Avondale College of Higher Education

School of Ministry and Theology

Through the Eyes of Youth Leaders: A Study of the Leadership Development Experiences of Youth Leaders in Three Samoan Seventh-day Adventist Churches in the Greater Sydney Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

An Honours Thesis presented in partial fulfilment

of the requirements of the degree of

Bachelor of Theology and Ministry (Honours)

By

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2013

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

The work contained in this thesis has not been submitted previously for a degree or diploma at any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

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ABSTRACT

This study set out with the focus of exploring the leadership development experiences of six past youth leaders from three of the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Greater Sydney Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in NSW. The study was carried out using a mixed method design of a brief quantitative questionnaire and qualitative individual interviews with the six youth leaders. Using descriptive and thematic analysis, four key themes emerged from the data. The leadership development experiences of the six youth leaders revolved around positive *involvement* in the youth committee and church in general, that assisted their transition into the role of youth leader; the forging of key *informal mentoring* relationships with former or older youth leaders; the impact of *training* that was difficult to adapt to a Samoan local church setting; and the impact this had on the *culturally bound* relationships of youth leaders and their faufautua or church appointed mentors. The study found that although youth leaders generally reflected positive experiences of youth leadership development in their local Samoan Seventh-day Adventist churches; there are also areas of concern that are likely to need consideration, by the three churches and the Greater Sydney Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, to improve the experience of youth leaders in the future.

Keywords: Youth leadership development, church leadership, Samoan leadership

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my parents, Pule and Faaleava.

I will never forget the cold mornings on a West Auckland strawberry field.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces the study by outlining the background of this study and its context, in the first two sections, by way of the researcher's own leadership development experience as a former youth leader in a Samoan Seventh-day Adventist (SDA)[1] Church in the Greater Sydney Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GSC).[2] Next the aim of this study details the purpose and the intended outcome of the study. The title and the research questions including the sub-questions that guide this study will also be discussed. This introduction chapter then lists the limitations of the study before it concludes by outlining the following chapters of the study and what each section aims to achieve.

Study Background

The initial impetus of this study stems from the researcher's own leadership development experience as a former youth leader in a Samoan SDA Church in the GSC. As is the purpose of research, this study aims to provide a sample of the leadership development experience of youth leaders by exploring the experiences of youth leaders, in three Samoan SDA Churches in the GSC of SDA. From the perspective of an insider researcher, that is a researcher who conducts research with populations of which they are also members,[3] this study stems from a personal story of success and failure during a period of two years as youth leader, and five years

[1] From this point forward in this study, SDA denotes Seventh-day Adventist

[2] From this point forward in this study, GSC denotes Greater Sydney Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists.

[3] Paul Oliver, *Understanding the Research Process* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2010), 12; Sonya C. Dwyer and Jennifer L. Buckle, "The Space Between: On being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8/1 (2009): 58.

involved in the youth ministry committee in a local Samoan SDA church in the GSC. This privilege allowed for observations of certain processes and the ensuing challenges that came with such processes. Concerns that were observed included the lottery that the local church undertook in appointing youth leaders and youth ministry teams; it seemed little leadership development attention was given to who was being appointed youth leader with most leaders appointed for a single year; there was no clear expectations of the youth leader except for ensuring there were youth programs; whether there was any consideration by the church leadership of further developing youth leaders into leaders of other church offices, through specific training or mentoring. Other concerns were whether the Sponsor or Elder appointed as youth advisor matched the youth leader; if the Sponsor understood their role or role expectations and how to handle conflict or differences with the youth leader or youth ministry. The researcher at the time of leadership tenure also found that although youth ministry training offered by the Youth Department of the GSC was encouraged to a certain degree by the local church; what was learnt at these training seminars was at odds with the expectations of the local Samoan church leadership and felt out of touch with the context of the local Samoan SDA church.

Study Rationale

Personally facing barriers and challenges as a youth leader and later learning of the frustration of other youth leaders from other Samoan SDA churches in the GSC brought about the idea, of investigating the leadership development experiences of youth leaders in three Samoan SDA Churches in the GSC, when the opportunity arose. In stating the source of the study, consideration has been given to the principles that guide research conducted by an insider. In order to avoid inside researcher bias, the researcher has sought advice through the research supervisor and sought to gain an

informed view of leadership from an outsider perspective.[4] As a contribution this study hopes to contribute in some form to the field of leadership development of local church leadership, specifically in the development of youth leaders in the Samoan SDA church in the GSC.

Research Title

The title of this research was carefully selected as, '*Through the Eyes of Youth Leaders: A Study of the Leadership Development Experience of Youth Leaders in Three Samoan Seventh-day Adventist Churches in the Greater Sydney Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*.'

The study addressed the leadership development through the eyes of youth leaders who have previously held the office of youth leader, within the last three years in three Samoan SDA Churches in the GSC.

Main Research Question

To draw responses from the participating youth leaders, the study's main research question asked, '*What are the leadership development experiences of Youth Leaders in the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Greater Sydney Conference of Seventh-day Adventists?*

Research Sub-Questions

In order to track the focus of the study the following research sub-questions were employed to ensure that the main research question will be answered. The data

[4] L. Atkins and S. Wallace, *Qualitative Research in Education* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2012), 48-51.

required for the study was collected by asking youth leaders, the following sub-questions:

Q1. How were you selected for the office of Youth Leader? What are your thoughts on your initial appointment?

Q2. Did you receive any training during your Youth Leader tenure? Describe its impact on you.

Q3. Did you receive any mentoring during your Youth Leader tenure? Describe its impact on you.

Q4. What happened to you after your Youth Leader tenure?

Study Context

This study details the leadership development experiences of youth leaders in three Samoan SDA Churches in the GSC. This section profiles the three churches that are the context of this research study:

Largest Samoan Church

The largest of the Samoan SDA churches involved in this study was established in western Sydney in the 1970's by Samoan Adventist migrants from New Zealand. Being the largest of the three Samoan SDA churches in this study, it currently has a church membership of more than two-hundred and fifty. It is no surprise that out of the three churches, they have the most number of youth with more than a hundred youth members.[5]

[5] Adapted from, David E. Hay, *The South Pacific & Beyond: Samoa 100+ Years, The SDA churches in the Samoan Islands, US & Australia* (Hamlyn Terrace, NSW: David and Cecily Hay, 2005), 417-19 and interviews with ministers and youth leaders.

Medium Samoan Church

Established in the early 1990's the second and medium-sized Samoan SDA Church in this study is situated in the inner western suburbs of Sydney. Although it has seen considerable growth through evangelism and migration growth, it averages around a hundred members with a largely young membership demographic. This church averages between sixty to seventy youth members in their youth ministry.[6]

Smaller Samoan Church

The smaller Samoan SDA church of the three churches involved in this study was established in the mid-nineties in the south-western region of Sydney. It currently averages seventy church members and has an average of thirty to forty youth members in its youth ministry.[7]

Aims of the Study

The impetus of this study is to understand what the leadership development experiences of six past youth leaders in three Samoan SDA churches in the GSC. This section outlines the three main aims and implications of this study.

The first aim of this study is to explore the leadership development experiences of youth leaders in order to gain a level of awareness and understanding of what those experiences are. Although the study narrowly explores the experiences of six Samoan SDA youth leaders, it is the belief of the researcher that this study may spur on other studies in exploring the experiences of youth leaders or young leaders in general and in other ethnically based local churches in the GSC and other conferences within New South Wales.

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

Secondly, this study aims to allow past youth leaders, who have been on the frontline of leading their local Samoan SDA church's Youth Ministry, a platform to share some of their leadership experiences and thoughts serving under the church leadership of the Samoan SDA churches in the GSC.

Thirdly, it is the aim of the researcher that by engaging past youth leaders on their leadership development experience, the implications of such a study on the future of youth leadership development within the context of the Samoan SDA churches in the GSC is important. The researchers hope that the findings of the study will furnish suggestions that may improve the experience of future youth leaders in the Samoan SDA churches in the GSC. Understanding these experiences will hopefully inform the way in which local Samoan SDA churches think about youth leadership development; and how the GSC Youth Department provide youth leaders and youth ministries of Samoan SDA churches, appropriate training and development. For this reason, this study concludes with a few recommendations to the local church and local conference.

Study Limitations

Although the study reached its aims, there are obvious limitations that could not be avoided. Firstly, due to time constraints limiting the study to only six youth leaders and including only three of possible five churches in the study meant that it is difficult to generalise the results of the study. This also means that the study may not accurately represent the views of youth leaders in other Samoan SD churches. What the six youth leaders provide though is a cross-section of youth leaders in a particular context that does suggest what the leadership development experience may be for youth leaders serving in a Samoan SDA Church in the GSC.

Secondly this study of youth leadership development may not be considered extensive as the study focussed mainly on the experiences of leaders based on

processes of leadership development; without much consideration given to the properties of leadership, namely the skills and abilities of past youth leaders. This aspect of leadership may be considered in future studies, but is not provided here as it is not the focus of the study.

Lastly, the study has sought to remain objective in all its stages; although to a degree some details of this study may be subjective given the researcher's insider perspective and relationships to some of the leaders and churches represented here. Although every effort has been made to ensure subjectivity is avoided, it is acknowledged here that this may in some sense pose some limitations to the outcomes of the study.

Definition of Terms

This study utilises several unique terms, whether in the SDA Church or in the Samoan culture. To assist the reader, definitions of the terms used in this study are listed here.

Nominating committee refers to a group of specially elected church members whose task it is to nominate the names of church members for church office or positions

Aganu'u means the Samoan way of doing things

Faaaloalo or *ava* means respect, humble or reverence

FaaSamoa means 'Samoan way of life'

Faufautua means Youth Sponsor, Advisor or mentor

Matai means titled-chief or titled leader

Palagi means 'Sky bursters,' a name Samoans give to Europeans

Study Outline and Chapter Summary

This 'Introduction' chapter provided the background, rationale, research title and the guiding questions, the study context, aims and implications, limitations, definition of terms and concluded with the chapter and study overview. This study has been organised by chapter and the description of each is provided here.

Chapter 2 of the study is entitled 'A Review of the Literature.' This chapter discusses the array of literature that was selected as the important background of the study into the leadership development experiences of youth leader's in the Samoan SDA churches in the GSC. This chapter also highlights the contribution this study makes to the literature.

Chapter 3 of the study is entitled, 'Research Methodology' which describes the reasons for conducting a mixed methods study using a questionnaire and individual interviews as the research instruments to collect the data. This chapter describes the whole research process of the study.

Chapter 4 of the study entitled, 'Questionnaire Results' outlines the results of the brief questionnaire. This chapter provides a brief outline of the six youth leader participants; followed by the commitment and leadership overview data provided by youth leaders in the questionnaire.

Chapter 5 of the study is entitled, 'Individual Interview Results' and outlines and presents the data collected from the individual interviews with youth leaders. This chapter is concluded with the identification of four emerging themes to be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 of the study is the 'Findings and Discussion' that converges the findings of the two strands. The chapter details and discusses the four themes that emerged from the data.

Chapter 7 is entitled the, ‘Conclusions and Recommendations’ and provides a summary of answers to the research question, details recommendations to the three Samoan local churches and the local Conference. The chapter is then rounded out with suggestions for future study, relevance of the study and concluding thoughts.

Chapter Two

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter Overview

This review set out with the focus of investigating the literature available on leadership development as it pertains to the development of young or youth leaders. Although there is little if any, literature on the development of youth leaders in a Samoan local church setting, this review endeavours to mix the broad body of literature on leadership development, youth leadership in the SDA Church and the impact of the Samoan culture on overall youth leadership development.

Leadership Development

Although leadership is a widely discussed topic much of the studies into leadership development have largely focussed on 'leader development' or the property of leadership;[8] in other words, the leader's personality, social and physical traits.[9] Leadership researchers like Day and McCauley and Van Velsor define this as 'leader development,' as it focuses more on the expansion of an individual leader's (or human capital) capacity to effectively execute leadership roles and processes.[10] In contrast this study of 'leadership development' focuses more on the collective capacity (social capital) of organisations, in its leaders and processes, to enact leadership in its

[8] Bernard M. Bass and Ruth Bass, *The Bass Leadership Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications* 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 2008), 6; David V. Day, "Leadership Development: A Review in Context," *Leadership Quarterly* 11 (2000): 582; Patricia L. Tapara, *Authentic Leadership: Organisational outcomes and leader and follower development* (Unpublished thesis, Massey University, Auckland, 2011), 14.; Abby McLeod, "Literature Review of Leadership Models in the Pacific," *AusAid, Australian National University* (4/ 2007): 2.

[9] Robert Palestini, *From Leadership Theory to Practice: A Game Plan for Success as a Leader* (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 1-2.

[10] C. D MacCauley and E. Van Velsor eds., *Handbook of Leadership Development* 2nd ed. (San Franscisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 2; Day, "Leadership," 605.

individual leaders by setting systematic support, direction and commitment.[11] Although it also values the leader's ability and individual competencies, 'leadership development' largely concerns itself with leadership processes rather than leadership properties.[12] The focus of this study leans to this definition of leadership development, aiming to explore the experiences of youth leaders concerning mentoring and leadership development processes.

