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Factors Related to Declining Attendance at the Adult Sabbath School in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist Church

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ABSTRACT

FACTORS RELATED TO DECLINING ATTENDANCE AT THE ADULT
SABBATH SCHOOL IN THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION
OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: FACTORS RELATED TO DECLINING ATTENDANCE AT THE ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL IN THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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Problem

From the time of its inception in the 1850s until the early part of the 20th century, the Adventist Sabbath School in North America was highly attended. During those times Sabbath School reached the highest attendance rate when Sabbath School membership was sometimes even larger than church membership. Following that time, the attendance rate at Sabbath School has significantly declined. Currently it is estimated that less than 25% of the Seventh-day Adventist Church membership in North America attends Sabbath School on a regular basis. This study explores factors related to declining attendance at the adult Sabbath School in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between Sabbath School Attendance in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the following five groups of factors: Achievement, Satisfaction, Socio-cultural, Institutional, and General Perceptions.

Methodology

This descriptive study employed non-experimental, quantitative survey methodology. The survey included 1,451 church members and 59 pastors in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, from a cluster sample in all nine unions in the North American Division. The statistical analysis utilized multiple one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), correlation analysis, and Chi-square tests applied to a two-stage process to determine the relationship(s) between Sabbath School Attendance and the five groups of factors mentioned above.

Results

In response to the 4,958 Member Surveys and 64 Pastor Surveys distributed, 1,451 (30%) Member Surveys and 59 (92%) Pastor Surveys were returned and correctly completed. The study revealed that seven out of eight Institutional Factors were significantly related to Sabbath School Achievement, and six out of the same eight Institutional Factors were related to Sabbath School Satisfaction. Furthermore, the study revealed that five out of eight Institutional Factors, five out of five Sabbath School Achievement and Sabbath School Satisfaction Factors, three out of six Socio-cultural Factors, and five out of six General Perception Factors were significantly related to Sabbath School Attendance.

Conclusions

Although there is no simple answer to the declining attendance at the adult Sabbath School in North America, this study reveals that 23 out of 30 factors studied were significantly related to Sabbath School Attendance. The only common institutional factor related to Sabbath School Achievement, Sabbath School Satisfaction, and Sabbath School Attendance was Teaching Style. Those taught interactively are more likely to achieve more, be more satisfied, and attend Sabbath School more frequently.

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A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

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External: Jonathan Kuntaraf   Date approved

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am also thankful for my godly parents who made an effort to take me regularly to Sabbath School when I was a child. I have to admit that my interest and motivation for this study is rooted in my early Sabbath School experience, which equipped me for my future ministry.

Finally I am deeply grateful to my wife Adriana and my daughters Heidi and Beatrice for allowing me to make my office a second home, spending every free moment working on this project. Without a loving and supportive family it would be extremely difficult to complete a project of this magnitude.

I would also be remiss if I did not give thanks to God for providing me so many undeserved opportunities and resources needed for this study. It is my earnest prayer that this research study is not just the completion of an academic requirement for my degree but a contribution to a better understanding of the value and mission of Sabbath School in a postmodern world.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath School is the main church-based non-formal

educational institution providing Bible-based religious instruction in accordance with the

teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The term *Sabbath School* is used

similarly to the way in which other Christian denominations use *Sunday School* (see

Definition of Terms, p. 17).

The Sabbath School is an integral part of the worldwide Adventist Church and is

presently functional at any given location of a Seventh-day Adventist congregation.

Sabbath School usually operates on a weekly schedule and, in most cases, precedes the

morning worship service held on Saturdays.

Instituted in the early 1850s, prior to the official establishment of the Seventh-day

Adventist Church, the Sabbath School is one of the oldest organized ministries in the

movement. As an educational institution, the Sabbath School was established as a platform

for fulfilling the church's mission of teaching the gospel and nurturing the spiritual

growth of its members (see Chapter 2, under History of Sabbath School Objectives).

From its inception, the Adventist Sabbath School was intended to be "one of the

greatest instrumentalities, and the most effectual, in bringing souls to Christ" (E. White,

1900, p. 20). For many decades until the early 20th century, the Sabbath School mission

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and goals were maintained successfully. The early history of Sabbath School shows that the adult Sabbath School was growing and its members were spiritually enriched. Referring to the early history of Sabbath School, William Covert, an early Sabbath School member, wrote in one of his letters published by Plummer (1911): "I enjoyed my Sabbath School study then as much as ever in my life" (p. 8).

Originally, the Sabbath School had one objective, namely, to instruct the youth of the church through a systematic study of the Word of God. Writing about the origins of Sabbath School, Plummer (1922) mentions that Elder James White, a pioneer of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, "was deeply impressed with the need of some regular system or plan of Bible lessons especially adapted to the youth" (p. 19).

As the Adventist Church grew, the objectives of the Sabbath School were gradually multiplied. An independent research study done on the history of Sabbath School objectives conducted by McCormick (1992) suggests that Sabbath School should be responsible for six "tributary" objectives. In order of importance, McCormick identified these objectives as: Bible study, community evangelism and soul-winning, fellowship and support, nurture and character development, training for Christian service, and world mission promotion and funding (p. 147).

The current *Sabbath School Handbook* states: "Sabbath School has four specific objectives: Study of the Word, Fellowship, Community Outreach, and World Mission Emphasis. These four objectives are the basis for every activity of the Sabbath School in all divisions" (North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists [NAD], 2004, p. 6).

The annual statistical reports of the North American Division show that for a number of decades from its time of inception in the 1850s, the attendance rate at the adult

Sabbath School in the Seventh-day Adventist Church was continuously growing. According to McCormick (1992), by the year 1926, the ratio of North American Sabbath School members to church members reached its highest level with 108 Sabbath School members for every 100 church members. Also, within the same period, the Sabbath School offering, mainly designated for world missions, reached its highest level in 1932. During that year, for every tithe dollar submitted, the worldwide Sabbath School gave 31.8 cents (32%) in Sabbath School offerings (p. 1).

Based on the annual financial reports, the *147th Annual Statistical Report* (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists [GC], 2009), Sabbath School offerings currently represent only 2.55 cents (3%) for each tithe dollar (p. 87). Benchmarked against tithe, this is proportionally a decline of over 90% in a period of about 75 years.

Although there are no longer Sabbath School Attendance Reports formally taken in North America, it is estimated that typical adult Sabbath School attendance is lower than 25% of the church membership in the Adventist churches in North America. This is a proportional drop of more than 75% in Sabbath School attendance compared to about 75 years earlier.

Prior to the 1930s, Sabbath School was the main evangelistic ministry in the church. In an article entitled "Sabbath School Evangelism," Dickson (1932) remarks on the important role played by the Sabbath School in evangelism. The article reads: "It is stated that 85 percent of church membership comes directly from the Sabbath school" (p. 18).

The results of an unpublished Delphi study I conducted during the spring of 2010 show that Sabbath School administrators and church leaders who participated in the study

were concerned about the vitality and the future of the adult Sabbath School in North America. Twenty Sabbath School officers and church leaders interviewed in the study commonly agreed that the adult Adventist Sabbath School needs to be reevaluated and equipped to face the unprecedented challenges of the 21st century.

The following statements are just a small sampling of how the adult Sabbath School in North America was perceived by these church leaders interviewed for this study. A university professor said: "The adult Sabbath School in my church flips me over." Another admitted: "I am really ashamed of my Sabbath School. I would never invite anybody, especially non-Adventists, to attend my Sabbath School class." A Seminary professor said: "I remember the classes in only one Sabbath School that I truly enjoyed in my entire life." Another participant noted: "If I were not a pastor, I would never attend Sabbath School." A Sabbath School leader acknowledged: "The Sabbath School in North America is dying, if it is not already dead."

In the light of these statements and what the Sabbath School's official reports indicate, the following questions need to be addressed: Why is the adult Sabbath School in North America losing its vitality and membership? Is there a future for the adult Sabbath School in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America? Does Sabbath School still have any objectives to fulfill in a postmodern world?

Statement of the Problem

Prior to 2012, no focused study had been done to determine and examine the potential factors related to declining attendance at the adult Sabbath School in the North American Division (NAD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There is ample evidence in the historical records and statistical reports that attendance at Sabbath School

in the NAD is falling, and that the Sabbath School is not achieving its stated purposes to an adequate degree. An analysis of the perceptions held by church members regarding satisfaction with Sabbath School and achievement of Sabbath School goals is a necessary step in an attempt to identify the challenges facing the Sabbath School in the early 21st century.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive study was to address the issue of declining attendance in the adult Sabbath School in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NAD) and to examine the relationship between Sabbath School attendance at churches in the NAD and the following groups of factors: Achievement, Satisfaction, Institutional, Socio-cultural, and General Perceptions. Description of these groups and their corresponding variables are presented in the conceptual framework .

Significance of the Study

In spite of numerous attempts to revitalize the adult Sabbath School, promoted by Sabbath School leaders from the local church to the GC headquarters, the adult Sabbath School continues to lose its vitality and membership, especially in the NAD. This study used social science research methods to identify and evaluate potential factors related to declining attendance in the Sabbath School, providing a quantitative description that may be useful in developing new strategies for recovery of the Sabbath School.

The history of Sabbath School, as it is presented in the next chapter, reveals the important role played by the adult Sabbath School in the development and the growth of

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the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. The decline of Sabbath School membership, directly and indirectly, has affected the dynamics of the Adventist Church.

Although some of the historical objectives of the adult Sabbath School have been gradually taken over by various other church ministries and departments, the adult Sabbath School continues to have its unique objectives which cannot be fulfilled by any other church ministry or department. Keeping the worldwide Adventist Church doctrinally and spiritually united is just one example of a unique objective of Sabbath School.

The findings of this study will provide the statistical information to be considered by Sabbath School and church leaders from any organizational level in designing and implementing the Sabbath School curriculum and related materials and programs. Understanding the causes of decline is an essential step in a revitalization effort. This study is not intended to solve the adult Sabbath School attendance problem, but rather to provide the groundwork necessary for further studies and action plans.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is the foundation of a research study. Merriam (2009) defines the conceptual framework as "the underlying structure, the scaffolding or the frame of your study" (p. 66). The framework affects all aspects of the study. It identifies the topic, the variables, the relationships between variables or groups of variables, and the purpose of the study. In more practical terms, the conceptual framework is like the map for the entire study.

A graphic representation of the conceptual framework for this study is presented in Figure 1. This framework indicates the relationships between five groups of factors

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables   Dependent Variables
Non-manipulated   Manipulated   Preliminary   Final

```
┌──────────────┐
│ Socio-Cultural│────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Factors     │                                            │
└──────────────┘                                            │
                                                            │
            ┌──────────────┐        ┌──────────────┐        │
            │              │────────│ Satisfaction │───────▶│
            │              │        └──────────────┘        │
            │ Institutional│──────────────────────────────▶ │ Attendance
            │   Factors    │                                 │
            │              │        ┌──────────────┐         │
            │              │────────│ Achievement  │───────▶ │
            └──────────────┘        └──────────────┘         │
┌──────────────┐                                            │
│   General     │───────────────────────────────────────────┘
│ Perceptions   │
└──────────────┘
```
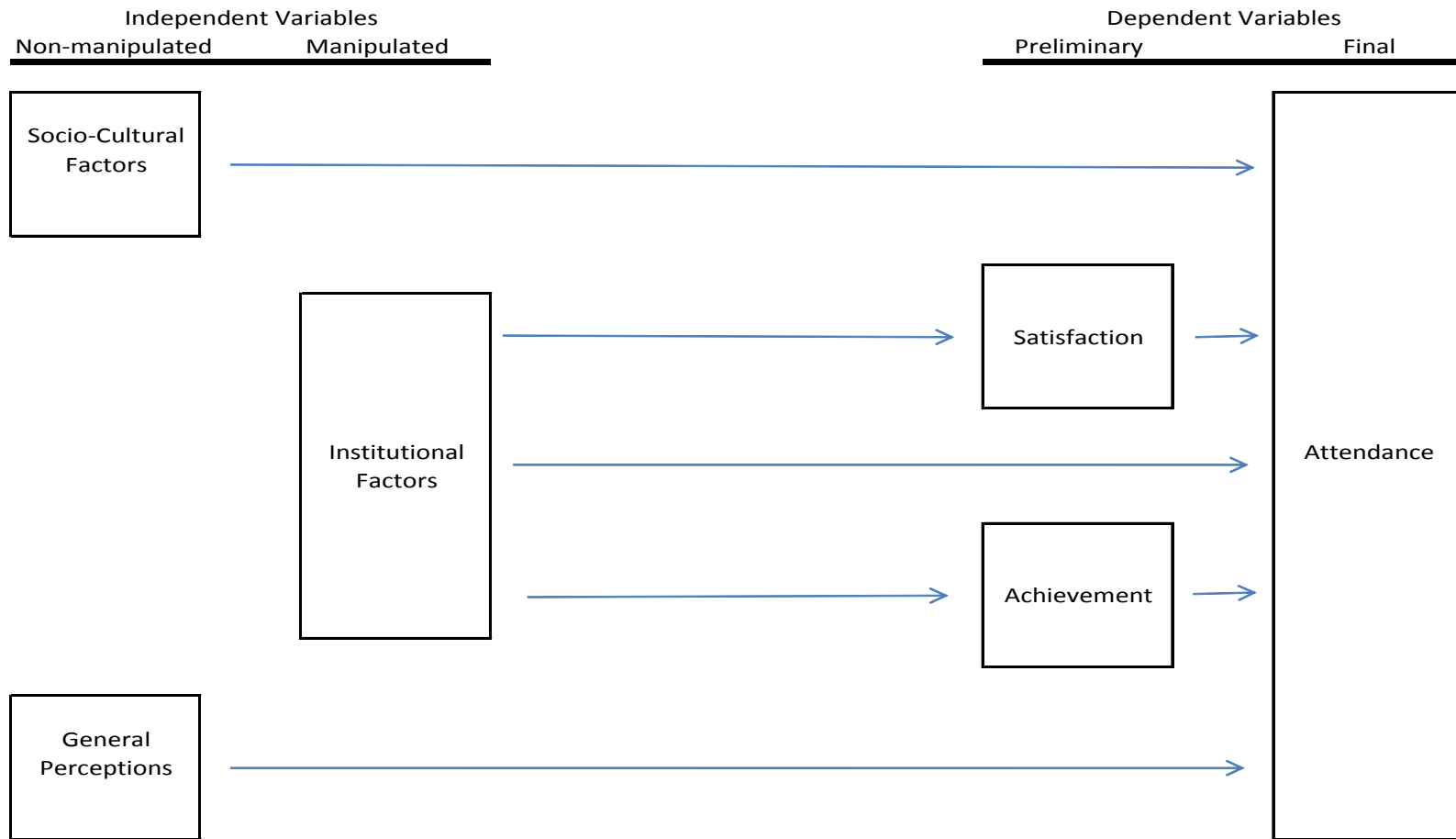
Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

and Sabbath School Attendance. I selected these groups of factors based on the literature review and personal field observation. These groups of factors were treated as dependent or independent variables depending on the stage of the study in which they were considered.

Due to the complexity of this study a two-stage approach was developed for identifying the factors related to Sabbath School Attendance. The first stage (Stage A) involves one group of independent variables, called Institutional Factors, and two groups of dependent variables, called Sabbath School Achievement and Sabbath School Satisfaction. The latter two groups of variables were treated as dependent variables for this stage only, while for the second stage they were treated as independent variables. The first stage examines how Sabbath School Achievement (the cognitive element) and Sabbath School Satisfaction (the affective element) are related to the Institutional Factors.

The second stage (Stage B), as presented in the conceptual framework, involves five groups of factors treated as independent variables, and Sabbath School Attendance as the only dependent variable. The five groups of independent variables were as follows: Sabbath School Achievement, Sabbath School Satisfaction, Institutional Factors, Socio-cultural Factors, and General Perceptions Factors.

As the framework indicates, the Institutional Group of Factors relates to Sabbath School Attendance in two ways: directly and indirectly through Sabbath School Achievement and Sabbath School Satisfaction. The Institutional Group of Factors contains the following variables: Preliminaries, Topics *Studied, Teaching Styles, Class Settings, and the four Sabbath School objectives: Teaching the Word, Fellowship, Community Outreach, and World Mission. A description of all groups of factors and their

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corresponding variables is presented in the next section, Dependent and Independent Variables.

Dependent and Independent Variables

As presented in the conceptual framework section there were two sets of dependent and independent variables selected for this study depending on the stage in which they were considered. A multi-phase design allows variables to play different functions based on the purpose of the study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), "whether the variable functions as an independent or dependent variable, as a predictor or a criterion variable, or as the only variable in the study depends on the purpose, logic, and design of the study" (p. 83).

Stage-A Independent Variables: The following eight independent variables were related to the Institutional Group of Factors:

1. Preliminaries: This variable indicates whether the Sabbath School program includes or does not include a section called *Preliminaries,* and the duration of this section (usually *Preliminaries* is a program taking place before the Sabbath School class).

2. Topics Studied: This variable indicates what topics are studied in Sabbath School (e.g., topics from the quarterlies, or other biblical topics, or other general topics).

3. Teaching Style: This variable identifies the teaching style used by the Sabbath School teacher (e.g., interactive, or lecture-like, or a combination of these styles).

4. Class Setting: This variable describes the size and the location characteristics of a Sabbath School class (e.g., small groups in separate rooms, single large group, or multiple small groups in one room).

5. Teaching the Word: This variable indicates to what extent the teaching objective of Sabbath School is fulfilled by using Bible as the primary teaching resource in a Sabbath School class.

6. Fellowship: This variable indicates the extent to which a Sabbath School class provides opportunities related to the fellowship objective of Sabbath School.

7. Community Outreach: This variable indicates the extent to which a Sabbath School class is engaged in programs related to the community outreach objective of Sabbath School.

8. World Mission: This variable indicates the extent to which a Sabbath School class participates in any kind of project related to the world mission objective of Sabbath School.

Stage-A Dependent Variables: There were two dependent variables considered for this stage:

1. Sabbath School Achievement: This variable indicates the overall achievement or the benefit from Sabbath School.

2. Sabbath School Satisfaction: This variable reflects the overall satisfaction or the extent to which participants like or dislike Sabbath School.

Stage-B Independent Variables: This stage, which represents the main section of the study, includes 30 independent variables. The following eight independent variables were related to the Institutional Group of Factors: The definitions of these eight variables are the same as stated for Stage A.

1. Preliminaries

2. Topics Studied

3. Teaching Style

4. Class Setting

5. Teaching the Word

6. Fellowship

7. Community Outreach

8. World Mission.

The following five independent variables were related to the Sabbath School Achievement Group of Factors:

9. Learning Achievement: This variable indicates the extent to which Sabbath School members learn from studying the Bible during a Sabbath School class.

10. Fellowship Achievement: This variable indicates the level of fellowship personally experienced in a Sabbath School class.

11. Community Outreach Achievement: This variable indicates the level of personal involvement in community outreach programs promoted by Sabbath School.

12. World Mission Achievement: This variable indicates the level of personal participation in world mission projects promoted by Sabbath school.

13. Sabbath School Achievement: This variable is a compound item indicating the overall achievement from Sabbath School experience. It indicates a combined achievement from the previous four achievement items (Variables 9–12).

The following set of independent variables was related to the Sabbath School Satisfaction Group of Factors:

14. Satisfaction With Preliminaries: This variable indicates the extent to which participants like or dislike the Sabbath School preliminaries (the program before the class).

15. Satisfaction With Topics Studied: This variable indicates the level of satisfaction with the topics studied in a Sabbath School class.

16. Satisfaction With Teacher: This variable indicates participants' satisfaction with their teacher's preparation for teaching the class.

17. Satisfaction With Teaching Style: This variable indicates the level of satisfaction with the teaching style used by a Sabbath School teacher.

18. Sabbath School Satisfaction: This variable, which combines the previous four satisfaction items, indicates the overall satisfaction with Sabbath School.

The following set of independent variables was related to the Socio-cultural Group of Factors:

19. Access to Information: This variable indicates the extent to which participants are using other resources, rather than the Sabbath School class, to learn biblical truths (e.g., sermons, seminars, books, magazines, radio/TV programs, or internet).

20. Come to Worship God: This variable indicates participants' attitudes toward church services in general. It underlines to what extent worshiping God is the reason for attending a church service (which may or may not include Sabbath School). This variable indicates a cultural transition from "knowledge" to "experience."

21. Come to Learn Biblical Truths: Similarly to the previous item, this variable indicates to what extent learning biblical truths motivates participants to attend church services (not limited to Sabbath School classes only).

22. Come to Meet Friends: Similarly to the previous two items, this variable indicates to what extent the social aspect of a church influences attendance at church services (which may or may not include Sabbath School).

23. Truths Enhance Relationship With God: This variable indicates to what extent participants believe that a knowledge of biblical truths enhances their relationship with God.

24. Relationship With God More Important Than Beliefs: This variable indicates participants' view about the importance of biblical truths versus the relationship with God.

The following set of independent variables was related to the General Perception Group of Factors:

25. Duplication With Worship Service: This variable indicates to what extent participants perceive Sabbath School as mirroring or duplicating the church worship service.

26. Participation in Other Church Programs: This variable indicates the extent to which participants are involved in other church programs, rather than Sabbath School, which may prevent them from coming to Sabbath School.

27. Sabbath School Is Optional Service: This variable indicates participants' perception that Sabbath School is optional for experiencing "going to church" on Sabbath.

28. Meaningful for the 21st Century: This variable indicates participants' perception that Sabbath School is meaningless or less relevant for the 21st-century generation.

29. Expectation for Home Study: This variable indicates the extent to which participants believe that Sabbath School requires prior preparation before attending the class.

30. Entry Level Program: This variable shows the extent to which participants think that Sabbath School is good for new converts only.

Stage-B Dependent Variable: There was only one dependent variable for this stage—Sabbath School Attendance—which indicates the frequency of attending Sabbath School.

Limitations of the Study

In a survey-based study, the accuracy of the results depends on the accuracy of the self-reported responses of the participants. In order to have confidence in the results, the researcher must be confident that respondents reported information, both correctly and truthfully. It was assumed that all participants were familiar with the Adventist Sabbath School and understood all the related terms. To achieve an acceptable level of confidence, instructions were carefully worded to facilitate a common process and encourage honest responses.

Delimitations of the Study

Delimitation 1: Geographical area. Although the adult Sabbath School is integral to the Adventist Church all over the world, represented in all divisions, unions, conferences (including missions/fields), and local churches, this study was limited to a sampling of local churches in the NAD only, including the United States and Canada as well as a number of attached territories and islands. The results of this study may not by applicable outside of the NAD.

Delimitation 2: Sample—Ethnicity. Although the Adventist population in the NAD is ethnically diverse, this study is limited to only English-speaking Adventist congregations. In order to include churches in North America using foreign languages, all the data collection materials, including the surveys, would need to have been appropriately adjusted and translated. Participants with different ethnic backgrounds within the selected English-speaking churches were purposefully included.

Delimitation 3: Sample—Church Size. For the purpose of this study, I clustered the sample based on the following size categories. *Small*: churches with a membership between 50 and 99; *medium*: churches with a membership between 100 and 199; and *large:* churches with a membership between 200 and 300. For the purpose of this study, churches with membership under 50 or above 300 were not considered typical or representative for the Adventist population in the NAD.

Delimitation 4: Factors. Although there may be other factors related to Sabbath School Attendance, for this study I chose only five groups of factors related to Sabbath School attendance. These groups were as follows: Achievement, Satisfaction, Institutional, Socio-cultural, and General Perceptions. Most likely there were other factors or groups of factors related to Sabbath School Attendance which were not considered in this study. According to Alreck and Settle (1995), "a measurement of any kind is valid to the degree it measures *all* of that and *only* that which it's supposed to measure" (p. 58).

Delimitation 5: Participants. Only church members or regular visitors who were 18 or older and were familiar with the adult Sabbath School were asked to participate.

Research Questions

Based on the conceptual framework of this study there was a two-stage approach designed for identifying the factors related to Sabbath School Attendance. Therefore the research questions were developed for each of the two stages individually.

Stage-A Research Questions—of which there are two:

1. Is there any relationship between each of the Sabbath School Institutional Factors and Sabbath School Achievement?

2. Is there any relationship between each of the Sabbath School Institutional Factors and Sabbath School Satisfaction?

Stage-B Research Questions—of which there are six:

3. Is there any relationship between each of the Sabbath School Institutional Factors and Sabbath School Attendance?

4. Is there any relationship between each of the Sabbath School Achievement Factors and Sabbath School Attendance?

5. Is there any relationship between each of the Sabbath School Satisfaction Factors and Sabbath School Attendance?

6. Is there any relationship between each of the Socio-cultural Factors and Sabbath School Attendance?

7. Is there any relationship between each of the General Perception Factors and Sabbath School Attendance?

8. Do the relationships between the variables vary by the Demographic Factors? (A list with the Demographic Factors analyzed in this study is presented in Chapter 3.)

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses were determined by the research questions previously stated. The following statements represent the research hypotheses for the two stages of this study:

Stage-A Research Hypotheses—of which there are two:

1. Sabbath School Achievement is related to each of the Sabbath School Institutional Factors.

2. Sabbath School Satisfaction is related to each of the Sabbath School Institutional Factors.

Stage-B Research Hypotheses—of which there are six:

3. Sabbath School Attendance is related to each of the Sabbath School Institutional Factors.

4. Sabbath School Attendance is related to each of the Sabbath School Achievement Factors.

5. Sabbath School Attendance is related to each of the Sabbath School Satisfaction Factors.

6. Sabbath School Attendance is related to each of the Socio-cultural Factors.

7. Sabbath School Attendance is related to each of the General Perception Factors.

8. The relationships between the variables vary by the Demographic Factors.

Definition of Terms

Adult Sabbath School Division: A Sabbath School class primarily for adults.

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Adult Sabbath School Lesson (sometimes referred to as the quarterly): A quarterly publication of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, containing Bible-based lessons for adults. Official name—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*.

Adventist: Abbreviated name for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a Protestant religious Christian denomination.

Conference: A regional headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church overseeing churches within a state, a mission field, a province, or a limited territory.

Departmental Ministries: Specialized departments within the organizational structure of the church designated to oversee a specific ministry or group of ministries.

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: Abbreviated GC, the highest organizational level of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church in terms of leadership structures; also used to refer to the headquarters of the Adventist Church located in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA.

