

Spiritual Intelligence and Mental Health of Senior secondary College Students: A comparative study

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Abstract

Given the increasing interest in the role of spiritual intelligence as a component of mental health, this research aimed to examine its impact on adolescents, considering factors such as gender, area of residence, and academic stream of students of Lucknow city. A total of 240 students were selected through simple random sampling, with 80 students from each of the three academic streams: Arts, Science, and Commerce, and an equal gender distribution (120 male and 120 female). The data were analysed by using descriptive analysis (mean, Standard Deviation) and inferential analysis ('t'-test, ANOVA, Tukey's HSD Post-hoc analysis). The results revealed significant gender difference in both spiritual intelligence and mental health and No significant differences were found in relation to the area of residence. Additionally, no significant difference was observed in spiritual intelligence across the academic streams. However, significant differences in mental health scores were found between streams, with post-hoc analysis indicating that students in the Commerce stream had significantly different mental health scores compared to those in the Science and Arts streams. No significant difference was found between the Art and Science streams in terms of mental health. These findings provide valuable insights into the role of spiritual intelligence and mental health among adolescents and suggest the need for further investigation in specific academic contexts.

Keywords: Spiritual Intelligence, Mental Health, Gender, Area, Stream, Senior secondary students.

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1. Introduction

Adolescence represents a critical stage in life where the groundwork is laid for future education, significant life roles, interpersonal relationships, and the pursuit of long-term goals. It is also a pivotal period for implementing preventive interventions aimed at reducing the risk of developing more severe psychopathological conditions in adulthood (Saxena et al., 2006). Adolescence is a developmental stage marked by significant biological, cognitive, emotional, and psychological changes (Erikson, 1968). Adolescence phase of a young person's life offers opportunities for positive psychosocial development and healthy decision-making, while

also posing risks for psychological challenges and involvement in risky behaviours (Steinberg, L., 2008; Dahl, 2004). Spiritual intelligence, a concept introduced by Stephen Covey (2004), has been proposed as a potential protective factor against mental health issues. Spiritual intelligence refers to the ability to access consciousness, facilitating a deeper sense of purpose, meaning, and connection to oneself and others. Many of Researches has shown that spiritual intelligence is positively correlated with mental health outcomes, including life satisfaction, emotional intelligence, and resilience (Amram & Dryer, 2008; Piedmont, 2001). Mental Health professionals have recognized the power of spiritual intelligence (Safara & Bhatia, 2013). The role of spiritual intelligence and mental

health in adolescents is very important for present scenario it is a crucial area of research (King & Boyatzis, 2015). The role of spiritual intelligence especially in the context of psychology, religion, spirituality and mental health has attracted considerable attention (Emmons, 2000). Mental health broadly encompasses an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being, including the ability to make sound decisions and effectively manage stress. Spiritual intelligence represents a high level of intelligence, beyond the ego that has access to the mature qualities and advanced capabilities of the true self (World Health Organization, 2018; Amram & Dryer, 2008). These qualities include wisdom, compassion, integrity, joy, love, creativity, and peace. Spiritual intelligence uncovers a deeper sense of meaning and purpose, and improves a wide range of important life skills and work skills (Amram & Dryer, 2008; Emmons, 2000; Zohar & Marshall, 2000). The concept of Spiritual intelligence encompasses adaptability and problem-solving abilities that promote highest levels of growth in different cognitive, ethical, emotional and interpersonal domains (Amram & Dryer, 2008). It helps individuals to coordinate with their surrounding phenomena and achieving internal and external integration. The ability to behave with Wisdom and Compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace (equanimity), regardless of the circumstances is called spiritual intelligence (Wigglesworth, 2006). Spiritual intelligence provides people a general insight on life and all of its experiences, allowing them to reinterpret and restructure their experiences, thereby enhancing their understanding and awareness. (Esmaili et al., 2014). Salman et al. (2011) stated that high spiritual intelligence is the most effective means of attaining happiness, internal serenity, high self-confidence, and having Spiritual intelligence (SI) is closely linked to psychological well-being and is commonly viewed as the recognition of spirit as the core essence of existence or the creative force behind evolution. It involves a set of abilities that draw upon spiritual resources, contributing to personal growth and adaptability (Gupta et al., 2025). While distinct from existential intelligence, Spiritual Intelligence shares significant overlap with it (Halama & Strizenec, 2004). Spiritual intelligence represents a set of spiritual capabilities, abilities and resources that its employment leads to increasing adaptability and as a result, mental health in students (King, 2008; Zohar and Marshall, 2000). Spiritual intelligence is an improved and more efficient version of intellectual intelligence and emotional intelligence (Zohar and Marshall, 2000). When we mention spiritual intelligence that solves our semantic problems, signifies our activities and life at a wider and stronger level and someone's meaning of life and life path can be measured by it (Emmons, 2000). Spiritual intelligence and its dimensions including personal meaning - such as personal

