Summary, Findings and Conclusions
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction to the Chapter

The present study was conducted with major objectives of exploring the effect of Metaphysical Beliefs, Religio-Spiritual Institutional Affiliation, Value Orientation, Personality Traits and Emotional Intelligence of Moral Competence. The study was conducted on a global sample with representation from across the continents. This chapter summarizes the entire research in a nutshell, describing in brief the objectives and hypothesis that guided the study, methodology adopted and instruments used in the study, summary of results and findings, conclusions, implications and the limitations of the study.

5.1. Summary of the Study

The sections below summarises the study.

5.1.1. Need for the Study

Any research pertaining to Morality and Moral Competence bears high significance in the contemporary society. The moral orientation of the world societies are changing at a faster pace and the moral values that the societies once upheld are diminishing and gradually losing their meaning (Varghese and Raj, 2014a). Influence of the belief systems and the psychological aspects like values, personality traits and emotional intelligence etc. on morality is relatively less explored. An understanding of the factors of Moral Competence in a multicultural context bears very high significance and deeper explorations in this area will be beneficial in identifying the key psycho-social indicators of morality and Moral Competence. Knowledge of the same would also aid in developing modules to impart focussed moral competency enhancement in targeted populations.
5.1.2. Objectives of the Study

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

- To find whether the levels of Moral Competence differ between genders.
- To find whether the level of Moral Competence varies in individuals with age.
- To find out if there is any difference in the levels of Moral Competence between the Indians and the non-Indians.
- To find out the levels of Moral Competence in the sample of Indian Population and find if Indians from different regions differ on Moral Competence.
- To find if metaphysical beliefs such as Faith in God or a Higher Being, Belief in Afterlife and the Belief in the Influence of Present life on Afterlife influence Moral Competence.
- To find whether the levels of Moral Competence vary according to the Religio-Spiritual Institutional affiliations of the individuals.
- To find if the specific value orientation of individuals have any influence on moral competency and identify the specific influence of the values like Conformity, Tradition, Benevolence, Universalism, Self Direction, Stimulation, Hedonism, Achievement, Power and Security on Moral Competence.
- To find if the personality traits like Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience have any influence on Moral Competence.
- To find if the Moral Competence is influenced by Emotional Intelligence traits such as Well-being, Self-control, Emotionality and Sociability.
5.1.3. Variables in the Study

The Dependent and Independent variable in the study are the following:

**Dependent Variables:**

*Main Variable:* Moral Competence

*Sub Variables (Moral Traits):* Integrity, Honesty, Moral Courage, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Humility, Altruism, Compassion, Self-Forgiveness, Other-Forgiveness

**Independent Variables:**

*Metaphysical Beliefs:* Faith in God or a Higher Being, Belief in Afterlife and Belief in the Influence of Present Life on Afterlife

*Personality Traits:* Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience

*Emotional Intelligence:* Well-being, Self-control, Emotionality, Sociability and Global Trait EI

*Values:* Conformity, Tradition, Benevolence, Universalism, Self-Direction, Stimulation, Hedonism, Achievement, Power and Security

*Demographic Variables:* Gender, Age, Geographic Location, Religio-Spiritual Institutional Affiliation

5.1.4. Research Questions

The following are the major research questions derived to lead this study and formulate the specific hypothesis for the study.

- Does there exist any difference between the genders on their levels of Moral Competence?

- Do Moral Competence and different Moral Traits vary in level due to age?

- Is there any difference in the dominant Moral Traits in the individuals belonging to different geographical locations?
• Is there any difference in the levels of Moral Competence between Indians and non Indians?

• Is there any difference among the East Indians North Indians, South Indians and West Indians on Moral Competence?

• Do the prevailing Metaphysical beliefs influence Moral Competence and Moral Traits?

• Is there any difference in the Moral Competence of individuals according to their Religio-spiritual institutional affiliation?

• What are the prevailing values in individuals that support Moral Competence?

• Is there any relationship between Moral Competence and personality traits?

• Does Emotional intelligence and Emotional intelligence traits influence Moral Competence?

