



Religious Belonging and Sense of Self in Hindu Education: The Role of Teachers' dynamic approaches and Students' socioeconomic status

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Within Hindu education, the primary purpose of this study is to investigate the complex dynamic impact of teachers' approaches (teaching ethics and morality, student-centered teaching, and narrative in education) on students' sense of religious belonging and the resulting empathy. Using social identity theory and sociocultural theory as a foundation, this study investigates the interaction and influence of these variables. **Methodology:** The study collects data from 611 Hindu students attending various colleges and institutions in Bali, Java, and South Sulawesi regencies using cluster sampling techniques and a quantitative survey research design. Over six months, lagged data collection methodologies were utilized.

Results: The findings demonstrate that instructors' approaches have significant direct and indirect effects on students' empathy via the mediating role of students' religious affiliation. In addition, the study emphasizes the moderating impact of socioeconomic status on these associations. This study contributes to the existing literature by shedding light on instructors' approaches and students' sense of religious belonging in fostering empathy within Hindu education. The findings have implications for educators, policymakers, and practitioners who seek to improve teaching practices, promote religious affiliation, and cultivate student empathy. **Novelty:** In Hindu education, the study investigates the complex dynamic impact of teachers' approaches (teaching ethics and morality, student-centered teaching, and storytelling in teaching) on students' sense of religious belonging and the resulting empathy.

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Introduction

According to the findings of the research carried out by [Winstone et al. \(2022\)](#), the educational experiences that people have played a significant part in forming their identities and worldviews. The effect that religious education has on these aspects is very significant. According to the findings of research conducted by Winia and colleagues in the year 2020, kids who are enrolled in Hindu schools must negotiate their religious identities within the context of a dynamic and varied society. The study of Hinduism provides students the resources to examine and comprehend the rituals, beliefs, and practices significant to their religious tradition. According to the findings presented by [Sutriyanti et al. \(2019\)](#), the program creates an environment where participants are provided with the opportunity to obtain a comprehensive understanding of Hinduism and its tenets. The investigation into 2022 that Subagiasta and Gateri carried out. To offer students an in-depth understanding of their religion, it is required to teach students about the religious texts, rituals, myths, and philosophical ideas that constitute the foundation of their faith. This is done to provide students with an in-depth understanding of their faith. This line of research can potentially increase the individual's religious commitment and identification as a Hindu. It also can strengthen the individual's sense of community within Hinduism. In the context of a background steeped in Hinduism, the concept of "religious belonging" refers to the extent to which an individual is personally, socially, and culturally ingrained in the religious customs of that religion. This can apply to any life stage, from childhood to adulthood. The individual's upbringing in the Hindu religion is responsible for forming these relationships. Those who had been brought up in the Hindu religion in a manner not dissimilar to one another were destined to become good friends. Students who attend Hindu schools have the opportunity to participate in a diverse range of educational pursuits, each of which contributes in some fashion to the development of the students' identities. According to [Merliana and Tantri \(2022\)](#), members of this faith find it difficult to square the circle between the principles of their religion and the fluidity and dynamic nature of modern society. In other words, they have a hard time reconciling the two concepts. Merliana and Tantri point to this issue as an obstacle that people who adhere to this faith must overcome. Students embark on a journey of self-discovery when they study Hinduism because, as they analyze how the teachings and values of Hinduism relate to both themselves and the world, they actively set out on this trip. As a result, students learn about Hinduism as they embark on a journey of self-discovery. This lesson's objective is to allow students to obtain a more in-depth understanding of Hinduism, the lesson's primary aim.

In addition, an academic study has shown that the amount to which a student is familiar with Hindu culture and values has a significant and long-lasting impact on the student's impression of their religious identity and affiliation ([Lall & Anand, 2022](#)). The researchers discovered this. This resource is extremely helpful for assisting students in reestablishing a connection with their religious upbringing, achieving a deeper understanding of Hinduism, and overcoming the problems of upholding their faith in a pluralistic culture. [Nofradatu \(2022\)](#) proposes that students' religious identities are closely connected to their self-concepts, which are produced through the interactive process of education with the students. By recognizing the power of education to bring about good change in its recipients, Hindu educators play an important part in cultivating a sense of community and providing students with the self-assurance and empathy they need to navigate their religious identities successfully.

In addition, the dynamic and diversified nature of teaching methods within Hindu education is reflected in the classroom approaches taken by teachers, such as student-centered instruction, teaching ethics and morality, and the use of storytelling in the classroom. According to Levett-Jones and her colleagues' research from 2019, pupils' empathy involves their capacity to comprehend and identify with the emotions experienced by others. There is a knowledge gap about how teachers' dynamic approaches in Hindu education directly influence students' religious affiliation and sense of self, even though previous literature has investigated the impact of teaching practices on different areas of students' development. In addition, there has been a lack of studies conducted on the function that socioeconomic class plays as a moderator and the role that religious affiliation plays as a mediator in the relationship between religious affiliation and empathy. In addition, the study of religious education in Hindu contexts has always been treated from a conventional standpoint, with a primary emphasis placed on Hindu rituals, texts, and dogmas (Pratama & Swarniti, 2021). The modern environment of Hindu education, on the other hand, demands a broader view that considers the dynamic interaction between instructors and students as well as the larger societal milieu.

Concurrently, in Hindu education, it is vital to consider the distinct cultural and geographical elements of particular places home to Hindu groups (Arini et al., 2019; Lall & Anand, 2022). In Indonesia, particularly on the islands of Bali, Java, and South Sulawesi, Hinduism has a sizable following, and the dynamic between belonging to a religious community and having a strong sense of one's own identity displays certain distinctive traits. In the setting of Hindu education in Indonesia, the purpose of this study is to bridge the contextual gap by investigating the effect that students' socioeconomic level and creative teaching methodologies have on the students' sense of religious affiliation and who they are as individuals within the context of Hindu education. Most people who call the Indonesian island Bali are, often known as the "Island of the Gods," their home practice Hinduism. Education in the Hindu religion is extremely important in maintaining and passing on the Hindu cultural legacy of the Balinese people (Mubarok, 2022). The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture reports that around 83% of Balinese people consider themselves Hindus, which highlights the community's strong sense of religious identity (Sutriyanti & Dharmawan, 2022).

