Constructing a Model of Religiosity among Franciscan Faculty

ALICIA MCLAUGHLIN, PH.D., LCSW & LORRI MCMEEL, PH.D., LCSW

Abstract

Respect, integrity, compassion and service, the core values of the Franciscan tradition within the mission of Franciscan higher education, should reflect interactions in the classroom and throughout the entire campus. These Franciscan values lie at the very heart of an institution. As such, the institution and every person involved in the institution must put these values into practice. In thinking about how one's own personal values gravitate towards the organizational values, we began to question how this relationship pertains to religiosity among faculty in Franciscan settings. It is largely unknown how Franciscan values impact job satisfaction and commitment to one's institution in a higher education setting. Therefore, this study investigates the relationship among job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and religiosity for faculty at a small Catholic Franciscan university. Results from individual interviews illustrate testable models of religiosity for junior and senior faculty.

Constructing a Model of Religiosity among Franciscan Faculty

The *Ex Corde Ecclasiae* document issued from Pope John Paul II inspired administrators at Catholic institutions of higher learning to incorporate "hiring for mission" policies and to articulate how the Catholic identity translates into their institution's mission and activities. This document also sparked empirical inquiry as to whether non-Catholic instructors support the Catholic identity of the university in the same manner as Catholic instructors. In a survey of 1,900 faculty members at six Catholic universities, most faculty members supported the inclusion of religion in hiring practices and felt extremely committed to integrating faith in the classroom (Parker, Beaty, Mencken, & Lyon, 2007). Faculty believed that these acts did not interfere with academic freedom or commitment to their respective disciplines. Another survey of 1,290 faculty members in a random sample of 100 Catholic institutions concluded that Catholic faculty promoted Catholic identity more than non-Catholic faculty (Sullins, 2004). In this study, the institutions with a majority of Catholic faculty members had higher faculty retention and a higher proportion of Catholic students. These studies illustrate the relevance of religious beliefs for faculty and administrators at Catholic institutions of higher learning.

The emphasis on strengthening Catholic identity at Catholic institutions as outlined in *Ex Corde Ecclasiae* seems to have been a relevant issue to undertake considering the increasing evidence that job satisfaction and organizational commitment may be a byproduct of religious commitment. For example, faculty with a higher religious commitment had higher levels of job satisfaction; the more faculty members committed to religion the more they committed to the university (Brown & Sargeant, 2007). They also tended to stay longer at the university than faculty members with lower levels of religious commitment. In another sample of faculty members, the more satisfied they became, the more committed they were to improving the university climate by stimulating learning and being more instrumental in helping students specifically students from diverse backgrounds (Corbin, 1998). One study that surveyed 379 faculty members from seven private liberal arts institutions found that job satisfaction positively predicted satisfaction with life in general (Bechtold, 2005). Some might argue that this type of life satisfaction closely ties to levels of spiritual and religious development. In all, the highlighted studies seem to indicate that religious beliefs affect job satisfaction. In turn, job satisfaction permeates levels of commitment to the institution and to the students.

With explicit written encouragement from the *Ex Corde Ecclasiae* document, studies show that faculty at Catholic colleges and universities understand the relevance of infusing religion in hiring practices and in student development. However, the understanding of how the religious beliefs and practices of faculty members relate to perceptions about work in the Franciscan tradition is yet to be examined. Therefore, this study investigates the relationships among job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and religiosity for faculty at a small Catholic Franciscan university. This study also compares the responses of junior faculty with those of senior faculty to determine the differences in perspectives among the proposed concepts of interest in order to construct a model of religiosity among Franciscan faculty.

Key Concepts

The primary variables examined in this study include religiosity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Studies pertaining to religion are typically complex due to the vast dimensions that religion can encompass. Hill and Hood (1999) state that "religious phenomena include some relevance to traditional institutionalized searches to acknowledge and maintain some relationship with the transcendent" (p.5). Commonly, the term religiosity is used to refer to both religious practices and religious beliefs (Hill & Hood, 1999). Religious practices entail those observable behaviors that occur as part of an organized religion. Examples would include attending church or synagogue, prayer, and observing religious holidays and sacraments. Religious beliefs entail our interpersonal thoughts and attitudes towards formalized religion and one's personal relationship with God.

