

STAGE 2

RELIGION STUDIES

Religion and Spirituality

Folio

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Introduction

The purpose was to construct and conduct an interview style survey with 15 people and include questions that demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of religion and spirituality.

In order to establish if the group that I was surveying had any particular views about religion and spirituality I designed a questionnaire to ask the following questions.

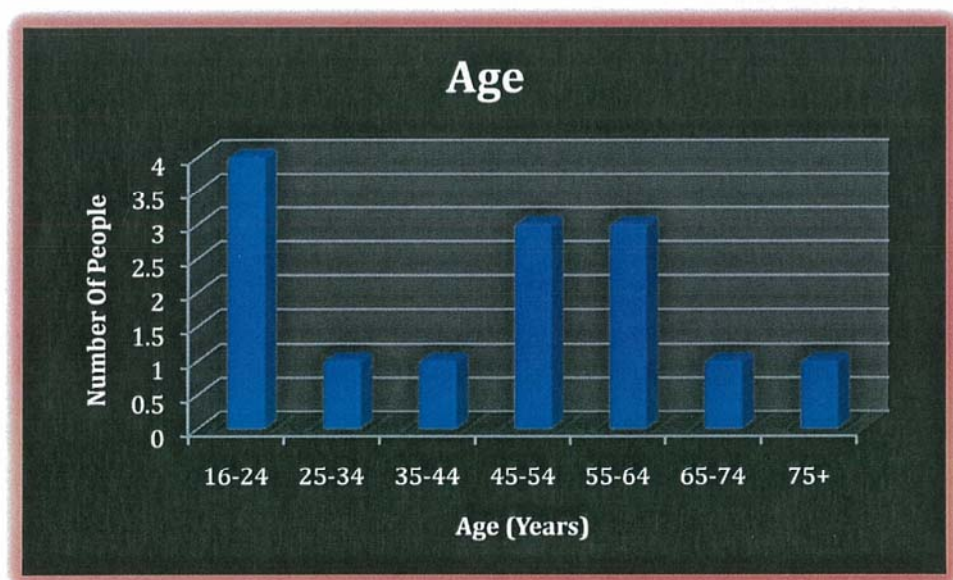
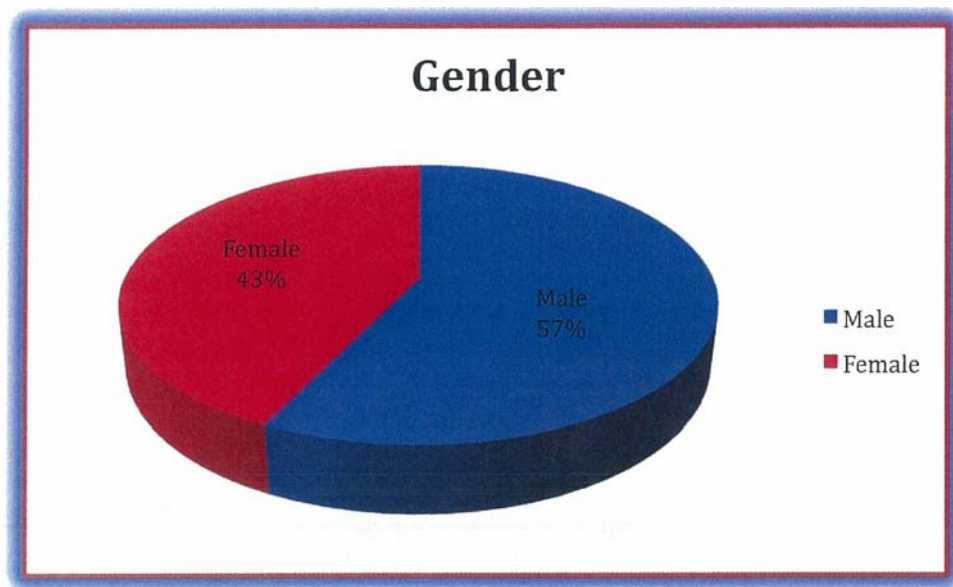
1. Do you consider yourself to be a religious person?
2. Do you believe that Australians today are losing their faith and commitment to organised religion?
3. Do you see Australia as a highly religious country?
4. How does religion differ from spirituality?
5. How do religion and/or spirituality affect your everyday life?
6. Do you consider yourself to be a spiritual person?
7. How often do you attend religious gatherings or functions?

