

Healy, KG, 2001, *The Commitment of Principals, in the Irish Context, to the Spiritual Dimension of Catholic School Leadership: An Exploration of the Ontological Basis of Motivation and Satisfaction Orientations.*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

This study focused on a sample of 86 Irish Catholic voluntary secondary school principals. The survey was undertaken within the parameters of a leadership motivation construct derived from a tripartite concept of Catholic school leadership - educational, managerial and spiritual - and embracing both professional and mission/spiritual aspects of Catholic education. Accordingly, the related research questions pertained to five areas:

the type of motivation, mission or professional, which was the underlying inspiration for principals as Catholic school leaders

the degree of association between leadership motivation orientations and personal religiosity

how groups of principals - formed according to state in life, educational level attained, gender, age, years of experience as principal, area of concentration for degree taken and time elapsed since last graduate course - compare on mission motivation, professional motivation and religiosity variables.

whether leadership satisfaction depended mainly on spiritual/mission motivational or professional motivational factors.

the degree to which the demographic variables, personal and professional, correlated with, and were determinants of mission and professional motivation, and whether leadership satisfaction in Catholic voluntary secondary schools rested upon mainly spiritual or professional factors.

Data were gathered by means of a 62-item questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential analyses include frequencies, means and standard deviations, bivariate associations, t-tests and one-way NOVAS on group statistics and the employment of a hierarchical regression model.

Among the findings of interest were the high levels of mission and professional motivation among the total sample. Another central finding was a strong correlation between religiosity and mission motivation. Mission motivation, too, was seen to be both significantly and positively associated with spiritual leadership satisfaction, educational leadership satisfaction and managerial leadership satisfaction. Finally, the hierarchical linear regression analysis indicated that religiosity, gender (female), and age (50+ years) emerged as significant predictors of, and counting uniquely for, variation in mission motivation. Drawing on the study findings, the writer sees the challenge to Catholic school trustees and principals in terms of a re-imagined spirituality within a context of heightened awareness of the ontological basis of motivation and satisfaction.