There are many existing definitions of job satisfaction; consequently, many theories inform the phenomena. Most definitions are similar in that job satisfaction encompasses "the feelings a worker has about his or her job or experiences in relation to previous experiences, current expectations, or available alternatives" (Balzer & Smith, 1990, p. 10). On the other hand, organizational commitment has been neatly defined as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Brown & Sargeant, 2007, p. 217; Mowday et al, 1982; Tett & Meyer, 1993;). The current study conceptualized organizational commitment as one's perceived commitment to the university, one's identity with the university, and one's participation or involvement within the university.

Methods

The participants for this qualitative, exploratory study were a convenience sample drawn from full-time faculty members at a small, Midwestern, Catholic Franciscan university. Since administrators, staff, and adjunct faculty were excluded, they were not eligible to participate. Faculty members were recruited through email in addition to a flyer placed in faculty mailboxes. The recruitment materials described the study and the methods and directed interested faculty members to contact one of the researchers. Data collection occurred through two separate means. Faculty members had the option to complete either a one-on-one interview with one of the researchers or a questionnaire online.

Faculty members who elected to participate in the 60 minute interviews signed the informed consent and were advised of their rights as research participants. All interviews were audio recorded so that interviews could be transcribed. Faculty members participating in the interviews were entered into a drawing for two $25 gift cards. Other faculty members opted to complete the online survey in lieu of participating in an interview. The link to the online survey was sent through email to all full-time faculty members. Interested faculty members were given two weeks to complete the online survey. Survey respondents using this method of responding remained completely anonymous. Both interviews and surveys used open-ended questions pertaining to religious beliefs, religious practices, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. This study was approved by the university's institutional review board (IRB).

Sample Characteristics

In this study, 29 (30%) faculty members participated in this study. Of these, 48% (n=14) participated in interviews and 51% (n=15) participated in the online survey. Overall, 11 of the faculty members identified themselves as non-tenured, while 18 of the faculty members identified themselves as either tenured or on a three year rolling contract; this resulted in a response rate of 30% and 45%, respectively. For the purposes of this study, faculty who identified themselves as tenured or on a three year rolling contract will be defined as senior faculty. Faculty who have not yet earned tenure will be referred to as junior faculty. Junior faculty averaged 2.4 years of employment at the university (range 1-5 yrs). Senior faculty averaged 18.4 years of employment at the university (range 5-31 yrs).

Data Analysis

All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim into word documents. Responses from the online survey were downloaded into word documents. Researchers used open coding procedures in order to break down the data into discrete parts and compare for similarities and differences in responses. The interactions that were found to be related in meaning were then grouped together into categories. Categories were further broken down into subcategories if needed. Line-by-line analysis was used in order to generate codes for quotations that represented these themes or concepts. Each category of concepts was defined and agreed upon by both researchers.

Results

Religiosity Themes

Religion as impacting decision to become faculty at university

The majority of respondents revealed that the potential to teach at a religious institution had no bearing on the decision to come to the university (see Table 1). However, one common theme among junior and senior faculty involved feeling happy about their decision after arriving. Both groups reported that this sense of happiness derived from the feeling of a safe campus climate and an inviting environment. Junior faculty, in particular, reported that they came to the university for the sole purpose of teaching within their specific discipline. Another theme among junior faculty was an initial worry and concern about coming to the university for those who did not adhere to Catholic practices and beliefs or those who might not ascribe themselves as religious. These respondents felt that the university might not accept them based on the differing beliefs, yet these concerns quickly subsided once they experienced the welcoming campus environment.

For senior faculty, four themes emerged as a response to this inquiry. First, senior faculty reported that they came to the university for practical reasons such as the need for employment at the same time the university conducted a job search in their subject area. Other senior faculty reported that their department became absorbed by the university and that their decision to come was based on whether they wanted to maintain employment. Therefore they remained in their position. The feeling of being very comfortable during the initial campus interview was the second theme that had impacted their decision. A third theme that senior faculty reported as making an impact on their decision to come involved the positive regard for the Franciscan values as an extension of their own personal values. Once they learned about the four core values of respect, compassion, service, and integrity, they felt connected to the university. Lastly, the decision of the senior faculty to come to the university involved the opportunity to carry out their own ministry. These respondents believed that teaching there extended their religious duties to the Catholic Church.

> **Once they learned about the four core values of respect, compassion, service, and integrity, they felt connected to the university.**

Being a religious person and participating in the religious practices

The majority of respondents identified themselves as religious persons (78%) who participated in religious practices (85%). Types of religious practices for respondents included attending church/mass, enrolling children in religious schools, participating in religious or church activities, volunteering in their church or community, and following basic religious traditions.

