



The Role of Religion, Culture and Education System on the Epic of India "Ramayana"

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 13 September 2022

Received in revised form: 15 December 2022

Accepted: 10 February 2023

DOI: 10.14689/ejer.2023.103.017

Keywords

Religion, culture, education system, religious institutions, epic of India, "Ramayana"

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The belief on the Indian epic such as "Ramayana" depends on the religion, culture and education system of the nation and this aspect requires the attention of recent studies and policymakers. Hence, the present research investigates the impact of religion, culture and education system of educational institutions on the Indian epic "Ramayana". Survey at several universities in Vietnam that teach the epic Ramayana in the training program specialized in Literature. **Design / Methodology / approach:** The survey was conducted by visiting several universities in Vietnam. In addition, the researchers distributed around 540 surveys but only 302 surveys were received. The researchers also check the data reliability and association among variables using AMOS-SPSS.

Findings: Research results show that there is a close relationship between religion, culture and good moral values education in the epic "Ramayana". The outcomes also revealed that the leadership significantly moderates among religion, culture, the education system of the religious institutions and the epic of India "Ramayana". **Practical Implications:** This study offers a comprehensive look at the religious beliefs, Indian culture, and social and educational significance of this epic in the Indian tradition.

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1. Introduction

The factors like culture, religion, and education have a significant influence in determining the strength of any country in the world. It believes that the usage of culture as a soft power strategy can strengthen the country's standing across the world. India is one of the leanest and oldest economies in Asia. The country is rich in culture and history. India's soft power naturally exist in its own rich as one of the major cradles of Asian civilization and one of the largest as well as oldest civilization of the world. Throughout the heroic epic, the main character is always a flawless hero, while the other characters simply serve to highlight the hero's beauty in a supporting or ambiguous capacity. The generalization, social goals, and artistic standards of the time are expressed by a hero in the Indian and Vietnamese epics. To identify the typical traits of heroic characters in epic works and the type method of literature proposed "study the commonality among phenomena to prove the similarities among literature of nations". Further, these methods were used to identify similarities in the concept of heroic characters in the Indian and Vietnamese epics (Thi Bich Thuy, 2019).

With profound moral principles, a philosophy of human existence, and religious beliefs told in the guise of a historical hero, the Ramayana epic presents a full picture of ancient Indian society. The Ramayana also has a desire for rescuing individuals from a life of sin, so long as the river is not shallow and the stone is not worn (Thi Bich Thuy, 2019). The most well-known piece of the old clan's oral literature in Central Vietnam is the Dam San epic. The Dam San epic is consistently brought up first when discussing pre-Indochina culture and mythology, indicating that this work still has significance in the spiritual lives of the locals.

In the context of epic, India is seen as one of the soft powers. Besides that, it is also considered a bridge that connects Indian culture to the entire globe. Further, it also helps in promoting Indian culture across the world. The epic is an important component of folk literature in every country. The epic tells the tale of a historical hero while providing a comprehensive portrait of people's lives. In the epic, heroic figures serve as the primary representation of the creativity, talent, bravery, and wisdom of society (Thi Bich Thuy, 2019). The epic heroic character also displays the beauty of morality, knowledge, genius, and courage in addition to the magnitude of the cosmic dimension, which symbolizes the physical strength, and the spirit of the ethnic group. All are demonstrated by the heroic hero's bold and selfless deeds and great triumphs (Cabral, Pandey, & Xu, 2022; Fleming, 2018). In the context of literature, the country has a unique role in the ongoing evolution of literature all around the globe. Indian literature has a significant impact on world literature in the context of epic (Mukherjee, 2022). Southeast Asia is one of the world regions which is strongly influenced by Indian literature and the Indian epic is seen as the wellspring of soft power (Esleben, Kefler, & Kulkarni, 2021). In the context of a comparison between Ramayana and Dam San: the protagonists of the Ramayana, an Indian epic, and Dam San, a Vietnamese epic, are idealistic and flawless monarchs who possess beauty, power, talent, courage, and morality as well as strong desire and lofty aspirations. These heroes stand for the values of their respective ethnic communities (Davis, 2021; Khambaty & Parikh, 2022).

