

## **Emotional Intelligence as Predictor of Moral Judgment in Adolescents**

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The present research focused on the relationship between emotional intelligence and moral judgment in adolescents; it was hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and moral judgment; EI would predict moral judgment and there are likely gender differences in moral judgment of adolescents. The sample of 351 adolescents (n=172 male; n=179 female) was recruited for the research. The Scale of Emotional Intelligence (Batool & Khalid, 2009) and Padua Moral Judgment Scale (Comunian, 2011) were used for assessment. Independent sample t-test, Pearson correlation and hierarchical regression analysis were carried out to analyse data. Results revealed a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and moral judgement (.15,  $p < .01$ ), stage 4 of moral judgment development (.2,  $p < .01$ ), socio-moral values (Contract .15,  $p < .01$ , truth .17,  $p < .01$ , property .13,  $p < .05$ , law .11,  $p < .05$  and legal justice .15,  $p < .01$ ). Regression analysis revealed that EI significantly predicted stage 4 of moral development, socio-moral values (contract, truth, property, law and legal justice). Moral judgment predicted all types of socio-moral values and stages of moral development. Moreover, the combined interactive effect of EI and moral judgment significantly predicted stage 2 of moral development. However, no gender differences were found in emotional intelligence and moral judgment. Findings have important implications for parents, teachers and policymakers.

**Keywords:** *emotional intelligence, moral judgment, adolescents.*

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### **Introduction/ Background**

Humans are given an inborn ability to develop moral sense Aristotle (384–322 BC), Socrates and Plato (429-347 BC) were the pioneers to introduce the concept of moral ethics. Development of a sense of ethical behaviour and values are known as moral development. Ethics and values cannot be talked about without considering morality. Craig (1989) conceptualized morality a system of beliefs and values, the judgment about correctness or wrongness of acts known as conscience. There is a need to define different mental processes

that are the basis of moral judgments.

Moral reasoning is a conscious process as it is intentional, effortful, well-regulated, and the reasoner is aware of it (Bargh, 1994). The process of moral development corresponds with cognitive development; capacity for moral reasoning is related to cognitive development which affects behaviour through moral judgment. Moral reasoning is a mindful mental activity that alters given information about people to reach a moral judgment (Galotti, 1989). Children are unable to make moral judgments and choices until they reach

cognitive maturity (Mariaye, 2006). Moral motivation is an individuals' willingness to abide by moral rules they realize to be valid, even if this rule is in clash with non-moral desires, i.e. a very hungry person can steal food from a shop to satisfy his hunger, but he would control till he may find an approved moral way to eat (Nunner-Winkler, 2007). According to Piaget (1965), morality is ones' admiration for the rules of social order and justice, where justice is a concern for mutuality and equivalence among individual. Kohlberg (1964) considered morality as a capacity used to make decisions and to act accordingly. Stein and Nemeroff (1995) stated that moral judgments are assessments (good versus bad) of the actions an individual takes with respect to a set of features held by a culture or subculture. These judgments are distinctive and often become part of the identity of an individual (Skitka, Bauman & Sargis, 2005). Moral judgments are made consciously and individual move from conscious reasoning to judgments (Kaplow & Shavell, 2002; Kohlberg, 1981; Korsgaard, 1996; Piaget, 1932). Adolescence is a revolutionary period of development in which not only a value system but the behaviour is shaped (Levy, 1988). During adolescence, a groundwork for moral reasoning and honesty is prepared within the cognitive development

(Eisenberg, Carlo, Murphy, & Van Court, 1995). Moral development continues throughout life but in adolescence moral self and the associated moral motivation are developed (Blasi, 2004). From early to middle and late adolescence, the pressure of peer group and ego aptitudes are increased (Hart & Carlo, 2005). During adolescence, a person progresses from dependence to individuality, self-sufficiency to maturity and standing alone as a responsible adult of which sense of morality is an integral part (Mabey & Sorensen, 1995).