Change in religious practices and religious beliefs

Few respondents noticed a change in their religious practices since becoming a faculty member (n=10). However, the majority of respondents noticed changes in religious beliefs (n=18). Both groups mentioned that the positive impact of informal religious mentors on-campus attributed to the evolution of religious beliefs. Junior faculty alone referred to learning about Franciscan values and reading about the life of St. Francis of Assisi as contributing to a change in religious beliefs. Senior faculty, on the other hand, repeatedly referred to their role and participation in the church as a contributor to the change in religious beliefs. Several of these respondents became ordained in their religion or participated in the church as a Eucharistic minister. Thus, senior faculty became more engaged in the church after becoming a faculty member. They also reported an increase in attending mass on-campus. In all, this contributed to the type of change in which their religious beliefs have grown deeper and stronger.

> I think I have grown stronger in my faith because of my experience here. Some of the people here, most of them retired, but a group of us formed a prayer group and some comradery and one of us would make a dish. One time when I was pregnant and on bed rest they came to my house (senior faculty member).

Changed response to those with different religious views

Although the majority of respondents did not report changes toward those with different religious views since being a faculty member, respondents did report changes in their approach to learning about others who have different religious views. Junior and senior faculty reported increased tolerance, appreciation, and sensitivity to

diverse religions. For example, several respondents discussed becoming more interested in learning about the Muslim religion and started interacting with Muslim students to gain a better understanding of their religious views.

> I believe our strength is in our acceptance of religious diversity and our willingness to learn more about each other's differences (senior faculty member).

Incorporated religion in the classroom

More senior than junior faculty reported that they incorporate religion in the classroom as shown in Table 1. For junior faculty who used religion in the classroom, it tended to be done through student-oriented activities that highlighted Franciscan values and illustrated human diversity.

> This is a new thing…I sometimes ask students how their decisions and answers in my class reflect, comment on, or change meaning by being housed in a religious institution (junior faculty member).

Senior faculty members, who used religion in the classroom, did so in the context of illustrating ethical decision making for economic and social justice. These respondents also initiated prayer in class and tended to talk openly about religion in the classroom. Senior faculty discussed having formal and informal contact with students surrounding religious practices such as on-campus mass and talking about religion outside of the classroom.

> I have always done this in my nursing classes. I pray before each test, bring reflections to class, and share examples of my faith as appropriate to the content that day (senior faculty member).

> I have always prayed openly with students in the classroom and clinical setting and continue to do so. The frequency has increased as students have requested more prayer as we go along in the semester (senior faculty member).

> Focusing on Christian/Catholic social justice issues in some detail and with particular assignments dedicated to both researching and actually contributing to these concerns is something I had not done before being at [the university] (senior faculty member).

Junior and senior faculty similarly reported using religion in the classroom when students disclosed personal losses or family crises; they also reported using religion as a teaching tool in their subject area. Therefore, religion became part of the pedagogy for respondents who used religion in the classroom.

Religion to cope with things that happen at work

Most respondents felt that their religious beliefs and religious practices helped them cope with the things that happened to them at work. In particular, these respondents relied on their faith in God and prayer to cope as they would turn to God in prayer and then "let go" in challenging times.

> Definitely, a lot of times this semester I let go and let God [take over]. …Remembering that I don't have to measure up to other people's expectations I only have to measure up to my own and to God's and I remember that here better than I have at other institutions (junior faculty member).

> I believe that when things are going badly at work that there is a reason. I try to be part of a solution and once I have done that, I leave the outcome to God (senior faculty member).

> I really have to say that it is the religious spiritual piece of me I turn to the most when I'm uncertain or with my current situation with my job. I am not expecting God to just work the situation but to guide my hand (junior faculty member).

> It [religion] provides a framework of support for me as I face difficult decisions, circumstances, or people at work (senior faculty member).

Junior faculty, in particular, discussed relying on support systems external to the university to cope with work related challenges. However, senior faculty mostly discussed relying on support systems within their church or among those in the university such as prayer groups or church groups.

Become more devoted to the environment, equality, and pain and suffering in the world

There were not an overwhelming number of respondents who reported changes in their devotion to the environment, to equality, and to pain and suffering in the world. However, this may have been misleading as several themes emerged when respondents were prompted for explanations. First, faculty reported that these issues become commonly part of the pedagogy throughout their courses to make students more sensitive to and aware of the world around them. Second, devotion to these issues was reinforced in the campus environment in which faculty felt encouraged to be sensitive to environmental changes, problems with equality, and the pain and suffering that occur. Overall, since faculty reported a university atmosphere that supports and encourages devotion to social problems, they felt comfortable discussing and exploring how actions affect these issues.

