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ATHEISM OR RELIGIOSITY: WHAT DRIVES NEW AGE ADMINISTRATORS AND ENTREPRENEURS

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ABSTRACT

Religiosity or Atheism: What drives the administrators and entrepreneurs today? The scriptures across the world have discussed the issue of religiosity and atheism in details but it is relatively a new and interesting concern to understand that whether this religiosity and atheism relates to administrative and entrepreneurial activities. The present study is also such an attempt to understand relationship between religious vs atheist orientation and entrepreneurial vs administrative inclination of new age managers. A sample of 80 such managers was taken. The results show that the managers with atheist orientation are high on entrepreneurial inclination. Males are found to be higher on atheism as compared to females. Also the study presents interesting results that males with entrepreneurial inclination are higher on atheism.

KEYWORDS

Atheism, Religiosity, Entrepreneurial Interest, Administrative Interest.

INTRODUCTION

Religion and spirituality are amongst those few important issues which pervade every stage of human development and provides meaning to the mysteries of existence. Religion not only brings out the best in people in the form of mystics, saints, cathedrals, music and literature, but has also been used throughout human existence to rationalize and justify inhumane treatment of others, persecution, intolerance of different belief systems, exploitative labour relations and political systems (Belzen, 1996, p 23). Religion is viewed as one of the most stable social forces in shaping and controlling an individual's life and behavior (Chen & Liu, 2009; Kennedy & Lawton, 1998). Even the scholars dating back to Adam Smith and Max Weber assert that religion plays a fundamental role in shaping economics. But literature also affirm that the biggest entrepreneurs of the world like Warren Buffett, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and Richard Branson are all atheist. It is argued that charitable behavior gets big perks in the afterlife, according to Indian, Christian and Islamic theology. But what about atheists? Atheists have no faith, no expectation of benefit afterlife. Atheists, non-believers, and secular humanists the whole gamuts of the godless have emerged in recent years as inarguably the most generous benefactors on the globe. Warren Buffett an atheist donated \$40.785 billion to health, education, humanitarian causes. Bill & Melinda Gates; both atheists, donated \$27.602 billion to global health and development, education. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan donated \$120 million to public schools in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2013. The British business mogul and founder of Virgin Records and Virgin Atlantic Airways, Richard Branson has vowed to give at least half of his \$4 billion wealth away to charity. In contrast, Pew Research Forum (2009) reported that a comprehensive study by Harvard University professor Robert Putnam found that religious people are more charitable than their irreligious counterparts. This research paper is not about who is donating how much, but an endeavour to understand the relationship between religious orientation, atheism, administrative inclination and entrepreneurship amongst new age managers. Above quoted people are all big names in entrepreneurship and their religious orientation should have some connection to what they are today. The Journal of Institutional Economics recently published a study by two economists, Travis Wiseman of Mississippi State University and Andrew Young of West Virginia University titled Religion: productive or unproductive? The paper claims to have found evidence for negative correlations between religious belief commitments and some macro economic activity. Religiosity was determined by four factors: regular attendance at religious services, strong belief in God, regular prayer, and viewing one's religion as "very important." They found that the percent of individuals reporting as atheist/agnostic is positively associated with productive entrepreneurship.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Allport (1954, 1960) observed that for some people religion is chiefly a means to their own ends. It is useful because it provides comfort in sorrow, security, social interaction, status, and a means of self-justification. This is the extrinsic religious orientation or ERO. Persons with an intrinsic religious orientation (IRO) are interested in the internal and personal aspects of faith; they find "their master motivation in religion" (Allport & Ross, 1967, p. 434). The person with this orientation seeks to bring the rest of life into harmony with their beliefs. It has been found that the IRO is strongly correlated with intrinsic motivation (Kahoe, 1974). With regard to the relationship between religious orientation and entrepreneurial behavior, Research on the relationship between religious orientation, entrepreneurial behaviour, and economic development remains fuzzy partly due to the complexity of underlying interactions – the critical mess of entrepreneurship (Gartner, 2006). McClelland (1961) found that primitive tribes with a high nAch (Achievement Motivation) believed a person could come into contact with the gods without the use of priestly intermediaries. Such tribes tended also to have many entrepreneurs and to be making comparatively rapid economic progress.

