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<b>Article:</b>	<b>Development and Validation of Moral Self-Image Scale (MSIS)</b>
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## **ABSTRACT**

Moral Self-Image (MSI) refers to one's subjective perception of his/her morality. The present research aimed at the development and validation of the moral self-image scale (MSIS) by using a mixed-method approach. 1100 young adults (19-34 years) from different cities of Pakistan ( $M=27.5$ ,  $SD=8.5$ ) were recruited. Qualitative exploration (thematic analysis) yielded seven subordinate themes of Moral self-image: integrity, generosity, compassion, forgiveness, social welfare, lawfulness, and tolerance, which were used as conceptual referents for the development of the item pool. Quantitative analyses (factor analyses and construct validity analyses) showed adequate reliability indicators, and evidence of construct and content validity for MSIS. Results also revealed significant differences in the scores of MSI on gender, educational level, and socio-economic status indicating the relevance of these three demographics as strong influencers. The implication of the present research is for students, researchers, organizations, personnel, and recruitment purposes as well as for forensic and personality psychologists.

**Keywords:** *Moral Self-Image, Mixed Method, Thematic Analysis, Factor Analysis.*

**Abbreviations:** Moral self-image = MSI, Moral self-image Scale = MSIS

## Introduction

The moral self is one of the most essential concepts in understanding what is meant to be a person, a human being, or a creature ranked superior to all other creatures of the world (Carr, 2011). The study of moral self-image stem back to philosophy and psychology specifically cognitive psychology and moral Psychology, a branch of psychology that deals with the study of moral development (Lapsley, 1996). The main focus of moral psychology was moral development (Piaget, 1965; Kohlberg, 1969; Blasi, 1988), moral identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002), moral action (Monroe, 2001), moral sensitivity (Morton et al., 2006), moral responsibility (Youniss et al., 1997), moral reasoning (Brown & Herrnstein, 1975), moral diversity (Narvaez et al., 1999), moral character (Boyd, 1989; Blasi, 2005), altruism (Hart & Fegley, 1995), moral emotions (Kernis & Johnson, 1990) moral integrity (Bandura, 1999) and moral discrepancy (Teper et al., 2011).

But studies in all these dimensions did not disapprove of the importance of moral-self and self-perceptions about morality (Boozhmehrani, 2015). The centrality of morality to self and self-perceptions were both theoretically and empirically approved by literature (Mulder & Aquino, 2013; Barkan, Ayal, Gino & Ariely, 2012; Zhong & Liljenquist, 2006) and moral-self considered and determined as a single most powerful link between moral judgments and (IM) moral conducts. People with organized moral self-image and beliefs are high in translating their behaviors and actions morally around their life span (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Jordan, Leliveld, & Tenbrunsel, 2015).

Jordan, Leliveld, & Tenbrunsel, (2015) defined moral self image as a malleable concept of self which is related to prototypical traits of a person's morality. These traits are caring for others, kindness, compassion, generosity, helping others, fairness, honesty, hardworking, and friendliness (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Moral Self-image exists in individuals' flexible part of self and it is fully subjective like the rest of the components of working self-concept. It does not amount strength of a person's moral judgments, nor does it assess to what extent a person is moral or immoral, but it measures to what extent he thinks that he is moral. (Jordan, Leliveld, & Tenbrunsel, 2015). An individual appraises his moral self and then assigns positive and negative attribution or titles on the basis of social and behavioral clues (Kernis & Goldman, 2003).

The moral self is related but distinct from all related constructs such as sympathy (i.e Ahmed & Jackson, 1979); religiosity (i.e Brown); negative reciprocity norms (Eisenberger, Lynch, Aselage, & Rohdieck, 2004); Self-Esteem (Generalized; i.e Rosenberg, 1965); and Moral disengagement (i.e Moore, Detert, Treviño, Baker, & Mayer, 2012). The literature review (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1988) suggested that the moral self image is an underlying mechanism behind one's moral and immoral action and their emotions and beliefs. MSI is an important construct in understanding one's actions (Moral and Immoral) but unfortunately little efforts were made in order to assess the subjective perception of one's about his/her own morality.

