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Choosing God, Choosing Schools: a Study of the Relationship between Parental Religiosity and School Choice

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by
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APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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Abstract

CHOOSING GOD, CHOOSING SCHOOLS:
A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL RELIGIOSITY AND
SCHOOL CHOICE

by
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Claremont Graduate University: 2018

Over the last several decades, school choice – in the context of educational systems that are available to choose from as well as the reasons why parents choose what they do for their child – has become a topic of interest to both educational researchers and the public at large. The Seventh-day Adventist school system, like other faith-based institutions, is uniquely positioned in this subject, as it is an educational organization framed by a religious denomination. In addition to the typical factors such as academic standards, curricular offerings and peer influence, the issue of school choice within this context also involves complex layers of culture and religiosity and spirituality.

Are parents able to disengage themselves from the trappings of those expectations and beliefs and objectively choose a school system for their child? Or are religious background and experience simply too embedded into one's psyche – and, as an extension – one's choices to ever fully disentangle that subtext from the decision-making process?

This mixed-methods study sought to better understand the relationship between parental religiosity and school choice, specifically within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. In order to assess the influence of Adventist culture, doctrinal commitment and general religiosity, a cultural domain had to first be established. Following the methodology as laid out in cultural consensus theory, free-listing and rank-ordering tasks were given to two separate, geographically representative samples from across the continental United States.

Derived from those conversations, statements were then developed that captured characteristics and behavior of a member who adhered to traditional Seventh-day Adventist culture. Those statements were written into the survey instrument, alongside validated scales for general religiosity and Adventist doctrinal commitment.

The population for this study targeted any Seventh-day Adventist member in America who had K-12 school-aged children. The survey was developed in SurveyMonkey and distributed through church communiqué (websites, bulletins, announcements, etc.), official administrative channels such as ministerial department newsletters and video announcements, and social media. Over 1,000 responses came in and the data was analyzed through SPSS, specifically examining patterns of school choice among those with high or low general religiosity, doctrinal commitment and Adventist culture.

The results of the data analysis demonstrated clear and significant associations between several key variables and the dependent variable of school choice. Several variables, such as Adventist culture, doctrinal commitment and a parent's own educational background, emerged as predictors for school choice when binary logistic regressions were conducted. Adventist culture proved to be a multi-factorial construct, interacting with other variables in different ways.

The conclusions from this study point to several implications for K-12 Adventist education, particularly in the area of marketing to Adventist families and further research could certainly explore that more fully.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Drs. Elissa and Danny Kido.

For turning a dream into reality,

for investing in me and in the future of Adventist Education,

and for your generous and gracious spirit –

I will be forever indebted to you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It's done.

While my professional career in higher education and educational research has only just begun, *this* part, this portion of the journey that has consumed my life for the past three and half years is finally over.

On a muggy summer day in June 2015, I found my way to the basement of Harper Hall, nervously clutching my registration printout in one hand and a lunch bag in the other. It was there, in that musty classroom with five other classmates, that I began my doctorate at Claremont Graduate University. I hadn't been in a higher education academic setting in nine years, I had two small children, and to Tessa Hicks-Peterson and the rest of my Prison Education class, I probably looked exactly like I felt – harried, slightly concerned and more than a little out of place.

And yet somehow – you're holding my manuscript in your hands now. Which means it is finished. How did that happen? On whose shoulders have I stood upon these last few years as I wrote papers, read articles, wrote more papers and tried to juggle doctoral work with family and work and life?

I would like to thank my committee – Dr. Ganley, Dr. Hilton and Dr. Luschei – for their work with me in this process. For every email I sent out, I received a response sometimes mere minutes later – encouraging, challenging, offering wisdom. I often felt like I was flying blind on this path – trying to speak about faith-based education in a politely disinterested secular environment – but Dr. DeLacy Ganley stepped right in as my much-needed touchstone. Her guidance and wisdom always breathed clarity into this messy business of dissertation writing and I cannot thank her enough for supporting my work.

My parents have been my cheerleaders from the time I was born. In their very biased eyes, there is no one smarter, more capable or more brilliant than their daughter. To them, it was never a question of if I would earn a doctorate, but *when*… so who was I to question that?

And finally, nothing successful ever seems to happen without a tribe and this process has been no different. My brothers, my in-laws, the Girls, my Facebook community – all have shouldered the burden – my burden – in some fashion or another in order to see this dissertation through – and for that, I thank them.

So, with Martinelli's in hand, I raise a toast to all of you – and to Adventist Education.

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List of Abbreviations and Symbols

NAD   North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists

AUC   Atlantic Union Conference

CUC   Columbia Union Conference

MAUC   Mid-America Union Conference

NPUC   North Pacific Union Conference

PUC   Pacific Union Conference

SUC   Southern Union Conference

SWUC   Southwestern Union Conference

SDA   Seventh-day Adventist (also referred to as "Adventist")

β beta, standardized coefficient

df   degrees of freedom

DUREL   The Duke University Religion Index

N, n   number, sample size

M   mean

r   Pearson product moment correlation

X^2 Chi-square statistic

ϕ Kramer's V

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

With approximately 34,500 campuses in America, K-12 private schools account for about 26 percent of our nation's educational system (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). While private schools can have varying specializations or purposes, the majority of these institutions – roughly 67 percent – prescribes to a religious belief system or is specifically affiliated with a religious organization (Broughman, Rettig, & Peterson, 2017).

Religious schooling has been around since the establishment of formal education in America. Skimming through the annals of our country's history, one quickly realizes that religious communities were first to institute any type of sponsored elementary and secondary education, a development mirrored in other countries around the world (Jones, 2008). Early churches such as Lutherans, Mennonites, Quakers, Puritans, and Jews founded their own independent schools and, as one might imagine, the curriculum was heavily tinged with religious content (Jeynes, 2012).

Because formal educational systems significantly affect their pupils' worldview, value system, belief structure, social expectations, and cultural understanding (Vryhof, 2004), one could naturally surmise that one of the main reasons for the establishment of faith-based schools[1] is to preserve and protect aspects of religious heritage. This assumption would be fairly accurate. A study, conducted by Hannaway and Abramowitz (1985), for instance, on missional differences underscored this purpose of faith-based education. They surveyed principals' perceptions of school goals in both public and private schools and concluded that for public

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[1] In this paper, "faith-based" will refer to any school with a religious affiliation, even if it is non-denominational or unspecified.

schools, the most frequent goals cited were for literacy skills and academic excellence. For religious private schools, however, the single most important goal was the religious development of all students. Catholic schools teach the catechism of the Catholic Church ("Religious Curriculum for Schools"), Seventh-day Adventist schools integrate their church's doctrines into their academic offerings (Thayer & Kido, 2012), the curriculum in Jewish day schools includes study of the Torah (Pomson, Wertheimer, & Wolf, 2014), and *madrasas* provide Islamic-based instruction to their students (Blanchard, 2008). Specific faiths have distinctive beliefs about religious and spiritual matters including the afterlife, the nature of humanity, and the existence of a deity. Some religions share many commonalities within these understandings, while others are uniquely embraced by the particular denomination. Teaching children about the specifics of one's faith and beliefs is easily and conveniently accomplished when embedded into the school's curriculum (Hunt, 2012).

Besides the transmission of religious beliefs, another purpose of faith-based education is that of preserving and nurturing a specific cultural identity (Merry, 2005). Culture and religion are inevitably connected, but religious education, as outlined above, is certainly different than the cultural distinctiveness that can be taught and formed within a school setting (Vryhof, 2004).

Jewish day schools provide ample fodder for analysis of this cultural distinctiveness. There exists a generations-old conversation within Jewish communities in America that revolves around what their children understand about Israel and how closely connected they are to their Jewish heritage (Cohen, 1974). While there have long been a number of extracurricular programs developed and made available to Jewish children through the local synagogue, many proponents of Jewish education wanted a more seamless, more unified experience for their children, believing that "day schools were the only real means of maintaining continuity with

Jewish tradition" (Jones, 2008). The term "day schools" denoted full-time education in a

traditional school setting as opposed to supplementary instruction after school or on weekends

(Jones, 2008). A recent report from the AVI CHAI foundation in 2014 underlines this attitude

and states that day schools and the educators that work in them "are directed towards the

cultivation of emotional states: identification, allegiance and attachment" (Pomson, Wertheimer

& Wolf, 2014).

However, while the purpose for faith-based schools may still be valid and genuine,

interest in and appeal of these schools has changed, evidenced by the significant decline in

enrollment over the last few decades. As one can see in Figure 1, the Catholic educational

system experienced immense growth in the first half of the 20th century, but has dwindled slowly

since then (NCES, 2016). With the closure of hundreds of schools each year, the total

enrollment of students in Catholic K-12 schools dropped by an estimated 400,000 between 2003

and 2014.
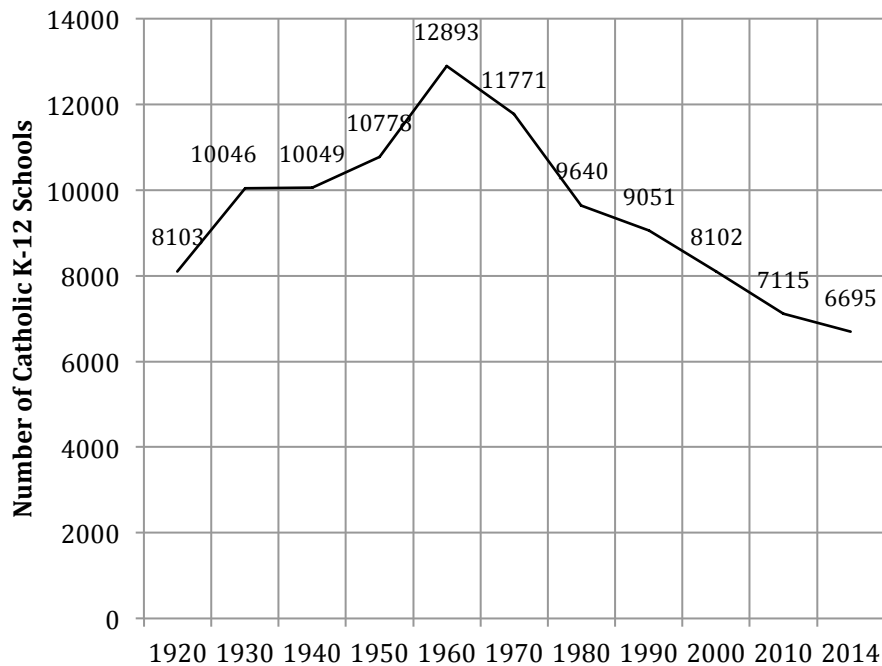
Figure 1. The number of Catholic schools in America, 1920-2014. Adapted from the
U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for
Education Statistics.

Other religiously affiliated school systems have had similar enrollment drops, resulting in much head-scratching and hand-wringing among church administrators and educators. Figure 2 shows the general downward trend that five other faith-based school systems have experienced over the last five decades.
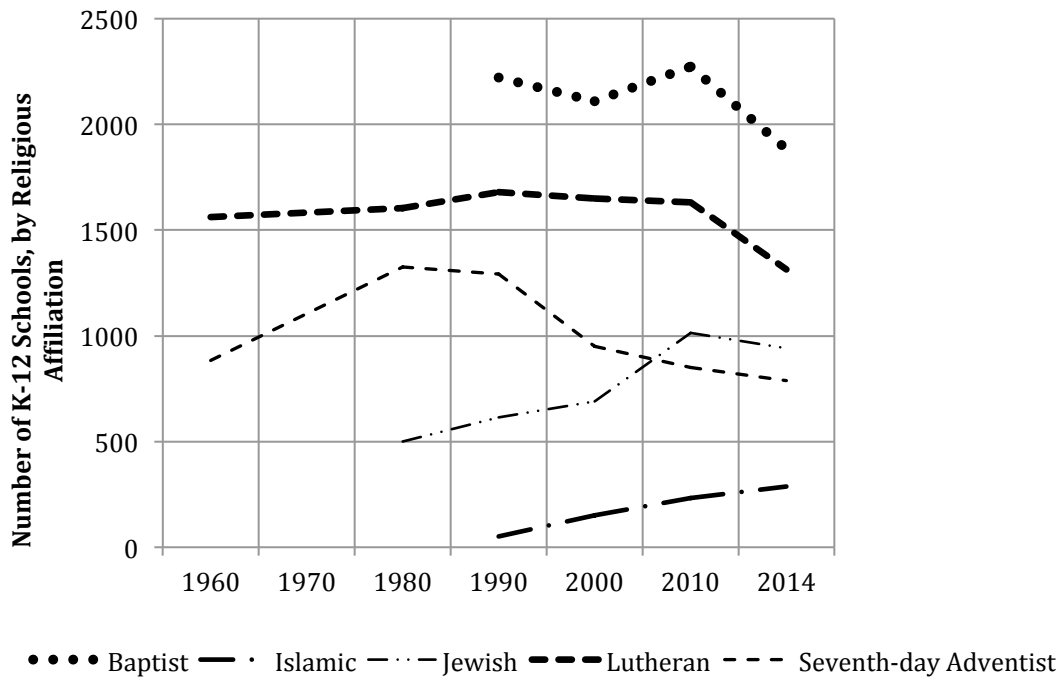
Figure 2. The number of selected faith-based schools in America, 1960-2014.
Adapted from the U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences,
National Center for Education Statistics.

The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) school system is no exception and for years now, church leaders have worried that low enrollment numbers are directly connected to its schools' educational quality and academic offerings. Where are the church members' children all going? What are our schools doing wrong? Why have our schools ceased to attract our own constituency? Because faith-based schools generally operate largely from tuition revenue (Eigenbrood, 2004), the significance of enrollment and student population is a real issue and a downward trend will inevitably lead to school closures.

Purpose of the Study

The decline in enrollment in SDA schools has certainly not gone unnoticed. In 2014, the highest level of administration within the NAD charged a select group – the NAD Education Taskforce (NADET) – with assessing the state of the SDA K-12 educational system and making recommendations that could strengthen and improve schools. The members of the NADET spent hundreds of hours in videoconferences and focus groups looking for issues and seeking out solutions that could possibly plug the holes in the proverbial sinking ship. There must be a cause, a reason for low enrollment and there seemed to be no better place to point that finger than at the school's lacking – lack of quality, lack of innovation, lack of… something.

These conversations are mirrored at the local level as well. As a former teacher and principal in the SDA school system, I've sat through many board meetings in which my school, my staff, my curriculum were all under intense scrutiny and our efficacy was called into question. Concerned parents and church members were always quick to reference the other private schools in the area, encouraging us to visit those campuses and see what they were doing. Perhaps, they mused, we could mimic their style or type of education and draw more students to our own school. I recall one particularly enthusiastic parent sitting down with me in my office to detail his plan of starting a Christian drama program through our school and the throngs of new families who would flock to our campus as a result.

These well-meaning suggestions were not necessarily wrong. As with any system or institution, there will always be faults or areas for improvement. However, I have long wondered if blame is being cast in the wrong direction. What if the quality of our schools has not changed? What if it is the identity of the churchgoing member that has changed?

In that same aforementioned principal's office in which I used to work, I also would often be regaled with tales from constituents about their parents or grandparents who had worked three jobs to ensure that their children could receive a SDA education. I heard story after story about the heroic, herculean efforts by these staunch church members to keep their child attending a SDA school, including moving their home to be physically closer to a church school and, in one case, literally building a new school on the local church property with personal funds.

Based on numerous anecdotes similar to these, it can be surmised that a generation ago, being a solid, committed member of SDA Church meant that you *always* sent your child to a constituent school, regardless of circumstances or educational needs or even desire. The church identity of parents used to, it seems, extend into their choice of school for their child. This seems to contrast starkly with the current reality.

What if the gauge of a solid, committed member of the SDA Church no longer involves enrolling your child in a SDA school? What if members today feel they can still be engaged, involved church members even if their children attend a public school? Viewed in this light and in juxtaposition of the results of this study, the general enrollment in SDA schools may not reflect the quality of their academic offerings, but rather the church member's paradigm of church identity and commitment.

The context or expectations or identity of church members from generations ago would be difficult to capture for analysis now; fortunately, however, that has no real bearing on my study as I am seeking to focus only on the current generation of parents and the way in which their relationship with the Seventh-day Adventist church affects their choices.

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to analyze parents' religiosity – as measured by their cultural consonance, commitment to church doctrine, and level of general religiosity – in

relation to the choice of school for their child. Using an emic approach, this study will first

identify the cultural domain of Adventism, a task that has never before been undertaken to this

extent within this denomination. With the salient items gleaned from that initial step, a survey

will then be administered that quantifies that cultural aspect as well as other components of

religiosity. This study will juxtapose that data with existing literature on religious consumer

behavior and culture theory to determine whether a relationship exists between respondents'

church identity and school choice.

Significance of the Study

If it can be concluded – or even suggested – that school enrollment is due *in part* to the

current paradigm of SDA church members, then perhaps the very reason for the Adventist

educational system should be reexamined to assess its relevance. Because if typical Seventh-day

Adventist parents no longer feel that Adventist education is absolutely necessary in the

upbringing of their children, if enrollment in an Adventist school is no longer the default, then

there could be significant ramifications on Adventist educational philosophy and purpose. At the

very least, there would be another piece to the enrollment puzzle that could be put on the table –

right alongside the section about drama troupes.

Additionally, this study could contribute to the scant literature that exists on how

religiosity affects consumer behavior. While there has been increased interest in the role that

religion plays in market economics, researchers are clamoring for greater insights into religious

consumer behavior as it could have ramifications on marketing strategies and product specificity

and placement. While school choice is not generally seen as a product of "consumption," this

study proposes that the decision-making process that underlies school choice is similar to that

undertaken for other lifestyle choices and purchases, especially within the context of religious culture.

Finally, this study could yield results relevant to researchers of school choice. With recent developments in the area of school choice and the evolution of school vouchers and tax credits, private schools are playing a more significant role in the current educational landscape. At the writing of this paper, 31 states have some type of school choice program that involves an Educational Savings Account (ESA), vouchers, tax credits scholarships, or individual tax credits or deductions ("The ABCs of School Choice", 2016).

While there have been numerous studies on the efficacy of voucher programs – both as a financial support for families and an academic boon for students – it is difficult to filter the data to reflect faith-based schools alone. There is a huge opportunity for further research in this field – statistics on families who choose faith-based schools using vouchers, their reasons for doing so, and the measure of satisfaction and achievement once students have been enrolled.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

Q1)   How does consumption behavior – as seen in school choice - differ among

Seventh-day Adventist parents?

Q2)   How does the degree of cultural consonance to the Seventh-day Adventist model

relate to consumption behavior as seen in school choice?

a.   Are parents who display a high level of cultural consonance more likely to send

their oldest/only child to a Seventh-day Adventist school?

Q3)   To what extent does a Seventh-day Adventist parent's general religiosity, doctrinal commitment, and church identity – as represented through cultural consonance – predict the choice of school for his/her oldest/only child?

Summary

The enrollment decline in faith-based schools over the last few decades has generated concerned speculation over the state and survival of these educational systems. In turning the focus away from the schools and their efficacy, this study seeks to look instead at the primary consumers of these schools – the church member. Having a greater understanding of the identity and paradigm of church members who enroll their child in a SDA school - and those who do not – should yield considerable insights that could contribute to those invested in this faith-based school system.

The next chapter will provide an overview of the two strands of literature most relevant to this study – consumer behavior and culture theory. By tying together the research on how religiosity can affect consumption behavior as well as the ways in which religion can be viewed and measured as a cultural identity, this review will lay the groundwork for the rest of this research.

Chapter 2: The Context of Adventism

While there are many aspects of this study that will be relevant to other faith communities and contexts, this research is focused primarily on members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in America. Before continuing with the findings and discussion of this research, it may serve the reader well to first receive at least a cursory introduction to the Seventh-day Adventist faith, a profile of the Seventh-day Adventist church membership and an understanding of Adventist education.

Throughout this study, the terms "SDA" or "Adventist" will be used interchangeably with "Seventh-day Adventist".

History and Organizational Structure

The Seventh-day Adventist church began as an offshoot from the Millerites, a movement driven by a Baptist farmer from New York – William Miller (Butler, 1986). Miller was convicted by a specific verse in the book of Daniel in which he interpreted the end of the world coming in October 1844. When the anointed day – October 22 – came and went, hundreds of his followers, convinced that they were going to be raptured away, were greatly disappointed. Some abandoned their beliefs entirely, others decided that the premise was still correct, but the date was wrong, while still others believed that the date *had* been significant, but for another event. The Seventh-day Adventist church grew from this last group and began to establish themselves as a faith community in the late 1800s. As one might expect, the Millerites – and subsequent factions that came out of the movement – had been and continued to be subject to much ridicule and mockery by those around them. It's important to note the origins of the SDA community in the Millerite movement as it provides context for the distinct pride and separationist feelings that

early Adventists harbored and that has been perpetuated through generations since. Rather than feeling demoralized, these Seventh-day Adventists pioneers believed themselves to have a grasp – albeit tenuous and not altogether accurate – on biblical truth and prophecy. To their credit, the search for truth did not end in 1844, but rather continues to be an earmark of the denomination to this day (Knight, 2000). Early leaders spoke of a "present truth" – a progressive paradigm about knowledge, as opposed to one steeped only in tradition or convention (Knight, 2000).

This dynamism is evidenced in the continued review, analysis and expansion of their creed. The official Adventist statement of beliefs was written out in five succinct tenets at the first state conference in 1861, but has since been grown to 28 doctrines (Knight, 2000).   Many of these overlap with precepts from other Christian faiths, such as the belief that the Bible was divinely inspired and that there is a holy Trinity made up of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Adventists also hold doctrines that are less common, including their beliefs in Saturday as the Sabbath and the soulless, unconscious state of those who have died ("Beliefs", n.d.)

From these modest roots, the Adventist denomination has evolved into a robust faith community that currently has roughly 19 million members worldwide. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is located in Silver Spring, MD and oversees the governance of the world church. The General Conference is geographically divided into 13 divisions, which are further divided into unions and then conferences. The North American Division (NAD) has 10 unions and this study drew from eight of those unions, excluding Canadian Union and Guam-Micronesia Mission.

Economically speaking, the Adventist church is funded by members' tithes and offerings. Tithing is a biblically based practice in which members contribute one-tenth of his/her income;

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offerings are any monetary donation above and beyond that. Church employees' salaries and

pensions are derived from this income as well as substantial subsidies for church institutions

such schools and hospitals (Bull, 2006). Much like state and local taxes help to fund public

schools, so are Adventists' monies used to support Adventist schools.

Demographics and Membership Profile

Outside research organizations, such as the Pew Research Center and the National

Opinion Research Center, have conducted studies on religious congregations in America,

providing us with some valuable insights into the Adventist church community and the profile of

a member.
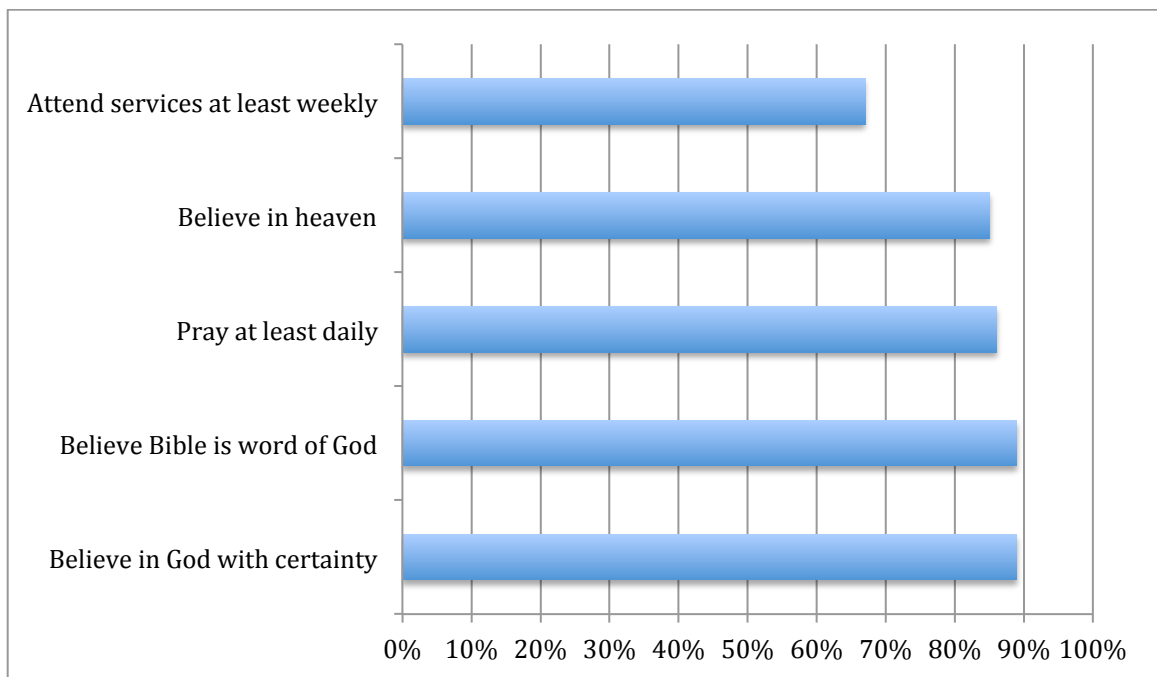
Figure 3. Religious Beliefs and Practices of Seventh-day Adventists in America. This
figure indicates the percentage of Americans who hold to these particular mores.
Adapted from the Pew Life Research Center data (2014).

Using data collected in 2001 by the US Congregational Life Survey as well as that

reported by the 2014 Religious Landscape Study, the majority of Adventists are Caucasian or

African-American, employed, highly educated (32% with a bachelor's degree or higher), and middle-class (45% make $25,000-$75,000 annually). 64% of Adventists in America are married and 47% of this sample fell between the ages of 25-54. 40% of Adventists reside in the South while 31% call the West home.

Adventists tend to be more traditionally conservative and devout in their religious practice, as seen in Figure 3.

Adventist Education

Context and History

The establishment of denominational schools began in the late 1800s after the foundation of the church had been set and leaders began to look past the immediate structure – both literal and figurative – of the church (Knight, 2005). As the story goes, a group of church elders gathered together for a meeting one evening to discuss the future and vision of the fledgling church. At that point, evangelists had already been dispatched to share their faith across the world and hospitals – another strong emphasis of the Seventh-day Adventist church – were beginning to be established. "What now?" they purportedly asked themselves. "Where should we direct our resources, our time, our efforts?" After some murmured discussion, a clear voice rang out, "What can we take to heaven with us? Not our clothes or our homes or any worldly belongings. The only thing we can take with us is our children. And so there is our answer – we must invest in our children."   And thus – as legend has it – was the start of the Seventh-day Adventist educational system (N. Brown, personal communication, 2002).

Regardless of the veracity of this quaint story, it is evident that the educational philosophy that informs their policy and drives the curriculum and climate of Adventist schools is inextricably tied to the beliefs of their faith and the doctrines of the church. Rooted in a

Biblical worldview, Adventist education seeks to aid in the development not only of a child's mind, but also of his/her body and spirit. This holistic perspective is evidenced in their teacher qualifications, extracurricular choices and academic offerings (Knight, 2005).

Curriculum

Service to God and humanity, for instance, is a strong component in Adventist churches, as they believe that followers of Christ should extend love and grace to those around them ("Beliefs", n.d.). Like in most Christian churches, one can often find community outreach events programmed into weekly church functions (Knight, 2005). In that same vein, most Adventist schools emphasize service in their curriculum and will often have a requirement of community service hours in their handbook. "Mission trips" are common occurrences, especially at the high school level. They can range anywhere from single-day outings into neighboring communities to clean up trash to week-long trips to an impoverished country to participate in building a church or volunteering at an orphanage (Akers, 1989).

Another theme in Adventist educational philosophy, as outlined by Ellen White, one of the church's early leaders, is that formal education should also be practical, useful and relevant (Akers, 1989). The instruction of classical languages, for example, was shunned by the church founders and seen as useless. While today's Adventist educators may not genuinely feel that same scorn, one would still be hard-pressed to find Latin or Greek taught at the elementary or high school level. However, what *does* abound in Adventist schools – then and now – are many work-related and practical applications in the school day (Tucker, 2001). Many Adventist high schools have hung on to courses like Woodworking, Home Economics, and Auto Mechanics long after their public school counterparts discontinued them (Akers, 1989). For decades, most Adventist educational institutions had a dairy or farm or other agricultural/service industry on

their property where their students worked for half the day. Monterey Bay Academy, a high

school located in central California, still has an industrial laundry on its campus where many

students are employed ("Student Work Program", n.d.).

