

# FAITH AND JOB SATISFACTION: IS RELIGION A MISSING LINK?

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## ABSTRACT

*While many studies of business ethics have linked job satisfaction and spirituality, relatively few have focused on the connection with formal religions. However, there are numerous suggestions in the literature that spirituality, when incorporated into religious systems, might affect the work-related values and attitudes of employees in unexpected ways. These nuances are important for managers who desire to be inclusive in a multicultural world to understand.*

*This study explores the links between religious faith and job satisfaction using a multi-religion sample of working adults. Data were drawn from 741 employees and managers from Southern California organizations and firms. The sample included non-religious individuals and members of a variety of religions. The intent was to examine whether and what level of religious commitment impacted workplace attitudes, specifically job satisfaction.*

*In this paper, we compare and contrast members of the five largest religions which are, in alphabetical order, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, in relation to job satisfaction. We found that religious commitment does positively impact job satisfaction, though there are differences depending on the type of religion. The study concludes with implications for research and practice.*

## INTRODUCTION

A major influence on an employee's satisfaction at work is the subtle permission on the part of the employer to allow him or her to be a complete person, rather than making it necessary to leave important personal characteristics, such as ethnicity, gender or religion, at the door (Ackers and Preston 1997; Epstein 2002). This desire is not limited to one age group or education level; rather it affects the job satisfaction or dissatisfaction of many employees (Brief 1998; Kutcher *et al.* 2010).

In the diverse workplace of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a good manager works at creating an inclusive workplace where whole-person expression is welcomed. Research suggests that such encouragement includes the accommodation of spirituality and the basic tenets of religious faiths (Ali and Gibbs 1998; Walker 2013). That is, understanding an employee's spirituality helps minimize misunderstanding and creates a healthy, accepting workplace. It increases job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction can be defined as an individual's positive or negative attitude toward his or her job or workplace (Brayfield and Crocket 1955; Kinicki *et al.* 2002). Research suggests

that there are extensive positive correlations between job satisfaction and important workplace variables such as organizational commitment, absenteeism, and low turnover (Judge *et al.* 2001; Mowday and Steers 1979; O'Reilly and Caldwell 1980; Petty *et al.* 1984). Hence, employee job satisfaction is presumed to be an important construct for managers to understand.

Job satisfaction is a complex construct. Four basic factors are postulated to affect an individual's level of job satisfaction: (1) the nature of the work itself (Herzberg, 1987; Kim, 2005); (2) the individual's personality, demographics, and values (Judge and Larsen 2001; Locke and Latham 1990); (3) social influence (Van den Berg and Feij 2003); and (4) the individual's general life satisfaction (Jones 2006; Witmer and Sweeney 1992).

Ghazzawi and Smith (2009) suggest that a strong religious faith could influence at least three of these factors. For example, individual values are often formed and strengthened by the religion the person is affiliated with. Social influence, in the form of religious teachings and communities, may affect how the person understands the value of his or her job. General life satisfaction can be enhanced by a sense of purpose in life, as is incorporated into many religious systems (Ellison and Smith 1991).

Indeed, a number of researchers have found positive correlations between an employee's spirituality and his or her satisfaction with, and commitment to, the job (Barnett *et al.* 1996; Kolodinsky *et al.* 2008; Milliman *et al.* 2001). However, although spiritual commitment has been researched extensively in relation to job satisfaction and other work attitudes, religious commitment has been less studied (Cash and Gray 2000; Fry 2003; Moore 2008; Von Bergen 2009).

This paper contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it contributes to the ethics literature by adding to the discussion on religion. As said before, in relation to employees the ethics literature has tended to emphasize spirituality (Kennedy and Lawton 1998; Kutcher *et al.* 2010; Moore 2008; Von Bergen 2009), but there have been increasing calls for more research on employees and religion (e.g. Conroy and Emerson, 2004; Furnham 1990; Ghazzawi *et al.* 2012; Ibrahim *et al.* 2008; Kriger and Seng 2005; Moore 2008). This might be because spirituality is often self-defined in individual terms (Duffy, 2006; Fry, 2003; Kolodinsky *et al.* 2008) which, arguably, makes it more difficult to study reliably (Hill and Pargament 2003; Milliman *et al.* 2001; Parboteeah *et al.* 2008). Please note that saying that spirituality is often defined in individual terms does not suggest that there is not a communal aspect (i.e. Milliman *et al.* 2001), merely that there is not a consistent group creed or defining set of beliefs. However, a majority of the employees (and employers) who say they are spiritual are also members of one of the major religions (Kriger and Seng 2005; Walker 2013), and these do have defining beliefs. Studying spirituality within a consistent community and set of beliefs can arguably contribute to rigor in the research (Hill and Pargament 2003; Hill *et al.* 1998; Kutcher 2010). Thus, one benefit of studying religion might include the ability to generalize finding more straightforwardly.

It should be noted that this paper does not focus on one particular religion. Rather it focuses on religions as collective faith and creed systems (Fisher, 2008; Hill *et al.* 1998; Fry 2003; Kennedy and Lawton, 1998; Kolodinsky *et al.* 2008). Though there is spirituality outside of religion, religions incorporate the spirituality of the individual into a system of formal doctrine, worship, values, attitudes, prayer, and devotional practices (Horton 1950; Vitell 2009; Zellers and Perrewé 2003). Spirituality is valuable to study, but it is not the focus of this paper.

This paper also contributes by exploring religion in relation to a major workplace variable, job satisfaction. The connections between religious expression and workplace attitudes

are important for managers to understand. Outside of the West many employees assume that religion will be central in the workplace (Ali 1987; Choo *et al.* 2009; Hutchings *et al.* 2010). Even in the West, religion is important to people. For example, though there is evidence that Americans are becoming less religious (Grossman 2009), 80% of surveyed adults in the U.S identify themselves with a formal religion, and over half say religion is very important in their lives and that they attend religious services regularly and pray daily (PewResearch 2008: Para. 2). Thus, while religion may not be as central in the western workplace as in other societies, we suggest that many employees would not wish to sublimate their religious identities at work (Kennedy and Lawton 1998; Kutcher *et al.* 2010). In addition organizations are becoming increasingly diverse (Cunningham, 2010; Kriger and Seng 2005). Therefore it becomes even more important for managers who desire to create inclusive workplaces to understand the links between religious commitment and work attitudes.

This research also contributes because it focuses on five different religions. Though there have been repeated calls for multi-religion tests of workplace attitudes (i.e. Parboteeah *et al.* 2009; Kutcher *et al.* 2010), it is still relatively unusual to find studies where people of different religions are compared on the same scale. In addition this study tests working adults, which adds robustness to the results. It explores the positive aspects of religiously committed employees, thus adding complexity to the perspectives in the organizational literature.

Finally, this study contributes by testing the validity for an instrument that is increasingly used in measuring religious commitment – the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (Worthington *et al.* 2003). To date, this instrument has been shown to be a robust, multi-dimensional measurement of religiosity, but it has largely been tested on Christians (Hall *et al.* 2009; Kum-Lung and Teck-Chai 2010). This research tests the instrument on a variety of people, including those who are religiously committed and those who are not.

