Review of Literature
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0. Introduction to the Chapter

Research in its generic linguistic and etymological constitution itself contains ‘Re-Search’ which means, to search again in the already done studies and already established facts, the solution for the current research problem or the factors of present enquiry. This chapter in a condensed form presents the previous studies in the area of moral psychology and other disciplines relevant to the context of the present investigation, pertaining to the studies on the effect of metaphysical beliefs & religio-spiritual institutional affiliation, psychological values, personality traits and emotional intelligence on Moral Competence.

2.1. Studies on Morality and Moral Competence

Moral Competence is the skill to do the right thing or it is the ability to consistently behave according to the accepted ethical principles. Moral Competence involves the “moral values with which people select and justify actions, to evaluate people (including the self) and events” (Schwartz, 1992).

Moral Competence is characterized with the traits of socializing, empathy and autonomy which endorse moral behaviour (Hogan, 1973). It promotes the ability to behave ethically, characterized by features like being emphatic, taking responsibility of others, self actualization and self control (Haas, 1998), and the ability to distinguish right from wrong which further contributes to the attributes of empathy, awareness, self-control, respect, politeness, tolerance and fairness (Borba, 2001). Accordingly, lack of Moral Competence results in much negative behaviour like suicidal tendency, infanticide, forcing behaviour, alcohol and drug abuse, distractibility, hyperactivity.
and depression (Borba, 2003). In other words, Moral Competence nurtures the cognitive capacity to specify how universal rules of integrity, responsibility, compassion, forgiveness etc. are used (Lennick & Kiel, 2006). Moral Competence improves the consistency of moral behaviour in accordance with the moral principles (Varghese & Raj, 2014).

Moral Competence facilitates moral decisions and judgments based on the moral principles and to act in accordance with it (Kohlberg, 1964). It also increases the affective orientation to perform altruistic behaviours towards others and the ability to judge moral issues logically, consistently, and at an advanced level of development (Ma, 2012). Similarly Moral reasoning and moral identity that promotes Moral Competence were found to be higher contributors of in service-learning (Lies, 2006)

A moral person is identified by the virtues or the observable Moral traits he/she possesses which is influenced by a number of psycho-social factors and various studies and researches are there on exploring the structure and components of morality and Moral Competence. Similar to Personality Traits and Emotional Intelligence Traits; Virtues form the character traits or the moral traits contributing to and supporting the moral sanctions of the society. Accordingly, some of the major virtues include, Integrity (Lennick & Kiel, 2006); Honesty (Hartshorne & May, 1928; Havighurst & Taba, 1949; Josephson, 2002); Loyalty (Havighurst & Taba, 1949; Lennick & Kiel, 2006), Responsibility (Havighurst & Taba, 1949; Lennick & Kiel, 2006; Hartshorne & May, 1928); Moral Courage (Havighurst & Taba, 1949); Friendliness (Havighurst & Taba, 1949); Service (Hartshorne & May, 1928) which includes the sense of responsibility in serving others, Altruism (Hartshorne & May, 1928); Compassion (Lennick & Kiel, 2006) etc.
All the Moral traits involve some notion of adhering to the social and cultural norms which involves effort on the part of the individual; and control of the self and sacrifice (Kohlberg, 1964). Josephson (2002) defined Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship as the six vital qualities or pillars of character that guides moral behaviour. The standard of conduct that emerges out of these values accordingly constitutes the ground rules of moral behaviour and Moral Competence (Josephson, 2002).

The Moral traits are very positively associated with the various psycho-social aspects of individual’s life. Integrity has been found to be associated with higher levels of self-esteem, intimacy, self-regard, and positive affect (Harter, 2002), as well as with productive interpersonal relationships, teamwork, effective decision making, participation, and positive climate in organizations (Harter, 2002; Gergen, 1999; Lerner, 1993). Forgiveness is seen to be highly associated with broader and richer social relationships, higher satisfaction, stronger feelings of empowerment, less physical illness, faster recovery from disease and injury, and less depression and anxiety (McCullough, 2000; Hope, 1987; Fitzgibbons, 1986; Enright, 1994).

