

# Gender Differences In Calling And Work Spirituality Among Israeli Academic Faculty

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## ABSTRACT

*In order to examine possible gender differences in work calling and work spirituality, 68 university academic faculty members responded to self-report multidimensional measures of these constructs. No gender differences were found for the attribution of the source of a transcendent summons, with a majority of respondents indicating internal potential, society's needs, destiny, and family tradition as sources of this summons. MANOVA indicated that women had higher scores in comparison with men for two dimensions of calling - search for a transcendent summons and prosocial motivation - and for two dimensions of work spirituality - engaging work and mystical experience at work dimensions of work spirituality.*

**Keywords:** Academic Calling; Work Spirituality; Gender Differences

## INTRODUCTION

Research focusing on gender differences in academia has been growing in recent years. Many studies have focused on gender inequalities as well as gender differences in job stress, work-family conflict, and job satisfaction. However, less empirical research has been conducted on gender differences in variables related to the manner in which individuals relate to their work. This study focuses on two such variables – calling and work spirituality. Although Max Weber characterized science as a "calling" (see Althoff & Weber, 1973), to the best of our knowledge academic calling has been the subject of only a single empirical study that was qualitative in nature (Hakala, 2009). In a similar manner, work spirituality has been included in only a few studies on academic faculty (e.g., Malik & Naeem, 2011). The current study is unique in that it examines both of these variables together and focuses on gender differences. In addition, although numerous studies have included samples of Israeli academics (e.g., Keinan & Perlberg, 1987; Toren, 1993), calling and work spirituality among academic faculty in Israel have not been the subject of empirical investigation.

### Academic Gender Differences

A large number of studies in various parts of the world have focused on the existence of gender inequalities among academic faculty. Polkowska (2014) focused on the underrepresentation of women in science among Polish academics. Heijstra, Bjarnason, and Rafnsdóttir (2015) examined the relation between work-related and family-related variables and gender inequalities in academic rank among academic faculty in Iceland. Toren (1993) focused on gender differences in promotion rate from an organizational perspective among Israeli academic faculty. Fritsch (2015) cited a number of studies (e.g., Acker & Armenti, 2004; Damaske, 2011; Fox, 2001) indicating such gender inequalities. However, she noted some recent positive changes in academic gender inequalities in Austria. Ceci, Ginther, Kahn, and Williams (2014) concluded that there are many contradictions in the literature concerning gender inequality in academic careers and the only point of agreement is the underrepresentation of women in mathematically intensive fields such as engineering, the physical sciences, and geoscience.

Other studies have focused on gender differences in various aspects of academic work. One such aspect is work-related pressure and stress. Many researchers have pointed out that various aspects of occupational stress among academic faculty have increased over the years (e.g., Kinman & Jones, 2008) for all academic workers. However, Kinman (2001) noted that the research indicates that women academics perceive a higher level of job pressure in comparison to men. Lease (1999) examined the occupational stress and personal strain experienced by new and experienced female and male faculty, as well as factors affecting the stress-strain relationship such as hardiness, social support, peer relations and coping strategies.

Other researchers have examined gender difference in additional aspects of academic work. Fox (2014) examined gender differences in the manner in which formal and informal organizational indicators predict the degree of clarity of promotion criteria. Winslow (2010) found that men and women academic faculty members divided their time between teaching and research in different ways.

A large number of studies have explored gender differences among academic faculty in relation to job satisfaction, a major organizational variable. Although some researchers (e.g., Terpstra & Honoree, 2004) have failed to find gender differences in academic job satisfaction, most studies do indicate significant differences in the level of job satisfaction between female and male academic faculty. Bozeman and Gaughan (2011) cited a large number of studies, which all indicated that female faculty are less satisfied with their academic jobs than male faculty, and these researchers investigated demographic characteristics, colleague interactions, and extrinsic pay motivation as determinants of satisfaction for female and male academics. Sabharwal and Corley (2009) cited extensive literature indicating that overall job satisfaction, as well as satisfaction with specific job aspects such as benefits and promotion opportunities, is higher for men than for women academics. These researchers found similar findings across various academic disciplines.