There are many thousands of religions but we chose to focus this study on the five largest - Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism (Adherents.com 2012). This kept the study and the paper within reasonable bounds. Testing other religions, or people without religion, in relation to job satisfaction is valuable, but it is outside the scope of this paper.

The following pages will first focus on the nature of religion and its connections with ethics and with the workplace. Next, we will discuss the five major religions in relation to job satisfaction. Lastly, we present the study linking job satisfaction to the religious commitment of adherents of the five largest world religions.

## **THEORITICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY: RELIGION AND JOB SATISFACTION**

Religion can be thought of as a sincerely held set of beliefs about the nature of the forces(s) that ultimately shape man's destiny and moral values (Lenski, 1969; Von Bergen 2009). For the sake of simplicity, in this paper we will call these forces(s) "deity" with a small "d." By "deity" we mean to denote the ultimate source that adherents to the religion assume are the sacred/moral/shaping force or forces that create their religion.

A religion includes "the feelings, thoughts, experiences and behaviors that arise from a search for the sacred...and the means and methods (e.g. rituals or prescribed behaviors) of the search that receive validation and support from within an identifiable group of people" (Hill *et al.* 1998:21). Most religions bring their devotees into a community, such as a temple, church,

synagogue, or mosque, and encourage members to interact in worship, prayer/meditation, or study of sacred documents.

Considerable research focuses on the relationship between religion and ethics (e.g. Cavanagh and Bandsuch 2002; Childs 1995; Ibrahim *et al.* 2007; Kutcher *et al.* 2010). Religions, through the norms, values, and beliefs they advocate, often provide the foundations for the ethical values of their adherents (Horton, 1950; Fararo and Skvoretz 1986; Fisher 2001; Turner, 1997). For example, the code of ethical values found in the Ten Commandments provides a moral foundation for three major religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam).

There is theoretical support for a positive relationship between a higher degree of religious commitment and ethical workplace attitudes (Allmon *et al.* 2000; Barnett *et al.* 1996; Conroy and Emerson 2004; Siu *et al.* 2000; Smith and Oakley 1996; Wolkomir *et al.* 1997). For example, the Hunt and Vitel (1986) Ethics Model postulates that personal religious commitment influences an individual's perceptions of situations, alternatives, and consequences of business decision making. Tests of the model suggest that personal religiousness does influence an individual's ethical decision-making behavior (e.g. Mayo and Marks 1990; Kennedy *et al.* 1998; Vermillion *et al.* 2002).

This influence might occur because religious ethical values are regarded by many as general moral guidelines in their business and personal conduct (Ali *et al.* 2000; Conroy and Emerson 2000; Friedman 2000; Kohlberg 1981). Economist Adam Smith possibly expresses the ultimate connection between religion and ethics when he says:

“Religion affords such strong motives to the practice of virtue, and guards us by such powerful restraints from the temptations of vice, that many have been led to suppose that religious principles were the sole laudable motives of action” (Smith [1776] 1982, p. 171).

Job satisfaction is not a value, but it is a work attitude and attitudes are formed by values (Rokeach 1973). Values are global concepts that guide judgment and a conviction about what is right or desirable (Chaplin 1985; Rokeach 1973). As suggested earlier, religious faith is often a source of individual value systems (Leahy 1986; Kohlberg, 1981; Parboteeah *et al.* 2008). Value systems influence an individual's attitudes, the predisposition to respond to specific environmental elements (Ali 1987; Bos *et al.* 2009; Chaplin 1985; Rokeach 1973). This research is testing the connection between religious intensity and the attitude of job satisfaction

### **RELIGION AND DEITY: IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE**

Each of the five major religions has different assumptions about the nature of the ultimate force or forces which, as stated earlier, we call “deity.” For example, it has been suggested that the Hindu ideal of deity is power, the Christian ideal of deity is love and justice, and the Muslim ideal of deity is transcendence (Corduan 2005). Deity can be impersonal, personal, single or multiple, and have different characteristics.

According to Plantinga and Tooley (2008), the religions of the world center around three major conceptions of deity: 1) deity as the forces of nature/the universe, 2) deity as humanity, and 3) deity as a being separate from and in authority over nature and humanity. Many religions are a synchronistic blend of these concepts.

One concept of deity is that the forces of nature are the ultimate sources that guide life, values and morality (Plantinga and Tooley, 2008). In this concept, deity can be earth-centered (for example Mother Gaia or many forms of Wicca) or involve the larger forces of the universe. Some systems of belief personalize natural forces as spirits or gods, as in Animism or Pantheism. Other systems consider these forces to be impersonal and arbitrary. For example adherents to Atheism say there is no divinity/god/sacred reality but rather assume that the final shaper of human life is the impersonal forces of the universe (Fisher 2008).

In this concept of deity, humans strive to find defenses against the forces of nature, whether personal or impersonal, or find ways to work with or placate them/it. This view would include those whose trust is in science, magic, or technology (McCleary and Barro 2006).

A second concept of deity is that humankind is the source of meaning, knowledge and value (Plantinga and Tooley, 2008). Humanity - individually, *en mass*, or in systems such as cultures - creates morality and meaning. Communism and Humanism (Huxley, 1961) are part of this concept, as are the religions that create deity from archetypes such as war (Mars), birth (many of the fertility religions) or death (Kali). Other religions, such as Buddhism, see the human self/mind as in control of creating the person's moral or physical state (Marques 2011; Yeshe 1998).

The third conception of deity is Theism, the idea that a supreme being or beings, separate from nature and from humanity, has revealed his, her, or themselves and is/are the source of meaning (Plantinga and Tooley 2008). Those who adhere to the major monotheistic religions, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, think of man and nature as dependent on a singular supreme being (Fisher 2008). God or Allah (Arabic for God) is engaged in combat with the evil tendencies in the world (Horton, 1950) and has given a code of morality to humans in a written form – the Bible (Old and New Testaments) or the Koran, respectively.

Some divide these three concepts of deity into two views: the “immanent” and “transcendent” views (Fisher 2008). The immanent perspective is based on the idea that deity is experienced as present within the world in the form of nature or humanity (Horton 1950). Hinduism and Buddhism are examples of immanent religions. It should be noted that some see Buddhism as more of a philosophy than as a religion in the conventional sense (Marques, 2011; Yeshe 1998). However, for purposes of this study, we follow the majority of scholars by assuming that Buddhism is an immanent religion as defined above. The transcendent perspective is based on the idea that deity is separate from and outside of nature and humanity (Horton 1950; Plantinga and Tooley 2008). Christianity, Islam and Judaism are examples of transcendent religions (Fisher 2008).

## **RELIGION IN THE WORKPLACE AND ITS EFFECTS ON JOB SATISFACTION**

What is the appropriate role of religion in the workplace? In the United States, Federal law, such as Title VII, prohibits hiring discrimination or preference based on religion. However, the law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate employees whose religious beliefs, practices or observances conflict with work requirements, unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship (U.S. Department of Labor n.d., para. 3). This could create a possible ambivalence on the part of some managers.

