

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

AN EXPLORATORY SEQUENTIAL MIXED METHODS STUDY OF PHRONETIC
ADMINISTRATIVE COMPETENCIES IN EXPERIENCED
STUDENT MINISTRY PRACTITIONERS

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Tripp Atkinson

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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ABSTRACT

While the impact of a healthy student ministry in the local church is culture-shaping and eternally significant, many churches are not experiencing success in this ministry area. Among the many challenges modern student ministry face, a high turnover rate and perceived lack of competence among student ministry professionals contribute to this lack of sustained fruitful ministry (Devries, 2008). In many cases, the lack of competence is a primary contributing factor to the turnover. While a number of studies have identified the necessity of student ministry professionals possessing sound administrative competencies in sustaining success, a significant gap in the literature exists, especially in the past decade, concerning research and development in the area of administration in student ministry. This sustained literature gap highlights the value of the learned experiences of student ministry veterans in the area of administration, as much of what they have learned in this area is phronetic, having been learned through experience. If such phronetic administrative competencies can be identified and ranked in order of perceived value among student ministry professionals, such information could inform curriculum development in higher education, professional development resources, and hiring practices for the church. The purpose of this exploratory sequential mixed methods research was to determine the nature of phronetic administrative competencies in experienced student ministry practitioners. This study first utilized a Delphi technique to collect data in a qualitative form regarding transformative administrative proficiencies most valued by an expert panel. This study then collected data in a quantitative form regarding perceived proficiency, value, and source of learned administrative proficiencies by student ministry professionals according to church size, educational background, and ministry experience.

Keywords: Student ministry, student pastor, competencies, administration, phronetic

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Dedication

To my Christ-honoring wife, Courtney, who does not care much about Delphi studies but does care deeply that the church is equipped to advance the Gospel. Without your love, support, encouragement, and sacrifice, this work would not have been possible.

To my incredible children, Kason, Cole and Hadley. I pray that in the sacrifices you have made in this journey, you have learned far more than those who read this study will learn. May God use those lessons to encourage you as you discover and live His best for your life. My greatest joy is seeing God work in each of your lives in unique and beautiful ways.

To my parents, Ken and Teri Atkinson, who have encouraged and supported me every step of this journey. Without you, this would not have been possible. Of all you have given me, your reflection of God's unconditional love is most cherished.

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The leadership and wonderful people of First Baptist Columbia and Sugar Hill Church have supported and encouraged me through my educational journey. The incredible student ministry team at SHC- Joy Lyle, Andy Armstrong, Corron Boston, Karen Brown, and Abigail Hyma- have been living examples of the beauty of God-designed teamwork.

Joy Lyle has gone the extra mile to encourage and facilitate margin in which to engage school work and has relentlessly encouraged throughout the journey. Jennifer Barrineau was the first to model the value of excellent administration in paving the way for sustained success in student ministry. Brittany Odom offered invaluable insight into this work and contributed greatly to qualitative analysis. Kris Reyes (Pathar Analytics, LLC) provided professional analytic support and wisdom in utilizing statistics in ministry.

My mom taught me the value of service and relationships, and my dad taught me there is always a way. My incredible family- Courtney, Kason, Cole, and Hadley- sacrificed for years to make this possible. My Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has saved me, sustained me, and blessed me far beyond what I deserve.

My heartfelt gratitude to all who have allowed God to use them to shape my life and ministry. And to the many who have chosen to embrace the beautiful mess of student ministry, both professionally and as volunteers, know that your labor of love is not in vain. You are

heroes. Know that your efforts, tears, investment, and sacrifices are eternally significant. God sees and knows. Thank you.

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List of Abbreviations

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Leader–Member Exchange (LMX)

Liberty University (LU)

Liberty University Center for Youth Ministry (LUCYM)

North American Mission Board (NAMB)

New Testament (NT)

Qualitative (QUAL)

Quantitative (QUAN)

Social-Behavioral-Education (SBE)

Student Leadership University (SLU)

Vertical Dyad Linkage (VDL)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

The demands of full-time student ministry professionals are varied and complex. In a position that is often expected to produce significant results, practitioners are facing more and more challenges reaching students in a post-Christian culture (Barna, 2018; White, 2017; DeVries, 2008). While the church desperately needs competent and trusted student ministry professionals building lasting relationships with families and facilitating a system of sustained discipleship, the average student ministry professional is only in their position for three years (Barna, 2016). High attrition rates among student ministry professionals have been significant since the late twentieth century (Borthwick, 2004; Strommen et al., 2001) and continue well into the twenty-first century (Devries, 2008; Barna, 2016). Such a trend is not helping the church reach and retain students.

While there are a host of reasons for the turnover rate of student ministry professionals, including low pay and perceived lack of support (Navarra, 2019), much of the turnover is tied to what Barna defines as the three core qualifications of pastoral leadership: calling, character, and competencies (Freed, 2014). While calling and character will be discussed, this work will focus on the needed competencies of the student ministry professional.

One may never be fully prepared for the demands and complexities of leading a healthy student ministry. Most churches' expectations of student ministry professionals require them to be great communicators, theologians, counselors, entertainers, planners, activity directors, managers, disciplinarians, motivators, crisis managers, and administrators (to name a few competencies). While many student ministry professionals are hired because of their magnetic stage presence and public communication skills, for most practitioners in a local church, a

modest percentage of their job requirements involve being on a stage (Devries, 2008). The far greater percentage of their job requirements involve leadership and administrative competencies (Robbins, 2010).

But are there a variety of resources that specifically address administrative competency development in the unique setting of the local church student ministry? A review of the literature shows that such resources are few and mostly dated. This gap highlights the value of the learned experiences of student ministry veterans in the area of administration. Because there is a significant gap in the literature, much of what veteran student ministry professionals have learned in this area is phronetic in nature, as it has been learned through experience.

If such phronetic administrative competencies can be identified and ranked in order of perceived value among student ministry professionals, such information could be valuable in informing curriculum development in higher education, resources for professional development, and hiring practices for the church. It could also significantly impact the health of countless student ministries, as well as the professionals who lead them. This study explored such competencies and aimed to make such a contribution.

Toward that aim, this study is arranged as follows: Chapter One provides an introduction, overview, and foundational framework for the research study. Chapter Two offers a review of the literature, providing a theological framework, theoretical framework, a review of related literature, rationale for the study, gap in the literature, and profile of the study. Chapter Three describes the research methodology, detailing the research design synopsis, setting, participants, sampling procedures, limitations of generalization, the role of the researcher, ethical considerations, and data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter Four offers an analysis of

research findings organized by research question. Chapter Five offers research conclusions, implications, and applications, and suggests opportunities for further research.

Background to the Problem

As the modern church faces the significant challenge of reaching and retaining students in a post-Christian culture, it is more important than ever that churches have healthy student ministries that are successfully engaging and discipling students to impact their world for the glory of God. While such ministries are built on lasting and trusted relationships (Cole et al., 2016), the church continues to see high attrition among student ministry professionals tasked with building such relationships and ministries (Barna, 2016). Much of this attrition is tied to competency-related issues, often related to a lack of administrative leadership skills (Devries, 2008).

While there are not many and most are older than five years old, several important studies have identified needed competencies for the student ministry professional and agree that solid administrative competencies are significant for leading and sustaining effective ministry to students in the local church (Dunn, 1996; Strommen et al., 2001; Graham, 2005; Temple, 2007; Anderson, 2017). However, it has also been found that student ministry professionals place little value on administrative development (Temple, 2007). Could it be that the lack of value comes from the lack of literature in this area? Perhaps those student ministry professionals in their first three years of church ministry do not realize what knowledge they lack in this area or understand how vital administrative skills are to growing and sustaining success in student ministry. One would assume such vital skills are being taught to student ministry professionals (or those aspiring to be) in theological higher education. However, are such assumptions accurate?

According to a 2013 study by the Barna Group discussed in a 2016 report, only 34% of

student pastors attended seminary, and 7% have “some” seminary training (Barna, 2016, p. 55). But even seminaries have been criticized for neglecting practical training that is necessary for the development of professional competencies and encouraged to provide such competencies that will better prepare students for sustained success (Morgan, 1994; Greig, 1999, Temple, 2007, Welch, 2011; Geukgeuzian, 2015, Anderson, 2017). The 60% of student pastors who have not attended seminary (Barna, 2016, p. 55) must rely on resources outside of higher education to successfully identify and develop the competencies needed to lead a healthy student ministry organization. The problem is that these resources largely do not exist. The literature gap related to administrative skill development in the student ministry setting has created a significant problem that is impacting the church struggling to reach a post-Christian generation.

Researcher’s Relationship to the Problem

This researcher has over 23 years of experience serving the local church (4 churches full-time) in student ministry. This experience has led to an awareness of certain indispensable competencies learned through experience that has proven to be vital in sustaining healthy results in student ministry for a significant tenure. These administrative competencies are typically discussed when this writer coaches other student ministry professionals. More times than not, it is discovered that these practitioners did not learn such administrative competencies in their higher education training or any professional training since.

With a handful of transformative skills in mind, this researcher casually reviewed youth ministry master’s degree programs from eight seminaries. Examining course descriptions, desired learning outcomes, and course material (where available), it was found that only one out of the eight programs specifically addressed any of the competencies that this student ministry veteran deemed valuable for leading sustained success in student ministry. (Liberty University

was the only program that specifically highlighted any of these valued skills.)

This casual review led this researcher to a more in-depth exploration of the literature, which highlighted the need for this study and led to the formation of the relevant research questions (RQs). When answered, the research questions provide additional insight and, prayerfully, solutions to the problem.

Statement of the Problem

Student ministry professionals need essential training in administrative competencies that have proven invaluable in growing and sustaining success in student ministry in the local church (Devries, 2008; Robbins, 2010). The problem is that there exists a significant gap in the literature that could be used for such training. This problem presents a challenge for both seminaries and individuals seeking resources in administrative training in the student ministry context.

While seminaries cannot prepare students in every ministry area in a 36, 48, or even 60-hour program, they must send students into ministry settings equipped with more than theological training (Anderson, 2019). Certainly, such theological training should serve as the foundation of their preparedness, but what good is it to invest so much in theological training to impact students and families if the practitioner will not be able to keep a job due to burnout or firing for incompetence? It would seem that seminaries could better prepare students by offering them training in administrative competencies that have proven to be indispensable to successful student ministry veterans.

Identifying such competencies would not only serve a great purpose in seminaries but also in training resources for the majority of student pastors who have not attended seminary. Perhaps identifying such competencies could also help student ministry practitioners who have led a ministry for years but have struggled to see significant results.

There are a plethora of student ministry training resources that focus on theological training, relational ministry, discipleship, and big-picture strategies (Robbins, 2011; Anthony and Marshman, 2015; Stier, 2015; Cole et al., 2016; Trueblood, 2016; Newton and Pace, 2019; and Belsterling, 2019). What is lacking is a variety of resources that focus on administrative competencies that will transform a student ministry. If ministry success is facilitated by administrative competencies, this poses a significant problem for churches, aspiring student ministry professionals, and even current practitioners desiring a healthy and fruitful ministry to students.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this exploratory sequential mixed methods research was to determine the nature of phronetic administrative competencies in experienced student ministry practitioners. This study first utilized a Delphi technique to collect data in a qualitative form regarding transformative administrative proficiencies most valued by an expert panel. This study then collected data in a quantitative form regarding perceived proficiency, value, and source of learned administrative proficiencies by student ministry professionals according to church size, educational background, and ministry experience.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. What practical administrative abilities have been most valuable to student ministry professionals in leading a successful student ministry?

RQ2. What is the source of learning for the most valued administrative competencies?

RQ3. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and the size of ministry?

RQ4. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and ministry experience?

RQ5. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and perceived proficiency in that competency?

Assumptions and Delimitations

Research Assumptions

The following assumptions underlying this study are listed as follows:

1. The student ministry professionals included in this study have an informed understanding of what comprises a healthy student ministry.
2. The student ministry professionals included in this study can accurately assess their competencies and their student ministry's health.

Delimitations of the Research Design

This study examined the phronetic administrative competencies of student ministry practitioners in the context of the local church. The specific focus may impact the degree to which any findings may generalize to other populations.

This research is delimited to student ministry professionals who are currently serving or have recently served in a local evangelical Christian church in the United States. This research is further delimited to examining transformative competencies that are administrative in nature.

Definition of Terms

To provide for a clear understanding of specific terms that are used throughout this study, the following definitions are presented.

1. *Student Ministry professional /practitioner*: This term describes a full-time church staff member who leads a ministry area that ministers to middle school and high school students.
2. *Phronetic*: This term describes practical expertise that is characteristic of experienced practitioners. It is derived from Aristotle's idea of phronesis (Flyvbjerg, Landman, & Schram, 2012).
3. *Administrative Competencies*: This term refers to abilities related to or required for running an organization/ministry successfully (Oxford University Press, 2020).

4. *Transformative*: This term describes the power to change or influence something dramatically.
5. *Proficiencies*: This term refers to skills and abilities.
6. *Transformative Competencies*: This term refers to abilities that dramatically change or influence.
7. *Delphi Method*: This term refers to a research process used to determine the opinion of a group by surveying an expert panel, usually in multiple rounds of questioning (Skulmoski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007).

Significance of the Study

The results of this study contribute important data that could inform the following areas:

1. Evaluation of seminary curriculum.
2. Identification of needed resources for the training of student ministry professionals.
3. Hiring practices in the local church.

Summary of the Design

This study is a mixed methods exploratory sequential design. A mixed methods approach to this study was chosen to most fully answer the research questions. This study gathered open-ended qualitative information regarding what administrative competencies are needed to lead a sustainable and effective student ministry. From that information, this study explored closed-ended quantitative information in regards to how those identified administrative competencies are ranked, perceived to be proficient, and how they are learned by student ministry professionals.

The three phases of this exploratory sequential mixed-method design flow from the collection of qualitative data from an expert panel (Phase 1) to the design of testing instrument from that collected data (Phase 2) to the collection of quantitative data with the new instrument (Phase 3) from which results are interpreted.

Research participants were obtained through various student ministry networks. The researcher assembled a panel of 20 experts that included 15 student ministry professionals widely considered successful in their field and have at least ten years of experience in student ministry in a local church. Five of these professionals were chosen from churches that average less than 500 congregants in weekend attendance (categorized as *small* churches). Five of these professionals were chosen from churches that average between 500 and 1,200 congregants in weekend attendance (categorized as *medium* churches). Five of these professionals were chosen from churches that average more than 1,200 congregants in weekend attendance (categorized as *large/mega* churches). An additional five experts were chosen from the student ministry network organizations to provide representative expertise on a national level.

In Phase 1 of the research, a Delphi method was used to discover the potential consensus among a panel of experts as it relates to administrative competencies needed to sustain an effective student ministry. The Delphi method utilized a three-round iterative process to seek consensus. In the first Delphi round of study, the expert panel was given a brief description of the nature of the study and was asked one open-ended question, “What five administrative competencies have proven to be most transformative in effectively running a successful Student Ministry?” Participants were asked to provide a one to two sentence description of each competency listed to clarify their intent. Results were analyzed, and like responses were combined. Participants were given a compiled list of competencies gathered from the panel. After reviewing responses from the panel, participants were given the opportunity to revise, add to, or subtract from their answers. Results were analyzed, and like responses combined. This was the first step towards consensus.

In the second Delphi round, demographic and ministry background information was collected, and experts were asked to quantitatively rate the list of competencies according to value and indicate proficiency level and learning source for each. Data was analyzed, and participants had an opportunity to review the average (mean) rating of how the expert panel views each competency. After reviewing the average ratings, participants were allowed to revise previous answers if they desired.

In a third and final Delphi round, the experts were asked to rank the top 10 competencies (identified in round 2) in order of value. Data was analyzed and the expert panel top 10 competencies were identified for use in phase 2. This concluded the three-round Delphi and phase 1 of the research study.

Phase 2 of this study involved developing a test instrument from phase 1 data to facilitate the phase 3 testing of a larger population of student ministry professionals. In phase 3, the new quantitative research instrument was emailed via weblink through two national youth ministry networks to full-time student ministry professionals in evangelical Christian churches across the United States. The questionnaire included a brief description of the study's purpose, a consent form, and the study's procedures. Respondents provided information regarding gender, age, ministry experience, denominational affiliation, educational background, church size, ministry budget, and perceived health of ministry. Respondents rated each competency's value and indicated the source of learning and perceived proficiency of each competency.

The results were analyzed to answer the research questions. Network directors and research participants were offered an opportunity to view final results, observations, and generalizations that may be made from completed research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

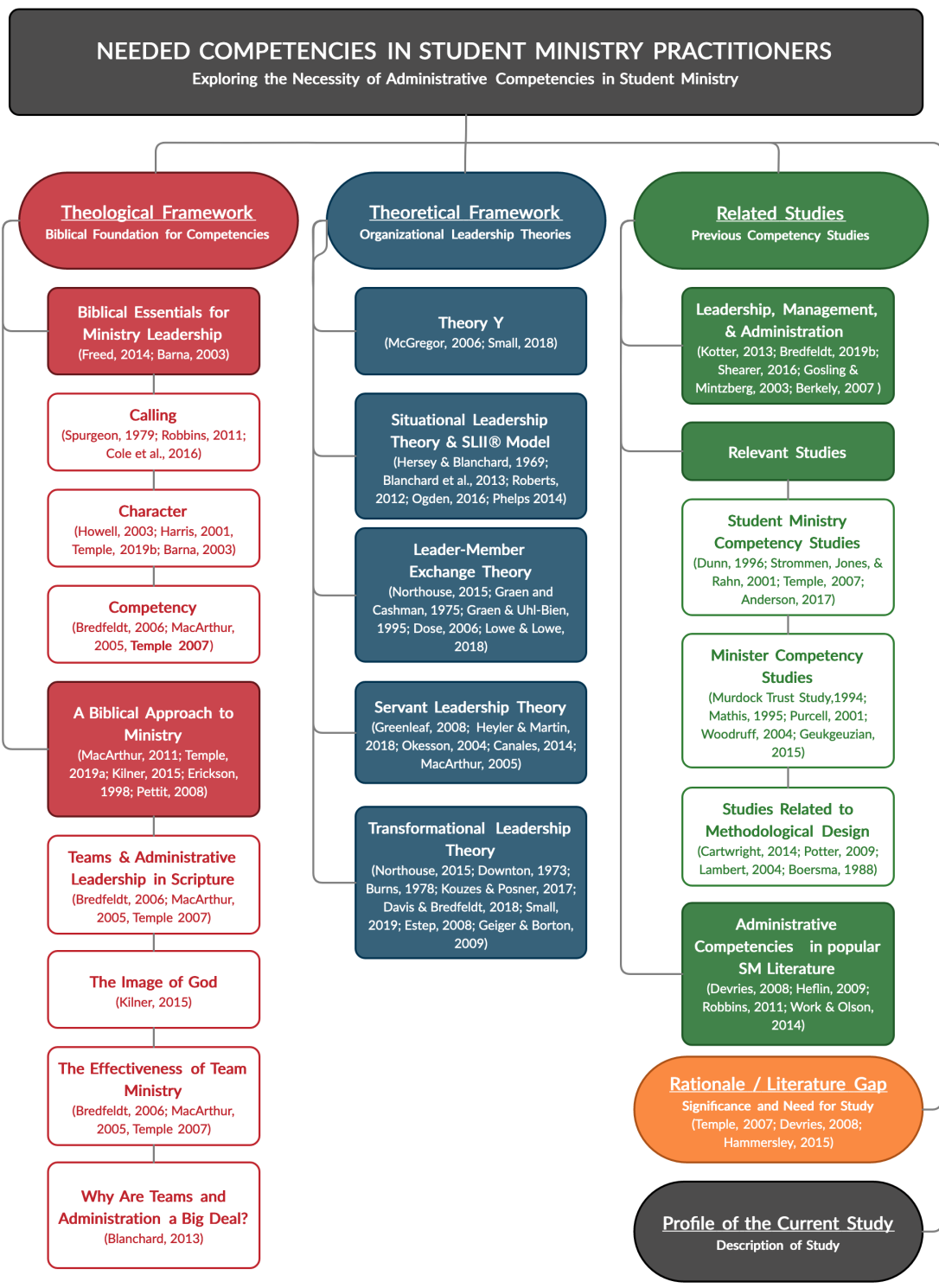
Overview

Leedy and Ormrod (2016) note, “Many who have conducted research before you have laid foundational elements—not only previous research finding but also insightful concepts and theories—on which you might productively build” (p. 52). The purpose of this chapter is to uncover and review such concepts and theories relevant to the study, that may guide this study, and on which the future findings of this study can be built.

This chapter begins by establishing a theological framework for the study. Biblical essentials for leadership and a biblical approach to ministry will be explored, including a case for a team approach to ministry and a look at administrative leadership demonstrated in the ministry of Jesus. Next, a theoretical framework for the study will be examined by exploring five leadership and organizational management theories that are particularly significant to the student ministry professional and consistent with the instruction and example of Jesus. Then, related literature will be reviewed, starting with works relevant to leadership, management, and administration. The focus will be narrowed to relevant studies, starting with student ministry competency studies, and then necessarily widening the scope to minister competencies due to the lack of studies focused on student minister competencies. Studies related to methodological design will be examined to provide comparisons regarding exploratory sequential designs utilizing a Delphi method. The final examination in relevant studies will review popular student ministry literature that addresses administrative competencies in the student ministry professional. Next, a rationale for the study will be articulated and the significant gap in the literature will be highlighted. This chapter will conclude with a profile of the current study. A progression of this chapter is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Literature Map



Theological Framework for the Study

Paraphrasing Augustine of Hippo, Arthur Holmes (1977) coined the phrase “All truth is God’s truth” in his book by that title (Holmes, 1977). While a wide-range of literature will be reviewed in this chapter, this researcher will begin by exploring a biblical and theological framework for this study. Pinzer (2018) notes that the special revelation of God is the Bible, and “His revelation is perfect” (Pinzer, 2018). In determining relevant biblical-theological themes related to qualifications and competencies for the student ministry professional, it is logical to start with Scripture and sources concerned with biblical literature.

Biblical Essentials for Ministry Leadership

Scripture is clear regarding what should motivate a ministry leader, who they should be, and what they should do. As one seeks ministry leadership in the church or develops those who do, careful attention should be given to a biblical understanding of calling, character, and competency in the ministry leader.

Calling

Of the many questions surrounding ministry and leadership, perhaps the most critical question is, “Why?” The aim of leadership and ministry should be motivated by divine calling and clear purpose. When considering the student ministry professional’s calling, one must consider the mission to which the church and all Christians are called and a specific calling associated with vocational ministry.

While Scripture gives various descriptions of Christian leadership’s function and aim, perhaps the two most direct mission statements for the church are found in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. In responding to a question about the most important commandment in the Law, Jesus responds in Matthew 22:37, “Love the Lord your God with all

your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (New International Version, 1973/2011)¹. Jesus follows this command up with the next most important command to love one’s neighbor as they love themselves. This total devotion to God and selfless service to others should certainly be an aim of Christian leadership (Bredfeldt, 2006).

The other missional mandate from Jesus is found in his words in Matthew 28:19-20, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” A missional agenda aims and drives the Christian leader for the purposes and glory of God. Cole et al. (2016) affirm this foundational, biblical assumption regarding youth ministry, “the primary role of the youth pastor and the student ministry in the local church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ” (p. 39). For the mission-driven student ministry professional, discipleship is not simply a program; it is a passion and calling that defines ministry work. Francis Chan (2012) stated this well when he said, “Making disciples is far more than a program. It is the mission of our lives. It defines us. A disciple is a disciple maker” (p. 31). Any student ministry leadership aimed at purposes other than these will yield results that lack eternal significance. Even if a ministry attracts large numbers and great excitement, a student ministry void of disciple-making is ultimately void of real success (Robbins, 2011).

Student ministry professionals, as all pastoral staff, should also be concerned with a specific calling by God to vocational ministry. In his classic work *Lectures to My Students*, Spurgeon (1979) discusses how to know the call to ministry with his students. He lists five ways that one can know that they are called:

1. An intense, all-absorbing desire for the work.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the Bible are from the New International Version Bible (1973/2011).

2. Aptness to teach and some measure of the other qualities needed for the ministry position.
3. Opportunities as God opens doors.
4. A measure of success.
5. Affirmation of the church (Spurgeon, 1979, pp. 26-41).

Spurgeon urged his students that if they could do anything other than vocational ministry, to do it. He rightly knew the passion needed to weather the intense and continual trials that come with vocational ministry. The demands that are placed on student pastors are typically unrealistic and discouraging (Devries, 2008). It is often a sense of divine calling that gives the motivation to persevere. While competencies and character are undoubtedly necessary, a successful ministry begins with a divine calling.

Character

Because rightly reflecting the character of Christ is at the heart of the calling and mission of the student ministry professional, it is impossible to be truly successful in ministry without character. Anyabwile (2012) affirms, “A pastor cannot be effective if he does not have private character” (p. 63). For the Christian leader, character should be rooted in the foundation of Scripture and one’s identity in Jesus Christ. While there are many criteria used in our culture to measure the success of a Christian leader (church size, financial health, fame, giftedness, etc.), biblical leadership should be highly concerned with the character of the leader. Howell (2003) notes the biblical example of leadership success in the ministry of Timothy and Titus, “Timothy and Titus will succeed in their pastoral ministries to the degree that they give careful attention to growing in godliness and setting an example for the believers in faith (Godward), love (manward), and integrity (selfward) (1 Tim 4:7-8, 12, 16; Tit 2:7-8, 15; 3:8)” (p. 296). It is from the heart and character of the leader that all actions and leadership flows.

For the Christian leader, all action and leadership should reflect Jesus Christ, who is the perfect image of God. Paul captures an understanding of this in his words to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” Of this call by Paul to imitate him, Howell (2003) notes, “Paul sets forth himself not as a leader to follow, but as a fellow servant to imitate” (p. 266). Paul used strong and clear language when he repeatedly identified himself as a “servant” and “slave” of God or Jesus Christ.

Speaking of the biblical and theological foundation of the slave motif, Murray J. Harris (2001) notes, “A servant gives service to someone, but a slave belongs to someone. We commit ourselves to do something, but when we surrender ourselves to someone, we give ourselves up” (p. 18). Such leadership is a reflection of the leadership of Jesus Christ, and a picture of what true Christian leadership should be. The follower of Jesus Christ should be wholly surrendered to the person and purposes of Christ, and his character should reflect that of Christ.

In his presentation, “Who is the Christian Leader?” Temple (2019a) noted, “A solid, credible character is the basis of the teacher/learner relationship.” From that basis, an ethical leader can leverage trust to impact the life of the learner. Barna (2002) affirms the necessity of trust that is derived from character, asserting that effective leaders “must possess the type of character that moves people to trust you to take them places—spiritual, emotional, relational, and intellectual—that they otherwise would not go” (p. xvi). Without character, a student ministry professional cannot expect to earn the trust needed to facilitate meaningful transformation. Cloud (2009) claims, “...who a person is will ultimately determine if their brains, talents, competencies, energy, effort, deal-making abilities, and opportunities will succeed” (pg. 8). Character counts because what one does flows from who they are. Scripture affirms this in

Proverbs 11:3, “The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.”

What specific character qualities should a student ministry professional possess? The Apostle Paul lists over thirteen qualities that church leaders should reflect,

Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap. (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

In listing qualifications, Paul focuses on character qualities more than professional skills.

Perhaps if student ministry professionals did the same, there would be less turnover in student ministry related to character issues. Barna (2003) notes a truth that perhaps many student ministry practitioners have ignored, “Character is not like competencies, for which it is acceptable to ignore your weaknesses and run with your strengths. Weakness of character will eventually undermine your strengths, no matter how strong they are” (para. 14).

Competencies

In addition to divine calling and character, there are necessary skills that a student ministry professional must possess. Bredfeldt (2006) notes, “... virtuous character in itself is not enough. A Christian leader must be competent for, or capable of doing, the tasks required” (p. 113). Bredfeldt points to Psalm 78:74, “And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.” For the Christian leader, there is an expectation of both character and competency. Concerning what a pastor is to be and do, MacArthur (2005) notes a similar connection in 1Peter 5:1-3 as an exhortation for pastors to “be humble and do the work of

shepherding the flock” (p. 15). Character (humility) and competence (do the work of shepherding the flock) go hand in hand in effective ministry.

MacArthur (2005) points to 1 and 2 Thessalonians as the most explicit books in Scripture that describe this relationship regarding the work of ministry. This basic ministry description is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

The Primary Activities of a Pastor

1. Praying	1 Thess. 1:2-3; 3:9-13
2. Evangelizing	1 Thess. 1:4-5; 9-10
3. Equipping	1 Thess. 1:6-8
4. Defending	1 Thess. 2:1-6
5. Loving	1 Thess. 2:7-8
6. Laboring	1 Thess. 2:9
7. Modeling	1 Thess. 2:10
8. Leading	1 Thess. 2:10-12
9. Feeding	1 Thess. 2:13
10. Watching	1 Thess. 3:1-8
11. Warning	1 Thess. 4:1-8
12. Teaching	1 Thess. 4:9-5:11
13. Exhorting	1 Thess. 5: 12-24
14. Encouraging	2 Thess. 1:3-12
15. Correcting	2 Thess. 2:1-12
16. Confronting	2 Thess. 3:6, 14

This list describes both the character of a pastor as well as the nature of his work.

Regarding the specific aim of ministry leadership, the Apostle Paul describes God's design for pastor-teachers to properly equip the body of Christ in Ephesians 4:11-14,

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

The work of ministry involves those called to service, with Christ-honoring character, and equipped to equip others for ministry towards maturity in Christ.

What specific competencies are required to do such work in a student ministry setting? Based on biblical precedent and the needs of modern-day youth ministry, Heflin (2009) proposes that student ministry practitioners need competencies to fulfill ten roles, which he grouped in five identity dyads, as seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Heflin's Roles of Professional and Volunteer Youth Workers

Identity Dyad	Role
Approach to Education	1) Evangelistic Missionary
	2) Discipling Teacher
Allocation of Time	3) Pastoral Shepherding
	4) Organized Administrator
Position of Advocacy	5) Bold Prophet
	6) Compassionate Priest

Identity Dyad	Role
Focus on Relationships	7) Spiritual Friend 8) Equipping Recruiter
Division of Responsibilities	9) Visionary Leader 10) Faithful Teammate

Note. Heflin's Roles of Professional and Volunteer Youth Workers. Adapted from Youth Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Youth Ministry by Houston Heflin, 2009, loc. 163-176. Copyright Abingdon Press.

Such work involves competencies related to teaching, preaching, shepherding, and counseling, valuable skills of which much has been written (for example, Robbins & Fields, 2007; McDowell & Hostetler, 1996; Heflin, 2009). However, the work also requires invaluable administrative organizational leadership skills, of which there exists a significant literature gap (Strommen et al., 2001; Devries, 2008, Heflin, 2009). To successfully build and sustain a healthy student ministry, the student ministry professional must develop administrative competencies that lead others in accomplishing the purposes of the church.

To identify and understand the value of these competencies, one must explore a biblical case for a team approach to ministry and understand the administrative leadership skills modeled throughout Scripture in effectively leading a team to fulfill God's purposes for the church.

A Biblical Approach to Ministry

A contributing factor to the turnover rate of student ministry professionals is the inability or unwillingness to cooperatively partner with church staff or parents of students (Devries, 2008). Typically the newest staff member in a position known to have the shortest shelf life (Barna, 2016, Devries, 2008), the temptation is real for the student ministry professional to isolate themselves and operate their ministry area in a "silo." Such an approach to ministry is not only less effective but also can be destructive. A biblical approach to student ministry is

relational in nature and involves teams. To effectively build and sustain a healthy student ministry, the student ministry professional must possess the competencies needed to function on a team as well as lead a team. A healthy team approach to student ministry is not only biblical but is also more effective than an individual approach in accomplishing the missional purpose of the church and sustaining effective ministry to students.

Teams and Administrative Leadership in Scripture

A team approach to ministry is both instructed and modeled throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament, it was the strategy used to lead the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, it was how Jesus chose to operate as a model for the church. Throughout Scripture, the picture of effective team ministry involves certain leadership and management competencies used to inspire, influence, and develop groups of people to achieve a common goal.

Old Testament. Exodus 3 – 4:17 records Moses' call by God to lead the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt. Moses protested this assignment based on his perceived lack of giftedness to adequately fulfill the mission. Moses asked God to send someone else who was better qualified. To this protest, God reveals that he has already provided a compliment to Moses' abilities by sending Aaron to go with him to be his mouthpiece. Where Moses was weak, God provided a teammate who possessed that strength. Together they approached the elders of the Israelites (Exodus 4:29), who served as a team of leaders in the Israelite community. They united the elders with the God-given mission and vision, under which they all played their unique role.

Exodus 18 records the further utilization of delegation and teamwork in Moses' leading of the nation of Israel. After Israel emerged from captivity in Egypt, Jethro (the father-in-law of Moses) saw that Moses was burdened with the strain of leadership and ministry. Jethro tells Moses, "You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too

heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone” (Exodus 18:18). Moses’ best efforts were too little for such a great need and inefficient given his giftedness. Jethro encourages Moses to delegate, empowering others to lead as he works within his giftedness. He states to Moses, “If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied” (Exodus 18:23). In highlighting the wisdom of Jethro’s advice to Moses, Sanders (1974) notes, “It is a big mistake to assume more duties than we can discharge. There is no virtue in doing more than our fair share of the work. We do well to recognize our limitations” (p. 140). Moses recognized his limitations and became highly effective as he embraced this team approach to ministry and used administrative leadership competencies to lead the ministry team.

Of Moses as a leader, Eguizabal and Lawson (2009) stated, “Moses looked for the assistance of a number of people who also qualified to take the role of leaders. He had a humble attitude before God and men, recognizing that other people could carry out the mission with him” (p. 254). Moses learned to recognize others’ God-given giftedness, empower them to lead, and trust them to make decisions. As he did this, he became more effective in leadership and ministry.

Many student ministry professionals burn out, not being able to “stand the strain” of ministry because they either never learn how to effectively develop leaders to share the work or they never develop the administrative abilities to rightly organize and delegate the work (Devries, 2008). As Moses was challenged to grow in the area of administration, he effectively multiplied his capacity as he empowered others for the work of the ministry.

Another great Old Testament leader who realized the necessity of administrative competencies in fulfilling God’s calling was Nehemiah. Noting his strategic management acumen, Patton (2018) refers to Nehemiah as “an early case study in strategic management” (p.

8). Nehemiah chapters 1-7 records the story of Nehemiah's quest to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. His ability to lead well despite significant opposition is a picture that every student ministry professional should emulate. Of Nehemiah's administrative acumen, Breneman (1993) notes,

Nehemiah was a genuine leader, an excellent administrator, and a man of prayer. He exhibited many principles of sound administrative practice. Nehemiah's singlemindedness of purpose, attention to detail, willingness to delegate authority, dedication to service, and dependence on God were combined in a man who can simply be labeled as a servant of God. (p. 31)

Nehemiah demonstrated the heart of a Godly leader when he asserted, "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding..." (Nehemiah 2:20). While he acknowledged that God was the source of ultimate success, he recognized his role was to inspire, equip and lead a team in doing more together than any of them could do on their own.

MacArthur (2005) states,

Like many biblical leaders, Nehemiah demonstrated an understanding of God's call over his life. Whether as cupbearer to a king or as the rebuilders of Jerusalem, Nehemiah pursued his goals with commitment, careful planning, strategic delegation, creative problem solving, focus on the tasks at hand, and a continual reliance on God, particularly regarding areas beyond his control. (p. 543)

Nehemiah wisely adapted his leadership to meet the demands of the situation. He inspired others by both his words and example. Breneman (1993) notes, "Nehemiah was an energetic leader who combined a deep trust in the Lord with precise planning, careful organization, and discreet but energetic action. Christian leaders find inspiration in Nehemiah's life and character" (p. 167).

Nehemiah's clear sense of calling, honorable character, and administrative competency combine to form the qualities of a leader who accomplished what seemed impossible for the glory of God.

New Testament. The New Testament (NT) provides many examples of a team approach to ministry that is significant for the student ministry professional. The most prominent team

ministry models are offered through Jesus' ministry with his disciples and Paul's example and instructions to the early church regarding team ministry.

Jesus' Model of Ministry. Jesus is the ultimate example of a team-oriented leader. As Jesus began his earthly public ministry, he formed his team by choosing 12 disciples with whom he could have more intimate relationships as they ministered together. Mark 3:13-19 records Jesus choosing his disciples,

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means "sons of thunder"), Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

For 18 months, Jesus invested in these men and allowed them to watch him as he ministered to the sick, lame, and lost. Then Jesus empowered them to participate in the ministry that they had seen him do. Luke 9:1-10 records the collective ministry efforts of this newly empowered team. "When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1-2). This empowerment of his team allowed the reach of Jesus' ministry to begin to expand significantly. MacArthur (2011) notes, "Jesus chose to multiply His ministry by using the twelve men whom he had called to be apostles (6:12-16)" (p. 240). Jesus modeled that a team approach to ministry can multiply reach and impact.

Paul's Model of Ministry. The ministry of the Apostle Paul was characterized by a team approach to ministry and demonstration of administrative competencies as well. Several fellow ministers typically accompanied Paul on his missionary trips and in his ministry work. Paul's ministry team included Onesimus (Philemon 12-14), Luke (2 Timothy 4:11), Timothy (Acts

20:1-6), Silas (Acts 16:19-40), Tychicus (Acts 20:4), Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:2), Apollos (Acts 18:24-28), and Mark (2 Timothy 4:11). Paul's concern for co-laborers in the faith is evident in his letters, as in his letter to Titus,

As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives. Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. (Titus 3:12-15)

Paul not only traveled with his ministry partners but heavily invested in each of them. As Paul modeled Jesus' approach to team ministry, he equipped and empowered others to multiply the impact of his ministry for the sake of the Gospel of Christ. An example of this is Paul's encouragement to Timothy, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2). Paul consistently demonstrated an understanding of the effectiveness of a team approach to ministry and the importance of equipping others for the work of the ministry. Dunn and Senter (1997) note an axiom of sustained youth ministry, "...long-term growth of a youth ministry is directly dependent on the ability of the youth worker to release ministry responsibilities to mature and qualified lay leaders" (p. 150). Such competency expands not only the reach of the ministry but also the effectiveness.