North American Division: Abbreviated NAD; a sub-entity of the GC in the United States, Canada, and Bermuda. The NAD is one of the 13 Divisions representing the GC around the world.

Quarterly: (See Adult Sabbath School Lesson.)

Regional Conference: A regional headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church especially overseeing African-American churches within a state, states, or limited territory.

Sabbath: The biblical day of worship known as the seventh day of the week (Saturday).

Sabbath School: A non-formal meeting on Saturday for religious instruction. An educational institution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Generally, it is the

equivalent of the Sunday School in other Christian denominations. In this study only adult Sabbath Schools are investigated.

Sabbath School Department: Although the administrative office of the Sabbath School is included in all organizational levels of the Adventist Church, references to the Sabbath School Department in this study are limited to the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries at the GC and Adult Ministries at the NAD. Among other responsibilities, they supervise the operation of the Sabbath School, train Sabbath School leaders, and develop Sabbath School curriculum materials in association with the office of the Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide and the World Sabbath School Curriculum Committee.

Sabbath School Division: A unit of Sabbath School based mainly on age. Usually it includes beginners, kindergarten, primary, junior, early teen, youth, young adults, and adult divisions or sections.

Seventh-day Adventist Church: The official name of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since 1860 (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996, p. 574).

Spirit of Prophecy: As used in this dissertation, the writings of Ellen G. White.

Superintendent: The office title of the Sabbath School leader within any given Adventist congregation.

Union: A regional headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church overseeing several conferences.

Special Remarks

Use of Abbreviations

For practical purposes the names *North American Division* and *General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* will be spelled out one time at the beginning of

each chapter and then generally abbreviated to NAD and GC respectively throughout the rest of the chapter.

Use of Biblical References

The Bible version used for all biblical references in this study will be the New King James Version (NKJV).

Use of Capitalization

For the purpose of clarity and consistency in writing, the names of the variables and the names of the groups of variables used in this study will be capitalized when they refer to the actual name of the variable or the group name (as proper nouns). In all the other instances they will be not capitalized. For example, "Sabbath School attendance has dropped significantly," or "there was a significant relationship between Sabbath School Attendance and Sabbath School Satisfaction." The same principle applies to the names of instruments "Pastor Survey" and "Member Survey."

Use of Sabbath School as a Title

For the purpose of clarity the title *Sabbath School* used in this study refers, in most instances, to the adult division of Sabbath School. The data used in this study may not be applied to any of the lower divisions of Sabbath School, or to Sabbath Schools outside of the NAD.

Outline of the Study

This research study is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 presents a background, the rationale for the study, the purpose and significance of the study, the conceptual framework, research questions, and research hypotheses. It also provides a list of limitations and delimitations for the study, and definitions of the terms used in the study with which some readers may be unfamiliar.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to the history of Sabbath School, the dynamic of Sabbath School objectives, the impact of culture and cultural changes on Christian education, and various aspects of teaching and learning applied to Christian education.

Chapter 3 describes the research design used for this study, the population and sampling model, the development of the instruments, and data collection procedure; it concludes with a description of the data analysis method.

Chapter 4 presents the findings and analyzes the results.

Chapter 5 summarizes the findings and proposes recommendations to Sabbath School members and leaders and suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to review the literature related to potential factors of declining attendance at the adult Sabbath School in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, identifying these factors of declining attendance at Sabbath School was not an easy task for at least three main reasons: First, there is a lack of literature; although the declining attendance is obvious in the vast majority of adult Sabbath Schools across the NAD, there are very limited, almost non-existing, resources dealing specifically with this topic. Second, there is a lack of uniformity; the adult Sabbath School in North America has a very heterogeneous structure, institutionally and demographically. Third, the complexity of those factors potentially related to attendance creates a difficulty in identifying the cause(s); no single or simple cause is predominantly responsible for the declining attendance. There is a complexity of factors, internally and externally, affecting Sabbath School attendance in North America.

For practical reasons, and based on the literature review and stakeholders' input, this research study focused on the following three major groups of potential factors of decline. The first group, called *Institutional Factors*, brings into perspective the impact of Sabbath School institutionalization, as well as its diversification of objectives on

membership attendance. The second group, identified as *Socio-cultural Factors*, addresses various social and cultural aspects and their implications for Christian education. The third group of factors, known as *Teaching and Learning Factors*, explores principles and methods of teaching and learning and the implications for Christian education.

This chapter is divided into three main sections: History of Sabbath School Objectives, Sabbath School in a Cultural Context, and Teaching and Learning Applied to Sabbath School. Each of these sections covers one of the groups of factors mentioned above.

History of Sabbath School Objectives

The first section of this literature review focuses on the history of Sabbath School objectives and its organizational process. This section reveals the implications of the institutionalization and the multiplicity of objectives attributed to Sabbath School on the dynamic of the adult Sabbath School in North America.

The history of the Adventist Sabbath School shows a gradual diversification of its objectives. Although this diversification was naturally driven and intended to help the Adventist Church, it may not have influenced the dynamics of Sabbath School for the better.

One Objective: Teaching the Word

The Adventist Sabbath School had its beginnings in the summer of 1852 (officially established in 1853), under the inspiration and leadership of James White, the husband of Ellen G. White and an important leader in the development of the Adventist

Church. Plummer (1911) writes that James White "was deeply impressed with the need of some regular system or plan of Bible lessons especially adapted to the youth" (p. 5). Originally, the Sabbath School was started with one objective, "to instruct the youth" of the church through a systematic study of the Word of God ([J. White], 1852, p. 2).

The need for such a plan, later called Sabbath School, was well justified in those days by the lack of an adequate educational system, in the private or public sector, able to offer age-based religious instruction. Plummer (1911) explains that during the early years of the Advent Movement (i.e., prior to 1852), "little attempt was made to instruct the children in the doctrines cherished by their parents" (p. 5).

It is also important to mention that at the time the idea of Sabbath School was generated, the Adventist Church was not yet organized. The movement had an urgent and vital need of an educational program able to present and promote its teachings in a systematic and accessible manner. Plummer (1911) describes the church's condition as follows: "At that time the believers were widely scattered; the name 'Seventh-day Adventist' had not been coined; the word 'church' was seldom used; no ministers had been ordained; no church elders cared for the flock" (p. 5).

During those times, the primary objective of Sabbath School was to organize and promote "a uniform course of Bible study" (Plummer, 1911, p. 5). As a result of this initiative, the first number of the *Youth's Instructor* was issued in August 1852, containing four Sabbath School lessons. The topics covered in the first Sabbath School lesson series, written by James White, were: the Sabbath—Lessons #1 and #2, the law of God—Lesson #3, and the art of the testimony—Lesson #4 (pp. 2-5).

The text used in the early Sabbath schools was the Bible. In a letter published by Plummer (1911), William Covert, an early Sabbath School member, describes the spirit of Sabbath School members from those times, as they were studying the Scriptures book by book. He wrote:

> It is in my mind now that I spent a few years in Sabbath school work before periodical lessons were provided. In my class we went twice though the book of Daniel, and Revelation verse by verse, and thought by thought. . . . We would go as far as we could in one lesson and next Sabbath begin where we closed the Sabbath before and thus proceeded through an entire book. The average lesson comprised five or six verses. We also studied the book of Romans and the book of Hebrews and others of the epistles in the same way. . . . I enjoyed my Sabbath school study then as much as ever in my life. We had reference Bibles and brought in kindred matter that we found in other parts of the Scriptures to help us understand the particular part that we were using for the lesson. In fact it was a regular Bible study week by week, month by month, year by year with us then. (Plummer, 1911, p. 8)

He explains the reason: "I think that our attendance was more uniform then than it is now. We probably learned as much then as we do now, but it was because of our superior application rather than to the method" (p. 9).

The *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (Bates, 1859) reveals that the Sabbath School was designed as a Bible-based instructional program for *every member* in the church, not just for the children or the youth. This program was also created to promote a daily study of the Scriptures. The article reads: "Their Sabbath-school and Bible-class includes all the members of the church, with the children. Independent of other lessons, they commit to memory one verse every day in the week. In this way they are learning to study the Scriptures daily" (p. 16).

During those times the focus of Sabbath School was to study and memorize the Bible. It was the responsibility of each Sabbath School teacher to maximize the benefit from studying God's word. The *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* ("Search the

Scriptures," 1858) notes: "Pastors and Sabbath-school teachers should take pains to instruct those under their charge, how to read the Bible so as to derive the most benefit from it" ("Search the Scriptures," 1858, p. 171).

Ellen White (1878) clearly underlines the importance of this objective of Sabbath School which was studying God's word. At the Sabbath School held in connection with the camp meeting at Battle Creek, Michigan, October 2–14, 1878, she said:

> I am deeply interested in the Sabbath-school work, and have a great desire to see it prosper. The Sabbath-school is the place where we learn of God and Christ, and learn to study the Holy Bible. If we would develop Christian characters, we must study the character of Christ, that we may come into full union with him. (p. 1)

In the January 1889 *Sabbath School Worker* article entitled "The Possibilities in Sabbath-school Work," Ellen White calls Sabbath School a *Bible Society*. "Our Sabbath schools are nothing less than Bible societies, and in the sacred work of teaching the truths of God's word, they can accomplish far more than they have hitherto accomplished" (p. 1).

Based on the implementation of this objective, the Sabbath School seems to have played an important role in helping the recently formed Adventist Church become biblically founded and doctrinally established. With its distinctive and clearly stated objective, which was studying God's word, the Sabbath School of those times had equipped the church for its rapid and successful worldwide growth.

Sabbath School Organization

The summer of 1877 marks the beginning of a new stage in the organization and development of the Sabbath School movement. For more than two decades since its origins, the Sabbath School was locally organized and each school provided for its own needs. At the 1877 teachers' meeting held in Battle Creek, Michigan, Goodloe Harper

Bell launched the idea of a Sabbath School organization, which would "bring together the Sabbath Schools of a State, in some union, which would enable them to help one other" (Plummer, 1911, p. 12). Shortly after this meeting, in August 1877, the California Sabbath School Association was organized, and in almost one year 12 other state associations were formed.

One year later in 1878 at the GC meetings held in Battle Creek, Michigan, the General Sabbath School Association (1878a) was established (p. 77). Although the idea of a general organization was intended to create more opportunities for the strengthening and broadening of the Sabbath School movement, the change redirected part of the focus to administrative aspects like raising money for the needs of the association, procuring supplies, election of officers, and preparation of statistical reports.

During this session the following resolution from J. H. Waggoner was adopted: "We recommend to all our Sabbath-schools the practice of contributing a penny or more to the funds of the Sabbath-school, by both teachers and scholars, on every Sabbath day" (Bell, 1878, p. 129).

The collection of these funds taken during the Sabbath hours created a lot of tension among the church leaders. Trying to solve this challenge, the General Sabbath School Association (1878b) promoted a new way of collecting money by so-called *Penny Boxes*. "We mean boxes to hold the pennies that are brought as offerings to the Sabbath school. Every secretary should be provided with some kind of a box to receive the little offerings" (p. 2). Some years later, this method was replaced with contribution envelopes.

After the Sabbath School was officially organized, and the State and General Associations were formed, detailed attention was paid to the Sabbath School reports. The

first official statistical report was completed in 1878. "The plan is so thoroughly established that once in three months the General Sabbath School Office receives reports, which represent almost every Sabbath School in the world" (Plummer, 1911, p. 15). The reports usually contained three items: number of schools, attendance, and offerings.

This institutionalization process generated a more quantitative orientation to Sabbath School. From the administrative perspective, Sabbath School work tended to be evaluated more in terms of numbers, as the number of schools, the number of persons attending, and the amount of money collected. On the other hand, organization of the Sabbath School created more opportunities for growth and expansion of the Adventist Church, locally and internationally, which led to a new objective being formulated for the Sabbath School.

Two Objectives: Teaching the Word and World Mission

The year 1885 marks a new shift in the focus of Sabbath School work. The gospel commission in Matt 28:19 exhorts: "Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." This made the Sabbath School leaders of the time aware of the need for global advancement of the biblical gospel preached by the Adventist Church. Without intentionally diminishing the importance of its original objective—studying God's word, the world mission initiative was introduced as a new objective of the Sabbath School.

In order to accomplish and maintain this two-part objective, the Sabbath School became even more involved in collecting significant donations for world mission projects. Serious financial contributions were made by several Sabbath School associations to accommodate advancement of the work in foreign fields.

The Upper Columbia Conference followed by the California Sabbath School Association were among the first associations to designate their offerings entirely to foreign missions. These funds were used to start a new field of work in Australia. One year later in 1887, the first African mission station was also opened. As a reflection of its extensive involvement in advancing the work in foreign lands, at the ninth annual session in 1886, the name of the General Sabbath School Association was changed to the International Sabbath School Association. In 1889-90, following the example of the individual conferences, all the Adventist conferences in North America banded together to support and expand world mission. For example, in 1889-1890 the NAD collected an offering for the purchase of a vessel to send a missionary to Pitcairn Island.

In 1901, the International Sabbath School Association was officially integrated into the GC as one of its departments. Its name was changed again from the International Sabbath School Association to the General Conference Sabbath School Department.

Three Objectives: Teaching the Word, World Mission,
and Soul-Winning

Besides the intensive efforts to expand the mission of the gospel in foreign lands as seen over the last decades of the 19th century and into the early 20th century, the need of local evangelism, called soul-winning or later community outreach, was added to the list of Sabbath School priorities. Without intentionally diminishing the importance of the existing Sabbath School objectives—studying God's word and world mission—over the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the Sabbath School's major focus tended to be on the soul-winning mandate.

Underlining this important objective of local evangelism attributed to the Sabbath School, Jones (1899) wrote: "The influence growing out of the work of Sabbath-school should improve and enlarge the church. There is a most precious missionary field in Sabbath-school, and if there are now omens of good, they are only indications and beginnings of what may be done" (p. 35). Similarly, Johnson (1899) states, "So the object of the Sabbath-school work in the great mission field should be the ingathering of the souls" (p. 55).

Besides teaching God's word, the Sabbath School also became responsible for building up and strengthening the local church. A paper read before the GC on February 17, 1899, entitled "The Objective of the Sabbath-school Work and How to Secure It" stated: "The great objective of the Sabbath-school is to teach the World of God to old and young, and thus sow the seeds of truth, which will build up the church and win souls, especially the young, to Christ" (M. H. B., 1899, p. 49).

The same evangelistic emphasis on the objective of the Sabbath School is given by Dickson (1932). He called this objective a "mighty mission."

> Thus we find that the Sabbath school idea in its origin was a soul-saving endeavor. It is not strange that we have been told that the Sabbath school is to be one of the greatest soul-winning agencies in these last days. There is need of broader views of the possibilities of this world-wide movement. We must give the Sabbath school a chance to work out its mighty mission, and this can be done only as the church places large emphasis upon the central aim of Sabbath school work. (p. 17)

According to the Sabbath School report presented by the GC (1944a), the Sabbath School now had three primary objectives: *studying the word, world mission,* and *soul-winning*.

> The Sabbath school has a number of important objectives, but the three outstanding ones are: daily study, soul winning, and the support of foreign

missions. A threefold cord is not quickly broken, and three Sabbath school objectives have bound together a marvelously strong work around the world. (p. 4)

In the same year the Sabbath School Department published *The Supreme Objective: A Study of Sabbath School Evangelism*, in which evangelism is considered the *supreme objective* of Sabbath School. The book reads: "In the work of the church every activity has but one objective. That objective is the salvation of lost men, women, youth, and children" (GC, 1944b, p. 11).

In *Evangelism Through Sabbath School*, Nash (1964) identified three objectives of Sabbath School. The third on his list reads: "To cause man gladly to go forth and labor for others, and win them to Christ" (p. 19). He continues, saying that "God has ordained that the Sabbath School should be an aggressive soul-winning agency" (p. 31). In his view, soul-winning or evangelism is called: "the main objective," "the great objective," "the supreme objective" of Sabbath School (p. 31).

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Four Objectives: Teaching the Word, World Mission,
Soul-Winning, and Fellowship

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Starting with the last decades of the 20th century, a more holistic perspective on human beings has been reflected in the priorities and the purposes of the Sabbath School. According to Ferris (1978), one of the basic purposes for the Sabbath School was fellowship—to create emotional ties within the Sabbath School family. In an article entitled "A Family Affair," Ferris (1978) wrote:

Sabbath School is a family affair. As it builds fellowship among brothers and sisters, as it builds emotional ties between the redeemed children and the lost created children of God, the bonds of Sabbath School family love will bind us so close to our Father and Elder Brother that we will become like them. (p. 3)

The fellowship objective of Sabbath School leads not only to growth at the personal level but also to church growth and church planting on a larger scale. Reflecting on the work of Calvin L. Smith, Oyinloye (1997) suggested a practical *action unit* model of Sabbath School. Through fellowship and Bible study, an action unit has the potential to become a home fellowship, then a Sabbath School branch, and later an organized church.

> *Home fellowship* is the getting together of two or more Sabbath school action units in the same area. When an action unit of eight conducts crusades and Bible studies and successfully converts at least four more souls, they are to divide into two Sabbath school action units of six members each. The two new units work and add more souls to each. This area is growing into a home fellowship. Soon they will need a larger space in order to form a branch Sabbath school, that will eventually grow to become an organized church. (Oyinloye, 1997, p. 19)

After 1979 all handbooks of the Sabbath School Department include *fellowship* as one element of the four Sabbath School objectives. Continuing into the first decades of the 21st century, the adult Sabbath School has operated on the same basic four objectives. The *Sabbath School Handbook* states, "Sabbath School has four specific objectives: Study of the Word, Fellowship, Community Outreach, and World Mission Emphasis. These four objectives are the basis for every activity of the Sabbath School in all divisions" (NAD, 2004, p. 6).

Multiple Objectives

The literature written during the last several decades reveals an expanding diversity of Sabbath School objectives. A rigorous study on Sabbath School objectives done by McCormick (1992) reveals numerous objectives attributed to the adult Sabbath School.

> A multiplicity of objectives was emphasized during the middle and later 1900s. These ranged from as basic as "soul-winning," to as simple as "every member

present and on time." At times these objectives appeared to be promoted without having been thought through. There was often no consensus. (p. 56)

Describing an ideal Sabbath School, Pereyra (2000) writes, "The Sabbath School divisions can provide a place of spiritual learning, worship, celebration, and joy" (p. 14). He concludes that "when and where that happens, there is an ideal Sabbath School" (p. 14).

McCormick (1992) concludes his research by attributing six "tributary" objectives to the adult Sabbath School. He argues that the six objectives revealed in the Sabbath School literature are subordinated to a higher objective, which is winning and keeping souls.

> Six areas of "tributary" objectives for the adult Sabbath school are evident in the literature. These are: Bible study, Community evangelism and soul-winning, Fellowship and support, Nurture and character development, Training for Christian service, and World-mission promotion and funding. (McCormick, 1992, p. 72)

Analysis of Institutional Factors

The diversification of Sabbath School objectives and its general organization were viewed as factors fostering progress in the development of Sabbath School. In fact, it helped the church to become functionally and doctrinally established and grow rapidly, locally and internationally. However, the multiple objectives attributed to Sabbath School may have diminished the overall dynamic of the Sabbath School and Sabbath School attendance.

The goal of organizing, as stated by the early Sabbath School leaders, was to create more *uniformity* within the Sabbath School movement. This uniformity could be a positive factor in the homogenous environment that characterized the early Adventist Sabbath Schools, but it may create challenges in a heterogonous environment. For the last

several decades, the adult Sabbath School in North America has become significantly diverse, and the uniformity in curriculum, methods of teaching, time of meeting, class setting, and other institutional factors may not have had the same positive impact as expected. Instead of strengthening and broadening the mission of Sabbath School, the goal of uniformity may have led to misinterpretation and disconnect with its members.

Although the diversification of Sabbath School objectives was a fairly natural and well-intended development to help the church in its early history, when there were no organized departmental ministries, this diversification of objectives created overlapping goals when a multi-departmental church structure was introduced. As a result, some of the historical objectives of the Sabbath School have become the primary objectives of other church ministries which now are distinct departments within the church. From personal observation, overloading Sabbath School with multiple objectives has de-emphasized the importance of its main objective and may have created confusion among the members and leaders at the local church level about what exactly the Sabbath School is intended to accomplish.

In my personal opinion, establishing a unique and well-defined objective for Sabbath School might strengthen the vitality and, consequently, enhance attendance at the adult Sabbath School within the present context of the Adventist Church. I agree with Nash (1965), who underlines the importance of one main Sabbath School objective. He argued: "We must never permit the auxiliary objectives to supersede the vision of the main objective" (p. 16).

The question remains: What is the main objective of Sabbath School? McCormick (1992) suggests that soul-winning and soul-keeping is the main objective (p. 72). I

personally see this objective more as the overarching goal not only of the Sabbath School but also of all church ministries. I consider that the defining characteristics of a primary objective should be related to the following: a present need, a need that is tangible, and a need that is not the primary objective of another ministry in the church.

In a world that is constantly departing from God's word, it is the Sabbath School's responsibility, and its main objective, to engage the entire Adventist Church in studying (not preaching) God's word (not the quarterlies). This objective needs to be culturally relevant, by using the most effective methods of teaching and learning, through which the members are engaged in personal and corporate study of the Bible and encouraged to voice their beliefs.

I agree with Naden (1982) who called Sabbath School "a Bible society" (p. 31). Also the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (GC, 2005) underlines the same central objective of Sabbath School.

> The Sabbath School has rightly been called the church at study. It is one of the most important services held in connection with our church work. Sabbath by Sabbath the greater part of our membership and thousands of interested friends meet in Sabbath School to study God's word systematically. (p. 79)

Soul-winning will follow, soul-keeping will take place, salvation will be experienced, if the church at large, including the Sabbath School, diligently fulfills this central objective of study of God's word. Jesus said: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17).

This central objective was not and cannot be adequately fulfilled by any other church department or ministry. In the current socio-cultural context, Sabbath School remains the church entity that has the potential to keep the worldwide Adventist Church doctrinally united and grounded in God's word. The global growth of the Adventist

Church that is characterized by a uniform system of beliefs is greatly attributed to the work of the Sabbath School. Reflecting on the global impact of Sabbath School, Plummer (1911) writes:

> The Sabbath school, with its Sabbath services adapted to all ages is one of the leading factors in modeling, establishing, building up, and making permanent our denominational work in any place. Its influence blends with every phase of the message. It reaches out helpfully to the lone member, and connects him very definitely with the advancing work. (p. 43)

Summary of Sabbath School Objectives

Although there is not a very clear delimitation of the periods corresponding to each of the Sabbath School objectives presented in this study, the literature reveals a gradual diversification of these objectives, from one to multiple objectives. In most cases these objectives were created to enhance the mission of the Adventist Church as it was growing locally and internationally. For a number of decades, in the early history of the Adventist Church, the Sabbath School was one of the major ministry vehicles accompanying its expansion. This may explain why so many responsibilities were attributed to the Sabbath School.

The Sabbath School literature also reveals a classification of the importance of its objectives: one class containing *ordinary objectives*, or *tributary objectives*, or *auxiliary objectives,* and the other class containing *the main objective*, or *supreme objective*. The literature seems to emphasize strongly the importance of the main objective while the other objectives are viewed as peripheral to the main goal.

Overall, most authors who have written about the Sabbath School consider the soul-winning objective as the main objective or the supreme objective of Sabbath School. As profound as it may sound, this objective does not provide the parameters or the

specifics of a soul-winning agency. In my opinion, this goal is more like the overarching

goal of any church effort. Sabbath School needs to focus on a unique, clearly defined,

tangible, and culturally contextualized objective which will enhance the Adventist

Church in fulfilling its mission. A diligent study of God's word was, is, and should

remain the fundamental objective for any Sabbath School effort in the Adventist Church.

Sabbath School in a Cultural Context

The second section of this literature review is focused on the second group of

factors related to Sabbath School Attendance, namely, *Socio-cultural Factors*. This

section explores the implications of the following socio-cultural changes on church and

Christian education and particularly on Sabbath School: Ethnic Diversity,

Postmodernism, Secularism, Materialism, and Religious Pluralism.

Along with many other church ministries, the Sabbath School as a non-formal

educational institution has been influenced by numerous socio-cultural changes

throughout its history. The reality of these social and cultural changes cannot be ignored

or underestimated. The socio-cultural changes that the church is facing are not just ideas,

but they are "experienced as a lived reality" (Detweiler & Taylor, 2003, p. 24). In the

same way, Guy (1999) argues that "no form of spiritual life can be alien to its time and to

the cultural life of that time" (p. 150).

Sabbath School and Ethnic Diversity

Ethnic diversity in the church in North America in the early 21st century reflects

the demographic characteristics of contemporary society. Christian educational leaders

should take into consideration the unique characteristics of each group in terms of

communication styles and types of behavior. According to Breckenridge (2001), "churches in the twenty-first century should assume that cultural differences of individual members will be a normal part of congregational life" (p. 45). She emphasizes that "the impact of ethnic differences on our organizations and the people in them should not be underestimated" (p. 46).

Although the Adventist population in North America is ethnically very diverse, the most preeminent subcultures in the NAD are the Hispanic-American, African-American, and Asian-American subcultures. Following is a brief description of each of these cultures, presented with the recognition that generalization and stereotypical descriptions may detract from providing insights into the richness of a culture.

According to Breckenridge (2001), for the Hispanic group "truth is grounded in interpersonal reality, rather than in objective reality" (p. 47). For Hispanics, interpersonal relationships are integrated into their system of moral values. Consequently, interpersonal behavior is more important than task achievement.

In Breckenridge's view, the African-American culture is characterized by "a strong sense of community and identification of self within the group" (2001, p. 48). Social life is essential and the community defines their identity. They view church as a central social group which gives them a sense of collective responsibility.

Generally speaking, the Asian-American population in North America, although very diverse in itself, is strongly motivated by achievement, success, and independence for themselves and for their families. For them "long-term personal relationships are important" (James, 1995, p. 14).

In a cross-cultural environment, as is present in the NAD, the effectiveness of the Sabbath School as a non-formal educational institution depends on how these ethnic differences are taken into consideration and accommodated by appropriate teaching and learning styles and practices. Writing about effective Christian education in a multicultural setting, Breckenridge (2001) suggests that "a general understanding of the basic cultural groups is necessary in order to recognize and appreciate the distinct styles of communication and types of behavior unique to groups" (Breckenridge, 2001, p. 47).