Religious commitment can affect employees positively. Three key effects are noted in the literature.<sup>1</sup> First, the major religions encourage moral frameworks that include care for others. Various studies have found that a majority of business people believe that their religious

values play an important role in making ethical business decisions (i.e. Childs 1995; Lewis and Hardin 2002), and that these decisions should be based on respectful treatment of customers, colleagues and employees (Vitell 2009).

For example, Buddhism and some Hindu sects emphasize the importance of people working harmoniously together toward a common goal (Rich 2007). Judaism is known for its charitable imperatives (Hartman and Hartman 2011), as is Islam where giving alms to those in need is one of the five pillars of the faith (Dunn and Galloway 2011). One of main commands for Christians is altruistic love, to “do to others what you would have them do to you” (Bible, Luke 6:31). Christians and Muslims are required to be just to their employees, knowing that God is watching (Al-Qazwini 1999; Bible, Colossians 4:1). An entire book of the Jewish scriptures (Bible, Proverbs) is devoted to honesty and diligence in life and work, and honorable interactions with others (Pava 1998).

Second, the five major religions encourage their adherents to be honest and conscientious workers, often by helping believers think of their work as dedicated to deity (Epstein 2002). For example, the Protestant (Weber 1958 [1920]) and Catholic work ethic (Novak 1993), the Islamic work ethic (Ali 1987; Ali *et al.* 1995), and many Jewish writings (Bible, Proverbs; Hartman and Harman, 2011; Pava 1998) require employees to be exemplary workers in order to honor God. Choompolpaisal (2008) suggests that the Buddhist work ethic resonates with the Weberian idea that worth can be judged by a person’s willingness to work hard (Weber 1958: 68-70). One of the fundamental principles of Islam is stewardship where believers are to protect the resources entrusted to them and deal with others justly (Dunn and Galloway 2011); stewardship is also an important Jewish and Christian concept and part of some Hindu sects (Fisher 2008).

Religions also can play a part in creating positive reactions towards work by helping believers think of their labor as transcendent to the immediate moment even when the moment is unpleasant (Kutcher *et al.* 2010; Vitell 2009). In addition, people who have strong religious social networks might be able to integrate negative work experiences more favorably than people with weaker networks (Kolodinsky *et al.* 2008; Martinson and Wikenning 1983). This might encourage them to continue to give good service to their employers, even when unhappy with the employer. Third, religions have been found to encourage emotional health in individuals. There is evidence that employees with high religious commitments are likely to be emotionally healthy (Brooks, 2008; Hill and Pargament 2003), though the opposite has also been found (i.e. Lenski 1969; Lugo *et al.* 2008). Religiously committed individuals may receive positive emotional support, and sometimes physical provision, from fellow members of their faith community (Duffy 2006; Stone *et al.* 2003). This might allow a person to cope more easily with the challenges of a job (Davis *et al.* 2004).

In addition, there is evidence that suggests a positive correlation between strong religious commitment and life satisfaction, defined as happiness and well-being (i.e. Hill and Pargament 2003; Jones 2006; Vroom 1964). Longitudinal surveys have found that religious people of all faiths report being about 13 points happier on average than non-religious people (Brooks 2008; Davis *et al.* 2004). Religious people also report being optimistic about the future and inclined to feel successful (Davis *et al.* 2004; Snoep 2008).

A few studies have found a direct relationship between religion and job satisfaction (i.e. Ali *et al.* 1995; Chusmir and Koberg 1988; Ghazzawi *et al.* 2012; Martinson and Wikenning 1983; Yousef 2001). For example, in a study comparing the two branches of Christianity, Catholicism and Protestantism, Skjorshammer (1979) concluded that religion is a significant modifier of job satisfaction and that frequent attendees of religious places tended to be more

satisfied with their jobs than less frequent attendees. Ali and colleagues found similarly that Muslim employees who were more religiously committed tended to be more devoted to their job (Ali 1987; Ali *et al.* 1995). Ghazzawi and Smith (2009) suggest that religion connects positively to job satisfaction by influencing three of the four basic factors that have been postulated to affect an individual's level of job satisfaction: individual values, social influence and general life satisfaction. Religions are the sources for individual values that influence attitudes and they also encourage faith communities, which create social influence (Pava 1998). People are more likely to be satisfied at work if their family and friends model satisfaction (Van den Berg and Feij 2003; McGee and Cohn 2008).

Religious people also have been shown to have high degree of life satisfaction which has been shown to connect to job satisfaction. Tait and colleagues (1989) found, for example, that the greater the degree of general life satisfaction, the higher the degree of job satisfaction (Tait *et al.* 1989 Jones, 2006), though the direction of the relationship has been questioned (England and Whitely 1990; Kolodinsky *et al.* 2008).

In addition, a number of studies have found that spirituality links positively to job and career satisfaction (i.e. Kolodinsky *et al.* 2008; Milliman *et al.* 2001). Since religions incorporate spirituality into a system, the suggestion that strong religious commitment and job satisfaction are linked should not be unexpected.

To summarize, the literature about religion and its role in the workplace suggests that, in general, religiously committed individuals will be more satisfied with their job. However, some variations may exist among those of different religious affiliations and of different levels of religious commitment.

### **Other Variables Related to Job Satisfaction and Religion: Age, Gender, Income, and Education**

Other variables have been frequently suggested to relate significantly to both religion and job satisfaction. The most prominent of these are age, gender, income, and educational level (Byrne *et al.* 2012; Ghazzawi, 2008; Jagannathan and Sundar 2010). In order to clarify the effects of religion, we chose to test these variables as well.

#### **Age**

There is some indication that an employee's age might affect his or her religious commitment and also level of job satisfaction. Religious commitment has been found to fluctuate throughout an individual's life (Brooks, 2008; Witmer and Sweeney 1992) though there is no clear pattern as to whether old or young people are more religiously committed (Kum-lung and Teck-Chai 2010; Worthington *et al.* 2003).

A growing body of literature suggests that age plays a role in job satisfaction (Bos *et al.* 2009; Ghazzawi 2010) but again, the results are inconclusive. Some researchers found that older workers tend to be more satisfied than younger ones (i.e. Hunter 2007; Durst and DeSantis 1997) while others found the reverse (i.e. Finegold *et al.* 2002; Hickson and Oshagbemi 1999; Oshagbemi and Hickson 2003). Still others suggest that the age-job satisfaction relationship may follow a U shaped curve, with employees over 55 and under 25 reporting the highest satisfaction (Bernal *et al.* 1998; Clark *et al.* 1996; Hunter 2007). Other researchers found no interactions at all, though the studies were not always done in western nations (i.e. Sarker *et al.* 2003; Sharma

and Jyoti 2005, 2009; Tu *et al.* 2005). In conclusion, the connections between age, level of religious commitment and job satisfaction are not clearly defined. One contribution of this study is to continue testing this relationship.

## **Gender**

Some researchers have found evidence that women are more concerned with religion than men (Kum-Lung and Teck-Chai 2010; Ruegger and King 1992). However, a 1998 meta-analysis of gender and religiosity (Borkowski and Ugras 1998) concluded that approximately 51% of the studies found no or mixed differences between the genders. The effect of gender upon religious intensity is still not clear (Kum-Lung and Teck-Chai 2010).