Compassionate people demonstrate higher levels of helping behaviour, moral reasoning, connectedness, and stronger interpersonal relationships, as well as less depression, reduced moodiness, and less mental illness (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Cassell, 2002; Blum, 1980; Solomon, 1998). Virtues such as courage, hope or optimism, faith, honesty or integrity, forgiveness and compassion are inoculation agents against psychological distress, addiction and dysfunctional behaviour (Seligman, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Integrity works similar to the physical laws of nature; gravity for example and it operates irrespective of whether one likes it or not (Erhard, Jensen, & Zaffron, 2005). Moral integrity is experienced as a subjective
sense of wholeness & balance and it is positively associated with well-being. Studies have revealed that moral exemplars possess high level of moral integrity (Colby & Damon, 1992; Damon, 1996).

Several researches have been conducted to investigate the antecedents of Moral Competence, with major focus on parental training (Turiel, 1983; Eisenberg, Fabes & Spinrad, 2006), peer influence (Ma et al., 2000, Eisenberg, Fabes & Spinrad, 2006) and religion (Wahrman, 1981; Ernsberger & Manaster, 1981; Glover, 1997); metaphysical beliefs (Varghese & Raj 2014c), personality traits (Athota, O’Connor, & Jackson, 2009; Curtis, Billingslea, & Wilson, 1998; Varghese & Raj 2014c) Emotional Intelligence (Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Jensen, et al., 2007; Ogunleye & Olawa, 2013; Varghese & Raj 2014d) Values (Allport, Vernon & Lindzey, 1960; England, 1975; Rokeach, 1973; Lei & Cheng, 1987; Schwartz & Bardi, 2001) etc., and have found that Moral Competence is determined by multifarious psycho-social factors. Similar to the objectives of exploration in this study, previous reports also have consistently shown that Moral Competence has significant relationship with the metaphysical beliefs and religio-spiritual institutional affiliation, values, personality traits and emotional intelligence. The following sections draw the relationship between the Moral Competence and each of the broad independent variables in this study summarizing the previous relevant researches in the area.

2.2. Metaphysical Beliefs, Religio-Spiritual Affiliation and Moral Competence

Most of the religions or the theistic perspectives attempt to define the ultimate meaning of life and reality of life’s existence, with reference to God or a Higher Being or a supernatural force controlling the universe whereas, the non theistic worldviews such as humanism, atheism or agnosticism connects the meaning and existence to the nature and natural phenomena (Kaplan, 1961; Glock & Stark, 1965).
Studies in the area of moral psychology have found that faith in God and religious concepts elicit norms of fairness in social interactions. Religious orientation increase generosity among dictator game participants (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007) and decrease tendencies of cheating (Mazar, Amir & Ariely, 2007). Many true believers in God consider their relationships to be subject to the same norms of reciprocal altruism as their social relationships with other human beings (Johnson & Krüger, 2004; Bering, 2006) and the nature of relationships people have with God often reflects in the nature of relationships they have with others (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992). On the other hand the fear of omniscient and omnipotent supernatural God deters group defectors, particularly in large groups where the rule and law is difficult to enforce (Raven, 1999; Atran & Norenzayan, 2004; Johnson & Krüger, 2004; Bering, 2006).

Religious believers perceive violations of their religious code to be offensive to God; and actions that cause offense to other people to be severe moral violations than identical actions that do not (Mikula, Scherer & Athenstaedt, 1998 & Knobe, 2003). Unjust acts against the known scriptural codes, provoke strong negative emotions in a religious believer (Mikula, et al., 1998), which may induce moral evaluation (Greene & Haidt, 2002) of the actions of the self and actions that induce feelings of disgust are judged to be immoral even when people cannot offer a logical explanation for their judgment (Haidt, Koller, & Dias, 1993).

Researches in criminology have found that there is an inverse relationship between religion and crime (Johnson et al., 2000; Doris, 2007). Baier & Wright (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 60 studies on religion and crime and concluded that religious beliefs have a moderate deterrent effect on crime and criminal behaviour. The understanding that, actions that cause harm to others are more blameworthy than
identical actions that cause no harm, enable an individual to be considerate towards others (Knobe, 2003; Cushman et al., 2006) and the fear of a Supreme Being and Judgement of actions promotes moral behaviour (Varghese & Raj, 2014e).

