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## Moral Intelligence and its Relationship to Academic Entitlement and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the current research is to identify the correlations between moral intelligence and both academic entitlement and academic performance; in addition to identify the mediating role of academic entitlement between moral intelligence and academic performance. Four hundred and forty-four students from (Yemen, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Jordan) participated in the research. The moral intelligence scale and the academic entitlement scale were applied to the participants and data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and path analysis. The results revealed that there was a statistically significant negative correlation between moral intelligence and academic entitlement and a significant positive correlation between moral intelligence and academic performance. Besides, results demonstrated the mediating role of academic entitlement between moral intelligence and academic performance. The results of this research can be employed in building programs and setting plans for developing moral intelligence and eliminating academic entitlement behaviors and beliefs to encounter the problems of secondary school students.

**Keywords:** *Academic entitlement, academic performance, moral intelligence, secondary school students.*

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### Introduction

Morals is a significant research direction that has emerged from positive psychology (Griffiths et al., 2009). Most educational institutions focus on providing students with skills and abilities related to reading, writing, thinking, and other mental skills that help them to succeed, but they are less interested in developing their moral dimension, which creates their desire to learn (Park & Peterson, 2009). Thus, educational institutions should be concerned with developing virtues and morals among students because the need for good morals has grown in parallel with academic education. Besides, both school and family contribute equally to developing learners' moral intelligence.

Moral intelligence refers to the individual's ability to distinguish between right and wrong and to have moral convictions that enable him to behave in the right way according to seven moral virtues of the self-direct behavior: justice, self-control, empathy, kindness, tolerance, respect, and conscience (Borba, 2002). It stands for the mental capacities directed towards doing good (Lennick & Kiel, 2005). It reflects the ability to behave ethically (Nobahar & Nobahar, 2013). In the Arab context, it is the student's ability to follow the correct behavior with self-control that pushes him to work without payment or supervision from anyone, through his emotional participation with others, providing them with assistance, respecting them, showing tolerance with them, and treating them fairly (Abdul Latif, 2020).

Moral intelligence represents a critical pillar for adolescents if developed with all its components will affect all aspects of their lives, the quality of their future relationships, skills, and productivity. It also affects their contribution to art, literature, and society because what we provide to adolescents is what determines their reputation as a person (Borba, 2002). It is an essential dimension in the individual's ability to manage himself. It monitors his behavior so as not to leave himself freely towards destruction or violate the community's law (Aldarabah et al., 2015).

Moral intelligence is a multidimensional concept that incorporates mercy, kindness, forgiveness, justice, tolerance, responsibility, control, and mutual respect. These dimensions work with internal self-motivation through conscience and

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religious scruples to push the individual to deal with others by providing them with good and repelling harm from them. In the current research, moral intelligence denotes the students' ability to follow the correct behavior by believing in the control of Allah, which stimulates them to work without payment or monitoring, encouraging them to participate emotionally with others, offer help when needed, treat them fairly, respecting them, and showing tolerance.

Discussing moral problems within classroom situations requires effort from the teacher. They should address these problems with methods and means that can develop the learners' moral intelligence (Alhadabi et al., 2020; Barbara, 2013; Elliott et al., 2000). Furthermore, the lack of an individual's moral intelligence makes him miss other bits of intelligence and pushes him outside society's control (Coles, 2007). Adolescents are subject to pressures, problems, and challenges imposed by the nature of the current era that leads to the exacerbation of other problems and psychological, emotional, and behavioral disorders. Therefore, they need moral intelligence to encounter these pressures (Alhadabi et al., 2020; Borba, 2002; Coles, 2001).

The educational system is currently facing a critical period that has resulted in some moral and educational problems of psychological nature. For example, e-learning and social media after the Corona pandemic impacted learners who are accustomed to learning through short lessons and have difficulties with long texts and essay questions that measure higher-order thinking skills. They also suffer from social media addiction. Hence, many ethical problems have emerged, some of which are academic such as unrealistic academic entitlement and cheating (Stiles et al., 2018), academic dishonesty (Elias, 2017; Kelly, 2021), and others are ethical and behavioral problems as disrespect, aggression, and disrespect for regulations and laws (Bertil et al., 2019; El Dabae, 2020; Gotschall, 2016; Keener, 2020).

