

## Study of Academic Performance as a Function of Spirituality

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Spirituality is the equality or condition of being spiritual, attachment to or regard for the thing of the spirit as opposed to material or worldly interest.' The present paper is an attempt to examine the level of spirituality experienced by science and arts stream students and the influence of level spirituality on their academic performance. In order to meet the objectives of the paper, two directional hypotheses have been formulated and t test is used to find out the deference between the level of spirituality among science and arts stream students it has been found that groups were not significantly differ with respect to their level of spirituality. And one way ANOVA with post hoc is computed to examine the influence of spirituality on academic performance, result showed that there is significant influence of spirituality on academic performance, eventually, post hoc concluded, no significant influence of the low and moderate level of spirituality on academic performance, but high spirituality increases the academic performance.

**Key words:** Spirituality, Academic Performance, t-test, ANOVA.

### 1. Introduction

Spirituality' is a particularly slippery word and educationalist are often uncertain about its authenticity or utility. People often uncover their real spirituality by viewing themselves through the eyes of others as well as by reflecting their own experiences of hope and darkness. Spirituality according to Oxford English Dictionary is 'the equality or condition of being spiritual, attachment to the thing of spirit as opposed to material or worldly interest'.

It is important to note that for some people spirituality involves a religious connotation while for others it does not. Some scholars have made a conceptual distinction between spirituality and religiosity, arguing that there are many people who are spiritual but not religious, some who are religious but not spiritual, and some who are both [1]. In fact, historically much of the interest in spirituality has been rooted in religion. However, for many others, spirituality in the present scenario does not involve a connection to any specific religious practice, but rather is based on their own personal values and philosophy. In a general sense, spirituality can be define as involving the fundamental values to which we commit ourselves and we trust to secure significant meaning in our lives.

When we examine the multiple forms of academic spirituality, we can distinguish between two broad and opposing types. One illustrates aggressive or insistent individualism which is critical of basic human values include spiritualities that raise self-preoccupation, even egoism and selfishness, that encourage to listen others in hoping to hear weakness rather than novelty or strength, that interpret intellectual inquiry as attack and counterattack, that emphasize on hierarchy and consider education as only a commodity, or that separate public and private selves, or compartmentalize believing and living. While second type of spirituality raise autonomy as the spiritual value, understanding it as intellectual self-sufficiency in an academic context where individual self-promotion and self-protection are central. These kinds of individualistic spiritualities produce either the intolerable egotism to those who are successful in their self-promotion or the damaged self-esteem and wounded selfishness to the unsuccessful. In the moments of insistent individualism, one aims to be autonomous and self-regulating, in counting ones strengths and shrewdness to protect oneself and secure the self-serving meanings to which one is loyal. Using spirituality in education, in addition to ease the process of teaching and learning, contributes to preparing the learners' mentality in learning, more efficacy along with psychological

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safety [2,3]. Furthermore, education along with spiritual training can give meaning to lessons and goals; it creates a deep sense of unity and relation to the world [4].

Moreover, in higher education, connecting faith to academic performance has not been the subject of significant academic research. Though, some relevant studies have been conducted in the particular aspect of spirituality. As George Kuh [5] conducted a study on students' spirituality and its effect on various aspects of the students' experience in college. The data was based on almost 150,000 surveys from students of 461 American universities. Results indicated that students, who engage in spirituality-enhancing activities, participated more in extra-curricular opportunities such as cultural events and community service. They also observed that spirituality enhancing activities have not adversely affected positive educational activities such as studying and deep learning. But when looking specifically at faith-based colleges to the exclusion of secular or primarily secular institutions, they found that students tended "to engage less in deep learning activities and to gain less in developing practical competence and general education outcomes". Overall, researchers found that "spirituality-enhancing activities do not seem to hinder, and may even have mildly salutary effects on engagement in educationally purposeful activities and desired outcomes of college. In response to the various challenges of students' life, some students resort to spirituality as a coping strategy [6]. UCLA Higher Education Research Institute conducted a survey in its National Study of College Students' Search for Meaning and Purpose, it is found that 80% of respondents indicated that they were interested in spirituality and believed in the sacredness of life; about 66% declared that their spirituality was a source of joy; more than 75% admitted that they believed in God; more than 66% accepted that their religious/spiritual beliefs provided them with strength, support, and guidance; and 75% said that feeling a sense of connection with God/a Higher Power that transcended their personal self [7]. These figures suggest that spirituality is essential to College or university students' lives, and highlight the crucial role of spirituality in higher education. According to the recently revised 2019 School Inspection Handbook, to promote spiritual development a school should provide opportunities for pupils to develop the ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life, second, to respect different people's

faiths, feelings and values, third, add sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them, fourth, use of imagination and creativity in their learning, willingness to reflect on their experiences [8].

The present paper is an attempt to investigate the relationship with academic performance and to compare the level of spirituality experienced by the arts and science esteem students. Finding of present paper will help in revealing the stream where student are more spiritual, in order to find out that whether or not spirituality has any effect on academic performance.

### 1.1 Objectives

1. To find out the significant difference between science and arts stream student in their level of spirituality.
2. To examine the influence of different (low, moderate, high) level of spirituality on academic performance of science and arts esteem students.

### 1.2 Hypotheses

1. Level of spirituality will be higher among arts esteem students as compare to science esteem students.
2. Spirituality will have significant positive impact on academic performance.