Other organizational variables have also been the focus of gender difference studies among academics. Brown and Duan (2007) examined gender differences in role orientation and role self-efficacy in a sample of counselling psychologists employed as academic faculty. Winefield and Winefield (2014) included measures of organizational commitment and job autonomy in their study of work-family conflict among academics. Fisher, Boyle, and Fulop (2010) examined gender differences in organizational commitment among academic faculty and concluded that the existing measures of organizational commitment are gender biased. They suggested that men and women academics understand organizational commitment in different ways.

A number of studies have focused on work-family conflict among academic faculty. Wortman, Biernat, and Lang (1991) pointed out that, in contrast to other occupations, academic work is essentially "open-ended" and therefore prone to work-family conflict. Winefield and Winefield (2014) examined the relation between work-family conflict and well-being in a very large sample of Australian university employees. They found predicted physical symptoms and psychological strain even after accounting for job demands and control. However, these researchers did not examine gender differences. Fox, Fonseca, and Bao (2011) examined work-family conflict among academic scientists and found considerable gender differences in the factors that interfere in both directions, i.e., work interfering with family and family interfering with work. They explained that academic work is characterized by high expectations as to the priority of work and that academic work is a salient part of personal identity leading to responsiveness to work demands. Elliott (2008) explored gender differences in work and family role strain. She found that while all faculty members experienced comparable levels of work and family role strain, men and women differed in the sources of that strain. For women, family conditions were the most important source of strain, whereas for men conditions of work stood out as the primary source of strain. Finally, Polkowska (2014) concluded that one of the possible causes, among others, of the underrepresentation of women in the sciences is the problem of reconciling professional and family life. She pointed out that while this potential conflict of roles can influence women's professional choices throughout all career stages, women academics are confronted with the 'choose-or-lose' choice at earlier career stages, whereas men do not have to decide between their career and their family.

In summary, the research literature indicates pronounced gender differences among academics in a variety of areas. Women academic faculty are confronted with numerous inequalities in comparison to their male colleagues, including a lower proportion of women academics in general, and in specific academic disciplines in particular, and greater challenges in the promotion process. Women academics suffer from higher levels of job stress and work-family

conflict in comparison to their male counterparts. Finally, and not surprisingly in light of these findings, women are less satisfied with their academic jobs than men. Therefore, on the basis of these numerous gender differences among academic faculty, it would be reasonable to assume that significant gender differences may exist among academics in additional work-related variables.

In recent years, the manner in which individuals relate to their jobs has been the focus of a growing number of studies. Among the constructs studied are work commitment (e.g., Choi, Oh & Colbert, 2015), engagement (Zhang, Ling, Zhang & Xie, 2015), and flow (Debus, Sonnentag, Deutsch & Nussbeck, 2014). Two such constructs that have been the focus of a large number of studies in the last decade are work spirituality (e.g., Pawar, 2009; Petchsawang & Duchon, 2012; Roof, 2015) and calling (Duffy, Allan, Autin & Douglass, 2014; Hall, Oates, Anderson & Willingham, 2012; Rawat & Nadavulakere, 2015). The current study focuses on these constructs among academic faculty and examines gender differences in both the source and importance of calling and in the presence of calling and spirituality at work.

### **Calling**

Calling has been defined in a variety of ways in the literature, and as Duffy and Dik (2013) remarked there is little, if any, consensus as to the conceptualization of calling (for detailed reviews of the historical development of calling see Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Dik & Duffy, 2009; Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2010). One of the more detailed and widely accepted definitions of calling was presented by Dik and Duffy (2009) on the basis of a review of the relevant literature:

A calling is a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation (p. 427).