Academic entitlement reflects a component of psychological entitlement. This concept is introduced by Achacoso (2002). He defined it as the unrealistic beliefs about what a student should be given, and actions or behaviors that support the tendency towards entitlement. Literature defined academic entitlement as the unreasonable expectation of services and rewards regardless of the learner's actual performance in the educational setting, self-ascent versus others, and social comparison to receive better rewards and services than others deserve (Campbell et al., 2004). Also, Greenberger et al. (2008) defined it as expecting high scores with minimal effort and having a negative attitude towards teachers when the results disappoint their expectations. It reflects the decreased personal responsibility in academic tasks, the feeling that he/she deserves rewards regardless of effort, and irrational expectations with excessive demands for what they do not deserve (Carollo, 2020).

Several studies have concentrated on studying the negative effects of academic entitlement on students' moral dimensions. Elias (2017) and Keener (2020) revealed that the most entitled students exhibit unethical behaviors, cheating, and academic dishonesty. Stiles et al. (2017) explained that entitlement plays a significant role in predicting cheating and approved a positive correlative relationship between entitlement and narcissism. Besides, Luckett et al. (2017) indicated that entitlement affects not only learning negatively but also their social lives.

Chowning and Campbell (2009) described entitlement as the tendency to expect success without bearing the responsibility for this success. In their model, they divided entitlement into two dimensions the external responsibility dimension, which refers to the extent to which students attribute successes or failures to their performance and the teacher's and classmates' behavior, and the entitled expectations that indicate the feeling that one deserves good grades without the need to put in more effort.

Academic entitlement causes negative behaviors in the classroom, including hostility, control, challenging peer relationships, deliberate harm, greed, aggression, and increased conflicts between students and teachers. It is also associated with many negative maladaptive behaviors such as selfishness, aggression, and low self-control. Reysen et al. (2020) stated that academic entitlement is directly related to students' harmful behaviors, which lead to poor classroom learning quality. These behaviors are associated with nuisance behaviors.

Academic entitlement is a very widespread problem among adolescent learners (Blincoe & Garris, 2017; Bonaccio et al., 2016; El Dabae, 2020). High academic entitled students are poorer in academic performance (Bonaccio et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2015; Wasieleski et al., 2014). Delucchi and Korgen (2002) reported that 73% of students expressed their desire to get more grades even if they didn't learn anything, 24% also expected professors to take into account non-academic standards when assessing grades, 53% agreed that it is the teachers' responsibility to attract and maintain the students' attention within the classroom, and 36% agreed that if they pay for their education, they should obtain a degree.

Academic performance and the variables associated with it is one of the issues that has attracted many researchers in different educational disciplines as one of the most recognized outcomes of the educational process and the primary criterion for judging students, the educational system, and the quality of the provided services (El Zahrani, 2020). Academic performance is the sum of the knowledge, experiences, and skills that the students have acquired as a result of the effort they exerted in the various academic courses during the academic year (El Zahrani, 2020). It is also the average grade obtained by the student in the final exams. Regarding that the learner is one of the most significant pillars from which education reform begins in all societies, it was necessary to pay attention to all the processes affecting the learner's academic performance in a way that would improve his abilities and potential to the maximum extent possible, by

studying the relationship of academic performance with many variables that might affect it (Hassanein & Abdul Wahed, 2020).

Various studies have demonstrated the correlation between moral intelligence, academic entitlement, and academic performance. The higher the degree of entitlement, the higher the degree of academic dishonesty (Greenberger et al., 2008). The study by Bonaccio et al. (2016) indicated a negative statistically significant correlation between entitlement and positive personality traits: openness, acceptability, conscientiousness, and extroversion. Academic entitlement was also negatively correlated with honesty and humility in the Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience model (HEXACCO), and general entitlement was associated with a strong negative relationship with the HEXACCO sub-scale of honesty and humility (Bertil et al., 2019). Goodboy and Frisby (2014) found that students with an unrealistic belief in academic entitlement engage in severe oppositional behaviors and are highly critical of others. While, Kurtyilmaz (2019) explained that entitlement is one of the most critical issues that impact students' academic performance and promote their engagement in undesirable behaviors such as anger, disrespect, and aggression through educational situations.

