



A Study of Academic Achievement, Spiritual Intelligence, and Emotional Intelligence Across Demographic and Educational Variables

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Abstract

Background Contemporary educational paradigms increasingly emphasize holistic adolescent development, recognizing that academic achievement alone is insufficient for overall well-being and success. Emotional intelligence (EI) and spiritual intelligence (SI) play a vital role in shaping students' emotional regulation, ethical orientation, resilience and meaning-making abilities. However, disparities in these competencies across socio-demographic variables such as gender, area of residence, family type and academic stream remain underexplored, particularly within Hindi-medium senior secondary school contexts in India.

Purpose This study examine the levels and inter-group differences in emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and academic achievement among senior secondary students. Specifically, the study aimed to investigate variations in EI, SI and academic achievement across socio-demographic variables including area, gender, family type and academic stream.

Method A quantitative survey research design was employed for the study. The sample comprised 580 senior secondary students aged 16-20 years, drawn from Hindi-medium schools affiliated with the Uttar Pradesh Board. Standardized instruments-the Emotional Intelligence Inventory by Mangal & Mangal and the Spiritual Intelligence Scale by Singh and Sinha-were used to collect data. Academic achievement was measured using students' examinations scores. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent sample *t*-tests, *one-way ANOVA* and post-hoc tukey HSD tests to identify significant differences among groups.

Results The findings revealed statistically significant differences in emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and academic achievement across gender, area and academic stream. Urban students demonstrated higher EI, SI and academic achievement than their rural counterparts. Female students scored significantly higher than male students in emotional and spiritual intelligence as well as academic achievement. Family type did not show a significant influence on any of the studied variables. Students from the Science stream outperformed Arts and Commerce



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students in academic achievement and emotional intelligence; however, no significant differences were observed in spiritual intelligence across academic streams.

Conclusion The study concludes that emotional and spiritual intelligence, along with academic achievement are significantly shaped by socio-demographic factors such as gender, area and academic stream. The absence difference based on family type suggests that school-based and socio-educational factors may play a more critical role in adolescents' holistic development. The findings highlight the need for inclusive educational interventions and policies that foster emotional and spiritual competencies, particularly among rural students and male learners, to promote balanced cognitive, emotional and spiritual growth in adolescents.

Keywords

Emotional Intelligence, Spiritual Intelligence, Academic Achievement, Gender, Area, Stream, Family Type, Secondary Education

Introduction

The evolving landscape of 21st-century education increasingly calls for a paradigm shift from purely academic attainment to a comprehensive, holistic development of students (UNESCO, 2021). This contemporary approach recognizes that true success extends beyond cognitive abilities, encompassing equally vital emotional and spiritual dimensions. Consequently, Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Spiritual Intelligence (SI) have emerged as pivotal constructs, shaping students' overall well-being, adaptability, and capacity to navigate complex social, emotional, and ethical landscapes (Elias et al., 1997; Mayer et al., 2008; Zohar & Marshall, 2000).

Emotional Intelligence (EI), fundamentally defined as the capacity to perceive, understand, use, and manage emotions effectively in oneself and others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008), is widely recognized for its profound impact on individual well-being and success. This construct, popularized by Goleman (1995), encompasses critical skills for emotional regulation, stress management, and fostering healthy interpersonal relationships. Empirical evidence consistently links higher EI to improved academic performance, enhanced social competence, and greater mental health resilience, particularly among adolescents (Mangal & Mangal, 2013; Petrides, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2004).

Complementary to EI, Spiritual Intelligence (SI) refers to the capacity to apply spiritual principles and values to daily life, providing a framework for meaning-making, purpose, and inner peace (Emmons, 2000; Zohar & Marshall, 2000). SI fosters enhanced self-awareness, compassion, and a profound sense of connectedness, equipping individuals with robust coping mechanisms and resilience in the face of life's challenges.

While both EI and SI have been extensively studied as independent constructs across diverse adolescent populations globally (King, 2008; Mangal & Mangal, 2015), a significant void exists in understanding their synergistic interrelationship, particularly within the specific socio-educational context of India. Despite growing global advocacy for integrated emotional and



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spiritual learning frameworks (UNESCO, 2021), empirical investigations exploring the interplay between EI and SI, and their potential variations across socio-demographic factors, remain notably scarce in Indian senior secondary education. Existing research in India has largely concentrated on theoretical models or been confined to urban, English-medium private institutions, leaving a critical knowledge gap concerning government school students (Agrawal & Maurya, 2023; Rani & Bansal, 2022).

This research lacuna becomes especially critical when considering the distinct socio-demographic factors (gender, locality, family background, academic stream) and the specific educational landscape of Hindi-medium government schools under the Uttar Pradesh Board. Students in this particular educational ecosystem frequently navigate unique socio-cultural challenges, coupled with limited access to resources and support services, such as adequate counseling and career guidance (Kaur & Kaur, 2018; Kumar & Singh, 2021; Sharma & Yadav, 2022). These constraints can profoundly impact their emotional and spiritual development, making targeted interventions based on robust empirical understanding imperative.