In addition to service and practical education, another common component of Adventist

schools is a strong fine arts program. Following the framework of holistic development as well

as the belief that God uniquely created all individuals and gifted each one with special talents,

Adventist schools make music and the arts a high priority within their curriculum despite

budgetary constraints (N. Brown, personal communication, 2002). Students who attended

Adventist schools from kindergarten through 12th grade will most likely have sung in a choir and

learned one or two instruments.   But more than just classroom music and the requisite Christmas

program, this musical training is often taken off campus and shared with the community. School

musical ensembles such as choirs or wind symphonies will often perform for nursing homes and

area churches. Similar to the mission trip, music tours are also often taken at the secondary

level, with teachers leading their ensembles on an annual trip designed to showcase their music

in a variety of venues in different locales. These tours always contain an evangelistic or outreach

underpinning, giving evidence once more of the close tie between church and school (K.

Leukert, personal communication, 2015).

As these examples demonstrate, Adventist education focuses on the holistic development

of a child. This does not mean, however, that the academic program is shoddy or sub-par.

Rather, a recent study found that students in Adventist schools were above average in

achievement when compared to national norms. Moreover, the longer students stayed in the

Adventist educational system, the higher they achieved (Kido & Thayer, 2012).

The curriculum found in Adventist schools is chosen within the same context and for the same reasons as all the other components of the school system – with relevance to the beliefs of their faith and within a Biblically-based framework. Educators in Adventist schools may teach out of the same textbooks as their public school counterparts in some subjects, whereas in others – such as science or Bible – the education committee for the North American Division writes and publishes their own textbooks ("Curriculum", n.d.).

The methodology used in and philosophy of the Adventist educational system is clearly rooted in a worldview that frames Adventists' beliefs in origin, meaning of life and destiny.

Recent Statistics

The NAD currently educates around 50,000 K-12 students within the walls of its 1100 schools. Of the roughly 27,000 high school students attending Adventist academies, over two-thirds of them are baptized members of the SDA church or come from Adventist homes ("Statistics", 2016). That proportion is only slightly less for elementary students.
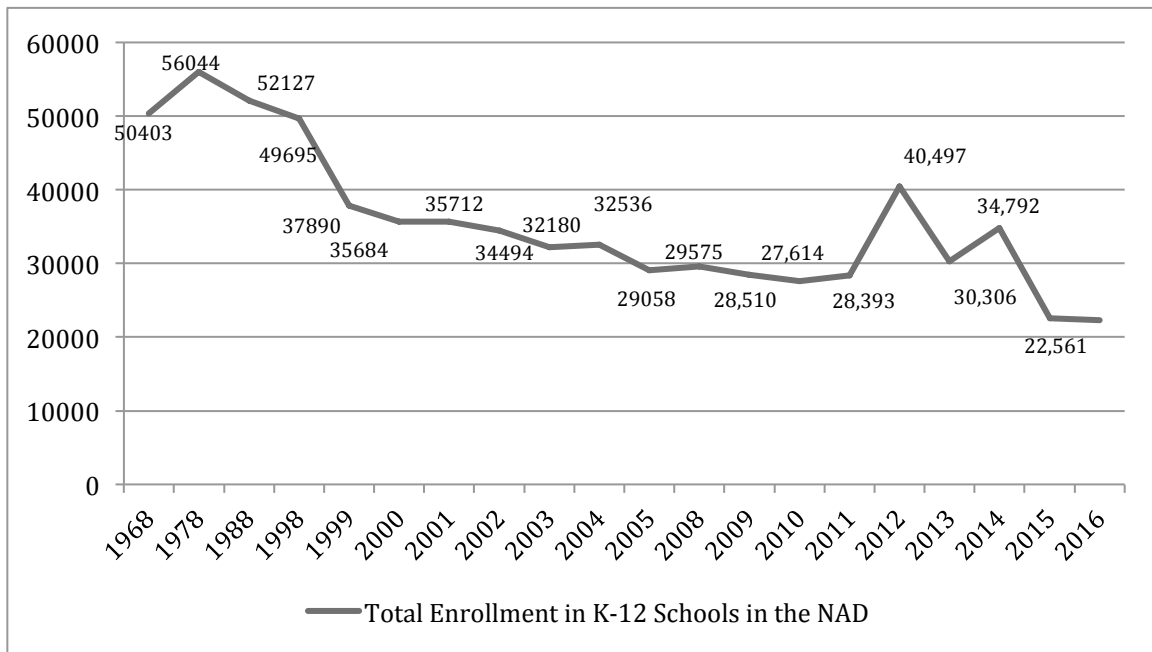
Figure 4. Total enrollment of K-8 students in the North American Division. Adapted from the North American Division Office of Education data (2016).

Figure 4 gives stark evidence of the gradual decline in enrollment over the last four decades in Adventist elementary schools. This trend is mirrored in Adventist high schools and has been the cause of great concern and debate in recent years.

Conclusion

Since its inception in the mid 1800s, the Seventh-day Adventist church has become a small, but thriving faith community in the United States. In addition to establishing an official creed, statement of beliefs and method of practicing religion, the SDA denomination has created an all-encompassing network and community for its members. As Bull (1989) noted:

It is clear from this that many of a church member's needs can be accommodated by denominational institutions. Adventists can be born in Adventist hospitals, go to Adventist schools, graduate from Adventist colleges, and receive further training in Adventist universities. They can read Adventist literature, buy Adventist music, listen to Adventist radio programs, and watch Adventist television productions. They can work in Adventist institutions, and, because Adventists tend to cluster around their institutions or administrative centers, they can even live in an Adventist community. When they are ill, they can be treated in Adventist hospitals, and when they are old, they can live out their days in Adventist retirement centers. Adventism is an alternative social system that can meet the needs of its members from the cradle to the grave. (p.115)

Viewed from this perspective, it is evident that in the Seventh-day Adventist community in America, doctrine and culture have intertwined, making it difficult to separate one from the other. This unique juxtaposition serves as the juncture for this study.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Religion has the ability to take root in one's life in inexplicable ways. A belief in a higher power or deity can significantly impact an individual's behavior, thought pattern, decision-making process, sense of self, and daily living. While most recognize the far-reaching effects that religion can have on humans, this relationship between religiosity and behavior has been somewhat neglected in academic research and literature. Is this because the complex entanglement between religion and culture makes it difficult to study one without the other? Or is it due to the irrational nature that some feel is at the very core of religion? Or perhaps quantifying and placing objective measures on such a personal, subjective matter is too difficult? Whichever the case, the gloves have begun to come off in the last few decades as more and more attention is being given to the role that religion plays in the lives of humans. Researchers are recognizing that for those who hold religious convictions – which is roughly 7 out of 10 Americans (Pew Research Center, 2015) – the influence of said beliefs is a force not only to be reckoned with, but also to study, understand and analyze.

Because this study seeks to establish the connection between aspects of religiosity and school choice, this literature review explores two different themes. First, I examine religiosity itself, including various methods of measurement as well as the ways in which it functions as an extension of culture. By synthesizing the most recent works on cultural consensus analysis, a case is built for the relevance and applicability of this construct in this study. After establishing religiosity as an influential – and quantifiable – aspect of one's life, the second element of this review focuses on religiosity as a determinant of behavior. I review specific works and theories that demonstrate how religious belief and commitment can affect individuals as consumers,

which, for parents, may ultimately influence parenting lifestyles, values, and the choices that they make for their children.

Definition and Measurement of Religiosity

If religiosity must serve as a variable to be studied, it stands to reason that it must be first identified, and second, quantified. Scholars have long sought to capture the essence, the idea of religion into a single acceptable statement. One such operational definition, articulated over five decades ago, is:

> Religion is an aspect of culture centered upon activities which are taken by those who participate in them to elucidate the ultimate meaning of life and to be related to the ultimate solution of its problems. Many religious systems contain the notion of deity and/or holiness in relation with such activities. (Kishimoto, 1961, p. 240).

This reference to "activities" belies one of the most significant conundrums in the study of religion – that is, the multidimensionality of religion. In the late 1800s, religious studies were already being delineated into three components – belief, feeling, and behavior (Hall, 1891; Starbuck, 1899). Research expanded in the mid-1900s with the development of several scales that measured two (Broen, 1957), four (Lenski, 1968), five (Glock & Stark, 1966), and six (DeJong, Faulkner & Warland, 1976) dimensions of religiosity. These seminal works set the stage for religious studies and sparked the resurgence of religious studies within a variety of different frameworks (Hill & Hood, 1999).

Allport and Ross (1967) contributed another important scale during this period – the Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) – that was noteworthy in its articulation of the motivational constructs behind religion. The ROS captured the variance between extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity, loosely defined as "using" or "living" one's religion (Hill & Hood, 1999).

More recently, Huber and Huber (2012) developed the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS), a measurement that rates the importance of religion to an individual. Another multidimensional instrument, the CRS includes five dimensions of religious beliefs: public practice, private practice, religious experience, ideology, and the intellectual.

One additional scale that has proven useful in measuring religiosity is the Religious Fundamentalism Scale, developed by Altemeyer and Hunsberger in 1992. It specifically assessed attitudes towards religious beliefs, with no preference or specificity to any religion (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004). With high alphas in each sample, the authors demonstrated that the RFS could capture the fundamentalist aspect of diverse faiths including Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism.

While these and numerous other works have contributed significantly to the measurement of religion, the complexity of the subject matter continues to inspire further research. For instance, besides the foundational construct of religion, there also exists the more topical – but arguably equally important – matter of categorization. Nationwide surveys have long demarcated respondents into separate religious classifications (Dougherty, Johnson & Polson, 2007). As recently as 2016, the General Social Survey used only the main categories of Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish in their questionnaire.

A counter approach has been to look at "religious families" instead of denominational doctrinal differences: Catholic, Jewish, liberal Protestant, moderate Protestant, conservative Protestant, and black Protestant (Roof & McKinney, 1987). Further studies have added to the list, such as the ten categories that Keller (2000) enumerated -- Catholics, Protestants, mainline Protestants, black Protestants, conservative nontraditional Protestants, liberal nontraditional Protestants, other non-Christians, and secular individuals.

In a valiant attempt to assemble the literature on religiosity measurements into a single volume, Hill and Hood (1999) edited and published a compendium of religiosity scales – 126 in all and neatly divided into 17 chapters of specific subtopics. Viewed in this manner, the number of approaches one can take to study religiosity seems overwhelming, and yet it is also somewhat fortifying to see the ready array of tools we have at our disposal.

As the research on measuring religiosity has expanded, it seems clear that there is much to gain by studying this issue in a multidimensional manner. Given that evidence, this study will measure religiosity within the Seventh-day Adventist church through three separate components: general religiousness, doctrinal commitment, and cultural awareness.

Religion as Culture

As scholars have moved from assessing religion and religiosity across just a single dimension to seeking an understanding of the multiple facets of an individual's or group's religious beliefs, it has become apparent to many that religion can and should be studied as a cultural system (Saroglou & Cohen, 2011; Stevenson, 1998). Culture, as captured by Fiske, Kitayama, Markus and Nisbett, "is a socially transmitted or socially constructed constellation consisting of such things as practices, competencies, ideas, schemas, symbols, values, norms, institutions, goals, constitutive rules, artifacts, and modifications of the physical environment" (2002. p.85). Triandis (2007, p. 64) expanded on that by adding, "First, culture emerges in adaptive interactions between humans and environments. Second, culture consists of shared elements. Third, culture is transmitted across time periods and generations." In essence, culture is a juxtaposition of the way in which an individual makes sense of the world around him or her as well as how that sense is shared with others.

This framework, in turn, contributes significantly to the formation and development of identity (Hammack, 2008). There is a plethora of literature on identity and the complex ways in which personal narrative and experiences constitute self, but some argue that what is lacking is the connection between how these micro-level connections are all grounded within a macro-level context of group or society (Hammack, 2008). Because while there are certainly dimensions of one's self-concept that are derived from the internal consciousness, there lies a direct connection between self and society – the knowledge and practice of *being* and the expression of that within the larger community (Taylor & Usborne, 2010). Prominent psychologists and sociologists have held this societal observation of identity for over a century, beginning with James (1890) and his notion of identity through sameness, Cooley's "looking-glass self" (1902), which highlighted the concept of self as seen through the reflections of others, and Mead (1934) and the influence of social interaction on self-development. Social identity theory, as formalized by Tajfel and Turner in 1979, expands directly to this premise by arguing that membership within *any* group by default provides a certain set of beliefs and roles and expectations which the individual incorporates into his or her identity (Chang & Jetten, 2015). This belonging, however, is not a passive act; merely *being* in a group does not automatically produce social or cultural identity. Individuals are active players in the process of identity development within a community; they must endorse, commit to, and express or act out the norms of that group. The ways in which each particular cultural system is integrated into one's life relies on many different factors, including the individual's personal history, his/her positive and negative experiences within that community, and the pressures exerted by those social ties. This idea of degree or level of cultural identification will be more closely studied in a later section.

Some communities naturally lend themselves to a more socio-centered environment. Schweder and Bourne (1984) conducted an influential study comparing identity development in India and the United States. Indian respondents tended to frame their statements of self with community and contextual references as opposed to the more independent accounts provided by the American participants (Hammack, 2008). A similar study compared individuals in Japan to those in the United States and found that identity construction in the former culture was far more socially dependent that that in the latter (Hammack, 2008). But while there are varying degrees to which societal – or cultural – influence is exerted, it does appear evident that social ties and the interactions with people within the same category or community – whether ethnic or geographic or any other categorization – bring about shared knowledge and common behavior.

Given these understandings of culture and because one's religion can also dictate, like other cultural elements, the meaning and value that are placed on language and thoughts, behavior, and practice, there is clearly significant interplay and overlap of religion in this field (Tarakeshwar, Stanton & Pargament, 2003). Some assert that in cultural studies, religion should stand right alongside other traditional measures such as gender, race and ethnicity. For example, Cohen (2009) posits that many definitions of religion are, in fact, nearly indistinguishable from those of culture. They both have components of a shared belief system and obligatory roles that are lived and carried out by members of the community, either cultural or religious. In some communities, for instance, there is significant overlay between ethnicity or nationality and religion. This is particularly true for countries that have a state religion, such as Tunisia and Morocco, which both lay claim to Islam (Watzlawik, 2012). For residents in those locales, their Muslim identity almost wholly defines their cultural identity; being Moroccan is difficult to

separate from being Muslim. Likewise, Catholic parishes within Irish or Polish communities are primed with both religious and ethnic or national perspectives (Phillips, 2009).

And just like there are ethnic or geographic cultures that have a greater dependence on the whole – as seen in the aforementioned studies on India and Japan, there are both religions that have a stronger sense of collectivism and *individuals* who have a deeper commitment to and more rooted identity in their religion as compared to others (Cohen & Hill, 2007).   Some have explored the strength of religious identity by parsing out the difference in religion by descent and religion by choice or beliefs. In the former, individuals are born into the religion, like that of the Jewish tradition. Cohen and Hill (2007) argue that for those "hereditary" believers, identity may stem more from external or ritualistic behavior such as observing the Sabbath or consuming kosher foods than it does from a resolute belief in an absolute truth or specific doctrine. Regardless of categorization or source, however, religious and cultural identity can indeed be the most pervasive and salient part of one's concept of self. While a professional identity can begin and end at the office entrance and gender identity may not be always relevant in certain contexts, both religion and culture seem to provide a guiding framework that influences all aspects of living (Taylor & Usborne, 2010).

Measurement of Religious Culture

But while there does seem to be a definitive intersection of religion and culture, with the former bearing many of the markings that define and encapsulate the latter, viewing religion through a cultural lens does not necessarily afford the researcher with a clearer method of empirical measurement for analysis. Just as religious scholars have grappled with the dimensions of religiosity and ways in which to quantify something with seemingly intangible qualities, cultural researchers have likewise employed multiple theories and tools to account for

and understand culture. Ethnographers and anthropologists have traditionally used qualitative methods to describe their subjects – field observations, thoughtful, semi-structured interviews, and examination of relevant cultural artifacts (Dressler, Borges, Balieiro, & Dos Santos, 2005). These measurements certainly procure reliable data and have rightly earned a place within the study of culture.

Quantitative methods are dutifully used as well, though. Unidimensional models for acculturation, for example, have developed scales that measure language acquisition, frequency of participation in cultural events, and commitment to cultural values (Cabassa, 2003).

The recent rise of cultural intelligence is another aspect of culture that has utilized a quantitative measure. CQ, as cultural intelligence has been termed, is assessed over four dimensions – metacognitive, cognitive, behavioral, and motivational – and the CQ scale, developed by (Ang, Van Dyne & Koh, 2007) measures these elements accordingly through self-reported measures of 20 items (Bucker, Furrer & Lin, 2015).

Another approach to quantifying culture is through the measurement of cultural products. In one meta-analysis, Morling and Lamoreaux (2008) examined all literature that looked at cultural products. They argued that culture has thoroughly been studied within the context of the psyche, but that little had been said about how culture is lived and measured "outside the head" (2008). The measures that they found for cultural products included magazine advertising, song lyrics, religious texts, and web sites. Another theory related to cultural products goes one step further and studies the cultural embeddedness in products (CEP) (Jakubanecs & Supphellen, 2014). This relatively new construct identifies the degree to which certain products convey culture in the minds of consumers. Jakubanecs and Supphellen (2014) developed a list of items commonly thought to be culturally related; for this Russia-based study, these items included

ketchup, soda, vodka, *mors* (a drink made of berries), and *pelmeni* (meatball). Through factor

analysis, they tested these items in a survey with two different samples. They used three

dimensions of culture – public and private personas and symbolic interaction – and found that

the results fit their multidimensional model well, with all three elements highly correlating to

each other and differently with other variables.

One of the fundamental issues in cultural studies – and, subsequently, in measurement –

is the balance of individual versus collective or the self versus the group. The individualism-

collectivism (IC) theory articulates this tension best as it attempts to place individuals – their

perceptions, their goals, their motivations – all within the context of the larger community

(Fischer et al., 2003). Some instruments measure culture by asking the respondents about their

personal preferences or choices, while others attempt to capture general, nation-wide elements of

culture. The problem with this, advocates of IC argue, is that the individual and collective are

intertwined; culture is indeed the ideas contained within oneself, but it is also the influence of

and expression within a wider social framework. Consequently, IC theorists have developed

models in which individuals don't identify characteristics of themselves, but rather of the *group,*

and then go on to place those individuals on a spectrum based on the domain that was defined

(Fischer et al., 2003). Bourdieu (1984) provided a related paradigm for this spectrum when he

coined the term "cultural space," a world that is jointly inhabited and culturally understood by its

occupants. For instance, the mention of "football" or "hot dog" or "prom" will have similar

connotations for most Americans as Americans share a cultural space. Within this space,

inhabitants share meaning; that is, there is a consensus within the domain about the norms –

acceptable behavior, language, etc.

Cultural Consensus Analysis

While this concept of consensus within a culture may seem obvious or organic, it has proven hard to quantify empirically. But by using the theory of culture as an aggregate construct, Romney, Weller and Batchelder attempted to do exactly that, introducing the cultural consensus model (CCM) in 1986 (Dressler, 2018). Developed as a way to empirically and formally measure shared cultural knowledge, it clearly made a significant impact in the field as the original article that presented CCM in the *American Anthropologist* still holds the title of the sixth most frequently cited paper in the journal's history of over 100 years. CCM restates the basic premise that individuals behave in certain and specific ways based on their understanding of that certain and specific culture. Americans behave differently at baseball games than they do in board meetings because they anticipate and expect different things at different venues. The culture informs their behavior, which is rooted in a shared understanding of that particular domain. By assuming a fixed knowledge base from a proposed cultural domain, CCM first identifies agreement within this domain from key informants. Researchers ask a sample of the population to list and then rank items that are salient to that culture. Agreement among the respondents serves to validate the cultural domain and then construct a cultural model. For instance, one study asked Brazilians to define a successful lifestyle (Dressler, 2018). Responses from the sample produced a list of 25 items that were identified by 10% of the sample. The respondents were then asked to rank the items, which produced another list with the average assigned rank. By comparing the responses of the individuals, researchers could identify which respondents had higher correlations or, to put it another way, agreed more with each other. In CCM, those respondents are considered more "culturally competent"; that is, their knowledge of the cultural domain is greater and more correct than the others. This is an important aspect of

CCM as subsequent calculations will give more weight to those respondents than to others who are not as "culturally competent." In the example above, there was clear cultural consensus within the domain of successful Brazilian lifestyle as evidenced through a high ration of the first-to-second eigenvalue (Dressler, 2018). From this, researchers were able to derive a cultural "key," the average value, for instance, of owning a DVD player or a refrigerator, as identified by the respondents. This key is crucial, as it paves the way for further analysis and regression of the cultural domain and the people who inhabit that domain. One finding from this particular study provided evidence that those with a primary or secondary level of education actually had higher cultural competence about successful lifestyle than those with higher levels of education – an interesting insight (Dressler, 2018)! Further discussion on CCM will follow in the sections on theoretical framework and methodology.

While the cultural consensus theory has mainly been framed within the context of health and psychological wellbeing, there is significant potential for the study of religious communities and the subcultures that define them.

Religiosity and Consumer Behavior

Besides exploring the parameters of religion and culture within the context of the Seventh-day Adventist religion, this study also seeks to identify the relationship between religiosity and school choice. Because an individual's behavior is prompted by his/her beliefs, values, and desires (Chang & Jetten, 2015; Moschis & Ong, 2011), and because I've made the case that religion can be defined as a cultural system of beliefs and values, one can surmise that religiosity can indeed have a significant effect on behavior. I suggest that for the purpose of this study, "behavior" is viewed in the context of consumption; that is, what one partakes of, engages in, or purchases. Cosgel and Minkler (2007) defined behaviors motivated by religiosity as

religious consumption norms. These norms are a way in which believers are able to express, communicate and explain their identity, their choices, and their beliefs. Muslim women, for instance, can express their religious commitment by wearing headscarves; Jews might refrain from eating pork as a religious consumption norm.

Viewed within this context, it seems natural that religion would warrant attention in market research as it could clearly drive – or dispel – consumer behavior. Economists seem to have the most to gain from linking consumer types with consumption patterns and discerning the influences on purchasing habits is certainly relevant to this end. But while there has been ample discussion on other consumer-centered aspects such as gender, ethnicity and age, there has been little research conducted specifically on religiosity and its connection to behavior as seen in consumption (Moschis & Ong, 2011; Muhamed & Mizerski, 2010). A meta-analysis conducted by Cutler (1991) found that only 35 articles had been written about religiosity in academic marketing literature between 1956 and 1989, with 80% of that small number being published in the 1980s! There has been a growing interest in this field, however, and more research is being conducted that will continue to shed light on this relationship.

Because there are a myriad of ways in which one can measure religiosity, researchers must decide which dimension of religiosity they seek to hold up against consumer behavior. Besides diet and dress, for instance, religiosity can influence behavior or consumption in a variety of other ways. One rationale (Lehrer, 2004) posits that religiosity influences very specific economic and demographic outcomes because of the impact it has on the basic costs and benefits within a household. Studies on marital stability, for example, have shown that couples that share the same religion have a lower probability of divorce than those who have different

religious beliefs. Having the same religion simply equates to a more efficient household – in time, finances and effort – and can act as a stabilizing force within a marriage (Lehrer, 2004).

Religion also affects gender roles and behavior, both at home and in the workforce. Due to moral support, perceived psychological rewards, and varying fundamentalist paradigms, women with high levels of religiosity are more likely to stay out of the professional labor market when their children are young (Lehrer, 2004).

Educational attainment (Sherkat & Darnell, 1999), employment choices (Lehrer, 2004), and cohabitation (Lehrer, 2000) are other documented ways in which religiosity influences behavior.

Based on the scant literature on religiosity and consumer behavior, studies seem to roughly divide into two categories – those that compare consumption between religions or denominations and those that assess the strength of religiosity on behavior (Moschis & Ong, 2011).

In the former category, Hirschman conducted two prominent studies that compared Jews and non-Jews (1981) as well as Catholics and Protestants (1982). In the first study, she used a variety of measures to identify consumers' positivity towards consumption innovativeness and transfer of consumption information (Hirschman, 1981). In essence, she wanted to see how willing consumers were to learn about and use new products. Hirschman found significant differences between Jewish and non-Jewish consumers, concluding that Jewish consumers may have less brand and store loyalty and more awareness and acceptance of new products. Her later study (1982), Hirschman argued that the differences between Catholics, Protestants, and Jews produced different consumptions among entertainment, housing, transportation, and even pet ownership (Khraim, 2010).

Table 1

Consumer Shopping Patterns Among Various Religious Affiliations

Religion	Findings
Buddhism	• Older Buddhists were more reluctant shoppers than younger Buddhist shoppers • More educated Buddhists were less risky shoppers
Catholicism	• Less informed shoppers • Older Catholic were more informed than younger Catholics
Hinduism	• Rational shoppers
Islam	• Impetuous shoppers • Less informed shoppers • More educated Muslims were less risky shoppers • Muslim men were less informed than women
Judaism	• More educated Jews were less risky shoppers
Protestantism	• Protestant men were more reluctant shoppers

Note. Adapted from "Effects of Religious Affiliation on Consumer Behavior: Preliminary Investigation" by J. Bailey & J. Sood, 1993, *Journal of Managerial Issues, 5*(3), p. 344. Copyright 2003 by Pittsburgh State University.

Bailey and Sood (1993) expanded those classifications to also include followers of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. As seen in Table 1, they found different patterns of consumer behavior among all six religious groups. Some of the variances were age-related; others seemed to be connected to the shoppers' ideology or level of education.

On the other hand, other studies have shown a rather weak relationship between religious affiliation and consumer behavior. There were no differences seen between Christians, Muslims, and Jews in choosing foods based on certain aspects – such as fresh versus frozen chicken, nor were there any notable distinctions in the evaluation of retail stores among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews (Muhamed & Mizerski, 2010).

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The second category of religious consumption – the measure of religious commitment or strength of church identity – is particularly noteworthy for my study. Religion clearly affects individuals differently and the degree to which one is committed to his/her religion changes the consumer context from person to person.

Cosgel and Minkler (2004) provide a foundational understanding about the significance of religious commitment and the choices that follow the varying level of affiliation. They recognized that members in the same religious community do not all behave in the same way or consume the same products or have the same motivations. Some, they observed, might choose to eat pork instead of fish simply because of personal preferences; others might prefer eating pork, but will concede to choosing fish because of the social pressure exerted by their religious community. Cosgel and Minkler suggested that the differences in how these individuals respond in regard to the consumption of religious products (both ideas and goods) is captured in the concept of integrity. They define integrity in this context as "identity-conferring commitments"; in essence, the degree of integrity religious adherents have will directly affect their commitment to their religious identity. A person with a high level of integrity or commitment to his or her religion will be heavily constrained in their behavior. To continue the example above, a Jew with a high level of integrity will choose to eat fish on Sabbath even if it is inconvenient (the fish market is farther away than the meat market) and even if the meal is in the privacy of his or her own home (no social pressure to conform to). This general understanding of the relationship between strength of affiliation and behavior can be further extended into specific product consumption or behavior.

Wilkes, Burnett, and Howell (1986) sought to determine the influence of religiosity on consumer behavior by analyzing religiosity using four different factors: church attendance,

importance of religious values, confidence in religious values, and self-perceived religiousness. These religiosity dimensions were correlated with five lifestyle constructs, which, by the authors' own admission, were selected for only "likely" or "possible" relevance to either consumption or religiosity. At the time of the study – over 30 years ago – there was no formal theory and scant research conducted yet on these two domains, so the researchers simply made their best educated guesses and cast their nets into the unknown. The findings from this study yielded significant – but very general – results. They concluded, for example, that "more religious" individuals – as categorized by their survey instrument – were more dependent, more conservative, and displayed greater discipline. They were also less likely to be opinion leaders and more likely to ascribe to traditional gender roles (Wilkes, Burnett & Howell, 1986). While these results provided some insight into religiosity and consumer behavior, the link was clearly still tenuous and vague.

Later studies continued the quest to link religious commitment with consumer choices. McDaniel and Burnett (1990) found that more religiously committed consumers tended to select stores based on the friendliness of sales personnel, product quality, and shopping efficiency as opposed to less religiously committed consumers who did not place as much importance on those aspects. Another study (Sood & Nasu, 1995) found that more devout American Protestants tended to exhibit more frugal spending behavior such as shopping in less expensive stores and buying products on sale.