Regarding the relationship of moral intelligence with academic performance, Beheshtifar et al. (2011) pointed out that moral intelligence is related to an individual's cognitive ability, and there is a significant positive relationship between moral intelligence and student achievement. Besides, Hoseinpoor and Ranjdoost (2013) indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between some components of moral intelligence and student achievement, and the study of Saleh (2014) revealed a positive correlation between moral intelligence and both self-esteem and achievement. Mohamed (2020) also concluded that there is a positive correlation between moral intelligence and academic average and that academic achievement can be predicted from the components of moral intelligence and there is a significant negative correlation between moral intelligence and cheating in exams.

The pilot study using interviews with field training students, teachers, and school principals and through reviewing their reports on students' behaviors revealed that the common features of adolescent students are quarrels with each other, cheating in exams, and low achievement responsibility. Moreover, their expectations do not correspond to the efforts they make in the educational process. They also blame teachers in the case of low grades, and they insist on teachers adjust their grades as they think they deserve more than that. A review of the psychological heritage shows the scarcity of Arab studies in this field, and there is no study- according to the researcher's knowledge - that dealt with the relationship between research variables among adolescent students in the secondary stage.

According to the existing literature mentioned above, academic entitlement includes many immoral behaviors that may negatively affect the student's personality and their academic performance, which is negatively related to high moral intelligence personality traits such as honesty, humility, tolerance, conscience, and responsibility. In addition, moral intelligence is one of the modern positive psychology approaches that may be used to reduce the level of negative behaviors. Exploring the relationship between students' moral intelligence and their academic performance may contribute to understanding the role that moral intelligence can play in directing, managing, and controlling their learning and thinking behaviors in a good way. Therefore, this research aims to identify the relationship of moral intelligence with both academic entitlement and academic performance and to identify the mediating role of academic entitlement between moral intelligence and academic performance. In line with the study objectives, the following hypotheses have been constructed:

*Hypothesis 1:* There is no significant relationship between students' scores on the moral intelligence scale and their scores on the academic entitlement scale.

*Hypothesis 2:* There is no significant correlation between students' scores on the moral intelligence scale and academic performance scale.

*Hypothesis 3:* Academic entitlement as a mediating variable does not affect the relationship between moral intelligence and academic performance of the research participants.

## **Methodology**

### *Research Design*

The descriptive research design was used to determine the correlation between the research variable (academic entitlement, academic performance, and moral intelligence). This research design allows testing of expected relationships between and among variables and the making of predictions, It also can assess these relationships in everyday life events.

### *Sample and Data Collection*

The pilot research sample consisted of 530 students (male and female) from (Egypt, Yemen, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq) to verify the research tools (moral intelligence scale and academic entitlement scale) psychometric properties

(mean age=17.43, SD= 2.04). The basic research sample comprised 488 male and female students- who did not include in the first study- to verify the research hypotheses (mean age=17.13, SD=1.86).

#### *Moral Intelligence Scale*

The moral intelligence scale for secondary school students was developed by the researcher. The scale consists of 45 items into 8 dimensions reflecting aspects of moral intelligence. The items were corrected as follows: (3) for the responses that represent high moral intelligence, (2) for the responses that represent medium moral intelligence, and (1) for the responses that represent medium moral intelligence level. Hence, the highest score on the scale is (138), and the lowest score on the scale is (46) degrees.

The scale was applied to (530) to verify its psychometric properties. The construct validity through exploratory factor analysis using the principal factoring method was examined. Bartlett's test was 8356.65 with  $df=1081$  and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test= .898. According to the factor analysis of the large-item pool representing this variable, eight factors are identified (fear of Allah, self-control, and patience, sympathy and mercy, tolerance and forgiveness, respect, fairness, responsibility, and courage). The results illustrated that the eight factors have 47.93% of the total variance, Besides, Oblique Promax Rotation demonstrated that the factor loading of items ranged between (4.69-7.77), confirming the structural validity of the moral intelligence scale.

The results of calculating the internal consistency coefficients of the scale using Pearson's correlation coefficient demonstrated that there were significant positive correlation coefficients at .01 between the degree of each item with the overall degree of the dimension to which it belongs, after deleting the degree of the items from the total degree of the dimension. Moreover, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was measured to the reliability of the scale, where the values of the reliability coefficients in the total degree of the scale and dimensions were more than (.70), indicating that the moral intelligence scale is reliable.