Teaching and learning requires adaptability to meet the specific needs of each cultural group. "While in the West, active student participation is seen as an indicator of a congenial teaching and learning atmosphere, students from Asian, African, or Latin American contexts may have different experiences and expectations" (Hess & Brookfield, 2008, p. 148).

Going beyond the academic aspect of education in a multicultural setting, Breckenridge (2001) emphasizes the importance of relationships, acceptance, and appreciation for those who share a different ethnic or cultural background. She concludes:

> The truly multicultural Christian education program is not found in methods, materials, or programs. It is found in changed attitudes of individuals as they interact with one another. It is found in relationships of acceptance and appreciation for individual differences and in the desire to represent the unified family of God. (p. 51)

The adult Sabbath School membership in the NAD has changed considerably in its ethnic diversity through the middle and late 21st century. The international growth of the Adventist Church, along with immigration to North America, continuously changes the cultural picture of Sabbath School membership in the NAD. I personally believe that the vitality of Sabbath School in the NAD will be positively influenced when these

cultural differences are considered and accommodated based on the specific characteristics and needs of each individual culture.

Sabbath School and Postmodernism

Postmodernism represents another cultural change that for the past several decades has influenced the dynamic of church life in general and Christian education in particular, including Sabbath School. Unavoidably, postmodernism has influenced the entire society. Tabb (2004) notes that "all of us, regardless of our age, have been affected by the shift from modernity to postmodernity. There's a little postmodern in all of us" (p. 21).

In particular, postmodernism has influenced the philosophy of education. Derived from the Western Marxist tradition of critical thinking, the postmodern philosophy of education is based on two concepts: *variety* and *relativity* (Ozmon & Craver, 1999, p. 361). Postmodernism is a philosophical worldview that questions the authority of absolute truth. Nietzsche (1844–1900) stated that human knowledge of truth can be no more than a simple *perspective,* not *the Truth*. In Nietzsche's view, says Knight (1998a), "there is no foundation on which to rest beliefs. Truth is dead and people have no option but to create their own world" (p. 84).

Commenting on the outcomes of Nietzsche's philosophical view, Newbigin (2003) concludes: "As a result, we have relapsed into what is now called 'postmodernism,' a sinking into the kind of belief where people say, 'Well, it may be true for you, but it's not true for me.' It is believed that there is no such thing as objective truth" (p. 6).

The impact of postmodernism goes beyond the philosophical spectrum affecting many areas of life. Writing from a psychological perspective, Fowler (1981) considers that the replacement of external authority, such as traditional and historical teachings, with "universal ethical principles" is compelling within a postmodern worldview (p. 38).

According to Sire (1997) postmodernism has created major shifts in perceiving reality:

1. It generated a shift from "being to knowing to constructing meaning." Reality is constructed rather than discovered.

2. The truth about the reality itself is forever hidden from us. All we can do is to tell stories. Truth becomes a mobile army of metaphors or a sum of human reflections.

3. Human beings make themselves who they are by the language they construct about themselves.

4. Ethics, like knowledge, is a linguistic construct. Social good is whatever society takes it to be. Truth becomes what human beings decide it to be (pp. 174-190).

Because of this view, the social gospel movement, which tends to place human needs above biblical principle, is gaining more territory among church goers, fostering a culture where there is no real need for absolute truth, even within the church. Without diminishing the value and importance of meeting the needs of others (Matt 25:31-46) the church cannot safely countenance a shift of focus from the *source* to the *recipient,* a trend that the social gospel seems to encourage.

One of the greatest implications of postmodernism in education is *constructivism* which is skeptical of the traditional foundations of knowledge. Zahorik (1995) points out three major implications of constructivism in relation to knowledge. First, knowledge is

constructed by humans; second, knowledge is conjectural and fallible; and third, knowledge grows through exposure.

Another major influence of postmodernism in Christian education is a switch from *knowledge* to *experience*. Using more practical words, Detweiler and Taylor (2003) state: "The postmodern battleground has shifted from the mind to the body" (p. 307). One of the main reasons for this transition, they argue, is that "theology has been far too theoretical for far too long" (p. 317). They advocate, as part of a solution, "a lived theology, a demonstrated faith" (p. 317). In a culture enamored with experience and skeptical of "Truth," Christian education is seriously challenged in maintaining theologically sound teaching objectives while still being perceived as relevant to daily life.

Postmodernism regards truth as being relative to the observer. Anderson (2009) acknowledges that, in postmodernism, truth is "migratory and dependent upon time and place for its determination" (p. 49). He continues his argument by stating that, to postmoderns, the notion of absolute truth, which is true at all times and under all circumstances, becomes "abhorrent and oppressive" (p. 49).

Anderson (2009) considers postmodernism to be "one of the main roots from which declining institutional loyalty springs" (p. 49). In his view, postmodernism has strong implications for Adventism in general and Adventist education in particular. First, postmodernism, followed to its logical conclusion, regards any established institution as inherently oppressive. Second, it marginalizes history by questioning even traditionally incontrovertible facts (e.g., the holocaust). In contrast, postmodernism argues that history, including all Church and institutional history, is merely the perspective of the one who

presents it, and is therefore open to deconstruction and personal reinterpretation. A third

implication is secularism, which basically sees God as removed from or optional to daily

life. A fourth implication is liberalism, where there is no sense of a unique mission to be

accomplished in the world or any meaningful teleology toward which the world is moving.

Scholars commonly agree that cultural changes unavoidably shape the reality of

society. Christian educators need to be aware of these ongoing socio-cultural changes and

respond accordingly. There are several ways Christian educators and church leaders can

respond to cultural changes, some of which are discussed by Detweiler and Taylor

(2003):

> There are at least three ways of dealing with changing cultural contexts. A
> classical approach may resist and preserve a prior way of life. Another route
> fiddles with existing formulas, repackaging old truths in new cans. The path
> we've chosen acknowledges the changes, embraces the culture, and reconstructs
> life and practices accordingly. (p. 293)

In Tabb's (2004) view, understanding the culture is a vital first step toward

impacting it with eternal truth. But the efforts should go even farther than understanding.

They require courage and action in stepping out of the comfort zone. He writes: "As we

try to come to grips with the change that surrounds us, we must move out of the safety of

the familiar" (p. 21).

Other scholars try to respond to these cultural changes by pointing out the

adaptability of Christian theology to the new contexts. Grenz and Franke (2001) have

observed that, "throughout this history, Christian theology has shown itself to be

remarkably adaptable in its task of assisting the church in extending and establishing the

message of the gospel in a wide variety of contexts" (p. 3).

Another approach to the postmodern challenge to the Christian church is the

missionary model promoted by Kimball. This approach evaluates the core values of

postmodernism and translates them into the new contexts. In his view, God is still God, and the truth and the gospel are not compromised. The change starts with an understanding of the values of the postmodern culture. Kimball (2007) writes: "When missionaries enter another culture, they listen, learn, study the spiritual beliefs of the culture, and get a sense of the culture's values" (p. 86). Referring to the postmodern culture, Kimball continues:

> We've got to realize that in our emerging culture, we are now in a different culture and we need to view it and the people in it as the missionary world. Christians now are the foreigners in a post-Christian culture, and we have got to wake up to this reality, if we haven't. (Kimball, 2007, p. 86)

Guy (1999) suggests the *theological thinking model* as the solution to the conflict between cultural changes and church beliefs. His model is based on witness and service. He writes: "It is therefore imperative that Adventist Christianity take the contemporary culture seriously in its theological thinking. Our culture is the context within which the community of faith is called to live, bear witness, and serve" (p. 159).

In conclusion, through its broad influence on North American society, postmodernism has permeated the church and influenced the dynamics of Sabbath School. But its influence should not be viewed only in a negative direction. It is true that postmodernism has negatively affected the Sabbath School, especially by de-emphasizing the authority of absolute truth. This presents a real challenge for the Adventist Sabbath School in maintaining its primary objective—teaching God's word, including belief in the authority of God's word as absolute truth. But postmodernism also has positively influenced Sabbath School, especially through the positive elements of a constructivist approach to learning. This influence helped the Sabbath School create "thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts" (E. White, 1952, p. 17).

Sabbath School and Secularization and Materialism

Secularization, an important outcome of postmodernism, is another cultural factor that influences the dynamic of church and Christian education. Because of its teaching function, Sabbath School is placed at the crossroads of theology, philosophy, and sociology. Understanding the cultural implications on religious life and making appropriate adjustments would enable the Sabbath School to fulfill its mission more effectively.

According to Hull (1995), "secularization brings materialism and the psychologization of the church. Pluralism brings relativism and breaks the back of absolute truth" (p. 51). The target of secularization and materialism is to create *a higher level of independence*. Slowly secularism moves toward the point where religion is no longer needed, and moral standards are no longer coming from an outside source. Hull describes this process through which secularism eliminates the need of religion:

> Secularism is the process by which religion's influence on culture is reduced. Its effect is to bring culture to a point of indifference to religion and to render religion irrelevant to public policy. . . . The process is a slow transfer from an ecclesiastical to a civic culture. . . . However, because of secularization, indifference has become hostility and freedom of religion has become freedom from religion. (p. 74)

In a practical way Hull (1995) describes how the process of secularization affects the dynamic of church and particularly of Christian education. He underlines three major outcomes of secularism: (a) the elevation of choice to the highest virtue; choice is placed above discipline, self-denial, honesty and faithfulness; (b) individualism and a loss of interdependence; and (c) instant gratification.

Analyzing Hull's arguments, I come to the conclusion that secularism manages to eliminate the very fundamental spiritual needs of a human being: (a) the need of an

absolute code of moral values (the Bible) by elevating choice to the highest virtue, (b) the need of relationships (the church) by moving toward individualism and loss of interdependence, and (c) the need of a supernatural power (God) by promoting self-restoration.

With these insights into the assumptions of secular ideology, it becomes obvious that secularism would affect the dynamics of the Sabbath School. All four Sabbath School objectives—Teaching God's Word, Fellowship, Community Outreach, and World Mission—have in fact become the casualties of changes in the cultural paradigm.

<center>Sabbath School and Religious Pluralism</center>

In the same way pluralism as a natural product of postmodernism has impacted the dynamic of religious life, including Christian education. According to the *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* ("Pluralism," 1974), pluralism is defined as

> a theory that there are more than one or more than two kinds of ultimate reality, . . . a state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups maintain an autonomous participation in and development of their traditional culture or special interest within the confines of a common civilization.

Contrary to what Christian education is based on, religious pluralism ignores the idea of absolute truth. Newbigin (1989) defines religious pluralism as a private interpretation of truth.

> Religious pluralism, on the other hand, is the belief that the differences between the religions are not a matter of truth and falsehood, but of different perceptions of the one truth; that to speak of religious beliefs as true or false is inadmissible. Religious belief is a private matter. Each of us is entitled to have—as we say—a faith of our own. (p. 14)

There is no question why Christian education loses its uniqueness in a pluralistic context. According to Mariante (1981), religious pluralism is simply a process of co-existence delimited by how conflict is handled, not by theological boundaries.

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Pluralism is usually described as the co-existence of different ethnic, religious and ideological groups in modern society. It is a co-existence that allows a certain measure of conflict but which (at least until now) moderates that conflict so as to prevent the disintegration of the pluralistic society. (pp. 29-30)

Contrary to this pluralistic view, Christian education relies only on one source of wisdom, found exclusively in God's revelation. Anthony and Benson (2003) point out that "to Christian educators, only one true source of philosophical thought exists because only one origin of wisdom exists" (p. 383).

In the pluralistic context that characterizes the Western world of the 21st century, the dynamic of Sabbath School has been significantly affected. Throughout its history, the primary objective of the Sabbath School has been and still remains the teaching of God's word. One of the fundamental assumptions regarding Sabbath School is that God's word is the embodiment of God's absolute truth. This truth does not change or lose its meaning over time in different cultural settings. Pluralism contradicts the basic philosophical foundation of Sabbath School.

Religious pluralism and cultural diversity are not exactly the same. They create a new and delicate challenge for Sabbath School in the postmodern era. Sabbath School must deal with diversity in order to be effective, while avoiding the slippery slope of philosophical pluralism.

Teaching and Learning in Sabbath School

The third and the last section of this literature review focuses on the principles of teaching and learning applied to Christian education. These teaching and learning factors are related to the *Institutional* Group of factors as presented in the conceptual framework. After an introduction to Sabbath School as a Christian educational institution, this section

covers the following aspects of teaching and learning applied to Sabbath School:

Theories of Learning, Dimensions of Learning, and Learning Styles.

Sabbath School as an Educational Institution

Although the idea of a Sabbath School was initiated in the summer of 1852, the

concept of Bible school, or religious instruction, is much older than this. Plummer (1922)

writes:

> In our search for the origin of the Sabbath school idea we are not limited, as one
> might suppose, to an investigation of modern times. As it exists today, the
> Sabbath school is a modern organization, though tradition informs us that before
> the flood such a school, giving religious instruction, was in existence. Laying
> tradition aside, the Old Testament abounds in references to the Bible school. (p. 5)

The concept of Christian education, as well as the concept of Sabbath School or

Sunday School, finds its origin and purpose in the early history of human race. As Reed

and Prevost (1993) observe: "A history of Christian education appropriately begins with

the Hebrews, not the Sunday School movement" (p. xix). The evidences of religious

instruction, which is the purpose of Christian education, are not limited to the formal

setting of instruction. Referring to the Old Testament concept of Christian education,

Lawson (2001) writes: "There were no formal schools for the children to attend, but as

the parents grew in their knowledge of God's law, they were to teach it to their children

and reinforce it through their own example and conversation" (p. 17).

Sabbath School and Sunday School, though comparatively recent institutions,

share common objectives with Christian education more broadly and historically

conceived. Ellen White (1900) classifies Sabbath School as "one of the greatest

instrumentalities, and the most effectual, in bringing souls to Christ" (p. 20). Lawson

(2001), thinking of Christian education in its broadest sense, defines it similarly as "an

effort to encourage people to gain an authentic relationship with God" (p. 17). The *Evangelical Dictionary* identifies one of the main objectives of Christian education: "To bring people to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, to train them in the light of discipleship, and to equip them for Christian service in the world today" ("Christian Education," 2001, p. 133).

According to Benson (2001), "the philosophical foundations of Christian education are derived from systematic theology, which in turn emerges from biblical theology" (p. 26). From a philosophical perspective, Cremin (1988) defines education as "the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, and acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensibilities, as well as any learning that results from that effort, direct or indirect, intended or unintended" (p. x).

Benson observed that Pazmiño (1988) used Cremin's concept of education and added a spiritual dimension. In Pazmiño's view, Christian education is the "deliberate, systematic, and sustained divine and human effort to share or appropriate the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, sensitivities, and behaviors that comprise or are consistent with the Christian faith" (p. 8).

According to Knight (1998b), Christian education needs to be viewed from two different angles. In his view these two distinct aspects are the *conservative* and the *revolutionary* functions of Christian education. He defines the conservative function of Christian education as the process of transmitting the traditions and the moral values to the younger generations.

> The conservative function of Christian education is twofold: (1) to pass on the legacy of Christian truth, and (2) to provide a protected atmosphere for the young in which the transmission takes place and in which Christian values may be imparted to the young in their formative years through both the formal curriculum

and the more informal aspects of the educational context such as the peer group and extracurricular activities. (p. 238)

Knight (1998b) defines the revolutionary function of Christian education as the fulfillment of the great gospel commission. He writes:

Beyond the conservative function of Christian education is the revolutionary role. Christ's great gospel commission was for Christians to go into all the world to make disciples of all nations, and to teach other people to observe all that He commended (Matt 28:19, 20). (p. 239)

The same missiological emphasis of Christian education is given by Clark, Johnson, and Sloat (1991). In their view, the focus of Christian education is placed upon people. They state: "We tend to think of Christian education in terms of programs, ministries, activities, and organization. But the primary focus should be on people. After all, Christ's mandate is to make disciples, not perpetuate programs" (Clark et al., 1991, p. 219).

Christians tend to place a high value on the theological objective of Christian education. According to Harner (1939), "Christian education is a reverent attempt to discover the divinely ordained process by which individuals grow in Christ-likeness and to work with the process" (p. 20). Commenting on this definition, Issler (2001) extrapolates: "First, to understand anything about life, we must begin to understand God and his revealed instructions. Secondly, human nature is designed by God to become Christ-like, the goal toward which we educate" (p. 35).

It is the responsibility of Christian educators to understand the importance of God's word and to transmit its message by teaching and practice. Issler (2001) notes: "Bible study is at the heart of Christian education. Our job is to take the living Word of God and write it on the hearts of believers" (p. 36). Personally, I disagree with Issler's description of the work of a Christian educator when he argues that "our job is to take the

living Word of God and write it on the hearts of believers" (p. 36). In my understanding this is God's work more than it is the work of Christian educators. But I agree that Christian educators are called as agents available to the Holy Spirit who is the one facilitating changes in people's lives.

Besides teaching and discipling, another role of education is moral instruction or character development. Lickona (1991) states: "Schools cannot be ethical bystanders at a time when our society is in deep moral trouble. Rather, schools must do what they can to contribute to the character of the young and the moral health of the nation" (p. 5). He continues:

> Moral education is not a new idea. It is in fact as old as education itself. Down through history, in countries all over the world, education has had two great goals: to help young people become smart and to help them become good. (Lickona, 1991, p. 6)

Christian education is a collective effort. It involves more than one individual or one institution. Benson (2001) concludes that Christian education is the work of the church, the Christian home, the Christian school, and Christians in whatever societal setting they find themselves (p. 27). With its non-formal educational approach, the Adventist Sabbath School functions as one of many Christian educational institutions, sharing with them the overarching objectives of Christian education discussed in this section.

More specifically, the adult Sabbath School in the NAD as well as of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church currently operates with four basic objectives identified in the *Sabbath School Handbook*. "Sabbath School has four specific objectives: Study of the Word, Fellowship, Community Outreach, and World Mission Emphasis.

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These four objectives are the basis for every activity of the Sabbath School in all divisions" (NAD, 2004, p. 6).

Sabbath School and the Sunday Schools of other Christian denominations share the same fundamental objective of teaching God's word. According to Tidwell (1993): "The most important structure for many churches of many denominations, for Bible teaching and learning is the Sunday school" (p. 82). Underscoring the importance of Bible teaching in Sunday School, he writes:

> The ministry of Bible teaching and learning is the first of the basic components of the educational ministry of a church. The Bible is the source of multitudes of truths that make up the essential subject matter of religious education. Many other subjects relate to a "complete" religious education, but the Bible is the core subject. (p. 79)

In summary, the Bible may be taught in a formal setting in regular educational institutions. If, however, this was the only setting in which God's word was taught, the vast majority of Christians would be left in ignorance. In the Adventist Church, Sabbath School is the designated agency for the non-formal education of church members. It is in the adult Sabbath School that adults are educated in the knowledge and practice of God's word. Without this agency, the church is in danger of succumbing to the secular and postmodern influences of culture. With this agency, the church members will learn to relate to the culture and live within the culture, but do so with a firm foundation established on the absolutes of God's word.

<div align="center">Theories of Learning Applied to Christian Education</div>

The effectiveness of teaching and learning for Christian education, as well as for Sabbath School or Sunday School, is based on the understanding and implementation of teaching and learning principles. These processes involve more than a transfer of

knowledge from the teacher to the student. According to Yount (2001) teaching and learning is a changing or transforming experience:

> I contend that the effective teaching-learning process intersects and transforms the lives of learners. Teaching is more than conveying subject matter, more than displaying the knowledge of the teachers. It is facilitating the confluence of learner need and subject substance. Both learner need and subject substance fall into three fundamental areas of life: what we think (meaningful understanding), what we value (personal convictions), and what we do (skillful behavior). (p. 101)

Yount (2001) suggests that teaching and learning require three major changes: (a) a change in behavior, (b) a change in cognitive capacity, and (c) a change in affective capacity (p. 107). These three areas of change are in fact the subject of the three classical theories of learning. Presented in a chronological order of development these theories are: (a) the behavioral theory, (b) the cognitive theory, and (c) the humanistic theory. The different approaches to teaching and learning are based on the domain in which the process of learning is addressed. Yount (2010) maintains that the domains of learning that are generally accepted by educational theorists (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) are a synthesis of the three different learning theories as they are integrated to cover the broad spectrum of the ways in which students learn.

The behavioral theories of learning are "mainly concerned with conditions that affect organisms" (Lefrançois, 2000, p. 119). Among the founders of this psychological approach to learning are Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936) known for the classical conditioning theory; E. L. Thorndike (1874–1946) known also as the father of educational psychology; and B. F. Skinner (1904–1990) who developed the operant conditioning theory.

The behavioral theories of learning are governed by the following principles: (a) The *Law of Readiness* which says that the learning proceeds best when learners are prepared to respond, (b) the *Law of Exercise* which states that repetition strengthens the

learning, and (c) the *Law of Effect* which says that any response followed by pleasure or reward is strengthened.

Yount (2001) suggests that when translated into the Christian educational context the behavioral theories of learning lead to practical applications such as:

1. Use cues and prompts to establish new behaviors.

2. Use an appropriate reinforcement schedule.

3. Assure that all learners receive some praise, and

4. Provide clear informative feedback on student work (pp. 103, 104).

Learning in the psychomotor domain takes place most effectively through application and practice. In the non-formal setting of the Sabbath School, activities should lead to individual involvement and practical application. Ellen White (1942) noted that

> it is a law of nature that our thoughts and feelings are encouraged and strengthened as we give them utterance. While words express thoughts, it is also true that thoughts follow words. If we would give more expression to our faith . . . we should have more faith and greater joy. (pp. 251, 252)

Every student of a Sabbath School class should be allowed to express his or her beliefs and opinions and be appreciated for these contributions. New attitudes and perceptions as well as new behaviors should emerge from the Sabbath School experience, and these will be enhanced through active verbal expression and practical involvement. Appropriate reinforcement strategies, particularly important in the psychomotor domain, will also facilitate positive thoughts and practices.

In contrast to the behavioral theories, cognitive learning theory "looks at the more intellectual or mental aspects of learning. Cognitive approaches deal mainly with questions relating to cognition or knowing" (Lefrançois, 2000, p. 119). This approach to

learning focuses on the internal mental process where meaning is attached to information. Among the leading proponents of cognitive theory are John Piaget (1896–1989) who emphasized the need of systematization (organization) in the process of learning, and Jerome Bruner (born 1915) who proposed discovery learning theory, or learning how to learn.

Translated into a Christian educational context, the cognitive theories of learning lead to the following practical applications suggested by Yount (2001):

1. Explain, illustrate and visualize concepts.

2. Make learning flexible and exploratory.

3. Lecturing is less effective than asking questions.

4. Arouse curiosity by asking questions or posing problems that are relevant to students' needs.

5. Periodically return to important concepts. Encourage informal guessing.

6. Use a variety of materials (Yount, 2001, p. 106).

The above applications are essential in teaching Sabbath School. Classes should be places of interaction rather than lectures, and visual and verbal imagery should intentionally be incorporated to enhance meaning and foster concept retention. Sabbath School teachers need to be trained to facilitate topical discussions by emulating the teaching style and practices of Jesus, who used a lot of illustrations and visual concepts in teaching His disciples and addressing the crowds that came to hear Him.

The humanistic theories of learning focus on the affective domain of education and the uniqueness of each learner, who is placed at the center of the learning experience. The humanistic theories involve the learner's attitudes, emotions, and values. The central

tendency of this educational model is to create a learning environment free from punishment, harsh discipline, and manipulative methods, so that the learner may be internally motivated to make value choices—rather than externally constrained to comply without making any real, personal commitment.

These humanistic models of education developed from the pragmatic experimentalism of John Dewey (1859–1952) and became the foundation for education in the 20th century. Among the leading proponents of humanistic learning and psychology who extended Dewey's educational philosophy were George S. Counts, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Paulo Friere, and Arthur Combs. They fostered concepts such as learning through intrinsic motivation, person-centered education and counseling, cooperation rather than competition, inductive methods leading eventually to constructivism, and teachers serving as facilitators more than sages.

Yount (2001) suggests that the humanistic theories of learning may be applied in Christian education in the following ways:

1. Focus on learners' experiences, emotions, values, and choices.

2. Use small-group settings to facilitate cooperative learning, to explore interpersonal relationships, to express feelings, and to share personal values.

3. Allow students to regulate their own learning, like selecting topics and resources, setting goals, all with a little teacher guidance.

4. Create a classroom atmosphere that enhances open communication.

5. Model instruction to students' abilities (Yount, 2001, p. 108).

Summarizing his analysis of the theories of learning, Yount (2001) proposes a new model for Christian education which he calls *The Lord Within Model*. Through this

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model "the presence and power of the Lord, operating from within through channels of thinking, feeling, and doing is essential for true life transformation" (p. 109).

Correctly understood, Yount's model interprets "the presence and the power of the Lord, operating from within," as a contrast to other more self-centered approaches. The priority in his model is placed on God whose power works from within and facilitates the change.

Based on this model, the Sabbath School experience should be more than just a place where cognitive information is delivered. It should be a place where students experience an encounter with God, a place of cognitive, affective, and behavioral transformation into the image of God. This goal cannot be reached without the transforming power of the Holy Spirit being present in the life of both the teacher and the Sabbath School participant.

Dimensions of Learning Applied to Christian Education

Another perspective on learning is based on the dimensions of learning. This is a comprehensive view based on five ways of thinking essential to successful learning. Applying the theory behind the dimensions of learning would create a positive impact on the quality of Christian education, including Christian education in the non-formal setting of the Sabbath School.

According to Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001), there are five dimensions of learning: (a) Attitudes and Perceptions, (b) Acquire and Integrate Knowledge, (c) Extend and Refine Knowledge, (d) Use Knowledge Meaningfully, and (e) Habits of Mind.

In successive order, the following principles derive from the dimensions of learning presented by Marzano et al. (2001):

1. Positive attitudes about learning lead to effective instruction.

2. Integrating new information and skills with prior knowledge in an organized and systematic manner gives meaning to the new information and enhancing long-term memory.

3. Analyzing the information leads to deeper understanding.

4. Effective learning is measured by the ability to use information in performing meaningful tasks.

5. The most effective learners have developed powerful habits of mind that enable them to think critically, think creatively, and regulate their behavior (Marzano et al., 2001, p. 6).

