

The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Moral Stability of the Religious Education Students



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Abstract: This research was undertaken to assess the relationship between EI and MS of RE students. The researchers attempted to find out the differences in EI and MS due to different demographic variables such as age groups, marital status, and class. A purposive sampling technique was used for data collection from 200 RE students. The findings revealed that RE students had a moderate level of EI and high MS. The findings indicated that there was no significant relationship between EI and MS. Significant differences were not found in EI and MS among different age groups and different worldly academic degree holder students. This research also revealed that there was no significant difference between senior and junior students regarding EI. On the basis of research findings, it is recommended that RE authorities may inculcate subjects and activities related to EI in curricular and co-curricular activities in order to enhance the EI of their students.

Key Words: Emotional Intelligence (EI), Moral Stability (MS), Religious Education (RE), Students

Introduction

EI is an ability that helps in identifying and managing emotions, stress and feelings when communicating with others. Every child comes into this world with this intelligence, and it increases with age. A number of factors influence the development of EI in children, such as parents, family members, teachers, friends, school environment, and society (Houtmeyers, 2002). If the children are subjected to positive attitudes, then they will respond and show positive behavior, and if they are treated negatively, then they will show negative attitudes (Smith & Walden, 1999). Knowing how to use EI enables children to control their own emotions in stressful conditions and to build a better relationship with others, especially with their friends and siblings (Elias, Weisberg & Brien 2008). With the increase in EI, children's moral abilities increase accordingly, and both EI and MS affect the academic progress of the students (Stone-McCown, Jensen & Rideout, 1997).

A number of researches have been carried out on EI as well as its impact on Moral Development, and measurement scales on these were developed by Schutte, 1998; Graham, Haidt, and Nosek, 2008. A number of researches also have been conducted in

order to find out the relationship between EI and MS, but their findings are different. The research findings by Maria Platsidou (2012) declared a reverse relationship between EI and moral thought, but research findings of McBride and Elizabeth's study (2010) on the "EI and cognitive MS in undergraduate business students" reported a weak relationship between the EI and MS of students. These findings supported the previous findings by Akkoyun (1987), who did not find any significant relationship between moral judgment and emotional empathy, which is related to EI.

According to Schutte (2001), high moral intelligence is associated with high cooperation, self-control, empathy, and ethical behavior of students. Similarly, Moghaddam's study (2006) also supported the findings of Schutte.

Literature Review

EI is considered an important characteristic of human beings, and it has a major part in making life successful. A capacity of a person to solve problems and to get various experiences from his practical lifespan is called intelligence (Santrock, 2010). EI is a significant type of

general intelligence that deals with the emotions, behaviors, and feelings of a person. There is a number of EI definitions, such as an individual's capacity to recognize and understand emotions then apply this understanding and awareness to manage his own behaviors and to make effective relationships with others (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009), or it is defined as an ability to comprehend, perceive, assimilate and regulate the emotions of oneself and other people (Salovey, Mayer & Caruso, 2000).

The history of EI goes back to Thorndike (1920). First, it was introduced as social intelligence, then Saul Stern and Robert Thorndike reshaped and reviewed it, and they identified three major areas within social intelligence. The first area was about the individual's relationships, attitudes and behaviors towards society and all of its basic components such as economics, politics, social customs, values, taboos, norms and beliefs. It means people have different attitude and behaviors, and sometimes a person having a negative attitude and showing a positive behavior and vice versa. Attitudes and behaviors play a major role in any one's life as it has a great impact on economics, politics, social customs, values, taboos, norms and beliefs.

The second area concerned knowledge and information about the regular social challenges, obstacles, tendencies, preferences, and general information about the society. It means people are having a varying level of knowledge and awareness regarding social challenges, obstacles, tendencies, preferences, and general information about the society. Therefore, depending upon the level of knowledge and awareness about a particular factor shapes our attitudes and behaviors. The third area was about an individual's extent of social adjustment. It includes the individual introversion and extroversion personalities that can be identified by assessing the individual responses to personality questionnaires (Thorndike, 1937). There is a number of differences between intelligence and EI. These also vary from person to person depending upon their nature of experiences, feelings, problem-solving methods and exposure to a number of events. It also means that people who are introverted are less expressive hence do not communicate when compared with extroverted people. The researchers also found this phenomenon during data collection from RE students.