#### *Academic Entitlement Scale*

Chowning and Campbell (2009) developed the academic entitlement scale. The researcher translated and adapted the scale as a tool to achieve the current research objectives. The scale consists of 15 items distributed into two dimensions. The first dimension is the external responsibility that contains 10 items (1,2,3,6,7,10,11,12,13,15). Higher scores for this component indicate that students see others rather than themselves as responsible for the success of their education. The second dimension is the entitled expectations, which contains 5 items (4,5,8,9,14). The scores in this dimension indicate the students' expectations of the professors. Participants rate on a 7-point Likert-type scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Items were estimated as follows (1,2,3,4,5,6,7) except for two items (2-11) which are estimated oppositely.

In line with the well-documented evidence of the scale's psychometric properties, the scale was applied to (530) to verify its psychometric properties. The construct validity through exploratory factor analysis using the principal factoring method with Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) was examined. The measurement model for the academic entitlement scale has been tested. The measurement model consisted of (15) items distributed into two dimensions. The results indicated that the model represented an acceptable fit to the data [ $df = 89$ ,  $\chi^2 = 284.296$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 3.194$ , (CFI) comparative fit index = .981, (RMSEA) root mean square of error approximation = .072, (TLI) Tucker-Lewis index = .977]. Besides, all factor loading values were more than .4 and were statistically significant at the .01 level, which confirms the academic entitlement scale structural validity.

The results of calculating the internal consistency coefficients of the scale using Pearson's correlation coefficient demonstrated that there were significant positive correlation coefficients at .01 between the degree of each item with the overall degree of the dimension to which it belongs, after deleting the degree of the items from the total degree of the dimension. Moreover, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was measured to define the scale reliability, where the values of the reliability coefficients in the total degree of the scale and dimensions were more than (.7), indicating the scale reliability.

#### *Analyzing of Data*

Data were analyzed in IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 25) and Mplus software. Descriptive statistics were generated to describe the sample characteristics. Construct validity was assessed using Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The CFA was conducted in Mplus using the diagonally weighted least squares (DWLS) estimator as data on scale items were considered to be ordinal, and to account for non-normality. The adequacy of the models was evaluated using the goodness-of-fit chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ). Given that  $\chi^2$  is sensitive to sample size (Hu & Bentler, 1999), additional indices were used: the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)  $\leq .08$ , standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)  $\leq .06$ , Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)  $\geq .95$ , and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI)  $\geq .95$  (Schreiber et al., 2006).

The researcher estimated skewness and kurtosis for the model variables. Values between  $\pm 2$  were considered as an indicator of normal distribution (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014). The researcher also regressed the outcome variable into

each of the factors to test for linearity, outliers, and multicollinearity. Linearity assumptions were plotted using P-P plots and scatterplots of the residuals. Outliers analysis was conducted using Cook's D, with D values below one indicating the absence of outliers. Multicollinearity was assessed using variation inflation factors (VIF); values below four indicated non-overlap between factors (Saks & Allsop, 2012). Afterward, we examined bivariate correlations. All of these analyses were conducted using SPSS 26.0. Skewness estimates ranged between  $-.90$  and  $-.24$  and kurtosis estimates ranged from  $-.63$  to  $.58$ , below the recommended cut-off point, Both P-P plots and scatterplots graphically supported the assumption of a normal distribution of the outcome variable through each of the variables. Cook's D showed that the most extreme values reached  $.05$ , indicating the absence of outliers.

To investigate potential issues of multicollinearity, we computed the tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) across variables; values less than  $.10$  or greater than  $10$ , respectively, indicate multicollinearity. Tolerance values exceeded  $.10$ , and VIF values ranged from  $1$  to  $4$ , suggesting no issues with multicollinearity. Due to variations in responses caused by the instrument rather than the actual predispositions of the respondents that the instrument attempts to uncover, common method bias (CMB) may happen. On account of a common instrument used for measuring all the variables with different kinds of scales, the common method bias (CMB) was assessed. Harman's single factor test was employed for this purpose. CMB was assessed by factor analysis using SPSS 25.0, in which, all the items were loaded with a threshold to attain one factor. The results showed that a single factor contributed  $23.512\%$  of the total variance extracted, which is below  $50\%$ . This confirmed that CMB was not a major concern for this study (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

## Results

### *The First Hypothesis Validation Results*

'There is no significant correlative relationship between the students' scores on the moral intelligence scale and their scores on the academic entitlement scale'. To examine the validity of this hypothesis, the Pearson's correlation coefficient between the participated students' scores on the moral intelligence scale and their scores on the academic entitlement scale are utilized as indicated in Table 1.

