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Searching for the Perfect Fit: An Examination of the Job Satisfaction of Middle Management Student Affairs Professionals in Christian Institutions of Higher Education

By Brent Ellis, Ed.D.

INTRODUCTION

In the latter half of the twentieth century a considerable amount of research surfaced on the satisfaction or lack of satisfaction experienced by individuals in the work place (Herzberg et al., 1959; Locke, 1976, 1983, 1984; Iacqua & Schumacher, 1995; Lawler, 1971, 1973, 1995; Smith, Kendall, & Hullin, 1969; Wanous & Lawler, 1972). Initially the research focused on workers in industry; however, over the last thirty years the research areas have grown to include all areas of employment.

This research emphasis can be explained in numerous ways, but none so simple as the fact that work "fills the greater part of the waking day for most of us. For the fortunate it is the source of great satisfactions; for many others it is the cause of grief" (Herzberg et al., 1959, p. 3). Because of the very obvious, yet profound truth, job satisfaction has become an important area of research for all areas of employment.

The reasons, however, do not cease with a surface analysis. Research has shown that an average person spends as much as one-third of his or her life at work (Adams & Ingersoll, 1985). Work also influences physical and mental health, families, self-confidence, longevity and develops identity (Adams & Ingersoll, 1985; Burke, 1970; Cranny, 1992; Herzberg et al., 1959; Locke, 1976, 1983; Sigelman & Shaffer, 1995). Obviously, job satisfaction is an area that affects life profoundly and therefore, is important to study.

This study focused on the job satisfaction of middle management student affairs professionals at Christian colleges and universities. Middle management refers to any student affairs position subordinate to the dean of students' position. Such positions would primarily consist of residence life, student activities, leadership development, career development, orientation, housing and campus ministry staff. The positions of residence hall directors, however, were not included.

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Theoretical Background

Research has shown that several factors affect the job satisfaction of college and university student affairs professionals. Among these factors are student relations, faculty relations, ideological fit, prestige, professional growth, supervision, equitable pay and the availability of resources (Nestor, 1988; Plascak, 1988; Lucas, 1996; Iacqua & Schumacher, 1995). However, particular causes of job satisfaction for student affairs professionals at Christian colleges and universities have not been examined.

While administrative positions have been shown to be one of the top twelve most stressful occupations (Charlesworth & Nathan, 1985), the existing research has yet to examine student affairs professionals at the middle management position in Christian higher education. When research has focused on student affairs administrators either the senior administrators, specific sub groups such as residence hall assistants, student activity programmers, and senior housing officers, or a global study of all administrators has taken place (Adams, 1995; Bender, 1980; Burns, 1982; Clements, 1982; Forney & Wiggers, 1984; Liddell, 1986; Nestor, 1988; Studer, 1980; Tarver, Canada, & Lim, 1999). Attempting to examine midlevel administrators could identify interesting differences between what impacts the job satisfaction of this group of student affairs professionals and what impacts the job satisfaction of the professionals that have been researched in prior studies.

Faye Plascak's (1988) study serves as an appropriate model for this project. This study measured job satisfaction among university faculty and found that student relations, faculty relations, ideology, autonomy, prestige, professional growth, supervision, equitable pay and the availability of resources had the most significant impact on job satisfaction for faculty.

Methodology

Survey Development

A survey instrument, adapted from Faye Plascak's (1988) survey, was developed to identify the information necessary to measure job satisfaction among middle management student affairs professionals at Christian colleges and universities. The instrument used in this current study was comprised of 40 questions and categorized into three major categories. Twenty-one questions measured the sixteen facets influencing job satisfaction. The next nine questions asked specific demographic information. The next eight questions ascertained the dependent variable, job satisfaction. Finally the last two questions allowed for the individual completing the questionnaire to offer any particulars that the questionnaire did not cover.

