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Orginal Article

The Mediating Role of Mindfulness in the Relationship between Spirituality and Wisdom

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the mediating role of mindfulness in the relationship between spirituality and wisdom within a causal model. Understanding the psychological mechanisms through which spirituality contributes to wisdom can provide important insights for both educational and mental health contexts. The present research employed a descriptive–correlational design. The statistical population consisted of female student teachers enrolled in their final semester at Farhangian University of Tehran. Using a random cluster sampling method, a total of 309 participants were selected for the study. Data were collected through three standardized instruments: the Five-Dimensional Wisdom Questionnaire developed by Webster, the Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire designed by Baer et al., and the Spiritual Well-Being Scale developed by Dehshiri et al. All instruments demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties in previous studies and in the present sample. Data analysis was conducted using structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS software. Before testing the hypothesized model, preliminary analyses were performed to assess assumptions of normality and to evaluate descriptive statistics and correlations among the study variables. The proposed model demonstrated an acceptable fit to the data based on multiple goodness-of-fit indices. The results indicated that spirituality had a significant direct effect on wisdom. In addition, spirituality exerted a significant indirect effect on wisdom through mindfulness, confirming the mediating role of mindfulness in the proposed model. Specifically, higher levels of spirituality were associated with greater mindfulness, which in turn predicted higher levels of wisdom. Overall, the findings showed that spirituality and mindfulness together accounted for approximately 75% of the variance in wisdom. In conclusion, the results highlight the important role of mindfulness as a psychological mechanism linking spirituality to wisdom. These findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of wisdom development and have practical implications for educational and psychological interventions. Accordingly, it is recommended that future

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intervention studies focus on enhancing spirituality and mindfulness to promote wisdom, particularly among teacher education students and other populations involved in educational and helping professions.

Keywords: spirituality, wisdom, mindfulness

Extended Abstract

Introduction

Interest in the concept of wisdom in psychology has grown substantially in recent decades, a trend that is closely linked to approaches such as positive psychology and lifespan developmental studies. Various theoretical frameworks have been proposed to define wisdom; some emphasize cognitive and knowledge-based dimensions, while others conceptualize wisdom as a multidimensional personality trait encompassing the capacity to utilize significant life experiences, regulate emotions, engage in multiple perspective-taking, remain open to new experiences, and display humor. Empirical findings indicate that wisdom is positively associated with well-being and life satisfaction.

One dimension highlighted in certain models is spirituality. Across different definitions, spirituality has been associated with elements such as unity with God, inner peace, altruism, and a sense of transcendence. Some studies suggest that spirituality may constitute a component of wisdom or overlap with it, whereas other investigations—particularly those based on implicit theories—indicate that individuals do not necessarily perceive a direct link between the two constructs. These discrepancies appear to be largely influenced by cultural contexts and by variations in the conceptualization of spirituality.

Despite such inconsistencies, a growing body of evidence indicates that both spirituality and wisdom exert comparable positive effects on psychological health and quality of life. Nevertheless, the causal relationship between these two constructs remains ambiguous. In this regard, mindfulness may play a significant mediating role. Mindfulness, defined as conscious and nonjudgmental awareness of present-moment experience, has been shown to correlate with both spirituality and wisdom. Spiritual traditions as well as psychological evidence suggest that spirituality can enhance mindfulness, which in turn fosters the development of wisdom.

Accordingly, the present study was designed to examine the mediating role of mindfulness in the relationship between spirituality and wisdom. The

target population consisted of female student-teachers in Iran, and the central research question concerned the extent to which variations in wisdom can be predicted through spirituality and mindfulness.

Methodology

This research employed a descriptive–correlational design, and relationships among the core variables were assessed using structural equation modeling (SEM). The statistical population consisted of female student teachers enrolled at Farhangian University in Tehran. From this population, 309 participants were selected using a random cluster sampling method to ensure adequate representation. Data were collected using three validated instruments: the Five-Dimensional Wisdom Questionnaire (Webster, 2003), which measures experience, openness, reflection, emotion regulation, and humor; the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (Baer et al., 2006), which captures acting with awareness, non-judging, observing, describing, and non-reactivity; and the Spiritual Well-Being Questionnaire (Dehshiri et al., 2014), which evaluates relationships with the self, others, nature, and God. Reliability and validity indices of the instruments in previous research confirmed their appropriateness for the current study.

Results

In this study, data were analyzed using SPSS 21 for descriptive statistics and AMOS 21 for testing the structural equation model. Preliminary checks confirmed the assumptions of normality and the absence of multicollinearity, ensuring the adequacy of the data for further analyses. Descriptive statistics and correlations among the main variables—wisdom, spirituality, and mindfulness—showed significant positive associations.

The initial structural model was tested, and after removing the non-significant “nonjudgment” dimension of mindfulness, the modified model demonstrated satisfactory fit indices. Path analysis revealed that spirituality had a significant direct effect on wisdom ($\beta = .23$, $p < .01$), a strong direct effect on mindfulness ($\beta = .64$, $p < .001$), and that mindfulness, in turn, significantly predicted wisdom ($\beta = .71$, $p < .001$).

Bootstrap analysis further confirmed the mediating role of mindfulness, indicating that spirituality indirectly predicted wisdom through mindfulness ($\beta = .44$, $p < .01$). The final structural model explained 75% of the variance in wisdom ($R^2 = .75$) and 40% of the variance in mindfulness ($R^2 = .40$).

Overall, the findings support the proposed model, highlighting mindfulness as a significant mediator in the relationship between spirituality and wisdom among female student-teachers.

Explanation

The results suggest that spirituality is directly associated with mindfulness, which subsequently contributes to the growth of wisdom. This mediating role may be explained by overlapping features of the three constructs, including self-connection and transcendence, a sense of coherence and integration, reflective engagement with experiences and actions, openness to new perspectives, altruism, and compassion. Spirituality, by cultivating inner peace, calmness, satisfaction, and integration, appears to create an existential foundation that fosters mindful awareness and thereby facilitates the emergence of wisdom. The findings add meaningful insights to both theoretical frameworks and practical applications, particularly in educational contexts where cultivating wisdom can benefit not only individuals but also the communities they serve. On this basis, intervention studies designed to enhance spirituality and mindfulness, as well as to evaluate their combined influence on wisdom, are strongly recommended to extend and refine these initial findings.

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