Faculty Information Literacy Stipend
Final Report

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Course: CCPA 2375: Communication Research Methods and Data Analytics
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Introduction

The focus of this information literacy project was on crafting an effective literature review which is a key component and required assignment of this course. Developing a strong literature review can be challenging for both undergraduate and graduate students. Many students lack sufficient training in how to search for articles and develop a strong literature review. In writing their first literature review, students make common mistakes such as summarizing individual studies paragraph by paragraph; reviewing irrelevant information; providing too many technical details from a given study; overquoting; or failing to follow appropriate citation style guidelines. Consequently, the literature review often fails to adequately set up the hypothesis, methodology, and subsequent findings of the research paper.

Through this information literacy project and with strong support from Ms Megan Heuer, Director of Educational Initiatives, the CCPA 2375 students learned best practices for writing a literature review such as synthesizing sources and organizing the review into thematic sections; paraphrasing and describing studies in their own voice; and focusing the review on the research questions. They learned specific search techniques beneficial for a smooth literature review process. This project supported the following Learning Objectives of this course:

- Identify and use a variety of credible sources for primary and secondary research.
- Develop a literature review.

Description of the Information Literacy Assignment or Activities

Students completed the following Learning Activities:

1. **Searching for Information Online Canvas Module [M. Heuer]:** Students learned basic concepts and terms related to online information search; identified how search works on the open internet and in library databases; and identified effective search strategies. This activity helped the students find appropriate research topics and develop preliminary research questions.
2. **In-Class Lecture on Developing Literature Reviews [P. Charoensap-Kelly].** In 1-2 class sessions, students learned key concepts about a literature review including the purpose of a literature review, the difference between summary and synthesis, the approaches to organizing a literature review, and characteristics of good versus poor literature reviews.
3. **"Literature Review Re-Assembly Game" Bonus Canvas Discussion [P. Charoensap-Kelly].** Students engaged in an activity where they each re-assembled mixed-up pargraphs from an actual published article into a coherent literature review, shared their results on a Discussion thread on Canvas, and compared their results with those of their classmates. In a debrief, students were shown the correct order of that published literature review and guided to see the strengths and weaknesses of organizing the literature review that way.

4. **In-Class Lecture on Advanced Search Techniques for Literature Reviews [M. Heuer].** Students learned how to conduct exploratory research to gain a big picture of their chosen topic and determine what articles to include or leave out. They learned specific search techniques and tools for developing a literature review such as scoping, content mapping, and citation tracing.
5. **APA Citation Canvas Module [M. Heuer]:** Students learned how to cite sources correctly per the American Psychological Association Style Guide, 7th Edition.
6. **Wrote a Group Literature Review [P. Charoensap-Kelly].** In a group of 4-5, students developed a 6-8-page literature review that formed the basis of their research questions or hypotheses and justified their research methodology. This literature review was then integrated into their full research report (i.e., 15-page final paper) which included the literature review, methodology, results, and discussion sections. There were six groups of students in total.

Throughout the semester, students received feedback from me via email and in-person meetings about how to organize their literature review or strengthen the quality of their paper. Several students also met with Megan outside of class for additional support on using library databases and finding relevant sources for their paper.

Method of Assessment

- **Learning Activities #1 and #5** above were assessed through quizzes at the end of each Module.
- **Learning Activities #2 and #3** were informally assessed through in-class discussion.
- **Learning Activity #4** were offered as a bonus activity. Students received full score by sharing their results and responded to at least two classmates.
- **Learning Activity #6**, the final product of this information literacy project, was graded using the rubric provided in the Appendix.

After the students turned in their literature review, they had a chance to revise and resubmit it. Some groups of students took this chance whereas some did not. Finally, all groups revised their literature review one last time for their final paper (the complete research report). The students expressed the learning activities and additional support from Megan were very helpful for their completion of the literature reviews as well as the rest of their research projects.

Results and Impact on Student Learning

In their first draft of literature reviews, students' grades ranged from C to A-. The students did well in finding relevant sources. Two groups misunderstood the purpose of the literature review and used it to answer *rather than* to logically set up their research questions. Most groups had a problem synthesizing sources and developing rationale for their research questions or hypotheses. All groups had a problem with citing sources correctly per the APA style guide. On their second attempt, for those groups that revised and resubmitted, their grades improved to a B on average. In their final draft for the final paper, the grades still ranged from C to A-. However, students demonstrated a better understanding of the purpose and elements of a literature review.

Overall, students demonstrated the ability to find credible and relevant sources using the library databases and open internet. Also, they presented fresh and interesting ideas relevant to their research topics. Some groups showed improvement in synthesizing sources and writing a coherent review in their

own voice. Others struggled to connect the dots and "stacked" their sources without forming a logical argument. Nonetheless, students showed an awareness of the literature review process. Importantly, several of them felt this assignment challenged them in a positive way because it helped them develop many important skills such as advanced research, critical thinking, organizational, and analytical skills.