In addition, significant Hindu populations may be found on the island of Java, the part of Indonesia with the highest population density overall. According to Adi et al. (2023), although Hinduism is considered a minority religion in Java, it still has a significant impact in the regions of Central Java and East Java. The presence of sizeable Hindu communities distinguishes these regions. It has been observed by Noorzeha et al. (2022) that the cultural practices and traditions of Hindu groups in Java are frequently one of a kind. They represent a fusion of traditional indigenous Javanese practices and Hinduism. The practices, traditions, and principles intrinsic to Javanese Hinduism serve as the primary focal point of the majority of the education provided in Hinduism in the regions mentioned above. According to Firman and Pratama (2022), young Javanese Hindus can strengthen their ties to the Hindu religion and the Javanese culture they belong to while attending school. This allows them to better integrate themselves into both of these communities. According to Idrus et al. (2023), the metropolitan area of Makassar, which is located on the island of South Sulawesi, and the province surrounding it, is home to sizeable Hindu

communities. According to [Novita et al. \(2022\)](#), the Toraja community currently residing in South Sulawesi practices a distinctive form of Hinduism. This form of religion combines traditional Hindu doctrines with cultural practices that are unique to the Toraja people. A significant portion of the cultural history of the Torajan people is the performance of elaborate burial rites and the veneration of their ancestors who have passed away. The students of Toraja, who live in the region of South Sulawesi, are given a Hindu education. The purpose of this education is to preserve cultural traditions, share hereditary knowledge, and cultivate a community feeling of religiosity among the students of Toraja.

According to the research findings, the distinct rituals, practices, and traditions specific to each geographical area help Hindu schoolchildren develop their own individual sense of identity. As a result, Hindu educators can adjust educational techniques to foster religious affiliation and empower students to navigate their religious identities within these varied regions of Indonesia by gaining an awareness of the distinct cultural and geographical circumstances. Thus, the primary objectives of this study are to;

- Examine the impact of teaching ethics and morality, student-centered teaching, and storytelling in teaching on students' empathy and sense of religious belonging.
- Investigate the impact of students' sense of religious belonging on students' empathy.
- Analyze the mediatory role of students' sense of religious belonging in the association between teaching ethics and morality, student-centered teaching, storytelling in teaching, and students' empathy.
- Investigate the moderating role of students' socioeconomic status in the association between students' sense of religious belonging and empathy.

This study's primary objective is to improve our current understanding of religious education within Hindu settings. Specifically, the authors wish to draw attention to the significant part that students' socioeconomic status and teachers' flexibility in their instructional approaches play in shaping students' religious identity, personal identity, and empathy. The current inquiry intends to support educators of religious studies, scholars, and decision-makers in resolving some areas of insufficiency in their understanding by assessing the interrelationships among the components mentioned above of religious education. This will be accomplished by examining the interrelationships among the abovementioned components of religious education.

Literature Review

The sociocultural theory and the notion of social identities are the conceptual underpinnings of this investigation. According to the key tenets of the social identity theory ([Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019](#)), how an individual's interpersonal relationships shape their sense of self is a critical factor in forming their self-concept. According to the current study's findings, a student's perception of their personal identity and sense of religious connection are significantly impacted by the degree to which the student identifies with the Hindu community and receives a Hindu education. According to [Edwards et al. \(2019\)](#), the abovementioned theory provides a complete framework for understanding a person's religious affiliation influences that person's viewpoints, behaviors, and social interactions. Within Hindu education, a student's religious affiliation is significantly connected to their sense of identity, and this connection is extremely personal and intimate. According to

Pratama and Swarniti (2021), students can develop a sense of belonging to a community by embracing their Hindu identity and participating in Hindu pedagogical practices. This can help students feel like they have a place in the world. The construction of a communal identity is one factor that contributes to forming an individual's self-concept, which in turn shapes the individual's behaviors, values, and beliefs displayed in public. Through social identity theory, one can better comprehend the intricate self-concepts held by Hindu students and their positioning within the larger context of the world.

The sociocultural hypothesis provides insight into how an individual's social and cultural surroundings influence the development of their cognitive abilities. According to the most recent learning and development theory, the function of social contacts is given an extremely high level of relevance. This is especially true when these interactions are complemented by the direction of knowledgeable outside entities (Glăveanu, 2020). In the framework of Hindu education, the function of teachers is considered to be of the utmost importance because they are responsible for promoting the diffusion of information and culture. The incorporation of ethical and moral principles, the prioritization of individualized attention, and the use of storytelling tactics are just a few of the many effective strategies teachers use to assist their students' intellectual and emotional development. The application of sociocultural theory as a framework makes it possible to examine the impact of different teaching approaches on the students' feelings of community, identity, and empathy. A climate that is amenable to free discourse and the exchange of individual students' religious experiences and points of view can be encouraged through the use of teaching strategies that put the requirements and pursuits of the students at the forefront, particularly in the context of storytelling. Educators can actively contribute to their pupils' moral growth if they incorporate ethical and moral training into their instructional practices. By utilizing social identity theory (Cleland & Durning, 2019), which elucidates the influence of educators' actions on the development of their pupils, one can better understand the correlation between one's personal identity and one's religious affiliation. By using a number of different theoretical frameworks, this research aims to deepen our understanding of Hindu education and its impact on the communal, identity, and sympathetic components of today's young.

