Identity Achievement of Adolescents; Predicting Role of Spirituality

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The current research aimed to explore the relationship of Spirituality, Closeness to God and Identity Achievement among Adolescents in a quantitative correlational research survey design. Through purposive convenient sampling, adolescents *N*=350 (Male *n*=208 & Female *n*=142) were approached; age ranging from 15-21 years (*M*=17.99, *SD*=1.79), from different educational institutes of Karachi. Data was collected through Daily Spiritual Experience Scale and Ego Identity Process Questionnaire. It was hypothesized that there will be a positive relationship between Spirituality, Closeness to God and Identity Achievement (Exploration & Commitment) and that adolescents with different levels of spirituality will differ in the levels of identity achievement. The findings revealed a significant weak positive relationship of Commitment with spirituality and Closeness to God, while no significant relationship between Exploration and Spirituality was found and there is a significant weak negative relationship between Closeness to God and Exploration. It can be interpreted that there is a weak partial positive relationship between Spirituality and Identity Achievement. Findings also revealed significant differences in the levels of commitment of adolescents with different levels of spirituality ($\eta2$=.04) and levels of closeness to God ($\eta2$=.05). Current findings have implications in educational settings, curriculum development and counselling.

Keywords: Spirituality, Identity Achievement, Identity Exploration and Commitment, Adolescents

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Adolescence, also known as the period of *storm and stress*, falls between the onset of puberty and adulthood. During this period, the individual undergoes a drastic change pertaining to his physical, emotional, social and psychological growth that eventually leads to the development of a personality that he or she takes forward in life (Hashmi, 2013). It is also a period of heightened stress because during this phase, the individual gradually moves beyond caring for his physical appearance and is driven by an urgent desire for independence, augmented prominence of social and peer interaction and most importantly his need to develop a distinct identity (Blakemore, 2008). This emotional and cognitive transition compels them to think in ways that are rather abstract and highlights their increasing interest in trying to understand their own personalities, further marked by a radical variation in their originally built self-concepts (Hashmi, 2013). A transition from dependency (typical of childhood) to autonomy (typical of adulthood) is as important a part of adolescence as is establishing a sense of identity. From early adolescence through late, dependency on parents continues to decline while on the other hand conformity to peers and peer pressure seems to be on a rise (Smetana, 1989).

As, adolescents face the challenges of fast-approaching adult tasks (e.g., getting a job, becoming a responsible citizen, and planning a family life of his own), the late adolescent is compelled to abandon the childhood privilege of being *given to* and prepare to be the *giver* (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Among a variety of conflicts that an adolescent face, the most common are those that are experienced against significant authority figures, particularly parents (Dekovic, 1999). While trying to secure a place of their own in the society, most of them feel the inevitable need to rebel against the rules and standards set by their caregivers and more often than not they adopt such behaviours that might put them in the face of danger (Frankel & Dullaert, 1977; Luthar & Ansary, 2005; Silveri, et al., 2006).

During this period of intense confusion, the only way known to adolescents for asserting their independence is through rebellion. Whether they are exploring the values passed onto them by their elders or questioning the ways of the world while trying to establish novel values and beliefs, they wish to figure it all out on their own, thus becoming a little less accepting of what adults say to them. But since they lack the mental and emotional maturity necessary to make life decisions, they might find themselves in a compromising position (Steinberg & Morris, 2001).

To sum up, during this tempestuous period of life, the adolescents feel the pressing need to separate themselves from their parents and to establish their own place and goals; but at the same time, they lack a clearly defined role in the society which would inhibit the development of their independent identities. Thus, to state that the struggle for developing a stable identity in such an overbearing society is difficult, would be an understatement.

A well-developed identity is characterized by a keen sense of one's strengths, weaknesses, and a profound sense of individuality. A person with a poorly developed identity, on the other hand, is not able to clearly define his or her strengths and weaknesses and fails to have a clear and well-established sense of self either (Morsunbul, 2015).

It is considered that identity development follows a psychosocial framework where a person's biological and psychological capacities interact with the available social support and opportunities to help him develop a sense of individuality that he desires (Erikson, 1963; 1968). When an individual is required to make decisions pertaining to his future (addressing his vocational, ideological and relational issues), his decisions are based on the identity that has so far been developed. It is important to keep in mind that identity formation is an on-going process that begins during middle to late adolescence and expands well into adulthood. It continues to evolve and change over the course of adult life

where the person gradually adapts to these changes and works toward further refinement of his self-concept. Furthermore, identity is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide variety of sub-identities falling under different contexts and settings such as religious, occupational, relational and political identities or even an individual's gender identity (Howard, 2000).