Cosgel and Minkler (2007) explored the idea of religious commitment and consumer behavior from a slightly different angle; rather than assessing one's level of commitment as an isolated variable, they placed religious commitment as a means of expression within a social context. This ties in neatly with the idea of religion as a culture and the identity that is found within that culture. They posited that religious adherents need ways in which to communicate

their religious membership and commitment; the degree to which they understand and adopt

their religion's consumption norms allows them one method of expression. The study gives the

example of members of the Amish community; the fabric, style, and size of their pants or hats

indicates intergroup differences as well as the level of their commitment. Cosgel and Minkler

(2004) also emphasize that differing degrees of commitment will result in differing quantities of

consumption. Those who are highly committed to their faith will partake of most or all of the

expected consumption norms – evidenced in aspects such as diet, dress, rituals, and lifestyles,

while those who are more casual in their religious affiliation will "consume" less – both in

quantity and in frequency. They offer the example of a highly committed Muslim female who

would feel inclined to wear her headscarf all the time compared to one who is less committed

and therefore only wears her headscarf on special occasions or to the mosque (2007). As an

intriguing corollary, Cosgel and Minkler (2007) also suggested that the effect of religious

consumption might actually be bidirectional; in other words, consumption of religious norms

may at times *strengthen* religious commitment. By expressing their religious identity publicly –

through dress or other norm-related consumption – these individuals may feel obligated to act

accordingly. In other words, a Jewish man who dutifully attends synagogue on Sabbath is

making a statement about his commitment to the Jewish faith and, therefore, may compel him to

wear a yarmulke in public, even if he doesn't necessarily feel personally convicted about that

norm (2007).

　　While many studies in this field have focused on Western religions, some research has

been conducted within the Muslim community. Followers of Islam who reside in a

predominantly Muslim country serve as interesting subjects for religious consumer research as

they have not only their personal convictions, but also those enforced by state regulations

(Mukhtar & Butt, 2012). *Halal* goods are those that are deemed appropriate or permissible under Islamic law; the Quranic philosophy forbids "adultery, gambling, liquor, pork, interest on money, blood of animals and the meat of animals sacrificed in the name of other than Allah" (Mukhtar & Butt, p. 109, 2010). The research specifically examined both the attitudes of the consumers towards *halal* products as well as subjective norms. Results indicated that external influences such as the individuals' interaction within their religious community contributed to their attitude towards *halal* products, pointing to a connection between strength of religious identity and consumer behavior.

The sparse literature on religiosity and consumer behavior suggests that this area of study has proven troublesome for scholars to capture and investigate empirically. Earlier discussion pointed out the difficulty that comes with measuring religiosity and it is that lack of clarity that has hindered attempts to isolate the influence of religious commitment on behavior (Muhamad & Mizerski, 2010). Instruments that endeavor to measure commitment, for instance, tend to lump all religious commitment under one umbrella – regardless of specific faith or denomination. Given the stark differences in Judaism and Hinduism, for example, it seems ludicrous to think that the same yardstick could assess the degree of commitment from both types of believers.

The Religious Orientation Scale, developed by Allport and Ross (1967) has been a mainstay in religious studies and has been utilized in other field as well, including economics and consumer research. Its biggest limitation, however, is the bias towards Judeo-Christian religions (Mokhlis, 2009). The jargon, the criteria, the categories – all make perfect sense to the Christian respondent, but are fairly ineffective with participants from other non-Western cultures and religions.

In order to develop a more valid and reliable instrument to measure religiosity and consumer behavior, Mathras et al. (2016) suggest a multidimensional construct – assessing religion through four dimensions and exploring how each of those dimensions influence specific aspects of consumption, including product choice and brand relationship. In their study, they acknowledge the two primary domains that have been used – affiliation and commitment – but emphasize the need to expand on both through more specific measures that focus on beliefs and rituals and values that are unique to each religion.

Other scholars have also proposed further research on religiosity and consumer behavior through closer analysis of mediating factors. In their study of religious consumption of older adults in Malaysia, Moschis and Ong (2011) found no significant differences in brand switching and store preferences between customers with high and low religious commitment. They suggested that the perceived effect of religious commitment on consumer behavior might actually be explained by age.

Lindridge (2012) offers another caution in regard to general assumptions about the relationship between religiosity and consumption. In his study on Asian Indians living in Britain, he noted the differences between eastern and western perspectives on materialism. Because of the higher levels of materialism observed in India than in Britain (Lindridge & Dibb, 2003), accumulating wealth or increasing product consumption can be seen as a positive indicator of religiosity. In western countries such as Britain, however, that relationship is different. Increased levels of materialism among British religious adherents tend to be indirectly proportional to their religiosity, as evidenced in lower church attendance rates (2003). It is clear that national and ethnic differences should be taken into consideration in the analysis of religiosity and consumption behavior.

The influence of one's religious community is another dimension of religiosity that may provide deeper insights into consumer behavior. Consumer research has already demonstrated that both the need for and lack of belonging affects consumption choices (Mathras et al., 2016). Membership in a certain community usually includes the adoption of group norms, beliefs and expectations. These social rules can also be extended into consumption of certain products. Participants might increase their consumption of those items in order to feel more included or accepted (Mathras et al., 2016). Adding religiosity to this framework requires then an even more complex analysis of this moderating influence of community.

Religiosity and School Choice

There are clearly a number of elements that contribute to the way in which religiosity informs consumer behavior. This literature review so far has not only examined many of the different factors that may influence the effects of religiosity on product consumption, but also the ways in which product consumption can vary based on certain aspects *of* religiosity. Product consumption, as I have shown, can range from the purchase of specific foods to the choice of clothing.

Parents of K-12 school-aged children are a specific subset of the general shopper population and there are certain products that – by nature and design – fall under their particular purview. Product consumption can denote a whole host of other things for parents such as vehicle safety devices (Kunkel, Nelson & Schunk, 2001), preschools (Fuller, et al., 1995), groceries (Gaumer & Arnone, 2009), and childhood immunizations (Hamilton, Corwin, Gower & Rogers, 2004).

These are clearly just a few of the myriad of decisions that parents make and that they can choose to "consume" for their children, but for the purpose of this study, I am looking at one specific product: school choice.

In the field of school choice, there has been some research to understand more clearly parents' decision-making process in choosing a school for their child. Greater insights into this process could significantly impact many areas – educational policy, educational labor markets, schools' fundraising and marketing aims, charter school developments, and others (Carpenter, 2015).

Factors that rise to the forefront include academic achievement (Belfield, 2004), racial diversity (Schneider, Marschall, Teske, & Roch, 1998), school size (Weiher & Tedin, 2002), and socio-economic status (Coleman, 1992; Schneider, 1998). School safety has also been cited as a significant factor in some studies but has not been proven to be of consideration in others (Carpenter, 2015).

The choice of a faith-based school, however, seems to have different – or, perhaps additional – elements involved. In some early studies, religiosity of parents and their commitment to religious factors has been found to be two of the main factors (Coleman, 1982; Lankford & Wyckof, 1992) for attendance in faith-based schools. Related to parents' religiosity is their desire to preserve and protect their family and community's religious identity (Cohen-Zada, 2006). There is ample evidence that religious ideas and values to which individuals are exposed in childhood are often what they adopt in adulthood (Cricks & Jelf, 2011). One study on Muslim education found that parents chose Muslim schools due to the schools' acceptance of specific Muslim culture, such as eating with their hands (McCreery, 2007). Other issues of concern were enough time allotted for prayer and understanding and support for periods of

fasting. These studies speak to a parent's desire for their religious identity to be understood, respected, nurtured, and taught.

Interestingly enough, research has shown that the desire for religious education within a specific denomination diminishes when that denomination is overrepresented in the community. Essentially, when religious values are being seen and modeled overtly in community life, there appears to be less of a need for formal education within that religion (Cohen-Zada, 2006). As one study stated: "Many parishes found that they didn't really need to maintain a parochial school, however, because their community (or their neighborhood) was so overwhelmingly Catholic that the public school sufficed" (Finke & Stark, 2005, p. 147).

To further substantiate this matter of preservation of religious identity, an earlier study found that parents were less likely to enroll their children in Catholic schools if they found the percentage of lay teachers to be too high – if there were too many non-Catholic teachers (Lankford, et al., 1991). This all seems to point, albeit indirectly, to religious identity as one of the main reasons for faith-based education.

Moral development is a topic that often seems to go hand in hand with religious education, so it is no surprise that parents who choose faith-based schools are highly interested in moral formation, discipline and student behavior ("What Parents Really Want", n.d.). A recent study conducted on the universal choice program in Colorado found that only a small percentage of parents who chose faith-based schools in Douglas County did so because of religious instruction (Carpenter, 2015). In fact, 19% of the families in the study reported that they didn't hold any religious preferences themselves.   These families, it appears, chose faith-based schools for their moral instruction, unrelated to their religious education.

There has also been some research into the intergenerational effect on faith-based school choice – that is, whether or not parents' own school experiences significantly influence their choice of school for their child.   It was determined that graduates of faith-based schools were more likely than their counterparts in public schools to send their children to faith-based schools (Schwarz & Sikkink, 2016). This seems connected to another researched point, which is a shared, common community that faith-based schools provide (Vryhof, 2004). In a chapter titled *Functional Community*, Vryhof writes that

> parents try a number of ways to achieve the value consistency and intergenerational closure of functional community, including family vacations, time with grandparents and other relatives…arrangement of summer camp experiences…and, increasingly, choosing a school that provides the values and adult-child relationships that support their functional community goals (p. 7).

Parents who choose faith-based schools for their children seem to value the connection between beliefs taught at home and at church ("What Parents Really Want," n.d.).

Like their public school counterparts, academic quality is high on the list for many parents who opt for faith-based schools (Louie, 2009). As a parent remarked in one study, "…you don't put your kids in public school if you can afford Catholic school. They saw it as a better education…" (Louie, 2009). Academic quality, however, does appear to be slightly less important than it is for parents who choose public schools (Fordham Study, 2013). College preparation, STEM programs, and project-based learning ranked lower in importance for parents who chose faith-based schools as opposed to parents with students in public schools.

Sander (2005) examined the relationship of a parent's religiosity – as measured by church attendance – and that of their children's enrollment in private schools. He found that being

religiously affiliated did indeed have a strong effect on private school attendance. Moreover, high church attendance had a positive correlation with private school enrollment, particularly among Catholics and fundamentalist Protestants. Because the majority of private schools in America are religious, Sander contended that the largest driving force behind the demand for private schools is grounded in religion.

Suffice it to say that school choice – specifically of faith-based education – remains a difficult topic to quantify and measure objectively. Each family, each sub-group, each religion has their own reasons – both conscious and not – for choosing a faith-based school for their child.

Outcomes of Faith-based School Choice

Given all the interest into why parents choose faith-based education, it seems prudent to also look at the outcomes of faith-based schools. Are they doing what they aspire to do? For parents who choose them for their academic excellence – are they meeting those expectations? For parents who choose them for moral and character development – are they producing positive, contributory citizens?

The preponderance of research that exists for outcomes of faith-based education is in Catholic schooling. Studies conducted by James Coleman, Thomas Hoffer and Sally Kilgore in the early 1980s serve as seminal works in the area of academic achievement of Catholic schools, resulting in the coining of the term "the Catholic School Advantage." Their book, *High School Achievement* (1982), analyzed data from High School and Beyond, a longitudinal study of sophomores and seniors in Catholic and public high schools. They found that there was a significant difference in achievement between Catholic high schools and public high schools, with students attending Catholic schools faring far better. There were also higher rates of

engagement found in academic activities, with better school attendance and higher participation in advanced courses. There were also differences in school climate, with fewer reports of violence, fights, and threats in Catholic schools as opposed to public schools (Coleman, 1982).

Further evidence of academic achievement in faith-based schools has been derived from an analysis of standardized test scores. From 2006-2009, for example, the Center for Research on K-12 Adventist Education did a nationwide study of students in Seventh-day Adventist schools in North America. They analyzed scores from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills as well as the Cognitive Aptitude Test (both from Riverside Publishing) and compared results with other schools that also used those tests. On average, students in Seventh-day Adventist schools were found to score at least one grade level above those in other schools with higher achievement across reading, science, and math. In another analysis of test scores, students in religious schools outperformed their counterparts in public schools on all measured sections – writing, verbal and math – of the Scholastic Aptitude Tests in 2010 (Thayer & Kido, 2012).

Another landmark study conducted by Bryk, Lee and Holland (1993) found that students from disadvantaged backgrounds or of minority groups had much higher levels of achievement within Catholic schools than they did in public schools.

More recent studies conducted by William Jeynes, a preeminent scholar on faith-based schools in America, have further expanded on the works of Coleman and Bryk et al. and have provided more substantiation for the differences in academic achievement between students in faith-based schools and those in public schools. His meta-analysis (2007), for instance, found that students from low socioeconomic households consistently fare better in faith-based schools and that African American and Latino students performed just as well academically as White students – effectively closing the achievement gap found among races in public schools.

One of the most publicized and more recent observations of the academic superiority of faith-based schools came from the White House in an address by President George W. Bush. He spoke out about the closure of faith-based schools in urban locales, citing this as a crisis for education in America. Evidence was given that attendance in a faith-based school reduced the achievement gap in students of color by more than 25% (Jeynes, 2008; White House, 2008). Based on the results of numerous studies, it is clear that African American and Latino students perform better in faith-based schools than they do in public schools.

High school graduation rates, college attendance, and years of formal schooling are also statistics related to academic achievement and that add context to the outcomes of faith-based schools. Students who have attended a Catholic high school have a 10-13% better chance of continuing on to college (Evans & Schwab, 1995). Another study (Grogger & Neal, 2000) assessed college attendance rates specific for urban minority students and found there to be a significantly higher rate of college attendance for those from Catholic schools as opposed to public schools. Moreover, students from Catholic schools tend to complete more years of schooling than their public school counterparts and are more likely to complete at least a Bachelor's degree (Cardus, 2014). The Seventh-day Adventist school system, the fourth largest in religiously affiliated schools in America, reports a 93% graduation rate amongst their high school students (Thayer & Kido, 2012). The current graduation rate for American students in public schools is roughly 83% (Ed*Facts*, 2015).

Besides academic achievement, though, another area of some study has been the spiritual outcomes of students who attend faith-based schools compared to those in public schools. Research by LeBlanc and Slaughter (2012) have shown that students attending faith-based schools feel more prepared to defend their faith upon graduation and the Cardus Report (2014)

adds that Evangelical Protestant school graduates are more likely to attend religious services and participate in individual religious practices such as praying and reading their Bible.

And finally, one of the criticisms of faith-based schools is that they raise a generation of students who are isolated or indifferent to society. There is concern that the perceived single-minded focus of faith-based schools may lead, for example, to citizens who are unwilling to participate in non-religious civil service. There seems to be no evidence to this end; rather, graduates of faith-based schools are just as likely as their counterparts to be interested in civic duty and politics. In fact, students who attend faith-based schools seem to demonstrate a greater commitment to their local community and are much more likely to volunteer for civic or religious organizations (Sikkink, 2001).

Moving Forward

After examining these various strands in the current literature on religiosity, on consumer behavior and on school choice, it certainly seems as if there is a growing body of work dedicated to each of these elements. However, the idea of juxtaposing all three factors – religiosity, consumer behavior, and school choice – appears to be yet explored. By addressing that very issue in this study – the relationship between religiosity and school choice within the framework of parents as consumers - we will enhance our understanding of how one's attitude towards church and religious commitment is extended into the "consumption" of schools.

For this dissertation, I will be looking at this issue specifically within the Seventh-day Adventist educational system in the United States. The selection of one faith-based organization allows for a more focused study but it also enables the researcher to examine the unique cultural norms associated with that particular religious affiliation. The results of this study, however,

will hopefully be generalizable to other religious affiliations and serve as a catalyst for future studies.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

Q1)   How does consumption behavior – as seen in school choice - differ among Seventh-day Adventist parents?

Q2)   How does the degree of cultural consonance to the Seventh-day Adventist model relate to consumption behavior as seen in school choice?

a.   Are parents who display a high level of cultural consonance more likely to send their oldest/only child to a Seventh-day Adventist school?

Q3)   To what extent does a Seventh-day Adventist parent's general religiosity, doctrinal commitment, and church identity – as represented through cultural consonance – predict the choice of school for his/her oldest/only child?

The following hypotheses will be considered in this study:

H1)   The culture of the SDA denomination is a significant construct that can be defined and operationalized, using the cultural consonance model.

H2)   The culture of the SDA denomination significantly influences church members' paradigm of identity within the church and, consequently, affects their consumption behavior, as measured by school choice.

H3)   The interplay between the three elements measured – general religiosity, doctrinal commitment (belief in doctrines unique to the SDA Church), and cultural consonance – will result in different consumption behavior, as measured by school choice.

Theoretical Framework

In the area of school choice, the theoretical frameworks that are generally cited in discussions are rational choice theory and social capital theory. Rational choice theory presumes that individuals will "act rationally, weighing costs and benefits of possible actions, and choosing those actions that maximize net benefits" (Ellison, 1995). In the context of school choice, this theory posits that parents will reflect on the values of their household, of what they wish to transmit to their children and, after assessing the educational opportunities available to their children, make the best choice possible with the given information (Goldring & Shapira, 1993). Social capital – which can also include cultural capital – theories, on the other hand, are based on the premise that parents have a certain amount of capital that they are able to leverage as decision makers for their children. Popularized by Pierre Boudrieu and James Coleman, social or cultural capital theories maintain that social networks and cultural signifiers can be used as tools and wielded to procure educational advantages; in the context of school choice, this can mean a behind-the-scenes understanding of the admission process to a private school or knowing the right phone calls to make to the right people to procure a spot in an elite academy (Schneider et al., 1997).

These two theories are most often used in the study of school choice because educational researchers tend to focus on a child's education as an object of investment. Parents, they might posit, carefully weigh their options and select their child's school because of the long term dividends that particular educational system offers – high quality academics, a boost up the social ladder, etc. To be sure, Adventist parents who choose Adventist schools are certainly making an investment decision – one that involves financial resources, peer circles and religious beliefs.

However, the hypothesis of this study maintains that school choice can also be seen as an object of consumption. The literature suggests that school choice – in the context of a parent's religiosity – can serve as an extension of cultural norms and that parents might be choosing schools for their children not only because of the long-term investment they're making into a specific kind of education, *but also* because their religious and cultural context stipulates the type of school they should be "consuming" or selecting for their children. Therefore, my research will examine school choice within the framework of consumer behavior – specifically consumer culture theory – and culture, through the cultural consonance theory.

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)

To begin with, a basic theoretical premise of consumer behavior is that it can be examined through a means-end analysis; in other words, behavior – whether it is buying a tube of toothpaste, deciding which restaurant to take a first date, or choosing a school for one's child – can be traced back to specific attitudes towards the product, which originate from conscious or unconscious values that the individual holds (Minton & Kahle, 2013). The general equation for consumer behavior under this paradigm is Values $\Rightarrow$ Attitudes $\Rightarrow$ Behavior (Minton & Kahle, 2013).

To leave it at that, however, would grossly oversimplify the field of consumer research and theories abound that dissect, unpack and examine all three of those elements – values, attitudes and behavior. Most traditional consumer research, though, has focused on each piece separately and compartmentalized the process of consumption (Levy, 2015). Studies have analyzed customers' buying intentions, the actual purchase, and then their satisfaction with said purchase. But recently, there has been a marked interest in consumer culture theory, an overarching paradigm that brings together varied areas of interest and expertise to study

consumerism (Joy & Li, 2012). Introduced as an official term in 2005 by Arnould and

Thompson, consumer culture theory (CCT) is a multi-disciplinary approach, driven by the

premise that consumers are not one-dimensional beings that always operate under a single set of

rules or expectations derived from a single culture. Rather, CCT suggests that consumers are

continually molded and shaped by a myriad of contextual, historical and cultural forces and that

their consumption behavior lies at the intersection of these many strands of self (Arnould &

Thompson, 2005). Far more than just a theory of economics with some cognitive psychology

thrown in, CCT draws from fields such as anthropology, ethnography, and sociology; it

acknowledges the different perspectives garnered by each discipline and the important ways in

which each contributes to providing meaning and understanding of consumer behavior (Joy &

Li, 2012).

Ahuvia, Carroll and Wang (2006) compared CCT with traditional methods of consumer

research and noted five main differences:

1) parsimony versus detail in analysis,

(2) single versus multiple meanings associated with products and brands,

(3) quantitative versus qualitative research methods,

(4) implicit versus explicit group membership, and

(5) a descriptive versus theory-based focus.

One example they give of these differences is the evaluation of consumer resources.

While many studies viewed income and education as similar forms of capital, CCT, drawing

from Bourdieu's theories on social and cultural capital, argues that not only are income and

education two vastly different types of capital, education alone could be further subdivided into

categories. Formal education, for instance, versus self-taught knowledge would constitute

separate forms of education and be accounted for and qualified differently. This attention to detail is essential to CCT (Ahuvia, Carroll & Yang, 2006).

Another example given is that of French champagne. Conventional research methods might assume that most consumers would view French champagne as a cultured, sophisticated product – one that denotes wealth and class. CCT, however, would suggest that depending on political, socio-economic, or even pop cultural contexts, French champagne can hold vastly different meanings from consumer to consumer. For instance, the Iraq war in the 1990s caused political tensions between the United States and France; some Americans sensitive to that situation chose to boycott French products. Serving a bottle of French champagne to those individuals could convey an entirely different message than the intended one (Ahuvia, Carroll & Yang, 2006).

Cultural Consonance Model

Religious belief systems, embedded with spiritual teachings and guidelines – both from a deity and church leaders – can most certainly serve as the catalytic foundation for consumption behavior; studies are only recently beginning to explore the nuances of religiosity and their subsequent effects, which makes for a fascinating field that is ripe for harvest (Moschis & Ong, 2011; Mukhtar & Butt, 2012). The cultural consonance model (CCM) is one such attempt to do just that, serving to "evaluate the degree of sharing, or consensus, in a cultural domain" (Dressler, 2000). Using a cultural competence coefficient, which is a correlation of a particular individual's profile with that of the model, respondents can be plotted across a continuum and researchers can conduct analyses that relate their positionality and level of cultural consonance to various outcomes (Dressler, 2018).

While culture has a very real presence in the lives of all humans, embodied in ways such as ethnicity, nationality, gender, and religion, it is only salient because of the collective meaning attached to it. Culture always reduces down to a set of arbitrary rules that are decided upon, implemented and acted out by each community; without that element of shared knowledge, culture means nothing (Dressler, 2005). The beauty of the CCM is that it provides a valid and tangible way of connecting a collective, shared culture with individual understanding and behavior. Being able to quantify culture then provides us with newfound freedom to operationalize this construct (Dressler, 2018).

Once a cultural domain is established and a key developed (as detailed in *Data and Methods*), CCM allows researchers to assess community members' cultural consonance. Dressler (2007) defines cultural consonance as "the degree to which individuals, in their own beliefs and behaviors, approximate the prototypes for belief and behavior encoded in cultural models". In other words, how closely do members of any given community *live* according to that community's culture? The more aligned their own lives are with the expectations, rules, and beliefs of the culture, the more culturally consonant they are.

This model has been employed in various fields including biocultural research and anthropological studies. For example, Jackson (2009) interviewed pregnant women in Mexico, first establishing a cultural domain – what they *thought* constituted a good pregnancy – and then measuring their consonance to that domain – how closely they *lived* according to that model. Even though the cultural domain of a good pregnancy included various traditional practices that were ungrounded in medical knowledge, those who were higher in cultural consonance did indeed have a "better" pregnancy, as evidenced by lower levels of stress and anxiety. Another study was conducted on Hispanic migrants living in rural Mississippi (Read-Wahidi, 2014).

Immigrants there lived a difficult life – the toil of fieldwork coupled with the stressors of residing in an unwelcoming, foreign land. Read-Wahidi first developed a cultural model of devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe – a deity revered by the migrants in that Hispanic community. Through conversations with the migrants, she identified behaviors that they believed exemplified true devotion to the Virgin – lighting candles, attending celebrations, etc. The findings from Read-Wahidi's study revealed that individuals with low cultural consonance – those who did not act in accordance with the cultural model – reported higher immigration-related stressors and poorer health as compared to those with high cultural consonance (Dressler, 2018).

CCM has also been used to study religious communities, such as Dengah's work with Pentecostals in Brazil (2013). As in the other studies that employed CCM, Dengah first established a cultural domain within the Brazilian Pentecostal community and then developed a survey instrument to assess cultural consonance. He found that the more culturally consonant they were, the more the members' lives aligned with their concept of *a vida completa* (how they described the complete and good life of a Pentecostal), the higher their levels of psychological well-being (Dengah, 2017).

To my knowledge, CCM has not been used in the specific context of religion and education, but Dressler is clear about the potential for using this model and analysis for further research in other cultural domains in which "there is a clear outcome of interest that applies to individual behavior" (2017).

Cultural consonance is the way in which an individual's lifestyle and behavior lines up with his/her cultural paradigm. I believe this paradigm – or "cultural model" – is precisely one of the layers of knowledge that consumer culture theory seeks to include in understanding

consumer behavior. Using the model of CCT – the recognition that multiple contexts serve to inform consumer behavior – to frame the two overlapping concepts of religiosity and cultural consonance comprises the theoretical model for this study.

Chapter Four: Data and Methods

The following section provides an overview of the methodologies that were used in this study, directed by the guiding research questions found at the end of Chapter 2. This chapter also includes details of the study sample and data collection methods.

Research Design

Because of the multi-faceted makeup of religion, a mixed-methods approach was chosen for this study. There have been few studies on Christian denominational culture, and the majority of those have been solely qualitative – utilizing focus groups, individual interviews or small case studies. This study specifically sought a way to turn the vague and elusive concept of culture into a concrete, quantifiable variable. Cultural consensus analysis emerged as the most appropriate method to use for this initial step; therefore, while the preponderance of data was collected quantitatively through the distributed survey and analyzed through various statistical analyses, the first part of the study was wholly qualitative. In order to have a valid measure that could quantify this cultural component of religion, an emic approach was first taken to develop a cultural model based on the responses from the community itself.   Using the cultural consensus theory as a guide, this study employed a number of strategic qualitative tools to first identify, define and construct the cultural domain of the Seventh-day Adventist community in the United States.   That domain and derived cultural key was then embedded into the survey instrument and used as a quantitative measure.

Construction of the Cultural Domain

In order to measure cultural consonance, one first needs a cultural model. Following the steps outlined in the *Cultural Consensus Model* section, this domain was emically constructed in two phases with two different samples.

Free-listing

The individuals in the first sample (n = 61) were contacted by phone or email and the interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via Skype, Zoom or over the phone. After a brief explanation of the study, each participant was provided with the prompt: "Imagine a traditional Seventh-day Adventist who lives according to the prescribed Adventist culture. What behavior or characteristics would you expect to see in these individuals?" Based on that prompt, the respondents were asked to free-list all items that came to mind. They were specifically instructed to answer on behalf of their knowledge of the community and not of themselves personally (Dressler, 2018).

In all, there were 61 interviews conducted, each taking about 10-15 minutes. Each interview was recorded (either through audio or video captures) and a spreadsheet was created, itemizing the responses from each individual. At the conclusion of the interviews, this spreadsheet was examined in its entirety and a codebook was created from the notes. Similar items were reduced to single statements. For example, one respondent remarked, "Adventists don't intentionally seek interactions with non-Adventists". Another stated that Adventist have "a bit of an exclusive mindset and are drawn to people we are similar to…" Phrases like those were merged and coded into "socializes with other Adventists".

From this first sweep through the respondents' lists, the codebook consisted of 165 items. By continuing to parse and combine, the list was further reduced to 45 traits or characteristics of

69

a traditional, upstanding Adventist (see Table 3).   New columns in the spreadsheet were created

for each respondent, with their corresponding edited list that used the codebook terms.

Researchers who conduct cultural consensus analysis often use ANTHROPAC or similar

software to analyze the free lists (Andrews, 2018). For this study, Flame was used to run these

free lists through. Based on the frequency of items generated through Flame, 27 of the most

salient items were chosen for the rank-ordering task that followed.

Rank-ordering

Once this list was created, a second sample was drawn (n = 63). For this phase of the

construction of the cultural consensus domain, the participants were given the task of rank-

ordering the list of items derived from the first sample. The purpose of this second step was to

assess the degree of agreement – or consensus – among these items, which had been identified as

being key elements in the culture of Adventism in the first phase.

As with the first sample, each participant in the second sample was first contacted either

through phone or email. At the appointed meeting time (also either in person, on the phone or

via computer), a brief summary about the study was provided to the participants as well as an

explanation as to how these 27 items were identified. The participants were told exactly what

the prompt had been for the first sample; in other words, what those participants had been

responding to and how this list had been developed. They were then instructed on the task

before them – to rank order all 27 items, beginning with what would be *most* important to a

traditional Seventh-day Adventist in good standing. Overall, this task seemed to be more difficult

than the free-listing task. For those who asked for clarification, they were told to imagine

themselves sitting in a room with 10 other Adventists. Of the 27 traits listed, which would they

most likely see in all 10 of those church members? Which would they only see in perhaps one or

two church members? This seemed to provide them with a helpful visual and most were able to continue on from there without too much difficulty.

For those with whom this task was conducted in person, Dengah's approach to rank-ordering was used (2013). Those participants were given 27 small cards with each of the items written on them. Respondents were encouraged to first sort the cards into three categories – very important, somewhat important and not at all important. Once they had three piles, the respondents were next asked to order them within each of the categories.   When they were finished, the result was a complete rank-ordered list of all 27 items.   Some respondents chose to complete the task that way; others simply rearranged their cards from left to right – "like a choo-choo train", remarked one respondent – and ordered them in one fell swoop from 1-27.