The role of gender in job satisfaction is also unclear. While some studies reported that women have higher job satisfaction than men, possibly due to lower expectations (Clark 1997; Sloane and Williams 2000), others found that women have lower job satisfaction, possibly due to more restrictive conditions (Kaiser 2007; Sousa-Paza and Sousa-Poza 2003). Still other studies found no effect at all (Bender *et al.* 2005; Eskildsen *et al.* 2004), though that might be moderated by work related factors such as stress (Kim *et al.* 2009).

## **Education**

Education acts as a moderator for many relationships and one of those relationships seems to be ethics. A number of studies have found that higher educated respondents tend to display a more sophisticated ethic (Tsalikis and Lassar 2009; Kum-Lung and Teck-Chai 2010). Given the link between ethics and religion, this would suggest a similar relationship for religious intensity, but we could find no study linking educational level and religious intensity.

The links between educational level and job satisfaction are mixed. Some researchers found positive relationships between the two (i.e. Bamundo and Kopelman 1980; Chen and Francesco 2000; Pereira and Coelho 2013). Others concluded that educational level is negatively related to job satisfaction, particularly if over-skilling is an issue (Agarwal and Bhargava 2013; Mavromaras *et al.* 2011). Yet others found no results at all. For example, level of education was not a predictor of job satisfaction in nursing (Choi *et al.* 2012) or in academics (Byrne *et al.* 2012).

## **Income**

The relationship between income and job satisfaction has been well-documented, though not agreed upon. Some studies report a positive relationship (Clark and Oswald 1996; Weaver 1980), while others find that the relationship does not exist or is negative (Bhuiyan and Mengue 2002; Jayaratne and Chess 1984). Still others suggest that the relationship is different among different income levels (Ducharme and Martin 2000).

In conclusion, the literature on age, gender, education and income do not give clear ideas on what direct or indirect effect these variables might have on job satisfaction. Therefore it seemed best to control them when examining the relationship between religious commitment and job satisfaction. Consequently, we propose the following hypothesis:



**Hypothesis 1:** *For any individual, there is a positive and direct relationship between his or her level of religious commitment and job satisfaction, after controlling for the direct or indirect effects of age, gender, income, and education.*

## THE FIVE RELIGIONS AND JOB SATISFACTION

There are many important religions but in order to bound the study, we focused on the five largest - Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. It should be noted however, that none of these religions are unified systems of belief. For example Islam has several branches, the most dominant of which are the Sunni and Shiite, and there are many sects of Hinduism. However, for the purposes of this exploratory research, we assumed that the variations between religions were greater than the variations within a religion. Each religion was considered as a single construct. The discussion below covers the major “orthodox” teachings of the religion regarding job satisfaction, with the differences in the branches noted only peripherally.

### Immanent religions and job satisfaction: Buddhism and Hinduism

#### Buddhism

Buddhism is based on the writings and teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, commonly known as The Buddha, the enlightened one. The goal is to escape impermanence - the thinking constructs of the world - and plunge into Nirvana, the uncreated, which is enlightenment (Fundamentalbuddhism.com; Marques 2011; Yeshe 1998). The Eightfold Noble Path links the thinking and action processes designed to assist the adherent to achieve enlightenment through a process of birth and rebirth (Cantor 2008; Rich 2007).

There are a few studies that suggest that Buddhism might have a positive influence on its followers’ job attitudes. For example, Rich (2007) suggested that the values of Buddhism, particularly compassion and other communitarian values might cause nurses who are Buddhists to have good job relationships and subsequently higher job satisfaction. On the other hand, it is possible that the Buddhist philosophy of impermanence might affect an adherent’s perception of the job as tying one to the world (Cantor 2008). In addition, there might not be the social encouragement of other adherents to be attached to a job because it is part of the thinking constructs of the world.

#### Hinduism

There is little formal research on the relation between work ethics and Hinduism, nor could we find literature connecting the religion to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Therefore one of the contributions of this paper is to begin to fill this gap.

Hinduism is a syncretistic religion. Though there are a large number of Hindu gods and sects, a number of experts suggest that the major sections of Hinduism fall into the category of humanity as deity (i.e. Berry 1961; Chattopadhyaya 2001; Drees 2011). Therefore we have positioned it as an imminent religion.

In the culture derived from the Hindu *dharma*, an individual’s profession and social status is determined by his cast (Borooah *et al.* 2007; Hopkins 2010). This might affect job

satisfaction, particularly for people of a lower cast or for women. In many Hindu sects, a virtuous woman can only seek employment with the permission of her husband, which results in a high percentage of women working in lower paying, home-based work (Kantor 2005; Rani and Unni 2009). As a result of these complexities, we suggest that it might be difficult to find clear correlations between religious commitment and job satisfaction for Hindus.

## **Transcendent religions and job satisfaction: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism**

### **Christianity**

Christians worship the God of Judaism in three persons (“three in one”) and are named for the second member of the Trinity, Jesus, who Christians also consider to be the Jewish Messiah or Christ. The scriptures of Christianity are the Bible (Old and New Testament), and its major branches are Catholicism and Protestantism.

Beginning with Max Weber in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Weber 1958 [1920]), a well-established literature on Christian work ethics has developed. Weber argued that the Protestant Work Ethic arose from Luther and Calvin, leaders in the Protestant movement. Luther suggested that God calls individuals to various vocations using the term *Beruf*, “calling,” to suggest that a Christian had a spiritual work on earth – his or her vocation (Wingren, 1957).

There is also a clearly established Catholic work ethic (Novak, 1993). Both ethics derive from the Bible which commands Christians to work as though they were working for Christ himself (Sherman and Hendricks 1987; Smith 2011). Good work is seen as evidence of altruistic love to others and an act of worship to God (Ryken 1986). We suggest that as believers internalize these values, their satisfaction with their job will increase.

### **Islam**

Islam, which means “surrendering one’s will to the will of Allah” (Al-Qazwini 1999) is derived from a revelation from Allah, the Almighty, given to Muhammad. The message was written in the Quran, or Koran, which is the principle holy book in Islam. The major branches of Islam are Sunni and Shia’i (Dunn and Galloway 2011).

There is a growing literature on the relation of Islam to work attitudes such as job satisfaction (i.e. Ali 1987; Ali et al. 1995; Tsalikis and Lassar 2009; Yousef 2001). Muhammad was a businessman and, according to the Quran, business is an important aspect of life. For example, it is allowed even during pilgrimage to Mecca (Graafland et al. 2006). Work in general is a source of independence, a means of fostering personal growth and self-respect, and a way to create the means to provide charity to others (Ali 1987; Graafland et al. 2006). In fact not working hard is seen to be a life failure (Tsalikis and Lassar 2009). Based on a study of 425 Muslim employees, Yousef (2001) concluded that the Islamic work ethic directly affects both job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Ali and colleagues found that Muslim employees who were more religious tended to be more devoted to their job (Ali 1987; Ali et al. 1995).

### **Judaism**

Judaism is also a transcendent religion, though it is notoriously difficult to define the religion clearly (Satlow 2006) because it also involves ethnicity and tradition. The name “Jew”

was originally a nickname for people from the Israelite tribe of Judah, but the meaning later came to include all descendants of Jacob (Neusner 1975). The religion is generally based on rabbinical traditions and ceremonial laws, located in and derived from, the Hebrew Scriptures (Halbertal 1997) which are called the TaNaKh an abbreviation for the Torah (the Law), the Neviim (the Prophets) and the Kethuvim (the Writings or Wisdom literature) (Neusner 1975; Satlow 2006.).