Investigation and Application
Competent development and application of appropriate investigation methods, including generally productive use of inquiry skills.

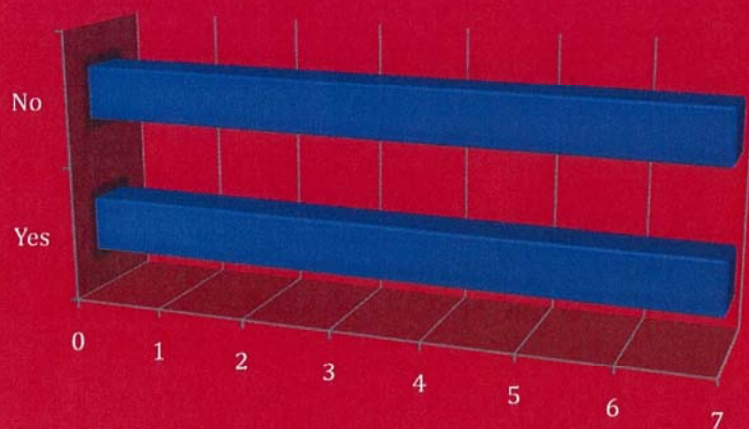
Methodology

After designing the questionnaire I distributed it to 15 people. When handing out my questionnaires I wanted a range of results and I did this by handing questionnaires to a range of people from different religions and age groups.

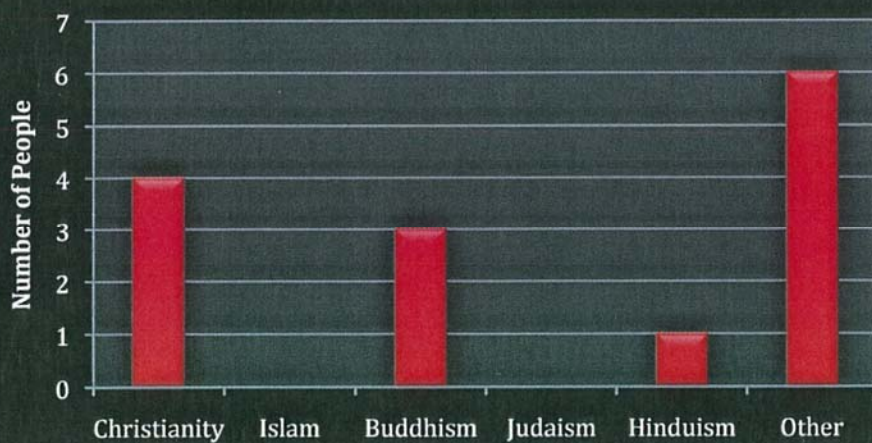
Analysis



Do you consider yourself to be a religious person?



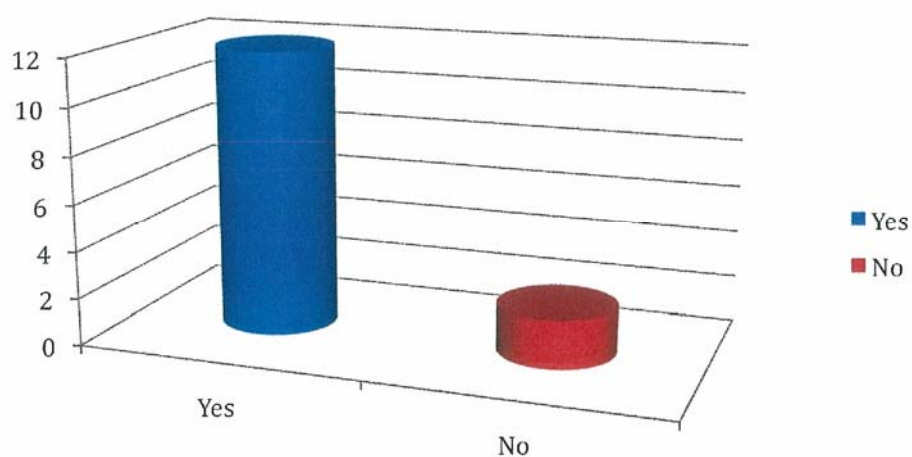
Religion



How often do you attend religious gatherings or functions?