Instruction to the Early Church. As Paul modeled Jesus' approach to relational team ministry, he also gave the early church specific instructions regarding how they should view their mission and ministry. Perhaps his most clear statement regarding a team approach to ministry is found in 1 Corinthians 12. Paul states, "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:12). In this passage, Paul clarifies that each part of the body has specific skills, each part is valuable, and the body best

functions as the parts work together. Speaking of 1 Corinthians 12, Temple (2019a) asserts that this passage is “an emphatic statement about team ministry.” Paul is most explicit about collaborative ministry when he states,

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? (1 Corinthians 12:27-30)

Paul masterfully uses the image of a body to illustrate the interconnectedness of the church. Of this, MacArthur (1984) notes, “Paul again... uses the human body to illustrate the unity and interrelationship of the members of Christ’s Body, the church” (p. 310). Paul’s repeated use of this imagery emphasizes its significance. “Through verse 27 of chapter 12 Paul uses the term *body* some 16 times, and he uses the metaphor many other places in his writings (Rom. 12:5; Eph. 1:23; 2:16; 4:4, 12, 16; Col. 1:18; etc.)” (MacArthur, 1984, p. 310).

God’s design for pastor-teachers (Ephesians 4:11-12) also serves as a model of team ministry. Paul dispels the myth that it is merely the job of a pastor or student pastor to do ministry. He describes their work as equippers of the church for the work of ministry. This directive opposes a “Lone Ranger” approach to student ministry and emphasizes the collective nature of the church’s work.

For those who would protest, like Moses, that they are not gifted for ministry, Paul notes the ability of each member to do things well in Romans 12:3-8,

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is

to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Paul is vivid in his imagery and clear in teaching that church ministry involves team ministry, and teams need leaders equipped to lead them well. Each team member has specific skills, each team member is valuable, and the body best functions as the team members work together. The ministry leader's role is to facilitate such collaborative service (Hartwig & Bird, 2015).

The student ministry professional's job is not to "do all the ministry" but to recognize the giftedness of others, help others discover their giftedness, and lead them to utilize their giftedness for the glory of God. Contrary to why some may get into student ministry, the student ministry professional should not be the ministry's focal point. Biblical leadership of a student ministry should never include a "Rockstar" student pastor (Devries, 2018). In his work *Student Ministry That Matters: 3 Elements of a Healthy Student Ministry*, Ben Trueblood (2016) stresses this point, "A healthy student ministry isn't led by one person, but by a team of people who all desire a healthy student ministry and know how to get there together" (p. 229). The elements of such a healthy student ministry (collaborative movement towards a clear goal) are descriptive of the need for specific administrative leadership competencies.

The Image of God

Another aspect in which a team approach to ministry is biblical relates to the Image of God in man. Genesis 1:26-27 states,

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

While there are many views concerning how to define the image of God in man, the Bible is clear that Jesus Christ is the perfect image of God. Kilner (2015) notes, "Ultimately, the image of

God is Jesus Christ. People are first created and later renewed according to that image. Image involves connection and reflection. Creation in God's image entails a special connection with God and an intended reflection of God" (loc. 90). The image of God in man is displayed in connection with the triune relational God and properly reflecting the triune relational God to the world.

Kilner (2015) notes the result of followers of Christ becoming conformed to Christ, "Christians become the human image of God in Christ by becoming conformed to Christ" (p. 235). As one is renewed in Christ and conformed to Christ, they more fully understand that "God's image is the very blueprint for humanity" (Kilner, 2015, p. 90). Healthy team leadership most consistently demonstrates such a connection with and reflection of a relational triune God.

The Effectiveness of Team Ministry

A team approach to student ministry is not only biblical but also more effective than an individual approach in accomplishing the church's missional purpose. The church's mission is relational and is most effectively accomplished through a collaborative team effort. Beyond that, there are certain benefits of a team approach to student ministry that cannot be experienced apart from an authentic team community. This collaborative work involves necessary administration to be effective and successful.

The Mission. There are many ways in which the purposes of the church have been characterized. Dever (2012) states, "The proper ends for a local congregation's life and actions are the worship of God, the edification of the church, and the evangelism of the world. These three purposes in turn serve the glory of God" (p. 69). Erickson (1998) identifies the functions of the church as "evangelism, edification, worship, and social concern" (pp. 1060-1061). While the church has many purposes, it is clear from Scripture that the church's missional purposes involve

evangelism and discipleship (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). The Great Commission mandate that is a calling of every Christian is fulfilled through the context of biblical community.

While many have tried to make discipleship merely a program, it is undeniably relational and involves community. Chan and Beuving (2012) note, “Discipleship is all about living life together rather than just one structured meeting per week” (p. 31). To reduce discipleship to a program is to miss the context in which spiritual formation happens. Pettit (2008) defines spiritual formation as “the ongoing process of the triune God transforming the believer’s life and character toward the life and character of Jesus Christ—accomplished by the ministry of the Spirit in the context of biblical community” (p. 24). Spiritual formation is ecological in nature, as it involves growth both individually and corporately. Lowe and Lowe (2018) affirm the ecological nature of spiritual growth, noting, “In God’s ecology, individual things and people do not grow alone. They grow when they connect to and interact with the ultimate Source of Life and other growing people” (p. 4). The fulfillment of the church’s God-given mandate happens in the context of groups of people working together for a common purpose.

Eguizabal and Lawson (2009) recognize the ultimate aim of a team approach to ministry, “A ministry team approach to the church's tasks that has its foundation on God's Word will have as its ultimate goal the building up of the body of Christ” (p. 263). This happens as people are led to Christ and conformed to the image of Christ in the context of biblical community. Cloud and Townsend (2001) consider the role the body plays in such spiritual growth of members. The authors note, “Biblical growth is designed to include other people as God’s instruments. To be truly biblical as well as truly effective, the growth process must include the Body of Christ. Without the Body, the process is neither totally biblical nor orthodox” (Cloud & Townsend, 2001, p. 122). The authors lay out the many roles the body of Christ plays in a believer’s

spiritual growth process, which include the following: connection, discipline and structure, accountability, grace and forgiveness, support and strengthening, mentoring the whole person, grieving, healing, confronting, containing sin, administering truth, modeling, and discipleship. These benefits are highlighted through a team approach to ministry (Cloud & Townsend, 2001).

The collective efforts of the members of the body of Christ, exercising their unique roles, in unity, towards one goal, paints a powerful picture for the world. Dever (2013) notes, “Our individual lives alone are not a sufficient witness. Our lives together as church communities are the confirming echo of our witness” (p. 147). A student ministry professional must promote and facilitate such a witness.

Describing the role of administration in accomplishing this in the church, Heflin (2009) states, “In the church, administration is a partnership with the people of the church to accomplish the objectives of God's mission through ministry” (p. 859). Paul notes the “gifts of administration” among the tools of spiritual leadership given to the church to advance the mission of the church. Such gifts and competencies are vital to effective and sustained student ministry.

The Benefits of Team Ministry. There are certain additional benefits of a team approach to student ministry that cannot be experienced by operating in a “silo” but by effectively leading a ministry team. These include the value of varied giftedness, accountability, support and development, and being a model of unity.

The Benefit of Varied Giftedness. As seen in exploring the Apostle Paul’s instructions to the church, a considerable emphasis is placed on the significance of varied giftedness within the body. To underscore the value of diversity within the body, Paul gives a humorous illustration,

Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because

I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. (1 Corinthians 12:15-20)

To ignore others’ value in ministry is to miss the beauty of the body of Christ operating as it was designed. Maxwell (2002) highlights the impact of such a collaborative team effort,

“Collaboration has a multiplying effect on everything you do because it releases and harnesses not only your skills but also those of everyone on the team” (p. 15). Multiplying one’s ministry impact is both wise and Christlike.

The Benefit of Accountability. A team approach to ministry offers a unique sense of accountability to one’s life and ministry. The Apostle Paul demonstrated this with how he made himself accountable, offered accountability to his teammates in ministry, and encouraged the church to do the same. Paul repeatedly made himself accountable to the church and other church leaders. Acts 14:26-28 is one example of the intentionality of Paul to report to those who commissioned him and supported him in ministry,

From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples. (Acts 14:26-28)

Paul not only received such accountability but was quick to offer it to those with whom he did ministry. In his letter to Timothy, Paul admonished Timothy, “Watch your life and doctrine closely” (1 Timothy 4:16). Because of his love for Timothy and the mission, Paul told Timothy to examine his life and teaching so that he did not fall prey to sin and false doctrine.

Contemporary student ministry professionals need this same exhortation and accountability. Scazzero and Bird (2015) note the importance of a leader monitoring their inner life closely,

The overall health of any church or ministry depends primarily on the emotional and spiritual health of its leadership. In fact, the key to successful spiritual leadership has much more to do with the leader's internal life than with the leader's expertise, gifts, or experience.

While accountability is key to success in ministry leadership, Strommen et al. (2001) note the lack of accountability among professional youth ministers, "More than half of all youth ministers meet with their peers for fellowship purposes..., but less than half are in professional accountability relationships or take advantage of opportunities to learn from their peers..." (p. 221). Within the busyness and challenges of professional student ministry, the temptation is real for the professional to neglect their own hearts while fighting for students' hearts. Accountability in the context of team ministry and biblical community is significant in combating moral failure and burnout that contributes to the turnover rate in student ministry professionals (Devries, 2008).

Paul encouraged the church to "be devoted to one another in love" (Romans 12:10). He also instructed them to speak truthfully to one another, "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body" (Ephesians 4:25). One who is lovingly devoted to teammates and willing to speak the truth for the benefit of the other and the team has the characteristics of someone Lencioni (2016) would consider an "ideal team player." Such team players are willingly vulnerable to the team leading to "greater levels of trust among members, which make conflict, commitment, accountability, and results that much more likely" (Lencioni, 2016, p. 213). Lencioni (2002) believes that accountability is key to success within teams and asserts that one of the five pitfalls for successful teams is

“avoidance of accountability” (p. 188). While ministry in isolation is possible, it does not afford one the loving accountability that can happen, and is necessary, within a team.

The Benefit of Support and Development. A team approach to student ministry creates a unique opportunity for team members to support and develop each other as they work together towards a common goal of leading students to grow in Christ. The proximity in which team members interact allows life on life exchanges that can be encouraging and comforting as well as challenging and transformational. The Apostle Paul spoke of such exchanges in the early church, as he exhorted, “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Such encouragement and support provide the foundation of effective teams. MacMillan (2001) notes, “Solid team relationships provide the climate needed for high levels of cooperation and are characterized by trust, acceptance, respect, understanding, and courtesy” (ch. 8).

In his wisdom, King Solomon understood the importance of support when he penned, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). Such relational commitment does not just benefit one member of the team but is reciprocal. Solomon recognized the nature of mutually beneficial relationships when he stated, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17, NIV). As team members interact, they can sharpen each other relationally, professionally, and spiritually. Bridges (2012) notes the most significant way that team members can build each other up, “One of the most important things we can share with one another is the spiritual truth God has been teaching us that might be of great help to fellow believers” (p. 60). As team members support

each other in these ways, they model to students what biblical community and fellowship practically look like.

The Benefit of Modelling Unity. A biblical team approach to ministry also serves as a model of unity to students. Just as Jesus spent three years developing a culture of trust and unity, student ministry leadership emphasize such values in student ministry teams. Blanchard et al. (2016) note, “Trust is extended first by loving hearts committed to serve and support one another, and trust grows with promises kept, encouragement and appreciation expressed, support and acceptance offered, repentance and apologies received, and reconciliation and restoration established” (p. 27). Such actions lead to a trust that is foundational to unity, which the Apostle Paul underscored was vital to the church. Paul pleaded to the church at Corinth, “...in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought” (1 Corinthians 1:10). This “perfect unity” should begin within the student ministry leadership team and must be facilitated by the student ministry professional called to lead the team. Moreover, it is only through unity that the student ministry team can ultimately be effective. In his work evaluating the effectiveness of teams, Krispin (2017) concludes that “unity is essential for an effective, healthy ministry team” (p. 49).

Why Are Teams and Administration a Big Deal?

The student ministry professional must not only understand the value of teams but must have the necessary competencies to lead a team well. These competencies include abilities related to leadership, management, organization, and systems. Ultimately, each of these deals with people and relationships.

The most excellent picture of ministry leadership is Jesus. Jesus modeled with his disciples how to assemble, equip, and empower a team to fulfill a mission collaboratively. This approach multiplied the reach and impact of Jesus' earthly ministry and continues to multiply the reach and impact of his mission today. Temple (2019b) asserts that a team approach to ministry is a "biblical, practical, accurate, and faithful expression of the heart of God..." To not employ an approach to student ministry that honors the heart of God and has an exponential impact is not only foolish but also perhaps sinful. To not invest in developing the administrative competencies needed to lead such an approach successfully is poor stewardship of an opportunity to model the leadership of Jesus and exponentially impact the world for the glory of God.

A theological foundation for this study has been introduced by exploring the biblical essentials for ministry leadership of calling, character, and competency. The theological framework was constructed by narrowing the focus to needed ministry competencies, examining a biblical approach to ministry that is team focused and guided by administrative leadership competencies as evidenced in the life and ministry of Jesus. The benefits of such an approach were highlighted and connected to the work of the student ministry professional.

Theoretical foundations will now be examined which support such an approach to ministry leadership.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

While there are many theories that offer valuable insight into understanding and practicing effective organizational administration, Christian ministry leadership should rightly exhibit aspects of leadership and organizational management theory consistent with the instruction and example of Jesus. Five theories are of particular significance to the student ministry professional.

Theory Y

In his 1960 work, *The Human Side of Enterprise*, Douglas McGregor challenges the traditional managerial mindset that authority is the primary method of managerial control. McGregor makes a case that the power to influence others is not about simply exercising authority but about wisely discerning the means of influence based on current circumstances. McGregor examines the traditional view of managerial control, which he calls Theory X, and introduces a new approach that focuses on integrating individual and organizational goals. He calls this approach Theory Y (McGregor, 2006).

While not explicitly written from a Christian perspective, Theory Y undeniably speaks to the value of theological anthropology. Theological anthropology is concerned with what the Bible says about man (Small, 2018). McGregor (2006) makes some “groundbreaking” claims that are really biblical truths about humanity applied to business management. At the heart of Theory Y is the value of relationships. Where Theory X supports an authoritative approach to management, Theory Y understands that people respond to relationship (MacGregor, 2006).

Scripture is clear that humankind was made for relationship with God and with others. God values relationship from the beginning of creation, and the Bible affirms community throughout (Ecc. 4:9-12, Acts 2:46-47, Rom. 12:4-5, 1 Cor. 1:10, Heb. 10:24-25, 1 John 4:11). Theory Y management supports a softer approach to leadership that adds value to others, consistent with the words of 1 Peter 5:2-3 as instruction is given to the elders of the flock,

Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

McGregor (2006) asserts,

The philosophy of management by direction and control—regardless of whether it is hard or soft—is inadequate to motivate because the human needs on which this approach relies are relatively unimportant motivators of behavior in our society today. Direction and control are of limited value in motivating people whose important needs are social... (loc. 1300)

These social needs are a design of God who created mankind in God’s image, which involves connecting and reflecting. An effective student ministry professional must understand the social needs of their students, volunteer leaders, and staff to lead in a way that speaks to those needs. Effective student ministry veterans understand how to lead with the needs of those they are leading in view.

Situational Leadership Theory and the SLII® Model

In 1969, Dr. Paul Hersey and Dr. Ken Blanchard published an article entitled “Life Cycle Theory of Leadership” (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). This article would lay the foundation on which nearly 50 years of management and leadership theory would be built and taught. This theory significantly impacts business management and education, and should also impact Christian ministry, as the foundational ideas of this theory were both modeled by Jesus and directed to his followers. Developed mainly on the foundation of W.J. Reddin’s 3-D management style theory (Reddin, 1967), Hersey and Blanchard offered in Situational Leadership theory a model that has proven to stand the test of time.

While Hersey and Blanchard introduced the Situational Leadership model in 1969, Blanchard later revised the model and introduced the SLII® model. SLII® is the most widely held of the Situational Leadership models and asserts that no single leadership style works for every situation. Therefore, an effective leader must change his or her approach based on the needs of the follower in the given circumstances. The SLII® leadership model consists of two major dimensions (leadership style and development level of followers) and three indispensable skills

(setting clear goals, accurately diagnosing the development level of the follower, and matching leadership style to the competence and commitment of the follower) (Blanchard et al., 2013).

Leadership style is the behavior a leader exhibits when attempting to influence another and includes both directive and supportive behaviors. Blanchard et al. (2013) classify leadership styles into four categories of directive and supporting behavior, as demonstrated in Table 3.

Table 3

Blanchard's Leadership Styles

Leadership Style	Directive / Supportive Behavior Level
Style 1 (S1): Directing	High in directive behavior, low in supportive behavior
Style 2 (S2): Coaching	High in both directive behavior and supportive behavior
Style 3 (S3): Supporting	Low directive behavior, high supportive behavior
Style 4 (S4): Delegating	Low in both directive behavior and supportive behavior

Blanchard et al. (2013) divide the development level continuum into four levels as well, as demonstrated in Table 4:

Table 4

Blanchard's Development Levels

Development Level	Competence / Commitment Level
D1: Enthusiastic Beginner	Low competence, high commitment
D2: Disillusioned Learner	Low to some competence, low commitment
D3: Capable but Cautious Contributor	Moderate to high competence, high commitment
D4: Self-reliant Achiever	High competence, high commitment

Figure 2*The SLII® Leadership Model*

Note. From *The Ken Blanchard Companies*®, 2020, (<https://www.kenblanchard.com/Products-Services/SLII>). Copyright 2020 by The Ken Blanchard Companies®. SLII® is a registered trademark of The Ken Blanchard Companies®. Used with permission.

Situational Leadership Theory is consistent with a biblical leadership model, as demonstrated by Jesus (Blanchard et al., 2016; Ogden, 2016; Phelps, 2014). The clearest examples of how Jesus used each style of situational leadership can be seen in how he interacted with his disciples. David Bryte Roberts' (2012) work, *A Directed Content Analysis of the Leadership of Jesus Among His Twelve Disciples Using the Framework of the Situational Leadership® Model*, concluded,

The researcher documented a total of 122 instances of Jesus' leadership among His twelve disciples. All 122 identified leadership events fit within the framework of Situational Leadership®; therefore, Situational Leadership® was reflected 100% of the time in the leadership of Jesus among His twelve disciples. (p. 131)

Jesus chose a group of twelve men who were extremely low in competence. Among the twelve were fishermen (Andrew, Peter, James, John), a tax collector (Matthew), and a zealot (Simon).

Although they were each low in competence, they were extremely high in commitment. Each gave up their professions (Matthew 4:18-22, Matthew 9:9-13) and followed Jesus. Low competence and high commitment would classify them at the D1 development level. To this, Jesus matched S1 *Directing* leadership style, offering high directive and low supportive behavior. An example of this is when Jesus sent out his disciples in Matthew 10:5-10,

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. “Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts— no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep.

Jesus formulated the plan and provided specific instructions on how the disciples were to carry out the plan.

Although the disciples began their journey with Christ highly motivated, there were times they became discouraged, and their commitment waned. The disciples would eventually desert Jesus when he was arrested (Matthew 26:56), and Peter would deny Christ three times (Luke 22:54-62). In each instance, Jesus met them where they were and ministered to them (Luke 24:33-37, John 20:19-20, John 21). Earlier in their ministry, the disciples became frustrated when they could not successfully heal a demon-possessed boy (Matthew 17). They were demonstrating a D2 development level, to which Jesus responded with S2 *Coaching* leadership. Matthew 17:19-20 records,

Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

Jesus continues to direct the task accomplishment and explains why, allowing the disciples to learn and grow. In analyzing the leadership of Jesus according to the *Situational Leadership*®

Model, Roberts (2012) found that “Jesus reflected a preferred leadership style of S2,” employing a coaching style of leadership more than all the other leadership styles combined (p. 131).

Later in Jesus’s ministry, his disciples would often be in the D3 development level. They had moderate to high competence, with variable commitment. Their commitment would often be dependent on their circumstances (Mark 4:35-41 - Jesus calms the storm, Mark 8:14-21 - the disciples forgot bread). To these situations, Jesus would respond in a *Supporting* (S3) leadership style. A famous example of this is when Jesus asked Peter to walk to him on the water during a storm (Matthew 14:22-36). Peter’s commitment fluctuated with the waves. To this, Jesus offered support, “But when [Peter] saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. ‘You of little faith,’ he said, ‘why did you doubt?’” (Matthew 14:30-31). Jesus’s response was high in support and low in direction.

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples and offered coaching and support over forty days. The reality of the resurrection moved the disciples to a new level of commitment. At a D4 development level, they were high in both competence and commitment. Jesus then demonstrated the ultimate example of S4 *Delegating* leadership when he called them together and offered the Great Commission as a final instruction before he ascended into heaven (Matthew 28:18-20). Although Jesus did offer support through the Holy Spirit, he would not physically be with them as they carried out this Great Commission mandate. It was clearly now their responsibility to continue the ministry of Christ and carry the Gospel to all nations.

These are all examples of how Jesus adapted his leadership according to the situation and based on his followers’ current development level. He offered directive and/or supportive behavior based on his followers’ competence and commitment at the time. The successful

student ministry professional must have a flexibility in administration that recognizes the unique needs of students, volunteers, and staff and meets them where they are. The professional must also understand the unique needs of the student ministry organization at large and adjust administrative practices to meet those needs. Heflin (2009) notes, “Being a youth pastor requires skillfully juggling diverse roles in dissimilar contexts with people of multiple generations while enlisting others to join the effort” (p. 135). Student ministry professionals model the leadership of Jesus as they utilize Situational Leadership theory in meeting the diverse demands of leading student ministry.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

While many leadership theories seek to describe the role of the leader or follower, the leader-member exchange has a different emphasis. Northouse (2015) notes, “Leader–member exchange (LMX) theory... conceptualizes leadership as a process that is centered on the interactions between leaders and followers” (p. 138). While some may assume that leadership is about a set of standard practices a leader has towards every follower, he asserts that leader-member exchange does not agree with this approach. Northouse (2015) notes, “LMX theory challenged this assumption and directed researchers’ attention to the differences that might exist between the leader and each of the leader’s followers” (p. 139).

LMX theory was first described in 1975 in the works of Graen and Cashman (1975), Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975), and then Graen (1976). In the early studies, the theory was known as vertical dyad linkage (VDL) theory, and research focused on the nature of “vertical linkages” leaders established with each of their followers. Leader-member dyads were categorized as in-group (based on expanded role relationship) or out-group (based on formal job descriptions). These early studies focused on what followers were willing to do for the leader

(Northouse, 2015). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) note the evolution of LMX study, “What began as an alternative to average leadership style...has progressed to a prescription for generating more effective leadership through the development and maintenance of mature leadership relationships...” (p. 220).

More recent studies of LMX theory came to study how leader-member exchanges impacted organizational performance (Chen et al., 2007; Ilies et al., 2007; Harris et al., 2009; Nahrgang et al., 2009; Le Blanc & González-Romá, 2012). Of such LMX studies, Northouse (2015) notes,

Researchers found that high-quality exchanges between leaders and followers produced multiple positive outcomes (e.g., less employee turnover, greater organizational commitment, and more promotions). In general, researchers determined that good leader-member exchanges result in followers feeling better, accomplishing more, and helping the organization prosper. (p. 159).

Healthy leader-member exchanges create positive experiences for the followers and create a positive culture for the organization.

In many ways, LMX theory is consistent with a biblical perspective of how Jesus led (Dose, 2006). While Jesus came to offer salvation to *everyone* who believes (John 3:15-16, 12:44, 2 Peter 3:9), he was clearly concerned with the relationship by which people are saved, and not just the ends of salvation. A key to following Jesus is to understand the necessity of a spiritual connection to Christ. Such connectedness and dependence are emphasized in Scripture through the use of connection terminology. Lowe and Lowe (2018) note the connection terminology the Apostle Paul used to describe the relationship between Jesus and his followers. Lowe and Lowe (2018) state, “Paul used the preposition *syn*, meaning ‘together with’ or ‘connected to,’ with a pronoun referring to Christ. Paul uses this form to stress our connection *to the person of Christ*” (p. 139).

Jesus offers a word-picture to illustrate the necessity of such a dyadic relationship. He states, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). An understanding of that relationship should be the focus of student ministry discipleship. Cole et al. (2016) stress the necessity of this focus in ministry to students, noting that effective youth ministry “...needs to inform and remind students that they are made to live in a dependent relationship with God, and that they naturally defy this need. It must help them understand that all of their sin originates from attempting to be the lord in their own lives, rather than allowing Jesus to be their King” (p. 28).

Healthy relationship is both the aim and means of effective ministry to students. The student ministry professional must realize that ultimately they are not called to lead an organization, but the people who make up the organization. While Jesus was undoubtedly a great leader, his mission statement was about people, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). With such a view and aim of ministry, the student ministry professional can be ever mindful that organizational administrative skills are ultimately about people and serve to advance the mission of Christ.

Servant Leadership Theory

Servant Leadership theory originated in Robert Greenleaf’s “The Servant as Leader” essay in 1970. Servant leadership focuses on the behavior of the leader in response to the needs of the follower. Servant leadership aims to empathize, nurture, and empower the follower. To lead in such a way requires that the leader be aware and attentive to followers’ needs and willing to take a role of service to meet those needs. Greenleaf (2008) defines servant leadership as:

[Servant leadership] begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. . . . The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant—first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. (p. 15)

Such leadership is focused on service, not authority, and the leader demonstrating qualities that focus on the needs of others (see Table 5). Heyler and Martin (2018) note how servant leadership theory changes the paradigm of a traditional view of leadership, "...servant leadership theory 'inverts the pyramid' of the organization such that organizational leaders are serving the other members of the organization" (p. 230). Such a service-oriented approach to leadership can not only make an impact on individuals but also on organizations. Heyler and Martin (2018) observe, "Over the past several decades, the concept of servant leadership has emerged as a dynamic form of leadership associated with a positive impact on organizations" (p. 230). Servant leadership aims to impact at every level of the organization and beyond. Northouse (2019) discusses this aim, noting, "the central goal of servant leadership is to create healthy organizations that nurture individual growth, strengthen organizational performance, and, in the end, produce a positive impact on society" (p. 237). While Greenleaf is credited with introducing servant leadership into leadership theory, the idea and practice of servant leadership is biblical and has been having a positive impact on organizations and society for thousands of years.

Table 5

Ten Characteristics of a Servant Leader by Robert Greenleaf

Characteristic	Quote
Listening to Understand	"...true listening builds strength in other people" (loc. 393).
Empathy	"People grow taller when those who lead them empathize and when they are accepted for what they are, even though their performance may be judged critically in terms of what they are capable of doing" (loc. 438).

Characteristic	Quote
Healing	“Whether professional or amateur, the motive for the healing is the same: for one's own healing” (loc. 627).
Awareness	“The cultivation of awareness gives one the basis for detachment, the ability to stand aside and see oneself in perspective in the context of one's own experience, amid the ever present dangers, threats, and alarms” (loc. 517).
Persuasion	“Leadership by persuasion has the virtue of change by conviction rather than coercion” (loc. 548)
Conceptualization	“...passionately communicated faith in the worth of people and their strength to raise themselves—if only their spirit could be aroused” (loc. 592).
Foresight	“Foresight is the ‘lead’ that leaders have” (loc. 500).
Stewardship	“The real enemy is fuzzy thinking on the part of good, intelligent, vital people, and their failure to lead, and to follow servants as leaders” (loc. 720).
Commitment to Growth of Others	“An institution starts on a course toward people-building with leadership that has a firmly established context of <i>people first</i> ” (loc. 664).
Building Community	“The first order of business is to build a group of people who, under the influence of the institution, grow taller and become healthier, stronger, more autonomous” (loc. 659).

Note. Ten Characteristics of a Servant Leader by Robert Greenleaf. Adapted from *Servant Leadership: A Journey Into the Nature of Legitimate Power & Greatness* by Robert K. Greenleaf, 1977. Loc. 393-720. Copyright 1977 by Robert K. Greenleaf; copyright 1991, 2002 by the Robert K. Greenleaf Center, Inc.

The methodology of Christian leadership is embodied in servant leadership. Because Jesus is the image of the invisible God, Okesson (2004) notes, “servant leadership is the

fundamental character of the Christian leader: Jesus Christ is the image of the true human; or one can say, of the image of the true leader” (p. 31). Jesus willingly humbled himself, served those he came to save, and made clear to his followers that greatness in his kingdom is defined differently than how the world defines greatness. In Mark 10:43-45, Jesus said,

...whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

The Apostle Paul reminds his readers of Jesus’ example in Philippians 2:5-8,

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

The greatest leader ever gave service as the greatest example of leadership. Because service is at the heart of a call to follow Christ, one must understand that the methodology of Christian leadership is informed by the example of servant leadership displayed by Jesus Christ.

MacArthur (2005) takes great care to dispel the glamorous myths of spiritual leadership.

He makes no more clear or concise statement of the role of a spiritual leader than when he said,

The calling of the ones whom God designates as leaders is not to a position of governing monarchs but of humble slaves, not of slick celebrities but of laboring servants. Those who would lead God’s people must above all exemplify sacrifice, devotion, submission, and lowliness. (p. xii)

Making a case for a servant leadership approach to youth ministry, Canales (2014) defined servant leadership as “a process of modeling Jesus’ attitude of humility, service, respect, and love, which leads the followers in promoting the mission of the group, organization, or institution” and asserts that this definition “fits perfectly within the values of Christian youth ministry” (p. 44). The effective student ministry professional must be known as a servant leader,

and their administrative competencies must be employed in a way that ensures the highest priority needs of others are being served.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership first appeared by name in James V. Downton Jr's *Rebel Leadership: Commitment and Charisma in the Revolutionary Process* in 1970. Sociologist James McGregor Burns more fully explored the idea in his 1978 work titled *Leadership*. Burns linked the roles of leaders and followers and explored how a leader can utilize followers' motives to reach goals. Burns differentiated between transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Northouse (2015) explains the distinction that Burns makes, "In contrast to transactional leadership, transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower" (p. 163).

Transformational leadership is concerned with developing followers to reach their full potential. Kouzes and Posner (2017) developed a model for transformational leadership, identifying Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership as follows:

1. model the way
2. inspire a shared vision
3. challenge the process
4. enable others to act
5. encourage the heart

The first practice, model the way, is a concept that is especially biblical. Modeling the way was not only significant in Jesus's relationship with his disciples, but also Jesus's expectation for his disciples.

The aim of Christian leadership should be transformation, in both the organization and the individuals who make up the organization. Northouse (2019) describes transformational leaders as individuals who have “a clear vision of the future state of their organizations” (p. 175). Such is the biblical example referenced earlier in Nehemiah. Transformational Christian leaders also have a clear vision of the future state of the people they lead. Such leadership has a higher purpose than a transactional approach to leadership. In his presentation entitled, “Transactional versus Transformational Leadership,” Dr. Jeffrey Davis affirms that “transformational leadership has a higher aim or goal” than transactional leadership (Davis & Bredfeldt, 2018). That aim is change. Jesus modeled such transformational leadership. The disciples were indeed not the best or the brightest that Jesus could have chosen, but they were all transformed into something radically different through a relationship with him.

Although transformation is ultimately by and through the work of the Spirit of God, the Christian leader plays a vital role in communicating life-changing truth and being an example of that transformation work. In his presentation “Living the Image of God” Small (2019) noted, “If we only do theoretical things and we don’t call the people we lead to change the way they live in light of these truths, we have not finished the task of leading people to real and meaningful change” (Small, 2019). Heart transformation precedes rightly reflecting the glory of Christ to the world. Estep (2008) affirms,

...the end of theology is not the acquisition of mere head knowledge. The goal rather is heart transformation. Our knowledge of God leads us to faith and repentance, motivates us to adore and worship him, and prompts us to serve him out of love and devotion. This is the heart of discipleship. (p. 21)

This not only honors God but also rightly reflects him to the world and is a picture of successful transformational leadership. Geiger and Borton (2009) affirm transformational leadership in the context of student ministry, “The end result of discipleship is not merely the knowledge of all

Jesus commanded but the obedience of all Jesus commanded. True discipleship is not about information but transformation” (p. 12).

The student ministry professional must not lead in a way that is simply transactional but significantly transformational. A focus on what giftedness or talent can be shared with others falls radically short of a vision to see lives transformed for the glory of God. Administrative competencies must be aimed at not only organizational change but also personal change as well. Such administration models the example of Jesus and aligns with the heart of God.

Summary of Theoretical Framework

Administrative leadership that prioritizes relationships, service, and transformation is consistent with proven organizational leadership and management theories and consistent with the calling and character of Jesus. Such leadership reflects biblical directives for the ministry leader and also the example Jesus demonstrated in his leadership. The combination of theories presented in this chapter offers a view of leadership that is radically different from the image of leadership that draws some to youth ministry (Devries, 2008). Such theories do not support a “rockstar” youth pastor, but one with a much different ministry agenda. The student ministry professional must be ever mindful that leadership is not a position from which to exert authority; leadership is a role from which to serve. Through service comes influence. With influence, one can lead others from here to there. If “here” is their current spiritual condition and “there” is the person of Jesus Christ, such theoretically informed leadership is theologically sound and eternally significant.

Related Literature

The literature undeniably reveals the theological and theoretical foundations of effective administrative competencies in student ministry leadership. However, the nature of such

administrative competencies, especially as tested by successful student ministry practitioners, has received little to no direct examination. A review of related literature will begin with a broad view of literature relevant to understanding leadership, management, and administration. The focus will then narrow to relevant research studies, starting with a targeted examination of studies highly specific to student ministry competencies, followed by studies that inform minister competencies, and then studies relevant to this current study's methodological approach. Popular literature will then be examined as it relates to administrative competencies in student ministry. Based on a review of relevant literature, the rationale for the study will be examined, and a significant gap in the literature will be clearly highlighted. This chapter will conclude with a profile of the current study.

Because of the existent gap in the literature, foundational studies that are older than five years will be explored, as well as more recent literature related to the topic.

A Critical Connection: Leadership, Management, and Administration

This research is concerned with exploring administrative competencies that have proven to be transformative in sustaining an effective student ministry in a local church. For purposes of this research, *administrative competencies* are defined as “abilities related to running an organization/ministry successfully.” This term encompasses aspects of both leadership and management competencies, making literature significant to each area valuable.

While some literature, like Welch (2011) and MacKenzie (1969), differentiates between the terms *administration* and *management*, the two terms are mostly used synonymously in the literature (Anthony & Estep, 2005; Berkley, 2007; Havinal, 2011). Havinal (2011) notes three approaches (administration is above management, administration is under management, management and administration are the same) and explains, “The basic point of controversy

between management and administration lies in forms of coverage of activities” (p. 12). Because any suggested distinctions between the terms would typically all still fall under the job description of the student ministry professional in a local church, this study will use the terms interchangeably.

While the terms *leadership* and *management* are often used interchangeably as well, the distinction between these terms is both significant and necessary. In his article entitled “Management Is (Still) Not Leadership,” John P. Kotter (2013) notes the magnitude of the confusion around these two terms and states that “misunderstanding gets in the way of any reasonable discussion about how to build a company, position it for success and win in the twenty-first century” (p. 1). Confusion around these terms also cloud conversations regarding how student ministry professionals should think and lead a ministry organization. Any discussion about these crucial issues must begin with clearly defining leadership and management.

While there is a multitude of definitions of leadership, most involve the idea of influence (as noted in Table 6).

Table 6

Leadership Definitions in Literature (emphasis added)

Definition	Author (Year, pg. #)
“Leadership is <i>influence</i> —nothing more, nothing less.”	Maxwell (2007, p. 11)
“Leadership is a process whereby an individual <i>influences</i> a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.”	Northouse (2019, p. 5)
“Leadership is the process of <i>influencing</i> others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives.”	Yukl (2013, p. 7)

Definition	Author (Year, pg. #)
“Leadership is the <i>influencing</i> process between leaders and followers to achieve organizational objectives through change.”	Lussier and Achua (2016, p. 5)
“Leadership involves multiple individuals engaged in a process of interpersonal and mutual <i>influence</i> that is ultimately embedded within some collective.”	DeRue and Ashford (2010, p. 629)
“Leadership is a social and goal-oriented influence process, unfolding in a temporal and spatial milieu.”	Fischer, Dietz, and Antonakis (2016, p. 1727)

Kouzes and Posner (2017) define leadership in terms of “a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow” (p. 26). Perhaps the best working definition of leadership for purposes of this work is offered by Dr. Gary Bredfeldt. In his presentation “The Essence of Leadership,” Bredfeldt defines leadership as “moving a group from here to there” (Bredfeldt, 2019b). This involves defining reality, defining the preferred future, and identifying a change strategy to move from here to there.

Likewise, there are many definitions of management. Some of the more popular definitions are listed in Table 7.

Table 7

Management Definitions in Literature

Definition	Author (Year, pg. #)
“a distinct process consisting of planning, organizing, actuating and controlling, performed to determine and accomplish the objectives by the use of people and resources”	Terry (1977, p. 4)
“Management is an art of knowing what is to be done and seeing that it is done in the best possible manner.”	Taylor (2008)
“Management is to forecast, to plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate and control activities of others.”	Fayol (2013, p. 4)

Definition	Author (Year, pg. #)
“the planning, organizing, leading and controlling of resources to achieve organizational goals effectively and efficiently”	Jones and George (2020)
“Management involves coordinating and overseeing the work activities of others so that their activities are completed efficiently and effectively.”	Robbins et al. (2014, p. 11)
"Management is that process by which managers create, direct, maintain and operate purposive organisation through systematic, coordinated and cooperative human efforts."	McFarland (1974)

Most popular definitions of management involve the idea of controlling things or people. This is one reason some oppose any form of management or administration in the local church (Anthony & Estep, 2005). In his article “A Triad of Pastoral Leadership for Congregational Health and Well-Being: Leader, Manager, and Servant in a Shared and Equipping Ministry” Manala (2010) recognizes that the idea of using or controlling others is typically associated with management and offers a definition for church management as, “...a process and act of planning, organising, evaluating and facilitating efficient and effective functioning towards the achievement of ecclesial goals through effective utilisation of time, physical, financial and other relevant resources in meaningful collaboration with other people” (p. 4). This definition recognizes the functions of management while also acknowledging the collaborative effort with which the church should operate. Darren Shearer provided another definition of management that works especially well in a church ministry context in his article “Management or Leadership: Which Did Jesus Emphasize More?” Shearer (2016) describes management as wise and responsible stewardship of what one has been given. This definition captures the concepts of calling, character, and competencies needed to manage well in a ministry context.

Because the terms *leadership* and *management* are often used interchangeably, it is beneficial to explore them through comparison. In his presentation “Top 10 Differences Between Managers and Leaders,” Scott Williams (2011) notes the significant contrasts between managers and leaders, “Leaders develop followers, while managers manage people and things.” While leaders do not have subordinates, managers are concerned with the positional equity that comes with subordinates. Williams states, “A leader... is not worried about positional equity or formal authority because they know they are in the business of creating a tribe and developing more leaders” (Williams, 2011). Leaders are concerned with influencing people to bring about change, while managers are concerned with maintaining (and even improving) processes and systems within the boundaries they are given. Managers and leaders often think very differently about issues. In his presentation titled *Change Management vs. Change Leadership*, Bredfeldt (2019a) notes, “The skills of management is different than the skills of leadership. In fact, the whole mindset is different.” Abraham Zaleznik (2004) expands his description of this distinction in his article titled “Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?” He states, “...managers and leaders are very different kinds of people. They differ in motivation, personal history, and in how they think and act” (p. 4).

