LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

AN EVALUATION OF THE RESPONSES TO SELF-STUDIES FOR AETH CERTIFICATION OF HISPANIC BIBLE INSTITUTES

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Marta Noemi Luna

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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ABSTRACT

The current literature on accreditation of theological education institutions does not include studies focused on the self-studies phase of the accreditation processes (Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019; AETH, 2020b). Little information was found on the number of incomplete self-studies or incomplete certification or accreditation processes (AETH, 2020b). The purpose of this exploratory sequential study was to evaluate the AETH Certification program and the self-study responses by collecting data to determine the factors that prevent Hispanic Bible institutes from successfully fulfilling the requirements, exploring the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. The study implemented the CIPP Evaluation Model with both formative and summative approaches. The CIPP model collected both QUAL and QUAN data through the Context (C), Input (I), Process (P), and Product (P) evaluations to assess the AETH Certification program and determine factors leading to the incomplete self-study information (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Four questions guided the research and yielded data analyzed using triangulation assessing the alignment of the program objectives with the needs of the stakeholders, how the program met the requirements, how the plans were executed, and whether the goals were attained (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The results demonstrated that there is an essential need for mentoring, a necessity to increase knowledge and competency on organizational structure and operational condition, an inadequate understanding on accreditation and certification, and the need to develop organizational structure readiness.

Keywords: leadership, self-study, competency, theological education, certification, Bible institute, performance

Dedication

To glorify and honor God above all. To my husband, MSG (Retired) Sixto L. Luna, who exemplifies a Christian military leader. To my daughter, Ruth Noemi Rankin, the young leader. To my father, Rev. Ramón Luis Prieto-Camacho, a true servant leader. To my mother, Gregoria Diaz, a woman of noble character and the community chaplain. To my brothers, Rev. Luis S. Prieto, Rev. Ricardo Prieto, Rev. David Prieto, and their families; faithful leaders of the Church. And to the diligent leaders of the Hispanic Bible institutes and ministry formation programs in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico.

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Above all, I want to acknowledge my family, who diligently prayed for me. I cannot leave without mentioning my beloved faith family from Iglesia Defensores de la Fe Monte de los Olivos, in Candelaria Arenas, Puerto Rico. Reverends Gloria E. Diaz and José A. Sotomayor, your hospitality and love did not go unnoticed. My gratitude to the members of Iglesia La Gran Comisión, in Pembroke Park, Florida, and to the Iglesia Cristiana Renacimiento, in Orange Park, Florida. I am looking forward to using my knowledge and skills to advance theological education in our local communities and expand the Lord's kingdom to His glory.

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List of Abbreviations

Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC)

Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS)

Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana (AETH)

Context-Input-Process-Product Evaluation Model (CIPP)

Evangelical Teacher Training Association (ETTA)

Liberty University (LU)

Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Mixed-Methods (MM)

Qualitative Analysis (QUAL)

Quantitative Analysis (QUAN)

Red de Entidades Teológicas (ReDET)

The Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE)

The Fund for Theological Education, Inc. (FTE)

The Association of Theological Schools (ATS)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

The community-based theological education programs known as Hispanic Bible institutes provide the candidates to ministry and laity with the foundational theological education in the local community (FTE, 1988). The convenience of the Hispanic Bible institutes encompasses the localization within the vicinity, the low cost for classes, and the simplicity of the standards for admission (Conde-Frazier, 1998). The leaders at the forefront of the Hispanic Bible institutes have a critical role in managing the learning and teaching environment, the performance of the students, and the resources of the program (Leithwood, 2007). A gap existed in the study of Bible institutes leadership's efficacy, accountability, and competency in completing the first phase of the self-studies for the AETH certification process (FTE, 1998; Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019). The intention of the present study was to contribute to the field of study of accreditation of theological education institutions by evaluating the responses and exploring the contributing factors for the incomplete AETH certification self-studies that inhibit the progress of the process and to pass beyond that phase.

The AETH self-studies are evaluations that the institutions pursuing certification perform to review all aspects of the framework of the organization and help the leaders identify areas that need strengthening to reach the goals or that need special attention to fulfill the mission (AETH, 2018). Evaluation helps determine if the objectives of the program were accomplished and the magnitude of the attainment (Aziz et al., 2018). A quality evaluation will include every aspect of the school and the degree of influence on the student body (Aziz et al., 2018). Accordingly, The Association of Theological Schools, Standards of Accreditation states that the process of accreditation serves to self-review the strengths and weaknesses of the school and "supports the

school's efforts in planning, evaluation, and imagination" (ATS, 2020c). Accreditation ensures excellence and improvements for schools (ATS, 2020c). Moreover, evaluation is critical to assessing and improving the quality and effectiveness of any program (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Such quality assessments help monitor an educational program's managerial, administrative, and pedagogical aspects (Aziz et al., 2018).

The present research resulted from a concern for the understanding of what is an institutional assessment and the evaluative practices in Hispanic Bible institutes in both denominational and non-denominational circles. Furthermore, the role of the leaders in the Hispanic Bible institutes includes an interrelationship with the context, the faculty, staff, and the students while managing competencies, readiness, and resources (Yan & Ehrich, 2009). Chapter one gives background information on the crucial role of the Hispanic Bible institutes and the role of AETH in developing standards and basic guidelines for the certification of the institutes. The chapter includes the statement of the problem, guiding questions, delimitations, assumptions, the significance of the study and concludes with a summary of the design.