Summary and Next Steps:

Given that writing a literature review is challenging even for graduate students or experienced researchers, I was satisfied to read the students' final papers. Although proficiency in developing and writing a literature review was not achieved, I was pleased to see the students' effort to meet the assignment expectations. Also, for some groups, their final products were commendable considering this was perhaps their first ever literature review.

I believe this sequence of instruction and assignments was successful and I intend to continue implementing these learning activities in this course. Additionally, I have made the following adjustments to enhance the students' learning and performance.

- **Make the Literature Review Re-Assembly Game a required activity.** This activity helped the participating students see a concrete example of a literature review and understand how to structure one. I have made this Canvas discussion a requirement for a future semester.
- **Adjust the APA Citation Canvas Module.** To help students increase their knowledge and skills in the APA style guide, I have added an informational page to the APA Citation Module listing the Do's and Don'ts about APA citation. This page lists common APA mistakes that students can avoid. Also, I now set up this Module such that the students must complete the Module sequentially and mark every page as done. This is to keep students accountable and fully study the Module rather than skipping to the end-of-Module quiz without first studying the material.
- **Be more explicit about the information literacy goals.** I found that I should communicate more explicitly about how this assignment can help the students strengthen their information literacy which can be helpful for their future classes as well as careers. I plan to emphasize how this assignment can help them become a better consumer of research reports and a more information literate researcher.

In conclusion, I am grateful for strong support from Megan and the library team and am motivated to continue developing the students' information literacy through this course as well as my other courses. As students across the disciplines are required to write literature reviews, I believe this project benefited students beyond this communication research course and fostered skills the students could transfer to their other courses or graduate school in the future.

Appendix

- Literature Review Re-Assembly Game Canvas Discussion Prompt
- Literature Review Assignment Instructions
- Literature Review Assignment Rubric
- Examples of Student Work

LITERATURE REVIEW REASSEMBLY GAME

This literature review is based on a published research article and rearranged in the most illogical way possible for the purpose of this activity. :) Please save the authors from your mischievous professor by logically reordering the paragraphs from the left column into the right column. Once you are done, share your answer (e.g., "C, B, A, E, D" or "E, B, C, A, D") as a reply to this discussion thread and respond to at least two classmates.

You can see others' replies only after you post your reply. Have fun!

A.	
At the same time, previous studies investigating SNS behavior in association with narcissism found incompatible results based on a specific SNS user behavior (e.g., Bergman et al., 2011). Thus, this study focused on a specific SNS user behavior (i.e., selfie posting) in association with narcissism. A selfie is "a form of self-portraiture typically created using smartphones or webcams and shared on social networks" (Hess, 2015, p. 1629). While many studies found a positive association between narcissism and selfie posting behavior (e.g., Bergman et al., 2011; Brailovskaia & Bierhoff, 2016), a previous study indicated possible gender and culture differences in the relationship (Sorokowski et al., 2015). For example, Sorokowski et al. (2015) found a positive association between narcissism and selfie posting on SNS for Polish males but not Polish females. Thus, one aim of this study was to investigate cultural and gender differences in the relationship between narcissism and the number of selfies. McCain and Campbell (2018) conducted a meta-analysis on the relationship between grandiose narcissism and number of selfies. They advocated for more diverse research to confirm results across a variety of contexts because previous SNS studies focusing on narcissism and number of selfies were conducted mostly using American samples.	
B.	
Based on the above literature review, we developed the following research questions:	
RQ1: Are there cultural (i.e., American vs. Japanese) and gender (i.e., male vs. female) differences in levels of narcissism?	
RQ2: Do individuals who scored high in narcissism post selfies on SNS more than	

individuals who scored low in narcissism across culture and gender?	
C.	
Cross and Madson (1997) argued that American men tend to construct independent self-construal. If American men construct independent self-construal, American narcissistic men should seek attention-seeking behavior that is not relationship-oriented such as posting selfies.	
March and McBean (2018) emphasized the importance of including self- esteem when conducting a study on narcissism and selfie posting because they found that self-esteem plays a key role in narcissism and selfie posting behavior. March and McBean (2018) found that when self-esteem was low to average, a positive relationship existed between Grandiose Exhibitionism (a subtype of narcissism characterized as self-absorption, vanity, exhibitionistic tendencies) and selfies posted on social media, while no relationship was found between narcissism and selfies posted on social media when self-esteem was high among Australian college students. Therefore, the present study offered the following hypothesis:	
H: Self-esteem moderates the relationship between narcissism and the number of selfies for American male college students.	
D.	
Social Networking Sites (SNS) user behavior has been investigated in connection with the narcissistic personality of SNS users (e.g., Bergman, Fearrington, Davenport, & Bergman, 2011; Fox & Rooney, 2015; McKinney, Kelly, & Duran, 2012; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Sorokowski et al., 2015). Because narcissism is characterized as a grandiose and inflated positive self-view with elevated attention needs (Campbell & Foster, 2007), social media is believed to serve the needs of the narcissistic personality (McCain & Campbell, 2018).	
E.	
Self-construal and cultural differences on the number of selfies	
People possessing narcissistic characteristics seek a way to maintain self- worth such as "admiration-seeking, bragging, displaying material goods, socializing with important individuals" (Campbell & Foster, 2007, p. 115).	