### **Emotional Intelligence and Moral Judgments**

Emotions have been reported to interfere with moral judgments, which may result in prejudiced reasoning and wrong conclusions (Nichols, 2002; Blair, 1995; Prinz, 2008). The quality of moral decisions is very sensitive to emotions, it enables individuals to understand the role of emotional competence in moral selections. In the domain of moral reasoning, emotional elements and reasoning occur together when making a moral decision (Greene & Haidt, 2002). Athota, Connor and Jackson (2009) argued that EI and moral reasoning differ in the level of specificity. EI is a general ability to regulate emotions and influences most of our behaviours to some extent, while

moral reasoning is a situation specific ability. It can be safely said that EI has an effect on moral reasoning. Moral judgment has two central dimensions: emotional and cognitive (Keskin, 2013). The emotional aspect is based on values that contribute to making moral decisions (Lind, 2008) and has been considered more crucial than cognitive aspect (Rietti, 2009). Goleman (1996) stated that EI has a moral dimension and it helps to distinguish and adjust emotions accordingly. It is known as the skill to “outline socio-moral problems in the context of one’s standards and values in order to judge the suitable course of action” (Rest, 1979; p.198). Thus, EI includes using, understanding of emotions, and moral reasoning is about utilizing one’s standards and values to make decisions. Therefore, the importance of EI in the determination of moral decisions is significant because EI involves a sense of balance between emotion and reason. EI has also been defined as “an ability to perceive and express emotions precisely and adaptively, the ability to comprehend emotions and emotional knowledge, the ability to use feelings to simplify thought, and the ability to regulate emotions in oneself and in others” (Salovey & Pizarro, 2003, p. 263). Bar-on (1997) strongly emphasised both social and emotional facets EI. In his model, he highlighted social and emotional

proficiencies that affect outcome behaviour. Bar-On developed a scale encompassing 15 dimensions of EI i.e. self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-actualization, empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationship, stress tolerance, impulse control, reality testing, flexibility, problem-solving, independence, optimism and happiness.

Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000) differentiated between ability and trait EI on the basis of the consideration given to moral issues. Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) model of (ability EI) allows understanding emotions and has no direct reference to moral values. On the contrary, models of (trait EI) gives direct attention to moral issues. Gender differences in moral development have always been a focus of discussion and a lot of inconsistencies have been noticed as to the effect of gender on moral development (Huston, 1983; Lytton & Romney, 1991). Gilligan (1983) describes that women mostly use the ethic of care while making decisions of their lives. She proposes that the ethic of care comes from children’s attachment to their mothers and girls learn ‘give-and-take’ nature of relationships from their mothers in which moral decisions are made. Since last decade EI has caught the attention of researchers in Pakistan. Batool

and Khalid (2009, 2012) developed a scale of EI. Four facets of EI i.e. interpersonal skill, empathy, optimism, and impulse control predicted marital quality and conflict resolution. Jalil and Muazzam (2013) examined whether EI predicts marital adjustment in fertile and infertile women. They found a significant relationship between EI and marital adjustment in both groups. Other researchers have explored the relationship of emotional intelligence with academic achievement (Yasmin, 2008) effective leadership (Rizvi, 2008) psychological wellbeing and prevention of depression (Batool & Khalid, 2009). EI has been described as an effective monitor of one's own and others' emotions, and it has a pivotal role in moral judgment. However, In Pakistan, no research has looked at the relationship between EI and moral judgment. Therefore, the current study aimed to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and moral judgment in Pakistani adolescents.

### **Objectives**

1-To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and moral judgment

2- To explore gender differences in emotional intelligence and moral judgment.

### **Hypotheses**

1-There would be a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and moral judgment.

2-Emotional intelligence would predict moral judgment in adolescents.

3-There are likely to be gender differences in adolescents' moral judgment.

### **Methodology**

Non-probability, purposive sampling technique was used to recruit sample. The sample size was determined using criteria proposed by Andy Field (2013) i.e. a range of 5 - 7 participants per construct. Sample comprised of 351 adolescents (girls =179, boys =172) with age ranging between 15 -19 years ( $M=16.58$ ,  $SD=.98$ ). Participants were recruited from public and private educational institutions of Lahore, Pakistan and they were studying in 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Mean monthly family income was 50,000 Pak. RS ( $SD=37980.39$ ). Demographic characteristics of the sample are given in table 1.