Do you believe that Australians today are losing their faith and commitment to organized religion?



Evaluation

How would you define Religion?

There were an array of responses some were deep and well thought out and others logical and straightforward. In every description 'a set of beliefs' was referenced to and religion was also closely related to a group of people or community. But there were also sceptical responses such as *'Religion is a system in which a group of people attempt to make society think in the right way'*

For those people, religion means very little but there were only two responses that even hinted a sceptical response. Other responses were similar and did not differ between those who considered themselves religious and those who did not. I believe that this shows that those who have chosen not to be religious have some idea of religions.

Another common value seen in people's views of religion was that **all religions had faith in God or Gods, this may be true in some religions,** but not all. This last fact leads me to believe that when Australian's think of religion they think of Christianity, as they all know of the term God.

Knowledge and Understanding
Some considered explanation of different religious beliefs, perspectives, and experiences, within and across traditions.

Investigation and Application
Appropriate application of knowledge and understanding of religions and spiritualities in local and global contexts

How does this (religion) differ from Spirituality?

All respondents discussed ones inner self and that spirituality was purely individual. Responses to this question differed very slightly if at all between all respondents. The responses were also much the same between different divisions of *religion*. One response that covers what most thought *'Spirituality is derived from within yourself and doesn't require external instructions or goods'*. But the response that interested me most came from an atheist *'I think spirituality is feeling connected with nature and the forces around you '*; this answer stood out for me as an atheist who does not believe in higher beings believes about a link with nature and the forces around him. Finally in this section there was only one respondent that discussed the matter of higher beings in relation to spirituality, this was a Hindu *'Spirituality may not require a higher being, just something that makes you centered and comfortable with yourself. It may be living the life that you set for yourself rather than living a life set out by a higher being or religious order'*.

Knowledge and Understanding
Some considered explanation of different religious beliefs, perspectives, and experiences, within and across traditions.

This showed me how different both religion and spirituality are, as this respondent believes that spirituality may be taking a completely independent path in life rather than one chosen by religion. I believe that is the most common message that come across, spirituality is independent. The final observation I made whilst evaluating the responses to this question, was that the more in depth responses were from those younger respondents. Older respondents struggled to describe their views on spirituality.

Investigation and Application
Appropriate application of knowledge and understanding of religions and spiritualities in local and global contexts.

Do you think religion or spirituality has influenced other aspects of you life, especially important decisions you have made?

Most respondents answered 'yes' while the majority of non-religious responses discussed how religion had influenced their decision as to what is right and what is wrong. This was not their religion affecting their views, but rather the view of people around them who are religious. Examples of this included '*Religion has taught me the importance of values and ethics*' to '*Buddhism can be seen throughout my life and every decision I make as for me this seems the correct way to live life and achieve a better understanding of life*'. These answers showed me that religious or not, values in Australian society that happen to be based around Christian views, effect our every day decisions.

Reflection
Generally informed consideration and explanation of the social significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies.

Conclusion

We can see that religion and spirituality are two quite different things and the entire sample group sees this. Furthermore, spirituality can affect the lives of even those who are not religious. Spirituality has a larger effect on young persons lives, as they were able to describe spirituality with ease. the final fact that came from the analysis was that we all have an idea of right and wrong. It may be based on some Christian beliefs or other parts of Australian society. The entire group demonstrated some aspect of ethics and morals, due to the fact that those core aspects of Christianity have become a way of life for Australians.

Investigation and Application
Appropriate application of knowledge and understanding of religions and spiritualities in local and global contexts

Reflection
Informed exploration of the relevance of religions or spiritualities in contemporary Australia.

Word count: 878 words — (including titles)

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