Teacher Approaches and Students' Empathy

According to the findings of Yli-Panula and colleagues (2022), the ability of pupils to comprehend alternate points of view is improved when those students participate in teacher-led discussions on ethical decision-making and moral problems. According to Levett-Jones et al. (2019), as students gain knowledge of real-life scenarios and ethical concepts, this leads to a more nuanced comprehension of empathy towards others. According to Canseco et al. (2022), developing empathy in students can be aided by establishing a feeling of community and increasing mutual understanding through instructional techniques that prioritize students' agency, collaboration, and critical thinking. In addition, Canseco et al. suggest that these two factors can help students better understand each other. According to Feraco et al. (2023), encouraging the development of empathy and collaboration abilities in students by providing them with opportunities to express their thoughts and emotions regarding their learning experiences and an adequate place to do so is beneficial to the students' overall educational experience. According to

Etin et al.'s (2021) research, employing narratives in the classroom to teach empathy can be an efficient way to foster the characteristic. Students can investigate various topics, including prejudice, compassion, and the ability to understand other cultures when allowed to use tales as a catalyst. According to Omar et al.'s (2022) research, allowing pupils to experience the highs and lows of the emotional lives of fictional characters can improve their ability to empathize with others and show compassion. Hence, it is hypothesized that;

H1: *There is a positive impact of teaching approaches, i.e., a) teaching ethics and morality, b) student-centered teaching, and c) storytelling on students' empathy.*

Teacher Approaches and Students' Sense of Religious Belonging

Students can relate their religious beliefs to real-life situations when teachers actively engage students in discussions about ethical principles and moral values (Paul & Jena, 2022). The students' sense of religious affiliation is strengthened due to this integration, which improves their comprehension of the importance and implementation of the teachings of their religious tradition. In addition, student-centered teaching approaches allow students to investigate their religious identities and their beliefs within the educational environment (Murphy et al., 2021). Student-centered education encourages students to communicate and evaluate their religious beliefs. This helps students have a sense of ownership over their religious identities and validates such identities (Bara & Xhomara, 2020). Student-centered teaching accomplishes this by allowing self-expression, collaborative learning, and critical thinking. This method contributes to the students' development of a sense of religious belonging by fostering a loving and welcoming environment that understands and respects the myriad ways in which Hinduism can be expressed. In the classroom, the use of storytelling helps teachers to immerse students in rich narratives. At the same time, teachers can better foster a sense of pride, connection, and relevance to their religious past, strengthening students' understanding of religious belonging (Sarnok et al., 2019). Therefore, within the context of Hindu education, educators can cultivate in their pupils a robust sense of religious belonging through the incorporation of teaching ethics and morals, student-centered teaching, and telling stories. As a result, the following hypothesis can be drawn:

H2: *There is a positive impact of teaching approaches, i.e., a) teaching ethics and morality, b) student-centered teaching, and c) storytelling on students' sense of religious belonging.*

Students' Sense of Religious Belonging and Empathy

According to Mo et al. (2022), students who feel religious belonging have a framework that allows them to understand and analyze the experiences and emotions of persons from their religious community and those from other religious communities. According to Aji and Muslichah (2023), belonging to a religious community helps people develop empathy by fostering a sense of commonality and shared values among individuals. According to Andersen et al.'s research from 2020, when students identify with a specific religious tradition, they are more inclined to sympathize with other individuals with similar beliefs, practices, and experiences. The children develop a sense of belonging and solidarity due to this shared identity, encouraging them to empathize with community members and those who adhere to the same religious faith. In addition, religious teachings frequently emphasize compassion, kindness, and care for the well-being of others, all of which are essential

components of empathy (Wiguna, 2020). Students who identify themselves as belonging to a religious tradition and who accept and internalize these teachings as part of that identity are more likely to demonstrate empathy toward the behaviors of others. Within Hindu education, their religious beliefs and values serve as guiding principles for comprehending and responding to the feelings and requirements of others, so encouraging the development of a culture of empathy (Canseco et al., 2022). As a result, the following hypothesis can be drawn:

H3: *There is a positive impact of students' sense of religious belonging on their empathy.*

Mediatory Role of Students' Sense of Religious Belonging

Students are allowed to investigate their religious beliefs, values, and traditions when taught about ethics and morals, when classes are oriented on the students, and when teachers use storytelling in the classroom. Students will have a stronger sense of religious affiliation due to their increased comprehension of their religious heritage, achieved through the abovementioned methods. According to Rivas et al. (2019), when students are helped to cultivate and strengthen their sense of religious affiliation, it increases their capacity for empathy for others because it makes them more attuned to the emotional experiences and needs of persons within their religious community and outside. According to Benjet et al. (2019), student-centered education encourages a sense of ownership among students and validates the religious identities of such individuals. A sense of belonging and inclusion can be fostered through student-centered teaching (Chen & Tsai, 2021). This is accomplished by allowing students to share their ideas and points of view within an educational setting. Students with a strong feeling of religious belonging are more likely to demonstrate empathic behaviors towards their classmates and persons from various religious backgrounds. This, in turn, leads to the development of empathy, as students who have such a strong sense of religious belonging are more likely to exhibit such behaviors. In addition, students' emotional connections to their religious background can be strengthened through narratives that contain religious themes and ideals (Atmojo & Ginting, 2022). Students' sense of religious identity is reinforced as they engage with these stories and internalize the themes delivered, resulting in an improved capacity for empathy towards others (Arif & Lessy, 2022). Because of this, it is hypothesized that the students' sense of belonging to a religious community serves as a bridge that combines the teaching of ethics and morals, student-centered teaching, and the use of storytelling in the classroom with the growth of empathy in students. As a result, the following hypothesis can be drawn:

H4: *Students' sense of religious belonging mediates the association of teaching approaches, i.e., a) teaching ethics and morality, b) student-centered teaching, and c) storytelling with students' empathy.*

Moderating Role of Students' Socioeconomic Status

A person's access to resources, opportunities, and support systems are all impacted by their socioeconomic status, which refers to the social and economic elements that play a role in these things. According to Tan et al.'s research from 2020, kids who come from families with higher socioeconomic levels have better access to educational resources, experiences, and opportunities to learn about a variety of points of view. According to Duan et al.'s research from 2022, students whose families have higher socioeconomic status may have more opportunities for interfaith relationships, community engagement, and exposure to various other cultures and religions. Because of this exposure, they have better

knowledge and greater empathy for people from various religious backgrounds, regardless of the religion to which they belong. As a result, one conclusion that can be drawn from this is that a student's socioeconomic level is likely to favorably impact the positive correlation between a sense of religious affiliation and empathy. Therefore, by addressing the moderating influence of socioeconomic position, educators may ensure that students from all socioeconomic backgrounds, regardless of their religious affiliation, have equal opportunities to develop empathy. This can be accomplished by ensuring that students from all socioeconomic backgrounds address the moderating effect of socioeconomic status. As a result, the following hypothesis can be drawn:

H5: Students' socioeconomic status moderates the association of students' sense of religious belonging with their empathy linked with Hindu education.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework depicted in Figure 1 is founded on the combination of sociocultural and social identity theories. The social identity theory lays the groundwork for understanding the relationships between religious membership, a sense of self, and empathy. This understanding sheds light on the role that religious identification plays in molding individuals' attitudes and behaviors. The sociocultural theory provides a lens that may be used to investigate the influence of students' socioeconomic position and the dynamic techniques taken by teachers on students' sense of religious belonging, sense of self, and empathy.