5.1.5. Hypothesis of the Study

This study tested 9 Major hypotheses and 59 Minor hypotheses. The major hypotheses tested in the study are the following.

H-1. There is significant difference between the males and females on Moral Competence and each of the Moral Traits.

H-2. There is significant difference between the different age groups on Moral Competence and each of the Moral Traits.

H-3. Metaphysical beliefs such as ‘Faith in God or a Higher Being,’ ‘Belief in After Life and Belief in the influence of present Life on Afterlife’ has significant effect on Moral Competence and Moral Traits.

H-4. Religio-Spiritual Institutional Affiliation has a significant influence on Moral Competence and each of the Moral Traits.
H-5. Indians and Non-Indians significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and each of the Moral Traits.

H-6. There is significant difference among the East Indians, North Indians, South Indians and West Indians on Moral Competence and each of the Moral Traits.

H-7. Value Orientations have significant effect on Moral Competence and each of the Moral Traits.

H-8. Personality traits have significant effect on Moral Competence and each of the Moral Traits.

H-9. Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence Traits have significant effect on Moral Competence and each of the Moral Traits.

5.1.6. Instruments Used

The following instruments were used in the study:

1. Moral Competency Inventory [Lennick and Kiel, 2005]

2. Abridged Big Five Indicator BFI-10 [Rammstedt and John, 2006]

3. Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire [Petrides & Furnham, 2006]

4. Portrait Value Questionnaire [Shwartz, 2003]

5. Personal and Demographic Data Questionnaire made for the study.

6. Metaphysical Beliefs Questionnaire made for the study.

5.1.7. Research Design

The objectives of the study necessitated to have a Relationship cum Comparative Survey research design.

5.1.8. Sample of the Study

Sample of the study was collected online via. simple random sampling. The sample consisted of 331 males and 645 females totalling 976. The mean age of the sample is 35.82 with a standard deviation of 13.63. The sample has representation
from all continents forming multiple criterion groups in terms of gender, age groups, religio-spiritual institutional affiliation, geographical locations etc.

5.1.9. Statistical Analysis

Along with the descriptive statistics of the criterion groups, the data obtained from the samples were analysed using the descriptive statistics, and the inferential statistical methods like one way ANOVA, unpaired ‘t’ test, Pearson Correlation Analysis, Multiple Linear Regression, Multivariate Analysis of Variance test etc. appropriately.

5.2. Findings of the Study

Based on the specific objectives that guided the study, the hypotheses derived were tested using appropriate statistical techniques. Accordingly, the findings drawn from this study are the following.

- Men and Women significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and Women and higher than Men in the overall Moral Competence.
- There are significant differences between Males and Females on Integrity, Honesty, Trustworthiness, Responsibility and Compassion; whereas there is no difference between the genders on Moral Courage, Humility, Altruism, Self-Forgiveness and Other-Forgiveness
- Individuals belonging to different age groups significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and all the Moral Traits.
- ‘Faith in God or a Higher Being’ significantly influences the Moral Traits; Humility and Self-Forgiveness but do alter the overall Moral Competence.
- ‘Belief in Afterlife” significantly influences the Moral Traits; Trustworthiness and Self-Forgiveness with a significant level of influence on the overall Moral Competence.
• ‘Belief in the Influence of present life on Afterlife’ significantly influences the Moral Traits; Honesty and Self-Forgiveness with a significant level of influence on the overall Moral Competence.

• Religio-Spiritual Institutional affiliation has significant influence on Moral Competence.

• Indian and non-Indians significantly differ between each other on Moral Competence and in the Moral Traits; Integrity, Honesty, Moral Courage, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Humility, Altruism, Compassion and Other-Forgiveness.

• East Indians, North Indians, West Indians and South Indians significantly differ among each other on their levels of Moral Competence and in all the Moral Traits.

• Value priorities of individuals have significant effect on Moral Competence and the Psychological Values like Tradition, Benevolence, Universalism, Self Direction, Stimulation and Power are significant predictors of Moral Competence.

• Individuals high and low in Conformity value significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and in the Moral Traits; Integrity, Honesty, Moral Courage, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Altruism, Compassion and Other-Forgiveness.