Psychology passed through different phases and different stages. When psychology completed its half-

century, then the previous paradigm shifted to behaviorism, and the IQ testing movement dominated over EI movement. Wechsler continually developed his well famous and worldwide used IQ test. This educational revolution continued till 1983, and in 1983, Howard Gardner resurrected EI theory and introduced a new theory in psychology, which was named by Howard Gardner "The Multiple Intelligences Theory". His theory included two types of personal intelligence namely the Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Intelligence. This psychological journey constantly passed through theoretical innovations and revolutions, and in 1988, Reuven Bar-On developed EQ in his doctoral dissertation. According to Bar-On, EI is a collection of social and emotional knowledge and skills which affect overall individual and personal abilities related to social and environmental demands (Bar-On, 2000).

According to Bar-On (2000), this array comprised of four major abilities and five important domains, which are a person's ability to perceive, understand, become aware of and express himself, person's ability to know, understand, become aware of and cope with others, person's ability to control his impulses and deal with emotions in difficult and unpredictable circumstances, and personal ability to change himself with the changing environment and solve social and personal problems. Whereas the five domains are Interpersonal Skills, Intrapersonal Skills; Adaptability Skills, Stress Management Skills and General Mood (Bar-On, 1997).

Components of Emotional Intelligence (EI)

EI is made up of four basic skills, which are described in two basic categories, namely Personal Competence (PC) and Social Competence (SC).

Personal Competence (PC)

PC is described as the ability to know oneself by recognizing one's own emotions and feelings and then manage them in different situations. It has three basic components, namely the Self-Awareness (SA), Self-Assessment (SA) and Self-Management (SM). SA refers to the individual skill to perceive and understand One's own emotions and stay aware of them as they happen. SA means the ability to be aware of self-emotion, self-evaluation and to have self-confidence. The people having strong SA are better aware of their emotions and confidence. Furthermore, with strong

SA, people can well do their own self-evaluation. Therefore, it results in better self-understanding. These type of people know well about themselves that is good for them and for their organizations. It may also result in improved individual, group and organizational performance. The SM refers to a person's ability to control the emotions as they happen and to show flexibility and passivity towards behavior (Leiberg S, & Anders, 2006). It means the people who accept responsibility for their actions and responses. The responsibility is the ability to choose your response. Therefore, people having SM have the strong ability to choose the right actions and responses in their personal, social, and professional lives. As a result, there is enhanced performance at all levels that is personal, social and at a professional level.

Social Competence (SC)

SC means an ability of a person to perceive and understand the motives, behavior and moods of other people. It also has two components; social awareness and relationship management. Social awareness is defined as the ability of a person to understand other people by observing their emotions in different circumstances. It includes three basic elements; empathy, organizational awareness, and service orientation. Relationship Management (RM) refers to the ability of a person to use his awareness and emotions in developing and sustaining interactions successfully. The basic and essential purpose of RM is to manage relationships with others (Ioannidou, & Konstantikaki, 2008).

Understanding others motives, behavior and moods is a great skill as not many people have these skills. Behavior includes verbal and nonverbal communication. In verbal communication, there is spoken and written communication, whereas, in non-verbal communication, there is body language, dress and tone. Having a strong understanding of others verbal and nonverbal communication is a vital skill. Furthermore, people having strong RM skills are also in a better position to use this understanding of others motives, behavior and moods for long-term successful relations with people around them. In a nutshell, we can say that PC is a prerequisite for enhanced Performance at all levels.

Morality

There are a number of definitions of morality, such as a skill of a person to differentiate the correct from the

incorrect, the truth from the lie, the good from the bad, and applying this ability in his practical life in order to be a good and civilized person. Firstly, it means the ability to know and secondly, the ability to apply learned behavior. It is also defined as a process of knowing the results and consequences of one's own actions and being careful before taking any wrong action or misbehavior towards any person. Moral development is a process of developing positive and desired characteristics and attitudes in persons in order to be civilized and effective members of society ([Kashani, 2010](#)).