*Table 1. The Pearson's Correlation Coefficients Between the Students' Scores on Moral Intelligence Scale and Their Scores on the Academic Entitlement Scale*

Variables	Academic Entitlement scale			
	Externalized Responsibility	Entitled Expectations	Total score	
The Moral Intelligence Scale	Fear of Allah	-.131**	-.148**	-.146**
	Self-control and Patience	-.243**	-.230**	-.254**
	Sympathy and mercy	-.154**	-.144**	-.160**
	Tolerance and forgiveness	-.148**	-.135**	-.152**
	Respect	-.173**	-.147**	-.174**
	Fairness	-.192**	-.171**	-.196**
	Responsibility	-.266**	-.254**	-.278**
	Courage	-.215**	-.202**	-.224**
	Total score	-.261**	-.246**	-.272**

\*significant at  $.05$ , \*\*significant at  $.01$

Table 1 indicates a statistically significant negative correlation at the level  $(.01)$  between the students' scores of the research sample on the moral intelligence scale and their scores on the academic entitlement scale, where the correlation coefficient value is  $(-.272)$ . The correlation coefficients values between the components of the moral intelligence scale (fear of Allah, self-control and patience, sympathy and mercy, tolerance and forgiveness, respect, fairness, responsibility, courage) and the components of the academic entitlement scale (external responsibility and entitled expectations) ranges between  $(-.131)$  and  $(-.266)$ , and all these values are negative and significant at the significance level  $(.01)$ .

### *Results of Validating the Second Hypothesis*

'There is no significant correlation between the students' scores on the moral intelligence scale and academic performance scale'. To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the Pearson's correlation coefficient between the participated students' scores on the moral intelligence scale and their academic performance is utilized as illustrated in table 2.

Table 2. The Pearson's Correlation Coefficients Between the Students' Scores on Moral Intelligence Scale and Their Academic Performance

Variables		Academic performance
Moral Intelligence Scale	Fear of Allah	.443**
	Self-control and patience	.408**
	Sympathy and mercy	.391**
	Tolerance and forgiveness	.394**
	Respect	.448**
	Fairness	.372**
	Responsibility	.422**
	Courage	.402**
	Total score	.551**

\*significant at .05, \*\*significant at .01

The previous table illustrates a statistically significant positive correlation at the level (.01) between the students' scores of the research sample on the moral intelligence scale and their academic performance, where the correlation coefficient value is (.551). The values of the correlation coefficients between the dimensions of the moral intelligence scale (fear of Allah, self-control and patience, sympathy and mercy, tolerance and forgiveness, respect, fairness, responsibility, courage) and the academic performance ranges between (.372 and .448), and all these values are positive and significant at the significance level (.01).

Results of Validating the Third Hypothesis

'Academic entitlement as a mediating variable does not affect the relationship between moral intelligence and academic performance among the research participants. To verify this hypothesis validity, path analysis is used and the normal data distribution is examined. The validity of the current study model is verified (Figure 1) and the model parameters are examined using the Maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) method. The model achieved good fit indexes, as the indicators of good fitness are illustrated in Table 3. Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the standard values of the direct and indirect effects of the model variables.

Table 3. Goodness of Fit Statistics for the Mediation Model

Goodness of fit indices	Value	Acceptable value*
Chi-square	20.84	
Degrees of freedom	9	Chi-square/degrees of freedom < 3
Chi-square/degrees of freedom	2.32	
(TLI) Tucker-Lewis Index	.953	NFI ≥ .95
(CFI) Comparative Fit Index	.951	CFI ≥ .95
(RMSEA) Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	.065	RMSEA < .08
SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual)	.058	SRMR < .06