Yet how narcissists behave to satisfy their needs across gender and cultures remains unclear (Campbell & Foster, 2007, p. 131). A concept of self- construal might be useful to understand the different ways of seeking admiration through social media. Markus and Kitayama (1991) argued that people with independent self-construal maintain boundaries and enjoy autonomy, while people with interdependent self-construal maintain a close relationship with others and define the sense of self based on the relationship. According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), people from divergent cultural backgrounds develop different views of self, which affect behavior. Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggested that compared with Americans, Japanese construct an interdependent self-construal. Additionally, Cross and Madson (1997) argued that American males tend to construct independent self-construal, whereas American females tend to construct interdependent self-construal. Ferenczi, Marshall, and Bejanyan (2017) argued American men's more antisocial use of Facebook such as attention-seeking and trolling were explained partly by their greater narcissism. On the other hand, American women's more prosocial Facebook use such as connecting with others and providing social support became explained by relational self-construal (Ferenczi et al., 2017). Similarly, Japanese college students' selfie posting behavior might not be related to narcissism, rather selfie posting might reflect relational self-construal because Japanese have interdependent self-construal like American females. As such, American male college students' selfie posting behavior might be related to narcissism, while American female and Japanese college students' selfie posting behavior may operate from a desire to reflect social interdependence.

Group Literature Review

✓ Published ⋮

OVERVIEW

A literature review is a summary and synthesis of sources relevant to a research topic. It is a coherent, well-organized argument that justifies the importance of and provides the context for a research study. The literature review also explains the theoretical framework and previous research findings that form the hypotheses or research questions of the new study. In this assignment, you will write an APA-style literature review that provides a strong basis for your group research project.

COMPONENTS

Your literature review must consist of the following components

1. **Title page:** Include the title of the paper, the statement below, and the names of each group member:

   My name on this page signifies that I have contributed significantly to the development and completion of this project. I have read all group members' contributions to the paper and take responsibility for the quality of the work contained throughout the paper. Moreover, I further certify that this paper is free from plagiarism including undocumented quotations, ideas, structures, and metaphors.

2. **Introduction:** In 2-3 paragraphs (about one double-spaced page), introduce the topic to the reader, provide rationale for the study, and state the research purpose. Clearly discuss your research problem and the significance of your topic. You can do so by citing relevant statistics and explaining why it matters. You can also conceptually define your variables here and explain how your research can contribute to the Reboot program and youth ministry practices. Wrap up the introduction with a succinct preview of the paper's content. For example, "The first part of this paper reviews...theory...next…and finally…"

3. **Literature Review:** In 5 double-spaced pages, describe the theory and existing research that form the basis of your study. Your individual **annotated bibliographies** will be very helpful here. You can select those sources relevant to your group project for this paper. However, remember to weave your sources together and organize this section by themes not by articles. If you are conducting a quantitative study, an effective and common approach for reviewing the literature is to explain your independent variable(s), your dependent variable(s), and your reasoning for the predicted outcomes leading to the hypotheses. If you are conducting a qualitative study, explain your variables, background of the study, and make a case for your research questions

your variables, background of the study, and make a case for your research questions. Remember all the Do's and Don'ts about the literature review that we discussed in class (paraphrase, avoid excessive quotes, include only relevant information, do not plagiarize, etc.).

4. **Hypotheses or Research Questions:** Your literature review sets up the research questions or hypotheses. Therefore, in between paragraphs or at the end of your literature review, pose your hypotheses or research questions. You must have **at least two hypotheses (for quantitative study) OR two research questions (for qualitative study).** Keep your hypotheses or research questions apart from the main text through bolding or indentation. Number them with a small subscript. For example, you may have:

   H_1: Parents' strength of religious faith will be positively associated with their children's strength of religious faith.
   H_2: Youth at Reboot churches will report higher level of self-efficacy than youth at non-Reboot churches. OR
   RQ_1: What challenges are Reboot churches facing during the COVID-19 pandemic?
   RQ_2: How well have Reboot churches responded to those challenges compared to non-Reboot churches?

5. **References:** Your literature review **must include a minimum of 10 sources (five of which must be peer-reviewed journal articles** within or outside the communication field). You may use additional types of credible sources that are relevant to your research topic (e.g., books, book chapters, news articles, trade magazines, government reports, dissertations, etc.).

FORMAT

Use the APA style for your paper. Make sure to cite correctly both in text and in the References Section. Use 12-point Times New Roman with 1-inch margins. Double-space the entire document. Include page numbers and running heads in the paper. Consult the **APA Citation Training Module** or **this website** **(https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_for** for APA guidelines.