Against this backdrop, the present study addresses these critical empirical gaps by investigating the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence among a representative sample of 580 senior secondary students enrolled in Hindi-medium government schools under the Uttar Pradesh Board. Employing standardized and culturally relevant Indian measurement tools, this research further explores potential variations in EI and SI across key socio-demographic factors including gender, locality, family structure, and chosen academic stream. The findings are expected to yield novel insights crucial for informing the development of culturally responsive, gender-sensitive, and context-specific educational interventions aimed at fostering holistic student development in this underserved population.

Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence in Adolescent Development: A Comprehensive Review

Adolescence represents a pivotal and dynamic developmental phase characterized by profound cognitive, emotional, social, and identity-related transformations. Successfully navigating this intricate period, marked by increased academic demands, complex peer relationships, and the quest for self-identity, necessitates a robust repertoire of adaptive capabilities. Among these, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical construct, broadly conceptualized as the capacity to perceive, understand, regulate, and effectively utilize emotions. EI is increasingly recognized for its instrumental role in fostering positive adaptation and overall well-being throughout the lifespan (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Goleman, 1995). Seminal theoretical frameworks have laid the groundwork for understanding EI's multifaceted nature. Salovey and Mayer's (1990) ability model, for instance, posits EI as a distinct form of social intelligence, encompassing four hierarchical branches: emotional perception, emotional facilitation of thought, emotional understanding, and emotional management. This model underscores EI as a set of cognitive abilities essential for processing emotional information and navigating complex social environments effectively. In



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contrast, Goleman's (1995, 1998) widely influential mixed model integrates cognitive emotional abilities with personality traits and learned competencies. Key components of this model—such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills—are posited as indispensable for adolescents grappling with identity formation, peer dynamics, academic demands, and the development of a coherent self-concept (Mangal & Mangal, 2013; Petrides et al., 2004).

Empirical investigations consistently demonstrate a robust and pervasive association between higher levels of EI and a spectrum of positive developmental outcomes in adolescents. These include superior academic performance, often mediated by improved focus, reduced test anxiety, and enhanced organizational skills. Furthermore, EI significantly facilitates the cultivation of adaptive peer relationships, promoting prosocial behaviors, effective conflict resolution skills, and a stronger sense of belonging and social integration. Concurrently, heightened emotional competencies are strongly linked to enhanced psychological well-being, characterized by greater resilience, self-esteem, reduced internalizing symptoms, and a more positive outlook on life (Petrides et al., 2004; Mangal & Mangal, 2013). Conversely, deficits in EI are frequently linked to maladaptive outcomes, such as heightened susceptibility to psychological stress, elevated anxiety levels, and significant challenges in social adjustment and interpersonal communication. These emotional difficulties can contribute to the exacerbation of internalizing problems like depression and externalizing behaviors, thereby impeding holistic development. Studies conducted within the Indian sociocultural context, exemplified by the work of Mangal and Mangal (2013), consistently corroborate these global trends, underscoring the critical relevance of EI in fostering adaptive functioning and holistic development among Indian youth, who often navigate unique cultural and societal pressures.

The examination of gender differences in EI has yielded varied yet compelling insights, prompting considerable scholarly debate regarding underlying mechanisms. While early assertions by Goleman (1998) and observations by Petrides and Furnham (2000) on trait EI suggested higher emotional awareness and relational skills in females, contemporary research points to a complex interplay of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors. For instance, socio-emotional learning, which is often culturally influenced through familial and educational environments, may differentially shape emotional competencies. Within India, several studies consistently report that female adolescents exhibit higher EI scores compared to their male counterparts (Kaur & Kaur, 2018; Sinha & Sharma, 2022). This observed disparity is frequently attributed to prevailing sociocultural norms that may differentially encourage emotional expressiveness, empathy, and relationship-oriented competencies in girls, while potentially inhibiting the overt expression of emotions in boys due to gender role expectations. Understanding these gender-specific patterns is crucial for developing equitable and culturally sensitive educational interventions aimed at fostering EI across all adolescents. Such interventions may need to tailor strategies to account for



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varied socialization experiences and address potential gender biases in emotional expression and perception, thereby promoting comprehensive emotional literacy and well-being for all young individuals.

Spiritual Intelligence (SI) and Adolescent Well-being

Beyond the established domain of emotional intelligence, Spiritual Intelligence (SI) represents a distinct yet increasingly recognized construct within positive psychology, referring to the adaptive capacity to engage with and utilize spiritual resources for meaning-making, transcendence, and overall well-being. Emmons (2000) conceptualizes SI as encompassing critical existential thinking, the ability to find purpose and meaning in life, and the capacity to transcend one's ego in pursuit of higher states of consciousness. This perspective positions SI as a fundamental human capacity for spiritual growth and self-actualization, distinct from conventional intellectual or emotional capacities. Zohar and Marshall (2000) further elaborate on SI as the "spiritual quotient" (SQ), an intelligence that enables individuals to access inner wisdom and connect with universal principles, thereby integrating profound meaning and value into their actions. Crucially, SI is distinct from religious adherence; it focuses instead on a broader human capacity for universal meaning, compassion, and interconnectedness, serving as a psychological resource independent of specific faith traditions. This distinction is vital for a scientific understanding of SI, allowing it to be studied across diverse populations irrespective of their religious affiliations, focusing on the cognitive and affective dimensions of spirituality.

