The Relationship Between Persistence Rates and The Alignment of Traditional Sophomore Student Religious Beliefs With Institutional Missions: A Multi-Institution Focus Approach

By
Dany Doughan
A dissertation submitted to the faculty of Benedictine University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Educational in Higher Education and Organizational Change July, 2014
The Relationship Between Persistence Rates and The Alignment of Traditional Sophomore Student Religious Beliefs With Institutional Missions: A Multi-Institution Focus Approach

A dissertation submitted

by

Dany Doughan

to

Benedictine University

in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

in

Higher Education and Organizational Change

This dissertation has been accepted for the faculty of Benedictine University

____________________________
John Minogue, Ph.D. __________ Date __________
Dissertation Committee Director and Chair

____________________________
Tamara Korenman, Ph.D. __________ Date __________
Dissertation Committee Reader

____________________________
Nancy Svoboda, Ed.D. __________ Date __________
Dissertation Committee Reader

____________________________
Sunil Chand, Ph.D. __________ Date __________
Program Director, Faculty

____________________________
Eileen Kolich, Ph.D. __________ Date __________
Faculty

____________________________
Ethel Ragland, Ed.D., M.N., R.N. __________ Date __________
Acting Dean, College of Education and Health Services
ABSTRACT

Compared to other student subpopulations, do Catholic students persist better at Catholic institutions? Such was the central question of this study. To elucidate an answer to this question, a relationship between (1) the persistence rates of traditional sophomore students at three Benedictine institutions of higher education and (2) the alignment of these students’ religious beliefs with the missions of the three institutions was revealed following an examination of student retention data and a quantitative analysis of questionnaires completed by the aforementioned sophomore students. Through including a total of three Benedictine Catholic institutions of higher education—one college and two universities—whose identities remained unknown, this quantitative study confirmed the observed trend at a small size Benedictine university where traditional sophomore level students whose religious beliefs were closely aligned with the institutional mission persisted better on campus. This study established a correlation between the alignment of the sophomore students’ religious beliefs with the missions of the three institutions and the persistence rates of the sophomore students at the three institutions. The study did not imply causation between the two variables.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Statement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose Statement and Hypothesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and Related Research Questions</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2—REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables Anticipated to Be More Pertinent to the Study</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Context</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Size</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging College Entrance Interview</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Perception of Campus</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Student Involvement</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Institutional Fit</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with the College Experience</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Affiliation</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables Anticipated to Be Less Pertinent to the Study</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institutional Acceptance Rates .................................................................................. 17
Availability of Financial Aid ..................................................................................... 18
Innate Academic Capabilities of Students ............................................................... 19
SAT Scores and High School Grade Point Averages ................................................. 19
Student Health ........................................................................................................ 20
Social and Family Support ....................................................................................... 20
Faculty Teaching Skills ........................................................................................... 21

CHAPTER 3—METHODOLOGY ............................................................................... 22
Research Type .......................................................................................................... 22
Population ................................................................................................................ 22
Sampling Procedures and Validity ........................................................................... 23
Instrumentation ........................................................................................................ 24
Response Anchors .................................................................................................... 25
Variables .................................................................................................................. 26
Independent ............................................................................................................. 26
Dependent ............................................................................................................... 27
Control ..................................................................................................................... 27
Compounding Effect of Variables .......................................................................... 28

CHAPTER 4—RESULTS ......................................................................................... 29
Institutional Data ...................................................................................................... 29
Survey Data ............................................................................................................. 39
Validation of Survey Responses .............................................................................. 87
Correlations Between Control and Independent Variables ................................... 91
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Retained Variables</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis Testing</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith-Based Identity</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Identity</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Identity</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Mission</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis Validation</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 5—DISCUSSION</strong></td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Findings</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal Limitations</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Limitations</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Recommendations</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REFERENCES</strong></td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDICES</strong></td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Survey Questions</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Informed Consent Form</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Retention data at SSC for all traditional freshman to sophomore students for the past five years ................................................................. 29
Table 2: Retention data at SSC for Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students for the past five years ................................................................. 30
Table 3: Retention data at SSC for Christian non-Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students for the past five years ................................................. 30
Table 4: Retention data at SSC for non-Christian traditional freshman to sophomore students for the past five years ............................................................. 31
Table 5: Retention data at SSC for traditional freshman to sophomore students with “no response” to the religious affiliation question for the past five years ......................... 31
Table 6: Retention data at SSU for all traditional freshman to sophomore students for the past five years ........................................................................... 32
Table 7: Retention data at SSU for Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students for the past five years ................................................................. 32
Table 8: Retention data at SSU for Christian non-Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students for the past five years ................................................. 33
Table 9: Retention data at SSU for non-Christian traditional freshman to sophomore students for the past five years ............................................................. 33
Table 10: Retention data at SSU for traditional freshman to sophomore students with “no response” to the religious affiliation question for the past five years ......................... 34
Table 11: Retention data at MSU for all traditional freshman to sophomore students for the past five years ........................................................................... 34
Table 12: Retention data at MSU for Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students for the past five years ................................................................. 35
Table 13: Retention data at MSU for Christian non-Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students for the past five years ................................................. 35
Table 14: Retention data at MSU for non-Christian traditional freshman to sophomore students for the past five years ............................................................. 36
Table 15: Retention data at MSU for traditional freshman to sophomore students with “no response” to the religious affiliation question for the past five years ........................................ 36

Table 16: Expected values for the SSC Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students ... 37

Table 17: Expected values for the SSU Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students ... 38

Table 18: Expected values for the MSU Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students .. 39

Table 19: Correlation coefficient ($r$) for all answers to the sets of validation questions .......... 88

Table 20: Correlation coefficient ($r$) for consistent answers to the sets of validation questions . 90

Table 21: Correlation between importance of institution’s faith-based identity and all other variables ............................................................................................................ 92

Table 22: Correlation between importance of institution’s Christian identity and all other variables ........................................................................................................... 93

Table 23: Correlation between importance of institution’s Catholic identity and all other variables ................................................................................................................. 94

Table 24: Correlation Between importance of the institutional mission and all other variables .................................................................................................................. 95

Table 25: Control variables eliminated from the study because of weak or nonexistent correlations with all four independent variables ............................................................ 97

Table 26: Variables retained in the study because of moderate or strong correlations with one or more of the four independent variables .................................................. 98

Table 27: Variables included in the analysis of the study because of moderate or strong correlations with one or more of the four independent variables ........................................ 100

Table 28: Mean scores and standard deviation values of the seven religious affiliations on the importance of the faith-based identity variable ........................................... 139

Table 29: Mean scores and standard deviation values of the seven religious affiliations on the importance of the Christian identity variable ............................................. 139

Table 30: Mean scores and standard deviation values of the seven religious affiliations on the importance of the Catholic identity variable ................................................. 140

Table 31: Mean scores and standard deviation values of the seven religious affiliations on the importance of the institutional mission variable ........................................... 140
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student responses to informed consent</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Religious affiliation</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Commitment to faith or religion</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Importance of the faith-based identity of the institution</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Importance of the Christian identity of the institution</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Importance of the Catholic identity of the institution</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Importance of the Benedictine values of the institution</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Importance of the institutional mission</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Importance of the level of engagement in the college interview</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Time devoted to religion per week</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Time devoted to academic work per week</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Time devoted to nonreligious social activities per week</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Importance of the involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Importance of the involvement in the Catholic organizations</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Satisfaction with institution in terms of availability of religious campus activities</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Frequency of participation in religious campus events and activities</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Satisfaction with institution in terms of availability of nonreligious campus activities</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Frequency of participation in nonreligious campus events and activities</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Frequency of participation in service projects on campus</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Satisfaction with institution in terms of interaction with other students</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 21: Satisfaction with institution in terms of social life ................................................. 60
Figure 22: Frequency of interaction with faculty members outside the classroom ................ 61
Figure 23: Satisfaction with the overall sense of community of campus .............................. 62
Figure 24: Frequency of practicing religion at home ............................................................... 63
Figure 25: Time devoted to on and off campus employment per week ................................ 64
Figure 26: Devotion to faith or religion .................................................................................. 65
Figure 27: Importance of the faith-based identity of the student’s decision-making process to persist .......................................................... 66
Figure 28: Importance of the Christian identity of the institution in the student’s decision-making process to persist .......................................................... 67
Figure 29: Importance of the Catholic identity of the institution in the student’s decision-making process to persist ......................................................... 68
Figure 30: Importance of the Benedictine values of the institution in the student’s decision-making process to persist .......................................................... 69
Figure 31: Importance of the institutional mission in the student’s decision-making process to persist ................................................................................. 70
Figure 32: Importance of the student’s involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations on campus ................................................................. 71
Figure 33: Importance of the student’s involvement in the Catholic organizations on campus 72
Figure 34: Student satisfaction with institution in terms of availability of religious campus activities ................................................................................................. 73
Figure 35: Student satisfaction with institution in terms of availability of nonreligious campus activities ................................................................................................. 74
Figure 36: Student satisfaction with institution in terms of interaction with fellow students 75
Figure 37: Student satisfaction with institution in terms of overall social life ...................... 76
Figure 38: Student satisfaction with the overall sense of community of campus ................ 77
Figure 39: ACT/SAT score .................................................................................................. 78
Figure 40: Grade point average ................................................................. 79
Figure 41: Collective income of the person or people paying the student’s tuition .................. 80
Figure 42: First generation college student .................................................. 81
Figure 43: National origin ........................................................................... 82
Figure 44: Transfer student ......................................................................... 83
Figure 45: On-campus versus off-campus residence ......................................... 84
Figure 46: Gender ....................................................................................... 85
Figure 47: Ethnicity .................................................................................... 86
Figure 48: Race ........................................................................................... 87
Figure 49: Benedictine values not at all important .......................................... 101
Figure 50: Benedictine values of low importance .......................................... 102
Figure 51: Benedictine values slightly important .......................................... 103
Figure 52: Benedictine values neutral .......................................................... 104
Figure 53: Benedictine values moderately important ..................................... 105
Figure 54: Benedictine values very important .............................................. 106
Figure 55: Benedictine values extremely important ....................................... 107
Figure 56: Involvement in Catholic organizations not at all important .......... 108
Figure 57: Involvement in Catholic organizations of low importance ............ 109
Figure 58: Involvement in Catholic organizations slightly important ............ 110
Figure 59: Involvement in Catholic organizations neutral ............................ 111
Figure 60: Involvement in Catholic organizations moderately important ...... 112
Figure 61: Involvement in Catholic organizations very important ............... 113
Figure 62: Involvement in Catholic organizations extremely important ....... 114
Figure 63: Student religiousness not at all important ................................................................. 115
Figure 64: Student religiousness of low importance................................................................. 116
Figure 65: Student religiousness slightly important ................................................................. 117
Figure 66: Student religiousness neutral ................................................................................. 118
Figure 67: Student religiousness moderately important........................................................... 119
Figure 68: Student religiousness very important ..................................................................... 120
Figure 69: Student religiousness extremely important............................................................. 121
Figure 70: Agnostic student responses in the low involvement in Catholic organizations category .................................................................................................................................. 122
Figure 71: Atheist student responses in the low involvement in Catholic organizations category .................................................................................................................................. 123
Figure 72: Catholic student responses in the low involvement in Catholic organizations category .................................................................................................................................. 124
Figure 73: Christian other than Catholic student responses in the low involvement in Catholic organizations category .................................................................................................................................. 125
Figure 74: Hindu student responses in the low involvement in Catholic organizations category .................................................................................................................................. 126
Figure 75: Muslim student responses in the low involvement in Catholic organizations category .................................................................................................................................. 127
Figure 76: Other student responses in the low involvement in Catholic organizations category .................................................................................................................................. 128
Figure 77: Catholic student responses in the high involvement in Catholic organizations category .................................................................................................................................. 129
Figure 78: Christian other than Catholic student responses in the high involvement in Catholic organizations category .................................................................................................................................. 130
Figure 79: Highest ranked student responses to faith-based identity by religious affiliation .......................................................................................................................................... 132
Figure 80: Highest ranked student responses to Christian identity by religious affiliation .......................................................................................................................................... 134
Figure 81: Highest ranked student responses to Catholic identity by religious affiliation
........................................................................................................................................136

Figure 82: Highest ranked student responses to institutional mission by religious affiliation
........................................................................................................................................138
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am especially thankful to and deeply grateful for the guidance and mentoring of Dr. John “Jack” Minogue who served as my dissertation chair and director, and whose great wisdom, contagious resolve, and valuable insight have brought this study to light.

I am also very appreciative of Dr. Tamara Korenman and Dr. Nancy Svoboda who served as my dissertation committee members, and whose encouragement and diligence have greatly aided me in seeing the light at the end of my doctoral journey.

I am also thankful to Dr. Sunil Chand and Dr. Eileen Kolich for their support and assistance with any and all administrative matters since day one, and for making sure that my progress toward graduation was timely and uncomplicated.

I am also grateful to all the faculty members and students I had the pleasure of interacting with and learning from inside and outside the classroom, during the regional meetings, and at the national conferences.
To my amazing wife Maya, my wonderful children Lana and Adam, and my incomparable parents Ibrahim and Chadia. Without your love and support, this dissertation would not have been possible.
CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Two decades ago 28.5% of students entering four-year institutions of higher education were not retained by the end of the first year (Berger & Braxton, 1998). Today, the number has increased to 33.5% (Habley, Valiga, McClanahan, & Burkum, 2010).

According to Snyder and Dillow (2011), the 2007-2008 retention rate at public institutions of higher education was 70.6%. At private not-for-profit institutions—to which religious colleges and universities belong—the rate was 78.7%, and for-profit institutions the rate was 58.8% (Snyder & Dillow, 2011).

Online education is a major contributor in lowering retention rates at traditional private not-for-profit colleges and universities offering conventional on-ground courses and majors (Aslanian & Clinefelter, 2012). The reasons drawing postsecondary students to online education follow.

According to Aslanian and Clinefelter (2012), when asked about their preferences toward online education, online students mentioned the “[a]bility to balance work, family, and school responsibilities” (p. 16) as the most frequent response at 68%, the “[a]bility to study anytime and anywhere” (p. 16) as the second most frequent response at 64%, the “[a]vailability of accelerated, fast-track courses” (p. 16) as the third most frequent response at 37%, and the “[o]verall lower cost” (p. 16) as the fourth most frequent response at 30%

These four reasons for choosing online education over on-ground education can be better understood through the lens of disruptive technology (Christensen, Johnson, & Horn, 2008). Online education—thanks to its convenient and customizable nature—is capable of jeopardizing
the very fabric and long-honored traditions of higher education (Christensen, Johnson, & Horn, 2008).