LENGTH

8-10 double-spaced pages (including title page, introduction, literature review, and references). The content alone (intro and literature review) should be about 6 pages.

EXAMPLES

The best examples of literature reviews are in published research articles. See examples of good and poor literature reviews in supplemental journal articles in **Modules >> Week 4**. Keep in mind that different citation styles are used across journals. Some journals may use APA. Some may use ASA, MLA, or Harvard. Consult the APA style guide (as indicated above) for your formatting. Read journal articles to get ideas of how to write or structure your literature review (not how to cite your

journal articles to get ideas of how to write or structure your literature review (not how to cite your sources).

RESOURCES

[Ms Megan Heuer - SMU Librarian and Head of Educational Initiatives (https://guides.smu.edu/megan)](https://guides.smu.edu/megan)
[SMU Writing Center (https://www.smu.edu/Provost/ProvostOffice/SAES/StudentSupport/SASP/Services/WritingCenter)](https://www.smu.edu/Provost/ProvostOffice/SAES/StudentSupport/SASP/Services/WritingCenter)
[Writing a Literature Review - Purdue Online Writing Lab (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/conducting_research/writing_a_literature_review.html)](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/conducting_research/writing_a_literature_review.html)

SUGGESTED READING

Reboot's four core principles are based on empirical research reported in the book, *"Growing Young : Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church."* The first chapter of this book can help you frame your introduction of the literature review (i.e., the research problem). Also, I suggest you read the chapter relevant to your topic to see how those constructs (e.g., youth agency, theological significance, etc.) are defined or explained in this book. You can cite this source in your literature review. **[The book is available in the SMU Bridwell Library.   (https://smu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma9952349202103716&context=L&vid=01SMU_INST:01SMU&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and](https://smu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma9952349202103716&context=L&vid=01SMU_INST:01SMU&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and)**

Points	50
Submitting	a file upload
File Types	doc and docx

Due	For	Available from	Until
Oct 17, 2021	Everyone	-	-

Literature Review Rubric

Criteria	Ratings				Pts
Problem Statement/ Introduction Topic is clearly defined. Importance of research established. Context of research provided	**8 to >6.0 pts Excellent**	**6 to >4.0 pts Good**	**4 to >2.0 pts Fair**	**2 to >0 pts Poor**	8 pts
Content Each cited study is relevant to the topic. Sources are appropriate and credible. Content reflects depth and breadth of research.	**8 to >6.0 pts Excellent**	**6 to >4.0 pts Good**	**4 to >2.0 pts Fair**	**2 to >0 pts Poor**	8 pts
Organization and Alignment Information logically organized with good flow. Issues threaded throughout paper by themes. Sections well transitioned.	**9 to >7.0 pts Excellent**	**7 to >5.0 pts Good**	**5 to >3.0 pts Fair**	**3 to >0 pts Poor**	9 pts
Synthesis and Conclusion Information synthesized and brought to a logical conclusion. Research questions and/ or hypotheses well justified.	**9 to >7.0 pts Excellent**	**7 to >5.0 pts Good**	**5 to >3.0 pts Fair**	**3 to >0 pts Poor**	9 pts

Criteria	Ratings				Pts
Quality of Writing Writing is clear and concise. Uses correct spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and word choices.	8 to >6.0 pts **Excellent**	6 to >4.0 pts **Good**	4 to >2.0 pts **Fair**	2 to >0 pts **Poor**	8 pts
APA Format and Citations Correct use of APA throughout paper. In-text citations and reference list citations complete and properly formatted in APA style.	8 to >6.0 pts **Excellent**	6 to >4.0 pts **Good**	4 to >2.0 pts **Fair**	2 to >0 pts **Poor**	8 pts
				Total Points: 50	

Religiosity and Youth Empowerment in Churches

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Southern Methodist University

CCPA-2375: Communication Research and Data Analytics

Dr. Piyawan Charoensap-Kelly

December 11th, 2021

My name on this page signifies that I have contributed significantly to the development and completion of this project. I have read all group members' contributions to the paper and take responsibility for the quality of the work contained throughout the paper. Moreover, I further certify that this paper is free from plagiarism including undocumented quotations, ideas, structures, and metaphors.

Religiosity and Youth Empowerment in Churches

Churches have seen many obstacles when it comes to youth empowerment and involvement. A study by Kara Powell and Krista Kubiak reports that "they lose between 65% and 95% of their young people after high school" (Sirles 2009). More specifically, there has been a decrease in theological significance from youth in churches. Theological significance is based on the belief and practice of Christian values, and it is a big part of church involvement. A study made by the Barna Research Group demonstrated that 61% of young adults (in their 20s) are spiritually disengaged, meaning they stopped attending mass, praying, among other things (Sirles 2009). Youth members make up a big part of the church itself, so the majority of disengaged young adults could cause gaps in the church community. Therefore this is a very significant issue that needs resolution.