Youth Leadership Development

Although leadership development is considered essential to organisations, identifying the right age to begin development is still widely debated.[13] A long-lens study by Murphy and Johnson highlighted how sums of leadership development programs tend to ignore the development of young leaders.[14] Despite the fact that in a longitudinal study by Reichard, Riggio, Guerin, Oliver, Gottfried and Gottfried, of leadership development from adolescence to adulthood found that starting youth on the leadership trail early was seen as considerably effective,[15] even if it meant smaller increments of involvement and activity within the layers of the developing organisation. Starting youth early on a journey of leadership development has a

[11] McCauley, *Handbook*, 18; Day, "Leadership," 584-85, 605.

[12] Day, "Leadership"582.

[13] Susan E. Murphy and Stephanie K. Johnson, "The Benefits of a Long-Lens Approach to Leader Development: Understanding the Seeds of leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 22 (2011): 459.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Rebecca J. Reichard, Ronald E. Riggio, Dian W. Guerin, Pamella H. Oliver, Allen W. Gottfried and Adelle E. Gottfried, "A Longitudinal Analysis of Relationships Between Adolescent Personality and Intelligence with Adult Leader Emergence and Transformational Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 22 (2011), 479-480.

snowball effect in the long run.[16] Small developmental experiences from an early age have been identified as having a profound impact on future development outcomes.[17] This is supported by Gane who says that involving youth is enabling and mobilizing the gifts already present in them.[18] In support of long term strategies in leadership development, Hiatt in a detailed review of leadership development found that among many factors, one major contributor to ineffective leadership development was due to the short term nature and the isolated approach most organisations took to it.[19] The success of long term leadership development strategies is seen in the way it accounts for the emotional ride most young people endured during their development.[20] The findings from these studies suggest that an intentional process of leadership development is important in establishing long term leadership pathways for young leaders, and in some cases that may begin with on the job training.

Leadership Training

For many leaders the experience of leadership development usually involved course, seminar or leadership training or following a curriculum.[21] Goslin in thinking about the long-term effectiveness of leadership development comments such an important process involves more than just a few days in a classroom or an isolated

[16] Murphy, "Long-lens," 459; Jerusha O. Conner and K. Strobel, "Leadership Development: An Examination of Individual and Programmatic Growth," *Journal of Adolescent Research* 22/ 3 (2007): 275.

[17] Murphy, "Long-lens," 459.

[18] A. Barry Gane, *Building Youth Ministry: A Foundational Guide* (Riverside, CA: Hancock Center Publications, 1997), 64.

[19] Mark S. Hiatt, *Exploring Implementation Methods in a Long-term Leadership Development Program* (Unpublished thesis, North Central University, Prescott Valley, AZ, 2009), 49.

[20] Jerusha O. Conner, "Examination," 292.

[21] Johnathan Gosling, "Leadership Development in Management Education," *Business Leadership Review* 1 (2004). (http://mba world.com/blrissues/article1.htm accessed on 8 July 2013)

think tank.[22] Although they may have short term effects such as a burst of leader enthusiasm, apart from that they remain isolated from where learning matters, on the job. Because leadership involves both the development of skill and management of key mentoring relationships, there should be an onus on finding the right balance.

Mentoring in Leadership

Leadership Development is a process that need not be walked alone.[23] Dziczkowski defines the mentoring relationship as a shared leadership process and adds that the proper formation of this key relationship has a significant impact on the mentee's leadership ability.[24] The study reiterates the point that through the mentoring relationship, mentees have the potential to learn a great deal from their mentors.[25] In the context of a local church, this asserts that a supportive environment that values such relationships facilitate the growth of its leaders.[26] Studies into the role of mentoring in leadership development find the effectiveness of mentoring for improving outcomes across behavioural, social, emotional and learning capacity of young people's development.[27] The evidence pointing to the positive effect this has on young people contrasts to non-mentored youth who exhibit a pattern of decline in

[22] Ibid.

[23] Kara Powell and Chap Clark, *Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 37-39.

[24] J. Dziczkowski, "Mentoring and Leadership Development," *The Education Forum* 77 (2013): 355- 356.

[25] Dziczkowski, "Mentoring," 353; Stephanie T. Solansky, "The Evaluation of Two Key Leadership Development Program Components: Leadership Skills Assessment and Leadership Mentoring," *The Leadership Quarterly* 21 (2010): 680.

[26] A. Barry Gane, *South Pacific Island Nations Valuegenesis, Study 1 Core Report: A Study of Faith Development and Values Formation in Seventh-day Adventist Adolescents and Youth Aged 12-18 years* (Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press, 2012), 29.

[27] Jean E. Rhodes, "A Model of Youth Mentoring," in David L. DuBois, Michael J. Karcher eds., *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), 30-33.

their progress.[28] Dziczkowski found factors such as incompatible pairing, mentor training, lack of time, and misunderstanding of the mentoring task as significantly impacting the effectiveness of mentoring.[29] Strommen in his landmark study of youth ministers found that youth leaders who had built effective and positive mentoring relationships with their mentors or supervisors, and vice versa, valued their involvement more and felt more ownership of their local church's mission.[30] This point is brought home by Peters, Baum and Stephens' study that promotes mentors not only focussing on supportive the leader's learning but also how to apply learning back on the job.[31] A point that should not be lost is that when the properties of mentoring such as support, networking, encouragement and opportunity are provided, it makes successful leadership development a real possibility.[32] The value of this key relationship is even more important given what is at stake; leading the church's youth ministry.

Youth Leadership in the SDA Church

The importance of Youth Ministry in the SDA Church in the South Pacific is not lost in studies by Gane that have highlighted the significance of youth ministry in developing the spiritual and personal growth of a local church's youth.[33] Recent

[28] D. L DuBois, "How Effective are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence," Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 12/ 2 (2011): 57, 62-63, 67-68.

[29] Dziczkowski, "Mentoring," 357-358.

[30] Merton P. Strommen, Karen E. Jones and Dave Rahn, *Youth Ministry that Transforms: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Hopes, Frustrations and Effectiveness of Today's Youth Workers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 21, 135-138; A point not lost in studies by Checkoway in Barry Checkoway, "What is Youth Participation?" *Children and Youth Services Review* 33 (2011): 340-345.

[31] Larry Peters, John Baum and Gregory K. Stephens, "Supervisor as Steward of Leadership Development Efforts," *Organisational Dynamics* 42 (2013): 47-52.

[32] Ibid., 52.

[33] A. Barry Gane, *Youth Ministry and Beliefs and Values Among 10-19 year old Students in the SDA School System in North America* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005).

studies by Gane on the 2012 Valuegenesis reports into youth in the South Pacific Islands further reiterates this value that the SDA Church place on youth ministry.[34] More importantly for this study is the way in which the SDA Church has classified the way it appoints its youth ministry in the local church – namely to the office of youth leader, youth committee and Youth Sponsor or mentor. What is clear in SDA youth ministry literature is the importance that youth leadership in the local church is far more a collective work rather than the ability and responsibility of the individual youth leader.[35]

In the SDA church, as guided by the *Church Manual*, the offices of youth leader, the youth committee and the Youth Sponsor are usually elected by the churches nominating committee who are made up of regular standing church members.[36] This committee usually changes with every election. This committee, usually elected every year or two,[37] is charged with the task of selecting someone to the office of youth leader and its respective youth committee.[38] The committee should endeavour to place young people in each of these positions.[39]

In addition to the youth leader and the youth committee, the church nominating committee also elects an elder or board member to the position of Youth Sponsor who serves in a mentoring capacity to the youth leader and the youth committee.[40] The

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[34] _____. *South Pacific Island Nations Valuegenesis Study 1 Core Report: A Study of Faith Development and Values Formation in SDA Adolescents and Youth Aged 12-18* (Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press, 2012; _____. *Valuegenesis II, Study 1, Core Report: A Study of Faith Development and Values Formation in Seventh-day Adventist Adolescents and Youth Aged 12-18 years in Two Generations.* Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press, 2012.

[35] A. Barry Gane, *Building Youth,* 59.

[36] Secretariat, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* 18th ed. (Warburton, Victoria: Signs Publishing, 2010),102, 108; Gane, *Building Youth*, 61.

[37] Secretariat, *Church Manual,* 106.

[38] Ibid., 102.

[39] Gane, *Building Youth,* 61.

[40] Secretariat, *Church Manual*, 103; Gane, *Building Youth*, 61.

Church Manual requisites this mentor to be understanding of the objectives of the youth, sympathetic with youth and will serve as a valued counsellor to the youth officers. The mentor will also work with the youth leader and the youth committee to present the needs of the youth ministry to the church board.[41] This relationship between the older mentor and the younger youth leader and youth committee is an area of some interest when culture is considered in leadership.

Culture and Leadership

Pacific-based research continues to highlight that perceptions of leadership are influenced by one's own cultural background.[42] This despite the fact that upon observation, the predominant body of literature on leadership reflects western leadership practices.[43] Although there has been a wealth of attention on Samoan migration,[44] religion,[45] health,[46] education[47] and social research,[48] the fact remains

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[41] Secretariat, *Church Manual*, 103.

[42] Lalen Simeon, Tracie Mafile'o, Kaise Api, A. Barry Gane and Ben Thomas, *Successful Models of Youth Leadership: A Study of Papua New Guinea Youth* (Pacific Leadership Program and Pacific Adventist University, 2010), 3; Lee M. Ah Chong and David C. Thomas, "Leadership Perceptions in Cross-Cultural Contexts: Pakeha and Pacific Islanders in New Zealand," *Leadership Quarterly* 8/3 (1997): 278.

[43] Graham Hassall, "The Challenge of Leadership: Sustaining Local, National, Regional and Global Pacific Futures," a Paper Presented at the Resilience in the Pacific: Addressing the Critical Issues Conference, Wellington NZ, 17 February (2011), 22; Simeon, *Successful Models*, 4.

[44] Cluny MacPherson, "Samoan Migration to New Zealand" in Cluny MacPherson, Brad Shore, and Robert Franco eds., *New Neighbours: Islanders in Adaptation* (Santa Cruz, CA: Center for South Pacific Studies, 1998); Leulu. F Va'a, *Saili Matagi: Samoan Migrants in Australia* (Suva, Fiji: IPS Publications, 2001).

[45] Lona L. Siauane, *FaaSamoa: A Look at the Evolution of the Faasamoa in Christchurch* (Unpublished thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 2004); Edwin P. Hendrikse, *Migration and Culture: The Role of Samoan Churches in Contemporary Aotearoa, New Zealand* (Unpublished Thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1995); Laumua F. Tunufai, *The Price of Spiritual and Social Survival: Investigating the Reasons for the Departure of Young NZ-born Samoans from a South Auckland Samoan SDA church* (Unpublished Thesis, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, 2005).

[46] Kiwi Tamasese, Carmel Peteru, Charles Waldegrave and Allister Bush, "Ole Taeao Afua, The New Morning: A Qualitative Investigation into Samoan Perspectives on Mental Health and Culturally Appropriate Services," *Australian and NZ Journal of Psychiatry* 39 (2005):300-309;

that there is still a dearth of research on Samoans abroad in relation to leadership, whether in New Zealand or Australia. Indeed there is little doubt that there is now a considerable population of second-generation Samoans living in New Zealand and Australia, but the point remains that it is likely that the churches most second-generation Samoans belong to are usually led by Samoans elders who are usually first generation Samoans.[49] A literature review of Pacific leadership models conducted by McLeod found that there were predominantly two leadership types throughout the Pacific. Namely, 'Big man leadership' and 'Chiefly leadership.' According to McLeod's definition, Samoan leadership is identified as 'chiefly leadership;' that authority resides in status or the position, not the person.[50]

Samoan Leadership

The *faasamoa* or the 'Samoan way of life,'[51] put simply as the psychological, socio-cultural and community processes that surround control and influence the everyday lives of many Samoans, is what serves as a cultural guide for most Samoans.[52] In positions of the leadership, it is largely hierarchical and patriarchal in

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Queensland Health, *The Health of Queensland's Samoan population 2009* (State of Queensland, Queensland Health, 2011).

[47] Judith F. Kearney, Margaret Fletcher and Maria Dobrenoy-Major, "Non-aligned Worlds of Home and School: A Case Study of Second-Generation Samoan Children," *Journal of Family Studies* 17 (2011): 146-156; Cherie M. Chu, *Mentoring for Leadership in Pacific Education* (Unpublished Thesis, Victoria University, Wellington, 2009).

[48] Diversicare: F. Tiumalu, *Samoans in Queensland.* (Unpublished data. Diversicare: Townsville, 2009).

[49] Melanie Anae, "Towards a NZ-born Samoan Identity: Some Reflections on Labels," *Pacific Health Dialog*. 4/2 (1997): 133.

[50] McLeod, *Leadership Models*, 2-3.

[51] Hendrikse, *Migration and Culture*, 29.

[52] Silipa R. Silipa, *Punavai ole Malamalama, Spring of Illumination: Framework of Significant Learning Concepts and Domains in the Web of Samoan Epistemologies; Cultural Context, Artefact and Traditional Oratory* (MacMillan Brown, Working Paper Series 16, 2008): 13.

its leadership form.[53] In faasamoa, the majority of responsibilities are distributed, with mostly the elders of the home, village or church delegating such tasks, although they are tasks achieved collectively rather than individually.[54] Faasamoa establishes that each member of the family has a role to play, whether in the home, in the community or in the context of the church.[55] Traditionally in Samoa, the institutions of home, village and church are the foundations of where *faasamoa* is orally passed on. Traditional values of *faasamoa* like *faaaloalo* and *ava,* translated as a form of hierarchical 'respect and reverence' are also taught and passed on.[56]

Challenges of Samoan Leadership

Faasamoa is closely guarded by Samoan people,[57] and with it comes some challenges. The challenges revolve around items such as respect or *faaaloalo*. Often what is seen is that when older members of the family or church speaks or is sharing their views or perspective, young Samoan people are expected to be silent.[58] Speaking up, and especially speaking against, an elder's perspective would be deemed as a disrespectful challenge of the status quo by a subordinate member of the family.[59] Nowhere is this truer when the elder is a chief-titled or a *matai,* which most elders in

[53] Graham Hassall, Mili Kaitani, Paul Mae, Feue Tipu and Laiasiasa Wainikesa, *Comparative Study on Local Government and Traditional Governance Systems Interaction in Pacific Island Countries.* (Unpublished Report, University of South Pacific, Wellington, 2011), 6.