Sabbath School is designed as a place where new information is explored and integrated with prior knowledge. The quarterly system of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, along with the other Sabbath School activities, helps the participants to acquire and integrate knowledge which leads toward practical application and internal transformation. Marzano et al. (2001) present educational principles well suited to the non-formal setting of the Sabbath School.

I strongly believe that when these dimensions of learning are correctly and consistently applied by Sabbath School leaders and teachers there will be a change in attitudes toward Sabbath School. Teaching the lessons with positive attitudes, bringing up new and practical ideas, facilitating deeper understanding, involving the students in

practical applications, and encouraging them to express their opinions, are principles few

in number but with the potential to change the dynamic of Sabbath Schools.

Learning Styles Applied to Christian Education

Another factor influencing the effectiveness of Christian education is based on the

understanding and implementation of learning styles. Christian educators need to be

aware of the fact that not all students learn in the same way. Each student processes

information in a unique way. Lefrançois (2000) defines learning style as

> a unique and important learner variable, manifested in differences in biological
> rhythms (morning versus evening people), perceptual strengths (visual versus
> auditory learners), sociological preferences (whole-group versus small-group
> instruction), attention span (long or short), and a wealth of personality variables
> (dependence or independence, for example). (p. 255)

Underlining the importance of learning styles, LeFever (2001) argues that

> when we take into consideration the unique differences in learning preferences,
> students are able to learn faster, enjoy what they are learning more, and are more
> likely to put what they have learned into practice. When we as teachers fail to take
> these differences into consideration we waste valuable learning opportunities.
> (p. 130)

It is extremely important for Christian educators, including Sabbath School

leaders and teachers, to consider, identify, and utilize the student's predominant learning

style for effective learning. Christian educators need to know that each person (student)

has a unique approach to learning. The uniqueness of a personal learning style is

described in these words: "Each person's individual learning style is as unique as a

signature" ("Learning Styles," 2001, p. 417).

According to McCarthy and McCarthy (2006), the natural cycle of learning is

based on the learner's preferred learning style. I agree that no student learns exclusively

in one learning style. Effective teaching takes place when the teacher employs a learning style that is preferred by the student.

While this idea may seem difficult to achieve in a group setting, the creative teacher can implement various approaches to different phases of a lesson. If the teacher uses a variety of teaching-learning strategies, each individual has an opportunity over time, even over several lessons, to learn in his or her preferred learning style. Diversity in teaching strategies would very likely improve learning and satisfaction in the Sabbath School.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature reviewed in this chapter focused on the following three areas: (a) a historical overview of the objectives of the Sabbath School, (b) major socio-cultural changes affecting Sabbath School, and (c) principles of teaching and learning applied to Christian education.

The history of the Sabbath School objectives reveals a gradual increase in the number of objectives and responsibilities attributed to Sabbath School. For the first several decades of its history, Sabbath School had only one objective, a systematic study of God's word. Close to the end of the 19th century, a second objective was added, World Mission. During the middle part of the 20th century, Sabbath School became responsible for Local Evangelism, the community outreach objective. In the latter part of the 20th century, the new objective of Fellowship was added. Recent studies show an even higher number of objectives for which the Sabbath School is deemed to be responsible.

The impact of this diversification of objectives could be identified as having both positive and negative implications. Positively, it helped the Adventist Church grow locally and internationally, and kept the worldwide church doctrinally united. Also, it created the necessary groundwork for new ministries, which later became distinctive ministries or departments in the Adventist Church. Negatively, an overload of objectives may have created confusion and a loss of focus among Sabbath School members. Also, its multiple objectives may overlap and duplicate the objectives of other distinctive ministries, some of them even originally launched from within the Sabbath School.

In the second section of this chapter, four Socio-cultural Factors were studied: Ethnic Diversity, Postmodernism, Secularism and Materialism, and Religious Pluralism. According to the literature, the impact of these cultural changes cannot be avoided and their presence directly and indirectly influences the life of the Christian church. As a church-based educational institution, Sabbath School is not exempt from the impact of these socio-cultural changes and these are not to be underestimated.

As a result of numerous global mission projects conducted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the ethnic diversity of the Adventist population in the NAD has changed considerably, especially during the last several decades. In such a diverse environment, it is desirable to understand and adjust the teaching methods and curriculum of the Sabbath School according to the characteristics of the cultures represented. Three of the most predominant subcultures in the NAD were studied in this chapter: Hispanic-American, African-American, and Asian-American cultures.

On the philosophical level, postmodernism, along with its natural products, secularism, materialism, and religious pluralism, has dramatically changed the dynamic

of church and Christian education during recent decades. Creating a new philosophical worldview governed by relativism, postmodernism has attacked the origin and the authority of God's word. The evidence suggests that the vitality of Sabbath School, whose main objective is studying and teaching God's word, has been affected by these postmodern philosophies.

In the same way, secularism and materialism have changed people's focus from knowledge to experience. Emotional feelings and external achievements seem to have become more important than searching and knowing the truths of God's word. Also, religious pluralism, with its goal of eliminating theological boundaries, makes the teaching objective of Sabbath School and the diligent search for the truth, difficult, less relevant, and less important in this postmodern day and age.

The third and the last section of this chapter dealt with principles of teaching and learning applied to Christian education. Three major topics were covered in this section: (a) Theories of Learning, (b) Dimensions of Learning, and (c) Learning Styles. The literature reveals that the understanding and the application of the various aspects of the teaching and learning process determine the quality of education.

In order to fulfill the main objective of Sabbath School, which involves teaching, it is fundamentally important for all Sabbath School teachers and leaders to know and apply the basic principles of teaching and learning. The literature showed that teaching and learning cannot be generalized. Each culture is unique, each class is unique, and each student is unique.

Ultimately, teaching the word of God involves more than just following or mastering the principles of teaching and learning. It involves more than accommodating

to the socio-cultural changes. It goes beyond what Sabbath School teachers or leaders can do. Successful teaching takes place when human effort and divine power are united in transmitting the everlasting gospel with passion and love to a world that needs a Savior (E. White, 1952).

The most important attribute of the teacher is relationship with and dependence on God. But there are many skills a teacher can learn that will allow the Holy Spirit to use that teacher more effectively. This literature review has explored how the art and science of teaching may be employed in achieving the primary purpose of Sabbath School—studying God's word. A clearly defined and culturally contextualized objective, passionately and diligently pursued, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, may potentially set up the grounds for a new and more productive phase of the adult Sabbath School in North America.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This quantitative research study employed a non-experimental descriptive design. The purpose of this research was to gather descriptive data on the way active and non-active adult Sabbath School members in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church act and think about Sabbath School, and to examine these data to find factors related to declining attendance. This chapter describes the research design, population and sample, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis procedure.

Research Design

The selection of the research design is a very important aspect of a social-science investigation. It determines the limitations of the study, the conditions for interpreting the results, and the nature of data analysis. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997), "the purpose of a research design is to provide, within an appropriate mode of inquiry, the most valid, accurate answers possible to the research questions" (p. 31).

A quantitative mode of inquiry was selected for this study. This mode was selected for the purpose of maximizing the objectivity of the study by accessing a large sample, which would have been difficult to accomplish through a qualitative approach.

A non-experimental design was used in this study to describe the actual conditions of the adult Sabbath School and their potential relationships to attendance without any manipulation of conditions that are experienced. This descriptive design is intended to describe and assess the nature of existing conditions in the adult Sabbath School in the NAD.

This approach to data collection was used in order to simultaneously access different groups of Sabbath School members who are or who are not currently attending Sabbath School. The differences between these groups are related to demographic characteristics (such as age, location, church size, ethnicity, level of education), to personal characteristics (such as learning styles, personal relationships, general perceptions related to Sabbath School), and to socio-cultural characteristics (such as worldviews, access to biblical information, intercultural relationships).

Instrumentation

Description

There was no standard instrument developed for measuring the factors included in this study. There was not even a similar instrument that could have been modified to meet the needs of this study. Therefore, I developed a customized instrument.

Two survey instruments were developed to measure the relationship between the six groups of factors and Sabbath School Attendance. These groups were as follows: (a) Institutional, (b) Socio-cultural, (c) Achievement, (d) Satisfaction, (e) General Perceptions, and (f) Demographic Factors. A description of each group, including the number of items for each group, is shown in Table 1. A full description of these groups

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and their corresponding variables is presented in Chapter 1 in the section on Dependent

and Independent Variables.

Table 1

Groups of Variables

Groups	Variables	No. of Items
Institutional	Preliminaries Topics Studied Teaching Style Class Setting Sabbath School Objectives	13
Achievement	Learning Achievement Fellowship Achievement Community Outreach Achievement World Mission Achievement	9
Satisfaction	Satisfaction With Preliminaries Satisfaction With Topics Studied Satisfaction With Teachers Satisfaction With Teaching Style	9
Socio-cultural	Access to Information Perceptions About Church Perceptions About Biblical Truths	7
Perceptions	Duplication With Other Programs Optional Service Meaningful for the 21st Century Expectation for Home Study Entry Level Program	5
Demographic	Age Range Ethnicity Years in the Adventist Church Education Level Sabbath School Home Study Class Rotation Class Setting Availability Church Location Church Size Worship Service Attendance Child Sabbath/Sunday School Attendance Time of Meeting Music Style	14

The first survey is called the Pastor Survey and consists of 10 items which are descriptive in nature: Church Size, Church Location, Church Attendance, Sabbath School Attendance, Class Settings, Time of Meeting, Preliminaries, Topics Studied, Number of Adult Sabbath School Classes, and Music Style. This survey was designed to collect data from the group leaders only (mainly pastors, head elders, or Sabbath School leaders). A copy of the Pastor Survey is found in Appendix A.

The second survey is called the Member Survey. This survey, which is the main survey, was used to collect data from church members. It consists of 45 items and is divided into four sections based on the method of answering and the scale headings. Four out of the 45 items are demographic in nature: Ethnicity, Level of Education, Age Range, and Years in the Adventist Church. The remaining 41 items measure achievement, satisfaction, socio-cultural circumstances, and general perceptions in relationship to the adult Sabbath School and its four main objectives. A copy of the Member Survey is presented in Appendix B.

The majority of survey items in both surveys were developed on the basis of the stated Sabbath School objectives. According to the *Sabbath School Handbook* (NAD, 2004, p. 6), the four objectives of the adult Sabbath School are: (a) Teaching the Word, (b) Fellowship, (c) Community Outreach, and (d) World Mission.

The main survey has four sections: A, B, C, and D. Each of the 18 items in Section A was scaled along a 5-point Likert scale from 1–*Very Little or None* to 5–*Very Much*. Each of the eight items of Section B was scaled along a 5-point Likert scale from 1–*Strongly Disagree* to 5–*Strongly Agree*. Each of the eight items of Section C was scaled along a 5-point Likert scale from 1–*Very Rare or Never* to 5–*Very Often*. Each of

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the 11 items of Section D was a multiple-choice item from which only one option was selected. Each of the 10 items of the Pastor Survey, referred to as Section P, was made up of multiple-choice items. Data collected from both surveys were combined and reported on a single data sheet according to the sections presented above.

Validity

The survey items on both surveys were developed on the basis of a declining attendance at the adult Sabbath School in the NAD. These items were grouped into groups of factors commonly presented in the Sabbath School literature or observed in the field. These factors were grouped into the following groups: Institutional, Socio-cultural, Achievement, Satisfaction, and General Perceptions related to Sabbath School.

The Member Survey was designed for the average church member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the NAD. Upon completion of the pilot study, several wording changes were necessary to accommodate the wide diversity of the Adventist population in North America, in terms of age, level of education, ethnicity, and years in the SDA church.

The Pastor Survey was designed mainly for the pastors, head elders, or local Sabbath School leaders. All of the 10 items of the Pastor Survey were descriptive in nature. This survey was designed for the purpose of reducing the size of the main survey (Member Survey) by addressing those general questions that were applicable. Also the completion of the Pastor Survey was used as the consent for participation and commitment to support the study.

I sent both survey instruments, the Pastor Survey and the Member Survey, to 10 university professors whom I selected, requesting comments and suggested revisions. Six

items in total from the original version, two from the Pastor Survey and four from the Member Survey, were removed due to some duplication with other items, and also to maintain a reasonable size for a "during-the-service" survey administration. Wording suggestions were also given to enhance the clarity of items.

After the changes were analyzed and approved by the dissertation committee, the survey instruments were sent to a group of Sabbath School professionals for content evaluation. The Sabbath School professionals were GC and NAD officers, conference leaders, and local church officers. Several wording suggestions were given by the professionals to eliminate potential confusion.

The dissertation committee agreed and approved the changes and then I presented the survey instruments to a group of 20 pastors for feedback on the content, the format, and the data collection procedure. I provided the pastors with a copy of both survey instruments, and the letters addressed to both the pastor and the congregation. These pastors were asked to read the Member Survey and the letter addressed to the congregation from the perspective of their members. They were also asked to identify any items they found confusing, too difficult, or not properly worded. Such changes were necessary to avoid distorting the results due to readability. It was important that all items were clear and could be responded to confidently and with a common understanding by the church members.

In summary, the content validity for the instruments used in this study was established in three ways: (a) the university professors for their academic perspective related to formatting and consistency, (b) the Sabbath School professionals mainly for content overview, suggesting changes to those items that they found difficult or

confusing, and (c) the group of pastors who examined the instrument from the members'
perspective.

When all the suggested changes coming from the three validating sources were
considered and implemented under the guidance of the dissertation committee, the survey
instruments were pre-tested in a pilot test at a medium-sized church I selected in the
Southern Union. The pilot test indicated no need for further adjustments. By this time, the
instruments were considered validated and ready for distribution.

Population and Sample

The population for this study is the entire membership of the North American
Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (NAD). According to the most recent
statistical report at the end of the first quarter of 2011, the total membership of the NAD
was 1,126,040. The NAD is made up of 5,285 churches divided into 58 conferences and
nine unions. Table 2 indicates the demographics of the NAD.

A weighted-cluster sampling procedure was used to create the sample for this
study. Cluster sampling involves two stages. First is to select the cluster. I followed the
protocol required by the NAD headquarters to obtain access to a church database
containing the information needed. After the database was obtained, I first clustered the
population based on geographical representation into the nine union conferences.

I then grouped the churches of each union under the following categories based
on membership size: *Large* with a membership between 200 and 300, *Medium* with a
membership between 100 and 199, and *Small* with a membership between 50 and 99.

In order to keep a balanced sample in terms of church size, only churches with a
membership between 50 and 300 were considered for this study. Considering churches

Table 2

Membership Statistics (2011) of the NAD Union Conferences

Union	No. of Churches	Membership
Atlantic	567	104,764
SDA Church in Canada	355	62,410
Columbia	670	136,416
Lake	506	83,370
Mid-America	449	64,629
North Pacific	435	97,219
Pacific	686	219,760
Southern	1,074	254,309
Southwestern	552	103,138
Totals	5,295	1,126,040

with a membership higher than 300 would require a larger sample size, which could not be accomplished through this study. In addition, the results coming from churches with a membership higher than 300 were not expected to be much different from what was obtained from churches with a membership between 200 and 300.

Churches with a membership lower than 50 were not considered in this study for the same reason—that of keeping a balanced sample in terms of church size. In addition, the responses from these churches (with a membership under 50) were not expected to be much different from those churches of 50 to 100 members. Foreign language churches were not considered for this study due to communication issues.

In order to create a weighted cluster, a specific number of churches from within each category was determined. Rea and Parker (1992) state that in cluster sampling "grouping must be a well-delineated subset of the general population" (p. 138). I determined the number of selected churches from each category based on a distribution ratio. Table 3 indicates the percentages of church membership attending different sized

churches within the Adventist church in North America. Based on the percentages shown in this table, two large churches (200–300), four medium churches (100–199), and six small churches (50–99) were initially selected from each union. The above number of churches selected from each size category was determined to ensure a balanced sample in terms of membership size representation.

Table 3

Church Attendance Distribution

Church Size	Membership Percentage
Large (200–300)	30%
Medium (100–199)	50%
Small (50–99)	20%

Initially, 108 churches from the nine unions were selected for participation in this study. Table 4 presents the selection according to their membership size.

Over-sampling was used to ensure the proposed minimum number of responses would be achieved. The expected number of responding churches for this study was 54, representing 50% of the originally selected sample. This expected sample of 54 churches included three small churches, two medium churches, and one large church from each of the nine unions. Table 5 shows the expected number of participating churches.

The minimum number of churches accepted as adequate for this study was 36. A minimum of two small churches, one medium church, and one large church per union was considered satisfactory for this study. Repeated random selections were performed in order to reach the minimum accepted number of churches for each category. Based on

Table 4

Number of Selected Churches From Each Category

Union	Small	Medium	Large	Totals
Atlantic	6	4	2	12
SDA Church in Canada	6	4	2	12
Columbia	6	4	2	12
Lake	6	4	2	12
Mid-America	6	4	2	12
North Pacific	6	4	2	12
Pacific	6	4	2	12
Southern	6	4	2	12
Southwestern	6	4	2	12
Totals	54	36	18	108

Table 5

Expected Number of Participating Churches From Each Category

Union	Small	Medium	Large	Total
Atlantic	3	2	1	6
SDA Church in Canada	3	2	1	6
Columbia	3	2	1	6
Lake	3	2	1	6
Mid-America	3	2	1	6
North Pacific	3	2	1	6
Pacific	3	2	1	6
Southern	3	2	1	6
Southwestern	3	2	1	6
Totals	27	18	9	54

this sample, the estimated number of respondents was between 1,500 and 2,000

participants. Table 6 indicates the minimum number of participating churches accepted as

adequate for this study.

Table 6

Minimum Number of Participating Churches Accepted From Each Category

Union	Small	Medium	Large	Total
Atlantic	2	1	1	4
SDA Church in Canada	2	1	1	4
Columbia	2	1	1	4
Lake	2	1	1	4
Mid-America	2	1	1	4
North Pacific	2	1	1	4
Pacific	2	1	1	4
Southern	2	1	1	4
Southwestern	2	1	1	4
Totals	18	9	9	36

The second step in creating the cluster sampling was the random selection of

churches from each of the above categories. I used a computer-based program to

randomly select the initial 108 churches, spread equally over the nine unions and

clustered by membership size. Nine sets of 12 randomly selected numbers were used to

select the 12 participating churches from each union. The number of churches from each

category, which agreed to participate, was 64 as indicated in Table 7.

Table 7

Number of Churches That Agreed to Participate From Each Category

Union	Small	Medium	Large	Total
Atlantic	3	1	2	6
SDA Church in Canada	3	3	1	7
Columbia	5	2	1	8
Lake	3	3	2	8
Mid-America	2	3	1	6
North Pacific	2	3	2	7
Pacific	3	2	3	8
Southern	4	2	2	8
Southwestern	3	3	0	6
Totals	28	22	14	64

Procedure

All research projects involving human subjects conducted at Andrews University must be approved by the University-appointed Institutional Review Board (IRB). This board is commissioned to protect the rights and safety of all subjects involved in a study and to ensure that the confidentiality of data is maintained. As this study involves church members, the IRB approval was obtained.

An entire research protocol, including the two survey instruments, the e-mail letters addressed to the pastors, the letter addressed to the congregation, the informal consent letter addressed to the pastor of each of the selected churches, and the survey instructions, was submitted to IRB for approval. A copy of the IRB approval is presented in Appendix C.

Following the IRB approval, I searched for the contact information of the 108 selected churches. After the information was obtained, an initial e-mail message was sent out to all pastors or designated contact persons of the 108 randomly selected churches. The purpose of this initial contact was to provide a description of the nature of the study and provide the opportunity of requesting more information about the project, if interested. A copy of the first e-mail letter is found in Appendix D.

An endorsement letter from the Dean of the School of Education at Andrews University was also attached to this e-mail. A copy of this letter of endorsement is shown in Appendix E.

After the pastors' responses were received either by e-mail or telephone, a second message was sent out to the pastors who were interested in knowing more about the project. This second message included the following: a letter to the pastor giving a detailed description of the research study explaining the data collection procedure, the Pastor Survey, and a copy of the Member Survey for reference purposes. A copy of the pastor's second letter is included in Appendix F.

At the end of the Pastor Survey, the pastors were asked to provide the following information: (a) the average number of printed bulletins on a typical Sabbath (which determined the number of copies for the main survey), and (b) the mailing address where the package containing the Member Surveys should be sent.

An online alternative incorporating the first two e-mail letters was developed to enhance accessibility to the Pastor Survey and to all the documents included in the e-mail option. After the online submission of the Pastor Survey, an automatic Thank You message was prompted. Also, in the Thank You response, the participants were informed

that the package would arrive within the next 7 to 10 business days. A copy of this Thank You letter is included in Appendix G.

Once the data from the Pastor Survey were collected, either through the e-mail or the online format, a package including the requested number of copies of the Member Survey was mailed out to the address provided. The package included: (a) a letter to the congregation stating the purpose of this research study and information on how to answer the survey and how the surveys were to be collected; (b) pre-folded copies of the Member Survey for each participant with printed instructions on the top of the survey; and (c) a pre-paid, pre-addressed return envelope. A copy of the letter addressed to the congregation is found in Appendix H.

As follow-up, a first e-mail reminder was sent 7 days after the package containing the Member Survey was mailed (14 days for the Canadian addresses). This letter asked specific questions like, "Did the package arrive the way it was expected?" "Are the quantities right?" And, "What date do you anticipate passing out the survey?" A clarification note was added to this first reminder e-mail letter stating that the study involves the whole congregation, not just the Sabbath School participants. A copy of the first reminder letter is found in Appendix I.

A second e-mail reminder was sent during the week following the Sabbath when the survey was supposed to be administered. In this e-mail, these questions were asked, "Were you able to pass out the surveys?" "How did the distribution go?" "Have you already sent the package back?" "If not, when do you plan to do that?" See Appendix J for a copy of this letter.

The survey for the church members was preferably to be administered on a Sabbath (Saturday) morning following the package's arrival. The pastors were advised to insert a pre-folded copy of the survey in each church bulletin or hand it out as persons walked into the church. During the announcements, the pastor or a designated person was asked to read the letter addressed to the congregation containing the information about the study. They were asked to collect the surveys on the same day, after the service or any time before members left the church.

Only church members or regular visitors who were 18 or older and were familiar with the adult Sabbath School were asked to participate. The survey could be completed in 15 to 20 minutes. All the necessary survey instructions were provided in writing in the heading to the survey and in the letter addressed to the congregation. The pastors were instructed to mail all the collected surveys to me using the pre-paid return envelope provided, preferably on Monday following the Saturday when the survey was administered.

A final Thank You e-mail letter was sent when the package containing the completed surveys was returned to me. In this e-mail, the pastors were given the opportunity to request a summary of the study. A copy of this letter is included in Appendix K.

This process of data collection was scheduled to start on Monday, February 20, 2012, and suggested to conclude on March 31, 2012. Each pastor could choose any of the five Sabbaths during the month of March 2012 to administer the surveys. Late responses were still considered through the end of June 2012.

A spreadsheet was created for the purpose of tracking all the steps of the data

collection procedure. This spreadsheet indicates the name of the church, the name of the

pastor or contact person, their e-mail address, the number of surveys sent to each church,

the date when the surveys were sent, the dates for each reminder letter, the anticipated

date for distribution, the number of surveys received back, the date received, and the date

when the Thank You letter was sent. An adjusted copy of the tracking process for the

data collection is presented in Appendix L. For the purpose of privacy, any personal

information has been removed from this copy.

The returned surveys were assigned two different numbers: a church code and a

consecutive number, indicating the order in which they were entered into the statistical

program. Appendix L also provides a complete list with the assigned codes for each

church. The returned surveys were sorted out and stored securely. The *Statistical

Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS™) software was used for data entry, analysis, and

analytical output.

Return Results

The number of churches that sent back the Pastor Survey administered at their

locations was 59. The screening indicated that all of the 59 surveys were properly

completed. Table 8 indicates the number of churches from each category that returned the

Pastor Survey.

A total number of 4,958 Member Surveys were mailed out to the 64 churches that

agreed to participate. This number was based on the average number of printed bulletins

for each church as reported in the Pastor Survey. The total number of returned Members

Surveys was 1,490. After the initial screening, a total of 39 Member Surveys were

discarded due to incomplete or unclear answers. The number of surveys entered into the

database was 1,451 Member Surveys and 59 Pastor Surveys. Five churches that agreed to

participate did not return their surveys. Repeated letters were sent to these two churches,

but without response.

Based on an over-response rate, which exceeded the minimum number of

churches accepted for this study, the two large churches that did not respond were

eliminated from the study without affecting the sampling requirements. These two non-

responding churches were from the Columbia Union and the Southern Union.

According to Rea and Parker (1992), the sample size based on an error range of

5%, with an alpha of .05 (95% confidence) for a population of 1,126,040 Adventists in

North America (see Table 2), should be not less than 384. The sample size used for this

study (1,451) is large enough to allow generalization from the sample to the entire

population at a 95% level of confidence with an error of less than 5%.

Table 8

Number of Churches That Returned Surveys

Union	Small	Medium	Large	Total
Atlantic	3	1	2	6
SDA Church in Canada	3	3	1	7
Columbia	4	2	0	6
Lake	3	3	2	8
Mid-America	2	3	1	6
North Pacific	2	2	2	6
Pacific	3	1	2	6
Southern	4	2	2	8
Southwestern	3	3	0	6
Totals	27	20	12	59

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to report on the collected data describing adult

Sabbath School Attendance in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist

Church, and to examine these data for relationships between factors related to Sabbath

School Attendance. The data for this study were collected with a set of two survey

instruments administered to 59 pastors and 1,451 church members from 59 Seventh-day

Adventist churches across North America. This chapter presents the study response rate

and the demographic description of the sample, the participant response rate by item,

tests of the hypotheses, discussion of the findings, and a summary.

Response Rate and Demographic Description of the Sample

Of the original 108 randomly selected churches in the NAD, 64 churches (60%)

agreed to participate in the study. Of these 64 churches, 59 (92%) returned the surveys.

This response rate exceeds the minimum number of churches (36) accepted as adequate

for this study. Table 8 (see Chapter 3) presents the number of participating churches from

each union according to their membership size.

Of the 4,958 Member Surveys sent to the 59 churches, 1,490 surveys (30%) were

returned. After an initial screening, 39 Member Surveys were discarded due to

incomplete or inaccurate responses. Of the 64 Pastor Surveys sent out, 59 surveys (92%) were returned and all of them were correctly completed. Table 9 indicates the number of returned Member Surveys and Pastor Surveys from each union.