This study seeks to analyze the connection between the significance of theology in the lives of young and adult churchgoers as well as their perceptions of youth group activities in hopes of applying them to a real-life youth group revitalization project: Reboot. Previously published works provide two themes to organize literature: First, the theme of familial influence is addressed by investigating the effect of parental or familial religious influences on individuals across age groups. Second, the organizational influence of church leadership and activities on youth is studied with a focus on youth empowerment and inclusive opportunities for youth. The synthesis of these sources and their specific themes may provide a baseline to construct approaches to youth revitalization efforts across the nation.

Literature Review

This study is grounded in cross-disciplinary research on perceived empowerment and religiosity among youth and adults. As previously mentioned, the research can be categorized into subjects pertaining to (1) Familial Influence and (2) Organizational Influence. Familial influence is defined by several aspects, primarily parental religiosity, and how their connections to secular practices could be seen in their children, if at all. Organizational influence refers to church organizations' influences, how they attempt to connect with younger generations, and how successful attempts are.

Familial Influence and Religiosity

The first of the major influences consistently found amongst studies of youth religiosity is familial influence, specifically regarding the impact one's family and upbringing can have on the specific theology individuals choose to hold in high regard as they progress through adolescence. Mullikin (2006) acknowledges and emphasizes the importance of family in a child's life. In addition, they wanted to understand the multitude of impacts religion can have on a child as they grow into adulthood. Through social learning theory, the study was able to determine that "if youth are less exposed to religious practices within their families, they will have fewer opportunities to observe and engage in religious behavior" (Mullikin 2006).

Similarly, and to add even further evidence to the strength of familial influence, Petts (2015) discusses parental participation and family structure's influence on youth religiosity. During this study, researchers had in mind their hypothesis, which stated, "The influence of parental religiosity on private religious practices will be weaker for youth raised in nontraditional family structures than those raised by married biological/adoptive parents."(Petts 2015) In doing so, they were able to use two waves of NSYR to determine the results. They found that parental

religiosity was indeed a strong predictor in attendance of youth religiosity, but the familial

structure was not as much of an influence on the other hand(Petts 2015). While this may be the

case, they did find one exception to this claim: youth raised in stepfamilies attended religious

service much less frequently than those a part of a biological/adoptive family (Petts 2015).

Nevertheless, this primarily focuses on comparing the strength of religiosity between family

types.

In contrast, Wesley Allen Sirles' article "The Accuracy of Youth Ministers' Conception of

the Lasting Faith Tendency of Youth", chooses to focus on the broader impact of parents in

general, not specific to the structure of the home (Sirles 2009). In this study, researchers hoped to

determine if familiar influences genuinely have an impact on young children, specifically to

understand if events such as a parent figure attending a church service could impact their child's

desire to attend secular services, as well as strengthen their faith (Sirles 2009). They determine

that children are not only impacted by their parents but they may also be impacted by other

family members. Furthermore, they determined that religion itself can positively influence

children for their own benefit, especially children negatively impacted by family, media, or

future professional opportunities (Sirles 2009).

If all of these findings were synthesized, the results found in the article by Baumbach et.

al. would come to similar conclusions, but build on prior determinations in that they believe

parents and family methods of relaying spiritual beliefs with their children are extremely

pertinent. Their conclusions "reveal a strong relationship between adolescent spirituality and

frequency of parental communication, quality of communication with fathers, and adolescents'

perception of parental spirituality"(Baumbach 2006). By integrating a communication

perspective to analyze the impacts of specific parenting styles and behavior on adolescents'

approaches to religion, this investigation differs from the other sources that merely consider face value structuring and observations. An extensive cross-sectional survey offered valuable connections between stated variables: Perceived parental spirituality, communication frequency, and quality of communication(Baumbach 2006). The results found that heightened parent involvement in a child's religious life significantly influences late-adolescent spirituality. The two specific conclusions ascertained from this article that are relevant to the current study are as follows: First, that parents that reflect their religious practices in their behavior have children that are more religious later in life, and second, that an 'open' communication style between the two groups had a more powerful or significant impact on adolescent spirituality(Baumbach et. al 2006).

Because of the information found in these studies, we believe that a family's theological significance directly correlates with an individuals' religious faith. Specifically focusing on the Baumbach et al. study, communication and parental religious practices were found to impact their children's religiosity. Thus, an individual's family does impact their religious strength, leading to our first hypothesis:

H1: Family religiosity will be positively correlated with individuals' strength of religious faith.

Organizational Influence

Organizational ties can have an immense impact on an adolescent's life, and religious organizations specifically can impact them in many ways. In this research, we specifically investigate two forms of organizational influence: youth empowerment and inclusive opportunities among churches.

Youth Empowerment

Youth empowerment refers to the "process where people gain the ability and authority to make informed decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people" (Olusola 2019). Existing studies have revealed the important concern of addressing this population's participation in churches and how those religious organizations play a role in shaping their youth generations. Previous literature has examined this relationship, such as Patricia Snell's article: "What Difference Does Youth Group Make? A Longitudinal Analysis of Religious Youth Group Participation Outcomes". She notes an apparent lack of investigation into causal mechanisms that actually make a difference in youth's religious lives, and sought to use youth ministry programs as a means to study it (Snell 2009). Her results show that since younger generations see their religious organizations and their leaders as support networks, they are more likely to attend services and activities. Increased access to and attendance to youth groups is then inferred to positively correlate to beneficial feelings toward churches themselves (Snell 2009).