[54] Kearney, "Samoan-Australian," 17.

[55] Papaaliitele S. M. Fouvaa, *What is the Role of Family Fono and Church Fono in the Maintenance of the Samoan Language in New Zealand?* (Unpublished thesis, University of Auckland, Auckland, 2011), 198.

[56] Silipa, *Punavai,* 12.

[57] Elise Huffer and Asofou Soo eds., *Governance in Samoa: Pulega i Samoa* (Suva, Fiji: Asia Pacific Press, 2000), 312.

[58] Raewyn Manley, Gareth Seymour and Linda McDonald, *A NSW Department of Juvenile Justice, Tagata Moana: A Resource Guide for Working with Young People and their Families from Pacific Island Backgrounds* (NSW Department of Juvenile Justice, Papatuanuku, 2004), 1.

[59] Anae, "NZ-born Samoan," 133.

most Samoan SDA churches in Australia or New Zealand would be. This void in communication would certainly cause friction between elders and younger leaders. This was identified as a main area of concern in Tunufai's research into the reasons why young people were leaving a Samoan SDA church in the South of Auckland, New Zealand. The lack of understanding and communication by church elders and leaders had a significant contribution to the reasons why youth, even younger leaders, had left the church.[60] The challenge of respect in the Samoan culture is that it often limits the opportunities to dialogue on a deeper and meaningful level about issues that matters.[61]

The challenge for young leaders in a Samoan church in Australia is the balance of introducing new ideas and platforms into the Samoan church, while not being seen as challenging the authority of older members of the church. Tunufai, in his ethnographic study, identified several practices in Samoan churches that hindered the involvement and contribution of young people, which eventually drove them away from church.[62] These issues related to the lack of involving young people in the church's decision-making process, which had a knock-on effect to how young people saw the acceptance and value of their views.[63] Other objections highlighted in the study were parents forcing their children to take up leadership positions when they felt they weren't ready and a lack of clear and consistent expectations and standards set and followed by the church.[64] The study by Tunufai raises important concerns as

[60] Tunufai, *New Zealand-born Samoans*, 133.

[61] Tailetai P. Fa'aulufalega, *How does Culture Impact on Educational Leadership in Samoa* (Unpublished Thesis, The University of Waikato, Hamilton, 2008), 6.

[62] Tunufai, *New Zealand-born Samoans*, 133.

[63] Dan Kimball, *They like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007) eBook Edition. Kimball sights the concern of young leaders as, the inability of older leaders to involve young leaders in important and significant church decisions, in addition to a certain tokenism, that is involving young leaders just enough to keep them busy and quiet.

[64] Tunufai, *New Zealand-born Samoans*, 121-123, 124, 129.

expressed by young people about the lack of understanding and support from those deemed older leaders of the church who were appointed to work with young people.[65] This study seeks to highlight these factors by exploring the leadership development experiences of youth leaders in three Samoan SDA churches in the GSC.

Chapter Summary

This review of the literature has discussed the importance of leadership development, mainly so the development of young leaders. This chapter has reiterated the value of developing young leaders and involving them early and, outlined the importance of youth leadership and youth ministry in the SDA Church. Key relationships were also identified as a vital part of leadership development and the chapter discussed the challenges of culture and that of Samoan leadership when it comes to addressing the issues of leadership development in young leaders.

[65] Ibid., 129-130.

Chapter Three

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter Overview

The aim of this chapter is to provide the rationale for the chosen research methodology used in this study. This chapter will cover the description and purpose for selecting the chosen methodology in an attempt to furnish a response to the research question, '*What are the Leadership Development Experiences of Youth Leaders in the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Greater Sydney Conference of Seventh-day Adventists?'*

Study Overview

This study was conducted using a fixed mixed method approach, where the use of quantitative and qualitative methods are predetermined and planned at the start of the study.[66] Through a brief questionnaire and individual interviews with six past youth leaders of three Samoan SDA churches in the GSC, this study seeks to explore their leadership development experiences during their youth leader tenure. [67] In collecting these experiences, the study sought to identify key factors that contributed to their leadership development experience.[68] This study used a mixed method approach using a quantitative questionnaire and qualitative individual interviews, allowing in part, youth leaders to extend their responses given in the questionnaire.

The strategy of mixed method research is to collect both statistical data and

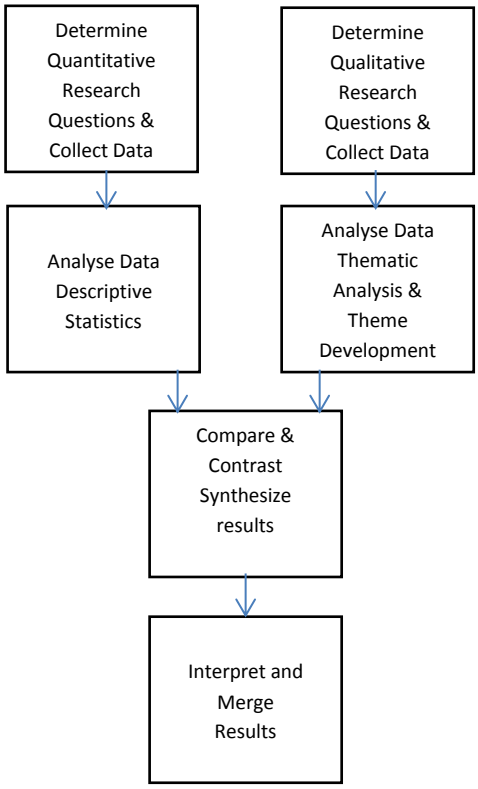
[66] John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research, 2nd ed.* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2011), 54.

[67] Abbas Tashakkori and Charles Teddlie, *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioural Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2003), 502.

[68] Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2005), 151; Oliver, *Understanding*, 2.

words. This approach amplifies the ways of hearing[69] the leadership experiences of the research participants. By using these multiple outlets for research, discovery is provoked as the study is conducted.[70] This study will use the process of a convergent research design[71] which is illustrated in the following table.

Figure 3.1 Implementing a Convergent Design[72]



[69] Creswell, *Designing*, 2.

[70] Carolyn Ridenour and Isadore Newman, *Mixed Method Research: Exploring the Interactive Continuum* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 13.

[71] Adapted from Creswell, *Designing*, *69.*

[72] Ibid.

Study Rationale

Creswell and Plano-Clark define mixed method as, 'a persuasive and rigorous procedure of collecting, analysing, mixing and integrating both qualitative and quantitative design during the stages of the research process.'[73] The rationale for mixing methods was due to the idea that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves in addressing the research question.[74] When used in combination, the two methods complement each other, giving a wider array of information that aides the process of analysis and provide a more complete picture of the research problem.[75]

In this study, it is purposed that the quantitative 15 question-questionnaire records and establishes the basic demographic of the participating youth leaders and their direct observation of their leadership development experience. In complementary fashion the second part of data collection, purposes to engage youth leaders in conversation about their leadership experiences, elaborating on the initial data and allowing for participants to expand on their responses. Implementing this pattern allows the two methods to measure the same conceptualisation of the phenomenon of interest.[76] Together, these two sets of data aim to provide a more comprehensive and complete youth leader response to the research questions set by the study.[77]

[73] Creswell, *Designing*, 5.

[74] Ibid., 120.

[75] Ibid., 304; Sharlene N. Hesse-Biber, *Mixed Methods Research: Merging Theory with Practice* (New York: Guildford Press, 2010), 143.

[76] Jennifer C. Greene, *Mixed Methods in Social Inquiry* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2007), 101.

[77] Ibid., 101.

Participants and Sampling

In considering the scope of the study, the study participants here are a *sample survey*[78] of the population of Youth Leaders who serve in the Samoan SDA Churches in the GSC. This research focuses on six Youth Leaders who were appointed in the past by their local Samoan SDA Churches in the GSC to serve in their local churches. The decision to limit the number of participating youth leaders was made due to the need of acquiring greater depth in the responses of each individual youth leader and that of time constraints, costs and certain limitations. The youth leader *samples* chosen for the study were selected by way of *purposive* sampling. Tashakkori defines *purposive* as the selection of particular persons for the specific information and answers they provide to a research study's question.[79]

The *purposive sampling* requirement, allowed for the sourcing of youth leaders based on their suitability in terms of the comprehensive data they provide in relation to the research focus and sub-section questions. Therefore, two of the most recent youth leaders from each local church, subject to availability and permission to be included, were selected as most suitable to provide the needed information for this study. This requisite ruled out currently serving youth leaders as the research was conducted half-way through their current year of service. It was also thought that there would be certain difficulties in recalling facts for anyone who served over four years ago from the date of the study – therefore, it was deemed best to include only those who, were willing and available and, served within the last three-year period.

[78] Paul W. Vogt, Dianne C. Gardner and Lynne M. Haeffele, *When to Use What Research Design* (New York: The Guildford Press, 2012), 15.

[79] Abbas Tashakkori, *SAGE Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2008), 783; Abbas Tashakkori & Charles Teddlie, *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research: Integrating Qualitative and Qualitative Approaches in the Social and Behavioural Sciences* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2009), 170.

Ethics Committee Approval

The nature of the mixed method study involved engaging with human participants or the six past youth leaders. Therefore, Ethics Approval was sought from the Avondale College Human Resources and Ethics Committee and granted on the 19th of June, 2012 (Refer to Appendix 1.1). On receipt of the Ethical Clearance, information sheets explaining the research study (see Appendix 1.2) were sent to the Senior Ministers of the three churches involved in the study. Their consent was received on the 20th of June, 2012. Following this approval, the information sheets detailing the research study were also forwarded to the selected Youth Leaders and consent was received back from them over the next few days (see Appendix 1.3).

Data Collection Instruments

The mixed method design of the data collecting process utilized two components. This included the use of a quantitative questionnaire and qualitative individual interviews with each of the six youth leaders. The process usually involved introducing the study; providing the information sheet for the study and allowing them time to read it, ask questions and then sign the consent; provide the questionnaire and allowed time for youth leaders to complete; and on completion of questionnaire and checking whether all parts were completed and understood the researcher proceeded to the individual interviews with the youth leader.

Questionnaires

Survey-questionnaires in mixed method research are popular because they can be efficient, and are fairly straight-forward in addressing specific questions and are considered cost effective.[80] With this purpose in mind, it was deemed by the

[80] Vogt, *Research Design*, 16.

researcher to be most suitable. A questionnaire was used to gather the demographic information, commitment levels and provide an initial overall leadership experience of youth leaders who participated in the study (see Appendix 1.4). This was specifically designed to elicit information that will be useful for descriptive analysis.[81] This was done by asking 15 closed-questions categorised in three sections:

The first section of the questionnaire gathered objective background data about the Youth Leader participants. The demographic data gathered was also two-fold in nature addressing not only age and gender but also place of birth and whether the youth leader had attained a Samoan chiefly title. This particular information will inform the study in responding to research question 1 which includes community standing.

The second part of the questionnaire aimed to gather data in relation to how long they were church members before they were appointed, how involved they were and whether they still are committed to that particular local church, and lastly how large their youth ministries were in terms of membership? The aim of these two sections was to establish and profile the basic demographics of youth leaders in terms of their involvement and commitment as Seventh-day Adventists in their local churches.

The third section addressed all three research questions. It asked Youth Leaders for their response to what they felt was their overall view of their leadership experience during their youth leadership tenure and allowed for them to provide an overview of what they felt about their experience. The data collected from the questionnaire was presented with the use of descriptive statistical analysis. The participant responses to the third section was complemented and expanded in the individual interviews with youth leaders.

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[81] Earl R. Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research* 13th ed. (Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning, 2008), 255.

Individual Interviews

The qualitative component of the research used individual interviews with participants (see Appendix 1.5). It was decided, early in the study, that due to conflict of interest, the effect of some of the relationship dynamics and a genuine concern for the inability of some to convey their true experiences in a group environment, focus groups would not be suitable for the second part of this study. This was in addition to the logistical difficulty that the researcher would have with the youth leaders spread out over a large area in western Sydney. For the purpose of time and resource saving, in addition to more in-depth and honest responses from youth leaders, individual interviews were selected and utilised.

The aim of the interviews were to allow youth leaders the opportunity to express their views, feelings and experiences in detail providing further insight into the preliminary data they provided in the questionnaires. These gathered insights are what Vogt and Gardner consider as the 'complementary subjective' data, that in turn affects the inner state of participants.[82] This type of data is important given the nature of the study addressing what youth leaders really thought of their leadership development experiences prior to, and during their leadership tenure.

The majority of the questions in the individual interview were open-ended with a few that asked for a direct answer followed by further probing questions to encourage a deeper response to the question. The questions were semi-structured in nature although they were also specifically organised in order to furnish a response to the main focus question. The data collected from the individual interviews will be presented as the collection of data under each of the research's sub-questions.