When we care about humanity, we began to make the movement to be more consistent with our core values (senior faculty member).

Apart from junior faculty responses, senior faculty added two additional themes while addressing questions related to changes in devotion. Senior faculty reported that since they have been a faculty member, they noticed an increase in awareness surrounding environmental changes, equality issues, and pain and suffering in the world; previously they were unaware. As a result, they now felt more devoted to helping in these areas. Senior faculty also reported that since becoming a faculty member they sensed a return to devotion in these areas experienced in their personal childhood. For some, first hand experiences in their youth made them want to become devoted to these issues.

Constructing a Model

Overall, this exploratory study attempted to gain an initial understanding of the possible relationships that could exist between the key variables of religiosity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Another goal of the study was to determine if any differences were evident between junior and senior faculty members in the overall model. Several findings emerged as illustrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

A relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment was found for both junior and senior faculty. Several themes emerged as faculty commented on this relationship. Both senior and junior faculty felt that their level of job satisfaction was increased because they were invested in the mission of the university and the Franciscan values instilled by the university. Faculty members also noted a bi-directional relationship between being involved in university activities and increased job satisfaction. Faculty members commented that when they participated in more activities they felt more connected to other faculty members which in turn increased their overall satisfaction. At the same time, faculty noted that having a higher level of job satisfaction and feeling connected to others made them want to participate in more university activities, thus furthering their commitment to the organization.

> **The importance of junior faculty members participating in university activities in order to build relationships with other faculty members was viewed as instrumental in increasing job satisfaction and the commitment to the university.**

Senior faculty members were more likely to note the need and the importance of being recognized and valued for their contributions to the university by higher administration. The motivation behind much of their involvement was student driven and commitment to the students. Faculty members were much more likely to participate in activities which supported their students. However, senior faculty members were more likely to report feeling burned out with the number of activities, both student and faculty driven, in which they were expected to participate.

The importance of junior faculty members participating in university activities in order to build relationships with other faculty members was viewed as instrumental in increasing job satisfaction and the commitment to the university. However, practical barriers to participating in events were much more likely to be encountered by junior faculty. Faculty noted that other obligations, such as family responsibilities, prevented them from attending many events.

> I think you have to feel committed to the university mission and objectives and be invested in the values of the university or you will not be satisfied. As I become more affected by the identity of St. Francis you feel like a part of the community, you contribute to it, you get reciprocation from it and you feel more satisfied (junior faculty member).

Organizational Commitment and Religiosity

Only senior faculty members noted that there was a relationship between their level of commitment to the university and religiosity. Several themes emerged when discussing the relationship between the two variables. For example, participants believed that because they were committed to their religion, they were better able to identify with the university thereby enhancing their sense of organizational commitment. Similarly, Catholic respondents noted that sharing the same values with the institution was important in enhancing their identify and overall commitment as well.

> My personal mission aligns well with that of the college and the university. I am able to fulfill my personal mission through my work at this university. All of this helps me to be a better person, and it nurtures my relationship with God (senior faculty member).

> I think it's helpful for both faculty and students to feel that what we are about here is of value beyond simply preparing students for a career (senior faculty member).

...faculty commented on the importance of student centered activities and how increased involvement with students allowed them to be more committed to the university.

Senior faculty members were much more likely to see their position within the university as part of their ministry or an extension of their faith. As a part of that faith, they wanted to have the ability and opportunity to reach out to students. Therefore, faculty commented on the importance of student centered activities and how increased involvement with students allowed them to be more committed to the university.

Additionally, senior faculty members discussed their belief in giving both money and time to institutions in order to demonstrate their commitment. Many of these faculty members discussed giving money to support the church and similarly, giving money to support the university and/or its students. The concept of servant leadership also flowed through responses. Most senior faculty embraced the opportunity for servant leadership and believed it advanced their level of commitment to the university.

Religiosity and Job Satisfaction

The relationship between religiosity and job satisfaction remains unclear for both junior and senior faculty. Approximately half of the sample did not feel there was a connection between these variables; however, the other half of the sample did feel there was a connection. One faculty member who did not believe there was a relationship stated:

> My religious beliefs, such as they are, give me some perspective on all the things that happen to me, but not specifically to what happens to me here at work nor the satisfaction I derive from it (senior faculty member).

Junior and senior faculty members who believed a connection existed discussed the role of faith and a higher purpose. Frequently faculty members believed that they were called to their current role and were where God wanted them to be. This ultimately provides them with a higher sense of job satisfaction.