Not only do they think differently, but managers and leaders often have different objectives. In their *Strategy & Leadership Journal* article titled “A Useful Distinction Between Managers and Leaders” Russell L. Ackoff and John Pourdehnad (2009) explore the means and end goal of managers and leaders. They describe a manager as “one who directs others in the pursuit of ends by the use of means that he or she selects,” while they note a leader is “one who induces and guides others in the voluntary pursuit of ends by the use of means that they, the followers, select or approve of if they are chosen by another” (Ackoff & Pourdehnad, 2009).

While leaders are often thought of as those only at the top of an organization, Kotter (2013) points out that leaders can exist throughout an organizational chart. He notes,

People use the term “leadership” to refer to the people at the very top of hierarchies. They then call the people in the layers below them in the organization “management.” And then all the rest are workers, specialists, and individual contributors. This is also a mistake and very misleading. (Kotter, 2013, p. 1)

In their article for the *Academy of Management Review* entitled “Who Will Lead and Who Will Follow? A Social Process of Leadership Identity Construction in Organizations,” DeRue and Ashford (2010) cite the work of Ancona & Backman (2008) and Bedeian & Hunt (2006), noting, “Scholars have begun to question traditional conceptualizations that position leadership as top-down, hierarchical, and equivalent to formal supervisory roles in organizations” (p. 627). In his work, *The 360 Degree Leader*, Maxwell (2005) affirms this questioning and states that the number one misconception people have about leadership is “the belief that leadership comes simply from having a position or title” (p. 4). If leadership is about influence and the ability to move people, that can and should be happening throughout a healthy organization. Those who believe this is not possible have bought the “position myth.” In *The 5 Levels of Leadership*, Maxwell (2011) explains that positional leadership is the lowest level of leadership because when people have to follow a leader, they typically only give the minimum of what is required. Speaking of leadership that is dependent on position, Maxwell (2011) notes, “Position is a poor substitute for influence” (p. 11).

Leadership and management are indeed very different competencies and mindsets. Which, then, should be most valued both individually by the student ministry professional and in an organization like a local church? Gosling and Mintzberg (2003) note the need for both leadership and management in an organization and speak to the dangers of separating management from leadership. They note, “Just as management without leadership encourages an

uninspired style, which deadens activities, leadership without management encourages a disconnected style, which promotes hubris” (Gosling & Mintzberg, 2003, p. 54).

The Bible is filled with examples of both good and bad leadership, as well as good and bad management. For brevity purposes, this researcher will focus on the teachings of Jesus to explore both leadership and management thinking.

Jesus had a lot to say about management thinking. In exploring the parable teachings of Jesus, Shearer (2016) points out that managers are the main characters in virtually all of Jesus’ parables. He notes that there are “28 (parables) that have specifically a business, financial, and/or resource management context” (Shearer, 2016). This researcher agrees with 26 of them as listed in Table 8.

Table 8

Managers in the Parables of Jesus

Parable	Reference
The Wise and the Foolish Builders	Matt. 7:24–27; Luke 6:46–49
New Wine into Old Wineskins	Matt. 9:17–17; Mark 2:21–22; Luke 5:37–39
Parable of the Sower	Matt. 13:3–9; Mark 4:3–9; Luke 8:5–8
Parable of the Mustard Seed	Matt. 13:31–32; Mark 4:30–32; Luke 13:18–19
The Tares	Matt. 13:24–30
The Leaven	Matt. 13:33–33; Luke 13:20–21
The Hidden Treasure	Matt. 13:44
Parable of the Pearl	Matt. 13:45–46
Drawing in the Net	Matt. 13:47–50
The Lost Sheep	Matt. 18:10–14; Luke 15:4–6
The Unforgiving Servant	Matt. 18:23–35

Parable	Reference
The Workers in the Vineyard	Matt. 20:1–16
The Two Sons	Matt. 21:28–32
The Parable of the Tenants	Matt. 21:33–41; Mark 12:1–9; Luke 20:9–16
The Faithful Servant	Matt. 24:42–51; Mark 13:34–37; Luke 12:35–48
The Ten Virgins	Matt. 25:1–13
The Parable of the Talents	Matt. 25:14–30
The Growing Seed	Mark 4:26–29
The Two Debtors	Luke 7:41–43
The Rich Fool	Luke 12:16–21
Counting the Cost	Luke 14:28–33
The Lost Coin	Luke 15:8–9
Parable of the Prodigal Son	Luke 15:11–32
The Unjust Steward	Luke 16:1–13
The Master and Servant	Luke 17:7–10
The Parable of the Minas	Luke 19:12–27

Note. Managers in the Parables of Jesus. Adapted from “Management or Leadership: Which Did Jesus Emphasize More?” by Darren Shearer, 2016, Copyright Theology of Business Institute.

Throughout these parables, Christ-centered management thinking is promoted. Such thinking in areas of stewardship and lordship help a Christ-follower keep a healthy perspective. God is honored as one rightly manages one’s resources, self, and others. In ministry, God is honored as the pastor rightly manages the church’s resources towards the church’s mission and purpose. In *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, James Berkley (2008) describes the necessity of pastors possessing management competencies,

No pastoral duties can wholly be divorced from managerial functions, since the essence of spiritual direction involves the stewardship of the church's human and temporal resources. The basic Greek word for ministry, *diakonia*, has been translated "administration" (1 Cor. 12:5; 2 Cor. 9:12 KJV). The Latin prefix *ad-* adjoined to the word *minister* meant "toward ministry." So management refers to the wise ordering of the believing community so that its mission to individual members and to the world can be fulfilled. (p. 350)

As has been explored previously in this chapter, Jesus also spoke of leadership thinking as he called his followers to influence and move those around them. On a fishing expedition, Jesus redefined the course of Peter's life as he called him to a new way of thinking. Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people" (Luke 5:10b). As has been outlined, Jesus' call to imitate his leadership (2 Corinthians 5:20), be "salt and light" (Matthew 5:13-16), and carry his mission (Matthew 28:19-20) are clear calls to be influencers in the world for his purposes.

So which type of thinking should a follower of Christ have, leadership thinking or management thinking? The biblical literature suggests that Jesus would want his followers to have both. In matters of stewardship, Jesus promotes management thinking. In matters of mission, Jesus promotes leadership thinking. This holds true for the student ministry professional as well. But is it possible for one to possess competencies and thinking as both a leader and a manager?

In David Brookmire's (2014) article "Managers or Leaders?" he makes a case for the development of leader *and* manager competencies to ensure an organization's needs are being met. Brookmire (2014) asserts that to maximize success, organizations need strong managers who succeed in the execution and oversight of daily operations, as well as leaders who inspire and offer a big-picture perspective. He states, "The key to success is not an either/or option. Organizations depend on *both* leaders and managers to maximize their victories" (Brookmire,

2014, p. 27). While leader and manager roles are sometimes split in the corporate world, in the local church setting, often the leader and manager are the same person. Noting the necessity for pastors to be proficient in both leadership and management competencies, Manala (2010) quotes G.A. Stephens, who notes, “Sometimes the same person, a person such as the pastor, wears both hats” (p. 3). Especially in running a student ministry, leadership and management competencies are so woven together, they are often difficult to separate. Berkley (2007) recognizes this collaborative reality, “Many authors attempt to differentiate leadership from management, though the lines of separation inevitably blur” (p. 350). In a student ministry setting, such a “blurring” of distinction between leadership and management can be healthy. Berkley (2007) discusses this distinction,

Perhaps leadership has more to do with dynamic human relationships, and management relates more closely to the stewardship of material resources, though the distinction doesn’t always hold up. Leadership includes diagnosis, vision, change, the redefinition of direction and goals, motivation, structural reinvigoration, the enablement and maximization of potential—things not always required of managers. Managers plan budgets, call for decisions, and wisely use material resources—things not always required of leaders. Most good managers—perhaps all—have some leadership skills, but not all leaders possess managerial competence. (p. 350)

Berkley is not alone in noting the connectedness between leadership and management. R. Alec McKenzie (1969) identified five aspects of the management process: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling (evaluating). While McKenzie (1969) argued the distinction between leadership and management, his “management process in 3-D” diagram illustrates the connectedness of the two (pp. 83-84). Commenting on MacKenzie’s diagram, Heflin (2009) notes, “While planning and organizing involve concepts and ideas, staffing, directing, and evaluating involve the leadership of people so that goals are met” (loc. 859). Leadership and management are both necessary for running an organization effectively. Student ministry

professionals who lack both leadership and management skills will face significant challenges in building or sustaining effective ministry to students (Devries, 2008; Heflin, 2009).

With the many complex demands on the student ministry professional, successful administration requires both leadership and management competencies working together. Leadership competencies are needed to inspire people's movement to a preferred future via a clear change strategy (Bredfeldt, 2019b). Management competencies are needed to facilitate the plan by utilizing their giftedness to execute the logistics of the change strategy (Berkley, 2008). Both leadership and management competencies play vital roles in the successful administration of sustained youth ministry and warrant further exploration and study.

Relevant Studies

While not vast in number, studies that explore specific needed competencies for ministers at large and student ministry professionals specifically provide invaluable information to the field from which professional development, evaluation, and higher education curriculum can be informed. Relevant to the current study, the following academic studies will be explored: student ministry competency studies, minister competency studies, and studies related to methodological design.

Student Ministry Competency Studies

The focused research that has been done to identify needed professional competencies of student ministry practitioners, though limited, is invaluable to the field. Certain core competencies were identified from these limited studies that have informed higher education and hiring practices for years. Four foundational studies will be explored.

Dunn's Competencies for an Effective Youth Worker. In his 1996 *Christian Education Journal* article titled "What are the Necessary Competencies to be an Effective Youth

Worker,” Rick Dunn takes a significant dive into the many diverse abilities a student ministry professional should possess. Dunn aimed to combat inaccurate perceptions of youth ministers and provide a resource that could prove valuable for churches evaluating potential youth ministry hires, youth ministers in assessing their personal development, and educators in training youth ministry students. Warning against bowing to “personality ethic” in evaluating a youth minister’s competence, Dunn (1996) asserts, “Qualities stereotypical of youth ministers, such as enthusiasm, energy, a sense of humor, and fun-loving creativity, are assets when developing youth ministry relationships. They are, however, insufficient as primary considerations of competency for ministry” (p. 26). Dunn offers a framework of competencies based on personal efficacy, interpersonal effectiveness, ministry task proficiency, and integrative learning aptitude. Under these four categories, Dunn describes over forty competencies as detailed in Table 9.

Table 9

Dunn’s Necessary Competencies for an Effective Youth Worker

Competency Type	Specific Ability
Personal Efficacy	<p><u>Self-Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective time management - Personal boundary management - Moral boundary management - Ministry Investment Management - Ability to accurately self-assess personality, talents, spiritual gifts, relational style, and personal need - Understand clearly defined calling to ministry context <p><u>Self-Care</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal Spiritual Nurture through spiritual disciplines - Holistic Care (mind, body, emotions) - Biblically process failures (“failing forward”) - Investing in loving, interpersonal relationships
Interpersonal Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An ability to initiate relationships with students. - An ability to sustain and nurture authentic long-term relationships with students. - An ability to maintain helping relationships appropriate to students’ needs.

Competency Type	Specific Ability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active listening skills - Assisting students in identifying the source and challenges of personal struggles - Knowing when and how to refer to professional helpers - An ability to build covenantal relationships with a leadership team. - An ability to grow through experiences of interpersonal conflict.
Ministry Task Proficiency	<p><u>Leadership</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to provide organizational leadership <p><u>Administration / Organization</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set and evaluate short- and long-term goals - Provide purposeful structure to the total youth ministry program - Relate the total program to the broader church ministries - Create and implement an action plan for a specific event or activity - Create and implement an action plan for a major event - Delegate responsibilities appropriately and efficiently - Ability to respond redemptively to failed leadership attempts on the part of volunteer adults and students - Facilitate evaluative feedback systems for improving ministry effectiveness and responding to potential problems - Prepare and maintain a fiscally responsible budget <p><u>Communication</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capability of individual and group evangelism - Thematic speaking and teaching - Expository speaking and teaching - Ability for inductive Bible study - Effective small-group leadership - Ability to perform general tasks of pulling together a large group to focus on a particular idea or activity <p><u>Contextualization</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to describe, analyze, interpret, and predict youth culture / subculture - Capacity to respond to verbal and nonverbal challenges <p><u>Discipline</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to confront moral issues in students' lives - Ability to respond to verbal and nonverbal challenges

Competency Type	Specific Ability
Integrative Learning Aptitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to apply biblical disciplinary principles to the behavioral problems that surface within the life of a youth ministry <li>- Capacity to think integratively about the theological, philosophical, developmental, sociological, and cultural dimensions of Christian youth ministry. <li>- Ability to maintain an ongoing posture of learning.

Note. Dunn's Necessary Competencies for an Effective Youth Worker. Adapted from "What are the Necessary Competencies to be an Effective Youth Worker" by Rick Dunn in Christian Education Journal, Spring 1996, pp. 25-38. Copyright 2016 American Theological Library Association.

While Dunn's detailed competency description has been widely used to consider student ministry professionals' qualifications, he is quick to note that no one is completely competent for youth ministry. Dunn (1996) states, "This evaluative framework is not meant to imply that a youth minister must be *fully* developed in *every* competency before he can be considered ready for ministry" (p. 27). However, it serves as a foundational framework from which those entrusted with hiring and developing student ministers can evaluate and mentor towards sustained effective ministry for the glory of God.

Strommen, Jones, and Rahn's Study on Youth Minister Development. One of the most significant widespread studies from which a set of competencies for student ministry practitioners was narrowed was facilitated by Strommen, Jones, and Rahn (2001). In a study that was the first-ever national sample survey of Protestant youth workers, Strommen et al. administered a 260-item survey to 2,416 student ministry professionals seeking feedback from respondents on decision-making, organization, perceived competence, perceived effectiveness, motivation, and philosophy in ministry. The stated aim of the study was to achieve three purposes:

- To transform youth ministries that have been heading in the wrong direction.
- To help youth ministries become more effective in transforming youths.
- To provide the basis for transforming the training and preparation of youth ministers. (Strommen et al., 2001, p. 9).

In data analysis, the sample was organized into nine denominational families. The sample was also classified based on tenure in professional youth ministry. At the time of this study, 14 percent of respondents had served less than three years in youth ministry, while 22 percent had served for 16 years or more (Strommen et al., 2001, p. 12). The authors note the particular value of the feedback from youth ministry veterans, speculating that the longer they have served, the more they have learned. Also, such experience likely speaks to the ability to have successfully navigated the many challenges that often create turnover in the first few years of professional youth ministry. Strommen et al. note,

...those who have served for 16 years or more perceive themselves as the most competent in job performance, in confident leadership, in effective relationships with youth, in theological grounding, in developing adult volunteers, in being motivated by God's calling, and in a creative response to the youth culture. Conclusion? Years of service make a great deal of difference. The longer-serving youth workers also tend to be serving in the largest churches and with the largest youth groups. (p. 12)

The authors' argument for the value of feedback from veteran youth ministry professionals is particularly influential in this researcher's current study as he seeks to determine the nature of phronetic administrative competencies in experienced student ministry professionals.

Strommen et al. analyzed their data based on denominational families and tenure and by considering youth ministry attendance, Sunday morning worship service attendance, educational background of the youth minister, theological orientation, community size, and youth ministry approach (missional or entertainment).

From this study, the authors were able to gain insight into spiritual fatigue that often overwhelms youth ministers and leads to premature burnout. Strommen et al. (2001) identify six debilitating concerns of youth ministers that can undermine effectiveness and sustainability in youth ministry as follows:

- Feelings of Personal Inadequacy
- Experiencing Strained Family Relations
- A Growing Loss of Confidence
- Feeling Unqualified for the Job
- Feeling Personally Disorganized
- Experiencing Burnout

Each of these concerns is related in some way to competency, particularly the ability to lead administratively in a way that creates margin, organizational effectiveness, and a healthy team approach to ministry. Data analysis shows that respondents least confident in competencies and most at risk for burnout are those with the least years of experience. Feelings of inadequacy decreased proportionately with tenure and age.

Also of note in this groundbreaking study is what the authors learned about respondent's perceived developmental needs. Strommen et al. (2001) note, "Youth ministers are aware of the fact that their task exceeds their capabilities" (p. 24). Data analysis revealed eight explicitly identified developmental needs of youth ministers:

- Training in communicating biblical and life-changing truth
- Understanding adolescent development leading to effective counseling
- Arriving at effective and personally fulfilling ministry strategies
- Gaining Biblical knowledge and pastoral ministry skills

- Gaining knowledge of family development and parental training skills
- Training in administration and management
- Having specific opportunities to gain new ideas
- Having opportunities for mentoring relationships and peers

Of particular interest to this researcher is the authors' findings related to training in administration and management. Noting the many complex demands on youth ministers to lead a growing and effective organization (including recruiting, training volunteers, delegating, and multiplying ministry through a team), Strommen et al. (2001) note that the variety of job interests "leads to a desire for increased training in the kind of administrative and management skills that will help them to meet many difficult—but worthy—expectations" (p. 317). The study reveals that 82 percent of respondents believe that additional administrative training would contribute to professional growth or effectiveness. Regarding the profile of student ministers who are most interested in receiving additional professional development in administration and management, the study shows that those serving in larger ministry contexts crave administrative training the most. The authors note, "Greater numbers often require systems and policies to ensure that communication is accurately transmitted across the board. Advanced budget preparation, forecasting, long-range planning, recruitment strategies... and countless other details often accompany the day-to-day operations within large churches" (p. 319). While the desire for specific administrative development was most expressed by youth ministers in a large church context, respondents at large expressed a desire for professional development. Particularly sought was training that is practical and could help the youth minister effectively meet the daily and complex needs of leading an effective ministry.

From the wealth of data in the study, Strommen et al. designed the first developmental map for the professional growth of youth ministers. This map outlines both explicitly identified needs, implicit needs as discovered through complex data analysis, and suggested outcome objectives for professional youth minister development. The authors' developmental blueprint, called "Youth Minister's Professional Development Map," can be seen in Appendix A.

Based on findings from this study, a team of youth ministry professors, led by Steve Gerali of Judson College, proposed that youth ministry educators adopt a commitment to uniform standards related to professional youth ministry education in the areas of youth minister maturity, youth ministry understanding, and youth ministry competencies. The proposal suggested the following six areas of competency for youth ministers (Strommen et al., 2001, p. 335):

- Communication and teaching skills
- Administration and organization skills
- Programming skills
- Counseling/helping skills
- Leadership development skills
- Research skills

While Gerali's proposal was never formally adopted as a standard among youth ministry professors, the suggested competencies have helped many and have served as a foundation for future studies.

Temple's Study on Leadership Competencies for Effective Youth Ministry. A significant study built on the work of Strommen, Jones, and Rahn is Troy Temple's 2007 study titled "An Analysis of Youth Ministers' Perceptions of Character Qualities, Leadership Competencies, and Leadership Flaws that Facilitate or Hinder Effective Youth Ministry."

Temple advanced not only the work of Strommen et al. but also the work of Dunn (1996) and David Adams (2004). Adams, formerly of the International Center of Youth Ministry at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, detailed a list of more than 50 critical requirements of a youth minister in the areas of credentials and experience, knowledge, character, skills, and programming. (See Appendix B for Adam's exhaustive list of competencies from which Temple developed his instrument survey.)

While building on the work of Strommen et al. (2001), Adams (2004), and Dunn (1996), whom all affirm organizational administrative competencies as core competencies of student ministry professionals, Temple (2007) makes an important discovery in his research,

The current study found that the youth ministers did not favor administrative responsibility well with 47% affirming delegation as a primary leadership competency for leading an effective local church youth ministry. Youth ministers, by and large, do not attend to the administrative responsibilities with great passion or integrity. (p. 116)

Respondents ranked communication, knowledge of the Bible, and biblically-based philosophy of youth ministry as top student ministry competencies. They had a much lower view of administrative competencies. Temple (2007) noted,

Administrative competencies cannot be labeled and dismissed as not primary if the youth minister is to be effective in leading a local church youth ministry. The effective youth minister must learn the skills for leading administratively as well as in communication and knowledge. (p. 117).

While student ministry professionals desire to be great communicators and have great plans, administrative competencies reflective of solid organizational leadership are necessary to sustain a healthy and growing student ministry. Temple (2007) adds, "The identification of youth ministry leadership competencies in no way guarantees effectiveness. Only the employment of those competencies can escort the youth minister into the wide open spaces of fruitful youth ministry" (p. 113). Temple's work highlights the need for additional research to identify

transformative administrative competencies in experienced student ministry professionals that other student ministers can embrace and implement towards sustained success in ministry to students.

Anderson's Study of Leadership Traits of Long Tenured Youth Ministers. In a more recent study, Gregory Anderson (2017a,b) conducted semi-structured interviews with veteran youth ministry professionals to determine leadership practices and strategies utilized by long-tenured youth ministers in Churches of Christ to help mitigate turnover in professional youth ministry (Anderson, 2017a). Citing the work of Stroupe & Bruner (2012) and Mancini (2008), Anderson (2017a) notes the modern shift to evaluate ministerial leadership growth less through external markers (like attendance, buildings, etc.) and more through competencies such as “purpose-aligned vision casting” and “capturing culture and creating movement.” Anderson (2017b) asserts, “Ministers are now expected to grow not only in Biblical knowledge and mastery of external markers, but also in organizational leadership capacity and competency that contributes to a congruent self” (p. 1).

Through analysis of data, Anderson identified the following seven themes related to the leadership approaches of long tenured-youth ministers:

- Self-awareness
- Relationally oriented
- Servant leader
- Process Minded
- Visionary
- Empowering
- Innovator

A key finding was that tenured youth ministers placed a high value on relationships. Understanding the value of relationships and having a relational orientation towards leadership has helped pave the way for these leaders to enjoy sustained success in youth ministry. This relational commitment was evidenced by making mentoring relationships a high priority and valuing conflict management training as a means to protect relationships within the administration of a sustained ministry.

Anderson (2017a) notes a concern of youth ministers related to higher education,

Study participants lamented the absence of practical courses that could have more effectively prepared them for the rigors of ministry. Courses on effective team building, practicing self-awareness, servant leadership, spiritual leadership, moral leadership, transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, conflict management, and interpersonal skills will complement courses dedicated to biblical studies and theological formation. (p. 81)

Anderson is not alone in encouraging theological higher education not to neglect practical training that is necessary for the development of professional competencies (Woodruff, 2004; Morgan, 1994; Greig, 1999, Geukgeuzian, 2015, Temple, 2007, Welch, 2011).

Minister Competency Studies

Because of the lack of significant studies regarding needed competencies specific to student ministry, a review of the literature must widen to consider such studies of ministers at large. A foundational study that invested significant resources (\$100,000) in studying the state of theological higher education and determining what abilities seminary graduates need to minister in the local church effectively is the 1994 Murdock Report, sponsored by the Murdock Charitable Trust. The Murdock report surveyed close to 800 seminary professors, pastors, and laypeople and concluded that seminaries should value student competency in the following eight areas:

1. Character

2. Communication Skills
3. Counseling Skills
4. Leadership Skills
5. Management Abilities
6. Relational Skills
7. Spirituality
8. Theological Knowledge

While many of the top five competencies were the same, each group differed in how they ranked the competencies, as seen in Table 10.

Table 10

The Murdock Report Top Five Priorities in Pastoral Training

Rank	Lay Priorities	Pastor' Priorities	Professors' Priorities
1	Spirituality	Relational Skills	Theological Knowledge
2	Relational Skills	Management Abilities	Character
3	Character	Communication Skills	Leadership Skills
4	Communication Skills	Spirituality	Communication Skills
5	Theological Knowledge	Theological Knowledge	Counseling Skills

Note. The Murdock Report Top Five Priorities in Pastoral Training. Adapted from “Re-Engineering the Seminary: ‘Crisis of credibility’ forces change.” by Timothy C. Morgan in *Christianity Today*, October 24, 1994. pp. 74-78.

The study revealed that while seminary professors valued theological knowledge over leadership and management skills, ministry practitioners valued leadership and management attributes over theological knowledge.

Mathis (1995) offered additional insight in his study “Perceptions Concerning Basic Ministerial Competencies Obtained Through Training in a Selected Southern Baptist Theological

Seminary.” Mathis sought to determine what, if any, differences in perception of basic ministry competencies exist between faculty, students, and trustees of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and ministers and layperson in the states served by the seminary. Overall, there was significant agreement among the respondent groups who valued attitude competencies the most, followed by skills. The least regarded sub-section (of three) was knowledge competencies. The nine concentrations examined were ranked as follows:

1. Inward spiritual attitude
2. Attitudes about religious beliefs
3. Attitudes about others
4. Personal communication skills
5. Pastoral ministry skills
6. Administration skills
7. Practical theological knowledge
8. Classical studies
9. Specialized knowledge

Noting the consistency of findings among the 332 respondents (that included 47 faculty members, 35 trustees, 84 students, 86 ministers, and 80 laypersons), Mathis (1995) notes,

These rankings were consistent through all of the groups except that both trustees and laypersons reversed the fourth and fifth places. The top three and the bottom three were consistent across all groups. The conclusion of this study would appear to be that attitudes are most important, followed by skills, followed by knowledge. (pp. 121-122)

Unlike the Murdock Report (Morgan, 1994), Mathis (1995) found the faculty respondents valued skills over theological knowledge. It is also interesting to note the ranking of administration skills as the lowest of the skills surveyed, yet higher than all knowledge concentrations.

The work of Purcell (2001) yielded similarly interesting results. In “A Comparative Analysis of a Congregation’s Perception and a Pastor’s Perception of Ministerial Leadership,” an expert panel compiled a list of needed ministerial competencies and characteristics from research. From that list, Purcell (2001) developed a survey instrument of 45 questions (clustered and triangulated) that was administered to 100 pastors and 42 lay leaders from three specific church sizes in western Kentucky, southern Illinois, and northwestern Tennessee. The study found that pastors ranked *Relational Skills* and *Leadership* among the lowest three necessary ministerial skills, with *Leadership* being the lowest valued. Laypersons surveyed ranked *Knowledge of God’s Word* as a top characteristic. *Preaching and Evangelism* were the next most significant skills. The remaining top eight characteristics valued by laypersons all related to the pastor’s calling or character. (See Table 11 for findings.) Purcell (2001) notes, “This can indicate that laypersons are concerned with the integrity of ministerial leaders and that they lead from the inside out” (p. 132). Once again, *Leadership* and *Personal Relational Skills* ranked at the bottom of the list of ministerial leadership characteristics.

Table 11

Purcell’s Essential Leadership Characteristics of Pastors

Characteristic	Pastor Value	Layperson Value
Knowledge of God’s Word	1	1
Relies on God	2	2
Growing Marriage	3	7
Personal Disciple	4	5
Authentic	5	3
Calling	6	4
Preaching	7	6
Evangelism	8	8
Develops and Utilizes Lay Leaders	9	11

<i>Management</i>	10	9
Perseverance	11	10
Visionary	12	13
Personal Relational Skills	13	15
Good Communication Skills	14	12
<i>Leadership</i>	15	14

Note. Purcell's Essential Leadership Characteristics of Pastors. Adapted from "A Comparative Analysis of a Congregation's Perception and a Pastor's Perception of Ministerial Leadership" by Larry Joe Purcell, 2001, pp. 91, 95. Copyright Larry Joe Purcell.

It is noteworthy that *Management* ranked above *Leadership* for both pastors and lay leaders.

A closer look at leadership and management competencies in the local church was examined in the 2004 research study of Timothy Woodruff titled, "Executive Pastors' Perception of Leadership and Management Competencies Needed for Local Church Administration" conducted through The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. While Woodruff (2004) explored the emerging role of *Executive Pastor*, his work was a unique and valuable dive into the leadership and management competencies needed in the local church, whether a pastor was tasked to fulfill such competencies themselves or could direct specific staff charged with such responsibilities. Foundational to Woodruff's work was the 1988 study of pastoral managerial competencies by Stephen A. Boersma (1988), which identified fifty specific pastoral management competencies. Using a survey instrument validated by Boersma's study, Woodruff used a descriptive survey methodology to gather feedback from 37 respondents functioning as an executive pastor in Southern Baptist mega-churches.

In seeking rank order and relative agreement of the perceived competency importance, data analysis revealed that executive pastors rated *interpersonal skills* as the highest factor. Woodruff (2004) notes, "This factor relates to the interpersonal relationships with the staff team in order to accomplish the church's goals. The competencies in the area focused on morale-

building, creating harmony, resolving differences, and involving the team in decision-making” (p. 154). When comparing his findings to that of Boersma (1988), Woodruff discovered a consistency among the highest valued areas of interpersonal skills or implementation and decision-making skills. Woodruff (2004) points out, “The number one item in both studies was the competency related to building and maintaining morale. One may conclude that regardless of the position, pastor or executive pastor, the need to maintain organizational esprit de corps is of the utmost importance” (p. 159). Throughout the precedent literature, the concept of positive organizational culture driving organizational success is clear (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Northouse, 2019; Blanchard et al., 2013; Lencioni, 2016; Scazzero & Bird, 2013; Livermore, 2015; Welch, 2011; Lencioni, 2002; Greenleaf, 2002; Berkley, 2007). This work further supports the theological and theoretical case for the value of competencies related to building and maintaining healthy team environments in sustaining ministry success.

Another significant contribution to the literature base for this study is the work of Geukgeuzian (2015), “Vocational Ministry Training at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.” While drawing some parallels to Mathis’ (1995) work twenty years earlier, Geukgeuzian (2015) explores practical ministry training in the context of internships through the Department of Christian Leadership and Church Ministries at Liberty University and partner churches. The study surveyed 114 undergraduate ministry students regarding expectations for ministry internships and training. The study also surveyed 15 alumni from the Department of Christian Leadership and Church Ministries who had successfully completed an internship with the department and have since served on a church ministry staff for more than a year. This second group was questioned regarding internship experience and relevance to their current ministry position. The third group surveyed were pastors of seven churches with which the

Department of Christian Leadership and Church Ministries had partnered to train interns. The comparative findings show that each group surveyed valued the same four traits as desired learning outcomes of a church internship experience. Although not ranked in the same order by each group, the common traits were personal leadership, personal spiritual development, ministry leadership, and ministry experience. (See Table 12.)

Table 12

Geukgeuzian's Necessary Traits to Learn from Church Internship

Traits	Themes	Elements
Personal Leadership	Character Development	Being accountable, showing integrity, leading one's self, showing humility, being above reproach
	Learning how to be a leader	Servant leadership, learning from other leaders, modeling true & effective leadership, knowing what leaders should /should not do
	Skill development	Goal setting, time management, how to disciple a new believer, balancing family time / ministry, personal communication
Personal Spiritual Development	Personal growth	Spiritual disciplines (Bible study, prayer, intimacy with Christ, Scripture knowledge & memorization)
	Mentoring	Personal conduct, ministry leadership, accountability
Ministry Leadership	Developing leadership qualities	Communication, curriculum development, discipleship, leading volunteers, showing responsibility
	Exhibiting servant leadership / submission to authority	Teaching students and giving opportunity to show servant leadership
	Casting Vision	Having vision and communicating vision to team

Traits	Themes	Elements
Ministry Experience	Learning by doing	Giving opportunity to put knowledge into practice by executing ministry programs
	Mentoring	Personal mentoring by ministry staff
	Teaching & Leadership	Modeling of leadership by ministry staff

Note. Geukgeuzian's Necessary Traits to Learn from Church Internship. Adapted from "Vocational Ministry Training at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia" by Jonathan Allen Geukgeuzian, 2015, pp. 70-74. Copyright Jonathan Allen Geukgeuzian.

While each group agreed on four of the top five traits, it is interesting to note the fifth trait that each group valued as follows:

- Pastors: Outreach
- Alumni (serving at least one year in a local church): Lay leadership management
- Undergraduate Ministry Students: Oral Communications

Both undergraduate ministry students and recent alumni were also asked to rank the top five character qualities that a student going into vocation ministry should possess (excluding those mentioned explicitly in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1). Both alumni and ministry students ranked the top five from a list of 20 character qualities determined by a survey of pastor and youth pastors, and both groups ranked the same qualities in the top five. Three of the top five qualities were related to spiritual or character qualities as follows: integrity, strong spiritual life, and coachable. The other two qualities that were determined to be necessary for students going into vocational ministry focused on ministry skills as follows: biblically / theologically sound, and able to lead others.

Each relevant study related to ministerial competencies provides additional evidence supporting the argument for administrative leadership competencies as a part of both preparation for and ongoing professional training in ministry to students.

Studies Related to Methodological Design

Several studies have informed the methodological design of this exploratory sequential mixed methods study utilizing a Delphi technique. Of particular interest to this researcher is precedent studies that have successfully reached a consensus among an expert panel by using a Delphi technique- an iterative process that refines data collected in a previous round (Skulmoski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007).

John Cartwright (2014) accomplished this purpose in his work “Best Practices for Online Theological Ministry Preparation: A Delphi Method Study.” In his work, Cartwright (2014) sought to consult experts in the field to answer the question, “What are the best practices for ministry preparation in online theological education?” (p. 9). To gather and refine the data needed to answer this question, a three-round Delphi study was performed with 17 participants. In the first round, participants were given a free-form eight-question survey (based on the four learning outcomes for ATS M.Div. programs) and asked to respond to how these outcomes might be accomplished in an online format. Respondents were also asked to offer feedback about relevant questions that may be missing. After round one, respondents were able to view the entire group’s answers and then given the opportunity to revise their answers in any way. Respondents were also invited to submit any of their published work that may further answer or contribute to any questions. Once responses and additional material were received, the data was analyzed and coded based on themes. Round 1 data analysis yielded 44 statements. Cartwright (2014) described the next important step in the Delphi process, “The analysis of the round 1 information discovered emergent themes that served as a basis for a round 2 survey that was administered to this same group of participants” (p. 44).

The round 2 survey was quantitative in nature, containing a four-option Likert-type scale for respondents to rate the statements from round 1 on its level of importance in meeting learning outcomes. Results from round 2 were analyzed statistically using standard deviation and mean. Cartwright (2014) noted, “Round 2 served as the first attempt to measure consensus among the group” (p. 45). Respondents were once again given the opportunity to view the group results and revise their answers if desired. If consensus was generally achieved on a question, those who fell outside the consensus were asked to join the consensus or justify remaining outside the consensus.

The 30 statements that received consensus in round 2 were used for a third round of questioning using a second survey with a dichotomous scale for its responses. As in the previous rounds, the group’s answers were shared, and respondents were allowed to revise their answers, once again seeking consensus. Results were collected and analyzed statistically, and all 30 statements maintained consensus. Cartwright (2014) described, “...after this three-round Delphi study, 30 statements met the definition of consensus on best practices for ministry preparation in online theological education” (p. 94).

Cartwright’s study serves as a great example of how to guide an expert panel of 17 individuals through an iterative process to achieve consensus without leading the group towards the researcher’s opinions. Cartwright carefully describes a methodology that allowed the process to lead the way to significant data from a diverse and qualified expert panel.

Dorothy Potter (2009) employed the Delphi method to produce a consensus among an expert panel to identify key traits and attitudes exhibited by servant leaders and the work environment in which they thrive. Potter described the seven-person panel as representing “business leaders, authors of leadership, leaders in federal government, educators,

theologians/clergy and leaders of non-profit associations geographically dispersed throughout the United States with the participants serving as subject matter experts from various disciplines” (p. ii). Round 1 yielded 51 traits/characteristics of servant leaders, 35 attitudes of servant leaders, 29 effective work environments of servant leaders, and 28 ineffective work environments of servant leaders. Like Cartwright (2014), the round 2 qualitative instrument (4-point Likert scale) was designed from round 1 data, and then round 3 instrumentation was designed from round 2 data. In round 3, participants were asked only to rate those items meeting the 80% criterion. From data analysis, Potter was able to determine consensus and draw conclusions. Of interest to this researcher is how Potter interacted with her panel and some issues she encountered. With a smaller panel of seven participants, Potter ran into some issues when several participants had problems related to participation and clarity. While she was ultimately able to get enough data to analyze, she would have significantly benefited from a larger panel of experts.

Two other studies that offer methodological value to this study is the work of Lambert (2004) “Determining Research Needs in North American Christian Youth Ministry: A Delphi Study” and Boersma (1988), “Managerial Competencies for Church Administration as Perceived by Seminary Faculties, Church Lay Leaders, and Ministers.” These studies had a much larger sample size, with Lambert (2004) surveying 61 youth ministry professors. Boersma (1988) began with a panel of 10 experts, and from that data surveyed 482 respondents.

Each of these studies offers something of methodological value to this study, and each demonstrates the flexibility that a Delphi method offers a researcher to adapt the method to best answer the relevant research questions.

Administrative Competencies in Popular Student Ministry Literature

This research has identified four resources among popular literature in the field of student ministry over the past 12 years that significantly contribute to the area of study (Devries, 2008; Heflin, 2009; Robbins, 2010; Work & Olson, 2014).

Devries (2008) offers an excellent resource in *Sustainable Youth Ministry: Why Most Youth Ministry Doesn't Last and What Your Church Can Do About It*. As a youth ministry consultant for churches worldwide, Devries has a good pulse on contributing factors to the turnover rate of student ministry professionals and why many churches have never experienced significant success in ministry to students. He addresses each of these in a way that is highly descriptive of the problems and prescriptive to solutions. Perhaps the most helpful content related to this current study is Devries' discussion on "A Systems Approach to Youth Ministry." Devries (2008) invites the reader to view youth ministry with a systems perspective, noting, "Sustainable youth ministries make the leap from a short-term, patchwork ministry to ones based on established systems that last long after the current leadership team has moved on" (p. 52). He encourages the reader that sustainable youth ministry is possible if two critical components of systems thinking are rightly addressed:

1. Architecture: the structures of sustainability
2. Atmosphere: the culture, climate, and ethos that sustain the health of an organization (Devries, 2008, pp. 52-53).

Devries highlights the Apostle Paul as a systems thinker and notes, "Youth ministry is not an event, but a process" (p. 55). This researcher highly values Devries' work, as it offers so much more than a "template" for successful youth ministry. While the content is brief, Devries offers practical training by which invaluable administrative competencies can be developed. Such

training is exactly what this researcher has noted is largely missing within the literature directed to the context of student ministry.