Erikson in his theory of Psychosocial Development proposed that like all other stages, adolescence is also marked by a major conflict which is between an individual's Identity Achievement and Role Confusion (Erikson, 1950; 1959;1963) termed as *Identity Crisis* to describe the uncertainty, even anxiety, that adolescents may feel over the realization that they are no longer children but are also far from being adults. Their confusion pertaining to their present roles in the society and those of the future, along with an inability or difficulty in resolving the said conflict is what leads them toward a state of identity diffusion. If an individual is unable to resolve the afore mentioned conflict, he will enter adulthood with an unstable personality that would consequently meddle with the resolution of all subsequent conflicts experienced in the later stages (Erikson, 1963).

The concept of identity crisis and identity confusion as given by Erikson was further expanded by James Marcia in his theory of Identity and its different statuses (Marcia, 1966; 1980) which states that individual's sense of identity is determined largely by the choices and commitments he makes pertaining to certain personal and social traits; that is, how many choices one has actively and proactively made and how much commitment he expresses over those choices. Marcia considered identity to develop along a continuum which is further categorized into four stations or statuses, namely: Identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure and diffusion. The statuses range from a confused or undetermined self-concept to a highly precise and specific individual identity that an individual then becomes committed to (Marcia, 1966; 2002).

Furthermore, an adolescent's identity achievement is characterized by two distinct parts, namely: crisis and commitment. Certain situations and events, during the process of identity development, act as catalysts that prompt the individual's movement along this continuum and consequently help him secure a stable sense of individuality for himself. He believed that these events i.e. *crisis*, create an internal conflict for the individual and concurrently challenge his existing values and beliefs. These conflicts then motivate him to search for answers and explore alternate possibilities that eventually result in the individual establishing a new and refined set of beliefs, values and goals. According to Marcia, the process of identity exploration prompted by developmental crisis ultimately causes adolescents to develop a greater commitment to an identity that he takes forward in life, also known as Identity Achievement;\ where individuals, after resolving highly conflicting identity issues, manage to establish a sense of purpose and direction in their life that later assists them while taking important life decisions. It was well-determined that specific sense of identity will only be available to those people who are inherently mature and well-adjusted (both mentally and emotionally; Marcia, 1966; 1980).

The prior researches have highlighted that the level of identity achievement of an individual is largely determined by the cultural context an individual is a part of. As the Western culture place more importance on independence, freedom and individuality, thus, an individual who manages to achieve these three qualities will be considered mature and well-adjusted. On the other hand, Eastern cultures entails importance to community as a whole, rather than a single individual; here, individual is expected to be compatible with the cultural values. Therefore, the process of identity development cannot be separated from the individual's inherent values and beliefs. A profound understanding of one's self and emergence of an individual value system goes hand in hand (Sokol, 2009). It has been observed that where some adolescents actively develop novel value-systems based on their explorations, others simply adopt them from their families and communities and

work upon strengthening those with time. The stronger the identification with one's values and beliefs, the more clearly defined one's sense of identity would be. Thus, an individual's established set of values will facilitate the process of identity development for him.

It have been found by Hill and Hood (1999) that for many adolescents their religion or other spiritual associations make up for most of their set values and act as important sources of ideals, role models and ideologies that in turn outline the entire course of identity development. While, religion and spirituality both are seen as distinct but largely overlapping constructs, both of them describe a person's beliefs and perspectives toward the Divine. In the light of that, it can be deduced that both religiosity and spirituality would have an impact on the process of identity achievement of adolescents. However, the scope of this study has been limited to Spirituality and its significant relationship with Identity Achievement.

