of marital relationships. The role of religion is definite, since religion has many other elements in itself including life style, belief and value systems, expectations, etc. Religiousness is significantly in relation with marital satisfaction. Spirituality and religiousness act as a soothing event for conflicting couples, such that praying reduces hostile excitements and emotional interactions. This paper suggest that both the spirituality dimensions have a significant impact on marital satisfaction and it clear from results that relationship with God through others have more impact on marital satisfaction as compared to direct relationship with God and the explanation could be that more religious persons were likely to have religious activities more frequently with their spouse regardless of the quality of their relationship with their spouse. Therefore to better understand the various influences on marital satisfaction.

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