Table 4. The Direct Effects in the Mediation Model

Variables		Standardized Estimate	S.E.	Z value	p-value
Externalized Responsibility	→ Academic Average	-.341	.015	-4.13	.000**
Entitled Expectations	→ Academic Average	-.215	.027	-2.09	.037*
Fear of Allah	→ Externalized Responsibility	-.123	.171	-1.07	.286
Self-control and patience	→ Externalized Responsibility	-.236	.144	-3.01	.003**
Sympathy and mercy	→ Externalized Responsibility	-.058	.189	-.58	.560
Tolerance and forgiveness	→ Externalized Responsibility	-.019	.284	-.18	.859
Respect	→ Externalized Responsibility	-.191	.141	-2.54	.011*
Fairness	→ Externalized Responsibility	-.001	.274	-.02	.988
Responsibility	→ Externalized Responsibility	-.230	.184	-2.25	.025*
Courage	→ Externalized Responsibility	-.228	.081	-3.16	.002**
Fear of Allah	→ Entitled Expectations	-.359	.151	-2.40	.017*
Self-control and patience	→ Entitled Expectations	-.164	.070	-2.94	.003**
Sympathy and mercy	→ Entitled Expectations	-.163	.136	-1.54	.125
Tolerance and forgiveness	→ Entitled Expectations	-.006	.149	-.07	.943
Respect	→ Entitled Expectations	-.100	.102	-1.25	.212
Fairness	→ Entitled Expectations	-.082	.155	-1.28	.199
Responsibility	→ Entitled Expectations	-.294	.111	-3.25	.001**
Courage	→ Entitled Expectations	-.186	.108	-1.32	.187

Table 5. The Indirect Effects in the Mediation Model

Variables	Standardized Estimate	S.E.	Z value	P-Value
<i>Moral intelligence on Academic Average via Externalized Responsibility</i>				
Fear of Allah	.042	.040	1.04	.299
Self-control and patience	.081	.033	2.41	.016*
Sympathy and mercy	.020	.032	.62	.537
Tolerance and forgiveness	.006	.035	.18	.855
Respect	.065	.029	2.24	.025*
Fairness	.001	.025	.02	.988
Responsibility	.078	.039	2.03	.043*
Courage	.078	.031	2.52	.012*
<i>Moral intelligence on Academic Average via Entitled Expectations</i>				
Fear of Allah	.077	.030	2.58	.010**
Self-control and patience	.035	.023	1.56	.118
Sympathy and mercy	.035	.025	1.40	.162
Tolerance and forgiveness	.001	.021	.06	.952
Respect	.022	.024	.90	.371
Fairness	.018	.016	1.07	.283
Responsibility	.063	.025	2.53	.011*
Courage	.040	.048	.84	.401