Spirituality, as abstract as the construct itself, cannot really be defined using a single, objective definition. Based on numerous literatures and qualitative analyses done in the recent decades, two different meanings of spirituality were seen to be prevalent: Spirituality as a state of awareness and spirituality as a separate domain of development (Bhosale, 2015). While on the other hand, spirituality with its own set of functions and stages, can also be considered as a distinct, representational domain of identity development (Markstrom, Hofstra & Dougher, 1994). It consists of ideals and ideologies that are sanctified by the individuals to find a deeper meaning in life. The precise nature of spirituality has been under debate for centuries (Seaward, 2001) but in popular usage, it refers to discovering, experiencing and living out the implications of a transcended human life (Muldoon & King, 1995). Research suggests that all in all, five different types of spirituality exist based on both Western and Eastern religions, namely: humanistic spirituality, unmoored spirituality and three different types of moored spirituality (Koeing, 2010). The foundations of each one is different with different ideologies and practices, however, when

these divergent views were integrated, spirituality was then described as the ancient quest of humans for a connection with something larger and more dependable than their own weak egos and selves (Palmer, Muldoon & King, 1995).

Though having different meanings for different people, the one thing that is commonly hypothesized by many researchers is that spirituality is innate in nature (Fisher, 2011), experienced by everyone (Nolan & Crawford, 1997) and is posited at the heart of human experience (McCarroll, et. al, 2005).

Moreover it is dynamic in nature and further extends in the concept of *spiritual development* which suggests that if it had been static, there would be no *spiritual life* at all as a person's spiritual health fluctuates between high and low throughout his or her life unless a definite understanding of profound concepts has been achieved (Chapman, 1987).

The focus of current research is not on the Divinity or the values attached to it. Rather the focus is on mental processes and their functional implications that facilitate the individual's subjective well-being and in turn guide their attitudes and behaviours which are essential for identity development.

Following Erikson (1963) and Marcia (1966), many identity theorists have sketched a theoretical framework to support the earlier stated claim and have suggested that Spirituality is one of the several components of ego identity as it helps to structure an individual's self-concept and in turn encourages behavioural outcomes compatible with other domains of identity (Josselson, 2002; Marcia, 1966; Marcia, Waterman, Matterson, Archer & Orlofsky, 1993). They have explicitly conceptualized that exploration of and commitment to a religious/spiritual identity marks an important component of an adolescent's overall identity status. Moreover, several studies have claimed that spirituality has a significant positive correlation with an improved mental health and subjective well-being of an individual (Verghese, 2008; Wong, Rew, & Slaikeu, 2009; Yoon & Othelia, 2008) and since the

process of Identity Achievement largely depends upon the degree of mental clarity and intelligibility of an individual, it can be concluded that spirituality will act as a facilitator to the process.

Adolescents move beyond having concrete childhood impressions of religion and start reflecting on concepts that are embedded in the existential and transcendental realms (Markstrom, Hofstra, & Dougher 1994). Multiple factors can affect the development of identity; some hinder it while others help it (Hasmi, 2013). Spirituality is also one of these factors. A research found a positive relation between religion and identity among adolescents (King, 2003). Research suggests a positive relationship between high religiousness scores and high Identity Achievement (Fulton, 1997).

Spirituality encourages self-empowerment and elevates the importance of emotions such as hope, compassion, forgiveness and a sense of purpose. Through several researches, it has been found that spirituality and spiritual engagements stimulate positive feelings and a sense of subjective well-being (Kennedy & Kanthamani, 1995) and a positive correlation between life satisfaction and degree of spirituality (Kass, 1991) has been confirmed. Both mental health and spirituality share a common goal, that is, to lessen or relieve mankind of emotional and mental suffering (Bhosale, 2015). Although the amount of stress experienced by spiritual and non-spiritual people appears to be equal, spirituality is observed to affect the coping styles and locus of control-perceptions of people, consequently helping and motivating them to deal with the stress better and more effectively (Schafer and King, 1990). Religious and spiritual commitments compel people to avoid unhealthy behavioural patterns such as hopelessness, aggressive behaviours, excessive drinking, drug abuse etc. and encourage the adoption of health-related behaviours such as meditation and frustration tolerance. Furthermore, spiritual people have been observed to own a peculiar sense of calm that gets them through all major life stressors (Ellison, 1983).