There is a lot of literature exists on the epic in the religion, culture and education system context particularly in India but still, there are a number of gaps that exist in the literature and the present investigation are addressing are 1) although the epic in different forms like

in literature, in education, in culture has been researched a lot in different times in different economies but still not reached its peak as there numerous of its aspects particular in the context of religion, culture, education system and leadership, 2) the model based on the factors like epic, religion, culture, education system and leadership particularly in India is not tested before in recent time, 3) Yulianti (2020) and Tursunpulatovna (2021) investigated whether there is any kind of nexus between culture and epic in literature, however, the present investigation will also work on it along with other variables like religion, education system and leadership in India with fresh sample set, 4) Wang and Wang (2021) and Mahmudxo'jayeva (2022) investigated whether there is any kind of nexus between education system and epic in literature, however, the present investigation will also work on it along with other variables like religion, culture. 5) De Clercq and Vekemans (2019) and Pandey (2019) investigated whether there is any kind of nexus between religion and epic in literature, however, the present investigation will also work on it along with other variables like culture, education system, and especially in Vietnam, the epic Ramayana is included in the curriculum of high schools and universities majoring in linguistics to educate students about Indian culture, religion and values good moral values of the epic work "Ramayana".

The present investigation pertaining a noticeable significance like 1) being one of the most important topics of the modern era i.e., epic in literature the present investigation will highlight the need to explore it, particularly in the context of religion, culture, education system, 2) although there is a lot of material regarding epic in literature particularly in India is available and in Vietnam but the present study will result in add the literature on this topic, 3) provide a guideline as well as help to the epic literature related professionals to review and upgrading the policies to highlight the importance of epic in literature particularly in the country like India which is the combination of multiple cultures, 4) although there are numerous aspects of epic in literature have been explored till now, despite that there still numerous remained hidden, therefore, the present investigation will also provide the help to scholars to explore new aspects.

2. Literature Review

The world is a combination of different cultures and races. Some countries are a combination of multiple cultures while others are based on a few major cultures. The culture of any country is associated with the religion followed in the country. The countries having more than 2 to 3 cultures in majority faced a mixed culture. Similar is the case with India. India is one of the oldest cultures in the world. Culture is all about values, fiction, stories, epic, and other related acts. Indian literature has a significant impact on world literature in the context of epic. The present study aimed at epic and culture. Literature proposed that culture plays a vital role in the context of epic in literature (Kennedy, 2016). Many times the epic part of culture became an important element of any country's education system. Likewise, the Darmasiswa is one of the prominent elements of Indonesian culture and is considered one of the literature symbols. In this context, Yulianti (2020), worked on the Darmasiswa in the context of Indonesian culture. The investigation was carried out in Indonesia. The study focused on, 1) using the Ramayana text to educate Indonesian culture and improve language proficiency and, 2) using the adjective phrase in the Ramayana text to instill Indonesian character qualities. The study proposed that culture plays a vital role in the context of epic. The study contributed to the context of education

in the form of culture as well as language. Many times religious characters have become the epic of literature. The religious epic is considered one of the strongest parts of literature as it strongly affects the human psyche. Islam is one of the major religions of India. In this context, [Tursunpulatovna \(2021\)](#) worked on the epics of Hazrat Yusuf and Zulaykho. The investigation was carried out in Uzbekistan. The results of the study proposed that the epic of Hazrat Yusuf and Zulaykho is one of the strongest symbols of Islamic literature in Uzbekistan. Furthermore, in this context, [Pallathadka, Pallathadka, and Devi \(2022\)](#) also worked on the role of culture in epic in the context of Ramayana. Ramayana is one of the most powerful epic symbols of India. The investigation was carried out on the combination of India and Indonesia. The results of the study proposed that the Ramayana is one of the vital epics of India and strongly influences its literature. Thus, the hypotheses derived from the above debate are as under.