The personal demographic items included in the Member Survey describe the respondent's characteristics: Age Range, Ethnicity, Education Level, Years in the Adventist Church, Childhood Sabbath School/Sunday School Attendance, and Sabbath School Home Study. Table 10 shows the response rates to these personal demographic characteristics.

Additionally, a set of demographic items was included in the Pastor Survey, and the responses to these items describe the host church for the Sabbath School. The data identify Church Location, Membership Size, and Music Style. Table 11 reports the response rates to the hosting church demographic characteristics.

Table 9

Number of Returned Surveys From Each Union

Union	No. of Returned Member Surveys	No. of Returned Pastor Surveys
Atlantic	194	6
SDA Church in Canada	193	7
Columbia	131	6
Lake	215	8
Mid-America	115	6
North Pacific	147	6
Pacific	141	6
Southern	190	8
Southwestern	125	6
Totals	1,451	59

Table 10

Personal Demographic Items

Demographic Items	*n*	%
Ethnicity		
White	866	59.7
Black/African-American	242	16.7
Other	183	12.6
Missing	160	11.0
Age Range		
Under 25	93	6.4
Between 25 and 39	208	14.3
Between 40 and 60	564	38.9
Over 60	537	37.0
Missing	49	3.4
Education Level		
High School	479	33.0
College	608	41.9
Graduate	284	19.6
Missing	80	3.5
Years in the Adventist Church		
Under 5	199	13.7
Between 5 and 20	306	21.1
Over 20	901	62.1
Missing	45	3.1
Childhood SS/SS Attendance		
Never or Rare	368	25.4
Moderately	154	8.5
Often	822	47.7
Missing	137	9.4
Sabbath School Home Study		
None or Little	392	17.1
Sometimes	321	22.1
Much or Very Much	674	46.5
Missing	64	4.4

Table 11

Hosting Church Demographic Items of the Sample

Demographic Items	n	%
Church Location		
Large City	296	20.4
Suburban Area	263	18.1
Small City	665	45.8
Rural Area	227	15.6
Church Membership Size		
Under 99	496	34.2
Between 100 and 200	519	35.8
Over 200	436	30.0
Music Style		
More Traditionally Oriented	1,070	73.7
More Contemporary Oriented	142	9.8
Both Styles Equally	239	16.5

The final set of demographic items is related to descriptors of the specific Sabbath School classes (as reported on the Pastor Survey): Class Setting Availability, Number of Classes, Time of Meeting, Topics Available for Study, and Preliminaries. Table 12 reports the response rate to these Sabbath School demographic items.

Preparation and Treatment of Data

After receiving the 1,451 Member Surveys and 59 Pastor Surveys from the 59 churches across the NAD, all surveys were carefully screened, numbered, entered into the system, and then stored securely. Data collected from both surveys were combined and reported collectively. Details about these initial procedures were presented in Chapter 3, pp. 65-68.

Table 12

Sabbath School Demographic Items for the Sample (Pastor Survey)

Demographic Items	*n*	%
Class Setting Availability		
One large class only	422	29.1
Combination of large and small	467	32.2
Separated small classes only	288	19.8
Classes in the same room	182	13.2
Number of Classes Available		
One	375	25.8
Two	369	25.4
Three	389	26.8
Four of more	318	21.9
Time of Meeting		
Before worship service	1,245	85.8
Other times	181	12.5
Topics Available for Study		
Quarterlies only	1,027	70.8
Quarterlies with other topics	403	27.8
Other topics only	21	1.4
Preliminaries Availability		
More than 30 minutes	176	12.1
Between 15 and 30 minutes	704	40.5
Less than 15 minutes	428	29.5
Not at all	142	9.9

The statistical analysis software, *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*

(SPSS™), was employed for data entry, analysis, and analytical output. All the survey

answers were manually entered into the system. After the data were entered, a check for

incomplete data or impossible values was made. All surveys were stored securely.

The codes in the right-hand columns for Tables 13 to 18 and Table 20 refer to the

items that make up each scale, and can be consulted in Appendices A and B.

Table 13

Survey Item Names for Institutional Factors

Group	Item Name	Survey Items
Institutional	Preliminaries	P5
	Topics Studied	D2
	Teaching Style	D3
	Class Settings	D5
	Sabbath School Objectives	
	Teaching the Word	A7
	Fellowship	C1
	Community Outreach	A1
	World Mission	A2
Attendance	Sabbath School Attendance	D1

Note. P = Pastor Survey; A, C, D = respective sections of the Member Survey.

Table 14

Survey Item Names for Achievement Factors

Group	Scale and Item Names	Survey Items
Achievement	Learning Achievement✝	
	Motivates to Study the Bible	A8
	Helps to Understand God's Word	A9
	Provides New Information	A10
	Is My Resource for Biblical Information	A17c
	Answers My Biblical Questions	C4
	Fellowship Achievement✝	
	Make New Friends	A5
	Share My Challenges	A14
	Community Outreach Achievement✝	
	Motivates to Share with Others	A3
	Invites Others to Sabbath School	C3
	World Mission Achievement✝	
	Picture of the Worldwide Church	A4
	Involved in World Mission Projects	A15
	Sabbath School Achievement✝	
	Learning Achievement✝	(see scale above)
	Fellowship Achievement✝	(see scale above)
	Community Outreach Achievement✝	(see scale above)
	World Mission Achievement✝	(see scale above)

Note. A & C = respective sections of the Member Survey. ✝ Scale.

Table 15

Survey Item Names for Satisfaction Factors

Group	Scale and Item Names	Survey Items
Satisfaction	Satisfaction With Teachers✝	
	Makes the Lesson Come Alive	A13
	Comes to the Class Well Prepared	C2
	Satisfaction With Teaching Style✝	
	Style of Teaching Used	D3
	Style of Teaching I Like	D4
	Satisfaction With Topics Studied✝	
	Quarterlies Help Me Grow Spiritually	A11
	Well Organized and Easy to Follow	A12
	Satisfaction With Preliminaries✝	
	Preliminaries Are Meaningful	A6
	Consume the Class Time	B3(R)
	Ideal Sabbath School Includes Preliminaries	B7
	Sabbath School Satisfaction✝	(see scale above)
	Satisfaction With Teachers✝	(see scale above)
	Satisfaction With Teaching Style✝	(see scale above)
	Satisfaction With Topics Studied✝	(see scale above)
	Satisfaction With Preliminaries✝	(see scale above)

Note. A, B, C, D = respective sections of the Member Survey. R = Reversed Item. ✝ Scale.

Table 16

Survey Item Names for Socio-Cultural Factors

Group	Scale and Item Names	Survey Items
Socio-cultural	Access to Information✝	
	Use Sermons and Seminars	A17a
	Christian Programs on Radio or TV	A17b
	Books or Other Publications	A17d
	Internet	A17e
	Come to Worship God	A18a
	Come to Learn Biblical Truths	A18b
	Come to Meet Friends	A18c
	Biblical Truths Enhance Relationship With God	B2
	Beliefs More Important Than Relationship With God	D6

Note. A, B, D = respective sections of the Member Survey. ✝ Scale.

Table 17

Survey Item Names for Personal Perceptions Factors

Group	Scale and Item Names	Survey Items
Perceptions	Participation in Other Church Ministries✝	
	Attend Other Meeting to Study the Bible	C5
	Attend Other Meeting for Fellowship	C6
	Duplication With Worship Service	B6
	Optional Service	B8(R)
	Meaningful for the 21st Century	B5
	Expectation For Home Study	B1
	Entry Level Program	B4

Note. B & C = respective sections of the Member Survey. R = Reversed Item. ✝ Scale.

Table 18

Survey Item Names for Demographic Factors

Group	Scale and Item Names	Survey Items
Demographics	Class Setting Availability✝	
	A Large Class in the Sanctuary	P4a
	Small Classes in Separated Rooms	P4b
	Small Classes in the Same Room	P4c
	Other Class Settings	P4d
	Topics Availability✝	
	Sabbath School Quarterlies	P3a
	Other Biblical Topics	P3b
	Felt-Need Topics	P3c
	Other Topics	P3d
	Number of Classes	P6
	Age Range	D9
	Ethnicity	D8
	Years in the Adventist Church	D11
	Education Level	D10
	Sabbath School Home Study	A16
	Class Rotation	C8
	Church Location	P1
	Church Size	P9
	Worship Service Attendance	P10
	Sabbath School Attendance %	P7
	Time of Meeting	P2
	Childhood Sabbath School Attendance	C7
	Teaching Office	D7
	Music Style	P8

Note. P = Pastor Survey; A, C, D = respective sections of the Member Survey. ✝ Scale.

Due to a low response rate, eight items needed to be recoded. Topics Studied was changed from a 4-choice item into a 2-choice item where 1 = Quarterlies and 2 = Other Topics. Beliefs Are More Important Than Relationship With God was converted into a 5-point scale in which 1 = 1; 2 = 3; and 3 = 5. Ethnicity was converted into a 2-option item, 1 = White and 2 = Black. Education was changed into a 3-option item where 1 = High School; 2 = College; and 3 = Graduate or more. Years in the Adventist Church was made a 3-choice item where 1 = Less than 5; 2 = Between 5 and 20; and 3 = More than 20. Time of Meeting was changed into a 2-option item, 1 = Before the worship service, and 2 = Other times. Number of Classes was reduced to 4 options, where 4 = Four or more. Church Attendance was grouped into three categories, 1 = Under 99; 2 = Between 100 and 200; and 3 = Over 200. The options with no response or with a low response rate were eliminated from the study.

Also, for the purpose of maintaining directional consistency within a scale, three items were reverse scored. By reversing the scoring, the new values were as follows: 1 = 5; 2 = 4; 3 = 3; 4 = 2; and 5 = 1. Table 19 presents the recoded and reversed items.

Factor analysis was used to help decide which scales to use. An initial overview of similar items was undertaken, followed by the application of a reliability test to create the scales and to determine which items should be removed from each scale based on the values of "Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted." By following this procedure, 14 scales were created for this study. Table 20 indicates the scale names and their configuration.

Table 19

Recoded/Reversed Survey Items

Recoded/Reversed Items	Survey Items
Recoded Items	Topics Studied
	Beliefs Are More Important Than Relationship
	Ethnicity
	Education
	Years in the Adventist Church
	Time of Meeting
	Number of Classes
	Church Attendance
Reversed Items	Home Study
	Sabbath School Is Optional
	Sabbath School Attendance

Table 20

Survey Item-Scale Configuration

Scales	Survey Items
Learning Achievement	A8, A9, A10, A17, C4
Fellowship Achievement	A5, A14
Community Outreach Achievement	A3, C3
World Mission Achievement	A4, A15
Sabbath School Achievement	A3, A4, A5, A8, A9, A10, A14, A15, A17, C3, C4
Satisfaction With Teachers	A13, C2
Satisfaction With Topics	A11, A12
Satisfaction With Teaching Style	D3, D4
Satisfaction With Preliminaries	A6, B3(R), B7
Sabbath School Satisfaction	A6, A11, A12, A13, B3(R), B7, C2, D3, D4
Access to Information	A17a, A17b, A17d, A17e
Duplication With Other Services	C5, C6
Use Quarterlies	P3a, P3b, P3c, P3d
Class Setting	P4a, P4b, P4c, P4d

Note. P = Pastor Survey; A, B, C, D = respective sections of the Member Survey. R = Reversed Item.

Presentation of Results

Research Question #1

The first two research questions belong to the first stage of the project. The first

research question asked: Is there any relationship between each of the Sabbath School

Institutional Factors and Sabbath School Achievement? For this research question,

Sabbath School Achievement was treated as the dependent variable and the eight

Institutional Factors were the independent variables.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the relationship

between Sabbath School Achievement and the first four Sabbath School Institutional

Factors: Preliminaries, Topics Studied, Teacher Style, and Class Settings. Correlation

analysis was used to examine the relationships between Sabbath School Achievement and

the following four Sabbath School Institutional Factors: Teaching the Word, Fellowship,

Community Outreach, and World Mission.

Means, standard deviations, and sample sizes for Sabbath School Achievement by

each of the groups of the four Institutional Factors mentioned above are presented in

Table 21. Sabbath School Achievement is a scale containing the following items:

Learning Achievement, Fellowship Achievement, Community Outreach Achievement,

and World Mission Achievement.

Independent Variable—Preliminaries

The results indicated that there was a significant difference between those groups

having different preliminaries on Sabbath School Achievement. Those who attended

Sabbath Schools with preliminaries scored low on achievement (3.43/3.44), while those

who attended Sabbath Schools with no preliminaries at all scored the highest (3.62).

Table 21

Relationship of Institutional Factors to Sabbath School Achievement

Institutional Factors	F	df	p	N	Mean	SD
			Sabbath School Achievement			
Preliminaries (Pastor Survey)	3.33	3, 1443	.040			
More than 15 minutes				879	3.44	0.79
Less than 15 minutes				425	3.43	0.76
Not at all				142	3.62	0.75
Topics Studied (Member Survey)	2.22	1, 1348	.090			
Quarterlies only				1,235	3.48	0.76
Other topics				115	3.35	0.35
Teaching Style (Member Survey)	17.99	2, 1362	.000			
Discussion/interactive				1,003	3.50	0.79
Lecture/sermon-like				64	2.92	0.89
Both styles equally				298	3.49	0.75
Class Setting (Member Survey)	3.93	2, 1373	.020			
A large class				698	3.43	0.80
Small classes separated				482	3.47	0.70
Small classes together				196	3.60	0.78

Participants in Sabbath Schools with no preliminaries achieved significantly more than did those in Sabbath Schools with preliminaries. (Data for Preliminaries were taken from the Pastor Survey, whereas data for the other three items were from the Member Survey.)

Independent Variable—Topics Studied

The results indicated that there was not a significant difference between those groups studying different topics in their Sabbath School class on Sabbath School Achievement. Those who studied quarterlies did not score significantly different on achievement than did those who studied other topics in their Sabbath School classes.

Independent Variable—Teaching Style

The results indicated that there was a significant difference between groups that were taught by using different teaching styles during Sabbath School and Sabbath School Achievement. The means ranged from 2.92 for those who were taught by lecturing, to 3.50 for those who were taught interactively. Participants achieved significantly more in Sabbath Schools taught interactively than did those in Sabbath School classes taught by lecturing or by a combination of styles.

Independent Variable—Class Setting

The results indicated that there was a significant difference between those groups that were in different class settings and Sabbath School Achievement. The means ranged from 3.43 for those attending a large class, to 3.60 for those attending small classes together. Participants who were attending small Sabbath School classes together or separated scored higher than did those attending a large class.

Independent Variable—Teaching the
Word, Fellowship, Community Outreach,
and World Mission

A correlation analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a relationship between Sabbath School Achievement and the following four Institutional Factors which are related to the four objectives of Sabbath School: Teaching the Word, Fellowship, Community Outreach, and World Mission. Table 22 presents the Pearson product-moment correlation for these variables.

All four variables were significantly correlated with Sabbath School

Achievement. The four variables explained between 21% and 25% of the variance of

Sabbath School Achievement.

Table 22

Correlations Between Sabbath School Objectives and Sabbath School Achievement

Sabbath School Objectives	n	R	R^2	p
Teaching the Word	1,400	.503	.253	.000
Fellowship	1,380	.461	.212	.000
Community Outreach	1,346	.476	.226	.000
World Mission	1,349	.465	.216	.000

Research Question #2

The second research question asked: Is there any relationship between each of the

Sabbath School Institutional Factors and Sabbath School Satisfaction? For this research

question Sabbath School Satisfaction is treated as a dependent variable and all the eight

Institutional Factors are the independent variables.

Multiple one-way analysis of variance was conducted to determine whether there

were group differences (for each item) on Sabbath School Satisfaction. Means, standard

deviations, and sample size for Sabbath School Satisfaction grouped by the four

Institutional Factors are presented in Table 23. Sabbath School Satisfaction is a scale

combining the following items: Satisfaction With Preliminaries, Satisfaction With

Topics, Satisfaction With Teaching Style, and Satisfaction With Teachers.

Independent Variable—Preliminaries

The results indicated that there was no significant difference between groups that have different levels of Preliminaries on Sabbath School Satisfaction. The different lengths of Preliminaries did not make a significant difference in participants' satisfaction with Sabbath School.

Table 23

Relationship of Institutional Factors to Sabbath School Satisfaction

Institutional Factors	Sabbath School Satisfaction					
	F	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
Preliminaries	0.24	2, 1440	.792			
More than 15 minutes				877	4.06	0.59
Less than 15 minutes				425	4.03	0.61
Not at all				141	4.07	0.61
Topics Studied During Class	38.19	1, 1349	.000			
Quarterlies only				1,236	4.09	0.57
Other topics				115	3.74	0.69
Teaching Style	122.15	2, 1364	.000			
Discussion/interactive				1,004	4.17	0.48
Lecture/sermon-like				64	3.14	0.86
Both styles equally				299	3.94	0.61
Class Setting	0.89	2, 1374	.411			
A large class				694	4.08	0.59
Small classes separated				483	4.03	0.57
Small classes together				195	4.08	0.62

Independent Variable—Topics Studied

The results indicated that there was a significant difference between those groups that studied different topics in their Sabbath School classes and Sabbath School Satisfaction. Participants who studied quarterlies scored significantly higher on Sabbath School Satisfaction ($M = 4.09$) than did those who studied other topics during their Sabbath School classes ($M = 3.74$).

Independent Variable—Teaching Style

The results indicated that there was a significant difference between groups that were taught by using different teaching styles during Sabbath School class on Sabbath School Satisfaction. Sabbath School participants who were taught by lecturing scored significantly lower on satisfaction ($M = 3.14$) than did those who were taught interactively ($M = 4.17$) or by a combination of teaching styles ($M = 3.94$).

Independent Variable—Class Setting

The results indicated that there was no significant difference between those groups that had different class settings on Sabbath School Satisfaction. The three class settings tested in this study did not make a significant difference on participants' satisfaction with Sabbath School.

Independent Variable—Teaching the Word, Fellowship, Community Outreach, and World Mission

A correlation analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a relationship between the remaining four Institutional Factors and Sabbath School Satisfaction. These four Institutional Factors are related to the four objectives of Sabbath

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School: Teaching the Word, Fellowship, Community Outreach, and World Mission.

Table 24 presents the Pearson product-moment correlation for these variables.

All four Institutional Factors presented above were significantly correlated with Sabbath School Satisfaction. These four variables explained between 9% and 20% of the variance of Sabbath School Satisfaction. Teaching the Word had the highest correlation with Sabbath School Satisfaction ($r = .452$) while Community Outreach had the lowest ($r = .300$).

Table 24

Correlation Between Sabbath School Objectives and Sabbath School Satisfaction

Sabbath School Objectives	n	R	R^2	p
Teaching the Word	1,399	.452	.204	.000
Fellowship	1,371	.378	.142	.000
Community Outreach	1,344	.300	.090	.000
World Mission	1,347	.331	.109	.000

Research Question #3

The following six research questions belong to the second stage of the project in which Sabbath School Attendance is the dependent variable. The third research question asked: Is there any relationship between each of the Sabbath School Institutional Factors and Sabbath School Attendance?

Multiple Chi-square tests and multiple one-way ANOVAs were used to determine whether there were group differences for each variable on Sabbath School Attendance. Chi-square tests were used to analyze the relationships between the following four

categorical Institutional Factors and Sabbath School Attendance: Preliminaries, Topics Studied, Teaching Styles, and Class Settings. Table 25 presents the Chi-square test results for the relationships between these four categorical Institutional Factors and Sabbath School Attendance.

Independent Variable—Preliminaries

There was no significant difference in Sabbath School Attendance between groups that had different lengths of preliminaries in their Sabbath Schools.

Independent Variable—Topics Studied

There was a significant difference in Sabbath School Attendance between groups that studied different topics in their Sabbath School classes. Eighty percent of those who studied the quarterlies attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath, while only 60% of those who studied other topics attended Sabbath School with the same frequency.

Independent Variable—Teaching Style

There was a significant difference in Sabbath School Attendance between groups that were taught by using a different teaching style. Eighty-one percent of those who were taught interactively attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath, and only 60% of those who were taught by lecturing attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath.

Independent Variable—Class Setting

There was not a significant difference in Sabbath School Attendance between groups that had different Sabbath School class settings.

Table 25

Chi-square Sabbath School Institutional Factors and Sabbath School Attendance

Institutional Factors	n	Sabbath School Attendance				X²	p
		I usually don't attend (%)	Occasionally (%)	2-3 times per month (%)	Almost every Sabbath (%)		
Preliminaries	1,436					9.15	.165
More than 15 minutes	859	5.60	9.50	9.00	75.90		
Less than 15 minutes	427	4.90	8.90	7.70	78.50		
Not at all	140	5.70	2.90	12.10	79.30		
Topics Studied	1,343					26.74	.000
Quarterlies only	1,292	4.20	7.60	7.90	80.20		
Other topics	114	5.30	17.50	16.70	60.50		
Teaching Style	1,362					48.6	.000
Discussion/interactive	1,000	2.90	6.80	8.50	81.80		
Lecture/sermon-like	64	7.80	25.00	6.20	60.90		
Both styles equally	298	7.40	11.70	10.70	70.10		
Class Setting	1,371					11.44	.076
Large class	695	3.30	9.60	8.80	78.30		
Small classes separated	482	4.60	6.80	10.20	78.40		
Small classes together	194	7.70	10.30	7.70	74.20		

**Independent Variable—Teaching
the Word**

For this and the following three variables, multiple one-way ANOVAs were used

to analyze the relationships between Sabbath School Attendance and the four quantitative

Institutional Factors: Teaching the Word, Fellowship, Community Outreach, and World

Mission.

With regard to Teaching the Word, there was a significant difference between

groups that had a different frequency of Sabbath School Attendance on the level of using

the Bible as the primary resource for Sabbath School. Participants who attended Sabbath

School almost every Sabbath scored the highest on using the Bible as the primary

teaching resource ($M = 4.47$) while participants who usually did not attend Sabbath

School scored the lowest on using the Bible as the primary teaching resource ($M = 4.02$).

Table 26 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Table 26

Relationship of Teaching the Word to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Teaching the Word					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	11.37	3, 1377	.000			
I usually do not attend				65	4.02	1.07
Occasionally				117	4.11	1.10
2-3 times per month				125	4.32	0.97
Almost every Sabbath				1,074	4.47	1.08

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Independent Variable—Fellowship

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency of Sabbath School Attendance on the fellowship opportunities provided by their Sabbath School. Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath scored the highest on fellowship opportunities provided by their Sabbath School ($M = 3.91$), while participants who usually did not attend Sabbath School scored the lowest on fellowship opportunities provided by their Sabbath School ($M = 3.52$). Table 27 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Table 27

Relationship of Fellowship to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Fellowship					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	6.57	3, 1368	.000			
I usually do not attend				65	3.52	1.07
Occasionally				118	3.58	0.94
2-3 times per month				124	3.83	0.91
Almost every Sabbath				1,065	3.91	0.99

**Independent Variable—Community
Outreach**

There was a significant difference between groups that had a difference frequency on Sabbath School Attendance on the level of engagement in Community Outreach Projects promoted by their Sabbath School. Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath had the lowest engagement in Community Outreach ($M = 2.34$),

while participants who did not attend ($M = 2.53$) or occasionally attended ($M = 2.58$), or

attended 2 to 3 times per month ($M = 2.64$) had a higher engagement in community

outreach projects. Table 28 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Independent Variable—World Mission

There was not a significant difference between groups that had a different

frequency of Sabbath School Attendance on the involvement in world mission projects

promoted by their Sabbath School. Table 29 presents the analysis of results for this

variable.

Research Question #4

The fourth research question asked: Is there any relationship between each of the

Achievement Factors and Sabbath School Attendance? For this research question the

Achievement Factors are treated as independent variables while Sabbath School

Attendance is the dependent variable.

Table 28

Relationship of Community Outreach to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Community Outreach					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	2.86	3, 1322	.036			
I usually do not attend				62	2.53	1.34
Occasionally				111	2.58	1.23
2-3 times per month				120	2.61	1.35
Almost every Sabbath				1,033	2.34	1.23

Table 29

Relationship of World Mission to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	World Mission					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	1.66	3, 1327	.179			
I usually do not attend				61	2.95	1.10
Occasionally				113	2.99	1.21
2-3 times per month				120	3.09	1.24
Almost every Sabbath				1,037	2.85	1.30

Multiple one-way ANOVAs were conducted to analyze the relationships between

Sabbath School Attendance and Sabbath School Achievement. The Sabbath School

Achievement Factors were Learning Achievement, Fellowship Achievement, Community

Outreach Achievement, World Mission Achievement, and Sabbath School Achievement.

**Independent Variable—Learning
Achievement**

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency

of Sabbath School Attendance on the level of Learning Achievement. Participants who

attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath achieved the highest ($M = 3.89$) while

participants who usually did not attend Sabbath School achieved the lowest ($M = 3.16$).

Table 30 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Table 30

Relationship of Learning Achievement to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Learning Achievement					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	23.02	3, 1356	.000			
I usually do not attend				60	3.14	0.96
Occasionally				113	3.50	0.83
2-3 times per month				118	3.72	0.87
Almost every Sabbath				1,069	3.89	0.80

**Independent Variable—Fellowship
Achievement**

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency

of Sabbath School Attendance on the level of Fellowship Achievement. Participants who

attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath scored higher on Fellowship Achievement

(*M* = 3.44) than did those who usually did not attend Sabbath School (*M* = 2.83).

Table 31 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

**Independent Variable—Community
Outreach Achievement**

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency

of Sabbath School Attendance on the level of Community Outreach Achievement.

Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath achieved the highest on

Community Outreach Achievement (*M* = 2.98) while participants who usually did not

attend Sabbath School achieved the lowest on Community Outreach Achievement

(*M* = 2.36). Table 32 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Table 31

Relationship of Fellowship Achievement to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Fellowship Achievement					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	8.67	3, 1401	.000			
I usually do not attend				68	2.83	1.17
Occasionally				123	3.10	1.07
2-3 times per month				126	3.41	1.10
Almost every Sabbath				1,088	3.44	1.00

Table 32

Relationship of Community Outreach Achievement to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Community Outreach Achievement					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	11.38	3, 1396	.000			
I usually do not attend				67	2.36	1.06
Occasionally				122	2.66	0.82
2-3 times per month				125	2.92	1.09
Almost every Sabbath				1,086	2.98	0.98

Independent Variable—World Mission Achievement

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency of

Sabbath School Attendance on the level of World Mission Achievement. Participants

who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath scored the highest on World Mission

Achievement ($M = 3.34$) while participants who usually did not attend Sabbath School

scored the lowest on World Mission Achievement ($M = 2.65$). Table 33 presents the

analysis of results for this variable.

