



A study on Happiness, Emotional Intelligence and Spirituality among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

The key to effective mental health which is inclusive of emotional, psychological and social well-being is happiness. Early adulthood is a period of transformation in life that requires a positive mindset, strong foundation and sense of purpose in order to attain a flourishing and happy journey. It is seen that emotional intelligence and spirituality are significant determinants of happiness as they make individuals strive for a mindset that is capable of guiding towards a state of equilibrium where inner-self and external being are in harmony to have a powerful fortitude. Therefore, the study was conducted to investigate the influence of emotional intelligence and spirituality as a predictor of happiness among early adults. Standardized tools were used on a sample of 50 early adults of age group 20-30 years. The results indicate that there is a positive significant correlation between emotional intelligence and happiness and spirituality. Therefore, people must practice gratitude, condition for a powerful positive mindset, have compassion, practice music therapy, set realistic goals and focus on the present to achieve happiness in life.

KEYWORDS: Emotional Intelligence, Spirituality, Happiness, Early Adults, Well-being

INTRODUCTION

“We cannot tell what may happen to us in the strange medley of life. But we can decide what happens in us — -how we can take it, what we do with it —- and that is what really counts in the end.”

- Joseph Fort Newton

Early adulthood is a crucial phase of our life where we experience various life challenges and obstacles because this is the life transitioning phase of our lives. It is characterized by significant developments across various areas of life. The changes and developments in our internal and external world affect our well-being, personality and mental state. And our well-being, personality and mindset is influenced by the kind of mindset we possess. Mindset is often conceptualized as varying in valence from positive (positive emotions, mindfulness, gratitude, self-awareness and self-regulation) to negative (negative emotions, cognitive distortions, regret and over generalization). The choice of right mindset determines happiness and unhappiness in the early adulthood phase of our life because *“The greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to oneself.” – Michel de Montaigne*

Happiness is a positive aspect of life which can be embraced by being aware of our true emotions and that of others, self-assessing strengths and weaknesses and accordingly working on them. Martin Seligman advocates that in order to embark on a transformative life journey towards a more meaningful and fulfilling existence rather than investing time and effort in fixing your flaws, individuals should exercise their innate signature strengths that hold the key to unprecedented levels of happiness. We have signature strengths such as kindness, generosity, originality, kindness, and humor. These strengths define our individuality and should be harnessed through conscious efforts by identifying, enhancing, and utilizing them

(Seligman, 2002). The pursuit of happiness can be achieved through emotional intelligence (EI) and spirituality. Emotional intelligence and spirituality are interconnected as these two components have direct influence on individual's interpersonal and intrapersonal wellbeing (Sodhi, 2016). Self-awareness makes people open to positive and negative aspects of internal experience, better able to label them and communicate them (Mayer & Salovey, 1993) which empowers individuals to manage and regulate their emotions effectively by taking responsibility for oneself and being open for opportunities and promoting well-being. Interpersonal awareness enables us to understand social connection (Joshi et al., 2017). Spirituality is a way to connect with oneself and others by understanding intrapersonal emotions and interpersonal emotions. Thereby emotional intelligence in conjunction with spirituality gives insight about our identity, our values, and things important to us and significance of others in our personal life (Goleman, 1995). Moreover, Goparaj and Sharma (2011) has inferred that it is these social and emotional competencies that we need to identify and measure if we want to be able to predict performance and is the ultimate mantra for individual success.

The Bhagavad Gita emphasizes on becoming a karma yogi that is the outcome of highest emotional intelligence as by possessing characteristics like contentment, compassion, forgiveness, straightforwardness, calmness, self-control and dutifulness are the outcome of highest emotional intelligence, individual is able to understand himself and becomes *Titha Pragna* (wise and content) helps achieving equanimity of mind (realising one's potential) in order to make him *Jeevan Muktha* (liberated) and experience true happiness (Goparaj & Sharma, 2011).

