
OUTLOOK FOR MORE FLOURISHING HUMAN AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Religious participation is related to a number of aspects of human development, including joy and contentment with life, mental and physical health, purpose or meaning, integrity or virtues and good social relationships. Rigid longitudinal study designs with significant confusion now demonstrate the advantages of these prosperous features of religious communities. The connections between religious group participation and prosperity are far larger than those between spiritual-religious identities and individual behaviors. Although the support network is an important component in the connection between religion and health, it only accounts for a small portion of the results. In this study, writers identified a number of other mechanisms which seem to be at play and determined that the significant effect of religious organizations on so many aspects of human happiness may be due to the convergence of religious ideals and practices, strengthened by social ties and customs. The proposed classification is helpful for the future study of academics and professionals and more investigation is needed to extend the geographical area of the study.

KEYWORDS: Anxiety, Flourishing, Happiness, Religion, Virtue.

1. INTRODUCTION

Improvement in well-being and reduction in mental pain are more important than ever before, and the evidence for this is overwhelming. Distractibility, loneliness, depression, and anxiety are all on the rise, resulting in a mental health crisis as well as a growing divide in our collective well-being in our modern society. It is necessary to develop new techniques of well-being research and innovative approaches to improving it because of the enormity of the issue. Investigators evaluated a new paradigm focused on the flexibility of well-being, highlighting four elements of well-being that may be improved via various types of mental training, allowing for ongoing research in this area to be conducted(1).

A number of variables that are considered to be the most important components of social flourishing, as well as their relationships to physical health, job performance, social connections, and a variety of other outcomes, have been extensively researched in the field of mental well-being over the last several decades. A wide range of therapies, including counselling, positive psychology treatments, and contemplative practices such as meditation, have been studied in connection to interventions that improve well-being via the use of various types of self-regulation. Although significant progress has been made in the study of well-being, these disciplines are in need of a unified framework that explains the aspects of well-being that exhibit training-induced flexibility, as well as the biological and psychological processes through which strength and

conditioning changes may persist in the long term. For example, a framework like this provides a common language and set of ideas for organizing the wide range of research activities and treatments in this area, as well as for promoting cooperative research and cross-pollination within and beyond related fields of study(2).

1.1 Relationship Between Religion and Mental Health:

Visiting religious institutions once a week is associated with a 25 percent to 35 percent reduced mortality risk during a ten- to fifteen-year period, according to long-term research. The consequences may be more severe for women than for men, for black people than for white people, and in certain countries than in others, but they seem to be constant across all gender, racial, and religious groups examined. According to one study, if a person maintained regular service attendance throughout his or her life, the lower mortality rates would result in an additional seven years of life. A variety of health behaviors, including fewer instances of new smoking initiation, significantly greater smoking cessation, very little alcohol abuse, and less illegal drug use have been linked to attendance at religious services over time; however, attendance is not strongly protectively correlated with all health behaviors, as the connections with diet, exercise and weight appear to be more blended. Attendance at religious services has also been related to better mental health over time, including a 20 percent to 30 percent decrease in the incidence of depression and subsequently a 3 to 6-fold reduction in the risk of suicide over time. Despite the fact that cross-sectional research shows a protective connection with anxiety, longitudinal research seems to dispute the existence of a protective relationship with anxiety(3).

1.2 Religious Beliefs and Social Interactions:

Attending religious services seems to be associated with increased social ties, according to some research. A number of studies have looked at the relationship between attendance and the likelihood of divorce. Despite the fact that the majority of these research are cross-sectional in nature, continuous studies have shown that people who attend religious activities in the outset are 30 percent to 50 percent less likely to divorce in the long term. Taking part in religious services has been shown to be associated with meeting new people, getting married, joining to a nonreligious organization, and having a greater sense of social support, according to longitudinal research. Several studies have discovered a link between attending facilities and feelings of cheerfulness and life satisfaction; nearly all of these studies are cross-sectional, but observational evidence, which controls for a variety of social and population covariates as well as baseline feelings of cheerfulness and life satisfaction, provides some confirmation of this study(4).