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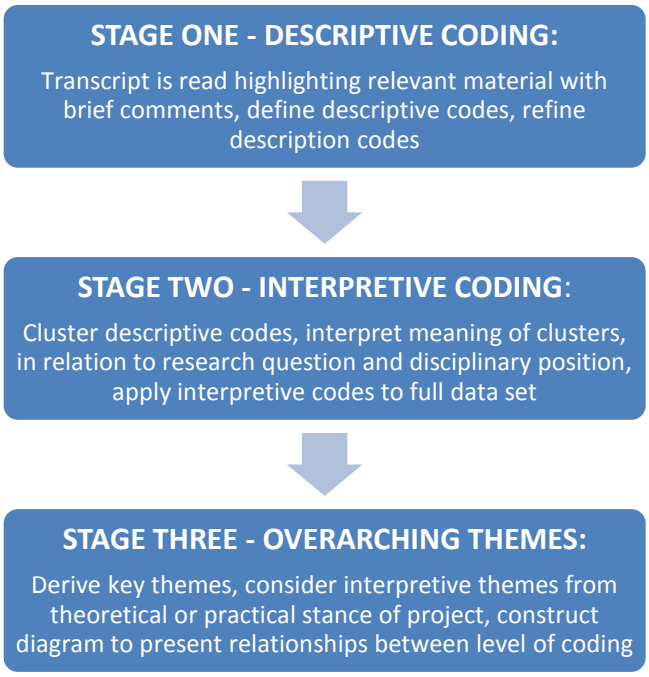
[82] Vogt et al., *Research Design,* 16.

Analysing the Data

As the design follows a convergent style of matching, comparing and contrasting the results to synthesize discussion of the results, this data analysis process has three stages;

Figure 3.2 Stages of Data Analysis



As noted in figure 1.2, descriptive statistics were used to analyse the questionnaires. It was decided that due to the low number of participants in the questionnaire, it was deemed inefficient to run the data through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) and therefore the data was carefully edited, cleaned, coded, and compared.[83] The results of this process are presented in the 'Questionnaire Results' chapter, using charts and graphs to visually and simply convey the questionnaire data collected. It is noted that correlation analysis was not considered as this does not contribute to the aim of the questionnaire. The aim was simply to create a profile of the sample

[83] Allen Rubin and Earl R. Babbie, *Research Methods for Social Work* (Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning, 2011), 508.

population and explore an overview of the leadership development experiences of youth leaders.

For the interviews, thematic analysis was employed to describe and develop themes from the data.[84] Thematic analysis in other words is simply the 'describing and analysing what the data shows.'[85] This was employed after the interview recordings were carefully transcribed by the researcher. This process involves the conversion of the recorded material into text, as a precursor to commence and enrich the analysis of the data.[86] Themes that emerged from the interview data collected and presented under each research sub-question in the 'Individual Interview Results' chapter. These results were to be compared with the data from the questionnaire in 'Chapter 6: Discussion of Findings' where the emerging themes will be discussed. The discussion involved weaving findings and threads of thought from the literature reviewed in 'Chapter 2: A Review of the Literature.'

Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed how this study was conducted. It began by explaining why the study chose a convergent research design; then provided the rationale of selecting a mixed methodology and detailed how it was to collect the data by using a questionnaire and a complementary individual interview. The process of thematic analysis was discussed as a means of identifying emerging themes that would be weaved together with the thoughts found in the literature as part of the study discussion. This chapter also explained why the study was limited to only six

[84] Clive Seale ed., *Researching Society and Culture,* 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE 2012), 367-368.

[85] Karen Smith, Malcolm Todd and Julia Waldman. *Doing Your Undergraduate Social Science Dissertation* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 116-121.

[86] Nigel King and Christine Horrocks. *Interviews in Qualitative Research.* (London: SAGE, 2010), 142-143.

participants and outlined the ethical clearance required for such a study. The next chapter details the summary of the resulting data collected via the methodology explained in this chapter.

Chapter Four

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Chapter Overview

This study set out with the focus of exploring the leadership development experiences of six past youth leaders, in three Samoan SDA churches in the GSC. The next two chapters set out to present the data collected in this mixed methods study. The data was collected with the use of a questionnaire, followed by individual interviews with the six youth leaders in July 2012. This chapter presents the results of the questionnaire by firstly outlining the profiles of the six youth leaders with their respective data codes for confidentiality. Part two of this chapter details the demographic background data, giving depth to the profiles of the youth leaders presented in the first part of the chapter, by using descriptive analysis with the use of graphs and tables. Thirdly, the data that tested the level of the commitment each participating youth leader has towards their local church is also presented. Finally as the fourth part of this chapter, the questionnaire data relating to the overview responses of youth leaders to their leadership development experience will also be presented. Before this chapter concludes, themes that emerge from the data will be mentioned, which will be discussed later in chapter six.

Part 1: Participant Profiles

The first part of this chapter presents a brief profile of each youth leader which provides key background information on each participant that will be discussed in detail in parts two, three and four of this chapter. The brief profile outlines of the six participating youth leaders were compiled using the data they provided in the demographic and church commitment sections of the questionnaire. As outlined in

chapter three in relation to ensuring the ethical practices of maintaining confidentiality for leaders, the six profiles are presented using pseudo names.

Eva[87] is a female and was aged in her *mid-twenties* when she was youth leader. She was born in Samoa and has been an *Adventist for more than 10 years* and regularly attended her local Samoan church, on a *weekly* basis prior her appointment as youth leader. Her youth ministry had less than fifty members and she was leader for only a year. She *continues to attend* her local Samoan Seventh-day Adventist church.

Atamu is male and was aged *less than twenty years* when he was youth leader. He was born in New Zealand. He had been an Adventist member for more than 2 years and regularly attended church on a *weekly* basis before his appointment. His youth ministry had less than fifty members and was only leader for a year. He responded that he *continues to attend* the same local Samoan Seventh-day Adventist church.

Tuna is male and was in his *late twenties* when he was appointed youth leader. He was born in New Zealand. He had been an Adventist member for less than five years and attended church *weekly*, before he was youth leader for only one year. His youth ministry had less than fifty members and at the time of the study, *continues to attend* the same church.

Fata is male and was in his *mid-twenties* when he was appointed youth leader. He was born in Samoa. He regularly attended church on a *weekly* basis before he was appointed youth leader for only two years. At the time of his tenure, his youth ministry membership ranged between fifty and a hundred. He *still attends* the church he was youth leader at.

Paulo is male and was about to turn *twenty* when he was appointed youth leader. He was born in Australia and said that he had been attending church on a

[87] The names Eva, Atamu, Tuna, Fata, Paulo and Miri are pseudonyms used here, to conceal the true identities of the study participants in accordance with ethics approval.

weekly basis for about *six years prior* to his appointment. He was youth leader for a total of two years leading a youth ministry with about eighty members. He no longer attends this church, but is a member of another Adventist church.

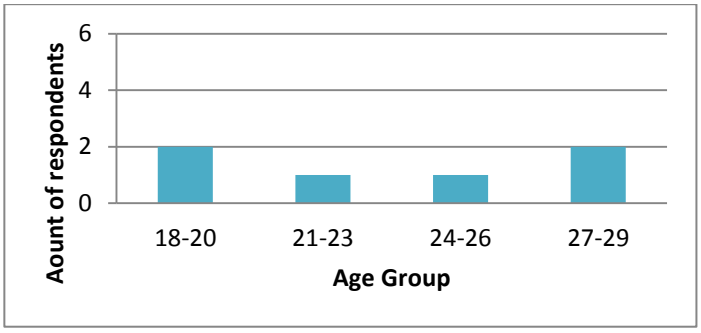
Miri is female and was in her *mid-twenties* when she was appointed by her church to the office of youth leader. She was born in New Zealand. She had been regularly attending church on a *weekly* basis, as church member for more than twelve years before she was appointed to youth leader where she served for three years. Her youth ministry had about eighty members. She still attends the same church.

Part 2: Demographic Data

The second part of this 'Questionnaire Results' summary chapter details and presents the demographic background data collected in the first section of the questionnaire. These details are an extension and elaboration of the brief profiles outlined above.

As outlined in the earlier profiles of the six leaders, the first question asked for the age group of the youth leaders participating in the study. The responses suggest that at the time of youth leadership tenure, all of the respondents were under the age of 30 years with the range being a spread from 18 to 29. Of the questionnaire respondents, as illustrated in Figure 4.1, 33% were under the age of 20 years; 33% were older than 27 years and the other third of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 26 years at the time of their tenure.

Figure 4.1 – Illustrates the age groups of Youth Leaders

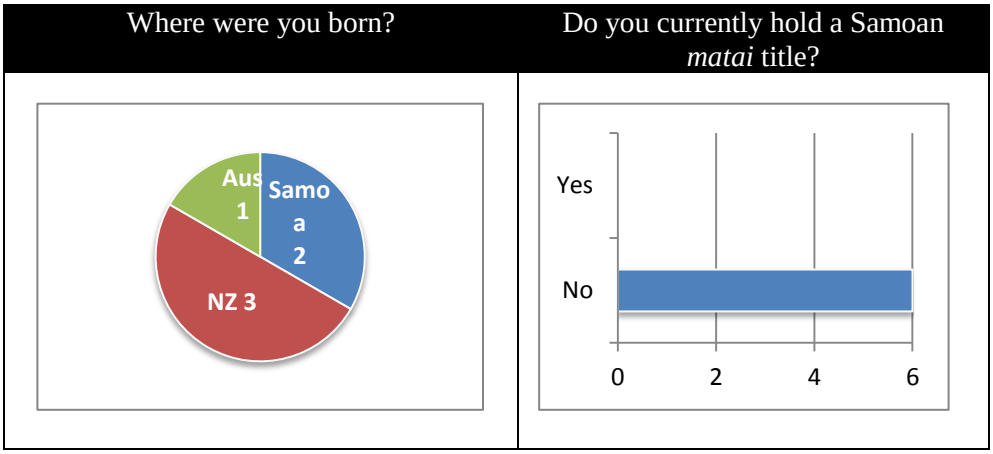


The demographic section questions also looked at the gender of the selected youth leaders. In total, two or 33% of the six youth leaders were females. It must be acknowledged here, that although only 1 in 3 youth leaders in this study are female; it is an encouraging statistic in terms of gender equality, given that Samoan society is largely patriarchal, especially in positions of leadership.[88]

Next, youth leaders were asked in which country were they were born. Figure 4.2 illustrates that over half of youth leaders were born outside of Samoa. In addition, youth leaders were next asked whether they held a Samoan *matai* title or not. This was seen as significant in terms of Samoan leadership practice which will be discussed in the 'Discussion' chapter. It also adds another dimension in terms of cultural awareness and understanding and more importantly leadership standing within a Samoan local church context. As indicated in Figure 4.2 all youth leaders indicated that they did not hold any Samoan *matai* titles.

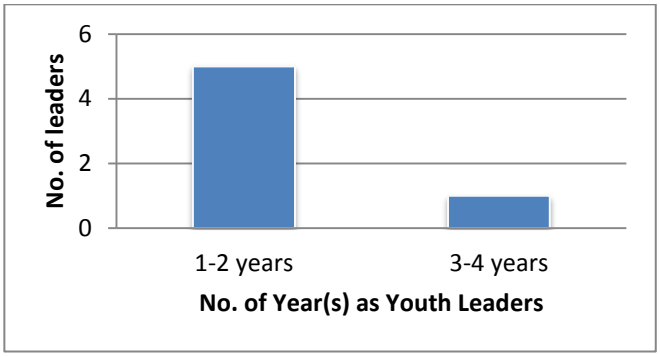
[88] Graham Hassall, Mili Kaitani, Paul Mae, Feue Tipu and Laiasiasa Wainikesa, *Comparative Study on Local Government and Traditional Governance Systems Interaction in Pacific Island Countries.* (Unpublished Report, University of South Pacific, Wellington, 2011), 6. The authors sight that the Samoan way of leadership usually reflects a patriarchal system.

Figure 4.2 – Illustrates the country of birth and *matai* titles



The last question of the first part of the survey looked at the length of time Youth Leaders served. The data collected, as illustrated in Figure 4.3, suggests that only 1 in 6 served for more than two years as Youth Leader; with 83% of respondents commonly appointed only for a year or two.

Figure 4.3 – Illustrates the Length of time as Youth Leader

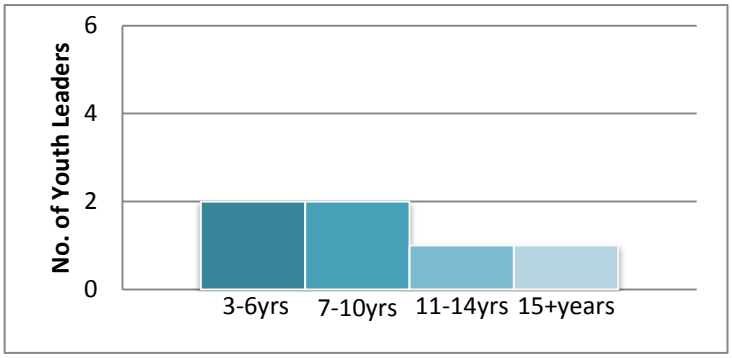


Part 3: Commitment

The third part of the questionnaire asked leaders about their level of commitment to their local Samoan churches. The purpose of this question was to measure how long respondents had been SDA's before they were appointed youth leaders. As shown in Figure 4.4, there was an even spread of membership as an

Adventist right across the youth leaders with 66% responding that they have been in the Adventist church for more than ten years.