In the context of student retention at traditional colleges and universities, this means a higher migration rate from on-ground education to its online counterpart, especially when the latter becomes more established (Christensen, Johnson, & Horn, 2008).

Since the retention rates of online and on-ground institutions of higher education are less than ten percent apart (Zatynski, 2013), it is imperative for traditional colleges and universities to focus on what sets them apart from their online counterparts. As such, on-ground institutions of higher education can focus on their ability to offer their students a more community-oriented, integrative, and comprehensive educational experience, the kind that online colleges and universities are simply unable to match or replicate.

From a financial standpoint, it is paramount today for traditional institutions of higher education to admit students who have the highest chance to persist on campus. It is a well-known fact in administrative circles that retaining a student costs quite a bit less than admitting a new one, or as Johnson (2012) puts it, “[a]ttrition clearly adds to the expense of producing college degrees, thus reducing it is crucial to enhancing productivity and increasing educational attainment” (p. 1).

To be exact, “[i]t costs an average of about $6,000 to recruit, enroll and process each new college or university student. So, every student who leaves takes at least $12,000 out the door with him or her. The dropping student takes the $6,000 average financial investment the school made to recruit and enroll him or her initially. The lost student must also be replaced so that will cost another $6,000 recruitment and enrollment cost” (Raisman, 2009, pp. 4-5).
When an institution of higher education, public or private, is faced with increased attrition rates, it starts to doubt the quality of its education, and attempts through assessment to identify the reasons behind the problem (Angelino, Williams, & Natvig, 2007; Thompson, 1999).

This negatively affects its finances because the “costs for development, delivery, and assessment, as well as lost tuition revenue, result in wasted expenditures for the institution” (Moody, 2004, p. 205).

Though many faith-based institutions have retention rates below the 78.7% average (Snyder & Dillow, 2011), their persistence rates for students belonging to religions that are mentioned in institutional missions remain high (Astin, 1975, 1984, 1993).

To illustrate, at a small size Benedictine Catholic university (SSU) with a traditional freshman to sophomore student retention rate of 57.0%, the traditional Catholic student freshman to sophomore retention rate remains the highest on campus (Small Size University, 2010).

Thus far, no public or published persistence data on student subpopulations of specific religious beliefs were found. Some research groups have inferentially studied the effect on retention of aligning, or matching to a high degree, student religious beliefs and missions of institutions of higher education (Astin, 1975, 1984, 1993; Barrett & Morphew, 2010; Supiano, 2010).

**Theoretical Framework**

Firstly, the theoretical framework of this study is derived from Tinto’s *Interactionalist Theory of Student Departure*, which states that students who are more involved in campus activities—both social and academic—are more likely to persist on campus (Tinto, 1975).

Tinto’s model is based upon Durkheim’s (1951) work on suicide where Durkheim contended the following: “when a person shares values with a group, this person is less likely to
commit suicide (or by analogy, to drop out of school); and when a person has friendship support, this person is less likely to commit suicide (or drop out of school)” (Bean, 1981, p. 2).

Through Tinto’s (1975) analogy, what is of importance to this study is featured in the work of Durkheim (1951) as the “integration into religious, domestic, or political society reduces the likelihood of an individual’s committing suicide [or a student dropping out]” (p. 208).

Put differently, “the Tinto model views attrition as a longitudinal process involving a complex series of sociopsychological interactions between the student and the institutional environment” (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1980, p. 272).

According to Tinto’s model, the student’s family background, attributes, and personal experiences “interact with various structural and normative features of the particular college or university and lead to varying levels of integration” (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1980, p. 272).

On the subject of student attrition rates at institutions of higher education, Tinto (1975) wrote the following: “Other things being equal, the higher the degree of integration of the individual into the college systems, the greater will be his commitment to the specific institution and to the goal of college completion” (p. 96).

Secondly, the theoretical framework of this study is derived from Bean’s Student Attrition Model, which argues that students who perform well academically are more likely to persist on campus (Bean, 1980, 1981, 1985).

The work of Pascarella (1980) was influential on Bean’s work in that it emphasized “the importance of informal contact with faculty” (Bean, 1981, p. 13) as a means to reduce attrition by positively affecting the student’s academic performance.
What is of importance to this study is the fact that a religious institution of higher education follows local, national, or international mandates that set quota on recruiting faculty members from its specific religion versus other religions.

For example, by adhering to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Catholic institutions of higher education are expected to have at least half of their faculty members be Catholic (Pope John Paul II, 1990).

Also, Golden (2006) stated that almost “400 U.S. colleges cite religion as an element in their hiring policies” (p. 2); that ones “such as Brigham Young, an almost entirely Mormon university, are growing fast” (p. 2); and that at “the 102 evangelical Protestant schools belonging to the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, [Protestant] full-time faculty rose 36.2% from 1991 to 2003” (p. 2).

Faculty members and students that share the institution’s religion would also share its values and, as a consequence, the students develop a more informal rapport with the faculty, which can help the former better achieve academically, which in turn can reduce attrition rates as Bean (1981) argues.

Thirdly, the theoretical framework of this study is derived from Astin’s *Theory of Student Involvement*, which states that students who devote more physical and psychological energy to the academic experience are more likely to persist on campus (Astin, 1984). Astin (1984) also argues that students who “participate in extracurricular activities of almost any type are less likely to drop out” (Astin, 1984, p. 523).

Furthermore, Astin (1984) places student involvement on a continuum and views involvement as both quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative component refers to the
amount of time allocated to the involvement, while the qualitative component relates to the level of commitment of the student to the involvement.

According to the *Theory of Student Involvement*, “a highly involved student is one who, for example, devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students” (Astin, 1984, p. 518).

The support for the *Theory of Student Involvement* comes from the Chickering (1974) study that found that “in all types of institutions and among all types of students regardless of sex, race, ability, or family background” (Astin, 1984, p. 523), students who live in residence halls tend to better persist on campus.

What is of importance to this study are the roots of the *Theory of Student Involvement*, which come from *Preventing Students from Dropping Out* by Astin (1975), where the fit between students and institutions of higher education was investigated.

The results of Astin’s (1975) study show that “[s]tudents are more likely to persist at religious colleges if their own religious backgrounds are similar” (Astin, 1984, p. 524).

According to Astin (1984), this relationship is most likely linked to the “student’s ability to identify with the institution” (p. 524).

**Purpose Statement and Hypothesis**

The study’s purpose statement is to quantitatively describe the relationship between persistence rates and alignment of sophomore student religious beliefs with the missions of three Benedictine colleges and universities.
This study’s hypothesis is that traditional sophomore level students whose religious beliefs are closely aligned with institutional missions will tend to better persist on campus compared to other sophomore level student groups.

Central and Related Research Questions

The central research question of this study can be stated as follows: When compared to other student subpopulations, do Catholic students persist better at Catholic institutions of higher education?

The related research questions of this study can be stated as follows: In general, is alignment of student religious beliefs with institutional missions related to persistence rates? How important is the commitment level of students to their particular religion in their decision to persist at a faith-based institution?

Significance of the Study

This study will numerically prove that the retention rates at the small size Benedictine Catholic university (SSU) for Catholic students are not outliers; rather, they are part of the norm. The study will describe the relationship between persistence rates on one hand and the fit between student religious beliefs and the missions of Benedictine institutions on the other hand.

The study will help (1) enrollment management teams recruit students with higher anticipated retention rates, and (2) strategic planning teams maximize affordability and desirability by retaining more students who want to be at the institution because they identify with its mission.

In case of a strong positive correlation between persistence rates and the Catholic ideological alignment between students and Benedictine institutions, (1) the results of this study may be expanded to anticipate the co-varying of retention rates and other ideological alignments,
and (2) inferential statistics may be used to extrapolate the results of the study to a larger population.

In other words, if this study confirms numerically the findings of previous studies that students whose religious ideologies are closely aligned with institutional missions tend to better persist on campus, then there is a high probability that students whose other types of ideologies are closely aligned with other institutional characteristics may also tend to better persist on campus.

The study results may be extrapolated to help answer other ideological alignment questions between students and institutions of higher education such as: Will an open-carry campus better attract and retain students who hold dear their second amendment rights? Will a green campus better attract and retain students who recycle?

The study results may also provide support for the Astin (1975) findings that “students from small towns are more likely to persist in small than in large colleges” (Astin, 1984, p. 524), especially that this study’s three Benedictine institutions of higher education are substantially different in size.
CHAPTER 2—REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Variables Anticipated to Be More Pertinent to the Study

Among the variables that have already been studied are ones that were anticipated to be more pertinent to this study. These studies were not simply important to complete the literature review of this study; they were also the basis for its theoretical foundation, and are all accounted and/or controlled for in this study and its survey instrument.

Institutional Context

Berger and Milem (2000) defined the peer climate of an institution as the “combination of the individual characteristics of students at any one college or university” (p. 309). Berger and Milem (2000) also contended that the more involving the peer climate of an institution of higher education is, the higher the student persistence rates will be.

Thomas (2000) lent support to the results of Berger and Milem (2000) by maintaining the following: “students with a greater proportion of ties outside of their peer group perform better academically and are more likely to persist” (p. 609).


The findings of the Titus (2004) study were that “the average chance of persistence at a 4-year institution is related to measures of institutional structural-demographic characteristics and student peer climate, but unrelated to peer characteristics and aggregate student experiences” (p. 690). In the Titus (2004) study, the population was comprised of 5151 first-time, full-time, degree seeking undergraduates attending 4-year colleges and universities nationwide.
For this study, the findings of Berger and Milem (2000), Thomas (2000), and Titus (2004) indicate that the more involved students are in campus activities—religious or otherwise—that include other students, the higher their chances to persist.

**Institutional Size**

Kamens (1971) argued that the larger the size of an institution of higher education, the higher the persistence rates would be. The sociological argument was based on the notion that the size of an institution is positively related to the strength of its socialization process, which in turn is related to campus involvement and the overall student experience (Kamens, 1971).

Using statistical modeling, Titus (2004) supported Kamens’ (1971) results through discovering that “[a] one standard deviation increase in institutional size increases the average chance of persistence by 4%” (p. 690) for a population comprised of 384 four-year institutions of higher education.

In relation to this study, Kamens (1971) and Titus (2004) suggest that larger institutions offer more opportunities for student involvement—religious or otherwise—, thus increasing the persistence chances of their students. The three institutions that are included in this study were selected partly because their sizes differ widely.

**Engaging College Entrance Interview**

Marcus (1989) discussed the positive relationship that exists between higher persistence rates and more engaging college entrance interviews in which students participate. Marcus (1989) described the interviews as ones that (1) provided a prospective student with a more complete, in-depth institutional portrait, one that the student could internalize and better relate to, and (2) provided the institution with a more detailed narrative of the prospective student’s academic capabilities and nonacademic interests.
Braxton, Vesper, and Hossler (1995) emphasized the following when discussing the importance of sharing institutional traits with potential students during the entrance interview process, and on the positive relationship that exists between information transparency and retention rates: “colleges and universities need to accurately portray their characteristics to prospective students [and the portrait needs to] be rooted in available objective institutional data as well as in the perceptions of currently enrolled students” (p. 606).

Braxton, Vesper, and Hossler (1995) also pointed out that “[s]uch information should be communicated in a consistent way in college catalogues, viewbooks, fact sheets, conferences held between high school guidance counselors and admissions officers, interviews with prospective students, presentations at college fairs, and high school visits” (pp. 600-607).

The findings of Marcus (1989) and Braxton, Vesper, and Hossler (1995) suggest that the more engaged students are during their entrance interviews, the higher their chances are to persist on campus. With respect to this study, at religious institutions, this means that engaging interviews may translate themselves into meaningful discussions about the mission and identity of the institution and how the two relate to the incoming students’ sets of personal values and religious beliefs.

**Student Perception of Campus**

Tinto (1975, 1993, 1997) was first to publish the positive relationship between retention rates and student perceptions of their campus as part of the Interactionalist Theory of Student Departure.

Building upon Tinto’s work, Berger and Milem (1999) argued that “student behaviors and perceptions continually interact and modify each other as part of the ongoing persistence process” (p. 644) and that social integration of students on campus “has a positive indirect effect
on persistence” (p. 656) with a standardized partial regression coefficient value or $\beta$-weight of 0.15. The $\beta$-weight was derived from Wold’s (1982) partial least squares technique.

$\beta_k$, the $\beta$-weight, is equal to $b_k$, the confidence interval ratio of the $k^{th}$ independent variable, multiplied by $S_k$, the standard deviation of the $k^{th}$ independent variable and divided by $S_y$, the standard deviation of the dependent variable (Abdi, 2003). The usefulness of $\beta$-weights in the presence of multiple independent variables comes from the fact that the “weights have the advantage of being comparable from one independent variable to the other because the unit of measurement has been eliminated” (Abdi, 2003, p. 4).

The findings of Tinto (1975, 1993, 1997) and Berger and Milem (1999) suggest that if students perceive their institution positively, they may better persist. For the purposes of this study, if students have a positive perception of the religious nature of their institution, they may better persist.

**Level of Student Involvement**

As mentioned earlier in the discussion of this study’s theoretical framework, the seminal work in relating student retention rates to the level of student involvement on campus came from Tinto (1975, 1993, 1997) and Astin (1984, 1993). Since then, many research groups have either confirmed or expanded the findings of Tinto (1975, 1993, 1997) and Astin (1984, 1993).

Berger and Milem (1999) argued that “[e]arly involvement in the fall semester positively predicts spring involvement and has significant indirect effects on social integration, academic integration, subsequent institutional commitment, and persistence” (p. 658) at a private and highly selective research university.

Lotkowski, Robbins, and Noeth (2004) found out that retention rates and “social involvement had a moderate relationship” (p. 7). The Pearson product-moment correlation
coefficient (ρ) for social involvement and retention was found to be 0.216 (Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004, p. 7).

The collective findings of Tinto (1975, 1993, 1997); Astin (1984, 1993); Berger and Milem (1999); and Lotkowski, Robbins, and Noeth (2004) suggest that the more involved students are on campus, the higher their chances of persistence become. For this study, a higher involvement of students in religious activities on campus may translate itself into a higher chance to persist.

Student-Institutional Fit

It was Astin (1975) who first studied the idea of student-institutional fit extensively. The results of Astin’s (1975) study—later supported in Astin (1984) and Astin (1993)—showed that African American students tend to better persist at Historically Black Colleges and Universities compared to Predominantly White Colleges and Universities, and that “students from small towns are more likely to persist in small than in large colleges” (p. 524).