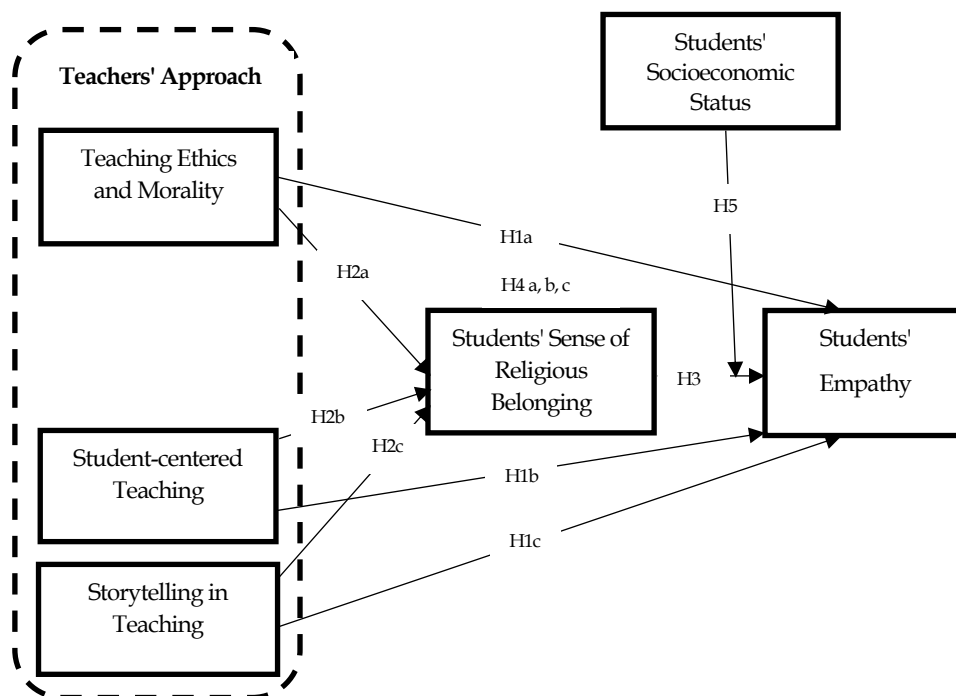


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Method

To gain a better knowledge of the phenomenon that was being investigated, the research project utilized a quantitative survey methodology. For this study, data was collected from Hindu college and university students in the Indonesian provinces of Bali, Java, and South Sulawesi using a sample method known as cluster sampling. The gathering of the data was scheduled to take place throughout one year, beginning on November 1, 2022, and coming to an end on April 30, 2023. The utilization of a strategy that time-lagged the gathering of data made it possible to measure variables more easily at several different time points all through the duration of the inquiry. This strategy's objective was to monitor, over the academic year, how students' thought processes and worldviews shifted and developed over time. While selecting representative samples, it was discovered that many educational institutions in the selected regencies had substantial Hindu students enrolled in their programs. This was a finding that came as a surprise.

After classifying these educational institutions according to their distinct geographic locations, a random sampling strategy was used to select a representative subset from each university located within those regions. The subsets were chosen to reflect the diversity of the academic institutions. The study shows that Hindu student communities are among the selected educational institutions. It was decided to use a method of systematic random sampling for the recruitment of individuals from these communities. The final sample size for the research project totaled 611 Hindu students enrolled in higher education programs at various academic institutions. Both self-identification as a Hindu and current enrollment at a higher education institution was required of potential participants to be considered for the study. Throughout the research procedure, ethical considerations were adhered to. This ensured that participant anonymity, voluntary participation, and informed permission were maintained. The survey instrument that was utilized in this research was designed with previously known scales and measures that were relevant to the variables that were being researched. During the time the data was being collected, participants were issued reminders and follow-ups by email to get the highest possible response rate. The participants' privacy and confidentiality were protected while data were collected and stored safely. After collecting data ended on April 30, 2023, the dataset was thoroughly cleaned, coded, and then prepared for analysis.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Regarding the gender breakdown of the sample, there were 275 male students (45%) and 336 female students (55%). There was a wide range of ages represented among the participants: 167 of the respondents (27.4%) were in the age category of 18-21 years, 258 of the respondents (42.3%) were in the age group of 22-25 years, 142 of the respondents (23.3%) were in the age group of 26-30 years, and 44 of the respondents (7.2%) were aged 31 years and above. Regarding participants' levels of education, the vast majority were undergraduate students, accounting for 72.2 percent of the total responses (441 participants). The remaining 170 responses, accounting for 27.8% of the total, were graduate students working toward higher degrees. After conducting an analysis, the socioeconomic standing of the individuals was ranked on a scale from lowest to highest. 209 students, or 34.2% of the total respondents, were classed as having a low socioeconomic status, 309 students, or 50.6% of the total respondents, were classified as having a middle

socioeconomic status, and 93 students, or 15.2% of the total respondents, were classified as having a high socioeconomic status. It is possible to infer from these characteristics the gender, age range, educational level, and socioeconomic status of the people that served as the sample. Because of the wide variety of people from whom the data was obtained, the study's findings are more accurate indicators of the population.