The present measure of MSI by Jordan et al. 2015 is a trait-based scale, but the situational morality and developmental stages are ignored in their scale, which are important factors in determining the MSI. Moreover, moral self-image was defined as a malleable construct and the traits proposed by Aquino and Reed (for moral identity was considered a static concept) were used to measure the static moral identity. Apart from this Moral self-image

diversely varies from one culture to another therefore there is a need to a culture specific indigenous measure of moral self-image.

The present study focused more on the contemporary idea of measuring those traits in empirical situations with different levels of moral development. The main goal/objective of this study was to provide a practical and theoretical and empirically-driven examination of the moral self-image. It is also an effort to provide an indigenous perspective on MSI. The concept of MSI occupies a central position in the moral-cognitive studies in the discipline of psychology and specifically in personality, forensic, industrial, and positive psychology. Its conceptualization allows psychologists, industrialists, and practitioners to explore the possibility of an individual's indulgence in moral and immoral conduct.

## **Research Method and Results**

### **Design**

A mixed method research design was used to explore the phenomenon to gather and analyze data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Greene & Caracelli, 1997; Creswell, 2003; Mertens, 2005) and for the development and validation of MSI measure.

This research was aimed at development and validation of an assessment measure for assessing the moral self-image of young adult from Pakistan. The study was comprised of two phases: development of MSIS and validation of MSIS

### **Phase I: Development of MSIS**

#### *Objectives.*

This study was comprised of two objectives.

1. To develop an MSIS by generating the item pool.
2. To explore the factor structure and internal consistency of the newly developed measure.

### **Phase II: Validation of MSIS**

Establishment of construct validity is vital in development of a reliable and valid assessment measure. Confirmatory factor analysis to confirm the factor structure on a new sample as well as convergent and discriminant validity (which two sub-types of construct validity are; Campell & Fiske, 1959) were assessed in this phase. Thus, phase 2, which included two objectives, was devised to establish the construct validity of MSIS.

#### *Objectives.*

1. To confirm the factor structure by using Confirmatory factor analysis.
2. Find out the convergent validity between MSIS and the Moral self-image Questionnaire (Jordan et al., 2015).
3. To determine the discriminant validity between MSIS and the Moral disengagement (MD) Scale (Moore et al., 2012).

### **Phase III: Establishment of Psychometric Properties of MSIS**

The third phase aimed to establish psychometric properties of scale on the overall sample.

#### *Objective*

1. To Establish psychometric norms of MSIS.

#### *Procedures*

*Item Generation for the Development of the MSIS.* For the development of MSIS, at the first step, an item pool was generated from the themes extracted from thematic analysis, previous literature, and empirical situations described in interviews during qualitative analysis.

Seven referent themes for MSI were extracted (including integrity, generosity, compassion, social welfare, forgiveness, lawfulness, and tolerance) were pooled. Secondly, Items that are overlapping, confusing, duplicate, ambiguous, irrelevant to the construct, not applicable to the whole sample, and susceptible to socially desirable responses were removed or revised from the initial item pool resulting in a scale of 57 items by expert reviewers. The judges review and decision was based on Lawshe's (1975) concept of content validity ratio (CVR) as a criterion for the inclusion of items in the scale, items with 0.99 CVR were retained from the initial items pool. The response format of MSIS was decided to be a Likert type 5-point scale, ranged from "Always to Not at all" ("Always=5", "Often=4", "Sometimes=3", "Rarely=2", "Never=1"). Higher score on the scale indicated higher MSI while low score showed low level of MSI. Informed consent and a demographic variable sheet were attached to the scale for pilot testing. Eventually, the scale was finalized by adding instructions to it. After finalizing the scale, informed consent and demographics were added for the pilot study.

#### Pilot Study

*Pilot study.* The Pilot study was aimed at curtailing of scale length and comprehension as well as to reduce ambiguity and unclear perspective items from the initial scale. A sample of 50 young adults (25 men, 25 women, age range: 19-34 years) was selected from Lahore, Pakistan by using convenience sampling. Results indicate item-total correlation of MSIS correlated positively with all items (r ranging from .31 to .65). 50 were retained for the final scale and items with less than .03 items (i.e., 3, 8, 12, 39, 43, 47, 57) total correlation will be discarded from the final scale (highlighted). This also improved the reliability (i.e., from .90 to .92 with 50 items). Thus, a total of 50 items were retained for further data collection.

