Original Article　　　　　　　　　　　　　https://hnpublisher.com

Moral Perfectionism, Moral Judgment, Altruism and Forgiveness in Young Adults

Ayesha Farooq[1] , Iram Fatima[2]

[1]Lecturer Psychology, Virtual University Lahore, Pakistan.
[2]Associate Professor, Institute of Applied Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore Pakistan.
Correspondence: ayesha.farooq@vu.edu.pk[1]

ABSTRACT

Aim of the study: Present research aimed to find out the relationship between moral perfectionism (self-oriented moral perfectionism & socially prescribed moral perfectionism), moral judgment, altruism and forgiveness in young adults. It was hypothesized that socially prescribed and self-oriented moral perfectionism would positively predict moral judgment, altruism and forgiveness. Mediating role of moral judgment between moral perfectionism, altruism and forgiveness was also hypothesized.

Methodology: Cross sectional research design was used in this research. Probability random sampling strategy was used to approach a sample of 200 (*Men=100, Women=100*) young adults with the age range of 20-25 years old (*M=21.53, SD=1.31*). To measure moral perfectionism, moral perfectionism scale, and adapted version of parental expectation scale of Frost multidimensional perfectionism scale were used. Further, moralization of everyday life scale, Forgiveness scale and adapted self-report altruism scale were used to measure moral judgment, forgiveness and altruism.

Findings: Structural equation modeling through AMOS indicated SOMP as a negative predictor of forgiveness and SPMP a positive predictor of altruism and forgiveness whereas no prediction was found for moral judgment. Further, Moral judgment didn't predict altruism and forgiveness.

Conclusion: overall the study highlights the significance of both self-oriented and socially prescribed moral perfectionism in shaping moral behaviors. It suggests that personal and social standards together provide a deeper understanding of moral actions, particularly in terms of altruism and forgiveness. The implications of the study are discussed with its application in counseling, educational, social and moral psychology.

Keywords: Moral Perfectionism, Self-oriented Moral Perfectionism, Socially-Prescribed Moral Perfectionism, Moral Judgment, Altruism, Forgiveness, Young Adults.

1. INTRODUCTION

Morality is a universal concept in all domains of life. Moral issues play an important role in human behavior, irrespective of culture, social strata, or race. It involves a differentiation of right and wrong and concern for others. The ideal for adults is to be good and righteous people. During adulthood, adults are more capable of understanding ethical dilemmas, following rules and regulations, and maintaining law and order. Adults who struggle to achieve perfectionistic moral standards possess more virtues and are more judgmental of their wrongdoings as compared to those who put less effort into achieving high moral values (Stoeber & Yang, 2016; Yang et al., 2015). In the modern era, new generations and moral decay seem to go hand in hand (Zimmerman & Jhon, 2011). In developed societies, conformism, profit intentions, the search for pleasure, and a desire for a luxurious life have resulted in a lack of morality on both an individual and societal level. Moral values are being overlooked by youth, and they are striving less to be morally perfect. Perfectionism has been an area of greater interest, but domain-specific forms of perfectionism, such as moral perfectionism, have been overlooked in psychological research since Yang et al. (2015) conducted their first empirical research to explore moral perfectionism on a Chinese sample (Yang et al., 2015). Later on, research was replicated on a western sample (Stoeber & Yang, 2016). But these studies only focused on the personal aspect of moral perfectionism, ignoring social aspects. Research also lacked the ability to obtain an equal proportion of samples with reference to gender. So, to overcome these limitations of previous research, the current study explored the relationship between self-oriented and socially prescribed moral perfectionism, moral judgment, altruism, and forgiveness in an Eastern sample of young adults.

Perfectionism is a personality trait described as a struggle for flawlessness and the setting of extremely high standards. It also involves a tendency to be critical of one's actions (Hewitt & Flett, 2002). Adler (1956) contended that striving towards perfectionism to maximize ones potential is a healthy characteristic for human development (Adler, 1956). Maslow (1970) also considered the struggle towards rightness as a determinant of positive mental health (Maslow, 1981). Perfectionism has been viewed as a multidimensional concept by many notable theorists (Frost, Marten, et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991), comprising both interpersonal and intrapersonal components (Blatt, 1995). Intrapersonal perfectionism is based on persons' self-related decisions concerning their own personal and behavioral standards, whereas interpersonal perfectionism (i) is about experiencing pressure to attain high personal standards set by other people, ii) involves the feeling of being judged critically by others regarding the attainment of high personal standards, and iii) is also related to persons' own judgments and expectations from others to attain high behavioral standards.