On the subject of student-institutional fit, Supiano (2010) made the observation that because “Hispanic Americans are family-oriented, conservative, and involved in church life” (p. 3) they possess ”qualities that fit well with [Oral Roberts University’s] ethos” (p. 3). Oral Roberts University is an evangelical, charismatic institution of higher education in Tulsa, Oklahoma (Oral Roberts University, 2013).

For this study, the findings of Astin (1975, 1984, 1993) and Supiano (2010) hint at a possible relationship between the level of fitting the religious beliefs of students with the mission of the college or university on one hand, and retention rates on the other hand.
Satisfaction with the College Experience

Supiano (2010) mentioned that a college should care “beyond enrollment and affirmative-action laws” (p. 2); this is why protestant Latino students “could be right at home at Oral Roberts or Regent, which are two of the largest charismatic colleges in the country” (p. 2).

While previous research had shown that “satisfaction is relatively unimportant in community college persistence decisions” (Voorhees, 1987, p. 127), newer research showed that “the students are more likely to be satisfied with their education and feel a sense of loyalty to their institution if the institution promotes active involvement on the part of students in campus life and learning” (Berger & Milem, 1999, p. 644), and that “involvement, along with students’ perceptions of integration, is an important contributing factor in college student persistence” (Berger & Milem, 1999, p. 644).

Having developed their work based on Tinto’s interactionalist model of persistence (Tinto, 1975, 1993), Braxton, Vesper, and Hossler (1995) confirmed the following: “student departure is the consequence of the interpretations made by students of their experiences with the academic and social communities of a college or university. Underlying such interpretations is an assessment by students of whether or not they wish to establish membership in the academic and social communities of a given college or university. One possible organizing framework an individual student may use for such interpretations is his or her appraisal of whether the college meets his or her expectations for the college experience” (p. 607).

Astin (1975, 1984, 1993), Davis (1991), and Barrett and Morphew (2010) explored the relationship between retention and student involvement on campus. The results of the study of Davis (1991) indicated that the more African-American students interact with other students and
faculty members, and the more they participate in organized activities, the more likely they are to persist.

Endo and Harpel (1982) studied the student-faculty interactions outside the classroom and found them to have a positive relationship with student retention rates. Voorhees (1987) contradicted the findings of Endo and Harpel (1982) for community college students where the number of interactions with faculty outside the classroom was “shown to be independent of persistence” (p. 126).

Minich (1996) argued that the frequency of contacting students is critical to retain them, and Wehlage, Rutter, and Smith (1989) contended that a supportive campus community is key “to providing students with a sense of belonging, membership, and engagement” (Angelino, Williams, & Natvig, 2007, p. 7). A campus where students have a sense of belonging to is one at which they tend to persist (Allen, Robbins, Casillas, & Oh, 2006; Dee, 2004; Tinto, 1993).

Rovai (2002) summarized the positive relationship between a strong sense of community and persistence rates as the following: “[r]esearch provides evidence that strong feelings of community may not only increase persistence in courses, but may also increase the flow of information among all learners, availability of support, commitment to group goals, cooperation among members and satisfaction with group efforts” (p. 3).

Titus (2004), through making use of “national survey data, and multilevel modeling techniques” (p. 673), supported Bean’s (1990) findings that “persistence is positively influenced by student academic background, college academic performance, involvement, and institutional commitment” (p. 692).

The different subcategories that make up the “Satisfaction with the College Experience” variable all lead to the following conclusion: the more sense of community students have toward
their institution, the more likely they are to persist. The sense of community this research is interested in stems from the Catholic identity and Benedictine heritage of the institutions of higher education under study.

**Religious Affiliation**

Astin (1975) was the first and only researcher to report the positive relationship between persistence rates of college students and the religious affiliation fit between the students and the institutions.

Astin’s (1975) longitudinal and multi-institutional study targeted 101,100 entering freshman students attending one of 358 nationally distributed two-year colleges or four-year universities. Of the 101,100 surveys that were sent out, 41,356 were properly completed and included in the study (Astin, 1975).

Astin (1975) raised questions such as: “Does this compatibility enhance student persistence? Do Students with atypical religious preferences find themselves in a foreign or hostile environment that prompts them to leave?” (p. 140).

The results of Astin’s (1975) study concluded that “Protestant students persist better than students from other religious backgrounds in Protestant institutions and worse than Roman Catholic students in Catholic institutions” (p. 142). Astin (1975) did not provide any correlation results between persistence rates of college students and the religious affiliation fit between the students and the institutions.

What was evident from research was the fact that religious institutions of higher education “are more likely than other institutional types to emphasize their distinctive qualities to prospective students” (Barrett & Morphew, 2010, p. 501).
The findings of Barrett and Morphew (2010) lend indirect support to the idea that religious institutions of higher education understand and capitalize on the positive relationship that results from aligning the religious ideologies of postsecondary students with those of institutions of higher education.

Even though one of the three most established theoretical frameworks on persistence in higher education predicts a positive relationship between persistence rates and the alignment of religious affiliations of students with those of institutions of higher education (Astin, 1975), the quantitative literature on the subject describing the strength of the aforementioned relationship remains absent.

This study aims at providing quantitative support to the positive relationship Astin (1975) described between persistence rates on one side and the alignment of religious affiliations of students with those of institutions of higher education on the other side.

Variables Anticipated to Be Less Pertinent to the Study

The positive relationships that exist between a rather large number of variables and retention rates have already been studied. Among these variables are ones that are anticipated to be less pertinent to this study, but at the same time still important to mention as part of a thorough and comprehensive literature review. Even though these variables are anticipated to be less pertinent to the study, most will still need to be controlled for in this study’s survey instrument because the covered literature describes them as having strong positive correlations with retention rates.

Institutional Acceptance Rates

Marcus (1989) related lower institutional acceptance rates to higher retention rates, and Snyder and Dillow (2011) provided concrete data that supported the relationship. During the
学术年2007-2008，公立高等教育机构的保留率为63.7%，而那些接受不到25%申请者的机构保留率为92.7%（Snyder & Dillow, 2011, p. 488）。

在同年，私立营利性高等教育机构的保留率为57.3%，而那些接受不到25%申请者的机构保留率为96.5%（Snyder & Dillow, 2011, p. 488）。

此外，在2007-2008学年，私立营利性高等教育机构的保留率为48.6%，而那些接受不到25%申请者的机构保留率为76.1%（Snyder & Dillow, 2011, p. 488）。


**availability of financial aid**

programs that provide similar amounts of money but through multiple sources” (p. 418) such as grants, loans, and work-study programs.

Because the availability of financial aid has a small positive effect on student persistence as evidenced by Hossler, Ziskin, Gross, Kim, and Cekic (2009), this study will not include in its survey instrument this variable.

**Innate Academic Capabilities of Students**

Bean (1980, 1981, 1985) argued that the inherent abilities of college students to better perform academically partially drive their decisions to persist on campus. Marcus (1989), Makuakane-Drechsel and Hagedorn (2000), and Hagedorn, Lester, Moon, and Tibbetts (2006) reported similar findings.

Because the innate academic capabilities of students partially drive their decision to persist according to Bean (1980, 1981, 1985), Marcus (1989), Makuakane-Drechsel and Hagedorn (2000), and Hagedorn, Lester, Moon, and Tibbetts (2006), this variable will be controlled for in this study’s survey in the form of a time on task question and a college level GPA question.

**SAT Scores and High School Grade Point Averages**

For students entering colleges and universities, DeBerard, Spielmans, and Julka (2004) and Marcus (1989) pointed out the strong positive relationship that exists between persistence rates on one side, and SAT scores and high school grade point averages on the other side.

Because this variable and persistence have a strong positive relationship (Marcus, 1989), a question about the student’s SAT/ACT scores prior to entering college will be included in this study’s survey instrument.
**Student Health**

While Ross and Wu (1996) argued that there is a positive correlation between educational attainment and health, DeBerard, Spielmans, and Julka (2004) quantitatively established the insignificance of the relationship between poor physical health—smoking and binge drinking—and the retention rates of college freshman students.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ($\rho$) for smoking and retention was found to be 0.04 and that for binge drinking and retention was found to be 0.09 (DeBerard, Spielmans, & Julka, 2004).

Because the relationship between student health and persistence was found to be insignificant (DeBerard, Spielmans, & Julka, 2004), it will not be included in this study’s survey instrument.

**Social and Family Support**

Davis (1991) was first to confirm the positive relationship between persistence rates and increased social and family support for undergraduate African American students. Subsequently, Kuh and Love (2004), Rendón, Jalomo, and Nora (2004), Tierney (2004), Dixon-Rayle and Chung (2007), and Nicpon, Huser, Blanks, Sollenberger, Befort, and Kurpius (2007) supported Davis’ (1991) results while studying other minority groups such as students of Hispanic descent.

Kawakami (1999) reported the positive relationship that exists between persistence rates and increased social and family support for undergraduate Native Hawaiian students. Benham (2006) supported the Kawakami (1999) findings by studying Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students.
Rousey and Longie (2001), Larimore and McClellan (2005), and Guillory and Wolverton (2008) substantiated the work of Kawakami (1999) and expanded it to include students from other Native American backgrounds.

In this study, the positive relationship between social and family support on one hand and persistence on the other hand will be controlled for by asking students questions about race, ethnicity, and their satisfaction with their social interactions on campus.

**Faculty Teaching Skills**

Tinto (1993) contended that there exists a positive relationship between student perception of faculty teaching and student persistence rates. Braxton, Bray, and Berger (2000) demonstrated the significant influence of faculty teaching on student persistence rates using path analysis.

Braxton (2000) argues “that at least part of the often-observed relationship between persistence and student-faculty contact outside the classroom is a reflection of faculty actions. Among other things, this relationship is likely to mirror how faculty actions shape student experiences within the classroom and, in turn, student willingness to seek out faculty beyond the classroom” (p. 90).

As such, in this study, the faculty teaching skills variable will be controlled for indirectly through asking a survey question about the frequency of interactions of students with their faculty outside the classroom.
CHAPTER 3—METHODOLOGY

Research Type

Because this study investigated the extent to which persistence rates and the alignment of traditional sophomore student religious beliefs with institutional missions co-vary, a correlational design that was explanatory in nature was employed. The study also utilized a survey method to validate institutional data.

Because persistence rates increase significantly as years in college increase (Marcus, 1989), the study surveyed traditional sophomore level students one time. The rationale behind the selection of sophomore versus freshman level students was that the former already knew the reasons for which they persisted, while the latter would have most probably provided the study with hypothetical reasons because that they had not persisted yet.

The rationale behind the selection of sophomore versus junior or senior level students was fundamentally to augment the total number of complete survey responses; there are typically more sophomore level students than there are junior or senior level students due to the continued, yet diminished, student attrition past the freshman year (Grasgreen, 2011).

Population

The multi-institution focus of this study included small and medium size baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral level institutions of higher education—one college and two universities—, all of which are Catholic and Benedictine in mission and identity.

Traditional sophomore level students from three Benedictine Catholic institutions of higher education made up the sample size. The names of the three institutions of higher education remained confidential; this study only used pseudonyms and did not use the collected data to single out any of the three institutions.
The three Benedictine Catholic institutions of higher education under study were: (1) a small size, exclusively undergraduate, four-year, highly residential, baccalaureate level college with a total student population below 2,000 (SSC); (2) a small size, very high undergraduate, full-time, four-year, inclusive, highly residential, baccalaureate level university with a total student population below 2,000 (SSU); and (3) a medium size, majority undergraduate, full-time, four-year, selective, higher transfer-in, primarily residential, research, doctoral level university with a total student population above 2,500 (MSU) (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2013). The institutional acceptance rate for SSC was between 70% and 75%, for SSU was between 55% and 65%, and for MSU was between 75% and 80% (U.S. News and World Report, 2014).

While the rich description of the profiles of the three institutions of higher education could help ensure the external validity of the study, the student population boundaries made it very difficult to determine the exact identity of any of the three institutions. As such, this study complied with the anonymity guidelines set forth by the Institutional Review Board of Benedictine University.

**Sampling Procedures and Validity**

As for sampling procedures and validity, the traditional sophomore student subset of the totality of the student body at the three Benedictine institutions of higher education—SSC, SSU, and MSU—was included in the study. As a result, this study employed a simple random sampling technique by selecting the subset of sophomore students out of the larger student population (Creswell, 2008).

More sophomore students participating in this study’s survey translated itself into higher criterion-related validity of the study results (Creswell, 2008). More participation from
sophomore students also translated itself into more statistical significance of the study results, thanks to the larger sample size (Creswell, 2008).

A more valid and statistically significant study led to less significant errors associated with extrapolation (Creswell, 2008). Extrapolation could only be considered if a strong correlation between the study’s variables was established.

**Instrumentation**

As for instrumentation, students of different religious backgrounds were surveyed electronically on their reasons for choosing and remaining at their respective Benedictine colleges and universities. The students who could potentially participate in the study were provided with an electronic consent form. Once potential participants read the consent form, they could choose between checking a “Consent” button and a “Do Not Consent” button. Only after checking the “Consent” button could they participate in the study.

The survey questions and set of answers focused on the importance of religion in the sophomore students’ decision to persist, including the level of commitment of the students to their particular religious affiliation, and whether religion, Catholic or otherwise, played a major role in their decision to attend and persist at their respective Benedictine institution.

To validate the survey’s instrument, the satisfaction-related questions were raised twice in a slightly different manner. Inconsistent responses were automatically excluded from the study. In order to further validate the study’s instrument, a pilot of the survey was distributed to sophomore, junior, and senior level students at a Catholic university. The students’ feedback from the aforementioned pilot was utilized to adjust the final version of this study’s survey instrument.
Through directly contacting the institutions, information was gathered on the Catholic versus non-Catholic, the Christian versus non-Christian, and overall traditional freshman to sophomore student persistence rates at the three aforementioned Benedictine institutions of higher education. A $\chi^2$ statistical test was used to compare the institutional data.

With respect to data analysis and interpretation, the survey results and the retention data were compared to deduce whether or not there was a strong relationship between the religious ideological alignment of students and Benedictine institutions on one side, and retention rates on the other side. A statistical software package was utilized to analyze the potentially large number of student survey responses.

**Response Anchors**

Aside from the demographic questions, the survey also included time on task questions, along with questions that used seven point Likert-type scale response anchors based on semantic differentials.