For respondents who were unable to meet in person, the interviews were scheduled for and conducted when they had access to a computer and internet. A Google Sheets document was created for each of these respondents with all 27 items listed in the first column. The second, third and fourth column were labeled, "Very Important", "Somewhat Important" and "Not at All Important", respectively. The fifth column had the header, "Complete Rank Order".

This file was shared with the participants right before the appointed meeting time. Once the interview started, the participant was asked to open up the shared file and provided with the same explanation and description of the study and task. They were then instructed to rank-order the 27 items by cutting and pasting each cell from the first column into either the second, third or fourth column – whichever felt most appropriate to them. Once they had the items sorted, they would then have a clearer picture of what was most important and what was least and then cut and paste once more into the "Complete Rank Order" column. As with the face-to-face group, some opted to sort them first, while others chose to cut and paste directly into that fifth column.

While some individuals needed some assistance and additional instructions as to how to navigate the spreadsheet, most were able to manage it without any difficulty.

Mailing index cards to each respondent who couldn't meet in person was initially considered; however, it was eventually decided to harness technology this way and use the shared Google spreadsheet. The resulting process worked smoothly and effectively, replicating the in-person process just about as nearly as possible for this situation and context.

Like the first sample, all respondents in the second sample were instructed to rank-order the statements according to how the community perceived their importance, not how they would prioritize them personally.

For both samples, an audio or video recording of each interview was kept, along with any written notes. Previous studies underscored the value of this qualitative approach and the insights that were gleaned as the respondents talked through these exercises (Dengah, 2013; Weller, 2014) and so it seemed both necessary and important to capture each conversation in its entirety.

Establishing a Domain

Using the ordered lists from each respondent in the second sample, a correlation matrix was created of respondents and their ranking of each item. The degree to which respondents agreed with each other was quantified as a cultural competence coefficient; essentially, it determined how well each individual understands the culture. Those who ranked items similarly to most others had a high coefficient and are said to have a high degree of cultural competence (Dressler, 2018). This is a consensus model, which means that "competence" is not defined *correct* answers, but rather, the level of shared knowledge among respondents.

Using those cultural competence coefficients, a factor analysis was run on the items, the respondents and their ratings, and examined for the ratio of the first eigenvalue to that of the second. Because the ratio was higher than 3:1, the existence of a shared cultural domain within the Seventh-day Adventist church was validated (Romney, Weller and Batchelder, 1986), which was the first research question set out in the study. By next calculating the rankings of all the items based on the average of all the respondents' rankings, while also giving more weight to those respondents with higher cultural competence coefficients, a "cultural key" was identified, providing a touch point for the from which the rest of the study could proceed.

In an effort to be sensitive to the length of the final instrument, only the top half of the items were included in the survey – the first 13 statements. This culling or selecting of items is not an unusual approach for in the cultural consensus model, but has been employed in numerous other studies (W. Dressler, personal communication, 2018). Among these 13 items, the trait/characteristic that was strongest for this cultural domain was *prepares for and celebrates the beginning of Sabbath on Friday at sundown.* The last – or lowest – item included was *dresses conservatively.*

With those selected items, questions were then developed that captured the essence of each statement (see Table 2). These questions were piloted informally with a focus group made up of SDA colleagues and friends before writing them into the final survey instrument.

Table 2

Survey Instrument Questions with Original Rank Order Statements

Original Rank Order Statement	Survey Question	Response Options
Prepares for and celebrates the beginning of Sabbath on Friday at sundown	In my household, we prepare for the start of Sabbath on Friday evenings, both in thought and in activity.	Likert scale (Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)

Table 2 continued

Knows of and believes in Ellen White as a prophetess	How certain are you that Ellen White was a prophetess?	Slider (0% certain to 100% certain)
Embraces a distinctive faith, framed by Adventist doctrines and underlined by a sense of different-ness	I value our church's distinctive and unique faith.	Likert scale (Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)
Is religiously conservative (e.g. believes in the literal Bible)	How would you identify your religious beliefs?	Slider (0% conservative to 100% liberal)
Keeps the Sabbath (Saturday) day holy, both in activity and worship (e.g., attends church, tries not to do worldly things, etc.)	I make it a priority to keep the Sabbath day holy, both in activity and in worship.	Likert scale (Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)
Is almost exclusively immersed in an Adventist community - both personally and professionally	Of those you interact with at work and/or professionally, what percentage are Adventist?	Slider (0% to 100%)
	What percentage of your friends are Adventist?	Slider (0% to 100%)
Leads a conservative lifestyle	How would you identify your lifestyle (choices, behaviors, etc.)?	Slider (0% conservative to 100% liberal)
Vegetarian or vegan	I follow a vegetarian or vegan diet.	Likert scale (Always, usually, sometimes, rarely, never)
Tries to live by Biblical principles	I live by Biblical principles.	Likert scale (Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)
Knows and follows rules	I tend to be a rule-follower.	Likert scale (Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)
Is actively involved in a close-knit church family (e.g., holds church office, attends weekly meetings, etc.)	I am actively involved in my church	Likert scale (Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)
Believes that the body is a temple of God and refrains from eating or drinking harmful substances	I live healthfully, which includes not eating or drinking harmful things	Likert scale (Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)

Table 2 continued		
Dresses conservatively	I tend to dress conservatively.	Likert scale (Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)

While the free-listing and ranking exercises established the cultural *competence* of the respondents – how well they know and understand the culture, the questions in the survey were to measure the cultural *consonance* of the respondents – how aligned their lifestyle is to the identified cultural domain.

This process for establishing the cultural domain among Seventh-day Adventists and developing the survey comprised a significant portion of this study.

Survey Instrument

Survey Design

This survey was developed through the online software *SurveyMonkey* – an application which allows researchers to manually input questions, select from various answer options, denote required questions, collect responses through social media or email, track the number of completed surveys, and a myriad of other helpful functions. Turning off the option for recording IP addresses ensured anonymity for the respondents and the ability to edit the link made it easier to remember and type in: www.surveymonkey.com/r/Adventistparents. Consideration was given for a paper version to be made available, but because of the ease of the online survey – both in delivery and in completion – the results ended up being collected solely through this digital means (see Appendix E for complete survey).

Key variables. To answer the first research question, "To what extent does a Seventh-day Adventist parent's level of religiosity, religious commitment, and church identity affect the

choice of school for his/her child", the survey instrument measured three different facets of religious belief and activity to produce three key variables: general religiousness, commitment and belief in the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist church, and cultural consonance within the SDA model.

The Duke Religion Index (DUREL), as developed by Koenig, Meador & Parkerson (1997) was used to measure the respondents' general religiousness over three dimensions: organizational religious activity, non-organizational religious activity and intrinsic religiosity. Used in over 100 published studies, this 5-item measure provides a concise, validated measurement for a general measurement of religiosity (Koenig & Bussing, 2010). Permission was granted for the use of this scale. The answers to these five questions were averaged to create the religiosity variable.

Commitment and belief in the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist church were measured using a short, five question instrument that was previously used to study religiosity and public issues among Seventh-day Adventists (Dudley, Hernandez, & Terian, 1992). Permission was also granted for the use of this scale. The answers to these five questions were averaged to create the variable for doctrine.

The survey also included questions designed to measure cultural consonance. These questions were derived from the cultural model described in the section above.

The main dependent variable was school choice – whether the child attended a public or charter school, a Seventh-day Adventist school, a different private school or homeschool. While the survey provided space to answer for each child separately (up to six children), the data analysis later conducted focused primarily on the placement of the first (oldest) child.

Other key independent variables measured included household income, marital status, the parent's own educational background, level of education, race and ethnicity, and geographic locale.

Survey questions. The questions in this instrument were grouped according to common themes or domains. Questions 1-3 were the inclusion criteria questions – whether respondents had read and agreed to the consent information, whether they were member of an SDA church, and whether they had a K-12 school-aged child in their household. Questions 4-8 were related to the religiosity domain, taken from the DUREL. Questions 9-22 involved the cultural domain of the Seventh-day Adventist church that had been developed through the cultural consensus analysis. Questions 23-27 were taken from Dudley's survey and dealt primarily with the domain of SDA doctrine. Questions 28-36 were general demographic questions. One question of particular importance was Q30, which provided the primary dependent variable - what school system the respondent's children had been in for the 2017-2018 school year. Q33 and Q36 were also of significance as the former asked about the respondent's own educational background in the context of Adventist education and the latter asked for his/her ZIP code, which could be recoded into unions, a variable that later proved to be statistically significant.

Survey distribution. Out of professional courtesy, the NAD associate ministerial director was contacted first and provided with a brief explanation of the study as well as the SurveyMonkey link to the survey instrument. Communiqué with this individual indicated his support of this research and resulted in the link and study information being shared with other key high-ranking administrative officials within the NAD. An invitation was also extended to write a short article about the study, with the assurance that it would be included in a bi-monthly newsletter that was distributed to all pastors in the NAD. This opportunity ensured that details of

this study and the link to the online survey were communicated to every single pastor, ensuring

that distribution and access to the survey was as equitable as possible.

Additionally, every ministerial director and/or communications director at both the union

and conference level was emailed and provided with details of study as well as a request that

they share the included link and/or email with the pastors within their jurisdiction. The email

also included templates of bulletin inserts or announcements that they could use as needed (see

Appendix E for an example). The emails and newsletter article garnered positive responses and

many individuals promised to include my link and information in their conference/union

newsletter. It was clear that the study information was slowly trickling through the Adventist

network as many strangers connected with me directly to say that they'd seen the article in one

publication or another and had not only taken the survey themselves, but sent it on to their

friends and family.

The communications director of the Pacific Union Conference issued an invitation to film

a brief spot for their weekly video news, *All God's People*, that they post on their website and

Facebook page and YouTube channel

(https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8mDzYghoxpk9M6tzmpfvCA/videos). This opportunity

provided for even further "advertising", increasing the likelihood that the targeted population

would see the survey; the resulting episode aired on July 20, 2018.

In addition to those efforts, the study and survey link were also shared via social media.

Beginning on June 14, 2018, a brief description was posted on Facebook, inviting any Adventist

parent of K-12 school-aged children to participate in the study by clicking on the link to

complete the survey. That original post was directly shared 92 times, but that does not include

the "shares" that resulted from those. This means that there are individuals who are not

connected to the account from which the post first originated, but saw the shared survey link on a mutual friend's account and took *that* to post on their own page, resulting in a true snowball effect. Furthermore, several reminders were posted over the course of the June, which garnered their own subsequent "shares".

Another distribution strategy that employed social media was connecting with Seventh-day Adventist churches or conferences that seemed to have a substantial social media presence. A brief description of the study was provided, with a request to share the survey link to their parishioners. Several church secretaries responded and confirmed that the study and web link would be shared either through their church's weekly newsletter or bulletin.

Because of the long reach of social media and digital communication, it is difficult to estimate the number of people who had the opportunity to complete the survey. In the end, though, the survey was open for almost exactly one month and received a total of 1,072 responses.

Population. The context for Adventist education is fairly homogenous throughout the United States in that there are K-12 SDA schools in every single state; therefore, the population for this study included every Seventh-day Adventist Church member in the United States who has K-12 school-aged children. The NAD, which includes the United States, Guam and Canada, is subdivided into ten unions, which are further divided into 59 conferences. Because of the significant cultural differences found in Guam and Canada, the Guam-Micronesia conference and the Canadian Union were omitted from this study.

Sample size. In order to have a margin of error of no more than 5% and to build a 95% confidence interval around the estimate, the goal was to procure at least 400 completed surveys

with which to use for this study.   Out of the 1,072 responses, 991 entries were viable and used in the subsequent analyses.

Protection of human subjects. One last aspect in the design of this research study was the assurance of safety for all participants. This study carried minimal risk to the respondents, but certain safeguards were still put in place to ensure complete transparency throughout the research process. IRB approval was applied for and granted first before any data collection began. Furthermore, the purpose of the study was always clearly explained to the potential respondents at the onset of any conversation or communication; they were also assured that participation was completely voluntary. The data from the first two samples – the free-listing and rank-ordering groups – were kept confidential, with no identifying information attached to any notes or recordings. The final survey was completely anonymous as it neither tracked IP addresses nor asked for any personal identification.

Data Acquisition, Cleaning and Coding

Once the survey was closed, the data was downloaded from SurveyMonkey, exported into Excel and then from Excel into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25. There were various steps that first needed to be taken in order to ready the data for analysis. To begin with, 91 submissions were eliminated for not meeting the inclusion criteria.

Next, many variables were recoded in order for their values to be reflected in descending order. For instance, for the question "How often do you attend church or other religious meetings", the answer with the highest frequency – "more than once a week" – was recoded from the lowest value (1) to the highest value (5).

There were questions that had a neutral answer: "In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine", for example, had "unsure" as the third option. The variable was recoded to reflect "unsure" as 0, "definitely not true" as -2 and "definitely true" as 2.

Next, all the ZIP codes were cross-referenced to a database of ZIP codes and cities in America as well as a boundary map of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. This allowed for a new variable to be computed that corresponded to the eight unions in the continental United States based on the original ZIP codes.

Finally, in order to come up with a single measure for the construct of religiosity, another new composite variable was computed to average the answers from the five questions within that domain. The same was done for the construct of doctrinal commitment.

In order to operationalize cultural consonance, the cultural key was applied to each respondent, multiplying the "score" for each cultural item with the respondents' answers. This provided the third essential scale for the analysis.

Finally, the dependent variable of school choice was recoded, collapsing "other private school" and "other" with the "non-Adventist school" option, leaving three categories – non-Adventist school, Adventist school or homeschool.

Statistical Tests

Once the data was cleaned and recoded, SPSS was used to create frequency tables of many of the variables in order to capture any themes that emerged from the data. *School choice* served as the dependent variable and there were 12 key independent variables: doctrinal commitment, religiosity, parental responsibility, cultural consonance, age, marital status, level of education, race, income, geographic locale (union), number of children, and educational

background. Based on those results, as well as the direction provided by the original research questions, various types of statistical tests were run.

Q1)   How does consumption behavior – as seen in school choice for their oldest child - differ among Seventh-day Adventist parents?

To answer this question, chi-square tests of association were run to assess the relationship between various independent variables such as household income, educational context, religiosity and doctrinal commitment and the dependent variable of school choice.

Q2)   How does the degree of cultural consonance to the Seventh-day Adventist model relate to consumption behavior as seen in school choice?

a.   Are parents who display a high level of cultural consonance more likely to send their oldest child to a Seventh-day Adventist school?

For both of these questions, the respondents' cultural consonance variable was analyzed directly against school choice for predictive values and statistical significance.

Q3)   To what extent does a Seventh-day Adventist parent's general religiosity, doctrinal commitment, and church identity – as represented through cultural consonance – predict the choice of school for his/her oldest child?

To answer this question, a predictive model was built based on the independent variables found to be statistically significant through binary logistic regression. The resulting model demonstrated the relationship of the predictors of religiosity, doctrinal commitment and cultural consonance on the dependent variable of school choice.   The forced entry approach used allowed for the measurement of the moderating effects of independent variables on the dependent variable.

Chapter Five: Results

The purpose of this chapter is to provide findings from this study in the context of the research questions posed at the beginning. Because this study utilized a mixed-methods approach, the first part of this chapter describes the qualitative work in constructing the cultural domain of the Seventh-day Adventist church. From there, I report the results of the analysis of the data collected from the final survey instrument.

Research Questions

The following hypotheses were considered for this study:

H1) The culture of the SDA denomination is a significant construct that can be defined and operationalized, using the cultural consonance model.

H2) The culture of the SDA denomination significantly influences church members' paradigm of identity within the church and, consequently, affects their consumption behavior, as measured by school choice.

H3) The interplay between the three elements measured – general religiosity, doctrinal commitment (belief in doctrines unique to the SDA Church), and cultural consonance – will result in different consumption behavior, as measured by school choice.

The following research questions will guide this study:

Q1) How does consumption behavior – as seen in school choice for their oldest child - differ among Seventh-day Adventist parents?

Q2) How does the degree of cultural consonance to the Seventh-day Adventist model relate to consumption behavior as seen in school choice?

a. Are parents who display a high level of cultural consonance more likely to send their oldest child to a Seventh-day Adventist school?

Q3)   To what extent does a Seventh-day Adventist parent's general religiosity,

doctrinal commitment, and church identity – as represented through cultural

consonance – predict the choice of school for his/her oldest child?

Cultural Consensus Analysis

This section reviews the results of the first phase of data collection, which provided data

for the cultural domain analysis. I give descriptive statistics of the two samples used as well as

other anecdotal and quantitative evidence that helped to create the "cultural key" – the values of

which were then used to answer the research questions.

This domain has, to my knowledge, never been explored or quantified within a

faith-based community such as the Seventh-day Adventist church, and so that served as the basis

of one of the hypotheses – that the culture of the SDA denomination is a significant construct

that can be defined and operationalized, using the cultural consonance model.

The bulk of this study depended on proving this hypothesis; therefore, the establishment

of this domain was key to proceeding with the rest of the research.

Sample 1: Free-listing Results

For the first sample (n = 61), snowball sampling through a network of Seventh-day

Adventist friends and colleagues procured names of individuals who are active and involved

members of a SDA church. Steps were taken to ensure that the sample was geographically

representative of the North American Division (NAD) of Seventh-day Adventists by including

approximately 7-8 individuals from each of the eight unions involved in this study. Of the 61

participants, 41 were female and 20 were male; 18 were over 50 and 43 were under 50. Because

the data collected was used to assess shared cultural knowledge, the sample did not need to be

random (Handwerker, 2001).

The task of free-listing involves asking respondents to list as many things as they can think of within the named domain – in this case, the characteristics or traits that are typical of a traditional Seventh-day Adventist church member in good standing. In each of the conversations had with individuals in this sample, they all began with the same prompt: "Imagine a traditional Seventh-day Adventist who lives according to the prescribed Adventist culture. What behavior or characteristics would you expect to see in these individuals?"

Most respondents had an easy time with this particular task. There were some who had been unwittingly recruited by a friend or colleague and were concerned that they wouldn't be able to adequately help with the research. But when they heard the prompt and understood what the question was, many would chuckle and immediately rattle off traits and characteristics, turning the act of note-taking into a timed typing test. A few asked for clarification about the initial question, and so the next prompt suggested that they imagine someone in their church or a SDA friend or family member who seemed to embody a Seventh-day Adventist, who was traditional through-and-through. The two prompts together were usually enough to get them started. The average number of items listed from each respondent was 21, with the most verbose participant listing 67 items and the shortest list containing only four items.

It is difficult to articulate the deep sense of belonging and familiarity that came across in these conversations with complete strangers. Out of this free-listing exercise tumbled out countless stories of Adventist culture – meeting a future spouse at Bible camp, eating haystacks at every vespers, knowing that a list of "Sabbath chores" was waiting when one came home from school on Friday, soaking beans on Thursday so that they could be cooked on Friday morning and ready for Sabbath supper that evening, delighting in special "Sabbath pajamas" – the list goes on and on. The stories, while different in detail and context, had so many commonalities

and shared themes. Faint glimpses of the framework, the underpinnings, the shape of Seventh-day Adventist culture began to emerge ever so slightly from these conversations and the prospect of defining and quantifying culture started to seem feasible.

After the final interview had been conducted, all the notes were examined and each respondent's list of answers were gone over again and again. The redundant items were combined, thus resulting in the creation of a codebook of repeated statements among the respondents. The original list of 165 statements was eventually reduced down to 45 and then run through Flame for an analysis of frequency and salience.

Table 3

Frequency List of Top 45 Free-Listed Statements

Item Description	Frequency	Percentage
Vegetarian or vegan	39	63.93%
Highly involved in church or hold church office	37	60.66%
Conservative dress	37	60.66%
Treats Sabbath differently than the other days of the week or tries not to do worldly things on Sabbath	36	59.02%
Lives in an Adventist bubble	35	57.38%
Conservative lifestyle	34	55.74%
Send children to Adventist schools	32	52.46%
Good character	32	52.46%
Body is a temple of God	31	50.82%
No or minimal makeup, jewelry or unconventional outward adornment	30	49.18%
Attends church on Sabbath	29	47.54%

Table 3 continued

Careful, intentional teaching and raising of children	29	47.54%
Distinctive faith	26	42.62%
Church all day	26	42.62%
Careful about public behavior or appearance	23	37.70%
Health-conscious	23	37.70%
Analytical and knowledgeable about Scripture	18	29.51%
Knowledge and belief in EGW	18	29.51%
Traditional family	16	26.23%
Fervent evangelism	15	24.59%
Quiet, worship-focused Sabbath activities	15	24.59%
Strict Sabbath observance	15	24.59%
Prepares for and celebrates Sabbath	15	24.59%
Follows rules	14	22.95%
Close knit family	14	22.95%
Good stewards of money and resources	14	22.95%
Honor God's commandments	13	21.31%
Spiritually conservative	13	21.31%
Has children in Pathfinders, Adventurers, AYS or VBS	12	19.67%
Strong emphasis on education	10	16.39%
Homeschool children	7	11.48%

Table 3 continued

Loving, close-knit church family	7	11.48%
Music-oriented	7	11.48%
Rebellious teenagers	4	6.56%
Balanced lifestyle	3	4.92%
Attended or worked at summer camp	2	3.28%
Culturally diverse church	2	3.28%
Steady profession	2	3.28%
Self-sufficient	2	3.28%
Calportering	1	1.64%
Not overly concerned with physical fitness or exercise	1	1.64%
Would want children baptized by age 13 or 14	1	1.64%
Support church leaders	1	1.64%
Anti-abortion	1	1.64%
Refined	1	1.64%
Abstinent	1	1.64%

After an analysis of the Flame results, only the top 27 most frequently reported items were selected to be rank-ordered. Previous studies that utilized rank-ordering or pile-sorting have determined that 25-35 items is sufficient; any more than 35 seems to become difficult for the participants to handle (Dressler, 2014).

Sample 2: Rank-ordering Results

Moving forward with the second stage of cultural consensus domain analysis, a second sample was developed. This sample was also derived from snowball sampling, using "referrals" from SDA friends, colleagues, and acquaintances across the country (n = 63). All participants were self-described as active and involved church members and are also parents of K-12 school-aged children. They also provided a fair representation of the eight unions studied, with roughly 7-8 participants from each region. Of the 63 individuals in this sample, 44 were female and 48 were under 50 years old.

Each participant had his/her own way of processing and working through the task. Many respondents chose to first sort the items into the three categories that had been suggested to them (very important, somewhat important and not at all important), while there were several who elected the other method, laying *all* of their cards out from left to right or cutting and pasting directly into a single column. Of those in the former category, many meta-cognated aloud over the difficulty of the task. A common sentiment was that the items were *all* important and that none could be placed in the "not important" pile. Many of these participants would end up with two piles instead of three; but even having just that filter seemed to help them in the final ranking.

Some participants talked through the entire process, providing an explanation for each of the rankings. Others mumbled under their breath occasionally, while still others were silent the entire time – only speaking up to announce when they were finished. Some individuals completed the task in just a few minutes; at the opposite end of the spectrum was a gentleman whose meeting lasted a solid hour as he moved every cell in the spreadsheet at least three times, second- and triple-guessing his placement of each.

More than one respondent threw their hands up quickly at the end, almost like they were participating in a timed challenge or game. Several participants actually conceded defeat, saying, "Take them away – otherwise, I could just keep moving them [the cards] around for the rest of the evening!"

Whatever their approach, all participants seemed to go about the task thoughtfully. There were very few questions asked for clarification about what each item meant; once they were clear about the task, any struggle that they had was internal – over placement and priority – not over how or what to do. One lady sighed with satisfaction after she had rank-ordered all 27 items and remarked, "That was really interesting! We should do this at potluck!"

Statistical Analysis

As described in *Data and Methods*, a factor analysis was then conducted on the respondents and their ranking of each item. The method used in CCA differs than conventional factor analysis in that the matrix is inverted: the respondents serve as the variables in columns, while the items are listed in rows. The analysis produced a cultural competence coefficient for each individual, which were then used to calculate the rankings of all the items. Rankings from the individuals who had a higher cultural competence coefficient were given more weight than those who had lower coefficients.

Romney (1986) developed the cultural consensus model as a method of quantifying and operationalizing a measure of shared culture. A cultural domain is established based on an examination of the ratio of the first and second eigenvalues. The first factor denotes the largest shared intersection among a set of variables – as composed by the free lists, and the second factor accounts for the residual agreement (Handwerker, 2002). Cultural consensus theory maintains that if the ratio between the first and second eigenvalues is higher than three, it can be

inferred that the sampled population is referencing and utilizing the same shared knowledge and that there indeed exists a cultural domain.
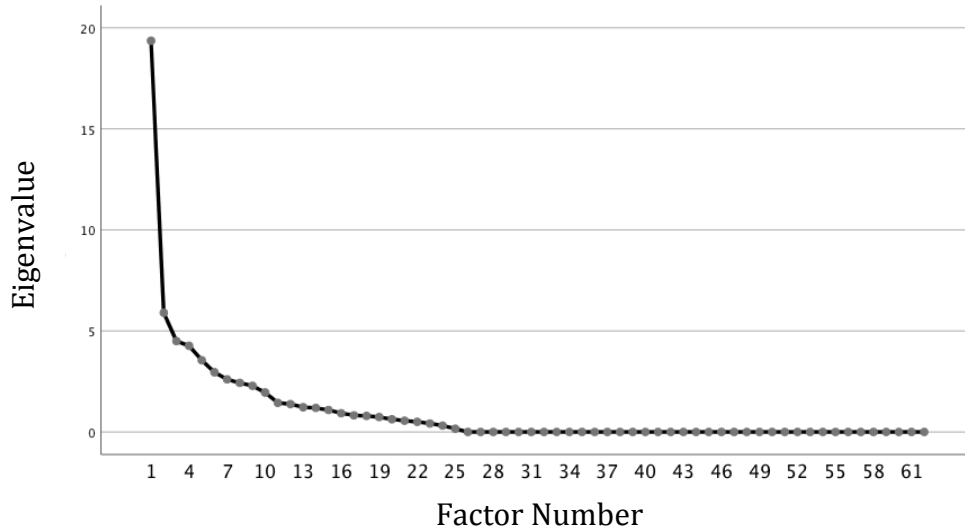
Figure 5. Scree plot demonstrating the eigenvalue ratio between factors.

The results of the factor analysis of the respondents (n = 62) produced a ratio of 3.28 between the first eigenvalue and the second eigenvalue. Figure 5 demonstrates the factor loading of this cultural domain, with the first factor at 19.357 and the second factor at 5.901. While it is a modest ratio, it still indicates there exists a shared set of cultural knowledge within the population of Seventh-day Adventist church members in America.

This served to reinforce one of the original hypotheses – that the culture of the SDA denomination is a significant construct that can be defined and operationalized by using the cultural consonance model. The validation of a cultural domain within the context of the Seventh-day Adventist church confirmed this observation and allowed the study to move forward with the rest of the analysis. The "cultural key" that was produced from this domain could be held up to any other Seventh-day Adventist church member to measure where they fell on this

scale. This unit of measurement is hereafter referred to as *cultural consonance*, a gauge that

served to answer the second hypothesis – that the culture of Seventh-day Adventism significantly

influenced church members' paradigm of identity within the church and, consequently, affected

their consumption behavior, as measured by school choice.

Table 4

Cultural Key for the Cultural Domain of Seventh-day Adventists in America

Cultural Statement	Cultural Score
Prepares for and celebrates the beginning of Sabbath on Friday at sundown	-1.51959
Knows of and believes in Ellen White as a prophetess	-1.50298
Embraces a distinctive faith, framed by Adventist doctrines and underlined by a sense of different-ness	-1.43482
Is religiously conservative (e.g. believes in the literal Bible)	-1.41311
Keeps the Sabbath (Saturday) day holy, both in activity and worship (e.g., attends church, tries not to do worldly things, etc.)	-1.39435
Is almost exclusively immersed in an Adventist community - both personally and professionally	-1.21368
Leads a conservative lifestyle	-0.51929
Vegetarian or vegan	-0.46449
Tries to live by Biblical principles	-0.22304
Knows and follows rules	-0.117
Is actively involved in a close-knit church family (e.g., holds church office, attends weekly meetings, etc.)	-0.08835
Believes that the body is a temple of God and refrains from eating or drinking harmful substances	-0.06719
Dresses conservatively	-0.0085
Has good character	0
Continues to socialize with other Adventists after church - through potlucks, dinners, game nights, vespers, etc.	0.06339
Is knowledgeable about Scripture (e.g., studies the Bible)	0.11448
Supports traditional family roles and values	0.16342
Sends children to an Adventist school	0.1801
Takes care with public behavior or appearance	0.26525
Has children in spiritual education outside of school (e.g. Pathfinders, Adventurers, VBS, etc.)	0.2789
Engages in evangelism (e.g., community outreach or sharing the health message)	0.7192

Table 4 continued

Health-conscious	0.86863
Supports God's work and is a good stewards of money and resources	1.215
Raises children with great care and intention	1.33986
Is committed to family (e.g. values and prioritizes family time)	1.35282
Values and participates in music	1.67172
Values education	1.73362

Note. Items were initially reverse coded; therefore, the more negative the value is, the more highly it was rated for the domain.

