

RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENT ON RELIGIOSITY, QUALITY OF LIFE AND HAPPINESS

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Abstract

Religiosity is an inclination to find meaning and purpose of life in order to live an integrated life. Religiosity provides goals and value system, which shapes different aspects of life and enhances mental health and happiness. The objective of this paper is to review the relevance of education for mental health, happiness and religiosity in different Indian environmental context.

Four hundred subjects from rural and urban population residing in various location of India were administered Oxford Happiness inventory test, WHO-QOL questionnaires and Religious orientation questionnaire. Multivariate ANOVA performed on differentiation scores revealed significant effects. Findings reveal that significant differences emerged in QOL, Happiness and Religiosity as a function of education, where less educated have higher degree of happiness and religiosity than highly educated participants.

Education effect was statistically significant on Religiosity, Quality of Life and Happiness. The data suggests a strong trend in the expected direction. The findings have been discussed in terms of the characteristic education patterns of Indian subcontinent.

Keywords: *Education, environment, religiosity, quality of life, happiness.*

1. Introduction

The persona of an individual is a reflection of his education. The process by which an individual acquires new skills, behaviour or understanding, often in a formal or informal setting is education. Learning skills and knowledge helps us to build opinion and have our own point of view on different things in life; way of thinking and behaviour, decision making and develops moral values & ethics. This always impacts our personality in a positive way.

Education gives knowledge and skills and religiosity provides moral values and ethics. The combination of education and religiosity make a person's value, goal of life and quality. For the overall holistic development of both character and personality, it is very important to excel in all types of education.

Religious behaviour and beliefs give life a meaning. Some behaviour such as trust in God, worship, pilgrimage etc. can cause inner peace by creating hope and encouraging positive attitude (Alimardani *et al.* 2014). It is also claimed that religious students fare better in their studies or academic life (Glass and Jacobs, 2005).

Religious commitment, religious involvement, religiousness, religious orientation and religiosity are terms often used to refer to the same concept (Khenfer an. Rouse, 2012).

2. Method

A cross-sectional descriptive design was used to explore the relationships among quality of life, happiness, religious orientation and education.

Sample: The sample consisted of 400 randomly selected people from different religions in rural and urban population residing in various locations of India. Of the total sample 50% (n=200) were from rural background and 50% (n=200) were from urban background.

Measures: For measuring quality of life WHOQOL-100 & WHOQOL SRPB-32 instrument was used. This scale was developed and standardized by a team of Department of mental health and substance, World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva, Switzerland in 2002. Both these scales consist of a total of 132 items. These items are divided into six domains. The questionnaires were translated in

simple Hindi language. Statements were made small and easy to understand. It was checked by six subject experts and proved to be good in the pilot study.

Happiness was measured by using Oxford happiness questionnaire developed and revised by psychologists Hills & Argyle (2002). The questionnaire had 29 items and discrimination power (DP) of 0.91. This questionnaire was self-translated in Hindi language. The statements were made simple & short and were converted into a four point rating scale for precise concept and accurate scoring.

For measuring religious orientation a 50 items five point Likert scale having 17 dimensions was self-developed during the course of investigation. The domains included are: Intrinsic religiosity i.e.; prayer & worship, future life, spirit and spirit world, general religiosity, personal religious belief, God as judge, universal truths, religious practices (yoga and meditation), and personal religion. Extrinsic religiosity i.e.; Nature of God, formal religion, attitude towards priests, civil and social religion, the daily and occasional rituals, religious education, attitude towards scriptures, attitude towards religious places. The DP of the scale was found to be 0.84.

Procedure: All the participants were contacted personally and provided a consolidated questionnaire having WHOQOL, Oxford happiness questionnaire and Religious orientation questionnaire (self-developed). Since all the participants were literate, there was no problem in their understanding the questions. The data was collected individually. The subjects were interviewed to make the observations more precise and accurate. They were also asked to express their views and suggestions.

The filled protocol was re-examined and the scoring was done as per manual instruction for each questionnaire. Master chart was prepared and the data was analysed statistically.

3. Result

Table 1 reports the means & SD of quality of life, happiness and religiosity as a function of education and environmental setting. Table 2 shows the summary of MANOVA. It is evident from the tables that main effect of education reached the significance level ($F(2,395) = 4.88, p < .01, \eta^2 = .024$) for QOL suggesting that the QOL of low ($M=528.75$) was significantly better than their counterparts moderate ($M=493.36$) and highly educated group ($M=473.26$). For happiness the main effect of education reached the significance level ($F(2,395) = 5.48, p < .01, \eta^2 = .027$) suggesting that the happiness of low educated group ($M=98.50$) is significantly low than moderate ($M=90.22$) and high educated group ($M=89.16$). For religiosity also the main effect of education reached the significance level ($F(2,395) = 42.88, p < .001, \eta^2 = .178$) suggesting that the religiosity of low educated group ($M=165.00$) is significantly better than moderate ($M=204.60$) and high ($M=189.25$) educated group.