The first part of the instrument, questions 1-21, measured levels of various work elements or facets. These facets are determinates of job satisfaction (Locke 1976; Locke et al., 1983). The facets were: *work itself, autonomy, role overload, role conflict, recognition, prestige, pay, evaluation standards, participation in decision making, general resources, working conditions, opportunities for professional growth, ideological fit, peer relationships, supervisory relationships and relationships with students*. These items are shown in Table One.

Table One

Items Assumed to Measure Concepts

CONCEPTS	ITEMS
Relationship With Students	#3 How often do you interact with students?
	#13 How often do you interact with students informally?
	#16 How often do you have opportunities for developing mentorships or personal relationships with your students?
Peer Relations	#14 How often do you interact with colleagues?
Supervisory Relations	#15 How often do you interact with your dean of students?
Ideological Fit	#17 How much congruence is there between your personal mission and the mission of your institution?
	#18 How much congruence is there between your philosophy of education and the philosophy of education of your institution?
	#21 How much congruence is there between your religious beliefs and the religious beliefs of your institution?
Prestige	#10 How much of your work is perceived by your university community as valuable or legitimate?
	#19 How much of your work is perceived by the public as valuable or legitimate?
Professional Growth	#8 How many resources are available for professional growth?
Working Conditions	#9 How appropriate is your working space?
General Resources	#7 How many resources are available that you need to carry out your job?
Participating in Decision Making	#6 How often do you participate in decision-making?
Evaluation Standards	#5 How fair are the criteria used to evaluate your work?
Recognition	#20 How often are you recognized by your institution for your work?
Role Conflict	#11 How often do you spend time in activities you value outside of your job?
Role Overload	#4 How high is the level of your workload?
Work Itself	#12 How often do you work with creative ideas?
Autonomy	#1 How often do you determine your own work activities?
Equitable Pay	#2 What is the value of your fringe benefit package to you?

The second part of the survey gathered demographic information. Certain demographic information about the individuals was helpful in interpreting the results of the survey. Information such as *gender, age, ethnicity, educational level, number of years working in field, number of years at current institution* and if the person is *working for his or her alma mater*, all gave interesting insights to the findings.

The third part of the survey measured the dependent variable of job satisfaction. Plascak (1988) adapted these survey questions, 10a-10h, from Price and Mueller (1986). The alternation between satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the statements was used to increase reliability in the responses.

Site

The site for this research was a small, private Christian liberal arts university in a small mid-western town. The university is located approximately 45-55 miles from two major metropolitan areas. During the month of June 2000, this institution hosted the national conference of the Association for Christians in Student Development (ACSD), an organization of Christian student affairs professionals from around the world. This institution was instrumental in the development of ACSD and has remained a chief contributor to the organization since its inception.

Sample

Names of individuals who fit the constraints of the research were obtained from the membership rosters of the Association for Christians in Student Development and the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. Only full-time employees were identified in order to reduce the variability of responses and knowledge about particular institutions, as well as increase the reliability and validity of the study. ACSD has approximately 1,100 members in its association. Of those 1,100 approximately one-half are classified as middle management professionals.

Measurement of the Independent Variables

Job Elements – Facets

The need fulfillment or need and need discrepancy theories, based on Maslow's theory of motivation, propose that satisfaction is the result of a reduction of tension between unmet and fulfilled needs (Maslow, 1954). Research that has been conducted utilizing the postulates proposed in these theories simply asks about the amount of a certain facet or outcome an individual employee receives (Lawler, 1995). The primary objective of this research was to identify what facets affect job satisfaction in middle management student affairs administrators at Christian colleges and universities.

Each respondent was asked to identify the amount of each facet he or she currently experiences in his or her position. The questionnaire used a seven point Likert scale with 1 = minimum/absent level to 7 = very high level. A list of the facets and a brief description of the facets will be helpful in understanding the research. These descriptions are found in Table Two.

