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THE CONCEPT OF RELIGIOSITY: DEFINITIONS IN A MARKETING PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This research purpose is to put a light on the concept of religiosity within the framework of marketing and management. The research is focused on a documentary analysis, and on some observations. The results show that religiosity is understood as a level of beliefs that can be low or that can be high. The recommendation is that research on religiosity should provide a deep understanding of the concept according to each context and to each religious affiliation realities for its better use in research and marketing.

Keywords: Religiosity, Religious Beliefs, Culture, Religion, Consumer, Believers.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of religiosity has been used in academia by many researchers worldwide (Holdcroft, 2006; Agarwala, Mishra, and Singh, 2017; Nassè, 2021; Sudaryanto, Suroso, Hanim, Pansiri, and Umama, 2021), but still its definition varies from one context to another context. Holdcroft, (2006) has recognized the complexity of the construct of religiosity in several ways. Till, today most of the research have associated the concept to consumption, culture and other aspects of life (Patel, 2010; Nassè et al., 2019). Thus, the knowledge of the concept specifically with the findings related

to other contexts are disregarded. How is religiosity conceptualized in the contemporary marketing and management perspectives in general and in the African context in particular?

The main objective of this research is to examine the concept of religiosity in the light of the literature worldwide in general but specifically in the African context.

METHODOLOGY

Process: This is a sounding documentary analysis in which articles and books are gathered for the purpose of this research. The documentary analysis is also completed by some direct and indirect observations.

Research Context: Most of the definitions on the concept have been made in developed countries context and what is known about the concept in developing countries' context is very little. Thus, the research is carried out by witnessing individual and collective religious beliefs in West African different contexts both in Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou) and in Ghana (Wa).

Data Collection and Gathering: The data is from multi-secondary sources. The data is based on several research papers conducted in the African context but also, it derives from other various papers from the same source. Some various sources are: The researcher has chosen the papers that have a good quality. These sources are from internet, particularly from the different search engines such as 'Google, Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, Yahoo, Researchgate, and Academia'.

Ethical Considerations: It is assured that the articles and the papers that are considered for this review are published in some quality journals. Some of these papers are from open access journals and some other papers are from non-open access journals.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The construct of religiosity is defined by many researchers worldwide. An author such as Mokhlis (2006) defines religiosity to be the degree to which some values and beliefs and ideals are believed, experienced in the daily life and then become as an identity mark. For Holdcroft (2006) religiosity has a non-physical dimension, and it finds its foundation and knowledge in religious instruction. Thus, for Holdcroft, religiosity refers to the application of such a knowledge in the daily live. For Patel (2010), religiosity is well-defined as the degree to which an individual is committed to a specific religious affiliation. Delener (1990) defines the concept of religiosity in the same way like Patel (2010). Delener describes the concept of religiosity as the degree of commitment of an individual to a specific religious' community. Bonewell (2008) defines religiosity in the same viewpoint as that of Allport and Ross (1967) by stating that religiosity is a social term that is used to label religious individuals. In other words, religiosity is the degree of beliefs of an individual or the degree of commitment of an individual, or the degree of faith or the belief system of an individual.

Bonewell (2008) goes further in his definition by distinguishing two distinctive types of religiosity: the extrinsic religiosity and the intrinsic religiosity. Extrinsic religiosity is defined as the use of religion or the use of religious faith to provide comfort or to improve one's own status, whereas intrinsic religiosity denotes the integration of religion or religious faith into one's own life by making it a real religious value.

However, these approaches of the concept of religiosity can raise numerous critics for the reason that they are defined in an Asian context and in a Western context. The present exploratory research seeks to bring out a conspicuous definition of religiosity in the context. In the African context, some authors have mentioned in a succinct way this concept in their research, even if it is not clearly stated. Firstly, in Burkina Faso, Ouédraogo (2007) has described some conflictual situations

between some employers and their employees where he shows that the solutions reside on the wisdom and the influence of some people who have a certain degree of beliefs. Consequently, the description given by Ouédraogo reveals that religiosity is associated to a given degree of beliefs that can be distinguishable in a community in some cases. This degree of beliefs may be associated with some leadership skills that are very useful to the group or the society within which the person lives. Nevertheless, this short portrayal of a real life situation gives the perception that religiosity is confined in a given company's human resources management circumstance. For further, Nassè (2006) emphasizes how Christianity as a religion affects Kassena culture through the early Christian believers life style. Here, religiosity is perceived as the affiliation to a given religious ethnic group, characterized by a linguistics borrowing that is grounded on religious vocabulary and business vocabulary. Later on, Nassè (2012) mentions the devotion and the high commitment of missionaries to accomplish religious activities in Burkina Faso. The perception of the concept of religiosity by Nassè is centered to the Christian life dimension and it does not incorporate other religions such as Islam and Animism. Then, for Kini (2012) the concept of religiosity refers to a degree of faith and beliefs that can even bring success in some area like to the management of a given company in the Burkinabe context, when the believer faith is grounded in God. The perception of the concept of religiosity by Kini is limited for the reason that it is centered in an evangelical perception of the world. Still, in the same context, religiosity is redefined by Nassè et al. (2019), not only as the degree of commitment but also the degree of dedication of a given individual to God, the Supreme Being. This means that religiosity is physically perceptible as the commitment to religious activities or as the real obedience to religious precepts or the devotion to implement some good actions.

In the context of Ghana, the concept of religiosity has been approached by some authors such as Howell (1996), as a religious itinerary through which people express their beliefs in one unique and supreme God. Thus, through some observations the expression of religiosity in Ghana is characterized by the daily tolerance and acceptance of the religious differences and cohesion in sharing common prayers dedicated to God.

CONCLUSION

Religiosity has been defined by many researchers as the degree of beliefs of individuals that can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Still the present research seeks to bring a restructured conceptualization of religiosity in a marketing perspective by defining it from different angles.

Conceptual Implications: Thus, religiosity can be defined as the degree of devotion of individuals to practice their religious faith, or religious beliefs. In the context, it is also found that religiosity has a syncretic dimension that aims to fashion a type of harmonization between different monotheist beliefs.

Managerial Implications: Understanding religiosity can help researchers and managers to better managerial decisions making in the business-to-business environment as well as in the business to customer environment.

Future Research: The researcher may investigate the link between religiosity and entrepreneurship success.

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Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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