Therefore, emotional intelligence and spirituality are essential determinants of overall level of mental and emotional wellbeing in early adulthood. Early adulthood is a crucial stage in the process of building personality, self-identity and right mindset. During this stage, self-

awareness, connectedness with inner self and mindfulness is a key role in determining happiness in order to have a meaningful and purposeful existence.

Happiness

Happiness is subjective well-being (Averill et al., 1993) as we are free to make association with what constitutes a good life for us by exploring the purpose and meaning of our life path (Miller, 2008). There are two approaches to understanding happiness. The first is hedonic happiness which is subjective well-being and the second is eudaimonia happiness which is psychological well-being (Waterman, 1993; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Hedonic happiness is the affective constituent of happiness that is achieved by experiencing pleasure, enjoyment and life satisfaction whereas eudaimonia happiness is the cognitive constituent that is achieved by purpose, contentment, living well and meaning in life. (Brülde, 2007; Chekola, 2007; Haybron, 2003; Kashdan, 2004; Sirgy et al., 2006; Veenhoven, 2005).

According to research conducted on happiness impacting learning and school curriculum it was found that prioritizing happiness has a positive approach to student well-being and education programs (Scoffham & Barnes, 2011).

Spirituality

Spirituality is the medium to get in alignment with our higher self and attain the ultimate bliss of life. It is the transcendent experience which integrates mind, body and soul (Zsolnai, 2011). It is a way of being a greater force of cosmic energy than who you really are by exploring the universal themes that are altruism, love, compassion and truth. Spirituality is universal and incorporates dimensions (Meezenbroek et al., 2012) such as:

Meaningfulness: Beliefs, values and goals in life that transcend to derive sense of purpose (Park, 2012). Meaningfulness means understanding the narrative that we choose for ourselves

in our life. Therefore, spirituality is a medium through which people are able to find meaning in life (Soylemez et al., 2019).

Trust: Trust is a spiritual attitude of conviction and hopefulness in life that everything is happening for the highest good. Trust knows deep inside you that all is well, that you are wise enough to make good decisions and learn from the others while ever expanding your circle of trust to include more good souls like you." - William DeFoore

Acceptance: Acceptance is the ability to allow people, circumstances, and situations to be as they are. It is a conscious choice to not resist the experiences of your life, but rather to permit them to be as they are and flow with what is happening.

Caring for Others: The ability to understand and identify the needs and feelings of others is caring for others. It is a conscious willingness to make meaningful contributions for others ensuring their well-being.

Connectedness with nature: The pathway to enhance eudaimonic well-being by developing profound emotional connection with nature, elevate psychological and overall well-being is connectedness with nature (Trigwell et al., 2014).

Transcendent experiences: The greater consciousness which is beyond perception and human understanding whereby subjective awareness is the ultimate expression is known as transcendent experience (Levin & Steele, 2005).

Spiritual activities: Spiritual activities are that align you with your inner self, deepen your connection with the divine and uplift your life path.

According to research conducted to investigate the relationship between health and spirituality it was found that physical presence and spirituality aid in effective nursing care (Delgado, 2005).

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Emotional Intelligence is a concept formulated by Salovey and Mayer (1990) which states that it is the ability to perceive, express and appraise emotions to understand the effective state of emotions within oneself and those around in order to attain personal accomplishments (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Emotional intelligence incorporates four components:

Emotional awareness(EA): Emotional awareness is the ability to describe one's own emotions and those of others in order to promote effective emotion self-regulation, harmony in complex social situations and thereby improving physical and mental well-being (Lane & Smith, 2021). For instance, individuals with lack of EA would tend to expect others to feel the same way they feel in a given situation, whereas high EA individuals may be better at recognizing that others may feel very differently than they do in the same situation (Lane, 2000).

Emotional Management: The ability to understand emotions and focus upon the conscious and reflective emotion regulation to make appropriate responses is emotional management (Biswas, 2022).