Table 1.

*Demographic Characteristics of the Adolescents (N=351)*

	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender		
Male Adolescents	172	49.0
Female Adolescents	179	51.0
Class		
10 <sup>th</sup>	60	17.1
11 <sup>th</sup>	201	57.3
12 <sup>th</sup>	90	25.6
Educational institution		
Public	128	36.5
Private	223	63.5
Father Education		
Illiterate	10	2.8
Primary	9	2.6
Middle	12	3.4
Matric	52	14.8
Intermediate	57	16.3
Graduate	92	26.3
Masters/MPhil/PhD	105	30
Mother Education		
Illiterate	16	4.6
Primary	20	5.7
Middle	19	5.4
Matric	86	24.5
Intermediate	79	22.5
Graduate	88	25.1
Masters/MPhil/PhD	41	11.4
Family system		
Joint	101	28.8
No. of siblings		
1	12	3.5
2	53	15.1
3	78	22.2
More than 3	208	59.2

Table 1 (Continued)

*Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=351)*

	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Birth order		
Firstborn	99	28.2
Middle born	248	70.6
Last born	4	1.2

Majority of the adolescents were in 11<sup>th</sup> grade and mostly from private educational institutions. For the majority, fathers' education was graduate, masters or higher, where the education of mother ranged from matric to graduation. A majority of the adolescents were living in nuclear family systems, were of middle birth order and had more than 3 siblings.

### **Assessment Measures**

Following measures were used in the present study to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and moral judgment in adolescents.

#### **Demographic Information Sheet.**

Socio-demographic information sheet included questions pertaining to gender, age, educational institution (public/private), educational class, parental education, monthly family income, family system, number of siblings and birth order.

#### **The scale of Emotional Intelligence**

The scale of social-emotional Intelligence (SEI) consists of 56 items and is developed by Batool and Khalid (2015). It is a self-report measure and is divided into four subscales i.e. Interpersonal skill, self-regard, assertiveness, emotional self-awareness, empathy, impulse control, flexibility, problem-solving, stress tolerance, and optimism. Sample items are "I can easily control my anger", "I cry on my failures", "People like to work with me". Each item is rated on four-point Likert response and follows a scale from 1 (never true of me)

high reliability ( $\alpha = .95$ ) whereas for the present sample alpha coefficient was also reasonably high ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

#### **Padua Moral Judgment Scale**

The Padua Scale of Moral Judgement is based on Kohlberg's theoretical framework and it is developed by Comunian (2011). This scale is specially developed to assess adolescents' moral judgment. It has 28 items which are grouped in four parts. Each part contains seven items addressing seven socio-moral values (contract, truth, affiliation, life, property, law and legal justice). Socio-moral values are the explanations or reasons that an individual provides for decisions s/he makes. These are known as the fair behaviours which range from interpersonal to societal norms. The contract is about keeping the promises, telling the truth, life is about saving the life of others, property, not to steal others' possessions, affiliation is showing

respect to friends and parents. To obey law and rules, while legal justice, is the legal punishment for not obeying the laws and rules of society. These moral values are developed in four moral stages, out of 4 stages 1 and 2 are immature stages in which moral values

are not followed and follow a scale from 1 (never true of me)

interpersonal reasons. While stages 3 and 4 are mature and internalised, care for interpersonal relations and norms is increased. (Gibbs, Basinger, Fuller & Fuller, 2013).

Each item is rated on a four-point rating scale ranging from disagreeing to totally agree. Scoring procedure involves calculating the average score for seven items on all four pages and getting a summary score by adding all four average scores. This summary score tells about the moral judgment of adolescents. In the present study, Urdu (National language) version of the scale translated and validated by Ghaus (2003) was used. Four stages of moral development were calculated according to Gibbs' theory of moral development. According to Gibbs' theory, stage1 can be calculated from items 3,13,18,20 and 24. Stage 2 is based on item No. 1, 5,7,9,10,11,15,17,21 and 23. Stage 3 is calculated by adding scores on item No 4 and 27. Stage 4 computed by adding scores on items 2, 6, 8, 12, 14,16,19,22, 25, 26 and 28 (Mehmood, 2011).

