

Spiritual enlightenment experiences and mindfulness: Mechanisms of suffering transcendence

Speaker: Dr. WANG Qi

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Abstract

The exploration of spiritual enlightenment experiences holds significant importance in various domains, including the enhancement of well-being and the transcendence of suffering. This research seminar aims to elucidate the underlying mechanisms through which spiritual enlightenment experiences and mindfulness practice contribute to individuals' psychological well-being. To achieve this goal, the speaker conducted several key studies, encompassing phenomenological qualitative interviews, scale development validated by exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, path analysis, and pre- and post-intervention studies.

From the phenomenological study, three major clusters of enlightenment experiences emerged, including quality of experience, sensory feelings and nondual realizations (including intrapersonal insights, inspiration internalization, interpersonal compassion, and interconnectedness). The subsequent scale development process revealed a three-factor structure of the Spiritual Enlightenment Experience Scale (SEES), comprising nonduality, sensory clarity, and sensory disappearance. Additionally, cross-sectional and longitudinal path analysis studies provided evidence suggesting that mindfulness practice and the realization of spiritual enlightenment can result in reduced psychological distress.

The comprehension of these underlying mechanisms pertaining to spiritual enlightenment can significantly inform the development of effective interventions and practices aimed at promoting well-being and mitigating psychological distress through the integration of mindfulness and spiritual enlightenment. By deepening our understanding of these phenomena, researchers and practitioners can contribute to the advancement of personal well-being, resilience, and the overall flourishing of individuals and communities.

Biography

Dr. Qi (Vicky) Wang currently holds the position of Research Assistant Professor at Lingnan University. She obtained her Ph.D. degree from the University of Hong Kong, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, and a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Pennsylvania. As a registered social worker in both Hong Kong and the U.S., and with more than 10 years of experience as a mindfulness practitioner, her research primarily centers around mindfulness-based interventions and gerontology, with a particular emphasis on the utilization of randomized controlled trials to conduct evidence-based research.

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