Heflin (2009) also offers a helpful resource in *Youth Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Youth Ministry*. While Heflin explores the many roles of a youth pastor, he includes a chapter on the youth pastor as Organized Administrator. Citing the work of Strommen et al. (2001), Heflin notes the need for more training in this area among student ministry professionals. He explores the five aspects of administration as defined by MacKenzie (1969): planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling. Heflin (2009) notes, “Administration is important to ministerial efficacy. But it is a means to an end” (loc. 1020). He reminds his readers to focus on ministry and mission and effectively use administration to succeed in what matters most. Heflin includes an important Epilogue titled “Character and Competency in Ministry” and notes, “If character is the prerequisite for a position in ministry, competence is the qualification for continuing in ministry” (loc. 2414). This statement underscores the importance of this study in addressing the literature gap regarding administrative competencies in the context of student ministry.

Duffy Robbins has been a leading voice in student ministry training for several decades. While many of his resources offer a big-picture perspective to student ministry (Robbins, 2004; Robbins, 2011), his 1991 release of *Youth Ministry Nuts and Bolts* offered a resource that was a first of its kind, a true behind-the-scenes look at the many details of youth ministry. The updated and revised 2010 release begins with the student ministry professional’s character and quickly jumps to issues of time management, skill management, people management, and life/spirit management. Riddled with practical administrative helps, Robbins’ work is a primer on student ministry management 101. While Robbins (2010) certainly offers many timeless truths, the

detailed nature of much of his content has quickly become dated. What is not dated is his encouragement to youth pastors,

The road to effective leadership and good administration leads through an intersection of faithful heart and skillful hands. Heart without hands lacks muscle and movement. Hands without heart lack reason to move. Youth ministry needs leaders who exercise their skills and spiritual gifts because their hearts are stoked by the grace of Christ. (p. 32)

Such practical skills training coupled with timeless truth is the kind of resources student ministry professionals seek and need.

In *Youth Ministry Management Tools 2.0*, Work and Olson (2014) offer a highly practical resource on managing a student ministry. Work and Olson (2014) state, “Our vision as developers is to help you succeed in all facets of youth ministry management. Our task as authors was to write a book to facilitate that success” (p. 7). The authors discuss strategic foundations, organization, planning, programming, risk management, and event facilitation. They also offer practical helps in managing interns and teams. Perhaps most helpful to some readers is the extensive offering of forms that could assist a student ministry professional in organization and management.

While there are not many like them, these resources make a significant contribution to the development of student ministry professionals. Each is practical, challenging, and speaks to areas in which student ministry professionals need and seek help. This researcher anticipates the findings of this study can offer such a contribution to the literature.

Rationale for Study and Gap in the Literature

While much can be learned through time-tested leadership and management theory and transferable principles from other business and organizational theory, the nuanced details of running a student ministry are decidedly unique and require a broad skillset (Devries, 2008; Heflin, 2009). Although the number of studies that have defined needed core competencies for

student ministry professionals is relatively limited and dated (Dunn, 1996; Strommen et al., 2001; Graham, 2005; Temple, 2007; Anderson, 2017), all agree that administrative competencies are critical to leading an effective student ministry. Often least valued by many student ministry professionals among other competencies (Temple, 2007), administrative skills are indispensable competencies needed to sustain a healthy student ministry and must be included in vocational training. Perhaps many student ministry professionals do not value administrative competencies more highly because they have not been exposed to administrative skills worth valuing. Many transformational administrative practices are learned over time that may never be discovered by the student ministry professional who is in a role an average of three years (Barna, 2003).

This researcher's casual observation has noted a significant gap in literature from 2010 to the present that focuses on developing administrative skills in a student ministry setting. As will be seen below, there are many student ministry training resources that focus on theological training, ministry models, and big-picture strategies. Among popular literature, Newton and Pace (2019) do an excellent job of discussing the practical side of the theory themes discussed above: relationship, service, and transformation. The authors discuss the abilities to help students "walk" and think, as it relates to discipleship. These speak to specific competencies within a Student Ministry professional that should be explored.

While Fields (1998), Robbins (2004), Geiger (2009), Robbins (2011), and Belsterling (2019) offer a picture of what an intentional and healthy Student Ministry looks like, they do not specifically outline competencies needed to build such an organization. Although they offer a great picture of a successful ministry, many associated competencies must be inferred.

Anthony and Marshman (2015), Cole et al. (2016), and Stier (2015) offer great insight on faith formation, disciple-making, and evangelism in student ministry. Trueblood (2016) offers

three elements of a healthy student ministry and makes a strong case for the impact a student ministry can have on culture. While each of these resources is a significant contribution to the field of student ministry, none of them purpose to offer significant insight on administrative competencies needed to build and sustain a healthy student ministry. Among popular literature, very few offer significant insight into such competencies.

There is a definite lack in both volume and variety of resources that focus on administrative competencies that will transform a student ministry and facilitate sustained ministry success. If ministry success is at all facilitated by administrative competencies, this gap poses a significant problem for churches, aspiring student ministry professionals, and even current practitioners desiring a healthy and fruitful ministry to students.

While a larger number of studies have been done to determine ministerial leadership competencies (Murdock Trust Study, 1994; Mathis, 1995; Purcell, 2001; Woodruff, 2004; Geukgeuzian, 2015), a much smaller number of studies have narrowed the focus to those in student ministry. While there may be substantial overlap in some competencies, ministering to adolescents requires a unique skill set that warrants focused research (Anderson, 2017; Lambert, 2004).

Of particular interest to this researcher are those competencies that experienced practitioners have tested and proven to be transformative. This study has referred to such competencies as *phronetic*, noting, “Proper training of student ministry practitioners for sustained and effective ministry must include phronetic administrative competencies that have been widely proven to be transformative from experienced student ministry professionals.” The term *phronetic* comes from Aristotle’s idea of *phronesis*, a practical wisdom that embodies situational awareness and is not dependent on a particular theory. Hammersley (2015) notes,

“More recently, the concept of *phronesis* has come to be applied to the kind of practical expertise characteristic of experienced practitioners in professional occupations of various kinds” (para. 1). It is descriptive of a mature acumen that considers values and circumstances. Phronesis is a term that has been used to describe airline pilots placed in unique and stressful situations, to which there is no precedent or predetermined plan in the manual. Such is descriptive of the actions of Chesley B. Sullenberger III, who saved the lives of 155 passengers when he successfully landed a US Airlines plane safely in the Hudson River in January 2009 (Kinsella & Pitman, 2012, p. 129).

While a student ministry professional may never have to land a plane in a river, many find themselves in organizational crises that require significant administrative insight (Devries, 2008). If such insight is only learned through years of trial and experience, inexperienced student ministry practitioners are at a considerable disadvantage. That is unless transferrable phronetic administrative insight has been an intentional part of their ministry training. The more transformative administrative skills that can be put in their “manual” of competencies, the better they can navigate unexpected turbulence.

This study’s value is in identifying such phronetic administrative competencies that have proven to be transformative in sustaining effective student ministry in the local church. This information can transform struggling student ministries and inform curriculum development in higher education, resources for continuing professional development, and hiring practices for local churches.

Profile of the Current Study

The impact of a healthy student ministry in the local church is culture-shaping and eternally significant. Unfortunately, many churches are not experiencing success in this area of

ministry. Among the many challenges modern student ministry face, a high turnover rate and perceived lack of competence among student ministry professionals contribute to this lack of sustained fruitful ministry. In many cases, the lack of competence is a primary contributing factor to the turnover. While a number of studies have identified the necessity of student ministry professionals possessing sound administrative competencies in growing and sustaining success in student ministry, many professionals in the field either feel ill-equipped in this area or place little value on development in this area.

The literature has shown little research in the area of transformative administrative competencies in the student ministry professional and provides little material that targets development in the area of administration in student ministry. There is a significant gap in the literature, especially in the past decade, concerning research and development in this critical area. This sustained literature gap highlights the value of student ministry veterans' learned experiences in the area of administration. Because seminaries have been criticized for lack of practical instruction in this area, much of what tenured student ministry professionals have learned in this area is phronetic in nature, as it has been learned through experience. If such phronetic administrative competencies can be identified and ranked in order of perceived value among student ministry professionals, such information could make a significant contribution to the literature in this area, informing curriculum development in higher education, resources for professional development, and hiring practices for the church. It could also significantly impact the health of countless student ministries, as well as the professionals who lead them. This study explores such competencies and aims to make such a contribution.

To collect data, an exploratory sequential mixed methods design incorporating a Delphi technique was utilized. A three-round Delphi guided an expert panel in reaching consensus on

the top 10 transformative administrative competencies. The expert panel findings were utilized to develop an instrument that sought quantitative data from a much larger sample of student ministry professionals nationwide. The survey gathered information from respondents regarding years of ministry experience, educational training, church size, student ministry budget, and their ministry's perceived health. The study identified valued administrative competencies and explored the source of learning for each competency. Data analysis explored any relationship between valued competency and size of ministry, ministry experience, and perceived proficiency in each competency. The details of the research study's multi-phase iterative data collection and analysis methods are discussed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following chapter will describe the research methodology that was employed in order to gather input from a panel of student ministry experts, determine a consensus of transformative administrative competencies, survey a larger population of student ministry professionals regarding these areas, analyze the data, and discover perceived proficiency, value, and source of learned administrative proficiencies by student ministry professionals according to church size and ministry experience. This chapter is organized around the following categories: design synopsis (research problem, research purpose, research questions, research design, and methodology), setting, participants, sampling procedures, limitations of generalization, role of the researcher, ethical considerations, data collection methods (qualitative data collection, quantitative data collection), instrumentation (qualitative instrumentation, quantitative instrumentation, validity and reliability), procedures, and data analysis (qualitative data coding and analysis, quantitative data analysis, research trustworthiness).

Research Design Synopsis

The Problem

As the church struggles to understand and reach a post-Christian world, effective ministry to Generation Z is vital (Barna, 2018; White, 2017). Critical to effective ministry to students in and through the church is the identification and development of men and women who are divinely called to reach this generation through the local church. The development of these individuals must include character qualities that reflect Christ and earn needed trust with students (Temple, 2019a; Barna, 2002) as well as the competencies required to build a sustained and healthy ministry to students and their families. Such competencies include necessary

administrative and organizational leadership skills needed to lead a biblical team approach to ministry. Sustained ministry to students in the local church cannot simply be built on personality and large group communication skills (DeVries, 2008). It must involve systems, organization, and effective management skills as well (Robbins, 2010).

Administrative competency development must be an area of emphasis in seminary training, professional self-development, and ongoing church staff coaching. The challenge of such emphasis and development lies in the obvious literature gap regarding administrative competencies in the student ministry setting. This researcher has aimed to make a significant contribution to the literature gap by seeking valuable information from veteran student ministry professionals who have demonstrated effective administrative and organizational leadership competencies in leading successful student ministries as evidenced by sustained numerical and spiritual growth.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this exploratory sequential mixed methods research was to determine the nature of phronetic administrative competencies in experienced student ministry practitioners. This study first utilized Delphi technique to collect data in a qualitative form regarding transformative administrative proficiencies most valued by an expert panel. This study then collected data in a quantitative form regarding perceived proficiency, value, and source of learned administrative proficiencies by student ministry professionals according to church size, educational background, and ministry experience.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. What practical administrative abilities have been most valuable to student ministry professionals in leading a successful student ministry?

RQ2. What is the source of learning for the most valued administrative competencies?

RQ3. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and the size of ministry?

RQ4. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and ministry experience?

RQ5. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and perceived proficiency in that competency?

Research Design and Methodology

This study was a mixed methods study that is an exploratory sequential design. A mixed methods approach to this study was chosen to most fully answer the research questions. Both qualitative (open-ended data) and quantitative (closed-ended data) methodologies have strengths and weaknesses. A mixed methods approach combines the strengths of both methodologies to create a fuller picture of the problem being explored. Creswell (2015) notes, “A core assumption is that when the investigator combines both statistical trends (quantitative data) with stories and personal experiences (qualitative data), this collective strength provides a better understanding of the research problem than either form of data alone” (p. 1). Mixed methods research integrates the two forms of data in the design analysis. Creswell (2018) describes the core characteristics of mixed methods research as follows:

- It involves the collection of both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (closed-ended) data in response to research questions or hypotheses.
- It includes the rigorous methods (i.e., data collection, data analysis, and interpretation) of both quantitative and qualitative data.
- The two forms of data are integrated in the design analysis through merging the data, explaining the data, building from one database to another, or embedding the data within a larger framework.
- These procedures are incorporated into a distinct mixed methods design that indicates the procedures to be used in a study.

- These procedures are often informed by a philosophy (or worldview) and a theory. (p. 215)

This researcher has chosen a mixed methods approach because both qualitative and quantitative information was needed to answer this study's research questions. This study sought open-ended qualitative information regarding what administrative competencies are needed to lead a sustainable and effective student ministry. From that information, this study sought closed-ended quantitative information regarding how those identified administrative competencies are ranked, perceived to be proficient, and how student ministry professionals learn them. With the right design, a contextualized measurement instrument was developed from the qualitative data to best gather that needed quantitative data.

To develop a better-contextualized measurement instrument by first collecting and analyzing qualitative data from an expert panel and then administering the instrument to a larger sample of practitioners, an exploratory sequential design was followed. Of this design, Creswell (2018) notes,

A three-phase exploratory sequential mixed methods is a design in which the researcher first begins by exploring with qualitative data and analysis, then builds a feature to be tested (e.g., a new survey instrument, experimental procedures, a website, or new variables) and tests this feature in a quantitative third phase. (p. 224)

The purpose of this design is to explore with a sample first (in the case of this study, an expert panel of veteran student ministry professionals) so that the later quantitative phase can be done with greater specificity in seeking information from a larger sample. Creswell (2018) notes the value of instrument development in this research design,

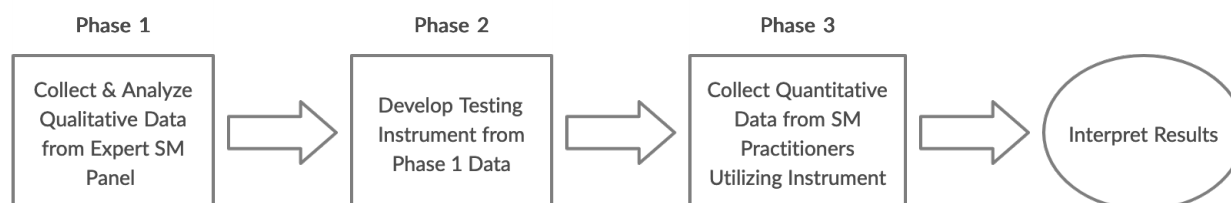
In this design, the researcher would first collect focus group data, analyze the results, develop an instrument (or other quantitative feature such as a website for testing), and then administer it to a sample of a population. In this case, there may not be adequate instruments to measure the concepts with the sample the investigator wishes to study. In effect, the researcher employs a three-phase procedure with the first phase as exploratory,

the second as instrument (or quantitative feature) development, and the third as administering and testing the instrument feature to a sample of a population. (p. 224)

The three phases of this exploratory sequential mixed-method design flowed as indicated in Figure 3, from the initial collection of qualitative data from an expert panel (Phase 1) to the design of testing instrument from that collected data (Phase 2) to the collection of broader quantitative data with the new instrument (Phase 3) from which results were interpreted.

Figure 3

The Flow of Design Procedures (Three-Phase Exploratory Sequential Design)



In the qualitative phase of research, the Delphi method was used to discover the potential consensus among the experts as it relates to administrative competencies needed to sustain an effective student ministry. Skulmoski, Hartman, and Krahn (2007) note,

The Delphi method is an iterative process used to collect and distill the judgments of experts using a series of questionnaires interspersed with feedback. The questionnaires are designed to focus on problems, opportunities, solutions, or forecasts. Each subsequent questionnaire is developed based on the results of the previous questionnaire. The process stops when the research question is answered: for example, when consensus is reached, theoretical saturation is achieved, or when sufficient information has been exchanged. (p. 2)

The Delphi method was first developed in the 1950s by Norman Dalkey and his associates at the RAND Corporation. Dalkey was working on a project sponsored by the U.S. Air Force that sought expert opinion “to the selection- from the point of view of a Soviet strategic planner- of an optimal U.S. industrial target system, with a corresponding estimation of the number of atomic bombs required to reduce munitions output by a prescribed amount” (Rowe & Wright,

1999, p. 354). Since then, the Delphi method has become a widely accepted research technique that can be modified to meet a wide range of research needs.

Rowe and Wright (1999) describe a traditional Delphi method as having four key features:

1. **Anonymity of participants:** through anonymous questionnaires, participants can freely offer their opinions without fear of disagreement from other participants. Anonymity also ensures that participants do not support an idea simply based on regard for the person who offered it. This allows each idea to be evaluated based on merit alone.
2. **Iteration:** allows opportunity for participants to refine their views based on feedback from the group.
3. **Controlled Feedback:** allows participants to be informed of the opinions of other participants and evaluate their input based on this information.
4. **Statistical aggregation of group response:** allows for a quantitative evaluation of group opinion. (p. 354)

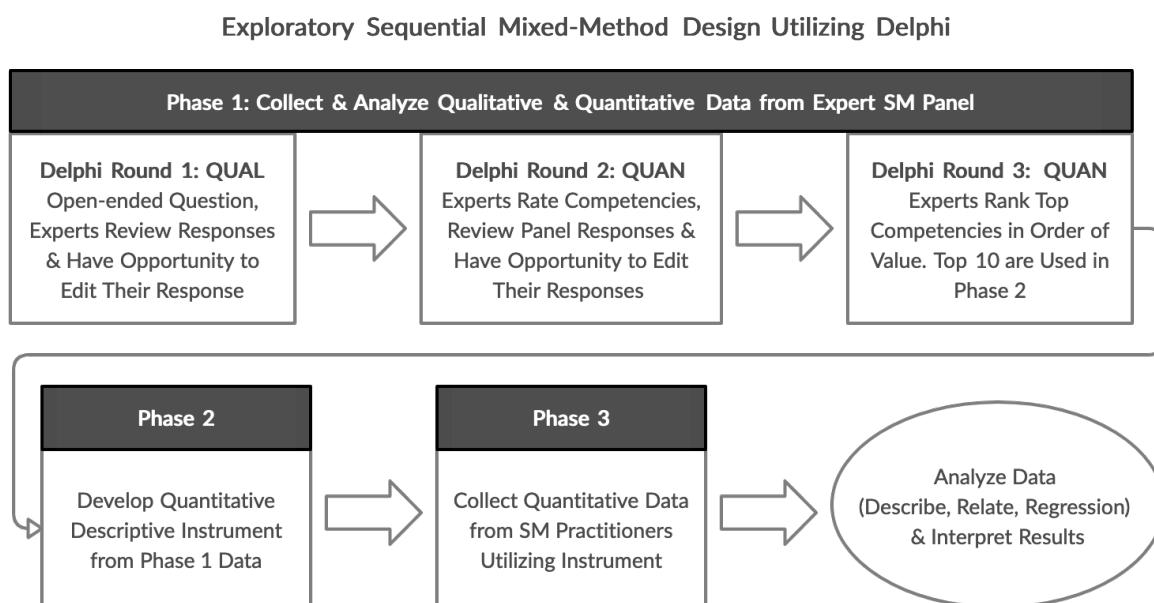
A critical step in a Delphi design is selecting the right expert panel. While what defines “expert” may vary by field, the key ingredients are experience and knowledge. Alder and Ziglio (1996) note the general qualifications of an expert panel include knowledge and practical engagement with the object of study, a willingness and ability to participate in the study, a commitment to dedicate the necessary time to the study, and adequate communication skills (p. 14). Critical thinking skills are also valuable within the expert panel. As experts answer questions and then evaluate their answers in light of other experts’ answers, they have the opportunity to evaluate their responses and revise their answers critically.

The Delphi method was chosen for this research study because it has proven to be an effective technique to solicit a reliable consensus among a group of experts (Cartwright, 2014; Potter, 2009). This method offered a flexibility for the researcher to hone in on specific information through multiple rounds of data gathering from the expert group. The Delphi method worked well with this study as the first round of questioning with the experts began open-ended.

The panel was asked about needed transformative administrative competencies with no leading from the researcher. Panelists were allowed to review other experts' answers and make any desired changes to their own answers. In a second round, panelists were asked to rate the value of each competency identified in round 1. Again, they were allowed to review results from the panel and given an opportunity to revise their answers, if desired. In a third round, the experts were asked to quantitatively rank the top 10 competencies from round 2 according to value. This data was then used to develop the instrumentation (phase 2) used in the more extensive quantitative study (phase 3). This exploratory sequential mixed methods design utilizing the Delphi technique flowed as depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Exploratory Sequential Mixed-Method Design Utilizing Delphi



Setting

This study was set within student ministry leadership of evangelical Christian churches in the United States. Because the size of ministry context is one of the variables with which this

study sought to determine if a relationship exists with valued competencies, expert panel participants were chosen from a variety of church contexts. This researcher sought qualified participants from the following contexts:

- Five professionals from churches that average less than 500 congregants in weekend attendance (categorized as *small* churches).
- Five professionals from churches that average between 500 and 1,200 congregants in weekend attendance (categorized as *medium* churches).
- Five professionals from churches that average more than 1,200 congregants in weekend attendance (categorized as *large/mega* churches).

Participants

This study is concerned with full-time student ministry professionals from evangelical Christian churches across the United States. These professionals represent a diverse demographic that varies in age, gender, and ethnicity. This population also varies in educational background, ministry experience, and size of ministry context.

In phase 1, participants were chosen for the expert panel in a purposive criterion sampling manner. Leedy & Ormrod (2016) note that in a purposive selection of data sources, “You would choose those individuals or objects that will yield the most information about the topic under investigation” (p. 262). In this study, the first phase’s information needed to come from experienced student ministry professionals who have been successful and who have served in a student ministry role for substantially longer than the three-year average (Barna, 2016). Because experience is a high value in phase 1, the expert panel’s demographics was slightly older than that of the general research population that was sampled in Phase Three. Regarding other aspects of demographics, diversity of ethnicity and gender was sought.

To choose the five participants from each of the represented church sizes, this researcher collaborated with representatives of student ministry organizations that serve and equip student ministry leaders through large national networks. These organizations were:

- LeaderTreks
- Liberty University Center for Youth Ministry (LUCYM)
- North American Mission Board (NAMB), Next Gen Ministries
- Student Leadership University (SLU)

This researcher asked for multiple candidates for each church size from each organizational leader. From that list, the researcher sought a combination that represents diverse demographics, along with ensuring the following qualifications:

- Is currently or has recently served in a full-time student ministry position in a local evangelical Christian church in the United States.
- Has at least ten years of ministry experience with at least seven years in a student ministry role.
- Is known to have experienced success in leading a healthy ministry. (evidenced by numerical, spiritual, and organizational growth)

The rationale for selecting the first criterion is to ensure that those on the expert panel had an intimate understanding of the challenges and opportunities of serving students in a local church context. The purpose of including “or has recently served” in this criterion was to acknowledge the wealth of information that may be available from someone with significant experience in a local church student ministry role who may have recently taken another role. The second criterion suggests an ability to identify certain phronetic abilities that come with significant experience in professional ministry and specifically in student ministry. The third criterion was related to experienced success in growing a healthy ministry, as evidenced by sustained organizational and spiritual growth.

In addition to the fifteen local church practitioners, an additional five experts were chosen from those organizations (listed above) that serve student ministry professionals on a national level. The rationale for including these five additional experts was to ensure a broader context of student ministry professionals were represented in the expert panel. These professionals represented organizations that have ongoing conversations with student ministry practitioners across the country and understand student ministries' needs from many contexts. Each of these organizations serves and resources a diversity of student ministry professionals and, between them, have a database of a significant number of student pastors nationwide. Having a relationship with many of these expert organizations' leaders, this researcher chose the additional five members for the expert panel based on diversity, availability, and convenience. Each had the following qualifications:

- Has served as a full-time student ministry professional in a local church.
- Has at least ten years of ministry experience with at least seven years in a student ministry role.
- Is known to have experienced success in leading a healthy ministry. (as evidenced by numerical, spiritual, and organizational growth)
- Regularly interacts with student ministry professionals nationwide and is engaged in ongoing conversations regarding the needs of student pastors and student ministries in diverse contexts of local churches.

The rationale for selecting the first three criteria was the same as listed above. The fourth criterion ensured that these five additional experts understand how to sustain healthy growth as a student ministry practitioner and understand the needs of a diverse population of student ministry practitioners nationwide.

These twenty experts made up an expert panel that has between 279 and 390 years of combined student ministry experience and represents various church sizes, educational

backgrounds, and ministry contexts.

In the third and final phase of this study, a single-stage cluster sampling design was applied through two of the national student ministry network databases. Of the four networks referenced, three have no denominational affiliation and are most representative of a diversity of student ministry professionals among various denominations. These three networks served as clusters and were loaded into an online list randomizer. The first network chosen was LeaderTreks, who was asked to email their database soliciting participants for the study. When additional responses were needed, the second network randomly chosen was Student Leadership University, who also emailed their database soliciting participants for the study. Between these two respected networks, the needed sample size was exceeded.

Sampling Procedures

This researcher sought survey data from at least 380 full-time student ministry professionals. This sample size was calculated based on the estimated number of full-time student ministry church staff in the United States of 36,000 (Barna, 2016). Calculating for a ninety-five percent confidence level with a margin of error at 5%, the sample size needed was 380 participants. In keeping with the single-stage cluster sampling design, one network at a time was used in randomly selected order until the sample size need was met.

Limitations of Generalization

This study is limited to full-time student ministry professionals in evangelical Christian churches in the United States; therefore, it is not directly applicable to part-time staff or volunteers, student ministry professionals outside of evangelical Christian churches, or full-time student ministry professionals in evangelical Christian churches outside of the United States.

Role of the Researcher

Researchers have a clear role in the research study. Because of the interpretive nature of qualitative research, "...the inquirer is typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 183). In the qualitative phase of the study, the researcher necessarily interacted with the expert panel to explain the study's nature and ensure the participants understood the instructions for each round of Phase One.

Concerning researcher bias, Leedy and Ormrod (2016) note, "Ultimately, we must remember that no human being can be completely objective" (p. 170). Acknowledging such, this researcher did approach this study with certain assumptions and biases regarding needed competencies for leading sustained success in student ministry. Having served full-time in student ministry for over 23 years (with tenures of 5, 10, and 6+ years), this researcher has a definite perspective on phronetic competencies learned over those years. This researcher also knows some of the expert panel participants due to his involvement with numerous national youth ministry networks. This researcher was mindful of biases related to experience and pre-existing relationships and was careful not to lead or influence the qualitative data in order to receive reliable information from the expert panel.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher is obligated to anticipate ethical issues that may be encountered in the research study. Creswell (2018) notes, "Researchers need to protect their research participants; develop a trust with them; promote the integrity of research; guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organizations or institutions; and cope with new, challenging problems" (p. 88). Towards this aim, this researcher completed required training

through the Social-Behavioral-Education (SBE) Basic course offered by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program). According to the CITI website,

The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) is dedicated to promoting the public's trust in the research enterprise by providing high quality, peer-reviewed, web-based educational courses in research, ethics, regulatory oversight, responsible conduct of research, research administration, and other topics pertinent to the interests of member organizations and individual learners.

The SBE Basic course offered by CITI provides an overview of social-behavioral-education research and focuses on ethical concerns related to research involving human subjects.

This researcher gained necessary approval for research through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval process prior to phase 1. This process was done according to the guidelines outlined through Liberty University (LU). The IRB exists to protect against human rights violations. Cresswell (2018) notes, "The IRB committee requires the researcher to assess the potential for risk to participants in a study, such as physical, psychological, social, economic, or legal harm" (p. 91). Throughout the research process, the researcher needs to be mindful of vulnerable populations, including minors, victims, pregnant women or fetuses, prisoners, mentally incompetent persons, and those infected with AIDS (Cresswell, 2018; CITI, n.d.). This researcher detailed research procedures and the research population in an application to the LU IRB and followed all guidelines required by the IRB.

Participation consent was received from each participant before participation in the study. While this study does not deal with sensitive personal information, confidentiality was used throughout Phase One. As information was gathered from the experts in the first Delphi round, names were removed from given competencies before they were shared with the panel. This practice ensured that the respect participants may have for particular experts did not influence agreement with their suggestions.

Data Collection Methods

Leedy and Ormrod (2016) define research as “a systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information—data— in order to increase our understanding of a phenomenon about which we are interested or concerned” (p. 2). This process is driven by a research approach, research design, and research methods, to effectively answer the relevant research questions (Cresswell, 2018). The research approach chosen for this study was mixed methods, as both qualitative and quantitative data were needed to answer the research questions adequately. An exploratory sequential design was chosen for this study, as it provides a multi-phase framework through which data can be collected, analyzed, and used to seek further data towards effectively answering the research questions. Specific methods of a mixed approach involve instrumentation containing both open- and closed-ended questions, multiple forms of data, statistical and text analysis, and interpretation that considers multiple databases (Cresswell, 2019, p. 16). Critical to the entire research process is the effective collection of significant data. Failure to collect enough data or the right data could make it impossible to answer the research questions adequately. Conversely, effective data collection paves the way for effectively analyzing and interpretation towards which an increased understanding of relevant phenomenon can occur. The following were two types of data collection in this study:

Qualitative Data Collection

A qualitative approach was used for the first Delphi round with the expert panel. The purpose of qualitative research is to produce stories. This methodology is a systematic investigation of social phenomena in natural settings. In qualitative research, the researcher is the main data collection instrument as they examine why specific events occur and what they mean to the participants studied. Of qualitative research, Creswell (2018) notes, “Qualitative research

is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). This approach best led to data that helped answer the relevant RQs for this study.

It was essential that this study first identified significant administrative competencies from the expert panel of veteran student ministry professionals. While this researcher could have provided a list of competencies to which the panel could interact, asking for the panel to provide the list of significant competencies in an open-ended manner provided detail and authenticity that led to better data. Patton (2012) notes the detail and depth that qualitative methods provide, “Approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry” (p. 14).

As qualitative data was collected through open-ended instruments and respondents were given the opportunity to review results from the panel and revise their responses, specific themes emerged in data analysis. Speaking of the process through which this happens, Creswell (2018) states, “The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data” (p. 4). Emerging themes are important to understand the nature of data collected and to consider what variables can be changed to manipulate those themes in the future. From the qualitative data collection with the expert panel, a reliable instrument could be developed to seek further information quantitatively.

Quantitative Data Collection

The second and third Delphi round in phase 1 and the remaining phase 2 and phase 3 of the study were all concerned with quantitative data. Quantitative research is concerned with

quantifying problems by generating and analyzing numerical data and producing statistical trends. In his presentation entitled, “Quantitative Methods: Measuring and Counting” Bredfeldt (2018) defines quantitative methods as “the collecting of data in the form of numbers and then processing and analyzing that data so that a conclusion can be drawn about an established hypothesis.” Quantitative research typically involves examining multiple variables and determining the relationship between them. Creswell (2018) notes, “quantitative approaches focus on carefully measuring (or experimentally manipulating) a parsimonious set of variables to answer theory-guided research questions and hypotheses” (p. 147). Because RQs 3, 4, and 5 are all concerned with determining if a relationship exists between variables, quantitative data collection was the best method of gathering relevant data. Beyond the expert panel, the quantitative information collected with the broader group of student ministry professionals also helped answer RQs 1 and 2.

The statistical data obtained through digital surveys in the quantitative phases of this study offered standardized data. Of quantitative research, Patton (2012) notes, “Quantitative methods... require the use of standardized measures so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can be fit into a limited number of predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned” (p. 14). This numerical data was able to be analyzed in various manners to the degree to which student ministry professionals value each administrative competency, the source of learning for each competency, and what relationships, if any, exists between valued competency and size of ministry, ministry experience, and perceived proficiency in each competency. While beyond the scope of answering the RQs, the quantitative data collected also offered insight into relationships between valued competency and other variables

such as age, gender, denominational affiliation, and educational background. This data may be helpful for future studies.

Instrumentation

Qualitative Instrumentation

In the first Delphi round, an open-ended qualitative survey was used to determine which administrative competencies the expert panel has found to be most transformative and valuable in sustaining a healthy student ministry. The rationale for using an open-ended survey was to allow the expert participants to produce a list of competencies without any leading from the researcher. A survey instrument was developed by this researcher that was administered through Qualtrics, a web-based survey and data analysis platform. The questionnaire asked the following open-ended question, “What five administrative competencies have proven to be most transformative in effectively running a successful student ministry?” (*Administrative Competencies* was defined for the participants as “Abilities related to running an organization/ministry successfully and efficiently.”) Participants were asked to provide a one to two sentence description of each competency listed to clarify their intent.

The qualitative phase questionnaire was field-tested by a diverse representative group of 11 student ministry professionals chosen in a purposive manner by the researcher to ensure gender and cultural diversity. Leedy and Ormrod (2016) note, “If your research project will include participants of both genders and various cultural backgrounds, be sure to include a diverse sample in your pilot test(s) as well. Gender and culture do play a role in people’s responses to certain types of questionnaire items” (p. 151). The pilot-test group was asked to complete the Qualtrics questionnaire and then respond to the following questions that were included in the pilot test instrument:

- Are the directions clear?
- Were there any additional words that needed to be defined?
- How easy was it to take the survey?
- How long did it take to complete the survey?
- Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding the survey?

The researcher made needed changes as warranted by the pilot test results.

After the first round of survey results were collected, responses were anonymously and randomly compiled, and like answers were combined. Participants were given the compiled list of competencies to review. After review, participants were asked the same primary open-ended question as previously and allowed to change their answers if they desired.

Quantitative Instrumentation

In the second Delphi round, the researcher designed a quantitative descriptive survey in Qualtrics with the responses from the qualitative round 1. The survey instrument requested such personal and ministry information as gender, age, ministry experience, educational background, denominational affiliation, church size, ministry budget, and perceived health of ministry. The rationale for collecting this information was to identify variables that may impact which competencies are valued. This information was also used for validity comparisons in later rounds.

Participants were asked to rate the value of each competency on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale. Participants were then asked to rate their proficiency of each competency on a similar 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale. The final multiple choice questions sought source of learning for each competency. (See Appendix G for instrumentation sample.) After results were analyzed, participants were given the opportunity to review the

average (mean) rating of how the expert panel views each competency. After reviewing the average value ratings, participants were allowed to revise previous answers to value rating question if they desired.

In a third and final Delphi round, the researcher designed a quantitative descriptive survey, utilizing the top competencies identified in round 2. Experts were asked to rank the competencies in order of value, from most valuable to least valuable. The rationale for a rank order instrument was to force participants to make choices concerning which competencies are most valued and in which order. Such choices are not required in a rating instrument. Data was analyzed, and the expert panel's top 10 competencies were identified for use in phase 2.

Phase 2 of this study involved developing a test instrument from phase 1 data that was used in the phase 3 testing of a larger population of student ministry professionals. This researcher took the top 10 identified competencies from the expert panel and built an online descriptive questionnaire. The research instrument included a list and brief description of the top 10 competencies identified by the expert panel. The questionnaire sought personal information regarding gender, age, years of ministry experience, denominational affiliation, educational training, church size, student ministry budget, and perceived health of their ministry. This information was necessary in answering RQ3 and RQ4 and revealed additional relationships between variables that were not directly related to the research questions of this study but could be valuable for future study. The questionnaire asked student ministry professionals to rate the degree to which they value each of the 10 listed competencies on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale. Responses to this question led the researcher to answer RQ1. Participants were asked to rate proficiency of each of the 10 competencies and indicate source of learning. These questions collected data needed to answer RQ2 and RQ5.

The quantitative questionnaires were pilot-tested by the same diverse representative test group of 11 student ministry professionals chosen in a purposive manner by the researcher to ensure gender and cultural diversity. The pilot-test group was asked to complete the questionnaire and then respond to the following questions that were in the pilot-test instrument:

- Are the directions clear?
- Were there any additional words that needed to be defined?
- How easy was it to take the survey?
- How long did it take to complete the survey?
- Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding the survey?

The researcher made needed changes as warranted by the pilot test results.

Validity and Reliability

Both validity and reliability are concerned with the accuracy of a measurement instrument. Leedy and Ormrod (2016) explain the difference, “Generally speaking, validity errors reflect biases in the instrument itself and are relatively constant sources of error. In contrast, reliability errors reflect use of the instrument and are apt to vary unpredictably from one occasion to the next” (p. 100). This researcher used several means to establish both validity and reliability. Judgment by a panel of expert professors at Liberty University was used to establish face validity. In addition to this, the test instrument was pilot-tested by a diverse group of 11 student ministry practitioners who were not included in the research findings. Of the value of pilot-testing, Creswell (2018) notes, “This testing is important to establish the content validity of scores on an instrument; to provide an initial evaluation of the internal consistency of the items; and to improve questions, format, and instructions” (p. 154). The feedback from these experts led the researcher in making needed modifications to the research instrument.

According to Creswell (2018), reliability in this context refers to “the consistency or repeatability of an instrument” (p. 153). This researcher established test-retest reliability through repeating the same primary quantitative instrument on the pilot test group, expert panel (Phase 1), and broader group of student ministry professionals (Phase 3). Reliability is demonstrated in the results depicted in Chapter 4 (See Table 25).

Procedures

Experts were recruited to participate in the phase 1 Delphi study based on the outlined criteria. Leaders from four national student ministry networks (including NAMB, Liberty University Center for Youth Ministry, Student Leadership University, and LeaderTreks) were contacted by phone, and the researcher explained the nature of the study and the requirements of potential expert panel participants. Organization leaders were asked to think of potential nominations for the expert panel from various church size contexts that met inclusion criteria and were among the very best they knew in student ministries. The researcher sent organization leaders official recruiting email (See Appendix D). Within one week, the researcher followed up and asked for contact information of prospective expert panel candidates.

Expert panel candidates were emailed an official recruitment letter which contained a link to the electronic screening survey hosted on the Qualtrics survey platform. The researcher followed up via phone with all candidates, with the recruiting email serving as a conversation guide. Any prospective panelist that did not fill out the screening survey received a follow-up contact via email or phone call.

After carefully reviewing the list of candidates who met all inclusion criteria via the screening survey, the 20-person expert panel was chosen in a manner that best represented diversity among the screened and amenable pool of prospects. Candidates were sent an email

informing them if they were chosen for the panel. If chosen for the expert panel, the panelists received a consent form attached to their email with a request to sign and return via email (See Appendix E). Once consent forms were received, participants were sent an email communication informing them of their Expert Panel Participant ID #. Because the identity of the panel is confidential, they were asked to make note of this number, as it would be asked as the first question in each survey instead of their name. With all preliminary screening, instructions, and consent complete, it was time to move to round 1 of the Delphi study.