#### Phase II: Factor Analysis and Internal Consistency of MSIS

This phase was aimed at determination of psychometric properties of MSIS. In this phase, the main objective was to derive items for the final scale and secondly to identify the different referents of MSI in the Pakistani population.

#### Sample.

500 young adults (262 female and 238 male; 19-34 years) was recruited through the convenience sampling technique from Lahore, Islamabad, Faisalabad, and Rawalpindi (hostels were focused to assure variability). The subject-to-item ratio for the exploration should be at least 10:1 (Nunnally, 1978; Clark & Watson, 1995; DeVallis, 2003; Thomason & Schepp, 2011).

#### Results.

The data was assembled and analysed on various dimensions as follows:

#### Factor Structure.

To explore the factor structure of MSIS, items were analysed by subjecting to Principal Component Analysis (PCA) by using method of varimax rotation for a sample of 500 participants on 50-item MSI. Initially, the appropriateness of data following analyses were applied: a) Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) b) Bartlett's test of sphericity.

Table 1

*Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for MSIS*

KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	p
.906	9229.44	1225	.000

(N=500) \*\* $p < .001$ 

Results of sampling adequacy analysis revealed adequate measure of sampling (KMO= .906) to detect factor structure of the scale in an excellent manner. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also highly significant  $\chi^2 [(1225, n=500) = 9229.44, p<.01]$ . Significant Bartlett's test of Sphericity is an indication for the appropriateness of factor analysis on this data.

Table 2

*Factor Loadings, Communalities, and Eigenvalues results from PCA of MSIS*

Items	Factors						Communalities
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<b>Eigenvalues</b>	12.92	2.71	1.91	1.77	1.66	1.55	
<b>Variance</b>	24.58	5.44	3.82	3.55	3.33	3.11	
MSI_10	.69						.54
MSI_19	.64						.49
MSI_18	.64						.49
MSI_20	.57						.42
MSI_17	.51						.42
MSI_12	.50						.49
MSI_13	.50						.43
MSI_22	.50						.45
MSI_11	.46						.30
MSI_4	.46						.30
MSI_23	.44						.30
MSI_5	.41						.36
MSI_39		.70					.58
MSI_43		.60					.50
MSI_40		.58					.48
MSI_38		.56					.40
MSI_44		.55					.47
MSI_42		.54					.56
MSI_31		.51					.42
MSI_45		.45					.36
MSI_46		.45					.45
MSI_30		.45					.45
MSI_26		.42					.34
MSI_16		.39					.37
MSI_47		.39					.43
MSI_28			.69				.57
MSI_27			.67				.56
MSI_25			.64				.51
MSI_24			.63				.44
MSI_41			.45				.42
MSI_29			.37				.32
MSI_34				.71			.55
MSI_33				.68			.53
MSI_35				.58			.53
MSI_48				.52			.40
MSI_49				.44			.34
MSI_50				.34			.30
MSI_3					.62		.47
MSI_7					.56		.50
MSI_9					.53		.50
MSI_1					.48		.45
MSI_8					.47		.43
MSI_6					.46		.45
MSI_21					.35		.30
MSI_32					.34		.30
MSI_37						.61	.52
MSI_12						.58	.49
MSI_36						.50	.52
MSI_14						.40	.299
MSI_15						.35	.35

Note: N= 500; Factor Loadings > .30 were suppressed. The solution was obtained by Orthogonal with Varimax rotation.

The six factors were labeled as integrity, generosity, compassion, forgiveness & social welfare, lawfulness, and tolerance respectively. The Eigenvalues of all six factors were 12.92, 2.7, 1.91, 1.77, 1.66, and 1.55 respectively resulted in a total 44% variance.

The item-total correlation analysis was performed to assess the correlation of all items with item-total. Result revealed that all items of MSI are reliable and valid indicators of MSI as items were positively correlated with item-total

Table 3 shows the mean, standard deviation, reliability (Cronbach's Alpha), range of response for items, and skewness of the overall scale after EFA.