Though a number of scholars have discussed the ethics of Judaism in relation to economic life (i.e. Michaels 2009; Pava, 1998; Satlow 2006), we could find few discussions of a so-called Jewish work ethic, and little research relating Judaism to job satisfaction. An exception is Kremer and Goldstein (1990) who found links between religious centrality and job satisfaction in high school teachers in Israel.

One contribution of this paper is to begin to fill this gap. We suggest that the historic relationships between the TaNaKh and economic integrity, plus the emphasis in Judaism on charity (McGee and Cohn 2008) argue that commitment to this religion could have a strong positive effect on job satisfaction.

## Summary

In regard to the links between personal commitment to one of the five major religions and job satisfaction, we speculate that members of the transcendent religions (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism) would be somewhat likely to have similar responses to religious commitment and job satisfaction. Followers of Allah or God follow divine commands when they act well as employees (Judge, et al. 2001; Petty et al. 1984). Therefore we predict a more direct positive connection between religious commitment and job satisfaction.

In contrast, the imminent religions, Buddhism and Hinduism, have fewer direct links between doctrine/divine authority and working well on the job. Therefore we predict that it will be more difficult to find positive relationships between the religious commitment of members of these religions and job satisfaction, or that the relationships will be neutral or negative. This discussion leads to the following hypotheses:

***Hypothesis 2:** The relationship between level of religious commitments and level of job satisfaction will be different among different religions.*

***Hypothesis 3:** Individuals who are members of transcendent religions will show a direct and positive relationship between level of religious commitment and level of job satisfaction. Members of immanent religions will not show a direct and positive relationship between level of religious commitment and level of job satisfaction, or the relationship will be weaker.*

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study investigates the relationship between religion and job satisfaction. The researchers used two instruments to survey 741 participants from a variety of southern California firms and organizations. Participants were also asked for demographic details such as age, gender, educational level, religious affiliation, income level, position in the organization, and the type of the industry they worked in.<sup>ii</sup> Participation in this study was voluntary and survey

responses were confidential. Participants signed a consent form that clarified the purpose of the study; the consent form was then separated from the demographic data and the survey instruments.

As noted earlier, we chose to limit this study to those people who self-identified with one of the five major religions. The purpose was to bound the study and also because the research design was exploratory in nature. We acknowledge that people without religion, or from other religions, are also valuable participants in this type of research, and will include them in future tests. However, this particular study focuses on people who are members of the five major religions.

### **Job Satisfaction Measurement**

The MSQ Short form (Lester and Bishop 2000) was used to measure an individual's level of job satisfaction. This is a commonly used instrument for this construct. The 20-item "general satisfaction scale" Short Form was created by extracting the item with the highest correlation from each of the original 20 scales of the MSQ. Hoyt reliability coefficients for the Short Form items range from 0.93 to 0.78 (Lester and Bishop 2000; Weiss, Dawis et al. 1967). Construct validity is supported by the validation studies of the Minnesota Importance Questionnaire, based on the Theory of Work Adjustment. Cronbach's Alpha for the 20 MSQ items is 0.926 (Lester and Bishop 2000). In this study, while the mean of job satisfaction was 3.70 and standard deviation was 0.71, for the entire study sample of  $n=741$  the mean was 3.73 for those who identified themselves as affiliated with one of the five major religions and 3.48 for those who did not.

### **Religious Commitment Measurement**

An individual's level of religious commitment was measured using the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10) (Worthington et al. 2003). The RCI-10 is a 10 question scale measuring general level of religious commitment, based on a Likert-type scale.

The RCI -10 was developed by Worthington and colleagues to assist psychologist and counseling health professionals in testing the religious intensity of patients. The developers used Pearson correlation coefficients to test each subscale of the instrument. The test-retest reliability coefficients for the full RCI-10 and for the factors Intrapersonal Religious Commitment, and Interpersonal Religious Commitment were .87, .86, and .83 respectively (Worthington *et al.* 2003: 87).

Construct validity of the instrument was assessed by an ANOVA, using participants' endorsement of salvation on Rokeach's Value Survey as the independent variable and the RCI-10 scales as dependent variables. Scores on the full-scale RCI-10 were significantly higher for religious individuals. Additionally, Pearson correlation coefficients were used to examine the relationship of the RCI-10 (full scale and subscales) and scores of endorsement of the single-item measures of religiosity and spirituality (Hall et al. 2009; Worthington et al. 2003). Cronbach's Alpha for the RC-10 items in this study was 0.959. For this study, the mean of religious commitment for those who were affiliated with a major religion ( $n=616$ ) was 2.97. The mean of those who reported themselves as not being a member of a major religion ( $n=125$ ) was recoded as 0.

## Participants and Setting

The 741 participants in the study included employees of banks, hotels, hospitals, governmental agencies, not-for-profit organizations and employed graduate students at a private southern California university. Out of the 912 people solicited for this study, a total of 769 completed and returned the survey, for a response rate of 84%. However, 28 forms were incomplete, and seven surveys belonged to unemployed respondents. These surveys were not used.

## Religions

About nine percent ( $n=64$ ) of the participants self-identified as Buddhist; 54.1% ( $n=401$ ) identified themselves as Christian; 4.2% ( $n=31$ ) identified as Hindu; 3.4% ( $n=25$ ) identified as Jewish, and 9.3% ( $n=69$ ) identified themselves as Muslim. About eight percent ( $n=61$ ) said they did not have a formal religion; and 3.5% ( $n=26$ ) identified with “other religions.” Three and half percent (3.4%) of the participants ( $n=25$ ) identified themselves as Agnostic and 3.5% ( $n=26$ ) as Atheist. Only 1.8% ( $n=13$ ) of the survey takers did not identify their religious affiliation. See Table 1 for participants’ religious affiliation.

Available statistics suggest that this sample is indicative of the religious composition of the southern California region. In particular, significant Hispanic immigration has changed the religious profile of some regions. For example, between 1990 and 2008, the Catholic population of the New England states fell from 50% to 36% while it rose from 29% to 37% in California (Kossmin and Keysar 2009, para. 8). About 54% of our sample identified as Christian, which includes both Catholics and Protestants. In 2004, California was reported to be 2.7% Jewish (Jones, 2004). This Jewish percent of the sample was 3.4% .

While Pew Research reports that 16.1% of the U.S. population is unaffiliated with any formal religion (Lugo et al. 2008), in California this percent goes down to 14.4% (Jones, 2004). About 15.1% ( $n=112$ ) of this sample reported no connection with a formal religion. Thus, on balance we judge that to a large extent this sample is representative of the religions of the region.