Audretsch et al. (2007) consider the influence of religion on individual decisions to undertake entrepreneurial activity (measured by self-employment) in a cross-country study. They find that certain religions – e.g., Islam and Christianity – tend to encourage entrepreneurship, while others – e.g., Hinduism – discourage it. In a similar study, Carswell and Rolland (2007) find (for a New Zealand panel) that non-Christian groups tend to be more entrepreneurial than Christians. While the relationship between religion and entrepreneurship has received attention in the literature (Dana, 2010; Candland, 2001), few studies in Britain (Rafiq, 1992)

specifically focused the effects of religion on ethnic entrepreneurship. Weber's (2002) theory of religious beliefs emphasises the effect of religious ideas on economic activities. It highlights the interaction between various religious thoughts and entrepreneurial culture. Key aspects of the Weberian theory include "spirit of capitalism" and "adventurous spirit". Associations, whether social, cultural or religious, in a community tend to generate business opportunities and linkages; shared networks and in-group familiarity that spawns the high level of trust embodied in social capital for business start-ups (Light et al., 1999). Social networks are vital to the development of ethnic enterprises largely because of the tendency to grant network access to members but deny same to non-members, thus giving the former some operational advantages over the latter (Waldinger et al., 1990). At the core of ethnic entrepreneurship social networks are the family and the community. Fukuyama (1999) argues that it is shared norms or values that foster social cooperation, as represented in social relationships (e.g. religious sects, village associations and clans) and goes further to suggest that it is a necessary precondition for strong economic growth. Anderson and Miller (2003) argued; the social space is mediated by the environment thus making entrepreneurship a socially constructed notion. It has been established that social capital (Waldinger et al., 1990), social network and embedded-ness (Cope et al., 2007; Jack et al., 2008) are seen to play a contributory role in entrepreneurship. Connections between religion and spirituality (Mitroff and Denton, 1999) and religion as a source of social capital (Aldrich, 1999) have been confirmed (Fornaciari and Lund Dean, 2001). A study by Noble et.al. (2007) concluded that immigrants' religious orientation significantly contributes to both economic achievement and entrepreneurial activity. For example, in one large-scale study of religion and entrepreneurship among Japanese immigrants, Woodrum (1985) found that both an individual's participation in religion and their familial religiosity were positively associated with self-employment. In an attempt to authenticate the harmony between faith and entrepreneurship, Nwankwo and Gbadamosi (2009) suggest that the platform of religion and faith-based organisations are used by many African-Caribbean individuals to validate their entrepreneurial pursuits and also to define their entrepreneurship orientation and identity. Some churches regularly arrange seminars and workshops as a means of encouraging members towards entrepreneurship and developing proactive sensitivity to entrepreneurial opportunities existing in the community.

Agnosticism and/or atheism may be associated with more self-interested behaviour. These are individuals who, more than simply not attaching themselves to a particular religious sect, explicitly express a general lack of belief, or even disbelief. A recent academic study shows that atheists are more likely to be entrepreneurs than either Protestants or Catholics. Travis Wiseman, an economics instructor at Mississippi State University, says his results rule out one popular theory: That being active in a church takes up time, which otherwise might be spent on entrepreneurial activities, and that therefore, those who don't go to church have more time to spend building a business. A case in point is Kazakhstan (Teal et.al). In just under twenty years as an independent country, Kazakhstan has made great progress in the transformation of a Soviet-command economy into a market-based economy. The support of entrepreneurship has been a strong contributor to this development. Compared to other emerging market economies, has been seen as being relatively supportive of new businesses (Doing Business, 2010). The impact of seventy-four years of official atheism has left many without religious beliefs (BBC News, 2010). People from over one hundred nations live in Kazakhstan and enjoy equal protection from the government and relative peace among ethnic groups (BBC News, 2010). This debate on atheism and religious orientation prompted the authors to conduct the present research in order to understand this relationship of atheism and religious orientation to entrepreneurship and administrative inclination amongst New age Indian managers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find the relationship between the religious orientation of new age managers with entrepreneurial and administrative inclination.
- To find the relationship between the atheism of new age managers with entrepreneurial and administrative inclination.

HYPOTHESES

- H1. There will be no relationship in religious orientation of new age managers with entrepreneurial and administrative inclination.
 H2. There will be no relationship in atheist orientation of new age managers with entrepreneurial and administrative inclination.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the study a sample of 100 was targeted out of which 80 valid responses were received with a response rate of 80%. The sample distribution is given below:

TABLE 1: SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE

	Value Label	N
Gender	Male	40
	Female	40
Family Occupation	Business Family	33
	Service Family	47
Family Background	Nuclear	57
	Joint	23

SURVEY TOOLS

A three – part questionnaire was used for data collection.

- Socio-demographic data concerning name, gender, family type (Nuclear, Joint, and Extended), family occupation (Business, Service and Both) and graduation background (Commerce, Science and Humanities).
- Religious Orientation Questionnaire was designed to measure Religious vs. Atheist orientation of individuals.
- Entrepreneurial and Administrative inclination was picked up from Comprehensive Interest Schedule designed by Psycom

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data was subjected to Pearson correlation to find out the relationship between religious orientation, atheism, administrative and entrepreneurial inclination. The results show that there is a significant positive correlation ($r = .31, p = .006$) between the atheism and entrepreneurial inclination (Table 2). However there is no significant relationship between atheism and administrative inclination, religious orientation and entrepreneurial inclination, and religious orientation and administrative inclination (Table 2). Therefore Hypothesis (H1) is partially accepted and partially rejected and Hypothesis (H2) is accepted. The results are in line with many studies showing that entrepreneurs mostly have atheist orientation. As is evident from the fact that even few of the business stalwarts like Warren Buffet, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg are also atheist.