The choice between an even or odd number of response anchors—neutral response anchor excluding or neutral response anchor including—came from the fact that participants may have genuinely been neutral about some of the satisfaction questions, and forcing them to make a choice could have skewed the results of the study.

Furthermore, if the participants elected not to respond because the response anchor denoting their neutrality was absent, their response was automatically excluded from the survey. This could have resulted in a lower overall number of complete survey responses, which could have lent itself negatively to the validity of the study.
For the level of importance, the seven response anchors were be (1) Not at all important, (2) Low importance, (3) Slightly important, (4) Neutral, (5) Moderately important, (6) Very important, and (7) Extremely important (Vagias, 2006).

For the level of agreement, the seven response anchors were (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat disagree, (4) Neither agree or disagree, (5) Somewhat agree, (6) Agree, and (7) Strongly agree (Vagias, 2006).

For the reflection of student behavior, the seven response anchors were be (1) Very untrue of me, (2) Untrue of me, (3) Somewhat untrue of me, (4) Neutral, (5) Somewhat true of me, (6) True of me, and (7) Very true of me (Vagias, 2006).

For the frequency of participation, the seven response anchors were (1) Never, (2) Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances when I could have, (3) Occasionally, in about 30% of the chances when I could have, (4) Sometimes, in about 50% of the chances when I could have, (5) Frequently, in about 70% of the chances when I could have, (6) Usually, in about 90% of the chances I could have, and (7) Every time (Vagias, 2006).

For the level of satisfaction, the seven response anchors were (1) Very dissatisfied, (2) Somewhat dissatisfied, (3) Dissatisfied, (4) Unsure, (5) Somewhat satisfied, (6) Satisfied, and (7) Very satisfied (Vagias, 2006).

**Variables**

**Independent**

This study had four independent variables it anticipated investigating and correlating with the dependent variable.

The first variable was the importance of the faith-based identity of the institution in the sophomore student’s decision to persist; the second variable was the importance of the Christian
identity of the institution in the sophomore student's decision to persist; the third variable was the importance of the Catholic identity of the institution in the sophomore student’s decision to persist; and the fourth variable was the importance of the mission of the institution in the sophomore student’s decision to persist.

**Dependent**

This study had one dependent variable it anticipated correlating with the four independent variables mentioned above. The dependent variable was the persistence or retention rate at the three Benedictine colleges and universities under study.

**Control**

Derived from the literature, this study had fourteen control variables that could affect retention rates. Three of these fourteen control variables were institution-related and eleven were student-related.

The three institution-related control variables were (1) the size of the institution, (2) the availability of financial aid on campus, and (3) the institutional acceptance rate.

Of the eleven student-related control variables, three were Boolean in nature and eight were not. The Boolean student-related control variables were (1) whether or not the student was a first generation college student, (2) whether the student was domestic or international, and (3) whether or not the student resided on campus.

The non-Boolean student-related control variables were (1) the student’s ACT/SAT score, (2) the student’s economic status, (3) the student’s ethnicity, (4) the student’s gender, (5) the student’s grade point average, (6) the student’s race, (7) the student’s frequency of interaction with faculty outside the classroom, and (8) the student’s frequency of participation and level of involvement in campus events and activities.
Compounding Effect of Variables

Of the fourteen aforementioned control variables, the frequency of participation and level of involvement in religious campus events and activities could have a compounding effect on this study’s four independent variables, thus making the statistical analysis quite difficult and laborious.

In order to limit the compounding effect, this study followed the scientific method, where the involvement control variable was effectively fixed, and only the independent variables were allowed to change.

As such, this study only included and analyzed those survey responses where (1) the role of the student in the Catholic organizations was identified as “Not at all important,” of “Low importance,” or “Slightly important” and (2) the frequency of participation of the student in religious campus events and activities was identified as “Never,” “Rarely”, or “Occasionally.”

As a result, the involvement control variable became almost invariant, its relationship with the dependent variable became insignificant and unimportant, and its compounding effect on the independent variables became negligible.
CHAPTER 4—RESULTS

Institutional Data

Subsequent to receiving the approvals of the Deans of Colleges, Vice-Presidents for Academic Affairs, and Provosts of the three Benedictine institutions participating in this study, the institutional data on traditional freshman to sophomore retention data was collected.

The five categories included in this study were (1) all traditional freshman to sophomore retention data for the past five years, (2) Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore retention data for the past five years, (3) Christian non-Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore retention data for the past five years, (4) non-Christian traditional freshman to sophomore retention data for the past five years, and (5) traditional freshman to sophomore retention data with “no response” to the religious affiliation question for the past five years.

Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 represent the institutional data collected from SSC.

Table 1

*Retention Data at SSC for All Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students for the Past Five Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of traditional freshman students entering the institution at the start of the fall semester below</th>
<th>Total number of preceding year’s traditional freshman students retained at the start of the fall semester below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

*Retention Data at SSC for Catholic Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students for the Past Five Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number of Catholic traditional freshman students entering the institution at the start of the fall semester below</th>
<th>Total number of preceding year’s Catholic traditional freshman students retained at the start of the fall semester below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

*Retention Data at SSC for Christian non-Catholic Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students for the Past Five Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number of Christian non-Catholic traditional freshman students entering the institution at the start of the fall semester below</th>
<th>Total number of preceding year’s Christian non-Catholic traditional freshman students retained at the start of the fall semester below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

*Retention Data at SSC for non-Christian Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students for the Past Five Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number of non-Christian traditional freshman students entering the institution at the start of the fall semester below</th>
<th>Total number of preceding year’s non-Christian traditional freshman students retained at the start of the fall semester below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

*Retention Data at SSC for Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students with “no response” to the Religious Affiliation Question for the Past Five Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number of traditional freshman students with “no response” to the religious affiliation question entering the institution at the start of the fall semester below</th>
<th>Total number of preceding year’s traditional freshman students with “no response” to the religious affiliation question retained at the start of the fall semester below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 represent the institutional data collected from SSU.

Table 6

*Retention Data at SSU for All Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students for the Past Five Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of traditional freshman students entering the institution at the start of the fall semester below</th>
<th>Total number of preceding year’s traditional freshman students retained at the start of the fall semester below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

*Retention Data at SSU for Catholic Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students for the Past Five Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of Catholic traditional freshman students entering the institution at the start of the fall semester below</th>
<th>Total number of preceding year’s Catholic traditional freshman students retained at the start of the fall semester below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8

Retention Data at SSU for Christian non-Catholic Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students for the Past Five Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New Students</th>
<th>Retained Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9

Retention Data at SSU for non-Christian Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students for the Past Five Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New Students</th>
<th>Retained Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

Retention Data at SSU for Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students with “no response” to the Religious Affiliation Question for the Past Five Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of traditional freshman students with “no response” to the religious affiliation question entering the institution at the start of the fall semester below</th>
<th>Total number of preceding year’s traditional freshman students with “no response” to the religious affiliation question retained at the start of the fall semester below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 represent the institutional data collected from MSU.

Table 11

Retention Data at MSU for All Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students for the Past Five Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of traditional freshman students entering the institution at the start of the fall semester below</th>
<th>Total number of preceding year’s traditional freshman students retained at the start of the fall semester below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12

*Retention Data at MSU for Catholic Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students for the Past Five Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number of Catholic traditional freshman students entering the institution at the start of the fall semester below</th>
<th>Total number of preceding year’s Catholic traditional freshman students retained at the start of the fall semester below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2008</strong></td>
<td>164</td>
<td>Fall 2009: 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2009</strong></td>
<td>174</td>
<td>Fall 2010: 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2010</strong></td>
<td>172</td>
<td>Fall 2011: 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2011</strong></td>
<td>152</td>
<td>Fall 2012: 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2012</strong></td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Fall 2013: 119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13

*Retention Data at MSU for Christian non-Catholic Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students for the Past Five Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number of Christian non-Catholic traditional freshman students entering the institution at the start of the fall semester below</th>
<th>Total number of preceding year’s Christian non-Catholic traditional freshman students retained at the start of the fall semester below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2008</strong></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Fall 2009: 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2009</strong></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Fall 2010: 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2010</strong></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Fall 2011: 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2011</strong></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Fall 2012: 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2012</strong></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Fall 2013: 38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14

*Retention Data at MSU for non-Christian Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students for the Past Five Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number of non-Christian traditional freshman students entering the institution at the start of the fall semester below</th>
<th>Total number of preceding year’s non-Christian traditional freshman students retained at the start of the fall semester below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15

*Retention Data at MSU for Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students with “no response” to the Religious Affiliation Question for the Past Five Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number of traditional freshman students with “no response” to the religious affiliation question entering the institution at the start of the fall semester below</th>
<th>Total number of preceding year’s traditional freshman students with “no response” to the religious affiliation question retained at the start of the fall semester below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since the null hypothesis of this study was that Catholic students were not better retained than other student subpopulations; at each of the three Benedictine institutions, the expected values for the $\chi^2$ goodness of fit test were derived from the student retention data for all non-Catholic freshman students. For one degree of freedom—which comes from the two non-Catholic freshman student subpopulations on one side and whether the students were retained or not on the other side—, at a confidence level of 0.999, a $\chi^2$ value higher than 10.827 would mean that the null hypothesis is rejected and the observed data is not the pure product of chance. At a confidence level of 0.95, which is where most null hypotheses are tested, the $\chi^2$ value needs to be higher than 3.841.

The expected values for the SSC Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students are summarized in Table 16. The expected values were calculated from the retention rates for all non-Catholic freshman to sophomore students and scaled up or down to the total number of incoming Catholic freshman students.

Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected values ($e$) for the Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students</th>
<th>Observed values ($o$) from Table 2</th>
<th>$(o - e)^2$</th>
<th>$e$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008 to Fall 2009</td>
<td>252.4</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>7.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009 to Fall 2010</td>
<td>249.3</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>9.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010 to Fall 2011</td>
<td>285.4</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 to Fall 2012</td>
<td>314.0</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>0.812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012 to Fall 2013</td>
<td>261.6</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>0.703</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square ($\chi^2$) value: 18.235
The SSC $\chi^2$ value of 18.235, which was higher than the 10.827 value at a confidence level of 0.999, rejected the null hypothesis and suggested that the retention rates for the Catholic students were not the product of chance alone.

The expected values for the SSU Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students are summarized in Table 17. The expected values were calculated from the retention rates for all non-Catholic freshman to sophomore students and scaled down to the total number of incoming Catholic freshman students.

Table 17

*Expected Values for the SSU Catholic Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected values ($e$) for the Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students</th>
<th>Observed values ($o$) from Table 7</th>
<th>$(o - e)^2 / e$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008 to Fall 2009</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009 to Fall 2010</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010 to Fall 2011</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 to Fall 2012</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012 to Fall 2013</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi square ($\chi^2$) value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The SSU $\chi^2$ value of 30.831, which was higher than the 10.827 value at a confidence level of 0.999, rejected the null hypothesis and suggested that the retention rates for the Catholic students were not the product of chance alone.

The expected values for the MSU Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students are summarized in Table 18. The expected values were calculated from the retention rates for all
non-Catholic freshman to sophomore students and scaled down to the total number of incoming Catholic freshman students.

Table 18

*Expected Values for the MSU Catholic Traditional Freshman to Sophomore Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected values (e) for the Catholic traditional freshman to sophomore students</th>
<th>Observed values (o) from Table 12</th>
<th>((o - e)^2/e)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008 to Fall 2009</td>
<td>129.2</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009 to Fall 2010</td>
<td>141.6</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010 to Fall 2011</td>
<td>149.9</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 to Fall 2012</td>
<td>116.0</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012 to Fall 2013</td>
<td>116.9</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi square ((\chi^2)) value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The MSU \(\chi^2\) value of 2.686, which is lower than the 10.827 value at a confidence level of 0.999, suggested that the retention rates for the Catholic students were similar to those of other student subpopulations.

**Survey Data**

A total of 659 sophomore students from the three Benedictine institutions of higher education participated in the study. Of the 659 participants, 651 voluntarily consented to the study, and of the 651 voluntary participants who consented to the study, 516 completed it. The total number of 516 completed survey responses exceeds the recommended value of 307 completed survey responses associated with a 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error, and an anticipated skew in the answers of 20% from the normal for a population of 6,248 (Pedhazur &
Schmelkin, 1991). The latter is the total number of traditional sophomore students at all the Benedictine colleges and universities in North America.

The survey data collection took place immediately after the Institutional Review Board approved the study, and lasted until the last day of classes at the three Benedictine institutions of higher education. As such, the survey data was collected between April 8, 2014 and May 9, 2014. The students were contacted via email at the beginning of the data collection period, and were reminded of the deadline to complete the survey one week before the data collection period ended.

The visual breakdown of the survey responses is illustrated below between Figure 1 and Figure 48.

*Figure 1. Student Responses to Informed Consent. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the informed consent form.*
Figure 2. Religious Affiliation. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on religious affiliation.

Of the thirteen religious affiliations, there were no responses from Buddhist, Confucian, Jewish, Shinto, Taoist, or Sikh students. The majority of the responses came from Catholic students, and the remaining responses came from Agnostic, Atheist, Christian other than Catholic, Hindu, Muslim, and Other students.
Figure 3. Commitment to Faith or Religion. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on commitment to faith or religion.
Figure 4. Importance of the Faith-Based Identity of the Institution. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the faith-based identity of the institution in the students’ decision to persist on campus.
Figure 5. Importance of the Christian Identity of the Institution. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the Christian identity of the institution in the student’s decision to persist on campus.
Figure 6. Importance of the Catholic Identity of the Institution. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the Catholic identity of the institution in the student’s decision to persist on campus.
Figure 7. Importance of the Benedictine Values of the Institution. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the Benedictine values of the institution in the student’s decision to persist on campus.
Figure 8. Importance of the Institutional Mission. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the mission of the institution in the student’s decision to persist on campus.
Figure 9. Importance of the Level of Engagement in the College Interview. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the level of engagement during the college interview in the student’s decision to persist on campus.
**Figure 10.** Time Devoted to Religion Per Week. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the amount of time they devote to their religion in a typical week.
Figure 11. Time Devoted to Academic Work Per Week. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the amount of time they devote to their academic work in a typical week.
Figure 12. Time Devoted to Nonreligious Social Activities Per Week. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the amount of time they devote to nonreligious social activities in a typical week.
Figure 13. Importance of the Involvement in the non-Catholic Spiritual and Religious Organizations. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the student’s involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations on campus.
Figure 14. Importance of the Involvement in the Catholic Organizations. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the student’s involvement in the Catholic organizations on campus.
Figure 15. Satisfaction with Institution in Terms of Availability of Religious Campus Activities. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s satisfaction with the institution in terms of availability of religious campus activities.
Figure 16. Frequency of Participation in Religious Campus Events and Activities. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the frequency of the student’s participation in religious campus events and activities.
Figure 17. Satisfaction with Institution in Terms of Availability of Nonreligious Campus Activities. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s satisfaction with the institution in terms of availability of nonreligious campus activities.
Figure 18. Frequency of Participation in Nonreligious Campus Events and Activities.