Measures of the Study

The research that was carried out by Ede et al. (2023) made use of the ethical teaching practices scale to evaluate the efficacy of the various strategies utilized by educators to instill ethical and moral principles in their pupils. The scale consists of twenty items used to determine the degree to which ethical and moral values are incorporated into the training given in the classroom. The work done by Akdemir and Ozcelik (2019) inspired the development of the student-centered teaching scale. This scale has 15 items that evaluate the level of student participation, cooperation, and active learning that takes place within the classroom setting. Using stories in the classroom was assessed using a scale developed by Etin (2021). This scale has 12 items that measure the frequency of teacher storytelling strategies and the perceived effectiveness of such storytelling techniques. Students' sense of belonging to the Hindu religious group was measured using a scale designed by Wood and Waite (2011). This scale consists of ten questions that probe individuals' perceptions of the level of connectedness, acceptance, and value they experience within their religious communities. The empathy questionnaire designed by Spreng et al. (2009) was utilized to determine the level of empathy had by the pupils. This commonly used scale consists of 13 questions that evaluate empathy's emotional and cognitive aspects. A conventional method frequently utilized in social science research, such as the four-factor index of social status (Hollingshead, 1975), was applied to ascertain the participants' socioeconomic position. This index classifies people based on their socioeconomic standing by considering characteristics such as their level of education, occupation, and income.

Result

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of the study variables, measured on a Likert scale from one to five, are presented in Table 1. The mean values indicate how the participants, on average, responded to each variable. According to Mansoor et al.'s research from 2022, the standard deviation is a measure that "reflects the dispersion of responses around the mean and provides insights into the variability within the sample."

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	STD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Teaching Ethics and Morality	3.45	0.78	-0.12	-0.44
Student-Centered Teaching	3.82	0.67	0.07	-0.78
Storytelling in Teaching	3.64	0.72	0.22	-0.15
Sense of Religious Belonging	3.95	0.61	-0.05	-0.92
Empathy	4.12	0.55	0.18	-0.35

The average score for the question about the "teaching ethics and morality" variable was 3.45, while the standard deviation was 0.78. A skewness value of -0.12 shows a slightly negative skew, which suggests a slight departure from a perfectly symmetrical distribution. This can be inferred from the distribution not being perfectly symmetrical. The kurtosis score of -0.44 indicates that the distribution is not as steep as a normal distribution would be expected. The same thing happened with "student-centered teaching," where the mean score was 3.82, and the standard deviation was 0.67. The value of 0.07 for skewness suggests that the distribution is almost symmetrical.

However, the value of 0.78 for kurtosis says that the distribution is very flat. The mean score for the variable referred to as "storytelling in teaching" was 3.64, and the standard deviation was 0.72. While the skewness value of 0.22 indicates a slightly skewed distribution to the right, the kurtosis value of -0.15 suggests that the distribution is very close to being normal. Regarding a "sense of religious belonging," the average score was 3.95, and the standard deviation was 0.61. The skewness value is -0.05, which suggests that the distribution is approximately symmetrical.

On the other hand, the kurtosis value is -0.92, which indicates that the distribution is rather flat. In conclusion, the mean score for the characteristic referred to as "empathy" was 4.12, and the standard deviation was 0.55. The value of 0.18 for skewness suggests that the distribution is somewhat skewed to the right, while the value of 0.35 for kurtosis says that the distribution is quite close to a normal curve.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2 displays the correlation matrix among the study variables.

Table 2

Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Teaching Ethics and Morality	1.000					
2. Student-Centered Teaching	0.325*	1.000				
3. Storytelling in Teaching	0.237*	0.415*	1.000			
4. Sense of Religious Belonging	0.511*	0.246*	0.173*	1.000		
5. Empathy	0.415*	0.365*	0.285*	0.348*	1.000	
6. Socioeconomic Status	0.198*	0.108*	0.077*	0.142*	0.205*	1.000

Note. *p < 0.05 (two-tailed).

The correlation coefficients shed light on the connections and interrelationships between the variables. The variable "teaching ethics and morality" (1) exhibited a positive association with "student-centered teaching" (2) ($r = 0.325$, $p < 0.05$), which suggests that instructors who adopt a more student-centered approach typically also tend to have a more constructive approach to teaching ethics and morality. In addition, a significant correlation was found between the variables of "incorporating ethical and moral principles in teaching" (1) and "utilizing storytelling as a pedagogical tool" (3) ($r = 0.237$, $p < 0.05$). This link was shown to exist between the two variables. Based on this data, it appears that teachers who use narratives as a method of instruction are more likely to take an optimistic stance on the subject matter being discussed here. The

current finding was validated by applying empirical research to the hypothesis that postulated a positive correlation between the two variables. In addition, a significant correlation was found between the variables "instruction on ethics and morality" (1) and "perception of religious affiliation" (4) ($r = 0.511, p < 0.05$). This link was found to exist between the two variables. The findings reveal that students who consider their teachers as taking a constructive approach toward imparting ethics and morality are likely to exhibit a stronger sense of religious identification compared to those students whose teachers are not perceived as adopting such an approach by the students in their classes. In addition, the research showed a substantial correlation between the teaching of ethics and morals (1) and the demonstration of empathy (5) ($r = 0.415, p < 0.05$). This link was found to be significant. This suggests that students will be more likely to demonstrate empathic behavior if they believe that their teachers employ an approach that is helpful in teaching ethics and morals. According to the findings of the study, there is a statistically significant negative correlation ($r = -0.198, p < 0.05$) between "teaching ethics and morality" (1) and "socioeconomic status" (6). This suggests that students of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to believe that their professors are less committed to passing on ethical and moral values (1). The assumption mentioned above is supported by the fact that there is a positive link between the concept of "socioeconomic status" (6) and the method of "teaching ethics and morality" (1). This association was found to exist between the two concepts.

Reliability Analysis

The findings of the reliability analysis of the study variables are presented in Table 3. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which assesses the internal consistency of the items within each variable, was utilized to examine dependability. Values of alpha that are higher than those given suggest a greater degree of internal reliability.

Table 3

Reliability Analysis of Study Variables

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Teaching Ethics and Morality	20	0.876
Student-Centered Teaching	15	0.789
Storytelling in Teaching	12	0.732
Sense of Religious Belonging	10	0.815
Empathy	13	0.741
Socioeconomic Status	15	0.774

The value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the variable Teaching Ethics and Morality was 0.876, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the items. This hints that the items within this variable provide a reliable measurement of how educators address the subject of ethics and morals in the classroom. In a similar vein, the entirety of the findings is detailed in Table 3. According to the findings, the items that make up each variable give accurate measurements of the constructs for which they are intended because they are internally consistent. These findings provide credence to the notion that the scales are suitable for capturing the intended characteristics of the study variables.