Padua moral judgment scale is based on Gibbs' Social Moral Reflection –Short Form (SRM-SF) which addresses seven socio-moral

values. Socio-moral values are calculated by adding scores on: for “contract” items 1, 8, 15, 22; for “truth” items 2, 9, 18, 27; for “affiliation” items 3,10,19, 25; for “life” items 4,11,17,23; for “property” items 5,12, 16,21; for “law” items 6, 13, 24, 26 and for “legal justice” items 7, 14, 20, 28 (Comunion, 2002).

Some of the sample items of the scale are, “You abide by the law because law promotes harmony and justice”, “You do not take other people's things because stealing goes against moral principles”, “You help your parents because children should be thankful for everything their parents do for them”. An alpha coefficient of the scale for the present sample is very high ( $\alpha=.85$ ).

### **Procedure**

The researcher personally contacted heads of the educational institutions for the purpose of data collection and written permission was taken after explaining the nature of the study. Teachers whose classes were to be engaged were instructed by the heads to stay in the class to maintain discipline or for any help needed by the researcher so teachers often remained present in the class. Informed consent was also taken by

research participants who volunteered to take part in the research. They have explained the nature and purpose of the research. It was made sure that instructions for all the participants were clear and uniform. Data were collected by the researcher in group form. Participants were encouraged to ask if they needed clarity about the nature of the study or pertaining to the questionnaires. They were also told about the confidentiality of the data and that their right to withdraw at any time if they felt uncomfortable without facing any penalty.

#### **Ethical Considerations.**

- Permission from authors of the scales was sought before collecting data.
- Detailed information was provided to the heads of the institutions about purpose, the time needed for completion of the scales and written informed consent was taken by the researcher.
- Prior to collecting data, the researcher clarified the nature of research to the potential participants. Participants were

assured that the information obtained from them will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purpose. Written informed consent was taken from participants. They were also told about their right to leave the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable.

- Instructions were given in Urdu language and all the scales used were also incomprehensible Urdu language.

#### **Results**

Descriptive statistics and reliability analyses of the scale and subscales of emotional intelligence and moral judgment scales were computed. Pearson correlation analyses were applied to see the relationship between emotional intelligence and moral judgment. Regression analysis was carried out to investigate whether emotional intelligence predicts moral judgment in adolescents. Independent sample t-test was carried out to explore the gender differences in moral judgment and emotional intelligence.

*Table 2*

*Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis of Emotional Intelligence, subscales of Emotional Intelligence, Moral Judgment, Stages of Moral Judgment and Socio-Moral Values. (N=351).*

Variables	k	M	SD	Ranges		$\alpha$
				Potential	Actual	
Emotional intelligence	56	165.44	17.26	56-224	109-252.	.84
1-Interpersonal skill	8	26.10	3.97	8-32	9 -32.	.77
2-Self-regard	6	17.45	2.79	6-36	9 -24	.36
3-Assertiveness	7	20.35	2.96	7-28	11-27	.32
4-Emotional self-awareness	5	15.37	2.34	5-20	9-20	.32
5-Empathy	5	16.34	2.58	5-20	7-20	.59
6-Impulse control	5	13.12	2.67	5-20	5-20	.31
7-Flexibility	5	14.05	2.80	5-20	6-20	.46
8-Problem solving	5	14.45	2.78	5-20	7-20	.58
9-Stress tolerance	5	13.14	2.59	5-20	5-20	.31
10-Optimism	5	14.74	2.19	5-20	7-20	.23
Moral Judgment	28	66.35	10.93	28-112	28-98	.85
Moral Stage 1	5	13.04	3.00	5-20	5-20	.54
Moral Stage 2	10	25.06	5.12	10-40	14-40	.65
Moral Stage 3	2	4.96	1.42	2-8	2-8	.05
Moral Stage 4	11	32.96	6.09	11-44	11-44	.82
Socio-Moral Values						
1-Contract	4	11.83	2.74	4-16	4-16	.68
2-Truth	4	11.04	2.54	4-16	4-16	.56
3-Affiliation	4	11.67	2.54	4-16	4-16	.51
4-Life	4	8.23	2.71	4-16	4-16	.55
5-Property	4	10.65	2.60	4-16	4-16	.46
6-Law	4	10.87	2.44	4-16	4-16	.47
7-Legal Justice	4	11.71	2.40	4-16	4-16	.58