Table Two
Facet Description

FACET	DESCRIPTION
1. Relationship With Students	Opportunities to develop mentoring or positive relationships with students.
2. Peer Relations	Interaction with colleagues.
3. Supervisory Relations	Interaction with supervisor.
4. Ideological Fit	Congruence between personal ideology and the ideology of the institution.
5. Prestige	Prestige assigned to position.
6. Professional Growth	Resources available for professional growth.
7. Working Conditions	Adequate working environment.
8. General Resources	General Resources implementation of job.
9. Participation in Decision Making	Opportunities to aid in making decisions for department.
10. Evaluation Standards	Receiving fair evaluations.
11. Recognition	Recognition for work done.
12. Role Conflict	Balance between work and other life responsibilities.
13. Role Overload	Adequate amount of time to fulfill job requirements.
14. Work Itself	Challenging and rewarding work.
15. Autonomy	Determining work activities.
16. Equitable Pay	Current salary and value of fringe benefit package.

A factor analysis was conducted to ensure reliability in these measures. The outcome of the factor analysis was the formation of five multiple item factors that were used in the regression equation. The composite factors matched the projected variables, with the exclusion of *evaluation standards, work conditions and role conflict*. The composite factors resembled the projected variables with a few exceptions. All other factors loaded into one of the five multiple item factors. The five multiple item factors were named *professionally minded, relationship with students, ideological fit, peer and supervisory relationships and autonomy*. The three composite variables that combined variables from the projected variables were, the professionally minded, peer and supervisory relationship and autonomy. Table Three demonstrates these multiple item factors.

Table Three
Reliability Measures for Multiple Item Independent Variables

FACTOR	ALPHA	ITEM #	SURVEY FACTOR LOADING
Professionally Minded	.743	2	.62034
		7	.73400
		8	.75194
		19	.60501
		20	.57660
Relationship With Students	.785	3	.78973
		13	.82451
		16	.80539
Ideological Fit	.767	10	.50255
		17	.80569
		18	.75841
		15	.77008
Peer and Supervisory Relationships	.526	14	.72841
		21	.75497
Autonomy	.505	1	.78513
		6	.58975
		12	.64036

Demographic Variables

Seven questions were used to investigate the impact that demographic variables have on job satisfaction. According to a study conducted by Iiacua and Schumacher (1995), demographic information gives valuable insight into the job satisfaction of employees. Research has also shown that *gender* and *age* impact job satisfaction (Johnson & Johnson, 2000; Koretz, 2000; Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1990; Zefane, 1994). However, the findings of Plascak (1988) and Nestor (1988) do not support this finding. Because of the investigative nature of this study, the researcher included an examination of the effect of demographic variables on job satisfaction. The demographic variables used requested respondents to provide information about *gender, ethnicity, tenure at current institution, tenure in student development, age, educational level and whether or not the respondent is currently employed at his or her alma mater*. These questions were then assigned numerical values based upon the responses.

Two steps were taken to ascertain which demographic variables influenced job satis

faction. First a correlation matrix was created that showed two variables as significant - *age and years at institution*. Also, a forced entry regression analysis was performed using only the demographic variables on the dependent variable, job satisfaction, to ascertain if any demographic variable impacted job satisfaction at a significant level. Only one of the eight demographic variables measured at a significant level - *age*. *Age* measured at .009 significance. As a result of this finding, *age* was included in this investigation as the only demographic variable in the regression equation for the study.

Measurement of the Dependent Variable

Eight questions were used to measure the dependent variable. The overall satisfaction of the participants was established by calculating an arithmetic mean from the responses to the eight statements from Price and Mueller's (1986) job satisfaction questionnaire (Table Four).

Table Four
Job Satisfaction Questions

1	I find real enjoyment in my job.
2	I consider my job rather unpleasant.*
3	I enjoy my job more than my leisure time.
4	I am often bored with my job.*
5	I am fairly well satisfied with my job.
6	I definitely dislike my job.
7	Each day on my job seems like it will never end.*
8	Most days I am enthusiastic about my job.
(*=Scored in Reverse)	

Participants answered the questions by checking a box that best represented their responses to the statements. The choices for responses were, *strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree*. Based on a Likert scale, numerical values were assigned to these responses to ascertain the overall job satisfaction.