In conclusion, the theoretical framework of current research entails that when adolescents, under societal pressure, feel an urgent need to acquire a sense of autonomy followed by the development of a unique sense of identity, they experience numerous crises and conflicts along the way that are resolved through exploration of and commitment to specific life goals and choices. The process of identity achievement is not an easy one, and it requires the individual to be in the best of his or her mental health in order to establish a sense of purpose and direction in life. Mental health, which refers to a well-adjusted personality, is facilitated by a person's spiritual engagements. Spirituality has been observed to help improve one's subjective well-being and mental health, thus paving an easy way for the individual to achieve his or her desired sense of individuality by encouraging behaviours and attitudes that promote mental health. Erikson (1956) highlighted that religion tends to play a more significant role in identity formation in a culture where there is a continually fluctuating social and political environment. Marcia (1966) inspired early research on identity development by clearly identifying two ideological domains of identity as political and religious orientations. Identity formation and spirituality/religiosity has both been studied yet there is limited focus on the relationship between the two in indigenous cultural context.

The significance of the study is embedded in the insights developed as a result of exploring how spirituality impacts Identity Achievement in adolescents. Perhaps connecting adolescents to a sacred being in this turbulent time will improve their mental health and sense of self and would facilitate their identity achievement. Having a spiritual identity will give adolescents the inner strength and pliability required to cope with adversity. It will also inculcate a more positive sense of self, easing the transition into adulthood (Schneider, Rice & Hoogstra, 2013).

Luhrmann (2014) suggests that culture significantly makes a difference on how people experience spirituality. Wilson's (2012) research suggests that culture influences spiritual beliefs.

As seen by the above stated researches, Spirituality is a culturally sensitive construct (King, 2003; Wilson, 2012). Hence, it highlights the need for the current research in indigenous perspective. Adams, Shea, and Fitch, (1979) research identifies the importance of cultural dynamics on the identity formation process in adolescence.

In the light of above mentioned discussion, the objectives of current study is to see the relationship between Identity Achievement (Exploration & Commitment) and Spirituality and to find out the differences in Identity Achievement (Exploration & Commitment) of adolescents based on their Spirituality level. It is being hypothesized that there will be a positive relationship between Spirituality and Identity Achievement (Exploration & Commitment) and adolescents with higher Spirituality will have greater Identity Achievement (Exploration & Commitment) as compared to adolescents with lower spirituality.

Method

Research Design

The current study is quantitative correlational survey research design in which two structured Self-report Questionnaires were used to assess the relationship between Spirituality and Identity Achievement.

Participants

The target population for this study was adolescents. The total participants $N= 350$ ($n=208$ Males, $n=142$ Females) were approached from different government and private schools, colleges and universities of Karachi, Pakistan. Convenient purposive sampling was used to approach these adolescents who aged between 15 – 21 years ($M=17.99$, $S.D= 1.79$). The following Table 1 shows the frequencies and percentages of the demographic variable.

Table 1

Frequency and percentages of demographic variable (N=350)

Variables	*f*	%
Gender		
Males	201	57.6
Females	149	42.6
Marital Status		
Single	330	94.3
Married	2.00	0.60
Engaged	8.00	2.30
Others	10.0	2.90
Religion		
Islam	339	72.6
Hinduism	7.00	1.50
Others	4.00	0.90
Socioeconomic Status		
Lower	15.0	4.30
Middle	261	74.6
Upper	74.0	21.1
Family Structure		
Nuclear	228	65.1
Joint	98.0	28.0
Extended	24.0	6.90
Age (in years)		
15-17 years	208	59.4
18-21	142	40.6

The above-mentioned Table 1 shows the frequency distribution and the percentages of all the demographic variables that were considered in the present study and the focus of the study was to target the true representative sample of the population in the current study.

Measures

Demographic information form. In the light of above mentioned literature review following demographics had been included in the study: the participant's name, age, gender, education, social economic status, marital status, religion.

Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES). This scale was developed by Dr. Lynn Underwood and Teresi (2002). It is a self-report measure of spiritual experience, comprising of 16 items and measures ordinary or daily spiritual experiences. The first 15 items of the scales had a 6-point likert scale (i.e. many times a day, every day, most days, some days, once in a while, and never or almost never), and item 16 had a 4-point likert scale (i.e. Not close at All, Somewhat Close, Very Close, and As Close as Possible) and there were no negatively scored items. The computed score is obtained by adding the items 1-15; whereas item 16 is calculated separately which measured Closeness to God. The scores can range from 18 to 85, where lower scores reflect more spiritual experience.

Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ). This 32-items self-report questionnaire asses the dimension of commitment and exploration in ideological (politics, religion, occupation, value) and interpersonal (friendship, family, intimate relationships, sex roles) areas. It had 20 positively worded and 12 negatively worded items having a a 6-point Likert scale (6= strongly agree, 5 = slightly agree, 4 = agree,3= disagree, 2 = slightly disagree and 1 = strongly disagree). The score of identity achievement was obtained by adding the items of the subscales of commitment and exploration separately; which ranged from 16 to 96. High scores indicated greater identity commitment and exploration (Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, & Geisinger, 1995).

Several studies suggested that EIPQ is the preferred instrument for making contrast among and between identity statuses. Furthermore, different studies utilizing EIPQ to determine the identity status were conducted by Elizabeth Balistreri *et al.*, (1995) which revealed that the Ego Identity process questionnaire (EIPQ) has moderately high reliability coupled with high construct and concurrent validity. Cronbach alpha for Commitment and Exploration were 0.75 and 0.76, respectively. The median scores for exploration and commitment was 66.5 and 62 respectively which were used in order to determine the identity status of the participants. Participants who scored above median scores were classified as Identity achieved, participants who scored below

median scores were identified as identity diffused and participants who scored below median on commitment but above on exploration classified as moratorium and participants with reverse patterns were foreclosed.

Procedure

The research was carried out by first getting permission to access and use the scales from the authors via email. Then researchers visited different schools, colleges and universities of Karachi, Pakistan and acquired permission from authorities for data collection. Before administrating the test, participants were requested to sign an informed consent in which they were briefly informed about the nature and purpose of the study, and their right to withdraw from the study. In addition, the participants were also assured about the confidentiality of their identity, personal information, findings and responses. After acquiring willingness of all the participants, a demographic sheet and two self- report questionnaires were given to them to fill out. The participants were requested to carefully read the instructions given for each test before filling out the items and ask for assistance in case of any query regarding the scales. Assistance was provided when needed. After the participants had completed the given questionnaires, their forms were collected. Gratitude was shown to the participants for their cooperation and participation. Total 400 forms were distributed among the participants of different institutes and departments, out of which 384 forms were received in which 34 forms were found to have incomplete information and were discarded. Data was then entered and tabulated in SPSS and analysis was done to find out the relationship between the two variables.

Results

The data was analyzed with the help of SPSS. The following tables show the results of the current study and their respective interpretations.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics and alpha reliability coefficients, univariate normality of study variables (N=350)

Variables	Items	α	M	SD	SK	K	Range Actual	Range Potential
IA								
COM	16	.58	58.96	7.78	-0.09	.05	34-82	16-96
EXPO	16	.60	58.72	9.22	0.39	.41	35-90	16-96
SP	15	.87	72.35	11.6	-1.02	1.66	24-90	15-90
CG	1		2.96	0.89	-0.29	-0.95	1-4	1-4

Note. IA=Identity Achievement, COM=Commitment Scale, EXPO=Exploration Scale, SP=Spirituality total score, CG=closeness to God score, SK=Skewness, K=Kurtosis.

The above-mentioned Table 2 shows that as per the values of Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis, the data is normally distributed (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014) and the alpha reliabilities of all the scales and subscales lie in the acceptable range (Nunnally, 1994).

Table 3

Pearson Moment Product Correlations between Identity Achievement (Exploration and Commitment), Spirituality and Closeness to God in adolescents (N=350)

Variables	Commitment	Exploration	Spirituality	Closeness to God
Identity Achievement				
Commitment	-	-.05	.20**	.16**
Exploration		-	-.07	-.13**
Spirituality			-	.47**
Closeness to God				-

Note. **p<0.01

The above-mentioned table 3 shows that commitment has significant positive but weak relationship with Spirituality and Closeness to God; while, Exploration has a significant weak

negative relationship with Closeness to God; and a non-significant relationship with spirituality. Moreover, a significant moderate positive relationship exists between Closeness to God and Spirituality. No significant relationship exists between Exploration and Commitment. Hence, it can be interpreted that Spirituality and Identity Achievement of adolescents are partially related to each other however, the relationship is weak.

Table 4

Simple Linear Regression Analysis showing Spirituality as a determinant of Commitment in Adolescents

	Commitment					
	β	B	*t*	*p*	R²	△R²
Spirituality	.14	.20	3.85	.00	.20	.04

Note. β=Standardized beta, R²=R-Squared, ΔR²= Adjusted R-squared

Table 4 provides that a unit change in the predictor variable of Spirituality will result in an insignificant change in the criterion variable which is Commitment, with a predictive percentage of 4%. The Exploration scale was not included in the regression analysis as no significant relationship was found between Spirituality and Exploration.