For years, there has been a long debate over whether perfectionism ought to be theorised as a global personality trait or whether it should be considered a domain-specific concept. Some perfectionism theorists, like Frost et al. (1990), Hewitt et al. (1991), and Hewitt, Flett, Besser, Sherry, and McGee (2003), conceptualised perfectionism as a global personality trait (Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Hewitt et al., 2003). While others claimed that perfectionism may apply only in selective areas of individual life as few perfectionists are perfect in all domains of life (Dunn et al., 2005; Missildine, 1963; Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009).

Moral perfectionism is a domain-specific form of perfectionism that is mainly associated with morality (Stoeber & Yang, 2016; Yang et al., 2015). It is a quest to achieve moral standards and a meaningful life. Aristotle was the early proponent who made perfectionism a moral theory and highlighted that it directs human beings to promote and protect good human lives. Moral perfectionism is centred on the concept of good and values human excellence (Hurka, 1993). Cavell described moral perfectionism as a form of moral reasoning (Falomi, 2010), highlighting that individuals have an unattained but attainable self that they should attempt to reach. Moral perfectionism leads human beings to care about their own perfection as well as the perfection of others. It can be egoistic or non-egoistic. In egoistic form, individuals strive to be good as much as possible, whereas in non-egoistic form, individuals perform duties to perfect others along with themselves. Hence, like perfectionism, moral perfectionism could be self-oriented and socially

prescribed. The personality theorist supported self-related moral perfectionism, highlighting that moral actions are determined by one's personality. Piaget (1965) asserted that to understand adults' morality, it is necessary to comprehend the manifestation of morality in their world as well as contributing factors in the development of the moral concept (Piaget, 2013). Piaget interviewed many children and found that young children focused on authority commands, but with age they became self-directed and assessed their actions based on a set of independent moral principles. On the other hand, Behavioral and social learning theories supported self-oriented moral perfectionism, claiming that human morality is developed through the external environment by learning the rules of acceptable behaviors.

As moral perfectionism is a struggle to gain high moral standards, these standards direct a person to be critical of their wrongdoings (moral judgement), virtuous, and generous to others. In the 19th century, moral perfectionism was discussed in relation to moral judgement, asserting that it provided a basis for moral judgement. Dewey (1991) highlighted that moral perfectionism impacts moral judgement by searching for a universal, enduring, and rational basis. Morality involves conscious decision-making and judgement about good or bad, justice or injustice, and behaving according to this judgement and decision (Kohlberg, 1976). Moral judgement is the rightness or wrongness of specific acts or policies. Moral judgement is a key to moral behaviour; without it, an action would be immoral, no matter how important it is (Blasi, 1980). Kohlberg (1981) gave the theory of moral judgement, emphasising that moral judgement is crucial for moral behaviour (Kohlberg, 1921). An action will not be moral without a judgement of that action. Hence, the judgement of right and wrong enables individuals to perform actions that are beneficial for others and refrain from doing immoral acts. According to the Rest model (1986), moral judgement becomes the basis for moral actions (virtues) (Rest & James, 1986). These virtues are necessary to understand the moral development of a person because a person has a responsibility to develop his or her character by practising virtues or performing virtuous actions (Cawley et al., 2000). Altruism and forgiveness are also virtues that bring goodness to the world. Altruism is a motivational, goal-directed state; its ultimate goal is to increase the welfare of others and to bring about some desired change. Aristotle highlighted that a person pursues virtues in order to become a virtuous person, so when the person acts altruistically, he or she is benefiting others to make himself or herself a better person (Scott & Seglow, 2007).

In the phase of moral development, a person tries to be a good person, and in response to this effort, they not only show empathy towards others and are helpful, but they also learn to forgive other people's mistakes instead of taking revenge. Forgiveness is a social psychological construct that involves changes in the forgiver's thoughts, feelings, motivation, and behaviour (McCullough & Hoyt, 2000). It is a collection of pro-social changes in people's motivation (McCullough & Hoyt, 2000). Researchers highlighted forgiveness as a way of replacing negative judgement and emotions with positive attitudes, including compassion, love, and kindness (Fincham, 2000; Jeffrie et al., 1988; North, 1987). Watts and Gulliford (2004) highlighted two forms of forgiveness: intrapersonal forgiveness (forgiveness between individuals) and interpersonal forgiveness (feelings, thoughts, and behaviours associated with forgiveness within the individual seeking to forgive). Researchers indicated that interpersonal and intrapersonal forgiveness is linked with self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism that takes place within the individual and is also a result of societal expectations. When individuals reach a higher level of forgiveness, they are more likely to refrain from negative judgement, condemnation, and maladaptive perfectionism (Mistler, 2010). Yang, Stoeber, and Wang (2015) found a positive relationship among moral standards, values, virtues, forgiveness, helping, and judgement of wrong behaviours, whereas concern over moral mistakes was positively related to indebtedness and negatively related to self-reliance (Yang et al., 2015). Stoeber and Yang (2016) also found personal standards of morality to be positively related to virtues, values, and judgement, whereas concern over moral mistakes was negatively related to gratitude, resourcefulness, and forgiveness (Stoeber & Yang, 2016).