The possible explanation of these results could be that atheism concentrates on service of humanity in contrast to service of God in religiosity. In their quest to serve humanity, atheist tries to find means and ways for this service. They therefore generate opportunities for the growth of humanity by being entrepreneurs and as is evident from studies act more philanthropically as compared to people with religious orientation.

Analysis of variance was applied to see the significant differences amongst males and females and managers with entrepreneurial and administrative inclination on religious orientation and atheism. The results revealed that males are significantly higher than females on atheism ($F = 4.46, p = .038$; Table 3, Table 4), however there is no difference in their religious orientation. The results confirm the studies pertaining to atheism being higher amongst males. Zukerman (2010) in his edited work on atheism and secularity reported that as a group, compared to believers, atheists and agnostics are represented by a majority of men. The atheists and agnostics are usually educated atleast up to graduation or post graduation. Atheist enjoy a higher socioeconomic status compared to believers and

dwell mostly in urban areas. Almost all atheists embrace liberal politics. In his article "Women more religious than men"; Britt (2009) mentioned the results of a survey revealing that women pray more often than men, are more likely to believe in God, and are more religious than men. Britt in his article further referred to numerous surveys of Gallup organization which again establishes that women are more religious than men, holds their beliefs more firmly, and practice their faith more consistently. The reasons quoted for such results ranges from women raising kids as mothers, to women majorly being homemakers in past (Gallup, 2002). This provided them more involvement in religious activities. Another reason for men being less religious than women is presented by Stark (2002). He argued that studies of biochemistry imply that underdeveloped ability to inhibit impulses is the prime reason for both male irreligiosity and male lawlessness. The results further revealed that managers with entrepreneurial inclination are significantly higher on atheism than those with administrative inclination or no inclination (Table 3, Table 5). However, no significant differences were found in the religious orientation of managers with administrative, entrepreneurial and none inclination. These results are also in line with the results of previous studies as mentioned in literature review. Also it is interesting to note that together gender and entrepreneurial inclination contributes up to 10% to atheism (Adjusted $R^2 = .103$, Table 3). This means that the males with entrepreneurial inclination are higher on atheism. The managers do not differ on their atheist or religious orientation with respect to their family background (business/ service) and family type (nuclear/joint).

CONCLUSION

The literature provides contradicting views of religion being the most stable social forces in shaping and controlling an individual's life and behaviour and to be a facilitator of economic growth on one hand while atheism as preferred way of many stalwart entrepreneurs who are examples to the world. Numerous studies have examined religiosity as a predictor of health and psychological well-being. However, people with no religious affiliation now make up the third-largest global group in a new study of the world's faiths - coming after Christians and Muslims but just before Hindus (Daily Mail, 2012). Research has also shown that more atheists tend to be entrepreneurs and philanthropists as compared to people who believe in religions. The results of the present study also show that the managers with atheist orientation are high on entrepreneurial inclination. Males are found to be higher on atheism as compared to females. Also the study presents interesting results that males with entrepreneurial inclination are higher on atheism.

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TABLES

TABLE 2: SHOWING THE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION, ATHEIST ORIENTATION, ENTREPRENEURIAL INCLINATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE INCLINATION

		Entrepreneurial Inclination	Administrative Inclination
Atheist orientation	Pearson Correlation	.31	.11
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.321
	N	80	80
Religious orientation	Pearson Correlation	-.026	.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.82	.90
	N	80	80

TABLE 3: SHOWING ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF ATHEISM WITH RESPECT TO GENDER AND ADMINISTRATIVE VS ENTREPRENEURIAL INCLINATION

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2.341a	5	.468	2.816	.022
Intercept	576.267	1	576.267	3.466E3	.000
Gender	.742	1	.742	4.461	.038
AD_ENT	1.383	2	.691	4.159	.019
Gender * AD_ENT	.053	2	.027	.160	.852
a. R Squared = .160 (Adjusted R Squared = .103)					

TABLE 4: SHOWING MEAN SCORES OF MALES AND FEMALES ON ATHEISM

Gender	Mean
Male	2.811
Female	2.616

TABLE 5: SHOWING SIGNIFICANT MEAN DIFFERENCES OF MANAGERS WITH ADMINISTRATIVE VS. ENTREPRENEURIAL INCLINATION ON ATHEISM

Administrative Vs. Entrepreneurial Inclination	N	Subset	
		1	2
None	24	2.59	
Administrative Inclination	26	2.63	
Entrepreneurial Inclination	30		2.90

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