Figure 4.4 – Illustrates length of time as Adventist



The data collected indicates most of the youth leaders had spent a significant amount of time in the church. This is supported by the data collected on how often they attended church. An overwhelming 100% indicated that they were committed regular weekly attendees of their local Samoan SDA Church.

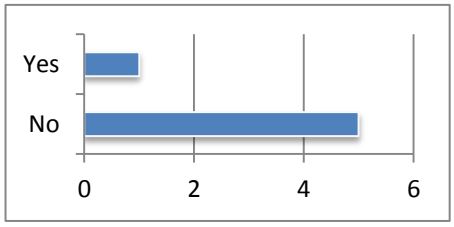
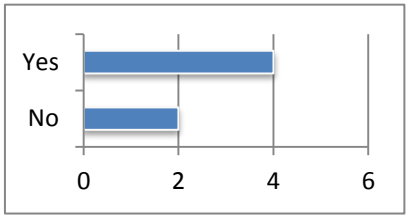
The size of the youth ministries that each youth leader was responsible for ranged from small (<50), medium (51-100) and large in size (101+), as previously indicated in the church profiles mentioned in the first chapter. As reflected in the churches they were youth leaders at, two youth leaders were a part of a youth ministry that had less than fifty youth members, another two had between fifty to a hundred youth members, and the two leaders from the largest of the churches reported a youth ministry of more than a hundred members.

In addition, as a measure of continued commitment to the church, youth leaders were asked whether they still attend the same church, where they had been youth leaders. The data found that only one leader out of the six no longer attended the same church while the other 83% responding that they continued to regularly attend the same local church.

Part 4: Leadership Development Overview

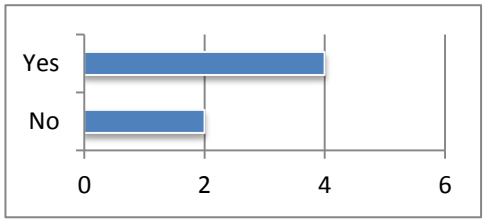
The aim of the fourth and final part of the questionnaire was to provide an overview of the Youth Leader's perception of their leadership development experience. They were asked five questions about the process before, during and after their leadership tenure.

Figure 4.5 – Illustrates responses to training

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
Did you receive youth leadership training BEFORE you were appointed Youth Leader?	
Did you receive Youth leadership training DURING your tenure as Youth Leader?	

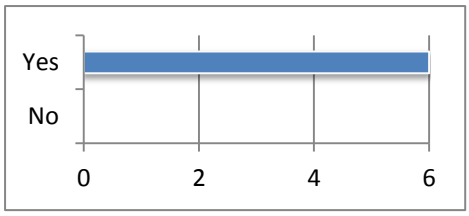
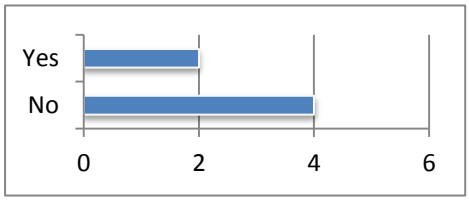
As Figure 4.5 illustrates, leaders were given the option of responding 'yes' or 'no' to the questions in this series. In regards to receiving training prior to their appointment as Youth Leaders, only one leader said that they did. The majority on the other hand, or 83%, said they did not receive any specific youth leadership training before starting their tenure. The next question about whether they had received training during their tenure, found a more positive outcome with four out of the six leaders saying that had received some form of youth leadership training during their tenure.

Figure 4.6 – Illustrates responses to Mentoring

Did you receive any leadership mentoring, DURING your tenure as Youth Leader?	

The question about mentoring, illustrated in Figure 4.6 was direct in terms of distinguishing whether there was anyone appointed to provide support, whether an elder or older youth, although this was not detailed in the question. Therefore the question asked for a direct response whether they had any mentoring agreement during their leadership tenure. The result was that four out of six answered 'yes' that they did have a mentor.

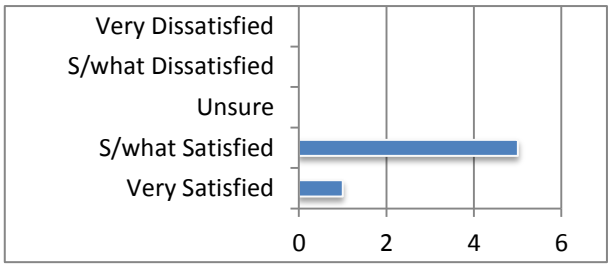
Figure 4.7 Illustrates tenure completion and adequate training

Did you serve the full term of your Youth Leader tenure?	
Do you feel you were adequately trained?	

All of the youth leaders who participated in the study completed their tenure as illustrated in Figure 4.7; however a more important point to this study is the fact that only two out of the six leaders said that they received adequate training. Four out of

the six leaders felt they did not receive adequate training in their role and this is reflected in the responses.

Figure 4.8 Illustrates overall leadership experience

How would you describe your overall leadership experience as Youth Leader?	

The last question asked youth leaders to rate how they felt about their leadership experience as Youth Leaders in the Samoan SDA church in the GSC. They were each given a range of responses on a Likert scale and asked to mark the response that best reflects what they felt. As illustrated in Figure 4.8, the majority or 83% of leaders felt they were 'somewhat satisfied' about their leadership experience. Slightly higher, only one leader responded that they were 'very satisfied' with their leadership experience. The responses of youth leaders to this question, as will be seen in later chapters, is an interesting one given that although youth leaders describe their overall leadership development experience as largely 'somewhat satisfied;' the importance of converging the questionnaire data with that of the individual interview data reveals, a unique picture of their leadership experience and what they deem as satisfying and what the points of difference were in their unique experience.

Chapter Summary

The data from the questionnaire results have been presented in this chapter. Already the data suggests a relatively young group of youth leaders, with all leaders aged under thirty years; most are committed to their local churches as indicated by the

length of time as Adventist prior to appointment and their regular weekly church attendance; mixed results regarding training and mentoring but they rate their overall attendance as ‘somewhat satisfied.’ These themes will be discussed further in ‘Chapter 6’ but before then, the next step is to present the data collected from the individual interview results.

Chapter Five

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW RESULTS

Chapter Overview

This research focussed on exploring the youth leadership development experiences of six past youth leaders from three Samoan Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Greater Sydney Conference. In this mixed method study it was desirable to allow the six youth leaders, Eva and Atamu, Tuna and Fata, and Paulo and Miri who were selected as participants in this study to elaborate on their answers in the questionnaire.[89] Their responses in the individual interviews were recorded, transcribed and the results are presented here. From this data the emerging themes will also be highlighted in the final part of this chapter. In providing a response to the research focus question, *what are the leadership development experiences of Youth Leaders in three Samoan Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Greater Sydney Conference?* The interviews asked the following sub-questions of youth leaders.

Research Question 1: Do you remember how you were selected for the office of youth leader? What are your thoughts on your initial appointment?

Youth leaders were asked about their preparation for the office of youth leader before they were formally appointed and how they were identified as leaders. The initial question of the individual interviews returned interesting results.

[89] As noted in the previous chapter, these are not the participant's real names; pseudonyms were used to conceal their true identity in accordance with the ethics committee recommendations.

Eva and Atamu

The first question asked received some candid responses from Eva and Atamu, with Eva stating that she wasn't 'too sure how I was selected; they just told me that we appointed you.' This was similarly repeated by Atamu who also said, 'it was like 'out of no-where,' I can say I was probably average in my spiritual life, but when they called me up, I was shocked, it was like they just wanted to see what I've got.' Despite being unclear about how the decision was made and what it was based on, to give her the office of youth leader, she revealed the influence of her family on her decision saying, 'coming from a traditional Samoan family you didn't really have a choice to say no, when you didn't really want to do it because you're still young, it was like "yeah ok" and especially when having my aunties and uncles in the committee, so it was like having family expectations.' Despite the pressure she felt from her extended family, she says that 'I was always *involved* in church activities that were happening, like leading small group, but I was never a leader for a particular department.'

Tuna and Fata

The other four leaders, although not as surprised at their appointment as Eva and Atamu identified similar theme of *involvement* in either other church roles or *involvement in the youth committee* leading up to their appointment. Tuna responded that he 'really wanted to be a part of the *Youth Committee* again or maybe in just assisting.' But as he adds, 'after I got encouragement from other youth and friends and elders to give it a go, I got a bit more confident.' Tuna describes the impact this had on his decision saying that, 'after I was asked if I wanted to be the Youth Leader, I was confident I wanted to do it.' This was also echoed by Fata who was also a previous youth leader from the same church saying, 'I was nominated youth leader a few times but I just wanted to be *involved* in the committee until I thought I had the

confidence in myself, so I decided to take on the challenge.' Both Tuna and Fata's responses to this first question have highlighted the importance of involvement in the youth committee was in preparing them for youth leadership.

Paulo and Miri

Involvement in the youth committee was also repeated by Paulo and Miri. Paulo said he had 'been in the youth committee, was a deacon, a Sabbath school teacher and involved in other smaller roles before I became youth leader.' Miri also repeated something similar saying, 'I had been in the *youth committee* for four years as a committee member and secretary, I worked my way up. I was born in the church, I knew the kids from pathfinders as a pathfinder teacher, I taught the kids through Sabbath school and when I was appointed I was quite happy. It felt like it was time to take charge. It wasn't anything new or frightening because I had been in the youth committee it was easier to step up.' This confidence building involvement in the youth committee and in other church roles is echoed by the majority of leaders and will be discussed further in the next chapter in relation to training and mentoring.

Research Question 2: Did you receive any training during your youth leader tenure? Describe its impact on you.

The second question of the individual interviews asked the youth leaders about the training they received. If so, they were asked to describe the type of training. The following responses were collected.

Eva and Atamu

When asked about training and mentoring they had been offered or had received during their time as youth leader, Eva said she only attended one training

weekend called "Inspire"[90] which was run by the Greater Sydney Conference. Eva added that apart from that single training event she attended in the year of her leadership tenure, most of her 'training was just learning from everybody else, getting advice from *older youth* and guidance from last year's youth leader.'

Atamu, from the same church said that in his time as youth leader he only attended the 'Move with Power' Leadership Summit in Brisbane. Atamu added that attending the summit 'helped me a lot, it helped me understand more about leadership and about youth leader strategies.' Atamu did add that although he received training later in the year, he felt that encountering that type of training early in his leadership tenure, he says, 'I think I would've been more prepared with the stuff that I got at the start of the year, probably would've understood how things worked and what I was supposed to do and how to do it.'

Tuna and Fata

Tuna and Fata from the medium sized church gave vivid descriptions of some of the issues they had with the *youth leader training* they attended. Tuna was quite candid about the youth leadership training seminars that the GSC youth department ran saying, 'I went to a couple of them but I didn't really get that much from it.' Tuna goes on to describe his reasons saying, 'Samoan churches are different, with the tools they were telling us I just couldn't picture a Samoan youth doing it or, seeing us doing it that way; *palagi* churches are a bit more out there and if we did do it, the elders would be telling us, 'you can't do that.'

Fata further expands on the challenge of adapting what he learnt at the training to his local youth ministry by saying that, 'it was just the way things are structured in the Samoan church that made it difficult, I just remember coming out of that camp

[90] 'Inspire' is a once a year event run by the GSC that aims to bring together all church leaders and church offices for a weekend of spiritual encouragement, vision-casting and leadership training according to www.gscadventist.org.au.

saying, ‘oh serious?’ Fata went on to say that the difficulty was because ‘Samoan churches are a bit more closed and stick to how we’ve done it before.’

Paulo and Miri

Paulo and Miri also identified a similar challenge when describing the training they attended. Paulo says that although he had attended a couple of youth leadership training seminars with ‘heaps of workshops’ he had found that ‘it was *hard to apply to the conservative way Samoan churches are* as it felt a bit too out there.’ He continued saying, ‘heaps of the *training didn’t apply* directly to Samoan churches because of our *culture* and how we did things and the issues Samoan churches face.’ Paulo, like Eva found himself reverting back to local knowledge describing that what he did ‘was just run off the previous year’s involvement in the youth committee. He adds, ‘I got a lot of help from the previous year’s youth leader who was an older youth committee member, they helped me in a major way.’

Miri also said that she had ‘attended youth leader seminars run by the conference’ and adds that ‘we had strong people in our youth committee and so we shared ideas; took on tools from the training resources and adapted it’ to their church and ‘just ran with that.’ These responses have identified a difficulty that Samoan youth leaders often found when trying to adapt what they learnt to their Samoan local churches, namely, as the leaders put it, ‘they had difficulty ‘adapting’ what they learnt’ and that led to some leaders questioning its ‘relevance’ to their youth ministry; in addition to the challenge of ‘getting the ideas passed’ by the older church elders and their Youth Sponsors or *faufautua’s.* These themes relating to training will be discussed later.

Research Question 3: Did you receive any mentoring during your youth leader tenure? Describe its impact on you.

In addition to training, the question relating to mentoring was an important part of this study. This third question asked leaders whether they received mentoring and if so, to describe the impact of that mentoring on them.