meaning-making, transcendental awareness, self-awareness development, and existential critical thinking—have been found to significantly enhance students' mental health. Mental health is an important indicator of all round growth and development of students (King, 2008; Narayanasamy, 2006; Wigglesworth, 2012; Nanda, 2010). It is helpful in dealing with stresses and challenges of everyday life. It is more helpful in dealing with circumstances using controlling of our sense (Seligman, 2011). Mental health is influenced by a range of factors, including individual, family, community, and structural elements, which can either protect or undermine it (WHO, 2018; Patel, 2019). While many people demonstrate resilience, those facing adverse circumstances such as poverty, violence, disability, or inequality are at a heightened risk of developing mental health conditions. Mental health is defined as an individual's state of well-being, characterized by the recognition of one's abilities, the capacity to manage life's normal stresses, the ability to work productively and effectively, and the capability to contribute to the communities ((WHO, 2014). The mental health and well-being of secondary level students has become a concern globally. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that approximately 10-20% of adolescents worldwide experience mental health disorders, including anxiety, depression, and substance abuse (WHO, 2019). Mental health refers to a state of well-being that empowers people to manage life's challenges, recognize their abilities, learn effectively, work productively, and contribute positively to their community (WHO, 2014). It holds both intrinsic and instrumental value and is essential for overall well-being (Seligman, 2011). According to Mohan (2007), mental health can also be understood as the ability of individuals to adjust to themselves and the broader world, achieving effectiveness, satisfaction, cheerfulness, and socially considerate behaviour, while facing and accepting life's realities with minimal tension and conflict. Currently, mental health issues among adolescents are becoming an increasing concern for schools, community counsellors, and educators (Patel et al., 2007; WHO, 2019). Despite the availability of effective treatments at relatively low costs, mental health systems around the world remain underfunded, resulting in significant treatment gaps. Moreover, the quality of care often falls short, and individuals with mental health conditions frequently encounter stigma, discrimination, and violations of their human rights.

2. Theoretical Framework.

Spiritual Intelligence and Mental Health

Dar et al. (2022) observed no significant differences in spiritual intelligence and mental health among students based on gender. However, their findings revealed notable variations across different academic streams. A post-hoc analysis

indicated that students in the humanities stream exhibited significantly different mental health outcomes compared to those in science and commerce. In contrast, no significant differences were observed in mental health scores when comparing the humanities and social sciences, science and social sciences, science and commerce, or social sciences and commerce streams. According to Das and Patnaik (2015), significant differences were observed between high and low levels of spiritual intelligence individuals across all dimensions of emotional intelligence and mental health. Similarly, Charkhabi et al. (2014) demonstrated that spiritual intelligence training, conceptualized as a novel psychological and religious framework, can effectively reduce psychological distress while enhancing mental health outcomes among high school students. According to Altalha positive and significant correlation between mental health and spiritual intelligence. Also, his ONE-WAY ANOVA results highlighted that independent combined variables are significant predictors of the mental health variable. Arnout B. (2020) conducted a study titled '*A Structural Equation Model Relating Unemployment Stress, Spiritual Intelligence, and Mental Health Components: Mediators of Coping Mechanism.*' The researcher prepared an unemployment stress scale and used the Spiritual Intelligence Scale-27, and the creation of a short version of the Mental Health Components Scale based on the Mental Health Scale-50. The study, which included Seven hundred sixty-one adults aged thirty to forty-eight and revealed that the spiritual intelligence and mental health components has a good fitness with the data were collected, and able to predict mental health among unemployed adults. Mental health was proved to be the independent predictor of mindfulness, spiritual intelligence among the studied subjects (Ibrahim et.al,2023). Hussain et al. (2023) did study on 'Spiritual Intelligence, Resilience, and Mental Health: A Comparative Study among University Students with Different Academic Degrees'. The 200-sample using purposive sampling (100 Major in Islamic studies & 100 Non-majors in Islamic studies) with age ranging between 20 - 25 years ($M = 22.59$; $SD = 2.56$). They suggested that a comprehensive curriculum based on Islamic teachings have a positive influence on the spiritual intelligence and mental health of the student. Hosseindor et al., (2022) did work on 'Relationship between spiritual well-being and spiritual well-being and spiritual intelligence with mental health in students. They selected 277 students (110 boys and 167 girls) through convenience sampling. The result of their study confirms that spiritual well- being and spiritual intelligence affect mental health and its dimensions. Razia B (2013) did work on 'Effect of spiritual intelligence on well-being of prospective teachers' use descriptive survey method of research conducted 203 B.Ed. students. The study revealed