Background to the Problem

Studies have found that a percentage of Latinos aspiring to pursue theological education encounter barriers in the form of high costs, difficulty to meet denominational standards, and missed opportunities (Martinez, 2018; Gonzalez, 1990; Barna Group, 2004). In many cases, the students found difficulty transferring the theological education to praxis in the current context of each Latino student's local faith community/community of practice, resulting in discouragement and withdrawal from the program (Martinez, 2018). In response to the challenge to prepare Latino students in theology, the Hispanic branches of the Protestant denominations in the continental United States developed a model for educating students known as Bible institutes

(FTE, 1988). Studies showed that Bible institutes serve in like manner as a vocational school, or similar to a technical school, in preparing students with the basic tenets of theology and other essential skills, through a variety of methods, educating seasoned and prospective leaders to engage in service (Hernandez et al., 2016; Martinez, 2018; Ramirez, 2019). Although the role of the Hispanic Bible institutes is remarkable, the challenges faced by the leadership are diverse, including a lack of mentoring, socio-economic status, and satisfaction with the status quo (Luna, 2018; Ramirez, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2016). As a result, many Hispanic Bible institute leaders do not pursue theological education program certification (JVA, 2012; AETH, 2013). The above was confirmed by the literature review revealing the gap in the study of Hispanic Bible institutes, and evident in the research findings, demonstrating degrees of quality in programming that many *institutos* offer (AETH, 2020a; De La Torre, 2013; FTE, 1998; Hernandez et al., 2016).

According to Dr. Juan Martinez, the denominations had one purpose: "The goal was to prepare people to evangelize and serve churches, not necessarily to learn to 'think theologically'" (Martinez, 2018, p. 205). By providing low-cost education, cultural identification, and the simple process to satisfy requirements, the Bible institutes found success (Conde-Frazier, 1998). A study done by Hernandez et al. and published by the Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana (AETH) demonstrated that the main reasons Hispanic leaders pursued Christian education were to "Support personal ministerial growth, support the local church and community, and promote ministry and expand it globally" (Hernandez et al., 2016, p. 401). Moreover, the study on Hispanic theological education done across nine regions of the United States included a survey. The researchers demonstrated the need for establishing approaches and models that could help improve the training of religious leaders in theological schools (FTE, 1988). The FTE (1988) study and the Hernandez et al. (2016) research demonstrated the pressing

need for change and an intentional modification to the structures and frameworks that make up the institutions that train Hispanic religious leaders. The 1988 FTE study identified the relevant role of the *institutos* and provided the opportunity to empower and improve the ministry training of the leaders (FTE, 1988). During a meeting of Hispanic/Latino theologians in 1991, the outcomes of the study were reviewed resulting in the establishment of the Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana in 1992 (AETH, 2021; Hernandez et al., 2016).

Since then, AETH has served the Hispanic/Latino population in the United States and abroad, promoting and improving the quality of theological education for individuals, churches, and communities at large (AETH, 2021). The Association is a network of leaders, experts, teachers, researchers, educators, directors of theological institutions, pastors, authors, denominational leaders, lecturers, students, etc. One of the core services is the endorsement and certification of quality theological education programs (AETH, 2021). During an eighteen-month joint effort between AETH and The Association of Theological Schools and The Commission of Accrediting (ATS/COA), the organizations developed standards and guidelines of a certification process presented to the Board of Commissioners of ATS (AETH, 2018). In March of 2013, The Association of Theological Schools and The Commission of Accrediting (ATS/COA) recognized AETH's work as valuable "regarding general institutional and educational standards of quality theological education," enabling AETH to begin implementation of the Certification of Bible institutes (AETH, 2013).

The AETH Certification Handbook states that "AETH's Certification is distinct from the accreditation process used for graduate theological schools as conducted by the Commission on Accreditation of ATS" (AETH, 2018, pg. 4). The Certification status means that "A given program of a Bible institute complies with the minimum educational and institutional standards

to be equivalent to baccalaureate-level studies and, therefore, is capable of fulfilling, the stated goals of the Certification standards and process" (AETH, 2018, p. 3). Accordingly, the benefits stream down to the leadership and faculty in the Bible institutes, the student body, the local church, and the community served. The benefits derived from the AETH Certification at the institutional level include ensuring that the "Bible institutes function according to *standards of institutional and educational quality"* and improving "the institutions and their educational programs" (AETH, 2018, p. 4). The *institutos* benefit "when other agencies or institutions make judgments about the Bible institute based on its certified status" and ensures to the students of "the academic and professional integrity of the certificates they earn" (AETH, 2018, p. 5).