This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the frequency of the student’s participation in nonreligious campus events and activities.
Figure 19. Frequency of Participation in Service Projects on Campus. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the frequency of the student’s participation in service projects on campus.
Figure 20. Satisfaction with Institution in Terms of Interaction with Other Students. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s satisfaction with the institution in terms of interaction with other students.
Figure 21. Satisfaction with Institution in Terms of Social Life. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s satisfaction with the institution in terms of social life.
**Figure 22.** Frequency of Interaction with Faculty Members Outside the Classroom. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the frequency of the student’s interact with faculty members outside the classroom.
Figure 23. Satisfaction with the Overall Sense of Community of Campus. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s satisfaction with the overall sense of community on campus.
Figure 24. Frequency of Practicing Religion at Home. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the frequency of the student’s practicing of her/his religion at home, where home may refer to the student’s dorm room, own residence, or parent’s residence.
Figure 25. Time Devoted to On and Off Campus Employment Per Week. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the amount of time they devote to on and off campus employment in a typical week.
Figure 26. Devotion to Faith or Religion. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on Devotion to faith or religion.

The responses to this question are meant to validate those submitted to an earlier question in the survey.
Figure 27. Importance of the Faith-Based Identity of the in the Student’s Decision-Making Process to Persist. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the institution’s faith-based identity in the student’s decision to persist on campus.

The responses to this question are meant to validate those submitted to an earlier question in the survey.
Figure 28. Importance of the Christian Identity of the Institution in the Student’s Decision-Making Process to Persist. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the institution’s Christian identity in the student’s decision to persist on campus.

The responses to this question are meant to validate those submitted to an earlier question in the survey.
Figure 29. Importance of the Catholic Identity of the Institution in the Student’s Decision-Making Process to Persist. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the institution’s Catholic identity in the student’s decision to persist on campus.

The responses to this question are meant to validate those submitted to an earlier question in the survey.
Figure 30. Importance of the Benedictine Values of the Institution in the Student’s Decision-Making Process to Persist. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the institution’s Benedictine values in the student’s decision to persist on campus.

The responses to this question are meant to validate those submitted to an earlier question in the survey.
Figure 31. Importance of the Institutional Mission in the Student’s Decision-Making Process to Persist. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the mission of the institution in the student’s decision to persist on campus.

The responses to this question are meant to validate those submitted to an earlier question in the survey.
Figure 32. Importance of the Student’s Involvement in the non-Catholic Spiritual and Religious Organizations on Campus. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the student’s involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations on campus.

The responses to this question are meant to validate those submitted to an earlier question in the survey.
Figure 33. Importance of the Student’s Involvement in the Catholic Organizations on Campus. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the importance of the student’s involvement in the Catholic organizations on campus.

The responses to this question are meant to validate those submitted to an earlier question in the survey.
Figure 34. Student Satisfaction with Institution in Terms of Availability of Religious Campus Activities. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s satisfaction with the institution in terms of availability of religious campus activities.

The responses to this question are meant to validate those submitted to an earlier question in the survey.
Figure 35. Student Satisfaction with Institution in Terms of Availability of Nonreligious Campus Activities. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s satisfaction with the institution in terms of availability of nonreligious campus activities.

The responses to this question are meant to validate those submitted to an earlier question in the survey.
Figure 36. Student Satisfaction with Institution in Terms of Interaction with Fellow Students. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s satisfaction with the institution in terms of interaction with other students.

The responses to this question are meant to validate those submitted to an earlier question in the survey.
Figure 37. Student Satisfaction with Institution in Terms of Overall Social Life. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s satisfaction with the institution in terms of social life.

The responses to this question are meant to validate those submitted to an earlier question in the survey.
Figure 38. Student Satisfaction with the Overall Sense of Community of Campus. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s satisfaction with the overall sense of community on campus.

The responses to this question are meant to validate those submitted to an earlier question in the survey.
Figure 39. ACT/SAT Score. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s ACT/SAT score when he/she joined the college or university.
Figure 40. Grade Point Average. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s current cumulative grade point average.
Figure 41. Collective Income of the Person or People Paying the Student’s Tuition. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the collective income of the person or people paying the student’s tuition.
Figure 42. First Generation College Student. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on whether or not the student is a first generation college student.
Figure 43. National Origin. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on whether or not the student is an international student.
Figure 44. Transfer Student. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on whether or not the student is a transfer student.
Figure 45. On-Campus Versus Off-Campus Residence. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on whether or not the student lives on campus.
Figure 46. Gender. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s gender.
Figure 47. Ethnicity. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s ethnicity.
Figure 48. Race. This figure illustrates the percent breakdown of the student responses to the question on the student’s race.

The six survey categories for race were part of the student responses with the vast majority identifying themselves as being white.

**Validation of Survey Responses**

In order to validate the students’ responses to the different questions, correlation coefficients ($r$) were calculated for the responses to the sets of questions featured twice in the survey. The correlation coefficient results for the thirteen sets of validation questions are summarized in Table 19 below.
Table 19

*Correlation Coefficient (r) for All Answers to the Sets of Validation Questions*

| Sets of validation questions in the survey                                                                 | How important is the faith-based identity of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution? | How important is the Christian identity of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution? | How important is the Catholic identity of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution? | How important are the Benedictine values of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution? | How important is the mission of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution? | In thinking about your involvement at your institution, please rate your involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations | In thinking about your involvement at your institution, please rate your involvement in the Catholic organizations | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of availability of religious campus activities | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of availability of nonreligious campus activities | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of your interaction with other students | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of your social life | Please rate your satisfaction with the overall sense of community on campus |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I am committed to my faith or religion                                                                            | I am devoted to my faith or religion                                                                            | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was its faith-based identity in your decision-making process? | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was its Christian identity in your decision-making process? | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important were the Benedictine values in your decision-making process? | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was the institutional mission in your decision-making process? | How important is your involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations? | How important is your involvement in the Catholic organizations? | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the availability of religious activities on campus | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the availability of nonreligious activities on campus | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the interactions you have with fellow students | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the overall social life it provides | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution's overall sense of community |
| How important is the faith-based identity of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution?     | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was its faith-based identity in your decision-making process? |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |
| How important is the Christian identity of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution?       |                                                                                                      | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was its Christian identity in your decision-making process? |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |
| How important is the Catholic identity of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution?         |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was its Catholic identity in your decision-making process? |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |
| How important are the Benedictine values of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution?       |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important were the Benedictine values in your decision-making process? |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |
| How important is the mission of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution?                    |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was the institutional mission in your decision-making process? |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |
| In thinking about your involvement at your institution, please rate your involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      | How important is your involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations? |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |
| In thinking about your involvement at your institution, please rate your involvement in the Catholic organizations |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      | How important is your involvement in the Catholic organizations? |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |
| Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of availability of religious campus activities           |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the availability of religious activities on campus |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |
| Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of availability of nonreligious campus activities      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the availability of nonreligious activities on campus |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |
| Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of your interaction with other students                |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the interactions you have with fellow students |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |
| Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of your social life                                   |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the overall social life it provides |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |
| Please rate your satisfaction with the overall sense of community on campus                                       |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution's overall sense of community |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                      |
The lowest correlation coefficient value of 0.560 was in reference to the survey question pertaining to the student’s rating of her/his involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations on campus. The value still reflected a positive correlation, but informed the study that the students were not highly consistent in answering the survey question. The inconsistency may have been due to the broad definition of what constitutes a non-Catholic spiritual or religious organization on campus.

The reason for the large difference in correlation coefficients to the sets of validation questions was the expected inconsistency in participant responses. Once the participants with inconsistent responses to the thirteen sets of validation questions were removed from the data set, the total number of complete surveys dropped to 337. The criterion for removal from the data set was a difference of two or more on the Likert-type scale of answers. As such, only participants whose responses to the thirteen sets of validation questions did not change or changed by one level on the Likert-type scale were retained.

The updated and anticipated to improve correlation coefficient results for the set of 337 survey responses with consistent answers to the thirteen sets of validation questions are summarized in Table 20 below. In Table 20, r refers to the correlation coefficient.
### Table 20

**Correlation Coefficient (r) for Consistent Answers to the Sets of Validation Questions**

| Sets of validation questions in the survey | I am committed to my faith or religion | How important is the faith-based identity of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution? | How important is the Christian identity of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution? | How important is the Catholic identity of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution? | How important are the Benedictine values of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution? | How important is the mission of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution? | In thinking about your involvement at your institution, please rate your involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations | How important is your involvement in the Catholic organizations? | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of availability of religious campus activities | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of availability of nonreligious campus activities | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of your interaction with other students | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of your social life | Please rate your satisfaction with the overall sense of community on campus |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am committed to my faith or religion | I am devoted to my faith or religion | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was its faith-based identity in your decision-making process? | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was its Christian identity in your decision-making process? | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was its Catholic identity in your decision-making process? | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important were the Benedictine values in your decision-making process? | When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was the institutional mission in your decision-making process? | How important is your involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations? | How important is your involvement in the Catholic organizations? | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the availability of religious activities on campus | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the availability of nonreligious activities on campus | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the interactions you have with fellow students | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the overall social life it provides | Please rate your satisfaction with your institution's overall sense of community |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Coefficients:**
- 0.970
- 0.966
- 0.977
- 0.985
- 0.963
- 0.954
- 0.970
- 0.966
- 0.965
- 0.923
- 0.881
- 0.941
- 0.993
The new lowest correlation coefficient of 0.881 for the answers to the set of questions on the student’s satisfaction with the institution in terms of her/his interaction with other students had become very strong, thus making the correlation coefficients for the answers to the remaining sets of questions almost perfect.

This meant that the remaining set of 337 survey responses could be analyzed with confidence, and that they portrayed the views of the students accurately because the answers of every participant had been validated thirteen times before her/his survey submission had been selected for inclusion in the analysis set.

**Correlations Between Control and Independent Variables**

In order to understand the correlation between the different variables being controlled for in the survey, the correlation coefficients of all the control variables compared to the four independent variables were calculated. The four independent variables are (1) the importance of the faith-based identity of the institution, (2) the importance of the Christian identity of the institution, (3) the importance of the Catholic identity of the institution, and (4) the importance of the mission of the institution. The results are summarized in Table 21 through Table 24 below. In Table 21 through Table 24, $r$ refers to the correlation coefficient.
Table 21

*Correlation Between Importance of Institution’s Faith-Based Identity and All Other Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$r$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the faith-based identity of the institution (Independent variable)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Christian identity of the institution (Independent variable)</td>
<td>0.949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Catholic identity of the institution (Independent variable)</td>
<td>0.959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the mission of the institution (Independent variable)</td>
<td>0.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to faith or religion</td>
<td>0.461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Benedictine values of the institution</td>
<td>0.843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of level of engagement in the college entrance interview</td>
<td>0.318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to religion</td>
<td>0.601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to academic work</td>
<td>0.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to nonreligious social activities</td>
<td>0.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations</td>
<td>0.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the Catholic organizations</td>
<td>0.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with availability of religious campus activities</td>
<td>0.310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in religious campus events and activities</td>
<td>0.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with availability of nonreligious campus activities</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in nonreligious campus events and activities</td>
<td>0.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in service projects</td>
<td>0.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with interaction with other students</td>
<td>-0.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with social life</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of interaction with faculty members outside the classroom</td>
<td>0.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with overall sense of community on campus</td>
<td>-0.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of practicing religion at home</td>
<td>0.589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to on and off campus employment</td>
<td>0.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT/SAT score</td>
<td>-0.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current cumulative grade point average</td>
<td>0.239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First generation</td>
<td>-0.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National origin (after removing the inconsistent answers, all respondents were US nationals)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>-0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence on or off campus</td>
<td>0.303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional size</td>
<td>-0.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>0.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>0.375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22

*Correlation Between Importance of Institution’s Christian Identity and All Other Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( r )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the faith-based identity of the institution (Independent variable)</td>
<td>0.949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Christian identity of the institution (Independent variable)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Catholic identity of the institution (Independent variable)</td>
<td>0.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the mission of the institution (Independent Variable)</td>
<td>0.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to faith or religion</td>
<td>0.419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Benedictine values of the institution</td>
<td>0.804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of level of engagement in the college entrance interview</td>
<td>0.364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to religion</td>
<td>0.584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to academic work</td>
<td>0.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to nonreligious social activities</td>
<td>0.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations</td>
<td>0.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the Catholic organizations</td>
<td>0.804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with availability of religious campus activities</td>
<td>0.292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in religious campus events and activities</td>
<td>0.649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with availability of nonreligious campus activities</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in nonreligious campus events and activities</td>
<td>-0.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in service projects</td>
<td>0.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with interaction with other students</td>
<td>-0.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with social life</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of interaction with faculty members outside the classroom</td>
<td>0.126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with overall sense of community on campus</td>
<td>-0.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of practicing religion at home</td>
<td>0.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to on and off campus employment</td>
<td>0.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT/SAT score</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current cumulative grade point average</td>
<td>0.256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First generation</td>
<td>0.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National origin (after removing the inconsistent answers, all respondents were US nationals)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>-0.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence on or off campus</td>
<td>0.289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional size</td>
<td>-0.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>0.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>0.395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 23

*Correlation Between Importance of Institution’s Catholic Identity and All Other Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the faith-based identity of the institution (Independent variable)</td>
<td>0.959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Christian identity of the institution (Independent variable)</td>
<td>0.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Catholic identity of the institution (Independent variable)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the mission of the institution (Independent variable)</td>
<td>0.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to faith or religion</td>
<td>0.439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Benedictine values of the institution</td>
<td>0.826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of level of engagement in the college entrance interview</td>
<td>0.292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to religion</td>
<td>0.551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to academic work</td>
<td>0.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to nonreligious social activities</td>
<td>0.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations</td>
<td>0.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the Catholic organizations</td>
<td>0.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with availability of religious campus activities</td>
<td>0.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in religious campus events and activities</td>
<td>0.678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with availability of nonreligious campus activities</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in nonreligious campus events and activities</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in service projects</td>
<td>0.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with interaction with other students</td>
<td>-0.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with social life</td>
<td>0.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of interaction with faculty members outside the classroom</td>
<td>0.122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with overall sense of community on campus</td>
<td>-0.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of practicing religion at home</td>
<td>0.593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to on and off campus employment</td>
<td>0.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT/SAT score</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current cumulative grade point average</td>
<td>0.231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First generation</td>
<td>-0.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National origin (after removing the inconsistent answers, all respondents were US nationals)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>-0.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence on or off campus</td>
<td>0.260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional size</td>
<td>-0.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>0.209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>0.384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 24

*Correlation Between Importance of the Institutional Mission and All Other Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the faith-based identity of the institution</td>
<td>0.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Christian identity of the institution</td>
<td>0.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Catholic identity of the institution</td>
<td>0.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the mission of the institution</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to faith or religion</td>
<td>0.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Benedictine values of the institution</td>
<td>0.832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of level of engagement in the college entrance</td>
<td>0.399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to religion</td>
<td>0.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to academic work</td>
<td>0.183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to nonreligious social activities</td>
<td>0.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious</td>
<td>-0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the Catholic organizations</td>
<td>0.558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with availability of religious campus activities</td>
<td>0.253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in religious campus events and</td>
<td>0.454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with availability of nonreligious campus</td>
<td>0.199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in nonreligious campus events and</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in service projects</td>
<td>0.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with interaction with other students</td>
<td>0.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with social life</td>
<td>0.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of interaction with faculty members outside the</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with overall sense of community on campus</td>
<td>-0.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of practicing religion at home</td>
<td>0.303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to on and off campus employment</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT/SAT score</td>
<td>0.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current cumulative grade point average</td>
<td>0.368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First generation</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National origin (after removing the inconsistent answers,</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all respondents were US nationals)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>-0.147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence on or off campus</td>
<td>0.282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional size</td>
<td>-0.134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>0.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>0.343</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With the correlation coefficients of all variables calculated with respect to the four independent variables specified in Table 21 through Table 24, many of the former variables were eliminated from the study. The variables that were eliminated from the study were the ones that did not correlate at all or correlated very weakly with the four independent variables specified in Table 21 through Table 24.