Table 5

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Spirituality and Identity Achievement (Exploration and Commitment) (N=350)

	Low (n=6)		Moderate (n=73)		High (n=271)					95% CI			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	□2	i-j	Mean D (i-j)	S.E	LL	UL
COM	49.83	10.25	57.01	7.92	59.68	7.50	7.88*	.04	Moderate>Low	7.18*	3.24	0.81	13.55
									High>Moderate	2.67*	1.01	0.69	4.65
EXPO	60.17	16.85	59.96	8.88	58.36	9.11	0.94						

Note. *p>.05,* CI=Confidence Interval, LL=Lower limit, UL= Upper limit, COM=Commitment, EXPO=Exploration

The results reveal that people with Moderate spirituality have greater Commitment as compared to people with lower Spirituality. Moreover, people with high Spirituality have greater Commitment as compared to people with moderate Spirituality

Table 6
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Closeness to God on Identity Achievement (Exploration and Commitment) (N=350)

Variables	Not at all (n=15)		Somewhat close (n=100)		Very close (n=120)		As close as possible (n=115)		F	η2	i-j	Mean D (i-j)	S.E	95% CI	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD						LL	UL
COM	51.87	7.34	58.09	7.53	59.79	7.56	59.77	7.82	5.66*	.05	Somewhat close>Not at all	6.22*	2.11	2.07	10.38
											Very close>Not at all	7.93*	2.09	3.82	12.03
EXPO	66.33	12.02	58.90	7.99	58.63	9.09	57.68	9.59	4.02						

Note. *p>.05. CI=Confidence Interval, LL=Lower limit, UL= Upper limit, COM=Commitment, EXPO=Exploration.

The above-mentioned Table 6 shows the results of analysis of variance of Identity Achievement (Exploration and Commitment) and Closeness to God. The results revealed that people who were somewhat closer to God had greater Commitment than those who were not close to God at all. Additionally, people who reported being very close to God had greater Commitment than those who were not close to God at all.

Discussion

From the results analyzed in the previous section, it can be assumed that no significant relationship exists between Spirituality and Identity Achievement of adolescents. Identity Achievement comprises of two components, namely: Exploration and Commitment; and since *only* Commitment appears to have a significant weak positive relationship with Spirituality, it is interpreted that there is a significant weak partial relationship between Spirituality and Identity Achievement (Exploration & Commitment). That is, Spirituality only partially contributes to the process of Identity Achievement (that is, through commitment and not exploration) in adolescents.

Spirituality, as a construct, cannot be defined or understood using a single standard definition; rather it is a comprehensive concept with room for a variety of perspectives. The term is used in an abundance of contexts and the understanding of it might vary from person to person, culture to culture, among different age groups and familial structures (Bhosale, 2015). The findings of this study can be largely attributed to the impact of culture in which it was conducted. In Asian cultures it is almost impossible to delineate and separate Religiosity from Spirituality. In such countries, spirituality is understood as nothing but a set of religious rituals and practices that may or *may not* connect people to a Supreme Being. One unique aspect of Asian cultures, particularly Pakistan, is their emphasis on religion (or spiritual practices, as both can be used interchangeably) as a mere *doing* or *performing* of rituals rather than believing in and obtaining a profound

understanding of them (Carnes & Yang, 2004). Like Spirituality, the concept of Identity Achievement (commitment & exploration) is also seen to vary with different cultures, age-groups and familial structures. Adolescents, in most Asian countries, are expected to observe blind commitment to whatever religious or spiritual institution they are a part of (Oyerman & Lee, 2008). Pakistan, too, like every other Asian community prioritizes values such as obedience, duty (Triandis, 1944) and conformity (Miles, 1992) and where acceptance of authority of elders is expected (Obeid, 1988). There is hardly any room for autonomy or exploration in such cultures, which consequently leads to a superficial and a merely extrinsic understanding of the purpose behind such rigorous worship (Triandis, 1994).