The main effect of location reached the significance level ($F(1,395) = 12.83, p < .001, \eta^2 = .031$) for QOL suggesting that the QOL of rural low education group ($M=528.75$); moderate education group ($M=499.29$) and high education group ($M=588.94$) is significantly better than their counterpart urban moderate education group ($M=473.68$) and high education group ($M=468.42$) (no low educated subject participated in this study in urban population). For happiness also the main effect of education could not reach the significance level ($F(1,395) = 1.28, p > .05, \eta^2 = .003$) for location suggesting that the happiness of rural low education group ($M=98.50$); moderate education group ($M=91.74$) and high education group ($M=86.84$) is significantly better than their counterpart urban moderate education group ($M=85.18$) and high education group ($M=89.87$). For religiosity the main effect of education reached the significance level ($F(1,395) = 75.24, p < .001, \eta^2 = .160$) in location showing that the religiosity of rural low educated group ($M=165.00$); moderate education group ($M=209.97$) and high education group ($M=207.28$) is significantly better than their counterpart urban moderate education group ($M=186.82$) and high education group ($M=183.68$).

The interaction of education and location could not reach significance level ($F(1,395) = .156, p > .05, \eta^2 = .000$) for QOL and religiosity ($F(1,395) = .007, p > .05, \eta^2 = .000$). However, happiness reached significance ($F(1,395) = 9.48, p < .01, \eta^2 = .023$).

Table 1. Mean scores of Quality of Life, Happiness & Religiosity as a function of Education and environment.

	Income	RURAL		URBAN		TOTAL	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Quality of Life	Low	528.75	28.02	-	-	528.75	28.02
	Moderate	499.29	52.83	473.68	56.82	493.56	54.68
	High	488.94	39.52	468.42	56.92	473.56	53.95
	TOTAL	500.24	48.57	469.42	56.79	484.83	54.98
Happiness	Low	98.50	1.53	-	-	98.50	1.53
	Moderate	91.74	13.10	85.18	16.29	90.22	14.12
	High	86.84	13.27	89.87	12.06	89.15	12.39
	TOTAL	91.32	12.76	88.98	13.05	90.15	12.94
Religiosity	Low	165.00	4.39	-	-	165.00	4.39
	Moderate	209.97	19.08	186.81	18.24	204.60	21.23
	High	207.28	20.73	183.68	26.21	189.24	26.92
	TOTAL	203.90	23.35	184.27	24.88	194.08	26.02

Table 2. Summary of Multivariate ANOVA for effect of EDUCATION and location (R/U) for quality of life, happiness, religiosity.

Source	Dependant Variable	Sum of square	Mean square	df	F	η ²
R/U	QOL	35216.27	35216.27	1	12.23***	.031
	Happiness	205.46	205.46	1	1.28	.003
	Religiosity	36175.10	36175.10	1	75.24***	.160
Education	QOL	26803.29	13410.64	2	4.88**	.024
	Happiness	1758.38	879.19	2	5.48**	.027
	Religiosity	41231.41	20615.71	2	42.88***	.178
R/U x Education	QOL	428.63	428.63	1	.15	.000
	Happiness	1520.19	1520.19	1	9.48**	.023
	Religiosity	3.33	3.33	1	.01	.000
Error	QOL	1084539.12	2745.67	395		
	Happiness	63369.07	160.43	395		
	Religiosity	189904.97	480.77	395		
Total	QOL	9.52		400		
	Happiness	3317847.00		400		
	Religiosity	1.53		400		

* p< .05; ** p< .01; *** p< .001

4. Discussion

The present findings reveal that education emerged as a significant predictor of QOL, happiness and religiosity (Table 2).

One does not have to look far to find plenty of evidence of the influence of education on many important aspects of people’s lives. So, if ‘happiness’ is understood in the robust sense of overall QOL and human wellbeing, then education evidently has an enormous impact. Without providing any particular order or categorization, here is a brief sample of impact statements drawn from Hayward *et al.* (2005) and others as indicated which support the present findings.

- “the well-being of modern society is dependent not only on traditional capital and labour but also on the knowledge and ideas possessed and generated by individual workers. Education is the primary source of this human capital” (Crocker, 2002).

- “Using panel data analysis for 35 developing countries for the years 1990, 1995 and 2000 it was shown that, the set of functionings enabled by educational attainment – being able to read, count, communicate, make informed choices, have a sense of selfworth, have greater degree of control over one’s life and so on – have a substantial impact on life expectancy. Significantly, the direct effect of those educational functionings on longevity is almost equivalent to their effect by way of resource accumulation” (Wigley & Wigley, 2006).

Notwithstanding all the well-supported and publicized information as above, the most frequently told story about the influence of education on happiness is that there is little, if any, influence. Educational attainment accounts for between 1% and 3% of the variance in adult subjective well-being (Witter *et al.*, 1984). In their broad overviews of things that contribute to happiness or wellbeing, Myers & Diener (1995) and Diener & Seligman (2004) did not even mention education. Layard (2005) wrote

that “education has only a small direct effect on happiness, though of course it raises happiness by raising a person’s income.” His cited source was Helliwell (2003).