In the Indian cultural milieu, spirituality is deeply ingrained and serves as a foundational pillar of daily life, significantly influencing ethical reasoning, moral frameworks, and psychological coping mechanisms. This profound cultural resonance makes the study of SI particularly pertinent and ecologically valid within this context. Research by Singh and Sinha (2008) substantially advanced the understanding of SI in India through the development and validation of a Spiritual Intelligence Scale tailored for Indian adolescents, delineating salient dimensions such as existential thought and transcendental consciousness. This pioneering work provided a culturally sensitive instrument for empirical investigation into SI's role in adolescent development. Subsequent empirical evidence increasingly links higher SI to enhanced psychological resilience, superior stress coping mechanisms, and the profound ability to derive meaning from challenging life experiences (Sharma, 2021; Kumar & Singh, 2021). These findings collectively underscore SI not merely as a religio-philosophical concept but as a tangible psychological asset that profoundly contributes to mental health and adaptive coping, particularly pertinent for adolescents navigating the multifaceted challenges inherent in their developmental stage, including academic pressures, peer relationships, and identity formation. High SI individuals may possess a greater capacity to find purpose in adversity, exhibit compassion towards self and others, and maintain a sense of interconnectedness, all of which are powerful protective factors against psychological distress and existential angst.



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Future Directions and Concluding Remarks

The burgeoning body of research on both Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence in adolescence highlights their independent and potentially synergistic contributions to positive youth development. While robust evidence supports the multifaceted role of EI in fostering academic success, healthy peer relationships, and psychological well-being, the emerging literature on SI reveals its significant influence on resilience, meaning-making, and coping with life's adversities, especially within culturally rich contexts like India. The current understanding suggests that both intelligences equip adolescents with crucial internal resources, enabling them to navigate developmental challenges more effectively. Future research is critically warranted to explore the specific pathways through which SI fosters well-being and its potential interaction with other forms of intelligence, including EI, in diverse adolescent populations. Specifically, longitudinal studies are needed to understand the developmental trajectory of both EI and SI, and how they might influence long-term life outcomes, such as career satisfaction, relationship quality, and overall life satisfaction. Investigation into integrated intervention programs designed to cultivate both EI and SI concurrently could also yield valuable insights into holistic developmental strategies, potentially leading to more comprehensive and effective youth development programs. Furthermore, cross-cultural comparative studies would enrich our understanding of how these constructs manifest and operate across different societal norms, cultural values, and educational systems. Understanding the nuanced interplay between these vital forms of intelligence can significantly inform comprehensive educational and psychological interventions aimed at nurturing resilient, adaptive, and purposeful young individuals, ultimately contributing to a more holistically developed and thriving future generation.

This comprehensive review reveals a significant gap in empirical research that integrates the study of EI, SI, academic achievement, and socio-demographic variables within the specific context of Hindi-medium senior secondary schools in Uttar Pradesh. The present study aims to address this lacuna by providing much-needed empirical data, exploring these interconnected factors in a setting that has been largely overlooked by previous research. By examining these relationships, the study will contribute valuable insights for developing culturally relevant and gender-sensitive educational interventions designed to foster the holistic development of adolescents in this region.

Research Objectives

1. To compare EI, SI, and academic achievement based on area (rural/urban), gender, family type (nuclear/joint), and academic stream (arts, science, commerce).
2. To determine the statistical significance of observed group differences using t-tests and ANOVA.

Methodology

This section details the methodological framework employed to investigate the relationships and variations in emotional intelligence (EI), spiritual intelligence (SI), and academic achievement



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among senior secondary students in Hindi-medium UP Board schools. The study adopted a **quantitative, and comparative research design** to systematically analyze the data and identify significant associations and differences among various demographic groups. This approach allows for objective measurement and statistical analysis of the variables under study, contributing to the empirical verification of hypotheses and the generalizability of findings within the specified context.

Participants

A Stratified random sampling was composed of N=580 adolescents (41.38% Males and 58.62 Females), aged 16-20 Years, from senior secondary students of Hindi-medium schools affiliated with the Uttar Pradesh Board. This method involved dividing the student population into relevant strata based on key socio-demographic variables: area of residence (rural/urban), gender (male/female), family type (nuclear/joint), and academic stream (Arts, Science, Commerce). Subsequently, random sampling was conducted within each stratum to select participants.

Measures

Emotional Intelligence was measured using Emotional Intelligence Inventory (EII), developed by S. K. Mangal & Shubra Mangal (EII: Mangal and Mangal, 2004). The EII has been designed for use with Hindi and English knowing 16 + years age of school, college and university students. The EII is an inventory containing 25 items for each four dimensions of emotional intelligence namely, Intra- personal Awareness (knowing about one's own emotions), Inter-personal Awareness (knowing about others' emotions), Intra- personal management (Managing one's own emotions) and Inter-personal Management (Managing others' emotions) respectively. A global score can be calculated based on these dimensions on a scale 2 ("Agree"), 1 ("sometimes") and 0 ("disagree") for positive items reversely for negative items.