People processing religious contents in a symbolic way show higher Moral Competence and tend to make a sharper distinction between moral arguments when compared to people who process religious contents in a literal way. Similarly religious people are more ordered, structured and predictable in their interactions (Duriez, & Soenens, 2006). In value orientation they are less in hedonism, stimulation and self-direction values and more on tradition and conformity values (Fontaine et al., 2005). Religious individuals uphold cultural, conservative and authoritarian beliefs and they honour and submit to authority figures (Duriez et al., 2004).

One of the basic rationales why people adopt traditional creeds, customs and religio-spiritual worldviews is to find meaning and coherence in the face of perceived meaninglessness of existence (Niebuhr, 1935; Tillich, 1956; Yinger, 1957; Buber, 1958). Though the religious codes may differ from religion to religion, and there exist theological differences; there are common values that most of the religions share. Concurrently, in majority of the religions it is immoral to steal, cheat, murder, indulge in sexual perversion etc. (Brier & Wright, 2001; Chapouthier, 2004). Most religious worldviews possess their own ethical code of conduct which play a significant role in the socialization and moral conditioning of its members (Varghese & Raj, 2014e). Religions and religious worldviews are chief sources of the Metaphysical beliefs associated with the existence of God or a Higher Being and it is mostly through the religious institutions that individuals imbibe the concept of a Supernatural Being. Since most religions have guidance for its people to make decisions relating to
behaviour and moral ways of living, religious institutions are vital moral institutions. Conclusively, the Metaphysical beliefs and religio-spiritual orientation are significant sources, inculcating moral values in individuals.

2.3. Psychological Values and Moral Competence

Values are the products of socialization, which plays a very vital role in the personality and moral development (Mussen, Conger & Kagan; 1974). They are deeply rooted, abstract motivations that guide, justify and explain attitudes, norms, opinions and actions (Halman & de Moor, 1994; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992; Williams, 1968; Schwartz, 2003). Values enable individuals to function according to the customs of their society or in other words it reflects the culture of the society to which an individual belongs (Mead, 1928/1934/1935; Benedict, 1934; Linton, 1934). Inculcation of values in the individual occur relatively early in the process of socialization and they are to a greater extend constant and unchangeable (Super & Sverko, 1995).

Findings of various studies on moral values and behaviour have found that personal values do influence human behaviour and the way of living (England, 1975; Rokeach, 1973; Singhapakdi & Vitell, 1993; Guth & Tagiuri, 1987; Fritzsche, 1995; Finegan, 1994; Eaton & Giacomino, 2000/2001). Values and value systems are the vital factors involved in the understanding of human morality (Connor & Becker, 1975; Allport & Vernon, 1931). Thus, Values occupy a central position in unifying diverse interests of all the sciences dealing with human behaviour (Rokeach, 1975).

Allport, Vernon and Lindzey (1960), England (1975) and Rokeach (1973) have conducted extensive research based on knowledge that values play a determining role in the individual behaviour and the different value orientations significantly influencing moral behaviour. Values enable individuals to select and justify actions
and to evaluate people (including the self) and events (Kluckhohn, 1951). According to Lei and Cheng (1987), the Chinese cultural values such as the maintenance of harmony, obedience and filial piety do affect Chinese moral judgments. The cultural factors along with values play a major role in moral judgment and the individual moral development depends on how and individual develops skill in adhering, understanding and managing the moral expectations of their culture and values (Schweder, 1990; Stigler, Schweder & Herdt, 1990).

Values play an important role in the development of moral self which integrates moral values to the self concept of individuals, and it is developed during the adolescence. The parental values play a significant role in the development of moral self and the Children with responsive parents are found to grow up with more empathy, conscience and pro-social tendencies (Kochanska, 2002a/2012b). The moral capacities are much influenced by the values inculcated through the neurobiological and parental factors defining the early childhood experiences (Narvaez, 2014). There is a very close relationship between the values of mothers and their children; and children are more disposed to adopt the value system of their mothers than most others (Kandel & Lesser, 1972). Many of the family oriented values and cultural values are passed down from one generation to another through the social institution of family (Kandel & Lesser, 1972).

