



The Relationship between Mindfulness and Conflict Management in Romantic Relationships among Young Adults

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Abstract: Background: Romantic relationships are an important aspect of psychosocial development during young adulthood. The quality of these relationships is influenced by how individuals perceive, regulate and respond to interpersonal conflicts. Mindfulness has gained increasing attention in psychological research because of its potential role in promoting emotional regulation, adaptive coping and healthier interpersonal functioning. However, evidence regarding the relationship between mindfulness and conflict management among young adults, particularly in the Indian context, remains limited. **Objective:** This study aimed to examine the relationship between mindfulness and conflict management in romantic relationships among young adults. **Methods:** A quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design was employed. A total of 200 young adults aged 18–30 years from urban regions of South India participated in the study through convenience sampling. Mindfulness was assessed using the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire–15 (FFMQ-15), while conflict management was measured using the Romantic Partner Conflict Scale (RPCS). Descriptive statistics, normality testing and Spearman's rank correlation were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics. **Results:** The findings indicated no statistically significant relationship between mindfulness and conflict management among young adults. Although participants demonstrated varying levels of mindfulness and different approaches to conflict resolution, mindfulness was not found to be significantly associated with conflict management strategies

in romantic relationships. **Conclusion:** The findings suggest that conflict management within romantic relationships is likely influenced by multiple psychological, interpersonal and contextual factors beyond mindfulness alone. Future studies employing longitudinal designs, culturally diverse samples and additional psychological variables may provide a more comprehensive understanding of relationship functioning among young adults.

Keywords: *Mindfulness, Conflict Management, Romantic Relationships, Young Adults, Emotional Regulation*

1. Introduction

Romantic relationships constitute one of the most significant developmental experiences during young adulthood, contributing substantially to emotional well-being, identity formation and psychological adjustment. Healthy romantic relationships are characterised by trust, intimacy, mutual respect, effective communication and constructive conflict resolution. Despite their importance, interpersonal conflicts are inevitable in close relationships due to differences in expectations, communication styles, personality traits and emotional responses. The manner in which individuals manage these conflicts plays a crucial role in determining relationship satisfaction and stability.

Conflict management refers to the behavioural and emotional strategies individuals employ to address disagreements and interpersonal challenges. Adaptive conflict management strategies, including collaborative problem-solving, open communication and emotional regulation, are associated with greater relationship satisfaction and psychological well-being. Conversely, maladaptive strategies such as avoidance, hostility, criticism and withdrawal may contribute to relationship distress and dissatisfaction.

Mindfulness, defined as the capacity to maintain non-judgmental awareness of present moment experiences, has emerged as an important construct within contemporary clinical and counselling psychology. Individuals with higher levels of mindfulness tend to demonstrate greater emotional regulation, empathy, cognitive flexibility and resilience. These characteristics may facilitate healthier interpersonal interactions and more constructive approaches to conflict resolution. Consequently, mindfulness has been increasingly incorporated into psychological interventions aimed at improving emotional functioning and relationship quality.

Although previous research has reported positive associations between mindfulness and interpersonal functioning, findings regarding its relationship with conflict management remain inconsistent. Furthermore, limited empirical evidence is available from the Indian context,

where cultural norms, family values and relationship expectations may influence both mindfulness practices and conflict resolution behaviours. Understanding this relationship among Indian young adults may therefore contribute to the development of culturally relevant psychological interventions and relationship education programmes.

The present study was undertaken to examine the relationship between mindfulness and conflict management among young adults involved in romantic relationships. By exploring this association, the study seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature on interpersonal relationships and provide insights that may inform clinical practice, counselling interventions and future research.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of mindfulness among young adults in romantic relationships.
2. To assess conflict management among young adults in romantic relationships.
3. To examine the relationship between mindfulness and conflict management among young adults.

1.2 Hypothesis

(H₁): There is a statistically significant relationship between mindfulness and conflict management among young adults in romantic relationships.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study Design

A quantitative cross-sectional correlational research design was employed to examine the relationship between mindfulness and conflict management among young adults in romantic relationships. The study aimed to investigate whether dispositional mindfulness was associated with conflict management strategies in romantic relationships among individuals residing in urban regions of South India.

2.2 Participants

The study included 200 young adults aged 18–30 years. Participants comprised both students and working professionals residing in urban areas across Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and Puducherry. Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants who met the eligibility criteria.

2.3 Inclusion Criteria

Participants were eligible if they:

- a) were between 18 and 30 years of age;
- b) were students or working professionals;

- c) resided in urban areas of South India;
- d) were currently involved in a romantic relationship.

2.4 Exclusion Criteria

Participants were excluded if they:

- a) had been in a romantic relationship for less than six months;
- b) identified outside the male or female gender categories used in the study;
- c) were unable to comprehend English.

