A Quantitative Analysis of Experiences on the Doctrine of Karma

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This study is undertaken to explore the experiences encountered by students on the Doctrine of Karma. In modern times it is hard to find youth who believe in our scriptures. It is also possible that the youth may believe in Karma concept without having exact knowledge of this concept. Considering this as a research problem, this study is undertaken to probe the mind of youth. Attempt is made to make them recollect instances in their life where they took decisions based on their principles in life. The researcher has made an attempt to quantitatively analyse the responses received. This social research is quantitative and exploratory in nature. This study makes an attempt to satisfy the objectives of the study by testing three hypotheses. The population comprise of undergraduate students from South Mumbai Colleges with a sample size of 100. The primary data thus collected through Google forms and structured questionnaire is analysed on Excel platform using appropriate t test. F test is used to check the variance. Correlation is also found out before applying the parametric tests. An attempt is also made to find gender biasness in the responses. Findings of this study are expected to be of interest to students and academicians considering the focus and advent of Indian Knowledge System in the New Education Policy.

Key Words: Indian Scriptures, Karma, t test, F test, parametric test, correlation.

1. Introduction

Suffering is an integral part of human experience. Karma is a Sanskrit word meaning 'Action'. According to the Law of Karma, you shall reap in this life or the next as you have sown in this and previous lives (Mahasi 1996). There is more to it. The concept of karma in Indian thought has several different interpretations as per the philosophical school. The Law of Karma is essentially cause and effect; what a person does comes back to him or her. Hindus regard it as a mechanistic process that must be simply acknowledged (Downey, 2023). The doctrine of karma implies that every soul embodied in a human being has the will to make decisions and choose what

actions to take. Those decisions and actions generate karma, which determines the future circumstances of that soul's earthly existence (Mittal, 2004).

The Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2 summarizes 'You have the right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions' (Yuvraj (1997). This scripture provides insights into, the types of karma, Karma yoga and Reincarnation. Human beings can choose to act in ways that will diminish negative Karma (Chapple, 2020). Vedas, Upanishads, Mahabharata, Ramayana also elaborate on Karma concept. Karma is a shared belief in many Indian religions, including Hinduism, Sikhism, and

Jainism (Sarvepalli. 1998).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Chapple, C. K. (2020). In this brief yet comprehensive article, Chapple considers a range of texts but centers on a careful analysis of two short texts from the Mahabharata and the Yogavashistha. Chapple explains these texts with great clarity and puts forward a compelling argument that ultimately the Indian tradition posits a world in which action is not dissonant with liberation.

- Downey Kevin (2023). This study lessons emphasizes on the Law of Karma and its types as per Hindu philosophy. It also talks about unwholesome Karma and the likeliness to experience negative consequences for our actions. This was found to be relevant to the research topic.

- Krishan, Yuvraj (1997). Reprising a series of articles published over a twenty-year period, Krishan's study presents a largely historical overview of Karma in nearly all the major Indian textual milieus. Contains a number of key passages from Indian texts and presupposes a firm grasp of the Indian tradition.

- Mahasi, Sayadaw (1996). The author brings together a series of in-depth examinations of Karma in India's best-known textual milieus. Contains contributions from many of the most influential scholars working in Indian studies in the latter part of the 20th century.

- Mittal, Sushil (2004). The author examines Karma's origins and considers the representation of Karma in the epics, Hindu law books, and Puranas, as well as the intersection of Karma with other fundamental elements of Indian thought, such as duty, fate and divine intervention.

- Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli (1998). Dr. Radhakrishnan said that everyone should perform karma, and that it is the only obligation one has. He believed that karma is not the only factor for fate. He believed that fate can also be influenced by gods, personalized time, death or nature. He maintained that if the law of Karma is a fact, then rebirth is a necessity. If the self is not produced by the body, it need not end when the body is destroyed.

3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Does the youth of today believe in Karma concept? Are they interested to read our scriptures? Have they experienced the doctrine of Karma? With this reasoning in mind this study is undertaken to gather information to find answers to these questions. It is also possible that the youth may believe in Karma concept without having exact knowledge of this concept. Considering this as a research problem, this study is undertaken to probe the mind of people. Attempt is made to make them recollect instances in their life where they took decisions based on their principles in life. This study also aims to find gender biasness in the responses.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

With the advent of Indian Knowledge System in the New Education Policy, this study will be useful to the academicians to understand the psyche of their students and their comprehensiveness on concepts like Karma. Students will also find this study interesting and useful as they prepare to welcome spirituality in their day to day life.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find the awareness level of students as regards the Karma concept.
2. To find if the students are aware of the different aspects of Karma.
3. To explore the experiences encountered by students on the Doctrine of Karma.
4. To find if there is any gender biasness in the responses.