Eva and Atamu

Eva responded by acknowledging that she saw her *faufautua* or Youth sponsor as appointed by the church committee, as her 'mentor;' although she said that 'it didn't feel like it at times.' She stated that her *faufautua* 'was good' but she adds that they 'gave me advice although most of the time he wouldn't agree or accept what I wanted,' even though 'most' of her committee wanted to do it.' She describes their difference of opinion as her *faufautua* being 'more old school' and of an 'older generation.' She also felt that her sponsor could have been 'more supportive and more understanding' of what her and her 'committee needed,' in terms of being more 'balanced instead of just saying no to most of their ideas.' Another area that Eva noted as 'a bit of a shock' was her feeling that he 'didn't know what he was meant to do as a faufautua.'

Atamu on the other hand said although he faced challenges, he was 'happy' that the church had 'thought about a mentor,' when appointing him youth leader. Atamu said that his older 'assistant youth leader helped' him 'a lot with confidence and encouragement' by 'mentoring' him 'throughout the whole year.' He describes that she was an older church member who had been a youth leader over a long period of time but was not an elder. Atamu stated that, 'there was a *faufautua'* as part of the youth committee but he saw his assistant leader as his mentor.

Tuna and Fata

When asked whether he had received any mentoring during his time as youth leader Tuna replied, 'Nah, no specific mentor.' Instead he describes that 'the boys from the previous year helped me and from watching them and learning from what they do.' Tuna credited these relationships with older youth and previous leaders as 'great support' in assisting him understand 'his job and the way things work in the Samoan church.' Tuna goes on to say that he 'felt he needed more guidance from the *faufautua*, the pastor and the youth pastor;' but because they were busy, he got 'help from the older guys.' He describes the challenges he faced early on saying, 'at the start of year, we lost the Youth Pastor, who I had hardly seen anyway,' and 'our pastor was rarely there, I hardly saw him, except in church meetings.' Tuna describes the feeling he felt when the formal mentoring arrangements broke down saying, 'I kind of went into it and I was like fumbling my way through.' Tuna describes that the experience of the 'year before' and the 'older youth' that helped him the most.

Fata's answers to the question of mentoring had a similar echo to Tuna's responses. Fata described that 'there was no specific mentoring,' but instead it was more of an ongoing support network from 'older youth who had been leaders before.' He also echoed what Tuna said about the appointed mentors saying, 'there was a formally appointed *faufautua* advisor but the older youth were of more help, the previous youth leaders were always around the youth, and the committee so it was helpful to have someone experienced as leader to talk to, and give me some good ideas and helpful advice.'

Paulo and Miri

In response to the mentoring question, Paulo described that the nominating committee had appointed him a '*faufautua*' who he 'discussed any topics in the AY committee with and gave confirmation' of what he 'could and couldn't do.'

Paulo said that ‘it was good to have them in the committee because of their advice.’ Miri on the other hand responded to this question quite positively. In great length she described her mentoring relationship with her faufautua. She begins by stating that ‘we had an awesome faufautua.’ She goes on to describe, ‘we had one faufautua for two years and he fully mentored me and gave advice to me and often protected me from the criticism in the Board Meeting. When we hit the wall in the board meetings he would step up and he would fully support me in the meetings.’ Miri says that her mentor not only supported her but protected her when the ‘Board meetings got hectic, it felt a bit like standing before a firing squad, yet he (faufautua) gave me his full support, I needed it.’ She also describes in detail the honest mentoring relationship that she had with her faufautua saying, ‘he wasn’t afraid to pull us into line and cautioned us about things that may hurt our ministry or the church, it was good that he kept us focussed and ensuring we were asking all the necessary questions needed for our youth ministry.’

As noted in the responses provided by the six participants, there is a mixture of responses to mentoring. Some have noted that their formal *faufautua* relationship failed and instead the older youth, past youth leaders and experiences from involvement in the youth committee bridged the mentoring gap that was left. On the other hand, some leaders reflected positively on the mentoring received from their *faufautua* or other nominating committee appointed mentors. Youth leaders have noted the importance of the mentoring that they needed and sought to establish these key relationships some way or another. This factor will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Research Question 4: What happened to you after your youth leader tenure?

The last question asked of youth leaders during the interview addressed what happened to their leadership progression after their tenure as youth leader. The question aims at uncovering any further patterns of leadership development.

Eva and Atamu

The leaders from the smaller of the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist church describe what happened next when their time as youth leaders finished. Eva said that she did not continue in the youth ministry and instead she 'became the Sabbath School leader.' Again she felt a bit shocked at the fact they (the nominating committee) selected her as the 'church Sabbath School Director.' She described that the nominating committee had selected 'all of the youth committee to lead Sabbath School.' Eva described vividly the relief of moving out of the youth ministry saying, 'looking back it's a relief to go to Sabbath school leader, everybody knew what they had to do and not always planning something to do like you do in the youth ministry.' Atamu on the other hand described a different experience saying that he 'wanted another chance at youth leader or the youth committee but they didn't offer me anything as someone else had put up their hand for the job.' Although he did not continue, Atamu said he was happy for the chance to lead for a year,' although he felt he 'had more to give.'

Tuna and Fata

The youth leaders from the mid-sized Samoan church described similar experiences. Tuna said that 'having some personal family issues' did not help him as he neared the end of his youth leader tenure. He describes that the church had requested that he 'continue with the office of youth leader' but felt that he 'had been going hard for the last three years with the youth and needed a break and spend more time with my girlfriend.' He further described that in the end, although he 'would

have been happy to do it again,' but he remembered the 'pressure' and 'challenges' he faced and felt he just 'needed to get away from it.' He chose not to continue. Fata also gave a similar response to this question saying that he 'took a break' because the office of 'youth leader is not an easy job, so much stress, so much load.'

Paulo and Miri

Paulo and Miri from the largest of the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist churches participating in this study, describe what happened after their youth leader tenure. Paulo said that he was only leader for two years with the year after that spent in the youth committee 'as a committee member.' Paulo describes that the reason why he was selected to be in the youth committee was to mentor and assist the next youth leader the church had appointed over the next two years. He noted though, that he only stayed on in the youth committee 'for only one more year.' He also mentions that he was also reinstated to teaching a youth 'Sabbath school class' and continued as a deacon which he says he 'was happy with.'

Miri on the other hand continued on after her two year appointment as youth leader. She said that 'after my two years of youth leader, I was happy to continue on but the nominating committee wanted me to mentor and assist the next youth leader, which was Paulo." She goes on to describe that 'after mentoring Paulo' in the youth committee for two years, she felt she needed a change. She described that at the conclusion of that mentoring arrangement, she then 'moved into other church departments like Sabbath school teacher.'

Emerging Themes

The responses for each question was carefully considered and through thematic analysis. After several processes, as noted in the responses of the six youth leaders in this study, four themes have emerged from the individual interview data (see

Appendix 1.6) and will be discussed in the 'Findings and Discussion' chapter that follows. These themes are that;

1. Involvement matters,

2. Relevant training matters,

3. Mentoring relationships matter and,

4. Cultural factors matter.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the results of the individual interviews with the six youth leaders. From the data analysis, four key themes have emerged that will now be discussed in the next chapter, along with the themes from data presented in the previous chapter.

Chapter Six

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter Overview

This study set out with the focus of exploring the leadership development experiences of six past youth leaders, in three Samoan SDA churches in the GSC. The mixed method study was conducted using a brief questionnaire which was followed by individual interviews with youth leaders about their leadership development experience as youth leaders. This chapter will now discuss the findings from the previous two results chapters. The discussion, which entails contrasting, interpreting and mixing the data, will weave the strands from the findings and the threads of thought that emerged in the literature in chapter two. To facilitate the requirements needed in order to answer the main research question, 'W*hat are the leadership development experiences of youth leaders in the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Greater Sydney Conference of Seventh-day Adventists?* The four themes that emerged from the data summary will be discussed in this chapter; *involvement matters, relevant training matters, mentoring relationships matter, and cultural factors matter.*

Theme 1: Involvement Matters

All six youth leaders expressed positive responses about youth committee and other church activity involvement; whether they were involved before or realised how it would have helped after their leadership tenure. Firstly, on a positive note of involvement, although there are more male youth leaders in the sample, as one would expect to find, the involvement of two female youth leaders is encouraging; given the study deals with a highly patriarchal culture, where leadership positions are usually

dominated by male leaders.[91] Secondly, four out of the six leaders responded that they were active in the youth committee prior to their nomination to youth leader; with most crediting their involvement in the youth committee as the 'confidence builder' they needed in order to 'step up' to youth leader. For example, Miri comments that she had 'been in the *youth committee* for four years' and used her involvement as a development opportunity to 'work her way up' into youth leadership. That involvement in the youth committee served as a positive transition into the role of youth leader is also supported by Paulo, Tuna and Fata who all say something similar. This finding supports what Reichard et al. and Murphy & Johnson say about how early involvement matters when developing leaders.[92] Four of the six leaders confirmed that they had been in the youth committee over a considerable number of years; this involvement allowed the formation of significant relationships that would prove valuable during their tenure as youth leaders. This suggests that there is a possible leadership pathway for youth leaders in the youth committee by involving potential youth leaders in it. Over time, as the study participants expressed, their involvement in the youth committee alleviated or reduced any 'fears' about the office and made it 'easier to step up' to lead.

The second part of *involvement* that emerges is the youth leader's church activity prior to their appointment to youth leader. All youth leaders responded positively to their involvement in the wider life of the church either as 'a deacon, leading a small group, teaching pathfinders or a Sabbath school class.' This seems to indicate that involvement and inclusion in wider church life has a positive effect on youth leadership development. Again this reiterates the literature on the importance of 'hands on' involvement of young leaders in the life of the organisation, which

[91] Ilana Gershon, *No Family is An Island: Cultural Expertise Among Samoans in Diaspora* (London: Cornwell University Press, 2012), 118; McLeod, "Leadership Models," 3.

[92] Reichard, "Longitudinal Analysis," 479-480; Murphy, "Seeds of Leadership," 459.

confirms, for them, ownership of their church and its mission.[93] In addition, this aspect of church activity and involvement is significant when compared to the responses in the questionnaire. Not only did all six youth leaders complete their leadership tenure, they also show considerable regular commitment to their local churches as regular weekly attendance. This type of commitment is identified in the 2012 Valuegenesis study by Gane, as a significant response by Pacific Islander youth.[94] These are important responses if the willingness of youth leaders is ever questioned. The encouraging aspect from some of the responses of youth leaders is that at the conclusion of their youth leadership tenure, they either continued as mentors in the youth committee or moved to other church leadership roles where they were able to put to practice their leadership experience from leading the youth ministry.

Theme 2: Relevant Training Matters

The converging of the results regarding training shows that although four youth leaders said yes that they had received training during their leadership tenure, most in the interviews expressed their concern at the relevancy of the training they did attend. Although there are clear links to the impact the Samoan 'culture' has on how the learned material and resources are applied in the local church, most felt that what they learnt from the GSC training was 'hard to apply' or that it 'didn't apply' to their local context. Leaders commented the difficulty was that 'Samoan churches are different;' with one leader saying that they had to 'adapt' what they learnt to what they needed in their local church. One leader alluded to a reason for the difficulty in that 'Samoan churches are not as out there' but instead described his church as 'more conservative and stick to how we've done it before.'

[93] Strommen, *Transforms*, 21, 135-138; Checkoway, "Youth Participation," 340-345.

[94] Gane, *ValueGenesis I*, 31; Tunufa'i, *New Zealand-born*, 119-125.

The comments by youth leaders highlight a significant gap in the training received at conference leadership training and what they felt their needs were at local church level; or that they were not taught how to apply it in a specific ethnic church. The challenges identified by youth leaders support the literature by Goslin that leadership development training involves more than a few days of isolation away in a seminar or workshop.[95] Although there may be better and newer content in the training, how that training is then adapted or transferred in order to find relevance in the local Samoan church's youth ministry, seems to hold more importance to the participants of this study.

A significant finding in what youth leaders said was that, in place of training they found difficult to apply to their local Samoan churches, they turned to their youth committee experiences and networks. Again involvement in the youth committee helped to bridge the gap in training, with most youth leaders using their local youth committee knowledge and the experience of older youth or previous leaders to bridge the gap in training. This helped them understand the role and the expectations of the office of 'youth leader in a Samoan church.' Some leaders found the beginning of the youth leader tenure quite difficult in that they were a bit unsure about the expectations of youth leader, but soon discovered help 'from the previous year's leader' by 'watching and learning from them' leading to them 'understanding the way things work.'

Again this confirms the literature on localised training as an effective form of leadership development training.[96] In addition, it also highlights a gap in how youth leaders, or leaders in general, who are nominated and appointed by their local SDA church, are transitioned into office at the beginning of their tenure. There is little, if

[95] Gosling, "Leadership Development," 2.

[96] Ibid.

any expectation of leadership training for youth leaders, or other leadership roles, in the Church Manual except an expectation of acceptable character and skill.[97]

Theme 3: Mentoring Relationships Matter

As already evident in the themes of involvement and local training needs, several youth leaders reflected positively on certain relationships and negatively on some. Youth leaders agreed that their involvement in the youth committee was not only positive but that it enabled them to form key relationships with older and more experienced youth and previous youth leaders. Some of these informal mentoring relationships were identified by four of the youth leaders as particularly beneficial when the relationship with the formally nominated faufautua or sponsor relationship broke down. The four youth leaders, from the smaller and mid-sized Samoan churches, described the relationship with older youth and previous leaders as, 'supportive,' 'always around,' 'more helpful than the faufautua,' and seemed to be available for the mutual sharing of 'ideas' and imparting of helpful 'advice.' This is again supported by the literature on the importance of the mentoring relationships and its significance in youth leader's experience, learning capacity and role satisfaction as advocated by Rhodes and Peters et al.[98]

As noted earlier, four of the six youth leaders interviewed negatively reflected on their relationship with the faufautua. Some of the difficulties sighted were that faufautua's should have been more 'supportive and understanding' of their ideas 'views of the youth' and less of a barrier when it came to programming. The reasons some leaders gave for this lack of connection was generational in nature, described by some leaders as 'more old school.' Despite the negative responses from the four leaders, about their relationship with the faufautua, two youth leaders from the largest

[97] Secretariat, *Church Manual*, 102.