It was assumed that the questions provided a reliable measure of job satisfaction based on the surveys used by Price & Mueller (1986) and Plascak (1988). An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the questions comprising the dependent variable. In the factor analysis, however, one question did not meet the .50 standard for factor loading - *I enjoy my job more than my leisure time*. The factor score for this question was .448. Subsequently, this question was removed from the dependent variable. The dependent variable was then measured by the seven remaining questions.

Alpha coefficient tests were then conducted on the seven remaining questions to test the reliability of the questions. The results showed an alpha value of .8266. Reliability coefficient values range from 0 to 1.0 and the closer the value is to 1.0 the more reliable the variable (Wiersma, 1995). Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .80 or higher is typically accepted for basic research. It was concluded that the questions measuring the dependent variable provided a reliable measure of job satisfaction.

RESULTS

Overall Satisfaction of Participants

Although the primary emphasis of this study was the identification of facets that affect the satisfaction of student affairs professionals in Christian higher education, a quick examination of the overall satisfaction of the participants will be helpful in understanding the findings of the research. The majority of studies indicated that student affairs professionals are satisfied with their jobs. The data in this study also revealed that the majority of respondents in this study have a high level of satisfaction with their positions.

To further illustrate the high level of satisfaction of the respondents, a frequency distribution table was created (Table Five). The results of the frequency distribution expressed what the mean did, that the respondents are satisfied; however, it also expressed the groupings of responses more adequately. For instance the statement, *I enjoy my job more than my leisure time* is better clarified by viewing the distribution of responses. Where the mean showed neither agreement nor disagreement, the frequency distribution showed that 46.3 percent of respondents disagreed with the statement while only 12.5 percent agreed with the statement. In all other categories, however, the respondents expressed extreme satisfaction. Positive scores for the remaining seven scores vary from 85.8 percent to 95.5 percent of respondents. The analysis of the frequency distribution supports the finding of the arithmetic mean, that the participants of this study were satisfied with their jobs.

Table Five
Frequency Distribution of Overall Satisfaction Item Scores

ITEM	CATEGORIES/NUMBER/PERCENTAGES				
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
I find real enjoyment in my job.	n=0 0%	n=4 2.3%	n=4 2.3%	n=76 43.2%	n=91 51.7%
I consider my job rather unpleasant.*	n=0 0%	n=6 3.4%	n=4 2.3%	n=89 50.6%	n=76 43.2%
I enjoy my job more than my leisure time.#	n=11 6.3%	n=70 40%	n=72 40.9%	n=17 9.7%	n=5 2.8%
I am often bored with my job.*	n=2 1.1%	n=6 3.4%	n=14 8%	n=79 44.9%	n=74 42%
I am fairly well satisfied with my job.	n=1 6%	n=11 6.3%	n=13 7.4%	n=93 52.8%	n=57 32.4%
I definitely dislike my job.*	n=1 6%	n=2 1.1%	n=5 2.9%	n=49 27.8%	n=118 67%
Each day on my job seems like it will never end.*	n=0 0%	n=6 3.4%	n=6 3.4%	n=81 46%	n=82 46.6%
Most days I am enthusiastic about my job.	n=0 0%	n=6 3.4%	n=12 6.8%	n=100 56.8%	n=57 32.4%
*Reversed Scoring #Removed from Global Job Satisfaction Equation					

Factors Influencing Satisfaction

Regression analysis was used to determine which variables had significant impact on the job satisfaction of student affairs professionals. According to Hair et al (1987), “multiple regression analysis is a general statistical technique used to analyze the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables” (p. 17). Two outcomes are useful in interpreting the relationship. First the R² indicates the amount of variance in the dependent variable predicted by the independent variables. Second, the regression indicates which variables have a statistically significant influence on the dependent variable (Hair et al, 1987). The results of the regression analysis are indicated in Table Six.