1.1 Rationale of the Study

Youth power is the driving force of a nation. Morality, moral values, and moral behaviours are pertinent to individuals, societies, and the nation at large. Societies where individuals strive to be ethically or morally good and follow moral values flourish more than societies characterised by immorality. But moral deprivation among youth is becoming a great problem now. The youth of today are engaging in behaviours that are considered morally inappropriate by traditional standards. They have been trapped by youthful lusts, pride, arrogance, disobedience, and indiscipline. The changes in family structure, the advent of westernisation, and the media revolution have resulted in less effort to improve morally (Mougán, 2009). This is directly bringing both moral deprivation to youth and social deterioration as well. So, this situation is not to be taken lightly, as youth is the future of a nation. In the modern era, though youth are striving less towards morality, there are still some individuals who make an effort to be good and care for the welfare of others. Many psychosocial factors, including personality, personal moral standards, parenting, society, etc., play a contributing role in instilling positive or negative behaviours in an individual. Striving to achieve high moral standards not only leads a person to attain a truly meaningful life but also enables an individual to realise his or her right and wrong behaviours (moral judgement) and behaving in the right manners, i.e., possessing moral virtues (Mougán, 2009). Although several studies have been conducted regarding perfectionism, few have explored the domain-specific form of perfectionism. Previous research on moral perfectionism almost overlooked the social aspects of moral perfectionism, so the present research will overcome these limitations by exploring the self-oriented and socially prescribed forms of moral perfectionism. The current research will make an effort to highlight those aspects that lead youth towards righteous actions for personal satisfaction as well as the wellbeing of others. A proposed model based on literature is presented in Figure 1.

1.2 Hypotheses

HI. Self-oriented and socially-prescribed moral perfectionism is likely to positively predict moral judgment, altruism and forgiveness in young adults.

HII. Moral judgment is likely to positively predict altruism and forgiveness in young adults.

HIII. Moral judgment is likely to mediate between moral perfectionism, altruism and forgiveness in young adults.

Figure 1: *Hypothesized model of moral perfectionism, moral judgment, altruism and forgiveness in young adults.*
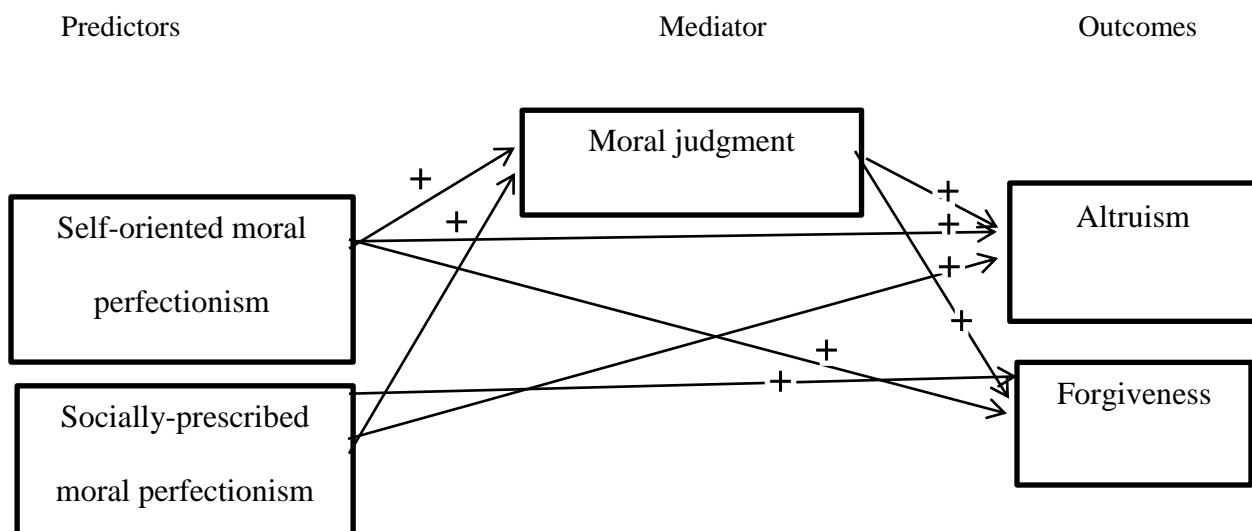
2. METHOD

