



Spirituality and Self Silencing as predictor of Relationship Satisfaction in Young Adults

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Abstract: The present study examined the connection between young adults' relationship satisfaction, self-silencing, and spirituality. Since romantic relationships have a big impact on emotional health throughout emerging adulthood, it's critical to comprehend the psychological aspects of relational fulfilment. The purpose of the study was to determine whether relationship satisfaction is significantly predicted by spirituality and self-silencing. From Delhi, Noida, and Gurugram, 200 young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 who were currently in romantic relationships were chosen. Standardised self-report measures were used, such as the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), the Spirituality Scale, and the Self-Silencing Scale (TSSS). Multiple regression analysis, Pearson's correlation, and descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. The findings showed a strong negative correlation ($r = -.224$, $p < .001$) between self-silencing and relationship satisfaction, suggesting that people who repress their feelings and thoughts are less satisfied with their relationships. Nonetheless, there was no significant correlation found between spirituality and relationship pleasure. According to regression results, self-silencing was the sole significant predictor, even though the model as a whole was significant. The results underscore the significance of emotional genuineness and candid communication in developing fulfilling love partnerships among young adults.

Keywords: Spirituality, Self-Silencing, Relationship Satisfaction, Young Adults

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

Young adulthood is a crucial time for psychological and emotional growth, marked by identity exploration, growing emotional closeness, and the establishment of deep love connections (Arnett, 2000). During this time, people try to create emotionally healthy and satisfying relationships while navigating the difficult balance between independence and intimacy, self-expression and compromise. According to numerous studies, psychological health, emotional control, and general life satisfaction are all strongly correlated with young adult romantic relationship satisfaction (Diener & Seligman, 2002; Fincham & Beach, 2010). However, even when these issues are not publicly voiced, a lot of young adults report feeling unhappy, emotionally distant, or having unresolved internal tensions in their relationships (Overall & Hammond, 2013). Spirituality and self-silencing are two psychological concepts that are especially crucial to comprehending marital happiness during this phase. According to Pargament (1997) and Koenig (2012), spirituality serves as a personal framework that helps people find meaning, purpose, and a sense of belonging. It also shapes their values, coping strategies, and expectations in relationships. Self-silencing, on the other hand, is the propensity to suppress one's wants, feelings, or ideas in an attempt to preserve interpersonal peace. This pattern can progressively erode relational happiness and emotional authenticity, despite the fact that it is frequently modest (Jack & Dill, 1992). Young adults often prioritise the stability of their romantic relationships over their own expression, self-silencing in order to avoid confrontation, rejection, or the fear of abandonment (Harper & Welsh, 2007). Selfsilencing may ease tension in the short term, but over time, it has been associated with emotional suffering, decreased closeness, and decreased relationship satisfaction (Jack, 1999; Impett et al., 2012). There are several ways that spirituality might impact this process. For some people, spirituality acts as a buffer in relationships by fostering emotional fortitude, acceptance, and resilience. But for others, depending on how these beliefs are understood and used, spiritual ideals that emphasise endurance or self-sacrifice may inadvertently promote self-silencing tendencies (Pargament, 2002; Mahoney, 2010). Although self-silencing and spirituality are important factors in forming relationship experiences, little research has looked at these concepts combined as indicators of young people' relationship pleasure. Examining their combined impact could provide a more complex picture of emotional health and relational dynamics at this crucial developmental time (Mahoney et al., 2008).

1.2 Variables and Operational Definitions

Spirituality

A person's subjective perception of meaning, purpose, and a sense of connection to oneself, other people, nature, or a higher force is known as spirituality (Pargament, 1997). In contrast to organised religion, spirituality is frequently experiential, inwardly directed, and personal. It embodies ideals like acceptance, compassion, awareness, and inner harmony, all of which have the power to influence how people understand their emotional experiences and interact with others (Koenig, 2012; Mahoney, 2010).