Table 33

Relationship of World Mission Achievement to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	World Mission Achievement					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	14.03	3, 1395	.000			
I usually do not attend				68	2.65	1.17
Occasionally				121	2.95	0.95
2-3 times per month				125	3.40	1.12
Almost every Sabbath				1,085	3.34	1.04

Independent Variable—Sabbath School Achievement

The Sabbath School Achievement is a scale which contains all of the previous Achievement Factors. There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency of Sabbath School Attendance on the level of Sabbath School Achievement. Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath scored the highest on Sabbath School Achievement (*M* = 3.54) while participants who usually did not attend Sabbath School scored the lowest on Sabbath School Achievement (*M* = 2.82). Table 34 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Research Question #5

The fifth research question asked: Is there any relationship between each of the Satisfaction Factors and Sabbath School Attendance? This research question treats the Satisfaction Factors as independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance as the dependent variable.

Table 34

Relationship of Sabbath School Achievement to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Sabbath School Achievement					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	27.60	3, 1417	.000			
I usually do not attend				74	2.82	0.88
Occasionally				123	3.19	0.73
2-3 times per month				127	3.42	0.84
Almost every Sabbath				1,097	3.54	0.73

Multiple one-way ANOVAs were conducted to determine whether there were

group differences for Sabbath School Attendance in relation to Sabbath School

Satisfaction. The Sabbath School Satisfaction Factors were: Satisfaction With

Preliminaries, Satisfaction With Topics Studied, Satisfaction With Teachers, Satisfaction

With Teaching Styles, and Sabbath School Satisfaction.

Independent Variable—Satisfaction With
Preliminaries

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency

of Sabbath School Attendance on the level of Satisfaction With Preliminaries.

Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath had the highest level of

Satisfaction With Preliminaries (*M* = 3.47), while participants who usually did not attend

Sabbath School had the lowest level of Satisfaction With Preliminaries (*M* = 3.19).

Table 35 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

**Independent Variable—Satisfaction With
Topics Studied**

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency

of Sabbath School Attendance on the level of Satisfaction With Topics Studied.

Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath had the highest level of

Satisfaction With Topics Studied ($M = 4.01$) while participants who usually did not

attend Sabbath School had the lowest level of Satisfaction With Topics Studied

($M = 3.57$). Table 36 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Table 35

Relationship of Satisfaction With Preliminaries to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Satisfaction With Preliminaries					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	3.12	3, 1397	.025			
I usually do not attend				70	3.19	0.87
Occasionally				122	3.32	0.71
2-3 times per month				124	3.41	0.83
Almost every Sabbath				1,085	3.47	0.91

Table 36

Relationship of Topics Studied to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Satisfaction With Topics Studied					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	8.67	3, 1401	.000			
I usually do not attend				68	2.83	1.17
Occasionally				123	3.10	1.07
2-3 times per month				126	3.41	1.10
Almost every Sabbath				1,088	3.44	1.00

**Independent Variable—Satisfaction With
Teachers**

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency

of Sabbath School Attendance on the level of Satisfaction With Sabbath School Teachers.

Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath had the highest level of

Satisfaction With Teachers ($M = 4.25$) while participants who usually did not attend

Sabbath School had the lowest level of Satisfaction With Teachers ($M = 3.74$). Table 37

presents the analysis of results for this variable.

**Independent Variable—Satisfaction With
Teaching Style**

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency

of Sabbath School Attendance on the level of Satisfaction With Teaching Style.

Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath scored the highest on

Satisfaction With Teaching Style ($M = 4.70$) while participants who usually did not

attend Sabbath School scored the lowest on Satisfaction With Teaching Style ($M = 4.25$).

Table 38 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

**Independent Variable—Sabbath School
Satisfaction**

Sabbath School Satisfaction is a scale containing all the previous Satisfaction

Factors. There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency

of Sabbath School Attendance on the level of Satisfaction With Sabbath School.

Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath scored the

highest on Sabbath School Satisfaction ($M = 4.10$) while participants who usually did not

Table 37

Relationship of Satisfaction With Teachers to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Satisfaction With Teachers					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	12.12	3, 1392	.000			
I usually do not attend				65	3.74	1.03
Occasionally				120	4.00	0.82
2-3 times per month				125	4.22	0.72
Almost every Sabbath				1,086	4.25	0.75

Table 38

Relationship of Satisfaction With Teaching Style to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Satisfaction With Teaching Style					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	4.91	3, 1346	.002			
I usually do not attend				58	4.25	1.30
Occasionally				118	4.54	1.12
2-3 times per month				121	4.69	0.91
Almost every Sabbath				1,055	4.70	0.98

attend Sabbath School scored the lowest on Sabbath School Satisfaction (*M* = 3.65).

Table 39 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Research Question #6

The sixth research question asked: Is there any relationship between each of the Socio-cultural Factors and Sabbath School Attendance? In this question the Socio-cultural Factors are the independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance is the dependent variable.

Table 39

Relationship of Sabbath School Satisfaction to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School Attendance	Sabbath School Satisfaction					
	F	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	15.59	3, 1416	.000			
I usually do not attend				72	3.65	0.71
Occasionally				123	3.91	0.58
2-3 times per month				127	4.04	0.58
Almost every Sabbath				1,098	4.10	0.57

Multiple one-way ANOVAs were conducted to determine whether there were group differences for Sabbath School Attendance in relation to the Socio-cultural Factors. The Socio-cultural Factors included the following variables: Access to Information, Come to Worship God, Come to Learn Biblical Truths, Come to Meet Friends, Truths Enhance Relationship With God, and Beliefs Are More Important Than Relationship With God.

Independent Variable—Access to Information

There was no significant difference between groups that had a different frequency of Sabbath School Attendance on the level of their Access to Information. Table 40 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Independent Variable—Come to Worship God

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency of Sabbath School Attendance on the extent to which worship is the reason for coming to

Sabbath School. Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath scored the highest on Coming to Church for Worship ($M = 4.69$) while participants who usually did not attend Sabbath School scored the lowest on Coming to Church for Worship ($M = 4.34$). Those who attended Sabbath School regularly were more interested in Coming to Church for Worship than were those who did not attend Sabbath School regularly. Table 41 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Table 40

Relationship of Access to Information to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Access to Information					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	1.18	3, 1378	.315			
I usually do not attend				73	3.08	1.07
Occasionally				119	3.33	0.93
2-3 times per month				123	3.28	0.93
Almost every Sabbath				1,067	3.30	0.99

Table 41

Relationship of Come to Worship God to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Come to Worship God					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	6.05	3, 1369	.000			
I usually do not attend				71	4.34	1.05
Occasionally				120	4.38	0.87
2-3 times per month				122	4.53	0.82
Almost every Sabbath				1,060	4.69	0.64

Independent Variable—Come to Learn
Biblical Truths

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency
of Sabbath School Attendance on the extent to which learning biblical truths is the reason
for coming to Sabbath School. Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every
Sabbath scored the highest on Coming to Church to Learn Biblical Truths ($M = 4.59$)
while those who usually did not attend Sabbath School scored the lowest on Coming to
Church to Learn Biblical Truths ($M = 4.19$). Those who attended Sabbath School
regularly were more interested in Coming to Church to Learn Biblical Truths than were
those who did not attend Sabbath School regularly. Table 42 presents the analysis of
results for this variable.

Independent Variable—Come to Meet
Friends

There was not a significant difference between groups that had a different
frequency of Sabbath School Attendance on the extent to which meeting friends is the
reason for coming to church. Table 43 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Independent Variable—Biblical Truths
Enhance Relationship With God

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency
of Sabbath School Attendance on the extent to which participants believe that Biblical
Truths Enhance Relationship With God. Participants who attended Sabbath School
almost every Sabbath scored the highest on believing that Biblical Truths Enhance
Relationship With God ($M = 4.71$), while participants who usually did not attend Sabbath
School scored the lowest on believing that Biblical Truths Enhance Relationship With

God ($M = 4.37$). Those who did not attend Sabbath School regularly tend to believe less that Biblical Truths Enhance Relationship With God than did those who attended Sabbath School more regularly. Table 44 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Table 42

Relationship of Come to Learn Biblical Truths to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Come to Learn Biblical Truths					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	7.88	3, 1336	.000			
I usually do not attend				69	4.19	1.09
Occasionally				114	4.41	0.87
2-3 times per month				118	4.45	0.88
Almost every Sabbath				1,039	4.59	0.73

Table 43

Relationship of Come to Meet Friends to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Come to Meet Friends					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	2.31	3, 1327	.074			
I usually do not attend				68	3.74	1.25
Occasionally				113	3.77	1.20
2-3 times per month				117	3.75	1.14
Almost every Sabbath				1,032	3.85	1.08

Table 44

Relationship of Biblical Truths Enhance Relationship With God to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Biblical Truths Enhance Relationship With God					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	13.97	3, 1378	.000			
I usually do not attend				68	4.37	0.86
Occasionally				117	4.44	0.78
2-3 times per month				124	4.56	0.63
Almost every Sabbath				1,073	4.71	0.57

**Independent Variable—Beliefs Are More
Important Than Relationship With God**

There was not a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency of Sabbath School Attendance on the extent to which participants think that Beliefs Are More Important Than a Relationship With God. Table 45 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Table 45

Relationship of Beliefs Are More Important Than Relationship With God to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Beliefs Are More Important Than Relationship With God					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	1.37	3, 1043	.251			
I usually do not attend				76	2.08	1.10
Occasionally				118	2.29	1.09
2-3 times per month				124	2.08	1.01
Almost every Sabbath				1,043	2.22	0.98

Research Question #7

The seventh research question asked: Is there any relationship between each of the General Perception Factors and Sabbath School Attendance? For this research question, General Perception Factors are the independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance is the dependent variable.

Multiple one-way ANOVAs were conducted to determine whether there were group differences for Sabbath School Attendance in relation to each of the General Perceptions Factors. The General Perceptions Factors included the following variables: Duplication With Worship Service, Participation in Other Church Ministries, Sabbath School Is Optional Service, Meaningful for the 21st Century, Expectation for Home Study, and Entry Level Program.

Independent Variable—Duplication With Worship Service

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency of Sabbath School Attendance on their view of Sabbath School as duplicating the worship service. Although there is not a linear trend, in general, less attendance is related to a stronger perception that there is Duplication With Worship Service. Table 46 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Independent Variable—Participation in Other Church Ministries

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency of Sabbath School Attendance on their Participation in Other Church Ministries. Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath scored the highest on

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Participation in Other Church Ministries ($M = 3.21$) while participants who usually did

not attend Sabbath School scored the lowest on Participation in Other Church Ministries

($M = 2.55$). Participants who attended Sabbath School regularly were more involved in

other church ministries than were those who did not attend or occasionally attended

Sabbath School. Table 47 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Table 46

Relationship of Duplication With Worship Service to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Duplication With Worship Service					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	3.73	3, 1363	.011			
I usually do not attend				64	2.73	1.12
Occasionally				117	2.99	1.31
2-3 times per month				121	2.64	1.34
Almost every Sabbath				1,065	2.58	1.27

Table 47

Relationship of Participation in Other Church Ministries to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Participation in Other Church Ministries					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	12.26	3, 1385	.000			
I usually do not attend				72	2.55	1.18
Occasionally				120	2.84	1.11
2-3 times per month				123	2.93	1.08
Almost every Sabbath				1,074	3.21	1.11

**Independent Variable—Sabbath School
Is Optional**

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency

of Sabbath School Attendance on perceiving Sabbath School as an option to replace the

experience of going to other services on Sabbath. Participants who attended Sabbath

School almost every Sabbath scored the lowest on perceiving Sabbath School as an

option to replace the experience of going to other services on Sabbath ($M = 2.95$) while

participants who usually did not attend Sabbath School scored the highest on perceiving

Sabbath School as optional ($M = 3.78$). Table 48 presents the analysis of results for this

variable.

Table 48

Relationship of Sabbath School Is Optional to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Sabbath School Is Optional					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	19.09	3, 1357	.000			
I usually do not attend				66	3.78	1.35
Occasionally				119	3.44	1.28
2-3 times per month				124	3.03	1.30
Almost every Sabbath				1,052	2.95	1.27

**Independent Variable—Meaningful for
the 21st Century**

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency

of Sabbath School Attendance on their perception about Sabbath School as Meaningful

for the 21st Century. Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath

scored the highest on perceiving Sabbath School as Meaningful for the 21st Century

($M = 4.28$) while participants who usually did not attend Sabbath School scored the

lowest ($M = 3.84$). Participants who did not attend Sabbath School regularly considered

Sabbath School as not Meaningful for the 21st Century. Table 49 presents the analysis of

results for this variable.

Table 49

Relationship of Meaningful for the 21st Century to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Meaningful for the 21st Century					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	4.40	3, 1335	.004			
I usually do not attend				64	3.84	1.26
Occasionally				113	4.17	0.89
2-3 times per month				120	4.19	1.01
Almost every Sabbath				1,042	4.28	0.97

**Independent Variable—Expectation for
Home Study**

There was a significant difference between groups that had a different frequency

of Sabbath School Attendance on the perception about the Expectation for Home Study

or prior preparation. Participants who attended Sabbath School almost every Sabbath

scored the highest on Expectation for Home Study ($M = 4.10$) while participants who

usually did not attend Sabbath School scored the lowest ($M = 3.81$). Participants who

attend Sabbath School more regularly are more likely to study the Sabbath School lesson

in advance during the week. Table 50 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Table 50

Relationship of Expectation for Home Study to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Expectation for Home Study					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	3.48	3, 1359	.016			
I usually do not attend				68	3.81	0.86
Occasionally				118	3.91	0.91
2-3 times per month				119	3.97	0.93
Almost every Sabbath				1,063	4.10	0.92

**Independent Variable—Entry Level
Program**

There was not a significant difference between groups that had a different

frequency of Sabbath School Attendance on their perception of Sabbath School as an

entry level program. Table 51 presents the analysis of results for this variable.

Table 51

Relationship of Entry Level Program to Sabbath School Attendance

Sabbath School	Entry Level Program					
Attendance	*F*	*df*	*p*	*N*	Mean	*SD*
	1.84	3, 1326	.138			
I usually do not attend				64	2.66	1.31
Occasionally				116	2.71	1.26
2-3 times per month				116	2.47	1.32
Almost every Sabbath				1,034	2.44	1.34

Research Question #8

The eighth research question asked: Do the relationships between the variables vary by the Demographic Factors? This research question aimed to analyze differences in correlation between the variables by Demographic Factors in order to provide a more in-depth understanding of the relationships between the variables. To simplify the analyses for this research question, each of the categorical variables was converted to a numerical variable. For example the independent variable Education was converted as follows: 1 = Elementary, 2 = High School, 3 = College, 4 = Graduate. For the purpose of keeping this study to a reasonable size, only six out of 17 Demographic Factors were selected for analysis. The selected Demographic Factors were: Age, Ethnicity, Education, Time of Meeting, Years in the Adventist Church, and Church Size. These selected factors were the ones expected to show the largest differences based on the theories presented in the literature review. For all of these Demographic Factors, I considered a .15 variation of the correlation coefficient large enough to be discussed.

Variation by Age

A correlation comparison was made to observe whether or not the correlations between the independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance vary by Age. The correlations between seven independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance varied by Age, as indicated in Table 52.

The correlation between Learning Achievement and Sabbath School Attendance was weaker for older participants than for younger. The correlation between Fellowship Achievement and Sabbath School Attendance was stronger for younger and older participants than for the middle-aged. The correlation between World Mission

Achievement and Sabbath School Attendance was lower for participants under 25 than

for other age groups. The correlation between Satisfaction With Preliminaries and

Sabbath School Attendance was weaker for participants older than 25 than for those

under 25. The correlation between Satisfaction With Teaching Style and Sabbath School

Attendance was weaker for participants over 25 than for those under 25. The correlation

between Come to Learn Biblical Truths and Sabbath School Attendance was stronger for

Table 52

Correlations With Sabbath School Attendance by Age Group

Variables	Age Group			
	Under 25	25-39	40-60	Over 60
Learning Achievement*	.331	.274	.190	.143
Fellowship Achievement*	.129	.107	.106	.126
Community Outreach Achievement	.244	.141	.142	.131
World Mission Achievement*	.039	.159	.128	.193
Satisfaction With Preliminaries*	.228	.068	.024	.071
Satisfaction With Topics Studied	.117	.148	.125	.059
Satisfaction With Teachers	.199	.192	.099	.108
Satisfaction With Teaching Style*	.369	.056	.025	.077
Access to Information	.023	.074	-.008	.070
Come to Worship God	.209	.261	.089	.167
Come to Learn Biblical Truths*	.272	.251	.031	.110
Come to Meet Friends	.096	.056	.045	.081
Biblical Truths Enhance Relationship	.124	.265	.125	.118
Beliefs Are More Important	-.120	.070	.089	.013
Participation in Other Ministries	.129	.264	.122	.155
Expectation for Home Study	.094	.142	-.036	.162
Entry Level Program	.052	.199	-.081	.001
Meaningful for 21st Century	.109	.192	.057	.101
Duplication With Worship Service	-.021	-.030	-.094	-.087
Sabbath School Is Optional*	.341	.190	.220	.136

* Correlations varying by .15 or more.

participants under 40 than for those over 40. The correlation between Sabbath School Is Optional and Sabbath School Attendance was stronger for participants under 25 than for those over 60.

Variation by Ethnicity

A correlation comparison was made to observe whether or not the correlations between the independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance vary by Ethnicity. The correlations between two independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance varied by Ethnicity. The correlations between Satisfaction With Teaching Style along with Come to Meet Friends and Sabbath School Attendance were stronger for the Blacks than for the Whites. Table 53 indicates the correlations with attendance by Ethnicity.

Variation by Education

A correlation comparison was made to observe whether or not the correlations between the independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance vary by Education. Correlations between two independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance varied by Education. The correlation between Come to Worship God and Sabbath School Attendance was stronger for Graduate than for College or High-School groups. Correlation between Sabbath School Is Optional and Sabbath School Attendance was weaker for High School than for College or Graduate groups. Table 54 indicates correlations with attendance by education.

Table 53

Correlations With Sabbath School Attendance by Ethnicity

	Ethnicity	
Variables	White	Black
Learning Achievement	.235	.295
Fellowship Achievement	.120	.246
Community Outreach Achievement	.162	.205
World Mission Achievement	.197	.162
Satisfaction With Preliminaries	.110	.080
Satisfaction With Topics Studied	.131	.188
Satisfaction With Teachers	.158	.149
Satisfaction With Teaching Style*	.089	.201
Access to Information	.036	.127
Come to Worship God	.171	.169
Come to Learn Biblical Truths	.147	.158
Come to Meet Friends*	.035	.195
Biblical Truths Enhance Relationship	.156	.169
Beliefs Are More Important	.028	.000
Participation in Other Ministries	.157	.171
Expectation for Home Study	.102	.136
Entry Level Program	-.018	-.068
Meaningful for 21st Century	.141	.114
Duplication With Worship Service	-.086	.043
Sabbath School Is Optional	.224	.139

* Correlations varying by .15 or more.

Table 54

Correlations With Sabbath School Attendance by Education

	Education		
Variables	High School	College	Graduate
Learning Achievement	.108	.218	.223
Fellowship Achievement	.083	.126	.203
Community Outreach Achievement	.093	.123	.181
World Mission Achievement	.124	.174	.165
Satisfaction With Preliminaries	.111	.067	.040
Satisfaction With Topics Studied	.105	.121	.074
Satisfaction With Teachers	.104	.143	.169
Satisfaction With Teaching Style	.133	.045	.132
Access to Information	.004	.035	.064
Come to Worship God*	.166	.104	.314
Come to Learn Biblical Truths	.107	.110	.180
Come to Meet Friends	.048	.067	.088
Biblical Truths Enhance Relationship	.189	.132	.177
Beliefs Are More Important	-.026	.072	.027
Participation in Other Ministries	.075	.180	.197
Expectation for Home Study	.101	.032	.118
Entry Level Program	-.071	-.117	004
Meaningful for 21st Century	.103	.061	.105
Duplication With Worship Service	-.075	-.102	-.079
Sabbath School Is Optional*	.115	.284	.211

* Correlations varying by .15 or more.

Variation by Time of Meeting

A correlation comparison was made to observe whether or not the correlations between the independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance vary by Time of Meeting. There was no variation on the correlation for the independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance by Time of Meeting. Table 55 indicates the correlations with Attendance by Time of Meeting.

Table 55

Correlations With Sabbath School Attendance by Time of Meeting

	Time of Meeting	
Variables	Before Worship	Other Times
Learning Achievement	.216	.145
Fellowship Achievement	.130	.089
Community Outreach Achievement	.144	.145
World Mission Achievement	.170	.089
Satisfaction With Preliminaries	.087	.007
Satisfaction With Topics Studied	.107	.171
Satisfaction With Teachers	.156	.070
Satisfaction With Teaching Style	.089	.041
Access to Information	.023	.010
Come to Worship God	.154	.090
Come to Learn Biblical Truths	.125	.088
Come to Meet Friends	.078	-.037
Biblical Truths Enhance Relationship	.177	.170
Beliefs Are More Important	.020	.071
Participation in Other Ministries	.174	.077
Expectation for Home Study	.085	.050
Entry Level Program	-.065	-.002
Meaningful for 21st Century	.088	.094
Duplication With Worship Service	-.078	-.010
Sabbath School Is Optional	.188	.246

* Correlations varying by .15 or more.

Variation by Years in the Adventist Church

A correlation comparison was made to observe whether or not the correlations between the independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance vary by Years in the Adventist Church. The correlations between two independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance varied by Years in the Adventist Church. The correlation between Satisfaction With Teaching Style and Sabbath School Attendance was stronger for those

who were in the Adventist Church 5-20 years than for those who were in the church either less than 5 years or more than 20 years. The correlation between Sabbath School Is Optional and Attendance was stronger as participants were in the church longer. Table 56 indicates the correlations with Attendance by Years in the Adventist Church.

Table 56

Correlations With Sabbath School Attendance by Years in the Adventist Church

	Years in the Adventist Church		
Variables	Under 5	5-20	Over 20
Learning Achievement	.257	.214	.222
Fellowship Achievement	.080	.174	.140
Community Outreach Achievement	.203	.137	.145
World Mission Achievement	.136	.106	.198
Satisfaction With Preliminaries	.143	.086	.070
Satisfaction With Topics Studied	.129	.069	.140
Satisfaction With Teachers	.109	.167	.151
Satisfaction With Teaching Style*	.079	.278	.011
Access to Information	-.001	-.014	.058
Come to Worship God	.193	.220	.131
Come to Learn Biblical Truths	.192	.164	.126
Come to Meet Friends	.062	.111	.066
Biblical Truths Enhance Relationship	.251	163	.145
Beliefs Are More Important	-.012	.058	-.006
Participation in Other Ministries	.167	.095	.179
Expectation for Home Study	.095	.134	.068
Entry Level Program	.080	-.127	-.063
Meaningful for 21st Century	.037	.174	.087
Duplication With Worship Service	-.028	-.174	-.044
Sabbath School Is Optional*	.041	.168	.235

* Correlations varying by .15 or more.

Variation by Church Size

A correlation comparison was made to observe whether or not the correlations between the independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance vary by Church Size. The correlations between three independent variables and Sabbath School Attendance varied by Church Size. The correlations between Fellowship Achievement, Community Outreach Achievement, and Come to Worship God are stronger as the church is larger. Table 57 indicates the correlations with Attendance by Church Size.

Summary of Findings

In response to the 4,958 Member Surveys and 64 Pastor Surveys distributed, 1,451 (30%) Member Surveys and 59 (92%) Pastor Surveys were returned and entered into the system. The first stage of this study revealed that seven out of eight Institutional Factors were significantly related to Sabbath School Achievement.

These factors are:

1. Preliminaries

2. Teaching Styles

3. Class Setting

4. Teaching the Word

5. Fellowship

6. Community Outreach

7. World Mission.

The only Institutional Factor not significantly related to Sabbath School Achievement was Topics Studied.

Table 57

Correlations With Sabbath School Attendance by Church Size

	Church Size		
Variables	Small	Medium	Large
Learning Achievement	.150	.165	.242
Fellowship Achievement*	.033	.093	.221
Community Outreach Achievement*	.069	.123	.211
World Mission Achievement	.130	.178	.167
Satisfaction With Preliminaries	.046	.049	.107
Satisfaction With Topics Studied	.071	.067	.178
Satisfaction With Teachers	.102	.135	.179
Satisfaction With Teaching Style	.048	.071	.138
Access to Information	-.017	.016	.122
Come to Worship God*	.052	.168	.207
Come to Learn Biblical Truths	.103	.108	.151
Come to Meet Friends	.020	.049	.166
Biblical Truths Enhance Relationship	.250	.145	.113
Beliefs Are More Important	.042	.025	-.014
Participation in Other Ministries	.134	.135	.205
Expectation for Home Study	.087	.096	033
Entry Level Program	-.083	-.074	-.062
Meaningful for 21st Century	.045	.045	.112
Duplication With Worship Service	-.019	-.119	-.087
Sabbath School Is Optional	.197	.192	.242

* Correlations varying by .15 or more.

Six out of the same eight Institutional Factors were related to Sabbath School

Satisfaction. These factors are:

1. Topics Studied

2. Teaching Styles

3. Teaching the Word

4. Fellowship

5. Community Outreach

6. World Mission.

The only two Institutional Factors not related to Sabbath School Satisfaction were Preliminaries and Class Setting.

The second stage of the study revealed that five out of eight Institutional Factors, five out of five Achievement and Satisfaction Factors, three out of six Socio-cultural Factors, and five out of six General Perception Factors were significantly related to Sabbath School Attendance.