> This is what I am currently being called by name to do right now (senior faculty member).

There is a connection…If this is where God wants me right now, I'm satisfied (senior faculty member).

Additionally, demonstrating servant leadership provided a higher sense of job satisfaction to senior faculty members as they realized their role in the university expanded far beyond teaching.

We all have unique talents which we can and should use to serve others. St. Francis was a servant leader; Jesus was a servant leader. I am blessed to be able to utilize my talents and experience to serve our students at [the university]. I have never been happier in my work (senior faculty member).

Senior faculty with religious values similar to the institution identified this as an important component of increasing job satisfaction.

I do think at this institution there is a warm human connection among people and I think it probably does have something to do with the religious values that are propounded and I think internalized by people (senior faculty member).

I think there is a connection. Obviously, small, private universities don't pay as much as large public universities. Also, the work load is greater in a small, private university. BUT, the opportunity to fulfill one's mission and the likelihood of being appreciated is much greater in a small, private university. In other words, we're here because we want to be here, and not because of the money. Sometimes people who work in larger, well-paying organizations become so attached to the money that they are willing to forsake the happiness that comes from fulfillment of one's mission. They place a higher value on the money than on fulfillment of one's mission (senior faculty member).

This is the most satisfied I've ever been. It's a nice fit – it's that whole thing about religiosity; it's as much as you want to take. I don't feel like it's ever forced on you; it's as much as you want to dip into it. But the more I dip into it the more I enjoy it and the more that does bring more job satisfaction (junior faculty member).

Overall Themes

Several other important themes emerged through the interviews and surveys that did not contribute to the overall model. These were important contributions to understanding not only why faculty members chose to be employed at a religious institution, but also the effect of this type of environment on both their overall commitment and satisfaction.

Faith
Across respondents, faith played an important role in contributing to one's religiosity, job satisfaction, and commitment to the university. Faculty saw their profession as ministry. In addition, many faculty members commented that fostering faith and religiosity among students was a component of their profession that provided them with greater meaning. Many who felt fortunate to be able to embrace this component realized that they would be unable to address the spiritual side of students in secular institutions.

It's actually pretty exciting to be here in a place where I think you really have an opportunity to talk to people about their faith; somehow you have to think yeah, this really is important, you shouldn't just go through life thinking and just focus on career and family and ignore the spiritual side.

Prayer
Prayer was essential to both junior and senior faculty members and was used in multiple capacities. For many respondents prayer was used as a religious practice and a method of coping and understanding. Many faculty members, particularly senior faculty, utilized prayer in the classroom which was received well by the students. The use of prayer before meetings helped to center faculty members and allowed them to proceed with a renewed holistic perspective. One faculty member commented:

I like it at the beginning of the meeting to ground myself with a prayer like one of our colleagues will say "let's use this time to honor you and pray for our students" and it really re-centers me to what I'm about –

I'm not here about my ego.

For others, prayer was used as a way to reinforce their faith while connecting to others. Faculty members reflected on the importance of faculty prayer groups they had been involved with in the past. They emphasized the amount of support they received from such groups and commented on how these types of experiences were essential in forming deeper relationships with co-workers.

Values
Values, whether personal, Franciscan, or Catholic, were a theme that occurred throughout most responses. Many felt more committed to the university because their personal values aligned well with the Franciscan values of the university.

> It is the Franciscan values of respect, integrity, compassion, and service that I find compelling not the religious trappings. When these values are translated into behavior then the world is a better place to live in for all. It means we act with compassion, respect, and integrity toward all people including those whose behavior and beliefs are different from our own (junior faculty member).

At the same time, faculty voiced more displeasure and frustration when they felt the university compromised those values. It was common that respondents held higher standards for co-workers, staff, and administrators than what they would if employed by a secular institution. Faculty had high expectations that others within the university setting would maintain the values especially when they dealt with times of hardship in the past. Faculty expressed being disappointed when they felt that the the university had focused more on the business aspect of maintaining a university than the humanistic/values aspect.

Participants also discussed how a large part of their jobs entailed reinforcing the Franciscan values among students. Faculty discussed the importance of shaping good, decent, human beings who will continue to contribute to the world in meaningful ways. One faculty member commented that his idea of success and the feeling of pride he gets related to students does not come from learning what type of job the student has accepted after graduation or finding out a few years later that the student is a CEO of a major company. Rather, the feelings of pride and success come from running into a student a few years later in the community, seeing the student with his or her spouse and children and observing that the student is in a strong marriage with a family and is a decent human being. This is perhaps one of the most vivid examples of how a religious institution hopes to prepare students for the future.