Self-Silencing

According to Jack and Dill (1992), self-silencing is a relational coping behaviour when people repress their needs, wants, or thoughts in order to prevent conflict and maintain the integrity of their relationships. Fears of rejection or losing a relationship are frequently the driving forces behind this propensity. Regular self-silencing has been linked over time to increasing psychological distress, resentment, emotional detachment, and depressive symptoms, especially in close relationships (Jack, 1999; Ussher & Perz, 2010).

Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction is a person's subjective evaluation of the level of fulfilment and quality they receive in a love relationship. According to Hendrick (1988), it encompasses feelings of mutual understanding, trust, communication efficacy, emotional intimacy, and perceived support from one's spouse. Relationship stability, emotional well-being, and improved mental health outcomes are all reliably linked to higher levels of relationship satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, 2010).

Young Adults

WHO defines 'youth' as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 and 'adolescents' as those between the ages of 10 and 19. However, "Young People" refers to anyone between the ages of 10 and 24.

2. Review of Literature

Carrillo (2022) examined self-silencing in romantic relationships and its association with conflict outcomes using a mixed-methods approach with young adult couples. Findings from correlational, daily diary, and experimental designs showed that avoidance-driven silence (externally or introjected motivated) was linked to lower positive affect, higher negative affect, unmet autonomy and relatedness needs, and poorer relational closeness. In contrast, intrinsically motivated silence grounded in intimacy was associated with greater positive affect

and higher relationship satisfaction. The results suggest that the impact of self-silencing depends on the underlying motivation behind the behavior.

Baeza, De Santis, and Cianelli (2022) conducted a study on concept analysis of self-silencing using Walker and Avant's methodology to clarify its attributes, antecedents, and consequences. Selfsilencing was defined as the persistent inhibition of self-expression to maintain relational harmony, rooted in gender norms and social expectations. Identified consequences included loss of personal voice, psychological distress, impaired interpersonal functioning, and reduced emotional intimacy. The authors emphasized its impact on mental and relational health and highlighted the need for clearer operational definitions and further research on cultural and contextual moderators.

Yaden, Batz-Barbarich, Ng, Vaziri, Gladstone, Pawelski, and Tay (2022) investigated the relationship between religion/spirituality and life satisfaction in the largest meta-analysis to date, including data from 256 research and a sample of 666,085 adults from various cultural backgrounds. The researchers discovered a slight but statistically significant positive overall correlation between religion/spirituality and life satisfaction ($r = .18$, 95% CI.16–.19, $p < .01$) using pooled effect sizes calculated using meta-analytic approaches. When looking at individual aspects of religion and spirituality, spirituality itself had the strongest correlation with life satisfaction ($r = .30$, 95% CI.25–.35, $p < .01$), followed by religious and spiritual practices and experiences, and there were also positive correlations between religiosity and attendance. According to moderator studies, these connections tended to be stronger in populations where religion and spirituality are culturally normative, in older samples, and in developing countries. Overall, the study shows a continuous, albeit weak, positive relationship between spiritual engagement and outcomes related to subjective well-being, such as life satisfaction, indicating that spiritual aspects of experience may have a significant impact on more general psychosocial functioning.

Hekmati Pour (2022) conducted a study on explored spiritual self-care practices among adolescents (ages 13–19) and their perceived psychological benefits. Using purposive sampling and in-depth interviews, thematic analysis revealed that practices such as prayer, meditation, and participation in religious or community rituals helped adolescents manage stress, enhance relaxation, improve problem-solving, and maintain emotional stability. Participants described spirituality as a source of meaning, inner strength, and resilience during daily challenges. Although the study did not directly assess romantic relationship satisfaction or self-silencing, it highlighted spirituality as an important emotional regulation strategy that supports adaptive

coping and psychological well-being, potentially influencing later relational functioning in emerging adulthood.

Mojtahedi et al. (2022) conducted a study and looked at 428 Iranian people's quality of life, psychological discomfort, and spiritual well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. Higher spiritual well-being was found to be a significant predictor of lower psychological distress ($\beta = -.33$, $p < .001$) and higher quality of life ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$) using standardised measures, regression, and structural equation modelling analyses. By lowering stress and anxiety, spiritual well-being also indirectly enhanced quality of life, indicating that spirituality serves as a protective barrier against unpleasant feelings. The findings emphasise spirituality as a psychosocial resource that promotes emotional regulation and general well-being, which are critical for relational functioning, even though they are not specifically related to love relationships.

