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A Quantitative Study of Slow Living: Mindfulness, Spirituality and Perceived Stress

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ABSTRACT

This study employed a correlational research methodology. Convenient sampling was utilized, and the sample consisted of 73 individuals: 50 females (65%), 13 males (16%), and 10 others (13%). The study measured the constructs using the Spirituality Perspective Scale (SPS), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Lifestyle Questions, and Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R). There was no significant correlation found between any of the study factors and the outcome variable. Spirituality, mindfulness, and lifestyle are the predictor variables that adversely but not substantially predicted perceived stress (F (3, 68), .998, p =.399), indicating that the four elements under investigation do not significantly affect the level of perceived stress in the overall model. Furthermore, R2 =.04 indicates that the model accounts for 0.4% of the variation in perceived stress. Because of sample size and additional theoretical and data-driven considerations in this specific sample, none of the model's components, either separately or collectively, significantly affect the outcome variable.

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1.0 Introduction

The current study's goal was to find out how a slow lifestyle, together with two of its components—spirituality and mindfulness—can impact a person's perceived level of stress in day-to-day living (Zeestraten, 2008). Fast-paced lifestyles have been linked to increased levels of stress, particularly in young individuals (Cotton, Dollard, & de Jonge, 2002; Garhammer, 2002; Melnikov et al., 2020). Indicators demonstrating a lack of mindfulness, such as anxiety, restlessness, being easily distracted, and lack of attention, patience, or self-compassion, are easier to identify in those who lead fast-paced lives (Sari et al. 2017).

1.1 Slow living and perceived stress

Nowadays, we are exposed to so many stimuli that we often sense the impulse to be busy and constantly please ourselves. Being excessively busy and fatigued may lead to increased perceived mental pressure and a decline in mental health and overall well-being (Zeestraten, 2008). Conferring to previous researches on slow living, shifting to a leisurelier lifestyle from a fast-paced routine may aid develop better mental health and moderate perceived stress. However, because the concept of slow living has so far been explored only through qualitative methods, the findings of these studies are less generalizable (Andrews, 2006). The idea behind the slow lifestyle (Chrzan, 2004) is to do things right instead of hurrying to complete them. It is safe to say that people who live such a lifestyle have the chance to take care of themselves and are involved in activities that increase mindfulness (Cilliers, 2006); besides, they are healthy and have good relationships with others. People living in a stimulating and bustling environment have higher stress levels (Garhammer, 2002), which in their turn have been related to reduced life satisfaction, especially among busy learners (Cotton, Dollard, & de Jonge, 2002).

1.2. Spirituality and perceived stress

According to Rose, Westefeld, and Ansley (2001), "spirituality" is a broad term that encompasses concepts, understandings, and practices related to a person’s connection with the universe or a supreme power. Isaia, Parker, and Murrow (1999) describe spirituality as a fundamental aspect of every person's existence and a collective social dimension (Goddard, 1995). In the past, the impact of spirituality on physical and mental well-being was not prioritized. However, there has been a recent scientific focus on the connections between religion, spirituality, and health. Numerous studies have indicated that spirituality and religion can aid individuals in coping with stress alongside other coping mechanisms (Kim & Seidlitz, 2002; Torosian & Biddle, 2005). According to research involving social workers,

1.3. Mindfulness and perceived stress

Being aware of our environment and inner selves at all times is what it means to be mindful (Araas, 2008). By increasing our awareness of the present, we might find greater satisfaction in life. According to research, awareness can help us deal with problems more effectively and identify stress or anxiety early on. The bulk of studies concentrate on mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques, which have been demonstrated as successful in handling a range of peoples with

various mental disorders (Creswell & Khoury, 2019).There is still much to learn about stress and mindfulness (Gallagher, 2012).DiCarlo et al. (2020) debated whether mindfulness practices might lessen instructors' perceptions of stress and enhance the classroom environment. The results of their study suggest that the Mindfulness Practices Intervention was effective in improving the learning environment for young students and teachers. Similarly, Zollars, Poirier, and Pailden (2019) investigated how a nearly comparable mindfulness meditation practice affected pharmacy students' perceptions of stress using the Headspace app. Hence, improved perceived stress was associated with the intervention, according to their study findings. Another, model was examined in a sample of Tunisian health workers which demonstrated that mindfulness is associated by means of high levels of well-being in addition to low levels of perceived stress, that explicated discrepancy (Kckaou et al. 2022).

1.4. Aims and objectives

The mainstream research that have been evaluated so far have only looked at the effectiveness of stress-reduction methods based on mindfulness. Present study examined the association between slow living, perceived stress and spirituality without any intervention. Rather than advocating mindfulness-based stress reduction strategies this study aims to provide a substantial contribution in the pool of information regarding the share of slow living, spirituality and slow living in stress sensitivity through the use of pertinent quantitative data. The following hypotheses were employed to examine the research variables.

1. Perceived stress and mindfulness are significantly correlated.
2. Spirituality and perceived stress are significantly correlated.
3. Perceived stress and lifestyle are significantly correlated.
4. Perceived stress is significantly predicted by lifestyle, spirituality, and mindfulness.