Higher scores indicate higher levels of emotional intelligence in this study, we used Hindi version, which has shown adequate validity and reliability. As shown in Table 1, our sample's reliability indexes were excellent ($\alpha = 0.89$; KR-20 = 0.90)

Spiritual Intelligence was measured using Spiritual intelligence scale (SIS), developed by K.S. Mishra (SIS: Mishra, 2005). The SIS is a self- report questionnaire containing 42 items. A global score can be calculated based on these areas. Items are answered on a scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree") and higher scores indicate higher levels of spiritual intelligence. In this study, we used Hindi version, which has shown adequate validity and reliability. As shown in Table 1, our sample's reliability indexes were excellent ($\alpha = 0.89$; KR-20 = 0.86). Finally, academic achievement was assessed using the marks of high school final marks reported by the students.

Table 1 Statistical Summary and Reliability Indices for Spiritual and Emotional Intelligence

Variable	M	SD	Cronbach alpha	KR-20	P
Spiritual Intelligence	166.77	21.92	.87	.85	0.01



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Emotional Intelligence 136.50 24.14 .89 .90 0.01

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was conducted with strict adherence to ethical guidelines and practical considerations to ensure the integrity and validity of the research. The government and added colleges of UP board assessed and approved the research protocol of the study. Necessary permissions were obtained from the concerned educational authorities and the principals of the selected schools. Before administering the questionnaires, participants were briefed about the study's objectives and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Written informed consent was obtained from the students.

Data collection was in accordance with current ethical standards Data were collected at the schools during a routine class session the presence of a teacher and a research assistant. During this session, students were informed of the objectives of the study and were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. Following instructions to complete the questionnaires were given and all questions were answered. Students voluntarily completed the paper-based questionnaires for approximately 30 min.

Statistical Analysis

Analyses were carried out using SPSS 21. Cronbach's alpha and KR-20 indexes were calculated to assess the reliability of the questionnaires. Descriptive statics and Pearson correlations were estimated. As self-report questionnaires were used to measure all variables, mean scores differences were assessed using t-test and ANOVA statistics. Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) were calculated for all variables to summarize the sample characteristics and the distribution of scores for EI, SI, and academic achievement across different demographic groups. These were used to compare the means of two independent groups. Specifically, t-tests were applied to examine differences in EI, SI, and academic achievement based on gender (male vs. female) and area of residence (rural vs. urban).

One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to compare the means of EI, SI, and academic achievement across more than two groups. This was primarily used for analyzing differences based on academic streams (Arts, Science, Commerce). When the ANOVA results indicated statistically significant differences among the groups, Tukey's HSD post-hoc tests were conducted. This step was crucial for identifying which specific pairs of groups differed significantly from each other. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances Prior to conducting the t-tests and ANOVA, Levene's test was performed to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variances. This step ensures the appropriateness of using parametric statistical tests.

If the assumption was violated, appropriate adjustments or alternative non-parametric tests would be considered, although the results indicated homogeneity for the employed tests. The significance level for all statistical tests was set at $p < 0.05$. The detailed application of these statistical methods allowed for a robust empirical investigation of the study's hypotheses and research questions.



Results

Preliminary Analyses

Table 1 shows the descriptive statics, reliability indexes, and Pearson analyses for the study variables as shown, the internal consistency of all the questionnaires was satisfactory and all the variables were significantly and positively correlated. This section presents the empirical findings derived from the statistical analysis of data collected from 580 senior secondary students of Hindi-medium of UP Board schools. The analyses were conducted to investigate differences in academic achievement, spiritual intelligence (SI), and emotional intelligence (EI) across various socio-demographic variables: area of residence (rural vs. urban), gender (male vs. female), family type (nuclear vs. joint), and academic stream (Arts, Science, Commerce).

1. Area-Wise Differences in Academic Achievement, Spiritual Intelligence, and Emotional Intelligence

To examine the impact of geographical background on the measured variables, independent samples t-tests were performed. Descriptive statistics, presented in Table 2, revealed that urban students generally achieved higher mean scores compared to their rural counterparts across all three variables: academic achievement, spiritual intelligence, and emotional intelligence. Specifically, urban students recorded a mean academic achievement score of 70.24 (SD = 8.64), which was significantly higher than the rural students' mean of 68.08 (SD = 8.67). Similarly, urban students demonstrated superior spiritual intelligence ($M = 172.00$, $SD = 18.76$) in comparison to rural students ($M = 166.74$, $SD = 20.36$). For emotional intelligence, urban students attained a mean score of 120.68 ($SD = 18.12$), which was also notably higher than that of rural students ($M = 116.49$, $SD = 15.89$).

The results of the independent samples t-tests, detailed in Table 3, confirmed these observations. A statistically significant difference was found for academic achievement between urban and rural students, with $t(514.42) = 5.51$, $p < .003$. For spiritual intelligence, the difference was also statistically significant, $t(577.99) = 6.69$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, emotional intelligence scores differed significantly between the two groups, $t(552.92) = 3.29$, $p = .003$. These findings collectively indicate that students residing in urban areas tend to exhibit higher levels of academic achievement, spiritual intelligence, and emotional intelligence compared to those from rural areas. This aligns with previous research suggesting that urban students may benefit from enhanced educational resources, greater social exposure, and more robust institutional support systems.