Both emotional intelligence and moral judgment scale show high alpha coefficient ( $\alpha = .84$ ,  $\alpha = .85$ ) respectively. Stages of moral judgment showed satisfactory reliabilities other than moral stage three which showed  $\alpha$

$=.05$ ; hence stage three of moral judgment was not included in the further analyses. All seven socio-moral values showed satisfactory reliabilities ranging from .46 to .68.



To explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and moral judgment Pearson correlation was performed.

Table 3

*Correlation Between Emotional Intelligence and Moral Judgment (N=351).*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
1-Age	1	.05	-.00	-.10	-.06	-.03	-.02	-.01	.02	-.05	.00	.02	.00	.02	.06	-.08	-.04	-.00	-.05	.12*	-.02	.01	-.02	
2-Gender		1	-.04	-.05	-.05	-.08	-.07	-.02	-.04	-.09	-.00	-.08	-.08	-.00	-.06	-.09	-.07	-.00	-.05	-.08	-.10	-.00	-.06	
3-Edu.institute			1	.15**	.04	.02	.10	.04	.10	.04	-.04	.06	-.00	-.01	-.06	.04	.05	.00	-.03	-.08	-.01	.05	.00	
4father Edu.				1	.57***	.03	.26***	-.25***	-.02	-.05	-.19***	.00	-.08	-.05	-.02	-.09	-.10	-.04	-.12*	.04	-.05	-.06	.00	
5-Mother Edu.					1	.10	.19***	-.27***	-.06	-.03	-.15**	-.00	-.14**	-.10*	-.10*	-.11*	-.09	-.08	-.13**	-.06	-.10*	-.11*	-.05	
6-family system						1	.08	.02	-.06	.01	.00	-.00	.006	-.07	-.04	.09	.04	.05	.00	-.04	.00	-.02	.01	
7-Family income							1	-.02	.06	.04	.06	.00	.02	.01	.00	.05	.09	.03	.02	-.06	.05	.00	-.00	
8-no.of siblings								1	.06	.07	.10*	.06	.08	.05	-.00	.14**	.17**	.01	.14**	-.11*	.04	.05	.06	
9-Emotional intelligence									1	.75**/*	.60***	.63***	.15**	.08	.06	.20**	.15**	.17**	.05	-.05	.13*	.11*	.15**	
10-interp. Skill										1	.53***	.38***	.18***	.07	.08	.26***	.26***	.17**	.10	-.07	.11*	.13*	.17**	
11-empathy											1	.28***	.25***	.15**	.11*	.30***	.28***	.26***	.16**	-.08	.19***	.15**	.24***	
12-Problem solving												1	.11*	.10	.10*	.08	.06	.15**	.01	.04	.12*	.07	.08	
13-Moral Judgment													1	.74***	.81***	.83***	.67***	.774**	.73***	.47***	.76***	.73***	.68***	
14-M Stg.1														1	.54***	.48**	.31***	.64***	.51***	.33***	.48***	.76***	.60***	
15- M. Stg. 2															1	.46***	.51***	.54***	.53***	.68***	.74***	.47***	.48***	
16-M. Stg. 4																1	.73***	.60***	.69***	.05	.62***	.62***	.73***	
Socio Moral Values																								
17-Contract																		1	.44***	.46***	.00	.44***	.37***	.48***
18-Truth																			1	.40**	.24**	.48**	.50**	.53**
19- Affiliation																				1	.19***	.48***	.43***	.50***
20-life																					1	.34***	.24***	.12*
21-Property																						1	.49***	.50***
22-1aw																							1	.51***
23-legal justice																								1

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001

Key; Gender 0-male, 1-female. Educational institution 1- public, 2- private. Family system 0-joint, 1-nuclear.

