



Exploring Gender Differences in Moral Intelligence and its Effects on the Learning Outcomes of Second Year College Students

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Abstract

The current study was undertaken with the primary objectives of exploring differences in moral intelligence due to gender and determining moral intelligence's effect on the learning performance of second-year students. The population of the study consisted of all second year college students of Skardu, Pakistan. However, data were collected from 445 students within the entire population by using the simple random sampling technique. Female students were found more intelligent than male ones in this study. The results depict that moral intelligence significantly affects the academic performance of students. So, it is suggested that subjects and contents related to moral intelligence may be included in the syllabus of second-year college students, as far as students' practical involvement of students in social and moral activities may also helpful in increasing moral intelligence; it may also be developed and increased by motivational speakers, who may deliver speeches and lectures on moral intelligence topic.

Key Words: Exploring, Gender Differences, Moral Intelligence and Academic Performance

Introduction

Different scholars have defined moral intelligence as a result of their own understanding and information. According to Lennick and Kiel (2005), it is the capacity of a person to apply the universally accepted principles and golden rules in his or her individual and personal actions, goals and values. While Borba (2001) defines moral intelligence as the capacity of knowing and identifying right from wrong and correct from incorrect.

Moral intelligence is a desired characteristic of human beings across the nations and countries and people with this intelligence feel comfortable and proud for serving others and they never feel loneliness and agitation in their lives. It is a prophetic virtue that all divine religions give considerable attention. Morality is a field of study, in which human behaviors, manners, and characters are formed. Giving no importance or less importance to moral intelligence may cause of emerging many social ills, such as corruption, intolerance, disrespect, and impatience in society. It was so important that people regardless of religion, caste, country, and region emphasize it. The history of morality or moral intelligence goes back to Ancient Greek, and though out history religious authorities, philosophers, psychologists, and scholars have been discussing it.

Importance of Moral Intelligence

All civilized nations and societies embrace and recognize the importance of moral intelligence, because it is considered as an essential distinguishing factor of human beings. Especially, the study of divine religions highlights that all Apostles paid considerable attention to develop this quality in their followers. Islam, as one of the Divine religions, makes moral development a religious obligation on every Muslim. The Holy Prophet (SAWS) expressed that he has been consigned and delegated in order to teach morality (Majlisi, 2016), and he (SAWS) says in another place that "Verily Allah loves those people who possess moral values and detests poor manners" (Hindi, 2017). It is observed that the Holy Prophet taught and trained the people with his noble virtues and people regardless of religions appreciated and affected by his morality. Likewise, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity also describe morality as an essential and desired characteristic of human beings. There is a complete section in rabbinic literature of Torah named as "The Moral Life" that discusses many ethical and moral values of

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Judaism in details. The study of the Holy Torah reveals that loving kindness, respect, honesty, humility, and service for others are very important virtues that everyone must adopt. Torah describes that “the world stands on three fundamental things; Torah, Service (to God) and loving kindness” (Mittleman, 2012). Ten Commandments of the Torah also include basic ethical and moral values and code of Judaism. Similarly, Christianity which is based on the Holy Bible also has complete frameworks of value system. Christianity insists the Christians follow Christ in choosing moral virtues and the Bible presents many examples of Christ. According to the teachings of the Bible, possessing the moral values and refraining from immorality is an obligatory act (Leviticus: 18, KJV). The Bible says “everyone should possess the virtue of love, compassion, pity and courtly of another and rendering evil and railing is impermissible” (1 Peter 3:8, NKJV).