[98] Rhodes in DuBois, *Youth Mentoring*, 30-33; Peters, "Supervisor as Steward," 47-52.

of the three Samoan churches shared a different experience. Paulo and Miri reflect positively on their formally appointed faufautua's who they say was 'good for advice,' 'support,' and 'protected' them when it came to 'criticism.' The fact that two youth leaders described their mentoring relationship as 'honest' meant that the faufautua could 'pull them into line' and keep them 'focussed.'

These findings on youth leader's mentoring relationship with their faufautua's indicate a mixture of experiences. While some leaders did not connect well with their faufautua's, there is also evidence of successful mentoring relationships. There is an indication that who the church nominating committee appoints as Youth Sponsor has a significant impact on the outcome of the mentoring relationship. This is evident in Atamu's comment about his older assistant leader and confirmed by Miri's experience; that they were appointed the same Sponsor over a two-year period; and it was someone that was already familiar with her development as a young leader.

The literature by Dziczkowski and Strommen support this finding that pairing the right mentor with the right mentee allows the real possibility of success.[99] Unfortunately the experience of the first four youth leaders indicate that the faufautua's likely lacked understanding their mentoring roles as some leaders felt their *faufautua* did not know what to offer them.

Theme 4: Cultural Factors Matter

The last theme that emerged from the data was the 'Samoan way of doing things' that youth leaders felt significantly impacted their experience of youth leadership. All leaders agreed that the Samoan culture had a particular impact on parts of their training, their relationships with faufautua's and their experience of church leadership in general, as they had to *pass through several older church leaders* before they could implement what they had learnt. The cultural difficulties that youth

[99] Dziczkowski, "Mentoring," 357-358; Strommen, *Transforms,* 21, 135-138.

leaders identified were experiences of acknowledgement by older f*aufautua's*. One youth leader alludes to the challenges he faced saying, his *faufautua* 'frustrated him' because he felt that his *faufautua* kept using values of 'respect your elders' or *faaaloalo*, to silence him when it came to discussions over the direction and plans of the youth ministry. Leaders said they were often reminded that they were 'younger' by older leaders and that they often felt this gave older leaders in the church the opportunity to criticise them when it came to board meetings.

As indicated by the literature, the finding reflects the challenge young leader's face when they are required to discuss difficult subjects with older members of the Samoan community.[100] Eva confirms this bind when she felt pressured from older members of her family to accept the office of youth leadership in her local church despite what she personally felt.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the four findings of the study; *involvement matters, training relevancy, relationships matter* and that the leadership experience of youth leaders are *culturally bound* and influenced by the practices of *faasamoa* that impact how decisions are made in a Samoan local church. This discussion has been carried out in light of the literature on youth leadership development, the youth leader nominating process of the SDA church and Samoan leadership practice. The next chapter will further consider the implications of this discussion on the conclusion of this study.

[100] Fa'aulufalega, *Culture,* 6.

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter Overview

This final chapter will make concluding comments and recommendations based on the findings discussed in the previous chapter. In order to satisfy the main research question of this study, a summary of answers will respond to the questions that guided the study. Secondly, as the aims of this study has implications for the context of the study, several suggestions will be made along with outlining areas of further research and concluded with some final remarks.

Summary of Answers

This study was guided by the following focus question, w*hat are the leadership development experiences of youth leaders in three Samoan Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Greater Sydney Conference?* The following sub-questions guided the study and are here provided answers;

Question 1: How were you selected for the office of youth leader?

The data revealed that although some youth leaders revealed that their nomination for youth leader came as a shock, all agreed that their prior *involvement* in the youth committee, as deacons, and Sabbath school or Pathfinder teachers had in some way contributed to their preparation and appointment to youth leadership. Some leaders described this *involvement* as beneficial for their confidence and eventually led them to accept the office of youth leader. In addition, participants also felt that they would have benefited with a clear role description and perspicuous expectations of the youth leader, from the church leaders to begin with.

Question 2: Did you receive any training during your youth leader tenure? Describe its impact.

Responses were mixed as youth leaders described that although they attended training offered by the GSC, they found it difficult to adapt what they had learnt to their local Samoan church. The added pressure from older church leaders and cultural expectations and processes, made some leaders question the relevancy of the training to their local Samoan church. Most leaders agreed that the most beneficial training came through ongoing informal training and support from older youth and previous youth leaders.

Question 3: Did you receive any mentoring during your youth leader tenure? Describe its impact.

Although youth leaders acknowledged the appointment of Youth Sponsors or a faufautua, they did not agree on their impact. Leaders who reflected negatively on their faufautua sighted a break down in the *mentoring relationship* due to a lack of support, understanding and *cultural differences*. These leaders instead identified key informal mentoring relationships with older youth and previous youth leaders as more helpful. Those leaders who responded positively towards their faufautua identified an understanding, supportive, honest and caring *mentor* who had known them a long time before they were youth leaders.

Question 4: What happened to you after your youth leader tenure?

Again the responses were mixed. Some youth leaders felt they needed a rest due to the length of their involvement in the youth ministry. Others responded that they wanted to continue on but instead were moved to other church roles. The rest found themselves mentoring the next youth leader and so continued to be involved in the youth committee until they were moved to other church offices as teachers or deacons.

Recommendations and Implications

As aforementioned in the first chapter, the aims of this study had implications for the three Samoan SDA churches in this study and the youth department of the GSC. There are several suggestions that emerge from this study.

1. That the three Samoan SDA churches involved in this study utilise or consider the youth committee as a pathway for future youth leaders; and consider appointing committee members or youth leaders for longer terms, rather than the temptation of the single-term appointment that many Samoan SDA churches make;

2. That the three Samoan local churches involved in this study give considerable thought and attention, to mentor-mentee compatibility and matching when appointing the Youth Sponsor or faufautua. In addition, this study has also found that greater thought be given to providing Youth Sponsors or *faufautua's* with training or clear role descriptions as per requisite on page 103 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual. This is important given that several youth leaders were concerned about burnout; it is proposed that an appropriately trained and supportive Youth Sponsor or

faufautua may effectively mentor youth leaders so they experience longevity in their roles.

3. That the three Samoan local churches involved in this study give consideration to the finding of the positive impact previous youth leaders had on mentoring, supporting and, in some way, training of youth leaders. Clearly more needs to be done to utilise their experience and lessons learnt;

4. That the three Samoan local churches identify ways to improve the relationships of youth leaders and older church leaders while also being aware of the Samoan cultural challenges that arise due to the sharing of different ideas. More intergenerational work needs to be done in the Samoan SDA church to bridge the gap, between older church leaders and young youth leaders who ultimately are the future of the Samoan SDA local church;

5. That the youth department of the local conference give consideration to ways it can increase the appropriateness and relevancy of the training offered given to youth leaders of Samoan SDA churches. One suggestion is to invest some time during the training, on how the Samoan youth leader will apply the training to their local context. Applying the principles of the training, might work in this instance, as how it may actually be applied will differ according to the context of the Samoan SDA church;

6. That the youth department of the local conference give considerable thought to understanding the challenges of the Samoan local church's youth ministry and tailoring a training package towards these churches. Such an effort may be general but at least it is an attempt to understand the unique youth ministry of Samoan SDA

churches. There is also a possibility that the local conference can make use of the experiences of previous youth leaders to establish a better understanding of what that may require.

Suggestions for Future Study

In addition to the focus of this study there are a couple of other areas of further research that can be explored in future, using the conclusions of this present research.

1. This study has focussed on the experiences of youth leaders in general using a mixed method approach. A possible path for future research using grounded theory may be undertaken to understand the attitudes and perceptions of older church leaders in a Samoan Seventh-day Adventist church and how this impacts their leadership decisions.

2. This study was carried out on only six past youth leaders due to time constraints and therefore limited, in a sense, the reach of the study. Future research may wish to cast the net a little wider, to include a larger sample of Samoan youth leaders in Australia, so that generalisations can be made with the study findings.

Concluding Remarks

This study of the leadership development experiences of six past youth leaders from, three Samoan SDA churches in the GSC showed that, there are definite involvement, training, mentoring and cultural factors that influence the experiences of youth leaders. It shows that despite some difficulty in their leadership experiences, youth leaders are finding ways to adapt to the requirements of their leadership role. This study has in

some way identified areas that should be improved to ensure a successful and positive experience of youth leadership is given the best possible chance to occur.

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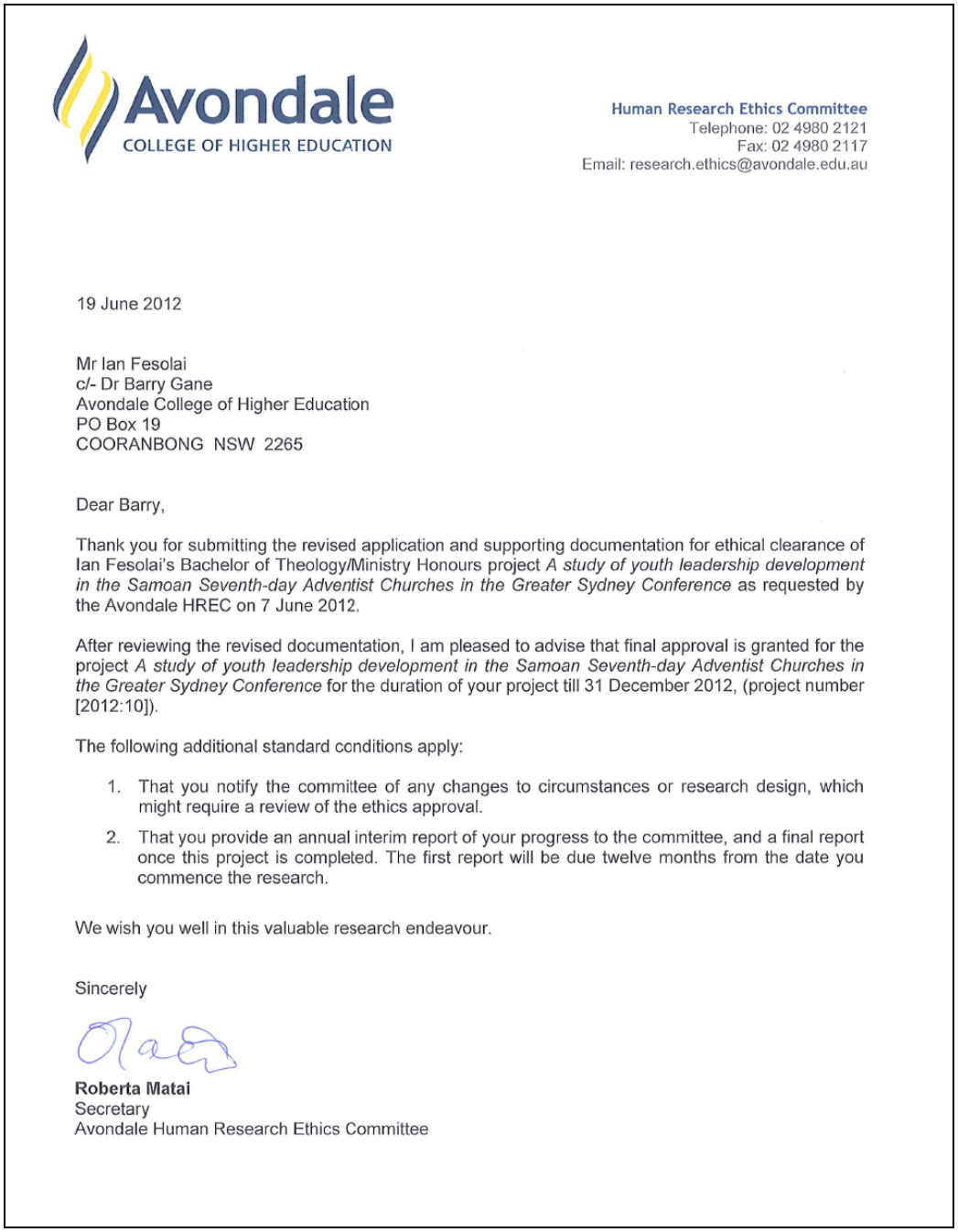
APPENDICES

Appendix 1.1: Human Research Ethics Committee Approval



Avondale
COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Human Research Ethics Committee
Telephone: 02 4980 2121
Fax: 02 4980 2117
Email: research.ethics@avondale.edu.au

19 June 2012

Mr Ian Fesolai
c/- Dr Barry Gane
Avondale College of Higher Education
PO Box 19
COORANBONG NSW 2265

Dear Barry,

Thank you for submitting the revised application and supporting documentation for ethical clearance of Ian Fesolai's Bachelor of Theology/Ministry Honours project *A study of youth leadership development in the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist Churches in the Greater Sydney Conference* as requested by the Avondale HREC on 7 June 2012.

After reviewing the revised documentation, I am pleased to advise that final approval is granted for the project *A study of youth leadership development in the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist Churches in the Greater Sydney Conference* for the duration of your project till 31 December 2012, (project number [2012:10]).