Table 3

*Psychometric properties of MSIS and subscales of moral self-image scale (N=500)*

Scale	k	M(SD)	$\alpha$	Range		Skewness
				Potential	Actual	
MSIS	49	201.79 (23.58)	.93	1-5	3.38-4.48	-.51
Integrity	12	49.30 (6.69)	.84	1-5	2-5	-.83
Generosity	13	54.52 (7.29)	.86	1-5	2-5	-.78
Compassion	6	23.01(3.89)	.75	1-5	1.80-5	-.22
Forgiveness and social welfare	6	23.35(4.19)	.70	1-5	1.16-5	-.48
Lawfulness	7	28.96(4.43)	.73	1-5	2-5	-.94
Tolerance	5	18.88(3.57)	.68	1-5	1.64-5	-.49

*Note: N=500; k=No. of items; M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation;  $\alpha$ =Cronbach's alpha reliability*

The above-mentioned results showed highly satisfactory Cronbach's alpha for the newly developed moral self-image scale ranging from .68 to .93 and MSIS proved to be a highly reliable and valid measure by fulfilling all the psychometric criteria commonly used.

## Phase II: Validation of MSIS

Validation of the moral self-image scale was done by performing: a) Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and b) by developing Construct Validity (i.e Convergent and discriminant validity; Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Thus, validation included three objectives: a) to confirm the factor structure of MSIS after EFA b) to explore convergent validity and c) to explore discriminant validity of MSIS.

### *Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).*

Confirmatory factor analysis was administered to explore a sample of 400 participants (Men= 200; Women = 200; 19-34 years) by using AMOS. Maximum likelihood Method (path analysis) was used to obtain the constrains of confirmatory factor analysis model by linking to fit the covariance and variance between observed score. The criteria for the acceptance of standardized regression weights consider to be greater than .35 (Field, 2009).

### *Results.*

To explore confirmatory factor analysis model diagram was drawn for MSIS (see figure 1).

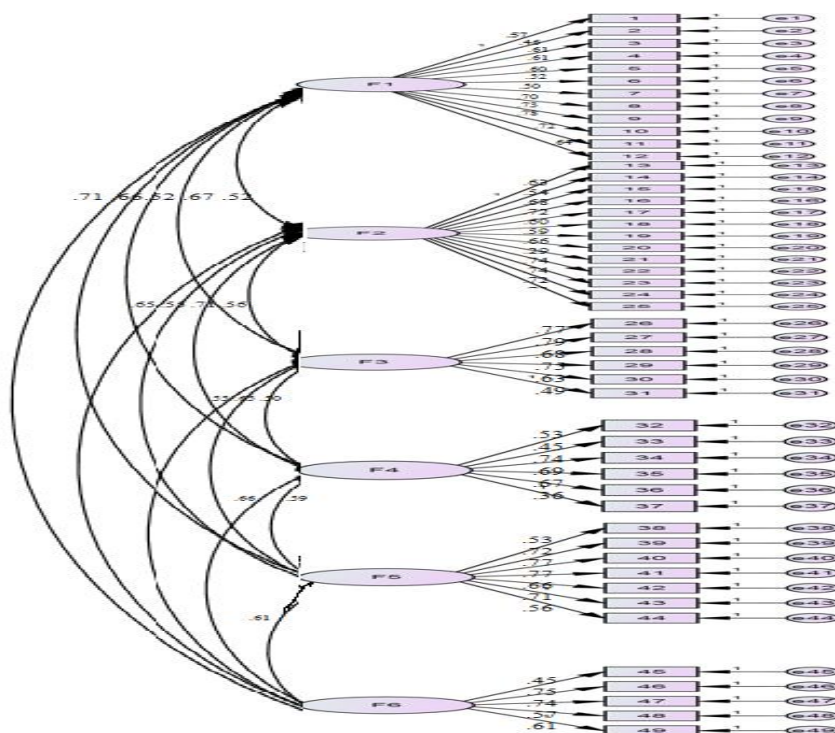


Figure 1. Complete standardized solution of CFA for Moral Self Image Scale ( $N = 400$ )

