

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: JNHST-019

Title: Faith, Vocation, and Professional Identity in Secular Societies: An Interdisciplinary Review,

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity		✓		
Significance	✓			

Reviewer's ID: JPR- 215

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The research article titled "Faith, Vocation, and Professional Identity in Secular Societies: An Interdisciplinary Review" provides a compelling and rigorous synthesis of how religious belief intersects with professional life in increasingly secularized institutional environments. By moving beyond the traditional sociological assumption that secularization necessitates the total erasure of religious influence from the public sphere, the authors explore how faith remains a potent, though often "privatized," driver of vocational motivation and ethical reasoning. The study effectively utilizes an interdisciplinary framework—incorporating Max Weber's sociological theory, Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, and contemporary psychological models of identity—to map the complex landscape of the "religious professional" in the modern West.

The narrative begins by establishing the tension between the private nature of faith and the public requirements of professional neutrality. The authors skillfully employ Weber's concept of *Beruf* (calling) to illustrate that for many practitioners, particularly in high-stakes fields like health and education, work

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is not merely a contract but a moral obligation. This historical-theoretical grounding is essential for the article's central argument: that the professional self is not a monolithic entity but a negotiated space where personal values and institutional norms constantly collide. A significant strength of this section is the critique of the "privatization pressure," where the authors demonstrate that the demand for secular neutrality often forces professionals to "bifurcate" their identities, leading to significant psychological labor.

A substantial portion of the review is dedicated to the psychological outcomes of integrating faith and work, specifically focusing on resilience and burnout. The analysis of religious coping mechanisms is particularly insightful. The authors present evidence suggesting that a well-integrated sense of vocation can act as a protective buffer against the emotional exhaustion typical of "caring professions." However, the narrative is careful not to present religion as a universal panacea; it acknowledges that identity conflict—where professional ethics (such as reproductive healthcare or LGBTQ+ rights) clash with personal dogma—can actually exacerbate stress and lead to professional alienation. This balanced approach elevates the paper from a simple advocacy piece to a serious academic inquiry.

The discussion on "stigma management" and visibility in the workplace provides a necessary sociological layer to the psychological data. Drawing on Bourdieu's field theory, the authors evaluate how religious "habitus" operates within secular "fields." They observe that professionals often engage in sophisticated strategies of disclosure and concealment to navigate workplace cultures that may view overt religiosity as a sign of irrationality or a lack of professional objectivity. This section effectively highlights the "stigma of the sacred" in elite professional circles, arguing that the management of this stigma is a defining feature of the modern religious professional's career trajectory.

Furthermore, the article proposes an "integrative framework" for future research, which is perhaps its most significant contribution. The authors suggest that religion should be treated as a primary variable in occupational identity research, rather than a secondary demographic trait. By calling for more longitudinal and cross-cultural studies, the review sets a clear agenda for the next generation of social scientists. The narrative effectively illustrates that as societies become more pluralistic, the ability of institutions to accommodate diverse "moral vocabularies" will be a key determinant of organizational health and employee wellbeing.

In summary, this article offers a profound and comprehensive review of a frequently overlooked dimension of professional life. It bridges the gap between the sociology of religion and organizational psychology with academic rigor and stylistic clarity. The author's ability to synthesize abstract theoretical concepts with empirical findings on burnout and stigma makes this a vital contribution to the study of

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identity in the 21st century. It is an essential read for scholars, HR professionals, and practitioners who seek to understand the enduring power of faith in a world that often demands its silence.

Recommendations for Minor Revisions**Theoretical and Conceptual Clarity**

- **Definition of "Secular":** The paper would benefit from a more precise definition of "secular societies." Distinguishing between "political secularism" (state neutrality) and "social secularization" (decline in personal belief) would help clarify which specific type of secular pressure is most impactful on professional identity in the various cases cited.
- **Bourdieu's Habitus:** While Bourdieu is mentioned, a deeper exploration of "religious habitus" versus "professional habitus" would strengthen the theoretical section. Specifically, explaining how these two internal systems of logic can be "misaligned" in the workplace would provide more depth to the discussion on identity conflict.

Content and Empirical Scope

- **Non-Western Perspectives:** The review is heavily focused on Western, predominantly Christian or post-Christian contexts. Including a brief section or even a few citations regarding professional identity in secularizing contexts in Asia or the Middle East (e.g., Turkey or India) would broaden the article's interdisciplinary and global appeal.
- **Impact of Digital Spaces:** The author might consider adding a short paragraph on how "digital professional identity" (e.g., LinkedIn or professional blogs) complicates the privatization of faith, as the boundaries between private belief and public professional personas become increasingly blurred online.

Structural Adjustments

- **Visual Representation of the Framework:** To enhance the clarity of the proposed "integrative framework," the author should include a conceptual diagram at the end of the review that visualizes the interaction between "Individual Faith," "Institutional Norms," and "Professional Outcomes" (like burnout or resilience).
- **Case Study Brevity:** The review mentions diverse fields like social work and health. Adding a small table summarizing the specific "primary tensions" found in each of these distinct professions would serve as a useful quick-reference for the reader.

Recommendation: Recommend for publication with minor revision.