Table 2 Area-Wise Group Statistics for Academic Achievement, Spiritual Intelligence, and Emotional Intelligence

Variable	Area	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Std. Error Mean
Academic Achievement	Rural	302	68.08	8.67	0.50



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Spiritual Intelligence	Urban	278	70.24	8.64	0.52
	Rural	302	166.74	20.36	1.17
Emotional Intelligence	Urban	278	172.00	18.76	1.12
	Rural	302	116.49	15.89	0.91
	Urban	278	120.68	18.12	1.09

Note. Higher means indicate better performance in the respective variables.

Table 3. Independent Samples t-Test Results for Area-Wise Differences

Variable	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Academic Achievement	5.51	514.42	.003 **
Spiritual Intelligence	6.69	577.99	.001 **
Emotional Intelligence	3.29	552.92	.003 **

Note. * $p < .01$ (two-tailed). Significant differences were observed across all three variables in favor of urban students.

2. Gender-Based Differences in Academic Achievement, Spiritual Intelligence, and Emotional Intelligence

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to investigate potential gender-based differences in academic achievement, spiritual intelligence, and emotional intelligence. The descriptive statistics presented in Table 4 show that female students ($n=340$) generally scored higher than male students ($n=240$) on all three measures. Female students achieved a mean academic score of 70.54 ($SD = 7.32$), while male students scored 67.11 ($SD = 10.06$). In terms of spiritual intelligence, females had a mean score of 173.78 ($SD = 18.31$) compared to males' 162.86 ($SD = 20.03$). For emotional intelligence, the mean score for females was 120.44 ($SD = 17.02$), versus 115.75 ($SD = 16.90$) for males.

The results of the independent samples t-tests, summarized in Table 5, confirmed these gender-based disparities. Female students scored significantly higher than male students in academic achievement ($t(410.45) = 5.51, p < .001$), spiritual intelligence ($t(485.03) = 6.69, p < .001$), and emotional intelligence ($t(516.75) = 3.29, p = .001$). These findings are consistent with research suggesting that females may possess stronger emotional regulation, empathy, and spiritual awareness, contributing to their higher academic performance. This highlights the potential need for gender-sensitive educational strategies that support the equitable development of these competencies in all students.

Table 4 Gender-Wise Group Statistics for Academic Achievement, Spiritual Intelligence, and Emotional Intelligence

Variable	Gender	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Std. Error Mean
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Academic Achievement	Male	240	67.11	10.06	0.65
	Female	340	70.54	7.32	0.40
Spiritual Intelligence	Male	240	162.86	20.03	1.29
	Female	340	173.78	18.31	0.99
Emotional Intelligence	Male	240	115.75	16.90	1.09
	Female	340	120.44	17.02	0.92

Note. Female students demonstrated higher mean scores across all three variables compared to male students.

Table 5 Independent Samples t-Test Results for Gender Differences

Variable	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Academic Achievement	5.51	410.45	.000 **
Spiritual Intelligence	6.69	485.03	.000 **
Emotional Intelligence	3.29	516.75	.001 **

Note. * $p < .01$ (two-tailed). Significant gender differences were observed across all three variables, with females outperforming males.

3. Family-Type-Based Differences in Academic Achievement, Spiritual Intelligence, and Emotional Intelligence

To determine if family type (nuclear vs. joint) influenced the measured variables, independent samples t-tests were performed. The descriptive statistics, shown in Table 6, indicate very similar mean scores for students from nuclear families ($n=294$) and joint families ($n=286$). The mean academic achievement scores were 69.11 ($SD = 8.52$) for single families and 69.12 ($SD = 8.93$) for joint families. For spiritual intelligence, the means were 168.65 ($SD = 19.29$) and 169.88 ($SD = 20.26$), respectively. Emotional intelligence scores were also comparable, with means of 119.62 ($SD = 17.11$) for single families and 117.35 ($SD = 17.07$) for joint families.

The independent samples t-tests results, presented in Table 7, did not reveal any statistically significant differences between students from nuclear and joint families on any of the three outcome variables. Specifically, the differences for academic achievement ($t(574.63) = 0.75$, $p = .454$), spiritual intelligence ($t(574.77) = 0.015$, $p = .999$), and emotional intelligence ($t(577.64) = 1.60$, $p = .110$) were all non-significant. These findings suggest that family structure, in terms of nuclear versus joint family systems, is not a significant determinant of academic achievement, spiritual intelligence, or emotional intelligence in this sample. This reinforces the notion that the quality of family relationships and emotional support within the family environment may be more influential than its structural form.



Table 6 Family-Type-Wise Group Statistics for Academic Achievement, Spiritual Intelligence, and Emotional Intelligence

Variable	Family Type	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Std. Error Mean	Error
Academic Achievement	Single	249	69.11	8.52	0.50	
	Joint	286	69.12	8.93	0.53	
Spiritual Intelligence	Single	294	168.65	19.29	1.13	
	Joint	286	169.88	20.26	1.20	
Emotional Intelligence	Single	294	119.62	17.11	1.00	
	Joint	286	117.35	17.07	1.01	

Note. Mean differences across family types were minimal for all three variables.