The first, and most unique, component of calling, according to Dik and Duffy (2009), is the transcendent or external summons to a particular field of work. Historically, the transcendent call was identified with a religious source such as G-d (Dalton, 2001) or some other higher power (Duffy & Dik, 2013) and was often related to work in the clergy, e.g., being "called to the collar". However, modern conceptualizations of calling identify a number of additional external sources of calling that are relevant to individuals who do not believe in G-d or in a higher power. For example, some individuals feel that their fate or destiny is to work in a certain field (Dik & Duffy, 2009), e.g., "I was destined to be an author" or "It is my fate to be a doctor". An additional external source of calling is family tradition or legacy (Duffy & Dik, 2013), e.g., "My grandfather was a pilot, my father was a pilot, my aunts and uncles were all pilots, and therefore I will also be a pilot". Some researchers (e.g., Dik & Duffy, 2009) claimed that the identification of society's needs is also a source of calling, e.g., "Society needs more social workers, therefore I will go into social work". Bunderson and Thompson (2009) suggested that an individual can identify particular skills, talents, and attributes that lead to a particular field, e.g., "I have exactly what it takes to be a nurse". Duffy and Dik (2013) commented that an individual may also identify other external forces that lead her or him to a particular vocation. What is common to all of these sources is that the individual perceives that the driving force towards a particular field is not that individual's desire and motivations, which are internal sources, but rather originates in some kind of external source.

To the best of our knowledge few, if any, empirical studies focusing on calling have examined the degree to which individuals identify these various sources as the source of their own transcendent summons. Therefore, our first research goal will be to examine the extent to which academic faculty attribute their transcendent summons to these sources and to test for possible gender differences.

The second component of calling, according to the Dik and Duffy (2009) conceptualization, is purposeful work and it refers to the extent to which the individual feels that his field of work allows her or him to express and fulfill their personal sense of purpose and meaning in life. The third component - prosocial orientation - is the perception that the individual's career is prosocially oriented and that the individual can therefore help others, whether directly or indirectly. Dik and Duffy explain that these two aspects were identified in the past as the two components of

"vocation", whereas the combination of purposeful work and prosocial orientation together with transcendent summons comprises the unique construct of calling.

Dik and Duffy (2009) also differentiated between the presence of calling and the search for calling. Presence of calling is the degree to which an individual perceives that he or she have found the three dimensions of calling in their career. Search for calling is the degree to which the individual is engaged in an active search for the three dimensions of calling in her or his career. Therefore, the Dik and Duffy conceptualization includes six aspects of calling - the presence of and search for transcendent summons, purposeful work, and prosocial orientation. However, it should be noted that almost all calling research focuses only on the presence of calling.

We felt that an alternative aspect of the search for calling – the importance and desirability of the search for calling - may be significant and relevant even for individuals who feel that they have found a high degree of calling in their field of work. An individual may feel that she or he has found their vocational calling in their field of work but that this is of little importance to them. Alternatively, an individual may feel that although there is little or no calling in her or his career, finding a calling is indeed important and an active search for vocational calling is a desirable and worthy endeavor. Therefore, in this study, this aspect of calling - the importance of the search for calling – was included together with the presence of calling, and the second research goal was to examine the importance of search for the three dimensions of calling among men and women academic faculty. Together with examination of the sources of the transcendent summons, discussed above, these two aspects will provide insight into the manner in which male and female academic faculty members relate to academic calling.

### **Work Spirituality**

An additional aspect of the manner in which individuals relate to their work is spirituality at the workplace or work spirituality. As is the case with calling, there is no agreement in the literature as to the definition of work spirituality. For the purposes of this study we have adopted the definition of work spirituality presented by Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2004):

Spirit at work is a distinct state that is characterized by physical, affective, cognitive, interpersonal, spiritual, and mystical dimensions. Most individuals describe the experience as including: a physical sensation characterized by a positive state of arousal or energy; positive affect characterized by a profound feeling of well-being and joy; cognitive features involving a sense of being authentic, an awareness of alignment between one's values and beliefs and one's work, and a belief that one is engaged in meaningful work that has a higher purpose; an interpersonal dimension characterized by a sense of connection to others and common purpose; a spiritual presence characterized by a sense of connection to something larger than self; and a mystical dimension characterized by a sense of perfection, transcendence, living in the moment, and experiences that were awe-inspiring, mysterious, or sacred (p. 37).

Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2006) later developed a measure to tap these four aspects of work spirituality : (1) *engaging work* – a cognitive dimension characterized by a sense of being authentic at work, awareness of alignment between one's values and beliefs and one's work, and a belief that one is engaged in meaningful work that has a higher purpose, and enjoyment and fulfillment through work; (2) *sense of community* - an interpersonal dimension characterized by a sense of connection to others and to common purpose; (3) *spiritual connection* – a spiritual presence dimension of a sense of connection to something larger than self; (4) *mystical experience* – an experiential dimension of physical sensations, energy dimension, positive affect dimension a positive state of energy or vitality, a sense of perfection, transcendence, and experiences of joy and bliss.

As is clear from the previous discussion, calling and work spirituality are in some ways very similar. The purposeful work dimension of calling has some commonality with the engaging work dimension of work spirituality. Both constructs have an interpersonal aspect – the prosocial orientation of calling and the sense of community of work spirituality. Despite these similarities and overlap, Dik and Duffy (2009) feel that calling and work spirituality, as well as other related work variables, are "sufficiently distinct to warrant attention as unique constructs" (p. 436). Therefore, the third research goal of this study was to examine gender differences in the presence of calling and in work spirituality among academic faculty.

## **Research Goals**

As argued above, men and women academic faculty appear to face different challenges in their work, and gender differences have been reported in a variety of work-related variables. This study focuses on calling and work spirituality and will explore possible gender differences among men and women academic faculty as to:

1. The source of their transcendent summons to work in academia.
2. The importance of finding a calling in academic work.
3. The presence of calling and work spirituality in their present academic jobs.

## **METHOD**

### **Sample**

The sample consisted of 68 academic faculty from Ariel University, 62% male and 38% female. Age ranged from 32 to 74 years ( $M = 47.4$ ,  $SD = 10.8$ ), and seniority ranged from 1 to 22 years ( $M = 6.7$ ,  $SD = 5.4$ ). The research participants worked in 22 different departments in the following faculties and schools; Health Sciences (14%), Engineering (15%), Humanities and Social Sciences (38%), Natural Sciences (22%), Communications (2%), and Architecture (3%), while 6% did not specify their department or faculty.

### **Measures**

*Calling.* Calling was measured using an adaptation of the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ: Dik, Eldridge, Steger, & Duffy, 2012). The original 24 CVQ items are divided into those indicating a presence of calling (e.g., "I believe that I have been called to my current line of work") and an active search for calling (e.g., "I'm searching for my calling in my career"). Both the presence and search scales are divided into three four-item subscales: transcendent summons (e.g., "I was drawn by something beyond myself to pursue my current line of work"), purposeful work (e.g., "My career is an important part of my life's meaning"), and prosocial orientation (e.g., "The most important aspect of my career is its role in helping to meet the needs of others"). As explained above, the original search scale was not included in the present study and the 12 search items were adapted to tap the importance of the search for calling. For example, the transcendent summons search item "I'm trying to identify the area of work I was meant to pursue" was replaced with "The attempt to identify the area of work I was meant to pursue is a positive endeavor". Items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true of me*) to 4 (*absolutely true of me*). The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the resulting six scales – presence and search importance of transcendent summons, purposeful work, and prosocial orientation - ranged from .64 to .90.

The CVQ items were translated into Hebrew by a group of academics who were all fluent in both English and Hebrew. A number of independent alternative translations were prepared and compared, resulting in the final translation. A particular challenge was encountered concerning the transcendent summons items. Most of these items used the word "calling" (or one of its derivatives), which has no direct translation into Hebrew. In addition, since the goal of these items was to tap the transcendent summons aspect of calling independently from the other two aspects of calling, we felt that the use of the term "calling" was problematic. To remedy both of these issues, we added a short introduction to the questionnaire where we explained what a transcendent summons is (e.g., some people feel that they were "called" to their field of work by some type of external influence. For example...). After this explanation, respondents were requested to indicate on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*not at all / not relevant*) to 5 (*a very large degree*) the degree to which they felt that their own transcendent summons to academia could be attributed to each of the following seven sources: internal potential, G-d, society's needs, destiny, supreme power, family tradition, and other. Respondents then received an explanation that, on the following portion of the questionnaire, some of the items referred to being "destined" to be an academic (the closest Hebrew term to calling) and that they should keep in mind what they had just indicated in the introduction section regarding the external summons. In this manner the transcendent summons items were clarified to the respondents and the translation problems were overcome.