2.5 Measures

2.5.1 Socio-demographic Questionnaire

A structured socio-demographic questionnaire was developed to collect information regarding age, gender, educational status, occupation, marital status, state of residence, relationship status and duration of the romantic relationship.

2.5.2 Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire–15 (FFMQ-15)

Mindfulness was assessed using the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire–Short Form (FFMQ-15) developed by Baer et al. (2006). The questionnaire consists of 15 items measuring five dimensions of mindfulness: observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience. Responses are recorded on a Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating greater dispositional mindfulness. Previous studies have reported satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.75 to 0.91.

2.5.3 Romantic Partner Conflict Scale (RPCS)

Conflict management was measured using the Romantic Partner Conflict Scale (RPCS) developed by Johnson and Halford. The instrument assesses six conflict management styles: Avoidance, Compromise, Conflict Reactivity, Separation for Cooling Off, Submission and Domination. Reported reliability coefficients for the subscales range from 0.70 to 0.85, demonstrating acceptable internal consistency.

2.6 Procedure

After obtaining institutional approval, participants were recruited through online and offline approaches. Eligible individuals were informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent before participation. Participation was voluntary and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout data collection.

2.7 Statistical Analysis

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were calculated to describe participant

characteristics and study variables. The Shapiro–Wilk test was used to assess normality. As the variables were not normally distributed, Spearman's rank-order correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between mindfulness and conflict management. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

3. Results

Participant Characteristics

The study included 200 young adults residing in urban regions of South India. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, including gender, age, occupation, marital status, geographical location and relationship characteristics.

Table 1: *Gender Distribution of Participants (N = 200)*

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Female	108	54.0
Male	92	46.0

The sample consisted of 108 female participants (54%) and 92 male participants (46%), indicating a relatively balanced representation of genders.

Table 2: *Age Distribution of Participants (N = 200)*

Age Group	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
18–22 years	138	69.0
23–26 years	50	25.0
27–30 years	12	6.0

The majority of participants belonged to the 18–22 years age group (69%), followed by participants aged 23–26 years (25%). A smaller proportion of participants were between 27–30 years (6%).

Table 3: *Occupational Status of Participants (N = 200)*

Occupation	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Students	136	68.0
Working professionals	64	32.0

Most participants were students (68%), while 32% were working professionals.

Table 4: *Marital Status of Participants (N = 200)*

Marital Status	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Unmarried	171	85.5

Married	29	14.5
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The majority of participants were unmarried (85.5%), whereas 14.5% were married.

Table 5: *Geographical Distribution of Participants (N = 200)*

State	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Karnataka	68	34.0
Tamil Nadu	61	30.5
Puducherry	27	13.5
Kerala	19	9.5
Andhra Pradesh	15	7.5
Telangana	10	5.0

All participants were from urban regions of South India. Karnataka (34%) and Tamil Nadu (30.5%) contributed the highest proportion of participants.

Table 6: *Relationship Duration of Participants (N = 200)*

Relationship Duration	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
6 months–1 year	69	34.5
More than 1 year	131	65.5

Most participants (65.5%) reported being in their current romantic relationship for more than one year, while 34.5% reported relationship duration between six months and one year.

Normality Analysis

Table 7: *Shapiro–Wilk Test for Normality*

Variable	W	p
Mindfulness	0.810	< .001
Conflict Management	0.702	< .001

The Shapiro–Wilk test indicated that both mindfulness and conflict management scores significantly deviated from normality ($p < .001$). Therefore, non-parametric statistical analysis was considered appropriate for examining the relationship between the variables.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 8: *Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 200)*

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
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Mindfulness	1	5	3.15	0.707
Conflict Management	2	5	3.99	0.530

Participants demonstrated moderate levels of mindfulness ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.707$) and conflict management scores ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.530$).

Correlation Analysis

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between mindfulness and conflict management.

Table 9: *Correlation Between Mindfulness and Conflict Management*

Variables	1	2
1. Mindfulness	—	.033
2. Conflict Management	.033	—

Spearman's rho correlation coefficient = .033, $p = .645$.

The analysis revealed a very weak positive correlation between mindfulness and conflict management. However, the relationship was not statistically significant ($p = .033$, $p = .645$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained, indicating that mindfulness was not significantly associated with conflict management among young adults in romantic relationships.

Table 10: *Conflict Management Styles*

Distribution of Conflict Management Styles

Conflict Style	Percentage (%)
Avoidance	77.5
Compromise	73.0
Separation	70.0
Submission	64.5
Conflict Reactivity	56.5
Domination	51.0

Among the various conflict management styles, avoidance (77.5%) was the most frequently observed style, followed by compromise (73%) and separation (70%). Domination was the least frequently observed style (51%), suggesting that participants were less likely to adopt controlling or confrontational approaches during relationship conflicts.

4. Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between mindfulness and conflict management among adults involved in romantic relationships. Contrary to the proposed hypothesis, the findings revealed that mindfulness was not significantly associated with conflict management behaviours. The correlation analysis using Spearman's rho indicated a weak positive relationship between mindfulness and conflict management; however, this association was statistically non-significant ($p = .033$, $p = .645$). This suggests that higher levels of mindfulness, as measured in the present sample, did not necessarily correspond with improved conflict management approaches within romantic relationships.

The absence of a significant relationship may be understood through the multidimensional nature of conflict management in intimate relationships. Although mindfulness has been associated with enhanced emotional awareness, self-regulation and reduced impulsive reactions, effective conflict management involves several additional interpersonal processes, including communication skills, empathy, attachment patterns, relationship satisfaction, emotional maturity and learned coping strategies. Therefore, mindfulness alone may not sufficiently predict how individuals respond during relationship conflicts.

One possible explanation for the findings could be the distinction between mindfulness as a dispositional trait and mindfulness as an actively cultivated practice. The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire assesses an individual's tendency to engage in mindful awareness. However, individuals may possess certain mindful characteristics without consistently applying mindfulness-based strategies during emotionally challenging interpersonal situations. Conflict situations within romantic relationships often involve heightened emotional arousal, personal expectations, and relational history, which may influence behavioural responses beyond an individual's general mindfulness disposition.

The cultural context of romantic relationships in India may also contribute to understanding these findings. Romantic relationships among young adults in Indian society are influenced by various factors, including family expectations, social norms, traditional values, and varying levels of relationship autonomy. These contextual factors may shape conflict expression, avoidance patterns and resolution strategies. In collectivistic cultural settings, individuals may sometimes prioritize relationship preservation, emotional restraint, or accommodation over direct expression and problem-solving, which may not be directly reflected through mindfulness levels.

Another possible explanation may relate to the measurement approach used in the current study. The FFMQ-15 is a brief measure of mindfulness and may not fully capture the

complexity of mindfulness-related processes involved during interpersonal conflicts. Similarly, conflict management is influenced by situational factors and relationship-specific dynamics that may not be completely represented through self-report measures. Future research using longitudinal designs, observational methods, or relationship-based assessments may provide deeper insights into how mindfulness influences conflict resolution processes over time.

The findings should not be interpreted as indicating that mindfulness has no role in romantic relationship functioning. Previous research has highlighted the potential benefits of mindfulness in emotional regulation, compassion and interpersonal awareness. However, the current findings suggest that the relationship between mindfulness and conflict management may be more complex and possibly mediated or moderated by factors such as emotional regulation ability, communication patterns, attachment style, and relationship satisfaction.

From a clinical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of adopting an integrative approach when working with couples and young adults experiencing relationship difficulties. While mindfulness-based interventions may support emotional awareness and self-regulation, therapeutic approaches may also need to incorporate communication training, conflict resolution skills, cognitive restructuring, and interpersonal awareness to improve relationship outcomes.

In conclusion, the present study contributes to understanding the association between mindfulness and conflict management among young adults in the Indian context. Although mindfulness demonstrated a positive but non-significant association with conflict management, the findings emphasize the need to consider broader psychological, interpersonal and cultural factors influencing relationship conflict processes.

5. Conclusion

The present study examined the relationship between mindfulness and conflict management styles in romantic relationships among young adults aged 18–30 years residing in urban South India. Using a quantitative correlational design, the study explored whether mindfulness characteristics were associated with more constructive conflict resolution approaches. Data were collected from 200 participants using the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire–15 (FFMQ-15) and the Romantic Partner Conflict Scale (RPCS).

The findings indicated that both mindfulness and conflict management variables did not meet assumptions of normality, as demonstrated by the Shapiro Wilk test, leading to the use of non-parametric statistical analysis. The mindfulness measure demonstrated moderate internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.658$), whereas the conflict management scale showed

strong reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.913$). The correlation analysis revealed a positive but extremely weak and statistically non-significant relationship between mindfulness and conflict management ($r = .033$, $p = .645$), indicating that mindfulness was not a significant predictor of conflict management styles within the present sample.

The study further identified that avoidance was the most frequently reported conflict management style among participants (77.5%), followed by compromise (73.0%) and separation (70.0%), whereas domination was the least frequently observed style (51.0%). These findings suggest that young adults in urban South India may demonstrate a preference for less confrontational approaches when managing relationship conflicts. Such patterns may reflect broader cultural influences, where maintaining interpersonal harmony, emotional restraint, and relationship stability are often valued over direct confrontation.