Expert panelists received an email outlining detailed instructions for the first survey, with careful attention to describing the scope of the study and defining important words (See Appendix F). The email contained the link to the round 1, part 1 web-based questionnaire hosted on the Qualtrics survey platform (See Appendix G). This survey asked one open-ended question, “What five administrative competencies have proven to be most transformative in effectively running a successful student ministry?” Participants were asked to provide a one to two sentence description of each competency listed to clarify their intent. Panelists were given one week to reply. The researcher followed up with participants as needed. Once all responses were received and analyzed, like answers were combined, and responses were anonymously and randomly compiled in a new Qualtrics questionnaire.

Participants received an email outlining instructions for round 1, part 2 of the Delphi study (See Appendix H) which included a PDF of the data from part 1 and a link to the part 2 survey. Participants were given the opportunity to review the anonymous responses from the entire panel and were asked the same question as previously, with permission to revise, add to, or subtract from their previous answers if they desired. Participants were given one week to respond. Results were collected, analyzed, and organized according to data analysis procedures.

Final results from round 1 (see Appendix I) were listed in a random order in a new quantitative survey instrument designed for the second Delphi round.

Participants were sent an email outlining the second Delphi round, part 1 survey (See Appendix J) which sought demographic information regarding gender, age, ministry experience, denominational affiliation, educational training, church size, ministry budget, and perceived health of their student ministry. Participants were then asked to rate the value and proficiency of each competency on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale and indicate the source of learning for each. Results were analyzed and mean (average) rating for competency values were depicted on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale graphic. In round 2, part 2 (see Appendices G and L), participants had the opportunity to review the group results of the mean value of each competency. After review, participants were asked to re-score competency values and given permission to revise previous answers if they desired. Once again, participants were given one week to respond. Results were collected, analyzed, and the top 10 competencies were identified.

In a third and final Delphi round (see Appendices G and M), experts were asked to rank the top 10 competencies identified in previous rounds in order of value, from most valuable to least valuable. Data was analyzed and the expert panel top 10 competencies (in order) were identified for use in phase 2 of the study. This concluded the three-round Delphi and phase 1 of the research study.

In phase 2, the data from the phase 1 Delphi study with the expert panel was used to develop a quantitative research instrument to seek information from a larger population of student ministry professionals. The phase 3 survey (see Appendix R) was an online questionnaire hosted on the Qualtrics platform that included a list and brief description of the top 10

competencies identified by the expert panel. Similar to the quantitative instrument used in the second round with the expert panel, the survey sought information regarding gender, age, years of ministry experience, educational training, denominational affiliation, church size, student ministry budget, and perceived health of their ministry. It also amassed perceived value, proficiency, and source of learning of each of the competencies.

LeaderTreks was randomly chosen among the four student ministry organizations to be the first network used for phase 3. The organizational leader was contacted and permission was requested to use their database for the phase 3 survey. Leadertreks agreed to send a recruiting email that contained the survey link and to follow up with another communication to network one week later, should more results be needed. An official Network Permission Request was emailed with sample permission verbiage (See Appendix N). Once written permission was received (See Appendix O), the researcher sent the Student Ministry Professional Recruitment Email (See Appendix P) to Leadertreks. The recruitment email contained an explanation of the study and information regarding consent. Leadtreks disseminated the recruiting email containing the phase 3 survey link to their national network of student ministry professionals in evangelical Christian churches across the United States. After clicking the survey link and reading a description of the study, participants who chose to participate affirmed an informed consent. Participants were then asked two screening questions and those who met inclusion criteria were given access to the survey. After one week, Leadertreks sent a reminder email that again included the recruitment email and survey link.

When the needed sample size was not met after two weeks, an additional student ministry network was randomly chosen (via online randomizer) from the remaining representative networks. Student Leadership University was chosen and an organizational leader was contacted

regarding the study and permission to use their network to gather remaining needed responses. SLU granted permission (See Appendix O) and agreed to forward recruitment email and survey link and follow up as needed to meet required sample size. When responses were still needed after a week, SLU sent a second email that was successful in producing results that exceeded sample size requirements.

Once there were enough responses to satisfy the needed sample size of 380 respondents, the questionnaire link was closed. The results from phase 3 were analyzed to answer the research questions. Network directors received communication thanking them for their contribution and extending an invitation to view final results, observations, and generalizations that may be made from completed research. All data was archived via a Dropbox folder and backed up on an external hard drive. For a summary list of procedures, see Appendix S.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Data Coding and Analysis

Leedy and Ormrod (2016) note that qualitative data analysis “is an iterative process, and thus a good qualitative researcher is apt to go back and forth a bit among (various) strategies” (p. 297). To analyze the qualitative data, this researcher followed Creswell’s (2013) *data analysis spiral*. Creswell suggests an iterative process to examine the data as follows:

1. **Organization:** Organize the data in a way that makes it easy to examine.
2. **Perusal:** Read through the totality of data several times to get a good sense of what it consists of. Make notes of first impressions.
3. **Classification:** Identify categories, subcategories, themes, and subthemes. Determine what the data means.
4. **Synthesis:** Summarize and organize the data in a way that clearly communicates findings. (p. 182)

This researcher took the Delphi round 1 questionnaire results and compiled all responses to the primary research question into one spreadsheet document. After reading through all responses several times, the researcher classified the results in a table, as depicted in Figure 5, and determine if any similar answers could be combined. As additional analysis measures, the researcher utilized NVivo qualitative analysis software to organize, analyze, and synthesize data, and also examined all data with a qualitative data analyst approved by the dissertation supervisor. Together the analysts loaded data into NVIVO qualitative analysis software where it was analyzed for themes and coded based on content. Similar themes were group into “nodes” and each group was further analyzed for analogous descriptive language. Themes were identified and described based on correlative verbiage. The results were synthesized for respondents to examine.

Figure 5*Transformative Administrative Competencies Classification Sample*

STRATEGIC PLANNING		
E16-a	Strategic planning	The ability to take the big picture vision of a strategic leader and to systematically create a process to execute the vision.
E18-b	Create a Strategy	This is the ability to get an organization from point A to point B
E17-d	Strategic planning	Leaders must be able to map out ministry programming in advance (1-year minimum), execute the plan, and assure that there is a purpose and strategy that links all programming. Many ministry just run programs (ministry night, small groups, camp, retreat, events) and there is no strategic link or plan for how each program is integrated and points towards the mission/vision.
E7-e	Discipleship Strategy:	Have goals and strategies in place for Bible engagement, prayer, accountability for your students.
E13-e	Vision, Strategy, & Planning.	Vision, Strategy, & Planning. If ministry will be as effective as possible, you can't 'fly by the seat of your pants.' Rather, you have to plan ahead and support the vision God has given. Too many folks assume student ministry is a 'last minute' decision mentality and the most effective ministries I've been a part of did not do that.
E15-b	Event Planning/ Organization	What seems to be a unique factor in Youth Ministry is not only the relationship building among students, but also planning and organizing events, retreats, and trips that make sense to building that relational environment. What would it look like to have key adult leaders/staff come alongside a young Youth Minister to equip/train him or her in strategic planning of events and environments with students in mind?
E10-d	Event Planning	In order to have success in student ministry you must be able to pull off some of the most basic parts of the ministry like planning and running an event. I have helped many leaders, especially young ones, think through all the details that go into planning events.

After expert panel participants had an opportunity to examine combined responses, they were given an opportunity to modify or completely change their answers to the primary research question. Once the new responses were collected, the researcher followed the same process of organization, perusal, classification, and synthesis. This process was done both manually on spreadsheets and through NVivo to ensure quality analysis. Responses were loaded into a new quantitative research instrument for the final Delphi rounds.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Leedy and Ormrod (2016) note a fundamental principle about data exploration: “How the researcher prepares the data for inspection or interpretation will affect the meaning that those

data reveal. Therefore, every researcher should be able to provide a clear, logical rationale for the procedure used to arrange and organize the data” (p. 213). This researcher began the quantitative analysis process with Qualtrics computer software. Qualtrics offers a survey platform and Stats iQ, a statistical analysis tool. Stats iQ quickly sorts data according to various criteria, and examines relationships between criteria.

Quantitative analysis began by identifying the RQ to be answered. The *Describe* feature in Stats iQ was used to visualize and summarize selected variables, offering a quick look at how data is structured and any obvious issues to explore. This analysis step helped this researcher report descriptive statistics related to participants’ gender, age, ministry experience, denominational affiliation, educational background, church size, and ministry budgets. This analysis step was also used to answer RQ1 and RQ2, identifying most valued administrative competencies and the source of learning for those competencies.

Stats iQ’s *Relate* analysis option provides the ability to select multiple variables, run relevant statistical tests, and identify relationships between variables. This analysis step was utilized to answer RQ3, RQ4, and RQ5, which are concerned with potential relationships between valued competencies and the variables of ministry size, ministry experience, and perceived proficiency. To further explore the relationship of variables, Stats iQ’s *Regression* feature was utilized to determine how multiple variables together impact respondents’ value of competencies and perceived proficiency of those competencies.

Research Trustworthiness

Creswell (2018) notes, “Researchers need to convey the steps they will take in their studies to check for the accuracy and credibility of their findings” (p. 199). A term in qualitative research that addresses validity is trustworthiness. (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). This researcher

specifically employed two strategies to establish trustworthiness. First, *respondent validation* was sought. The study's conclusions were reported to the expert panel for feedback and validation based on their experiences. Secondly, this researcher sought feedback from others, specifically colleagues in ministry, who were asked to examine findings to determine if logical conclusions were drawn from the study. Creswell (2018) suggests peer debriefing, noting, "This process involves locating a person (a peer debriefer) who reviews and asks questions about the qualitative study so that the account will resonate with people other than the researcher" (p. 201). This process ensures another person can interpret the data, add a different perspective, and add to the study's reliability and trustworthiness.

Credibility

The credibility of this researcher's qualitative portion of the study is highly supported by the expert panel from which the data comes. Chosen in a purposive manner, each expert participant is a highly respected student ministry veteran. Because of the study's nature, the expert participants did not offer a vast amount of qualitative data but a brief list of five transformative competencies with descriptions. Data analysis in this portion of the study involved compiling the expert panel's answers and evaluating the data via triangulation. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) describe triangulation as "multiple sources of data are collected with the hope that they will all converge to support a particular hypothesis or theory" (p. 86). Additional data points used for triangulation include informal field observations by the researcher and feedback from the pilot test group of student ministry veterans. Such comparisons offer valuable internal validity to the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019).

Dependability

Each step in the research process has been clearly described so that this study can be replicated. In addition to being peer-reviewed multiple times, the research methodology for this study has been vetted thoroughly by the dissertation supervisor and a scholarly dissertation committee.

Confirmability

All of the data collected in this study has been archived and is available for review by other researchers upon request. The rationale for this is to ensure data is available should there be any questions or if another researcher supposes other relationships might be discovered in the data. Archiving data may also prove beneficial if it could be examined to help in further research in the field.

Transferability

Because the expert panel in the qualitative portion of this study was chosen in a purposive manner to ensure a diverse and even mix of church size contexts, this study's findings should be transferable to student ministry professionals in church contexts of any size. Because experience was an essential criterion for being selected for the expert panel, the phronetic lessons that have been learned should be transferrable to various contexts, including other ministry leadership contexts.

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology for this exploratory sequential mixed methods design which used a three-round Delphi technique. The purpose of this study was to determine the nature of phronetic administrative competencies in experienced student ministry practitioners. This was accomplished through gathering input from a panel of student ministry experts, determining a consensus of transformative administrative competencies, surveying a

larger population of student ministry professionals regarding these areas, analyzing the data, and discovering perceived proficiency, value, and source of learned administrative proficiencies by student ministry professionals according to variables such as church size and ministry experience.

Details were described regarding design synopsis, setting, participants, sampling procedures, limitations of generalization, the role of the researcher, ethical considerations, data collection methods, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis.

In summary, the preceding chapters have provided an introduction, overview, and foundational framework for the research in Chapter One. Chapter Two provided a foundation for this study in offering a theological framework, a theoretical framework, a context for the study by exploring literature related to the research problem, and a rationale for the study by identifying a significant gap in the literature related to the topic of study. Chapter Three described the research methodology that will be used to answer the RQs towards better understanding the research problem and offering a meaningful contribution to the literature. Chapter Four will offer analysis of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this exploratory sequential mixed methods research was to determine the nature of phronetic administrative competencies in experienced student ministry practitioners. This study first utilized a Delphi technique to collect data in a qualitative form regarding transformative administrative proficiencies most valued by an expert panel. This study then collected data in a quantitative form regarding perceived proficiency, value, and source of

learned administrative proficiencies by student ministry professionals according to church size, educational background, and ministry experience.

After reminding the reader of relevant research questions that guided the study, this chapter presents compilation protocols and statistical measures used to analyze the research data. Demographic and sample data is discussed related to Group 1 participants in the phase 1 Delphi study and Group 2 participants in the more extensive phase 3 study. Next, data analysis and findings are presented by research questions. Finally, an evaluation of the research design is offered.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. What practical administrative abilities have been most valuable to student ministry professionals in leading a successful student ministry?

RQ2. What is the source of learning for the most valued administrative competencies?

RQ3. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and the size of ministry?

RQ4. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and ministry experience?

RQ5. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and perceived proficiency in that competency?

Compilation Protocol and Measures

This exploratory sequential mixed methods research involved three phases, two sample groups, six survey instruments, and a variety of both QUAL and QUAN data analysis tools and measures. An overview of compilation protocol and measures is depicted in Table 13.

Table 13*Compilation Protocol and Measures*

Phase	Sampling Design	Sample	Research Type / Instrumentation	Data Analysis Tools	Measures
PHASE 1 (3-round Delphi)	Purposive criterion	20 SM experts	Mixed Methods	QUAL & QUAN analysis tools (as described below)	QUAL & QUAN measures (as described below)
Round 1					
Part 1		20	Open-ended QUAL survey	NVivo QUAL analysis software, QUAL data analyst consultation, Numbers software	Data analysis spiral, manual coding
Part 2		20	Open-ended QUAL survey	NVivo QUAL analysis software, QUAL data analyst consultation, Numbers software	Data analysis spiral, manual coding
Round 2					
Part 1		20	QUAN descriptive survey	Qualtrics Stats IQ, Numbers	Central tendency, measures of variability
Part 2		20	QUAN descriptive survey	Qualtrics Stats IQ, Numbers	Central tendency, measures of variability
Round 3		20	QUAN descriptive survey	Qualtrics Stats IQ, Numbers	Central tendency, measures of variability
PHASE 2	----- (Development of QUAN research instrument from Phase 1 data) -----				
PHASE 3	Single-stage cluster	429 SM professionals	QUAN descriptive survey	Qualtrics Stats IQ, Numbers	Descriptive, relational, & regression tests (as described below)
RQ1		429		Qualtrics Stats IQ, Numbers	Descriptive statistics: central tendency, measures of variability
RQ2		429		Qualtrics Stats IQ, Numbers	Descriptive statistics: central tendency
RQ3		429		Qualtrics Stats IQ, Numbers	ANOVA, ranked ANOVA, Games-Howell, Pearson's chi-squared

Phase	Sampling Design	Sample	Research Type / Instrumentation	Data Analysis Tools	Measures
RQ4		429		Qualtrics Stats IQ, Numbers	ANOVA, ranked ANOVA, Games-Howell, Pearson's chi-squared
RQ5		429		Qualtrics Stats IQ, Numbers	Descriptive statistics: central tendency, measures of variability
Other		429		Qualtrics Stats IQ, Numbers	Logistic regression

In analyzing QUAL data, Creswell's (2013) *data analysis spiral* was followed as a method of organization, perusal, classification, and synthesis. Coding was performed in both NVivo qualitative analysis software and Numbers software.

QUAN analysis involved descriptive, relational, and regression measures. Measures were determined by the nature of the data and the RQs being answered, according to best practices within Qualtrics Stats iQ. Describe tests were used to summarize data. When Describe tests were used with categorical data, tests determined relative and cumulative percentage of each level. Describe tests included central tendency (mean, median, and mode) and measures of variability (range, variance, and deviation).

Relate tests were used to explore relationships between variables. Tests were selected by Stats iQ based on the structure of the data. Relate tests included ANOVA, ranked ANOVA, Games-Howell, and Pearson's chi-squared.

Regression tests were utilized to determine how multiple input variables impact an output variable. Linear regression or logistic regression was used based on the nature of the output variable (numbers or category).

Demographic and Sample Data

This exploratory sequential study consisted of two groups. Group 1 was a 20-person expert panel chosen to complete a three-round Delphi study with the purpose of seeking consensus on what administrative competencies are most valued by student ministries experts. The expert panel consensus generated from the mixed methods Delphi study was used to create an instrument with which data could be tested with a much larger Group 2.

Group 2 consisted of 429 full-time student ministry professionals from across the United States who serve in a variety of evangelical Christian local church contexts. Group 2 participated in a single-round QUAN survey.

Group 1: Expert Panel in Phase 1

Group 1 was comprised of 20 leading experts in Student Ministries from across the United States—15 student ministry professionals currently serving in a local church and five leaders from national student ministry organizations. The 15 student ministry professionals were chosen from a pool of candidates submitted by national student ministry organizations and who are known to have experienced sustained success in student ministries. Student ministry professionals were chosen in a manner that valued diversity and equally represented three major categories of church sizes— small (500 or less), medium (501-1,200), and large/mega (1,201 or more). Student ministry organization leaders chosen included leaders of prominent national student ministry organizations that met inclusion criteria, with a value placed on diversity. All participants met the inclusion criteria outlined in Chapter 3.

Demographically, the expert panel was diverse in every relevant category but gender, with only recommended males meeting inclusion criteria and agreeing to be a part of the multi-round study. While this study did not track racial demographics or geographic region (other than

within the United States), the expert panel did represent racial and geographic diversity. The ages of participants ranged from 30s to late 50s, with the largest representative group being 40-44 (45%). Concerning ministry experience, 55% of expert panelists had served full-time in student ministry for 16 or more years. Panelists represented nine denominations, with the largest representative group being Southern Baptist (40%). 70% of panelists have earned Master's Degrees, and 10% hold Doctorate Degrees. The complete demographic breakdown is depicted in Table 14.

Table 14

Group 1 (Expert Panel) Demographic

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	20	100
Female ²	0	0
<i>Age</i>		
30-34	2	10
35-39	5	25
40-44	9	45
45-49	3	15
50-54	0	0
55-59	1	5
<i>Years in full-time student ministry</i>		
7-10	2	10
11-15	7	35
16-20	8	40
20+	3	15
<i>Denominational Affiliation</i>		
Acts 29	1	5
Anglican	1	5
Baptist	2	10
Christian Missionary Alliance	1	5
Lutheran (LCMS)	2	10

² Female representation was actively sought but recommended females either did not meet inclusion criteria or did not choose to participate.

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Non-Denominational	1	5
Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)	1	5
Southern Baptist (SBC)	8	40
Wesleyan	3	15
<i>Highest Level of Education</i>		
Bachelor's Degree	6	30
Master's Degree	12	60
Doctorate Degree	2	10
<i>Church Size (Pre-COVID)</i>		
Small Church (<500)	5	25
Medium Church (500-1,200)	5	25
Large Church (>1,200)	6	25
N/A – Student Ministry Organization only	4	20
<i>Annual Student Ministry Budget (pre-COVID)</i>		
\$0-\$15,000	6	30
\$15,001-\$30,000	2	10
\$30,001-\$45,000	2	10
\$45,001-\$60,000	2	10
More than \$60,000	4	20
N/A – Student Ministry Organization only	4	20
<i>Described Health of Student Ministry</i>		
Somewhat healthy	6	30
Very healthy & growing	10	50
N/A – Student Ministry Organization only	4	20

Note. One student ministry organization leader also serves in a local church student ministry. This respondent answered demographic questions related to the local church student ministry which he serves.

Group 2: Large Group of Student Ministry Professionals in Phase 3

Participants for Group 2 included student ministry professionals in two highly respected national student ministry organizations' networks, LeaderTreks and Student Leadership University. To participate in the phase 3 study, participants had to meet the inclusion criteria of being at least 18 years old and currently serving (or recently served in the past three years) in a full-time student ministry position in a local evangelical Christian church in the United States.

The needed sample size was 380 participants. Participants from the LeaderTreks and Student Leadership University networks engaged with the study as follows:

- 590 respondents interacted with the survey.
- 51 did not complete or submit the survey (sent as “incompletes” when the researcher closed the survey.) All incomplete surveys were deleted and not included in the results, leaving 539 respondents.
- 62 did not meet the inclusion criteria, leaving 477 respondents eligible to participate in the study.
- 29 did not continue the survey after the screening questions, leaving 448 respondents.
- Five respondents dropped out while answering demographic questions, leaving 443.
- Nine respondents did not complete the first matrix question (value of competencies), leaving 434 who did complete it.
- Three respondents did not complete the second matrix question (proficiency of competencies), leaving 431 who did complete it.
- Two respondents did not complete the source of learning questions, leaving 429 respondents who met the inclusion criteria and completely answered the survey.
- Only these 429 complete surveys were included in the data analysis.

The relevant demographic breakdown of those 429 respondents and their ministries is displayed in Table 15.

Table 15

Group 2 (Student Ministry Professionals) Demographic

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	344	80.19
Female	85	19.81
<i>Age</i>		
18-22	5	1.17
23-25	26	6.06

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
26-29	53	12.35
30-34	77	17.95
35-39	76	17.72
40-44	83	19.35
45-49	42	9.79
50-54	28	6.53
55-59	22	5.13
60+	17	3.96
<i>Years in full-time student ministry</i>		
Less than 1 year	11	2.56
1-3	48	11.19
4-6	96	22.38
7-10	72	16.78
11-15	80	18.65
16-20	50	11.66
20+	72	16.78
<i>Denominational Affiliation</i>		
Anglican	2	.47
American Baptist	2	.47
Assembly of God	4	.93
Baptist	67	15.62
Brethren in Christ	1	.23
Catholic	1	.23
Christian Church	3	.70
Christian Church – Restoration Movement	1	.23
Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA)	2	.47
Christian Reformed Church	1	.23
Church of Christ	6	1.40
Church of God	3	.70
Church of God of Prophecy	1	.23
Church of Brethren	1	.23
Converge	1	.23
Disciples of Christ	1	.23
ECO Presbyterian	1	.23
Episcopal	4	.93
Evangelical Covenant	1	.23
Evangelical Free	5	1.17
Evangelical Presbyterian (EPC)	2	.47
Free Methodist Church	1	.23

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Free Will Baptist	1	.23
Foursquare	1	.23
IFCA	1	.23
Independent	4	.93
Independent Baptist	3	.70
Lutheran	8	1.86
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)	21	4.90
Lutheran, ELCA	1	.23
Mar Thoma	1	.23
Mennonite	1	.23
Messianic	1	.23
Methodist	7	1.63
Missionary	1	.23
Nazarene	3	.70
Non-denominational	75	17.48
PC (USA)	1	.23
Pentecostal / Charismatic	4	.93
Presbyterian	4	.93
Presbyterian (Fellowship Community)	1	.23
Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)	2	.47
Redeem Christian Church of God	1	.23
United Methodist (UMC)	12	2.80
Southern Baptist (SBC)	162	37.76
Wesleyan	2	.47
<i>Highest Level of Education</i>		
Graduated from high school	6	1.40
Technical or vocational training	6	1.40
Attended college but did not graduate	31	7.23
Associate Degree	15	3.50
Bachelor's Degree	189	44.06
Master's Degree	173	40.33
Doctorate Degree	9	2.10
<i>Average Weekly Church Attendance (pre-COVID)</i>		
500 or less	267	62.24
501-1,000	83	19.35
1,001-1,500	29	6.76
1,501-2,000	13	3.03
More than 2,000	37	8.62
<i>Annual Student Ministry Budget (pre-COVID)</i>		

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
\$0-\$15,000	220	51.28
\$15,001-\$30,000	106	24.71
\$30,001-\$45,000	39	9.09
\$45,001-\$60,000	26	6.06
More than \$60,000	38	8.86
<i>Described Health of Student Ministry</i>		
Not healthy or growing	36	8.39
Somewhat healthy	251	58.51
Very healthy & growing	142	33.10

Of particular note regarding demographic data, nearly one-third (28.44%) of respondents had 16+ years of ministry experience. Regarding education, 42.43% of respondents had received at least a Master’s level degree. Denominationally, the sample was representative of 46 specifically identified denominations. Those identifying as Baptist or Southern Baptist comprised 53.38% of the sample. Those identifying as Non-denominational accounted for 17.48% of respondents. Regarding church size, the largest representative group was churches of 500 or less, accounting for 62.24% of the sample. Churches over 2,000 comprised 8.62% of respondents. Over 90% (91.61%) of respondents describe their ministry as “very healthy and growing” (33.10%) or “somewhat healthy and growing” (58.51%).

Data Analysis and Findings

An overview of data analysis and findings will be presented according to research question.

Findings Related to Research Question 1

RQ1. What practical administrative abilities have been most valuable to student ministry professionals in leading a successful student ministry?

Phase 1: Round 1 (Group 1)

To first step to answering this question involved seeking consensus with an expert panel of student ministry professionals regarding the most valuable administrative competencies in leading a successful student ministry. To seek such a consensus, a Delphi technique was utilized, involving a three-round, five-part process.

Round 1 involved a two-part QUAL research process. In round 1, part 1 of the Delphi study, the 20 student ministry experts were asked one open-ended question: “What five administrative competencies have proven to be most transformative in effectively running a successful student ministry?” Respondents were asked to provide a one to two-sentence description of each competency to clarify intent. Via the Qualtrics survey platform, respondents submitted answers.

Once received, round 1 responses were loaded into NVivo qualitative analysis software and were analyzed for themes and coded based on content. Similar themes were grouped into “nodes,” and each group was further analyzed for analogous descriptive language.

Table 16

Identified Themes (Round 1, Part 1)

Theme	Occurrences
Strategic Planning	12
Team Leadership	11
Time Management / Scheduling	11
Leader Development	10
Communication	10
Budget Management	6
Delegation	6
Organization	6
Vision / Mission	5

Theme	Occurrences
Relationship Building	3
Flexibility	2
Marketing	2
Trust Building	2
Conflict Resolution	1
Cultural Intelligence / Agility	1
Multi-Tasking	1
Systems Development	1

Note. Occurrences noted above equal 90. There were 10 responses submitted that fell outside of the scope of the study and were excluded.

The analysis of the round 1 data discovered 17 themes (see Table 16), from which 17 administrative competencies were identified and described (see Table 17).

Table 17

Round 1, Part 1 Competency Definitions

Competency	Definition
Budget Management	The ability to strategically develop a financial budget and manage ministry resources.
Communication	The ability to effectively share information in various ways with staff, volunteers, parents, and students. Clear and timely communication keeps people informed, allows for continuous feedback, instills confidence in the ministry, and can reduce conflict. Effective communication is empowering as it keeps the vision and mission in the forefront.
Conflict Resolution	The ability to courageously initiate tough conversations to seek agreement and facilitate peace between team members, students, or families when difficult situations or anger arise.
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	The ability to relate and work effectively in culturally diverse situations. To understand a diversity of teen culture, parent culture, & church culture, and maintain influence across boundaries. This includes understanding the unique language, technology, and needs of diverse groups.
Delegation	The ability to effectively assign tasks and share workload based on perceived and proven strengths and weaknesses of both the student ministry professional and staff/leaders.
Flexibility	The ability to adapt and improvise when unexpected circumstances arise.

Competency	Definition
Leader Development	The ability to identify, recruit, train, and empower leaders to serve the ministry's mission. This competency also involves maintaining and prioritizing self-growth.
Marketing	The ability to effectively promote the ministry to students and parents as well as to the church/organization at large.
Multi-Tasking	The ability to focus on a single task without losing track of others. Multi-tasking involves simultaneously managing many responsibilities and switching between tasks as needed.
Organization	The ability to structure and order the many details involved in student ministry. This includes organizing information, people, and ministry details.
Relationship Building	The ability to develop healthy relationships with students, parents, and leaders. The ability to see and engage individuals, not just the whole. This competency displays value and allows the student ministry professional the influence needed to speak into the lives of others.
Strategic Planning	The ability to set goals and map out intentional programming and action steps that support the vision of the organization. Effective strategic planning in student ministry involves forward-thinking and the ability to begin with the big picture and work towards vital details. Such a strategic plan can be clearly communicated on a ministry calendar.
Systems Development	The ability to implement systems and processes that aid in organization and ensure efficiency in running a ministry organization.
Team Leadership	The ability to build and steward a ministry staff, and facilitate a team approach to ministry. This involves ensuring team members are in the appropriate role, leading a team to work together towards a unified goal, and facilitating alignment within the team and with other teams. Effective team leadership requires the ability to conduct productive meetings, ensure team members feel valued, and facilitate mobilization to execute a strategy.
Time Management/Scheduling	The ability to facilitate productivity by effectively handling time. This includes appropriate time management for daily/weekly tasks, meetings, programming prep, professional development, personal time, and margin to accommodate crises as they arise in the ministry. This skill allows the student ministry professional the ability to be punctual, focused, and efficient.
Trust Building	The ability to gain the trust of team members by remaining true to one's word and displaying consistency both personally and professionally.
Vision/Mission Clarity	The ability to clarify the "preferred future" for the ministry and define ministry success. This competency involves a focused picture of what the ministry team is trying to accomplish.

In round 1, part 2, the expert panel was shown the curated lists of competencies that reflected the collective data from part 1. Respondents were given the opportunity to review the

list and answer the same question again. They were allowed to use their identical previous answers, revise their answers, or completely change their answers. Respondents were also encouraged to make a case for their previous answer if they thought it was not well-represented on the list. Once collected, responses from part 2 were compiled into a Numbers spreadsheet and loaded into NVivo qualitative analysis software. A qualitative data analyst was consulted as responses were analyzed and coded both in the spreadsheet and in NVivo. Respondents made some compelling arguments for the grouping of some competencies and the exclusion of others. Part 2 analysis led to one competency being dropped from the list and five competencies being combined under existing headings (see Table 18). Definitions of the remaining 11 competencies were adjusted to reflect these and other changes dictated by the data.

Table 18

Round 1, Part 2 Analysis Groupings

Competencies	Pt 1	Pt 2	+/-	Total (Grouped)
1 Leader Development	10	12	+2	15
Delegation	6	3	-3	
2 Communication	10	13	+3	14
Marketing	2	1	-1	
3 Strategic Planning	12	11	-1	16
Budget Management	6	3	-3	
Systems Development	1	1	0	
Organization	6	1	-5	
4 Team Leadership	11	11	0	11
5 Vision / Mission Clarity	5	10	+5	10
6 Time Management / Scheduling	11	9	-2	9
7 Relationship Building	3	7	+4	7
8 Cultural Intelligence / Agility	1	6	+5	6
9 Conflict Resolution	1	4	+3	4
10 Multi-Tasking	1	3	+2	3
11 Flexibility	2	2	0	2

Competencies	Pt 1	Pt 2	+/-	Total (Grouped)
Trust Building	2	0	-2	0
Total Competencies Within Scope of Study	90	97		97

Phase 1: Round 2 (Group 1)

The second of three Delphi rounds moved the research from a QUAL focus to a QUAN focus. Round 2 involved a survey instrument designed in Qualtrics to collect demographic information from the expert panel and allow them to interact with the top 11 competencies identified and defined in round 1. Panelists were asked to review the revised competency definition list (see Table 19) before taking the survey.

Table 19

Round 2, Competency Definitions

Competency	Definition
Communication	The ability to effectively share information in various ways within the ministry (staff, volunteers, parents, & students), and promote the ministry at large to the church & community. Clear and timely communication keeps people informed, allows for continuous feedback, instills confidence in the ministry, and can reduce conflict. Effective communication is empowering as it keeps the vision and mission in the forefront.
Conflict Resolution	The ability to courageously initiate tough conversations to seek agreement and facilitate peace between team members, students, or families when difficult situations or anger arise.
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	The ability to relate and work effectively in culturally diverse situations. To understand a diversity of teen culture, parent culture, & church culture, and maintain influence across boundaries. This includes understanding the unique language, technology, and needs of diverse groups.
Flexibility	The ability to adapt and improvise when unexpected circumstances arise.
Leader Development	The ability to identify, recruit, train, and empower leaders to serve the ministry's mission. This competency involves effective delegation while maintaining and prioritizing self-growth.
Multi-Tasking	The ability to focus on a single task without losing track of others. Multi-tasking involves simultaneously managing many responsibilities and switching between tasks as needed.

Competency	Definition
Relationship Building	The ability to develop healthy relationships with students, parents, and leaders. The ability to see and engage individuals, not just the whole. This competency displays value and allows the student ministry professional the influence needed to speak into the lives of others.
Strategic Planning	The ability to set goals and map out intentional programming and action steps that support the vision of the organization. Effective strategic planning in student ministry involves forward-thinking and the ability to begin with the big picture and work towards vital details. Budget management, systems development, and organization are key ingredients in successful strategic planning.
Team Leadership	The ability to build and steward a ministry staff and facilitate a team approach to ministry. This involves ensuring team members are in the appropriate role, leading a team to work together towards a unified goal, and facilitating alignment within the team and with other teams. Effective team leadership requires the ability to conduct productive meetings, ensure team members feel valued, and facilitate mobilization to execute a strategy.
Time Management/Scheduling	The ability to facilitate productivity by effectively handling time. This includes appropriate time management for daily/weekly tasks, meetings, programming prep, professional development, personal time, and margin to accommodate crises as they arise in the ministry. This skill allows the student ministry professional the ability to be punctual, focused, and efficient.
Vision/Mission Clarity	The ability to clarify the “preferred future” for the ministry and define ministry success. This competency involves a focused picture of what the ministry team is trying to accomplish.

After describing demographic information, experts were asked to rate each of the 11 competencies on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale, with 0 being no value and 6 being the highest value. Results were analyzed in Qualtrics’ Stats IQ data analysis software (See Table 20).

Table 20

Expert Panel Value of Competencies

Competency	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
Leader Development	5.75	5.00	6.00	0.43	0.19	20
Relationship Building	5.70	5.00	6.00	0.46	0.21	20
Team Leadership	5.70	5.00	6.00	0.46	0.21	20

Competency	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
Vision/Mission Clarity	5.65	5.00	6.00	0.48	0.23	20
Communication	5.55	4.00	6.00	0.59	0.35	20
Strategic Planning	5.30	4.00	6.00	0.56	0.31	20
Time Management/Scheduling	4.95	3.00	6.00	0.86	0.75	20
Conflict Resolution	4.90	4.00	6.00	0.77	0.59	20
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	4.85	4.00	6.00	0.65	0.43	20
Flexibility	4.75	2.00	6.00	0.94	0.89	20
Multi-Tasking	4.20	2.00	6.00	0.93	0.86	20

Note. Values reflect scored responses on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale with 0 being no value and 6 being the highest value.

Comparing how the expert panel rated the identified competencies to the representative pilot test group results, this researcher discovered that the top seven competencies are the same in both studies. Leader Development and Relationship Building are the top two competencies in each study at this stage. (Numbers 3-5 are ordered differently, and 6-7 are in identical order.)

Experts were then asked to rate their proficiency of each competency on a similar Likert-type response scale (see results in Appendix L). Finally, experts were asked to indicate the contexts in which they learned each competency (see Appendix M). All results were analyzed using Qualtrics' Stats IQ data analysis software.

In round 2, part 2, expert panelists had the opportunity to review an image that depicted the mean (average) response of how the panel valued each competency (see Figure 6). After review, panelists were asked to rate the competencies again with the ability to answer differently or the same as the previous round.

Figure 6*Round 2, Part 1 Competency Value Mean Response Graphic*

HOW IMPORTANT are the following administrative competencies in growing & sustaining a healthy student ministry as evidenced by numerical, spiritual, & organizational growth?

	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict Resolution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leader Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Multi-Tasking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship Building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Strategic Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Team Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Time Management/Scheduling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vision/Mission Clarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Results were collected and examined in Stats IQ data analysis software. Because the goal of a Delphi study is to move a diverse expert group towards consensus, each round aims to draw closer to a clearly defined picture of top-valued competencies. While most changes in round 2, part 2 were minimal, the lowest-rated competency from round 2, part 1, dropped even lower. Figure 7 depicts that Multi-Tasking is a clear outlier from the rest of the top competencies. Because it is the only competency to score closer to “moderately important” than “very important,” it was excluded from the list of competencies for round 3.

Figure 7*Round 2, Part 2 Competency Value Mean Response Comparison*

HOW IMPORTANT are the following administrative competencies in growing & sustaining a healthy student ministry as evidenced by numerical, spiritual, & organizational growth?

	X = Round1				X = Round 2			
	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important	
Communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	5.55 / 5.85
Conflict Resolution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	4.90 / 4.85
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	4.85 / 4.65
Flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	4.75 / 4.80
Leader Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	5.75 / 5.85
Multi-Tasking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	4.20 / 4.05
Relationship Building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	5.70 / 5.75
Strategic Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	5.30 / 5.30
Team Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	5.70 / 5.65
Time Management/Scheduling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	4.95 / 4.95
Vision/Mission Clarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	5.65 / 5.55

Phase 1: Round 3 (Group 1)

In round 3, expert panelists were asked to rank the top 10 competencies identified in previous rounds. The purpose of asking experts to rank the competencies is to force them to choose between multiple competencies they may rate as the highest value. Using a drag-and-drop rank feature in the Qualtrics survey platform, panelists were given a visual depiction of their choices in assigning rank order (1 being most valuable, and 10 being least valuable). Before ranking, experts were reminded of the competency definitions, which were identical from round 2 (minus Multi-Tasking). Ranking results are depicted in Table 21.

Table 21*Expert Panel Ranking of Competencies (most valuable to least)*

Competency	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1. Vision/Mission Clarity	2.80	1.00	7.00	1.69	2.86	20
2. Relationship Building	3.60	1.00	9.00	2.22	4.94	20
3. Communication	3.85	1.00	9.00	2.26	5.13	20
4. Leader Development	4.10	1.00	7.00	1.95	3.79	20
5. Team Leadership	4.85	1.00	8.00	1.82	3.33	20
6. Strategic Planning	5.45	1.00	8.00	2.16	4.65	20
7. Time Management/Scheduling	6.50	1.00	10.00	2.77	7.65	20
8. Cultural Intelligence/Agility	7.05	1.00	10.00	2.85	8.15	20
9. Conflict Resolution	8.00	4.00	10.00	1.64	2.70	20
10. Flexibility	8.80	3.00	10.00	1.66	2.76	20

Note. Rank order with 1 being most valuable and 10 being least valuable.

Vision/Mission Clarity was ranked the top administrative competency by the expert panel. When examining the breakdown of how experts ordered the competencies (see Table 22), one can see that 50% of the experts ranked Vision/Mission Clarity in their top two and 80% of experts had it in their top three. Relationship Building was a clear second place, with 45% of experts ranking it in their top two and 60% in their top three. Just as clearly as Vision/Mission Clarity and Relationship Building were the top two valued competencies, so Conflict Resolution and Flexibility were clearly the bottom two of the remaining competencies. 70% of experts ranked Flexibility in their bottom two, and 50% of experts ranked Conflict Resolution in their bottom two. Although in a different order, the top five ranked competencies were the same in both the pilot test panel and the actual expert panel.