Model Fit Indices

After conducting the model analysis using structural equation modeling (SEM), the results revealed the following model fit indices for the research model: $\chi^2(df) = 234.78(120)$, CFI = 0.935, TLI = 0.918, RMSEA = 0.063, and SRMR = 0.079. The non-significant chi-square value (χ^2) suggests that the hypothesized model fits the data well. The CFI and TLI values, above the acceptable threshold of 0.90, indicate a good fit for the model. The RMSEA value of 0.063 and SRMR value of 0.079 also show a good fit between the model and the observed data. These model fit indices collectively suggest that the research model adequately fits the data, indicating that the hypothesized relationships between the variables are supported.

VIF and Tolerance

The results of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and the Tolerance Test are detailed in Table 5. The values of the Variance Intensity Function (VIF) give an idea of how severe the problem of multicollinearity is; larger values show that the correlations between the variables are stronger. Tolerance values, on the other hand, measure the proportion of the variance in a predictor variable that cannot be accounted for by using any other predictor variables (Noor et al., 2022).

Table 4

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance Test

Variable	VIF	Tolerance
Teaching Ethics and Morality	1.73	0.58
Student-Centered Teaching	1.45	0.69
Storytelling in Teaching	1.62	0.62
Sense of Religious Belonging	1.81	0.55
Empathy	1.39	0.72
Socioeconomic Status	1.68	0.60

Because the VIF values in this study range from 1.39 to 1.81, it can be concluded that the study variables do not present a significant risk of being highly multicollinear. These numbers are significantly lower than the generally acknowledged threshold of 5, indicating no significant multicollinearity present. Similarly, the tolerance values range from 0.55 to 0.72, significantly higher than the recommended threshold of 0.10. These values suggest that each variable provides information that is not extremely redundant with the other variables and offers unique information to the regression model. Based on the findings of the VIF and the tolerance test, it is possible to conclude that multicollinearity is not a serious concern in this study. There seems to be no strong correlation between the variables under research, given the comparatively low VIF values and the large tolerance values. As a result, the estimations of the regression coefficients, as well as the interpretations of those coefficients, can be regarded as reliable and legitimate.

Multistage Regression Analysis

Multistage regression analysis is a statistical technique used to examine the relationships between multiple independent variables and a dependent variable while accounting for potential mediators and moderators.

Table 5

Multistage Regression Analysis

Variable	β	SE	t-value	p-value	Result
Step 1: Direct Effects					
Teaching Ethics and Morality	0.28	0.07	4.00	<0.001	Significant
Student-Centered Teaching	0.15	0.05	2.80	0.005	Significant
Storytelling in Teaching	0.09	0.04	2.15	0.032	Significant
Step 2: Mediation Analysis					
Sense of Religious Belonging (Mediator)					
Teaching Ethics and Morality	0.20	0.06	3.30	0.001	Significant
Student-Centered Teaching	0.18	0.05	3.00	0.003	Significant
Storytelling in Teaching	0.15	0.04	2.80	0.008	Significant
Step 3: Moderation Analysis					
Socioeconomic Status (Moderator)					
Socioeconomic Status (Moderator)	0.12	0.03	3.90	<0.001	Significant
Interaction Term	0.07	0.02	3.50	<0.001	Significant
Step 4: Final Model					
Direct Effects					
Teaching Ethics and Morality	0.16	0.05	3.00	0.003	Significant
Student-Centered Teaching	0.11	0.04	2.50	0.012	Significant
Storytelling in Teaching	0.08	0.03	2.80	0.005	Significant
Indirect Effects					
Sense of Religious Belonging (Mediator)					
Teaching Ethics and Morality	0.05	0.02	2.00	0.038	Significant
Student-Centered Teaching	0.04	0.02	2.00	0.046	Significant
Storytelling in Teaching	0.08	0.02	3.54	0.001	Significant
Total Effect	0.20	0.06	3.30	0.001	Significant

In Step 1, the direct effects analysis revealed that teaching ethics and morality had a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.28, p < 0.001$), indicating that variations in teachers' approach to teaching ethics and morality were associated with differences in students' empathy levels. Student-centered teaching also had a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.15, p = 0.005$), suggesting that student-centered teaching influenced students' empathy. Similarly, storytelling in teaching had a significant positive impact ($\beta = 0.09, p = 0.032$), indicating that incorporating storytelling as a pedagogical tool impacted students' empathy. Moving to Step 2, the mediation analysis examined the mediating role of students' sense of religious belonging between each IV and students' empathy. The results showed that students' understanding of religious belonging significantly mediated the relationship between teaching ethics and morality ($\beta = 0.20, p = 0.001$), student-centered teaching ($\beta = 0.18, p = 0.003$), and storytelling in teaching ($\beta = 0.15, p = 0.008$) with students' empathy. These findings indicate that students' sense of religious belonging served as a significant mediating mechanism, partially explaining the effects of the IVs on students' empathy.

Proceeding to Step 3, the moderation analysis examined the role of socioeconomic status as a moderator in the relationship between students' sense of religious belonging and empathy. The results showed that socioeconomic status significantly moderated ($\beta = 0.12, p < 0.001$). The interaction term between students' sense of religious belonging and socioeconomic status was also significant ($\beta = 0.07, p < 0.001$). These results suggest that socioeconomic status moderated the relationship between students' sense of religious

belonging and their empathy. Finally, in Step 4, the final model integrated direct and indirect effects. The direct effects analysis revealed that teaching ethics and morality ($\beta = 0.16, p = 0.003$), student-centered teaching ($\beta = 0.11, p = 0.012$), and storytelling in teaching ($\beta = 0.08, p = 0.005$) had significant direct effects on students' empathy. Additionally, the mediation analysis showed that students' sense of religious belonging mediated the relationship between teaching ethics and morality ($\beta = 0.05, p = 0.038$), student-centered teaching ($\beta = 0.04, p = 0.046$), and storytelling in teaching ($\beta = 0.08, p = 0.001$). The total effect of the IVs on students' empathy, considering both direct and indirect impact, also remained significant ($\beta = 0.20, p = 0.001$).