> It is not about a career and financial success; it is about being successful as a human being.
> In the back of everyone's mind, at least I hope I think we all agree that there is a higher thing that we do - not just higher education but higher education with Franciscan values tied into it to help create a group of people that we desperately need out there. People with compassion who will listen to the other side of the story and empathize with situations and we need those folks and I hope that's the kind of kid we are turning out (junior faculty member).

Environment
The environment of the university was frequently described as warm, accepting, and tolerant. These characteristics were important to both Catholic and non-Catholic faculty members. Non-Catholic faculty members described a hesitancy about working for a Catholic institution and a fear of being ostracized. However, faculty members described how initial fears quickly faded upon their first contact with the university. Regardless of personal religious beliefs, the faculty believed in the mission of the university and the core values that the university holds.

> Emphasis on the mission of the university as well as alignment of it with our personal missions and ministries is very important as we move forward toward accomplishment of the goals of the university (senior faculty member).

> Our mission statement talks about Franciscan values and that sets the tone for the university and you know some follow it more than others but at least since it's a stated principle it makes me like the job more just because there is a bit of a higher calling to it (junior faculty member).

Faculty noted that they did not always agree on the amount of Catholicism that was displayed in the university setting. For example, some faculty members who identified themselves as non-Catholic were uncomfortable with the type of prayers said before meetings; others were uncomfortable when administration discussed wanting to create stronger ties to our religious identity. Similarly, faculty who identified themselves as Catholics were also caught in the common debate surrounding how Catholic the institution should really be. Some faculty noted they would like to see stronger ties to the Catholic faith within the organization, while other Catholic faculty commented on the need to maintain religious diversity and limit the impact of the Catholic religion on the university.

The key component of the atmosphere is one of care, of love, and of tolerance. If an intolerant form of Catholicism were practiced it might make a small group feel better and most other people, including mainline Catholics, feel ostracized. If an even more accepting and tolerant environment were created, and that love was revealed in all institutional practices, it might increase job satisfaction. So it isn't whether or not the school is religious, or even what religion is practiced, it is how that religion manifests in daily interactions with one another, and how faculty, staff, and administration, as role models for students, and one another, go about the living of that religion in daily life (senior faculty member).

Discussion

Although most respondents classified themselves as religious, other faculty members reported that they were not religious and described themselves as more spiritual. These respondents also reported a close adherence to Franciscan values. This might mean that they related the values of St. Francis of Assisi rather than religious practices and beliefs to their commitment to the university and their sense of job satisfaction. To date, there is no research confirming these assertions. Future research might need to explore the difference between Franciscan values and religiosity.

In reviewing Table 1 and its themes, senior faculty seemed more religious than junior faculty. According to the percentages provided, senior faculty had higher proportions of respondents who came to the university because it was a religious institution, who identified themselves as religious, who engaged in religious practices, who noticed changes in religious beliefs and practices, who responded differently to those with other religious views, and who used religion in the classroom. Senior faculty commonly discussed the significance of prayer, attending mass, contributing financially to the university, and adhering to the servant leadership role. Senior faculty also tended to bring their faith into the classroom by initiating prayer and using the subject matter to discuss Franciscan values. These themes are interesting in consideration of the number of senior faculty who reported that their sole reason for coming to the university was based on practical circumstances such as the synchronicity between their own search for employment and the university search for faculty. Although senior faculty noticed a deepening of their own faith and belief in God, this acknowledgement appears unanticipated.

Other studies at Catholic institutions found similar results pertaining to religiosity. For example, Brown and Sargeant (2007) found that older faculty members (above 46 years) have a higher religious commitment than younger faculty. Sullins (2004) found that the longer faculty teach at the Catholic institution, the more they identify with the Catholic traditions. These studies might explain the occurrence of higher commitment to the university and to religious views for senior faculty members. Further research would need to explore these claims more in depth.

The models of religiosity for junior faculty and senior faculty illustrate several similarities and differences between the groups. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment appear to relate for both groups. This means that the degree to which the faculty is satisfied with the daily duties corresponds to how they identify with the university as well as their level of involvement with university activities. These results are similar to several studies that explored the relationship between these concepts (Brown & Sargeant, 2007; Corbin, 1998; Coverly, 2009).