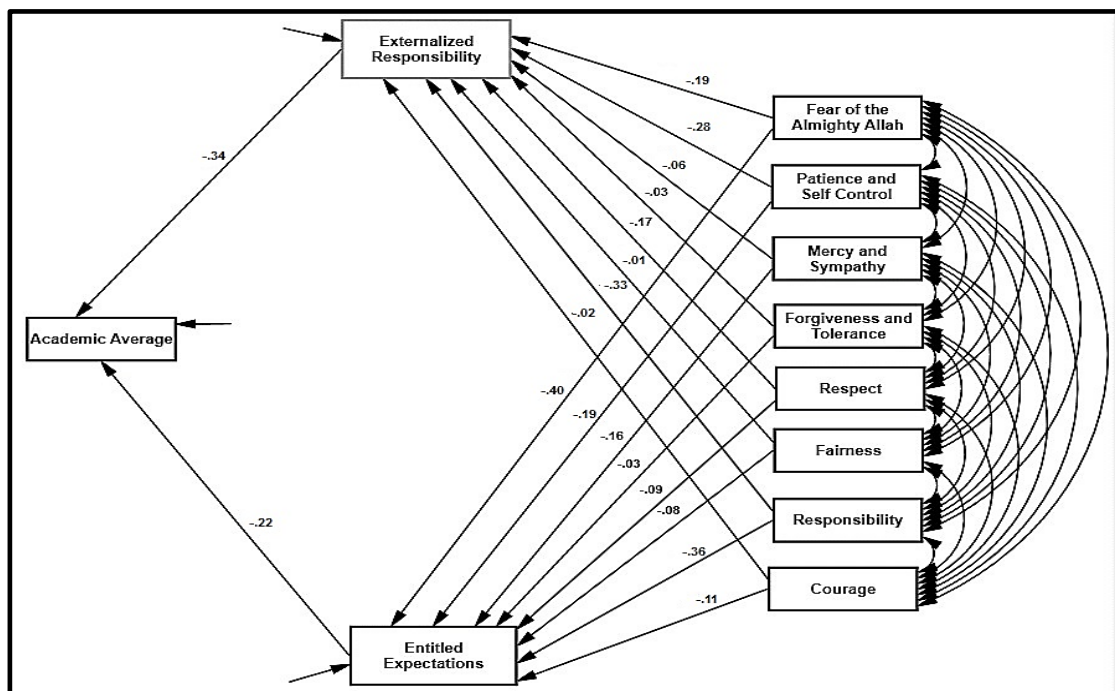


Figure 1. The Mediation Model and the Standardized Estimates

It is clear from Tables 3, 4, and 5 that there are direct and indirect effects between the current research variables. Regarding the direct effects between reach variables, it is evident that there is a direct negative significant effect between the moral intelligence components (self-control and patience, respect, responsibility, and courage) and the component of external responsibility in the academic entitlement variable. That the values of the standardized effect coefficients were (-.236, -.191, -.230, -.228) respectively. It is also noted that there is a direct negative significant effect between the dimensions of moral intelligence (fear of Allah, self-control and patience, and responsibility) and the entitled expectations component of the academic entitlement variable, where the values of the standardized effect coefficients are (-.359, -.164, -.294), respectively. The significance level values are (.017, .003, .001), respectively. Furthermore, there is a direct negative statistically significant effect between the academic entitlement components (external responsibility, and entitled expectations) and the academic performance variable, where the values of the standardized effect coefficients are (-.0341, -.215) and the significance level values are (.000, .037), respectively.

Regarding the indirect effects between moral intelligence and academic performance, results demonstrated that there is a positive indirect significant effect between the components of moral intelligence (responsibility, respect, self-control and patience, and courage) and the academic performance variable, through the external responsibility dimension of the

academic entitlement variable, where the values of the standardized effect coefficients are (.078, .081, .065, .078). ) respectively and the significance level values are (.012, .016, .025, .043) respectively. Besides, there is an indirect positive statistically significant effect between the dimensions of moral intelligence (fear of Allah and responsibility) and the academic performance variable through the entitled expectations dimension for the academic entitlement variable, where the values of the standardized effect coefficients are (.077, .063), respectively and the significance level values are (.010, .011) respectively.

### Discussion

In the current research, the correlation between moral intelligence and both academic entitlement and academic performance was examined. In addition, the mediating role of academic entitlement between moral intelligence and academic performance was investigated. Results illustrated that there was a significant negative correlation between moral intelligence and entitlement among students participating in the research. These results are generally in line with the results of several studies indicating that the highly academic entitled students exhibited immoral behaviors such as cheating, academic dishonesty, hostility, dominance, difficult relationships with others, greed, intentional harm, aggression, and increased conflicts between students and teachers, and narcissism (Campbell et al., 2004; Elias, 2017; Greenberger et al., 2008; Luckett et al., 2017; Stiles et al., 2018).

The significant negative correlation between moral intelligence and academic entitlement can be attributed to the dimensions of moral intelligence that include fear of Allah, which controls the individual's behavior. It also includes fairness and respect for others, including teachers and school management. Besides, these components of moral intelligence: bearing responsibility, religious scruples, respect for others, self-control, and forgiveness are characteristics that are negatively correlated to high academic entitlement. In other meaning, the higher the level of moral intelligence, the lower the level of academic entitlement. Those with high academic entitlement exhibit various immoral behaviors such as: disrespecting teachers, not adhering to school rules, disrespectful objection to grades, leaving class without teacher approval, talking on the phone, evading personal responsibility, sleeping in the classroom, inappropriate use of technology in a way that hinders the learning process, rude behavior especially with the teacher, side conversations with others, leaving the room without permission, and responding On the phone, showing boredom, anger as demonstrated by different studies (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Reysen et al., 2020).

The high academic entitled students are immoral because of their beliefs of competition and ideas of winning at any price and method, even if the student resorts to deception and cheating, and then their moral intelligence diminishes. Also, students with high moral intelligence are characterized by honesty, humility, and positive personality traits, confirming the negative relationship between the two variables (Bertil et al., 2019; Bonaccio et al., 2016).