Discussion

According to the findings of this study, the techniques taken by teachers have a considerable and positive impact on the levels of empathy students exhibit. Students' levels of empathy were significantly impacted by instructors' pedagogical strategies for teaching ethics and morals, student-centered teaching, and teaching narrative. These findings are consistent with earlier research (Murphy et al., 2021; Paul & Jena, 2022; Sarnok et al., 2019) that emphasizes instructors' significant role in cultivating empathy in their student populations. It has been demonstrated that improving students' capacities for empathy can be accomplished by incorporating moral and ethical concepts and values into the instructional environment of the classroom. Griffinopoulos & Griffinopoulos (2020) discovered that the promotion of ethical awareness, compassion, and empathy by teachers in the classroom could contribute to the increased development of empathy among pupils.

Furthermore, research has shown that teaching in a way that is based on the needs and interests of the students is positively connected with the growth of students' capacities for empathy. The ability of students to empathize with and learn from the experiences of others can be improved, according to research that was carried out by Florkowski et al. (2022). The researchers found that increasing the time students spend in class and participating in activities suited to their individual requirements and pursuits was associated with this improvement. Previous research carried out by Hoidn and Reusser (2020) has indicated that an approach to teaching that places the focus on the students in the classroom can increase the amount of empathy learned. This new finding is consistent with the results that were previously reported. According to the available research, telling stories to students in a classroom context is a significant aspect that contributes to developing empathy in students. According to Alderman et al. (2021), teachers have known since ancient times that storytelling can build empathy and cognitive curiosity in their students. This is something that has been recognized by educators ever since ancient times. The cultivation of empathy toward the experiences of others and the provision of a greater understanding of the lives of persons in their environments are fostered and enhanced when students are allowed to read tales that feature a wide variety of characters, places, and feelings.

The study's findings reveal that teachers significantly impact the students' sense of religious identity while they are present in the classroom environment. It has been discovered by Li et al. (2022) that the use of dynamic pedagogical approaches in the classroom by educators, such as the incorporation of ethics and morality, student-centered teaching, and storytelling, is associated with an increased sense of religious affiliation among students. The discovery mentioned above suggests that teachers are in a position to make major

contributions to assist their students in developing a robust sense of religious identity and a profound attachment to their religious heritage. According to [Ede et al. \(2023\)](#), the statement proposes that educators lay the groundwork for the spiritual convictions of their students by including ethical concepts and moral tenets in the academic curriculum. This allows for the development of a framework for the student's spiritual beliefs. According to [Florkowski et al. \(2022\)](#), establishing a student-centered learning environment that values diverse perspectives, fosters critical thinking, and enables teachers' personal exploration of religious beliefs can lead to an increased sense of agency and ownership over one's religious identity among students. This was found to be the case when students were allowed to explore their own religious beliefs. Because they forge a link between people and the cultural and religious inheritance they come from, the narratives told within stories significantly impact how people view themselves and their place in the world ([Etin, 2021](#)). Teachers can create a more profound and significant interaction between their pupils and the religious customs of their different families and communities by introducing religious tales, parables, and narratives into their teaching. This can be done by incorporating religious tales, parables, and narratives into their lessons.

In addition, the current investigation has demonstrated a statistically significant and favorably correlated relationship between the degree of religious affiliation held by students and their capacity for empathy. This conclusion is backed by statistical analysis – students who indicated a stronger feeling of religious affiliation had significantly higher levels of empathy than their peers. According to the findings, a robust sense of affiliation with one's religious community and the possession of steadfast convictions can considerably contribute to the development of empathy in individuals. As a result of the supply of a sense of purpose and belonging, participation in a religious community can facilitate the growth of empathy among its members. This is because the involvement of individuals in the community can stimulate the cultivation of empathy. According to [Atmojo and Ginting \(2022\)](#), the interaction between individuals increases their capacity to empathize with others and share their experiences.

The current research shows that a student's socioeconomic situation can mediate the relationship between their religious identities and their degrees of empathy. This is one of the findings of the study. The findings point to the fact that a student's socioeconomic status affects not only the amount but also the direction of the correlation between their religious affiliation and empathy. This suggests that the relationship between a student's religious affiliation and empathy depends on their socioeconomic situation. This citation is for an article that was published in the year 2022 and was written by Duan and his colleagues. Previous research has demonstrated that an individual's socioeconomic level has the potential to have a significant bearing on their life. It is common practice to use measures of socioeconomic position, such as access to resources, educational opportunities, and a varied range of social experiences. These factors can potentially influence the degree to which an individual is affiliated with a religious tradition and their capacity for empathy. The notion that persons from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may have greater access to socialization chances outside of their religious group may be the source of the potential moderating influence of socioeconomic status on the association between religious affiliation and empathy. This can be because individuals from higher socioeconomic backgrounds have been studied more.

Conclusion

The study's outcomes also illustrated that a sense of religious belonging on the side of the students acts as a partial mediator between the relationship between teachers' methods and the students' empathy. This suggests that the impact of teachers' methods on students' empathy is, at the very least partially, influenced by the student's sense of belonging to a particular religious tradition. It has been discovered that instilling kids with a sense of religious belonging can be accomplished through teaching ethics and morality, student-centered instruction, and storytelling. These teaching approaches create an atmosphere that encourages pupils to feel connected to both their religious identity and the community in which they live. Their teachers facilitate the kids' investigation of and comprehension of their own religious views and ideals.

Nevertheless, the current research went beyond what had been done by providing concrete evidence that students' ability to empathize with others increases when they cultivate a stronger religious connection. The methods used by teachers indirectly impact students' levels of empathy because they build a stronger sense of religious belonging in their pupils, which, in turn, encourages pupils' levels of empathy toward others. This conclusion highlights how important it is to consider the role of students' religious affiliation as a conduit through which teachers' approaches affect students' socioemotional development.