Individuals perform a value clarification in order to choose or justify the moral choices. Values significantly contributes to the process of self-actualization involving the sub processes of choosing among alternatives, prizing and affirmation of the choice, and the action or performance of moral behaviour (Maslow, 1970; Rogers, 1969). Values priorities determine the internal cognitive or effective patterns of the individual to decide on the morally desirable and undesirable behaviours.
The moral decision making involves the internal processes of feeling, willing, indenting, and thinking; and the making of choices are largely conscious efforts through self determined thoughts and feelings. Making of choices as a free being depends on the confirmation or denial of choices, which are largely determined by the value priorities of the individuals (Moustakas, 1966).

Values play a vital role in determining the responses of individuals in the daily life events and they are in a way the psychological regulators of behaviour (Molchanov, 2005). The value preferences in interaction with the different psycho-social factors including the socio-cultural norms, rules, expectations etc. influences the behaviour of individuals to larger significant extend (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). An individual’s actions in the society are largely determined by his/her priority of values and studies in situations of hypothetical behaviour modelling have shown that in most situations, people chooses to behave according to their specific value orientations (Belinskaya & Tihomandritskaya, 2001; Molchanov, 2005).

The convictions created in the individual by the personal and socio-cultural values thus have a determining influence on moral competence. Studies have overwhelmingly shown significant correlation among all types of value orientations with their corresponding behaviour types (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003). Values form the complex attitude sets that influence the behaviour of individuals and the behaviour of others in the day to day social interactions. They guide not only the personal choices of the individual but also the perceptions of the worth of others in the society thus guiding moral behaviour (Shockley-Zalabak, 1999).
2.4. Personality and Moral Competence

Recent researches in the domain of moral and social psychology have found that the Personality of an individual largely influence their moral orientation and thus significantly manipulates the moral behaviour. Personality trait is fundamentally, relatively stable characteristics of personality that causes an individual to behave in certain ways (Allport, 1937) and they have very significant impact on Moral Competence (Varghese & Raj, 2014c).

In earlier studies, the big five personality dimensions; Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience were found as significant predictors of moral reasoning (Athota and O’connor, 2009). Similarly, significant relationship was found between Personality Traits and Moral Competence; with Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness as remarkable effectors (Varghese & Raj, 2014c). Studies have also shown that Personality Traits have noteworthy effect on Moral Judgement (Stojiljković, 1998); Moral Reasoning (Mudrack, 2006); Moral Maturity (Curtis, Billingslea & Wilson, 1998); Moral Actions (Walker & Frimer, 2007); Moral Identity (McFerran, Aquino, & Duffy, 2009). Moral Judgements greatly depends on the individual’s intellectual abilities, empathy and basic dimensions of personality (Stojiljković, 1998), and there are analogous significant associations between Moral Maturity and Personality Traits (Curtis, Billingslea & Wilson, 1998).

Adoption of a principled ideology distinguishes individuals from others and enables them to live ethically (Schlenker, 2008). People committed to moral principles posses good level of integrity (Schlenker, 2008; Schlenker, Weigold, & Schlenker, 2008; Schlenker, Miller, & Johnson, 2009) and tend to uphold their ethical ideology at all times. Ethical ideology involves an integrated system of standards,
beliefs, values and self-assessments that define an individual's orientation toward matters of right and wrong (Schlenker, Miller, & Johnson, 2009) and it rests on a continuum between two dimensions labelled principled and expedient (Schlenker, 2008). A person who adopts a principled ideology believes that moral principles are absolute and should dictate personal behaviour, irrespective of the social or personal consequences for doing so. The personality traits; Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Openness to Experience have been identified as the contributors to the principled ideology (Colquitt, Scott, Judge, & Shaw, 2006; McAdams, 2009). A person with an expedient ideology assumes that moral principles have flexibility and that deviations for personal gain are justifiable. This is influenced by the moral identity of the person which is the mental representation of one’s own moral character that is held internally and projected to others. The Moral Identity is largely influenced by the personality traits of the individual (McFerran, Aquino, & Duffy, 2009).