I selected the top half – the first 14 statements – and developed them into questions that were embedded into the final survey instrument. When reliability was tested on this cultural consonance measure, a robust Cronbach's alpha of .792 emerged.

Data Analysis: Survey Instrument

Descriptive Analyses

General descriptors. In an effort to first capture the sample as a general populace, the data was run through several descriptive statistical analyses. Of the total respondents,

- 82.7% are between the ages of 36 and 55

- 86.7% are married

- 81% have a bachelor's degree or higher

- 61% have an annual income of over $80,000

- 75% are white, 13% are Mexican or of some Spanish descent, 9% are Asian and 5 % are African-American

- 19% never attended a K-12 SDA school, 20% attended a K-12 SDA school for a few years, and 61% attended a K-12 SDA school for most or all of their elementary and secondary experience.
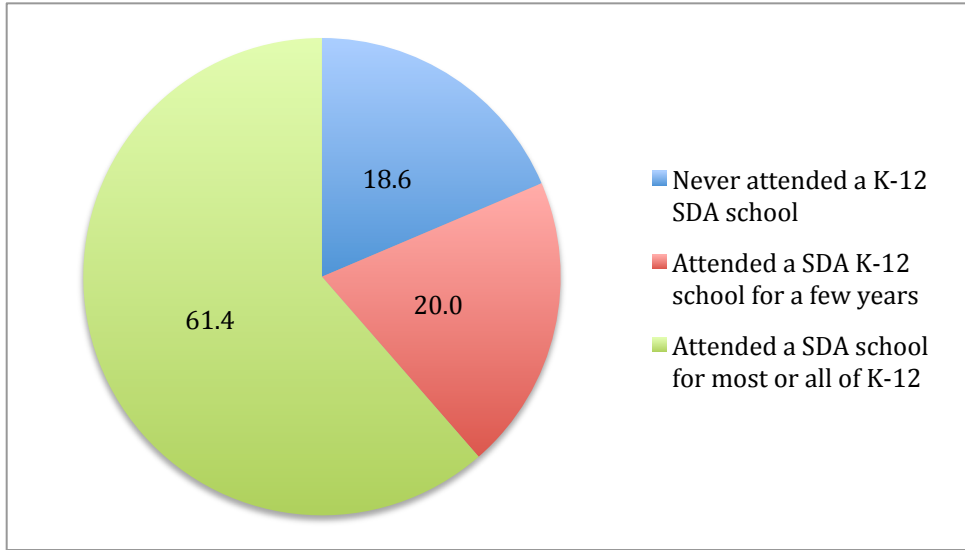
Figure 6. Percentage of respondents' attendance at a K-12 Adventist school in their own childhood, n = 927.

Based on the survey responses, most Seventh-day Adventists in America can also be described as highly religious, highly committed to church doctrines, and highly culturally consonant.

The breakdown of participants as seen by these statistics seem to generally reflect the findings of the 2014 Religious Landscape Study, which found the majority of Adventist to be Caucasian, employed, highly educated and middle class.

Table 5

Percentage of High and Low Scores on Three Different Scales

	N	Low	High
Religiosity	897	29.7	70.3
Doctrine	881	14.9	85.1
Cultural Consonance	914	23.7	76.3

Geographic representation. I also looked carefully examined the specific context of the

Seventh-day Adventist church. The ZIP code variable – recoded into the new variable

representing unions – was particularly helpful as it allowed for subsequent stratification across

geographic regions.
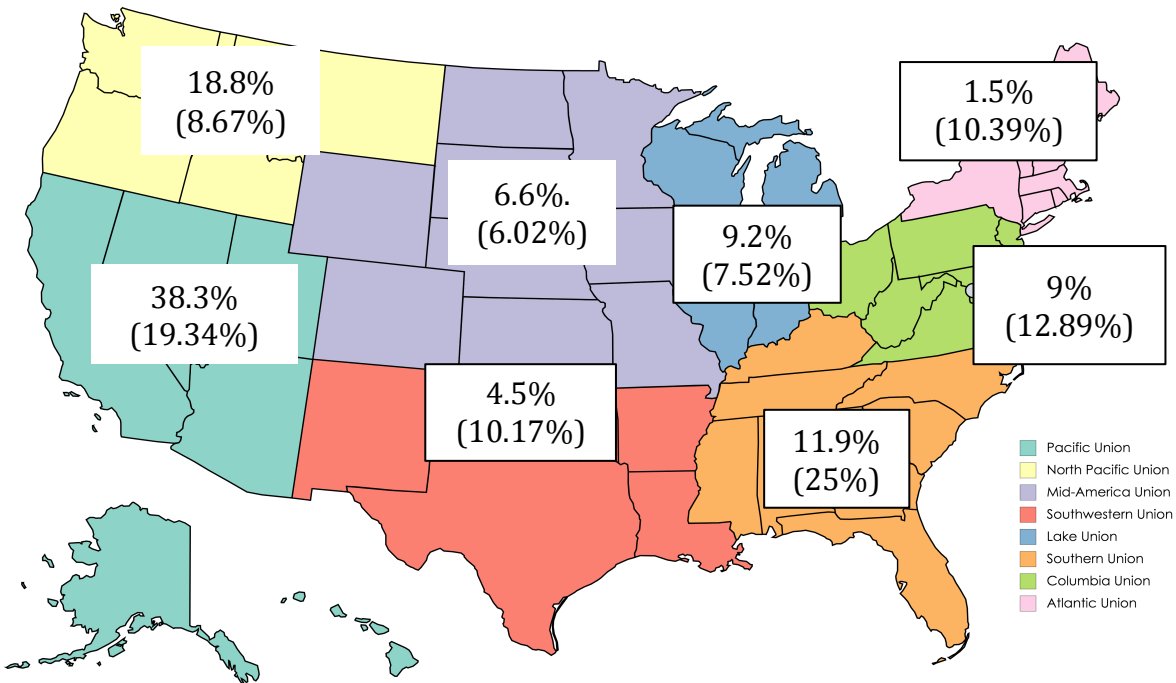
Figure 7. Map of the percentage of respondents by union; actual membership percentage in parentheses, n = 860.

As seen in Figure 7, the union with the fewest number of respondents was Atlantic

Union, while almost 40% of the total survey submissions came from Pacific Union. Some

unions were fairly represented in the context of membership within the NAD; for instance, Lake

Union's membership equals 6% of the entire NAD, which was very similar to the percentage of

survey participants. On the other hand, only around 12% of the total respondents came from Southern Union, and yet they make up 25% of the total membership in the NAD.

Union differences. Culture – whether in regard to colloquial jargon or social norms or food preferences – often varies among geographic regions. One might feast on clam chowder and don sneakers in northeast America while residents in the South relish buttered grits and wear tennis shoes (Katz, 2017). Physical environment plays a role in shaping culture – an axiom that seems to ring true for Seventh-day Adventist culture as well. Because geographic locale is neatly divided up into unions within the NAD, this section will reference the eight unions studied rather than physical regions in America.
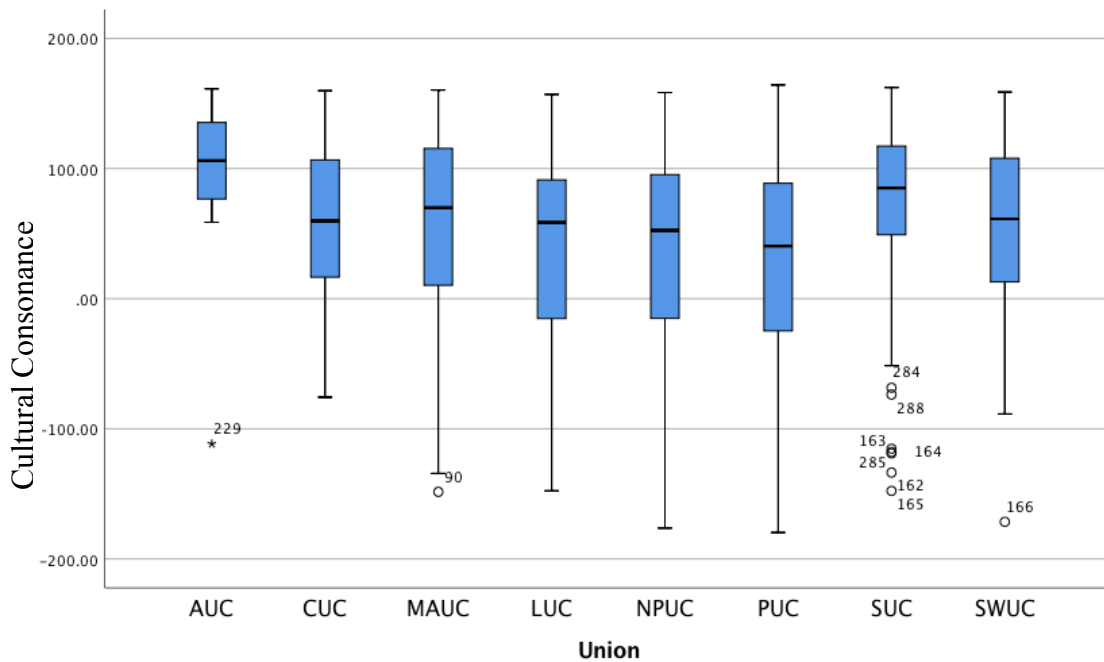
Figure 8. Box plot showing the cultural consonance scores by union, n = 914.

Figure 8 demonstrates the differences in how cultural consonance is represented among the unions. Atlantic Union (AUC) has the highest median of cultural consonance while Pacific Union (PUC) has the lowest.

96

Responses were also analyzed when stratified by union in the context of the three main scales: general religiosity, doctrinal commitment and cultural consonance. One religiosity question, for example, asked, "How often do you attend church or other religious meetings?" Figure 9 indicates that there are indeed some differences in church attendance across the unions.
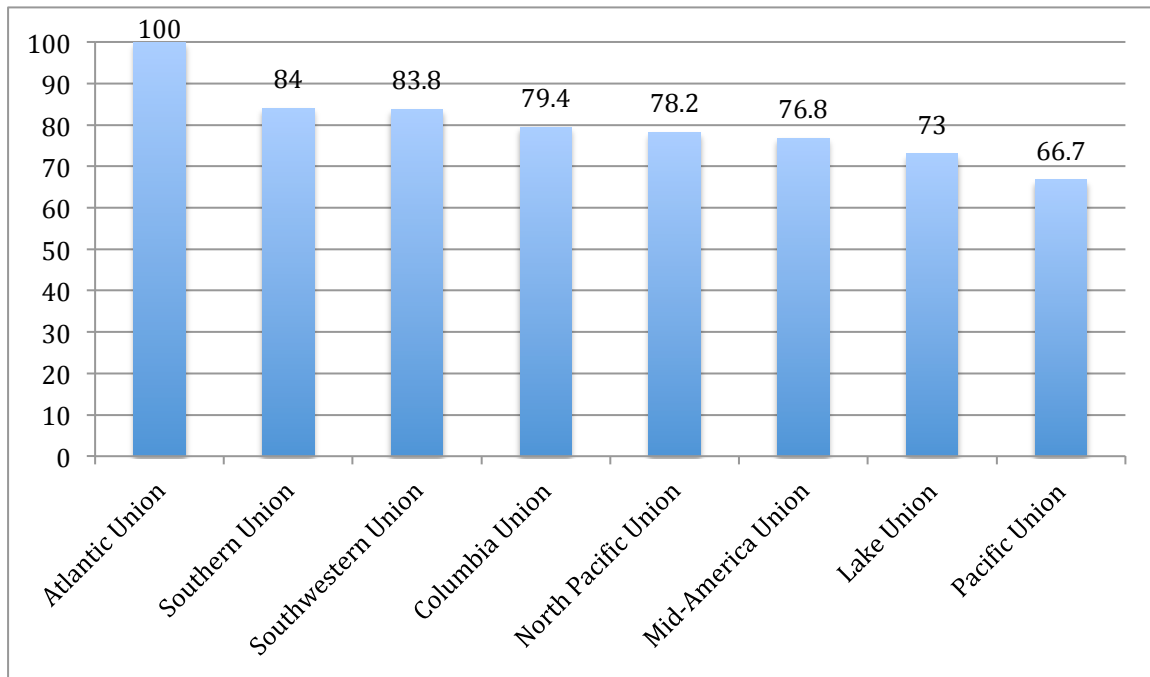
Figure 9. Percentage of respondents, by union, who attend church at least once a week, n = 956.

66% of Pacific Union members reported attending church at least once a week, while over 80% of members in the Southwestern, Southern and Atlantic Unions could make that claim.

One question from the doctrinal commitment measure asked respondents whether they strongly agreed or strongly disagreed (along a 5-point Likert scale) with the statement, "God created the world in six literal days, approximately 6000 years ago." An analysis of the survey participants who strongly agreed with that statement demonstrated a stark difference among the unions. Over 80% of Atlantic Union members fully supported that statement while less than 40% of Pacific Union members voiced their agreement.
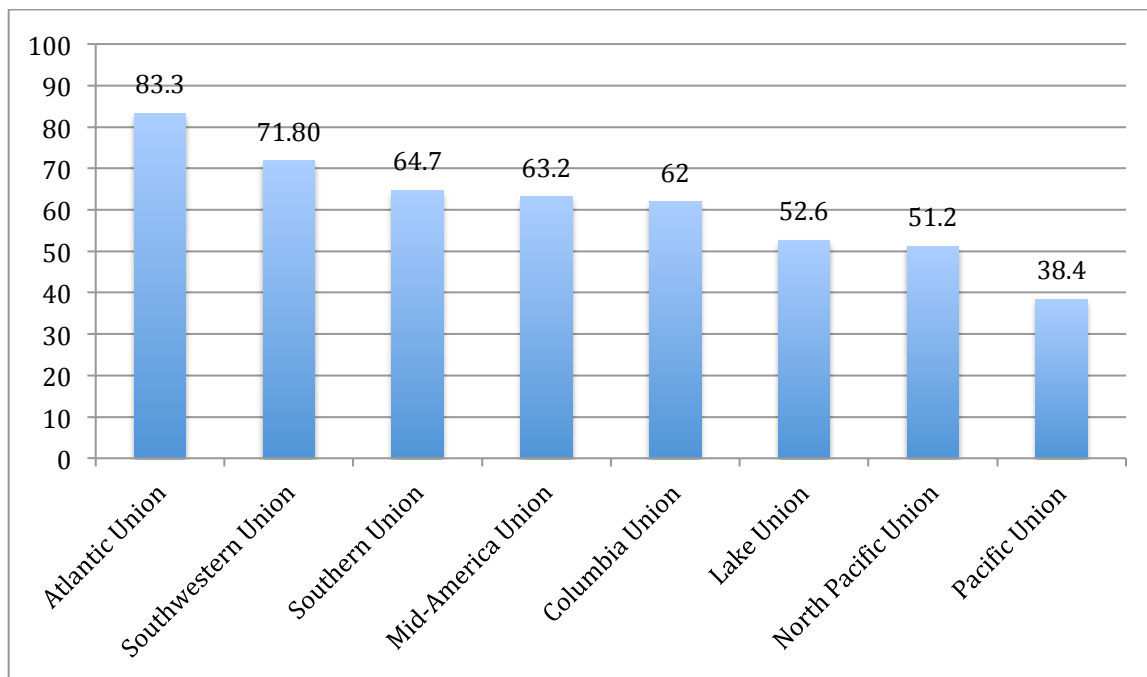
Figure 10. Percentage of respondents, by union, who strongly believe in a literal six day creation, n = 931.

A vegetarian or vegan diet is one of the hallmarks of SDA culture. While it is not written anywhere in the SDA fundamental beliefs (General Conference Ministerial Department, 2018), abstaining from meat – particularly unclean meat – was strongly encouraged by one of the early church's most prominent leaders, Ellen G. White (Coon, 1986). Because of that, vegetarianism has long been at least associated with, if not practiced by, members of the SDA church.
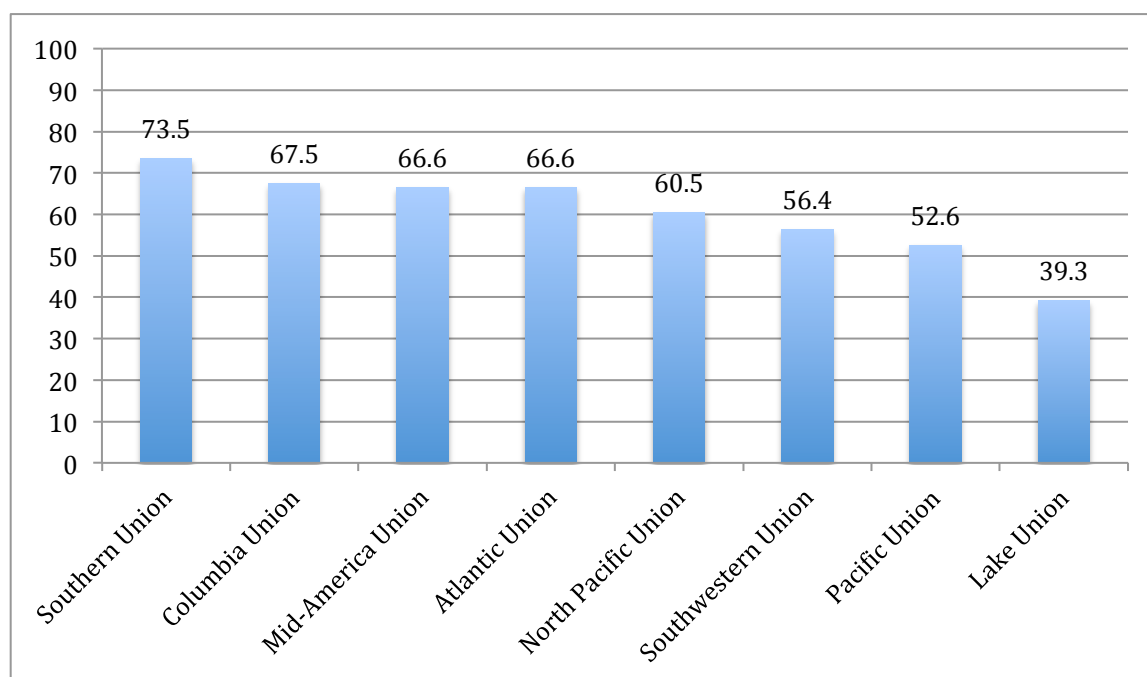
Figure 11. Percentage of respondents, by union, who usually or always follow a vegetarian or vegan diet, n = 940.

Based on Figure 11, it appears that those in northeast America – Atlantic Union and

Columbia Union – adhere to a vegetarian diet more than those in the southwest – Southwestern

Union and Pacific Union. Southern Union had the highest percentage with 73.5% of the

respondents from that union following a vegetarian/vegan diet, while only 39% of Lake Union

members reported being vegetarian or vegan.

The geographic differences in cultural consonance, general religiosity and doctrinal

commitment that are seen in these three examples led to subsequent additional analysis

compared unions with each other across a variety of variables.

Statistical Analyses

Research Question #1. How does consumption behavior – as seen in school choice -

differ among Seventh-day Adventist parents? To explore the answer to this question, descriptive

frequencies were explored that could sufficiently categorize different "types" of SDA members –

whether by their educational context or general religiosity or doctrinal commitment – and chi-square tests for association were run on each.

Table 6

Results of Chi-Square Test and Key Variables by School Choice

	School Choice						
	Non-Adventist School	Adventist School	Homeschool	N	df	X^2	ϕ
Age				898	10	12.292	.083
Doctrinal Commitment				881	2	26.340**	.173
High commitment	18.9%	60.4%	20.7%				
Low commitment	38.2%	51.1%	10.7%				
Educational Background				898	2	6.707*	.086
Attended Some/All Adventist School	20.2%	61.3%	18.5%				
Never Attended Adventist School	28.4%	51.5%	20.1%				
General Religiosity				897	2	47.535**	.230
High religiosity	16.5%	60.9%	22.7%				
Low religiosity	35.0%	55.6%	9.4%				
Household Income				882	10	44.287**	.158
Marital Status				899	8	14.721	.090
Number of children				888	2	8.786*	.099
2 or fewer children	20.1%	62.5%	17.4%				

Table 6 continued

3 or more children	24.8%	51.4%	23.9%				
Parental Responsibility				899	4	16.744**	.097
Some part in decision making	37.5%	54.2%	8.3%				
Equal part in decision making	19.5%	62.4%	18.2%				
Primary decision maker	29.2%	48%	22.8%				
Union				834	14	55.311**	.182

Note. *p<.05; **p<.01

Of the nine variables examined, only two did not have show any association with school choice: *age* and *marital status.* Among the other seven variables, *general religiosity* emerged as having the strongest relationship to school choice (ϕ = .230) and *age,* the weakest (ϕ = .083).

The variable *educational background* examined the respondents' own education within an Adventist context. The survey question asked the respondents if they'd "never attended a K-12 Adventist school", "attended a K-12 Adventist school for some years" or "attended a K-12 Adventist school for most or all years". This was recoded into binary variable by combining the second and third options so that those who had *some* experience in a K-12 Adventist school were put together with those who'd spent most or all of their years in a K-12 Adventist school. The results demonstrate that even if the respondents had never attended a K-12 Adventist school, still over 50% of them choose a non-Adventist school for their oldest child. Conversely, of the respondents who do have some SDA school context in their own background, only 20% chose a non-Adventist school for their oldest child. 61.3% of those respondents chose an Adventist school for their child, mirroring their own educational background.

The variable *union* was also significantly associated with school choice (p<.01). This categorical variable had eight groupings of geographic regions that make up the North America Division within the continental United States.
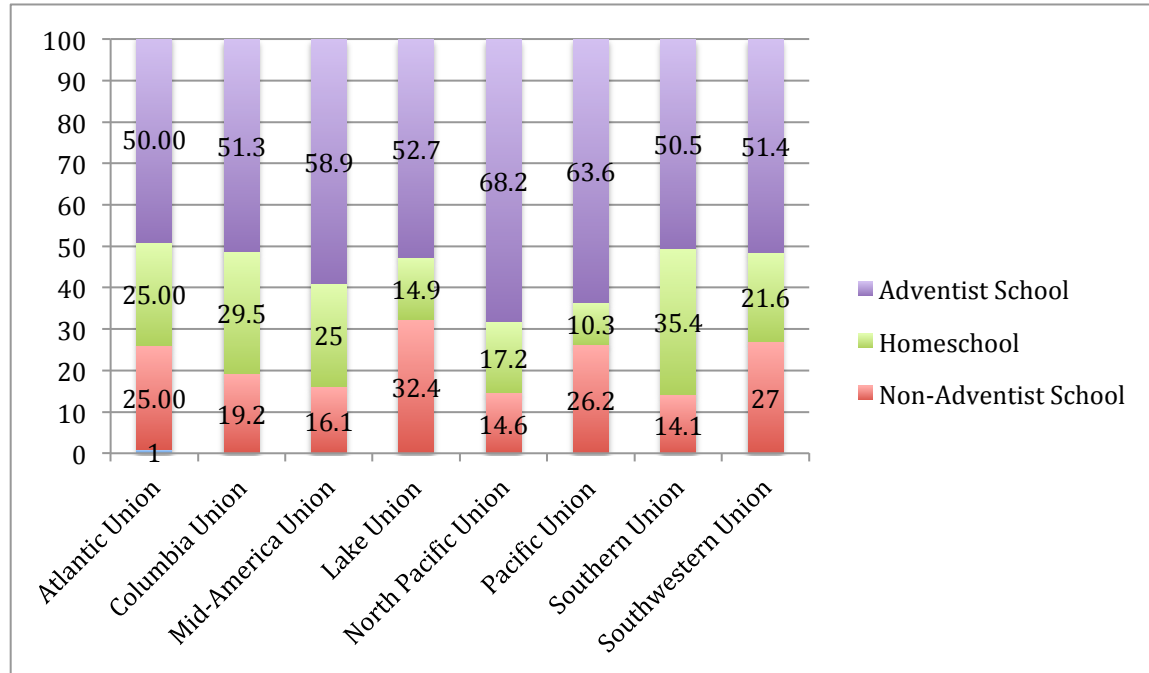
Figure 12. Histogram showing the percentage of respondents' choice of school, by union, n = 839.

Figure 12 provides another representation of school choice among the eight unions. In general, it appears as though most Adventist members send their children to a K-12 Adventist school. Both North Pacific Union and Pacific Union have fairly high percentages of respondents who choose Adventist schools for their children. At 17.2%, though, North Pacific Union has more children who are homeschooled than Pacific Union, with 10.3%. Pacific Union (26.2%) also has one of the higher rates of children enrolled in non-Adventist schools, along with Lake Union, at 32.4%.

Another way to look at the difference in consumption – as seen in school choice – among Adventist members is to examine the main measures that were embedded into the survey: general religiosity, doctrine and cultural consonance. The variables *general religiosity* and

doctrinal commitment were categorized into "high" and "low", based on thresholds noted within

each scale.
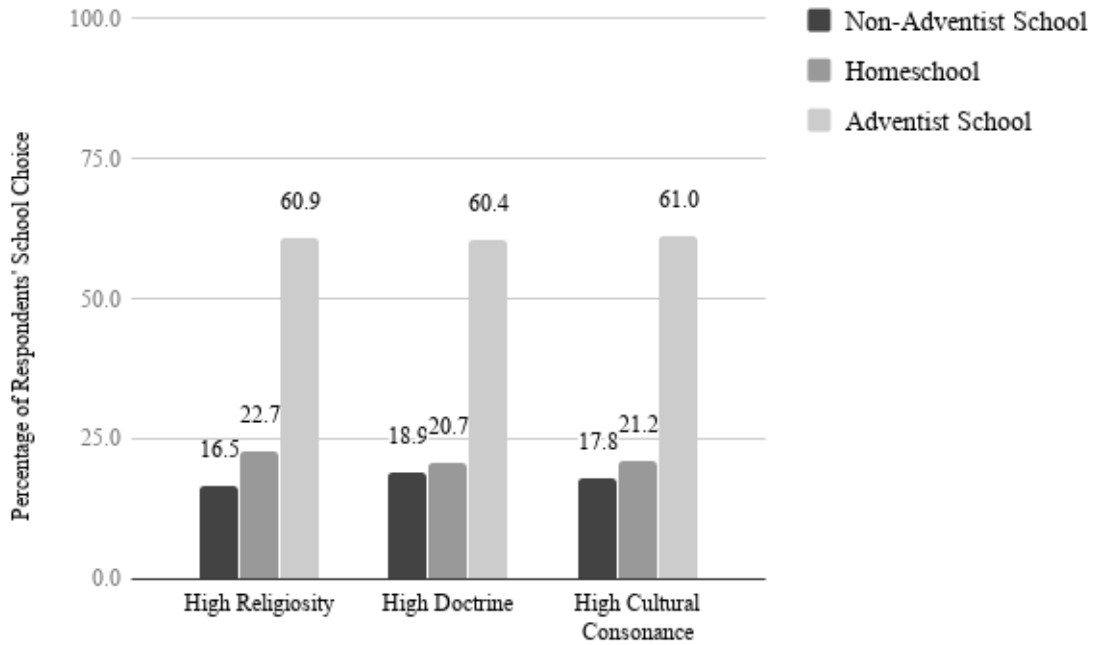
Figure 13. Percentage of respondents' school choice, categorized by high religiosity (n = 638), high doctrine (n = 764) and high cultural consonance (n = 680).
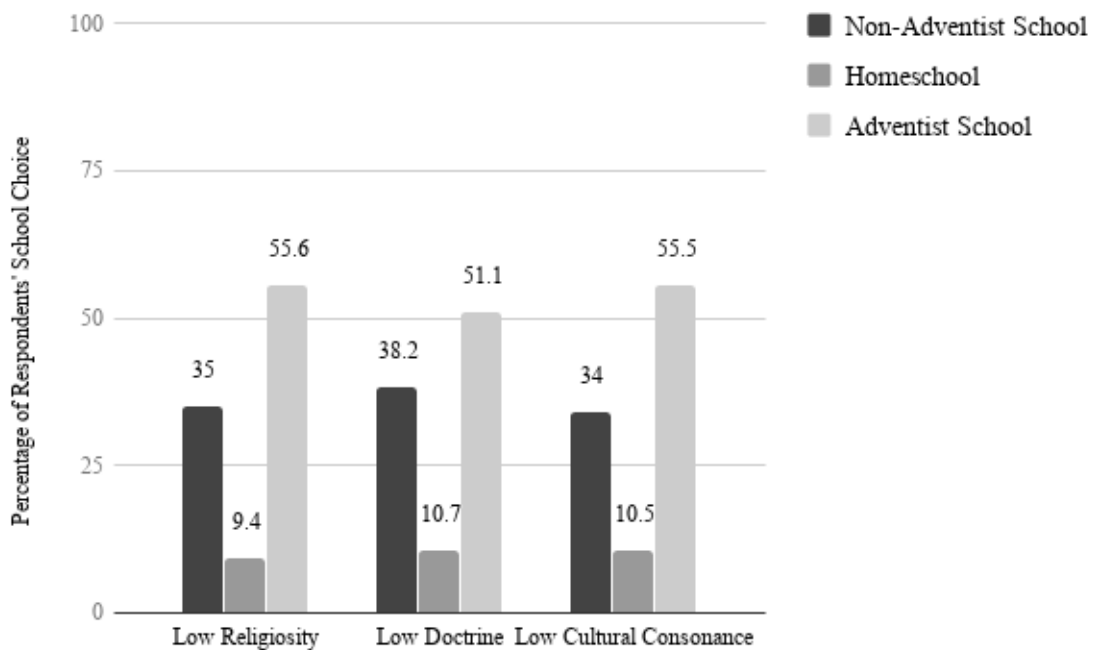
Figure 14. Percentage of respondents' school choice, categorized by low religiosity (n = 274), low doctrine (n = 133) and low cultural consonance (n = 215).