Another similarity with the model includes the mixed results between both groups with regard to the relationship of religion and job satisfaction. Respondents did not provide enough consistent information for investigators to conclude a definite connection with regard to these concepts. Future studies would need to better define the concepts for respondents and ask for further exploration into this area. Senior faculty who did confirm a relationship referred to the concept of "servant leadership" as the context with which to make a connection between reli-

gious views and the level of job satisfaction. This would also need to be explored in further research.

The main dissimilar aspect in comparing the models of religiosity between junior faculty and senior faculty was in the area of how religion affects organizational commitment. Senior faculty mostly confirmed a relationship between these concepts and used many personal examples as an illustration, for example, financial contributions, religious commitment, servant leadership, values of Catholicism, spirituality, and student driven service. This means that senior faculty view their religious beliefs and practices as connecting to their own level of commitment to the university and their job identification. Senior faculty also believe that they become involved in university activities because their faith and ministry calls them to extend their commitment to participation outside of the classroom. Senior faculty saw no disconnect between religious commitment and organizational commitment. These results did not emerge among junior faculty.

Limitations

Several limitations pertaining to this study should be noted. Of all respondents, 52% completed the questionnaire online. Consequently, this yielded a much higher percentage of missing data than the interviews. Online questionnaires were open-ended which required a significant amount of time to complete. In addition, the faculty had access to the online questionnaire for a two week time period when faculty were preparing to leave campus for summer break. The combination of these two factors likely influenced the higher rate of missing data and lower overall response rate.

Conducting one-on-one interviews was helpful in exploring the possible relationships between the variables of interest. However, it is possible that responses would have been enhanced by conducting focus groups with faculty members. This method would allow for more open dialogue about the variables of interest and make the relationships that existed between variables easier to define. Some faculty members were much more invested in the interview process since they thought about the questions before the actual interviews. Having focus groups with an open dialogue could have inspired reactions from participants who were viewed to be less engaged with the interview process.

Another possible limitation of this study is our definition of organizational commitment. This variable is more complex to define and has been examined less in the literature than either job satisfaction or religiosity. Our definition consisted of several concepts including one's sense of commitment, identification, and involvement with the university. However, questions pertaining to organizational commitment tended to focus more on involvement than the other components. The conceptualization of this variable is important to remember in discussing our overall findings pertaining to organizational commitment.

In this study, the majority of respondents classified themselves as religious. This means they participate in religious activities and harness religious beliefs. These results are not generalizable to all faculty members. Those who participated in this study might have done so because they wished to express their own views about religion and work experiences; perhaps nonreligious faculty declined to express opposing ideas. Further research would need to explore the motivation to participate in order to obtain a more generalizable profile of Franciscan faculty. Furthermore, a few participants identified themselves as more spiritual than religious. While we recognize the importance of spirituality and the impact of one's spirituality, examining this concept in more depth was beyond the scope of this study.

Aside from the number of years employed at the university and the tenure status of faculty, no other demographic information was gathered. It is unknown if there are true differences between junior and senior faculty or if other characteristics could attribute to these findings. For example, perhaps age is a more important characteristic than tenure status. While this provides some limitations, we believe this was beyond the scope of the current study. Additional demographic information will be examined as we test our model on a broader scale.

Despite the limitations, investigators successfully developed a defendable model of religiosity for junior and senior faculty that can be tested on a larger scale using quantitative methods. To date, this would be the first such attempt to understand the importance of religious practices and beliefs and its effect on organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Overall Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to construct a model of religiosity among faculty at a Catholic Franciscan university in order to understand the relationship among religious beliefs and practices, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment and to determine differences, if any, among junior and senior faculty. In accomplishing this purpose, several conclusions can be derived. First, the concepts of interests seem to operate differently for junior faculty than senior faculty resulting in two distinct testable models of religiosity. Second, committed faculty will identify with the Catholic mission and Franciscan values of the institution in cohesion with the mandate set forth in the *Ex Corde Ecclasiae* document. Lastly, senior faculty should be valued by administration in order to feel recognized for the commitment to their work; this mimics the conclusions in other studies (see Gurm, 2005, and Coverley, 2009). In sum, conclusions from this study underscore the extent to which personal religious views shape satisfaction with the institution and how these concepts influence organizational commitment in the Franciscan tradition.
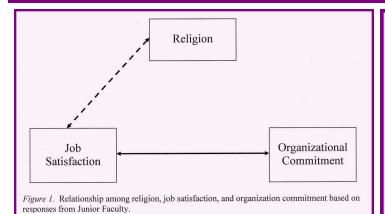
References

Bazler, W.K., Smith, P.C. et al (1990). *Users manual for the job descriptive Index (JDI) and the Job in general (JIG) scales.* Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University.

