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A SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND: VALUE PREFERENCES OF LAY AND RELIGIOUS TEACHERS IN ROMAN CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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This study examined the value preferences of full-time lay and religious faculty members in Roman Catholic secondary schools in one archdiocese. Using The Study of Values (Allport, Vernon, & Lindzey, 1960), two main research questions were addressed: What relative importance do teachers place on the six identified values? And what differences exist between the value preferences of religious and lay teachers? Findings indicated that both religious and lay teachers considered the religious value preference most important, while the economic value was the least preferred orientation. The significant difference found between groups for the religious value preference is discussed in terms of instrumentation. Implications for hiring are presented and recommendations for future research are made.

Within the framework of the *Declaration on Christian Education*, the Second Vatican Council postulated a vision that would redefine the position of the laity in Catholic education (Convey, 1992). The Council's resolve to expand the role of lay individuals along with escalating reductions in religious vocations to the priesthood, brotherhood, and sisterhood (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993) culminated in dramatic changes in hiring patterns in the nation's Catholic secondary schools. Between 1975 and 1990, statistics for secondary school teachers showed a 21% increase in the number of lay teachers in Catholic secondary school classrooms (Convey, 1992). The expanded role of lay teachers presents schools with challenges as well as opportunities (National Catholic Educational Association, 1987). Formidable, and yet not widely recognized among these challenges, is devel-

oping an understanding of the values held by lay educators.

Catholic schools were founded by religious orders committed to the values, beliefs, and traditions espoused by the Church. Today's Catholic secondary school is a reflection of the values, beliefs, and traditions of the lay faculty as well as the religious faculty. Research comparing the personal views of teachers in Catholic secondary schools to Catholic Church teachings on moral issues provided some insight into the values of the lay and religious women and men in the classroom. Benson and Guerra (1985) reported that on issues such as the use of artificial birth control, sexual relations outside of marriage, euthanasia, remarriage by divorced Catholics, and legal abortion if the mother's health was in danger, a majority of religious faculty members agreed with Church teachings while a majority of lay teachers did not totally support Church teachings on these same issues. Flynn (1993) found that only about half (49%) of the secondary school teachers surveyed agreed that abortion was "a worse evil than the birth of an unwanted child" (p. 20), and only 43% considered euthanasia morally wrong. These same teachers reported that only 50% considered going to Mass on Sunday personally important and only 51% took an active part in the Mass. Thus, while lay faculty do not completely support some of the basic teachings of the Church, they continue to teach in Catholic secondary schools, and in ever increasing numbers. This is an important consideration, for as Benson and Guerra (1985) observed:

Students learn a great deal from teachers, and not all of what they learn is academic in content. Teachers are role models, mentors, and communicators of values—whether they intend to be or not. Their convictions—strong or weak, orthodox or unorthodox, shared or hidden—become known to students and are influential in students' efforts to sort out and build their own positions on matters of faith and values. (p. 1)

There is little doubt that families influence the norms and values of the children (Anderson, 1982). Parental values are reflected in the choices they make for their children. Parents select Catholic schools because of the shared values of the school's staff, the clarity of the school's mission and purpose, and the school's emphasis on religious attitudes and values (Cibulka, O'Brien, & Zewe, 1982). However, values are rarely discussed. Louis (1988) concluded that, "This is because they are viewed as given or basic assumptions rather than as issues for debate" (p. 2). When nuns, priests, and brothers constituted a majority of the teaching staff of Catholic schools, the religious value preference of the faculty was apparent. However, as lay faculty, both Catholic and non-Catholic, continue to dominate the Catholic school classroom, there is a need to determine if shared values are reflected by the school faculty.

Theoretical considerations suggest that values determine attitudes,

behaviors, motivation, and personality (Allport, 1961; Rokeach, 1973). Values can be measured and are related to a number of important variables such as age, gender, ethnic group, and life roles (Allport, Vernon, & Lindzey, 1970; Rokeach, 1973; Super & Sverko, 1995). Values help us explain how and why we behave the way we do (Homer & Kahle, 1988). Based on the work of the German psychologist Spranger, Allport (1937, 1961) described the aesthetic, economic, political, religious, social, and theoretical values as a way of understanding the interest or motives in personality. Spranger (as cited in Allport, 1937) belonged to the school of *Verstehendepsychologie*, which defined ideal types as representing “ultimate and absolutely coherent patterns of value, unifying any personality capable of following one of them consistently” (pp. 227, 228). While an ideal fit between the individual and a particular value is not practical, Spranger postulated that examining value preferences aids in understanding the person (Allport, 1961). “We know a person best if we know what kind of future he is bringing about and his molding of the future rests primarily on his personal values” (Allport, 1961, p. 454). Teachers mold the future by molding the minds of the students in their charge.

