



WWJMRD 2025; 11(02): 84-85  
www.wwjmr.com  
International Journal  
Peer Reviewed Journal  
Refereed Journal  
Indexed Journal  
Impact Factor SJIF 2017:  
5.182 2018: 5.51, (ISI) 2020-  
2021: 1.361  
E-ISSN: 2454-6615

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## The Influence of Gender and Subject Discipline on Spiritual Intelligence and Resilience

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### Abstract

The rapidly evolving landscape of modern society places significant psychological and emotional demands on individuals, making resilience and spiritual intelligence essential attributes for navigating adversity. Resilience, the ability to recover from setbacks, and spiritual intelligence, which encompasses meaning-making and ethical awareness, play a crucial role in academic and personal development. This study explores the comparative impact of gender and subject discipline on these attributes, analyzing how individuals cultivate and express them in different contexts. Research suggests that women generally exhibit higher emotional intelligence and relational spirituality, while men tend to employ logical and task-oriented coping strategies. Similarly, academic disciplines shape resilience and spiritual intelligence differently—STEM students often develop resilience through structured problem-solving, while humanities and social sciences students engage in introspection and ethical reflection. The intersection of gender and discipline further influences these attributes, with female STEM students encountering additional resilience-building challenges and male humanities students navigating societal expectations around emotional expression. Drawing insights from contemporary research and the Indian knowledge system, which integrates spiritual and philosophical traditions, this study highlights the role of resilience and spiritual intelligence in fostering adaptability. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of human development and offer implications for educational and psychological interventions aimed at enhancing these attributes in diverse academic and personal settings.

**Keywords:** resilience, spiritual intelligence, gender differences, academic development

### Introduction

The rapidly changing landscape of modern society has placed significant psychological and emotional demands on individuals. As personal and professional challenges continue to evolve, the concepts of resilience and spiritual intelligence have emerged as crucial factors in navigating adversity. Resilience, the ability to recover from setbacks, and spiritual intelligence, which involves meaning-making and ethical awareness, are central to understanding human adaptability. This study aims to explore the comparative impact of gender and subject discipline on these attributes, offering insights into their role in academic and personal development.

### Understanding Spiritual Intelligence and Resilience

Spiritual intelligence is a relatively new construct within intelligence research, integrating introspection, ethical decision-making, and a sense of purpose (Emmons, 2000). Individuals with higher spiritual intelligence tend to demonstrate self-awareness, compassion, and a capacity for navigating complex situations with ethical clarity. These qualities enable them to manage stress effectively and maintain well-being.

Resilience, on the other hand, refers to an individual's ability to withstand or recover quickly from adversity. It involves emotional regulation, optimism, and cognitive flexibility (Masten, 2001). Resilient individuals are better equipped to manage stress, adapt to changes, and maintain mental stability despite challenges. The interplay between resilience and spiritual intelligence highlights the importance of internal strengths and external influences, such as academic environments and cultural expectations, in shaping human responses to stress.

### Gender Differences in Spiritual Intelligence and Resilience

Research suggests that gender plays a role in the development and expression of both spiritual intelligence and resilience. Women generally exhibit higher levels of emotional intelligence and empathy, which may enhance their spiritual intelligence (King, 2008). They are also more likely to engage in relational spirituality, seeking meaning through interpersonal connections. In contrast, men tend to approach resilience in a more task-oriented manner, utilizing logical reasoning and external solutions to manage stress (Sax, 2008).

In resilience studies, women have been found to rely on social support networks, while men often exhibit independence and problem-focused coping strategies (Nolen-Hoeksema & Aldao, 2011). These gender-based tendencies suggest that while both men and women possess resilience, the ways in which they cultivate and express it vary significantly.

### Influence of Subject Discipline on Spiritual Intelligence and Resilience

Academic disciplines shape cognitive approaches to problem-solving and stress management. Students in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines are often trained in analytical and logical reasoning, which may contribute to cognitive resilience but limit engagement with existential or spiritual inquiry (Slemp, Kern, & Vella-Brodrick, 2015). Humanities and social sciences, by contrast, encourage philosophical and ethical reflection, which can enhance spiritual intelligence.

Furthermore, research indicates that students in high-stress disciplines, such as medicine and law, may develop resilience as a response to their demanding environments (Colomer & Vila-Belda, 2022). However, the nature of resilience varies across fields—technical disciplines may foster resilience through structured problem-solving, while reflective disciplines promote resilience through introspection and meaning-making.

### Intersection of Gender and Subject Discipline

The interaction between gender and academic discipline presents a nuanced understanding of resilience and spiritual intelligence. For instance, female students in STEM fields may face additional challenges related to gender biases, necessitating higher resilience. Conversely, male students in humanities disciplines may need to navigate societal expectations about masculinity and emotional expression, influencing their spiritual intelligence (Karkoulouian, Messarra, & Sidani, 2009).

The Indian knowledge system is a vast spectrum of indigenous knowledge which includes spiritual, philosophical and scientific traditions which are rooted in Vedas, Upanishads, and epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana. It promotes a holistic view which integrates spiritual intelligence and resilience as a major aspect of human development. Spiritual intelligence is the ability to apply spiritual principles in daily life enhancing individual well-being, and resilience allows people to cope with challenges more effectively.

### Conclusion

This study seeks to provide empirical evidence on whether gender and subject discipline significantly influence spiritual intelligence and resilience. By analyzing these variables, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of individual differences in coping strategies and personal development. These insights can inform educational practices, mental health interventions, and strategies for fostering resilience and spiritual intelligence in diverse academic and professional settings. The Indian knowledge system offers profound insights into the development of spiritual intelligence and resilience, which are critical for personal and collective well-being. Gender plays a role in how these qualities are cultivated and expressed. Women often utilize spiritual coping strategies to enhance emotional resilience, while men may approach resilience through action-oriented spirituality. By integrating spiritual intelligence into daily life, individuals of all genders can achieve greater mental clarity, emotional balance, and resilience in the face of life's challenges. Further research on spiritual intelligence across different genders, particularly within diverse cultural contexts like India, will deepen our understanding of its role in resilience.

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