Table Six
Regression Analysis and Analysis of Variance for
Independent Variables Impact on Student Satisfaction

REGRESSION ANALYSIS					
R =	.510				
R ² =	.261				
Adjusted R ² =	.243				
Standard Error =	.445				
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
VARIABLE	B	STD. ERROR	BETA	T	SIG. LEVEL
Ideological Fit	.186	.042	.325	4.466	.000
Relationship With Students	.101	.033	.184	2.746	.007
Autonomy	.090	.042	.149	2.190	.030
Age	.087	.036	.145	2.021	.045
VARIABLES NOT IN THE EQUATION					
VARIABLE	B	STD. ERROR	BETA	T	SIG. LEVEL
Role Overload	.018	.039	.025	.384	.702
Evaluation Standards	.066	.028	.132	1.884	.061
Working Conditions	-.035	.028	-.032	-.461	.645
Role Conflict	-.021	.031	-.040	-.576	.565
Professionally Minded	.019	.044	.075	.962	.338
Peer/Supervisor Relationships	-.058	.035	-.103	-1.474	.142
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE		Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	
Regression		4	11.873	2.968	
Residual		170	33.697	.198	
		F=14.975	Sig=.000		

Four of the ten variables proved to be statistically significant in accounting for the variance in the dependent variable, job satisfaction. A cutoff level of .05 for significance was set for inclusion in the regression equations. The four most significant factors were *ideological fit*, *relationship with students*, *autonomy* and *age*, listed in order of respective beta values. The beta value denotes the amount of the total variance of the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. Beta values must be interpreted in the context of the variables in a single equation. These variables combined, in the regression equation, to explain 24.3 percent of the variance. The results showed that *institutional fit* accounted for 32.5 percent of the total variance explained by the adjusted R² score of .243. The factors of *professionally minded*, *peer and supervisory relationships*, *role overload*, *evaluation standards*, *working conditions* and *role conflict* did not meet the .05 cutoff and therefore were not considered statistically significant.

The analysis of the variance (ANOVA) for the total sample resulted in an F ratio of 14.975 and a significance level of .000. The F ratio is the ratio of the sum of squares to mean squares (Hair et al, 1987). The significance level score showed that the independent variables in the regression equation were significant in predicting the respondents' satisfaction and not just a result of random error.

Ideological fit had the highest level of effect on the overall job satisfaction of the participants in this study. *Ideological fit's* beta value was .325. This is interesting based upon the fact that this particular job facet was only identified in one other study, Nestor (1988). Nestor found that *ideological fit* had important influence on job satisfaction for student affairs professionals. This finding should not be surprising given the expectations and desires of this particular subset of student affairs professionals.

The second highest beta was *relationship with students* (beta = .184). The amount of impact this particular variable had on overall job satisfaction was as expected given the characteristics of this particular subgroup of student affairs professionals.

The factor, *autonomy*, had a surprisingly low beta, .149, compared to other research. In this study, *autonomy* had an alpha coefficient score of .505. This is a low alpha score and could suggest that this variable does actually influence job satisfaction to a greater extent than is represented by the data in this study. This finding suggests that although *autonomy* did impact job satisfaction, it did not do so to its expected level.

The final factor, *age*, had a beta score of .145. This finding is supported by the literature of other researchers who found older employees were more satisfied (Johnson & Johnson, 2000; Koretz, 2000; Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1990; Zefane, 1994).

The findings of this multiple regression analysis and analysis of variance suggest that many of the job facets that influence overall job satisfaction for college and university student affairs professionals do impact job satisfaction for this particular subgroup working in Christian higher education. However, it is interesting to note that many of the facets that have a high level of influence, according to other research, either do not impact or have very little impact on the job satisfaction of these participants.

Discussion of Important Findings

Several important findings were gathered from the statistical analysis of the data. The most important finding of this study was that *ideological fit* had the greatest influence on job satisfaction. Although *ideological fit* had been shown to impact job satisfaction in

Nestor's (1988) study, it had not surfaced as a primary predictor in other studies. This predictor is defined by the degree of congruence between the organization's ideology and the person's ideology (Nestor, 1988).