Prior research on values had been limited to the religious nature of the beliefs, attitudes, and values of teachers in Catholic secondary schools (Benson & Guerra, 1985). That study focused on religious formation in terms of Catholic doctrine. The current research examines the six personal value preferences described by Allport (1937, 1961) and is briefly described below.

The aesthetic value preference is grounded in the belief that life is a series of events each to be enjoyed for its own sake. This value is grounded in the concepts of harmony and form. Aesthetic people, while not necessarily artists, view life as a series of artistic episodes. Aesthetic values include an appreciation for independence, individuality, and people. Aesthetic values run counter to the interest in the welfare of people, repression of individual freedoms, and commercialism of business activities. The aesthetic value preference sees religion in terms of the beauty and pomp of the ceremony rather than traditional worship experience (Allport, 1937, 1961; Allport et al., 1970).

The economic value preference is concerned with usefulness and self-preservation. Education is seen as practical, and unapplied knowledge is useless. This value is based on the business concepts of acquired wealth, consumption of goods, and usefulness of credit. Wealth becomes a means of surpassing others rather than a means to serve or dominate. Business people tend to prefer this value orientation. The economic person perceives God as the source of tangible rewards, such as money, luxury items, and gifts (Allport, 1937, 1961; Allport et al., 1970).

A political value orientation is manifested in a concern for power. A political value preference is not necessarily an indication of a politician;

rather it is a leadership trait. Competition, leadership, and a struggle for power are all aspects of the political value orientation (Allport, 1937, 1961; Allport et al., 1970).

A religious value preference motivates people to search for an understanding of how each element fits into the great scheme of things, a search for unity. The religious value orientation finds divine intervention in every event. At its extreme, the religious preference may be manifested in the practice of self-denial, meditation, and isolation (Allport, 1937, 1961; Allport et al., 1970). Spranger (as cited in Allport, 1937) has described the religious person as one "whose mental structure is permanently directed to the creation of the highest and absolutely satisfying value experience" (p. 230).

The social value orientation is dominated by an altruistic or philanthropic love of people. Values such as kindness and unselfishness are characteristic of a social value preference. Power other than the power of love is viewed as a threat to personal integrity (Allport, 1937, 1961; Allport et al., 1970). Spranger (as cited in Allport et al., 1970) described the social value preference as being, "in its purest form...selfless and tends to approach very closely the religious attitude" (p. 5).

The theoretical value preference leads one to seek to discover truth. Scientists and philosophers exhibit a theoretical value orientation. Beauty and utility are unimportant values. Observation, cognition, and reason are essential for bringing order to knowledge. Theoretical values are girded in the intellectual, rational, critical, and empirical need to organize knowledge (Allport, 1937, 1961; Allport et al., 1970).

Neither Spranger nor Allport contended that any person is the sum total of one particular value. Rather, value direction is guided by choices. The repeated preference of one choice over another indicated a specific value orientation (Allport, 1961). This descriptive research looked at the value preferences of teachers in one archdiocese. Two research questions were addressed: (1) What relative importance did the teachers in this study place on the six values identified in *The Study of Values*? (2) Were there any significant differences in the importance of the values identified by the religious and lay teachers in this study?

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

The archdiocese selected for this study contained 12 Roman Catholic secondary schools. Five of these schools were categorized as private and seven were categorized as archdiocesan. Both private and archdiocesan secondary schools were invited to participate in this study. Eleven of the 12 high schools were included. One high school did not participate because of communication delays.

In order to obtain well-informed responses to the inquiry of teacher val-

ues, the study was limited to full-time teachers. During the 1996-1997 school year, 648 lay and religious teachers met this criterion. Forty-five (7%) of the full-time teachers were religiously affiliated; 10 were priests, 20 were religious men (brothers), and 15 were religious women (nuns). The 603 (93%) lay teachers accounted for the remainder of the full-time teaching faculty.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The hand-scored edition of *The Study of Values* (Allport et al., 1960) was used for this research. The instrument has been used for over 50 years to measure the strength of six basic, personality-related motives or interests: theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political, and religious. It was selected for this study because it included the religious value preference, it has been used consistently in vocational research, and it performed well in validation studies. The split-half reliability coefficients for the values ranged from .84 for theoretical values to .95 for religious values. Item total correlations for each scale were significant at the .01 level. Test-retest reliability ranged from .84 for economic values to .93 for religious values. Correlation among the values was difficult because the scores on each value are interdependent. However, a positive correlation was found between social and religious values and between economic and political values. To a lesser degree, a correlation exists between theoretical and aesthetic values (Allport et al., 1960, 1970).