Moral actions are determined by the personality traits to a significant extend (Walker & Frimer, 2007). Various studies have found that and there is a link between personality and the antisocial activities like theft, deviance etc. in workplace (Treviño, Weaver & Reynolds, 2006). In a study by Berry, Ones, & Sackett (2007) interpersonal deviance and deviance at workplace were found negatively related to the personality traits Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. People high in Conscientiousness are found to be honest and they are more likely to engage in pro-social activities including volunteering for social causes and extending helping hands to the needy etc. (Lodi-Smith & Roberts, 2007; McAdams, 2009). They are less likely to engage in dishonesty at work and they exhibit higher levels of ethical behaviour at work place (Roberts & Hogan, 2001). Personality trait Agreeableness promotes the moral attributes of fairness, justice and reciprocity (Matsuba & Walker, 2004; McAdams, 2009),
and the trait Openness to Experience is related to ego development (Loevinger & Blasi 1976; McCrae & Costa, 1980), which in turn is associated with deeper levels of moral reasoning.

In various studies, the Personality trait Extraversion has been found to be related to cooperation (Ross, Rausch, & Canada, 2003), and Conscientiousness with helping behaviour (King, George, & Hebl, 2005). A study by Neff, Rude & Kirkpatrick (2007) found that the moral virtue, compassion has significant positive association with Agreeableness, Extraversion, and Conscientiousness and a negative association with Neuroticism.

Walker and Pitts (1998) in their study of brave, caring and just individuals, found that brave exemplars aligned with a complex of traits associated with Extraversion; caring exemplars aligned with Agreeableness; and just exemplars with a mixture of Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability and Openness to Experience; and this pattern were further reconfirmed by Walker (1999) and Walker and Hennig (2004). Similarly, in another study, Matsuba and Walker (2005) found that young adult moral exemplars score high on Agreeableness, describing it as a favourable personality factor promoting morality.

Individuals having ‘resilient’ personality profile in childhood are more likely to involve in voluntary community service in adolescence than the teens who had ‘under controlled’ or ‘over controlled’ personality profiles as children (Hart, Atkins & Fegley, 2003). The shaping of Moral Identity in the adolescence is predominantly contributed by the enduring dispositional and the social factors including the family, culture, peers, social class etc. (Hart, 2005). On the other hand, in the process of moral development, the emergence of moral self is to a greater extent influenced by the personality of the parent and their temperaments (Kochanska, et al., 1995; Kochanska, 2002a; Kochanska et al., 2004; Kochanska & Aksan, 2004). Emergence
of morality begins with the quality of parent-child attachment and a strong and mutually responsive relationship with caregivers, which orients the child to be receptive to parental influence (Kochanska, 1997a; Kochanska, 2002b).

Hogan (1970) studied the relationship between the morality and personality and investigated the disposition of an individual with which they choose either ‘ethics of personal conscience’ or ‘ethics of social responsibility’. Ethics of personal conscience asserts that there exist higher laws unrelated to human rules, laws and legislation which individuals can discover only through Intuition. On the other hand the ethics of social responsibility advocate that there does not exist any ‘higher law’ and the most defensible criteria for evaluating social action are the existing legal system and the general welfare of the society (Hogan, 1970). In a study conducted by Johnson et al. (1981) high scorers on the Survey of Ethical Attitudes tests were found to have positive attitudes toward authority and they were also seen to be politically conservative and high in conformity (Hogan, 1970; Lorr & Zea, 1977). Similarly Conformers were found to be better adjusted, use fewer drugs and have an internal as opposed to an external locus of control when compared to the non conformers, exhibiting consistent moral behaviour (Gutkin & Suls, 1979).

2.5. Emotional Intelligence and Moral Competence

Emotional Intelligence plays a very vital role in determining human behaviour and moral decision making. It involves the ability to understand the feelings of self and others, to differentiate between the feelings; and to use the information to guide ones thinking and behaviour (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The moral validity of the actions depends on the extent to which people manage their emotions effectively (Pizarro & Salovey, 2002), and thus Emotional Intelligence contributes significantly in organizing and controlling the feelings and emotions for better self-organization and healthy interpersonal relationships (Goleman, 1998).
Emotional Intelligence has been found to have noteworthy effect on work performance, academic achievement, interpersonal relations and the ability to communicate effectively;resultantly enhancing the efficiency of individuals in dealing with everyday problems and make moral decisions (Emmerling, Shanwal, & Mandal, 2008). Emotional Intelligence helps to effectively cope with the environmental demands and pressures (Martinez-Pons, 1997/1998), thus augmenting the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand, reason and regulate emotions of self and others, ultimately contributing to the Moral Competence.