The following additional standard conditions apply:

1. That you notify the committee of any changes to circumstances or research design, which might require a review of the ethics approval.
2. That you provide an annual interim report of your progress to the committee, and a final report once this project is completed. The first report will be due twelve months from the date you commence the research.

We wish you well in this valuable research endeavour.

Sincerely

Roberta Matai
Secretary
Avondale Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 1.2: Pastors Information Sheet and Consent Forms

Tuesday 19 June, 2012

Pr. XXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Dear Pr. XXXXXXX,

My name is Ian Fesolai. I have previously worked with XXXXXXXX at XXXXXX Samoan Seventh-day Adventist Church, before I started study at Avondale College in 2009.

I am currently undertaking a research study entitled, ***Through the eyes of youth leaders: A study of youth leadership development in the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist Churches in the Greater Sydney Conference***. The selected research study is a part of my current course, Bachelor of Theology & Ministry (Honours).

I will be focussing my study on a targeted group of the two most recent (past) Youth Leaders from each of the selected three Samoan Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Greater Sydney Conference. The study excludes the participation of current Youth Leaders. I aim to meet with participants once, gathering data using a short questionnaire and an individual semi-structured type interview.

The study participants will remain anonymous in my written report and any questionnaires and interviews used in the study, will not include their names or the names of any church pastor, leader or member. Each youth leader will be referred to as a letter or a number in the final report. In addition, I have attached the approval for the study from the Avondale College of Higher Learning Human Research & Ethics Committee, for your viewing.

If you have any questions regarding my research project, please feel free to contact me on **xxxxxxxx** or at xxxxxxxxx or alternatively you may contact my Research Supervisor, Dr. Barry Gane on **xxxxxxxx** or at xxxxxxxxx.

Please print your name and date on the acknowledgement form attached. Please save a copy of it and attach it via return email to xxxxxxxxxx as soon as possible.

Yours in Jesus Christ,
Ian Fesolai

I, _____ , acknowledge and consent to the involvement of the two most recent (past) Youth Leaders at *XXXXXXXXXX Samoan* Seventh-day Adventist Church, in the study conducted by:

Ian Fesolai and *Dr. Barry Gane* of, Avondale College of Higher Education entitled:

Through the eyes of youth leaders: A study of youth leadership development in the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist Churches in the Greater Sydney Conference.

I understand that the study participants will remain anonymous in the written report and any questionnaires and interviews used in the study, will not include their names or the names of any church pastor, leader or member. Each youth leader will be referred to as a letter or a number in the final report. I understand that confidentiality will be maintained for all aspects of the study.

*It is noted that each participant of the study, will also be given the opportunity to provide consent.

Pastor's Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1. 3: Participant Information and Consent Form

RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

INFORMED CONSENT PART 1 OF 2

A. RESEARCH TITLE:

Through the eyes of youth leaders: A study of youth leadership development in the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist Churches in the Greater Sydney Conference.

B. RESEARCH CONTACT DETAILS:

1. **Dr. Barry Gane**
   582 Freemans Drive
   Avondale College Research Department
   COORANBONG NSW 2265
   Contact: +61 2 4980 2216 or barry.gane@avondale.edu.au

2. **Ian Fesolai**
   30 Collegeview Drive
   COORANBONG NSW 2265
   Contact: 0413 267 859 or i.fesolai@gmail.com

C. RESEARCH DESCRIPTION:

The study seeks to address the topic by asking, 'What is the leadership development experience of youth leaders in the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist local churches in Greater Sydney?

The sub-questions will address the leadership development experience before, during and after their tenure as Youth Leaders.

Three Sydney-based Samoan Seventh-day Adventist churches in Sydney have been approached to be part of this study and the research participants being the two most recent youth leaders of each church.

The method of data-gathering is in two stages. The first part entails a short questionnaire covering demographic and general questions about faith and leadership experiences as a youth leader. The second part of the study, involves the answering specific leadership development questions via a one-on-one semi-structured interview.

D. PROCEDURE AND RISKS:

The data gathering method is in two stages. Firstly you will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire covering demographic and general questions about your time as youth leader. Secondly, you will be asked

to provide your views and opinions on your leadership experience as youth leader through a semi-structured interview.

We would like to record the interview, if you are willing. The data collected will be used to write our material. We will record the interview only with your written consent, and will ask that no personal identifiers be used during the interview, to ensure your anonymity. Please feel free to say as much or as little as you want.
You can decide not to answer any question, or to stop the interview any time you want. Please note that the recording and transcripts will become the property of study.

The recordings and transcripts (or copy of notes taken) will be kept anonymous, without any reference to your identity, and your identity will be concealed in any reports written from the interviews through the process of coding.

The data analysis requires no further involvement from you. In brief, this process involves the sorting, coding and measuring of the data you provide to us, before it is further processed for major themes before conclusions and recommendations are derived from them.

There are no known risks associated with participation in the study.

E. BENEFITS:

It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute to a more intentional and purposeful process of youth leadership development in the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist local church. It is the aim of this study to identify key current youth leadership development challenges that may need addressing. Although the study is not comprehensive, it further benefits you and other youth leaders by providing you with an opportunity to contribute to the future improvement of leadership experiences of youth leaders in the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist church.

F. COST COMPENSATION:

Participation in this study will involve no costs or payments to you.

G. CONFIDENTIALITY:

All information collected during the study period will be kept strictly confidential. No publications or reports from this project will include identifying information on any participant of the study. If you agree to join this study, please sign your name on the following page.

CONSENT FORM

for participation in questionnaire and individual interview

Research Title:
Through the eyes of Youth Leaders: A study of leadership development in the context of the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist Local Church.

Investigator(s):

1. Dr. Barry Gane
2. Ian Fesolai

---

1. I, _____, consent to participate in the above named study. I have been provided a copy of the **study information statement** to which this consent form relates to and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I acknowledge that:
   (a) my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation;
   (b) this research project is for the purpose of research and not for profit;
   (c) any identifiable information about me which is gathered in the course of and as the result of my participating in this project will be (i) collected and retained for the purpose of this study and (ii) accessed and analysed by the researcher(s) for the purpose of conducting this project;
   (d) any information or data collected will be handled with strict confidentiality by the researcher(s)and that my anonymity will be preserved;
   (e) the results of this study may be published.

3. ***In relation to this project, I note the following (please place an X in the appropriate box)***

   - I agree to be interviewed by the researcher
     Yes ☐ ☐ **No**
   - I agree to allow the interview to be recorded by an electronic device
     Yes ☐ ☐ **No**
   - I agree to make myself available for further information if required
     Yes ☐ ☐ **No**

   By signing this document I agree to participate in this study.

_____ _____

Signature of Interviewee **Date**

The Interview Process

1. **Thank Youth Leaders for their participation** in the study and express appreciation for allowing the researcher, the opportunity to interview them.

2. Briefly confirm the **nature of the interview** and my efforts as researcher to ensure that all the material collected – whether recorded, transcribed, analysed and stored – will be handled in a manner that ensures that all information remains confidential.

3. **Briefly outline** and discuss the research topic, the focus question and the nature of the study.

4. **Discuss** (briefly) **the interview process**, including the fact that the **interview will be recorded**.

5. **Inform participants of their rights** during the interview including – but not exclusive to – their right to postpone or terminate the interview at any time during the interview and their right of refusal to provide an answer for any given question which they may feel uncomfortable answering.

6. Supply them with the **information sheet** of the questions to be asked.

7. Supply them with **participation agreement** to sign and date.

8. At the conclusion of the interview, ask them if there is anything else missed in the interview questions that they may feel is appropriate to the study.
9. **Stop the recording device**. Thank them for their time and their contribution to improve the quality of Youth Leadership Development in their local church.

Appendix 1.4: Questionnaire

PART ONE: YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE
ID #: _____

Youth Leaders Questionnaire
Thank you for being a part of this research project. By answering these questions you will assist us understand more about the leadership development experience of youth leaders in a Samoan local church. This will help us learn more about how to improve the leadership development of youth leaders in the local church.

Your answers are confidential and will only be looked at by the research team and no one else. No one from your church will see your answers. It is not compulsory that you answer any question you find troubling. You can withdraw from the survey at any time. Data from this questionnaire will be used in a research thesis and possibly in professional conferences and publications.

Marking Directions
i. Please place an '**X**' in the box next to your answer

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC

*Please place an '**X**' in the box next to your answer*

1. How old are you?
- ☐ 18-22
- ☐ *23-27*
- ☐ *28-32*
- ☐ *33-37*
- ☐ *38-42*
- ☐ *43 or older*

2. What is your gender?
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

3. Where were you born?
- ☐ Australia
- ☐ New Zealand
- ☐ Samoa
- ☐ Other. _____

4. Do you currently hold a Samoan *matai* title?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. How many year(s) in total, were you a Youth Leader?
- ☐ Less than 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 3-4 years
- ☐ 5 or more years

SECTION B: INVOLVEMENT

Please place an 'X' in the box next to your answer

6. How long were you a Seventh-day Adventist church member, before your appointment as Youth Leader?

- ☐ Less than 2 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ 7-9 years
- ☐ 10-12 years
- ☐ 13 or more years

7. How would you describe how often you attended church before your appointment as Youth Leader?

- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Fortnightly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Rarely

8. How many members were attending the church you were Youth Leader at?

- ☐ 1-50
- ☐ 51-100
- ☐ 101-200
- ☐ 201 or more

9. Do you still attend the same church you were Youth Leader at?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

SECTION C: TRAINING & SUPPORT

Please place an 'X' in the box next to your answer

10. Were you involved in any training in preparation for your time as Youth Leader?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

11. Were you involved in any training during your time as Youth Leader?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12. Did you have a mentor during your Youth Leader tenure?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

13. Do you feel you received enough training and support as Youth Leader?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Appendix 1.5: Individual Interview Questions

PART TWO: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The aim of the study is to explore the leadership development experience of youth leaders before, during and after their appointed tenure as Youth Leaders in their Samoan Adventist local churches.

A. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT BEFORE APPOINTMENT AS YOUTH LEADER

1. **How were you selected as Youth Leader?**
   What were you doing before your nomination? Did you feel prepared to lead?

B. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DURING APPOINTMENT AS YOUTH LEADER

1. **What training, if any, were you offered during your tenure as Youth Leader?** If so, describe its impact on how you led?
2. **Did you receive any mentoring during your tenure as Youth Leader?**
   If so, briefly explain its impact?

C. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AFTER APPOINTMENT AS YOUTH LEADER

1. **What happened to you after your leadership tenure?**
   How did you feel?
2. **Looking back at your time as Youth Leader; what do you feel was most effective in your development as a young leader?**

Appendix 1.6: Thematic Analysis Categories

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Thematic Category	Categories	What they said
INVOLVEMENT MATTERS	INVOLVEMENT in Youth Committee	*"Assisting in the Committee" "part of the Youth Committee" "involved in the Youth Committee until I thought I had confidence in myself" "been in the youth committee for four years" "it wasn't frightening or anything because I had been in the youth committee" "it was easier to step up" "assisting in the committee I was more confident" "as a committee member, secretary, I worked my way up"*
	Involvement in other Church roles	*"Involved in leading small group" "I was involved as a deacon" "I taught the kids" "I was a Pathfinder Teacher" "Sabbath School Teacher" "involved in other smaller roles in church"*
TRAINING MATTERS	Training needed	*"Nah no training, they don't explain to you properly" "It helped but I got it during, but not before, it would've helped at the start of the year" "no training at the start" "you learn from previous leaders" "training from older youth who were leaders before" "it didn't prepare you to do Youth Leader" "I fumbled my way through" "ran off last year's leader" "just used what we did the previous year"*
	Concern over training relevance	*"I didn't get that much from it" "Samoan churches are a bit different" "I couldn't picture a Samoan church doing it like that" "the way things are structured in the Samoan church made it difficult" "more closed, stick to how we've done it before" "Palagi churches are more out there" "elders telling us, 'you can't do that'" "it didn't apply to the conservative way Samoan churches are" "doesn't apply directly" "we adapted what we could use"*
MENTORING MATTERS	Mentoring by older youth and previous youth leader quite positive	*"the boys from the previous year helped me" "from watching them and learning what they do" "the older youth helped me and gave me good ideas and advice" "support network from older youth who had been leaders before" "older youth were more of a support" "helpful to have someone experienced, gave me good advice" "last year's youth leader mentored me" "the guys really helped"*

	MENTORING by Youth Sponsor/ Faufautua both positive and negatives	*"faufautua was good, but most of time they wouldn't accept our views" "nah, no specific mentor" "my faufautua was hard to work with, working with the adults was challenging" "it was good to have them in the committee because of their advice, they were quite solid" "we had an awesome faufautua" "we had one for two years" "he fully mentored me and gave advice" "protected me" "fully support me in the meetings" "he wasn't afraid to pull us into line" "cautioned us, kept us focussed"*
CULTURAL FACTORS MATTER	Youth Leaders were CULTURALLY BOUND by hierarchical relationships and processes	*"just the way things are structured in the Samoan church" "had to run things past the elders" "the elders would be telling us, 'you can't do that'" "pretty challenging chats with elders" "challenging to work with" "not really supporting" "just things they didn't think about" "the youth leader had to respect their position as elder as we're younger" "being hammered in my first board meeting by the oldies" "coming from a traditional Samoan family you didn't have a choice to say no" "you're still young" "had to listen, especially having my aunties and uncles in the committee" "family expectations"*