The criterion for elimination was a correlation coefficient value between \(-0.399\) and \(+0.399\) with all four independent variables (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). The list of eliminated variables can be found in Table 25 below with the maximum of the absolute values of the correlation coefficients with the four independent variables (\( | r_{\text{max}} | \)) listed next to the control variables.
Table 25

*Control Variables Eliminated from the Study Because of Weak or Nonexistent Correlations with All Four Independent Variables*

| Control Variable                                                                 | $| r_{max} |$   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Importance of level of engagement in the college entrance interview              | 0.399 |
| Time devoted to academic work                                                    | 0.250 |
| Time devoted to nonreligious social activities                                   | 0.198 |
| Involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations             | 0.256 |
| Satisfaction with availability of religious campus activities                     | 0.326 |
| Satisfaction with availability of nonreligious campus activities                  | 0.199 |
| Frequency of participation in nonreligious campus events and activities           | 0.052 |
| Frequency of participation in service projects                                   | 0.159 |
| Satisfaction with interaction with other students                               | 0.040 |
| Satisfaction with social life                                                    | 0.154 |
| Frequency of interaction with faculty members outside the classroom              | 0.161 |
| Satisfaction with overall sense of community on campus                            | 0.049 |
| Time devoted to on and off campus employment                                     | 0.186 |
| ACT/SAT score                                                                    | 0.151 |
| Current cumulative grade point average                                           | 0.368 |
| Income                                                                          | 0.140 |
| First generation                                                                 | 0.039 |
| National origin                                                                  | 0.041 |
| Transfer                                                                         | 0.048 |
| Residence on or off campus                                                       | 0.303 |
| Institutional size                                                               | 0.250 |
| Gender                                                                           | 0.310 |
| Ethnicity                                                                        | 0.198 |
| Race                                                                             | 0.395 |
Consequently, the list of retained control variables can be found in Table 26 below with the correlation coefficient values with the four independent variables listed next to the control variables. The criterion for inclusion is a correlation coefficient value with at least one of the four independent variables that has an absolute value of 0.400 or higher (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). In Table 26, $r$ refers to the correlation coefficient and the subscripts $(FB)$, $(CH)$, $(CA)$, and $(IM)$ refer to faith-based identity, Christian identity, Catholic identity, and institutional mission, respectively.

Table 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>$r_{(FB)}$</th>
<th>$r_{(CH)}$</th>
<th>$r_{(CA)}$</th>
<th>$r_{(IM)}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the faith-based identity of the institution</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.949</td>
<td>0.959</td>
<td>0.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Christian identity of the institution</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>0.949</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>0.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Catholic identity of the institution</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>0.959</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the mission of the institution</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>0.797</td>
<td>0.806</td>
<td>0.784</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Benedictine values of the institution</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.843</td>
<td>0.804</td>
<td>0.826</td>
<td>0.832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the Catholic organizations</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.841</td>
<td>0.804</td>
<td>0.793</td>
<td>0.558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to faith or religion</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.461</td>
<td>0.419</td>
<td>0.439</td>
<td>0.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time devoted to religion</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.601</td>
<td>0.584</td>
<td>0.551</td>
<td>0.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of practicing religion at home</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.589</td>
<td>0.531</td>
<td>0.593</td>
<td>0.303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in religious campus events and activities</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.717</td>
<td>0.649</td>
<td>0.678</td>
<td>0.454</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of Retained Variables

As mentioned earlier in the dissertation, the scientific method was to be utilized in the analysis of the variables. As such, all retained variables were prevented from varying as much as possible, and only one was allowed to change, and its relationship with the four independent variables determined.

This was especially important for this study because of the compounding effect of the different preserved variables on one another, as evidenced by the frequency of the strong correlations summarized in Table 26 above.

Of the variables listed in Table 26, the bottom four variables were descriptors of the level of religiousness of the student. The relationship of the four aforementioned variables could be deduced from the closeness of their correlation coefficients and each one of the independent variables. Once the student answers were digitized on a scale from 1 to 7, —where 1 meant least important / least amount of time / never and 7 meant most important / most amount of time / always—, the four variables were combined into a summative variable titled student religiousness that combines (1) the student’s level of commitment to her/his religion, (2) the time the student spends practicing her/his religion, (3) the frequency of student’s practice of her/his religion at home, and (4) the frequency of the student’s participation in religious campus events and activities.

Assuming that the four control variables were equal contributors to student religiousness, an average for each student’s responses was calculated, and the correlation coefficients of the summative variable with the four independent variables were also calculated. The results can be found in Table 27 below. In Table 27, \( r \) refers to the correlation coefficient and the subscripts
(FB), (CH), (CA), and (IM) refer to faith-based identity, Christian identity, Catholic identity, and institutional mission, respectively.

Table 27

Variables Included in the Analysis of the Study Because of Moderate or Strong Correlations with One or More of the Four Independent Variables  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>$r_{(FB)}$</th>
<th>$r_{(CH)}$</th>
<th>$r_{(CA)}$</th>
<th>$r_{(IM)}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the faith-based identity of the institution</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.949</td>
<td>0.959</td>
<td>0.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Christian identity of the institution</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>0.949</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>0.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Catholic identity of the institution</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>0.959</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the mission of the institution</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>0.797</td>
<td>0.806</td>
<td>0.784</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Benedictine values of the institution</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.843</td>
<td>0.804</td>
<td>0.826</td>
<td>0.832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the Catholic organizations</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.841</td>
<td>0.804</td>
<td>0.793</td>
<td>0.558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student religiousness</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.687</td>
<td>0.632</td>
<td>0.658</td>
<td>0.399</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 49 through Figure 55 below reflect the fraction of student responses associated with the importance of each one of the four independent variables on the one side, and the importance of the Benedictine values on the other side. The seven figures below correspond to the seven levels of importance of the Benedictine values in the survey.
Figure 49. Benedictine Values Not At All Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Not at all important” to the importance of the Benedictine values.
Figure 50. Benedictine Values of Low Importance. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Low importance” to the importance of the Benedictine values.
**Figure 51.** Benedictine Values Slightly Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Slightly important” to the importance of the Benedictine values.
Figure 52. Benedictine Values Neutral. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Neutral” to the importance of the Benedictine values.
Figure 53. Benedictine Values Moderately Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Moderately important” to the importance of the Benedictine values.
Figure 54. Benedictine Values Very Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Very important” to the importance of the Benedictine values.
Figure 55. Benedictine Values Extremely Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Extremely important” to the importance of the Benedictine values.

Student responses to the Benedictine values improved in rating between Figure 49 and Figure 55, as did the responses to the four independent variables, which validated the correlation coefficient results presented earlier.

Figure 56 through Figure 62 below reflect the fraction of student responses associated with the importance of each one of the four independent variables on the one side, and the involvement in Catholic organizations on the other side. The seven figures below correspond to the seven levels of importance of the involvement in Catholic organizations in the survey.
Figure 56. Involvement in Catholic Organizations Not At All Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Not at all important” to the importance of involvement in Catholic organizations.
Figure 57. Involvement in Catholic Organizations of Low Importance. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Low importance” to the importance of involvement in Catholic organizations.
Figure 58. Involvement in Catholic Organizations Slightly Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Slightly important” to the importance of involvement in Catholic organizations.
Figure 59. Involvement in Catholic Organizations Neutral. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Neutral” to the importance of involvement in Catholic organizations.
Figure 60. Involvement in Catholic Organizations Moderately Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Moderately important” to the importance of involvement in Catholic organizations.
Figure 61. Involvement in Catholic Organizations Very Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Very important” to the importance of involvement in Catholic organizations.
Figure 62. Involvement in Catholic Organizations Extremely Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a response of “Extremely important” to the importance of the involvement in Catholic organizations.

Once again the student responses to the involvement in Catholic organizations improved in rating between Figure 56 and Figure 62, as did the responses to the four independent variables, which validated the correlation coefficient results presented earlier.

Figure 63 through Figure 69 below reflect the fraction of student responses associated with the importance of each one of the four independent variables on the one side, and the student religiousness variable on the other side. The seven figures below correspond to the seven levels of student religiousness derived from the survey.
Figure 63. Student Religiousness Not At All Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a derived response of “Not at all important” to student religiousness.
Figure 64. Student Religiousness of Low Importance. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a derived response of “Low importance” to student religiousness.
Figure 65. Student Religiousness Slightly Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a derived response of “Slightly important” to student religiousness.
Figure 66. Student Religiousness Neutral. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a derived response of “Neutral” to student religiousness.
Figure 67. Student Religiousness Moderately Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a derived response of “Moderately important” to student religiousness.
Figure 68. Student Religiousness Very Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a derived response of “Very important” to student religiousness.
Figure 69. Student Religiousness Extremely Important. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a derived response of “Extremely important” to student religiousness.

Once again, the derived responses to student religiousness improved in rating between Figure 63 and Figure 69, as did the responses to the four independent variables, which validated the correlation coefficient results presented earlier.

In order to follow the scientific method and minimize the compounding effect of the three control variables on the four independent variables, the involvement in Catholic organizations on campus variable was split into two categories. The first category involved below “Neutral” or low involvement in Catholic organizations answers, where the numeric score of the answer was 3 or less (167 student responses), and the second category involved above “Neutral” or high involvement in Catholic organizations answers, where the numeric score of the answer was 5 or
more (154 student responses). Because the other two control variables—importance of Benedictine values and student religiousness—changed in the same way the involvement in Catholic organizations variable did, their compounding effect on the four independent variables was consequentially minimized after splitting the responses of the involvement in Catholic organizations variables as described above.

For the low involvement in Catholic organizations category, the response fractions for the seven different religious affiliations to the importance of the four independent variables are listed in Figure 70 through Figure 76 below.

Figure 70. Agnostic Student Responses in the Low Involvement in Catholic Organizations Category. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with an Agnostic religious affiliation.
Figure 71. Atheist Student Responses in the Low Involvement in Catholic Organizations Category. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with an Atheist religious affiliation.
Figure 72. Catholic Student Responses in the Low Involvement in Catholic Organizations Category. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a Catholic religious affiliation.
Figure 73. Christian Other Than Catholic Student Responses in the Low Involvement in Catholic Organizations Category. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a Christian other than Catholic religious affiliation.
Figure 74. Hindu Student Responses in the Low Involvement in Catholic Organizations Category. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a Hindu religious affiliation.
Figure 75. Muslim Student Responses in the Low Involvement in Catholic Organizations Category. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a Muslim religious affiliation.
Figure 76. Other Student Responses in the Low Involvement in Catholic Organizations Category. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with an Other religious affiliation.

For the above “Neutral” or high involvement in Catholic organizations category, the response fractions for the Catholic and Christian other than Catholic religious affiliations to the importance of the four independent variables are listed in Figure 77 and Figure 78 below. The five remaining religious affiliations did not score high (5 or higher) on the involvement in Catholic organizations, which explains their absence from this category.
Figure 77. Catholic Student Responses in the High Involvement in Catholic Organizations Category. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a Catholic religious affiliation.
Figure 78. Christian Other Than Catholic Student Responses in the High Involvement in Catholic Organizations Category. This figure illustrates the fraction of student responses to the four independent variables associated with a Christian other than Catholic religious affiliation.

Of the two categories above, only the low involvement in Catholic organization was of importance to this study, because (1) it lowered the compounding effect of the three control variables on the four independent variables, and (2) it involved non-Christian student subpopulations, which allowed for a comparison of the different results and a validation or invalidation of this study’s hypothesis.

Hypothesis Testing

In order to validate or invalidate the study’s hypothesis, an analysis of the results associated with Figure 70 though Figure 76 above was necessary.
Faith-Based Identity

The results showed that there was a noticeable difference between Christian and non-Christian student answers regarding the faith-based identity of the institution. The totality of the Hindu and Muslim student responses ranked the faith-based identity of the institution as either being of low importance or not at all important in their decision to persist at the institution, while 5.3% of Christian other than Catholic students ranked the faith-based identity of the institution as being of neutral importance, and 19.5% of the Catholic students ranked it as moderately important in their decision to persist at the institution.

The results also indicated that there was a clear difference between Christian and Atheist student answers regarding the faith-based identity of the institution. The totality of the Atheist student responses ranked the faith-based identity of the institution as not at all important in their decision to persist at the institution. The results of the Christian students—Catholic and otherwise—were discussed in the paragraph above.

The results also showed a clear difference between Christian and Other student answers regarding the faith-based identity of the institution. The totality of the Other student responses ranked the faith-based identity of the institution between not at all important and of low importance in their decision to persist at the institution. The results of the Christian students—Catholic and otherwise—were discussed earlier in this section.