Moral Development

Morality is an essential distinguishing factor of human beings. It has a significant place in all civilized nations and is a central focus in all divine religions. In morality, we mean that there are right behaviors and wrong behaviors as per our beliefs. Morality depends on the principles, values and beliefs of people. It means that people having a different set of principles, values, and beliefs have a different morality than those having a different set of principles, values and beliefs. Talking about values varies from person to person depending upon their own value recognition. It means that some people value quality, but others may value quantity. When these two types of people are serving in the same organization, an interdependence conflict may arise.

All Apostles were the symbols of morality, and they gave 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) says, "I have been deputed as a teacher of morality". ([Majlisi, 2017](#)), and Hazrat Ali (AS) said, 'the perfect one among you in faith is the one who has the high morality ([Majlisi, 2017](#)); here; Hazrat Ali (AS) considered morality the highest virtue for becoming a perfect Muslim.

In Islam, a person will not be a perfect Muslim until he adopts morality. Moral development is part of education in the Islamic Paradigm, and it is not only necessary for good interaction with society but also requires self-consciousness and God-consciousness. Allah ordered Muslims to be morally strong and showed his love for one who has high moral values as the Prophet (SAWS) said, 'Allah loves one who has high moral virtues and detests poor manners. ([Hindi, 2016](#)), and at another place, the Holy Prophet Hazrat

Muhammad (SAWS) expressed the purpose of his deputation by saying, 'I was deputed to perfect noble moral traits, ([Hindi, 2016](#)).

Here, it may be asked what the moral traits in Islam are. The grandson of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) Imam al-Sadiq (AS) was asked about noble moral traits. He replied that moral traits are comprised of pardoning someone who has oppressed you, re-establishing relationships with those who have broken ties, giving to the one who has deprived you, and telling the truth, even if it is against your interest and benefit ([Sadooq, 2015](#)). Islam condemns those who have immorality as the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAWS) said, 'Being immoral is a sin that is not forgiven' ([Kashani, 2010](#)).

Statement of the Problem

The present research is focused on finding out the association between EI and MS of the RE students. There is hardly any research that addresses this most important area in our country.

Objectives of Research

The key objectives of this research are to:

- a) Assess the level of EI of RE students.
- b) Explore the level of MS of the RE students.
- c) Identify the relationship between EI and MS of the RE students.
- d) Assess the differences in EI among the students due to demographic differences.
- e) Identify the differences in MS among the students due to demographic differences.

Hypotheses

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between EI and MS of RE students.
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference among different ages of RE students regarding EI.
- H₀₃: There is no significant difference among different contemporary academic degree holder RE students regarding EI.
- H₀₄: There is no significant difference in MS among different ages of RE students.
- H₀₅: There is no significant difference among different qualification of religious students regarding MS.

H₀₆: There is no significant difference in EI between senior and junior students of RE.

H₀₇: There is no significant difference in EI between married and unmarried students of RE.

H₀₈: There is no significant difference in MS between senior and junior classes' students of RE.

H₀₉: There is no significant difference in MS between married and unmarried students of RE.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The present research is quantitative, descriptive and correlational in nature.

Population and Sample

The population of this research constituted all students of a university in Islamabad, Pakistan. It is a higher RE recognized institution, and students from all over Pakistan study here. A sample of 200 students was from the entire population; out of these 200 students, 100 students were from the junior classes, and 100 students were from the senior classes. The Purposive Sampling technique was used for data collection. The primary data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The researchers used a number of statistical methods for data analysis, interpretation and tabulation, such as Means, Pearson Correlation Coefficient, One Way ANOVA and Independent Sample t-test.

Research Instruments

Two different types of questionnaires were used to collect data for this study. The Schutte EI Scale (developed by Dr Nicola Schutte, 1998) and Moral Foundations Questionnaire (developed by Jesse Graham, Jonathan Haidt, and Brian Nosek, 2008). The first questionnaire consisted of 33 items and the second one consisted of 32 items. Students' academic achievement was determined through the results of their annual exams.

Data Analysis

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of EI and MS of RE

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EI	200	2.88	4.55	3.779	.346
MS	200	2.94	5.00	4.144	

Table-1 shows that the level of EI of religious students falls ranges between 2.88 to 4.55, while their level of MS falls ranges between 2.94 to 5.00. It means that some of them have a high MS that reaches 5.00. This table indicates the mean scores of EI of the RE

student was 3.779, which describes a moderate level of EI, and the mean score of MS found 4.144, which means they had a high MS. On the basis of this table, it is concluded that RE students had a moderate level of EI and a high level of MS.