2.1   Sample

Correlational research with a cross-sectional design was used. A Sample of 200 young adults, including 100 men (50%) and 100 women (50%) was recruited. Boomsma reported a minimum of 200 sample sizes for SEM (Wolf, Harrington, Clark, & Miller, 2013). All participants were day scholars and were taken from two public universities where multiple disciplines were being offered. Universities and disciplines were randomly selected using an online random number generator, and then participants from these selected disciplines were approached on a convenient basis. Participants' age range was 20–25 years old (M = 21.53, SD = 1.31). 116 participants (58%) were living in a nuclear family system, and 84 (42%) were living in a joint family system. A demographic questionnaire was used to obtain demographic information.

2.2   Assessment Measures

2.2.1   Moral perfectionism scale (Stoeber & Yang, 2016)

To measure moral perfectionism, three dimensions of the multidimensional perfectionism scale by Frost (FMPS) (Frost et al., 1990) were used to capture personal standards (PS), concern over mistakes (CM), and parental expectations (PE). Two dimensions (16 items) of FMPS pertaining to "Personal Standards" and "Concern over Mistakes" have already been adapted by Stoeber and Yang in 2016. Besides these two adapted dimensions (Stoeber & Yang, 2016), Current research has added another dimension to FMPS, capturing "Parental Expectation". The basic purpose of adding this dimension was to assess the social aspect of moral perfectionism. Following Stoeber and Yang's (2016) procedure, the "Parental Expectations" dimension of the FMPS (5 items) was adapted as "Parental Moral Expectations (e.g., my parents set very high moral standards for me). Furthermore, based on the results of the factor analysis study by Frost et al. (1993), the current study categorized moral perfectionism as self-oriented moral perfectionism (personal moral standards) and socially prescribed moral perfectionism (concern over moral mistakes, parental moral expectations). The final scale used in the current study comprised 21 items (self-oriented moral perfectionism = 7 items, socially prescribed moral perfectionism = 14 items). Respondents respond on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagreeing (=1) to strongly agreeing (=5). SOMP had a reliability of .76 and SPMP had a reliability of .83. A higher sum of the scores on each scale reflected a higher level of moral perfectionism.

2.2.2   Moralization of Everyday Life Scale (Lovett, et al., 2012)

To measure moral judgement, the Moralization of Everyday Life Scale (MELS) developed by Lovett et al. (2012) was used after adaptation. The scale assesses morally wrong behaviours in certain situations. MELS is comprised of six subscales: deception, failure to do good, disregard for others, disgusting behaviours, laziness, and bodily violations. Although MELS is a validated instrument, certain items, currencies, terms, individuals, and organisations names were not related to Pakistani culture. Therefore, the scale was adapted to make it culturally appropriate. Prior to adaptation, the scale was discussed with two experts in testing and psychometrics. Based on the expert suggestions, three items (22, 24, and 26) that were not culturally appropriate were discarded from the original scale. Further, all names (i.e., Noah, Elizabeth, etc.) were replaced with the terms boy, girl, employee, and man. Items 1, 8, 10, 17, and 21 were also modified to make them culturally appropriate. Originally, MELS was comprised of 30 items, but after adaptation, 27 items were retained for the current study. Participants indicate their level of considering described behaviours morally wrong on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not wrong at all; a perfectly okay action) to 7 (very wrong; an extremely immoral action). The sum of the scores was calculated. A higher score reflected stronger moral judgement. The overall reliability of the scale in the current study was .88.

2.2.3   Adapted self-report Altruism Scale (Witt & Boleman, 2009)

To measure altruism, an adapted self-reported altruism scale was used. The scale was originally developed by Rushton (1981). The adapted self-report altruism scale is a 14-item self-report measure mainly developed for youth. Each item is measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (0=never, 1=once, 2=more than once, 3=often, 4=very often). The scale assesses helping intentions in different settings with different people (i.e., I would give directions to someone I did not know). A sum of all items was obtained. Higher scores on the scale indicate greater altruism. The reliability of the scale was .82.