<b>Religion Affiliation</b>	<b>Number of employees (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Agnostic	25	3.4%
Atheist	26	3.5%
Buddhist	64	8.6%
Christian	401	54.1%
Hindu	31	4.2%
Jewish	25	3.4%
Muslim	69	9.3%
No formal religion	61	8.2%
Other religious beliefs	26	3.5%
Blank	13	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Gender, Age, Education, Income

The respondents in this study were 54% male ( $n=402$ ) and 46% female ( $n=339$ ). The age distribution of the sample was as follows: 13.9% ( $n=103$ ) were younger than 25; 26.9% ( $n=199$ ) were aged 25-30. Of the remainder, 16.2% ( $n=120$ ) were in the 31-35 age range; 24.7% ( $n=183$ ) were in the 36-45 age range, 11.70% ( $n=87$ ) were in the 46-55 age range, and 6.5% ( $n=48$ ) were over 56.

Over 94% of the respondents had some level of education past high school. Six percent (6.2%) of the sample ( $n=46$ ) had a high school education and 14.7% ( $n=109$ ) had an Associate college degree. About 48.40% ( $n=359$ ) had a Bachelor's degree, and 28.5% ( $n=211$ ) of the sample had a Graduate degree. The remainder, 1.6% ( $n=12$ ) had "other" form of education, such as vocational and professional designations. A few participants ( $n=4$ ) did not answer this question. Please see Table 2 for the full characteristics of the sample.

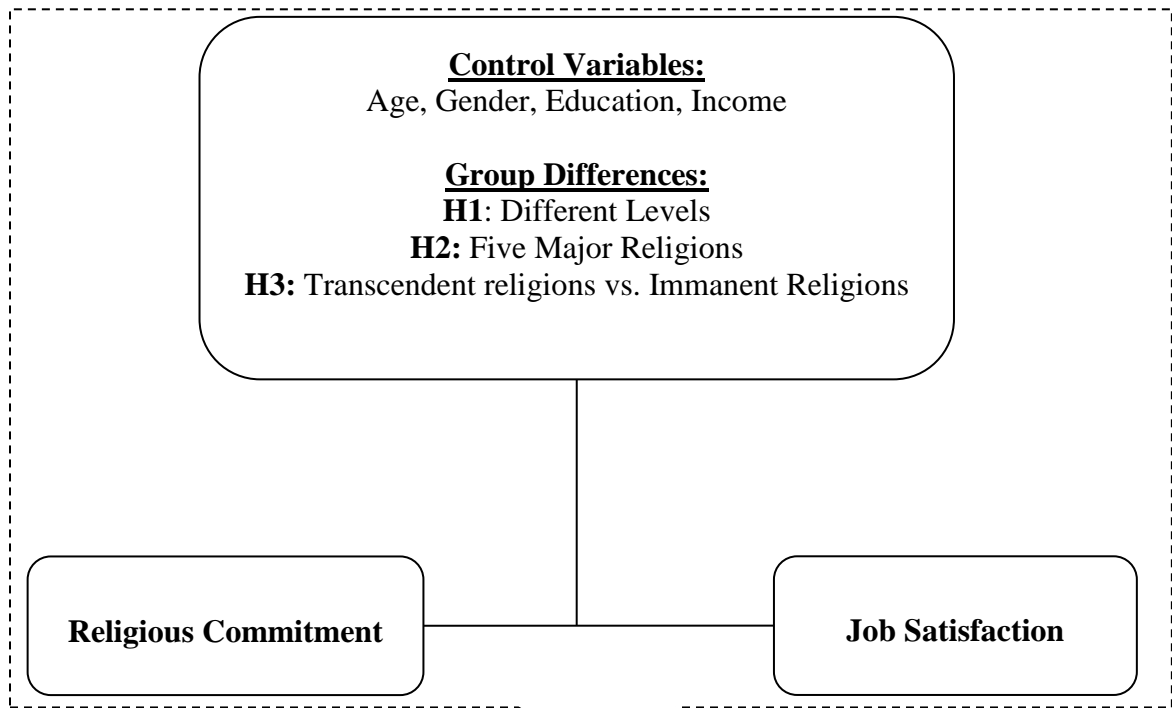
The income levels of the respondents were similarly distributed. Twenty four percent ( $n=178$ ) reported that their annual income was \$35,000 or lower; 17.8% ( $n=132$ ) earned \$35,000 - \$49,000; 18.8% ( $n=139$ ) earned \$50,000 - \$64,999; 10.8% ( $n=80$ ) earned \$65,000-\$79,999; 11.5% ( $n=85$ ) earned \$80,000-\$94,999; and 15.2% ( $n=113$ ) earned \$95,000 or more. Fourteen respondents did not indicate their income level (see Table 2. The value of income is transformed using the square root method for regression analysis).

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	402	54.30%
Female	339	45.70%
<b>Age</b>		
	Less than 20	103
	25-30	199
	31-35	120
	36-45	183
	46-55	87
	Above 56	48
	Age not identified	1
<b>Academic Degree</b>		
	High school	46
	Associate degree	109
	Bachelor's degree	359
	Graduate degree	211
	Other	12
	Degree not identified	4
<b>Income Level</b>		
	Less than \$35,000	178
	\$35,000 - \$49,000	132
	\$50,000 - \$64,999	139
	\$65,000-\$79,999	80
	\$80,000-\$94,999	85
	\$95,000 +	113
	Income not reported	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>741</b>

## RESULTS

To test the research hypotheses, we followed the analysis framework shown in Figure 1. SPSS was used to analyze the data. First we used simple and hierarchical regression analysis to determine whether the relationship between religious intensity and job satisfaction existed (Hypothesis 1), and then examined whether the relationships were different among different groups (Hypothesis 2 and 3). The results and discussions are below.

**Figure 1: FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION**



***Hypothesis 1:** For any individual, there is a positive and direct relationship between his or her level of religious commitment and job satisfaction, after controlling for the direct or indirect effects of age, gender, income, and education*

To test whether more religiously committed individuals experience more satisfaction from their job, as proposed in Hypothesis 1, correlation and regression analysis were used. We first calculated the correlation coefficients of a composite religious commitment variable using the means of all the 20 MSQ items, and its relationship to a composite job satisfaction variable using the means of the RC-10 (the level of religious commitment of those who self-reported as “not being affiliated with a religion” was coded as “0”). The correlation coefficient was 0.170 ( $p=0.000$ ), which suggested that there is a positive relationship between religious commitment and job satisfaction, though the relationship is not strong. Hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

## Level of Religious Commitment

Next hierarchical regression analysis was used to further analyze the positive relationship between religious commitment and job satisfaction, while the compounding effect of gender, age, income, and education were controlled and examined. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 3.

	<b>Model 1: Control Variables</b>	<b>Model 2: Effects of Independent Variable</b>	<b>Model 3: Effect of Moderator Variable</b>
Constant	3.079	2.912	2.761
Gender	0.070	0.089	0.091
Age	0.023	0.012	0.013
Education	0.033	0.036	0.038
Income	0.247***	0.234***	.318**
Religious Commitment		0.081***	0.141*
Income*Religious Commitment		-0.035	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.058	0.086	0.088
Adjust R <sup>2</sup>	0.053	0.080	0.080
F Value	10.973	13.485	11.452
R <sup>2</sup> Change		0.028	0.002
F Change		22.231***	1.261

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

The hierarchical analysis indicated that religious commitment was positively related to job satisfaction in this study. The results, shown in Model 2 of Table 3, suggest that religious commitment had a positive relationship with job satisfaction even after the effects of various demographic variables such as age, gender, income, and education are taken into consideration. The suggestion is that the more the person is religiously committed, the higher her/his job satisfaction ( $B=0.081$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Religious commitment added 2.8% to the explanation of the variance in job satisfaction. This positive relationship between religious commitment and job satisfaction stays positive and significant (see Model 3 of Table 3,  $B=0.141$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) even after the interaction of income and religious commitment is taken into consideration. Therefore, this study shows that the level of religious commitment is positively related to the level of job satisfaction. Accordingly, Hypothesis 1 is thus confirmed.

