

Religiosity and Socio-Economic Status as Predictors of Adolescents' Family Values: A Multilevel Analysis



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Introduction

This study explores multilevel relations between adolescents' religiosity and socio-economic status (SES, HDI) with their family-related values across 10 cultures (Figure 1). The data have been collected as part of the international "Value of Children and Intergenerational Relations"- (VOC-) Project (Trommsdorff & Nauck, 2005).

Adolescents' Family Values can be conceptualized as part of larger Family Models (Kagitcibasi, 2007). In my dissertation I identified three distinct Family Model Value Profiles (Mayer, 2009) for adolescents from 10 cultures (Figure 2):

- Family Model of Independence
- Family Model of Interdependence
- Family Model of Emotional Interdependence

The profiles are based on measures of Individualism, Collectivism, Family Relationship Values, Family Interdependence, Utilitarian/Normative Values of Children (VOC), and Emotional Values of Children.

Of special interest is the value profile representing the Family Model of Emotional Interdependence. This profile combines individualistic values and values reflecting low material interdependencies with relationship-oriented values. According to Kagitcibasi (2007), this family model constitutes a synthesis combining decreasing material interdependence and rising autonomy in the family with continuing emotional relatedness.

Empirical evidence for this family model should be primarily found in cultures with a collectivist background where social change as a result of modernization processes is present. There was strong cross-cultural variation with respect to adolescents' preference of these family model value profiles (Figure 3).

Aim of the Present Study

The current study aims to predict adolescents' preference for one of these Family Model Value Profiles by individual-level and culture-level religiosity and socio-economic status applying multilevel analysis. While the relation between economic status and family-related values is an integral part of Kagitcibasi's (2007) theorizing, religiosity has not been recognized as a potentially relevant factor for family model formation.

However, relations between religiosity and family values are an important issue in recent cross-cultural research (Saroglou, Delpierre, & Dernelle, 2004). Across cultures, religiosity is positively related to the importance ascribed to the family (Sabatier, Mayer, Friedlmeier, Lubiewska, & Trommsdorff, 2010). An open question is how culture-level and individual-level religiosity play together in affecting family values, and how religiosity is related to the family model patterns of family values identified by Mayer (2009).

Hypotheses

1. Religiosity is significantly related to adolescents' Family Model Value Profiles at both levels of analysis.

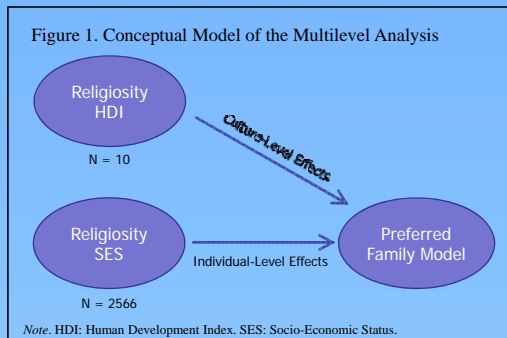
The higher the (individual-level and culture-level) religiosity, the higher should be adolescents' preference for the Family Model of Emotional Interdependence and the Family Model of Interdependence as compared to the Family Model of Independence.

2. SES is significantly related to adolescents' Family Model Value Profiles at both levels of analysis.

The higher the (individual-level and culture-level) socio-economic status, the higher should be adolescents' preference for the Family Model of Independence as compared to the two Interdependent Family Models; and the higher should be their preference for the Family Model of Emotional Interdependence as compared to the Family Model of Interdependence.

Method

The study included n = 2566 adolescents (57% female, M_{Age} = 15.5 years, SD_{Age} = 1.7 years) from n = 10 cultures: China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, South Africa, Switzerland, and Turkey. Since the dependent variable Preferred Family Model Value Profile was nominal, hierarchical nonlinear random coefficient models were computed (Raudenbush, Bryk, & Congdon, 2008). Adolescents' self-reported Importance of Religion (from 1 = Not important at all to 5 = Very important) was used as the indicator of Religiosity both at the individual and (aggregated) at the cultural level. Adolescents' self-reported Economic Status (from 1 = Low to 5 = Upper) was used as the individual-level indicator for their SES. At the cultural level, the Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP, 2009) was used as the indicator for a culture's level of socio-economic development.