The Study of Values consisted of two parts. Part I comprised 30 questions, each of which asked the respondent to select one of two alternative answers. In addition to selecting an answer, the respondent was asked to indicate the strength of preference by distributing three points between the two alternative responses (2 to one and 1 to the other; 3 to one and 0 to the other). Part II was composed of 15 questions. Respondents were required to rank the four alternative answers to each question from *most preferred* (4) to *least preferred* (1). Scores for each value were obtained by summing the item scores and adding or subtracting correction figures provided in the manual (Allport et al., 1960, 1970).

PROCEDURES

A cover letter, *The Study of Values*, and a researcher-designed demographic profile were distributed to a stratified random sample of 353 teachers in Roman Catholic secondary schools in the archdiocese. The purpose of using a stratified random sample was to assure representation from each of the relevant subgroups to be studied (Gay, 1996). Stratification was used to include all 45 full-time religious faculty in the sample to ensure that this subgroup was represented in the research.

Instruments were hand-scored with every tenth survey being retabulated to verify that accurate data were recorded. The ipsative nature of the instru-

ment required each respondent to have the same total score on the instrument. Verification of scores by cross addition of subset totals was completed as each survey was scored.

RESULTS

A total of 206 full-time teachers returned surveys. This represents an overall return rate of 58%. Of this total, 187 surveys were usable, which represents 53% of those sent questionnaires.

The data were analyzed for relative importance by looking at scores for each individual value in terms of group and subgroup means and standard deviations. Once the mean score for each value was determined, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if there was a significant difference at the .05 level between the means of the subgroups under study. Since the research reported on in this article is part of a larger study, the analysis of variance test was selected over a t-test to provide for consistency in statistical reporting. Since an analysis of variance is essentially a more rigorous t-test, it was well suited for this study (Gay, 1996).

POPULATION COMPARISONS

As reported in Table 1, respondents included 106 women (57%) and 81 men (43%). Of this sample 168 respondents were lay teachers (90%), and 19 respondents were religious teachers (10%). In 1994, Brigham reported that women accounted for 56% of the Catholic secondary school teaching population, and men accounted for 44% of the population. This report also found that 85% of the faculty was composed of lay women and men, and the remaining 15% were religious (Brigham, 1994). Archdiocesan statistics for 1996-1997 indicated that 58% of the full-time teaching faculty were women and 42% were men, with a 93% lay faculty presence and a 7% religious faculty presence.

Table 1
Comparisons by Gender and Religious Status Among the Study Sample, Archdiocesan Population, and National Population of Catholic Secondary School Teachers

	Study Sample	Archdiocesan Population	National Population
Women	57% (106)	58%	56%
Men	43% (81)	42%	44%
Religious Faculty	10% (19)	7%	15%
Lay Faculty	90% (168)	93%	85%

Percentages representing the age of respondents mirrored the 1993-1994 national statistics which indicated that 43% of all Catholic school teachers were under 45 years of age (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1995). The average age for respondents in this study was 42 years. Over 72% of the respondents were under the age of 50. Lay teachers' average age was 41 years, while the average age for religious respondents was 56 years. Age by religious affiliation was 57 years for brothers, 53 years for priests, and 56 years for sisters.

Of the 187 respondents, 86% were Roman Catholic, 8% were non-Catholic, and 6% did not report their religious affiliation. Over half (58%) of the respondents in this study held advanced degrees while 42% held bachelors degrees. Advanced degrees were held by 94% of the religious faculty members and by 54% of the lay faculty members represented in the study.

Teachers in this study had from 1 to 62 years of teaching experience. Lay teachers had an average of 15 years of teaching experience. Religious faculty had an average of 31 years of experience. While 27% (46) of the lay teachers had between one and six years of experience, no religious faculty members had less than seven years of experience. The majority of religious teachers (84%) had 19 or more years of experience. Almost a third (31%) of the lay faculty members had a similar experience profile. Years of teaching experience ranged from: 1 to 4 years (20%); 10-12 years (13%); 14-19 years (18%); 22-23 years (7%); and 24+ years (42%).