In demographics, age was positively correlated with socio-moral value (SMV) “life”. Fathers’ education showed a negative correlation with (SMV) affiliation and mothers’ education showed a negative relationship with moral judgment, moral development stages 1, 2, 4, and (SMV) affiliation, property and law. A number of siblings had positive relationship with moral development stage 4, (SMV) contract, affiliation and negative relationship with (SMV) life. EI and interpersonal skill showed a significant positive relationship with moral judgment, moral development stage 4, SMV contract, truth, property, law and legal justice. Empathy had a significant positive relationship with moral judgment stages of moral judgment and all socio-moral values except life. While problem-solving was found to be positively correlated with moral judgment, moral development stage 2, socio-moral values of truth and property (socio-moral values SMV are elaborated on page 8 in Padua moral judgment scale).

To examine whether emotional intelligence predicts moral judgment in adolescents’ regression analysis was carried out.

Table 5

*Regression Analysis Predicting Stages of Moral Development and Socio-Moral Values from Demographics and Interaction of Emotional Intelligence and Moral Judgment (N=351).*

Table 4

*Regression Analysis Predicting Moral Judgment from Emotional Intelligence (N=351).*

Predictor	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Emotional intelligence	.02**	.23**

The result showed emotional intelligence significantly predicted moral judgment in adolescents. I explained 23% of the variance in moral judgment.

To examine the interactive effect of emotional intelligence and moral judgment on stages of moral development and socio-moral values hierarchical regression analysis was carried out. Control variables including age, academic class, father education, mother education and a number of siblings were entered in the first step. Emotional intelligence was entered in the second step and moral judgment was entered in the third step and to see the interactive effect, multiple of emotional intelligence and moral judgment was entered in the fourth step.

Outcome Variable	Predictor	$\Delta R^2$	B
Moral Stage 1	Moral Judgment	.52***	.20***
Moral Stage 2	Academic Class 1 <sup>st</sup> year	.06	-1.71*
	Moral judgment	.64***	.39***
	Emotional Intelligence* Moral judgment	.00*	-.00*
Moral Stage 4	Fathers' Education Primary Graduation	.08*	-5.79* .01*
	Emotional Intelligence	.03***	.06***
	Moral Judgment	.62***	.45***
Contract	Academic class 1 <sup>st</sup> year 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	.08*	-.91* -1.32**
	Fathers' Education Primary Graduation Masters		-3.45** -2.53* -2.08*
	Emotional Intelligence	.01*	
	Moral Judgment	.40***	.16***
	Emotional Intelligence	.03*	.02*
Truth	Moral Judgment	.54***	.17***

Table 5 continued

Outcome Variable	Predictor	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Affiliation	Fathers' Education	.05	-2.12*
	Matric		
	Graduation		-2.34*
	Moral Judgment	.50***	.17***
Life	Academic Class	.11**	1.11*
	2 <sup>nd</sup> year		
	No. of siblings		-1.74*
	2 siblings		
	3 siblings		-1.74*
	More than 3 siblings		-1.76*
	Moral Judgment	.22***	.12***
	Emotional Intelligence		-.01*
Property	Moral Judgment	.56***	.18***
Law	Fathers' Education	.07	-2.94*
	Primary		
	Graduation		1.85*
	Emotional Intelligence	.01*	.01*
	Moral Judgment	.49***	.16***

	Emotional	7.47**	.02**
	Intelligence		
Legal Justice	Moral Judgment	.47***	.15***
Total $\Delta R^2$		52.56	

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Findings revealed that father education significantly predicted moral development at stage 4 which is the mature stage according to Gibbs and SMV (contract, affiliation & law). Academic class of the participant predicted stage 2 of moral development and socio-moral values of contract & life. A number of siblings were a significant predictor of the socio-moral value of life. Emotional intelligence predicted stage 4 of moral development and socio-moral values of contract, truth, property, law and legal justice. While moral judgment predicted all moral stages and SMVs. Interaction of emotional intelligence and moral judgment significantly predicted only stage 2 of moral development. Independent sample t-test was performed to examine gender differences in moral judgment and emotional intelligence.