The collectivist nature of the Asian cultures encourages excessive parental involvement in the lives of adolescents which obscures their right to explore a spectrum of identities and then commit to the one that is most suitable to them. Campbell, Adams and Dobson (1984) stated that identity formation occurs as a result of personal exploration and psychological differentiation processes and it is only possible in societies that offer opportunities of exploration to its members (Marcia, 1980). For free exploration of different possibilities, an individual must be allowed enough autonomy (cognitive, emotional and behavioral) to formulate their own questions and search for their answers. Autonomy, with respect to exploration, is seen to be positively related to an adolescent's quest for individuation (Allison & Sabatelli, 1988; Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000; Fullwinder-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993; Noller, 1995; Perosa, Perosa, & Tam, 2002) which is not provided in abundance in Asian societies (Littlewood, 1999; Feldman & Rosenthal, 1991; Stewart, Bond, Deeds & Chung, 1999).

Moreover, the process of identity development demands adolescents' separation or differentiation from parents so that a foreclosed identity status could be avoided (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000; Fullwinder-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993; Noller, 1995). In other words, commitment to an identity without prior exploration characteristically obstructs the process of identity achievement in

individuals. Hence in Pakistan, where adolescents live with their parents and are not provided functional autonomy find it difficult to establish an identity that is not already foreclosed upon them (Stewart, Bond, Deeds & Chung, 1999). Moving on, the significant positive relationship between commitment and spirituality can be attributed to the fact that spirituality or religiosity in most Asian cultures, in fact, necessitates blind faith and following under all circumstances. In most Asian countries, Spirituality or religiosity (Glock & Stark 1965) is measured in terms of the level of commitment the followers display. In countries like Pakistan, the dominant religion (Islam) demands commitment of their followers, with or without exploration, whether they agree with the teachings or not. In other words, people would be considered spiritual only if they are devout followers (though blind) and perform every single ritual religiously. Religious/spiritual commitment can be observed based on two standard measures: how often people pray and how often they attend religious services (Monsma, 2007). Exploration in such cultures, if present at all, is limited to a search for ways to practice in a more dedicated manner rather than to explore other possible options. In other words, only opportunities provided and practiced in most Asian cultures (particularly in Islam) are those of exploration in depth and not of exploration in breadth (Visser-Vogel, 2015). It does not matter if they have not yet established a connection with the Divine Being, what matters is how consistent and rigorous they are in their commitment and obedience to the institution. Thus, it is then safe to assume that the greater the *spirituality* the greater the level of *commitment* would be or vice versa; which is also evident by the correlational findings of this study that have highlighted a significant positive relationship between commitment and spirituality.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from the present study that Identity Achievement is partially related to spirituality among adolescents and adolescents have different levels of identity achievement with respect to their level of spirituality and closeness to God.

Moreover, in indigenous perspective the meaning of identity achievement is more related to commitment than exploration. The results can be attributed to the fact that majority of the sample were Muslim adolescents and Islam as compared to other religions offers the least opportunities to explore alternative ideologies and requires the highest degree of commitment out of all.

Limitations and Recommendations

The current study had a few limitations that must be considered when conducting future researches in this sphere. The sample size of the study was small; a larger sample size would have given more insights into the results. Moreover, the sample was only taken from the city of Karachi; a multi-cultural sample taken from different cities would have provided more depth into the finding. As the meaning of Spirituality in the Pakistani culture is in terms of Commitment, it is recommended that indigenous scales are developed in English in order to be used in future studies, as the target population had a better grasp on the said language.. Moreover, it is recommended that spiritual interventions are given as part of Quasi-experimental studies to see the impact of Spirituality on Identity Achievement in the Pakistani culture. As the prevalence of Identity Achievement is low in Pakistani adolescence, it is recommended that the study is repeated across different psychosocial stages given by Erikson (1963).

Implications

The findings of this study have implications for positive social change at the individual and the organizational level. In this study, spirituality is seen to expedite the commitment status of identity and in turn facilitate the process of identity achievement in *Pakistani* adolescents. The study can have various implications, particularly in the field of education. Training of spiritual practices and activities can be made part of the academic curriculums in institutes to help the students effectively incorporate spiritual ideologies and later practice them. The principles of spirituality can also be used in clinical settings to counsel clients that are facing conflicts pertaining to identity development. Moreover, it

benefits the psychological community by providing an opportunity to either replicate or explore the constructs further with an eye to find solutions to relevant problems.

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