*Work spirituality.* Work spirituality was measured with the 18-item Spirit at Work Scale (Kinjerski & Skrypnik, 2006), which produces four subscales: engaging work (e.g., "I experience a match between the requirements of my work and

my values, beliefs and behaviors”); sense of community (e.g., “I experience a real sense of trust and personal connection with my coworkers.”); mystical experience (e.g., “At moments, I experience complete joy and ecstasy at work”); and spiritual connection (e.g., “I experience a connection with a greater source that has a positive effect on my work”). Items were rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 6 (*completely agree*). Cronbach's alpha coefficient for these scales ranged from .68 to .79.

*Demographics.* Demographic items included gender, age, academic degree, tenure, department, and seniority.

### Procedure

After receiving the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee and of the Rector, email invitations were sent out to approximately 300 academic faculty members. The invitation included an explanation of the study and requested that the faculty members enter an internet link provided. Two weeks later, an additional email was sent to the potential research participants, and after an additional two weeks a telephone follow-up was used to encourage participation in the study. Those who entered the link received an informed consent form that had to be checked in order to begin the survey developed using Google forms. A total of 75 faculty members began the internet survey. However for various reasons, such as partial completion of the research instrument, six responses were deleted from the final research file, resulting in a final sample of 69 faculty members.

## RESULTS

Scores for the calling scales and for the work spirituality scales were calculated by averaging relevant items. Means, *SDs*, and ranges of the study variables are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Means, standard deviations, and ranges for study variables

|                                    | <b>M</b> | <b>SD</b> | <b>Minimum</b> | <b>Maximum</b> |
|------------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| Transcendent Summons – Importance  | 3.1      | .76       | 1.2            | 4.0            |
| Purposeful Work – Importance       | 3.1      | .64       | 1.0            | 4.0            |
| Prosocial Orientation - Importance | 3.1      | .61       | 1.7            | 4.0            |
| Transcendent Summons - Presence    | 2.4      | .73       | 1.0            | 4.0            |
| Purposeful Work - Presence         | 2.8      | .72       | 1.2            | 4.0            |
| Prosocial Orientation - Presence   | 2.8      | .63       | 1.7            | 4.0            |
| Engaging Work                      | 4.7      | .66       | 3.1            | 6.0            |
| Mystical Experience                | 3.9      | 1.05      | 1.5            | 6.0            |
| Spiritual Connection               | 2.1      | 1.21      | 1.0            | 5.3            |
| Sense of Community                 | 4.2      | 1.03      | 1.5            | 6.0            |

### Source of Calling

The research participants were requested to rate the relevance of each of seven different possible sources of their transcendent summons. The means and *SDs* of these ratings for male and female academic faculty are presented in Table 2. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated no significant gender differences for these ratings. In addition, since for many sources a large percentage of the sample indicated that the source was not relevant, the percentage who rated the source as relevant, regardless of the degree of relevance, is also presented in Table 2. Chi-square analysis indicated no significant gender differences for any of the sources of transcendent summons except for supreme power, where more than half the women indicated that this was a relevant source whereas only a quarter of the men indicated this source as being relevant.