The research results demonstrated a positive significant correlation between moral intelligence and academic performance among adolescent students participating in the research, which in general are consistent with several studies (Beheshtifar et al., 2011; Hoseinpoor & Ranjdoost, 2013; Mohamed, 2020; Saleh, 2014), while differs from the results of El Mikhlafi's study (2020) that illustrated a significant correlation between the components of moral intelligence and the academic performance.

The significant positive correlation between moral intelligence and academic performance can be attributed to the characteristics of responsibility, perseverance, and forgiveness that distinguish morally intelligent students as they contribute to the student's concentration and academic engagement (Abdul Latif, 2020) making them more eager to accomplish academic tasks. Those with high moral intelligence are characterized by conscience, self-censorship, and respect for time, which increases their ability to complete their academic tasks perfectly and respect their time and the tasks assigned to them, and this, in turn, contributes to the development of academic performance. This result can also be explained in light of the role of moral intelligence in developing academic motivation, which contributes to developing students' academic performance (Weber et al., 2016).

The results also revealed that academic entitlement mediated the relationship between moral intelligence and academic performance in adolescent students participating in the research. The direct negative effects of moral intelligence on academic entitlement can be explained in light that moral intelligence shapes students' academic behavior and is reflected in their academic practices. Consequently, students with high moral intelligence have a high level of responsibility, fear of Allah, respect for others, perseverance, self-motivation, and self-control, which are traits that contribute to lowering the level of academic entitlement based on shirking responsibility, unrealistic expectations that do not correspond to the efforts made, and lack of teachers respect and school management, and practice unethical behavior in the classroom.

The direct negative effects of academic entitlement on academic performance can be due to what entitlement entails students' apathy, laziness, and reluctance to make any effort. It reflects the student's belief that he deserves more things than others, and he should not strive or make an effort to get what he wants. Accordingly, this is reflected in his low academic performance, low level of responsibility, and unrealistic expectations from the school, which contribute to lowering his academic performance. High academic entitled students feel frustrated, do not make effort in learning, disturb learners, are late in attendance, leave class early, fall asleep during class, and have side conversations all of these



practices contribute to lowering students' academic performance. Entitlement is one of the most important challenges that affect the academic performance of students and lead them to engage in undesirable behaviors, such as anger, disrespect, and aggression (Jeffres et al., 2014; Kurtyilmaz, 2019).

The positive indirect effects of moral intelligence on academic performance through predicting entitlement variable is a logical result due to what moral intelligence contributes to controlling the behavior of learners morally in the classroom, being responsible for their learning, and controlling their beliefs about what they deserve, then this is reflected positively on their academic performance. Besides, moral intelligence is also related to the individual's cognitive ability and moral intelligence contributes to directing and managing the students' learning and thinking behaviors well during the learning process. Moreover, morally intelligent students are characterized by perseverance, respect for time, and motivation for academic achievement and academic integration, which can contribute to increasing a student's academic performance.

### Conclusion

The results of the current research pointed out that there was a significant negative correlation between moral intelligence and academic entitlement and a significant positive correlation between moral intelligence and academic performance. Besides, results demonstrated the mediating role of academic entitlement between moral intelligence and academic performance. In light of the results presented by previous research, these results are of most significance, especially for this sensitive educational stage of secondary school. The current research investigates one of the crucial issues that affect the student's educational process. Accordingly, teachers, parents, and stakeholders should seek to eliminate academic entitlement beliefs with effective methods to control its negative effects.

### Recommendations

In light of the above, the researcher presents some recommendations. Stakeholders should detect adolescent students with high academic merit in schools and immunize them intellectually and morally by developing their moral intelligence through counseling programs and workshops. Those in charge of educational planning and policies should develop the components of moral intelligence among adolescents through the use of curricula, teaching methods, school activities, and educational guidance in the educational process. The researcher recommends conducting more research that deals with the psychometric properties of the moral intelligence scale among all other groups in the Arab-Muslim environment, such as kindergarten, primary school, and university students. Further studies are needed to investigate other variables that can contribute to developing the moral intelligence of students at various educational stages such as students' social and economic levels.

### Limitations

The results of this research were limited to its population, which were secondary school students from (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Jordan, and Iraq). Further research is recommended to validate the presented research hypotheses. The study also does not identify the effect of some mediating variables such as the educational and socioeconomic status of the students and their parents. Consequently, further research is recommended to examine the effect of entitlement on students at different educational stages and its relationship to other variables.

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