2.2.4   Forgiveness Scale (Rye, et al., 2001)

To measure forgiveness, Rye scale of forgiveness developed by Rye, et al. (2001) was used. The scale basically measures the level of forgiveness toward an offender. Participants were instructed to think of a person who wronged them and how they respond to that offender (i.e. I can't stop thinking about how I was wronged by this person). The scale comprised of 15 items, all items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale (5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree). Higher scores on the scale indicate greater forgiveness toward a wrongdoer. Overall reliability of the scale in current study was .75.

2.3   Procedure

After sorting out formal permission from authors, permission to adapt the moralization of everyday life scale and one dimension of the Frost multidimensional perfectionism scale was obtained. All measures were initially tried out on young adults to assess average time taken and to identify problems in the scale and problems associated with foreign languages. After piloting, tools were finalized and compiled. Prior to data collection, faculties and departments of concerned universities were randomly selected, and then a sample was approached on a convenient basis. Participants were approached in their class rooms and libraries. Participants were briefed about the study, and a consent letter was obtained. Any ambiguity was cleared. They were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. The time to fill out questionnaires was 20–25 minutes. The average response rate was 86%.

3.   RESULTS

Bivariate correlation through Pearson product moment correlation was run to examine the relationship between moral perfectionism, moral judgement, altruism, and forgiveness as well as demographic variables (gender and family system). All of the hypotheses were directional in nature, so they were tested on one tail (Churchill, et al., 2006). Results revealed a positive relationship between self-oriented moral perfectionism and moral judgement and altruism. Socially-prescribed moral perfectionism was positively related to altruism and forgiveness. Moral judgement is positively related to altruism. Demographic variables were not related to altruism and forgiveness (see Table 1).

Table 1: *Relationship between Self Oriented and Socially Prescribed Moral Perfectionism, Moral Judgment, Altruism and Forgiveness (N=200)*

Sr. No	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
1	Gender	-	-.10	.02	.14*	.07	-.11	.07		
2	Family system		-	.03	.06	.02	.06	.04		
3	SOMP			-	.51***	.15*	.17**	-.07	24.47	4.08
4	SPMP				-	.13*	.20**	.13*	48.69	7.90
5	Moral judgment					-	.12*	-.06	130.16	26.12
6	Altruism						-	.07	31.11	9.43
7	Forgiveness							-	48.71	7.42

*Note. ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, (one-tailed), for gender: men=0, women=1, for family system: nuclear=0, joint=1, SOMP= Self Oriented moral perfectionism, SPMP= Socially Prescribed Moral Perfectionism*

Further, Structural equation modeling was employed through AMOS version 21 to test the assumed model. Model fit is presented below in the table 2.

The results of fit indices for all variables were obtained. The absolute fit of the model fit was $\chi^2(1, 200) =$ 1.07, p >.05. RMSEA for model I was .39, and the GFI, CFI; TLI were .90, .23, and -2.80, while χ^2/df was 31.74. Since, the initial model fit didn't fulfill criteria of descriptive measures therefore variations in model were made as per modification indices suggestions. Following Arbuckle's (2012) criteria, only covariances whose chi square change was 4 or greater were drawn. Modification indices suggested covariance between SPMP and SOMP[49.] Again, the indices of relative and absolute fit (TLI, CFI, GFI, and RMSEA) were compared. RMSEA for model fit was .02, whereas GFI, CFI, and TLI were .99, .99 and .99 (see table 2). These values were good enough to fit the model (Figure 2).

Table 2: *Fit indices for Self-Oriented Moral Perfectionism, Socially-Prescribed Moral Perfectionism, Moral Judgment, Altruism and Forgiveness (N=200)*

Model	χ^2	Df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	GFI	RMSEA
M1	63.48	2	31.74	.23	-2.80	.90	.39
M2	1.07	1	1.07	.99	.99	.99	.02
$\Delta\chi^2$	64.55						

Note: M1= hypothesized model, M2= fit model, GFI = Goodness of fit indices, TLI= Tucker Lewis Index, CFI=Comparative Fit Indices, RMSEA= root mean square error of approximation, df= degree of freedom, χ^2=chi square

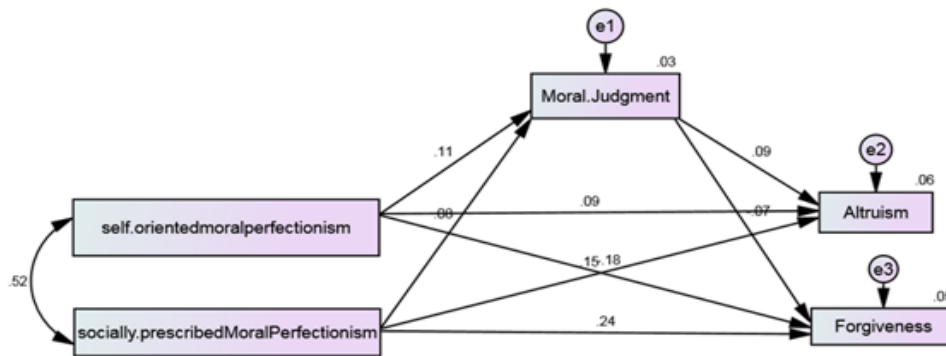**Figure 2:** *Empirical results from a Complex Multivariate Model Representing Standardized Regression Coefficient*