An essential component of the certification process is self-study and evaluation. In general, self-study is a report that gathers educational and organizational information from the entity (ATS, 2020b; AETH, 2018). The AETH Standards state that "A good self-study evaluates the school's strengths, weaknesses, and effectiveness in light of the Committee standards and the institution's purpose and goals" (AETH, 2018, p. 4). The standards cover two sets of criteria: (a) criteria to authenticate and determine baccalaureate equivalency and (b) criteria for curricular learning objectives (AETH, 2018). After the self-study is completed, a group of peers (commissioners) review every part of the assessment and issue a report following the guidelines of the AETH Standards (AETH, 2018). The report provides the school with an unbiased evaluation that covers all aspects of functioning and engages the constituencies helping discern the best course of action to fulfill the vision and mission of the school (AETH, 2018). The overall goal of the self-study is to present sufficient evidence indicating that the Bible institute has the required systems and procedures in place to provide a quality educational experience in a sustainable way (AETH, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

For years, the Hispanic/Latino branches of the Protestant circles, both denominational and non-denominational, in the continental United States and Puerto Rico, have endeavored to develop a model for ministry formation known as Hispanic Bible institutes or *institutos* (FTE, 1988). The *institutos* are thriving, growing, and proliferating while seeking ways to improve the services offered to the local constituency (AETH, 2020a; Ramirez, 2019). Since 1992, the Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana (AETH) has been interested in serving the Hispanic/Latino faith communities of the United States by improving and promoting quality theological education (AETH, 2021). AETH's focus on the certification of ministry formation programs and theological education derives from an understanding of the responsibility of the leaders of the *institutos* (AETH, 2020a).

Many Hispanic Bible institute leaders face a diversity of challenges, as revealed by an initial review of the AETH certification eligibility applications and self-studies responses (JVA, 2012; Ramirez, 2019). The issues included: a considerable percentage of the responses demonstrated (1) no indication of a proposed budget to operate, (2) a vague understanding of what is a governing board, (3) some do not have a strategic plan, (4) others have non-expert faculty, and (5) many have no library or media resources available to students (Ramirez, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2016; Conde-Frazier, 1998).

The study conducted in 2012 demonstrated that 51 percent of the *institutos* surveyed indicated that the financial situation was difficult. The survey conducted in 2019 revealed that 14 percent of *institutos* indicated that the budget did not cover the needs of the *institutos,* and another 46 percent confessed having financial hardship (JVA, 2012; Ramirez, 2019). Ninety-six percent of the respondents to the study done in 2012 suggested that the *institutos* depended

primarily on student tuition, 24 percent received grants, and 28 percent received gifts (JVA, 2012). In terms of governance, the 2012 study demonstrated that the directors of the *institutos* had multiple responsibilities: 40 percent of the time in administrative tasks, 21 percent of the time teaching, 8 percent of the time in development and fundraising, 11 percent on budgeting and finances, and 15 percent of the time in recruitment, marketing, pastoring, or another church ministry (JVA, 2012). Similarly, the study done in 2019 demonstrated the same trend of directors serving in multiple roles: 37 percent of the time in program management, 42 percent in teaching, 31 percent in fundraising, 20 percent in budgeting, and 34 percent in other activities (Ramirez, 2019). The results of both studies reiterated the earlier findings of the FTE study of 1988 conducted by Dr. Justo L. González in which the researcher wrote, "Thus, such directors, who sometimes are also part of the teaching faculty, are placed in the position of being professors, recruitment officers, financial aid advisers, fundraisers, and a host of other functions" (FTE, 1988, p. 102).

A group of experts in Hispanic/Latino theological education and culture conducted a study in 2016 on the status of theological education in the continental United States and Puerto Rico. The team included: Dr. Edwin I. Hernandez, founder of the Center for the Study of Latino Religion from the University of Notre Dame; Dr. Milagros Peña, a renowned sociologist from the State University of New York; Dr. Caroline Sotelo Viernes Turner, associate dean from the University of Florida, College of Liberal Arts and Science; and Ariana Monique Salazar, a research analyst from the Pew Research Center (Hernandez et al., 2016). The team concluded the study by stating that "There is still work that needs to be done, not just as regards the curriculum, but likely in other areas as well, organizational documents, leadership, teaching, hiring practices, and so forth" (Hernandez et al., 2016). The team added, "The

researchers recommend that institutes pursue accreditation that translates to colleges and seminaries so that students have more options available to them as a result of their education" (Hernandez et al., 2016, p. 412).

The benefits of the AETH certification to the *institutos* and ministry formation programs are trifold. First, the certification is an incentive to pursue the improvement of the educational standards acceptable to other agencies and organizations of theological education (AETH, 2020a). Second, the Certification will allow students who graduate from AETH certified *institutos* to pursue higher education and enroll in any ATS accredited school (AETH, 2020a). According to the AETH Handbook of Certification, standards provide guidance and support the faculty's professional and education positions and responsibilities (AETH, 2018). Moreover, the certification informs the functioning of the administration by exposing the institutional areas that need improvement and areas fulfilling the goals (AETH, 2018). Third, another benefit is the exposure to other organizations that share normative standards and patterns of good practice. Certification promotes financial accountability and efforts to comply with the standards (AETH, 2020a).