Table 2. Correlation Coefficient between EI and MS (n=200)

Variable	MS
EI	.642

**The correlation coefficient is significant at the .05 level.*

Table-2 describes the summary of Pearson Correlation between EI and MS of RE students. This table indicates that the p value was found to be .642, which is not significant and greater than $p \geq .05$. Thus, it is

concluded that our null hypothesis no 1 that there is no significant relationship between EI and MS is accepted.

Table 3. Analysis of Variance in EI among Different Age Groups (N=200)

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.272	3	.091	.746	.527
Within Groups	11.64	96	.121		
Total	11.916	99			

$P < 0.05$

Table-3 indicates the result of respondents' responses on EI. One-way ANOVA was applied to find out differences among different age groups of students. Table 3 illustrate that p-value of .527 is

greater ($P \geq 0.05$), and it is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. So, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in EI among different age groups of the RE students is accepted.

Table 4. Analysis of Variance in EI among different Worldly Academic Degree Holder students (n=200)

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.550	4	.137	1.148	.339
Within Groups	11.366	95	.120		
Total	11.916	99			

$P \leq 0.05$

Table-4 points out the result of participants' responses on EI. It indicates that the p-value is .339, which is greater than .05 ($P \geq .05$). So, it is concluded that our null hypothesis is accepted and also concluded there is

no statistically significant difference in EI between different contemporary academic degree holder RE students.

Table 5. Analysis of Variance in MS among Different Age Groups (n=200)

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.563	3	.188	.761	.542

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Within Groups	24.957	96	.260		
Total	25.520	99			

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table-5 depicts the result of ANOVA of the respondents' responses on MS. It shows that P-value is .542, which is not statistically significant at 0.05 level. So, our null hypothesis that there is no significant

difference among different age groups regarding MS is accepted. And it is concluded that there is no significant difference among different age groups of the RE students regarding MS.

Table 6. Analysis of Variance in MS among Different Worldly Academic Degree Holder students (n=200)

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.960	4	.490	1.976	.104
Within Groups	23.559	95	.248		
Total	25.520	99			

P<0.05

Table-6 highlights the result of ANOVA about the MS of RE students. It describes that P-value is .104, which is greater than 0.05 ($p \geq .05$); therefore, it is not statistically significant. So, it is concluded that the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference among

different worldly academic degree holder students is accepted, and it is concluded that the different worldly academic degree holders have no effect on the MS of the RE students.

Table 7. Independent sample t-test in EI between Senior and Junior students (n: 200)

Variable	RE	Mean	SD	F	t-value	Sig
EI	Senior Class	3.83	.351	.049	-1.494	.138
	Junior Class	3.72	.337			

P<0.05

Table-7 shows the whole picture of the independent sample t-test result on the scores of EI. A t-test was applied to find out the difference between the senior and junior students' views on the EI. This table represents that the mean score of senior students was (3.83), and the mean score of junior students was

(3.72). It means the seniors responded nearly in the same way as the juniors did. P-value was found .138 that is greater than .05 ($p > .05$). So, our null hypothesis that there is no significant mean difference in EI between the seniors and the juniors is accepted.

Table 8. Independent sample t-test in EI between Married and Unmarried Students (n: 200)

Variable	Marital Status	Mean	SD	F	t-value	Sig
EI	Married	3.91	.365	.073	1.904	.060
	Unmarried	3.74	.336			

P<0.05

Table-8 illustrates the mean differences and t-value of EI between the married and unmarried students. The mean score of married students was found 3.91 that shows that they have nearly high MS, and the mean score of unmarried students was found to be 3.74. It

means there is no significant difference between both groups. t-value was found 1.904 which is not significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level. So, our null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in EI between married and unmarried students is accepted.

Table 9. Independent sample t-test in MS between Senior and Junior students (n: 200)

Variable	RE	Mean	SD	F	t-value	Sig
MS	Senior Class	3.64	.537	.853	-1.410	.162
	Junior Class	3.78	.470			

$P < 0.05$

Table-9 describes the mean difference between the senior and junior students regarding MS. The mean score of senior students was 3.64, and the mean score of junior students was 3.78; it shows that the junior students got a little high mean score than the seniors

on MS. It also indicates a t-value -1.410, which is not significant at the .05 confidence level. Hence, our null hypothesis that there is no significant mean difference between the seniors and juniors regarding MS is accepted.