Table 7 Independent Samples t-Test Results for Family-Type Differences

Variable	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Academic Achievement	0.75	574.63	.454
Spiritual Intelligence	0.015	574.77	.999
Emotional Intelligence	1.60	577.64	.110

Note. No significant differences were observed between single-family and joint-family students across the three variables.

4. Stream-Wise Differences in Academic Achievement, Spiritual Intelligence, and Emotional Intelligence

To analyze differences across academic streams (Arts, Science, Commerce), a one-way ANOVA was conducted, followed by Tukey's HSD post-hoc tests where significant differences were found. The ANOVA summary in Table 8 shows that there were statistically significant differences among the academic streams for academic achievement ($F(2, 577) = 22.08, p < .001$) and emotional intelligence ($F(2, 577) = 10.83, p < .001$). However, no significant differences were observed for spiritual intelligence ($F(2, 577) = 1.03, p = .357$).

The Tukey HSD post-hoc tests, detailed in Table 9, further elucidated these findings. For academic achievement, students in the Science stream ($n=264$) significantly outperformed students from both the Arts ($n=148$) and Commerce ($n=168$) streams. The comparison between Arts and Commerce students did not yield a significant difference in academic achievement. Similarly, for emotional intelligence, Science stream students scored significantly higher than Arts stream students. The difference between Science and Commerce students for emotional intelligence was also significant. However, no significant differences were found between Arts and Commerce students in emotional intelligence. Crucially, for spiritual intelligence, no significant differences



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were detected between any of the academic streams, indicating that academic specialization does not significantly impact spiritual development in this context. These results suggest that the cognitive demands and the nature of the Science curriculum might contribute to higher academic performance and emotional competencies, aligning with existing research.

Table 8 One-Way ANOVA Summary for Stream-Wise Differences

Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Academic Achievement	Between Groups	3128.35	2	1564.17	22.08	.000 **
	Within Groups	40867.96	577	70.83		
Spiritual Intelligence	Between Groups	805.56	2	402.78	1.03	.357
	Within Groups	225474.13	577	390.77		
Emotional Intelligence	Between Groups	6136.14	2	3068.07	10.83	.000 **
	Within Groups	163414.86	577	283.22		

*Note. * $p < .01$ (two-tailed). Academic achievement and emotional intelligence showed significant stream-wise differences, while spiritual intelligence did not.*

Table 9 Post Hoc Tukey HSD Test for Stream-Wise Mean Differences

Variable	Comparison	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Academic Achievement	Arts vs Science	-4.53*	0.86	.000 **
	Arts vs Commerce	0.25	0.95	.961
	Science vs Commerce	4.78*	0.83	.000 **
Spiritual Intelligence	Arts vs Science	2.63	2.03	.397
	Arts vs Commerce	2.80	2.23	.421
	Science vs Commerce	0.17	1.95	.996
Emotional Intelligence	Arts vs Science	-6.38*	1.73	.001 **
	Arts vs Commerce	0.28	1.90	.988
	Science vs Commerce	6.66*	1.66	.000 **

*Note. * $p < .01$. Significant differences were found between Science and Arts/Commerce in academic achievement and emotional intelligence, favouring Science students. No significant stream-wise differences were observed in spiritual intelligence.*

Discussion

This study empirically examined socio-demographic differences in emotional intelligence (EI), spiritual intelligence (SI), and academic achievement among senior secondary students in Uttar



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Pradesh's Hindi-medium schools. The results affirm the multifaceted nature of adolescent development and highlight the influence of contextual, psychological, and socio-cultural factors on student outcomes. Specifically, urban students consistently outperformed rural students in all three domains, supporting previous findings on urban–rural disparities in academic and psychosocial development (Chaturvedi & Seema, 1992; Nagaraju, Reddy, & Reddy, 2003; Joshi & Srivastava, 2009). These differences are frequently attributed to better infrastructure, enriched learning environments, exposure to diverse socio-cultural stimuli, and the availability of psychosocial support systems in urban contexts (Kumar & Bhatia, 2019). Enhanced emotional and spiritual intelligence in urban students may also be associated with their access to varied interpersonal experiences and reflective practices supported by formal schooling environments.