It is important to notice that most of the studies of the influence of education on happiness or some form of subjective wellbeing only measure direct effects, although the possibility of indirect effects is often mentioned. It seems that, to construct an allegedly causal model that posits some measure of happiness or subjective wellbeing as simply the direct effect of highest level of formal education attained is to create a seriously mis-specified model. At a minimum, one ought to consider and search for indirect and total effects.

Results from Table 1, show the mean scores of religiosity as a function of education and environment. It shows that religiosity is inversely related with educational level. This finding is supported by the findings of Albrecht & Heaton (1984) who examined the secularization thesis in terms of the relationship between level of education and various measures of religiosity. Their data also indicated a negative relationship: the most educated were the least religious.

Educational level and religiosity may be related to the development of a person's ethical standards. Scientists have explored the relationship between intelligence and religiosity, as well as between education level attained and religiosity for many decades. Unfortunately, for religious people, the news is not good. IQ and religiosity are negatively correlated. Religiosity and educational attainment are also negatively correlated. Amongst the educated classes, professors are the least likely to be religious, and finally within the academe, the more eminent the professor is, the less he/she is likely to be religious. The evidence could not be any clearer. Nyborg, 2008, an intelligence researcher examined whether IQ relates to religious belief. His results, demonstrated that on average, Atheists scored 1.95 IQ points higher than Agnostics, 3.82 points higher than Liberal persuasions, and 5.89 IQ points higher than Dogmatic persuasions. "I'm not saying that believing in God makes you dumber. My hypothesis is that people with a low intelligence are more easily drawn toward religions, which give answers that are certain, while people with a high intelligence are more sceptical.

Lynn *et al.* (2008) investigated the link between religiosity and intelligence on a country level. Among the sample of 137 countries, only 23 (17%) had more than 20% of atheists, which constituted “virtually all the higher IQ countries.” The authors reported a correlation of 0.60 between atheism rates and level of intelligence, which is “highly statistically significant.”

Religiosity requires that one suspends rational thought and instead take the proverbial leap of faith. Hence, that which is considered a hallmark of intelligence namely the ability to arrive at veridical conclusions based on the presented evidence is denigrated as irrelevant when it comes to swallowing whole religious narratives.

The above findings prove my hypothesis that education level will have impact on the religiosity level to be true.

Quality-of-life measures in rural and urban areas reflect actual perceptions by location. The individuals who are more likely to out-migrate would be those who have greater career opportunities and stronger incentives for higher educational achievement (Broomhall, 1995). Such individuals tend to come from high-level socioeconomic backgrounds that correlate highly with mental abilities (Charters, 1963). Thus, individuals with higher cognitive skills would be expected to have out-migrated from both highly rural and highly urban areas to other areas of the state. This out-migration leaves those areas with resources that are potentially less mobile and individuals who exhibit lower socioeconomic characteristics. These individuals have generally been considered not to place a high regard on education because of their inability to foresee high returns to education within such regions (Broomhall & Johnson, 1994).

Finally, highly rural and highly urban areas that have low associated quality-of-life measures may translate into an apparent low expected return to education for individuals in school (Broomhall, 1995; Broomhall & Johnson, 1994). Given a low expected return to education, low student achievement scores relative to those in other areas would be expected. Such results imply that the relationship between student educational achievement and population density is inverted U-shaped.

The persons who receive higher education always have high life expectation and a variety of demands (Zhang, 2010). But it is difficult to realize these expectations. All these caused them to lower their satisfaction degree. On the contrary, those with low educational level probably have not so many demands for life, and are apt to satisfy, so their life satisfaction is relatively high.

Human being always acts in pursuit of what they think will give them the greatest balance of pleasure over pain. This is called as ‘psychological hedonism’. Here I intend to discuss ‘evaluative hedonism’ or ‘prudential hedonism’, according to which happiness consists in the greatest balance of pleasure over pain. Education is certainly a determinant of happiness. It gives a person great inner contentment.

Taking into account socio-economic background, for people with low levels of education and income there is great effect of green surroundings (Mass *et al.*, 2009). The city dwellers living near parks are healthier and suffer fewer bouts of depression. In my research also, this reason can be attributed to some extent. As the rural areas are comparatively greener so the level of happiness might be more as compared to urban habitat.

Inkeles & Smith (1974) have also found that although urbanization did seem to have a slight negative effect on religious practices, education was positively related to religiosity measures. In their view, "overall it is at least too simple and probably one could say wrong to conclude that urbanization is lessening religious commitment". They concentrated on the issue: among religious people how does urbanization affect their use of religion. There are several reasons to believe that urbanization adversely affects the use of religion in daily life. In an urban environment and especially among the educated, religion runs into several new competitors for control of people's lives- the medical and political and educational institutions (Inkeles & Smith, 1974). Even among the personally religious, then, found a negative relation between both urbanization and education and functional religiosity. However, I doubt that urbanisation leads to religious decline because I found no evidence that urban life and jobs negatively affect religiosity.

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