As seen in Figure 13 and Figure 14, Adventist members still tend to choose Adventist schools for their children, regardless of whether or not they are high or low in general religiosity or doctrinal commitment.

However, members who rate low on the three different scales choose non-Adventist schools *more* than their counterparts who rate high. Those who rate low are also less likely to homeschool their children as compared with those who are high in all three measures.

Another way in which consumption behavior differs is through the scale that was developed in the first part of this study – cultural consonance. The variable *cultural consonance* provided an approximation of how closely the respondents' behavior and choices reflected the cultural domain. The cultural consonance value is a composite of the respondents' answers to the fourteen cultural questions embedded in the survey instrument. A chi-square test of association was run for the first nine questions against school choice.

Table 7

Results of Chi-Square Test and Cultural Consonance Questions

	N	df	X^2	ϕ
In my household, we prepare for the start of Sabbath on Friday evenings, both in thought and in activity.[a]	890	6	80.474**	.213
I value our church's distinctive and unique faith.[a]	889	6	71.210**	.200
I make it a priority to keep the Sabbath day holy, both in activity and in worship.[a]	888	6	72.663**	.202
I tend to be a rule-follower.[a]	888	6	8.745**	.070
I am actively involved in my church.[a]	888	6	54.407**	.175
I live healthfully, which includes not eating or drinking harmful things.[a]	888	6	29.333**	.128

Table 7 continued				
I tend to dress conservatively.[a]	900	6	24.659**	.117
I follow a vegetarian or vegan diet.[b]	903	8	53.122	.172
I live by Biblical principles.[a]	902	6	32.215**	.134

**p<.01
[a]Responses for these items ranged from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4).
[b]Responses for this item ranged from always (1) to never (5).

Of these nine variables, Sabbath preparation emerged as having the strongest relationship with school choice (ϕ = .213).

Because of the nonparametric nature of the last five cultural questions answered on a slider scale, a Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted with the questions as the test variable and school choice as the dependent variable. Three questions - "How certain are you that Ellen White was a prophetess", and "Of those you interact with at work and/or professionally, what percentage are Adventist," and "What percentage of your friends are Adventist?" – were on a scale of 0 to 100%. The other two questions - "How would you identify your lifestyle (choices, behaviors, etc.)" and "How would you identify your religious beliefs?" – were on a slider from *conservative* to *liberal*.

All five questions were significant at p<.05 and rejected the null hypothesis.

The question "What percentage of your friends are Adventist?" was selected for further analysis, the first step of which was to be recoded into a binary variable divided into those who reported having 0-49% Adventist friends and those who reported having 50-100% Adventist friends. The chi-square test of association for this binary variable demonstrated a significant association (X^2 = 88.637, 2, N = 902, p<.01) and the highest Cramer's V value of all the questions (ϕ = .313).
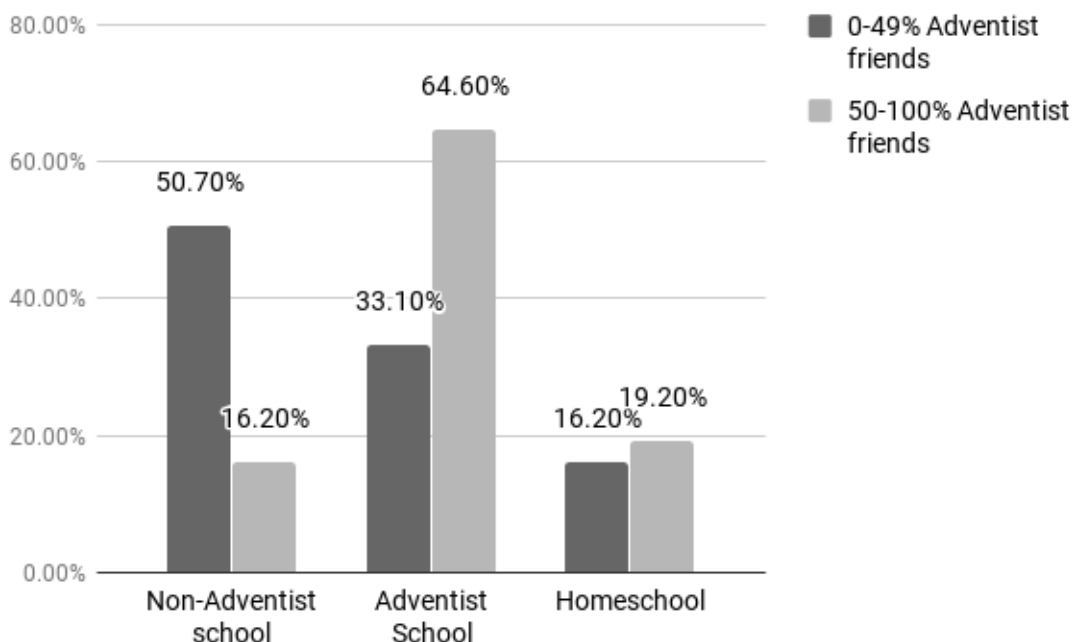
Figure 15. Histogram depicting percentage of respondents' school choice, stratified by those who reported have fewer than 50% Adventist friends and those who have more than 50% Adventist friends (n = 902).

A significant relationship also emerged when a chi-square test was run for the composite cultural consonance score and school choice, X^2 (4, N = 879) = 51.033, p < .01.

All these associations – the 14 singular statements along with the composite cultural consonance scores – each help to explain the difference in consumption patterns of school choice among the respondents.

Research Question #2. Does the degree of cultural consonance to the Seventh-day Adventist model relate to consumption behavior as seen in school choice? Are parents who display a high level of cultural consonance more likely to send their child to a Seventh-day Adventist school?

Based on the chi-square test for association, all questions on the cultural consonance measure have a statistically significant association with school choice. This demonstrates that

there does exist a relationship between school choice and cultural consonance across all statements. But to further discover whether the *degree* of cultural consonance is related to school choice, the cultural consonance variable was first stratified into three categories – low, average, and high. Respondents in the low category are those who exhibit a low degree of cultural consonance; that is, they do not often or generally practice or live out the cultural norms, traditions or expectations of the Seventh-day Adventist culture. The thresholds for each category were decided upon by first examining a histogram of all respondents with their cultural consonance score. Because of the rough curves noted in the histogram as depicted in Figure 15, it was decided that "low" = < -55, "average" = -54.99 – 34, and < 35+ = high cultural consonance.
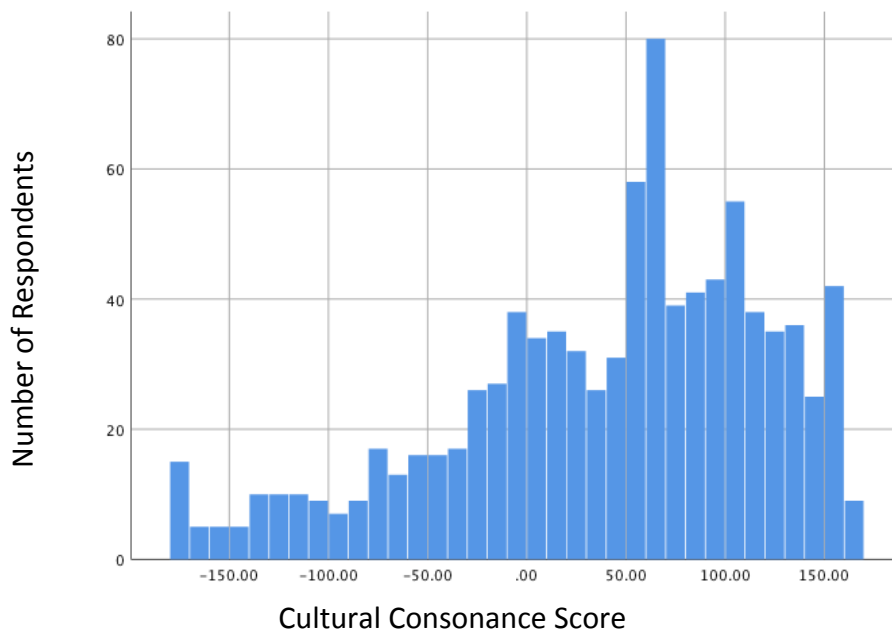
Figure 16. Histogram depicting cultural consonance scores for all respondents, n = 914.

With the cultural consonance variable stratified, cultural consonance and school choice were examined within a cross-tabulation. Respondents who exhibit low cultural consonance tended to send their children to an Adventist school less than their counterparts. However, those who exhibit the *most* cultural consonance do not have the highest percentage of children enrolled in an Adventist school; rather, those in this category have the highest percentage of homeschooled children. Those who demonstrate an average degree of cultural consonance are the most likely to send their children to an Adventist school (see Figure 17).
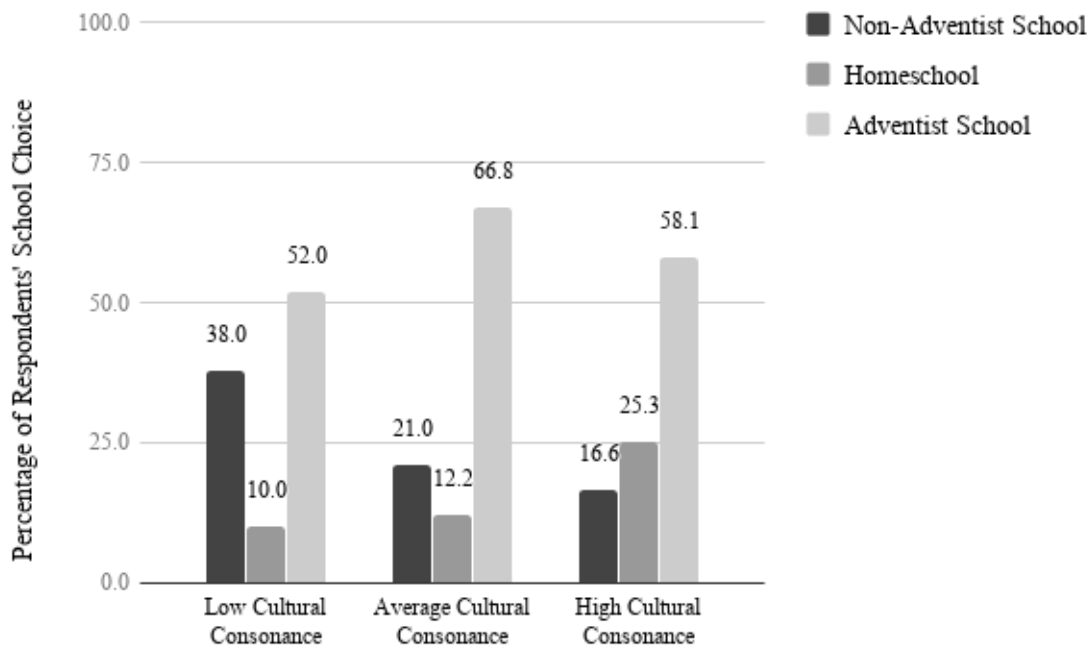
Figure 17. Percentage of respondents' school choice, categorized by levels of cultural consonance, n = 914.

Another representation of cultural consonance and school choice can be seen in Figure 18. Of the three levels of cultural consonance, those with the highest level choose to homeschool more often than those with average or low levels of cultural consonance. Those who choose to send their child to a non-Adventist school tend to have low levels of cultural consonance.

Moreover, respondents whose oldest child attends an Adventist school generally exhibit a higher degree of cultural consonance than those whose child attends a non-Adventist school, but a lower degree of cultural consonance than those who choose to homeschool.
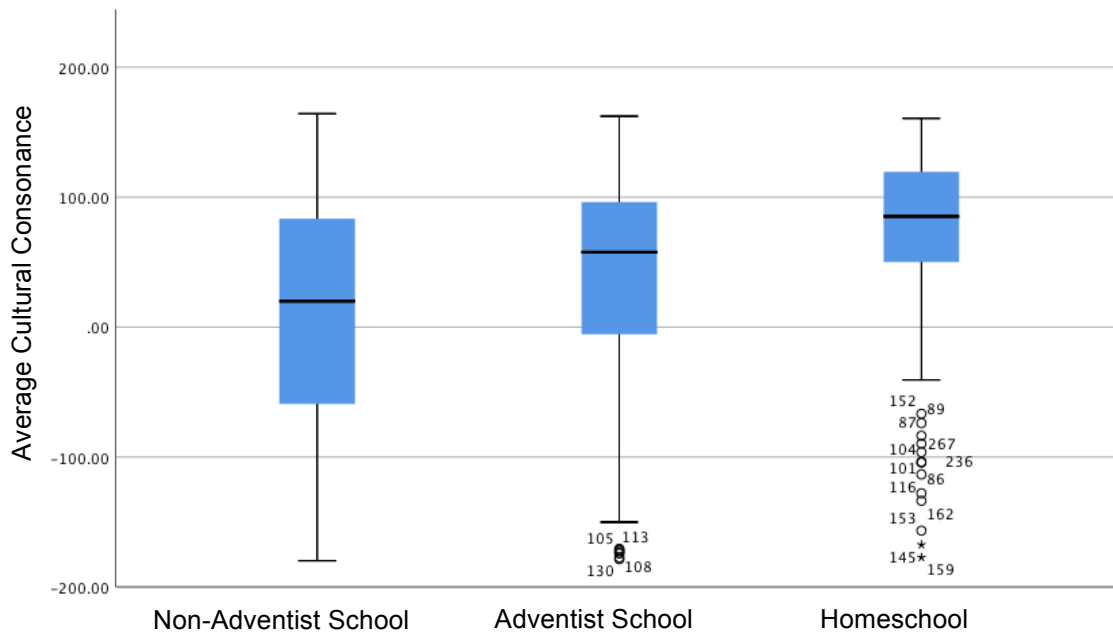
Figure 18. Box plot depicting the average cultural consonance score of respondents who choose non-Adventist schools, Adventist schools and homeschool, n = 879.

Research Question #3. To what extent is a Seventh-day Adventist parent's general religiosity, doctrinal commitment, and church identity – as represented through cultural consonance – associated the choice of school for his/her child? After first capturing the profile of this sample as well as noting some important differences in school choice within the context of key variables, the next step proceeded with building a descriptive model for respondents and the choice of school for their oldest child.

This required establishing the relationship among all three core measures: general religiosity, doctrinal commitment and cultural consonance. One additional chi-square test for

association was run between general religiosity and doctrinal commitment. The results showed a

significant association among all three measures, with moderate strength between cultural

consonance and doctrinal commitment as well as between cultural consonance and general

religiosity.

Table 8

Results of Chi-Square Test and Two Measures by Cultural Consonance

	N	df	X^2	ϕ
Doctrinal Commitment	859	2	282.448**	.573
General Religiosity	873	2	156.993**	.424

**$p < .01$

Table 9

Results of Chi-Square Test of General Religiosity by Doctrinal Commitment

	N	df	X^2	ϕ
General Religiosity	875	1	62.578**	.267

**$p < .01$

After noting the statistically significant relationship between all three measures, and

looking more closely at the key variables, two additional variables were recoded. Because of

the marked differences seen in geographic locale as well as to increase power, *union* was recoded

into a binary variable, collapsing Atlantic Union, Columbia Union, Mid-America Union, and

Southern Union into an east coast category and combining Pacific Union, North Pacific Union

and Southwestern Union into the west coast. By similar rationale, the dependent variable *school*

choice was recoded into a binary variable, leaving enrollment in Adventist schools as one

category and collapsing everything else – public school, homeschool and other private school – into another category.

In order to enter into the model those variables that were most significant, univariate logistic regressions were first run one by one on each variable (see Tables 10-20).

Table 10

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice[a]

							95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
Doctrinal Commitment	.376	.190	3.921	1	.048*	1.457	1.004	2.115

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 11

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice[a]

							95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
Re1igosity	.215	.148	2.107	1	.147	1.240	.928	1.656

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 12

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice[a]

							95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
Parental Responsibility			11.948	2	.003**			

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 13

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Cultural Consonance			9.781	2	.008**			

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 14

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Respondent Age	.066	.089	.543	1	.461	1.068	.897	1.272

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 15

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Marital Status			.234	4	.994			

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 16

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Level of Education	.300	.137	4.773	1	.029*	1.350	1.031	1.767

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 17

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Race	-.209	.151	1.902	1	.168	.812	.603	1.092

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 18

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Income	.593	.142	17.4501	1	.000**	1.810	1.370	2.391

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 19

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Union	.476	.167	8.145	1	.004*	1.609	1.161	2.231

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 20

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Number of children	-.455	.156	8.478	1	.004*	.634	.467	.862

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Before moving forward, however, it was decided to first examine *doctrinal commitment* more closely.   This variable had seemed to present differently based on its interaction with various factors, so again, a histogram was built to be able to determine the best thresholds for stratification.

Based on Figure 19, everything less than 0 was categorized as "low" commitment and everything higher than 0 as "high commitment.
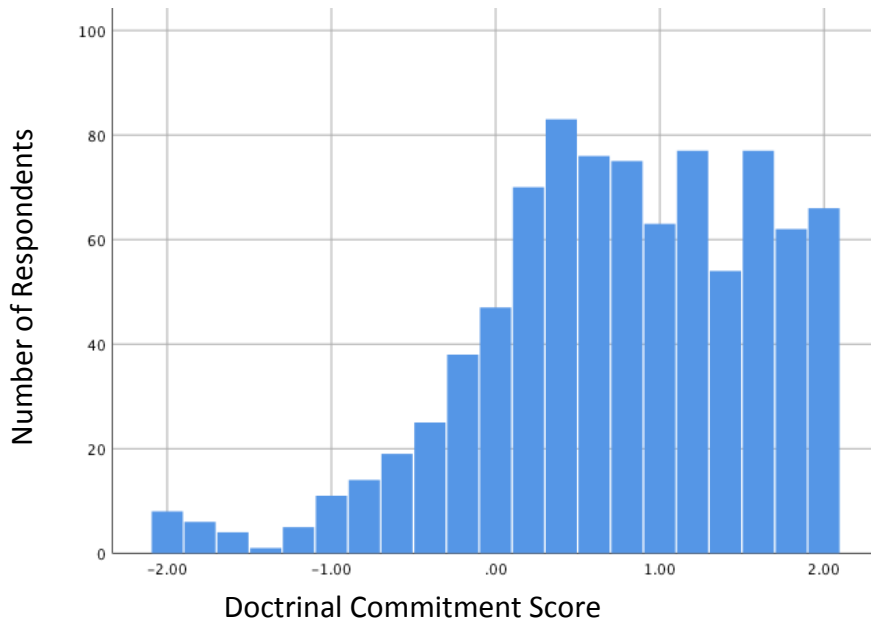
Figure 19. Histogram depicting the doctrinal commitment score of each
respondent, n = 750.

Two box plots (see Figure 20 and 21) were also created to provide more clarity, one for

the cultural consonance of those with high doctrinal commitment and one for the cultural

consonance of those with low doctrinal commitment.
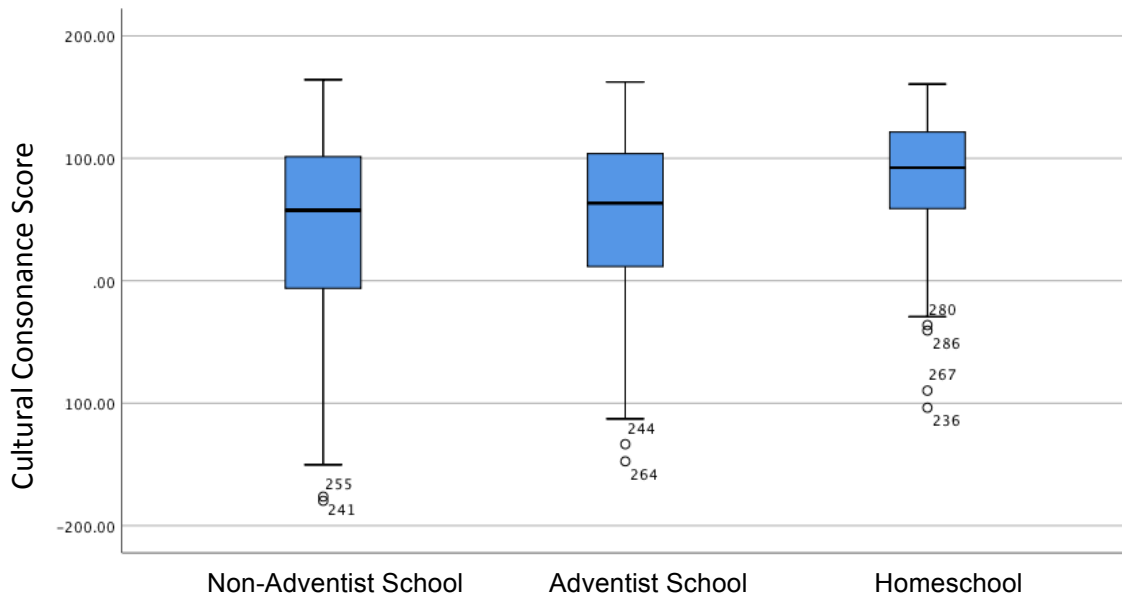
Figure 20. Box plot depicting the cultural consonance scores for respondents with
high doctrinal commitment and their school choice, n = 750.

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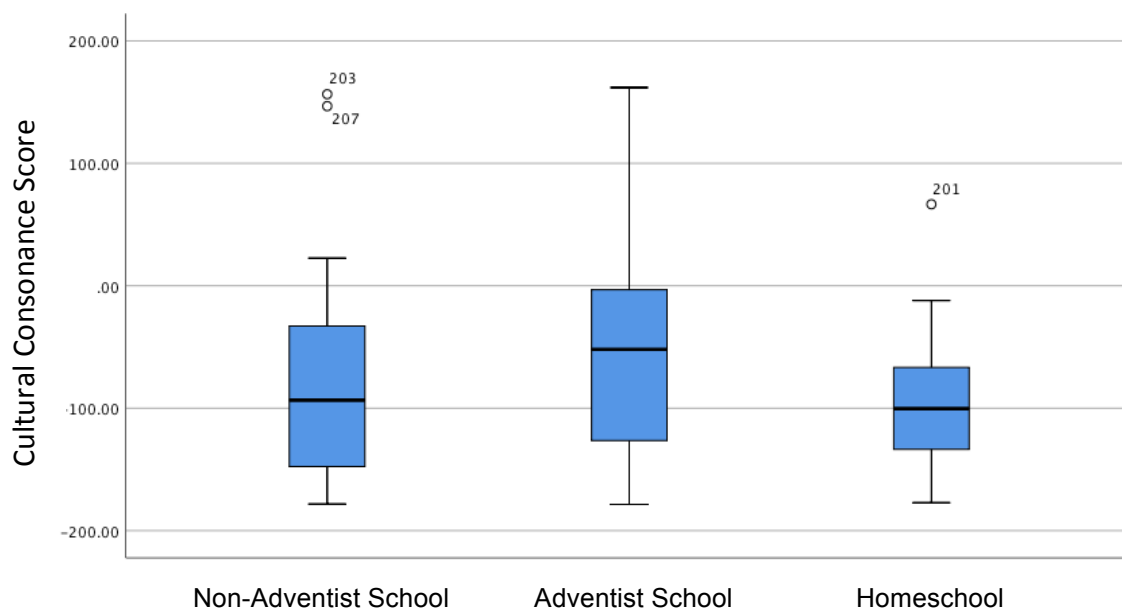
Figure 21. Box plot depicting the cultural consonance scores for respondents with low doctrinal commitment and their school choice, n = 131.

The box plots did demonstrate different patterns in cultural consonance scores between those with high levels of doctrinal commitment and those with low levels of doctrinal commitment, giving evidence that there may be a moderating or interaction effect between the two.

Placing that interaction directly into the regression was an option, but it was instead decided to stratify for high and low doctrine and build two separate models.

To begin, individual univariate regressions were again run, but for both levels of doctrinal commitment. Tables 21-31 present the results from only the high doctrine respondents, with school choice as the dependent variable. Out of the 11 independent variables, five emerged as significant predictors of school choice. These five included the questions "In what ZIP code is your primary residence?" (β = .646), "What best describes your parenting role?" (β = .027), "What is the highest level of education you have completed?" (β = .316), "What was your own

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educational experience from kindergarten through high school?" (β = .513), "What is your approximate net total household income?" (β = .712). Researcher's prerogative forced two additional variables into the model: *cultural consonance* (p = .060) and *number of children* (p = .059; β = -.325). While hierarchical and stepwise models hold a firm line at significance thresholds, there is certainly precedence for using a forced-entry approach as appropriate. Some researchers have noted concern over key variables being omitted from the final model when using stepwise or hierarchical regression techniques, which is what this analysis sought to avoid (Greenland, 1989). One recent epidemiological study on HIV cohorts (Rentsch et al., 2014) compared different regression techniques on the same data set and found that similar results emerged; the more parsimonious model dropped variables that the stepwise model had included, but with no negative net effect. Therefore, in moving ahead with the forced-entry model, both the *cultural consonance* and *number of children* variables seemed to be integral components of this study. As one of the three core measures in the survey instrument, *cultural consonance* was vitally connected to the crux of the research. The *number of children* was thought to have a significant confounding effect on the other variables as it provides a tangible measure of how financial resources might be spread more thinly in a multi-child household. Both variables' significance levels were also right at the threshold. The first variable was the respondent's cultural consonance score (p = .060) and the second was the number of K-12 children in their household (p = .059; β = -.325).

Table 21

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By High Doctrinal Commitment[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Cultural Consonance			5.624	2	.060			

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 22

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By High Doctrinal Commitment[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Educational Background	.513	.188	7.412	1	.006**	1.669	1.154	2.414

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 23

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By High Doctrinal Commitment[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Income	.712	.159	20.077	1	.000**	2.037	1.492	2.781

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 24

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By High Doctrinal Commitment[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B) Lower	Upper
Level of Education	.316	.151	4.374	1	.036*	1.372	1.020	1.846

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 25

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By High Doctrinal Commitment[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B) Lower	Upper
Marital Status			.114	4	.998			

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 26

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By High Doctrinal Commitment[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B) Lower	Upper
Number of Children	-.325	.172	3.571	1	.059	.723	.516	1.012

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 27

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By High Doctrinal Commitment[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B) Lower	Upper
Parental Responsibility			7.238	2	.027*			

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 28

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By High Doctrinal Commitment[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B) Lower	Upper
Race	-.195	.135	1.434	1	.231	.823	.598	1.132

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 29

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By High Doctrinal Commitment[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B) Lower	Upper
Re1igosity	.172	.171	1.002	1	.317	1.187	.848	1.661

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 30

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By High Doctrinal Commitment[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Respondent Age	.066	.089	.543	1	.461	1.068	.897	1.272

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool;
*p<.05; **p<.01

Table 31

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By High Doctrinal Commitment[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Union	.646	.177	13.331	1	.000**	1.908	1.349	2.700

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool;
*p<.05; **p<.01

All seven variables were run through a binary logistic regression; some variables remained significant, while others, when taken into the context of the whole model, lessened in their significance. After several iterations, the final descriptive model for the high doctrinal commitment strata included six variables, including one that was forced into the equation (see Table 32).