Regarding our first hypothesis, the results corroborated that students from urban backgrounds would outperform their rural counterparts in academic achievement, emotional intelligence (EI), and spiritual intelligence (SI). The results of the present study substantiated this hypothesis, revealing statistically significant differences favouring urban students across all three domains. These findings are consistent with and extend previous literature in multiple ways. In line with previous researches (Rani & Kumar, 2020; Singh & Kaur, 2019), these findings suggest that urban students tend to have higher academic achievement, often attributed to better infrastructure, access to learning resources, and parental educational support. This trend aligns with existing literature suggesting that adolescent females often demonstrate greater emotional regulation, empathy, and spiritual awareness (Goleman, 1998; Singh & Sinha, 2008; Kaur & Kaur, 2018). In addition, these non-cognitive attributes are instrumental in enhancing learning outcomes and fostering psychosocial resilience. Female adolescents' capacity for emotional processing and spiritual introspection may stem from both biological predispositions and socialization processes, emphasizing the importance of integrating gender-responsive strategies within educational settings. Thus, our findings align with these conclusions, indicating a mean academic score significantly higher among urban students ($M = 172.00$, $SD = 18.76$) compared to rural students ($M = 166.74$, $SD = 20.36$). In alignment with previous research by Sharma and Joshi (2018), the present study found that urban adolescents demonstrated significantly higher levels of emotional intelligence, particularly in the intrapersonal and interpersonal domains. This trend may be attributed to increased exposure to diverse social environments, access to structured extracurricular engagements, and emotionally supportive educational settings commonly found in urban contexts. Our findings further reinforce the association between urban ecological factors and enhanced emotional regulation and social adaptability among adolescents. These non-cognitive capacities are critical not only for optimizing academic performance but also for nurturing psychosocial resilience and adaptive coping strategies. Additionally, female participants consistently exhibited superior emotional processing and a greater propensity for spiritual reflection, which may be rooted in both neurobiological sensitivities and gendered socialization practices. These results



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underscore the necessity for educational frameworks to adopt gender-responsive and context-sensitive approaches when addressing emotional and spiritual development during adolescence. While comparative research on spiritual intelligence (SI) remains limited, emerging evidence suggests that geographical context plays a significant role in shaping SI competencies. For instance, Bano and Talib (2021) observed that students from urban backgrounds exhibited higher levels of existential thinking and personal meaning-making, attributing these differences to enhanced educational opportunities and greater exposure to diverse cultural experiences. Consistent with these findings, the present study revealed that urban students outperformed their rural counterparts on key SI dimensions, particularly transcendental awareness and critical existential thinking. These outcomes underscore the influence of sociocultural and educational environments on the development of spiritual cognition and reflective capacities among adolescents. Taken together, these comparisons indicate a persistent urban advantage, likely rooted in sociocultural and educational disparities. While our study confirms existing trends, it also emphasizes the need for systemic interventions in rural educational settings to bridge these gaps—particularly through emotional and spiritual development programs embedded within the school curriculum.

With respect to our second hypothesis, the findings are in alignment with a substantial body of literature emphasizing gender-related differences in non-cognitive domains. Prior studies have highlighted that females tend to demonstrate greater emotional awareness, empathy, and interpersonal sensitivity—core components of EI—which can positively influence learning outcomes and social functioning (Goleman, 1998; Mayer et al., 2008). Enhanced EI in females may provide them with an advantage in managing academic stressors, fostering better peer relationships, and maintaining motivation for academic tasks, ultimately contributing to their higher academic achievement.

In addition to emotional competencies, gender disparities in SI are also notable. The higher SI scores observed among female students suggest stronger engagement with existential reflection, personal meaning-making, and transcendental awareness. In line with previous research (Kaur & Kaur, 2018; Singh & Sinha, 2008) indicating that adolescent girls are often more inclined toward introspective and value-oriented thinking, especially in socio-cultural contexts where emotional and spiritual expressiveness is more socially reinforced among females. These attributes not only facilitate adaptive coping strategies but also promote holistic psychological development.

The integrated superiority of female students across all three domains—cognitive (academic achievement), emotional, and spiritual—underscores the multidimensional strengths they bring into the educational context. This reinforces the need for gender-sensitive educational frameworks that recognize and harness these competencies while also addressing the developmental needs of male students. Such frameworks should encourage emotional literacy, self-reflection, and meaning-making for all genders, thereby fostering more equitable and inclusive educational



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outcomes (Brackett et al., 2019). The data further underscore the developmental advantage of female adolescents in leveraging emotional and spiritual competencies to support cognitive functioning. Such evidence reinforces the need for gender-responsive pedagogical strategies that cultivate emotional and spiritual growth equitably across genders, thereby promoting holistic student development.

With respect to our third hypotheses, the results show No statistically significant differences were observed between students from nuclear and joint family structures across academic achievement, emotional intelligence, or spiritual intelligence. These findings support previous developmental literature which emphasizes that the quality of familial relationships—particularly emotional support, communication, and cohesion—plays a more pivotal role in adolescent adjustment than the structural configuration of the family itself (Buehler & Gerard, 2002; Lansford, 2009). The results suggest that functional aspects of the family environment, such as emotional warmth and supportive parenting, may exert a more substantial influence on adolescents' academic and psychosocial development than whether the household is nuclear or extended. This highlights the importance of fostering healthy intra-family dynamics over focusing solely on family type when considering interventions to support youth outcomes. These findings advocate for intervention models that prioritize relational dynamics over structural classifications when addressing student support systems.