Inman and London (2022) examined how self-silencing functions as a mediator in the link between young people's intimate partner violence (IPV) and rejection sensitivity. 410 undergraduate students from a sizable institution in the Northeastern United States participated in a cross-sectional survey in which they answered questions about their experiences with IPV (both victimisation and perpetration), self-silencing, and rejection sensitivity. Higher rejection sensitivity was linked to self-silencing behaviours, which in turn strongly influenced both IPV victimisation and perpetration, according to mediation studies. In particular, rejection sensitivity was unaffected by gender or ethnicity and indirectly predicted higher IPV experiences through increased self-silencing (mediation effects significant across models). These results highlight the wider effects of interpersonal sensitivity on young adults' romantic relationship functioning and emotional wellbeing by indicating that self-silencing, or the repression of one's needs and feelings, may be a psychological mechanism connecting interpersonal sensitivity with unfavourable relational outcomes like violence.

Batool and Saleem (2024) conducted a study in Islamabad, Pakistan, with 200 persons between the ages of 20 and 35 participating in the study, which looked at the connection between interpersonal relationship satisfaction and spiritual well-being. Relationship satisfaction and spirituality were found to be significantly positively correlated using the SIWB and RAS-G, as well as Pearson correlation, t-tests, and ANOVA. Married participants reported higher spiritual well-being and relational satisfaction than unmarried individuals, with no significant gender differences. Findings suggest that spiritual well-being is positively associated with relationship satisfaction in young to middle adulthood.

Chohan, Habib, and Waseem (2024) conducted a study on connection between life happiness and self-silencing in 127 young married Pakistani women who had been married as teenagers. A substantial negative link between self-silencing and life satisfaction was found using correlation and Hayes' PROCESS mediation analysis ($r = -.52$, $p < .01$). This link was strongly mediated by rejection sensitivity, suggesting that greater levels of self-silencing led to increased rejection sensitivity and, thus, decreased life satisfaction. The results show that one important interpersonal element causing emotional vulnerability and poorer wellbeing is self-silencing.

Rivera (2024) examined empirical studies on marianismo, a cultural ideology that emphasises women prioritising relationships, self-sacrifice, and emotional control. According to the analysis, spirituality and religious devotion are frequently linked to worse mental health outcomes when they are linked to strict self-sacrifice and emotional repression. Particularly, self-silencing was associated with lower assertiveness and increased psychological discomfort. The results show how internalised self-suppression may be encouraged by cultural-spiritual standards, which has significant ramifications for young adult women's emotional health and interpersonal relationships.

Aejaz, Chughtai, Khan, and Mushtaq (2025) conducted a study on association between mindfulness and marital adjustment among 282 working married women in Pakistan is mediated by self-silencing and the need for social approval. According to the results of structural modelling investigations, self-silencing negatively predicted marital adjustment, whereas mindfulness favourably predicted it. Increased self-silencing due to a need for social approval lowered marital adjustment. According to the mediation effects of both variables, relationship satisfaction is weakened by emotional repression and approval-seeking, whereas mindfulness promotes better relational functioning.

3. Methodology

3.1 Aim

To look at the links between spirituality, self-silencing and relationship satisfaction in young adults.

3.2 Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between spirituality and relationship satisfaction among young adults.

2. To examine the relationship between self-silencing and relationship satisfaction among young adults.
3. To assess whether spirituality and self-silencing predict relationship satisfaction among young adults.

3.3 Hypothesis

1. Spirituality will positively predict relationship satisfaction among young adults.
2. Self-silencing will negatively predict relationship satisfaction among young adults.
3. Spirituality and self-silencing will jointly predict relationship satisfaction among young adults.

3.4 Sample details

Sample location & size

The sample had 200 participants. The responses were conducted through survey and were distributed in the University Campus and nearby places Noida, Delhi and Gurugram.