## 2. Materials and Method

### 2.1 Participants

Population selected for this particular paper is the student of science and arts stream from Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. The sample consists of 100 students, out of which 50 were from arts and 50 from science stream who study in Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. The paper followed the purposive random sampling method. The sample belongs to an age group of 20 to 25.

### 2.2 Tool for data collection

The Spirituality Assessment Scale [9] was used for the assessment of spiritual orientation among students. The scale consisted of 28 items and has four dimensions of spirituality, namely, Purpose and Meaning in life, Inner Resources, Inter connectedness and Transcendence. The responses of the subject were obtained on 6 point scale from Strongly Agree, "SA (6) to Strongly Disagree, SD (1)". The internal consistency reliability coefficient for the SAS is equal to 0.70. And students' academic performance was measured by their percentage, obtained in previous examination.

### 2.3 Procedure

Students were selected from Arts and Science departments of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Department Heads were contacted for obtaining necessary permission and accordingly Data were collected from students. Informed consent was taken from every student before collecting the data and they were explained the purpose of the study.

### 2.4 Statistical Analysis of Data

In the present study, in order to find out the significant difference between science and arts stream students', t-test was used to analyze the data. Further, one way ANOVA was also used to examine the influence of spirituality on academic performance. And moreover, to determine the level (low, moderate and high) of influence investigator also utilized post hoc test. All statistical calculations were done using 20. Version of SPSS.

### 3. Results and Discussion

In the present investigation Table 1 is showing the difference between arts and science stream students on their level of spirituality. It is clearly observed that  $t = .124$  and not found significant on 0.05 level of confidence. Related hypothesis 1 that stated 'Arts students will be higher in their level of spirituality' is being rejected. Both groups have found almost same in experiencing spirituality. Result indicated that spirituality does not depend upon the stream but to a large extent, it depends on the personal values and philosophy. Spiritual growth is not something external but attending to something already exists.

**Table 1: Difference between Arts and Science Stream Students on Spirituality**

Stream	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Arts	50	68.4000	15.572		
Science	50	69.0400	20.628	.124	.902 (ns)

Though, significant difference has not been found in the level of spirituality in both the groups separately. But in examining the influence of spirituality as a whole on students academic performance, finding of the present study, is in line with the hypothesis stated above. The hypothesis stated that spirituality will have significant positive impact on academic performance. Table 3 is clearly shown that finding accepts the hypothesis as  $F = 9.236$  significant at .001 level of confidence.

**Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Level of Spirituality and Academic Performance of Students**

Level of Spirituality	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Low	25	63.10	5.425	.858	61.37	64.83
Moderate	40	64.30	3.278	.733	62.77	65.83
High	35	69.70	5.175	.818	68.04	71.36

**Table 3: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Shows Influence of Spirituality on Academic Performance**

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	941.760	2	470.880		
Within Groups	2396.200	97	24.704	9.236	.000
Total	3337.960	99			

Despite  $F$  value, indicating significant impact of spirituality on academic performance, level of spirituality needed for good performance is not being clear. By computing post hoc through SPSS, it is now clearly shown in Table 4 that low and moderate level of spirituality were not found to have their significant impact on academic performance but high level of spirituality increases the academic performance of science and arts stream students.

Table 4 of Post hoc comparisons using LSD test indicated that mean score of academic performance for low spirituality group ( $M = 63.10$ ,  $SD = 5.425$ ) was not significantly different than the moderate level of spirituality group of students ( $M = 63.20$ ,  $SD = 3.278$ ). However, the low spirituality group significant differs with high level of spirituality group on their academic performance ( $M = 69.70$ ,  $SD = 5.175$ ). Again, students having moderate and low level of spirituality are not found significantly different on their academic performance but moderate to high level of spirituality difference is being significantly differed with respect to its influence on academic performance. The result of table 4 clearly indicated that those students having high level of spirituality they are also better in their academic performance. High level of spirituality has its significant impact on academic performance while low and moderate levels of spirituality not seem to have any significant impact on academic performance.

**Table 4: Post Hoc Comparison (LSD) of Level of Spirituality and its Impact on Academic Performance**

Spirituality (I)	(J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Low	Moderate	-1.200	1.361	.380
	High	6.600**	1.111	.000
Moderate	Low	1.200	1.361	.380
	High	-5.400**	1.361	.008

#### 4. Conclusion and Implications

This is to conclude that spirituality is a very important aspect of students' personality that influences their academic performance but the level of spirituality should be higher. Thus, factor influencing spirituality should be detected and enhanced especially in students, in order to improve academic performance. It will help students to live more productive lives eventually will boost their overall life satisfaction.

Spirituality can gratify people in so many ways. In addition to education, spirituality is also instrumental in coping with stress as well as in boosting the life satisfaction by facilitating the sense of self, peace, purpose, hope, relationships and relatedness. It is observed that most of the problems a youth undergo found to be related to their carrier or break down in love affairs. Spirituality actually helps people to cope up with stress and to boost their personal well-being. Hence, by promoting spirituality in the world around ones, one can create more colorful picture of life. Eventually, by creating a spiritual atmosphere in education, organizations can facilitate the achievement of success in the academic system.

The present research was carried on the students undertaking from Aligarh Muslim University, where Muslim students are found to be in a promising number and the sample size is also small. Therefore, it minimizes the generality of the findings. Hence, it is suggested that such type of study must be conducted on relatively a large sample to be undertaken from across various section of the population.

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