If there is a high level of congruence between the personal ideology of an employee and the ideology of the institution, then job satisfaction is likely to increase. As the level of congruence between the two ideologies decreases, so does job satisfaction. The beta value for this variable was 43 percent higher than the second highest predictor – *relationship with students*. *Ideological fit* was measured by asking about three specific areas of the respondent's job – correlation between the institution's and the respondent's personal mission, philosophy of education and religious beliefs. The independent variable of *ideological fit* emerged as the best predictor of job satisfaction in this particular study.

The second important finding concerned the second best predictor for this study – *relationship with students*. The beta value for this independent variable was .184. Other research has demonstrated that opportunities to mentor and to have informal contact with students have a positive effect on job satisfaction (Newell and Spear, 1983; and Nestor, 1988). However, contact with students for disciplinary reasons impacts job satisfaction negatively (Nestor, 1988). The statistical analysis of Nestor's (1988) data corroborates the findings of this study. Relationships with students, in a positive context, influences job satisfaction in a positive manner.

A third important finding involved the high satisfaction levels of the participants in this study. The high mean scores on the questions designed by Price & Mueller (1986) that measure job satisfaction substantiate this finding. The overall mean score for all eight answers combined was 4.12, which indicates that the respondents were very satisfied with their jobs. The mean scores for the individual statements were 4.45, 4.34, 2.63, 4.24, 4.11, 4.61, 4.37, and 4.19. High scores ranged from 12.5 to 94.9 percent. As previously noted, the 12.5 percent positive answer and 2.63 mean score are both from the question *I enjoy my job more than my leisure time*. Taking that particular question out of consideration, the next lowest percentage is 85.2 percent of responses falling in the positive category (positive referring to either 4 or 5 on the Likert scale). This question was removed from the dependent variable because it did not meet the minimum .5 factor loading score. This shows a high level of satisfaction for the participants of this study. This is a very important finding.

The fourth important finding was that six of the ten independent variables were shown not to be significant in the regression equation. This is especially interesting considering the body of research that shows variables such as *relationships with peers*, *evaluation standards* and *professionally minded goals* to have a very significant impact on job satisfaction (Vroom, 1964; Bender, 1980; Pearson & Seiler, 1983; Price & Mueller, 1986; and Hutton & Jobe, 1985). This finding is worth mentioning because this study was conducted on an entirely new subgroup of student affairs professionals. The uniqueness of this particular subgroup of middle management student affairs professionals in Christian higher education could provide insight into the lack of significance of such standard facets that influence job satisfaction.

Practical Implications from this Study

Although job satisfaction has been an important topic for industry and education for more than fifty years, the investigation of job satisfaction in Christian higher education circles has only begun. While the results of this study show that the overall job satisfaction for the respondents was high, the results do not imply that nothing should be done to continue to create jobs in which the people fulfilling the responsibilities are content and satisfied. Moreover, the results do not imply that Christian higher education need not concern itself with the issue of job satisfaction. Christian higher education must continue to study the facets that influence job satisfaction both positively and negatively. The findings from this research are a start in this direction and serve as suggestions for practical implications for policy makers.

1. **Recognize the crucial role *ideological fit* plays in the overall job satisfaction of middle management student affairs professionals and emphasize the importance of this factor in institutional policy making.** The independent variable, *ideological fit*, emerged from the analysis of the data as the factor influencing the overall job satisfaction of the participants of this study more than any other variable. This variable was defined by Nestor (1988) as the degree of congruence between the organization's ideology and the person's ideology.

The fact that *ideological fit* was so significant in predicting job satisfaction should influence policy makers to consider its importance in numerous ways. A primary way is to insure that an intentional effort is made to hire individuals who possess similar ideologies to those of the institution. Hiring individuals with ideologies similar to those of the institution will not only contribute to the satisfaction level of the individual employee but will also assist the institution in maintaining its desired standards. This statement, however, does not negate the need for institutions to maintain diversity, only that the ideologies of the employee and the institution be similar.