A mixed-methods study to evaluate the factors contributing to the incomplete self-studies inhibiting from continuing to the next phase in the AETH certification process is the topic of this study. Despite the growth of the Hispanic Bible institutes and the increased efforts to improve the quality of the Hispanic theological education, there was hardly any literature on Hispanic Bible institutes, and no literature on Hispanic Bible institutes' evaluations or investigations focused on the causes of the incompletion of the AETH certification self-studies (Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019; AETH, 2020a; AETH, 2020b). The present study was the first.

The existing literature review suggested that a lack of understanding of the realities and reasons for the problem might foreshadowing a situation requiring the exploration of solutions (FTE, 1998; Hernandez et al., 2016). Many Bible institute leaders' have limited preparation on what strategic planning is and the benefits of self-evaluation and accreditation that can provide the needed success in ministry (JVA, 2012). Many Hispanic Bible institutes' leaders began the process of certification only to detain the procedures at the point of completing the self-study (AETH, 2020b). To complicate matters, most leaders did not ask for assistance or provide a reason for interrupting the process (AETH, 2020b).

The reason for bringing together a mixed-methods approach with the CIPP evaluation model was to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the governance practices, competencies, and the factors causing the incompletion of the self-studies (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The combination of approaches benefited from a sample in the QUAN part that indicated the various aspects of the problem and how the variables interacted, and the sample in the QUAL part that helped analyze and interpret the results introducing the perspective of the participants in the study (Creswell, 2014; Roberts, 2010; Creswell & Plano, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddie, 2010). The CIPP evaluation model provided the framework for decision-making by collecting information, considering the advantages and disadvantages of any and all alternatives, and helped determine how the evaluations were (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The Context evaluation assessed the decisions related to planning, which included the needs and current conditions of the program under evaluation (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The Input evaluation focused on decisions related to the structure of the organization and how the needs of the group were met (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The Process evaluation focused on implementing the plan, including improvements and procedures (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The final stage was

the Product evaluation and encompassed the assessment of the entire program focusing on whether the expected results were achieved or not (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The AETH self-study encompasses similar categories: normative and contextual questions about goals, gathering qualitative and quantitative information, assessment of performance and processes, and decision-making (whether the goals were attained or not) (AETH, 2018).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this exploratory sequential study was to evaluate the AETH Certification program and the self-study responses by collecting data to determine the factors that prevent Hispanic Bible institutes from successfully fulfilling the requirements, exploring the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. At this stage in the research, the AETH certification self-study was generally defined as the Hispanic Bible institute's state of the organization in which the leadership examines the status of the strategic plan, budget, staff's professional readiness, and program offerings operating within the United States (AETH, 2018). The evaluation model steering the research was the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP).

Research Questions

After implementing the CIPP evaluation model in the study, the researcher produced the following questions for the investigation, endeavoring to define the context of the AETH Certification program and if the program's self-study phase was fulfilling the original objectives.

RQ1. Context evaluation: How are the constituents' needs of the *institutos* aligned with the goals and circumstances of the AETH certification program?

RQ2. Input evaluation: How do the *institutos* describe the resources, procedural designs, or strategies of the AETH certification program, and which alternatives can increase the completion of the self-studies?

RQ3. Process evaluation: How are the established AETH certification self-study processes being followed?

RQ4. Product evaluation: What is the impact generated by the completion and incompletion of the AETH certification self-study on the Hispanic Bible institutes and the leadership?

Rationale for the CIPP Evaluation Model and Questions

The rationale behind the set of questions presented herein was, first, that the leaders of the Hispanic/Latino Bible institutes are the primary decision-makers of the institution (Leithwood, 2007). The same translates to how the leadership understands the role the *instituto* plays in the surrounding community, to serve the needs of the population better, and prepare leaders that will be able to engage the challenges in the secular and faith communities served (Hernandez et al., 2016; Conde-Frazier, 1998; Ramirez, 2019; FTE, 1988). Second, prior studies have demonstrated that each *instituto* varied on the understanding and use of the organizational documents and how each comprehended and valued the implementation of the vision and mission (Hernandez et al., 2016; Conde-Frazier, 1998; Ramirez, 2019). Third, according to the studies of Hernandez et al., AETH, FTE, Conde-Frazier, and Rivera, the findings agreed that accountability in a program was necessary and a weakness for many Hispanic/Latino Bible institutes (Hernandez et al., 2016; AETH, 2020b; FTE, 1988, Conde-Frazier, 1998; Rivera, 1996).

The questions helped identify common factors, whether internal or external, influencing the incompletion of the AETH certification self-studies phase by the leadership in the Hispanic/Latino Bible institutes. The order of the four evaluations helped identify the efficiency of the process and the impact on the organizations. Finally, the four questions helped determine to what degree the self-study results impacted the AETH Certification program and the constituency served. The use of evaluation in a program assisted and contributed to determining the value, merit, worth, and significance of the object evaluated (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

According to Fitzpatrick et al., there are two basic program evaluation modes that are agreeably integrated into the CIPP evaluation model—formative because it is goal-directed and receives feedback for revisions and implementations, and summative because of the focus on accountability and performance (2004). The CIPP model framework developed by Daniel Stufflebeam facilitated the decision-making process as the information was collected, helped find alternatives by the revision of all advantages and disadvantages, and concluded how the decisions yielded from the evaluation were rendered (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