The virtues of moral intelligence are not unified rather there are multiple views in this regard. The top figures of contemporary psychologist Lennick and Kiel (2005) have developed four important virtues; namely compassion, forgiveness, responsibility, (Cited in Hoseinpoor & Ranjdoost, 2013). Whereas the Bobra has a different views and she developed ten virtues. Integrity and honesty are desired characteristics of human beings and researches indicated that honesty is an indicator of counterproductive behaviors and job performance (Becker, 1998). Moreover, people do works more with honesty when their leaders follow integrity and honesty in their lives (Chen & Kompf, 2012). Similarly responsibility is also a necessary virtue and it means to accept failures and mistakes that occur in life without intentionally. Embracing responsibility leads towards success because it compels to avoid the repetition of undesired things again and again (Hussain, 2015). One of the important virtues described by Lennick and Kiel is compassion; it emerges in people when they observe other people in difficulty and suffering and these feelings motivate them to help them reliving suffering (Hojjat & Cramer, 2013). The integration of three essential components; mindfulness, self-kindness and common humanity make compassion (Neff, 2003). Compassion increases happiness, satisfaction, wisdom, gratitude, optimism, creativity and positive effect and decreases depression, stress and anxiety (MacBeth & Gumley, 2012). The last virtue that is focused in Lennick and Kiel model is forgiveness. Forgiveness explained as ability to forgive the mistakes of other people as well as one’s own mistakes (Lennick and Kiel, 2005). Forgiveness causes better physical health, whereas unforgiveness makes people hostile towards the offenders (VanOyen-Witvliet, Ludwig, Vander Laan, 2001) and it also damages the commune system. A well-being of a person may also be affected by unforgiveness (Worthington, 2007). Both types of forgiveness are very important in human life. Forgiving self-mistakes does not mean repeating the mistakes again and again rather it means to accept mistakes and have a commitment to do better in future. Generally people stick to others’ mistakes and do not forget them, but they easily forget their own mistakes, as far as there are few people who can easily forget others’ mistakes but they do not their owns. The habit of forgiving mistakes makes life easy and comfortable, while unforgiving harms life.

Theoretical Framework

There are more than one moral intelligence models and the most contemporary model which is being followed by a lot of researchers is the model developed by Lennick and Kiel (2005), and the present study is also based on their model of moral virtues. It consists of the four essential moral virtues that are presented in the following figure:



Figure: Theoretical Model of the Study

Objectives of the Study

1. To discover the gender differences in moral intelligence
2. To probe the effect of moral intelligence on the students’ academic achievement

Null Hypotheses

- H₀₁: Gender differences do not exist in overall moral intelligence.
H₀₂: Differences due to gender do not exist regarding integrity.
H₀₃: Differences due to gender do not exist regarding responsibility.
H₀₄: Differences due to gender do not exist regarding compassion.

H₀₅: Gender differences do not exist with relation to forgiveness.

H₀₆: moral intelligence does not have positive effects on the academic performance of college students.

H₀₇: integrity does not positively influence the students' academic performance.

H₀₈: responsibility has no positive contribution in students' academic performance.

H₀₉: compassion does not significantly affect the students' academic performance.

H₀₁₀: forgiveness has no significant impact on students' academic performance.

Methods and Procedures

For the current study, a quantitative and descriptive research method was adopted. The population of the study comprises all second-year college students. However, 445 respondents were selected from the entire population as a sample. The simple random technique was used for data collection. An international standardized questionnaire was used with the permission of questionnaire's originators to assess the moral intelligence, while students' academic performance was explored through the results of their annual examinations. Different inferential and statistical tests such as mean, regression, and t-tests were applied to check the hypotheses.

Data Analysis

Table 1. T-Test Analysis of Gender Differences in Moral Intelligence. (n=495)

Variable.	Gender.	n.	Mean.	Df.	t-value.	Sig..
Moral Intelligence	Males	267	3.27	493	8.036	.00
	females	228	3.78			

P ≤ 0.05

This table was framed out to describe the t-test results on gender differences regarding moral intelligence. Result shows that male students obtained 3.27 mean scores, whereas mean score of female students is 3.78. It means female students were morally stronger as compared to their counterparts' male students. P-value is .00, which shows a significant difference between both genders and null hypothesis is not accepted.

Table 2. Analysis of T-Test on Gender Differences in Integrity. (n=495)

Variable.	Gender.	n .	Mean.	df.	t-value.	Sig.,
Integrity	Males	267	3.29	493	7.168	.00
	Females	228	3.68			

P ≤ 0.05

Table 2 presents a snapshot of t-test results on gender differences in integrity. Female students got 3.68 mean score, which is more than the mean scores of male students, who got 3.29 on integrity. It shows female students are more honest than male students. From the t value 7.168, and the p-value .00, it is understood that results do not support null hypothesis and there exist a significant difference.