• Individuals high and low in Tradition value significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and in the Moral Traits; Moral Courage, Responsibility, Humility and Self-Forgiveness.

• Individuals high and low in Benevolence value significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and in the Moral Traits; Integrity, Honesty, Moral Courage, Trustworthiness, Humility, Altruism, Compassion and Other-Forgiveness
• Individuals high and low in Universalism value significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and in the Moral Traits; Integrity, Honesty, Moral Courage, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Humility, Altruism, Compassion, Self-Forgiveness and Other-Forgiveness.

• Individuals high and low in Self Direction value significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and in the Moral Traits; Integrity, Honesty, Moral Courage, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Humility, Compassion and Self-Forgiveness.

• Individuals high and low in Stimulation value significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and in the Moral Traits; Moral Courage, Humility, Altruism and Self-Forgiveness.

• Individuals high and low in Hedonism value does not differ on their levels of Moral Competence whereas do significantly differ in their levels of the Moral Traits; Self-Forgiveness.

• Individuals high and low in Achievement value significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and the Moral Traits; Integrity, Honesty, Trustworthiness and Other-Forgiveness.

• Individuals high and low in Power value significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and the Moral Traits; Integrity, Honesty, Moral Courage, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Humility, Altruism, Compassion, Self-Forgiveness and Other-Forgiveness.

• Individuals high and low in Security value does not differ on their levels of Moral Competence whereas they do significantly differ of their levels of Moral Traits; Altruism, and Other-Forgiveness.
• Personality traits significantly influence Moral Competence; and Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience are significant predictors of Moral Competence.

• Individuals high and low in Extraversion significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and the Moral Traits; Integrity, Honesty, Moral Courage, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Humility, Altruism, Compassion, Self-Forgiveness and Other-Forgiveness.

• Individuals high and low in Agreeableness do not differ significantly on their overall Moral Competence whereas they differ on the Moral Traits; Integrity, Moral Courage, Responsibility, Humility and Other-Forgiveness.

• Individuals high and low in Conscientiousness do not differ significantly on their overall Moral Competence whereas they differ on the Moral Traits; Moral Courage and Trustworthiness.

• Individuals high and low on Neuroticism do not differ significantly on their overall Moral Competence whereas they differ on the Moral Traits; Humility and Self-Forgiveness.

• Individuals high and low on Openness to Experience significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and the Moral Traits; Moral Courage, Responsibility, Humility, Altruism and Self-Forgiveness.

• Trait Emotional Intelligence significantly influences Moral Competence and the Well-being, Self-control, Emotionality and Sociability are significant predictors of Moral Competence.

• Individuals high and low in Well-being significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and the Moral Traits; Integrity, Honesty, Moral Courage,
Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Humility, Altruism, Compassion, Self-Forgiveness and Other-Forgiveness.

- Individuals high and low in Self-control significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and the Moral Traits; Integrity, Honesty, Moral Courage, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Humility, Altruism, Compassion, Self-Forgiveness and Other-Forgiveness.

- Individuals high and low in Emotionality significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and the Moral Traits; Integrity, Honesty, Moral Courage, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Humility, Altruism, Compassion, Self-Forgiveness and Other-Forgiveness.

- Individuals high and low in Sociability significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and the Moral Traits; Integrity, Honesty, Moral Courage, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Humility, Altruism, Compassion, Self-Forgiveness and Other-Forgiveness.

5.3. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Mere ‘Faith in God or a Higher Being’ does not influence Moral Competence whereas; higher forms of indulgent theistic beliefs such as ‘Belief in an Afterlife’ and the ‘Belief in the Influence of present life on Afterlife’ have significant effect on Moral Competence.

- Religio-Spiritual Institutional Affiliation has significant influence on Moral Competence.

- Geographical locations distinguished by the specific culture of the land have significant effect on Moral Competence.
• Indians and Non Indians Significantly differ on Moral Competence.

• The East Indians, North Indians, South Indians and West Indians Significantly differ among each other on Moral Competence.