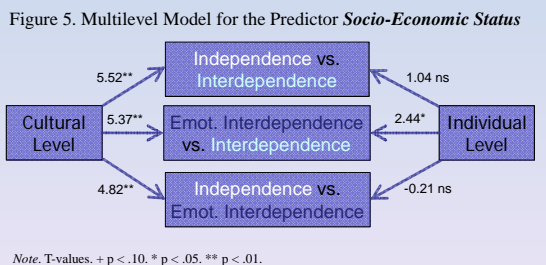
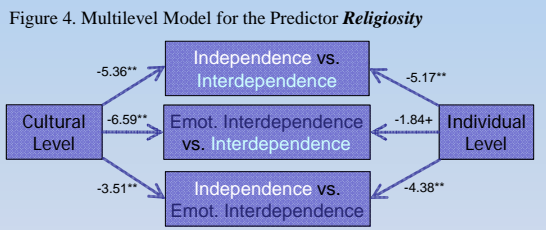
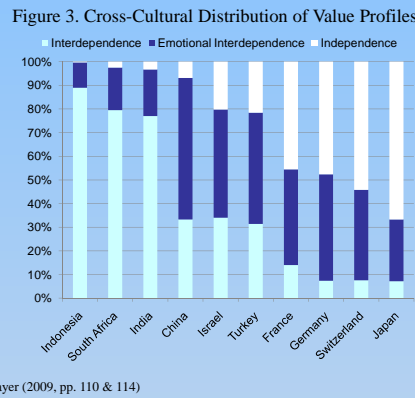
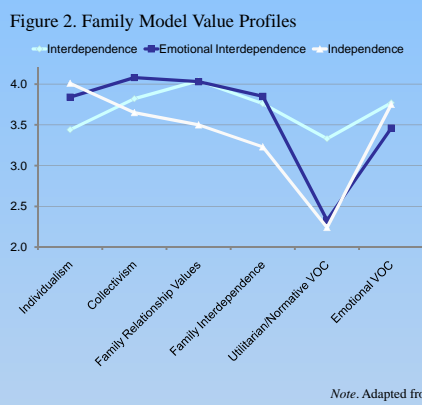


Results

For all models full PQL-estimation was used. Results of the null model indicated significant variation with regard to cross-cultural distribution of Preferred Family Models. Significant between-variance-components resulted for all category contrasts of the dependent variable.

Religiosity. The Importance of Religion showed significant effects on the Preferred Family Model at both levels of analysis (Figure 4). The higher adolescents' Importance of Religion at the individual as well as at the cultural level, the less likely was their preference for the Family Model of Independence as compared to the two more interdependent family models.

In addition, at the cultural level, the higher the average Importance of Religion in a culture, the less likely adolescents preferred the Family Model of Emotional Interdependence as compared to the Family Model of Interdependence. With regard to the Family Model of Emotional Interdependence, very religious cultures may be opposed to the autonomy orientation seen in this model, but very religious individuals may have less problems with this family model. Overall, culture-level Importance of Religion accounted for about 73% of the cross-cultural variation regarding adolescents' Preferred Family Model.



Socio-Economic Status. Adolescents' individual-level SES was hardly related to their Preferred Family Model. The culture-level HDI strongly predicted a preference for the Family Model of Independence as compared to both interdependent family models, and for the Family Model of Emotional Interdependence as compared to the Family Model of Interdependence (Figure 5). The HDI accounted for about 77% of the cross-cultural variation of adolescents' Preferred Family Model.

An additional combined analysis showed that the culture-level Importance of Religion and the HDI together explained about 87% of the cross-cultural variation of adolescents' Preferred Family Model.

Conclusion

The current study shows that at the cultural level, Religiosity and Socio-Economic Status have a strong impact on adolescents' family-related values in terms of Preferred Family Model Value Profiles. At the individual level, religiosity, but not SES, is related to adolescents' preferred family model. Both hypotheses were confirmed at the cultural level, but only H1 was confirmed at the individual level. In sum, religiosity seems to be an important factor for adolescents' family orientation deserving greater theoretical and empirical attention in cross-cultural research on values and the family, and especially with regard to Kagitcibasi's (2007) model of family change. Future research has to consider the role of different religions and religious denominations in addition to the importance of religion to explore culture-specific and cross-cultural relations between religiosity, socio-economic development, and adolescents' family orientation.

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