Social Emotional Awareness: The ability to acquire the skill to recognize and manage emotions accurately, develop concern for others, make appropriate decisions, establish positive social connection and be able to deal with complex situations in society to avoid conflicts is social emotional awareness. It aids in adjustment, cooperation, motivation and harmony in one another.

Relationship Management: The ability to bring mutual esteem, solidarity and good social relations with people around (Nehrt, 2011) to develop harmony with everyone without any differentiation (Goparaj & Sharma, 2011) is relationship management.

Research conducted by Mayer et al. (2011) found that emotional intelligence aids in recognizing human ability and is described as standard intelligence.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the study is to investigate the correlations of happiness, spirituality and emotional intelligence among early adults. Developing a personality with high level of emotional intelligence and spirituality leads to fulfillment, satisfaction, harmony and well-being that results in the experience of happiness in life leading to success and accomplishments.

HYPOTHESIS

- There will be a positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Spirituality
- There will be a positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Happiness.
- There will be a positive correlation between Spirituality and Happiness.

METHODS

SAMPLE

A total of 50 individuals participated from across Delhi and Agra in this research study. The sample consisted of both males and females. The age of the participants ranges from 20-30 years.

MEASURES

- **The Subjective Happiness Scale** (Lyubomirsky et al., 1999) is a 4-item scale where two items ask respondents to characterize themselves using both absolute ratings and ratings relative to peers, whereas the other two items offer brief descriptions of happy and unhappy individuals and ask respondents the extent to which each characterization describes them. The scale is used as an instrument to measure subjective happiness.

- **The Quick Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment**, adapted for the San Diego City College MESA Program from a model by Mohapel (2015) is a 40-item scale used to measure effectiveness in four domains of emotional intelligence i.e., emotional awareness, emotional management, social emotional awareness, and relationship management. It is scored from 0 (Never) to 4 (Always). A high overall score indicates enhanced skills: use as leverage to develop weaker areas.

- **Spiritual Attitude and Involvement List** (de Jager Meezenbroek et al., 2012) The 26 items scored from 1 (not at all) to 6 (to a very high degree), measures spiritual well-being on seven subscales: (1) meaningfulness, (2) trust, (3) acceptance, (4) caring for others, (5) connectedness with nature, (6) transcendent experiences, and (7) spiritual activities. Individual rate in how far they think specific statements about spiritual well-being apply to themselves. Higher scores indicate higher scores of spiritual well-being.

PROCEDURE

The participants of the research study were informed about the purpose of the research and they actively engaged by filling out the questionnaires via Google Forms. Each and every participant was sincerely appreciated and thanked for their valuable cooperation. Furthermore, Standardized Psychological Tests were administered to accuracy and consistency in the data collection process.

RESULTS

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation scores of 50 early adults with variables Happiness, Spiritual Attitude and Emotional intelligence along with their respective dimensions.

	Subjective Happiness	Meaningfulness	Trust	Acceptance	Caring for Others	Connectedness with nature	Transcendent Experience	Spiritual Activity	Emotional Awareness	Emotional Management	Social Emotional Awareness	Relationship Management
N	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Mean	18.9	11.5	15.8	15.7	16.6	8.88	19.6	14.4	25.4	23.8	29.5	27.8
Standard Deviation	4.17	2.76	3.70	4.20	3.81	2.78	6.02	4.77	7.06	8.47	8.16	7.60

Table 2

Correlation Matrix of Happiness, Spiritual attitude and Emotional Intelligence along with their respective sub dimensions.