With respect to our fourth hypotheses, the analysis revealed that students enrolled in the science stream significantly outperformed their counterparts from arts and commerce streams in academic achievement and emotional intelligence. In line with previous researches (Behere et al., 2011; Sharma & Bansal, 2020) this trend may be attributed to the cognitively demanding and high-stakes nature of science education, which often fosters both intellectual rigor and the development of emotional resilience necessary to manage academic pressures. Interestingly, no significant differences emerged among streams in spiritual intelligence, suggesting that spiritual development may transcend academic specialization and is more likely shaped by individual values, familial influence, and sociocultural factors rather than curricular orientation (Kumar & Singh, 2021). Prior research suggests that the cognitive rigor and high-pressure nature of science curricula may enhance students' emotional resilience and problem-solving abilities (Behere, Yadav, & Behere, 2011; Sharma & Bansal, 2020). Interestingly, spiritual intelligence did not differ significantly among academic streams, underscoring the idea that SI is influenced more by individual values, cultural exposure, and personal reflection than by subject specialization (Kumar & Singh, 2021). These findings indicate the need for domain-specific interventions, particularly to support emotional development in non-science streams.

These findings support the need for stream-specific interventions, particularly in arts and commerce education, to cultivate emotional competencies that contribute to both academic and personal success. Tailored programs that integrate emotional skill-building into the curriculum



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could help bridge the gap and support holistic student development across disciplines.

Conclusion

Collectively, the results highlight the complex interplay of socio-demographic and educational variables in shaping student outcomes. Addressing urban–rural disparities, advancing gender-sensitive emotional and spiritual education, strengthening supportive family dynamics, and adapting curriculum delivery to stream-specific needs are all essential strategies for promoting equity and psychological well-being in secondary education. Such integrative approaches are critical to ensuring that academic environments support not only cognitive performance but also the emotional and spiritual growth of all learners.

While the present study offers valuable insights into the interplay of emotional intelligence (EI), spiritual intelligence (SI), and academic achievement among senior secondary students in Uttar Pradesh, several limitations must be acknowledged. Firstly, we used cross-sectional data, which does not allow draw any causal inferences. the cross-sectional design prevents causal inferences regarding the directionality between socio-demographic variables and EI, SI, and academic outcomes (Maxwell & Cole, 2007). Another limitation of the study is that the sample was limited to Hindi-medium government schools, which may restrict the generalizability of findings to private or English-medium institutions. Thirdly, the reliance on self-report instruments may also introduce social desirability bias, particularly in constructs like spiritual intelligence, where cultural norms might influence responses (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Additionally, while the study controlled for several demographic factors, unmeasured variables such as parental education, teacher quality, and school climate may also significantly contribute to student outcomes. Finally, the lack of longitudinal follow-up limits our understanding of how EI and SI evolve over time and influence academic trajectories. Future research should consider adopting longitudinal or mixed-methods designs to better capture the dynamic nature of emotional and spiritual intelligence over time and across developmental stages. Expanding the sample to include private and English-medium schools, as well as other regional boards, could enhance external validity. Moreover, incorporating objective assessments and triangulated data sources (e.g., teacher ratings, academic records) may help mitigate biases associated with self-report data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Future studies should also explore intervention-based approaches that target EI and SI development across different socio-cultural contexts. This includes the design and evaluation of gender-responsive, stream-specific, and context-sensitive curricula that embed emotional and spiritual learning into everyday classroom practices (Brackett et al., 2019; Elias et al., 1997). Lastly, research should investigate the mediating and moderating roles of variables such as family cohesion, peer support, and teacher-student relationships to build a more comprehensive model of adolescent academic and psychosocial development.

Despite these limitations, our study is the first to analyse the importance of equitable, gender-responsive, and stream-specific educational strategies that foster emotional and spiritual



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development alongside academic growth. By addressing disparities rooted in geography, gender, and curricular stream, policymakers and educators can better support the holistic development of students in diverse socio-educational settings. Future research should continue to explore these variables through longitudinal and intervention-based approaches to inform more effective and inclusive educational policies. Our results support the notion compelling evidence regarding the significant role of emotional and spiritual intelligences in shaping academic achievement among adolescents. It highlights the nuanced influence of socio-demographic variables, such as gender, area of residence, and academic stream, on both cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes. The consistent advantage observed among urban and female students in emotional and spiritual domains emphasizes the need for targeted educational strategies that bridge contextual disparities and promote equity in psychosocial development. The findings affirm that emotional intelligence—especially in domains like intrapersonal awareness and emotional regulation—plays a critical role in academic functioning and personal adaptation during adolescence (Mayer et al., 2008; Brackett et al., 2011). Similarly, spiritual intelligence, which fosters meaning-making, existential reflection, and inner peace, appears to support adolescent resilience and well-being, particularly in educational contexts that allow introspection and moral inquiry (Zohar & Marshall, 2000; Amram & Dryer, 2008). Despite the lack of significant differences based on family type, the study reinforces the view that the *quality* of familial and educational interactions matters more than structural variables (Lansford, 2009). Furthermore, stream-specific variations in EI but not in SI point to the subjectivity of emotional development through curricular pressures, while spiritual growth remains more universal and influenced by personal and cultural values. Altogether, the findings suggest that integrating emotional and spiritual learning into mainstream pedagogy can contribute meaningfully to adolescents' academic success and psychological adjustment. Educational systems must therefore evolve to recognize the interconnectedness of emotional, spiritual, and cognitive development and foster inclusive and responsive learning environments. Future research should build on these insights through longitudinal and culturally grounded studies to further explore the transformative potential of non-cognitive competencies in adolescent education.

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