Table 6

*Mean Differences In Moral Judgment and Emotional Intelligence of Male and Female Adolescents (N=351)*

Variable	Male		Female		<i>t(df)</i>	<i>p</i>	CI		<i>d</i>
	Adolescents		Adolescents				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
	(172)		(179)						
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					
Moral Judgment	67.31	11.78	65.42	9.97	1.62(347)	.10	-.40	4.19	0.17
Emotional Intelligence	165.94	16.15	164.37	16.97	.88(349)	.37	-1.91	5.05	0.09

There was no significant mean difference in moral judgment and EI, (interpersonal skill, empathy and problem solving) in male and female adolescents. While summarizing the

results it can be seen that there was a significant positive relationship between EI and moral judgment. Mother education, father education, number of siblings and

academic class significantly predicted moral judgment. Empathy (subscale of EI) was the significant predictor of moral judgment.

## **Discussion**

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between EI and moral judgment. It was hypothesised that EI would have a positive relationship with moral judgment. Study findings indicate a significant positive relationship between EI (interpersonal skill, empathy & problem solving) and moral judgment. Hence, the hypothesis is supported as emotions are necessary for moral appraisal. Consistent with our findings, Platsidou (2004)'s results revealed that adolescents having high EI had better socio-moral judgment as compared to those of average and low EI. In another study with Indian adolescents, Kumari and Khadi (2015) found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and moral judgment. Similarly, Fernandez-barrocl and Extremera (2005) explored the relationship between moral judgment and EI. It was found that EI has the main role in making moral choices and it leads to a better understanding of emotions. Hence all these researches lend support to the notion that emotional competence or intelligence helps to develop moral thought.

The second hypothesis of the present research was that EI is likely to predict moral judgment. It was revealed that Interpersonal skill, a dimension of EI was a significant predictor of moral judgment (SMV) contract. Results also indicated that empathy is the major aspect of EI predicted moral judgment in adolescents. Goleman (1994) described that emotional intelligence includes self-awareness and above all, relationship skill, the capacity to get along well with others and to make friends. Lind (2003) found that those acquiring high scores on moral judgment competence and empathy also had good interpersonal relations and were able to deal with the problems more effectively. Kagan (1984) coined the term of empathy as one of the key moral emotion, while Damon (2008) stated that empathy is concerned with others and children must become familiar not only of their own emotional reactions but also of others as all moral acts are based on empathy (Stotland, 1969).

Data of the present research was taken from a collectivistic culture where family system teaches adolescents living together, to love each other and share joys and sorrows. This makes them learn empathetic understanding. Kuyel and Glover (2010) compared individualistic society

(USA) and collectivistic society (Turkey) for moral reasoning and moral orientation. Data comprised of 396 (20 Americans, 196 Turkish) undergraduates of age 16 to 46 years. Findings revealed that Turkish participants scored higher on both moral reasoning and moral orientation as compared to American participants.

In a more recent study, Beerthuizen and Brugman (2016) compared 216 community and delinquent male adolescents and found that emotional intelligence predicted socio-moral values. Moreover, a high evaluation of socio-moral values i.e. property, law and legal justice were associated with less antisocial behaviour. They also added that the high level of observing or appreciating moral values bring cognitive changes and externalizing behaviour. Furthermore, in support of our findings, Hoffman (2000) asserted that empathy is a social skill essentially needed for moral judgment which shows emotional concern for the welfare of others. Howe (2000) stated that empathy is the central feature of moral judgment that is related to emotion regulation. It is about feeling tenderness and sympathy to see someone in pain. Empathy means to imagine and understand someone's psychological mental state with maintaining self-differentiation.