**Table 2.** Source of transcendent summons by gender

|                    | Male Academic Faculty |     |          | Female Academic Faculty |     |          |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----|----------|-------------------------|-----|----------|
|                    | M                     | SD  | Relevant | M                       | SD  | Relevant |
| Internal potential | 0.8                   | 1.6 | 95%      | 1.1                     | 1.6 | 96%      |
| Society's needs    | 1.8                   | 1.7 | 64%      | 1.8                     | 1.6 | 73%      |
| Destiny            | 1.9                   | 1.8 | 63%      | 2.0                     | 1.6 | 72%      |
| Family tradition   | 0.6                   | 1.3 | 53%      | 1.3                     | 1.6 | 54%      |
| Supreme power      | 3.9                   | 1.1 | 24%      | 4.0                     | 1.2 | 54%      |
| G-d                | 1.5                   | 1.7 | 29%      | 1.3                     | 1.5 | 39%      |
| Other              | 0.9                   | 1.8 | 24%      | 0.6                     | 1.3 | 23%      |

The various sources of transcendent summons can be roughly divided into three groups of relevance. Almost all respondents indicated that the identification of internal potential was a relevant source of transcendent summons. Approximately two thirds of the respondents indicated society's needs and destiny as relevant sources of transcendent summons. Finally, approximately 25%-33% indicated transcendent sources, such as G-d or a supreme power, as relevant sources of their transcendent summons to their academic field. In addition, a quarter of the respondents indicated other sources for this summons.

### Calling Importance

In order to explore possible gender differences in the three dimensions of calling importance, we first performed a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) on the three scores (transcendent summons, purposeful work, prosocial orientation), with job tenure as a covariate (since it is often related to many work variables). The MANOVA was highly significant ( $Wilks' Lambda = .818, F(3,59) = 4.37, p < .001$ ). Subsequent univariate analysis indicated that the gender difference was due to the transcendent summons dimension and the interpersonal dimension. As can be seen from the means presented in Table 3, on both of these dimensions' women scored higher than men, whereas there were no gender differences in the purposeful work dimension.

**Table 3.** Means and standard deviations of calling importance by gender

|                                    | Male Academic Faculty |     | Female Academic Faculty |     |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|
|                                    | M                     | SD  | M                       | SD  |
| Transcendent Summons - Importance  | 2.9                   | .12 | 3.3                     | .14 |
| Purposeful Work - Importance       | 3.0                   | .10 | 3.1                     | .12 |
| Prosocial Orientation - Importance | 2.9                   | .09 | 3.3                     | .11 |

### Calling Presence and Work Spirituality

In order to examine possible gender differences in the presence of calling and in work spirituality, we performed a MANOVA for the dimensions of each construct. The MANOVA for the three dimensions of calling presence was not significant ( $Wilks' Lambda = .987, F(3,59) = 0.25, n.s$ ). As can be seen from the means presented in Table 4, male and female academic faculty indicated that they found all three dimensions of calling in their academic work in an almost identical fashion.

**Table 4.** Means and standard deviations of calling presence by gender

|                                  | Male Academic Faculty |     | Female Academic Faculty |     |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|
|                                  | M                     | SD  | M                       | SD  |
| Transcendent Summons - Presence  | 2.9                   | .12 | 3.3                     | .14 |
| Purposeful Work - Presence       | 3.0                   | .10 | 3.1                     | .12 |
| Prosocial Orientation - Presence | 2.9                   | .09 | 3.3                     | .11 |

However, the MANOVA for the four dimensions of work spirituality did indicate significant gender differences ( $Wilks' Lambda = .834, F(4,58) = 2.88, p < .05$ ). Subsequent univariate analysis of variance indicated that the gender difference was due to engaging work and mystical experience at work. The means presented in Table 5 indicate that

on both of these dimensions, women had higher scores than did men. No differences were found for spiritual connection and sense of community.

**Table 5.** Means and standard deviations of work spirituality by gender

|                      | Male<br>Academic Faculty |     | Female<br>Academic Faculty |     |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----|----------------------------|-----|
|                      | M                        | SD  | M                          | SD  |
| Engaging Work        | 4.6                      | .10 | 4.9                        | .12 |
| Mystical Experience  | 3.6                      | .15 | 4.5                        | .19 |
| Spiritual Connection | 2.0                      | .20 | 2.2                        | .23 |
| Sense of Community   | 4.1                      | .16 | 4.4                        | .19 |

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine gender differences in two work-related variables - calling and work spirituality – among academic faculty. Well established gender inequalities in the academic field, as well as consistent gender differences in academic work stress and satisfaction, were the basis for anticipated differences in the manner in which men and women academics relate to their work. The results presented here indicate that, in relation to some aspects of their work, there are significant gender differences between women and men academic faculty, whereas in relation to other aspects male and female academics are very similar.