Assumptions and Delimitations

Research Assumptions

1. A common false assumption encountered was that all Bible institutes taught and operated the same way; therefore, every leader was well-equipped as the other peer. The study of the Hispanic theological education revealed that the approaches, the design of the programs, and the implementation of models were different from denomination to denomination and from institution to institution (FTE, 1988). Therefore, this research assumed that Hispanic theological education was not monolithic and was different across denominations and institutions.
2. Another assumption was that the Bible institutes did not need to be concerned with social, administrative, and strategic planning issues. The study of the Bible institutes revealed that all rated themselves essential to the religious and local communities, but a low percentage of the Bible institutes surveyed included courses in the programs to help students engage cultural and social or administrative challenges (Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019). Therefore, this research assumed that Bible institutes provided training that did not fully translate outside of the classroom to the institutional, cultural, and social arenas.
3. One assumption permeating the education circles is that accreditation is an exercise linked to federal student aid, institutional effectiveness, student recruitment and learning, and educational equality (Barber & McNair, 2017).
4. Lastly, there is the assumption that the process of accreditation means more work for the institution's staff and faculty and an excellent investment of time and cost in the preparation of documents and reports related to the accreditation and re-accreditation processes (Manimala et al., 2020).

Delimitations of the Research

1. This study was delimited to religious, educational institutions, specifically, Hispanic Bible institutes, accredited and non-accredited, denominational and non-denominational, in chosen areas of the United States and Puerto Rico. The benefit of the ample geographical scope of the study resided in the opportunity to provide a greater sampling area within the AETH affiliate institutes and the generalization of the findings.
2. The study was delimited to religious institutions; therefore, it did not include secular non-religious educational institutions. Since the study did not discriminate against Christian traditions, the researcher provided an unbiased analysis applicable to both denominational and non-denominational ministry formation groups.
3. This study was delimited to leaders of Hispanic Bible institutes over 19 years of age. Younger participants were not included in the sampling pool; therefore, non-eligible to participate.
4. This study was delimited to Hispanic Bible institutes established and operating for a minimum of five consecutive years. The five-year parameter gave the researcher a good overview of the functionality and performance outcomes of the organization, such as the fulfillment of goals, strategic plan, continued education of staff, etc.

Definition of Terms

1. *AETH certification*: "is an effort to assess the quality of Bible institutes, programs and services, measuring them against agreed-upon standards and thereby assuring that they meet those standards" (AETH, 2014).
2. *Bi-vocational*: refers to the individual leader that holds secular employment while serving the church as a pastor (FTE, 1988; Conde-Frazier, 1998). Regarding the Latino churches, only mainline denominational churches and some megachurches will pay a salary to the pastor. The majority of other Hispanic smaller denominational and non-denominational churches do not pay a compensation to the ministers.
3. *CIPP Evaluation Model*: the model uses a summative and formative assessment that encompasses the context, input, process, and product of a program (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, pg. 338).
4. *Context evaluation*: the evaluation assesses what are the needs, difficulties, resources, and prospects that facilitate the decision-making progression activity to establish objectives and priorities to guide operators' and constituents' assessments and make decisions on products, and priorities (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, pg. 339).
5. *Evaluation:* refers to "The assessment of something's value, especially in terms of its merit, worth, and significance" (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, pg. 341).
6. *Hispanic Bible institute(s) (or 'instituto(s)' in Spanish)*: the term refers to "A widely used form of theological education in the Hispanic community. They are the grassroots or community-based training program for church leaders" (Conde-Frazier, 1998).

7. *Input evaluation*: the evaluation involves considering whether the program objectives are commeasurable to the needs of the stakeholders and meet the objectives (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, pg. 345).
8. *Process evaluation*: the evaluation focuses on the execution of the program and if the course of action will require improvements (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, pg. 349).
9. *Product evaluation*: collects information to monitor the program's daily operations and identifies the issues needing the resolution to avoid problems to the operation of the program giving consideration to whether the objectives were met or not (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, pg. 349).
10. *Self-study:* "is a simple, systematic, and sustained approach that covers both the institutional and educational effectiveness and informs institutional planning" (ATS, 2020).
11. *Standards:* are guides that delineate requirements, characteristics, guidelines, and other specifications that can be used in a consistent manner to ensure that processes, services, materials, and other products are purposely fit (UMASS, 2020).
12. *Strategic Plan:* refers to "a process that helps a company decide what market opportunities to pursue and how to do so over the next three to five years. The strategic process should take into account: external forces, internal forces, and organizational culture" (BDC, 2020).
13. *Theological education*: refers to the components that integrate courses on the sacraments as essential to the work of the minister in the church and the community. According to Estep, Anthony, and Allison, "the finished product is a well-ordered and coherent presentation of the major doctrines of the Christian faith" (2008). Theological education includes subjects such as Jesus Christ, the church, the Holy Spirit, and salvation (Estep, Anthony & Allison, 2008).