H1: *Culture significantly affects the epic in India.*

Education is one of the key elements of any country's success. A well-educated country leads to progress in every section of life as they know and compete for modern-era needs. Every country has its education system which is the combination of modern technology, the culture prevails in the country and the religion followed. One of the common elements of every country's education system all around the globe is epic in its literature. There is numerous form of epic some are in connection with rituals, and others are associated with religion. Whatsoever the form of the epic is it is vital for society's education system. Many times this epic in literature in the form of education leads to a better understanding of the country's culture, religion, and other related factors. There are a lot of epic issues and problems highlighted by the literature in connection with collation, and inheritance. In this context, [Wang and Wang \(2021\)](#) investigated whether there is any sort of association between collation, inheritance, and digital protection of the Gesar epic on education. The investigation focused on the new media environment. The results of the study proposed that collation and inheritance significantly influence the digital protection of the Gesar epic on education in the new era. The religion followed in the country also significantly influence the epic. The religion-based epic is more strictly followed in the country. These are also considered easy forms of learning. There is a significant association between religion pic and education. In this context, Similarly, [Mahmudxo'jayeva \(2022\)](#) investigated whether the characters of the Alpomish epic are significant for the country. The investigation was carried out in Uzbekistan. The results of the study proposed that the mythological motifs as well as the heroism of Alpomish are significant for the Uzbik epic. As the "Alpomish" epic is regarded as the most valuable gem by epic writers throughout the ages, who have displayed the prehistoric creativity of our people. In this context, [Saidovich \(2022\)](#) investigated the importance of the Alpomish epic. The investigation was carried out in Uzbekistan. The study is one of the prime examples of Uzbekistan as well as the entire world in connection with friendliness. Additionally, [Mousavi, Nourozi, and Zirak \(2020\)](#) investigated the anthropology of the King Fedowasi in the context of education, particularly in the curriculum of high schools. The investigation was carried out in Iran. The study concluded that the epic of King Fedowasi pertains significantly in the context of educational and anthropological particularly in the Persian books of Iran. Thus, the hypotheses derived from the above debate are as under.

H2: *The education system significantly affects the epic in India.*

There are several factors in any country which affect its education, culture, values, ethics, and other related factors. One of the vital factors among all those is religion. Religion all around the globe is one of the common factors which is not compromised by the people. Many times religious stories also result in a source of better learning for the people of any country. Almost in every country, religion is part of literature in terms of education. The religious epic is also a major source of learning for the people (Chambers, 2019). Literature proposed that there is significant nexus between religion and epic. A small percentage of people still practice Jainism as their faith. The Jains opted to portray themselves as active and critical participants of the larger interreligious discussions taking place at various times and in various locations, clearly acknowledging the reality of South Asia's diverse and multicultural contexts throughout history. In this context, De Clercq and Vekemans (2019) worked on the religion i.e. Jainism and the epic. The investigation was carried out in India. The results of the study proposed that the religious epic is one of the vital sources of education and learning particularly in India. Additionally, Pandey (2019) also worked on religion from the epic point of view. The investigation was carried out in India, particularly in Utter Pradesh. The results of the study proposed that religious plans are also a source of education in the form of literature particularly in India. Religion is rated very high when it is about the beliefs and understanding of people. People avoid the misrepresentation of religion in any form whether it's epic. The religious epic significantly influences the country's literature in terms of education. In this context, Tursunpulatovna (2021) worked on the epics of Hazrat Yusuf and Zulaykho. The investigation was carried out in Uzbekistan. The results of the study proposed that the epic of Hazrat Yusuf and Zulaykho is one of the strongest symbols of Islamic literature in Uzbekistan. Additionally, Kenbayeva et al. (2022) worked on the functioning of toponymic lexis, particularly in the context of epic in Turkish literature. The study proposed that toponymic lexemes serve the five major purposes of localizing, informing, accumulating, symbolizing, and individualizing in the epos. Toponyms can serve as the primary points of reference in time and space in the Kazakh and Tatar versions of the epic poem Edige, referring to particular features of geographic objects, communicating the historical and cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples, and revealing connections to Islam. Individual toponyms, or toponyms that are unique to one version of the epos and typical of the locale where the storyteller resided, also lend authenticity and a sense of place to the events detailed in the text in the national variants of the epos under investigation. Thus, the hypotheses derived from the above debate are as under.