The most unique aspect of the calling construct is the transcendent or external summons element. Both men and women academics attributed their summons to the same sources - almost all the research participants indicated that they identified a particular personal potential to enter academics and that this was the source of their transcendent summons. In addition, most respondents – male and female – indicated that the needs of society, destiny, and family tradition were important sources of their calling. In contrast, only about a quarter of the research participants indicated that G-d was a relevant source of their calling. In addition, no gender differences were found regarding the level of transcendent summons that the academic faculty found at work. However, significant gender differences were uncovered concerning the importance of searching for this transcendent summons. For women academics, the search for this aspect of calling was more important than it was for men. In a similar manner, the importance that women academics attributed to the search for a prosocial orientation in their academic work was higher in comparison to the men academics. Regarding work spirituality, women academics reported higher levels of spirituality in the dimensions that are related to the work itself - engaging work and mystical experience - than did men academics.

One possible explanation for these gender differences is that they may reflect a more basic difference between male and female academics as to how they relate to their scientific work. Male academics may perceive their academic vocation in a more instrumental manner. They are less occupied by the notion that their involvement in academic work may answer some kind of transcendent call or that their work should benefit society. In contrast, female academics seem to perceive their academic involvement in a more ideological manner. Female academics do perceive it as important that their efforts should answer a transcendent call and should benefit society. Therefore, female academics also are more immersed in their academic work - they experience semi-mystical work experiences and feel that their work has a higher purpose. An additional explanation may be based on the well-known idea of cognitive dissonance. As evident from the literature, academic life is much more difficult for women than it is for men. Women have to contend with numerous inequalities in the academic world - promotion, standing, research vs. teaching, as well as dealing with higher levels of work-related pressure and stress and more conflict between their academic jobs and their families. The higher "price" that women "pay" to remain in academia may affect how they perceive and relate to their work. They see their work as more engaging and as a more total experience. Of course, both of these explanations are suppositions and future research should include additional variables to explore these possibilities.

A number of research limitations involve the sample. First of all, the research sample was not large. Although we invited over 300 academic faculty members to participate in the study the eventual rate of participation was about 25%. Academic faculty members receive a large number of requests to participate in a variety of studies and surveys and, as the research shows, their time resources are limited. In addition, although anonymity was guaranteed, since the data was collected by a fellow faculty member this may have caused reluctance to participate among some of the



potential participants. In any case, the representability of the sample may be questionable. Finally, this study was conducted among the faculty of the Ariel University. The Ariel University is the youngest university in Israel and, due to a variety of economical and political factors, the institution and its faculty face particular challenges, which may of course influence the findings presented here. Therefore, we highly recommend replicating this study in additional universities in Israel as well as in other countries to determine the generalizability of the findings presented here.

An additional limitation is due to the fact that the job of a university faculty member consists of two major aspects – research - related activities such as direct involvement in research, as well as mentoring research students, and teaching, related activities including course preparation, frontal lecturing, and testing. As Winslow (2010) reported, men and women academic faculty members tend to divide their time between teaching and research in different ways. In a similar fashion, when the research participants assessed their degree of calling and spirituality, it is impossible to determine to which part of their academic job they were referring - teaching, research, or a combination of both. We recommend that future research differentiate between these two major aspects of academic work and have academic research participants assess calling and work spirituality separately for teaching and for research.

In conclusion, the findings of this study as to gender differences among academic faculty join those of numerous other studies from a variety of different countries and cultures. It seems that the question is not whether there are gender differences between academic faculty members but rather in what specific areas are the differences more considerable and in what areas do male and female faculty members show more similarities.

#### **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

The data for this study was collected by Gal Coren for her master's thesis under the supervision of Aryeh Lazar.

#### **AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES**

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**NOTES**