To further analyze how different levels of religious commitment relate to different levels of job satisfaction, we separated the respondents who were affiliated with formal religions into two groups (those without formal religions were excluded). Those with a religious commitment composite score above the mean were categorized as the “high commitment” group and those under the mean as the “low commitment” group. The hierarchical regression analysis results on the relationship between religious commitment and job satisfaction are shown in Table 4.



<b>Table 4</b>				
<b>RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION USING HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS: HIGH COMMITMENT GROUP VERSUS LOW COMMITMENT GROUP</b>				
	<b>High Commitment Model 1</b>	<b>High Commitment Model 2</b>	<b>Low Commitment Model 1</b>	<b>Low Commitment Model 2</b>
N	344	344	346	346
Constant	3.155	2.467	3.052	3.133
Control Variables				
Gender	.148	.155*	.170*	.169*
Age	.032	.021	0.015	0.015
Education	.018	.026	.056	.068
Income	.233**	.223*	.183*	.183*
Independent Variable				
Religious Commitment		0.0187**		0.042
R <sup>2</sup>	0.069	0.099	0.059	0.060
Adjust R <sup>2</sup>	0.058	0.086	0.045	0.042
F Value	6.308	7.453	4.156	3.371
R <sup>2</sup> Change	0.069	0.030	0.059	0.001
F Change	6.308	11.272	4.159	0.4266

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

The results suggest that the relationships for the two groups are different. There was a positive relationship between religious commitment and job satisfaction for the “high commitment” group ( $B=0.187$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , see Model 2 of Table 4’s high commitment group). For this group, religious commitment added 3.3% to the level of job satisfaction. Together with other demographic control variables, religious commitment explained 9.9% of overall job satisfaction.

Income was a significant factor for job satisfaction and gender was part of the relationship. Men with high religious commitment appeared to be more satisfied with their job. However, the relationship did not seem to hold for the low commitment group. The relationship between low religious commitment and job satisfaction was not significant ( $B=0.042$ ,  $p=0.607$ , see Model 2 of Table 4’s Low Commitment group) for those 346 respondents who had low religious commitment. Thus, analyzing low and high commitment groups separately strengthened the confirmation of Hypothesis 1 that different levels of religious commitment is related to different level of job satisfaction among those with formal religions.

### **Demographic factors**

The roles of the demographic factors (age, gender, income and education) were also examined. As shown in Model 1 of Table 3, hierarchical regression analysis results indicated that the control variables together explain 6% of the variance in job satisfaction. Income had a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction, while the other control variables such as age, gender, and education did not except as noted above.

The moderating effect of income was analyzed further. First we added the interaction of income and religious commitment to the hierarchical analysis that examined the relationship between religious commitment and job satisfaction while other demographic variables were controlled (see Model 3 of Table 3). While the results suggested that the interaction has some negative moderating effect on the relationship, it was not significant ( $B = -0.035, p > 0.05$ ).

We then compared the relationship between the level of religious commitment and the level of job satisfaction for different income groups. Respondents were organized into three groups: low income (annual income less than \$50,000,  $N=310$ ), middle income (annual income \$50,000 - \$79,999,  $N=219$ ), and high income (annual income \$80,000 and more,  $N=198$ ).

Multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the relationship, as well as that of the other control variables. The analysis showed unexpected results about the relationship between income, religious commitment, and job satisfaction (see Table 5). The relationship was significant and strongest in the middle income group ( $B=0.088, p < 0.01$ ). It was also somewhat strong and significant in the low income group ( $B=0.124, p < 0.001$ ). However, the relationship was weak ( $0.022, p = 0.493$ ) and not significant in the high income group with an income of \$80,000 and over ( $n=198$ ).

The analysis on demographic factors provided additional confirmation for Hypothesis 1. It was not surprising to find that in this study income had a positive relationship to job satisfaction. As suggested earlier, in the general literature the connection is been mixed. That is, while income is a motivator of job satisfaction for some individuals (Gupta and Shaw, 1998; Kohn 1993; Lawler 1971), it is a hygiene factor for others (Herzberg 1987). However, the literature suggests that age could be a moderating variable in this relationship; generally speaking income is a job motivator for younger people (Maslow 1970; Tang and Chiu 2003). Almost 82% of the participants in the sample were younger than 46 years; this is an age group where extrinsic factors such as income are often important (Ellickson 2002; George and Jones 2005; Ghazzawi 2008; Ghazzawi 2011). Nevertheless, this study found that the relationship between religious commitment and job satisfaction was different among different income groups. It is possible that a factor other than religion might play a significant role in job satisfaction for the high income group.

	<b>Low Income</b>	<b>Middle Income</b>	<b>High Income</b>
$R^2$	0.033	0.104	0.017
Adjusted $R^2$	0.018	0.082	-0.009
(Constant)	3.371***	2.779***	4.034***
Gender	-0.013	0.168	0.154
Age	-0.002	-0.012	0.014
Education	0.040	0.040	0.013
Income	-0.150	0.270	-0.154
Religious Commitment	0.088**	0.124***	0.022

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

*Hypothesis 2: The relationship between level of religious commitments and level of job satisfaction will be different among different religions.*

To examine the relationship between different religions and job satisfaction, we began by dividing the sample according to the major religion with which the individual self-identified. Multiple regression analysis was adopted for each religion group, using demographic variables and religious commitment as the independent variables and job satisfaction as the dependent variable. The results are shown in Table 6.

The analysis indicated that religious commitment does have a positive relationship with job satisfaction for two groups, Buddhists ( $N=64$ ,  $B=0.233$ ,  $p<0.001$ , see Table 6 under “Buddhism”) and Hindus ( $N=31$ ,  $B=0.280$ ,  $p<0.001$ , see Table 6 under “Hinduism”), but not for Christians, Jews, or Muslims. For Buddhists, two demographic variables, income ( $B=0.252$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and education ( $B=0.341$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), were also positively related to job satisfaction. For Buddhists and Hindus, religious commitment, income, and education explain over 20% of the variation in job satisfaction. This confirms Hypothesis 2, but in an unexpected way.