• Value orientations of individuals have momentous effect on Moral Competence. The Values with Social Inclination have positive effect on Moral Competence whereas the values with Individual Inclination have negative or neutral effect on Moral Competence.

• Psychological Values like Tradition, Benevolence, Universalism, Self Direction, Stimulation and Power are significant predictors of Moral Competence.

• Personality traits have significant effect on Moral Competence and the traits; Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience are major predictors of Moral Competence.

• Emotional Intelligence has significant effect on Moral Competence and the Emotional Intelligence Traits; Well-being, Self-control, Emotionality and Sociability are key predictors of Moral Competence.

• Age has significant effect on Moral Competence.

• Men and women significantly differ on Moral Competence and in a global context; women are more morally competent than men.

5.4. Implications of the Study

Findings of this study are expected to have a considerable implication in the area of Moral Psychology and Moral Education towards development of Moral Competence enhancement interventions. This study revealed the influence of the major Demographic factors like Age, Gender, Metaphysical Beliefs, Religio-Spiritual
Institutional affiliation and the Psychological variables like the Value Orientations, Personality Traits and Emotional Intelligence on Moral Competence. Since this study obtained clarity on the specific influence of the demographic and psychological variables on Moral Competence; the predicting factors and the influencing agents can be effectively included in the psychological behaviour modification programs like moral education curriculum development and moral competency enhancement interventions.

The knowledge that age and gender have significant influence on Moral Competence, will aid in developing age and gender specific modules in the proposed programs; the specific belief system aiding Moral Competence can be refined and included in the educational interventions. The knowledge of deference among the samples belonging to various geographic locations, can aid in further exploring the culture or society specific factors supporting Moral Competence, and thus aid in developing culture specific approach towards moral education and competency enhancement.

The specific psychological variables identified in this study as the factors influencing Moral Competence can influence the overall approach towards the study of morality and Moral Competence, and can significantly contribute to the moral education programs. Efforts in enhancing the independent influencing factors can resultantly lead to the increase in Moral Competence. The enhancement of desirable traits through personality modification programs, emotional intelligence enhancement interventions and value education modules may influence the overall Moral Competence.

Observations in this study add to the existing knowledge in the area of moral psychology and can stand as a foundation and reference for more specific researches in this domain.
5.5. Limitations

This study has the following limitations:

- A much larger sample size than in the present study could possibly represent the global population in a much better manner.

- Since the data was collected online, only that population having working knowledge of English language and Internet are included in the study.

- Some of the major Socioeconomic variables like familial status, birth order, childhood experiences, parental factors, economic conditions, education level, occupation etc. that could play an important role in Moral Competence could not be included in this study.

- As the study was conducted in uncontrolled settings, the variables like specific mental state of the individual at the time of study, the situational environment and the subject’s interest in responding at the point of time of the study were out of control.

- This study was conducted on a highly heterogeneous population and so the findings are largely general. These results may not always be applicable to specific sets of populations, like ethnic groups, socio-linguistic communities, occupational groups etc.

- Due to financial and time constraints; this study could not adopt experimental methods and conduct collaborative research with leading researchers in the area of moral psychology. Adopting experimental methodology and collaborative studies could have given a better shape to the findings of this study.
• Though Geographical Location is identified by culture, no separate attempt was made in this study to draw out the specific cultural differences between the samples that could contribute to the differences in Moral Competence.

• Religio-Spiritual Affiliation analysed in this study is only with reference to the response given by the subjects while choosing their affiliation. Since majority of people identify the religious affiliation superficially, by virtue of their lineage or birth in a family having such an identity and not through personal convictions; religio-spiritual affiliation as in this study may not necessarily represent the religion and religious teachings in specific, but only the individuals who identify themselves with that religio-spiritual institution.

5.6. Recommendations for Further Research

Since this study was conducted on a global sample of population, the elicited results are more general and in a global sense. Since there are many indigenous variables likely to influence Moral Competence, conducting similar researches in culture specific homogenous populations has scope for further study. Also, similar studies can be conducted in future in the specific context of the socioeconomic variables like familial status, birth order, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, linguistic origin, childhood experiences, parental factors, economic status, education level, occupational status etc.