But what of the barriers that come between youths and available youth ministry? Some scholars address this question by choosing to focus on the age gap between church leaders and youth, specifically if accommodation for younger generations can impact youth's participation in services. In the article, "A Theology of Accommodation as a Resource for Integrating Youth and Children into an Intergenerational Church," Gareth Crispin discusses the significance of integrating children with adults at a young age, with the church acting to 'bridge' the age gap between them(Crispin 2017). Moreover, he discusses that as children begin to integrate socially at church, they begin to integrate within their theological frameworks and the concept of accommodation. He states that his results from quantitative studies found that "Accommodation can act as a theological resource for those seeking to foster intergenerationally within their

churches" (Crispin 2017). As mentioned in various resources focusing on familial influence, Crispin also adds the positive impact of a family during one's youth.

This same argument can be seen applied in the journal "A Project to encourage youth to effectively engage in ministry at Second Baptist Church which is specific to the Second Baptist Church in Las Vegas, Nevada," but differs by making a point of demonstrating how if young people do not feel included in their church, they will most likely become disengaged (Chaney 2014). For the project, they had focus groups of 10 people, both female and male, ages 15-30. One of the methods used in the project to understand the lack of engagement from youth was two-hour workshops. In these workshops, participants were invited to discuss what the real issues were and how they could tackle them, from serious conversations to fun interactive games which got everybody engaged(Chaney 2014). These workshops helped break the tensions and open methods of communication between the church organization as a whole and its younger constituents. As they were getting to understand each other's needs and how they could work alongside each other, it is easy to conclude that if a church organization makes attempts to understand their youth populations, this may have a positive effect on the participation in church life (Chaney 2014). This project demonstrates the need for intergenerational relationships to take place in order to have the youth more involved. It is important for a church to see the youth as different from their projected stereotypes. Interest in the youth will be reciprocated if "the participants…know they could gain trust and respect; which would enhance their spirituality and help them to learn the tools necessary to make better life choices" (Chaney, 2014). Creating a community based on trust is immensely important for church life since "the lack of youth effectiveness in the church can cause failure in the future development of the leadership and stagnate church growth" (Chaney, 2014).

Due to a limited sample size of youth churchgoers in our data, we are not able to examine the role of youth empowerment on youth religiosity. However, previous research suggested, and our data showed (as will be later explained) that adult and youth members may have varying perceptions regarding the degree to which their churches empower youth. For instance, many adults and leaders of church organizations believe lectures, discussions, and activities are adequate enough to promote youth commitment to religious practice and 'empowerment' within the congregation (Gibson 2004). Limited opportunities for these two age groups to work in partnerships may be a cause for miscommunication, as lack of time together directly correlates to a lack of mutual understanding (Jones & Perkins 2012). Our study will approach this disparity through our second hypothesis, which seeks to determine whether or not adult members will perceive youth empowerment and commitment to religion higher than the youth populations:

H2: Compared to youth members, adult members will give their churches higher ratings of youth empowerment.

Inclusive Opportunities among Reboot and Non-Reboot Churches

By inclusive opportunities, we mean programs that act as an "expression of openness and welcome" to youth populations that allow them to have responsibilities outside the role of congregation members' children (Nash 2014). In connection, "Youth Religious Involvement and Adult Community Participation: Do Levels of Youth Religious Involvement Matter?", by Thomas Perks and Michael Haan, found that youths that experience increased communal religious ties are likely to continue them in the future: "Generally, the findings from these studies suggest that individuals who were more involved in extracurricular activities as youths were more likely to be active in the community in various ways when they reached adulthood" (Perks 2011). The author cites "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American

Community," by Robert Putnam to support why we need a religious connection to form beneficial social relationships. In religious organizations, it is common for "social networks...to form" amongst youth populations (Perks 2011). The quantitative study consisted of one independent variable, youth religious involvement, based on asking respondents whether they had participated in a religious organization during their school years. One dependent variable was the degree to which a respondent was currently active in the community. It concluded that (1) "religious involvement as a youth has significant predictive import in explaining adult levels of community participation," (2) "the effect of youth religious involvement on later community participation does not appear to decline as respondents become further removed from their youth religious experiences as they age," and "suggests that the predictive import of early religious involvement is equal to and...stronger than a number of sociodemographic background factors recognized ... as being among the most common predictors of community participation" (Perks 2011).

Given the previous literature, this study formulated our hypothesis that includes the specific research group under observation; Reboot churches. We propose that Reboot's main goal of increased participation of youth congregation is a measurable factor when real-world manifestations of their efforts are compared to existing non-Reboot churches:

H3: Reboot churches offer more inclusive opportunities for youth members compared to non-Reboot churches.