Relationship of empathy and moral judgment has been reported by several types of research. Lajciakova in (2014) explored the relationship between moral judgment competence and empathy and found that effective empathy had a significant relationship with moral judgment. Bar-on (1997) also described empathy and social responsibility as precise interpersonal skills. Goleman (1995) model talk about empathetic awareness, what others need is the major skill to identify others' emotions.

In the present study, the third hypothesis pertaining to gender differences was rejected. No significant gender differences were found in moral judgment and emotional intelligence. Findings are consistent with Al- Ansari (2002) who explored the moral reasoning of Kuwaiti adolescents. Morality was found below the norms for both groups and there were no gender differences. Kalsoom, Behlol, Kayani and Kaini (2012) assessed the moral reasoning of Pakistani adolescents. Their study lent partial support to Gilligan theory and they found girls being more care-oriented as compared to boys; however, they were equal on justice orientation. Louise and Emerson (2011) assessed the moral development of 207 high school students and their sample fell in the normal range on

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moral judgment and both girls and boys were comparable on moral judgment ability. Al-Rumaidhi (2008) examined patterns of moral reasoning in Kuwaiti adolescents and found majority being operating at a 4<sup>th</sup> stage in the development of moral judgement, however, no significant gender differences were found in the moral judgment of adolescents. In a similar study, Aybek, Cavdar and Ozabaci (2015) examined moral judgment and emotional intelligence in Turkey and they found no significant gender differences in moral judgment and EI.

Another important finding of the present study was that father education was a significant predictor of moral judgment (moral judgment development stage 4 and socio-moral values i.e. contract, affiliation & law). Consistent with our findings, Sydoogullar (2008) found that those students whose fathers were well educated had better moral judgment. Hoffman (1983) explained that children need a lot of training to follow moral rules, and parents spend a great time giving children moral instructions. The present research also revealed mother education and two components of EI (emotional self-awareness and empathy) were significant predictors of moral judgment in adolescents. In our study, a number of siblings in the moral values of

adolescents. Santrock (2005) asserts that the sibling relationship plays a pivotal role in a family system as siblings have a long-term relationship and have maximum exposure to each other. Sibling relationship can be negative (conflictual & aggressive) and positive (warm & intimate). Parents are the socializing agents for teaching moral rules to their children, but parental power is not enough for developing moral concepts rather modelling and reinforcement techniques are also needed (Loulis & Kuczynski, 1997). Siblings are also thought to be equally influential family members, contributing to the moral development of their brothers and sisters (Dunn, 2002).

### **Conclusion**

The present study was conducted to see the relationship between emotional intelligence and moral judgment. From findings, it is revealed that EI is positively correlated with moral judgment. EI predicted moral judgment of adolescents and findings supported research hypotheses. Empathy being an important component of EI was a significant predictor of moral judgment, which is again in line with the study hypothesis. Furthermore, demographic characteristics, i.e. mother and father's education, number of siblings and academic

class significantly predicted the moral judgment of adolescents.

### **Limitations**

The present study had two main limitations: sample size and recruitment of sample do not allow generalization of the findings on all adolescent groups. Samples were taken from public and private institutions of Lahore city only, it would have been more appropriate if the sample represented diverse localities and backgrounds.

### **Implications and Suggestions for Future Research**

EI and moral judgment have been of interest for researchers as they hold importance for a society to be a morally sound nation. Children raised with low emotional intelligence are likely to have poorer social relations, difficulty in decision making, face problems dealing with stress and remain unhappy (Sung, 2011). Family and parental attitudes affect children EI directly (Alegre, 2011). Therefore, awareness in the family and especially in parents is required so that can foster EI in their children. Parents can provide a conducive environment at home which helps develop EI and moral judgment in offsprings as physical and psychological family and school environment has been reported important for EI (Tiwari, 2011). Moreover,

emotional intelligence addresses the emotional, personal, social, and survival dimensions of intelligence and is important for every day functioning (Grayson, 2013). During adolescence, peer pressure is important and future research should explore the relationship between peer pressure and moral judgment.

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