A second suggestion is to develop specific descriptions of the institution's mission, philosophy of education and religious beliefs. These descriptions could be useful during both the hiring process and the orientation of new employees when prospective employees and new hires need to be certain of the ideological views of the institution, including the institution's history, mission and purpose. Additionally, these descriptions could be useful as reference tools for current employees. Veteran employees could receive encouragement and direction during difficult times of the school year from reviewing these descriptions.

2. **Recognize the crucial role that *relationship with students* play in the overall job satisfaction of middle management student affairs professionals and emphasize the importance of this factor in institutional policy making.** Positive relationships with students proved to be a job facet that had an important influence on job satisfaction. In recognition of this finding, policy makers should consider its importance when creating policy in several areas.

The first area involves policies related to promotion. When an individual enters the student affairs profession at the resident hall director position, he or she is exposed to many students. As the individual is promoted through the ranks of the institution, his or her exposure to students diminishes tremendously or it involves interaction that is primarily punitive in nature. Many professionals

find themselves becoming the primary disciplinarian for the college or university. Promotion should not exclude middle management professionals from roles and responsibilities where they are able to have positive interactions with students. For instance, a person whose role is primarily disciplinary in nature must have responsibilities that also allow him or her to interact with students in positive ways.

A second area involves policies related to expected responsibilities. A middle management employee should be expected to develop mentoring relationships with several students every year. This will not only aid in the overall satisfaction of the employee but will also aid in the development of the students involved in the mentoring relationship. A third area involves policies related to the location of office space. As much as possible, a middle management student affairs professional's office should be located in a high traffic area on the campus. The likelihood for developing positive interactions with students will increase as more students are found around the office area of middle management professionals.

3. **Recognize that factors that influenced the overall job satisfaction in this project are in some ways similar to factors that have been shown to influence job satisfaction at other institutions and examine efforts made on other campuses to enhance job satisfaction for possible adaptation.** Although many of the facets that are typically shown to influence job satisfaction in student affairs professionals did not meet the .05 cutoff level for significance, four did. *Ideological fit* and *relationship with students* were already discussed. The third and fourth variables were *autonomy* and *age*. This analysis led to the assumption that although there are differences, there are also some similarities between the job facets that affect job satisfaction in this subgroup and the job facets that affect job satisfaction in student affairs professionals in general. The practical implication for administrators and policy makers is that it could be beneficial to examine the programs and policies at other institutions aimed at fostering job satisfaction among their employees. If the job facets that affect job satisfaction are similar, then the programs aimed at fostering job satisfaction at one institution could be transferable to other institutions.
4. **Recognize that there are unique characteristics influencing job satisfaction within this particular subgroup of student affairs professionals and work with institutions within this subgroup to identify ways of increasing job satisfaction.** Of the ten job facets that were regressed, six showed little or no significance. *Peer/supervisory relations*, *evaluation standards*, *role overload*, *role conflict*, *professionally minded* and *working conditions* all were shown to influence job satisfaction in other research. There is some difference in the makeup of the respondents of this survey and student affairs professionals in general. The practical implication for administrators is to examine programs and policies at similar institutions aimed at fostering and promoting job satisfaction among their employees. In similar institutions there are typically similar employees. Programs that are successful at one institution could be useful in similar contexts.

SUMMARY

The review of the literature showed that very little, if any research at all, had been conducted on job satisfaction among student affairs professionals in Christian colleges and universities. This study attempted to address this void. This analysis showed that

mid-level student affairs professionals at Christian colleges were highly satisfied with their roles and that the factors that most influenced their satisfaction were *ideological fit, relationship with students, autonomy and age*.

The findings of this study should be considered by senior administrators as they judge the impact policy decisions and practices have on the overall job satisfaction of these college or university employees. Student affairs middle management professionals at Christian institutions of higher education should also weigh the findings of this study as they decide where to work, where to invest their time and how to set priorities for their responsibilities.

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