Evaluating SMU Perkins School of Theology Reboot Program: What elements work? How can it improve?

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Author Note

My name on this page signifies that I have contributed significantly to the development and completion of this project. I have read all group members' contributions to the paper and take responsibility for the quality of the work contained throughout the paper. Moreover, I certify that this paper is free from plagiarism, including undocumented quotations, ideas, structures, and metaphors.

The SMU Perkins School of Theology Reboot program was designed as an innovative approach for churches and their congregations to restructure their respective youth ministry programs. The program's objective is to provide churches with a new standard on creating a sustainable youth ministry. Church organizations have seen a decline in youth evolution and are struggling to design ways to reverse the issue (Pew Research Center, 2020). Several church leaders have attempted to reinvent their youth programs, and several come up short. The issues churches face is a multitude of things: lack of funding, low attendance, or unsuccessful creative measure (Bobkowski, 2009). Reboot has developed a method with churches to restore all aspects of youth ministries. The Reboot program consists of six strategic stages to ensure each church has a unique and personal program. The goal of Reboot is to restructure youth ministries and use the results to formulate templates that churches nationwide can use for their programs.

Although Reboot sees progression, it is necessary to empirically examine the program's effectiveness. A significant aspect of Reboot is trial and error. To reduce and hopefully eliminate error, research is needed to investigate what program elements are working and what elements are not. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Reboot program and explore methods of improvement. The Reboot program has initiated the discussions for this assessment. Completing a program evaluation will establish the efficacy of Reboot. Evaluating programs, such as Reboot, determines what approaches are working; it looks at every portion of the program and provides a deep understanding of the program as a whole.

The following section explores the problem of youth disengagement in church programs. Then, the Reboot program is briefly reviewed to provide the context for this study. Following are Reboot's four values and evaluating the effectiveness. Based on what was discussed and

evaluated, we present three research questions. The methods of our study, as well as the results, follow. A detailed discussion that interprets and further explains the study will conclude.

Review of Literature

Declining Youth Engagement in Churches

Undeniably, the challenges of youth engagement in church and youth ministry stem from several factors, but overall attendance seems to be the most significant. The attendance of church services has decreased overall, especially for those under 21. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance in the church was at a steady decline. The Pew Research Center conducted a study in 2018 on attendance, and results show that only 1 in 3 teens regularly attend church, while 4 in 10 never attend (Pew Research Center, 2020). The issues that derive from youths' disengagement have the potential for long-term effects. The disengagement will likely follow these youth into their adulthoods. They will not have the exposure or experience that could make them into a leader in the church; thus, the entities will suffer from leadership or a lack thereof. The causes of youth not being motivated to attend church are indefinite and could be several. Factors such as separating youth from the rest of the congregation, lack of intergenerational activities, and the climate of modern technology have potential contributing factors.

The Reboot Program

The Reboot Program is an initiative of the SMU Perkins School of Theology graduate school (Reboot, 2021). The leadership team behind the program includes the faculty of the school, an advisory board, and various church leaders. The rationale behind introducing the program is to help churches rebuild their youth programs; the leaders believe that "churches flourish when everyone takes an active interest in the lives of rising generations" (Reboot, 2021). Reboot designed a cycle for each church to use as a starter guide, a six-step process consisting of

questions and checkpoints. The first stages are excavation, values, problems, and project

ideation. As a whole, the beginning stages evaluate current ministries, needs, and wants, current

problems, and how to articulate the problems. The second stages are all about evaluating the

prototype, its successes, and failures, what to change, and how to adjust. The cycle operates as a

universal backbone for each church to utilize; it suggests questions and keeps track of progress.

Checkpoint documents were derived from the cycle for churches to document their progress.

Reboot encourages church leaders to get creative for their churches and inspire their

congregations to want to participate. With this approach, leaders are guided to develop strategies

for tackling the problem unique to their congregations. It is important to note that Reboot is not

focused on youth ministries alone; it focuses on churches as a whole. A successful youth

ministry begins with the congregation.

The Four Reboot Values

The Reboot Program is based on four core values: intergenerational relationship, youth

agency, theological significance, and multiple pathways for youth engagement. First, it is

common that youth ministries are entirely separate from the remainder of the congregation, and

the Reboot program has allowed churches to combine generations. Jacqueline Hanna conducted

a study that seeks to explain the lack of involvement and participation from youth and reported

that "including children in corporate worship isn't a matter of choice or changing trends; it's a

matter of justice" (Hanna, 2020). Intergenerational congregations encourage teens to have a

desire to be involved because they see leadership in motion. In her study, Hanna stated that

"passing on the faith to the next generation is challenging today in a new way. In fact, 'passing

on the faith' is no longer the task it used to be. Teens choose faith instead" (Hanna, 2020). Teens

have the ultimate choice of whether or not they choose to engage; some feel that "ministries lack

connectivity and close relationships," and their attendance will not make a difference (Hanna, 2020). The value of intergenerational relationships encompasses the role of parents in youth involvement in churches. A study done by The Religious Communication Association investigated parental communication style, quality, and frequency and their impact on young adults' spirituality and attitude towards religion. Parental interaction was found to be one significant factor that influences a youth's attitude toward religion. Differing parenting styles had differing effects on young adults' feelings about their spirituality and ultimate engagement in religious affiliation (Gunnoe & Moore, 2002). Ultimately, parental guidance paves the path for youth entering the field of religion; thus, children lead by example (Baumbach, Forward, & Hart, 2006).