Table 3

Standardized Direct and Indirect Effects Estimated by SEM

Iv's & mediator	Moral judgment (M)		Altruism (DV)						Forgiveness (DV)					
	Direct effect		Direct effect		indirect effect		Total effect		Direct effect		indirect effect		Total effect	
	β	*P*	*β*	*P*	*β*	*P*	*β*	*P*	*β*	*P*	*β*	*p*	*β*	*p*
Self-oriented moral perfectionism	.10	.09	.08	.14	.00	.18	.09	.32	-.18	**.01**	-.00	.26	-1.9	.27
Socially-prescribed moral perfectionism	.08	.15	.15	**.03**	.00	.27	.15	0.3	.23	**.001**	-.00	.30	.23	.30
Moral judgment	-	-	.08	.10	-	-	-		-.07	.15	-	-	-	

Results of direct paths indicated Self-oriented moral perfectionism is a negative predictor, and socially prescribed moral perfectionism is a positive predictor of forgiveness. Socially-prescribed moral perfectionism also positively predicted altruism. No significant prediction was found for moral judgment.

4. DISCUSSION

The present research aims to explore how moral perfectionism (self-oriented and socially prescribed) is related to moral judgement, altruism, and forgiveness. Overcoming the limitations of previous research, both personal and social aspects of moral perfectionism were explored. Results supported the idea that both internal and external factors lead to moral behaviours. Personal standards accompanying social standards provide better insight into judging everyday behaviours and performing virtuous actions that bring betterment to society.

The result of current research supports hypothesis I: Self-oriented moral perfectionism (SOMP) is positively related to moral judgement and altruism. SOMP was not related to forgiveness, but it negatively predicted forgiveness. A possible explanation for such results is the inclusion of other variables in multiple regression as regression checks prediction by including all independent variables where the correlation between two variables is independent of other variables. Socially prescribed moral perfectionism was positively related to moral judgement, altruism, and forgiveness. It also positively predicted forgiveness and altruism. The findings are in line with previous empirical research (Stoeber & Yang, 2016; Yang, et al., 2015). Levitt and Aligo (2013) claimed that moral orientation plays an important role in moral decision-making. Sometimes individuals are internally motivated to do good by having concern for others, but sometimes morality imposes considerable demands on individuals. Individuals are required to adhere to social standards when making ethical decisions or taking actions for the benefit of others and to promote societal well-being (Seglow, 2005).

Theorists also supported the importance of self-oriented and social perspectives in moral behaviours. Kohlberg (1976) stated that interpretation of certain situations is made by the individual, meaning is assigned in light of moral and psychological context, and then the individual finally makes a moral judgement and performs actions accordingly. Developmental psychologists stressed that moral behaviours like altruism and forgiveness result as a part of learning when moving through different stages of development. With age, children start sharing their things with others as a result of their learned internalisation of values. A social psychologist also emphasised that moral actions depend on the interaction between internal and external factors. Individuals' personal characteristics, together with their external environment, better explain the decision to take moral actions (Monroe, 2001).

Kim (2011) and Bugay (2010) also found socially prescribed perfectionism to be a significant predictor of self- and other-forgiveness, supporting the idea that many social determinants not only predict forgiveness but could also encourage individuals to be kind towards others. Though altruism and forgiveness have mostly been viewed as personal constructs that depend on personal willingness, social standards motivate individuals to behave well to adjust to society. Most of the time, it might not be easy for an individual to forgive the transgressor when referring to internal standards or considering the severity of misbehavior, but to maintain social relationships, an individual tries to abide by the rules set by social agents.