Bechtold, T. B. (2005). Predictors of life satisfaction among private liberal arts college and university faculty. *Dissertation Abstracts International,* (UMI No. 3160524) Abstract retrieved April 22, 2010, from Digital Dissertations database.

Brown, D., & Sargeant, M.A., (2007). Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and religious commitment of full-time university employees. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 16, 211-241.

Corbin, S. K. T. (1998). Role perceptions and job satisfaction of community college faculty. *Dissertation Abstracts International,* (UMI No.9829292) Abstract retrieved April 22, 2010, from Digital Dissertations database.

Coverley, D. M. (2009). Faculty members' perceptions of leadership and communication dynamics during organizational transition and change at a major Historical Black College and University (HBCU). *Dissertation Abstracts International,* (UMI No. 3335306) Abstract retrieved April 22, 2010, from Digital Dissertations database.

Gurm, B. K. (2005). Understanding the environmental factors that have an impact on employee well-being: A social audit of a university college. *Dissertation Abstracts International,* (UMI No. AA-INQ93125) Abstract retrieved April 22, 2010, from Digital Dissertations database.

Hill, P.C., & Hood, R.W. (1999). *Measures of religiosity*. Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press.

Mowday, R. T., Porter, L. W., & Steers, R. M. (1982). *Employee organization linkages: The psychology of commitment, absenteeism, and turnover*. New York: Academic Press.

Parker, J., Beaty, M., Mencken, F. C., & Lyon, L. (2007). The professionalization of faculty at religious colleges and universities. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion,* 46(1), 87-100.

Sullins, D. P. (2004). The difference Catholic makes: Catholic faculty and Catholic identity. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion,* 43(1), 83-101.

Tett, R. P., & Meyer, J. P. (1993). Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intension, and turnover: Path analyses based on meta-analytic findings. *Personal Psychology*, 46, 259–293.

Table 1
Summary of Responses to Questions Related to Religiosity

Question	Response in Percentage (yes/total)		
	Junior Faculty (n=11)	Senior Faculty (n=18)	Total (n=29)
1. Did the fact that this is a religious institution have any bearing on your decision to come to [the university]?	20% (2/10)	44% (8/18)	36% (10/28)
2. Do you identify as religious?	67% (6/9)	83% (15/18)	78% (21/27)
3. Do you participate in any religious practices?	78% (7/9)	89% (16/18)	85% (23/27)
4. Have you noticed a change in frequency of religious practices since you have been a faculty member at [the university]?	18% (2/11)	47% (8/17)	36% (10/28)
5. Since you have been a faculty member, do you believe that your religious beliefs evolved over time?	64% (7/11)	69% (11/16)	67% (18/27)
6. Since you have been a faculty member, do you feel you have changed the way you respond to people who have different religious views than you?	27% (3/11)	38% (6/16)	33% (9/27)
7. Do you incorporate religion into your courses since you started teaching at [the university]?	50% (5/10)	71% (12/17)	59% (17/29)
8. Do you feel your religious beliefs, religious practices, or other factors help you to cope with the things that happen to you at work?	82% (9/11)	71% (12/17)	75% (21/28)
9. Since you have been a faculty member, have you become more devoted to the environment?	44% (4/9)	53% (9/17)	50% (13/26)
10. Since you have been a faculty member, have you become more devoted to equality?	40% (4/10)	35% (6/17)	37% (10/27)
11. Since you have been a faculty member, have you become more devoted to pain and suffering in the world?	25% (2/8)	47% (8/17)	40% (10/25)
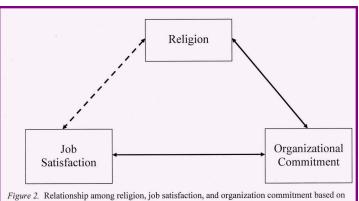
Figure 1. Relationship among religion, job satisfaction, and organization commitment based on responses from Junior Faculty.

Figure 2. Relationship among religion, job satisfaction, and organization commitment based on responses from Senior Faculty.

About the Authors

Alicia McLaughlin, PhD, LCSW
is an Assistant Professor
of Social Work at the University of
St. Francis located in Joliet, Illinois.
She also serves as the BSW/MSW
Field Education Director.

Lorri McMeel, PhD, LCSW
is an Assistant Professor
of Social Work at the University of
St. Francis located in Joliet, Illinois.
She also serves as the BSW
Program Director.