Table 22*Expert Panel Competency Ranking Breakdown (by Rank Position)*

Competency	1		2		3		4		5	
1. Vision/Mission Clarity	25.00%	5	25.00%	5	30.00%	6	0.00%	0	10.00%	2
2. Relationship Building	15.00%	3	30.00%	6	15.00%	3	0.00%	0	25.00%	5
3. Communication	25.00%	5	0.00%	0	25.00%	5	15.00%	3	10.00%	2
4. Leader Development	10.00%	2	20.00%	4	5.00%	1	25.00%	5	10.00%	2
5. Team Leadership	5.00%	1	5.00%	1	15.00%	3	15.00%	3	20.00%	4
6. Strategic Planning	10.00%	2	5.00%	1	0.00%	0	15.00%	3	10.00%	2
7. Time Management/Scheduling	5.00%	1	10.00%	2	0.00%	0	10.00%	2	10.00%	2
8. Cultural Intelligence/Agility	5.00%	1	5.00%	1	5.00%	1	10.00%	2	5.00%	1
9. Conflict Resolution	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	10.00%	2	0.00%	0
10. Flexibility	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	5.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0
	6		7		8		9		10	
1. Vision/Mission Clarity	5.00%	1	5.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0
2. Relationship Building	0.00%	0	10.00%	2	0.00%	0	5.00%	1	0.00%	0
3. Communication	10.00%	2	10.00%	2	0.00%	0	5.00%	1	0.00%	0
4. Leader Development	15.00%	3	15.00%	3	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0
5. Team Leadership	25.00%	5	5.00%	1	10.00%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0
6. Strategic Planning	25.00%	5	15.00%	3	20.00%	4	0.00%	0	0.00%	0
7. Time Management/Scheduling	10.00%	2	15.00%	3	5.00%	1	20.00%	4	15.00%	3
8. Cultural Intelligence/Agility	5.00%	1	5.00%	1	25.00%	5	5.00%	1	30.00%	6
9. Conflict Resolution	5.00%	1	10.00%	2	25.00%	5	40.00%	8	10.00%	2
10. Flexibility	0.00%	0	10.00%	2	15.00%	3	25.00%	5	45.00%	9

With a clearly defined list of the top ten administrative competencies most valuable to leading experts in student ministries, phase 1 of this exploratory sequential study concluded.

Phase 2 (Instrument Design)

Phase 2 of this study involved taking the data from phase 1 and developing an instrument to be used in a larger national survey of Student Ministry professionals (See Appendix R). The aim of the survey instrument was to enable a wide base of student ministry professionals to interact with the competencies identified by the expert panel and to collect enough data to thoroughly answer the research questions.

Phase 3 (Group 2)

Phase 3 involved the implementing the larger QUAN survey through two highly respected national student ministry networks— Leadertreks and Student Leadership University. Potential participants were recruited to take part in the study, as outlined in Chapter 3. As with phase 1 instrumentation, this survey was hosted on the Qualtrics platform.

After responding to two screening questions to ensure inclusion criteria were met, participants were presented with survey instructions and a list of defined competencies with descriptions. The 20-question survey asked the same questions given to expert panelists in phase 1, round 2, part 1, which included demographic information, a matrix table to rate value of competencies, a matrix table to rate perceived proficiency of competencies, and multiple-choice questions to indicate the source of learning for competencies. Of course, the list of competencies was updated to reflect the final list produced in phase 1.

Results from the phase 3 study were loaded into Qualtrics Stats iQ data analysis software and organized by relevance to RQs. Concerning RQ 1, the data depicted in Table 23 and Table 24 was examined.

Table 23*Group 2 Value of Competencies*

Competency	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
Relationship Building	5.76	2.00	6.00	0.52	0.27	429
Communication	5.58	4.00	6.00	0.58	0.33	429
Leader Development	5.37	1.00	6.00	0.72	0.52	429
Vision/Mission Clarity	5.35	1.00	6.00	0.82	0.68	429
Team Leadership	5.20	2.00	6.00	0.76	0.58	429
Flexibility	5.10	2.00	6.00	0.88	0.77	429
Conflict Resolution	4.96	1.00	6.00	0.89	0.79	429
Strategic Planning	4.95	2.00	6.00	0.81	0.66	429
Time Management/Scheduling	4.85	1.00	6.00	0.95	0.90	429
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	4.69	0.00	6.00	0.94	0.89	429

Note. Values reflect scored responses on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale with 0 being the minimum value and 6 being the highest value.

While Table 23 shows the top-rated competency of Relationship Building had a minimum score of 2.0 (“slightly important), Table 24 shows that only two respondents rated it below a 4.0 (“moderately important). Nearly 4 out of 5 respondents (78.79%) gave Relationship Building the highest rating of 6.0 (“extremely important”). Receiving the fewest “extremely important” ratings were Cultural Intelligence/Agility (19.81%) and Strategic Planning (26.34%).

Table 24*Breakdown of Valued Competencies Rating*

Competency	Not at all important		Low importance		Slightly important		Neutral		Moderately important		Very important		Extremely important	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Communication	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	4.43	19	33.10	142	62.47	268
Conflict Resolution	0.00	0	0.47	2	1.17	5	1.86	8	24.71	106	42.42	182	29.37	126
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	0.23	1	0.00	0	1.86	8	6.06	26	31.93	137	40.09	172	19.81	85
Flexibility	0.00	0	0.00	0	1.17	5	2.56	11	19.58	84	38.93	167	37.76	162
Leader Development	0.00	0	0.23	1	0.23	1	0.47	2	9.32	40	40.56	174	49.18	211
Relationship Building	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.23	1	0.23	1	2.10	9	18.65	80	78.79	338
Strategic Planning	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.70	3	2.33	10	24.48	105	46.15	198	26.34	113
Team Leadership	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.23	1	1.63	7	14.92	64	44.29	190	38.93	167
Time Management /Scheduling	0.00	0	0.47	2	1.86	8	3.26	14	27.97	120	39.16	168	27.27	117
Vision/Mission Clarity	0.00	0	0.47	2	0.47	2	0.93	4	12.12	52	33.33	143	52.68	226

Of significance, the top five competencies from the phase 1 expert panel study, phase 3 national student ministry professionals study, and the pilot-test expert panel study were all the same (though in a different order). Table 25 depicts the consistency among the top valued competencies and supports the reliability of the research study.

Table 25

Comparison of Top Five Valued Competencies Among Test Group and Study Groups

Pilot-Test: Expert Panel (Ranked)	Phase 1: Expert Panel (Ranked)	Phase 3: Student Ministry Professionals (Rated)
1. Communication	1. Vision / Mission Clarity	1. Relationship Building
- Leader Development	2. Relationship Building	2. Communication
- Relationship Building	3. Communication	3. Leader Development
4. Team Leadership	4. Leader Development	4. Vision / Mission Clarity
5. Vision / Mission Clarity	5. Team Leadership	5. Team Leadership
6. Strategic Planning	6. Strategic Planning	6. Flexibility
7. Systems Development	7. Time Management / Scheduling	7. Conflict Resolution
8. Time Management / Scheduling	8. Cultural Intelligence / Agility	8. Strategic Planning
9. Organization	9. Conflict Resolution	9. Time Management / Scheduling
10. Budget Management	10. Flexibility	10. Cultural Intelligence / Agility

Note. Competencies that are struck-through in the Pilot Test group were incorporated into other competencies by the Expert Panel in the actual study. The first three competencies in the Pilot Test tied for first.

Because RQ1 specifically seeks what practical administrative abilities have been most valuable to student ministry professionals in leading a *successful* student ministry, a comparative analysis was conducted of valued competencies by described health of ministry. As seen in Table 26, student ministry professionals leading “very healthy and growing” and “somewhat healthy” ministries value administrative competencies in the same order, with the only exception being the “somewhat healthy” group values Conflict Resolution slightly higher than Strategic Planning. The “not healthy or growing” group was more significantly different, as they valued Flexibility over Mission/Vision Clarity and Team Leadership.

Student ministry professionals that describe their ministries as “Very healthy & growing” overall value administrative competencies more than those who describe their ministries as “Somewhat healthy” or “Not healthy or growing.” Table 26 depicts this relationship between the degree administrative competencies are valued and the health of the ministry.

Table 26

Comparative Analysis of Valued Competencies by Described Health of Ministry

Competency	Very Healthy & growing (n=142)	Somewhat Healthy (n=251)	Not healthy or growing (n=36)
Relationship Building	5.80	5.73	5.75
Communication	5.65	5.54	5.56
Leader Development	5.54	5.29	5.25
Mission / Vision Clarity	5.51	5.32	4.94
Team Leadership	5.39	5.15	4.83
Flexibility	5.20	5.04	5.08
Strategic Planning	5.14	4.88	4.69
Conflict Resolution	5.12	4.90	4.69
Time Management / Scheduling	4.97	4.81	4.69
Cultural Intelligence / Agility	4.80	4.64	4.61
Average Value of Competencies	5.31	5.13	5.01

Note. Values reflect scored responses on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale with 0 being the minimum value and 6 being the highest value.

Findings Related to Research Question 2

RQ2. What is the source of learning for the most valued administrative competencies?

To answer RQ2, the phase 3 survey instrument asked respondents to check all sources of learning that applied and offered a text box for any contexts of learning that were not represented. Data analysts found that many responses written in for “other” would fall in a “Personal/Professional Experience” category, so the Professional Experience header name was adjusted accordingly to reflect similar answers. Table 27 details responses for each competency,

displaying the total number of responses given for each context of learning and the corresponding percentage of total responses the context of learning received within the competency category.

Table 27*Source of Learning*

Competency	I have NOT learned		Undergrad		Grad School / Seminary		Professional Training		Personal reading		Mentor		Personal / Professional Experience		Other	
	%r	n	%r	n	%r	n	%r	n	%r	n	%r	n	%r	n	%r	n
Communication	0.45	5	13.84	155	9.82	110	11.16	125	16.70	187	15.71	176	32.05	359	0.27	3
Conflict Resolution	1.22	12	9.99	98	7.85	77	10.60	104	16.72	164	20.18	198	32.82	322	0.61	6
Cultural Intelligence/ Agility	2.26	20	9.71	86	7.79	69	10.16	90	27.65	245	11.29	100	30.59	271	0.56	5
Flexibility	0.46	4	8.43	74	4.78	42	8.43	74	13.44	118	21.41	188	42.37	372	0.68	6
Leader Development	1.31	16	10.11	124	8.89	109	16.72	205	19.66	241	20.23	248	22.59	277	0.49	6
Relationship Building	0.18	2	11.37	129	5.90	67	9.60	109	17.89	203	22.91	260	31.54	358	0.62	7
Strategic Planning	1.64	18	11.21	123	9.39	103	15.68	172	18.87	207	17.78	195	25.07	275	0.36	4
Team Leadership	0.86	10	9.01	105	7.03	82	16.04	187	20.07	234	20.33	237	26.24	306	0.43	5
Time Management/ Scheduling	2.31	24	13.17	137	7.31	76	11.06	115	18.65	194	17.31	180	29.42	306	0.77	8
Vision/Mission Clarity	1.58	18	10.21	116	9.33	106	14.35	163	19.28	219	20.60	234	24.30	276	0.35	4

Table 28 displays each source of learning by the percentage of total sample size. This table makes it easy to see what percentage of total respondents learned each competency in each context.

Table 28*Source of Learning by Percentage of Total Sample Size (%N)*

Competency	I have NOT learned	Undergrad	Grad School / Seminary	Professional Training	Personal reading	Mentor	Personal / Professional Experience	Other
Communication	1.2	36.1	25.6	29.1	43.6	41.0	83.7	1.2
Conflict Resolution	2.80	22.84	17.95	24.24	38.23	46.15	75.06	1.40
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	4.66	20.05	16.08	20.98	57.11	23.31	63.17	1.17
Flexibility	0.93	17.25	9.79	17.25	27.51	43.82	86.71	1.40
Leader Development	3.73	28.90	25.41	47.79	56.18	57.81	64.57	1.40
Relationship Building	0.47	30.07	15.62	25.41	47.32	60.61	83.45	1.63
Strategic Planning	4.20	28.67	24.01	40.09	48.25	45.45	64.10	0.93
Team Leadership	2.33	24.48	19.11	43.59	54.55	55.24	71.33	1.17
Time Management/Scheduling	5.59	31.93	17.72	26.81	45.22	41.96	71.33	1.86
Vision/Mission Clarity	4.20	27.04	24.71	38.00	51.05	54.55	64.34	0.93
Average %	3.01	26.73	19.60	31.33	46.90	46.99	72.78	1.31

Collectively, the greatest context of learning administrative competencies for student ministry professionals is personal/professional experience (72.8%). Behind experience, mentorship (46.99%), personal reading (46.90%), and professional training (31.33%) were the greatest contexts of learning. Higher education institutions were at the bottom of the scoring list, with 26.73% of student ministry professionals indicating undergraduate education as a source of learning valued administrative competencies. Less than one in five student ministry professionals

indicate graduate school/seminary as a context of learning valued administrative competencies (19.60%).³ Only nominal “other” sources scored lower (1.31%).

In examining the “I have NOT learned” responses, the top competency that has not been learned is Time Management/Scheduling, with 5.59% of respondents indicating they have never learned that competency. Cultural Intelligence/Agility came in second with 4.66%. Tied for the third most not-learned competency are Strategic Planning and Vision/Mission Clarity (4.20%). See Table 29 for complete breakdown by percentage of total sample size.

Table 29

Competencies Not Learned by Percentage of Total Sample Size (%N)

Competency	%N not learned
Time Management/Scheduling	5.59%
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	4.66%
Strategic Planning	4.20%
Vision/Mission Clarity	4.20%
Leader Development	3.73%
Conflict Resolution	2.80%
Team Leadership	2.33%
Communication	1.2%
Flexibility	0.93%
Relationship Building	0.47%

For Expert Panel competency source of learning, see Appendix U.

Findings Related to Research Question 3

RQ3. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and the size of ministry?

³ 42.32% of the sample completed graduate school/seminary with a Master’s degree.

To answer RQ3, both descriptive and relational data analysis was needed. Table 30 details the mean value of each competency according to each church size category.

Table 30

Comparative Analysis of Valued Competencies by Church Attendance

Competency	500 or less (n=267)	501-1,000 (n=83)	1,001-1,500 (n=29)	1,501-2,000 (n=13)	> 2,000 (n=37)
Relationship Building	5.76	5.73	5.86	5.46	5.78
Communication	5.58	5.51	5.69	5.54	5.70
Leader Development	5.29	5.41	5.69	5.46	5.59
Mission / Vision Clarity	5.31	5.37	5.38	5.46	5.59
Team Leadership	5.12	5.20	5.48	5.23	5.54
Flexibility	5.11	5.06	5.14	5.08	5.05
Strategic Planning	4.91	4.92	4.83	5.23	5.30
Conflict Resolution	4.90	4.92	5.07	5.0	5.32
Time Management / Scheduling	4.86	4.73	4.76	4.54	5.27
Cultural Intelligence / Agility	4.69	4.66	4.41	4.69	4.97
Average Value of Competencies	5.15	5.15	5.23	5.17	5.41

Note. Values reflect scored responses on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale with 0 being the minimum value and 6 being the highest value.

To begin exploring a potential relationship between valued competencies and church size, this researcher calculated how the mean competency value of each church size differed from the overall mean competency value of the entire group (+/-*M*). Findings are depicted in Table 31.

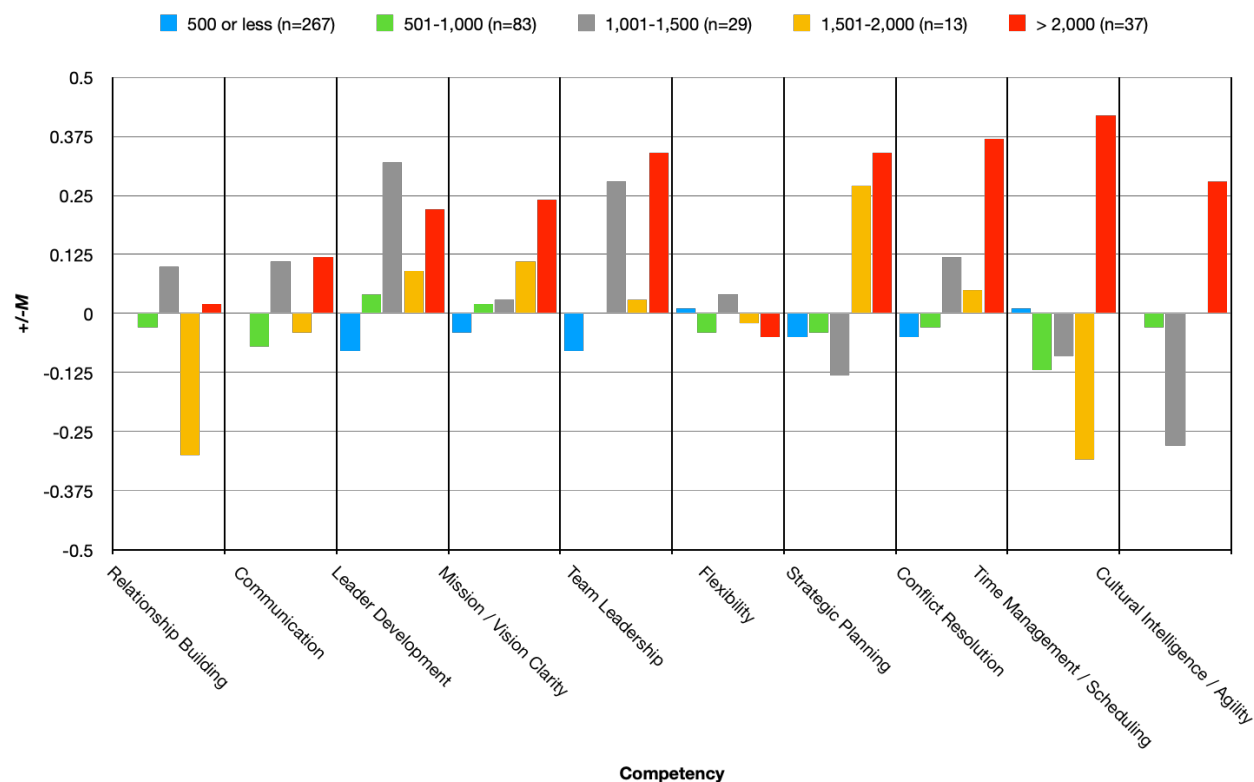
Table 31*Valued Competencies by Church Attendance (+/- M)*

Competency	<i>M</i>	500 or less (<i>n</i> =267)	501- 1,000 (<i>n</i> =83)	1,001- 1,500 (<i>n</i> =29)	1,501- 2,000 (<i>n</i> =13)	> 2,000 (<i>n</i> =37)
Relationship Building	5.76	0	-0.03	0.10	-0.30	0.02
Communication	5.58	0	-0.07	0.11	-0.04	0.12
Leader Development	5.37	-0.08	0.04	0.32	0.09	0.22
Mission / Vision Clarity	5.35	-0.04	0.02	0.03	0.11	0.24
Team Leadership	5.20	-0.08	0	0.28	0.03	0.34
Flexibility	5.10	0.01	-0.04	0.04	-0.02	-0.05
Strategic Planning	4.96	-0.05	-0.04	-0.13	0.27	0.34
Conflict Resolution	4.95	-0.05	-0.03	0.12	0.05	0.37
Time Management / Scheduling	4.85	0.01	-0.12	-0.09	-0.31	0.42
Cultural Intelligence / Agility	4.69	0	-0.03	-0.28	0	0.28
Average	5.18	-0.03	-0.03	0.05	-0.01	0.23

A visual representation of that data (Figure 8) makes it easy to see that the largest church context values administrative competencies significantly more than the smallest church context. The largest church context scored above the sample average in every competency except one, Flexibility. The smallest church context scored at or below the sample average in every competency except two, barely scoring above average in Flexibility and Time Management/Scheduling (both at + .01). The largest church context was the only church size that scored above the sample average in Cultural Intelligence/Agility (+.28).

Figure 8

Valued Competencies Relationship to Church Attendance (+/- M)



To look deeper into categorical ratings in search for potential relationships, both Chi-Squared and ANOVA tests were performed within Stats IQ. These tests revealed statistically significant relationships between average weekly church attendance and the following competencies: Leader Development, Team Leadership, Strategic Planning, and Time Management/Scheduling. A Chi-Squared Test determined a statistically significant relationship between church size and Leader Development, $\chi^2(20, N = 429) = 32.4, p = .0393$. Respondents from churches of 500 or less rated Leader Development “Extremely important” significantly less (43.1%) than those of 1,001-1,500 (72.4%) and 2,000+ church sizes (70.3%). Regarding church size and Team Leadership, a Chi-Squared test determined a statistically significant relationship,

$\chi^2(16, N = 429) = 32.1, p = .0098$, between how the largest and smallest church contexts rated Team Leadership as utmost important. 70.3% of churches of 2,000+ gave Team Leadership the highest score, compared to 31.8% of churches of 500 or less. Chi-Squared revealed a similarly significant relationship regarding Strategic Planning, $\chi^2(16, N = 429) = 32.6, p = .0083$. 51.4% of the largest churches rated Strategic Planning with the highest value, compared to 22.5% of the smallest church contexts. Chi-Squared results, $\chi^2(20, N = 429) = 44.7, p = .0012$, revealed statistical significance in that 54.1% of the largest church contexts valued Time Management/Scheduling as “Extremely important”, more than doubling the percentage of every other church size (500 or less, 25.1%; 501-1,000, 25.3%; 1,001-1,500, 20.7%; 1,501-2,000, 23.1%).

Regarding Conflict Resolution, Chi-Squared determined no statistically significant relationship, $\chi^2(20, N = 429) = 24.6, p = .219$. However, in rating Conflict Resolution as “Extremely important,” the largest churches more than doubled the smallest churches, 51.4% to 25.1%. While value of Vision/Mission Clarity increased marginally by church size, Chi-Squared tests revealed no statistically significant relationship, $\chi^2(20, N = 429) = 25.5, p = .181$. The largest church context did rate Vision/Mission Clarity with the highest value (75.7%) more than churches of 500 or less (49.8%).

Findings Related to Research Question 4

RQ4. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and ministry experience?

Descriptive and relational analysis was utilized to determine if a relationship exists between valued competencies and ministry experience. Table 32 displays a comparative analysis of competency value by ministry experience.

Table 32*Comparative Analysis of Competency Value by Ministry Experience*

Competency	< 1 year	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
Relationship Building	5.73	5.81	5.85	5.72	5.78	5.58	5.72
Communication	5.73	5.58	5.68	5.54	5.56	5.52	5.53
Leader Development	5.09	5.33	5.43	5.39	5.36	5.36	5.38
Vision / Mission Clarity	5.27	5.44	5.41	5.22	5.38	5.36	5.35
Team Leadership	5.27	5.10	5.24	5.19	5.19	5.16	5.25
Flexibility	5.36	5.13	5.16	4.99	5.06	5.12	5.08
Strategic Planning	4.91	4.88	4.95	5.00	4.80	5.00	5.10
Conflict Resolution	5.27	4.96	5.06	4.92	4.90	4.78	4.99
Time Management / Scheduling	4.64	4.85	4.93	4.89	4.83	4.54	5.00
Cultural Intelligence / Agility	4.91	4.52	4.85	4.69	4.65	4.58	4.67
Average Value of Competencies	5.22	5.16	5.26	5.16	5.15	5.10	5.21

Note. Values reflect scored responses on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale with 0 being the minimum value and 6 being the highest value.

Chi-Squared and ANOVA tests found no statistically significant relationship between competency value and years of ministry experience.

Findings Related to Research Question 5

RQ5. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and perceived proficiency in that competency?

With an understanding of how student ministry professionals valued administrative competencies, the researcher sought to determine the potential relationship between valued competencies and perceived proficiency in those competencies. To explore a relationship, the researcher first sought a statistical description of the data. Table 33 shows perceived proficiency

ratings (ordered highest to lowest by mean). Table 34 depicts perceived proficiency by rating category.

Table 33

Perceived Proficiency (Ordered Highest to Lowest)

Competency	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
Relationship Building	5.10	1.00	6.00	0.91	0.83	429
Flexibility	4.88	1.00	6.00	1.04	1.07	429
Communication	4.62	2.00	6.00	0.86	0.74	429
Team Leadership	4.54	1.00	6.00	1.03	1.05	429
Vision/Mission Clarity	4.52	1.00	6.00	1.10	1.20	429
Strategic Planning	4.38	1.00	6.00	1.15	1.33	429
Conflict Resolution	4.33	1.00	6.00	0.96	0.92	429
Leader Development	4.25	0.00	6.00	1.13	1.29	429
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	4.22	1.00	6.00	0.98	0.95	429
Time Management/Scheduling	4.03	0.00	6.00	1.31	1.72	429

Note. Values reflect scored responses on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale with 0 being the minimum value and 6 being the highest value.

Table 34

Perceived Proficiency (By Rating Category)

Competency	Not at all proficient		Low proficiency		Slightly proficient		Neutral		Moderately proficient		Very proficient		Extremely proficient	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Communication	0.00	0	0.00	0	3.26	14	1.63	7	39.16	168	42.19	181	13.75	59
Conflict Resolution	0.00	0	0.47	2	6.29	27	5.36	23	43.12	185	36.83	158	7.93	34
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	0.00	0	0.23	1	5.59	24	12.12	52	44.99	193	28.21	121	8.86	38
Flexibility	0.00	0	1.17	5	1.63	7	5.59	24	21.91	94	38.69	166	31.00	133
Leader Development	0.23	1	1.86	8	7.23	31	8.86	38	38.23	164	32.63	140	10.96	47
Relationship Building	0.00	0	0.23	1	1.63	7	1.86	8	19.58	84	37.76	162	38.93	167

Competency	Not at all proficient		Low proficiency		Slightly proficient		Neutral		Moderately proficient		Very proficient		Extremely proficient	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Strategic Planning	0.00	0	2.10	9	5.83	25	9.56	41	31.70	136	35.90	154	14.92	64
Team Leadership	0.00	0	0.47	2	5.36	23	5.36	23	33.10	142	39.63	170	16.08	69
Time Management /Scheduling	0.47	2	4.43	19	10.02	43	11.89	51	34.73	149	27.04	116	11.42	49
Vision/Mission Clarity	0.00	0	1.86	8	3.96	17	6.53	28	33.57	144	36.13	155	17.95	77

Table 34 illustrates that over 60% of respondents say that, at best, they are only moderately proficient at Cultural Intelligence/Agility (62.87%) or Time Management/Scheduling (61.48%). Nearly 60% of respondents say that, at best, they are only moderately proficient at Leader Development (56.38%), a top-three valued competency. Over 55% of respondents say that, at best, they are only moderately proficient at Conflict Resolution (55.42%). Nearly half of respondents say that, at best, they are only moderately proficient at Strategic Planning (49.19%), Vision/Mission Clarity (45.71%), Team Leadership (44.32%), and Communication (44.08%). The only administrative competencies in which more than 60% of respondents rated themselves as more than moderately proficient is Relationship Building (76.69% very or extremely proficient) and Flexibility (69.61% very or extremely proficient).

In comparing the difference between value and perceived efficiency in each competency for both the Phase 1 and Phase 3 participants, a picture emerges of the relationship (See Table 35). Leader Development had the greatest difference between value and perceived proficiency in both the Expert Panel (-0.9) and the Phase 3 study (-1.12). Communication was #2 on both lists (-0.8 and -0.97, respectively).

Table 35*Difference Between Value and Perceived Proficiency*

Phase 1: Expert Panel	+/-	Phase 3: Student Ministry Professionals	+/-
Leader Development	-0.9	Leader Development	-1.12
Communication	-0.8	Communication	-0.97
Time Management / Scheduling	-0.8	Vision / Mission Clarity	-0.83
Team Leadership	-0.55	Time Management / Scheduling	-0.82
Strategic Planning	-0.4	Team Leadership	-0.66
Vision / Mission Clarity	-0.4	Relationship Building	-0.65
Relationship Building	-0.3	Conflict Resolution	-0.63
Conflict Resolution	-0.25	Strategic Planning	-0.56
Cultural Intelligence / Agility	0	Cultural Intelligence / Agility	-0.48
Flexibility	+0.25	Flexibility	-0.22

Note. Calculated as mean score of competency value (Table 23) minus mean score of perceived proficiency (Table 33).

The expert panel scored proficiency lower than value for each competency but Cultural Intelligence/Agility (+/-0) and Flexibility (+0.25). The phase 3 group indicated proficiency for each competency was lower than scored value.

In analyzing data related to perceived proficiency, this researcher noted a significant relationship between proficiency and ministry experience. While relevant to this study, these findings do not directly answer a stated RQ. These findings will be discussed in Chapter 5, and related data can be found in Appendix V.

Evaluation of the Research Design

The final section of this chapter will briefly discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the research design used and how the design could be improved in future similar studies. This study used an exploratory sequential mixed methods design to explore phronetic administrative competencies in experienced student ministry practitioners. Phase 1 of the study involved a three-round Delphi, with each of the first two rounds having two parts.

Strengths

The exploratory sequential mixed methods design was extremely labor-intensive but proved to provide rich data critical to answering the research questions competently. The five-part Delphi technique with the expert panel successfully moved a diverse group of experienced professionals from an initial list of 17 indistinct themes to consensus on a top ten list of competencies, with a clear top five. The thorough methodology heightened the study's credibility and provided the quality of data needed to answer the relevant research questions confidently.

The method used for selecting the expert panel proved to be a strength. Leaders from four nationally respected student ministry organizations submitted names of proven experts who met the inclusion criteria for the study. From this pool of names, the panel was chosen in a manner that valued the most diversity available. The resulting panel was comprised of esteemed professionals that were widely divergent in ministry experience, church size, denominational affiliation, educational background, geographic location, and race. Such diversity created significant representation that broadened panel discussion and enriched results.

The decision to utilize the Qualtrics XM survey platform proved to be a valuable strength in this study. While there was a significant learning curve involved in using the Qualtrics software, the payoff was found in the many features Qualtrics provided for handling, organizing, and analyzing data. The built-in Stats IQ data analysis software is robust and performs all recommended statistical tests based on the nature of the data presented. This eliminates the need to use additional SPSS software.

Weaknesses

One weakness of the study is the lack of female representation in the Group 1 expert panel. Potential panelists were recommended from leaders of national student ministry networks

and needed to meet inclusion criteria and be willing to participate in the study. Multiple female student ministry professionals were recommended for the study and were contacted by this researcher. They either did not meet inclusion criteria (due to years of experience or full-time employment criteria) or did not respond to request to participate in the study (likely due to life circumstances). While this researcher made great efforts to seek diversity in this area, he ultimately had to continue the study according to research procedures. With females representing 20% of the Group 2 (phase 3) sample, it would have been good to have a representative number of females on the expert panel.

Another weakness of this study related to the expert panel was the timing of the study and the amount of time it took to complete the Delphi portion of this study. The researcher intended to facilitate phase 1 of the study in the early months of the year. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the expert panel did not begin their work until early summer. This timing was the worst possible for student ministry professionals as most panelists were involved in multiple summer camps and family vacations throughout the numerous Delphi rounds. This considerably slowed down response time and somewhat impacted the flow of the study, with sometimes weeks between rounds. Ultimately, this researcher does not think results were negatively impacted, however, it was certainly tiring on the researcher and potentially the panelists for the study to extend through the summer. Also, the summer timing of the expert panel may have excluded a potential candidate who otherwise would have participated in the study.

In an attempt to be thorough in exploring a multitude of variables, this researcher included as many demographic categories as seemed reasonable. While the expert panelists were categorized according to three church sizes- small (<500), medium (500-1,200), and large (>1,200), the researcher created five narrowed categories for the phase 3 study. This expansion

from three categories to five proved to be a bit too narrow, as it led to a relatively small sample size within certain groups (1,001-1,500, $n=29$; 1,501-2,000, $n=13$).

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

After reminding readers of the research purpose and relevant RQs, Chapter Five will offer research conclusions, implications, and applications. Research limitations will be discussed, with any potential negative impact on the study highlighted. The researcher will offer multiple suggestions for further research and will provide a summary of the study.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this exploratory sequential mixed methods research was to determine the nature of phronetic administrative competencies in experienced student ministry practitioners. This study first utilized a Delphi technique to collect data in a qualitative form regarding transformative administrative proficiencies most valued by an expert panel. This study then collected data in a quantitative form regarding perceived proficiency, value, and source of learned administrative proficiencies by student ministry professionals according to church size, educational background, and ministry experience.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. What practical administrative abilities have been most valuable to student ministry professionals in leading a successful student ministry?

RQ2. What is the source of learning for the most valued administrative competencies?

RQ3. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and the size of ministry?

RQ4. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and ministry experience?

RQ5. Does a relationship exist between valued competencies and perceived proficiency in that competency?

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

Research conclusions were drawn based on the findings that answered the relevant research questions that guided this study. The findings are summarized below according to RQ. Conclusions, implications, and applications will follow.

Summary of RQ1: Most Valuable Administrative Competencies

From the phase 1 expert panel Delphi study and the phase 3 student ministry professionals with healthy ministries, a clear top 5 valued competencies emerged as follows:

1. **Vision / Mission Clarity:** The ability to clarify the “preferred future” for the ministry and define ministry success. This competency involves a focused picture of what the ministry team is trying to accomplish.
2. **Relationship Building:** The ability to develop healthy relationships with students, parents, and leaders. The ability to see and engage individuals, not just the whole. This competency displays value and allows the student ministry professional the influence needed to speak into the lives of others.
3. **Communication:** The ability to effectively share information in various ways within the ministry (staff, volunteers, parents, & students), and promote the ministry at large to the church & community. Clear and timely communication keeps people informed, allows for continuous feedback, instills confidence in the ministry, and can reduce conflict. Effective communication is empowering as it keeps the vision and mission at the forefront.
4. **Leader Development:** The ability to identify, recruit, train, and empower leaders to serve the ministry’s mission. This competency involves effective delegation while maintaining and prioritizing self-growth.
5. **Team Leadership:** The ability to build and steward a ministry staff and facilitate a team approach to ministry. This involves ensuring team members are in the appropriate role, leading a team to work together towards a unified goal, and facilitating alignment within the team and with other teams. Effective team leadership requires the ability to conduct productive meetings, ensure team members feel valued, and facilitate mobilization to execute a strategy.

While the expert panel ($n=20$) ranked Vision/Mission Clarity #1, a larger group of student ministry professionals leading “very healthy & growing” ministries ($n=142$) rated it #4 in the list.

The second five most important competencies varied in order among the groups but are

presented as ranked in value by the expert panel:

- **Strategic Planning:** The ability to set goals and map out intentional programming and action steps that support the vision of the organization. Effective strategic planning in student ministry involves forward-thinking and the ability to begin with the big picture and work towards vital details. Budget management, systems development, and organization are key ingredients in successful strategic planning.
- **Time Management / Scheduling:** The ability to facilitate productivity by effectively handling time. This includes appropriate time management for daily/weekly tasks, meetings, programming prep, professional development, personal time, and margin to accommodate crises as they arise in the ministry. This skill allows the student ministry professional the ability to be punctual, focused, and efficient.
- **Cultural Intelligence/Agility:** The ability to relate and work effectively in culturally diverse situations. To understand a diversity of teen culture, parent culture, & church culture, and maintain influence across boundaries. This includes understanding the unique language, technology, and needs of diverse groups.
- **Conflict Resolution:** The ability to courageously initiate tough conversations to seek agreement and facilitate peace between team members, students, or families when difficult situations or anger arise.
- **Flexibility:** The ability to adapt and improvise when unexpected circumstances arise.

Summary of RQ2: Source of Learning for Most Valued Administrative Competencies

Collectively, the greatest contexts of learning administrative competencies for student ministry professionals are as follows:

1. Personal/professional experience (72.8%)
2. Mentorship (46.99%)
3. Personal reading (46.90%)
4. Professional training (31.33%)
5. Undergraduate education (26.73%)
6. Graduate school/seminary (19.60%)
7. Other (1.31%)

Summary of RQ3: Relationship Between Valued Competencies and Size of Ministry

The largest church context values administrative competencies significantly more than the smallest church context. The largest church context scored above the sample average in every competency except one, Flexibility. The smallest church context scored at or below the sample average in every competency except two, barely scoring above average in Flexibility and Time Management/Scheduling (both at + .01). The largest church context was the only church size that scored above the sample average in Cultural Intelligence/Agility (+.28).

Summary of RQ4: Relationship Between Valued Competencies and Ministry Experience

Statistical tests found no statistically significant relationship overall between competency value and years of ministry experience. A deeper dive into Leader Development did reveal a relationship with ministry experience that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Summary of RQ5: Relationship Between Valued Competencies and Perceived Proficiency

The following numbers represent the percentage of the sample that rates their proficiency as more than “moderately proficient” in each competency.

- Communication (55.94%)
- Conflict Resolution (44.76%)
- Cultural Intelligence/Agility (37.07%)
- Flexibility (69.69%)
- Leader Development (43.59%)
- Relationship Building (76.69%)
- Strategic Planning (50.82%)
- Team Leadership (55.71%)
- Time Management/Scheduling (38.46%)
- Vision/Mission Clarity (54.08%)

In comparing the difference between value and perceived efficiency in each competency for both the phase 1 and phase 3 participants, Leader Development had the greatest difference between value and perceived proficiency in both the Expert Panel (-0.9) and the phase 3 study (-1.12). Communication was #2 on both lists (-0.8 and -0.97, respectively). The expert panel scored proficiency lower than value for each competency but Cultural Intelligence/Agility (+/-0) and Flexibility (+0.25). The phase 3 group indicated proficiency for each competency was lower than scored value.

In analyzing data related to perceived proficiency, this researcher noted a relationship between proficiency and ministry experience (See Appendix V). While not unexpected, data revealed that proficiency increased after the first year in ministry and then noticeably again after ten years in ministry. While there is an increase in proficiency in the second ten years of student ministry over the first ten years, it is not as much as this researcher expected. Data did not show sustained growth during either of those time periods.

Conclusions, Implications, and Application

This researcher presents the following six conclusions as most significant from research findings:

1. There are a clear Top 5 administrative competencies needed to sustain success in student ministries.

All phases of the research study, including pilot-testing, are repeatedly consistent with a clear top five valued administrative competencies needed to grow and sustain a healthy student ministry as evidenced by numerical, spiritual, and organizational growth. These top five most valued competencies are as follows:

- Vision/Mission Clarity
- Relationship Building

- Communication
- Leader Development
- Team Leadership

While many precedent research studies refer to administrative competencies in a general sense, this study has identified and defined the ten most valuable administrative competencies and further determined the clear top five. For future study in the area of needed administrative competencies in student ministry, this study offers a precedent that has been validated through an extensive exploratory sequential mixed methods process.