	<b>Buddhism</b>	<b>Hinduism</b>	<b>Christian</b>	<b>Jewish</b>	<b>Muslim</b>
R <sup>2</sup>	0.223	0.263	0.068	0.302	0.109
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.156	0.115	0.056	0.119	0.039
N	64	31	401	25	69
(Constant)	1.792	3.109	3.018	2.346	3.190
Gender	.040	.143	.237	-.012	-.006
Age	-.030	-.021	.025	-.159	.126
Education	.252*	.011	.020	.230	-.043
Income	.341*	-.029	.156*	.533	.144
Religious Commitment	.233**	.280**	.062	.161	-.009

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

**Hypothesis 3:** *Individuals who are members of transcendent religions will show positive relationships between religious commitments and job satisfaction. Members of immanent religions may not show a direct relationship between religious commitment and job satisfaction, or show a weaker relationship.*

To further test the relationship between religious commitment and transcendent and immanent religions, we clustered members of transcendent religions (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism,  $N=495$ ) into one group and members of immanent religions (Buddhism and Hinduism,  $N=95$ ) into another. As suggested earlier, the reason for this grouping was based on the assumption that the immanent religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, have less direct connections between deity and acting well at work. The transcendent religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism, are all commanded by deity to act well towards their employment.

**Table 7**  
**RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT (PREDICTOR) AND JOB SATISFACTION USING REGRESSION ANALYSIS: IMMANENT RELIGIONS VERSUS TRANSCENDENT RELIGIONS**

Variable	Immanent Religions Model 1	Immanent Religions Model 2	Transcendent Religions Model 1	Transcendent Religions Model 2
N	95	95	495	495
Constant	2.870	2.139	3.147	3.010
Control Variables				
Gender	.036	.109	.192	.196
Age	.025	-.031	.037	.027
Education	.078	.167	.025	.023
Income	.329*	.274*	.168*	.174*
Independent Variable				
Religious Commitment		.238***		.054
R <sup>2</sup>	0.110	0.230	0.062	0.069
Adjust R <sup>2</sup>	0.071	0.186	0.055	0.060
F Value	2.790	5.306	8.126	7.281
R <sup>2</sup> Change	0.110**	0.119***	0.062***	0.007
F Change	2.790	13.781	8.126	3.722

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

A surprising result was the finding that those with strong beliefs in the transcendent religions did not show a strong relationship with job satisfaction, while the high commitment immanent believers did ( $B=0.054$ ,  $p=0.054$ ). For the transcendent group, religious commitment only explained 0.7% of the variance in job satisfaction and, when adding the demographic variables, it only explained 6.9% of the variance. The significance of income and its relationship to job satisfaction was similar in both groups.

These results suggest that the relationship between religious commitment and job satisfaction differs between transcendent religions (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism) and immanent religions (Buddhism, Hinduism). While the findings indicated that not all beliefs experience the same relationships between these constructs, transcendent religions do not show a positive relationship while immanent religions do. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is rejected.

There are several possible reasons for these results. One might be the small numbers in the sample for the different religious groups, particularly the immanent religions. It might be fruitful to further investigate this phenomenon with a larger sample. Another possible reason might have to do with each religion's view of the sacred reality, deity. A transcendent believer sees deity as a distinct being, with personality and existence apart from him or herself. An immanent believer views deity as an inherent and indissoluble part of nature and his or her self, such as the idea of direct self-awareness for the Buddhist and the sense of "Karma," the inevitability of action and consequences, for the Hindu. According to Fisher (2008) this means that for the immanent believer:

Every act we make, and even every thought and every desire we have, shape our future experiences. Our life is what we have made it. And we ourselves are shaped by what we have done: As a man acts, so does he become..." (79).

It is possible that the immanent believer sees job satisfaction as directly dependent on personal endeavor and action, rather than an outside personality, and as a result has higher job satisfaction.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study found that level of religious commitment does impacted job satisfaction, which is similar to the results found by Ghazzawi and colleagues (2012) in a pre-test. However, the relationship is not strong ( $r=0.182$ ).

The study also found that members of immanent and transcendent religions at the same level of religious intensity have different levels of job satisfaction. Contrary to our thinking, believers of immanent religions showed a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction, while believers of transcendent religions did not. This finding suggests that further testing along these lines might be useful.

Additionally, the study concluded that income plays a moderating effect in the relationship between religious commitment and job satisfaction, with higher income workers tending to be more satisfied.

At least two important managerial implications can be taken from this study. First, this research can inform managers who desire to create a more inclusive and religion-friendly working environment that employees, regardless of their faith, have the same needs as other employees and want management to be fair, reasonable, and provide opportunities for growth. The probability is high that a religiously committed employee will work hard, show respect for others, and treat customers and peers ethically. In addition, the employee is likely to have high job satisfaction, with its attendant positives such as organizational commitment.

Another managerial implication is relevant to organizations in the global arena. Managers from western nations need to understand the impact that religion might have on their foreign employees. Globally, there are many cultures that are driven by the majority religion of that culture and it is helpful for managers to understand the implications. For example, cultures based on certain religions may treat women in ways that Western managers would find problematic. In order to have strong job satisfaction from both men and women, secular managers may need to find culturally appropriate ways to deal with issues they may initially know little about.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND LIMITATIONS

This study also has implications for ethicists. The findings suggest that there are positive links between religious commitment and job satisfaction. There might also be links between religious commitment and other workplace constructs. If this is so, testing religious commitment using a validated instrument, such as the RCI-10, might yield more reliable results than testing an individually self-defined spirituality. That is, stronger tests and stronger results might be possible if religious commitment is tested versus personal spirituality. Finally, the fact that religious commitment affects job satisfaction suggests that researchers need to more deeply study the effect of the major religions on the workplace.

It is the intent of this paper to stimulate further research in the area of religious commitment-job satisfaction relationship. As already suggested, a focus on religious links to job satisfaction might extend the present literature in valuable ways, particularly in demonstrating ways that religiously employees can bring positive impact in their workplace.

The study has some limitations and its conclusions should be generalized with caution. One limitation is a possible geographical bias. The sample was taken from full-time employees

and managers who live in Southern California. Research on the same subject in different regions in the United States might yield different results, particularly in regions where religion, in general, is a larger part of daily life. That is, further research with a more statistically random sample across the U.S. is needed in order to assess the applicability of these findings to the general population.

It should also be noted that this research was limited to one country, the United States. Broad application of these results to other countries or cultures is not valid because religious beliefs, and the intensity of such beliefs, differ. Further research in different cultures would provide reasonable assessments of the applicability of the results to other cultures.

Another limitation is related to the size of the sample, particularly the small number of representatives of various religions. Though the study was unusual in that it tested the five largest religions on the same scale, there were relatively few Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims in the sample. Some of the effect sizes of the findings are small, which may be due to the small sample size. Future research should include enough numbers of each religious group to present sound statistical results regarding each faith.

In spite of the limitations however, the study does present some direction for further research. First, it might be rewarding to investigate the causal relationships between religious intensity and job satisfaction by using semi-structured or structured interviews with various focus groups of religiously committed employees. Second, more research is needed in specific professions and industries to test the applicability of this concept. Some religious groups might have positive or negative reactions to certain industries. For example Christians might not wish to work in military related industries or in industries that sell sex. Muslims, likewise, are enjoined to avoid working in industries that feature gambling, alcohol or swine (Dunn and Galloway 2011). Therefore industry or sector-specific research might yield valuable results.

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<sup>i</sup> This discussion is in no way meant to imply that people who are not religious do not have these characteristics, merely that religions can encourage these positive values in their adherents.

<sup>ii</sup> This study was approved by the IRB committee of the (authors’ university). All work was performed in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki.

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