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Question 1: What relative importance did the teachers in this study place on the six values identified in *The Study of Values*? Mean scores were used to determine relative importance. The religious value (44.79) was most important to the teachers in this study. The social value with a mean score of 42.03 was second in importance. Low importance was found for the political (37.16) and economic (36.17) values. Mid-range importance was found for the aesthetic (40.61) and theoretical (38.71) values.

Table 2 summarizes the rank, mean scores, and standard deviations for each of the values.

Research Question 2: Were there any significant differences in the importance of the values identified by the religious and lay teachers in this study? Only the religious value was found to be statistically significant at the .05 level. Religious faculty members had a higher mean score (50.73) than lay faculty members (44.11) which indicated that the religious teachers were more strongly attracted to this value. It should, however, be noted that both subgroups did select the religious value preference as the most important value.

Table 2
Rank Order of Importance of Values by Mean Rating
of All Respondents (N=187)

Rank	Value	Mean	SD
1	Religious	44.79	9.00
2	Social	42.03	6.88
3	Aesthetic	40.61	8.07
4	Theoretical	38.71	7.12
5	Political	37.16	6.20
6	Economic	36.17	7.43

Table 3
Comparative Rank Order of Importance (by Mean Rating)
of Lay and Religious Faculty

Value	Lay Teachers Rank (mean)	Religious Teachers Rank (mean)
Religious	1 (44.11)	1 (50.73)
Social	2 (41.88)	2 (43.26)
Aesthetic	3 (40.86)	3 (38.68)
Theoretical	4 (38.71)	4 (38.39)
Political	5 (37.39)	5 (35.05)
Economic	6 (37.02)	6 (33.86)

Table 4
Results of Tests of Significant Difference Between Lay Faculty (N=168)
and Religious Faculty (N=19) on Ratings of Importance of the Values

Value	Lay Faculty		Religious Faculty		F	p
	x	SD	x	SD		
Aesthetic	40.86	8.12	38.39	7.41	1.60	.20
Economic	37.02	7.45	33.86	6.75	3.11	.07
Political	37.39	6.16	35.05	6.22	2.45	.11
Religious	44.11	8.87	50.73	8.00	9.67	.00*
Social	41.88	7.04	43.26	5.17	.67	.41
Theoretical	38.71	7.27	38.68	5.66	.00	.98

Note: *p<.05

Table 3 summarizes the comparative rank order of importance by mean rating of lay and religious faculty, and Table 4 reports the significant differences between lay and religious faculty on ratings of importance of these values.

DISCUSSION

The demographics resulting from this study indicated that the sample was representative of the population from which it had been drawn. Additionally, the sample was representative of the national statistics in terms of lay faculty composition. Based on the age demographics seen in this study, it appears that the increased lay infusion in the archdiocese may be a result of an aging religious population. The average age for religious teachers was 15 years greater than the average age for lay teachers.

Because of the ipsative nature of this instrument, respondents were forced to select between competing values. Faculty members selected responses that favored the religious value over the other five value preferences. The dominant element of the religious value orientation is unity. The secondary school teachers in this study considered unity and their individual place within the unified whole as the most significant value preference. While this value preference was dominant, it also had the widest dispersion in mean scores of all the values. So while most of these Roman Catholic secondary school teachers preferred a religious value orientation, they varied widely in their level of preference.

The social, aesthetic, theoretical, political, and economic values followed in descending order. It is of little surprise that the social value ranked second with the teachers in this study. This value reflects the altruistic aspects of love. People who are motivated by this value can be described as kind, unselfish, and sympathetic. This value has also been closely related to the religious value in previous studies (Allport et al., 1970).

The economic orientation was the least preferred value orientation for all teachers in this study. Self-preservation and financial gain, important characteristics of those who prefer an economic value orientation, were least important to these teachers. This finding confirms Sederberg and Clark's (1987) research, which found that financial considerations were not crucial to a teacher's decision to remain in the profession.

As might be expected, there was a statistically significant difference in the religious value preference for lay and religious teachers. Given the conclusion that this value was the value of preference for both the religious and lay respondents in the study, there is probably little causing this difference other than the fact that lay teachers, while strongly motivated by the religious value orientation, may have more external considerations in their lives. This statistical difference may also be a function of *The Study of Values* scoring

which requires forced choices. Religious faculty members often are not overly concerned with the personal, financial, or political implications of their choice. However, some questions may have required lay respondents to select between religious, financial, or political options.

Also supporting this conclusion is the fact that the p value for the economic value, while not statistically significant at the .05 level, was .07. This may indicate that there is reason to consider that the difference between lay and religious faculty members' preference could be a function of having to choose between the economic value and an alternative value.