Inclusion criteria

1. Individuals from all backgrounds were included in the study.
2. The research included individuals aged 18-25 years.
3. Individuals within the normal distribution of the graph were included in the study.
4. Individuals belonging to Noida, Delhi and Gurugram were selected for the study.
5. Individuals who have been or are currently in a relationship were included in the study.

Exclusion criteria

1. Individuals with mental health problems were excluded from the study.
2. Individuals below 18 years and above 25 years were excluded from the study.
3. Individuals belonging to other regions of NCR or other parts of India were not included in the study.
4. Individuals not consent to be an active part of the research were excluded from the study.
5. Individuals who are not in a relationship

3.5 Tools used

- Spirituality Scale
- Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)
- The Self Silencing Scale (TSSS)

3.6 Procedure

Probability sampling is a sampling technique that selects samples from a larger population using a probability theory-based methodology. To be considered a probability sample, a participant must be selected at random.

The protocol for this study will emphasise ethical research techniques while collecting data on spirituality, self-silencing, and relationship satisfaction in young adults. A sample of individuals aged 18–35 who are currently involved in a romantic relationship will be recruited via internet platforms or educational institutions, with informed consent and anonymity maintained throughout the procedure.

Following this, participants will complete a self-administered survey to capture key information. The survey will consist of four main sections. The first section will gather demographic data to understand the participant pool's characteristics. The second section will assess their level of spirituality. The third section will include the Relationship Assessment Scale to measure relationship satisfaction, and the final section will assess self-silencing tendencies. Once all the data is collected, it will be securely stored and anonymised before statistical analysis to uncover potential relationships between spirituality, self-silencing, and relationship satisfaction among young adults.

3.7 Method

Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the data, and inferential statistics such as regression analysis will be employed to examine the relationships between variables.

3.8 Statistical Analysis

SPSS version 21 will be used to conduct descriptive statistics, t-test and regression analysis.

4. Results

This study investigated the connection between young adults' relationship satisfaction, self-silencing, and spirituality. Whether spirituality and self-silencing are major predictors of relationship satisfaction was another goal.

200 individuals' data were gathered, and SPSS Version 26 was used for analysis. The study employed multiple regression analysis, descriptive statistics, and Pearson's correlation.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Spirituality	203		138	104.51	21.794

Relationship Satisfaction	203	0	35	24.34	7.155
Self-Silencing	203		135	88.69	19.449
Valid N (listwise)	203	0			
		0			

Descriptive statistics for the primary study variables were calculated after the data was organised.

The average score for spirituality was 104.51 (SD = 21.79), suggesting that participants had a moderate to high degree of spiritual orientation.

The sample's mean score for self-silencing was 88.69 (SD = 19.45), indicating moderate levels of self-silencing tendencies.

Relationship satisfaction among young people was moderately satisfied, with a mean score of 24.34 (SD = 7.15).

Table 2. *Correlation Analysis*

		Relationship Satisfaction	Spirituality	Self Silencing
Relationship Satisfaction		1.000	.074	-.224
Pearson Correlation.	Spirituality	.074	1.000	.046
	Self-Silencing	-.224	.046	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Relationship Satisfaction	.	.147	.001
	Spirituality	.147	.	.258
	Self-Silencing	.001	.258	.
N	Relationship Satisfaction	203	203	203
	Spirituality	203	203	203
	Self-Silencing	203	203	203

The associations between spirituality, self-silencing, and relationship satisfaction were investigated using Pearson's correlation analysis.

The results showed:

Relationship satisfaction and spirituality had a non-significantly positive connection ($r = .074$, $p = .147$).

Self-silencing and relationship satisfaction were significantly correlated negatively ($r = -.224, p < .001$).

This suggests that lower levels of relationship satisfaction are linked to higher levels of self-silencing. However, there was no statistically significant correlation found between spirituality and relationship satisfaction.

Table 3. *Regression Analysis*

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	593.068	2	296.534	6.084	.003
Residual	9748.794	200	48.744		
Total	10341.862	202			

Dependent Variable: Relationship Satisfaction

Predictors: Self-Silencing, Spirituality

The study employed multiple regression analysis to determine whether relationship satisfaction is concurrently predicted by spirituality and self-silencing. There was statistical significance in the entire regression model:

$F(2, 200) = 6.084; p = .003$

A slight but significant predictive effect was shown by the model, which accounted for 5.7% of the variation in relationship satisfaction ($R^2 = .057$; Adjusted $R^2 = .048$).