2.0 Literature Review

The notion of perceived stress means that individuals estimate situations in terms of unpredictability, uncontrollability, or overload. From the perspective of lifestyle pace, individuals that always experience pressure, have many responsibilities at the same time, and do not spend enough time on themselves may become more susceptible to stress, because a rapid lifestyle does not allow for effective emotion regulation and reflective thoughts. The role of mindfulness is especially important in this case since mindfulness implies being aware of one’s experiences in the present moment. According to the findings of Brown & Ryan (2003), mindfulness is associated with psychological well-being, which means that individuals who demonstrate high levels of mindful awareness are likely to be capable of controlling their emotions and reducing stress.

Spirituality may influence perceived stress in terms of its ability to provide individuals with meaning and hope when they face challenging events and experiences. It should be noted that spirituality cannot be described in terms of a mere set of religious beliefs but rather represents a tool that facilitates interpreting stressful experiences within a bigger picture. This idea is supported by the findings reported by Koenig (2012).

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Study Design and Sample

In order to evaluate the association between spirituality, mindfulness, lifestyle and perceived stress, the current study used a survey research approach. The sample, which consisted of N=73, was chosen via online convenient sampling.The age range was 18–58, with a mean of 28.11 (SD=8.13).

3.2 Assessment Scales

3.2.1 Spirituality Perspective Scale (SPS)

The Spirituality Perspective Scale (SPS) was developed to gauge the degree to which individuals display spiritually oriented behavior and hold certain spiritual beliefs (Reed, 1987).It is a 10-item questionnaire. Four items address the frequency of spiritual pursuits. There are six possible behaviors: 1 (never), 2 (rarely), 3 (approximately annually), 4 (about monthly), 5 (basically weekly), and 6 (almost daily). Spiritual beliefs make up six of the items. The choices offered to study participants are 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (disagree more than agree), 4 (agree more than disagree), 5 (agree), and 6 (strongly agree). A higher degree of spirituality is indicated by higher scores.

A single score between 10 and 60 is calculated by averaging the item replies. The psychometric properties of the scale in previous studies were stated as internal consistency reliability with (α) .91.

3.2.2 Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R)

The CAMS-R was used to measure mindfulness. It is a 10 item test that captures a broad conception of mindfulness using language that is not particular to any one type of meditation instruction (Feldman et al., 2007). For each item, participants indicate how frequently each of these approaches applies to them (rarely/not at all = 1, sometimes = 2, often = 3, virtually usually = 4). Item 6's score was flipped. The sum values for items 1 through 10 are calculated following the appropriate reversals. Higher values are a reflection of greater attention.

3.2.3. Lifestyle Question

Participants were asked, "How do you evaluate your current lifestyle?" in order to gauge their current lifestyle includes two choices—slow living and fast living—as well as a brief explanation of the traits that set these two lifestyles apart. According to Zeestraten (2008) slow living was defined as a more balanced, purposeful way of living that just involves taking more time for self-care and doing more thoughtful things. It is distinguished by actions and decisions that are focused on the future. Fast living, on the other side, is defined as a way of life marked by excitement, extravagance, expenditure, and risk-taking, as well as impulsive and present-focused behavior and decision-making.Participants select the option that most accurately represents their present way of life.

3.2.4. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

In this scale, people are expected to state how frequently they felt or thought about certain

situations that happened in the past month. This scale comprises of ten distinct PSS measures developed by Cohen et al. (1983). The first six items are coded negatively (1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10), while the last four items are positively coded (4, 5, 7, 8). All measures are evaluated based on a five-point Likert scale (never 0 to very often 4). Before computing the sum of all the measures, the scores for four positive items are reversed, with a possible range of scores between 0 and 40. A higher score means more stress.

3.2.5 Procedure

A survey methodology was employed in the current investigation. To gather information, a web survey was created using Qualtrics Survey Software. A demographic form was created to gather participant demographic data in addition to assessment scale questions, which were necessary for the study design's inclusion and exclusion criteria. The survey form also contained a debrief form, participant information sheet, and consent form. The online survey link was distributed and participants were recruited via social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp.About 40 of the 112 respondents who completed the survey were excluded from analysis because their answers were incomplete. It took ten to fifteen minutes for each participant to complete the questionnaire. The data collection process was finished in just over two weeks. The data was analyzed in SPSS using correlation and regression analysis methods after the planned number of participants was gathered.

4.0 Findings and Results

The outcomes of the present study are shown underneath.