2. *“WHY?” is the most important question to ask and communicate.*

While rated the #5 most valued competency by the expert panel, Vision/Mission Clarity was ranked #1 when respondents had to choose what was really most valuable. Vision/Mission Clarity was rated behind Communication, Leader Development, Relationship Building, and Team Leadership. When asked to rank those top competencies, experts determined that Vision/Mission Clarity was actually of supreme importance compared to each of the others in growing and sustaining a healthy student ministry as evidenced by numerical, spiritual, and organizational growth.

This finding substantiates a previous assertion by this researcher in chapter 2, “Of the many questions surrounding ministry and leadership, perhaps the most critical question is, ‘Why?’” (p. 27). In affirming Vision/Mission Clarity as the premier administrative competency, student ministry experts agree that healthy ministry begins with establishing an unmistakable purpose and aim, a reference from which to define ministry success. The ability to clarify the “preferred future” for student ministry is rooted in understanding and rightly communicating divine calling and clear purpose. Any student ministry driven by a vision that does not involve

the missional mandates of Christ, the Great Commandment and Great Commission, ultimately lacks eternal significance and true health.

Only from a place of clarity regarding Vision & Mission can the student ministry professional effectively and biblically utilize any other competency in moving a group from here to there. To revisit Bredfeldt's (2019b) explanation of leadership, "moving a group from here to there" necessarily involves defining reality, defining the preferred future, and identifying a change strategy to move from here to there. It is only from an established target that any significant strategy can flow.

While Vision/Mission Clarity for the student ministry professional is rooted in divine calling, it is practically supported by Transformational Leadership and Servant Leadership theories. Leading with clarity of vision & mission guards the student ministry professional from making ministry to students simply transactional. Healthy student ministry is significantly transformational, and the most important metric for success is changed lives. Vision/Mission Clarity reminds the student ministry professional that their leadership is not a position from which to exert authority but a platform from which to serve. Utilizing the validity of these theories in supporting biblical vision and mission models the example of Jesus and aligns with the heart of God.

3. The top administrative competencies are all related to facilitating and promoting mission, relationships, and a team approach to ministry.

These findings are encouraging. The top five competencies all support Vision/Mission Clarity, and model the aim and method of Jesus' leadership. Jesus' mission statement (Luke 19:10) was clearly about people. All that Jesus did in his earthly ministry supported that mission. The student ministry professional must be ever mindful that organizational administrative skills

are ultimately about people and serve to advance the mission of Christ. Relationship Building, Communication, Leader Development, and Team Leadership all directly serve and promote the mission.

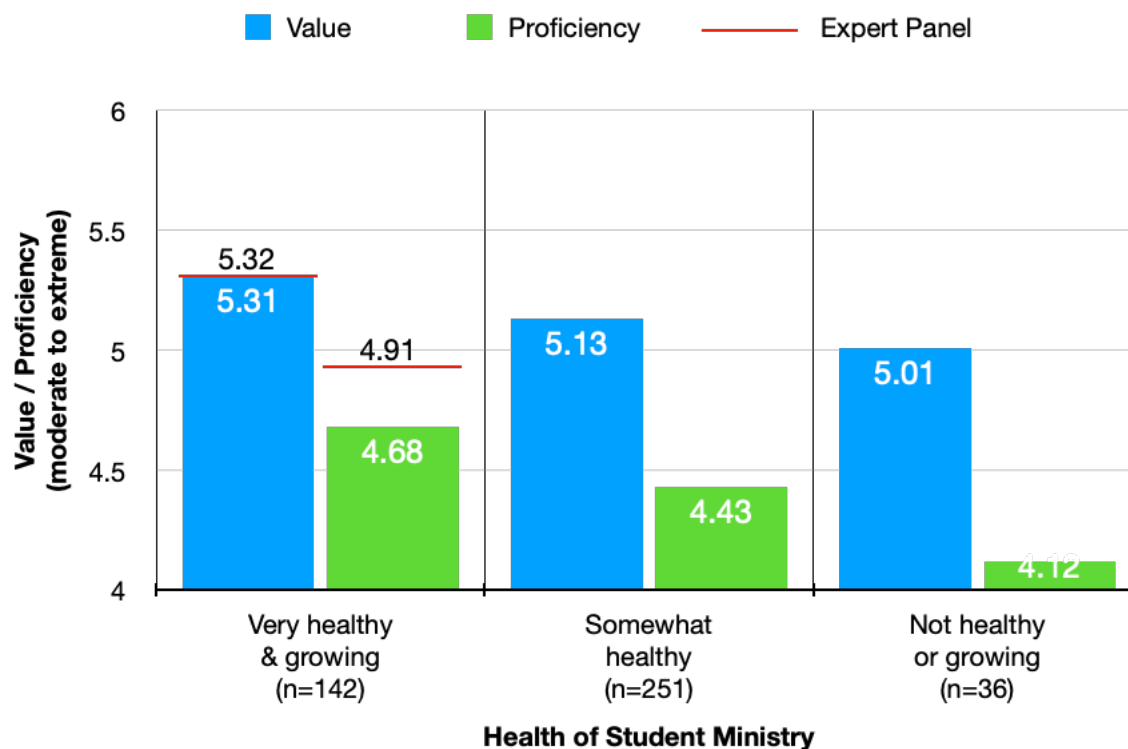
Not only was the mission of Jesus all about relationship, the method of ministry Jesus chose was relational as He chose, equipped, and empowered teams to fulfill the mission collaboratively. The relational nature of the most valued competencies is consistent with the foundational theories of Theory Y and Leader-Member Exchange Theory, each recognizing and embracing personal relationships in administration. As this researcher stated previously, the student ministry professional must be mindful that they are ultimately not called to lead an organization but the people who make up the organization.

4. There is a clear relationship between the value of/proficiency in administrative competencies and the ministry's health.

Earlier research (Temple, 2007) points to administrative competencies being the least valued among ministry skills for student ministry professionals. Temple (2007) notes in his findings, "Youth ministers, by and large, do not attend to the administrative responsibilities with great passion or integrity" (p. 116). This study provides empirical data that supports a direct relationship between value of/proficiency in administrative competencies and the health of student ministry (See Figure 9). Overall, the most healthy and growing student ministries valued administrative competencies more than ministries that were somewhat healthy or not healthy or growing. Also, the most healthy and growing student ministries were more proficient administratively than those of less or no health.

Figure 9

Relationship Between Value/Proficiency and Health of Student Ministry



While the significance of the margin of influence could be debated, the correlative connection is clear. In considering the margin of growth between moderately proficient (4.0) and very proficient (5.0), this researcher turned back to the expert panel of student ministry professionals who were recommended by leaders of national student ministry organizations based on their reputation of being highly successful in sustaining success in student ministries as evidenced by numerical and spiritual growth. As noted in Figure 9, the expert panel's value rating is almost identical to the national sample leading the most healthy ministries. The expert panel's proficiency rating is +.23, coming in just under 5.0 (4.91). Based on these findings, this researcher asserts that while the "best of the best" student ministry professionals don't value

administrative competencies more than the general sample leading healthy student ministries, they have found a way to be +.23 more proficient.

While only one point difference on a 7-point Likert-type scale, the difference between moderately proficient (4.0) and very proficient in administrative competencies is the difference between a student ministry described as “not healthy or growing” and “very healthy and growing.” There are undoubtedly many other factors to success in student ministry. However, experts agree that proficiency in administrative competencies is key to sustaining a healthy and growing student ministry.

5. More attention must be given to administrative competencies in ministry preparation.

These findings show that although student ministry professionals value administrative competencies, they are not very proficient administratively. Given the disparity between value and proficiency, this researcher turned to data regarding the source of learning for each competency. The most concerning finding regarding the context of learning is related to formal higher education preparation.

42.32% of the sample completed graduate school/seminary with a Master’s degree. Of those respondents who indicated having a Master’s or Doctorate, only 50.5% attribute graduate school/seminary as a source of learning for the highest learned administrative competency. The least learned administrative competency was only learned by 18.7% of respondents to graduate from graduate school/seminary. The following list details the percentage of graduate school/seminary graduates who indicated their higher education training as a source of learning for the valued administrative competencies (ordered by most learned).

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| 1. Leader Development | 50.5% |
| 2. Communication | 47.8% |
| 3. Strategic Planning | 47.8% |

4. Vision/Mission Clarity	47.3%
5. Team Leadership	37.9%
6. Conflict Resolution	36.3%
7. Time Management/Scheduling	34.1%
8. Relationship Building	30.8%
9. Cultural Intelligence/Agility	29.1%
10. Flexibility	18.7%

It is clear that at least some seminaries are attempting to teach some of these competencies. However, these findings raise serious concern and support calls in precedent literature for seminaries to provide practical training in professional competencies that will better prepare students for sustained ministry success (Morgan, 1994; Greig, 1999, Temple, 2007, Welch, 2011; Geukgeuzian, 2015, Anderson, 2017).

The findings of this study offer valuable insight for seminaries in the evaluation of curriculum and measurable learning outcomes. While theological training should continue to lead the way in curriculum design, a foundational mix of administrative training that has proven invaluable to sustaining success in ministry could allow the theological training to be utilized for longer and at a higher level in the local church.

In addition to informing seminary training, the findings of this study can similarly influence the resources needed for the ongoing professional training of student ministry professionals. While 31% of student ministry professionals indicate Professional Training as a source of learning valued administrative competencies, nearly 47% indicate Personal Reading as a source of learning. Given the significant gap in the literature which necessitated this study, research findings can inform experienced practitioners seeking to develop professional training

tools that address valued competencies in the context of which student ministry professionals serve.

Additionally, research findings can inform hiring practices in the local church. As personnel committees and Senior Pastors discuss needed skills of prospective student ministry hires, these findings can offer specificity from which to determine the most desired competencies, conduct interviews, and outline ongoing evaluation of professional development. Findings can also guide assessment and inform how to best assemble a team around a student ministry professional's administrative strengths and weaknesses.

6. Leader Development is the most phronetic competency, is the single largest driver of ministry health, and needs the most attention.

While attention should be given to each administrative competency that is valuable in sustaining health in student ministries, one competency stood out from the rest to this researcher. Throughout the study, the researcher found it interesting to see how respondents interacted with Leader Development in value and proficiency. Of note:

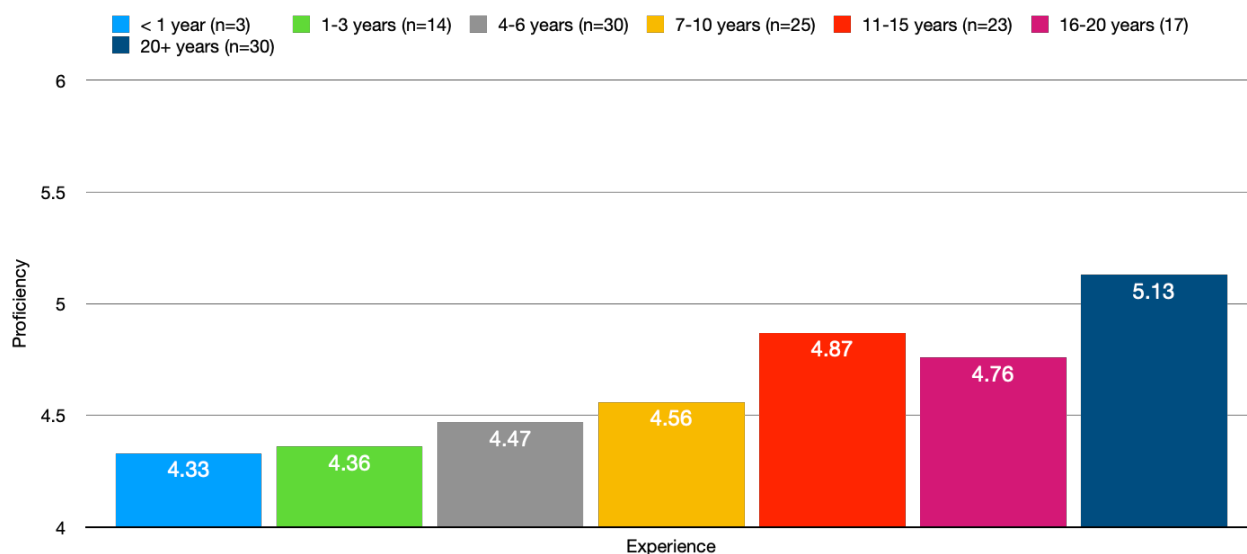
- Leader Development rates in the top 3 in value and bottom 3 in proficiency.
- Leader Development has the largest gap between value and proficiency among the expert panel and student ministry professionals at-large.
- Nearly 60% of respondents say that, at best, they are only moderately proficient at Leader Development (56.38%), a top-three valued competency.

While it is clear that a significant proficiency gap exists regarding Leader Development, it also became clear to this researcher that Leader Development is the most phronetic competency in nature. That is, experience appears to most directly impact proficiency in sustaining health in leading student ministry. When Leader Development proficiency of respondents leading “very

healthy & growing” ministries was explored, it was noted that respondents moved from just over “moderately proficient” to over “very proficient” steadily over time (with one outlier, noted in Figure 10).

Figure 10

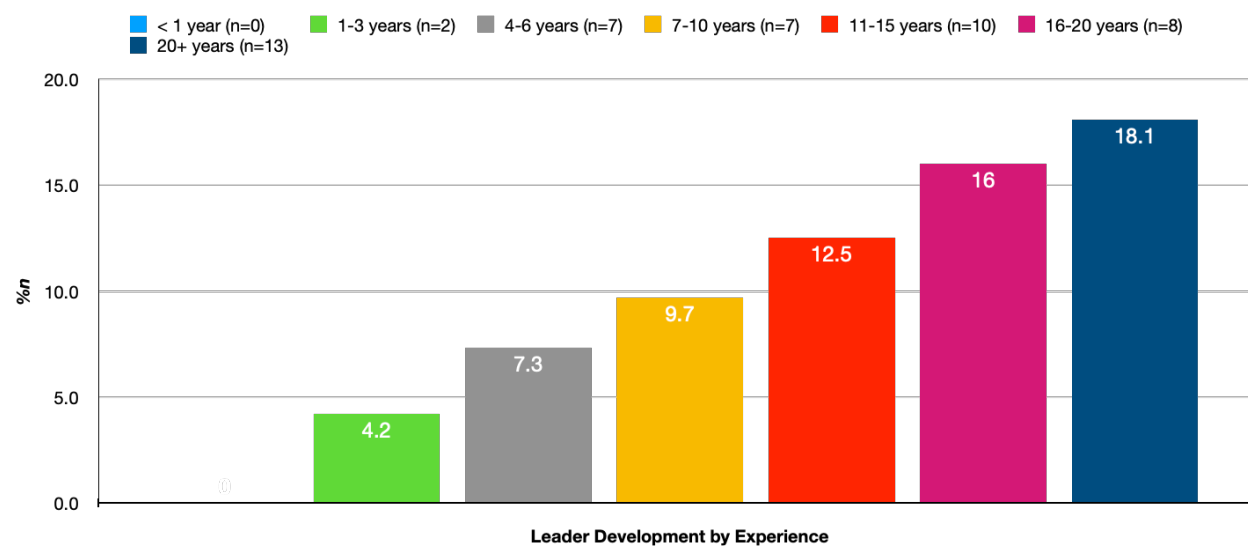
Leader Development Proficiency by Experience of Leaders of Very Healthy Student Ministries



When exploring the entire sample for respondents indicating the highest level of proficiency (extremely proficient), results show a steady increase in achieving extreme proficiency over time. (See Figure 11.)

Figure 11

Leader Development Extreme Proficiency by Experience (%n)



Logistic regression testing within Qualtrics Stats iQ found that Leader Development was the largest single driver of both “Very healthy & growing” and “Somewhat healthy” ministries. In testing “Very healthy & growing” as the output variable (McFadden’s pseudo $R^2 = .112$), Leader Development led in relative importance (33%) and p -value (0.00348). In testing “Somewhat healthy” as the output variable (McFadden’s pseudo $R^2 = .052$), Leader Development greatly led in relative importance (47% with next highest being 17%) and p -value (0.00156). While the R^2 significance could be argued in this regression testing, Leader Development was identified as the primary driver of healthy ministries. (See Appendix W for results.)

As explored at length in Chapter 2, Leader Development is at the heart of the leadership example of Jesus. Consistent with Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership model and Blanchard’s SLII® leadership model, Jesus offered directive and/or supportive behavior based on his followers’ competence and commitment at the time. Jesus demonstrated flexibility in administration as he met people where they were in order to help them discover significance and

purpose in knowing God and fulfilling God's missional purposes for their lives. Student ministry professionals must work hard to develop the same administrative ability that recognizes the unique needs of students, volunteers, and staff and meets them where they are.

An apparent effort is being put forth in higher education to teach Leader Development, as findings show it is the most-learned administrative competency in Graduate School/Seminary. However, only half of the graduates learned this skill in that context (25% of the total sample). The most significant source of learning was Personal/Professional Experience at 65%.

The gap between value and proficiency revealed in this study should garner the attention of student ministry professionals and those who seek to equip them for success in student ministry. Successful Leader Development not only curbs turnover in student ministry (Devries, 2009), but also mirrors the leadership practice of Jesus. For an abbreviated summary of Conclusions, see Appendix X.

Research Limitations

This research study and its findings were limited to full-time student ministry professionals in evangelical Christian churches in the United States. The full-time capacity limitation excluded participants who may be paid part-time by a church or who serve in a dual-role position. Such potential participants could contribute valuable data to this area of study. The geographic limitation of churches within the United States excluded participants outside of the United States who were willing to contribute to this study. While such exclusions may limit data, the narrowed focus of this study strengthens confidence in findings related to the targeted population.

Further Research

While this study answered many questions, the vast amount of data and multiplicity of variables provide significant opportunities for further research. This researcher suggests the following:

1. Regarding the context of learning, more than half of respondents who attended Grad School/Seminary indicated they did not learn valued administrative competencies in that context. Why? A future study could explore which, if any, of these competencies are taught in seminary programs related to Student Ministry.
2. Further analysis of data related to perceived proficiency and ministry experience could be explored. Trends in proficiency growth by competency over time could reveal interesting findings.
3. While this study collected demographic information regarding gender, educational background, and student ministry budget, none of these variables were formally tested against competency value or proficiency. Future studies could discover valuable findings from conducting these tests.
4. Regarding proficiency, this study conducted self-assessment testing. It may be interesting in future studies to have Senior Pastors, fellow staff members, or ministry lay leaders evaluate the student ministry professional's proficiency in each of these competencies and compare findings.
5. This study could be replicated but include the extra step of having the Group 2 (Phase 3) respondents RANK valued competencies. The ranking step that was a part of the expert panel Delphi study differed from the rating results. Adding this step would provide a better comparison of results between Group 1 and Group 2.
6. One of the inclusion criteria for this study was full-time employment in student ministries. Many student ministry professionals were excluded from the study because they are employed part-time by their church. A future study could include all student ministry professionals and capture the number of hours a week they are paid to lead student ministry. The relationship between paid hours and valued competencies could be explored.

Summary

Because of the eternal impact a healthy student ministry can have, it is imperative that the student ministry professional be clear in calling, Christ-like in character, and capable in the

competencies needed to effectively live out their calling. For decades, literature has noted unnecessary turnover and perceived lack of competence among student ministry professionals. Previous research has identified the necessity of student ministry professionals possessing sound administrative competencies in sustaining success (Dunn, 1996; Strommen et al., 2001; Graham, 2005; Temple, 2007; Anderson, 2017), and has noted that student ministry professionals often value administrative competencies less than other ministry competencies (Temple, 2007). This researcher has noted the lack of resources and practical ministry training in this area, and this study has sought to fill a significant gap in the literature over the past decade regarding research and development in administration of student ministry.

To that aim, this study has utilized a thorough, mixed methods, iterative methodology to successfully identify a clear ranked list of administrative competencies that successful student ministry veterans affirm is valuable to sustaining health in student ministry, as evidenced by spiritual and numerical growth. This research has discovered a definite relationship between proficiency (and value) in administrative competencies and overall health of ministry. This study has also measured gaps that exist in learning needed administrative competencies in ministry preparation.

These research findings should significantly inform theological higher education's evaluation of curriculum regarding practical ministry preparation, particularly in Leader Development, as it was discovered to be a primary driver of ministry health and a skill in which student ministry practitioners are not very proficient. These findings should also inform local churches and student ministry practitioners' approach to professional development. In addition to answering the five RQs that guided the research, this study has amassed rich data that can be used in future studies to explore other potential valuable relationships.

This researcher prays that this study has highlighted that excellence in the area of ministry administration reflects the leadership of Jesus. The mission and methodology of Jesus was about people. How Jesus ministered to people and the means Jesus chose to carry out his missional mandate each involved administrative competencies as He communicated a clear vision/mission, built relationships, developed leaders, and led a ministry team towards fulfilling God's purposes. May the findings of this study energize seminaries, local churches, and those called to lead student ministries to more rigorously engage and develop administrative skills, as both a means to a missional end (Heflin, 2009, loc. 1020) and also towards stewarding ministry leadership opportunities in a way that honors Jesus. As this is done, may the future of student ministry in the local church exponentially impact the world as never before for the glory of God!

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APPENDIX A: YOUTH MINISTER'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MAP

By Strommen, Jones, & Rahn (2001)

Establish Personal Vision

- Arriving at effective and personally fulfilling ministry strategies
 - Addressing the expectation that there should be competent job performance
- The priority of a clear sense of direction
 - Addressing the expectation that there should be confident leadership

Nurture Teenage Faith

- Communicating biblical & life-changing truth
 - Addressing the expectation that there should be creative responsiveness to youth culture
- Biblical knowledge & basic pastoral ministry skills
 - Addressing the expectation that youth ministers should be theologically grounded
- The priority of the spiritual development of youth
 - Addressing the concern that youth are disinterested and apathetic
 - Addressing the hope that youth display joyous attitudes of respect & love
 - Addressing the hope that youth serve the church & community
 - Addressing the hope that youth are active in public witness & ministry
 - Addressing the hope that youth (ultimately) own the ministry

Accommodate Developmental Realities

- Understanding adolescent development leading to effective counseling
 - Addressing the concern that youth are disinterested and apathetic
 - Addressing the hope that family relationships are strengthened
 - Addressing the expectation that there should be creative responsiveness to youth culture

- Knowledge of family development and parental training skills
 - Addressing the hope that family relationships are strengthened
 - Addressing the expectation that there should be positive relationships with parents

Build Meaningful Support

- Opportunities to gain new ideas
- Opportunities for mentoring relationships with peers
 - Addressing the concern of a lack of personal support in ministry
- Positive organizational climate
- Congregation's personal support
 - Addressing the concern over inadequate finances
 - Addressing the concern of a time conflict between job & personal life
 - Addressing the concern of a lack of personal support in ministry
 - Addressing the concern of feelings of personal inadequacy
 - Addressing the concern of a lack of self-confidence
 - Addressing the concern that youth ministers may feel unqualified or job
 - Addressing the concern that youth ministers experience strained family relations
 - Addressing the concern that youth ministers may experience burnout
- Supervisor's personal support
 - Addressing the concern of a time conflict between job & personal life
 - Addressing the concern of a lack of personal support in ministry
 - Addressing the concern of feelings of personal inadequacy
 - Addressing the concern of a lack of self-confidence
 - Addressing the concern that youth ministers may feel unqualified for job

- Addressing the concern that youth ministers experience strained family relations
- Addressing the concern that youth ministers may experience burnout

Locate Effectiveness Indicators

- Competent job performance
 - Addressing the concern of a time conflict between job & personal life
 - Addressing the concern of a time conflict between administration & youth relationships
 - Addressing the concern that youth ministers may feel unqualified for job
 - Addressing the concern that youth ministers feel personally disorganized
- Confident leadership
 - Addressing the concern of feelings of personal inadequacy
 - Addressing the concern of a lack of self-confidence
 - Addressing the concern that youth ministers may feel unqualified for job
- Motivation derived from God's call
 - Addressing the concern of feelings of personal inadequacy
 - Addressing the concern of a lack of self-confidence
 - Addressing the concern that youth ministers may feel unqualified for job
- Theological grounding
- Commitment to specialized youth ministry training
 - Addressing the concern that youth ministers may feel unqualified for job
- Effective youth relationships
 - Addressing the concern of a time conflict between administration & youth relationships
- Positive relationships with parents & adults
- Creative responsiveness to youth culture

- Ability to develop adult volunteers
- Personal peer involvement in ministry

Expand Ministry Partnerships

- Training in administration & management
 - Addressing the concern of a time conflict between administration & youth relationships
 - Addressing the concern that youth ministers feel personally disorganized
- The priority of volunteer recruitment & training
 - Addressing the expectation that adult volunteers are developed
- Congregational ownership
 - Addressing the concern that youth & church are disconnected
 - Addressing the expectation that one's peers are involved in ministry
- Helping parents minister to their teens
 - Addressing the hope that family relationships are strengthened
 - Addressing the expectation that there are positive relationships with parents & adults
- Giving teens ownership of ministry
 - Addressing the concern that youth are disinterested and apathetic
 - Addressing the hope that youth own the ministry
 - Addressing the hope that youth display joyous attitudes of respect & love
 - Addressing the hope that youth serve the church & community
 - Addressing the hope that youth are active in public witness & ministry
 - Addressing the expectation that there are effective youth relationships

APPENDIX B: CRITICAL REQUIREMENTS OF A YOUTH MINISTER

By David E. Adams (2004) via Temple (2007)

Credentials and Experience

1. Calling of God
2. Undergraduate degree - major in Youth Ministry
3. Five hundred (500) hours of supervised training
4. Master's degree - highly recommended

Knowledge

5. Overall knowledge of the nature of ministry
6. Well-rounded and thorough knowledge of the Bible
7. Has a biblical strategy for ministry
8. Displays a comprehensive knowledge of youth culture
9. Is aware of developmental issues related to adolescents
10. Demonstrates a complete understanding of discipleship and how to implement it both cooperatively and individually
11. Is knowledgeable of the organizational culture of church and para-church structures
12. Possesses a desire to learn as evidenced by his/her attitude, attendance of continuing educational opportunities, and outside reading

Character

13. Demonstrates an intimacy with Christ
14. Has regular personal devotions
15. Faithful in church attendance and leadership meetings
16. Displays supportive attitude toward pastoral leadership
17. Displays supportive attitude toward other church staff

18. Contributes to church staff unity
19. Family testimony
20. Honors, respects, and demonstrates healthy relationship with spouse
21. Demonstrates a consistent Christian examples as a parent
22. Spouse displays consistent Christian testimony and church loyalty
23. Children display consistent Christian testimony and church loyalty
24. Moral integrity
25. Is perceived as being above reproach in conduct with youth and adults
26. To the best of your knowledge has not been guilty of any moral indiscretions
27. Pays bills on time and is debt free
28. Keeps promises and commitments
29. Personality is compatible for ministry
30. The applicant is emotionally stable with very few mood swings
31. The applicant is a self-starter, requiring very little supervision

Skills

32. People skills
33. Relates well with Middle Schoolers
34. Relates well with High Schoolers
35. Relates well with College/Career students
36. Relates well with parents of teens
37. Relates well with lay staff
38. Public speaking
39. Communicates well with groups of 20 or less 40.

40. Communicates well with groups of 30 - 75
41. Communicates well with groups of 100 - 500
42. Management skills
43. Works effectively in office environment
44. Administrates and works well through office procedures and systems
45. Maintains office hours consistently, always on time
46. Returns phone calls and written correspondence
47. Knows how to manage a secretary
48. Effectively performs ministerial duties (visitation, prospect follow-ups, etc.)

Program

Is effective in developing and leading the following youth programs:

49. Incorporation of volunteer help
50. Sunday School with a "master teacher," co-ed large group approach
51. A small group, layperson lead Sunday School
52. Evangelistic outreach program
53. Teen choir or chorale
54. Weekly mid-week discipleship or outreach program
55. Teacher training meetings
56. Parents' meetings
57. Youth activities

APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVAL

Date: 10-4-2021

IRB #: IRB-FY20-21-497

Title: An Exploratory Sequential Mixed-Methods Study of Phronetic Administrative Competencies in Experienced Student Ministry Practitioners

Creation Date: 12-18-2020

End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Tripp Atkinson

Review Board: Research Ethics Office

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Exempt	Decision
				Exempt - Limited IRB

Key Study Contacts

Member	Tripp Atkinson	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	[REDACTED]
Member	Tripp Atkinson	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	[REDACTED]
Member	Troy Temple	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	[REDACTED]

APPENDIX D: EXPERT PANEL RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Expert Panel Candidate :

You have been selected as a possible expert panel participant in an important research study because of your reputation and experience in leading a successful student ministry.

As a doctoral student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting a valuable research project in the area of student ministry and need your help. The purpose of my research is to determine the nature of transformative administrative competencies that have proven to be invaluable in building and sustaining success in student ministry.

The expert panel for this study will consist of 20 student ministry veterans that represent various ministry sizes and contexts. The panel will also include some leading voices in the student ministry field who work with churches across the United States. You were recommended for the expert panel because you have proven to lead student ministry at a sustained high level and it is believed that you meet the following requirements:

15 Student Ministry Veterans serving in a local church:

- 18 years of age or older.
- Is currently or has recently served (in the last three years) in a full-time student ministry position in a local evangelical Christian church in the United States.
- Has at least ten years of ministry experience with at least seven years in a student ministry role.
- Is known to have experienced success in leading a healthy ministry (evidenced by numerical, spiritual, and organizational growth).

5 Experts from professional organizations that serve student ministry professionals on a national level:

- 18 years of age or older.
- Has served as a full-time student ministry professional in a local church.
- Has at least ten years of ministry experience with at least seven years in a student ministry role.
- Has experienced success in leading a healthy ministry (as evidenced by numerical, spiritual, and organizational growth).
- Regularly interacts with student ministry professionals nationwide and is engaged in ongoing conversations regarding the needs of student pastors and student ministries in diverse contexts of local churches.

The expert panel will be asked to participate in a three-round procedure involving the completion of questionnaires and surveys. The survey and questionnaire links will be sent out about three days apart and you will have three days to complete the survey. The first round will take about 25 minutes to complete, the second round will take about 15 minutes to complete, and the third round will take about 5 minutes to complete. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of the expert panel portion of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

If you are interested in participating, please click on the following link (or copy and paste into

your browser) to be taken to a brief screening survey to determine eligibility for the study:
[Redacted] [Link redacted]

If you meet the study requirements and are chosen to continue to the expert panel, you will be emailed a consent document that will contain additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please indicate consent with electronic signature by typing your name and date in the textbox. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to participate in the survey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [Redacted]
or [Redacted]

Thanks for your time and investment!

Blessings,

Tripp Atkinson
Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University School of Divinity

APPENDIX E: EXPERT PANEL CONSENT FORM

An Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Study of Phronetic Administrative Competencies
in Experienced Student Ministry Practitioners

Tripp Atkinson, Doctoral Candidate

Liberty University
School of Divinity

You are invited to participate on an expert panel in a research study on the nature of competencies that have proven to be transformative in building and maintaining a successful student ministry. You were selected as a possible participant based on the following criteria:

Student Ministry Professionals serving in a local church

- 18 years of age or older
- Is currently or has recently served (in the last 3 years) in a full-time student ministry position in a local evangelical Christian church in the United States.
- Has at least ten years of ministry experience with at least seven years in a student ministry role
- Has experienced success in leading a healthy ministry (evidenced by numerical, spiritual, and organizational growth)

Leader of organization that resources student ministry professionals

- 18 years of age or older
- Has served as a full-time student ministry professional in a local church
- Has at least ten years of ministry experience with at least seven years in a student ministry role
- Has experienced success in leading a healthy ministry (as evidenced by numerical, spiritual, and organizational growth)
- Regularly interacts with student ministry professionals nationwide and is engaged in ongoing conversations regarding the needs of student pastors and student ministries in diverse contexts of local churches

Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in this research project.

Tripp Atkinson, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of the study is to explore administrative competencies that have proven to be transformative in building and maintaining health in a student ministry organization. This study is being conducted in response to a significant literature gap in the subject and seeks to gather valuable information that could inform theological higher education and best practices in the local church.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things in this three round study:

1. **Answer a single open-ended question regarding which competencies have proven invaluable in running a successful student ministry.** This question will be answered via a digital questionnaire and may take approximately 15 minutes to list the top five competencies and write a brief (one to two sentence) description of each. You will have up to three days to respond to this question.

You will receive the randomized anonymous responses of the other participants via email to review (with like answers combined). After review, you will have the opportunity to revise, completely change, or not change at all your initial answers. This step may take approximately 10-15 minutes. You will have up to three days to respond to this request.

2. **Interact with panel responses by answering simple online survey questions.** Respondents will be asked to rate the value and perceived proficiency of each competency, and indicate the source of learning (higher education, experience, etc.). The survey will also ask for some demographic and ministry information. This step should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You will have three days to respond to this questionnaire.

Results will be analyzed within a few days of receiving all responses and participants will be emailed a link to the results. Participants will have the opportunity to review the average (mean) rating of how the expert panel views each competency. After review, participants will be allowed to revise previous answers to value rating question if they desire. Participants will have three days to respond.

3. **Rank the Top 10 competencies.** Respondents will be asked to rank the top 10 competencies in order of most valuable to least valuable through an online survey. This should take less than 5 minutes and participants will have three days to respond.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include potentially discovering important data and findings that could inform seminary curriculum, professional development resources, and hiring practices for the church.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of codes.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and in cloud storage. Research data and findings may be used in future presentations.

Voluntary Nature of Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision about whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your organization. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Tripp Atkinson. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED] and/or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Troy Temple (Dean, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity) at [REDACTED].

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Please indicate consent with an electronic signature by typing your name and the date in the textbox below.

Name: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX F: ROUND 1, PART 1 EMAIL TO EXPERT PANEL

Subject: Expert Panel Study: Round 1, Part 1

Dear Expert Panel,

Please carefully read the following instructions for the Round 1 survey...

There are three essentials for ministry leadership: calling, character, and competencies.

- *Calling* is concerned with one's divine sense of purpose.
- *Character* is concerned with one's moral strength and integrity.
- *Competency* is concerned with abilities or skills needed to do something successfully or efficiently.

This study is concerned with competencies. While there are many competencies that are valued in ministry leadership (preaching, counseling, shepherding, etc), this study is focused on administrative competencies... those specific skills or abilities related to or required for running a student ministry organization successfully.

Round 1 of this study is concerned with one question: **"What 5 administrative competencies have proven to be most transformative in effectively running a successful student ministry?"**

In identifying competencies, keep a few things in mind:

- Competencies are different from character traits (ex: Humble, reliable, wise).
- Competencies are skills that can be learned.
- Administrative competencies are skills related to running a student ministry organization successfully and efficiently (ex: Skills related to organizational leadership, planning, resource management, etc.)

For purposes of this study, we will assume that personal spiritual development is the starting point for the student ministry professional and impacts each subsequent administrative competency. As such, we will not specifically list spiritual disciplines under administrative competencies.

After you list competencies in the survey, please provide a one to two sentence description of each competency to clarify intent. Be sure to record your results in a separate document to refer back to in the next round.

Thanks again for your participating in this study and taking your time to think through your answers to offer your best response.

Link to the survey: [Redacted] [Link redacted]

(Please refer to previous email for your Expert Panel Participant ID #. You will use this ID in each survey)

APPENDIX G: PHASE 1 INSTRUMENTATION (3 ROUND DELPHI)**ROUND 1*****Round 1, Part 1:***

ID: Expert Panel Participant ID # [Text box]

Instructions:

This questionnaire is concerned with one question: “What five administrative competencies have proven to be most transformative in effectively running a successful student ministry?”

For purposes of this study, *Administrative Competencies* is defined as “abilities related to or required for running an organization/ministry successfully.”

After you list competencies, please provide a one to two sentence description of each competency to clarify intent.

Thanks for taking your time to think through your answers to offer your best response.

Q1: Competency #1 (followed by 1 to 2 sentence description of competency.)
[Text box]

Q2: Competency #2 (followed by 1 to 2 sentence description of competency.)
[Text box]

Q3: Competency #3 (followed by 1 to 2 sentence description of competency.)
[Text box]

Q4: Competency #4 (followed by 1 to 2 sentence description of competency.)
[Text box]

Q5: Competency #5 (followed by 1 to 2 sentence description of competency.)
[Text box]

Thanks for completing the first survey in this study. You will soon receive a follow-up that you are sure to find interesting. Blessings!

Round 1, Part 2:

ID: Expert Panel Participant ID # [Text box]

Instructions:

In Round 1, Part 2, you will now have the opportunity to review curated responses from the first survey. Like answers have been combined, and responses are presented in random order.

After reviewing all answers, you are allowed to revise, add to, or subtract from your previous answers if you desire.

Please review the responses below and answer the research question. (Even if your answers remain the same, please list five competencies in the text boxes and click “submit” when done.)

Responses from Round 1, Part 1:

[See Appendix I]

Remember, you may revise, add to, or subtract from your previous answers if you desire.

Q1: Competency #1 (followed by 1 to 2 sentence description of competency.)
[Text box]

Q2: Competency #2 (followed by 1 to 2 sentence description of competency.)
[Text box]

Q3: Competency #3 (followed by 1 to 2 sentence description of competency.)
[Text box]

Q4: Competency #4 (followed by 1 to 2 sentence description of competency.)
[Text box]

Q5: Competency #5 (followed by 1 to 2 sentence description of competency.)
[Text box]

You have completed Round 1 of the Expert Panel phase of this study. The upcoming Round 2 is an important round that will look a little different. Thanks for your investment in this important study!

ROUND 2

Round 2, Part 1:

ID: Expert Panel Participant ID # [Text box]

P1: Because of the significance of this study, will you commit to providing your best data in this 9-10 minute survey?

- Yes
 - No
-

Instructions:

In round 2, you will be asked some demographic and background information and then asked to rank the value of each competency, proficiency in each competency, and indicate the source of learning for each competency. The competencies are defined as follow:

[Competency definitions. See Appendix K]

The first eight questions provide information about you and your ministry that is valuable to this study:

Q1: What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q2: What is your age?

- 18-22
- 23-25
- 26-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 55-59
- 60+

Q3: How many years have you been in full-time student ministry?

- Less than 1 year

- 1-3 years
- 4-6 year
- 7-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 20+ years

Q4: What is the denominational affiliation of your church or ministry?