1.3 Religion, Its Significance, and Its Virtues:

Other studies have looked at the meaning and purpose of objects in general. The vast majority of these studies have shown that participating in church services is associated with a greater sense of importance or purpose in one's life, despite the fact that almost all of them are cross-sectional. When socioeconomic and demographic factors, as well as baseline life purpose, are taken into account, there is some evidence that service involvement is associated with increased life meaning over time. A large number of studies on the relationship between religion and virtue, as well as vice, use cross-sectional techniques once again. Despite this, there is evidence that individuals who attend meetings are more charitable, more ready to volunteer, and more politically engaged as a consequence of their participation in them. The evidence from research studies also seems to support the notion that attending religious services is associated with lower crime rates, despite the fact that the bulk of the data comes from cross-sectional studies. The problem of personality and virtue has also elicited some interesting findings from theoretical frameworks, which are not specifically related to religious service attendance, but rather to other aspects of religion. In a number of randomized priming experiments, it has been shown that religious signals have at the very least a minimal effect on prosocial behaviour. According to research, encouraging couples to

worship together increases forgiveness, gratitude, and trust in the relationship between them(5).

1.4 Flourishing Online Training:

Although scientifically informed theoretical models are very useful for increasing our knowledge, both descriptive and prescriptive knowledge, their capacity to influence wellbeing at the individual and societal levels may be limited. To enhance human flourishing in everyday circumstances, it is important to develop metacognitive strategies, which include knowing how to connect these ideas to real-world situations such as how to receive and process facts and make decisions in everyday situations. Throughout history, spiritual and religious organizations, as well as philosophical texts, have advocated for practices, activities, and workouts that promote flourishing. However, these practices, activities, and workouts have largely been absent from mainstream secular instruction for adults and children in contemporary western cultures. Recent scientific study on thriving, including its origins and causes, has made it feasible to teach and train people in evidence-based flourishing techniques, as well as to evaluate their effectiveness. It was created in 2014 to offer individuals all around the globe with this transformative knowledge as well as a range of practical exercises that they may use in their everyday lives. The science of happiness is a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) produced by the Greater Good Science Center. A total of over 650K people have taken part in the course, with student comments and feedback providing the applicable knowledge that was incorporated into the Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) design(6).

MOOC on the Science of Happiness (The Science of Happiness) is a ten-module online course that addresses the foundations of happiness as well as practical strategies for living a happy life. Eight 2-4-hour units comprise the course. Each unit has a collection of brief articles and films that explain key research techniques, analyses and conclusions. These articles and videos are interspersed with practical instruction on how to apply the results in real-world situations. There are interactive tasks and assessments in each module, and it is meant to be completed in a week. An intermediate exam as well as an end-of-course exam are included in the last two modules that participants may opt to complete in order to get credit toward the certificate of completion. Overall, the course focuses on the central themes of this article, which are that flourishing in people's lives is closely associated with having strong family bonds, feeling good in general, and being able to gracefully handle setbacks, and that these three categories represent measurable opportunities for improvement in order to foster the capabilities that nurture flourishing. The overall idea of the course is that contributing in ways that go beyond self-interest may help to enhance CPR skills by directing attention, enthusiasm, and resources toward a greater cause. Throughout the course, participants are invited to engage in a weekly self-evaluation in which they "Check In" to explain how they have been feeling over the preceding few days. During each 'Check In,' participants are shown a series of six cartoon images depicting various facial expressions, as seen in the illustration below:

- 1) Anxiety or fear
- 2) Interest or a strong want to do something
- 3) Dissatisfaction or resentment
- 4) Feelings of tenderness or affection
- 5) Feelings of grief or sadness
- 6) Pleasure or amusement

On a scale from 1 to 10, participants are asked to rate how much each word corresponded to how they've been feeling lately by rating the phrases. Everyone's "Check In" assessments were translated into a happiness score and plotted on their progress dashboards in the hopes of giving

personalized feedback that would motivate them to continue to participate. Over the course of ten modules, participants who responded to at least 80 percent of the 'Check In' questions demonstrated a systematically increasing level of happiness, indicating that they were actively participating in the course and that they felt successively less sadness, rage, and fear, while also experiencing greater delight, enthusiasm, and adoration. Due to the sensitivity to request characteristics, self-report trends could only reveal a correlation between course participation and ratings; however, the pattern's coherence suggests that long-term rigorous data collection could reveal a causal advantage of learning the standards and procedures of flourishing on both experiential and evaluative dimensions of flourishing(7).