H3: Religion significantly affects the epic in India.

The epic is considered much important in the education system in connection with its influence on the individual's mindset. People usually avoid any sort of involvement in religious or traditional education in the form of an epic. On the other side, the epic is also considered one of the major sources of a better understanding of religion. This entire understanding process is based on the education system which enables the deliverance of Indian religion in the form of epic. The content of moral education in the epics of all nations is aimed at building a sense of self-discipline to adhere to the social order for each individual, that is, maintaining compliance with behavioral patterns inherited by the community. Recognized as: The epic shows absolute support for honest, benevolent, selfless, wholehearted characters for the community. Epic critique of ugly, old, selfless characters; people who are fake, selfish, lazy, go against the common interests of the

community. The epic talks about suffering and loss, but does not break people's beliefs but promotes the desire to rise to fight with the negative aspects that still exist in life, to determine a place for the positive side. poles,... Literary works always advise people to do good, avoid evil, and live up to the standards of the community. The epic has fostered the soul of each community member with specific cultural values of the time, building in them aspirations, ambitions, and dreams of a rich village, about a hero fighting. relentlessly with anti-human forces to protect the survival and development of the community, the struggle for human happiness and dignity, and the awakening of self-worth.

3. Research Methods

The article studies the relationship between religion, culture, and education of good moral values of the Indian epic "Ramayana". The researchers used a survey questionnaire several surveys for students majoring in literature at some universities in Vietnam. The items are used to measure the variables. For example, religion is measured with four items extracted from Collins-Kreiner (2020), culture is measured with six items taken from Qays (2022), the education system is measured with five items adapted from Ionescu et al. (2020) and epic in India is measured with four items taken from Lutgendorf (2022).

The survey was conducted by visiting several universities in Vietnam. The researchers chose to survey philology students at some of these universities who had studied Indian literature and the epic "Ramayana". In addition, the researchers distributed around 540 surveys but only 302 surveys were received and represented approximately 55.93 percent response rate. Moreover, the researchers also check the data reliability and association among variables using AMOS-SPSS. This tool provides the best estimation outcomes using complex models and small and large data sets (Hair et al., 2017). The researchers also used three independent variables named religion (RL), culture (CL) and education system (EDS). These constructs are presented in Figure 1.

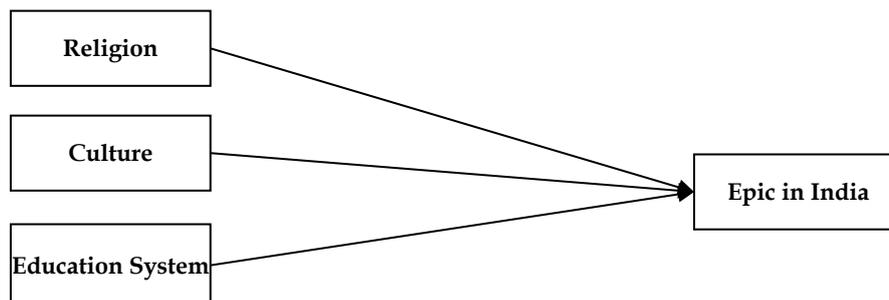


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

4. Research Findings

The research checks the correlation between the items called convergent validity. The outcomes indicated that the average variance extracted (AVE) shows values more than 0.50, composite reliability (CR) shows values larger than 0.70 and Maximum Shared Variance (MSV), and average Squared Shared Variance (ASV) show values less than AVE values. These outcomes exposed items are highly correlated and valid convergent validity. These values are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Convergent validity