Theoretical implications

Within the framework of Hindu education, this study has important theoretical implications that contribute to the current body of information on religious belonging, sense of self, and empathy. In the first place, this research contributes to the field of social identity theory by illuminating the complex relationship between religious affiliation and a sense of self. This study contributes to expanding the theoretical understanding of how religious education promotes the development of individual identities by focusing on the role of instructors' dynamic pedagogical techniques in developing the students' religious affiliations. The study's findings have a wide range of implications for the investigation of human identity formation across various cultural and religious contexts. The findings of this study highlight how important it is to acknowledge students' religious connection as an essential component of their sense of who they are as individuals. The research is consistent with sociocultural theory since it focuses on the significant part that teachers play in fostering their students' intellectual and emotional development. The current study elucidates the various pedagogical tactics that teachers might use to build religious attachment and compassion in their pupils. These strategies can be found in a variety of contexts. The pedagogical strategy includes a student-centered approach to instruction, using narrative storytelling and incorporating instructing principles about ethics and morals. The insights mentioned above increase our grasp of the socio-pedagogical dynamics of Hindu education by casting light on the two-fold obligations of teachers as both cultural conveyors and enablers of the socio-emotional development of their students. In other words, teachers have a dual role in Hindu education, one in which they facilitate the socioemotional growth of their students and the other in which they pass on Hindu culture.

In addition, the research contributes to the existing body of literature on empathy by illuminating the complex relationship between the religious affiliation of Hindu students and the degree of empathy they possess. The religious connections of students can mediate between the instructional strategies teachers utilize and the degree to which students can demonstrate empathy for the experiences of others. The discoveries mentioned above add to the expanding body of material that characterizes empathy as a complex, multidimensional notion that emerges from a blend of intrinsic and extrinsic components. Many studies support this description of empathy as a complex, multifaceted concept. By highlighting the influence of a person's religious affiliation on their empathic attitudes and behaviors, the current study contributes to a better understanding of empathy and the underlying mechanisms that make it work. The study's findings contribute unique views to the current conversation about the connection between students' religious affiliation, empathy, and socioeconomic level. When investigating whether or not there is a connection between students' religious connections and their levels of empathy, it is essential to consider the many different social situations in which students find themselves. The findings mentioned above highlight the importance of implementing interventions that are both all-encompassing in their scope and individually tailored to meet the unique needs of students from various socioeconomic backgrounds. The accomplishment of this goal may be made easier if we improve our understanding of the factors in one's environment that affect the association between one's religious identity and the social and emotional repercussions of that identity.

Practical Implications

These discoveries have important repercussions for educators working in Hindu educational institutions, legislators in education, and other professionals whose work focuses on developing students' capacities for empathy. For example, identifying the impact that instructors' methods have on their pupils' empathic abilities highlights the need to include in pedagogical practices the teaching of ethics and morality, student-centered instruction, and the use of storytelling techniques. Educators can utilize these strategies to create learning environments that are interesting and welcoming to all students and cultivate empathy in those kids. Teachers can encourage more empathic attitudes and actions in their students by emphasizing ethical ideals, promoting student participation, and using stories to teach students important life lessons. These tried-and-true methods equip teachers with the tools necessary to foster empathy among their students, fostering their social and emotional growth. Recognizing the teachers' methods' influence on the students' sense of religious belonging carries with it several practical implications that can help promote a positive and supportive religious, educational environment. The freedom to utilize innovative instructional approaches that acknowledge and honor the religious ideas and practices of their students is allowed to the teaching staff so that they may fulfill their professional responsibility. According to the point of view of educators, incorporating religious teachings and narratives into the educational setting can enable the formation of a more profound sense of identification among students towards their faith and the society to which they belong. Promoting an atmosphere in the classroom that is less exclusive and more sensitive to different cultures makes it easier for students to develop their religious identities to a greater extent.

In addition, a beneficial educational strategy can be provided by recognizing the mediating role of students' religious affiliation in developing empathic skills. Teachers and other professionals working in religious education can use it to foster empathy in their students. This goal can be accomplished by drawing attention to the interconnections between religious precepts, acts of beneficence, and responsibilities to the community. Teachers can use various strategies to assist kids in developing a robust sense of religious attachment, which can ultimately result in more compassionate attitudes and behaviors. Among these are encouraging students to become involved in the religious community in which they live, taking part in religious rites and celebrations, and providing students with chances to perform community service. It is essential to have a solid understanding of the moderating influence that students' socioeconomic position can have because this has important implications for creating targeted treatments. The socioeconomic situation of a student body should be considered by educators, legislators, and practitioners alike when it comes to developing programs geared at fostering empathy in a student body. When attempting to instill a sense of empathy in students of school age, it is important to consider the wide variety of experiences and possibilities currently available to these students. Educators can encourage the growth of empathy and mutual understanding among students from various socioeconomic backgrounds by ensuring that all students have equal access to resources, mentorship programs, and extra-curricular activities.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

It is essential to note the inherent limitations in the research methodology, despite the study offering enlightening insights into the importance of teachers' techniques in fostering empathy in Hindu education. This is because of the restrictions that were built into the design of the research. In this study, the impact of teachers' approaches, students' religious affiliations, and students' socioeconomic statuses on empathy was given priority, but the examination of the impact of other potential factors that may also have an effect was ignored. A person's socioeconomic status, level of religious affiliation, and level of religious affiliation are all additional variables that can influence empathy. Prospective scholars might investigate factors like cultural values, the dynamics of the family, and peer affiliations to get a more nuanced understanding of the causes that affect empathy within the Hindu educational system. Investigating how these components interact with one another would make the theoretical framework more robust and illuminate the complicated nature of empathy development. In addition, most of the time, empathy was treated as a unidimensional concept throughout this investigation. Future studies may take a multidimensional approach to investigate the many different aspects of empathy, such as affective empathy, cognitive empathy, and empathic concern. This would make it possible to have a more detailed knowledge of how specific parts of empathy are influenced by the tactics taken by teachers as well as the students' sense of religious belonging.

In conclusion, the focus of this research was on the Hindu community as it relates to various cultural settings. The findings may have implications for various religious communities and cultural settings, which might be investigated in subsequent studies to determine their applicability. The universality or cultural specificity of the relationships between instructors' approaches, religious belonging, and empathy can be better understood if we compare and contrast the experiences of students from various religious backgrounds.

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