Significance of the Study

The relevance of the study is found in the contribution to the research on certification of Hispanic Bible institutes (AETH, 2020a; 2020b). The investigation's focus on the AETH Certification program explicitly designed for Hispanic Bible institutes and Hispanic ministry formation programs enriched the study of accreditation of theological education programs and helped enhance the certification procedures for community-based programs (AETH, 2014; FTE, 1988; Conde-Frazier, 1998). The relevance of the AETH certification rests in assessing the quality and efficacy of theological education and the mutual opportunity for service found in the agreements formed between Hispanic Bible institutes, seminaries, and universities to serve more

constituency (AETH, 2020a). Furthermore, the study contributed a new understanding of the perception of Hispanic Bible institutes in the country and the impact of faculty and staff's professional readiness and effective and qualified Christian leadership. Moreover, the findings expanded the study presented by FTE in 1988 and the Ramirez report of the AETH survey in 2019 and contributed to the AETH Certification Committee with current data on self-studies in the Hispanic Bible institutes (FTE, 1988; Ramirez, 2019; AETH, 2020a; AETH 2020b).

Taking into account that ATS and AETH hold a significant number of affiliated Hispanic theological institutions among their members, made for a significant source for information that benefited and impulsed the progress of the study, in terms of the transparency of the reporting, self-evaluation practices, and willingness to share the findings of the reports (ATS, 2020a; AETH, 2020a). Regarding the AETH certified institutions, the study provided current data on the findings of initial and subsequent self-studies completed by the Hispanic Christian education institutions (AETH, 2020b; 2018; 2013). Self-studies offer a wealth of information on the socio-economic situation of the organization, the age groups served; moreover, commuting, and residential staff, full-time and part-time students, faculty expertise, governance, evaluation practices, etc. (ATS, 2020a; AETH, 2020b). The study showed the diversity of approaches, programs, and models that are currently at work in the Hispanic Bible institutes.

In a recent correspondence with the researcher of the present study, the Director of the Accreditation Department at The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) (T. Tanner, personal communication, February 2, 2021) commented that ATS lacked knowledge of any study done on the completion of the self-study phase of accreditation. Moreover, electronic communication with the Director of the Commission on Accreditation at the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) (R. C. Kroll, personal communication, February 9, 2021) yielded that the

topic of the present study was relevant to several agencies. The current research helped respond to the challenges found in leadership preparedness in administrative aptitude (De La Torre, 2013; FTE, 1998; Hernandez et al., 2016). Additionally, the study helped find solutions to the inconsistency found in the mechanisms used by the local denominational and non-denominational Hispanic Bible institutes as each contextualized the operations of the local religious education organizations (De La Torre, 2009; 2013; FTE, 1988; Hernandez et al. 2016). Moreover, the evaluation brought light to the practices of the AETH Certification program and the degree that the program met the needs of the constituency and fulfilled the program's objectives (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

Summary of the Design

The benefit of using a mixed-method was the possibility to yield data that combined the participant's perspective with a small sample and the capability to generalize the findings by using a larger sample (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, the mixed-methods allowed for addressing a broader range of problems and yielded a complete story (Creswell, 2014). The benefit of using the CIPP evaluation model was the support in making decisions during the collection of information, the review of the alternatives, whether advantageous or not, and assisted in the determination on how to execute the decisions (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The structure of the CIPP model implemented in the present study supported the researcher by addressing four different categories. The *context evaluation* (RQ1) yielded decisions related to the overall planning, needs, and circumstances of the AETH Certification program and the constituency served (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The *input evaluation* (RQ2) was focused on organizational structure and how the established arrangement and processes fulfilled the needs of the stakeholders (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The *process evaluation* (RQ3)

focused on how the plans were executed, and in the course of action, the decisions that involved improvements (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Finally, the *product evaluation* (RQ4) considered answering the question of whether the expected results were attained (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

The QUAL portion of the research fit the context and input evaluations and incorporated a revision of the AETH existing data, a session of interviews with the participants collecting data from open-ended questions, observations, and records (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The use of interviews and the document review of existing data helped identify any relationship and determined the factors leading to the incomplete self-study information (Creswell, 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The QUAN portion of the study agreed with the process and product evaluations and used the close-ended survey (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The surveys were analyzed to search for any tendencies of the collected responses (Creswell, 2014). In addition, the approach included linguistic and transcendental tactics that accommodated the sample participants to respond individualistically. At the same time, the methodology allowed the researcher to offer all participants free in-depth expression in the responses and expected a more enriching experience (Creswell, 2014). The survey and interview were available in both Spanish and English to secure the best and unadulterated responses and as an attempt to convey the message accurately. The questions covered the issues of governance, strategic planning, socio-economic status, effective leadership, and accountability (AETH, 2020a).

The chosen population for the QUAL portion of the study was composed of the 32 Hispanic Bible institutes members of AETH that met the criteria for the study, selected from a group of 34 that had initiated a self-study for certification since 2013 and that were part of 76 AETH institutional members (AETH, 2020b). Also, the population participants included the 8

AETH Certification Committee members who provided valuable information for the context and input evaluations of the study. The chosen population for the QUAN portion of the study was 101 selected Hispanic Bible institutes from a pool of 168 with a historical connection with AETH. The participants were representative of various United States regions, class statuses, age groups, male and female, denominational and non-denominational, certified, and non-certified (AETH, 2020b). The researcher used the CIPP model to test the data for the internal and external factors to the incomplete AETH certification self-studies.