Emotionally intelligent individuals are genuine, well-adjusted, warm, persistent, and optimistic (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Genuineness and adjustment are favourable qualities contributing to Moral Competence and moral behaviour (Ogunleye & Olawa, 2013), and Genuineness enhance interpersonal relations, distinctly improving the attributes of integrity, honesty and trustworthiness. There is considerable evidence of relationship between empathy and pro-social behaviour in children (Eisenberg, Spinrad & Sadovsky, 2006). The emotional trait Sociability is found to significantly determine helping behaviour in children, and influence assessment of unexpected contingency situations towards helping others (Eisenberg, Fabes & Spinrad, 2006).

Emotions are powerful sources of motivation and they play a vital role in moral development. The ability to channelize emotions, determines conformity to moral codes and standards (Pizarro & Salovey, 2002). There is a positive relationship between social responsibility and empathy (Bar-On, 1997), and the emotions of empathy and guilt are significant factors that stimulate pro-social behaviour (Jensen, Kohn, Rilea, Hannon & Howells, 2007). The emotional arousal an empathetic person
undergoes seeing the suffering of others; promote helping behaviour towards those in distress (Jensen et al., 2007). The empathetic awareness and understanding of the need of others; facilitate sensing of other’s emotions, and it resultantly promotes moral interactions in the society (Goleman, 1995). Studies in the neurobiological domain of moral psychology have shown that there are certain emotional parts of the brain which becomes active when individuals encounter a moral situation which demands a moral decision making (Gazzaniga, 2005).

Development of moral thought and judgement reflects the individual’s level of emotional intelligence and a well lived life distinguished by moral integrity reflects mature emotional intelligence. Accordingly, the moral commitment, judgement and integrity are the significant outcomes of the socio-emotional experiences of individuals (Saarni, 2000). The functional level of Emotional Intelligence is directly related with the development of moral thought in the adolescent years, and emotionally mature adolescents were found to demonstrate higher emotional abilities and moral judgment (Platsidou, 2004). When an individual develops the ability to feel, interpret, and express emotions correctly, adaptively, and follows accepted standards; they embrace and upholds actions that are morally inclined. The regulation and control of emotional reactions to stimulation in the environment determines the output of appropriate behaviours and Moral Competence lies in the expression of these appropriate behaviours (Ogunleye & Olawa, 2013).

Since, Emotional Intelligence assists in understanding and regulating the emotions in self and others, it drives individuals to step into the shoes of others, to empathetically appraise their situations; to exercise a healthy moral information processing and moral decision making (Varghese & Raj, 2014d). Ogunleye and Olawa (2013) reported Emotional Intelligence as a major predictor of Moral
Competence and in a study conducted by McCrae (2000), Emotional Intelligence was found to have significant effect on moral reasoning. Various researchers have found that altruistic characteristics of the personality of individuals varies with the demands and characteristics of the social contexts whereas the pro-social personality disposition that emerges in early childhood are consistent over time and adds to the moral personality of the individual (Carlo, Eisenberg, Troyer, Switzer & Speer, 1991; Eisenberg, Guthrie, Murphy, Shepard, Cumberland & Carlo, 1999; Eisenberg et al., 2002). Studies have also revealed that gender also has significant influence on Emotional Intelligence and moral decision making (Alloway, 2004; Sutarso, 1998).