There were no other statistically significant differences in the mean scores of values considered in this study. The aesthetic, political, social, theoretical, and to a lesser extent economic values were shared between the religious and lay faculty members who are represented in this study.

Almost half of the respondents in this study were "career" educators (Bryk et al., 1993). These teachers each had over 16 years of teaching experience. Additionally, most of them had taught exclusively in Catholic schools. Lay teachers accounted for more than 75% of the career educators. This confirms the literature that suggested that more and more lay teachers are spending their careers in Catholic schools. As this number approaches the 90% mark, the challenges facing administrators to hire and retain qualified teachers intensifies.

Researchers (Allport, 1961; Rokeach, 1973) have suggested that values are important factors in determining attitude, behavior, motivation, and personality. Among the choices, which may be influenced by values, are the selection of an occupation, the decision to remain in a given job or at a job site, and individual job satisfaction (Super & Sverko, 1995).

Shared values do exist among Roman Catholic secondary school teachers. The religious value which Spranger (as cited in Allport, 1961) defined in the mature personality as being "...an 'intrinsic' value for the individual, and as such is comprehensive and integrative and motivational" (p. 301), was found to be the most predominant shared value. In a motivational sense it is perhaps this value more than any other that is responsible for teachers selecting and remaining in Catholic secondary schools. Paramount to those who exhibit a religious value preference is the concept of unity. Unity allows one to build a life around a guiding philosophy. Decisions on career choice, job stability, and job satisfaction will be influenced by the philosophy which brings unity to the individual's life.

Administrative decisions on recruiting and hiring new faculty members are best served by matching an individual's value preference with the value preference of the school. Since shared values were found to be essential for building and maintaining school climate (Grant, 1985), the results of this study indicate that the identification of characteristics representative of a religious value preference are important when hiring new faculty. A non-Catholic presence has been identified in Catholic secondary schools (Benson

& Guerra, 1985). With this in mind, it is important that administrators understand the role that a religious value orientation can play in hiring decisions. A teacher who demonstrates a strong religious value preference, whether Catholic or non-Catholic, may better serve the school community than a nominal Catholic.

The results of this study reflected that the economic value orientation, while shared across subgroups, was the least important factor in each of these groups. Research found that salary is not a decisive factor in teacher retention (Sederberg & Clark, 1987); however, this study did find increasing mean scores and tighter standard deviation for this value. Over half of the respondents had been teaching in Roman Catholic secondary schools for nine or more years. So while it does not appear that salary was a major consideration for these veteran educators, there was a growing consideration of its importance as manifested by the decreasing difference between the mean score for the economic value and the other values represented in this study. Additionally, low starting salaries have been credited with the profession's inability to attract talented college graduates (Rosenholtz, 1984). Therefore, economic considerations must not be ruled out when examining teacher recruitment strategies.

While the religious value was the most preferred value orientation for all of the respondents in this study, there was a significant ($p < .05$) difference for this value between lay and religious faculty members. This would appear to be a function of the religious vocation as opposed to the single or married vocation. Religious faculty members are part of a community or order that provides economic support for its members. Single and married faculty members must provide for their own economic needs. While the economic value orientation was the least significant value preference, it may well have forced respondents to select responses that skewed this mean score.

IMPLICATIONS

As previously stated, parents select Catholic schools because of the values which are shared among the school's staff, the clarity of the school's mission, its purpose, and the school's emphasis on religious attitudes and values (Cibulka, O'Brien, & Zewe, 1982). Since shared values do exist among teachers in the Roman Catholic secondary schools examined in this study, administrators may wish to consider shared values when making recruitment and hiring decisions. It is recommended that the hiring process include interviews and recommendations from a committee representative of the school community. This committee may include an assistant administrator, teachers, a staff member, and a parent. Essential to this committee's effective functioning is a training session covering the formation of interview questions and legal considerations.

Open-ended interview questions should be developed that include con-

tent that encourages candidates to address their value preference. This focused interview process would give insight into the teacher's personality and the factors that motivated the candidate in the selection of the specific school site. Values-focused interviews afford the opportunity to determine if there is a fit between the teacher and the school community.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has provided data on the values of teachers in Roman Catholic secondary schools. It would be of interest to examine the values of teachers in Roman Catholic elementary schools to determine if there is a difference in value preferences between these two groups of educators. This research was quantitative. A similar study using qualitative methods of research would expand upon the insights gained from this study.

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