Further, results were not supported for hypotheses II and III. Moral judgement was positively related to altruism only. Results for altruism are in line with previous research (Midlarsky et al., 1999). Whenever a crisis arises, people are more likely to recognize that others are in dire need of help. They try to empathize with others' situations (Nelson et al., 1980) and are more likely to respond altruistically (Rubin & Schneider, 1973). Moral judgement didn't predict altruism and forgiveness. The mediating role of moral judgement in moral perfectionism, altruism, and forgiveness was also not observed. Though, in the pursuit of achieving high moral standards, individuals evaluate the situation and are then directed towards moral behaviour, all variance in moral behaviour may not be solely due to moral judgement (Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007). Jagger (2011) explained that moral judgement may not be directly related to moral behaviours because moral judgement may guide a behaviour, but as this action involves some conflict and choices, it might lead to a new phase of morality. The researcher highlighted that it is still unclear whether thought leads to action or action leads to thought. Hence, current research supports the idea that both personal and social aspects play an important role in shaping moral behaviours. Adults not only adhere to

their personal standards of morality but also try to empathize with the social situation and follow societal standards. A continuous struggle to be morally good may direct individuals to make an evaluation of right and wrong and result in more virtuous actions.

Like other research, current research also has a number of limitations; suggestions to overcome these limitations are also provided alongside: First, all measures were international; there is a need to use indigenous measures. Second, the moral perfectionism scale has been adapted from the Frost multidimensional perfectionism scale, so there is a need to construct a new scale on moral perfectionism. Third, because few results were contrary to expectations, the social desirability factor needed to be overcome because adults may fake their responses by presenting themselves as more moral perfectionists (Stoeber & Hotham, 2013). Finally, the study was quantitative in nature. Qualitative research may be helpful in providing in-depth detail; also, observational and experimental studies are needed. Besides limitations, the study contributed to existing literature and attempted to overcome limitations of existing research on moral perfectionism by exploring both self-related and social aspects of moral perfectionism.

ORCID iDs

Ayesha Farooq [1] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6614-8591
Iram Fatima [2] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9517-5062

REFERENCES

Adler, A. (1956). Striving for superiority. *The individual psychology of Alfred Adler: A systematic presentation in selections from his writings*, 101-125.

Batson, C. D., & Shaw, L. L. (1991). Evidence for altruism: Toward a pluralism of prosocial motives. *Psychological inquiry*, *2*(2), 107-122.

Blasi, A. (1980). Bridging moral cognition and moral action: A critical review of the literature. *Psychological bulletin*, *88*(1), 1.

Blatt, S. J. (1995). The destructiveness of perfectionism: Implications for the treatment of depression. *American psychologist, 50*(12), 1003.

Bugay, A. S. L. I. (2010). *Investigation of social-cognitive, emotional and behavioral variables as predictors of self-forgiveness*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Middle East Technical University.

Cawley III, M. J., Martin, J. E., & Johnson, J. A. (2000). A virtues approach to   personality. *Personality and individual differences*, *28*(5), 997-1013.

Churchill, Gilbert, A., & Iacobucci, D. (2006). *Marketing research: methodological foundations*. Dryden Press.

Dewey, J. (1991). *Lectures on Ethics, 1900-1901: John Dewey*. SIU Press.

Dunn, J. G., Gotwals, J. K., & Dunn, J. C. (2005). An examination of the domain specificity of perfectionism among intercollegiate student-athletes. *Personality and individual differences*, *38*(6), 1439-1448.

Falomi, M. (2010). Perfectionism and moral reasoning. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*, *2*(II-2). https://doi.org/10.4000/ejpap.903

Fincham, F. D. (2000). The kiss of the porcupines: From attributing responsibility to forgiving. *Personal relationships*, *7*(1), 1-23.

Frost, R. O., Heimberg, R. G., Holt, C. S., Mattia, J. I., & Neubauer, A. L. (1993). A comparison of two measures of perfectionism. *Personality and individual differences*, *14*(1), 119-126.

Frost, R. O., Marten, P., Lahart, C., & Rosenblate, R. (1990). The dimensions of perfectionism. *Cognitive therapy and research*, *14*(5), 449-468.

Hewitt, P. L., & Flett, G. L. (1991). Perfectionism in the self and social contexts: conceptualization, assessment, and association with psychopathology. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *60*(3), 456.

Hewitt, P. L., & Flett, G. L. (2002). Perfectionism and stress processes in psychopathology.

Hewitt, P. L., Flett, G. L., Besser, A., Sherry, S. B., & McGee, B. (2003). Perfectionism Is Multidimensional: a reply to. *Behaviour research and therapy*, *41*(10), 1221-1236.

Hurka, T. (1993). *Perfectionism*. Oxford University Press on Demand.

Jagger, S. (2011). Ethical sensitivity: A foundation for moral judgment. *Journal of Business Ethics Education*, *8*(1), 13-30.

Jeffrie, G., Murphy, & Hampton, J. (1988). *Forgiveness and mercy*. Cambridge University Press.