Participants were also requested to complete an informal array of human flourishing questionnaires before to and after the course, although this was not done as part of a scientific endeavor, but rather to assist in programme evaluation. Participants in the course were asked to perform this assignment three times: once immediately before to the course, once following the course, and once three to four months after completing the course. On the whole, the questionnaire responses suggest that participating in the Science of Happiness programme may have an appreciable effect on one's ability to thrive. Participants reported reduced stress and solitude in their daily lives, as well as regular bodily discomforts such as muscular aches, abdominal pain, or viral infection, after participating in the programme. Subjective pleasure, life satisfaction, and flourishing scores improved from before to after the programme. They continued for 3 to 4 months after the programme ended, suggesting that the course's beneficial effects are long-lasting(8).

1.5 Self-Control Capabilities:

According to academics, self-control "affects the core of strong points that exist in humans," and people find it pleasurable to exercise control from infancy forward, while losing control results in feelings of discontent, helplessness, despair, and sadness. Additionally, self-control has been related to a number of positive outcomes, including lower rates of sickness, less impulsive spending, better psychological adaptability, and higher levels of interpersonal success. Despite the fact that the majority of individuals strive to retain control over themselves and their environment, adolescents face extra difficulties since their ability to exert self-control is still growing.

Specifically, we endorsed the concept of self-control as a set of primary objective skills that develop from birth onwards, allowing humans to achieve personal as well as interpersonal goals; overcome difficulties related to thoughts, emotions and behaviour; resist temptation; and cope with uncomfortable feelings, such as pain and disconcerting emotions, while attempting to target both internally and externally disturbing situations. In the past, researchers have shown that those with strong self-control skills had better coping abilities, better adjustment, and higher rates of happiness and positive feelings. Researchers have discovered a link between poor self-control and a high degree of negative emotions at the same time. So we predicted that self-control skills in adolescents would be linked with a higher positivity ratio, which turned out to be correct.

Because self-control is conceptualized as a set of skills that is essential for both personal and interpersonal flourishing, the current study's model proposes that teenagers' self-control skills are directly linked to their positive thinking ratio as well as indirectly through the presence of perceived social support. A high positive ratio may be achieved in two ways by adolescents who exercise self-control, as previously stated. One method is via the direct relationship between self-control skills and the positivity ratio, which may be accomplished by exercising control over one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Another method is through the relationship between self-control abilities and the positivity ratio. The second method is via indirect peer support provided by parents and friends of the child. A recent study found that those who have great self-control skills are far more comfortable receiving help or assistance from anybody, and they are less concerned about losing control of their lives. If people have more confidence in themselves, they

are less likely to be worried about losing direct control over their lives and to be thankful for the social help that is readily available to them(9).

It also appears logical that those with good self-control have better social connections because social relationships necessitate the ability to connect with others, negotiate, regulate feelings and become more socially adaptable, constructive, intelligent and obedient, all of which require the ability to connect with others, negotiate, regulate feelings and become more socially adaptable. External social circumstances may be modified with the aid of behavioral self-control, while interior alertness can be maintained within the confines of an acceptable social engagement with the aid of emotional or cognitive self-control. Individuals with self-control are able to behave in a constructive manner while acknowledging the desires and rights of others, as well as modifying their own needs and rights in order to offer a mutually acceptable outlet from a psychologically stimulating environment. The results of previous longitudinal study have shown that children with better self-control have higher social competence and more socially acceptable behaviour than children with low self-control. In conclusion, previous study examined self-control, support networks, and positive emotions on their own terms; however, we contribute to the body of knowledge by investigating the role of social help as a mechanism that links self-control to optimism proportion(10).

2. DISCUSSION

Having strong social support is crucial for flourishing at any stage of one's life, but it is particularly important during times of transition, such as the enormous changes that define adolescence. Support networks were described as 'an individual's perceptions of general support or specific supportive acts (available or done) from individuals within their social network that enhances their performance and may shield them from undesirable repercussions.' In general, prior research on adolescents has shown that positive feelings and a high positivity ratio are positively linked to having received social support. In particular, In contrast, unpleasant emotions and internalizing and externalizing symptoms in adolescents, including aggression, were shown to be negatively linked to feelings of social support in the study population. Being that social connection is so essential throughout the teenage years, a teenager who experiences rejection, social isolation, or a self-perceived lack of social support during this period may experience the loneliest period of their life.

