



Adventist Colleges and Universities

Find Your Place—Faith, Friends, Future

13 accredited colleges and universities in North America

Following Faith Commitments

Adventist Higher Education Transition Theory

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Background

- 2005 study sponsored by Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities (AACU)
 - Researched Adventist college-bound youth
 - Awareness and perceptions of Adventist higher education
- Results
 - For college-bound youth in public high schools
 - Low-levels of awareness of Adventist HE
 - Low-levels of contact from Adventist HE (Sauder, 2008)

Background

- AACU Actions
 - System-wide branding
 - Centralized marketing for AACU schools
 - Collaborative enrollment management
 - Targeted recruitment of college-bound Adventist youth in public schools
 - Sponsored a follow-up, two-phase, sequential Quant-Qual mixed methods study, CollegeImpact
 - We are reporting Phase 2, qualitative results today

Purpose of the Study

- Identify the factors or conditions under which public high school graduates transfer to and are successful in Adventist Higher Education

Method - Qualitative

Grounded Theory Design
The Eclectic Approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2015)

Grounded Theory

- To Develop, NOT to test a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)
- Term “grounded” means that components of the theory come from, or are “grounded,” in the data of the study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)
- Inductive and abductive reasoning processes are used to move from rich description of specific cases to the conceptualization of general hypotheses (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015)

Participants

- Approximately one-third of the 6125 participants in Phase I volunteered to sit for interviews
- Inclusion criteria:
 - Reported having a positive undergraduate experience in an Adventist university
 - Completed a Bachelor's degree from an Adventist HE
 - Were still practicing Adventists at the time of study
 - Graduated from a public high school
 - Were not children of church employees

Participants

- 22 interviews conducted (2 not recorded)
- 18 interviews were analyzed and used to construct the theory (2 interviews too poor in quality to transcribe)
- 7 additional participants were added when we Checked for Representativeness of the theory
- 25 total participants

Participants

Represented 10 NAD
Adventist colleges/
universities:

- Andrews
- La Sierra
- Loma Linda
- Oakwood
- Pacific Union
- Southern
- Southwestern
- Union
- Walla Walla
- Washington (DC)

Instrumentation

- A semi-structured interview protocol (conducted f2f or via telephone)
 1. Reason for choosing college/university
 2. Strongest memories
 3. Support systems
 4. Sense of belonging
 5. Relationships with faculty
 6. Challenges faced
 7. Contributions to success

Data Analysis

- NVIVO 9/10 software package was used to organize and analyze the interviews
- Constant-comparative analysis (iterative) techniques were used with the data as it accumulated (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)
 - Data collection, memo writing, coding, compare to previous cases, compare previous cases to newer
 - **Theoretical sampling:** Creating increasingly nuanced versions of interview protocols based on emerging findings

Data Analysis

- Coding processes were heavily shaped by Charmas (2014) and Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, (2014)
- The research team engaged in memo writing (Charmaz, 2014) and verbal debriefing/ discussion throughout the project
 - Helped identify emerging findings
 - Guided theoretical sampling
 - Aided development and refinement of coding structures

Results

Adventist Higher Education Transition Theory

Results

The Central Concern

- Following Faith Commitments

Theory Components

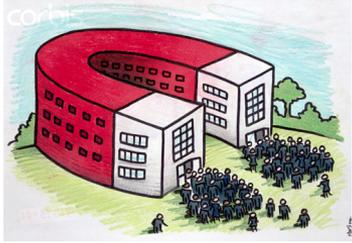
- Transitional Pathway
- Domains of Student Experience
- Timeframe of Transition

Results

Markers on the Transitional Pathway

- Attractors
- Adjustors
- Detractors
- Transitional Tasks
- Anchors

Attractors



Adjustors



Detractors



Transitional Tasks



Anchors



**Theoretical Components: Successful Transition
to Adventist Christian Universities**

Domains of Student Experience	Phases of Student Experience				
	Pre-enrollment	First Year (Particularly First Semester)	As the Issues Arise (Particularly First Two Semesters)	Generally By the End of the Second Year	
	Theoretical Components				
	Attractors	Adjustors	Detractors	Transitional Tasks	Anchors
Social (Relationships)	Family members Friends Significant adults Recruiters/marketers	Freshman orientation Community building programs targeting student retention Faculty-student interactions	Encountering (academy) cliques Living off-campus Age differences (non-traditional students)	Negotiating an adult relationship with family Making friends rather than trying to “Break in” Developing a “sense of belonging” Learning new ways to interact with professors	Family support A network of friends in college Positive, supportive faculty-student relationship(s) A Support System consisting of family, peers, significant others, faculty, & staff
Social (Romance)	A pool of singles who are more likely to share your values apriori romantic relationships	School sponsored social events	Relationship challenges, including divorce	Balancing romance and study Developing healthy romantic relationships	Having a serious boyfriend/girlfriend Becoming Engaged or Getting Married