Secondly, teen agency refers to the decisions teens make concerning the church, whether they feel motivated, when they choose to attend services, and what activities they engage in. Teens want to feel like they are making an impact; they want to feel useful in the church. Some pastors believe that it will benefit the youths if the programs they are trying to propose are initiated by the church itself rather than individuals outside of the church. For example, it was more favored to have activities on church grounds rather than outside the church. 48% of the responses to the questions all had the overarching theme of the hope to make youths' interests a more significant part of the church. If young people's interests outside of the church are integrated, they would be more inclined to attend church events and be more involved. If youths are not engaged in the church, it will be hard for them to eventually become leaders in the congregation.

Third, theological significance concerns the religious study and how it is studied. A study conducted by researchers Cnaan, R. A., Gelles, R. J., & Sinha, J. W. (2002) investigated the level

to which youth ages eleven to eighteen are religious and looked to answer the question: Why is

there a gap in involvement against teenagers? By way of a telephone survey with

parents/guardians, this study found that while most teenagers agree that religion and spirituality

are important, their participation and involvement depended on their demographic

characteristics. Another study conducted by Chang-Ho C. Ji and Tevita Tameifuna from La

Sierra University sought to compare the influence of personal religiosity and youth ministry on

the youth's denominational attitude. It examined whether youth pastors influence youth attitudes

toward the church and denomination. The results explain that the variables of youth ministry are

not as important to the youth's attitude toward the denomination by 15% compared to personal

religiosity (Ji, C.-h. C., & Tameifuna, T., 2011). This suggests that the role of the youth pastor

shapes youth's attitude toward denomination but has less effect than personal religiosity. The

data also showed that youth pastors play a significant role in finding church programs

meaningful and of value to them. In summary, these findings from the study present that youth

pastorship and ministry indirectly influence young adults' personal attitudes toward

denomination.

　　　　Fourth, multiple pathways for youth engagement refer to identifying ways to build

engagement. Another finding from the study reported that 40% of the youth reported that their

pastor was not "caring" or "accepting" (Ji, C.-h. C., & Tameifuna, T., 2011). This means that the

research needs to give more attention to helping youth pastors build stronger relationships with

their youth members to gain their trust and acceptance. The quality relationship between pastors

and youth is the top component of a successful program. The call to improve this results in better

mentors and support for youth ministry. The study explains that churches with youth pastors who

build strong relationships with their youth make it more likely for their members to attend and

stay satisfied. Once honest and mutually beneficial relationships are fostered amongst active

church members and the youth, loyalty and engagement will increase. For example, if a church

leader asks a young church member to work together on something, the young church member

would be more likely to reach out in the future for assistance and companionship. These

intergenerational relationships will strengthen the foundation for the youth's practice in their

adult career.

Furthermore, a theme of the 21st century that never fails to grab youth's attention is

technology. The addition of technology, while nontraditional in religious practices, would impact

youth ministries. Technology allows for accessible and effective "communication and

interaction" (Bobkowski, 2009). Using technology to convey messages and maintain direct

communication helps keep youth engaged while away from the church. The addition of

technology bridges the intergenerational gap.

The Reboot values serve as the program's principals, and it is a common ground for

church leaders to build from. The four values highlight what Reboot is geared to rebuild; some

church leaders may be unaware that a lack of intergenerational relationships is affecting their

congregations. Reboot conveys the values to the churches through meetings, training sessions,

and initial introductions. Presenting the values to the church leaders on the initial introduction

encourages the churches to apply the values in innovating their youth ministries.

Evaluating Effectiveness of Reboot

We aim to evaluate and discover what elements of the Reboot Program should be

continued in the future. A formative evaluation will gather and interpret information for the

Reboot program. Our evaluation is formative because any churches have not yet completed the

program. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is expected that churches will be in different stages

depending on their response to the pandemic. It is necessary to evaluate this implementation

program to determine what aspects of the process are working. To identify what elements of the

program should be continued, getting feedback from those who are familiar with the Reboot

Program is very important. We aim to investigate the stages in the Reboot wheel, the

implementation of the four values, and the resources Reboot has provided – info pack,

mentoring, and training.

Based on the above review, we ask:

RQ1: To what extent does the reboot process allow church leaders to develop new

strategies for engaging youth and their congregations?

RQ2: What elements of the Reboot Program should be continued?

RQ3: What elements of the Reboot Program should be improved?