Individual Predictors: There was no significant correlation between spirituality and relationship satisfaction. " $\beta = .084, t = 1.228, p = .221$."

Significantly lowering relationship satisfaction was predicted by self-silencing. In this case, $\beta = .228, t = -3.318$, and $p = .001$.

These results imply that although spirituality has no independent effect on relationship satisfaction, self-silencing is a major factor in lower relationship satisfaction.

5. Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the connection between young adults' relationship satisfaction, self-silencing, and spirituality. The results offer significant insights into how spiritual orientation and internal emotional control patterns affect relationship outcomes. According to the findings, relationship satisfaction was significantly negatively correlated with self-silencing. People who tend to repress their feelings, ideas, and wants in order to keep relationships harmonious expressed lower levels of satisfaction. This result is

consistent with earlier studies that indicate long-term self-silencing may cause emotional pain, resentment, and a decline in interpersonal closeness. Relationship satisfaction may be negatively impacted when people continuously suppress their emotions and communication. However, there was no meaningful correlation found between spirituality and relationship satisfaction. Spirituality showed a positive direction of correlation, however this was not statistically significant. This implies that relationship pleasure may not be directly increased by spirituality alone. Through mediating elements like emotional maturity, forgiveness, empathy, or coping skills, spirituality may have an indirect impact on relational outcomes. Another argument would be that young adults' spirituality serves more as a personal coping mechanism than as a relationship factor. Interestingly, the entire regression model was significant when self-silencing and spirituality were taken into account combined. Though these variables do play a part in relationship satisfaction, the explained variance was low (5.7%), suggesting that many other factors—like personality traits, communication styles, attachment styles, and conflict resolution abilities—probably have a greater impact. The intricacy of relational functioning is highlighted by spirituality's negligible effect. Instead than relying solely on internal belief systems, relationship happiness may be more influenced by behavioural and communication patterns (such as expressing versus suppression).

5.1 Hypothesis Testing

H1: Spirituality will significantly positively predict relationship satisfaction among young adults.

Regression analysis results showed that relationship satisfaction was not substantially predicted by spirituality ($t = 1.228$, $p = .221$). The link was not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, despite the relationship's favourable direction. The study hypothesis was thus not supported, and the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that, according to the current study, spirituality does not by itself help to explain why young adults have different levels of relationship satisfaction.

H2: Self-silencing will significantly negatively predict relationship satisfaction among young adults.

The results showed that relationship satisfaction was considerably lowered by self-silencing ($t = -3.318$, $p = .001$). Higher degrees of self-silencing are linked to poorer levels of relationship satisfaction, according to the negative beta value. The research hypothesis was accepted and the null hypothesis was rejected since the p-value was less than 0.05. This implies that young adults' relationship satisfaction is significantly impacted by self-silencing.

H3: *Spirituality and self-silencing will jointly and significantly predict relationship satisfaction among young adults.*

Self-silencing and spirituality jointly strongly predict marital satisfaction, according to the overall regression model, which was shown to be statistically significant ($F(2, 200) = 6.084, p = .003$). 5.7% of the variation in relationship satisfaction was explained by the model ($R^2 = .057$). Consequently, the study hypothesis was approved and the null hypothesis was disproved. However, self-silencing was the only one of the two predictors to show a significant independent effect.