The data was examined and processed by considering the existing data, all interviews' transcripts, then, analyzed the survey answers and found similarities and differences in the responses (Creswell, 2014). Some methods involved finding repeated themes and subthemes, communal experiences, any relationship, etc. (Creswell, 2014). The researcher utilized the QSR NVivo™ computer software to store, analyze the collected data, and facilitate the proper management and accuracy of the results in the QUAL portion of the study. The software was a crucial component in finding the themes and coding the QUAL material.

The information generated from the QUAL section was helpful in elaborating a survey instrument utilized in the QUAN section. The SPSS™ software platform was the statistical software for the QUAN portion of the study (Creswell, 2014). The SPSS™ was comprehensive and effortless for running descriptive quantitative analysis to find frequencies and means. The use of the CIPP and both QUAL and QUAN approaches provided the outcomes indicating the various aspects of the problem, how the variables interacted, analyzed, and interpreted the results introducing the perspective of the participants in the study (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Creswell, 2014; Roberts, 2010). The researcher took field notes throughout the process.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The ecology of theological education in the United States is diverse (González, 2015). The seminaries, Bible colleges, Bible institutes, universities, community-based programs, local church institutes all conform part of the ecology (FTE, 1988). Each one contributes to fulfilling the task of equipping leaders to serve the church and the surrounding community (FTE, 1988; Conde-Frazier, 1998; Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019). The purpose of the following literature review is to present to the reader a comprehensive and detailed appraisal of the past and current studies related to the topic of the researcher's investigation. The authors' works and researchers' studies listed in the following review provided significant information that educated and apprised the dissertation's research.

Overview

Theological education, denominational and nondenominational, in the United States has encountered tremendous challenges of different kinds in the last few decades (Martinez, 2018; Gonzalez, 1990; Barna Group, 2004). Challenges in the form of economic constraints, reduced enrollment numbers, changing demographics, and operational issues (Martinez, 2018; Gonzalez, 1990; Barna Group, 2004). A closer examination revealed that Hispanic Bible institutes continue to grow, proliferate, and are working hard to improve the quality of the theological education offered through the process of certification (AETH, 2020a; Ramirez, 2019). Nevertheless, the Hispanic Bible institutes also encounter challenges (JVA, 2012). An initial review of the responses of the certification process' self-studies phase indicated the following trends: a percentage of the responses yielded (1) no indication of a proposed budget to operate, (2) a vague understanding of what is a governing board, (3) some do not have a strategic plan, (4) others have non-expert faculty, and (5) many have no library or media resources available to

students (Ramirez, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2016; Conde-Frazier, 1998). There was no research on the Hispanic Bible institutes self-studies responses phase for AETH certification (AETH, 2020a; AETH, 2020b; Ramirez, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2016).

Theological Framework

The church was established on the premise of education: passing the faith and teaching what constituted the faith (Prov. 1:7; 22:6; 2 Tim. 3:16). The core tenet was the relationship with God and the expressions of the relationship in the daily life of the children of Israel (Erickson, 1998).

Brief History of Theological Education

Throughout the Bible, the reader finds references to education, assessment, and the benefits to the people of God (Prov. 1:7; 22:6; 2 Tim. 3:16). Moses was teaching the commandments of God to the children of Israel, encouraging them to observe each one and live according to the law of God, given for the betterment of man's life (Ex. 24:12-13; Deut. 4:1; 5:33; 6; 8:1). Moses makes emphasis on the central theological issue, which is to call attention to the covenant between God and Israel (Block & Block, 2012). A covenant of love that required reflection on the great salvation God worked on their behalf and one for the future, demonstrating the perennial aspect of the relationship with God: a bright future (Block & Block, 2012). In Deuteronomy 6, Moses used the opportunity to exhort the people of Israel and reminded all that God was the source of the covenants, Moses was the teacher of the commands, and the Israelites the learners (Block & Block, 2012). The goal was to help the Israelites remember the Word in a way that inspired them to act on the covenant (Block & Block, 2012).

In the book of Exodus, the reader is confronted with an evaluation of leadership performance, goals, resources, procedures, and impact on the stakeholders and the leader (Ex.

18:13-26) (Nelson, 1974). In the biblical record, Moses is visited by Jethro, the father-in-law, who identified irregularities in the leadership practices of Moses and an inefficient process to get the work accomplished (Ex. 18:13-26) (Nelson, 1974). Carol Meyers writes that Jethro identified an organizational crisis (Meyers, 2005). Accordingly, Jethro counseled Moses to appoint trained leaders for the administration of justice to the people (Ex. 18:13) (Nelson, 1974). Meyers states that "Moses already knows the 'statutes and instructions' (v.16)—terms that together represent the community regulations (20:17-23:33) to be represented at Sinai—and he will teach them to these officials (v.20)" (Meyers, 2005, p. 137).