Kim, L. M. (2011). *A "perfect" storm: Perfectionism, forgiveness, and marital satisfaction*. Regent university.

Kohlberg, L. (1921). *The philosophy of moral development: Moral stages and the idea of justice* (Vol. 1). Harper & row.

Kohlberg, L. (1976). Moral stages and moralization: The cognitive-development approach. *Moral development and behavior: Theory research and social issues*, 31-53. https://cir.nii.ac.jp/crid/1572261549895131264

Levitt, D. H., & Aligo, A. A. (2013). Moral orientation as a component of ethical decision making. *Counseling and Values*, *58*(2), 195-204.

Lovett, B. J., Jordan, A. H., & Wiltermuth, S. S. (2012). Individual differences in the moralization of everyday life. *Ethics & Behavior*, *22*(4), 248-257.

Maslow, A. H. (1981). *Motivation and personality*. Prabhat Prakashan.

McCullough, M. E., & Hoyt, W. T. (2000). Forgiveness Constructs. *Forgiveness: Theory, research, and practice*, 65.

Midlarsky, E., Kahana, E., Corley, R., Nemeroff, R., & Schonbar, R. A. (1999). Altruistic moral judgment among older adults. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, *49*(1), 27-41.

Missildine, W. H. (1963). Perfectionism—If you must strive to "do better.". *Your inner child of the past*, *75*, 90.

Mistler, B. A. (2010). *Forgiveness, perfectionism, and the role of self-compassion*. University of Florida.

Monroe, K. R. (2001). Morality and a sense of self: The importance of identity and categorization for moral action. *American Journal of Political Science*, 491-507.

Mougán, C. (2009). Moral perfectionism: Ethical theory from a pragmatic approach. *Human Affairs*, *19*(1), 44-51.

Nelson, J. G., Adams, D. R., Foster, S. F., & Farley, F. H. (1980). Socialization and empathy as predictors of moral judgment: Test of a model. *Counseling and values*, *24*(4), 264-271.

North, J. (1987). Wrongdoing and forgiveness. *Philosophy*, *62*(242), 499-508.

Piaget, J. (2013). *The moral judgment of the child*. Routledge.

Rest, J. R. (1986). *Moral development: Advances in research and theory*. Praeger.

Reynolds, S. J., & Ceranic, T. L. (2007). The effects of moral judgment and moral identity on moral behavior: an empirical examination of the moral individual. *Journal of applied psychology*, *92*(6), 1610.

Rubin, K. H., & Schneider, F. W. (1973). The relationship between moral judgment, egocentrism, and altruistic behavior. *Child Development*, 661-665.

Rushton, J. P., Chrisjohn, R. D., & Fekken, G. C. (1981). The altruistic personality and the self-report altruism scale. *Personality and individual differences*, *2*(4), 293-302.

Rye, M. S., Loiacono, D. M., Folck, C. D., Olszewski, B. T., Heim, T. A., & Madia, B. P. (2001). Evaluation of the psychometric properties of two forgiveness scales. *Current psychology*, *20*(3), 260-277.

Scott, N., & Seglow, J. (2007). *Altruism*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Seglow, J. (2005). The ethics of immigration. *Political studies review*, *3*(3), 317-334.

Stoeber, J., Hotham, S. (2013). Perfectionism and social desirability: Students report increased perfectionism to create a positive impression. *Personality & Indvi. Differences*, *55*(5), 626-629.

Stoeber, J., & Stoeber, F. S. (2009). Domains of perfectionism: Prevalence and relationships with perfectionism, gender, age, and satisfaction with life. *Personality and individual differences*, *46*(4), 530-535.

Stoeber, J., & Yang, H. (2016). Moral perfectionism and moral values, virtues, and judgments: Further investigations. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *88*, 6-11.

Watts, F., & Gulliford, L. (Eds.). (2004). *Forgiveness in context: Theology and psychology in creative dialogue*. A&C Black.

Witt, P. A., & Boleman, C. (2009). *Adapted self-report altruism scale*. Youth Development.

Wolf, E. J., Harrington, K. M., Clark, S. L., & Miller, M. W. (2013). Sample size requirements for structural equation models: An evaluation of power, bias, and solution propriety. *Educational and psychological measurement*, *73*(6), 913-934.

Yang, H., Stoeber, J., & Wang, Y. (2015). Moral perfectionism and moral values, virtues, and judgments: A preliminary investigation. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *75*, 229-233.

Zimmerman Sr, J. W. (2011). *America Adrift—Righting the Course: The Decline of America'S Great Values*. iUniverse.