The findings contribute to the growing literature on mindfulness and interpersonal functioning by highlighting the importance of examining psychological constructs within specific cultural contexts. Although mindfulness has been associated with emotional regulation and interpersonal awareness in previous research, the current findings suggest that its influence on romantic conflict management may be shaped by additional psychological and sociocultural factors. Factors such as communication patterns, attachment styles, relationship duration, emotional regulation abilities and cultural expectations may play a more significant role in determining how individuals respond to relationship conflicts.

5.1 Strengths of the Study

A major strength of this research is its focus on young adults within the Indian cultural context, particularly urban South India, where relationship patterns are influenced by rapidly changing social values alongside traditional expectations. Much existing research on mindfulness and relationship functioning has been conducted in Western populations; therefore, this study contributes culturally relevant insights into how mindfulness and conflict behaviours may operate within an Indian context.

The inclusion of 200 participants from urban regions and the involvement of both students and working individuals increased the diversity of the sample. Additionally, the use of established psychological measures, including the FFMQ-15 and RPCS, strengthened the methodological foundation of the study and allowed systematic examination of the research variables.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations. The moderate reliability of the mindfulness measure (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.658$) suggests that the assessment tool may not

have fully captured culturally specific expressions of mindfulness among Indian young adults. The conceptual understanding and practice of mindfulness in Indian traditions may differ from Western interpretations, potentially influencing participants' responses.

The use of convenience sampling limits the generalizability of findings to broader populations. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design prevents conclusions regarding changes over time or causal relationships between mindfulness and conflict management. Since both variables were assessed through self-report measures, responses may have been influenced by social desirability bias, particularly in areas involving romantic relationships and interpersonal behaviours.

The study also did not examine additional relationship-related factors such as relationship duration, attachment patterns, personality characteristics, gender differences or emotional regulation abilities, which may influence conflict management approaches.

5.3 Implications for Practice and Future Research

The findings highlight the importance of adopting culturally sensitive approaches when addressing relationship functioning among young adults. Mental health professionals, counsellors and relationship educators may benefit from integrating mindfulness-based approaches with communication training, emotional regulation strategies and conflict resolution skills rather than considering mindfulness as an independent factor influencing relationship outcomes.

Educational institutions and preventive mental health programs may incorporate culturally relevant mindfulness and relationship skill building interventions to support emotional well-being among young adults. Such interventions may be particularly valuable during periods of increasing social change, where individuals navigate both traditional expectations and evolving relationship dynamics.

Future research should focus on developing and validating mindfulness assessment tools that better reflect Indian cultural experiences. Longitudinal studies, mixed-method approaches, and observational research may provide deeper understanding of how mindfulness influences relationship processes over time. Further investigations should also explore potential mediating and moderating factors, including attachment style, emotional regulation, gender roles and relationship satisfaction.

5.4 Overall Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study found no significant relationship between mindfulness and conflict management styles in romantic relationships among young adults in urban South India. However, the findings emphasize that conflict management behaviours are influenced

by broader cultural, interpersonal and contextual factors. The preference for avoidance and other non-confrontational strategies suggests the significant role of cultural values related to harmony and relationship preservation.

Although mindfulness did not demonstrate a direct association with conflict management in this study, the findings highlight the need for culturally informed research approaches that consider the complexity of emotional and relational experiences. Developing culturally appropriate mindfulness interventions and relationship focused psychological programs may contribute to healthier interpersonal functioning among young adults in diverse cultural settings.

Supplementary Statements for Journal Submission

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that there are no financial, personal, academic or professional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the design, conduct, analysis, interpretation or publication of this research.

Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated and analysed during the current study are not publicly available because they contain confidential participant information. De-identified data may be made available by the corresponding author upon reasonable request for academic or research purposes, subject to ethical and confidentiality requirements.

Funding Statement

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors. The study was conducted as part of the requirements for the Master of Science in Clinical Psychology at Jain (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru.

Ethics Statement

This study was conducted under the academic guidance of Dr. Sharon John, Department of Psychology, Jain (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru. Ethical approval was obtained from the appropriate Institutional Ethics Committee before commencement of the study. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation was voluntary, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study

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Appendix A

Participant Information and Informed Consent

Participants were provided with an online/offline informed consent form before participating in the study. The con

sent form explained the purpose of the research, voluntary participation, confidentiality of responses, approximate completion time and the participant's right to withdraw at any stage.

Demographic Information

Participants provided information regarding:

- Age
- Gender
- Current relationship status
- Relationship duration
- Residential location
- Urban/rural background

Psychological Measures

The study utilized the following standardized instruments:

1. Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire–15 (FFMQ-15)
2. Romantic Partner Conflict Scale (RPCS)

The complete questionnaire items are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.