	Subjective Happiness		Meaningfulness		Trust		Acceptance		Caring for Others		Connectedness with nature		Transcendent Experience		Spiritual Activity		Emotional Awareness		Emotional Management		Social Emotional Management		Relationship Management	
Subjective Happiness	—																							
Meaningfulness	0.378	**	—																					
Trust	0.388	**	0.974	***	—																			
Acceptance	0.066		0.565	***	0.634	***	—																	
Caring for Others	0.057		0.631	***	0.696	***	0.705	***	—															
Connectedness with nature	0.020		0.617	***	0.663	***	0.590	***	0.686	***	—													
Transcendent Experience	0.184		0.420	**	0.505	***	0.469	***	0.586	***	0.500	***	—											
Spiritual Activity	0.138		0.339	*	0.391	**	0.517	***	0.554	***	0.504	***	0.735	***	—									
Emotional Awareness	0.298	*	0.440	**	0.424	**	0.257		0.256		0.298	*	0.202		0.183		—							
Emotional Management	0.397	**	0.531	***	0.508	***	0.233		0.374	**	0.285	*	0.282	*	0.344	*	0.521	***	—					
Social Emotional Awareness	0.128		0.467	***	0.499	***	0.425	**	0.525	***	0.381	**	0.207		0.166		0.510	***	0.565	***	—			
Relationship Management	0.441	**	0.597	***	0.634	***	0.441	**	0.552	***	0.479	***	0.368	**	0.398	**	0.582	***	0.599	***	0.772	***	—	
Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001																								

The aim of the present study is to investigate the correlation of happiness, emotional intelligence and spirituality among early adults. On the basis of correlation statistical analysis, the results found that subjective happiness is positively correlated with meaningfulness ($r=0.378$, $p<0.01$), trust ($r=0.388$, $p<0.01$), emotional awareness ($r=0.298$, $p<0.05$), emotional management ($r=0.397$, $p<0.01$) and relationship management ($r=0.441$, $p<0.01$). The pattern of research is consistent with a study conducted by Compton (2000) which affirms that meaningfulness is the most significant predictor of subjective well-being. According to Sariçam (2015) trust and confidence, positive future orientation, and social relations and personal value are important predictors of subjective happiness.

In addition to this, meaningfulness is positively correlated with trust ($r=0.974$, $p<0.001$), acceptance ($r=0.531$, $p<0.001$), caring for others ($r=0.531$, $p<0.001$), connectedness with nature ($r=0.617$, $p<0.001$), transcendent experience ($r=0.420$, $p<0.01$), spiritual activity ($r=0.339$, $p<0.05$), emotional awareness ($r=0.440$, $p<0.01$), emotional management ($r=0.531$, $p<0.001$), social emotional awareness ($r=0.467$, $p<0.001$), and relationship management ($r=0.597$, $p<0.001$). According to Mayer et al. (2008) emotional intelligence has association with meaningful existence and helps recognize the importance of emotional components in diverse domains of human abilities and their application in the lives of people.

Correspondingly, there is significant positive correlation between trust and acceptance ($r=0.634$, $p<0.001$), caring for others ($r=0.696$, $p<0.001$), connectedness with nature ($r=0.663$, $p<0.001$), transcendent experience ($r=0.505$, $p<0.001$), spiritual activity ($r=0.391$, $p<0.01$), emotional awareness ($r=0.424$, $p<0.01$), emotional management ($r=0.508$, $p<0.001$), social emotional awareness ($r=0.499$, $p<0.001$) and relationship management ($r=0.634$, $p<0.001$).

A spiritual seeker acknowledges the existence of deeper truth by embracing the concepts

of not knowing as a way to understand knowledge that is beyond the limitations of logic (Spencer, 2012).

Moreover, there is significant positive correlation between acceptance and caring for others ($r=0.705$, $p<0.001$), connectedness with nature ($r=0.590$, $p<0.001$), transcendent experience ($r=0.469$, $p<0.001$), spiritual activity ($r=0.517$, $p<0.001$), social emotional awareness ($r=0.425$, $p<0.01$) and relation management ($r=0.441$, $p<0.01$). Results of a study conducted by López et al. (2022) found that emotional awareness that involves appraisal, use and regulation of emotions as experienced by Spanish teachers promotes happiness.

