

RELIGION IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Those looking for honest companies to invest in might want to check out businesses based in more religious communities, suggests a new paper from the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management.



The study found that businesses with head offices in places with high levels of "religiosity" were less likely to experience stock price crashes as a result of not disclosing bad financial news. And it didn't matter whether those at the top were religious or not. Just being in a town where social norms are influenced by religious codes of behavior was enough to rub off on the companies operating there.

The researchers used data from 1971 to 2000 about the number of churches and church membership in US counties from the American Religion Data Archive. They compared this with information about stock returns and accounting restatements for U.S. companies, including where those companies were headquartered.

Previous research has shown that religious managers are less likely to manipulate the flow of information and a religious setting tends to foster more whistleblowers within a corporation, raising the risk of manipulators getting caught.

The paper is forthcoming in the *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis.*

Different Values for Boys and Girls



A study by researchers in Spain which analysed 595 toy advertisements broadcast on television at Christmas 2009, 2010 and 2011 showed that they promoted values that associate beauty with girls and strength and power with boys.

The analysis of the adverts shows that, although many of them have messages that apply to both sexes, such as fun, education, solidarity and individualism, it was more frequent to see very separate values.

In most of the publicity, cars and action heroes were associated with males, together with competitive values, individualism, power and strength. However, the female role was linked to beauty and motherhood as seen in adverts for dolls and accessories.

The researcher also found that there was evident gender segregation in the voice-overs. "Female voices predominated in adverts where girls appear and male voices where only boys appear and also when both genders are shown."

The authors conclude that, despite legal provisions, there are still toys that are very different for girls and boys.