One problem that has been addressed is the kind of social support that adolescents need in order to survive. According to the findings of the study, the primary source of societal support varies with age, shifting from family assistance in childhood to social assistance in adolescence. In adolescence, the social circle does play a significant role in the psychological development of adolescents as well as their increasing need for independence. Perceived social support has been linked to lower symptoms of mental illness and suicidal thoughts, as has better adherence to school rules, excellent behaviour, and the absence of disruptive behaviour. The majority of researches have shown that parental support is a better predictor of an adolescent's excellent development and well-being than social support in most cases. According to a research conducted on a random sample of adolescents, when compared to other kinds of support, substantial parental engagement was the greatest predictor of considerable life satisfaction as well as low internalizing and externalizing symptoms. According to a more recent study, adolescents who had parents who were very supportive reported better levels of well-being in terms of less negative emotions, more positive emotions, and higher levels of self-esteem.

Another legitimate point of worry is the connection that exists between these two potential sources of help. Based on Bowlby's (1988) attachment theory, which says that early attachment to parents influences later affiliation with others, we predicted that parental and social support would be positively linked (including peers). According to the researchers, this positive relationship may be

attributable to the fact that parental support has overflowed into peer support. Descriptively, despite the fact that teenage independence from parent's increases, people who have a supportive relationship with their families are better able to establish supportive connections with their peers, as shown by higher levels of reported peer support. Therefore, we investigated the role played by social support from both parents and peers in indirectly linking teenagers' self-control skills with their positive ratio. Based on prior research showing that social support plays a critical role in predicting decreased psychopathology and better wellbeing, we predicted that both kinds of help would be associated directly and positively with a high positivity ratio. Because prior research has shown that while parental support decreases in adolescence, social support increases, we were interested in investigating their roles as parallel mediators.

Gender is a significant role in how children and adolescents develop their identities and obligations, as well as how they cope with the pressures of growing up. In light of the importance of social support, self-control, and impulsiveness for healthy development, it is critical to understand if these factors are influenced by gender differences. Regarding social support, research has shown that coping with support-seeking leads to better well-being in both men and women, regardless of gender. According to other studies, girls are more likely than boys to seek social support as a coping strategy, while men are more likely than women to engage in avoidance or physical exercise as coping mechanisms. According to one hypothesis, this discrepancy may be linked to differences in the perceived significance of social assets and the intimacy of relationships between men and women. Several studies have shown that females report getting greater perceived support from a variety of various sources in their lives than men. On the basis of prior findings, we anticipated that women would outperform males in terms of self-control and social support from both parents and peers. According to one of the most reliable studies on self-control, females exhibit higher levels of self-control than males on a scale from one to ten. Gender was shown to have consistently significant effect sizes in research involving children between the ages of 3 months and 13 years, with girls demonstrating greater levels of self-control than boys in almost all of the studies examined. When studying adolescent emotional control, researchers identified tendencies that were similar to those seen in this study.

3. CONCLUSION

The focus of this research is mostly on the development of religious groups and individuals. Although religion makes a significant contribution to human welfare on a broad scale, there is also a social component to this contribution that should be considered when evaluating religion's contribution to individual wellbeing in general, as well as for people who do not participate in religious groups. For example, we haven't spoken about religious terrorism or child sexual assault in religious organizations yet, but we should. In spite of the fact that the prevalence of abuse is higher in general society, the fact that it happens at all in spiritual contexts is concerning. Religious communities' contributions to flourishing should be evaluated not only in terms of their negative aspects, but also in terms of their many positive contributions to broader society, such as soup kitchens, food pantries, prison outreach programmes, civil rights advocacy efforts, Alcoholics Anonymous services, and the comprehensive delivery of health care services, among other things. In certain African countries, faith-based organizations may provide up to 50% of total health-care services. There is no doubt that each of these variables has an essential part in defining the function of religion in a society. One might consider the positive and negative cultural contributions made by religious groups, including the role they played or did not play in so-called religious conflicts. Another might consider the advancement of hospitals and academic institutions as well as the advancement of economics, the rule of law, civil rights, science, and the preservation of knowledge.

In contrast, a more comprehensive approach would also take into consideration what religious organizations consider to be their own objectives and purposes. Of fact, the world's major religious

traditions do not place a high value on health or material fulfillment in this life. As opposed to this, religious organizations' primary objectives are often focused on a vision of or relationship with God, or even the sublime, or on experiencing life as God intended, or on restoration to complete wholeness. Many religious organizations teach that ultimate pleasure transcends financial prosperity in this life and that the ultimate objectives of religion should take precedence over all other considerations. Given religion's focus on the transcendent, it's a little unexpected that belonging to religious organizations has such a significant impact on so many aspects of human happiness.

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