A fourth result was that a fraction of Catholic students ranked the faith-based identity of the institution higher than did any of the non-Catholic Christians.

For Agnostic students, 18.2% of the answers ranked the faith-based identity of the institution as being slightly important in their decision to persist on campus. The results of the Christian students—Catholic and otherwise—were discussed earlier in this section.
The highest ranked sets of responses to the faith-based identity question for all seven religious affiliations are shown in Figure 79 below.

**Figure 79.** Highest Ranked Student Responses to Faith-Based Identity by Religious Affiliation. This figure illustrates a continuum of the highest sets of student responses to the importance of the faith-based identity of the institution based on the different religious affiliations.

### Christian Identity

The results once again showed that there was a noticeable difference between Christian and non-Christian student answers regarding the Christian identity of the institution. The totality of the Hindu and Muslim student responses ranked the Christian identity of the institution as either being of low importance or not at all important in their decision to persist at the institution, while 42.1% of Christian other than Catholic students ranked the Christian identity of the institution as being moderately important, and 9.1% of the Catholic students ranked it as being very important in their decision to persist at the institution.

The results also indicated that there was a clear difference between Christian and Atheist student answers regarding the Christian identity of the institution. The totality of the Atheist student responses ranked the Christian identity of the institution between not at all important and
of low importance in their decision to persist at the institution. The results of the Christian students—Catholic and otherwise—were discussed in the paragraph above.

As with the faith-based identity, the results also showed a clear difference between Christian and Other student answers regarding the Christian identity of the institution. The totality of the Other student responses ranked the Christian identity of the institution between not at all important and of low importance in their decision to persist at the institution. The results of the Christian students—Catholic and otherwise—were discussed earlier in this section.

Similar to the faith-based identity result, a fourth result was that a fraction of Catholic students ranked the Christian identity of the institution higher than did any of the non-Catholic Christians.

For Agnostic students, 9.1% of the answers ranked the Christian identity of the institution as being slightly important in their decision to persist on campus. The results of the Christian students—Catholic and otherwise—were discussed in the paragraph above.

The highest ranked sets of responses to the Christian identity question for all seven religious affiliations are shown in Figure 80 below.
Figure 80. Highest Ranked Student Responses to Christian Identity by Religious Affiliation. This figure illustrates a continuum of the highest sets of student responses to the importance of the Christian identity of the institution based on the different religious affiliations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Extremely important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Catholic Identity

The results once again showed that there was a noticeable difference between Christian and non-Christian student answers regarding the Catholic identity of the institution. The totality of the Hindu and Muslim student responses ranked the Catholic identity of the institution as either being of low importance or not at all important in their decision to persist at the institution, while 26.3% of Christian other than Catholic students ranked the Catholic identity of the institution as being slightly important, and 11.7% of the Catholic students ranked it as being very important in their decision to persist at the institution.

The results also indicated that there was a clear difference between Christian and Atheist student answers regarding the Catholic identity of the institution. The totality of the Atheist student responses ranked the Catholic identity of the institution between not at all important and of low importance in their decision to persist at the institution. The results of the Christian students—Catholic and otherwise—were discussed in the paragraph above.
As with the faith-based identity and the Christian identity, the results also show a clear difference between Christian and Other student answers regarding the Catholic identity of the institution. The totality of the Other student responses ranked the Catholic identity of the institution between not at all important and of low importance in their decision to persist at the institution. The results of the Christian students—Catholic and otherwise—were discussed earlier in this section.

Similar to the faith-based identity and the Christian identity results, a fourth result was that a fraction of Catholic students ranked the Christian identity of the institution higher than did any of the non-Catholic Christians.

Similar to the results from the faith-based identity and the Christian identity, 18.2% of the Agnostic students ranked the Catholic identity of the institution as being slightly important in their decision to persist on campus. The results of the Christian students—Catholic and otherwise—were discussed earlier in this section.

The highest ranked sets of responses to the Catholic identity question for all seven religious affiliations are shown in Figure 81 below.
Institutional Mission

The results once again showed that there was a noticeable difference between Christian and non-Christian student answers regarding the mission of the institution. The totality of the Hindu and Muslim student responses ranked the Catholic identity of the institution as either being of low importance or not at all important in their decision to persist at the institution, while 57.9% of Christian other than Catholic students and 20.8% of the Catholic students ranked the mission of the institution as being very important.

The results also indicated that there was a slight difference between Christian and Atheist student answers regarding the mission of the institution. A fourth of the Atheist student responses ranked the mission of the institution as moderately important in their decision to persist at the institution. The results of the Christian students—Catholic and otherwise—were discussed in the paragraph above.

As with the faith-based identity, the Christian identity, and the Catholic identity, the results also showed a clear difference between Christian and Other student answers regarding the
mission of the institution. The totality of the Other student responses ranked the mission of the institution between not at all important and of low importance in their decision to persist at the institution. The results of the Christian students—Catholic and otherwise—were discussed earlier in this section.

Unlike with the faith-based identity, the Christian identity, and the Catholic identity results, a fourth result was that the highest ranking of the institutional mission by Catholic students was the same of that of the non-Catholic Christians.

Similar to the results from the faith-based identity, the Christian identity, and the Catholic identity, 27.3% of the Agnostic students ranked the mission of the institution as being slightly important in their decision to persist on campus. The results of the Christian students—Catholic and otherwise—were discussed earlier in this section.

The highest ranked sets of responses to the institutional mission question for all seven religious affiliations are shown in Figure 82 below.
Figure 82. Highest Ranked Student Responses to Institutional Mission by Religious Affiliation. This figure illustrates a continuum of the highest sets of student responses to the importance of the mission of the institution based on the different religious affiliations.

Hypothesis Validation

Through depicting the best sets of responses related to the four independent variables, Figure 79 through Figure 82 supported the hypothesis of this study that traditional sophomore level students whose religious beliefs were closely aligned with institutional missions tend to better persist on campus compared to other sophomore level student groups.

Specifically, between the Catholic and the non-Catholic Christian sophomore students, all four independent variables—including the institutional mission—were consistently ranked highest.

Another instrument that allowed for the analysis of the results was a comparison of the mean scores of the different religious affiliations to the four independent variables. The mean scores of the seven religious affiliations on the importance of the four independent variables along with the respective standard deviations (σ) are listed in Table 28 through Table 31 below.
Table 28

*Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Values of the Seven Religious Affiliations On the Importance of the Faith-Based Identity Variable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation (σ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian other than Catholic</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 29

*Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Values of the Seven Religious Affiliations On the Importance of the Christian Identity Variable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation (σ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian other than Catholic</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 30

*Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Values of the Seven Religious Affiliations On the Importance of the Catholic Identity Variable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation (σ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian other than Catholic</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 31

*Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Values of the Seven Religious Affiliations On the Importance of the Institutional Mission Variable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation (σ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian other than Catholic</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mean scores of the traditional sophomore student responses to the four independent variables—including the institutional mission—were consistently higher for Catholics and/or Christians other than Catholic compared to the other religious affiliations. The one exception could be found in Table 30 above where the mean score for Agnostic students was slightly higher than that for the Christian other than Catholic students.

In Table 28 through Table 31 above, Catholic students had the highest standard deviations, but the latter remained quite small in magnitude with 1.94 being the highest. This meant that in this study the responses of students with a given religious affiliation did not deviate much from the average score of the responses from that entire religious affiliation.

Finally, the maximal scores reflected in Figure 82 and the mean scores calculated in Table 31 above supported the hypothesis of this study that traditional sophomore level students whose religious beliefs were closely aligned with institutional missions tended to better persist on campus compared to other sophomore level student groups.

Specifically, this study provided quantitative evidence that in their decision to persist on campus, Christian traditional sophomore students—Catholic or not—tended to rank the importance of the Catholic institutional missions of SSC, SSU, and MSU higher than did traditional sophomore students belonging to the Agnostic, Atheist, Hindu, Muslim, or Other religious beliefs.

The hypothesis of this study was thus validated quantitatively.
CHAPTER 5—DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

In this dissertation, the correlation between retention rates on one hand, and the alignment of the religious beliefs of traditional sophomore students and the institutional missions of the three Benedictine institutions of higher education the student attend on the other hand was investigated.

The investigation started with a statement of the problem. This was the attrition rates that institutions of higher education cannot possibly afford anymore. The solution would be to admit students who have the highest possible chance of persisting on campus.

Even though the literature on student retention and factors contributing to persistence in higher education may be abundant, it is mostly focused on (1) the institutional context, (2) the institutional size, (3) the level of engagement of the college entrance interview, (4) the student’s perception of campus, (5) the level of student involvement on campus, (6) the overall student-institutional fit, (7) the student’s satisfaction with the college experience, (8) the student’s religious affiliation compared to that of the institution of higher education, (9) the institutional acceptance rates, (10) the availability of financial aid on campus, (11) the student’s innate academic capabilities, (12) the SAT scores and high school grade point averages, (13) the student’s health, (14) the student’s social and family support, and (15) the faculty teaching skills.

Of the fifteen contributors to student retention mentioned above, the student’s religious affiliation compared to that of the institution of higher education was found to be by far the least investigated. As a result, this quantitative study was constructed in such a way to understand the relationship between aligning the religious beliefs of students and the missions of their respective institutions of higher education on one side, and the student retention rates on the other side.
This study collected data in two separate ways. The first was through institutional freshman to sophomore retention data at three Benedictine institutions of higher education—a college and two universities—, and the second was a survey disseminated electronically to the students of the three aforementioned Benedictine institutions of higher education.

The institutional data served as a measure of whether or not the retention of Catholic students at the three Benedictine institutions of higher education was similar to other student subpopulations. The Catholic freshman to sophomore student retention $\chi^2$ values were calculated for the three institutions of higher education. For SSC and SSU the $\chi^2$ values rejected the null hypothesis, which stated that Catholic students were not better retained than other student subpopulations. In other words, two of the three $\chi^2$ values suggested that the retention rates for the Catholic freshman to sophomore students were not the product of chance alone. For MSU, the $\chi^2$ value suggested that the Catholic freshman to sophomore retention rates were similar to those of the other student subpopulations. Overall, the three Benedictine institutions of higher education informed the study that Catholic freshman to sophomore retention rates were either similar to or higher than other freshman to sophomore student subpopulations.

On the survey side, a total of 659 sophomore students from SSC, SSU, and MSU participated in the study. Of the 659 participants, 651 voluntarily consented to the study, and of the 651 voluntary participants who consented to the study, 516 completed it. Because of inconsistencies in answering the set of thirteen validation questions on the survey, only 337 of the 516 responses could be included in the study. The criterion for elimination was a difference of two or more on the answers to the Likert-type scale validation questions.

The next step was to calculate the correlation coefficients of all the control variables compared to the four independent variables. The four independent variables were (1) the
importance of the faith-based identity of the institution, (2) the importance of the Christian identity of the institution, (3) the importance of the Catholic identity of the institution, and (4) the importance of the mission of the institution.

Once the correlation coefficients were calculated, the control variables that had correlation coefficients with all four independent variables that fell between −0.399 and +0.399 were eliminated from the study because they correlated weakly or did not correlate at all.

The control variables that were eliminated were (1) the importance of level of engagement in the college entrance interview, (2) the time devoted to academic work, (3) the time devoted to nonreligious social activities, (4) the involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations, (5) the satisfaction with the availability of religious campus activities, (6) the satisfaction with the availability of nonreligious campus activities, (7) the frequency of participation in nonreligious campus events and activities, (8) the frequency of participation in service projects, (9) the satisfaction with the interaction with other students, (10) the satisfaction with the social life, (11) the frequency of interaction with faculty members outside the classroom, (12) the satisfaction with the overall sense of community on campus, (13) the time devoted to on and off campus employment, (14) the ACT/SAT score, (15) the current cumulative grade point average, (16) the income level, (17) whether or not the student is a first generation college student, (18) the national origin, (19) whether or not the student is a transfer student, (20) the residence on or off campus, (21) the institutional size, (22) the gender, and (23) the ethnicity.

On the other hand, the control variables that had absolute correlation coefficients equal to or higher than 0.400 with at least one of the four independent variables, were retained in the study because they correlated moderately or strongly.
The control variables that were retained were (1) the importance of the Benedictine values of the institution, (2) the involvement in the Catholic organizations on campus, (3) the commitment to one’s own faith or religion, (4) the time devoted to one’s own religion, (5) the frequency of practicing one’s own religion at home, and (6) the frequency of participation in religious campus events and activities.

The relationship between the last four variables above—variables that describe the level of religiousness of the student—was deduced by the closeness of their correlation coefficients to each one of the independent variables. Once the student answers were digitized on a scale from 1 to 7, —where 1 means least important / least amount of time / never and 7 means most important / most amount of time / always—, the four variables were combined into a summative variable titled student religiousness, and the correlation coefficients of the new summative variables with all four independent variables were calculated. The assumption in digitizing the student religiousness variable was that (1) the commitment to one’s own faith or religion, (2) the time devoted to one’s own religion, (3) the frequency of practicing one’s own religion at home, and (4) the frequency of participation in religious campus events and activities are all equal contributors to the summative variable.

The six control variables now became three where (1) is the importance of the Benedictine values of the institution, (2) is the involvement in the Catholic organizations on campus, and (3) is student religiousness, thus making the data analysis more manageable.

The fractions of student responses to the four independent variables associated with the different levels of responses to the three control variables were calculated, and the visual representations of the results corresponded to the observed correlation coefficient values.
In order to follow the scientific method and minimize the compounding effect of the three control variables on the four independent variables, the involvement in Catholic organizations on campus variable was split into two categories.

The first category involved below “Neutral” or low involvement in Catholic organizations answers, where the numeric score of the answer was 3 or less (167 student responses), and the second category involved above “Neutral” or high involvement in Catholic organizations answers, where the numeric score of the answer was 5 or more (154 student responses).

Because the other two control variables—importance of Benedictine values and student religiousness—changed in the same way the involvement in Catholic organizations variable did, their compounding effect on the four independent variables was consequentially minimized after splitting the responses of the involvement in Catholic organizations variables as described above.

For the low involvement in Catholic organizations category, the response fractions for the seven different religious affiliations to the importance of the four independent variables were calculated and represented in bar graphs. The seven religious affiliations were (1) Agnostic, (2) Atheist, (3) Catholic, (4) Christian other than Catholic, (5) Hindu, (6) Muslim, and (7) Other.