On summarizing the review of the literature, it makes apparent that the factors discussed above have significant influence on Moral Competence. Previous researches have convincingly drawn the relationship that Moral Competence has with Metaphysical Beliefs and Religio-Spiritual Institutional Affiliation (Varghese & Raj, 2014e; Brier & Wright, 2001; Chapouthier, 2004; Niebuhr, 1935; Tillich, 1956; Yinger, 1957; Buber, 1958; King, 1954; Coles, 1990; Mikula, et al., 1998; Knobe, 2003; Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007; Duriez, & Soenens, 2006; Fontaine, et al, 2005; Duriez et al., 2004); Psychological Values (Allport, Vernon & Lindzey, 1960; England, 1975; Rokeach, 1973; Lei & Cheng, 1987; Schwartz & Bardi, 2001; Belinskaya & Tihomandritskaya, 2001; Molchanov, 2005; Mead, 1935; Benedict, 1934; Linton, 1934; Singhapakdi & Vitell, 1993; Guth & Tagiuri, 1987; Fritzsche, 1995; Finegan, 1994; Eaton & Giacomo, 2001); Personality Traits (Athota, O’Connor, & Jackson, 2009; Curtis et al., 1998; Varghese & Raj, 2014c; Schlenker, 2008; Schlenker et al., 2009; Colquitt et al., 2006; McAdams, 2009; Walker & Frimer, 2007; Treviño, et al., 2006; Berry et al., 2007; Lodi-Smith & Roberts, 2007; McAdams, 2009; Loewinger & Blasi 1976; McCrae & Costa, 1980; Kochanska & Aksan, 2004; Hogan, 1970; Lorr & Zea, 1977) and Emotional
Intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Jensen, et al., 2007; Ogunleye & Olawa, 2013; Varghese & Raj 2014d; Martinez-Pons, 1998; McCrae, 2000; Eisenberg et al., 2006; Platsidou, 2004; Saarni, 2000; Carlo et al., 1991; Emmerling, Shanwal, & Mandal, 2008).

The former studies throws enough light on the fact that, the psycho-social factors like Metaphysical Beliefs, Religio-Spiritual Institutional Affiliation, Psychological Values, Personality Traits and Emotional Intelligence has significant relation with morality and different aspects of human behaviour. This study focuses of further exploring the effect of the variables reviewed in this section and the specific demographic variables on Moral Competence in the global context. The following sections deals with the directional research questions drawn for this study and the hypotheses formulated for inferential testing.

2.6. Research Questions

As delineated, the human behaviour emanates from various psycho-philosophical as well as socio-political, biological and environmental factors and Moral Competence enables an individual to act according to what is ‘right’ or stand for ‘truth’ and exhibit moral behaviour. The brief review of literature convincingly elucidate the influence of the psycho-social factors on Moral Competence; and forming grounds on the existing knowledge, an intense need is felt to investigate further into the basic determinants of Moral Competence and explore the specific effect of the psycho-social factors such as Metaphysical Beliefs, Religio-Spiritual Institutional Affiliation, Psychological Values, Personality Traits, Emotional Intelligence, and the various demographic variables like gender, age, culture identified by the geographic location etc. on Moral Competence in the global population. In order to have a directional focus for the current research and to meet the objectives defined for
the present study the following research questions were arrived upon to lead the research and formulate the specific hypotheses 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?

2.7. Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the objectives of this study and specific research questions derived, the following hypotheses were formulated to directionally guide through this research.
H-1. There is significant difference between the males and females on Moral Competence and each of the Moral Traits.

H-1.1 There is significant difference between the males and females in the study on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-1.2. There is significant difference between the males and females in the study in each of the different Moral Traits.

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

H-2.1. There is significant difference among the different age groups in the study on their Levels of Moral Competence.

H-2.2. There is significant difference among the different age groups in the study on each of the different 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-3.1.1. Metaphysical belief ‘Faith in God or a higher being’ has significant Influence on Moral Competence.

H-3.1.2. Metaphysical belief ‘Faith in God or a Higher Being’ has significant influence on the different Moral Traits.

H-3.2.1. Metaphysical belief ‘Belief in After Life’ has significant Influence on Moral Competence.

H-3.2.2. Metaphysical belief ‘Belief in After Life’ has significant influence on the different Moral Traits.
H-3.3.1. Metaphysical belief ‘Belief in the Influence of present Life on Afterlife’ has significant influence on Moral Competence.

H-3.3.2. Metaphysical belief ‘Belief in the Influence of present Life on Afterlife’ has significant influence on the different Moral Traits.

H-4. Religio-Spiritual Institutional Affiliation has significant influence on Moral Competence and each of the Moral Traits

H-4.1. There is significant difference among the individuals belonging to different religio-spiritual institutions on their level of Moral Competence.

H-4.2. There is significant difference among the individuals belonging to different religio-spiritual institutions on each of the different Moral Traits.