Table 10. Independent sample t-test in MS between married and unmarried students (n: 200)

Variable	Marital Status	Mean	SD	F	t-value	Sig
MS	Married	3.77	.506	.001	.738	.462
	Unmarried	3.68	.501			

$P < 0.05$

Table-10 depicts the t-value and means difference in the scores of MS between the married and unmarried students. The mean score of married students was 3.77, and the mean score of unmarried students was

3.68. The t-value was found .738 that is greater than .05 ($p > 0.05$). So, our null hypothesis that there is no significant mean difference between married and unmarried students regarding MS is accepted.

Research Findings

On the basis of the present research study, the following findings are obtained:

1. The mean score of EI was found 3.77 that shows both senior and junior students of RE had nearly high EI.
2. The mean score of MS was found 4.14; it means the RE students had high MS.
3. Significant differences were not found among different age groups regarding EI.
4. The aim of the current study was also to explore the differences among different worldly academic degree holder students regarding EI. The result indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the different contemporary academic degree holders RE students regarding EI.
5. Interrogation of differences in MS among different age groups of RE students was also the objective of the present study. The results indicated no significant difference; hence null hypothesis was accepted.
6. The results of the study revealed that there was no significant difference among different contemporary academic degree holder

students regarding the MS. As such, hypothesis 6 was accepted.

7. The results of the current study represented that the mean score of the junior students was 3.72, and the mean score of senior students was 3.83. P-value was found .138 that is greater than .05 ($p > .05$). So, our null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between senior and students regarding EI is accepted.
8. The results of the study highlighted that there was no significant difference between the married and unmarried RE students. The mean score of the married students was found 3.91, and the mean score of unmarried students was found to be 3.74. So, our null hypothesis that there is no significant mean difference between married and unmarried students regarding EI is accepted-
9. The results of the present study illustrated that the t-value was found -1.410, which is not significant at a .05 level of confidence. Hence, our null hypothesis that there is no significant mean difference between the senior and junior students regarding MS is accepted.

10. The results also declared that there is no significant difference between the married and unmarried students regarding MS of RE students. Hence, null hypothesis 9 was accepted.

Conclusion

The researchers conducted present research to measure the level of EI and MS of RE students. The core purpose of the present research was to determine the relationship between EI and MS of RE students. The present research indicates that RE students were found at a moderate level of EI, and they had high MS. The findings of the present research revealed that RE students had a moderate level of EI and high MS. The findings also indicated that there was no significant relationship between EI and MS. Significant differences were not found in EI and MS among different age groups and different worldly academic degree holder students. The present study also revealed that there was no significant difference between senior and junior students regarding EI.

Recommendations

Based on the detailed literature review, data collection, data analysis and interpretations, the following are the key recommendations:

- a) The RE authorities and teachers may focus on the development of EI of their senior students, as the findings showed that senior students' level of EI was not higher than the juniors. It is a fact that EI should increase with the increase in knowledge; hence efforts are required to increase the knowledge level of RE students, particularly the senior students. For this

purpose, various methods may be used, including effective presentations, case studies, role-plays and so on. This may increase the knowledge level of junior and senior students of RE.

- b) The participation of RE students in activities relevant to EI may also ensure positive results. There is a number of theoretical and practical activities of EI that can help RE students.
- c) Although the level of MS of the RE students was high, differences were not observed between the seniors and the juniors, it is recommended that different content and activities related to moral development may be made part of the curriculum in order to increase the level of MS of the senior students.

Future Research

- a) The current study was carried out within a small population, and the researchers did not find any significant relationship between EI and MS; therefore, further research may be conducted in a larger population.
- b) The present research was conducted for the purpose of exploring the relationship between EI and MS of RE students of a university in Islamabad, Pakistan. It is recommended that further research studies may be carried out across all RE institutions in Pakistan.
- c) Finally, the present research was conducted in a male RE institution. Research may also be conducted in female RE institutions in Pakistan.

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