Items and Variables			Loadings	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
RL1	<---	RL	0.800	0.885	0.657	0.315	0.282
RL2	<---	RL	0.806				
RL3	<---	RL	0.825				
RL4	<---	RL	0.812				
CL1	<---	CL	0.987	0.868	0.546	0.383	0.274
CL2	<---	CL	0.845				
CL3	<---	CL	0.509				
CL4	<---	CL	0.418				
CL5	<---	CL	0.566				
CL6	<---	CL	0.912				
EDS1	<---	EDS	0.942	0.925	0.715	0.524	0.290
EDS2	<---	EDS	0.903				
EDS3	<---	EDS	0.797				
EDS4	<---	EDS	0.667				
EDS5	<---	EDS	0.890				
INE1	<---	INE	0.400	0.786	0.516	0.312	0.248
INE2	<---	INE	0.411				
INE3	<---	INE	0.944				
INE4	<---	INE	0.924				

The research also checks the correlation between the variables called discriminant validity. The outcomes indicated that the Fornell Larcker was used and the first value that exposed the linkages with the variable itself is larger than the other values that exposed the linkages with other variables. These outcomes exposed variables that are not highly correlated and valid discriminant validity. These values are given in [Table 2](#).

Table 2

Fornell Larker

	INE	RL	CL	EDS
INE	0.718			
RL	0.559	0.811		
CL	0.517	0.471	0.739	
EDS	0.366	0.528	0.474	0.846

In addition, the research also checks the model's good fitness. The outcomes indicated that the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and comparative fit index (CFI) show values larger than 0.90 while the root means the square error of approximation (RMSEA) shows values less than 0.05. These values exposed that the model is a good fit. These values are given in [Table 3](#).

Table 3

Model Good Fitness

Selected Indices	Result	Acceptable level of fit
TLI	0.903	TLI > 0.90
CFI	0.907	CFI > 0.90
RMSEA	0.000	RMSEA < 0.05 good; 0.05 to 0.10 acceptable

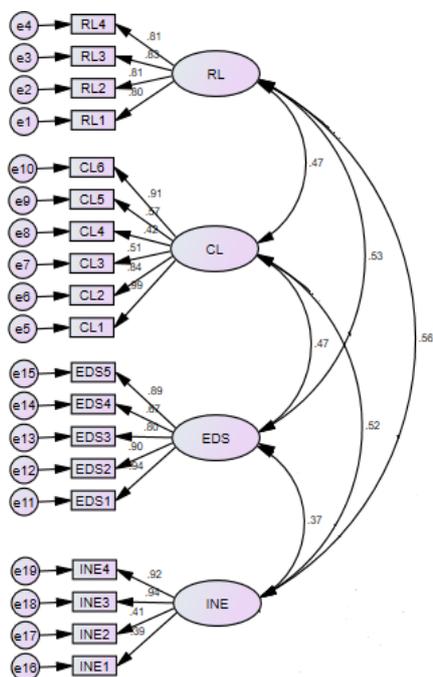


Figure 2: Measurement model assessment

The results indicated that the religion, culture, and education system of the higher education institutions in Vietnam has a positive association with the epic of India "Ramayana" and accept H1, H2 and H3.

Table 4

A path analysis

	Relationships	Beta	Std. Beta	S.E.	C.R.	P
Indian Epic	<--- Religion	0.411	0.263	0.031	13.197	0.000
Indian Epic	<--- Culture	0.634	0.406	0.031	20.357	0.000
Indian Epic	<--- Education System	0.461	0.284	0.032	14.257	0.000



Figure 3: Structural model assessment

5. Discussions

The results indicated that religion has a positive association with the epic of India "Ramayana". These results are supported by [Yulianti \(2020\)](#), which posits that if most of the members of the teaching and managerial faculty in Indian institutions belong to the native religion of Hinduism, they have more knowledge about the story described in the great Hindu epic "Ramayana". They have a better ability to narrate the whole epic effectively to the students. Thus, religion matters greatly in promoting the Indian epic "Ramayana". These results also agree with [Thi Bich Thuy \(2019\)](#), which examines the religious impact on the epic of India "Ramayana". The study implies that if the students in Indian institutions are close to religion and feel respect necessary for religious teachings, can have a better understanding of lectures on the epic of India "Ramayana".