that spiritual intelligence plays an important role in the enhanced well- being of prospective teachers. Hussain et al. (2023) explored the relationship between spiritual intelligence, resilience, and mental health in their study titled "*Spiritual Intelligence, Resilience, and Mental Health: A Comparative Study among University Students with Different Academic Degrees.*" The research utilized purposive sampling to gather a sample of 200 students (100 Islamic Studies majors and 100 non-majors) aged 20–25 years ($M = 22.59$, $SD = 2.56$). Findings suggested that a curriculum informed by Islamic teachings positively influenced students' spiritual intelligence and mental health. Hosseindor et al. (2022) investigated the "*Relationship Between Spiritual Well-Being, Spiritual Intelligence, and Mental Health in Students.*" Their study included 277 participants (110 male and 167 female students) selected through convenience sampling. The results confirmed that both spiritual well-being and spiritual intelligence significantly impact mental health and its various dimensions (Gupta et. al., 2026). Thakur et al. (2022) did work on 'Spiritual Intelligence in Relation to Mental Health: A Study among Indian Adolescents'. They selected one hundred students age range of 15-17 years. For data analysis they used means, Standard deviations, independent sample t-test and correlation. The result confirmed that Students with higher spiritual intelligence own better mental health. Tavakkoli et al. (2015) stated that those who enjoy a companionship of spirituality and religious experiences report higher degrees of mental and physical health. Razia B. (2013) examined the "*Effect of Spiritual Intelligence on the Well-Being of Prospective Teachers*" using a descriptive survey method involving Two hundred three B.Ed. students. The findings highlighted that spiritual intelligence plays a critical role in enhancing the well-being of future educator.

3. Methodology

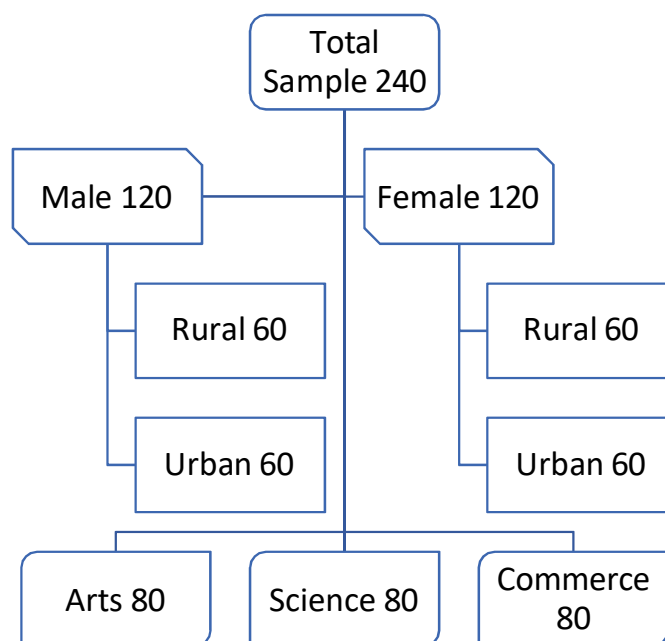
3.1 Participants

Statistical Population for the present study were Senior secondary college students of UP board of Lucknow district. The sample comprising a total of Two Hundred forty (240) students of age 15 to 20 years from streams Arts (80), Science (80) and Commerce (80). Gender wise Participants was male One Hundred twenty (120) and female One Hundred twenty (120)

equally. Area wise Participants were Rural One Hundred twenty and Urban One Hundred twenty equally. The Figure of Sample Distribution is shown below in Fig 1.