Table 32

Binary Logistic Regression Analysis of Significant Variables for School Choice, Stratified by High Doctrine

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool;

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Cultural Consonance			3.720	2	.156			
Educational Background	.600	.210	8.183	1	.004**	1.822	1.208	2.747
Income	.616	.172	12.820	1	.000**	1.851	1.321	2.593
Number of children	-.407	.189	4.636	1	.031*	.666	.480	.954
Re1igosity	.416	.203	4.201	1	.040*	1.516	1.018	2.257
Union	.555	.188	8.745	1	.003*	1.742	1.206	2.157

*p<.05; **p<.01

The binary logistic regression indicated that *union*, *religiosity*, *educational background*, *income* and *number of children* all significantly predict school choice. These five variables were significant at the 5% level [*union* Wald=8.745, p=.003 (p<.01), *religiosity* Wald=4.201, p=.040 (p<.05), *educational background* Wald=8.183, p=.004 (p<.01), *income* Wald=12.820, p=.000 (p<.01), *number of children* Wald=4.636, p=.031 (p<.05)]. The model correctly predicted 24% of instances where respondents chose non-Adventist schools and 87.1% of cases where respondents chose Adventist schools, resulting in an overall percentage correct prediction rate of 62.3%.

These steps were repeated for the low doctrine strata by first conducting univariate regressions. Tables 33-43 presents the results from using the low doctrine strata with the dependent variable of school choice.

Table 33

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By Low Doctrinal Commitment[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Union	-1.000	.704	2.015	1	-.156	.368	.093	1.463

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool;
*p<.05; **p<.01

Table 34

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By Low Doctrinal Commitment[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Religosity	-.078	.359	.047	1	.828	.925	.458	1.870

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool;
*p<.05; **p<.01

Table 35

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By Low Doctrinal Commitment[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Parental Responsibility			3.514	2	.173			

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool;
*p<.05; **p<.01

Table 36

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By Low Doctrinal Commitment[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Cultural Consonance	-.005	.002	3.556	1	.059	.995	.991	1.000

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 37

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By Low Doctrinal Commitment[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Respondent Age	-.036	.229	.025	1	.874	.964	.615	1.511

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 38

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By Low Doctrinal Commitment[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Marital Status	-.405	.671	.365	1	.546	.667	.179	2.483

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 39

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By Low Doctrinal Commitment[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Level of Education	.249	.352	.500	1	.480	1.282	.644	2.555

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 40

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By Low Doctrinal Commitment[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Educational Background	.379	.481	.623	1	.430	1.462	.570	3.751

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 41

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By Low Doctrinal Commitment[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Race	.169	.477	.126	1	.723	1.185	.465	3.020

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 42

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By Low Doctrinal Commitment[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B) Lower	Upper
Income	.190	.354	.287	1	.592	1.209	.804	2.421

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Table 43

Univariate Regression Analysis of Key Variable as a Determinant for School Choice, Stratified By Low Doctrinal Commitment[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B) Lower	Upper
Number of children	-1.238	.433	8.186	1	.004**	.290	.124	.677

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

In some of the initial analyses, the doctrinal commitment variable seemed to act as a protective factor in some instances and a risk factor in others, which led to the decision to stratify by low and high doctrinal commitment. As additional evidence that the high and low doctrine samples respond differently in various contexts, the univariate regression analyses run on the low doctrine sample was substantially different that of the high doctrine sample. In these analyses, only one variable emerged as a significant predictor: number of children (Wald=8.186, p=.004, p<.01). The variable *cultural consonance* (Wald=3.556, p=.059) was almost significant at the p<.05 level.

A binary logistic regression was run with both those variables for the final model (see Table 44).

Table 44

Binary Logistic Regression Analysis of Significant Variables for School Choice, Stratified by Low Doctrinal Commitment[a]

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for Exp(B) | |
							Lower	Upper
Cultural Consonance	-.005	.003	3.427	1	.064	.995	.990	1.000
Number of children	-1.437	.477	9.067	1	.003**	.238	.093	.605

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

Only one variable (*number of children* Wald=9.067, p=.003, p<.01) was significant. The model correctly predicted 36.8% of instances where respondents chose non-Adventist schools and 78.1% of cases where respondents chose Adventist schools, resulting in an overall percentage correct prediction rate of 58.7%.

Because there had been evidence of different patterns of consumption for the varying degrees of cultural consonance, the same five variables from the above model were used to run another binary logistic regression, stratified across the three cultural consonance levels – high, average, and low. Table 45 presents the results from that regression.

Table 45

Binary Logistic Regression Analysis of Significant Variables for School Choice Among Respondents with High Doctrinal Commitment, Stratified by Cultural Consonance[a]

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B) Lower	Upper
High Cultural Consonance								
Union	.864	.233	13.687	1	.000**	2.372	1.501	3.748
Re1igosity	.324	.297	1.192	1	.275	1.382	.773	2.472
Cultural Consonance	.006	.003	2.973	1	.085	1.006	.999	1.013
Educational Background	.420	.266	2.501	1	.114	1.522	.904	2.563
Income	.470	.227	4.298	1	.038*	1.600	.999	1.013
Number of children	-.422	.240	3.088	1	.079	.656	.410	1.050
Average Cultural Consonance								
Union	.134	.389	.118	1	.731	1.143	.533	2.452
Re1igosity	.689	.333	4.293	1	.038*	1.992	1.038	3.822
Cultural Consonance	.001	.006	.043	1	.835	1.001	.989	1.014
Educational Background	.937	.400	5.489	1	.019*	2.553	1.166	5.592
Income	.978	.315	9.609	1	.002**	2.659	1.433	4.933
Number of children	-.425	.363	1.372	1	.241	.654	.321	1.331
Low Cultural Consonance								
Union	-1.279	.909	1.980	1	.159	.278	.047	1.652
Re1igosity	-.269	.703	.147	1	.702	.764	.193	3.030

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Table 45 continued								
Cultural Consonance	-.022	.010	4.802	1	.028*	.978	.959	.998
Educational Background	.745	.831	.805	1	.370	2.107	.414	10.730
Income	.406	.632	.413	1	.521	1.501	.435	5.182
Number of children	-.720	.799	.811	1	.368	.487	.102	2.332

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool; *p<.05; **p<.01

There were two significant predictors that emerged for high cultural consonance levels in this predictive model: union (Wald=13.687, p=.000, p<.01) and income (Wald=4.298, p=.038, p<.05). Predictors for average cultural consonance included three variables: educational background (Wald=5.489, p=.019, p<.05), religiosity (Wald=4.293, p=.038, p<.05), and income (Wald=9.609, p=.002, p<.01). The last regression run for the high doctrine strata was for those with low cultural consonance. Stratified by high doctrine and low cultural consonance, only one independent variable was a significant predictor for school choice – cultural consonance (Wald=4.802, p = .028, p<.05).

Nesting stratification of cultural consonance levels within doctrinal commitment slightly increased the overall prediction rate. Instead of 58.1% from the previous model, the high cultural consonance model had a 64.3% success rate of prediction, the average cultural consonance model, 68.6%, and the low cultural consonance model had a successful prediction rate of 67.9%.

One final binary logistic regression for the low doctrine strata was run again, but this time, comparing the high, average and low cultural consonance groups (see Table 46).

Table 46

Binary Logistic Regression Analysis of Significant Variables for School Choice Among Respondents with Low Doctrinal Commitment, Stratified by Cultural Consonance[a]

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
								Lower	Upper
High Cultural Consonance	Cultural Consonance	-2.260	641.854	.000	1	.997	.104	.00	.
	Number of children	-205.534	57850.822	.000	1	.997	.000	.000	.
Average Cultural Consonance	Cultural Consonance	-.034	.024	1.969	1	.161	.966	.921	1.014
	Number of children	-3.233	1.291	6.231	1	.013*	.040	.003	.500
Low Cultural Consonance	Cultural Consonance	.007	.005	1.729	1	.189	.993	.983	1.013
	Number of children	-.798	.534	2.232	1	.135	.450	.158	1.283

Note. [a]Dependent Variable: Non-Adventist School, Adventist School, homeschool;
*p<.05; **p<.01

Only one variable emerged as a significant predictor among all three levels: number of children for those with average cultural consonance (Wald=6.231, p=.013, p<.05).

Chapter Six: Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter serves to examine the results from the data analyses for this study and

consider not only the ways in which the research questions were answered, but also the possible

implications of the findings within the context of the Seventh-day Adventist church, both for

church and school administration. While there were limitations to this study – which will be

noted in a subsection of this chapter – there were a number of significant insights that was

gleaned from the data analyses.

Discussion

Cultural Consensus Analysis

This study hinged on the validation of the first hypothesis posed – that the culture of the

SDA denomination in America is a significant construct that can be defined and operationalized.

Following the process articulated by the cultural consonance model, two completely different

samples from across eight unions were used and each performed a separate task – free-listing and

rank-ordering. The rank-ordering task served to test the cultural consensus derived from the

free-listing task by analyzing the patterns of agreement from the correlation of response. In

general, if the value of the first factor extracted from the cultural consensus is three times greater

than the second factor, then the minimum threshold is understood to have been reached and a

cultural domain, established. The analysis of the rank-ordered items from the respondents in the

second sample (n = 62) yielded an eigenvalue ratio of 3.28. While modest, this still provides

sufficient evidence that there is an overarching culture that is shared by Seventh-day Adventists.

In essence, this proves that there is a something core and essential and understood in the

Seventh-day Adventist denomination that goes beyond general religious practice, beyond the

number of times one prays or pays tithes and offerings, and beyond doctrines like the state of the dead or the trinity of the Godhead.

Additionally, because the purposive sampling acquired equally representative samples of the eight unions, this cultural domain transcends geographic bounds and captures the profile for Adventists in the entire continental United States. Longtime church members will speak anecdotally about the glaring differences among Seventh-day Adventists in the deep South, Pacific Northwest, or East Coast. They might reference region-specific potluck entrees or particular jargon that is used in one state versus another or what "modest dress" means to certain congregations in the east. But this confirms that *despite* those differences, there still remains a culture that is present and relevant to all American Adventists.

Establishing the existence of this cultural domain using a quantitative approach is highly significant in that it contributes to the growing body of knowledge that the measurement of religious identity can and should not only encompasses this element of religious culture, but also that there is a quantifiable mechanism that can be used to evaluate cultural consonance and its effect on other outcomes. Other studies have explored the relationship between cultural consonance and health outcomes, determining whether or not one's adherence to cultural norms predicts stress or knowledge of beneficial health practices (Dengah, 2014), but these studies have either sampled from a specific congregation (Dengah, 2013) or concentrated on a particular subgroup, such as Mexican immigrants in Alabama (Read-Wahidi, 2014). The idea of being able to emically construct a measure from a population as large and heterogeneous as Seventh-day Adventist church members across America is noteworthy and could be a launching pad for other culture- or denominational-specific studies.

Sampled Population

The profile of a Seventh-day Adventist church member in America, as characterized through the survey respondents, has some distinctive features that are different from the general public. According to the 2016 U.S. Census, roughly 30% of Americans over 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher; by contrast, 81% of this sample had that same level of educational attainment. Around 41% of households in America reported an annual income of $75,000 and higher (Census, 2017), while 61% of the respondents have an annual income of over $80,000. This data seems to mirror other reports that have also noted similar discrepancies in education and income between religious groups and the general public (2014 Religious Landscape Study). Differences such as these certainly frame this particular population in a space and context that is unlike what one would find in a study on the general public's educational values or choice of school.

Consumption Norms and School Choice

Using a parent's choice of school as a measure of consumption in this study was rather unconventional and almost seemed inappropriate. Consumer research has most often looked at marketplace experiences and product quality, focusing on objects – household items or luxury gifts, for example – that people purchase to shape, change or maintain their identity (Joy & Li, 2012). When viewed in that way, school choice doesn't quite seem to fit as a product of consumption. However, recent studies have brought to light different and more effective approaches to consumer research – one of them focusing on consumer identity and consumption norms (Joy & Li, 2012). Cosgel and Minkler (2002), for instance, argue that one's religious

culture plays an integral role in shaping identity, through internal beliefs and external pressures, and therefore, significantly impacts consumption.

This study, therefore, was developed to extend these theories just a bit further. By positing that school choice is an extension of one's religious identity, it was hypothesized that capturing religious profiles of parents would yield valuable insights into the choice of school for their child.

And the results did seem to show that! There are clear differences in school choice as seen through complex, multi-layered relationships of the three core measures of religiosity. The chi-square tests for association as well as the multiple binary regression analyses run on the data repeatedly demonstrated significant relationships between respondents' doctrinal commitment, cultural consonance and school choice.

Consumption Differences Among Seventh-day Adventist Parents

All religious groups have certain characteristics or beliefs or tenets that define who they are to those outside of their sphere. The Book of Mormon, for instance, is understood to be a foundational text for members of the Church of Latter-Day Saints, while Jews might be associated with Hanukkah celebrations and synagogue attendance. These faith communities, however, are not homogenous, of course; rather, there can be quite distinct differences among the members of each religious group. Among the Amish, for example, members of the Old Order live and behave differently than those who belong to Mennonite churches; likewise, there are numerous variations in the Jewish faith – Orthodox, Reformed, and Progressive, to name a few. Cosgel and Minkler (2004) sought to articulate these differences by looking at it through the lens of *consumption*. They maintained that the more an individual followed the consumption norms set forth by the religion he/she subscribed to, the more committed they were to that

particular religious identity. This study sits squarely in the space of that theoretical framework, with the first research question addressing those consumption norms: *How does consumption behavior – as seen in school choice - differ among Seventh-day Adventist parents?*

Based on the results of the analyses completed, there were indeed substantial differences in this particular consumption norm among Seventh-day Adventists.

The chi-square results showed that respondents with high *doctrinal commitment* were more likely to send their child to an Adventist school (60.4%) compared to those with low doctrinal commitment (51.5%). Conversely, those with low doctrinal commitment are more likely to send their child to a non-Adventist school and less likely to choose to homeschool. The 28 fundamental doctrines in the Adventist denomination are acknowledged and accepted when one is publicly baptized into the Adventist church; however, the degrees to which they are regarded and lived out certainly vary from member to member. It seems intuitive to think that those who are more strongly committed to the doctrines of the church would also see Adventist education as a proxy for church for their children.

When looking the respondents' *educational background*, the data demonstrated that those who had attended some or all of K-12 in an Adventist school were more likely to enroll their own child in an Adventist school (61.3%) than those who had no previous experience with Adventist education in their prior context (51.5%) – almost identical statistics to the high and low doctrinal commitment data for school choice. Furthermore, there was a significant association between school choice and the respondents' own educational background (X^2=31.423, p<.01). This indicates that the more years a respondent spent in a K-12 Adventist school, the more likely he/she is to send his/her child to a K-12 Adventist school, an observation that aligns neatly with other findings that graduates of faith-based schools were more likely than

their counterparts in public schools to send their children to faith-based schools (Schwarz & Sikkink, 2016).

There could be several elements involved with this variable. To begin with, it may point to a level of familiarity or inclusion in regards to respondents' experiences in the Adventist educational system. In 2016, the Center for Research on K-12 Adventist Education (CRAE) conducted an informal poll, asking Seventh-day Adventist church members why they believed in Adventist Education. The results were tabulated into a marketing piece that touted the top "100 Reasons for Adventist Education". Of the hundreds of answers that poured in to the CRAE office, rounding out the top of the list was the idea of being surrounded by like-minded individuals. Comments to this end included:

- Students are invited into a family of Seventh-day Adventist peers and teachers

- To be with like believers

- An extension of the values that are taught in the home

- Students in Adventist education either share your morals, or understand why you choose to live the way you do

These statements, albeit collected informally, seem to correspond with this idea that the experiences these respondents had in an Adventist school were comfortable and familiar and that they would want their own child to experience that – akin to "we like what we know and we know what we like" mentality.

This data also implies that not only was that experience familiar, but that it was positive! One's own attendance in an Adventist school seems to lead one to consider that option more strongly for the next generation.

From a marketing standpoint, this also seems to be something worth looking at more carefully. Recruiters for Adventist education need to ask alumni what *were* the positive experiences in their own experience? What of their memories from an Adventist K-12 school should continue to be made and perpetuated? What elements of Adventist education from 20 year ago should be held on to and kept sacred?

Another variable emerged that speaks to the differences in members of the Adventist church is the geographic locale, as defined by the boundaries of *unions*. There was a significant association between *union* and *school choice* ($X^2 = 55.311$, $p<.01$), indicating that there is a relationship between where respondents live and where they choose to put their children in school. Consumption norms – within the context of school choice – varied greatly across unions. North Pacific Union had the highest percentage of respondents who chose Adventist education for their children (68.2%) as well as one of the lowest percentages of respondent who opted for a non-Adventist school (14.6%). This seems to point to a high level of commitment to Adventist education in those northwest states that make up the North Pacific Union. Interestingly enough, just three years ago, an anonymous donor came through with a huge donation to cover *all* debts owed by any K-12 school in the Oregon Conference, one of six conferences in the North Pacific Union. Sheldon Eakins, a principal at one of the Oregon Conference schools said, "Someone with a heart for Christian education wanted the school to be able to move forward and build, rather than focus on debt." This one donor's commitment to those Oregon schools seems to align closely with the rest of the union's support of Adventist education.

32.4% of Lake Union respondents send their children to a non-Adventist school, the highest percentage among all eight unions. This is particularly interesting given that Lake Union is home to Andrews University and Theological Seminary, the NAD's sole educational

institution that grooms all aspiring pastors in the denomination. Having a constituent base of that

nature would lead one to believe that the percentage of those choosing Adventist schools would

be higher. However, one of the emerging topics in the conversation on the declining enrollment

in Adventist school is the lack of participation, context and understanding of the role of

Adventist education among Adventist pastors. According to the vice president of education for

the NAD, 60% of seminary students are second career individuals with little to no background of

Adventist education themselves. For a variety of reasons, many did not attend an Adventist

school in their childhood and therefore, have little loyalty towards Adventist education as an

adult. Juxtaposed with this idea is a conversation had with the principal of Andrews Academy, a

high school in Michigan. She noted that there is an interesting mentality that exists in that

community about Adventist and non-Adventist schools. While many members there are

"staunch Adventists" – committed to the church a variety of ways, including as seminary

students being educated to one day *lead* a church – they often send their children to the public

school across the street from Andrews Academy because it is Adventist *enough* (J. Leiterman,

personal communication, 2018). There are a number of Adventist teachers who teach in the

local public schools and the "talk around town" is that about 40% of the student population in the

Berrien Springs public schools is Adventist. There is even a school bus that comes on to

Andrews University campus to pick up students and bus them to the public school in town.

Because of this, many church members choose to send their children to the public schools

because it *feels* Adventist. This context may explain in some part the high percentage of

respondents in Lake Union who choose non-Adventist schools.

Another finding that emerged from the cross tabulation of school choice and respondents'

unions is that regardless of geographic locale, Adventist families seem to choose homeschooling

more than the general population in the United States (NCES, 2013). While the national rate sits at roughly 3.5% for homeschooled children, the percentage of respondents who homeschool their children range from 10.3% to 35.4%! While there are certainly homeschooling families that do not base their choice or method on religious terms, it is generally accepted that the majority of homeschoolers in the United States identify with a conservative Protestant community (Jeynes, 201), a generalization that appears to be substantiated by this study.

Another variable that can speak to differences among respondents is that of their net household *income*. The cost of tuition is one that is often cited when enrollment issues are discussed. The main reason why, parents argue, they don't send their child to an Adventist school is because the financial burden is far too great. The data does demonstrate a significant association between *income* and *school choice.* Of those who choose an Adventist school for their oldest child, the respondents who reported the lowest income - $40,000 or lower – had the smallest percentage (6.1%), while those who reported the largest household income - $121,000 or higher – held the largest percentage (29.7%). Interestingly enough, though, among those who choose an Adventist school, the $41,000-60,999 group (16.1%) had a higher percentage than the $61,000-80,999 respondents (13.4%) and similar percentages to the $81,000-99,999 group (16.9%) and the $100,000-120,999 group (17.8%). In other words, income makes the biggest difference in school choice when one compares those in the highest and lowest tiers of income, but not as noticeable in the middle groups. This would lead one to believe that while income might be a determining factor for those who bring in the least income, it doesn't seem to be a significant issue for others.

Cultural Consonance and Consumption Behavior

The second fundamental research question directly addressed the cultural component of this study and how it relates specifically to school choice Now that we can quantify this cultural element and refer to it as cultural consonance – the way in which one lives out and practices cultural norms and expectations – how is it associated with school choice?

In the *Results* section, chi-square results were reported for each statement of the cultural measure and school choice; they were all statistically significant. While the association was weak to moderate in all the cases, the X^2 and p-value were significant.

Particularly interesting is the variable on Adventist friends. The significant relationship that the data demonstrates speaks to the circle of influence that one's closest friends can exert on important life decisions. When the variable was further collapsed, the cross tabulation showed that of those who chose Adventist schools (N = 536), 90.79% have a large percentage of Adventist friends (over 50%). Similarly, among that group whose friends are mostly Adventist, around 65% of them chose an Adventist school while only 16% chose a non-Adventist school. This seems to point to the social pressure or expectation that, in this case, supports Adventist education. Social norms can have internal sanctions – where one chooses to act a certain way even in the absence of others watching, such as kneeling to pray by one's bedside or not belching out loud. Social norms, however, can also exert strong external sanctions – where one behaves a specific way because of the expectations of those around them (Elster, 1991). In this case, perhaps the large percentage of those who've chosen Adventist schools being individuals who *have* a large number of Adventist friends provides a robust example of external sanctions at work. It is easy to imagine how church member A, someone who lives near a large Adventist university and whose network of friends and colleagues mostly include other Adventist church

members, might make different choices than church member B, who lives in a rural part of town and has to drive 40 miles to fellowship with other church members at the nearest Adventist church.

It is also interesting to note the converse value – almost exactly *half* of the respondents (50.7%) who don't have a lot of Adventist friends (0-49%) choose a non-Adventist school for their firstborn. Framed in a slightly different way, if a respondent's network of friends is largely Adventist, they are twice as likely to send their child to an Adventist school (64.6%) versus a non-Adventist school (33.1%).

This social influence within cultural consonance could be particularly significant for church and school administrators interested in enrollment patterns for the Adventist educational system. The data seems to indicate that a church member's adherence to Adventist doctrine is less associated with choosing an Adventist school than his/her cultural consonance score. Consequently, a school's recruitment campaign aimed at Adventist church members would be more effective if it focused on fostering social and community relationships as opposed to strengthening doctrinal commitment. In other words, Adventist parents might be more likely to opt for an Adventist school if they make more other Adventist friends than if they are suddenly convicted about the state of the dead (one of the 28 fundamental beliefs for the Seventh-day Adventist church).

There are some aspects of Adventist culture that, anecdotally, seem to be more conservative than others. For instance, style of dress – no makeup, no jewelry, modest necklines – and conservative religious beliefs are generally understood as indicators of a conservative Adventist. Those two variables don't, however, show any evidence of stronger association with

school choice, leading one to believe that what is understood colloquially may not actually have the expected correlation.

On the other hand, preparing for and keeping the Sabbath are both variables that are grounded more substantially in Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. Observing Saturday as Sabbath is something that is fundamental to the Seventh-day Adventist church, so while these two variables are measured within the cultural scale, they both deal quite centrally with something core to Adventism. They both exhibited high X^2 scores ($X^2 = 80.474$ and 72.663) and stronger Cramer's V values ($\phi = .213$ and $.202$) than the other statements. One possible explanation for this is that respondents who feel strongly about Sabbath observance might hold Adventist education in the same regard, that there is a stronger relationship between those two variables than there is with school choice and a cultural item that is less central to Adventism. It has also already been noted that high doctrinal commitment has a stronger association with school choice than does low doctrinal commitment; these cultural statements that relate to doctrine seem to validate that finding.

The related research question - are parents who display a high level of cultural consonance more likely to send their child to a Seventh-day Adventist school – is answered most simply through a basic box plot. As seen in the *Results* section, this box plot (see Figure 22) demonstrates the relationship between degree of cultural consonance and school choice.
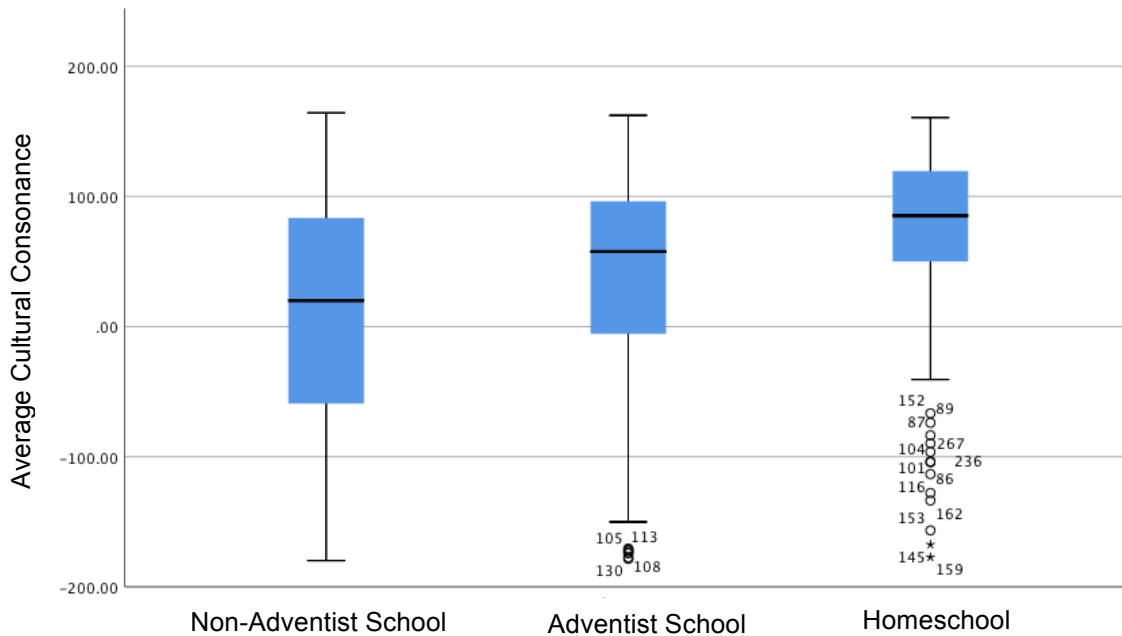
Figure 22. Box plot depicting the difference between average cultural consonance and school choice, n = 879.

The data used for this figure was an average of cultural consonance scores for respondents who chose that type of school system. Those with higher cultural consonance scores homeschool, those with low cultural consonance scores enroll their children in non-Adventist schools and those with moderate cultural consonance scores send their children to Adventist schools.

So what does it mean then to stakeholders in Adventist education if those who are highly culturally consonant *and* those who are low in cultural consonance are less likely to send their children to an Adventist school?

To begin with, campuses that are within the bounds of a more liberal Adventist community or whose general Adventist population might be less conservative than the norm may

have to assume that fewer constituent church members will choose to send their children to an Adventist school.

For instance, looking at Figure 21, church members in Atlantic Union, a region that has the highest cultural consonance mean, may be more likely to send their children to an Adventist school than church members who reside in the Pacific Union, a region that has the lowest cultural consonance mean. School recruiters in the Pacific Union who are looking to increase enrollment on their campus may not find it as effective to promote their school's uniquely Adventist elements such as vespers every Friday night or haystack potlucks at Back-to-School Night. They might fare better emphasizing things that would appeal to a more general consumer shopping around for schools for their child: top-notch academics, safe environment, extracurricular offerings, etc.
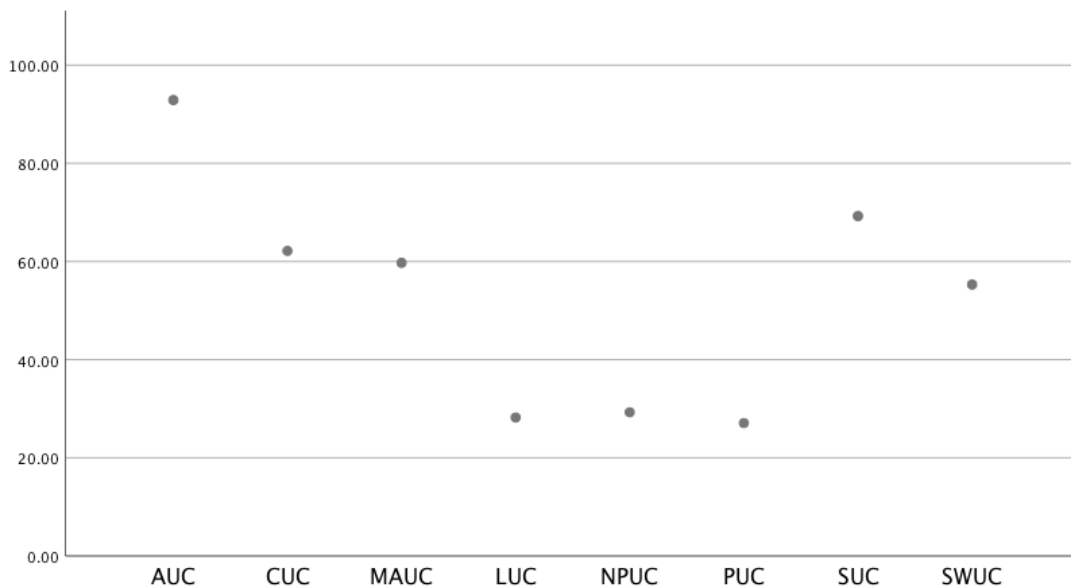
Figure 21. Scatterplot depicting average cultural consonance by unions, n = 839.