[text box]

Q5: What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Check one)

- Attended grade school or part of high school
- Graduated from high school
- Technical or vocational training
- Attended college but did not graduate
- Associates degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate degree

Q6: What was the average weekly attendance of your church, pre-COVID? (Check one)

- 500 or less
- 501-1,000
- 1,001 – 1,500
- 1,501 – 2,000
- more than 2,000
- N/A I work for a Student Ministry organization

Q7: What was your annual Student Ministry budget, pre-COVID? (Check one)

- \$0-15,000
- \$15,001 - \$30,000
- \$30,001 - \$45,000
- \$45,001-60,000
- more than \$60,000
- N/A I work for a Student Ministry organization

Q8: How would you rate the health of your student ministry as evidenced by numerical and spiritual growth? (Check one)

- Not healthy or growing
- Somewhat healthy
- Very healthy and growing
- N/A I work for a Student Ministry organization

Q9: HOW IMPORTANT are the following administrative competencies in growing & sustaining a healthy student ministry as evidenced by numerical, spiritual, & organizational growth?

	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict Resolution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leader Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multi-Tasking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship Building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategic Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Team Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time Management/Scheduling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vision/Mission Clarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10: HOW PROFICIENT ARE YOU in the following administrative competencies?

	Not at all proficient	Low proficiency	Slightly proficient	Neutral	Moderately proficient	Very proficient	Extremely proficient
Communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict Resolution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leader Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multi-Tasking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship Building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategic Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Team Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time Management/Scheduling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vision/Mission Clarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The final set of questions will seek to determine the context in which you may have learned each competency. (Check all that apply)

Q11: In what context did you learn COMMUNICATION? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q12: In what context did you learn CONFLICT RESOLUTION? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q13: In what context did you learn CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE/AGILITY(Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q14: In what context did you learn FLEXIBILITY? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q15: In what context did you learn LEADER DEVELOPMENT? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q16: In what context did you learn MULTI-TASKING? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary

- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q17: In what context did you learn RELATIONSHIP BUILDING? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q18: In what context did you learn STRATEGIC PLANNING? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q19: In what context did you learn TEAM LEADERSHIP? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q20: In what context did you learn TIME MANAGEMENT/SCHEDULING? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q21: In what context did you learn VISION/MISSION CLARITY? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Whew!! Good work. That was the hardest part of this study, but the information we just gathered is invaluable. Be on the lookout for some results coming soon. As always, thank you so much!

Round 2, Part 2:

ID: Expert Panel Participant ID # [Text box]

Instructions:

In Round 2, Part 2, you will now have the opportunity to review the average (mean) response for how the expert panel rated the value of each competency.

After reviewing the average ratings, you are allowed to revise your previous answers if you desire.

Responses from Round 2, Part 1:

HOW IMPORTANT are the following administrative competencies in growing & sustaining a healthy student ministry as evidenced by numerical, spiritual, & organizational growth?

	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict Resolution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leader Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Multi-Tasking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship Building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Strategic Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Team Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Time Management/Scheduling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vision/Mission Clarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

After reviewing the average ratings above, please once again answer Q9. You do not have to revise your previous answers, but you may.

Q9: How important are the following administrative competencies in growing & sustaining a healthy student ministry as evidenced by numerical, spiritual, & organizational growth?

	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict Resolution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leader Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multi-Tasking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship Building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategic Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Team Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time Management/Scheduling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vision/Mission Clarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

You are almost done with this study. Only one more brief question that will come in a third and final round email link. Thanks again for your time and expertise!

ROUND 3

ID: Expert Panel Participant ID # [Text box]

Q1: Please RANK the value of each competency in growing & sustaining a healthy student ministry as evidenced by numerical, spiritual, & organizational growth? (Drag item into rank order, with 1 being MOST valuable & 10 being LEAST valuable)

Communication	1
Conflict Resolution	2
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	3
Flexibility	4
Leader Development	5
Relationship Building	6
Strategic Planning	7
Team Leadership	8
Time Management/Scheduling	9
Vision/Mission Clarity	10

You did it! You just dropped some serious wisdom in a study that will prayerfully help thousands of student pastors and volunteers succeed wildly in ministry to students. Your contribution is invaluable and greatly appreciated. May God richly bless your family and ministry as you continue to make a difference!

APPENDIX H: ROUND 1, PART 2 EMAIL TO EXPERT PANEL

Subject: Expert Panel: Round 1, PART 2 Survey (w/ results from survey 1)

Dear Expert Panel,

Thanks again for your feedback from Round 1. There is so much good data!

As the researcher, my job (with the assistance of a qualitative data analyst) was to take the answers from the first survey and combine similar answers in a way that fits the scope of the study, to the best of my ability determining the intent of the panelists.

In this second part to round one, I will show you what the curated list looks like. You will have the opportunity to review the list and answer the same question again. You may use your identical previous answers, revise your answers, or completely change your answers.

Remember, if you don't see your specific answer on the list, it is because of the following:

- It was grouped with other similar answers
- It was determined to fall under the umbrella of a larger competency
- It did not meet the definition of administrative competency as defined in this study (perhaps it was determined to be a character trait or commitment and not a specific skill that fit the scope of this study).

This is the push-pull portion of the study that helps clarify terminology and intent as we move towards potential consensus. If you feel that the researcher (me) has not represented your previous answers in the listed competencies or wrongly left your answer off of this list (according to the narrow focus of competencies being explored), please list your answer again and make a case for it to have its own category.

Thanks again for your help! Please see the survey link below as well as a PDF document of data from round 1 (for easy viewing).

Survey Link: [REDACTED] [Link redacted]

APPENDIX I: EXPERT PANEL ROUND 1 COMPETENCIES

Leader Development: The ability to identify, recruit, train, and empower leaders to serve the ministry's mission. This competency also involves maintaining and prioritizing self-growth.

Strategic Planning: The ability to set goals and map out intentional programming and action steps that support the vision of the organization. Effective strategic planning in student ministry involves forward-thinking and the ability to begin with the big picture and work towards vital details. Such a strategic plan can be clearly communicated on a ministry calendar.

Vision / Mission Clarity: The ability to clarify the "preferred future" for the ministry and define ministry success. This competency involves a focused picture of what the ministry team is trying to accomplish.

Budget Management: The ability to strategically develop a financial budget and manage ministry resources.

Trust Building: The ability to gain the trust of team members by remaining true to one's word and displaying consistency both personally and professionally.

Conflict Resolution: The ability to courageously initiate tough conversations to seek agreement and facilitate peace between team members, students, or families when difficult situations or anger arise.

Communication: The ability to effectively share information in various ways with staff, volunteers, parents, and students. Clear and timely communication keeps people informed, allows for continuous feedback, instills confidence in the ministry, and can reduce conflict. Effective communication is empowering as it keeps the vision and mission in the forefront.

Team Leadership: The ability to build and steward a ministry staff, and facilitate a team approach to ministry. This involves ensuring team members are in the appropriate role, leading a team to work together towards a unified goal, and facilitating alignment within the team and with other teams. Effective team leadership requires the ability to conduct productive meetings, ensure team members feel valued, and facilitate mobilization to execute a strategy.

Delegation: The ability to effectively assign tasks and share workload based on perceived and proven strengths and weaknesses of both the student ministry professional and staff/leaders.

Flexibility: The ability to adapt and improvise when unexpected circumstances arise.

Multi-Tasking: The ability to focus on a single task without losing track of others. Multi-tasking involves simultaneously managing many responsibilities and switching between tasks as needed.

Systems Development: The ability to implement systems and processes that aid in organization and ensure efficiency in running a ministry organization.

Relationship Building: The ability to develop healthy relationships with students, parents, and leaders. The ability to see and engage individuals, not just the whole. This competency displays value and allows the student ministry professional the influence needed to speak into the lives of others.

Time Management / Scheduling: The ability to facilitate productivity by effectively handling time. This includes appropriate time management for daily/weekly tasks, meetings, programming prep, professional development, personal time, and margin to accommodate crises as they arise in the ministry. This skill allows the student ministry professional the ability to be punctual, focused, and efficient.

Organization: The ability to structure and order the many details involved in student ministry. This includes organizing information, people, and ministry details.

Cultural Intelligence/Agility: The ability to relate and work effectively in culturally diverse situations. To understand a diversity of teen culture, parent culture, & church culture, and maintain influence across boundaries. This includes understanding the unique language, technology, and needs of diverse groups.

Marketing: The ability to effectively promote the ministry to students and parents as well as to the church/organization at large.

APPENDIX J: ROUND 2, PART 1 EMAIL TO EXPERT PANEL

Dear Expert Panelists,

Your feedback from round 1 was so good! I appreciate the arguments that were made for/against specific competencies and to combine certain competencies. The data analysts found some arguments convincing, and the attached list of competencies for Round 2 reflects the petitioned changes.

This second of three rounds will seek some demographic info and allow you to interact with the top 11 competencies. The data from this round will enable us to explore relationships between numerous variables, including valued competencies, proficiency, ministry contexts, experience, etc.

Thanks again for your investment in this study! The data you provide in this round will be of enormous significance. After this round, there are only two very brief surveys remaining. Let me know if you have any questions.

Round 2 Link:  [Link redacted.]

Blessings,

Tripp Atkinson
Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University School of Divinity

APPENDIX K: EXPERT PANEL ROUND 2 COMPETENCIES

Communication: The ability to effectively share information in various ways within the ministry (staff, volunteers, parents, & students), and promote the ministry at large to the church & community. Clear and timely communication keeps people informed, allows for continuous feedback, instills confidence in the ministry, and can reduce conflict. Effective communication is empowering as it keeps the vision and mission in the forefront.

Conflict Resolution: The ability to courageously initiate tough conversations to seek agreement and facilitate peace between team members, students, or families when difficult situations or anger arise.

Cultural Intelligence/Agility: The ability to relate and work effectively in culturally diverse situations. To understand a diversity of teen culture, parent culture, & church culture, and maintain influence across boundaries. This includes understanding the unique language, technology, and needs of diverse groups.

Flexibility: The ability to adapt and improvise when unexpected circumstances arise.

Leader Development: The ability to identify, recruit, train, and empower leaders to serve the ministry's mission. This competency involves effective delegation while maintaining and prioritizing self-growth.

Multi-Tasking: The ability to focus on a single task without losing track of others. Multi-tasking involves simultaneously managing many responsibilities and switching between tasks as needed.

Relationship Building: The ability to develop healthy relationships with students, parents, and leaders. The ability to see and engage individuals, not just the whole. This competency displays value and allows the student ministry professional the influence needed to speak into the lives of others.

Strategic Planning: The ability to set goals and map out intentional programming and action steps that support the vision of the organization. Effective strategic planning in student ministry involves forward-thinking and the ability to begin with the big picture and work towards vital details. Budget management, systems development, and organization are key ingredients in successful strategic planning.

Team Leadership: The ability to build and steward a ministry staff and facilitate a team approach to ministry. This involves ensuring team members are in the appropriate role, leading a team to work together towards a unified goal, and facilitating alignment within the team and with other teams. Effective team leadership requires the ability to conduct productive meetings, ensure team members feel valued, and facilitate mobilization to execute a strategy.

Time Management / Scheduling: The ability to facilitate productivity by effectively handling time. This includes appropriate time management for daily/weekly tasks, meetings, programming prep, professional development, personal time, and margin to accommodate crises as they arise

in the ministry. This skill allows the student ministry professional the ability to be punctual, focused, and efficient.

Vision / Mission Clarity: The ability to clarify the “preferred future” for the ministry and define ministry success. This competency involves a focused picture of what the ministry team is trying to accomplish.

APPENDIX L: ROUND 2, PART 2 EMAIL TO EXPERT PANEL

Subject: Round 2, Part 2 (Results & One Question)

Dear Expert Panelists,

We are nearing the end of our study, as this is the next to last question you will be asked to answer.

In this Part 2 of Round 2 you will get to review the Mean (average) response of how the panel valued each competency. After review, you will be asked to answer one question again. You may answer differently or the same as the previous round.

Thanks again for your valuable input.

Survey link: [REDACTED] [Link redacted.]

Blessings,

Tripp Atkinson
 Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University School of Divinity

HOW IMPORTANT are the following administrative competencies in growing & sustaining a healthy student ministry as evidenced by numerical, spiritual, & organizational growth?							
	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Conflict Resolution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leader Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Multi-Tasking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship Building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Strategic Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Team Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Time Management/Scheduling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vision/Mission Clarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

APPENDIX M: ROUND 3 EMAIL TO EXPERT PANEL

Subject: FINAL Survey: Round 3 (1-question)

Expert Panel,

This is it....the FINAL 1-question survey in this study!!

THANK YOU for your contribution. I know some of the surveys seem redundant, but that is part of the Delphi methodology that seeks to guide a diverse expert panel towards consensus.

In this final survey, you will be asked to RANK the Top 10 competencies identified in the previous rounds. It should take approximately 3-4 minutes. Thanks again for your thoughtfulness and thoroughness in answering these surveys.

Round 3 (final) survey link: [REDACTED] [Link redacted.]

*For easy review of competency definitions, please see attached PDF.

Blessings,

Tripp Atkinson
Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University School of Divinity

APPENDIX N: NETWORK PERMISSION REQUEST

Dear Doug:

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research to understand better the nature of competencies that have proven to be transformative in building and maintaining a successful student ministry. The title of my research project is “An Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Study of Phronetic Administrative Competencies in Experienced Student Ministry Practitioners.” The purpose of the study is to address a significant literature gap and seek to gather valuable information that could inform theological higher education and best practices in the local church.

I am writing to request your permission to utilize your network to seek survey data from student ministry professionals that serve local churches in the United States.

Research participants will be asked to go to a web link to complete a survey based on transformative administrative competencies, as identified by an expert panel of 20 student ministry veterans. The survey will seek the perceived value and proficiency of each competency as well as the source of learning. I am confident that this survey will provide valuable insight regarding how competencies are learned and valued related to educational background and ministry context.

As a direct benefit to your organization for participating in this important study, you will receive data analysis results and research findings that you can use to better serve and resource churches and student ministry professionals.

Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please respond by email to tatkinson1@liberty.edu. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Tripp Atkinson
Doctoral Student, Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University

APPENDIX O: NETWORK PERMISSIONS

N Nikki Hoffpauir
 [External] RE: Network Permission Request
 To: Atkinson, Tripp

September 13, 2021 at 1:17 PM



[EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open attachments unless you know the sender and trust the content.]

Dear Tripp:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled "An Exploratory Sequential Mixed-Methods Study of Phronetic Administrative Competencies in Experienced Student Ministry Practitioners," we have decided to grant you permission to utilize our network to seek survey data from student ministry professionals that serve local churches in the United States. Please be advised of the following (Include any that apply):

(YES) We will be happy to forward an email to our network with research information.

(YES) We are requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.



NIKKI HOFFPAUIR
 COO



DF Doug Franklin
 [External] Re: Network Permission Request
 To: Atkinson, Tripp

August 16, 2021 at 10:35 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open attachments unless you know the sender and trust the content.]

You have my permission to use the LeaderTrek's marketing list

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 16, 2021, at 8:22 PM, Atkinson, Tripp <tatkinson1@liberty.edu> wrote:

Dear Doug:

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research to understand better the nature of competencies that have proven to be transformative in building and maintaining a successful student ministry. The title of my research project is "An Exploratory Sequential Mixed-Methods Study of Phronetic Administrative Competencies in Experienced Student Ministry Practitioners." The purpose of the study is to address a significant literature gap and seek to gather valuable information that could inform theological higher education and best practices in the local church.

I am writing to request your permission to utilize LeaderTrek's network to seek survey data from student ministry professionals that serve local churches in the United States.

APPENDIX P: STUDENT MINISTRY PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Student Ministry Professional:

If you had an opportunity to influence a research project that could make a significant contribution to the field of Student Ministry, would that be worth approximately 10 minutes of your time?

As a doctoral student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting a valuable research project in the area of student ministry and need your help. The purpose of my research is to determine the nature of transformative administrative competencies that have proven to be invaluable in building and sustaining success in student ministry.

If you are 18 years of age or older and are currently or have recently (in the last three years) served in a full-time student ministry position in a local evangelical Christian church in the United States, you can make a valuable contribution to this research study. You can help by completing a survey based on a list of competencies that have been proposed as valuable to running a successful student ministry organization. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and no identifying information will be collected.

To participate, click on the link provided (or copy and paste into your browser) and complete the survey no later than August 24, 2021.

A consent statement is provided as the first page of the survey. The consent statement contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please click the button to proceed to the survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to participate in the survey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or

[REDACTED]

Thanks for your time and investment!

SURVEY LINK: [REDACTED] [Link Redacted]

Blessings,

Tripp Atkinson
Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University School of Divinity
Associate Pastor, Sugar Hill Church, Sugar Hill, GA

APPENDIX Q: STUDENT MINISTRY PROFESSIONAL CONSENT FORM

An Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Study of Phronetic Administrative Competencies
In Experienced Student Ministry Practitioners
Tripp Atkinson, Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University
School of Divinity

You are invited to participate in a research study on the nature of competencies that have proven to be transformative in building and maintaining a successful student ministry. You were selected as a possible participant because of your connection to a student ministry network. To participate, you must be at least 18 years old and are currently, or have recently (in the past 3 years), served in a full-time student ministry position in a local evangelical Christian church in the United States.

Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in this research project.

Tripp Atkinson, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of the study is to explore administrative competencies that have proven to be transformative in building and maintaining health in a student ministry organization. This study is being conducted in response to a significant literature gap in the subject and seeks to gather valuable information that could inform theological higher education and best practices in the local church.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to complete an anonymous survey hosted on the Qualtrics survey site. You will have one week to respond to this survey and it will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include potentially discovering important data and findings that could inform seminary curriculum, professional development resources, and hiring practices for the church.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and in cloud storage. Research data and findings may be used in future presentations.

Voluntary Nature of Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision about whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your organization. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Tripp Atkinson. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED] and/or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Troy Temple, [REDACTED].

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

APPENDIX R: PHASES 2 & 3 INSTRUMENTATION

Screening:

S1: Are you at least 18 years of age?

- Yes
- No

S2: Are you currently, or have you recently served (in the past 3 years) in a full-time student ministry position in a local evangelical Christian church in the United States?

- Yes
 - No
-

P1: Because of the significance of this study, will you commit to providing your best data in this 9-10 minute survey?

- Yes
 - No
-

The first eight questions provide information about you and your ministry that is valuable to this study:

Q1: What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q2: What is your age?

- 18-22
- 23-25
- 26-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 55-59
- 60+

Q3: How many years have you been in full-time student ministry?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 year
- 7-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years

- 20+ years

Q4: What is the denominational affiliation of your church?

[text box]

Q5: Indicate your highest level of education you have completed. (Check one)

- Attended grade school or part of high school
- Graduated from high school
- Technical or vocational training
- Attended college but did not graduate
- Associates degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate degree

Q6: What was the average weekly attendance of your church, pre-COVID? (Check one)

- 500 or less
- 501-1,000
- 1,001 – 1,500
- 1,501 – 2,000
- more than 2,000

Q7: What was your annual Student Ministry budget, pre-COVID? (Check one)

- \$0-15,000
- \$15,001 - \$30,000
- \$30,001 - \$45,000
- \$45,001-60,000
- more than \$60,000

Q8: How would you rate the health of your student ministry as evidenced by numerical and spiritual growth?

- Not healthy or growing
- Somewhat healthy
- Very healthy and growing

Questions 9 and 10 are key questions that ask you to consider the administrative competencies identified by this expert panel and rate them according to value and then perceived proficiency. Your thoughtfulness in rating these competencies is appreciated.

Q9: HOW IMPORTANT are the following administrative competencies in growing & sustaining a healthy student ministry as evidenced by numerical, spiritual, & organizational growth?

	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict Resolution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leader Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship Building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategic Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Team Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time Management/Scheduling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vision/Mission Clarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12: HOW PROFICIENT ARE YOU in the following administrative competencies?

	Not at all proficient	Low proficiency	Slightly proficient	Neutral	Moderately proficient	Very proficient	Extremely proficient
Communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict Resolution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leader Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship Building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategic Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Team Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time Management/Scheduling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vision/Mission Clarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The final set of questions will seek to determine the context in which you may have learned each competency. (Check all that apply)

Q11: In what context did you learn COMMUNICATION? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q12: In what context did you learn CONFLICT RESOLUTION? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q13: In what context did you learn CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE/AGILITY(Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q14: In what context did you learn FLEXIBILITY? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q15: In what context did you learn LEADER DEVELOPMENT? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q16: In what context did you learn RELATIONSHIP BUILDING? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading

- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q17: In what context did you learn STRATEGIC PLANNING? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q18: In what context did you learn TEAM LEADERSHIP? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q19: In what context did you learn TIME MANAGEMENT/SCHEDULING? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Q20: In what context did you learn VISION/MISSION CLARITY? (Check all that apply)

- I have NOT learned this competency
- Undergrad
- Grad School / Seminary
- Professional Training
- Personal Reading
- Mentor
- Professional Experience
- Other (Please Explain) [Text Box]

Great work! Thanks so much for providing information that will be invaluable in helping other student ministry professionals. Be on the lookout for study results through your student ministry network. Blessings!

APPENDIX S: RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Procedures for this study are as follows:

1. Experts were recruited to participate in the phase 1 Delphi study based on the outlined criteria. Leaders from four national student ministry networks recommended potential expert panelists based on inclusion criteria. Expert panel candidates were emailed an official recruitment letter which contained a link to the electronic screening survey hosted on the Qualtrics survey platform. The 20-person expert panel was chosen in a manner that best represented diversity among the screened and amenable pool of prospects.
2. Participants who were chosen for the expert panel were assigned an Expert Panel Participant ID#, and each signed an informed consent before participating in the research.

Phase 1: Delphi Study

Round 1, Part 1:

3. Participants were emailed detailed instructions for the first survey with a link to an online questionnaire hosted on the Qualtrics survey platform. The questionnaire asked one open-ended question, “What five administrative competencies have proven to be most transformative in effectively running a successful student ministry?” Participants were asked to provide a one to two sentence description of each competency listed to clarify their intent. Participants were given one week to respond to the questionnaire.
4. Results were collected, like answers were combined, and responses were anonymously and randomly compiled in a new Qualtrics questionnaire.

Round 1, Part 2:

5. Participants were given the opportunity to review anonymous responses from the entire panel. Participants were asked the same question as previously and allowed to revise, add to, or subtract from their answers if they desired. Participants were given one week to respond.
6. Results were collected, analyzed, and like responses were combined. Final results from round 1 were listed in a random order in a new quantitative survey instrument for the second Delphi round.

Round 2, Part 1:

7. In a second Delphi round, participants were asked questions regarding gender, age, ministry experience, denominational affiliation, educational training, church size, ministry budget, and perceived health of their student ministry. Participants were asked to rate the value and proficiency of each competency on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale and indicate the source of learning for each.

8. Results were analyzed and mean (average) rating for competency values were depicted on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale graphic.

Round 2, Part 2:

9. After reviewing graphic of mean rating for competency values, participants were asked to re-score competency values, given permission to revise previous answers if they desired. Once again, participants were given one week to respond.. Once again, participants will have one week to respond.
10. Results were collected, analyzed, and the top competencies were identified.

Round 3:

11. In a third and final Delphi round, experts were asked to rank the top competencies in order of value, from most valuable to least valuable.
12. Data was analyzed and the expert panel top 10 competencies (in order) were identified for use in phase 2 of the study.

Phase 2: Instrument Creation

13. In phase 2, the data from the phase 1 Delphi study with the expert panel was used to develop a quantitative research instrument to seek information from a larger population of student ministry professionals. The phase 3 survey (see Appendix R) was an online questionnaire hosted on the Qualtrics platform that included a list and brief description of the top 10 competencies identified by the expert panel. Similar to the quantitative instrument used in the second round with the expert panel, the survey sought information regarding gender, age, years of ministry experience, educational training, denominational affiliation, church size, student ministry budget, and perceived health of their ministry. It also amassed perceived value, proficiency, and source of learning of each of the competencies.

Phase 3: Quantitative Survey with Student Ministry Network

14. LeaderTreks was randomly chosen among the four student ministry organizations to be the first network used for phase 3. The organizational leader was contacted and permission was requested to use their database for the phase 3 survey. Leadertreks agreed to send a recruiting email that contained the survey link and to follow up with another communication to network one week later, should more results be needed.
15. An official Network Permission Request was emailed with sample permission verbiage (See Appendix N). Once written permission was received (See Appendix O), the researcher sent the Student Ministry Professional Recruitment Email (See Appendix P) to Leadertreks. The recruitment email contained an explanation of the study and information regarding consent.

16. Leadtreks disseminated the recruiting email containing the phase 3 survey link to their national network of student ministry professionals in evangelical Christian churches across the United States.
17. After clicking the survey link and reading a description of the study, participants who chose to participate affirmed an informed consent. Participants were then asked two screening questions and those who met inclusion criteria were given access to the survey. Participants were asked to complete the survey in one week.
18. After one week, Leadertreks sent a reminder email that again included the recruitment email and survey link. Participants were reminded of the study's significance and given an additional week to complete the survey.
19. When the needed sample size was not met after two weeks, an additional student ministry network was randomly chosen (via online randomizer) from the remaining representative networks. Student Leadership University was chosen and an organizational leader was contacted regarding the study and permission to use their network to gather remaining needed responses.
20. SLU granted permission (See Appendix O) and forwarded recruitment email and survey link. When responses were still needed after a week, SLU sent a second email that was successful in producing results that exceeded sample size requirements.
21. Once there were enough responses to satisfy the needed sample size of 380 respondents, the questionnaire link was closed.
22. The results from phase 3 were analyzed to answer the research questions.
23. Network directors received communication thanking them for their contribution and extending an invitation to view final results, observations, and generalizations that may be made from completed research. All data was archived via a Dropbox folder and backed up on an external hard drive.

APPENDIX T: EXPERT PANEL PERCEIVED PROFICIENCY

Table 36

Expert Panel Perceived Proficiency (Ordered Highest to Lowest)

Competency	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
Relationship Building	5.45	4.00	6.00	0.59	0.35	20
Vision/Mission Clarity	5.15	4.00	6.00	0.79	0.63	20
Team Leadership	5.10	4.00	6.00	0.70	0.49	20
Communication	5.05	4.00	6.00	0.67	0.45	20
Flexibility	5.05	4.00	6.00	0.74	0.55	20
Leader Development	4.95	3.00	6.00	0.92	0.85	20
Strategic Planning	4.90	4.00	6.00	0.83	0.69	20
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	4.65	2.00	6.00	1.11	1.23	20
Conflict Resolution	4.60	4.00	6.00	0.66	0.44	20
Multi-Tasking	4.15	2.00	6.00	1.19	1.43	20
Time Management/Scheduling	4.15	1.00	6.00	1.49	2.23	20

Note. Values reflect scored responses on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale with 0

being the minimum value and 6 being the highest value.

APPENDIX U: EXPERT PANEL COMPETENCY SOURCE OF LEARNING

Table 37

Expert Panel Competency Source of Learning (%N)

Competency	I have NOT learned	Undergrad	Grad School / Seminary	Professional Training	Personal reading	Mentor	Personal / Professional Experience	Other
Communication	0%	40%	35%	45%	40%	60%	90%	10%
Conflict Resolution	0%	25%	20%	25%	65%	65%	90%	0%
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	0%	25%	30%	30%	70%	25%	85%	0%
Flexibility	0%	5%	5%	15%	25%	35%	95%	0%
Leader Development	0%	35%	50%	70%	80%	75%	80%	0%
Relationship Building	0%	20%	25%	40%	45%	65%	95%	0%
Strategic Planning	0%	20%	40%	65%	60%	55%	80%	0%
Team Leadership	0%	40%	40%	65%	65%	65%	90%	0%
Time Management/ Scheduling	0%	20%	25%	35%	50%	60%	80%	0%
Vision/Mission Clarity	0%	20%	30%	55%	65%	55%	80%	0%
Average %	0.0%	25%	30%	44.5%	56.5%	56%	86.5%	1%

Note. 70% of the sample completed graduate school/seminary with a Master's degree..

**APPENDIX V: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PERCEIVED PROFICIENCY BY
MINISTRY EXPERIENCE**

Table 38

Comparative Analysis of Perceived Proficiency by Ministry Experience

Competency	< 1 year	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
Relationship Building	4.91	5.04	5.06	5.07	5.29	5.12	5.01
Communication	4.55	4.42	4.61	4.51	4.76	4.46	4.81
Leader Development	4.00	4.00	3.90	4.24	4.50	4.30	4.61
Mission / Vision Clarity	4.36	4.52	4.32	4.36	4.60	4.64	4.79
Team Leadership	3.73	4.38	4.42	4.39	4.64	4.72	4.86
Flexibility	5.09	5.06	4.84	4.61	4.94	5.08	4.86
Strategic Planning	3.45	4.27	4.23	4.44	4.60	4.30	4.56
Conflict Resolution	4.09	4.21	4.33	4.21	4.49	4.34	4.40
Time Management / Scheduling	3.91	3.85	3.95	3.88	4.21	3.90	4.31
Cultural Intelligence / Agility	4.55	4.13	4.20	4.18	4.25	4.44	4.11
Average Perceived Proficiency	4.26	4.39	4.39	4.39	4.63	4.53	4.63

Note. Values reflect scored responses on a 7-point unipolar Likert-type response scale with 0 being the minimum value and 6 being the highest value.

Figure 12

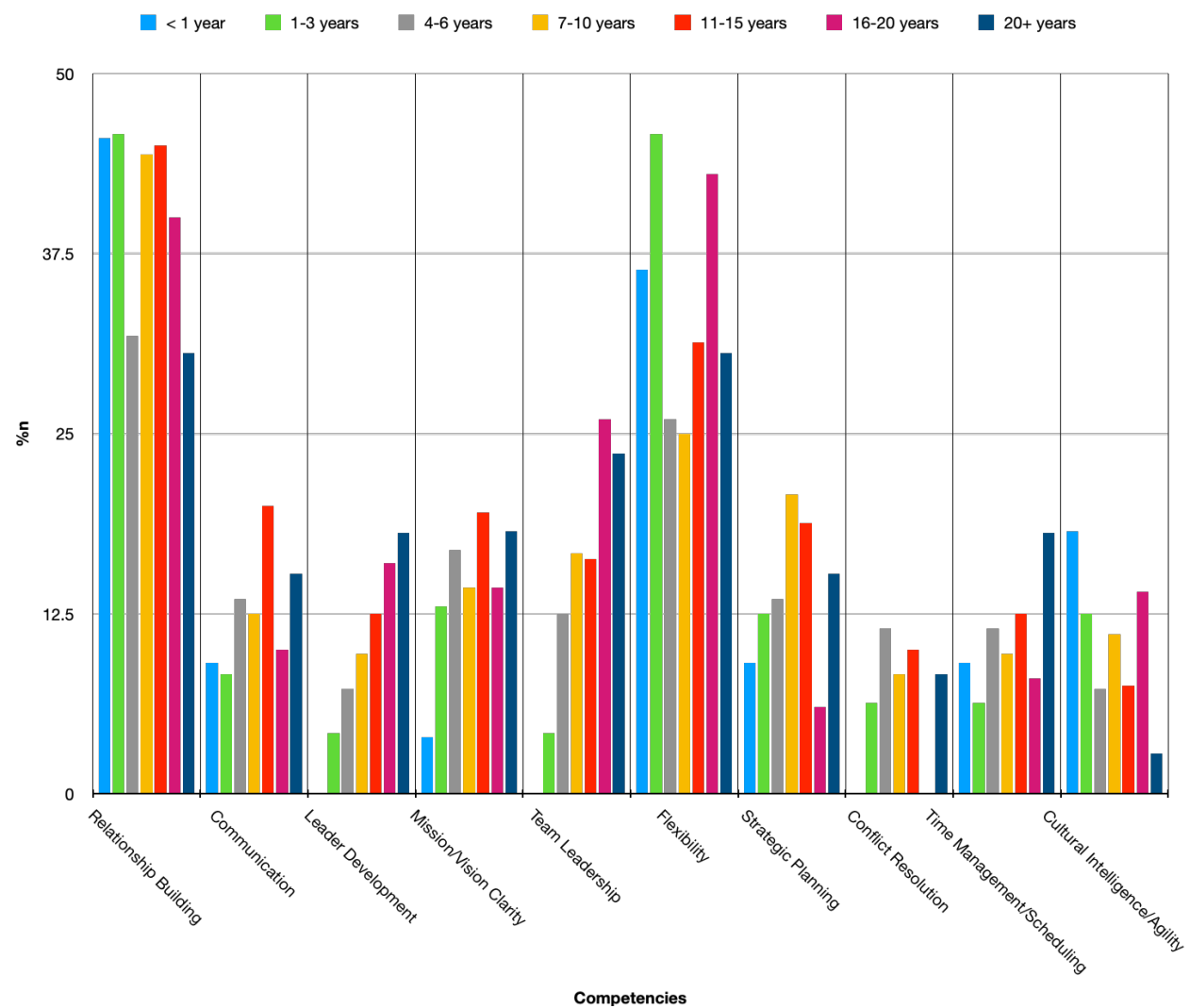
Extreme Proficiency by Ministry Experience (%n)

Table 39*Proficiency Growth by Decade of Experience*

Competency	First 10 Years	Second 10 Years	+/- Growth
Team Leadership	4.23	4.74	0.51
Leader Development	4.04	4.47	0.44
Strategic Planning	4.10	4.49	0.39
Mission/Vision Clarity	4.39	4.68	0.29
Time Management/Scheduling	3.90	4.14	0.24
Conflict Resolution	4.21	4.41	0.20
Communication	4.52	4.68	0.29
Relationship Building	5.02	5.14	0.12
Flexibility	4.90	4.96	0.06
Cultural Intelligence / Agility	4.27	4.27	0.00
Average Perceived Proficiency	4.36	4.60	0.24

APPENDIX W: LOGISTIC REGRESSION TO DETERMINE PRIMARY DRIVER OF HEALTHY MINISTRIES

Figure 13

Logistic Regression Test: “Very healthy & growing” Ministries

Variable	Relative Importance			Odds			Coefficient			Standardized Coefficient			P-Value	Frequency
Leader Development	15%	33%	46%	1.02	1.05	1.10	0.0218	0.0485	0.0994	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.00348	
Team Leadership	12%	28%	39%	1.02	1.05	1.13	0.0216	0.0499	0.1202	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.00511	
Relationship Building	3%	15%	32%	1.01	1.04	1.10	0.0109	0.0388	0.0917	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0434	
Time Manage.../Scheduling	1%	7%	19%	0.92	0.96	1.01	-0.0885	-0.0370	0.0077	-0.2	-0.1	0.0	0.00689	
Strategic Planning	2%	6%	18%	1.00	1.03	1.09	-0.0037	0.0292	0.0844	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.244	
Vision/Mission Clarity	2%	3%	10%	0.96	1.02	1.06	-0.0412	0.0202	0.0601	-0.1	0.0	0.1	0.219	
Conflict Resolution	1%	3%	13%	0.98	1.02	1.07	-0.0199	0.0182	0.0688	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.612	
Communication	1%	2%	12%	0.96	1.02	1.08	-0.0369	0.0237	0.0812	-0.1	0.0	0.1	0.911	
Flexibility	0%	2%	12%	0.99	1.01	1.05	-0.0145	0.0108	0.0523	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.541	
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	0%	0%	6%	0.95	1.00	1.03	-0.0518	-0.0047	0.0337	-0.1	0.0	0.1	0.554	

Note. $N=429$. McFadden's pseudo $R^2= .112$.

Figure 14

Logistic Regression Test: “Somewhat healthy” Ministries

Variable	Relative Importance			Odds			Coefficient			Standardized Coefficient			P-Value	Frequency
Leader Development	16%	47%	60%	0.88	0.96	0.99	-0.1283	-0.0429	-0.0144	-0.3	-0.1	0.0	0.00156	
Team Leadership	5%	17%	32%	0.88	0.97	0.99	-0.1275	-0.0347	-0.0083	-0.3	-0.1	0.0	0.184	
Time Manage.../Scheduling	1%	9%	28%	0.99	1.01	1.09	-0.0076	0.0143	0.0892	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0537	
Vision/Mission Clarity	2%	7%	20%	0.97	1.02	1.08	-0.0270	0.0219	0.0765	-0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0374	
Relationship Building	1%	6%	26%	0.93	0.98	1.01	-0.0681	-0.0178	0.0116	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.524	
Flexibility	0%	4%	21%	0.94	0.98	1.01	-0.0588	-0.0166	0.0141	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.399	
Conflict Resolution	1%	4%	20%	0.93	0.96	1.02	-0.0694	-0.0383	0.0193	-0.1	-0.1	0.0	0.551	
Strategic Planning	2%	3%	14%	0.95	0.99	1.04	-0.0563	-0.0114	0.0364	-0.1	0.0	0.1	0.676	
Cultural Intelligence/Agility	0%	1%	15%	0.95	0.98	1.03	-0.0481	-0.0163	0.0268	-0.1	0.0	0.1	0.805	
Communication	1%	1%	14%	0.95	1.00	1.05	-0.0523	-0.0011	0.0503	-0.1	0.0	0.1	0.701	

Note. $N=429$. McFadden's pseudo $R^2= .052$.

APPENDIX X: SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. **There are a clear Top 5 administrative competencies needed to sustain success in student ministries.**
 - Vision/Mission Clarity
 - Relationship Building
 - Communication
 - Leader Development
 - Team Leadership

2. **“WHY?” is the most important question to ask and communicate.**
 While rated the #5 most valued competency by the expert panel, Vision/Mission Clarity was ranked #1 when respondents had to choose what was really most valuable.

3. **The top administrative competencies are all related to facilitating and promoting mission, relationships, and a team approach to ministry.**
 The top five competencies all support Vision/Mission Clarity, and model the aim and method of Jesus' leadership.

4. **There is a clear relationship between the value of/proficiency in administrative competencies and the ministry's health.**
 This study provides empirical data that supports a direct relationship between value of/proficiency in administrative competencies and the health of student ministry. Experts agree that proficiency in administrative competencies is key to sustaining a healthy and growing student ministry.

5. **More attention must be given to administrative competencies in ministry preparation.**
 The findings show that although student ministry professionals value administrative competencies, they are not very proficient administratively.
 - Of those respondents who indicated having a Master's or Doctorate, only 50.5% attribute graduate school/seminary as a source of learning for the highest learned administrative competency.
 - The least learned administrative competency was only learned by 18.7% of respondents to graduate from graduate school/seminary.

6. **Leader Development is the most phronetic competency, is the single largest driver of ministry health, and needs the most attention.**
 - Leader Development rates in the top 3 in value and bottom 3 in proficiency.
 - Leader Development has the largest gap between value and proficiency among the expert panel and student ministry professionals at-large.
 - Nearly 60% of respondents say that, at best, they are only moderately proficient at Leader Development (56.38%), a top-three valued competency.

APPENDIX Y: COPYRIGHT PERMISSIONS



Briana Kimmel

[External] Permission to use SLII in dissertation

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We appreciate you respecting our intellectual property and wish you all the best with your dissertation.

Best regards,
Briana

BRIANA KIMMEL | IP and Contracts Specialist

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