The results revealed that culture has a positive association with the epic of India "Ramayana". These results are in line with [Pallathadka et al. \(2022\)](#), which state that the culture to which management and teaching faculty belong as well as the culture being applied influence the teaching effectiveness for the epic of India "Ramayana". If it is close to Hindu or Indian culture, it creates an effective environment for teaching the epic of India "Ramayana". So, suitable culture adds to teaching the epic of India "Ramayana". These results also agree with [Rachmawati \(2020\)](#), which claims that if the culture the students are practicing and the culture, the Indian epic shows are similar as well as have appeal to each other, the epic teaching gives better results.

The results indicated that the education system has a positive association with the epic of India "Ramayana". These results are supported by [Bhide et al. \(2022\)](#), which posit that the education system, with its education policies, teaching environment, and learning resources all influence the epic of India "Ramayana" teaching effectiveness. If the education system is supportive and effective, epic of India "Ramayana" can be effectively taught, and desired outcomes can be achieved from students. These results also match [Lutgendorf \(2022\)](#). This study proclaims that an effective and progressive education system has better teaching strategies and therefore, can teach the epic of India "Ramayana" better.

Epic plays an important role in traditional society, where human values are preserved to promote the harmonious development of personality and build a corresponding moral value system. The epic expresses the nation's aspiration for a happy and prosperous life, praising the love, nobility, and bravery of man before the challenges of nature and in the struggle with evil. In community activities, when epic performance is practiced, it is the most optimal space for moral lessons to be spread and imbued in each member.

6. Implications

The study has directions for the researchers through its contribution to literature. It analyzes the role of religion, culture, and education system in the epic of India "Ramayana". It extends the literature with the investigation of the moderating role of leadership between religion, culture, and education system and the epic of India "Ramayana". The study examines the role of religion, culture, and education system in the epic of India "Ramayana" for Indian religious institutions and thereby, it contributes to the literature.

Epic works are aimed at building a sense of self-discipline to adhere to the social order for each individual, that is, maintaining compliance with the accepted behavioral patterns

of the community. At the same time, the works always advise people to do good, avoid evil, and live up to the standards of the community. The epic has fostered the soul of each community member with specific cultural values of the times, built in the aspirations, ambitions, and dreams of a good society, humane actions to protect the survival and development of the community, the struggle for human happiness and dignity, and the awakening of self-worth.

7. Conclusion

The study was to check the role of religion, culture, and education system in the epic of India "Ramayana". The results showed a positive association between religion, culture, and education system and the epic of India "Ramayana". The results showed that as epic of India "Ramayana" is a narration of the religious story, the people who have good relation with religion can better teach and learn it. Likewise, if the Indian culture is dear to the audience, the epic of India "Ramayana" may have a better influence. The results also revealed that if the education system is effective with its physical and human teaching resources, the epic of India can be taught better. The content of moral education in the epics of the nations in general and the epic "Ramayana" of India in particular are aimed at building a sense of self-discipline to comply with the social order for each individual, i.e. maintaining conforming to accepted patterns of behavior by the community. The research results show that the meaning and important role of teaching the epic "Ramayana" in schools will help students acquire many good moral and cultural values and better understand the culture of the people Indian culture, religion, and people.

8. Limitations

The study still has some limitations and these limitations should be removed in future literature. First, this study examines a few factor's relationship like religion, culture, and education system association with the epic of India "Ramayana". The study is less comprehensive and requires from future researchers to add more factors to their research framework. This study checks the role of religion, culture, and education system in the epic of the India "Ramayana" by university students majoring in philology at some universities in Vietnam. Future research must also examine these relations in a community where some international or non-Hindu students are also included.

9. Acknowledgments

This research is funded by Vietnam National Foundation for Science and Technology Development (NAFOSTED) under grant number **602.04-2020.301**.

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