Likewise, there is significant positive correlation between caring for others and connectedness with nature ($r=0.686$, $p<0.001$), transcendent experience ($r=0.586$, $p<0.001$), spiritual activity ($r=0.554$, $p<0.001$), emotional management ($r=0.374$, $p<0.001$), social emotional awareness ($r=0.525$, $p<0.001$) and relationship management ($r=0.552$, $p<0.001$). According to research conducted by Rykkje et al. (2015) it was found that caring for the patient is connectedness and love as they are driven by compassion, risk of losing loved one and ethics.

Similarly, an association was found between connectedness with nature and transcendent experience ($r=0.500$, $p<0.001$), and spiritual activity ($r=0.504$, $p<0.001$), emotional awareness ($r=0.298$, $p<0.05$), emotional management ($r=0.285$, $p<0.05$), social emotional awareness ($r=0.381$, $p<0.01$) and relationship management ($r=0.479$, $p<0.001$). Research conducted by Olasupo et al. (2021) found that older adults in rural communities exhibiting dispositional optimism experience social connectedness and life satisfaction that is determined by emotional intelligence.

Correlational analysis found a positive correlation between transcendent experience and spiritual activity ($r=0.735$, $p<0.001$), emotional management ($r=0.282$, $p<0.005$) and relationship management ($r=0.368$, $p<0.01$). According to research conducted by Suresh and Santhanam (2019) it was found that emotional intelligence can be developed through practice of chakra meditation as it enables harmony within self.

Similarly, a positive correlation was examined between spiritual activity and emotional management ($r=0.344$, $p<0.05$) and relationship management ($r=0.398$, $p<0.01$). Research conducted by Juozėnaitė (2022) found that social, spiritual and mental dimensions help in effective decision making for creating brand meaning for customers.

And a positive correlation between emotional awareness with emotional management ($r=0.521$, $p<0.001$), social emotional awareness ($r=0.510$, $p<0.001$) and relationship management ($r=0.582$, $p<0.001$). According to a research conducted by Boyatzis and Goleman (2002) it was found that components of emotional intelligence that are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management helps in the effective performance of team members and its leader.

There is a significant positive correlation between emotional management with social emotional awareness ($r=0.599$, $p<0.001$) and relationship management ($r=0.599$, $p<0.001$). According to Smith et al. (2020) humans have evolved an expanded capacity for emotional awareness through which they can consciously manage their emotional responses, behaviour and thoughts before taking any action.

Lastly there is significant positive correlation between social emotional awareness with relationship management ($r=0.772$, $p<0.001$). According to research conducted by Boyatzis and Goleman (2002) it was found that components of emotional intelligence that are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management helps in the effective performance of team members and its leader.

CONCLUSION

This study is aimed to provide insight in order to understand the effect of emotional intelligence and spirituality as a potential predictor of happiness among young adults. Happiness is transitioning oneself from a lower state of being to a higher state of being. The findings indicate that adopting characteristics of emotional intelligence and spirituality is a way to mindfully condition yourself to be happy in life and possess elevated levels of psychological and emotional well-being. Identifying and measuring social and emotional competencies if we are able to predict performance and have the ultimate mantra for individual success. It is important to realise that happiness is a choice by choosing to accept your circumstances and release the need for control. Understanding your life purpose is essential for motivation, values and mindset. Therefore, to have happiness in life one must practise gratitude by appreciating what is present in life. Engage yourself in the process of continuous learning which will make you learn new skills and gain knowledge that will release happy hormones. It is essential to live in the present and set necessary boundaries for negative information by focusing on the positive aspect. Participate in selfless activities to create a self of belongingness and become a part of a larger society. Lastly, mindfulness affirmations and music therapy help the brain improve neuroplasticity that strengthens cognitive abilities and promotes a positive mindset to be happy in life. Trust yourself in order

to bring a sense of awareness that the journey of life will continue to have meaning and beauty even amidst darkness and suffering.

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