Domains of Student Experience	Phases of Student Experience				
	Pre-enrollment	First Year (Particularly First Semester)	As the Issues Arise (Particularly First Two Semesters)	Generally By the End of the Second Year	
	Theoretical Components				
	Attractors	Adjustors	Detractors	Transitional Tasks	Anchors
Spiritual	<p>Christian environment</p> <p>Praying about college decision</p>	<p>Formal, campus spiritual programing</p> <p>Classroom Devotions & Prayer</p> <p>Integration of Faith & Learning</p> <p>Evidence of God's leading</p>	<p>Other students who did not value or support the environment</p> <p>Incongruences</p>	<p>Affirming/reaffirming personal faith commitment(s)</p>	<p>Deeper relationship with God (Conversion/reconversion/recommitment)</p> <p>Personal spiritual engagement</p>
Intellectual	<p>Degrees offered at institution</p>	<p>Introductory courses in the major</p>	<p>Challenges with handling independence</p> <p>Many responsibilities</p> <p>Easy to get too busy</p>	<p>Learning to manage time</p> <p>Learning to take on responsibility</p> <p>Learning to identify and accept personal limits</p>	<p>Substantive leadership opportunities</p> <p>Substantive engagement opportunities</p>

Examples of Markers

Social Domain - Friends

Friends

Attractors

Well, I had some friends that . . . took me up to PUC one Sabbath and so I was able to see the area and the campus and I was impressed. I'm a person that likes being out in nature, and even though probably La Sierra College would have been closer for me . . . I liked the more rural environment at PUC.

James Stuart, Pacific Union College, 1970 Theology

Adjustors

I met some older students that did some things to help me out. And they took me under their wing so to speak. So that made it good.

Jason Williams, Oakwood University, 1993 Social Work

Friends

Detractors

I do remember initially, when I came, I was thinking all the freshmen would be new and on equal footing, but once I got there, I realized that most of them came from [Adventist high schools], so they already large groups of friends from [there]. So at the very beginning, I remember feeling a little bit out of the loop.

Marsha Lawrence, Union College, 1995 Elementary Education

Transitional Tasks

A lot of kids that went to academy together already knew each other, so it was hard to break into some of those groups. Kind of made friends with the kids that were in my same situation, that had gone to a public high school.

Mary Boyce, Washington Adventist University, 1993 Elementary Education

Friends

Anchors

[The most important thing] would probably be meeting my friends, like my closest friends. We all met in the same place, we all started working in the same office. And even now, after we have graduated, and even though they have moved away, we are still really good friends. I would think that that is kind of important to me.

Janet Pereda, La Sierra University, 2011 Fine Arts

Examples of Markers

From Other Domain

Matters of Faith

Attractors

When I decided to go back to school in 99, I was at a point where I wanted more of a Christian influence in my life so it seemed like a proper fit at the time to go to Southwestern.

Lawrence Smith, Southwestern Adventist University, 2003 Broadcasting, 2012 Nursing

Adjustors

Maybe if I had gone to a different school, a public school, I would learn the same ideas, but would want to leave. At La Sierra the teacher showed me I could have these new ideas, these new ways of thinking, without abandoning my faith. I think that's why, if I did it all over again. I would go to La Sierra.

Eugene Umar, La Sierra University, 2008 Religious Studies

Mental Maturation

Attractors

Well, my brother-in-law at that time, he suggested that I go there to find a wife. But I looked in the bulletin and far more interested in their theological program, so I ended falling in love with the idea of studying theology and went there for that reason

Matthew Carson, Walla Walla University, 1987, Theology

Adjustors

I was a fine arts major. I think that the department, like the faculty there, [were] very supportive and very helpful

Janet Pereda, La Sierra University, 2011 Fine Arts

Matters of Faith

Detractors

I remember having a lot of conversations with Adventist students who had been Adventist their whole life, who grew up in the Adventist church, but weren't necessarily practicing as an adult. And a lot of them had questions as to why I was deciding to become Adventist. Because it would seem like they would start fighting it.

Crystal Hopkins, La Sierra University, 2006 Social Work

Transitional Tasks

Okay. So I would have to say it was at a worship we had, like a required worship we had on Thursdays, you know? I think it was my sophomore year or so. I was kind of going through things like depression and stuff like that. And they had a guest speaker come; well I don't remember his name or anything. But his stories really touched me and made me realize that life wasn't so bad, and that God loved us, and it was just a life-changing moment.

Janet Pereda, La Sierra University, 2011 Fine Arts

Romance

Anchors

Meeting my wife was definitely a contributing factor in changing my whole attitude about school and being consistent with my work, trying to do better and all that.

Lawrence Smith, Southwestern Adventist University, 2003 Broadcasting, 2012 Nursing

Matters of Faith

Anchors

And it was during my sophomore year, it was a student week of prayer that I made that adult commitment to the Lord. I had been baptized when I was 13, but to make that adult decision my sophomore year ... Very significant.

Marcy Johnson, Andrews University, 1971 English

Mental Maturation

Anchors

When I was in high school, I felt that I was closed-minded. Narrow-minded, you know? Only talking in black and white. I think the biggest revolution for me [happened] in college. It helped opened up my thinking, came up with new ideas – new ways to look at the same issues. So I think that was my biggest transformation: being more open-minded about engaging with different people who have different beliefs, different ideas.

Eugene Umar, La Sierra University, 2008 Religious Studies

Implications

- Develop action plans to help students deal with Detractors and move through Transitional Tasks
- Provide strategic interventions throughout college experience
- Provide faculty development on the role and importance of faculty in student success and retention
- Review current policies and practices related to new student transition
- Ensure new students have opportunities to develop friendships

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