Table 3. T-Test Analysis of Gender Differences in Responsibility. (n. 495)

Variable.	Gender.	N.	Mean.	df.	t-value.	Sig..
Responsibility	Males	267	3.41	493	7.067	.00
	Females	228	3.78			

P ≤ 0.05

From the table 3, it can be understood that female students as compared to male students were more responsible as the female students got 3.78 mean score, whereas the male students mean score is recorded 3.41. A significant difference is appeared from this table as t-value 7.067 and p-value 00 indicates unacceptance of null hypothesis.

Table 4. T-Test Analysis of Gender Differences in Compassion. (n. 495)

Variable.	Gender.	N.	Mean.	Df.	t-value.	Sig..
Compassion	Males	267	3.39	.493	6.480	.00
	Females	228	3.83			

P ≤ 0.05

Gender difference in compassion is figured out in this table. It shows a significant difference between both genders as male students' mean score is recorded 3.39, while female students' mean is shown 3.83. From the t-value 6.480 and p-value .00, it can be concluded that null hypothesis is rejected and female students have a better level of compassion than male students.

Table 5. T-Test Analysis of Gender Differences in Forgiveness. (n. 495)

Variable.	Gender.	n.	Mean.	Df.	t-value.	Sig..
Forgiveness	Males	267	2.06	493	7.31	.00
	Females	228	1.04			

P ≤ 0.05

Gender differences in forgiveness are observed in this table. It shows a significant difference between both genders in forgiveness as male students mean score is recorded 2.06, while female students mean score is shown 1.04. From the t-value 7.31 and p-value .00, it can be concluded that null hypothesis is rejected and male students are more forgiving than female students.

Table 6. Regression Analysis of the Impact of Moral Intelligence on Learning Outcomes of Second Year Students (n=495)

R Square.	B (Coefficients).	t.	Sig..
.081	.285	12.70	.00

- a. Constant: Moral Intelligence
- b. Inconstant: Academic performance

The results of linear regression describe R² value is .081 that indicates 8.10 differences in criterion variable are due to explanatory variable and the rest of it may be caused by other elements. Beta value is shown (B=.285), which means .285 unit increases in academic performance with the increase of one unit in the moral intelligence. t-value is 12.70 while P-value is .00, which explains that moral intelligence positively influenced the students' academic performance and also reveal un-acceptance of null hypothesis.

Table 7. Regression Analysis of the of Effects of Integrity on the Performance of Students (n. 495)

R Square.	B (Coefficients).	T.	Sig..
.088	.288	13.10	.00

- a. Constant: Integrity
- b. Inconstant: Academic performance

Effect of integrity on the learning performance of students is observed in this table. R² value is .088, which shows an 8.80% variation in academic achievement can be understood by integrity and other factors also may affect it. Beta value is (β=.288), which means one unit increase in the constant variable is interlinked with the increase of .288 units in the dependent variable. P-value .00, is less than (p<0.05), which depicts significant effects of integrity on the academic performance of students and it is concluded null hypothesis is not accepted.

Table 8. Regression Analysis of the of Effects of Responsibility on the learning Performance (n. 495)

R Square.	B (Coefficients).	t.	Sig..
.054	.233	5.28	.00

- a. Constant; Responsibility
- b. Inconstant: Academic Performance

This table was developed to describe the results of Linear Regression on responsibility and learning outcome of students. The value of R² is .054, which reveals a 5.40% variation in criterion variable can be explained by explanatory variable responsibility and other than it may be the result of other elements. Beta value is .233, which depicts that .233 units may increase in the dependent variable with the one unit increase in constant variable. P-value is .00, and t-value 5.28 that indicate responsibility positively affected the academic performance of college students.