6. Conclusion

The present study aimed at 200 young adults' relationship satisfaction, self-silencing, and spirituality. The study sought to ascertain whether self-silencing and spirituality were important predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction using standardised self-report measures. The study aimed to add to the expanding corpus of research examining the interpersonal and psychological elements that affect relational well-being in emerging adulthood. According to the results, relationship happiness was significantly predicted negatively by self-silencing. Young adults who expressed greater propensities to repress their feelings, refrain from expressing themselves, and put marital harmony ahead of their own genuineness were less satisfied with their romantic partnerships. This implies that closeness, understanding, and open communication—all essential elements of a good relationship—may be compromised by long-term emotional repression. These results are consistent with theoretical viewpoints that highlight emotional expression and authenticity as essential to psychological health and stable relationships. However, when examined in conjunction with self-silencing, spirituality did not show a significant independent predictor of relationship pleasure. Spirituality and marital satisfaction were shown to be slightly positively correlated, however this correlation was not statistically significant. This suggests that, even if spirituality may support personal meaning-making, coping mechanisms, or moral principles, it might not immediately result in relationship happiness unless it is combined with constructive interpersonal and communication practices. Spirituality may not have a direct predictive effect, but rather function indirectly through other relational mechanisms. In terms of hypothesis testing, the idea that relationship satisfaction would be negatively impacted by self-silencing was validated. Nevertheless, there was no evidence to support the idea that spirituality would be a favourable predictor of relationship satisfaction. Although the total regression model was statistically significant, it only explained a small percentage of the variation in relationship

satisfaction, suggesting that other contextual, interpersonal, and psychological factors probably influence relational outcomes. These results emphasise how crucial emotional authenticity is in romantic relationships. In an attempt to preserve harmony, repressing one's wants and emotions may result in temporary stability in relationships but eventually lower levels of personal fulfilment and happiness. The findings highlight the psychological toll that maladaptive relational practices like self-silencing take.

6.1 Implications

There are numerous significant ramifications from the study. From a theoretical standpoint, the results support the self-silencing idea by showing how applicable it is to romantic interactions between young adults. According to the findings, relational pleasure is not only influenced by internal belief systems like spirituality but also by genuine self-expression and open communication. Counsellors and mental health specialists who work with couples or young adults may find it useful to evaluate relational self-sacrifice and emotional suppression tendencies from a clinical perspective. Relationship satisfaction may be increased by interventions that emphasise communication improvement, emotional awareness, boundary-setting, and assertiveness training. Therapists may continue investigate spirituality as a coping mechanism or personal strength while concurrently addressing interpersonal communication dynamics, even if spirituality did not significantly predict pleasure in this study. On a larger scale, psychoeducation regarding the impacts of persistent self-silencing may be incorporated into relationship education programs and premarital counselling activities. Young adults may have more satisfying and long-lasting love relationships if they are encouraged to acquire good emotional expression techniques.

6.2 Limitations

The study has several limitations in spite of its contributions. Establishing causal links between spirituality, self-silencing, and relationship happiness is hampered by the cross-sectional approach. To ascertain whether self-silencing eventually results in lower levels of contentment or whether discontent heightens inclinations toward emotional suppression, longitudinal research would be required.

Furthermore, response biases such as social desirability and subjective interpretation of relational experiences may have been introduced by the use of self-report measures. Because only young adults were included in the sample, the results cannot be applied to other age groups, married couples, or people from different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, spirituality was measured as a single construct without considering its multifaceted

components, which could have produced different results. Examples of these characteristics include relational spirituality, intrinsic religiosity, and spiritual coping.

6.3 Future Suggestions

To gain a deeper understanding of the causal pathways and directionality between self-silencing and relationship satisfaction, future research should use experimental or longitudinal approaches. The generalisability of results would be improved by broadening the sample to encompass a range of age groups, marital statuses, and cultural backgrounds.

Potential mediators and moderators, including attachment type, emotional regulation techniques, communication quality, gender disparities, and cultural expectations, may also be investigated in future research. A more thorough understanding of whether some types of spirituality have a greater impact on relational functioning than others may be gained by looking at many aspects of spirituality. Richer insights into how young adults subjectively perceive spirituality and emotional suppression in their relationships may be obtained by incorporating qualitative or mixed-method approaches. These methods might pick up on contextual details that quantitative measurements might miss.

Overall, this study advances our knowledge of relational dynamics by showing that, whereas spirituality does not predict relationship satisfaction in this context, self-silencing strongly predicts lower relationship satisfaction among young people. The results highlight the value of genuineness, emotional transparency, and clear communication in developing wholesome, fulfilling romantic relationships during emerging adulthood.

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