Fig 1

Gender, Area and stream Wise Sample



3.2 Tools

Measures All participants responded to of the two instruments that have been translated to Hindi language- **Spiritual Intelligence Scale (SIS-MK)**

The Spiritual Intelligence Scale was used to assess the spiritual intelligence of participants. The scale was developed by Dr. K. S. Misra (2014). It consists of 42 items each with five options starting from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The responses are to be scored by awarding 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. The respondent has to indicate the option depending on the degree to which the statement describes him/her. All the 42 statements are positively scored. Total score of Spiritual Intelligence Scale can range from 111-210. Its components include Spiritual understanding, beliefs, effort, outlook and reasoning. Guttman Split-half reliability coefficient for spiritual intelligence scale is 0.864 for UG-PG students' sample (N= One Hundred eighty) and 0.852 for senior secondary standard (N=one hundred sixty). Item validity has been calculated by finding out the correlation between scores on each item and scores on the spiritual intelligence scale. The value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.890 and 0.874 respectively. The correlation ranged from 0.184 to 0.610. The spiritual intelligence scale may be administered individually as well as in the group. There is no fixed time limit for the responses. But usually, respondents take 20-30 minutes of completing the whole scale.

Mental Health Battery (MHB-SS)

Mental Health Battery (MHB) was Developed by Arun Kumar Singh and Alpana Sen Gupta (2000). MHB intends to assess the status of mental health of persons in the age range of 13 to 22 years. There are set of 130 items in the MHB with six dimensions-1) Emotional Stability (ES), 2.6 Over all Adjustment (OA), 3. Autonomy (AY), 4. Security – Insecurity (SI), 5. Self-Concept (SC) and Intelligence (IG). Reliability of various dimensions of the battery was estimated by test-retest method and varied across 0.72 to 0.87. It also has high level of concurrent and constructs validity. The Validity of Battery was estimated as Part I: ES=0.673, Part II: OA=0.704, Part III: AY=0.681, Part IV: SI=0.821, Part V: SC=0.601 and Part VI: IG=.823. Percentile Norms for MHB have been developed.

3.3 Statistical Techniques

To Find out the Gender-wise, Area-wise and Stream-wise Differences Between Students on Spiritual Intelligence and Mental health the Data were analysed by using Mean, Standard Deviation, 't'-test, ANOVA,

Post-hoc Analysis with the help of SPSS.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Gender-wise Comparison of mean scores of Spiritual Intelligence

The question that we answered first was to find if there are any significant gender differences in the scores obtained by the students on Spiritual intelligence. The data was analysed with the help of t-test and the results are given in **table 1**

Table 1
Gender-wise M, S.D., N and t-values of Spiritual Intelligence

	Gender	M	S.D.	N	t-value	Sig
Spiritual Intelligence	Male	169.84	18.82	120	2.26	0.025
	Female	175.43	19.46	120		

***The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level**

From table 1 It is evident that the t-value is 2.26 which is significant 0.05 level with 238 (vide table 1). It shows that there is significant difference in mean scores of Spiritual Intelligence of Male and Female students. Thus, the Null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in mean scores of Spiritual Intelligence of male and female students is rejected. There were 120 males and 120 Females in total, with mean scores of 169.84 (S.D.=18.82) and 175.43 (SD=19.46) respectively. Further the **mean scores** of Spiritual Intelligence of Female is **169.84 (S.D.=18.82)** which is significantly higher than the male students whose mean score is **175.43 (SD=19.46)**. It may be said that female students were found to have significantly higher Spiritual Intelligence as compared to male students.

4.2 Gender-wise Comparison of mean scores of Mental Health

The question that we answered first was to find if there are any significant gender differences in the scores obtained by the students on Mental Health. The data was analysed with the help of t-test and the results are given in **table 2**.

Table 2
Gender-wise M, S.D., N and t-values of Mental Health

	Gender	M	S.D.	N	t-value	Sig
Mental Health	Male	84.34	8.21	120	2.36	0.35
	Female	80.90	12.02	120		

***The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level**

From table 2 It is evident that the t-value is 2.36 which is significant 0.05 level with 238 (vide table 1). It shows that there is significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Male and Female students. Thus, the Null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of male and female students is rejected. There were 120 males and 120 Females in total, with mean scores of **84.34 (S.D.=8.21)** and **80.90 (SD=12.02)** respectively. Further the **mean scores** of Mental Health of Female is **84.34 (S.D.=8.21)** which is significantly higher than the male students whose mean score is **80.90 (SD=12.02)**. It may be said that female students were found to have significantly higher mental health as compared to male students.