Table 9. Regression Analysis of the of Effects of Compassion on the Performance (n. 495)

R Square.	B (Coefficients).	t.	Sig..
.032	.180	4.052	.00

- a. Constant: Compassion
- b. Inconstant: Academic Performance

The effects of compassion on academic performance of students were assessed in this table. R² value is shown .032 which means 3.20% variation in criterion variable can be explained by explanatory variable compassion and other than it may be

due to other elements. The value of Beta is .180, which shows an association between independent and dependent variables. It is expected that one unit increase in compassion causes the increase of .180 units in the dependent variable. P-value is .00, and t-value is 4.052 that describe compassion positively and significantly affected the academic performance of students.

Table 10. Regression Analysis of the Effects of Forgiveness on the learning Performance (n. 495)

	R Square.	B (Coefficients).	T.	Sig..
	.041.	.201.	4.56.	.00.
a. Constant: Forgiveness				
b. Inconstant: Academic Performance				

The effects of forgiveness on the academic performance of students were assessed using the Linear Regression test. This table highlights R² value is .041 that means 4.10% variation in criterion variable can be described by constant variable forgiveness and other than these variations are the results of other elements. The beta value is .201 that reveals .201 units may increase in the dependent variable with the increase of one unit in the predictor. P-value found .00, and t-value found 4.54, which explains forgiveness significantly influenced the students' academic performance and the null hypothesis is unapproved.

Discussion

The current study was undertaken with the aims of exploring how much male students differ from the female students in the virtues of moral intelligence and its sub-factors, determining how much moral intelligence and its sub-factors affect learning outcomes. The research explored differences in moral intelligence regard to gender and its sub-factors. Moreover, female students significantly scored more than females on moral intelligence and all its sub-elements except forgiveness in which males got comparatively better mean scores than females.

The results of the study confirm the early studies that females are significantly more honest than males (Grosch, & Rau, 2017). Furthermore, males lie significantly more than females as far as dishonesty is found at large scale in males in group competition than females (Ones & Viswevaran, 1998; Muehlheusser, Roider & Wallmeier, 2015; Nieken & Dato, 2016).

In addition, the study also aimed to interrogate gender differences in responsibility. Results of the study reveal gender variances in responsibility and females were found more responsible than male students in this regard. The findings of the current study support the findings by Canney and Bielefeldt (2015), that describe women are more responsible in social responsibilities as compared to men, while another previous study also shows females are more sensitive than males in corporate social responsibility (Berenyi & Deutsch, 2017)

Significant gender differences regarding compassion were explored in this study and female students were found more compassionate than male ones in this regards. It is confirmed in early studies by Spence and Helmreich (1978) that females are more compassionate than males. Whereas these findings unsupported the results of the studies taken by Honse, (2019), as she found insignificant differences between females and males with respect to self-compassion, the result of current research do not confirm the result of Yarnell, et al., (2019), DeVore, (2013), Neff, (2003), and Leadbeater et al., (1999) as their studies showed males have high scores on compassion than females. These differences may be due to demographic differences of respondents.

The findings of previous studies show conflicting results about the gender differences in forgiveness. Whereas, the current study indicated male students are more forgiving than female students, these findings are inconsistent with the findings of Toussaint and Webb (2005) that show insignificant difference between male and females, and the findings by Miller, Worthington, & McDaniel (2008), that indicate men are less forgiving than women. Similarly, the current study disagrees with the study conducted by Mellor, Fung and Binti-Mamat (2012) that indicates no difference in avoidance of transgressors, and a little difference in forgiving as women are more forgiving than men.

Positive influence of moral intelligence on the academic performance was found in the current study, which supports early studies conducted by Ghaffari, Hajalo, and Bayami (2015), Husseinpoor and Ranjdooost (2013), Beheshtifar, Ismaili, Nekoi and Moghadam (2011), and Olasehinde-Walliams, Abdullah and Qwolabi, (2003) as all of these studies indicated positive effects of moral intelligence on students' academic performance.

Conclusion

The findings and results indicate the following conclusions:

Female students significantly scored on integrity, compassionate and responsibility than the male students, whereas male students were found more forgiving than female students. The study explored that moral intelligence and its four sub-types positively affects the academic performance of college students.

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