For the high involvement in Catholic organizations category, the response fractions for the Catholic and Christian other than Catholic religious affiliations to the importance of the four independent variables were calculated and represented in bar graphs. The remaining five religious affiliations did not score high enough, so they were not part of the category.

Of the two categories, the low involvement one was chosen because (1) it lowered the compounding effects of the control variables since their scores were below average, and (2) it
allowed for comparing the responses of the different religious groups, not only the Christian ones.

Analysis of the faith-based identity variable results showed that (1) a fraction of Christian students, whether Catholic or not, ranked the importance of the variable better than did any Agnostic, Atheist, Hindu, Muslim, or Other student, and (2) a fraction of Catholic students ranked the variable higher than did any of the non-Catholic Christians.

Similar to the faith-based identity, analysis of the Christian identity variable results showed that (1) a fraction of Christian students, whether Catholic or not, ranked the importance of the variable better than did any Agnostic, Atheist, Hindu, Muslim, or Other student, and (2) a fraction of Catholic students ranked the variable higher than did any of the non-Catholic Christians.

Analysis of the Catholic identity variable results showed that (1) a fraction of Christian students, whether Catholic or not, ranked the importance of the variable better than did any Atheist, Hindu, Muslim, or Other student, (2) a fraction of Agnostic students ranked the variable higher than did any of the non-Catholic Christians, and (3) a fraction of Catholic students ranked the variable higher than did any of the Agnostic and non-Catholic Christians.

Analysis of the institutional mission variable results showed that (1) a fraction of Christian students, whether Catholic or not, ranked the importance of the variable better than did any Agnostic, Atheist, Hindu, Muslim, or Other student, and (2) Christian students, whether Catholic or not, ranked the variable at the same high level of importance.

A comparison of the mean scores and standard deviations of the different religious affiliations to the four independent variables yielded three results.
The first result was that aside from one exception, the mean scores of the traditional sophomore student responses to the four independent variables—including the institutional mission—were consistently higher for Catholics and/or Christians other than Catholic compared to the other religious affiliations.

The second result was that even though Catholic students had the highest standard deviations for all four variables, the latter remained quite small in magnitude, which meant that the responses students of a given religious affiliation provided this study with did not deviate much from the average score of the responses from that same religious affiliation.

The third result was that the findings supported the hypothesis of this study that traditional sophomore level students whose religious beliefs were closely aligned with institutional missions tended to better persist on campus compared to other sophomore level student groups.

**Conclusions**

This study provided quantitative evidence that in their decision to persist on campus, Christian traditional sophomore students—Catholic or not—tend to rank the Catholic institutional missions of three Benedictine institutions of higher education as being more important than do traditional sophomore students belonging to the Agnostic, Atheist, Hindu, Muslim, or Other religious beliefs.

The hypothesis of this study was thus validated quantitatively.

**Limitations**

The limitations of this study can be categorized as being either temporal or statistical in nature.
Temporal Limitations

The first temporal limitation of this study came from the timeframe during which the research was conducted. A longer data collection time may have translated itself into a larger response set, which may have included religious affiliations other than the ones listed in this study. As such, the results of the study could have been more comprehensive.

The second temporal limitation of this study came from not surveying the students over a number of years. In other words, the second limitation of this study was that it was not a longitudinal study. As such, this study was a snapshot in time of student perceptions; it was not a tracking of how the relationship between the alignment of the students’ religious affiliations and the institutional missions on one side, and the decision to persist on the other side.

Statistical Limitations

The first statistical limitation of this study came from the number and size of the Benedictine institutions of higher education included in this study. If more Benedictine institutions of higher education were included in the study, a larger student fraction of the total student population at the fourteen Benedictine colleges and universities would have been surveyed, and the confidence level in the results of this study could have ultimately become higher. A similar rationale could be utilized to understand the potential benefits that could come from including larger Benedictine institutions of higher education in the study.

The second statistical limitation came from not including junior and senior level students in the study. The addition of junior and senior level students would have allowed for a comparison of the perceptions of the students at the different levels vis-à-vis the importance of the institutional mission in their decision to persist on campus.
Because the temporal and statistical limitations listed above cap the confidence level in the results of the study at 95%, the results of the study cannot be extrapolated to help answer other ideological alignment questions between students and institutions of higher education. A 99% confidence level would have helped in extrapolating the results into other ideological alignments.

**Future Recommendations**

The future recommendations of this study originate partly from the study’s limitations listed in the section above.

Future work may include a more inclusive survey of the remaining Benedictine colleges and universities, and a longitudinal study of the relationship between the ideological alignment of student religious beliefs and the institutional mission on one hand, and retention rates on the other hand.

Future work may also include surveying over the span of a semester of all students, whether undergraduate or graduate, to better understand their decisions to persist, and how these decisions relate to the alignment of students’ religious beliefs with institutional missions.

Finally, future work may include developing a model that assigns a weight to the alignment of the students’ religious beliefs with the institutional missions, and integrates the weight into a comprehensive prediction algorithm for student retention.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

A. Survey Questions

1)  *Please specify your religious affiliation*

- Agnostic
- Atheist
- Buddhist
- Catholic
- Christian, other than Catholic
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Shinto
- Taoist
- Sikh
- Other
2) *I am committed to my faith or religion*

- Very untrue of me
- Untrue of me
- Somewhat untrue of me
- Neutral
- Somewhat true of me
- True of me
- Very true of me

3) *How important is the faith-based identity of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution?*

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important
4) How important is the Christian identity of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution?

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

5) How important is the Catholic identity of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution?

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important
6) *How important are the Benedictine values of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution?*

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

7) *How important is the mission of your institution in your decision to remain at your institution?*

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important
8) How important was your level of engagement in the college entrance interview in your decision to choose your institution?

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

9) In a typical week, how much time do you devote to your religion through attending religious services, praying or meditating, and participating in service projects?

- Less than an hour
- One to three hours
- Three to five hours
- Five to ten hours
- Ten to fifteen hours
- Fifteen to twenty hours
- More than twenty hours
10) In a typical week, how much time do you devote to academic work?

- Less than an hour
- One to three hours
- Three to five hours
- Five to ten hours
- Ten to fifteen hours
- Fifteen to twenty hours
- More than twenty hours

11) In a typical week, how much time do you devote to nonreligious social activities including participating and attending campus related athletic events?

- Less than an hour
- One to three hours
- Three to five hours
- Five to ten hours
- Ten to fifteen hours
- Fifteen to twenty hours
- More than twenty hours
12) In thinking about your involvement at your institution, please rate your involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

13) In thinking about your involvement at your institution, please rate your involvement in the Catholic organizations

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important
14) Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of availability of religious campus activities

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Unsure
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied

15) How often do you participate in religious campus events and activities?

- Never
- Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances when I could have
- Occasionally, in about 30% of the chances when I could have
- Sometimes, in about 50% of the chances when I could have
- Frequently, in about 70% of the chances when I could have
- Usually, in about 90% of the chances when I could have
- Every time
16) Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of availability of nonreligious campus activities

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Unsure
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied

17) How often do you participate in nonreligious campus events and activities?

- Never
- Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances when I could have
- Occasionally, in about 30% of the chances when I could have
- Sometimes, in about 50% of the chances when I could have
- Frequently, in about 70% of the chances when I could have
- Usually, in about 90% of the chances when I could have
- Every time
18) *How often do you participate in service projects on campus?*

- Never
- Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances when I could have
- Occasionally, in about 30% of the chances when I could have
- Sometimes, in about 50% of the chances when I could have
- Frequently, in about 70% of the chances when I could have
- Usually, in about 90% of the chances when I could have
- Every time

19) *Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of your interaction with other students*

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Unsure
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied
20) *Please rate your satisfaction with your institution in terms of your social life*

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Unsure
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied

21) *How often do you interact with faculty members outside the classroom?*

- Never
- Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances when I could have
- Occasionally, in about 30% of the chances when I could have
- Sometimes, in about 50% of the chances when I could have
- Frequently, in about 70% of the chances when I could have
- Usually, in about 90% of the chances when I could have
- Every time
22) *Please rate your satisfaction with the overall sense of community on campus*

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Unsure
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied

23) *How often do you practice your religion at home, where home may refer to your dorm room, own residence, or parent’s residence?*

- Never
- Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances when I could have
- Occasionally, in about 30% of the chances when I could have
- Sometimes, in about 50% of the chances when I could have
- Frequently, in about 70% of the chances when I could have
- Usually, in about 90% of the chances when I could have
- Every time
24)  *In a typical week, how many hours do you devote to on and off campus employment?*

- None
- One to three hours
- Three to five hours
- Five to ten hours
- Ten to twenty hours
- Twenty to forty hours
- More than forty hours

25)  *I am devoted to my faith or religion*

- Very untrue of me
- Untrue of me
- Somewhat untrue of me
- Neutral
- Somewhat true of me
- True of me
- Very true of me
26) When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was its faith-based identity in your decision-making process?

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

27) When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was its Christian identity in your decision-making process?

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important
28) *When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was its Catholic identity in your decision-making process?*

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

29) *When you decided to continue at your institution, how important were the Benedictine values in your decision-making process?*

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important
30) **When you decided to continue at your institution, how important was the institutional mission in your decision-making process?**

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

31) **How important is your involvement in the non-Catholic spiritual and religious organizations?**

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important
32) *How important is your involvement in the Catholic organizations?*

- Not at all important
- Low importance
- Slightly important
- Neutral
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

33) *Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the availability of religious activities on campus*

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Unsure
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied
34) Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the availability of nonreligious activities on campus

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Unsure
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied

35) Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the interactions you have with fellow students

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Unsure
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied
36)  Please rate your satisfaction with your institution with respect to the overall social life it provides

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Unsure
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied

37)  Please rate your satisfaction with your institution’s overall sense of community

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Unsure
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied
38) My ACT/SAT score when I joined my institution was

- 14/1000 or lower
- Between 15/1060 and 20/1410
- Between 21/1500 and 25/1700
- Between 26/1760 and 30/1980
- 31/2040 or higher

39) My current cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is

- Below 1.00
- Between 1.00 and 1.99
- Between 2.00 and 2.99
- Between 3.00 and 3.49
- 3.50 or higher

40) The collective income of the person or people paying my tuition is

- Less than $20,000 per year
- Between $20,000 and $70,000 per year
- Between $70,000 and $150,000 per year
- Between $150,000 and $250,000 per year
- Between $250,000 and $400,000 per year
- More than $400,000 per year
- I do not know / It does not apply
41) Are you a first generation college student?
   • Yes
   • No

42) Are you an international student?
   • Yes
   • No

43) Are you a transfer student?
   • Yes
   • No

44) Do you live on campus?
   • Yes
   • No
45) Please select the location of the institution where you are currently enrolled

- Florida
- Illinois
- Kansas
- Minnesota
- New Hampshire
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Oklahoma
- Pennsylvania
- Saskatchewan
- South Dakota
- Washington

46) Please select the classification that best describes you

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate
47) Please select the classification that best describes you
   - Full-time student (enrolled in 12 or more credits per semester)
   - Part-time student (enrolled in less than 12 credits per semester)

48) Please select the classification that best describes you
   - Enrolled in the traditional program, where each course takes fifteen or sixteen weeks (four months) to be completed
   - Enrolled in the accelerated program, where each course takes between four and eight weeks to be completed

49) Please specify your gender
   - Female
   - Male

50) Please specify your ethnicity
   - Hispanic
   - Non-Hispanic
51)  Please specify your race

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other / Unknown
B. Informed Consent Form

Title of Project: The Relationship Between Persistence Rates and the Alignment of Traditional Sophomore Student Religious Beliefs with Institutional Missions: A Multi-Institution Focus Approach.

Principal Investigator: Dany I. Doughan

Introduction

We invite you to take part in a research study at your institution, which seeks to identify the effect of alignment of ideologies between students and institutions of higher education on institutional retention rates. Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. Talk to your family and friends about it and take your time to make your decision. If you decide to participate, you must consent to this form to show that you want to take part.

Section 1. Purpose of the Research

You are being offered the opportunity to take part in this research study because you are a student at a Benedictine college or university and this research study is being done to find out the effect of aligning your ideology with that of your college or university on your persistence at your college or university.

Approximately 10,000 people will take part in this research nationwide.

Section 2. Procedures

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey pertaining to your religious beliefs, the reasons you chose your college or university, and the reasons you are still enrolled at your college or university.
Section 3. Time Duration of the Procedures and Study

If you agree to take part in this study, your involvement will last approximately 20 minutes.

Section 4. Discomforts and Risks

There are no risks associated with the research, and the questions are written in such a way not to cause you any discomforts.

Section 5. Potential Benefits

The results of this research may help colleges and universities better understand how to retain their students.

Section 6. Statement of Confidentiality

Your research records that are reviewed, stored, and analyzed will be kept safe on a cloud server that uses the highest level of SSL encryption available. The server is hosted and maintained by SurveyGizmo.com, the online company that administers surveys for corporations such as FedEx, Microsoft, Disney, ESPN, GE, and IBM. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.

We will keep your participation in this research study confidential to the extent permitted by law. Only the principal investigator (Dany Doughan) will have access to the data.

At no point in time will your responses be printed; they will remain securely located on the SSL encrypted server mentioned above. Your name will not be required for this research. As such, your responses will never be linked to your name.

Furthermore, only Dany Doughan will have access to the data.

Section 7. Costs for Participation

There are no costs associated with participating in this study.
Section 8. Compensation for Participation

There is no monetary compensation associated with participating in this study.

Section 9. Research Funding

The institution and investigators are not receiving any grant money to support this research.

Section 10. Voluntary Participation

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If you choose to take part in this research, your sole responsibility will be to complete the survey. You do not have to participate in this research. If you choose to take part, you have the right to stop at any time. If you decide not to participate or if you decide to stop taking part in the research at a later date, there will be no penalty that follows.

During the course of the research you will be provided with any significant new findings that may affect your willingness to continue participating in this research.

Section 11. Contact Information for Questions or Concerns

You have the right to ask any questions you may have about this research. If you have any questions, complaints or concerns, please contact Dany I. Doughan.

Consent/Permission to be in the Research

Before making the decision regarding enrollment in this research you should have reviewed the information in this form.

Your consent below means that you have received this information, have asked the questions you currently have about the research and those questions have been answered.

Please print a copy of this form to keep for future reference.
By consenting to this form, you indicate that you are voluntarily choosing to take part in this research.

☐ I consent to this form and voluntarily choose to take part in this research

☐ I do not consent to this form and voluntarily choose not to take part in this research