4.3 Area-wise Comparison of mean scores of Spiritual Intelligence

The question that we answered first was to find if there are any significant Area differences in the scores obtained by the students on Spiritual intelligence. The data was analysed with the help of t-test and the results are given in **table 3**

Table 3
Area-wise M, S.D., N and t-values of Spiritual Intelligence

	Area	M	S.D.	N	t-value	Sig
Spiritual Intelligence	Rural	172.50	18.63	120	.21	.91
	Urban	172.78	20.04	120		

***The mean difference is not significant at the 0.05 level**

Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in mean scores of Spiritual Intelligence Rural and Urban Students. Thus, the Null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in mean scores of Spiritual Intelligence of Rural and Urban students is not rejected. It may be said that students of both Area (Rural and Urban) were found to have spiritual intelligence to the same extent.

4.3 Area-wise Comparison of mean scores of Mental Health

The question that we answered first was to find if there are any significant Area-wise differences in the scores obtained by the students on Mental Health. The data was analysed with the help of t-test and the results are given in **table 3**.

Table 3
Area-wise M, S.D., N and t-values of Mental Health

***The mean difference is not significant at the 0.05 level**

	Area	M	S.D.	N	t-value	Sig
Mental Health	Rural	81.88	9.68	120	.95	.34
	Urban	82.98	8.11	120		

Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in mean scores of Spiritual Intelligence Rural and Urban Students. Thus, the Null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in mean scores of Spiritual Intelligence of Rural and Urban students is not rejected. It may be said that students of both Area (Rural and Urban) were found to have spiritual intelligence to the same extent.

4.4 The second concern was if there are significant disparities in Spiritual intelligence levels between stream. The ANOVA and Post-hoc analysis were used, and the results are shown in table 4(a) and 4(b).

Table 4(a)

Stream-wise Descriptives study of Students' Spiritual Intelligence (SI)

Stream	N	Mean(M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Arts Science	80	174.98	19.24
Commerce	80	169.40	20.04
Total	80	173.54	18.41
	240	172.64	19.31

Table 4(b)

Showing the ANOVA results of Spiritual intelligence

Spiritual Intelligence	f-ratio	p-value
Between groups	1.81	.216

*The mean difference is not significant at the 0.05 level

Stream-wise mean score obtained by the subjects on spiritual intelligence as presented table 4a are Arts (M=174.98, SD=19.24), Science (M=169.40, SD=20.04) and Commerce (M=173.54, SD=18.41). ANOVA results in 4(b) shows that there is no significant difference in spiritual intelligence between the three streams **F=1.81, not significant at 0.05** level of significance. Since ANOVA test has not revealed any overall significant difference in stream-wise analysis so Turkey's HSD was not applied.

4.5 The third question investigators addressed was if there are significant disparities in Mental Health levels between streams. The ANOVA was used, and the results are shown in table 5(a), 5(b) and 5(c). Table 5(a)

Stream-wise Descriptives study of student's mental health

Stream	N	Mean(M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Art	80	83.46	7.987
Science	80	83.78	9.198
Commerce	80	80.04	9.17
Total	240	82.43	8.93

Table 5(b)

Showing the ANOVA results of Spiritual intelligence

Mental Health	f-ratio	p-value
Between Groups	4.44	0.013

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 5(a) and 5(b) show a significant difference in mental health between the three streams (F= 4.44, p-value 0.013), with the science stream having the best mental health (M=83.78, SD=9.198), followed by the Art stream (M=83.46, SD=7.987) and the Commerce stream (M=80.04, SD=9.17).

Table 5(c)

Presenting the results of post-hoc analysis (Turkey HSD test) for multiple comparisons across different streams

Stream	Comparisons	Mean Difference	Sig
Art	Science Commerce	.313 3.425	.973 .039*
Science	Art Commerce	.313 3.738	.973 .021*
Commerce	Art Science	3.425 3.738	.039* .021*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

A post-hoc test was also conducted to discover which of the streams had the most significant differences in mental health when compared to the others. As shown in table 5(c) mean

difference of art and science stream is 0.313 and sig 0.973, mean difference in between art and commerce is 3.425 and sig 0.039 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance and mean difference in between science and commerce is 3.738 and sig 0.021 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The mental health scores reported by Commerce stream revealed a significance difference between art and science stream. The mental health scores reported by art stream and science stream did not show any significant difference.