Results of CFA for MSIS ( $N=400$ ) revealed factor loading of items on all six factors ( $r=.29$  to  $.77$ ). The model fit indices showed acceptable model fit [ $\chi^2 (1106) = 2427.11/1106$ ;  $RMSEA=.05$ ;  $CFI=.86$ ;  $GFI=.88$ ]. Based on the initial criteria i.e., if items loading were  $>.30$  the model was reexamined (there is a single item, item no. 20<sup>th</sup> item showed factor loading lesser than  $.30$  which is  $.29$ ). It was expected to remove this item from the final model, but the removal of this item makes a negative impact in the model fit index, so, therefore, it was retained in the final model as it was quite close to the criteria of retaining an item.

#### *Evaluation of Convergent and Discriminant Validity of MSIS.*

This part of the research was planned to establish the construct validity of the Moral Self-Image Scale (MSIS). A sample of 200 participants (age range 10-34 years) was recruited both for discriminant and convergent validation. Two analyses were performed to attain the objectives:

1. At first, was conducted to establish the convergent validity of the Moral Self Image scale (MSIS) by relating it with an already proven measure of MSI (Jordan et al., 2015).
2. Secondly, the discriminant validity of MSIS was explored by relating it with a theoretically distinct construct 'Moral disengagement'. For this purpose, the Moral disengagement (MD) scale by Moore, Detert, Treviño, Baker, & Mayer, (2012) was used. To investigate the relationship between two measures of MSI, Pearson product-moment correlation was computed.

Moral self-image questionnaire (Jordan, Leliveld, & Tenbrunsel, 2015) showed ( $r=.55$ ,  $p < .05$ ) correlation with MSIS with the MSIQ, and with all subscales ( $r = .38$ , to  $.54$ ,  $p < .05$ ) provide evidence for the convergent validity. Moral disengagement scale ((Moore, Detert, Treviño, Baker, & Mayer, 2012) showed ( $r= -.66$ ,  $p < .05$ ) negative correlation with



MSIS and with all subscales ( $r = -.41$  to  $-.61$ ,  $p < .05$ ) showed an evidence of discriminant validity.

#### *Psychometric properties of MSIS.*

Psychometric properties of the overall sample ( $N=1100$ , 550 men & 550 women) were determined. Results showed reliabilities of integrity ( $\alpha=.84$ ), generosity ( $\alpha=.83$ ), compassion ( $\alpha=.76$ ), forgiveness and social welfare ( $\alpha=.70$ ), lawfulness ( $\alpha=.73$ ), and tolerance ( $\alpha=.68$ ), and for MSIS ( $\alpha=0.94$ ) were highly acceptable. Moreover, it was resulted that women score higher 95% CI [-8.63 to -2.73],  $t(1098) = -3.78$ ,  $p = .001$  on MSIS as compare to men. MANOVA test revealed significant differences in the level of MSI of young adults with different educational levels,  $F(18, 3086) = 4.144$ ,  $p=.0005$ ; Wilk's  $\Lambda = .93$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .22$ , and significant difference in the level of MSI of young adults from different socio-economic backgrounds,  $F(8, 3086)=2.24$ ,  $p=.002$ ; Wilk's  $\Lambda = .96$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .12$ . The present research resulted in a reliable and valid measure of MSI.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The research findings showed that the 49-item scale is a reliable and valid measure of Moral Self-Image (MSI). This scale is meant for young adults in the age range of 19-34. The MSIS, developed in this research, may help to measure the perception of individuals about their moral self. Apart from this, it is quite useful for recruitment purposes, especially in military and industrial recruitment. It is also useful in exploring different dimensions of personality and psychological constructs. This measure is beneficial in exploring moral and immoral conduct. It is equally useful for diagnostic purposes (such as violation of laws, intolerant behaviors, inability to forgive, and lack of different moral traits). Moreover, it's quite useful in determining the immoral tendencies of young adults. It may helpful for the new explorer and student for guidance for the test construction procedure by using the mixed method and to establish the convergent or discriminant validity of a new test in an indigenous context.

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