

Faith and Flourishing: Psychological, Philosophical, and Educational Perspectives on Wellbeing and Religion in Adolescence

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Abstract

The intersection of wellbeing and religion has been a central concern within the fields of education and psychology, with growing interest in how faith traditions and practices contribute to human flourishing. While adult populations have been the primary focus, comparatively less is known about adolescents, particularly within post-primary education contexts. This presentation investigates the relationship between religion and wellbeing amongst post-primary school students. It begins by outlining psychological perspectives on religion, including developments in the emerging field of neurotheology, which examines the neural correlates of religious experience. A review of the literature is then provided, highlighting evidence linking religiosity with both positive and negative wellbeing outcomes in adults and adolescents across various international contexts. In addition to educational and psychological perspectives, the presentation also considers philosophical questions concerning the nature of flourishing, meaning, and the role of faith in shaping conceptions of wellbeing. The analysis considers the extent to which faith functions as a resource for resilience, a potential source of strain, or both, within the developmental period of late adolescence. Finally, the implications of these findings for post-primary education are discussed, with particular attention to how schools might address the role of faith and spirituality in supporting holistic wellbeing.

Keywords: Religion, Wellbeing, Post-Primary Schools, Religious Coping, Adolescence