Twenty-three out of 30 factors investigated in the second stage, which was the main stage of this study, were significantly related to Sabbath School Attendance. These factors are:

1. Topics Studied

2. Teaching Styles

3. Teaching the Word

4. Fellowship

5. Community Outreach

6. Learning Achievement

7. Fellowship Achievement

8. Community Outreach Achievement

9. World Mission Achievement

10. Sabbath School Achievement

11. Satisfaction With Topics Studied

12. Satisfaction With Teachers

13. Satisfaction With Preliminaries

14. Satisfaction With Teaching Style

15. Sabbath School Satisfaction

16. Come to Worship God

17. Come to Learn Biblical Truths

18. Biblical Truths Enhance Relationship With God

19. Duplication With Worship Service

20. Participation in Other Church Ministries

21. Sabbath School Is Optional

22. Meaningful for the 21st Century

23. Expectation for Home Study.

Seven out of 30 factors were not significantly related to Sabbath School Attendance. These factors are:

1. Preliminaries

2. Class Settings

3. World Mission

4. Access to Information

5. Come to Meet Friends

6. Beliefs Are More Important Than Relationship With God

7. Entry Level Program.

Although this study did not analyze the effect size for the above correlations, their findings show that some factors have a stronger correlation than others. The study shows that three out of four Sabbath School objectives are significantly related to Sabbath

School Attendance. However, Teaching the Word has the strongest correlation to Sabbath School Attendance among the four Sabbath School objectives.

In the same way all four Sabbath School objectives were significantly related to Sabbath School Achievement and Sabbath School Satisfaction. However, the level of achievement and satisfaction related to the teaching objective of Sabbath School was higher for Teaching the Word than for any of the other three Sabbath School objectives.

The only Institutional Factor related to all three dependent variables (Sabbath School Achievement, Sabbath School Satisfaction, and Sabbath School Attendance), studied in Stages A and B, was Teaching Style. In the context of Sabbath School, this study shows that Teaching Style is significantly related to achievement—the cognitive component; satisfaction—the affective component; and attendance—the behavioral component. If Sabbath School teachers can be educated and encouraged to address all three of these learning domains, they will in fact be more fully addressing concepts of human development and transformation central to the biblical and Adventist understanding of the restoration of the image of God in humanity.

As presented in this study, Teaching Style has the potential to create a change in all areas of learning as suggested by the classical theories of learning. Those taught interactively were more likely to achieve more, be more satisfied, and attend Sabbath School more frequently.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The history of Sabbath School in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NAD) reveals that the adult Sabbath School was highly attended for several decades, from the time of its inception in the 1850s until the early part of the 20th century. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC) and NAD annual statistical reports indicate that in the early 20th century Sabbath School reached the highest proportional attendance rate when Sabbath School membership was larger than church membership. Since that time, the percentage of church membership attending Sabbath School has declined steadily. Currently it is estimated that less than 25% of church membership regularly attends Sabbath School in the NAD.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the adult Sabbath School Attendance in the NAD and the following five groups of factors related to attendance: Achievement, Satisfaction, Institutional, Socio-cultural, and General Perceptions.

Both the literature and the data collected for this study revealed that there is no single cause for or simple answer to the declining attendance at the adult Sabbath School in North America. The phenomenon of declining attendance encountered for almost a century is related to numerous factors, which cannot be easily and entirely identified.

Throughout this study, I focused only on a limited number of factors related to declining attendance.

More specifically, the literature revealed the following aspects related to Sabbath School:

1. Sabbath School Attendance has been related to the multiplicity of Sabbath School objectives. According to the literature a single and clearly defined objective was at least an important factor in maintaining a high rate of Sabbath School attendance for the first several decades of its history. Based on the history of Sabbath School, it has been observed that attendance started to decline when multiple objectives were attributed to Sabbath School.

2. As a culturally sensitive entity, the dynamic of the Sabbath School has been affected by the numerous socio-cultural changes encountered throughout its history. A major impact on the vitality of Sabbath School has been attributed to secularism, with its natural products of materialism and religious pluralism reinforced by a postmodern worldview.

3. As an educational institution, although non-formal, Sabbath School Attendance is influenced by the quality of its teaching and learning process. Cultural and technological changes have dramatically impacted teaching and learning strategies over the past century, and these may not always have been reflected in the way Sabbath School classes are conducted. An adequate teaching and learning method, carefully and culturally contextualized, could result in better attended Sabbath Schools.

Findings

The data for this study were collected from 59 churches across the NAD in which 1,510 participants responded to a set of two surveys. A total of 1,451 responded to the Member Survey and 59 responded to the Pastor Survey. The sample was randomly stratified by location in each of the nine union conferences of the NAD, and by the church membership sizes under the following categories: small (under 99), medium (100–200), and large (over 200).

The data were analyzed in two stages. The first stage analyzed the relationships between Institutional Factors as the independent variables and the following two dependent variables: Sabbath School Achievement (the cognitive component) and Sabbath School Satisfaction (the affective component). The second stage analyzed the relationships between Sabbath School Attendance as the dependent variable and factors relating to the following groups as the independent variables: Achievement, Satisfaction, Institutional, Socio-cultural, and General Perceptions. Only statistically significant findings are reported in the sections that follow. In some instances where the findings were contrary to expectations derived from a study of the literature or from observation of the field, additional comments and speculations may have been added to the report.

Institutional Factors and Achievement

Based on the findings of the first research question, the study revealed that there was a relationship between Institutional Factors and Sabbath School Achievement. The eight Institutional Factors included in this study were: Preliminaries, Topics Studied, Teaching Styles, Class Setting, Teaching the Word, Fellowship, Community Outreach, and World Mission. For the purpose of this study Sabbath School Achievement was

defined as the extent to which Sabbath School participants benefit or gain from their

participation in Sabbath School (see Chapter 1—Dependent and Independent Variable).

Sabbath School Achievement has four components: Teaching Achievement, Fellowship

Achievement, Community Outreach Achievement, and World Mission Achievement.

Seven out of eight Institutional Factors were significantly related to Sabbath

School Achievement. The only factor not statistically related to Sabbath School

Achievement was Topics Studied. The study reveals that Sabbath School Achievement is

significantly higher for Sabbath Schools:

1. With no preliminaries than for those with preliminaries.

2. When an interactive teaching style is employed by the teachers rather than a

lecturing style.

3. With small classes than for those with large classes.

4. That use the Bible as the primary teaching resource than for those that do not

use the Bible as the primary teaching resource.

5. That provide fellowship opportunities than for those that provide less

fellowship opportunities or none at all.

6. That are engaged in community outreach than for those that are less engaged

in community outreach or not at all engaged.

7. That participate in world mission projects than for those that participate less or

not at all.

Institutional Factors and Satisfaction

The same eight Institutional Factors mentioned above were analyzed to determine

whether there was any relationship to Sabbath School Satisfaction. For the purpose of this

study Sabbath School Satisfaction was defined as the extent to which Sabbath School participants like or dislike their Sabbath Schools.

Six out of eight Institutional Factors were significantly related to Sabbath School Satisfaction. The two factors not statistically related to Sabbath School Satisfaction were: Preliminaries and Class Setting. The study revealed that Sabbath School Satisfaction is significantly higher:

1. When studying the quarterlies than studying other topics.

2. When an interactive teaching style is employed by the teachers rather than a lecturing style.

3. For Sabbath Schools that use the Bible as the primary teaching resource than for those that do not use the Bible as the primary teaching resource.

4. For Sabbath Schools that provide fellowship opportunities than for those providing less opportunities or none at all.

5. For those Sabbath Schools that are engaged in community outreach than for those that are less engaged or not engaged at all.

6. For Sabbath Schools that participate in world mission projects than for those that participate less or not at all.

Institutional Factors and Sabbath School Attendance

The same eight Institutional Factors were analyzed to determine whether there is any relationship between these factors and Sabbath School Attendance. Five out of eight Institutional Factors had a significant relationship to Sabbath School Attendance. The three factors not statistically related to Sabbath School Attendance were: Preliminaries,

Class Setting, and World Mission. The study revealed that Sabbath School Attendance is significantly higher:

1. For Sabbath Schools studying the quarterlies (the Bible) than for those studying other topics.

2. When an interactive teaching style is employed by the teachers rather than a lecturing style.

3. For Sabbath Schools that use the Bible as the primary teaching resource than for those that do not use the Bible as the primary teaching resource.

4. For Sabbath Schools that provide fellowship opportunities than for those that provide less fellowship opportunities or none at all.

5. For Sabbath Schools that are engaged in community outreach than for those that are less engaged or not engaged at all.

<div align="center">Achievement and Sabbath School Attendance</div>

The study revealed that there was a relationship between Achievement Factors and Sabbath School Attendance. The following five Achievement Factors were analyzed to determine their relationship to Sabbath School Attendance: Learning Achievement, Fellowship Achievement, Community Outreach Achievement, World Mission Achievement, and Sabbath School Achievement. As previously defined, Sabbath School Achievement is itself a scale combining the other four Achievement Factors mentioned above. All these Achievement Factors were significantly related to Sabbath School Attendance. Higher attendance was always associated with higher achievement in all the areas mentioned above.

Satisfaction and Sabbath School Attendance

The study revealed that there was a relationship between Satisfaction Factors and Sabbath School Attendance. The following five Satisfaction Factors were analyzed to determine their relationship to Sabbath School Attendance: Sabbath School Satisfaction, which is itself a scale defined in Chapter 1 as a combination of the other four factors, namely, Satisfaction With Preliminaries, Satisfaction With Topics Studied, Satisfaction With Teachers, and Satisfaction With Teaching Style. The study indicated that all of these Satisfaction Factors were significantly related to Sabbath School Attendance. Higher attendance was associated with higher satisfaction in each of the five areas that were analyzed.

Socio-Cultural Factors and Sabbath School Attendance

Six Socio-cultural Factors were analyzed to determine their relationship to Sabbath School Attendance: Access to Information, Come to Worship God, Come to Learn Biblical Truths, Come to Meet Friends, Biblical Truths Enhance Relationship With God, Beliefs Are More Important Than Relationship With God.

The study indicated that three out of six Socio-cultural Factors were significantly related to Sabbath School Attendance. Sabbath School Attendance is significantly related to:

1. The worship function of the church. Those who come to church to worship God are more likely to attend Sabbath School more frequently than those who come to church for reasons other than worship.

2.   The teaching function of the church. Those who come to church for learning biblical truths are more likely to attend Sabbath School more frequently than those who come to church for reasons other than learning.

3.   Participants' belief that biblical truths enhance relationship with God. Those who believe that biblical truths enhance relationship with God are more likely to attend Sabbath School more frequently than those who do not.

Sabbath School is not significantly related to:

1.   Participants' access to information. Contrary to expectations, these findings reveal that more access to biblical information, such as literature, media, and the internet, would not necessary prevent church members from attending Sabbath School more frequently.

2.   The social function of church. Coming to church to meet others does not make a significant difference in attending Sabbath School.

3.   Participants' belief that beliefs are more important than relationship with God.

General Perceptions and Sabbath School Attendance

Six General Perceptions Factors were analyzed to determine their relationship to Sabbath School Attendance. The General Perceptions Factors included the following items: Duplication With Worship Service, Participation in Other Church Ministries, Sabbath School Is Optional, Meaningful for the 21st Century, Expectation for Home Study, and Entry Level Program. Five out of six items in this group were significantly related to Sabbath School Attendance. Sabbath School Attendance is significantly related to:

1. Participants' perception that Sabbath School duplicates the features of a typical worship service. Those who perceive Sabbath School as a duplication of the worship service are less likely to attend Sabbath School regularly.

2. Participants' participation in other church ministries. Those who have a higher attendance rate at other church ministries are more likely to attend Sabbath School regularly. Contrary to expectations, this finding reveals that participation in another church ministry does not necessarily prevent people from attending Sabbath School.

3. Participants' perception that Sabbath School is an optional way to experience "going to church" on Sabbath. Those who perceive Sabbath School as an optional service for a Sabbath experience are less likely to attend Sabbath School regularly.

4. Participants' perception that Sabbath School is meaningful for the 21st century. Those who consider Sabbath School irrelevant for the 21st century are less likely to attend Sabbath School regularly.

5. Participants' perception that Sabbath School requires prior preparation. Those who think that Sabbath School requires home study or prior preparation are more likely to attend Sabbath School regularly. Contrary to expectations, this finding reveals that members do not avoid attending Sabbath School because it requires home study or prior preparation.

Sabbath School Attendance is not significantly related to participants' perception that Sabbath School is an entry level program. This finding reveals that church members do not consider Sabbath School as being beneficial only for new believers.

Demographic Items and Sabbath School Attendance

Six out of 17 Demographic Factors were analyzed to determine whether there is variation of the relationship between all the variables studied and Sabbath School Attendance by these Demographic Factors. The Demographic Factors selected for this study were: Age, Ethnicity, Education, Time of Meeting, Years in the Adventist Church, and Church Size.

Variation by Age Groups

1. The correlation between Learning Achievement and Sabbath School Attendance is stronger for younger participants than for older participants.

2. The correlation between Fellowship Achievement and Sabbath School Attendance is stronger for younger and older participants than for middle-aged participants.

3. The correlation between World Mission Achievement and Sabbath School Attendance is weaker for those under 25 than it is for the rest.

4. The correlation between the two variables, Satisfaction With Preliminaries and Satisfaction With Teaching Style, and Sabbath School Attendance is weaker for participants under 25 than for those older than 25.

5. The correlation between Come to Learn Biblical Truths and Sabbath School Attendance is stronger for participants under 40 than for those over 40 years of age.

6. The correlation between Sabbath School Is Optional and Sabbath School Attendance is stronger for participants under 25 than for those over 60 years of age.

Variation by Ethnicity

The correlation between the following two variables, Satisfaction With Teaching Style and Come to Meet Friends, and Sabbath School Attendance is stronger for the Black population than for the White population. These findings underline the importance of considering cultural differences in conducting Sabbath Schools, as they were presented in Chapter 2.

The adult Sabbath School membership in the NAD has changed considerably in its ethnic diversity through the middle and late 20th century. The international growth of the Adventist Church, along with immigration to North America, continuously changes the cultural picture of Sabbath School membership in the NAD.

Although this study did not focus on multiple ethnic groups present in the NAD other than the Black and the White populations, these findings show that the Black population is more likely to attend Sabbath School when interaction in teaching and fellowship in the classrooms are present.

Variation by Education

1. The correlation between Come to Worship God and Sabbath School Attendance is stronger for the graduate group than for the college or high-school groups.

2. The correlation between Sabbath School Is Optional and Sabbath School Attendance is weaker for the high-school group than for the college or the graduate groups.

Variation by the Time of Meeting

There is no variation on the correlation for the independent variables studied and Sabbath School Attendance by Time of Meeting groups.

Variation by Years in the Adventist Church

1. The correlation between Satisfaction With Teaching Style and Sabbath School Attendance is stronger for those who have been church members from 5–20 years than for those who have been church members either less than 5 years or more than 20 years.

2. The correlation between Sabbath School Is Optional and Sabbath School Attendance is stronger for those who have been members of the church for longer.

Variation by Church Size

The larger the church, the stronger the correlation between Sabbath School Attendance and the three independent variables, Fellowship Achievement, Community Outreach Achievement, and Come to Worship.

Conclusions

From the time of its inception in the 1850s until the present (2012), the Sabbath School has been and continues to be the main Bible-based educational ministry for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Functionally present in any given Adventist congregation around the globe, the Sabbath School has been responsible for teaching the Bible to all ages in addition to serving as an agency for other personal ministry objectives.

Sabbath School attendance in North America grew steadily from the time of its inception in the 1850s until the early part of the 20th century. Following that time the

proportion of church members attending Sabbath School in North America has steadily declined. Both the NAD annual statistical reports and my field observation reveal that in most Adventist congregations in the NAD, adult Sabbath School Attendance has significantly dropped.

Although there is no simple answer to the declining attendance at the adult Sabbath School in North America, this study reveals a number of factors significantly related to Sabbath School Attendance. According to this study the following characteristics or circumstances were associated with frequent Sabbath School Attendance. The list does not include factors that were not significantly related to Sabbath School Attendance.

1. When the Bible is used as the primary teaching resource

2. When an interactive teaching style is predominantly used by the Sabbath School teachers

3. When fellowship opportunities are provided

4. When the local Sabbath School is engaged in community outreach projects

5. When worship is the reason for coming to church

6. When learning biblical truths is the reason for coming to church

7. When the participants believe that biblical truths enhance their relationship with God

8. When Sabbath School does not duplicate the features of the church worship service

9. When there is involvement in other ministries

10. When Sabbath School is considered necessary to experience "going to church" on Sabbath

11. When Sabbath School is considered relevant for the 21st century

12. When the Sabbath School lesson is studied during the week.

This study reveals that even in a postmodern culture such as 21st-century North America, the adult Sabbath School is better attended in those places where the Bible is used as the primary teaching resource. No other resources, as relevant as they might seem to be, were perceived as a replacement for the study of God's word. The Bible was and continues to be the foundation and the driving force for a successful Sabbath School.

An interactive teaching style employed by Sabbath School teachers makes a significant difference in Sabbath School attendance. When this teaching style is used, the Sabbath School participants feel encouraged to express their beliefs and develop their own well-considered theological identity.

A teaching style that takes into consideration the differences in learning preferences will enable the Sabbath School members to learn faster (achievement), enjoy what they are learning (satisfaction), and become more likely to put what they have learned into practice (psychomotor). These types of Sabbath Schools are more likely to grow their attendance. The art and science of teaching and learning seems to play an important role in achieving the goals in Sabbath School, but the most important attribute of the Sabbath School teacher is relationship with and dependence on God.

A friendly and welcoming environment where the Bible is taught becomes a binding force that attracts people to attend Sabbath School more frequently. An open and supportive Sabbath School class sets the tone for a growing Sabbath School.

A well-conducted Sabbath School provides the necessary ground for growth in discipleship, that is, personal spiritual sanctification and a desire to witness. Higher levels of achievement and satisfaction with Sabbath School in the area of personal spiritual development lead to better Sabbath School attendance.

In addition, Sabbath School attendance is significantly related to a fundamental attitude or worldview perspective in which worshiping God is associated with coming to church. A genuine corporate worship experience has the potential to lead people to a stronger desire for an in-depth study and understanding of God's word.

In the same way, a fundamental attitude in which learning is associated with coming to church is significantly related to Sabbath School attendance. As the primary non-formal educational ministry in the Adventist Church, the Sabbath School can satisfy the needs of those who value biblical truth and view this truth as essential to the enhancement of their relationship with God.

Keeping the features of a Sabbath School distinct and relevant and avoiding duplication with the features of other church services, mainly with the worship service, could have a positive impact on Sabbath School attendance. If Sabbath School mirrors the exact features of a typical worship service, it is more likely that members will be tempted to choose one of the two services instead of attending both.

This study reveals that participation in multiple ministries is related to Sabbath School Attendance. Those who participate in other ministries are more likely to attend Sabbath School more frequently. The possibility for involvement in well-organized and distinctly focused ministries as part of a balanced Christian life may be important in making Sabbath School relevant as a place where one learns in order to serve. If service

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to God and humanity is experienced as the joy God intends it to be, then Sabbath School becomes relevant as an institution where one can learn to serve better and more joyfully.

A culturally contextualized Sabbath School meaningful to the 21st-century generation is more likely to be frequently attended than an outdated Sabbath School that is not sensitive to members' needs. This identifies an important responsibility for Sabbath School leaders and teachers. They must remain relevant to the culture as well as true to the Bible—identified by this research as the best study resource for the Sabbath School.

The study of the Sabbath School lesson during the week is significantly related to Sabbath School Attendance. Commitment to the daily lesson study appears to motivate Sabbath School attendance rather than being seen as a chore that decreases attendance.

The level of achievement and satisfaction with Sabbath School is highly related to Sabbath School Attendance. Based on the findings of this study, a balance between the cognitive component (achievement) and the affective component (satisfaction), along with active involvement in some form of ministry (psychomotor), appears to stimulate members to regular attendance at Sabbath School.

North American Sabbath Schools in the 21st century face challenges unprecedented in their history. The most significant of these challenges is the paradigm shift to the postmodern era, manifested particularly through religious pluralism and cultural diversity. Sabbath Schools must deal with these new challenges in order to be effective. The study shows that a Bible-based teaching experience, culturally contextualized, and relevant to the 21st-century generation is an important ingredient for a well-attended Sabbath School.

In response to what has been revealed by this study, it is my personal conviction that one clearly defined and culturally contextualized Sabbath School objective, passionately and diligently pursued, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, may potentially set the grounds for a new and more productive phase of the adult Sabbath School. Although my initial and continuing assumption is that one primary objective best characterizes an ideal Sabbath School, the data collected for this study do not clearly support this assumption. A multiplicity of Sabbath School objectives is likely not directly related to declining Sabbath School attendance. In fact, the four objectives (Teaching the Word, Fellowship, Community Outreach, World Mission) all correlate positively with Sabbath School Satisfaction and Achievement; and all except World Mission correlate positively with Sabbath School Attendance. However, as noted (pp. 131-32), the objective with the strongest correlation to all three dependent variables is Teaching the Word.

In addition to the factors analyzed in this study, it is my opinion that other significant issues remain to be researched, particularly social and cultural developments that might explain additional reasons for declining attendance at Adult Sabbath Schools in the NAD. I live with the expectation that further studies will focus more on present cultural implications on the vitality of Sabbath School in the NAD.

Recommendations

Although the purpose of this study was not to solve the attendance problem of the adult Sabbath Schools in North America, the findings may be useful to Sabbath School leaders and administrators at any organizational level in designing and implementing Sabbath School curricula, programs, and strategies for recovery. Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:

To North American Division Sabbath School
Officers and Leaders

1. Provide opportunities for periodic training, encouraging all Sabbath School teachers to learn teaching skills and strategies. Where possible, make study toward approved Sabbath School teaching certificates an attractive opportunity for Sabbath School teachers in the NAD.

2. Encourage Sabbath School teachers to contextualize and customize the lessons according to the specific needs and circumstances of their classes.

To Conference Administrators

Wherever possible, appoint well-informed conference Sabbath School directors to support local pastors in developing quality Sabbath Schools and Sabbath School teachers.

To Local Pastors and Sabbath School Superintendents

1. Avoid large classes. Make classes small enough so that everyone can interact.

2. Keep your Sabbath School unique. As far as possible, avoid any duplication with any features of the worship service or of other church programs.

3. Eliminate irrelevant preliminary items.

4. Provide training opportunities for your Sabbath School teachers.

To Local Sabbath School Teachers

1. Develop an interactive teaching style. Avoid lecturing. Encourage your students to voice their opinions and beliefs by asking them meaningful questions.

2. Use the Bible as the primary teaching resource rather than relying solely on other materials.

3. Attempt to relate the teaching to present and practical needs. Contextualize and customize the lessons according to the needs and circumstances of your class.

4. Enhance your teaching skills by attending teaching workshops or taking formal teacher training.

To Active and Inactive Sabbath School Members

1. Rediscover the need and the importance of biblical knowledge. View God's word as the absolute truth in this present postmodern world.

2. Adjust your attitude and actions in Sabbath School to being a giver more than a taker. Make your Sabbath School an opportunity to give more than to get.

3. Be constructively critical. Suggest to your Sabbath School leaders a Sabbath School model that you think would fit your local church needs.

For Further Research

1. Conduct a similar study using a sample that includes more inactive Sabbath School members.

2. Conduct a qualitative study by asking participants why they do not attend Sabbath School and requesting them to provide a picture of an ideal Sabbath School.

3. Repeat this study focused on teens and young adults.

4. Repeat this study focused on ethnic and culturally diverse groups in the NAD.

Final Word

Is Sabbath School still relevant in a super-civilized society such as North America at the beginning at the 21st century? Is Sabbath School still needed in a technologically advanced world when information is present everywhere and easily accessible? Is

Sabbath School still suited to meet the needs of the secularized minds of the 21st century? Is there a future for Sabbath School in this postmodern world infused with relativism and materialism?

My answer is *yes*. Sabbath School still has its unique mission, a mandate that no other church ministry or church institution is able to fulfill as efficiently as the Sabbath School. In addition to what this study has revealed, I personally believe that the following four major outcomes of a properly conducted Sabbath School cannot and will not be fulfilled to the same extent by any other church entity:

1. Sabbath School was and continues to be the most effectual binding tool in keeping the Adventist Church theologically and doctrinally united.

2. Sabbath School provides a unique educational model that has the potential to guide the church membership, individually and collectively, in searching and studying the truths of the Bible at home and in Sabbath School on a weekly basis.

3. Sabbath School provides valuable mentoring opportunities for young, aspiring leaders to practice and develop their talents.

4. Sabbath School provides important opportunities for church and non-church members to voice their beliefs and opinions. As individuals are encouraged to consider and express their beliefs in Sabbath School, they naturally internalize biblical values and take ownership of their beliefs.

It is my personal conviction that even within the unprecedented challenges of the 21st century in North America as well as around the world, a properly designed and properly conducted Sabbath School has the potential to become what it was originally intended to be—one of the most effectual tools in bringing people close to God.

APPENDIX A

SABBATH SCHOOL PASTOR SURVEY

Sabbath School Pastor Survey

Your answers are absolutely confidential. Under no circumstances will your name or your church's name be associated with the findings of this study. Please put an ☒ in the boxes that correctly describe your answer. All questions refer to the **Adult** Sabbath School division only. Quarterlies = Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guides; Preliminaries = the program before the class.