Another fascinating finding within this context of cultural consonance is the component of homeschooling. The data from this study seems to parallel the generally accepted idea that those who are more *conservative* will choose to homeschool. While homeschooling in America has become slightly more mainstream, breaking from the prior stereotype of a rural, ultra-conservative, anti-government Christian – it still certainly maintains the underpinnings of alternative, perhaps even radical, mindset. This study, therefore, affirms that idea in that Adventists who are more culturally consonant – more conservative and traditional – choose to homeschool, too. Unlike the families who are low in cultural consonance and seeking a school that is *not* particularly Adventist, these families may not be choosing Adventist schools because they're not Adventist *enough* or because they don't feel that their more-conservative belief system is mirrored in the local Adventist school.

Adventist education, therefore, finds itself in an interesting predicament. Should their schools become *more* Adventist to draw in the more culturally consonant group or should they be *less* Adventist to bring in those who are less culturally consonant? That is an issue that has been debated for the last few decades. Some schools have chosen the former route; Needles Adventist School in Needles, CA, is unapologetic in instructing the students there about the benefits of a vegetarian diet. In a conversation had with two non-Adventist parents of a child in school there, the father remarked proudly, "My daughter came home and told us that she wasn't going to eat meat anymore and that we shouldn't either. She said it was bad for us." His wife chimed in, "She also asked me, 'Mom, why do you wear so much makeup? The Bible tells us not to!" Rather than being offended, however, the parents were pleased with their daughter's progress – both academic and socio-emotional – and thrilled with the school.   This is a clear example of how the "sticking to our roots" approach is working for this particular school. On the

other end of the spectrum, a few years ago, an academy in Ceres, CA, changed its name from Modesto Adventist Academy to Central Valley Christian School. Many other schools have followed suit, replacing "Adventist" from their name with "Christian" or simply removing the word entirely.

It's difficult to comment on which approach is better. Some argue that moving away from the "core" of Adventism is a betrayal to the church and that schools that choose to *dilute* the Adventist message are missing the point of Adventist education. Others counter this by questioning what that crux of Adventism truly is. Surely, they protest, our church is more than just a jumble of antiquated cultural norms. What *is* at the heart of Adventist education? Is it important to be unique? Or does that make them merely exclusive?

The final research question in this study was, "To what extent does a Seventh-day Adventist parent's general religiosity, doctrinal commitment, and church identity – as represented through cultural consonance – predict the choice of school for his/her child?"

In order to first answer this question, chi-square tests for association were run to establish significant relationships between those three measures – general religiosity, doctrinal commitment, and cultural consonance. Both doctrinal commitment and general religiosity were significantly associated with cultural consonance (X^2 (2, N = 859) = 28.448, p < .01 and X^2 (2, N = 873) = 156.993, p < .01) as well as with each other, X^2 (2, N = 873) = 156.993. Additional chi-square tests had also determined that there was a significant association between general religiosity (X^2 = 47.535, 2, N = 897, p < .01), doctrinal commitment (X^2 = 26.340, 2, N = 881, p < .01), and cultural consonance (X^2 = 26.340, 4, N = 879, p < .01) with school choice. There is clearly an association between those variables and the respondents' decision about schooling for their child.

As the data was explored through the regressions, it became clear that there were different populations with different motivations for choosing a particular school for their child. These motivations – or independent variables – interacted differently with each other. Rather than attempting to enter the various combinations as interactions, two separate models were built – one for high doctrinal commitment and one for low doctrinal commitment – and within each was stratified for three levels of cultural consonance. Having six different models, while perhaps slightly unwieldy, provided a cleaner approach to interpreting the nuances among the different sub-groups.

In the final descriptive model that was built, if a respondent had high doctrinal commitment, high cultural consonance and lived on the east coast, they were 2.372 times more likely to choose an Adventist school for their child. But when the respondents with high doctrinal commitment had average cultural consonance, the union they lived in became less important; rather, their net household income accounted for their school choice by 2.659 times.

Additionally, in the high doctrine model, *cultural consonance* did not have a significant effect among those who were already in the high cultural consonance strata [Wald = 4.802, p = .028 (<.05)]. Within the low cultural consonance strata, however, *cultural consonance* did have a significant effect [Wald = 4.802, p = .028 (<.05)]. Essentially, if a respondent already exhibits a high level of cultural consonance, variations within cultural consonance are inconsequential; however, degrees of cultural consonance within the low cultural consonance strata do matter. Respondents with lower cultural consonance values within that group are *less* likely to send their oldest child to an Adventist school.

Income was statistically significant for respondents within the high cultural consonance group [Wald = 4.298, p = .038 (<.05)] and the average cultural consonance group [Wald = 9.609,

p = .002 (<.01)], but not for those with low cultural consonance [Wald = .413, p = .521 (*n.s.*)], indicating that those with high doctrinal commitment and average or higher levels of cultural consonance are more likely to put their child in an Adventist school, regardless of cost. This could mean that, when strong enough, those convictions outweigh the possible financial burden of private school tuition.

These different results for each stratum continue to give evidence to the fact that cultural consonance is a multi-factorial construct, interacting with other variables in different ways.

The low doctrine model, however, proved more difficult to interpret. There was very little that converged, despite the stratifications. The one variable for this model that emerged as significant was the *number of children* within the average cultural consonance stratum, indicating that respondents within this group are *not* likely to send their child to an Adventist school [Wald = 2.232, p = .013 (<.05)].

Revisiting the Problem

Armed with the descriptive analyses and regression models run on the collected data, it is useful to reflect back on the issue that set this research in motion – the declining enrollment in Seventh-day Adventist K-12 schools. Common sentiment has been that enrollment numbers are tightly linked to the school itself – its offerings, its standards, its quality. If Adventist parents aren't choosing Adventist schools for their children, then there must be something wrong with the school, which, by extension, meant that the solution could only be found in creating a fix for the school system.

The original premise for this study, though, was that trends in enrollment are not solely, or even largely, tied to the pros and cons of a single educational institution, but rather, that these patterns could also be attributed to those who do the choosing – parents. Moreover, parents'

decisions were possibly complicated by a host of internal factors including their own educational context and demographics, as well as the religious and cultural norms that they espoused to, based on the strength of their identity with the church.

The results of this study seem to indicate that parental religiosity does, in fact, play a significant role in school choice. Through various analyses and correlating a number of key variables including general religiosity, doctrinal commitment and cultural consonance, it is clear that parental religiosity affects school choice in a myriad of ways. The level of commitment a parent has to the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist church and the extent of their cultural consonance, for example, appear to have a clear relationship with whether or not that parent chooses an Adventist school.

These rough findings have certainly opened the door to examining different factors that do more to affect school choice than simply the school itself. Could the enrollment decline in Adventist and other faith-based schools be related to a change in religious culture and how members identify and live out the culture of their denomination? The data from this study seem to indicate so.

Study Limitations

There are a number of limitations to note within this study. To begin with, the sample size was sufficient for statistical analysis (n = 991), but is still a small fraction of the targeted population – Adventists in America who have K-12 school-aged children. An increased sample size would have allowed for greater power in analyses, which may have provided for more nuances to be teased out of the data.

The low doctrine group, for example, would certainly have benefitted from a larger sample. That cohort simply didn't have enough power to run analyses from which I could

generalize. There just weren't enough respondents who *had* low doctrinal commitment. Future studies might compensate for that by oversampling that particular population.

In addition to size, a more geographically representative sample might have yielded more accurate results. Only 12 respondents from the Atlantic Union, for instance, made it hard to generalize for that region; biases in that small sample may have been grossly highlighted in the results. At the very least, it would've been helpful to have the proportion of respondents per union equal to the proportion of church members per union.

While attempts were made to communicate with as many church administrators at as many levels as possible to ensure opportunities for the survey to be distributed, most of the responses received did still seem to result from a snowball effect. Many in my own network of friends and colleagues took the survey and shared it to their personal and professional circles. Those respondents may have continued to pass the survey along or encouraged their own friends to take it, but the degrees of separation from the origin – Aimee Leukert in southern California – are still not many.   This bias may have come out in the responses, despite the sufficient *n*.

The design of the study also made for certain limitations. To begin with, the survey respondents were *individual* parents – that is, there was no discussion about the complex interplay of all stakeholders in child-rearing. Answers from respondents married to a non-Adventist might certainly have different confounding factors than those divorced or single or without full custody of his/her child. There was no accounting for these differences within the design of this study. Furthermore, the survey data collected for analysis was all self-reported. The answers on church attendance and doctrinal belief and feelings about Sabbath observance were all accepted on good faith. While a researcher could hope that the surveys were all taken

and submitted in a spirit of openness and honesty, concessions must be made to the limitations that come from anything that is wholly self-reported.

There was slight variation in the protocol in those who completed the rank-ordering task. The difference in how participants chose to rank-order the items (by first sorting the statements into three categories or by rank-ordering them all of them at once) may have resulted in small discrepancies in the findings.

And finally, in regard to the data analysis, this study is also limited in that it only looked at data for the respondents' oldest or only child. The regression models that were run captured the decision-making process for that child alone and did not factor in the dynamics and context of school choice for subsequent children.

Implications and Further Research

There are a number of issues still to be explored at this unique intersection of religion, culture and consumption. To begin with, the cultural consonance model could certainly be used to analyze cultures in other denominations through the construction of a cultural domain unique to that population. A 2012 Pew Research Study, for instance, attempted to capture the profile of Mormons in America through an extensive survey taken by roughly 1000 Mormon respondents – similar to the sample size of this study. The survey instrument asked a variety of questions about general religious beliefs, specific Mormon tenets, and lifestyle choices such as marriage and parenting goals. Having a single cultural value could have significantly increased the power in that data analysis and provided deeper insights into the Mormon identity.

In another research study, Cosgel and Minkler (2007) defined behaviors motivated by religiosity as religious consumption norms and posited that those with higher levels of commitment to their religious identity would express this through their behavior or increased

"consumption" of said religious norm. In their research, however, there was no way of concretely quantifying that level of commitment from individual to individual. Being able to first develop and then operationalize the cultural domain within a religious context could prove highly valuable to researchers in this field.

The use of a quantifiable measure of culture has proven significant in many fields including health, lifestyle choices and consumptions norms; bringing in school choice as a dependent variable, however, has never, to my knowledge, been explored. Other faith-based educational systems might also be interested in assessing the relationship between their constituents' cultural consonance and school choice. It would be fascinating to see if there were any patterns among various denominations and school choice.

Further research could also attempt to build a predictive model for Adventist school choice, rather than a descriptive model. Capturing a profile is helpful, but from a purely marketing perspective, being able to make predictive conjectures about potential new students would be wildly useful. They could provide church and school administrators with even more relevant insights into recruitment and enrollment.

The homeschooling population is certainly one that could be examined more closely. With the rapid rise in homeschooling over the past ten years and the above average percentage of homeschoolers within the Adventist population, school and church administration would be well advised to learn more about those who choose that educational option for their children.

One of the limitations, as addressed earlier, was that this study looked only at the respondents' oldest or only child. But what about families with more than one child? Is choosing an Adventist school even less likely the more children a respondent has? Does income

play a larger role then in that decision? Future research could certainly take that variable into account and develop a more sensitive study to examine those households.

And finally, there are a variety of directions those with an interest in research for the Adventist church could take with this newly established cultural domain for Adventists in America. Does cultural consonance have health implications? Can cultural consonance be correlated with children staying in – or leaving – the denomination? What might the relationship be between cultural consonance and service-oriented professions? Operationalizing culture provides ample fodder for further research and investigation.

Conclusion

The religious component within any population can seem elusive or murky to an academic researcher. There have been attempts to add clarity to this topic by measuring church attendance or reporting amounts of tithe and other monetary contributions to a religious institution.   The application of cultural consensus analysis provides a wealth of nuanced information that significantly complements and broadens the scope of study within a religious community.

In this study, not only have I attempted to quantify cultural consonance for the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in America, but I have also sought to apply and associate that scale with one specific consumption norm – school choice. Based on the findings, there are clear indicators that a cultural domain exists – one that is shared by members of the Adventist faith across America. Moreover, that domain can be operationalized in a manner that explains one aspect of a respondent's religious profile, providing rich insight and additional context to the ways in which religiosity affects one's choices, behaviors and values. Instead of directly asking parents why they choose certain schools for their children – a question that can be heavily

saturated with bias from both inquirer and respondent – this study has sought to examine the push and pull of other internal forces that are at play in this decision. Religiosity is indeed a multi-faceted construct that is made up of a variety of factors including general religiosity, doctrinal commitment and cultural consonance, and those components must all be carefully taken into account when attempting to determine what affects and influences a parent's choice of school for his/her child.

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Appendix A
Informed Consent Form for First Sample

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A SELECTED SAMPLE TO ASSIST IN CONSTRUCTING A CULTURAL DOMAIN OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH COMMUNITY

STUDY LEADERSHIP. My name is Aimee Leukert and I am a doctoral student in the School of Educational Studies at Claremont Graduate University. I am inviting you to take part in my PhD dissertation research project. Professor DeLacy Ganley, a member of the department, is supervising this study.

PURPOSE. The purpose of this study is to:
1) analyze the current trends and attitudes among Seventh-day Adventist church members, and
2) examine the resulting choice of school for those members' K-12 child(ren)

ELIGIBILITY. To take part in this portion of the study, you must be a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

PARTICIPATION. For this portion of the study, you will be asked to free-list items or traits that denote a "good" or "true" Adventist.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION. The risks you run by taking part in this study are minimal, and not higher than those faced in everyday life.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION. I do not expect the study to benefit you personally. This study will benefit me by helping me to finish my PhD. This study is also intended to benefit Adventist education by adding to its research and knowledge base.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop or withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to submit your final list. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your current or future connection with anyone at Claremont Graduate University.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your individual privacy will be protected in all papers, books, talks, posts, or stories resulting from this study. We may share the data we collect with other researchers, but we will not reveal your identity with it. While you are listing the items associated with Seventh-day Adventist behavior, the researcher may be recording (audio and/or video) and/or taking handwritten notes. At the completion of this study, all digital files will be erased and the notes, disposed.

FURTHER INFORMATION. If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please contact me at aimee.leukert@cgu.edu or 909.815.2659. You may also contact my faculty advisor at delacy.ganley@cgu.edu or (909)607-1111. This survey has been certified as exempt from Institutional Review Board coverage. You may print and keep a copy of this consent form.

CONSENT. Your signature below means that you understand the information on this form, that someone has answered any and all questions you may have about this study, and you voluntarily agree to participate in it.

Signature of Participant   _____   Date _____

Printed Name of Participant _____

AGREEMENT **T**O **P**ARTICIPATE IN **A** **S**ELECTED **S**AMPLE TO **A**SSIST IN **C**ONSTRUCTING A **C**ULTURAL **D**OMAIN OF THE **S**EVENTH-DAY **A**DVENTIST **C**HURCH **C**OMMUNITY

STUDY LEADERSHIP. My name is Aimee Leukert and I am a doctoral student in the School of Educational Studies at Claremont Graduate University. I am inviting you to take part in my PhD dissertation research project. Professor DeLacy Ganley, a member of the department, is supervising this study.

PURPOSE. The purpose of this study is to:
3) analyze the current trends and attitudes among Seventh-day Adventist church members, and
4) examine the resulting choice of school for your K-12 child(ren)

ELIGIBILITY. To take part in this study, you must be a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church and have K-12 school-aged children.

PARTICIPATION. For this portion of the study, you will be asked to rank selected items in order of importance to the Seventh-day Adventist church community.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION. The risks you run by taking part in this study are minimal, and not higher than those faced in everyday life.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION. I do not expect the study to benefit you personally. This study will benefit me by helping me to finish my PhD. This study is also intended to benefit Adventist education by adding to its research and knowledge base.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop or withdraw from the task at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your current or future connection with anyone at Claremont Graduate University.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your individual privacy will be protected in all papers, books, talks, posts, or stories resulting from this study. We may share the data we collect with other researchers, but we will not reveal your identity with it. While you are ranking the items and working through this task, the researcher may be recording (audio and/or video) and/or taking handwritten notes. At the completion of this study, all digital files will be erased and the notes, disposed.

FURTHER INFORMATION. If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please contact me at aimee.leukert@cgu.edu or 909.815.2659. You may also contact my faculty advisor at delacy.ganley@cgu.edu or (909)607-1111. This survey has been certified as exempt from Institutional Review Board coverage. You may print and keep a copy of this consent form.

CONSENT. Your signature below means that you understand the information on this form, that someone has answered any and all questions you may have about this study, and you voluntarily agree to participate in it.

Signature of Participant   _____   Date _____

Printed Name of Participant _____

Appendix C
Informed Consent Form for Focus Group

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A FOCUS GROUP TO ASSIST IN CONSTRUCTING A CULTURAL DOMAIN OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH COMMUNITY

STUDY LEADERSHIP. My name is Aimee Leukert and I am a doctoral student in the School of Educational Studies at Claremont Graduate University. I am inviting you to take part in my PhD dissertation research project. Professor DeLacy Ganley, a member of the department, is supervising this study.

PURPOSE. The purpose of this study is to:
5) analyze the current trends and attitudes among Seventh-day Adventist church members, and
6) examine the resulting choice of school for your K-12 child(ren)

ELIGIBILITY. To take part in this study, you must be a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church and have K-12 school-aged children.

PARTICIPATION. For this portion of the study, you will be part of a focus group that will take a survey on parental religiosity and school choice.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION. The risks you run by taking part in this study are minimal, and not higher than those faced in everyday life.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION. I do not expect the study to benefit you personally. This study will benefit me by helping me to finish my PhD. This study is also intended to benefit Adventist education by adding to its research and knowledge base.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop or withdraw from the task at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your current or future connection with anyone at Claremont Graduate University.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your individual privacy will be protected in all papers, books, talks, posts, or stories resulting from this study. We may share the data we collect with other researchers, but we will not reveal your identity with it. After you take the survey, you will be asked for feedback on its content and clarity. The researcher may record (audio only) this conversation or take handwritten notes. At the completion of this study, those audio files will be erased and the notes, disposed.

FURTHER INFORMATION. If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please contact me at aimee.leukert@cgu.edu or 909.815.2659. You may also contact my faculty advisor at delacy.ganley@cgu.edu or (909) 607-1111. This survey has been certified as exempt from Institutional Review Board coverage. You may print and keep a copy of this consent form.

CONSENT. Your signature below means that you understand the information on this form, that someone has answered any and all questions you may have about this study, and you voluntarily agree to participate in it.

Signature of Participant   _____   Date _____

Printed Name of Participant _____

Appendix D
Informed Consent Form for Survey Participants

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN
A SURVEY ON PARENTAL RELIGIOSITY AND CHURCH IDENTITY

STUDY LEADERSHIP. My name is Aimee Leukert and I am a doctoral student in the School of Educational Studies at Claremont Graduate University. I am inviting you to take part in my PhD dissertation research project. Professor DeLacy Ganley, a member of the department, is supervising this study.

PURPOSE. The purpose of this study is to:
7) analyze the current trends and attitudes among Seventh-day Adventist church members, and
8) examine the resulting choice of school for your K-12 child(ren)

ELIGIBILITY. To take part in this study, you must be a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church and have K-12 school-aged children.

PARTICIPATION. During the study, you will take an online survey asking about your beliefs about religion in general and about the Seventh-day Adventist church specifically. There will also be basic demographic questions such as your level of education, age and income. Completing this questionnaire will take about 20 minutes.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION. The risks you run by taking part in this study are minimal, and not higher than those faced in everyday life. The risk includes the possibility that you may be offended by some of the questions in the survey. You are free to skip any question that makes you uncomfortable, or stop the survey at any time.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION. I do not expect the study to benefit you personally. This study will benefit me by helping me to finish my PhD. This study is also intended to benefit Adventist education by adding to its research and knowledge base.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop or withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any particular question for any reason without it being held against you. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your current or future connection with anyone at Claremont Graduate University.

CONFIDENTIALITY: This anonymous online study is being conducted through the website of SurveyMonkey, an independent internet service company. You may find out more about this website, if you wish, at www.surveymonkey.com. No identifying information about you is being collected. In order to protect the anonymity of your responses, no IP addresses, email addresses, or identifying information will be collected, and SurveyMonkey uses industry-standard security methods to protect data transmission and storage. Survey data will be stored only on a password-protected computer. All individual answers will be presented in summary form in any papers, books, talks, posts, or stories resulting from this study. We may share the data set with other researchers, but your identity will not be known.

FURTHER INFORMATION. If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please contact me at aimee.leukert@cgu.edu or 909.815.2659. You may also contact my faculty advisor at delacy.ganley@cgu.edu or (909)607-1111. This survey has been certified as exempt from Institutional Review Board coverage. You may print and keep a copy of this consent form.

CONSENT. Clicking the "Yes" entry below means that you understand the information on this form, that any questions you may have about this study have been answered, and that you are eligible and voluntarily agree to participate. This link will direct you to the survey. Clicking the "No" entry will close this page and exit the survey.

Yes, I am over 18, a US citizen, and live in California, and I would like to participate

No, I do not want to participate

<u>PARENTS OF K-12 STUDENTS</u>

Our church has received a request to participate in a study about current trends among Adventist parents who have children in kindergarten – 12th grade.

Please visit: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/adventistparents to participate in the survey

or scan:

The deadline for completion is July 15, 2018.

Thank you!

Current Trends in Adventism
Introduction

Dear Participant,

My name is Aimee Leukert and I am a doctoral student at Claremont Graduate University. I am inviting you to participate in a survey that is part of my dissertation study examining the relationship between current trends, behaviors and attitudes of Seventh-day Adventist church members and the choice of school for their child(ren).

ELIGIBILITY. To take part in this study, you must be a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church and have K-12 school-aged children.

PARTICIPATION. You may participate by taking an online survey asking about your beliefs about religion in general and about the Seventh-day Adventist church specifically. There will also be basic demographic questions such as your level of education, age and income. The survey has 36 questions and will take you around 10-15 minutes to complete.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION. The risks you run by taking part in this study are minimal, and not higher than those faced in everyday interactions. The risks include the possibility that you may be offended by some of the questions in the survey. You are free to skip any question that makes you uncomfortable, or stop the survey at any time.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION. This results of this study will add to the research and knowledge base for Adventist education in general as well as provide data for my dissertation. This study will not necessarily benefit you personally.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop or withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any particular question for any reason without it being held against you. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your current or future connection with anyone at Claremont Graduate University.

CONFIDENTIALITY: This anonymous online study is being conducted through the website of SurveyMonkey, an independent internet service company. You may find out more about this website, if you wish, at www.surveymonkey.com. No identifying information about you is being collected. In order to protect the anonymity of your responses, no IP addresses, email addresses, or identifying information will be collected, and SurveyMonkey uses industry-standard security methods to protect data transmission and storage. Survey data will be stored only on a password-protected computer. All individual answers will be presented in summary form in any papers, books, talks, posts, or stories resulting from this study. We may share the data set with other researchers, but your identity will not be known.

FURTHER INFORMATION. If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please contact me at aimee.leukert@cgu.edu or 909.815.2659. You may also contact my

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faculty advisor, Dr. DeLacy Ganley at delacy.ganley@cgu.edu or (909) 607-1111 or CGU's IRB directly at irb@cgu.edu or (909) 607-9406. This survey has been certified as exempt from Institutional Review Board coverage. You may print and keep a copy of this consent form.

* 1. I have read the information above and consent to participating in this survey under those terms.

◯ Yes

◯ No

* 2. Do you currently identify yourself as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church?

◯ Yes

◯ No

* 3. In the 2017-2018 school year, did you have at least one school-aged child (kindergarten-12th grade) in your household?

◯ Yes

◯ No

2

General Religiosity

4. How often do you attend church or other religious meetings?

◯ More than once a week   ◯ A few times a year

◯ Once a week   ◯ Once a year or less

◯ A few times a month   ◯ Never

5. How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation, or Bible study?

◯ More than once a day   ◯ Once a week

◯ Daily   ◯ A few times a month

◯ Two or more times/week   ◯ Rarely or never

6. In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine (i.e., God).

◯ Definitely true of me   ◯ Tends not to be true

◯ Tends to be true   ◯ Definitely not true

◯ Unsure

7. My religious beliefs are what really lies behind my whole approach to life.

◯ Definitely true of me   ◯ Tends not to be true

◯ Tends to be true   ◯ Definitely not true

◯ Unsure

8. I try hard to carry my religion over into all other dealings in life.

◯ Definitely true of me   ◯ Tends not to be true

◯ Tends to be true   ◯ Definitely not true

◯ Unsure

3

Adventist Culture

9. In my household, we prepare for the start of Sabbath on Friday evenings, both in thought and in activity.

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

10. I value our church's distinctive and unique faith.

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

11. I make it a priority to keep the Sabbath day holy, both in activity and in worship.

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

12. I tend to be a rule-follower.

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

4

13. I am actively involved in my church.

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

14. I live healthfully, which includes not eating or drinking harmful things.

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

15. I tend to dress conservatively.

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

16. I follow a vegetarian or vegan diet.

○ Always   ○ Rarely

○ Usually   ○ Never

○ Sometimes

17. I live by Biblical principles.

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

For the next five questions with sliders, please make sure to click on the slider to activate the answer.

5

18. How certain are you that Ellen White was a prophetess?

0% certain   100% certain

19. Of those you interact with at work and/or professionally, what percentage are Adventist?

0%   100%

20. What percentage of your friends are Adventist?

0%   100%

21. How would you identify your lifestyle (choices, behaviors, etc.)?

Conservative   Liberal

22. How would you identify your religious beliefs?

Conservative   Liberal

6

Adventist Doctrines

23. Jesus Christ will come the second time in our generation.

- ( ) Strongly agree
- ( ) Agree
- ( ) Neither agree nor disagree
- ( ) Disagree
- ( ) Strongly disagree

24. God created the world in six literal days, approximately 6000 years ago.

- ( ) Strongly agree
- ( ) Agree
- ( ) Neither agree nor disagree
- ( ) Disagree
- ( ) Strongly disagree

25. The investigative judgment began in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary on October 22, 1844.

- ( ) Strongly agree
- ( ) Agree
- ( ) Neither agree nor disagree
- ( ) Disagree
- ( ) Strongly disagree

26. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is God's true church.

- ( ) Strongly agree
- ( ) Agree
- ( ) Neither agree nor disagree
- ( ) Disagree
- ( ) Strongly disagree

27. Ellen White was inspired by God and her writings are an authoritative guide for Adventists today.

- ( ) Strongly agree
- ( ) Agree
- ( ) Neither agree nor disagree
- ( ) Disagree
- ( ) Strongly disagree

7

Other General Questions

28. How old are you?

( ) 25 or younger   ( ) Between 46-55

( ) Between 26-35   ( ) Between 56-65

( ) Between 36-45   ( ) 66 or older

29. What is your marital status?

( ) Single   ( ) Widowed

( ) Married   ( ) Other

( ) Divorced

30. During the 2017-2018 school year, where did your child(ren) attend school? Please answer for each child from Kindergarten through 12th grade.

	Public/charter school	Seventh-day Adventist school	Other private school	Homeschool	Other	N/A
Child #1 (oldest child)	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Child #2	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Child #3	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Child #4	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Child #5	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Child #6	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

31. What best describes your parenting role?

( ) I am the primary decision-maker for my child(ren).

( ) I have an equal role in the decision-making for my child(ren) along with the other parent(s).

( ) I have some part of the decision-making for my child(ren).

( ) I have no part in the decision-making for my child(ren).

Other (please specify)

[   ]

8

32. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

◯ Less than high school degree   ◯ Associate degree

◯ High school degree or equivalent   ◯ Bachelor degree

◯ Some college but no degree   ◯ Graduate/Professional degree

33. What was your own educational experience from kindergarten through high school?

◯ I attended an Adventist school for most or all of grades K-12.

◯ I attended an Adventist school for some of grades K-12.

◯ I never attended an Adventist school for grades K-12.

34. What is your race/ethnicity? (Check all that apply)

☐ White

☐ Black or African-American

☐ Asian

☐ Mexican

☐ Of other Spanish descent

☐ American Indian or Native American

☐ Other

35. What is your approximate net total household income?

◯ $40,000 or under   ◯ Between $81,000 - $100,999

◯ Between $41,000 - $60,999   ◯ Between $101,000 - $120,999

◯ Between $61,000 - $80,999   ◯ $121,000 or over

36. In what ZIP Code is your primary residence?

[   ]