

Name: Sherene Hattingh

Institution: Avondale College of Higher Education

Email: sherry.hattingh@avondale.edu.au

Oral presentation Proposal [250-500 words]

Title: Qualitative analysis revealing teachers' perceptions of their institution's mission

A research project into the perceptions of institutional workers at Seventh-day Adventist institutions regarding the mission of their institution is gathering data from all 13 divisions of the world-wide Seventh-day Adventist Church. This presentation will report on the qualitative results of two open-ended questions from this research questionnaire administered at the recent 2018 Teachers Convention held for the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) schools across the North American Division (NAD) of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The two questions are:

I work at a Church-connected school. If I were asked what the mission of my school should be, I would say (A1):

My organization is owned by or connected to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. If I were asked what makes it different from similar organizations that are NOT part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I would say (A3):

One thousand and two (1002) participants provided their own written views and words in response to these questions thus providing qualitative data. Thematic analysis was used in identifying emerging themes (Rapley, 2016). Theme titles and key words have been taken directly from the data thereby reflecting the participants' views (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). NVivo was used by the researcher as the data-analysis software for data management, recording, sorting, linking and matching (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

In response to question A1 eleven significant themes were identified by these teachers as the mission of their school. These themes included: *lead the children to Jesus* (34%), *education* (26%), *preparation for this world* (21%), *service learning* (20%), *eternity focus* (20%), *share the Good News* (19%), *Christi-centred education* (16%), *show God's love* (10%), *no response/don't know* (9%), *community focus* (5%), and *Seventh-Day Adventist focus* (4%).

Interestingly, the analysis of the data for A3 also revealed eleven themes. These themes included: *integrate faith and learning* (31%), *Adventist affiliation* (28%), *nothing* (22%), *committed staff* (11%), *emphasize growing a relationship with Jesus* (11%), *broad base of support* (10%), *educate whole child* (7%), *caring tolerant family feel* (5%), *freedom to connect teaching with Biblical principles* (5%), *hope for the future* (5%), and *students trained for service* (5%).

The themes from both A1 and A3, although not in the same order, correlate with results from a similar study conducted with teachers in the South Pacific Division (McIver & Kilgour, 2017). It is encouraging to note that similar themes have been identified. Clearly the mission of these institutions is still Christ-centred and focused on leading students to Jesus. This aligns well with the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

References

- Bazeley, P., & Jackson, K. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo* (2 ed.). London: Sage.
- Cresswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: choosing among five approaches* (4 ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage.

McIver, R., & Kilgour, P. (2017). *Perceptions of mission held by teachers in the Seventh-day Adventist schools in Australia and the Solomon Islands*. Cooranbong, Australia: Avondale Academic Press.

Rapley, T. (2016). Some pragmatics of qualitative data analysis. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative research* (4 ed., pp. 331-345). London: Sage.

Abstract: [50 words]

This presentation reports the qualitative results of two open-ended questions from a questionnaire administered with North American Division teachers regarding their perception of the mission of their Seventh-day Adventist institution. The results show these teachers perceive the mission of their institutions as Christ-centred and focused on leading students to Jesus.