1. Where is your church located?
   ☐ Large city
   ☐ Suburban area
   ☐ Small city
   ☐ Rural area

2. When does the Sabbath School in your church normally meet?
   ☐ Sabbath morning before worship service
   ☐ After the worship service
   ☐ Between the worship services (if more than one)
   ☐ Other times: _____

3. What topics do the Sabbath School classes in your church normally study? (check all that apply)
   ☐ The Sabbath School quarterly
   ☐ Other biblical topics, but not the quarterly
   ☐ Felt-need topics
   ☐ Other: _____

4. What settings for Sabbath School classes are normally available in your church? (Check all that apply)
   ☐ A large class in the main sanctuary or in a large room
   ☐ Small classes each in a separate room
   ☐ More than one class in the same room
   ☐ Other: _____

5. On average, how much time does the Sabbath School in your church spend on preliminaries? (Like mission story, superintendent remarks, song service, scripture reading, special music, prayer requests, etc.)?
   ☐ More than 30 minutes
   ☐ Between 15 and 30 minutes
   ☐ Less than 15 minutes
   ☐ Not at all, except possibly the opening prayer

6. How many classes does your adult Sabbath School normally have?
   ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5+

7. What percentage would best describe the average adult SS attendance compared to the average worship service attendance in this church?
   ☐ More than 75%
   ☐ Between 50% and 75%
   ☐ Between 25% and 50%
   ☐ Less than 25%

8. How would you describe the music style used in your church?
   ☐ More traditional oriented
   ☐ More contemporary oriented
   ☐ Both styles about equally

9. What is the size of your church?
   ☐ Under 50
   ☐ 50-99
   ☐ 100-199
   ☐ 200-300
   ☐ Over 300

10. How many bulletins do you normally print on a typical Sabbath for this church? _____

Please provide the mailing address where you want to receive the package containing the surveys for your church:

Pastor's Name: _____

Church's Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

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APPENDIX B

SABBATH SCHOOL MEMBER SURVEY

<div align="center">**Sabbath School Member Survey**</div>

Please fill out and return this survey before you leave the church today. Do **NOT** print your name. Your answers are confidential. You should be a member or regular visitor 18 or older to participate. Participation is voluntary and without any obligations. Please put an ☒ in the boxes that correctly describe your answer. All questions refer to the **Adult** Sabbath School division only. SS = Sabbath School. Preliminaries=the program before class. Quarterly=Study Guides.

Note: If you <u>don't</u> attend SS currently, <u>please fill out the survey</u> and refer to the time when you were attending SS.

Section A—*Please answer on a scale of 1-5 according to these headings*

	Very Little or None	Little	Moderately	Much	Very Much
1. Sabbath School in my church engages in community outreach projects.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
2. Sabbath School in my church is involved in world mission projects in addition to the general SS offering.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
3. Sabbath School motivates me to share with others what I learn in class.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
4. Sabbath School gives me a picture of the world-wide Adventist church.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
5. Sabbath School in my church helps me to make new friends.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
6. SS preliminaries in my church are meaningful, (e.g. the program before class, mission story, superintendent remarks, song service).	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
7. My SS class uses the Bible as the primary teaching resource.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
8. My SS class motivates me to study the Bible regularly.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
9. My SS class helps me understand God's word better.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
10. My SS class provides me with new information which I didn't know before.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
11. The SS quarterly (Adult Bible Study Guide) helps me grow spiritually.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
12. The SS quarterlies are well organized and easy to follow.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
13. My regular SS teacher makes the lesson come alive.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
14. I feel comfortable to share personal challenges with my SS class.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
15. I am personally involved or I support world mission projects promoted by Sabbath School in addition to the general SS offering.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
16. I usually study the SS lesson during the week.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
17. Besides the Bible I use the following sources to find Biblical information:					
a. Sermons and seminars	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
b. Christian programs on radio or TV	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
c. Sabbath school class	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
d. Books or other publications	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
e. Internet	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
18. I am usually motivated to attend religious services because:					
a. I want to worship/experience God.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
b. I want to learn new truths from the Bible.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
c. I want to meet/be with friends and others.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐

Section B—*Please answer on a scale of 1-5 according to these headings*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My SS teacher/s expects class members to study the lesson in advance.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
2. I need to know the truths of the Bible to enhance my relationship with God.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
3. SS preliminaries consume time that could be better used in class.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
4. SS is more important for new believers than the established ones.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
5. Sabbath School is meaningful for the 21st-Century generation.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
6. Sabbath School duplicates the worship service, having almost the same features (e.g. songs, scripture reading, prayer, offerings, sermon/lecture).	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐

7. An ideal Sabbath School would include both preliminaries and class.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
8. Sabbath School is optional to experience "going to church" on Sabbath.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐

Section C—*Please answer on a scale of 1-5 according to these headings*	Very Rare or Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
1. Besides studying, my Sabbath School provides opportunities for fellowship.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
2. My regular Sabbath School teacher comes to the class well prepared.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
3. I have invited non-Adventists to come to SS within the last 12 months.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
4. I normally go to Sabbath School to find answers to my questions about the truths of the Bible.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
5. I attend meetings where I study the Bible outside of SS class (e.g. small groups, prayer meetings, vespers, seminars, Bible studies).	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
6. I attend church events for fellowship other than SS (e.g. women's/men's ministry, support groups, social events, special programs).	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
7. As a child I attended children's Sabbath/Sunday School.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐
8. I have attended different SS classes in my church during the last 12 months.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐	5☐

Section D—*Please chose the one most appropriate option*

1. How often do you attend Sabbath School?
☐ Almost every Sabbath
☐ 2-3 times per month
☐ Occasionally
☐ I usually don't attend Sabbath School

2. What does your Sabbath School class usually study?
☐ The Sabbath School quarterly
☐ Other biblical topics, but not the quarterly
☐ Felt-need topics
☐ Other topics not mentioned above

3. What is your SS teacher's style of teaching?
☐ Discussion/interactive
☐ Lecture/sermon-like
☐ Both styles equally

4. Which teaching style do you mostly prefer?
☐ Discussion/interactive style
☐ Lecture/sermon-like style
☐ Both styles equally

5. What is the setting of your Sabbath School class?
☐ A large class in the sanctuary or a large room
☐ A small class in a separate room
☐ A small class with other classes in one room

6. Choose what best describes you:
☐ My relationship with God is more important than what I believe
☐ What I believe is more important than relationship with God
☐ Both are equally important

7. Are you a current Sabbath School teacher?
☐ Yes, I am a regular teacher
☐ Yes, but I only teach occasionally
☐ No

8. With which ethnic group do you most closely identify?
☐ White
☐ Black/African-American
☐ Hispanic
☐ Asian
☐ Other: _____

9. Your age group:
☐ Under 25
☐ 25 - 39
☐ 40 - 60
☐ Over 60

10. Your education level:
☐ Elementary school only
☐ High school
☐ College
☐ Graduate school

11. Years in the Seventh-day Adventist Church:
☐ Less than one year
☐ 1 - 5
☐ 6 - 20
☐ More than 20 years

Thank you for your participation. Please return the survey before you leave the church.

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Andrews ⚫ University

December 9, 2011

Laurentiu Serban
Tel: (336) 886 4810
Email: serban@northstate.net

RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
IRB Protocol #: 11-168 **Application Type:** Original
Advisor: John Matthews **Dept.:** Religious Education
Title: Factors Related to the Declining Attendance at the Adult Sabbath School in North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Your IRB application for research involving human subjects entitled: *"Factors Related to the Declining Attendance at the Adult Sabbath School in North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church"* IRB protocol # 11-168 has been evaluated and determined to be Exempt under category *46.101 (b) (2)*. You may now proceed with your research.

We ask that you reference the protocol number in any future correspondence regarding this study for easy retrieval of information.

Please note that any future changes made to the study design and/or consent form require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented.

While there appears to be no more than minimum risks with your study, should an incidence occur that results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury, this must be reported immediately in writing to the IRB. Any research-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to the University Physician, Dr. Hamel, by calling (269) 473-2222.

Please feel free to contact our office if you have any questions.

All the best in your research.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kimakwa
IRB, Research & Creative Scholarship

APPENDIX D

PASTOR'S INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Andrews ◊ University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Department of Religious Education
Berrien Springs, Michigan49104

Dear Pastor,

Your church has been selected as one of 108 churches in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist church to participate in a nation-wide Sabbath School research study. The 108 churches were randomly selected from all churches in the NAD. This study is for the adult Sabbath School division only and is conducted by a Ph.D. student researcher in partnership with Andrews University.

The purpose of this study is to identify the main factors related to declining attendance at the adult division of the Sabbath School. This nation-wide study will involve more than 3,000 church members from a variety of church sizes, locations, and cultural backgrounds within the NAD.

As a pastor I know that your time is important, but I am kindly requesting your participation in this study. Your time involvement will be minimal and well spent as a contribution to the validity of Sabbath School in our Church. This study may also benefit your own ministry and your local Sabbath School department.

This study will be conducted in a professional manner. Under no circumstances will your name, or your church's name, be revealed or associated with the research findings. Your answers are absolutely confidential. Click on this link Endorsement to see the endorsement letter from Andrews University.

If you would be willing to have your church participate in this landmark study, please click on this link Study and you will find out more information about the study. This will be a one-time study and will not require any commitment for future participation or any other obligations. Also, all the mail involved will be preaddressed and prepaid.

For questions or more information regarding this research study, please contact Pastor Laurentiu Serban, the research coordinator at: (336) 687 4815, or e-mail at: pastorserban@gmail.com.

Thanks for your consideration. May the Lord continue to bless you and your ministry.

Please click on this link Sabbath School Research Study if you want to have your church participate in the study. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Laurentiu Serban
Pastor—Carolina Conference
Ph.D. Student Researcher—Andrews University

APPENDIX E

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT

Andrews ◊ University
School of Education

13 December 2011

Re: Pastor Laurentiu Serban, AU ID 89982

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter introduces to you PhD Candidate, Pastor Laurentiu Serban. Pastor Serban, who serves in the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, is currently conducting research in the area of Sabbath School attendance. His research has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Andrews University and his PhD dissertation committee.

The research is being done in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a PhD degree in Religious Education, an interdisciplinary program between the School of Education and the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. It is anticipated that the topic under study will make a significant contribution to an understanding of the dynamics of the adult Sabbath School. Based on the findings, recommendations will be made to appropriate organizations to address the issues that may have led to a continuing decline in adult Sabbath School attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Jeffery, PhD
Dean, School of Education

APPENDIX F

PASTOR'S SECOND LETTER

Andrews ♦ University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Department of Religious Education
Berrien Springs, Michigan49104

Dear Pastor,

Thank you for your willingness to have your church participate in this nation-wide Sabbath School research study. This study is intended to be a contribution to the vitality of Sabbath School in our denomination. Its purpose is to identify the main factors related to declining attendance in the adult Sabbath School in North America.

As mentioned previously your time involved in this project will be minimal and well spent. Your contribution will be limited to the following:

- Please fill out the online *Sabbath School Pastor Survey* by clicking on this link Survey and provide the mailing address where you want to receive the *Sabbath School Member Survey* for your church members. Click on this link Survey to see a copy of this survey for your reference.
- After you receive the Member Surveys by mail please choose the first convenient Sabbath during the month of March. There are five Sabbaths you can choose from (March 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31). If you cannot agree to one of these Sabbaths, please let me know and I will choose another church.
- Please insert a copy of the *Sabbath School Member Survey* in each church bulletin, or hand out a copy at the door as people walk into church on Sabbath morning. All surveys you receive will be pre-folded.
- During the announcements before the worship service, read the short letter addressed to the congregation containing the general instruction about the survey.
- At the end of the service, following the closing hymn and benediction, remind the congregation of the importance of completing and submitting the survey.
- Please allow the participants extra time to finish the survey if they need and then collect the surveys as people leave the church. The survey may take 10-15 minutes to be filled out.
- Mail the surveys back to me by using the prepaid and preaddressed return envelope.

Please click on this link Survey to fill out the *Sabbath School Pastor Survey* and have your church registered for the study. After you submit the form, I will send you a package by mail containing the surveys for your church members to the address you have provided. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Laurentiu Serban
Pastor—Carolina Conference
Ph.D. Student Researcher—Andrews University
E-mail: pastorserban@gmail.com
Phone: (336) 687 4815

APPENDIX G

THANK YOU MESSAGE

Thank you.

Your response has been sent. You will receive a package containing the surveys for your church within the next 7–10 days.

May the Lord bless you and your ministry.

Pastor Laurentiu Serban

APPENDIX H

LETTER TO THE CONGREGATION

Andrews ⬦ University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Department of Religious Education
Berrien Springs, Michigan49104

(**Attention to the person who does the announcements.** *Please give a short personal endorsement to this project and then read the following letter*)

Dear Church Participants:

In an effort to maintain the vitally of Sabbath School in our denomination your church has been selected as one of 108 Adventist churches in North American Division to participate in a nation-wide Sabbath School research study.

This study, conducted through Andrews University, has the purpose of identifying factors influencing adult Sabbath School attendance in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

You received a Sabbath School survey as you walked into church this morning. Please find an appropriate time and fill out the <u>entire</u> survey and return it before you leave the church today. It is important that your answers should reflect how your Sabbath School currently is, not how you think it is supposed to be.

Any adult church member or regular visitor 18 or older who is familiar with the Sabbath School in the Adventist church may participate. It is also important for those who do not regularly attend Sabbath School to fill out a survey. Your input is essential to an understanding of why people do or do not attend Sabbath School. If you haven't received a survey and would like to participate, please ask the ushers to give you a copy.

Participation is voluntarily and without any obligations. Please <u>do not</u> print your name on the survey. Your answers are absolutely confidential. Please read and follow the instructions on the top of the survey. Your <u>honest</u> answers are helpful and greatly appreciated.

May the Lord bless you and your church family.

Do not forget to return the filled out survey before you leave the church today. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Laurentiu Serban
Pastor and Doctoral Candidate
Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan

APPENDIX I

REMINDER LETTER #1

Dear Pastor,

Your package containing the Sabbath School surveys for your church members was mailed more than seven days ago and you should have received it by now. In case that you did not receive it, or it came with missing items, please let me know to send you another one immediately. If you need more survey copies for your church members, feel free to copy as many as you need or ask me for more copies.

Please reply to this message by answering the following two questions:
1. Have you received the package the way you expected?
2. On which Sabbath of this month do you anticipate passing out the surveys? (It is important that the surveys be completed as soon as possible and no later than the end of March).

Important: This study is for all church members not just for the Sabbath School members. It is important to know why people come or don't come to Sabbath School.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Laurentiu Serban
Pastor—Carolina Conference
Ph.D. Student Researcher—Andrews University
Phone: (336) 687 4815
E-mail: pastorserban@gmail.com

APPENDIX J

REMINDER LETTER #2

Dear Pastor,

I hope that everything went well with passing out the Sabbath School survey in your church. Please reply to this e-mail by providing the following information:

1. Were you able to pass out the surveys as you had planned?
2. Have you mailed them back to me?
3. If not, have you rescheduled a different date for passing them out? When? (It is important to administer the survey as soon as possible).

Please let me know if there is anything I can help you with.

I will be looking forward to hear from you.

Your effort is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Laurentiu Serban
Pastor—Carolina Conference
Ph.D. Student Researcher—Andrews University
Phone: (336) 687-4815

APPENDIX K

THANK YOU LETTER #2

Dear Pastor,

Your package containing the surveys from your church has been received. Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. Please let your church members know how much I appreciate their contribution to this study.
Let us continue to pray and hope that Sabbath School in our denomination will continue to be a great instrumentality in bringing souls to Christ.
If you would like to receive a summary of the results of this study, please let me know and I will send you one when the study is completed.

May God continue to bless your efforts to enlarge His kingdom.

Sincerely,

Laurentiu Serban
Pastor—Carolina Conference
Ph.D. Student Researcher—Andrews University
Phone: (336) 687-4815
E-mail: pastorserban@gmail.com

APPENDIX L

DATA COLLECTION TRACKING SHEET

DATA COLLECTION TRACKING SHEET

ID	Sent	R#1	Pass	R#2	Rec	Th	#Sent	#Rec	#D
111	1 Mar	8 Mar	24 Mar	20 Mar	2 Apr	3 Apr	35	8	0
112	5 Mar	14 Mar	n/a	20 Mar	22 Jun	24 Jun	25	17	0
113	5 Mar	14 Mar	n/a	20 Mar	4 May	6 May	50	34	2
121	5 Mar	14 Mar	31 Mar	20 Mar	5 Apr	5 Apr	100	73	1
131	23 Feb	8 Mar	n/a	20 Mar	21 May	22 May	140	16	2
132	26 Mar	2 Apr	7 Apr	10 Apr	18 Apr	23 Apr	170	51	0
211	22 Feb	8 Mar	10 May	n/a	17 Mar	18 Mar	50	36	0
212	6 Mar	14 Mar	31 Mar	2 Apr	9 Apr	10 Apr	20	11	0
213	7 Mar	20 Mar	24 Mar	26 Mar	31 May	2 Apr	25	17	0
221	7 Mar	20 Mar	n/a	2 Apr	9 Apr	10 Apr	70	11	0
222	7 Mar	20 Mar	24 Mar	2 Apr	5 Apr	6 Apr	150	49	0
223	9 Mar	20 Mar	24 Mar	26 Mar	7 Apr	8 Apr	80	38	0
231	8 Mar	20 Mar	24 Mar	n/a	14 Apr	15 Apr	110	31	0
311	9 Mar	16 Mar	31 Mar	26 Mar	7 Apr	8 Apr	75	25	0
312	9 Mar	16 Mar	17 Mar	20 Mar	24 Mar	25 Mar	25	14	2
313	13 Mar	20 Mar	26 Mar				100		
314	19 Mar	28 Mar	24 Mar	n/a	31 Mar	1 Apr	45	23	1
315	1 May	n/a	n/a	n/a	25 May	5 Jun	50	15	0
321	5 Mar	14 Mar	31 Mar	20 Mar	5 Apr	5 Apr	50	22	0
322	12 Mar	20 Mar	24 Mar	n/a	7 Apr	8 Apr	60	35	0
331	5 Mar	14 Mar	24 Mar	20 Mar			225		
411	5 Mar	14 Mar	17 Mar	20 Mar	24 Mar	25 Mar	30	8	0
412	13 Mar	20 Mar	31 Mar	26 Mar	5 Apr	6 Apr	35	21	1
413	5 Mar	n/a	24 Mar	n/a	31 Mar	2 Apr	40	21	2
421	22 Feb	8 Mar	24 Mar	26 Mar	31 Mar	2 Apr	40	21	1
422	8 Mar	16 Mar	24 Mar	26 Mar	5 Apr	6 Apr	75	21	1
423	12 Mar	n/a	17 Mar	n/a	31 Mar	2 Apr	100	22	0
431	6 Mar	14 Mar	17 Mar	20 Mar	2 Apr	3 Apr	150	45	0
432	12 Mar	20 Mar	24 Mar	n/a	29 Mar	29 Mar	120	61	0
511	28 Feb	8 Mar	17 Mar	14 Mar	22 Mar	23 Mar	85	49	3
512	28 Feb	8 Mar	17 Mar	14 Mar	25 May	5 Jun	50	15	1
521	2 Mar	14 Mar	n/a	20 Mar	16 Apr	19 Apr	80	11	0
522	23 Feb	8 Mar	10 Mar	14 Mar	17 Mar	18 Mar	45	15	0
523	28 Feb	8 Mar	10 Mar	14 Mar	15 Mar	16 Mar	75	16	1
531	9 Mar	16 Mar	17 Mar	20 Mar	24 Mar	25 Mar	63	19	0
611	2 Mar	14 Mar	n/a	n/a	9 Apr	10 Apr	50	10	0
612	2 Mar	14 Mar	17 Mar	20 Mar	22 Mar	22 Mar	15	11	0
621	2 Mar	14 Mar	17 Mar	n/a	22 Mar	23 Mar	45	22	1
622	28 Feb	14 Mar		20 Mar			90		
623	27 Feb	8 Mar	10 Mar	n/a	14 Mar	15 Mar	100	42	1
631	1 Mar	14 Mar	17 Mar	20 Mar	9 Apr	10 Apr	150	25	0
632	29 Feb	8 Mar	10 Mar	n/a	17 Mar	18 Mar	110	39	0
711	28 Feb	8 Mar		20 Mar	26 Apr	27 Apr	30	8	0
712	1 Mar	14 Mar	10 Mar	n/a	19 Mar	20 Mar	25	12	0
713	n/a	n/a	10 Mar	n/a	26 Mar	27 Mar	60	22	2
721	27 Feb	n/a	3 Mar	n/a	7 Mar	9 Mar	70	14	0
722	13 Mar	20 Mar		29 Mar			65		
731	28 Feb	8 Mar	10 Mar	14 Mar	17 Mar	18 Mar	150	31	0
732	28 Feb	8 Mar	17 Mar	20 Mar	22 Mar	23 Mar	150	58	2
733	7 Mar	15 Mar		20 Mar			200		
811	8 Mar	15 Mar	17 Mar	20 Mar	24 Mar	25 Mar	50	19	1
812	12 Mar	15 Mar	17 Mar	n/a	n/a	25 Mar	60	26	1
813	13 Mar	20 Mae	31 Mar	26 Mar	5 Apr	5 Apr	35	15	2
814	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	25 Apr	25 Apr	50	16	0

821	6 Mar	14 Mar	31 Mar	2 Apr	24 Apr	25 Apr	110	35	0
822	n/a	n/a	31 Dec	n/a	n/a	n/a	75	19	0
831	9 Mar	16 Mar	n/a	26 Mar	1 May	2 May	150	36	4
832	14 Mar	20 Mar	n/a	29 Mar	21 May	22 May	200	33	0
911	28 Feb	8 Mar	10 Mar	14 Mar	22 Mar	23 Mar	75	20	0
912	2 Mar	14 Mar	24 Mar	20 Mar	31 Mar	1 Apr	60	25	1
913	6 Mar	14 Mar	10 Mar	n/a	19 Mar	20 Mar	25	13	0
921	29 Feb	8 Mar	17 Mar	20 Mar	21 Mar	21 Mar	60	34	0
922	23 Feb	8 Mar	3 Mar	n/a	8 Mar	9 Mar	30	14	0
923	23 Feb	8 Mar	3 Mar	n/a	10 Mar	12 Mar	25	20	0

		TOTAL	4958	1490	33
				30%	2%
		# of churches	64	59	
				92%	

Unions		**Church Size**	
1.	Atlantic	1.	Small
2.	Canada	2.	Medium
3.	Columbia	3.	Large
4.	Lake		
5.	Mid-America		**E-mail Titles**
6.	North Pacific	R1	Sabbath School Survey
7.	Pacific	R2	SS Survey
8.	Southern	Th	Thank you
9.	Southwestern	F	Sabbath Scholol Research Study

Accepted

	Small	Medium	Large	**Total**
Atlantic	3	1	2	**6**
Canada	3	3	1	**7**
Columbia	5	2	1	**8**
Lake	3	3	2	**8**
Mid-America	2	3	1	**6**
North Pacific	2	3	2	**7**
Pacific	3	2	3	**8**
Southern	4	2	2	**8**
Southwestern	3	3	0	**6**
Total	**28**	**22**	**14**	**64**

Responded

	Small	Medium	Large	**Total**
Atlantic	3	1	2	**6**
Canada	3	3	1	**7**
Columbia	4	2	0	**6**
Lake	3	3	2	**8**
Mid-America	2	3	1	**6**
North Pacific	2	2	2	**6**
Pacific	3	1	2	**6**
Southern	4	2	2	**8**
Southwestern	3	3	0	**6**
Total	**27**	**20**	**17**	**59**

APPENDIX M

ITEM-SCALE CONFIGURATION

Item/Scale Configuration by Category

Category	Scale Names	Items
Institutional (IV)	Preliminaries	P5
	Topics Studied	D2
	Teaching Style	D3
	Class Settings	D5
	Sabbath School Objectives	
	Teaching the Word	A7
	Fellowship	C1
	Community Outreach	A1
	World Mission	A2
Achievement (DV/IV)	**Learning Achievement**	
	Motivates to Study the Bible	A8
	Helps to Understand God's Word	A9
	Provides New Information	A10
	Is My Resource for Biblical Information	A17c
	Answers My Biblical Questions	C4
	Fellowship Achievement	
	Make New Friends	A5
	Share My Challenges	A14
	Community Outreach Achievement	
	Motivates to Share with Others	A3
	Motivates to Invite Others to Sabbath School	C3
	World Mission Achievement	
	Picture of the Worldwide Church	A4
	Involved in World Mission Projects	A15
	Sabbath School Achievement	
	Learning Achievement	(see above)
	Fellowship Achievement	(see above)
	Community Outreach Achievement	(see above)
	World Mission Achievement	(see above)

Satisfaction (DV/IV)	**Satisfaction With Teachers**	
	Makes the Lesson Come Alive	A13
	Comes to the Class Well Prepared	C2
	Satisfaction With Teaching Style	
	Style of Teaching Used	D3
	Style of Teaching I Like	D4
	Satisfaction With Topics Studied	
	Quarterlies Help Me Grow Spiritually	A11
	Quarterlies Are Well Organized and Easy to Follow	A12
	Satisfaction With Preliminaries	
	Preliminaries Are Meaningful	A6
	Preliminaries Consume the Class Time	B3R
	Ideal Sabbath School Includes Preliminaries	B7
	Sabbath School Satisfaction	
	Satisfaction With Teachers	(see above)
	Satisfaction With Teaching Style	(see above)
	Satisfaction With Topics Studied	(see above)
	Satisfaction With Preliminaries	(see above)
Socio-cultural (IV)	**Access to Information**	
	Use Sermons and Seminars	A17a
	Christian Programs on Radio or TV	A17b
	Books or Other Publications	A17d
	Internet	A17e
	Come to Church to Worship God	A18a
	Come to Church to Learn Biblical Truths	A18b
	Come to Church to Meet Friends	A18c
	Truths Enhance Relationship With God	B2
	Relationship With God More Important Than Beliefs	D6
Perceptions (IV)	**Participation in Other Programs**	
	Attend Other Meeting to Study the Bible	C5
	Attend Other Meeting for Fellowship	C6
	Duplication With Worship Service	B6
	Sabbath School Is Optional Service	B8R
	Meaningful for the 21st Century	B5
	Expectation for Home Study	B1
	Entry Level Program	B4
SS Attendance (DV)	Sabbath School Attendance	D1R

Demographics	**Class Setting Availability**	
	Large Class in the Sanctuary	P4a
	Small Classes in Separate Rooms	P4b
	Small Classes in the Same Room	P4c
	Other Class Settings	P4d
	Topics Availability	
	Sabbath School Quarterlies	P3a
	Other Biblical Topics	P3b
	Felt-Need Topics	P3c
	Other Topics	P3d
	Number of Classes	P6
	Age Range	D9
	Ethnicity	D8
	Years in the Adventist Church	D11
	Education Level	D10
	Sabbath School Home Study	A16
	Class Rotation	C8
	Church Location	P1
	Church Size	P9
	Worship Service Attendance	P10
	Sabbath School Attendance Percentage	P7
	Time of Meeting	P2
	Childhood Sabbath School Attendance	C7
	Teaching Office	D7
	Music Style	P8

R=reversed score; **Bold**=scale; A, B, C, D, and P=respective sections of Member and Pastor Survey

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