4.1 Reliability Analysis and Descriptive

The reliability coefficients and a description of the scales used in this investigation are included in the following table.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics of study variables (N=73)

						Range
Variables	***k***	**R**	***M***	***SD***	**Mini-Maxi (Potential)**	**Mini-Maxi (Actual)**
CAMS-R	10	.71	24.97	5.52	13-37	10-40
SPS	10	.92	45.91	11.71	12-60	10-60
PSS	10	.75	25.98	7.44	15-50	0-40

K= number of items in scale, r= reliability coefficient, M=mean, SD= Standard Deviation

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 4.2

Correlations among spirituality, mindfulness, lifestyle and perceived stress (N=73)

	Variables	2	3	4
1	Spirituality	.31**	-.02	-.06
2	Mindfulness	---	-.09	-.17
3	Lifestyle		---	.27
4	Perceived stress			---

Note: * p< .05, ** p <.01

4.3 Descriptive Statistics of demographic variables (N=73)

Demographic variables	***f***	**%**
Lifestyle		
Slow paced	48	65.8%
Fast paced	24	32.9%
Gender		
Male	11	16.47%
Female	52	65.19%
Prefer not to say	10	13.16%
Marital status		
Married	29	39.7%
Living with partner	4	5.5%
Widowed	2	2.7%
Divorced/separated	3	4.1%
Never been married	35	47.9%
Religion		
Muslim	58	79.5%
Christian	6	8.2%
Hindu	3	4.1%
Buddhist	1	1.4%
Other	1	1.4%
I am not religious/atheist	4	5.5%

The results of the table showed that only spirituality and mindfulness had a significant correlation, with no significant values for the other variables.

4.4 Linear Regression Analysis

Table 4.4

Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Perceived Stress (N=73)

Predictors	B	SE	*B*
Constant	34.93	5.53	
Spirituality	-.017	.080	-.027
Mindfulness	-.244	.169	-.181
Lifestyles	-1.491	1.877	-.095
ΔR^2			.000

Spirituality, mindfulness, and lifestyle are the predictor variables that adversely but not substantially predicted perceived stress (F (3, 68),.998, p =.399), indicating that the four elements under investigation do not significantly affect the level of perceived stress in the overall model. Furthermore, 0.4% of the variation in perceived stress is explained by the model, as shown by the R2 =.04. In this specific sample, none of the model's components, either separately or in combination, significantly affect the outcome variable

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

There are no significant connections between the predictor and outcome variables for this specific sample, according to the results of a thorough study and interpretation of the data. The study model was not found to be significant overall. Neither of the study model's components could produce noteworthy outcomes that were in line with earlier research.

These results could be explained by a number of factors. The main explanation might be that in earlier studies sample size was larger to provide statistically significant evidence of a substantial impact or association between spirituality and mindfulness and perceived stress (Andrade,C.2020).

Second, non-normal data distribution may be a crucial factor in the failure of linear regression analysis to produce statistically significant results. The data collection had outliers because some of the values were not evenly distributed. Outliers may have a substantial effect on the fitted slop and intercept, leading to a poor fit for most of the data points (Knief, 2021).

The pattern and type of the values are similar to those found in earlier research, despite the

fact that the outcome values were not statistically significant. According to prior research, spirituality and mindfulness were shown to be inversely connected with perceived stress in correlational analysis, while the lifestyle variable was found to be positively correlated. However, these results were not statistically significant, hence the current study's null hypotheses were accepted.

Results that contradict previous research findings are likely to suggest that additional constructs should be included in the study modality. For instance, participants in numerous studies underwent stress-reduction programs focused on mindfulness, which produced encouraging outcomes. Significant variations in pre-post assessment observations following these interventions were discovered in earlier research (Araas, 2008). Furthermore, mindfulness typically only reduces stress when paired with other moderating factors including resilience (Galante et al. 2018), personality characters, and attention regulator (Nyklíček & Irrmischer, 2017).

This study is the first to examine slow living quantitatively. The topic is described qualitatively in earlier literature. The study's findings offer some evidence that lifestyle influences perceived stress levels, and there are some differences between the perceived stress levels of people who lead fast-paced and slow-paced lives. However, due to non-significant statistical values, the findings are not worth discussing.

Two additional elements that produce biased numerical values are gender and religion, which have an uneven distribution of participants in the data according to gender category. There are more women than men taking part in this study, which may have an impact on the stress outcome values because research indicates that men and women report experiencing stress differently in their bodies and thoughts (Schmaus et al. 2008). They take quite different approaches to stress management. According to Lee (2007), women are more likely than men to report feeling a lot of stress.

Many researches demonstrate the positive effect of spirituality on stress, but some do not. For example, one study found no correlation between religiousness or spirituality and lower levels of perceived stress. Although Latinas who are pregnant or have recently given birth make up the study sample, there may be additional psychosocial and psychobiological factors for the findings (Mann et al. 2010).

We can conclude that these study characteristics may have a moderating or mediating effect on percieved stress, which may be explained by further research. Additionally, a large sample size may provide a more quantitative explanation of slow living and how it relates to percieved stress.

5.1 Implications and Suggestions

In order to quantify slow living, future research should concentrate on creating a standardized slow lifestyle assessment questionnaire. Efforts to raise awareness of spirituality, the value of a calm lifestyle, and the encouragement of spiritual development may have substantial effects on reducing stress and may be important aspects to take into account while creating a quiet and healthy lifestyle.

Contribution

Nadia Arif: Problem Identification and Theoretical Framework
Chris Young: Data Analysis, Supervision and Drafting

Conflict of Interests/Disclosures

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest in this article's research, authorship,and publication.

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