5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research study is completed in two months period starting 20th September to 20th November,

2024. The respondents are 100 youths from four South Bombay Colleges. The study is focused on Karma concept only.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE DESIGN

This social research is quantitative and exploratory in nature. The researcher has made an attempt to satisfy the objectives of the study by testing the hypotheses at 5% level of significance. The primary data is collected through Google forms and a structured questionnaire is analysed on Excel platform. Appropriate use of independent sample t test is done to find relation between a categorical and a continuous variable. Since the sample size is small, random sampling is done in stages. It is assumed that the data is normally distributed. However, F test is used to check whether the variance is equal or unequal. Correlation is also found out before applying the parametric tests. The population comprise of youth students with a sample size of 100. Across the four South Bombay Colleges, twenty to thirty students are randomly selected from each college. Thus random sampling is done in stages. Secondary data from Books, Research papers and websites is used.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The universe is confined only to undergraduate students from South Bombay.
2. Due to limitation of time the sample size is small.
3. Sampling method could have been more exhaustive.

8. NULL HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H01: The awareness about Karma concept is not satisfactory.

H02: There is no relation between the number of aspects of Karma they believe in and the number of their experiences on Karma.

H03: The number of Karma experiences encountered is gender biased.

9. DATA ANALYSIS AND TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

Table 1. Awareness about Karma Concept

Awareness	Response %
Familiar with Karma Concept	89
Believe in Karma	62

Source: Compiled from data analysis

It is observed that out of the 100 respondents, 89% are aware of the Karma concept. Also 62% of them believe in the Karma concept. It is thus obvious that the respondents are very well aware and also believe in this philosophy. Thus the first Null Hypothesis viz., H01: The awareness about Karma concept is not satisfactory, is Not True. The level of awareness among the students is quite satisfactory.

Total ten different aspects of Karma were explained in the questionnaire and the respondents were asked to select the number of concepts they believe in. They were also asked which of the mentioned aspects of Karma they have ever experienced in life based on the situations where they felt that Karma had played a role. Following are the ten different aspects of Karma based researcher's knowledge gathered from the secondary data.

Different aspects of Karma
1. Past life impressions
2. As you sow, so shall you reap
3. What goes around, comes around
4. Good Karma has positive impact and Bad Karma results in suffering
5. Every thought has a corresponding reaction
6. Sanchita Karma (Sum total of actions in all lives)
7. Prarabdha Karma (Destiny)
8. Kreeyamaan Karma (Instantaneous present life Karma)
9. Nishkaama Karma (Do not think of fruit while performing duty)
10. Agami Karma (Generated by current actions that have consequences in the future)

Based on the responses received on above different aspects and experience of Karma, attempt is made find

correlation between the number of Karma aspects believed in by students and the number of their experiences of these aspects.

As calculated from excel the correlation value is,
$$r = 0.92$$

This indicates a very strong positive correlation between above mentioned variables. The two variables are closely related and tend to move together very strongly.

Thus $t_{Cal} = r.\sqrt{\frac{n-2}{1-r2}} = 0.92.\sqrt{\frac{100-2}{1-(0.92)2}} = 23.5$

Thus Computed value of t = 23.5
Degree of freedom = n - 2 = 100 - 2 = 98
Critical Value at 5% = 0.1946
The computed value is more than the critical value. Therefore the second hypothesis; H02: There is no relation between the number of aspects of Karma they believe in and the number of their experiences on Karma, is Rejected. There is a strong relation between the number of aspects of Karma they believe in and the number of their experiences on Karma. Thus it can be interpreted that the more they believe in Karma concept, the more they experience it in their life.

Based on the above, the researcher further has tried to find if the Karma experiences of the respondents is gender biased i.e. if the number of Karma experiences of females is more than males or vice versa. Hence a third hypothesis was framed to find out if the Karma experiences of the respondents is gender biased. To prove this hypothesis, t test is used. Before applying the parametric t test, F test is applied to know whether the variance is equal or unequal.

Table 2: F-Test Two-Sample for Variances

	Male	Female
Mean	1.75	1.403846154
Variance	3.085106383	2.559200603
Observations	48	52

Source: Compiled from data analysis

It is observed from the above table that there is a slight difference between the variance. So the t test with equal variance can be used to test the third hypothesis.

Table 3: t-Test Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	Male	Female
Observations	48	52
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	98	
t Stat	1.031403335	
P(T < =t) two-tail	0.304890444	
t Critical two-tail	1.984467455	

In the above table, the Calculated Value is less than the Critical Value. Also, the P value is more than 0.05. Both the conditions indicate that the Null hypothesis should be accepted. Thus the third hypothesis, H_{03}: **The number of Karma experiences encountered is gender biased**, is **Accepted**. This means there is a difference in number of experiences of male and female students. It is further seen from the responses that male students have encountered more number of Karma experiences than female students.

10. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- It is observed that out of the 100 respondents, 89% are aware of the Karma concept. Also 62% of them believe in the Karma concept. It is thus obvious that the respondents are very well aware and also believe in this philosophy.
- There is a strong relation between the number of aspects of Karma they believe in and the number of their experiences on Karma. Thus it can be interpreted that the more they believe in Karma concept, the more they experience it in their life.
- The number of Karma experiences encountered is gender biased, is Accepted. This means there is a difference in number of experiences of male and female students.
- It is further seen from the responses that male

students have encountered more number of Karma experiences than female students.

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