H-5. Indians and Non-Indians significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence and each of the Moral Traits.

H-5.1. There is significant difference between the sample representing Indian population and the sample representing rest of the world (Non Indians) on their Levels of Moral Competence.

H-5.2. There is significant difference between the sample representing Indian population and the sample representing rest of the world (Non Indians) on 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-6.1. There is significant difference between the East Indians, North Indians, South Indians and West Indians on their Levels of Moral Competence.
H-6.2. There is significant difference between the East Indians, North Indians, South Indians and West Indians on each of the Moral Traits.

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


H-7.2.1. Individuals high and low on Conformity value orientation significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-7.2.2. Individuals high and low on Conformity value orientation significantly differ on each of the Moral Traits.

H-7.3.1. Individuals high and low on Tradition value orientation significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-7.3.2. Individuals high and low on Tradition value orientation significantly differ on each of the Moral Traits.

H-7.4.1. Individuals high and low on Benevolence value orientation significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-7.4.2. Individuals high and low on Benevolence value orientation significantly differ on each of the Moral Traits.

H-7.5.1. Individuals high and low on Universalism value orientation significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-7.5.2. Individuals high and low on Universalism value orientation significantly differ on each of the Moral Traits.

H-7.6.1. Individuals high and low on Self -Direction value orientation significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.
H-7.6.2. Individuals high and low on Self-Direction value orientation significantly differ on each of the Moral Traits.

H-7.7.1. Individuals high and low on Stimulation value orientation significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-7.7.2. Individuals high and low on Stimulation value orientation significantly differ on each of the Moral Traits.

H-7.8.1. Individuals high and low on Hedonism value orientation significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-7.8.2. Individuals high and low on Hedonism value orientation significantly differ on each of the Moral Traits.

H-7.9.1. Individuals high and low on Achievement value orientation significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-7.9.2. Individuals high and low on Achievement value orientation significantly differ on each of the Moral Traits.

H-7.10.1 Individuals high and low on Power value orientation significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-7.10.2. Individuals high and low on Power value orientation significantly differ on each of the Moral Traits.

H-7.11.1. Individuals high and low on Security value orientation significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-7.11.2. Individuals high and low on Security value orientation significantly differ on each of the Moral Traits.
H-8. Personality traits have significant effect on Moral Competence and Each of the Moral Traits.

H-8.1.1. Personality traits significantly influence Moral Competence.

H-8.2.1. Individuals high and low in Extraversion significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-8.2.2. Individuals high and low in Extraversion significantly differ on each of the different Moral Traits.

H-8.3.1. Individuals high and low in Agreeableness significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-8.3.2. Individuals high and low in Agreeableness significantly differ on each of the different Moral Traits.

H-8.4.1 Individuals high and low in Conscientiousness significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-8.4.2. Individuals high and low in Conscientiousness significantly differ on each of the different Moral Traits.

H-8.5.1. Individuals high and low in Neuroticism significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-8.5.2. Individuals high and low in Neuroticism significantly differ on each of the different Moral Traits.

H-8.6.1. Individuals high and low in Openness to Experience significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-8.6.2. Individuals high and low in Openness to Experience significantly differ on each of the different Moral Traits.
H-9. Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence traits have significant effect on Moral Competence and each of the Moral Traits.

H-9.1. Emotional Intelligence Traits significantly predict Moral Competence.

H-9.2. Individuals high and low in Well-being significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-9.3. Individuals high and low in Well-being significantly differ on each of the different Moral Traits.

H-9.4. Individuals high and low in Self-control significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-9.5. Individuals high and low in Self-control significantly differ on each of the different Moral Traits.

H-9.6. Individuals high and low in Emotionality significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-9.7. Individuals high and low in Emotionality significantly differ on each of the different Moral Traits.

H-9.8. Individuals high and low in Sociability significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-9.9. Individuals high and low in Sociability significantly differ on each of the different Moral Traits.

H-9.10. Individuals high and low in Trait Emotional Intelligence significantly differ on their levels of Moral Competence.

H-9.11. Individuals high and low in Trait Emotional Intelligence significantly differ on each of the different Moral Traits.