Main Findings

1. There is significant difference in mean scores of Spiritual Intelligence of male and female students. Further the **mean scores** of Spiritual Intelligence of Female are **169.84 (S.D.=18.82)** which is significantly higher than the male students whose mean score is **175.43 (SD=19.46)**. It may be said that female students were found to have significantly higher Spiritual Intelligence as compared to male students.
2. A significant difference found in mean scores of Mental Health of male and female students. The **mean scores** of Mental Health of Female are **84.34 (S.D.=8.21)** which is significantly higher than the male students whose mean score is **80.90 (SD=12.02)**. It may be said that female students were found to have significantly higher mental health as compared to male students.
3. A significant difference not found in mean scores of Spiritual Intelligence of Rural and Urban students is not rejected. It may be said that students of both Area (Rural and Urban) were found to have spiritual intelligence to the same extent.
4. ANOVA test has not revealed any overall significant difference in stream-wise analysis in spiritual intelligence so Turkey's HSD was not applied.
5. ANOVA test show significant difference in mental health between the three streams ($F=4.44$, $p\text{-value } 0.013$), with the science stream having the best mental health ($M=83.78$, $SD=9.198$), followed by the Art stream ($M=83.46$, $SD=7.987$) and the Commerce stream ($M=80.04$, $SD=9.17$). A post-hoc test was also conducted to discover which of the streams had the most significant differences in mental health when compared to the others. mean difference of art and science stream is 0.313 and sig 0.973, mean difference in between art and commerce is 3.425 and sig 0.039 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance and mean difference in between science and commerce is 3.738 and sig 0.021 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The mental health scores reported by Commerce stream revealed a significance difference between art and science stream. The mental health scores reported by art stream and science stream did not show any significant difference.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The findings of the study showed that there is significant difference in mean scores of Spiritual

Intelligence of Male and Female students (Khan, Z.H., 2015; Amram Y., 2009) While the opposing result are found in study of Emmons, R. A. (2000); Mayer, J. D. (2000). Thus, the mean scores of Spiritual Intelligence of Female are 169.84 (S.D.=18.82) which is significantly higher than the male students whose mean score is 175.43 (SD=19.46). Which show that female students were found to have significantly higher Spiritual Intelligence as compared to male students (Thakur et al., 2022; King, D. B., & DeCicco, T.L., 2009; Kumar, V., & Gulati, A., 2015) Contrast results are found in study of Emmons, R. A. (2000); Piedmont, R. L. (2001). There is significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Male and Female students, the mean scores of Mental Health of Female are 84.34 (SD=8.21) which is significantly higher than the male students whose mean score is 80.90 (SD=12.02). It may be said that female students were found to have significantly higher mental health as compared to male students (Hyde, J. S., 2005; Seedat, S., et al., 2009) contrast results are found Kessler, R. C., et al., 2003; Piccinelli, M., & Wilkinson, G., 2000. Whereas area-wise, there is no significant difference found in spiritual intelligence and mental health (Zohar, D., & Marshall, I., 2000; Amram, Y. 2009). There is significant difference between Commerce stream demonstrated a considerable difference in mental health between science and art (Verma, S., & Gupta, J. 2015; Kumar, A., & Sharma, S., 2017) contrast results are found Singh, R., & Singh, A. (2013); Gupta, S., & Gupta, A. (2018). as presented in table 5a and 5b ($F=4.44$, significant at 0.05 level of significance). Mean difference of art and science stream is 0.313 and sig 0.973, mean difference in between art and commerce is 3.425 and sig 0.039 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance and mean difference in between science and commerce is 3.738 and sig 0.021 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Post-hoc test confirm no significant difference in the mental health scores of art and science streams. The mental health scores reported by Commerce stream revealed a significance difference between art and science stream. The mental health scores reported by art stream and science stream did not show any significant difference. Stream-wise mean scores obtained by the subjects on spiritual intelligence as presented table 4(a) showed that there is no significant difference between the three streams ($F=1.81$, not significant at $p < 0.05$) (Pant and Srivastava, 2017; Dar, et al., 2022).

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