Nehemiah and Ezra gathered the people and educated the Israelites during the reconstruction period in Jerusalem (Neh. 8:6-8). Kidner writes that the verses intimate "The candor of God's dealings with his people" and adds that "What is strikingly apparent is the royal reception given to the Word of God. This day was to prove a turning-point. From now on, the Jews would be predominantly 'the people of a book'" (Kidner, 2009, p. 115-116). The newfound knowledge of the citizens of Jerusalem produced unexpected joy and repentance, consolidating the relationship with God through the renewal of a covenant with Jehovah (Kidner, 2009). The wisdom literature is full of insight into the benefits of education for discernment (Prov. 1). The book of Proverbs states,

> For gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young—let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. (New International Version, 2011, Proverbs 1:2-7)

The pedagogical purpose of the counsel is intentional teaching of wisdom (Plantinga, 2015). Plantinga writes, “These words recur throughout Proverbs, underscoring that wisdom is not innate or intuitive; it must be learned and learned in community” (Plantinga, 2015, p. 18). A communion is recognized in Proverbs 3:32 as the intimate knowledge of God (Wilson, 2018).

In the New Testament, Jesus brought a purer meaning to the relationship with God, and emphasized the relevance and need to study, the importance to engage and practice the Word of God and considered education as an act of love to God and the fellow man (Luke. 10:25-28) (Chen, 2017). Erickson writes, “Since love of neighbor is closely linked by the law to love of God and involves actions like those of the good Samaritan, the Christian church must be concerned about hurt and need in the world” (1998, p. 1067). Furthermore,

> “Jesus’ teaching method avoided giving direct answers, particularly to those only interested in trapping him (Chen, 2017). But Jesus’ method is more serious because so much is at stake — inheriting eternal life. One cannot simply follow a guidebook… one has to internalize it.” (Garland, 2011)

Jesus considered education and the propagation of the message of truth as an avenue for the believer to be salt and light of the world (Mt. 5:13-16). The implications of the exhortation are to make the disciples aware that good followers remain active throughout the mission, in this case, the Great Commission (Osborne et al., 2010). The Early Church was established on the firm foundation of the Word and the message of the love of Jesus (Gal. 6:6). The education of the Jew and God-fearer Greeks was called the *catechumenate,* and the purpose was to educate the believers in matters of morality, doctrine, and liturgy (González, 2015).

In 2 Timothy 3:16, the apostle Paul exhorts to remain diligent in learning Scripture because the divine nature of the Word supersedes all other text (Erickson, 1998). The worth of the Scripture is found in the level of maturity added to the believer through the study experience (Erickson, 1998). Moreover, in 2 Timothy 3:17, the apostle continues the exhortation stressing

the real purpose of the training in righteousness (Collins, 2002). Collins states that "'Training' embraced everything that enters into the proper rearing of an individual so that he or she may assume the role of a mature person in society" (Collins, 2002, pg. 264-265).

The following centuries were filled with prolonged periods of preparation (González, 2015). The practices included the monastic lifestyle as an opportunity to learn (Ferguson,2005). A number of writers provided sources to educate during the Middle Ages and opened cathedral schools (González, 2015). The ordination of pastors increased, but at the same time, many other leaders did not have the same privilege (González, 2015; Ferguson, 2005). From cathedral schools to universities during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, theological education continued to expand and evolve into centers for philosophical development and less ministerial development (González, 2015). During the thirteenth century, the old world experienced a theological resurgence or illumination but not enough to help improve the theological preparation of the leaders (Logan, 2012).

Reaching the fifteenth century, the church experienced a disturbance known as the Protestant Reformation in favor of the education of the clergy and the laity (González, 2015). By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Protestant church had diversified into a variety of expressions impacting the theological education of the clergy and the laity seeking to provide a well-rounded preparation (Early, 2015; González, 2015). The modern times' theological education is the result of the Pietist objectives, critical thinking, and the scientific perspective (Early, 2015; González, 2015). Seminaries and universities continue to proliferate in Europe and North America, causing many universities to separate from the influence of the church, while seminaries remained financially and structurally dependent on the churches (González, 2015; Early, 2015).

Theological Education in the United States

The arrival of the pilgrims ushered the era of the Protestant church in the United States (Early, 2015). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Protestant landscape in North America will experience a series of revivals known as *awakenings* (Early, 2015). Theological schools were established to preserve the doctrines and teachings of the denominations. By 1848, divisions within the Protestant church increased due to disagreements of baptism, slavery, liturgy, and wars (Early, 2015). At the time, the major centers of theological education were clustered in the North of the United States (González, 2015).

The study of Scripture brought fervor and revivals sparked with unexpected results (Sweeney, 2005). A great missionary movement developed, and seminaries for white males and females were established, educating believers, and sending them to countries around the world to educate others (Sweeney, 2005). Many free blacks and slaves became pastors and other free blacks led church organizations that educated many of the fellow men and women and established evangelistic organizations (Early, 2015). Women organized boards to evangelize and educate other women for ministry (Sweeney, 2005). By the nineteen hundred, the numbers of leaders in the North American Protestant church had considerably increased and yielded significant results (Sweeney, 2005). Thousands of men and women graduated from seminaries and Bible colleges and joined the many denominations in different areas of service (Sweeney, 2005).

All the efforts and successes did not keep the institutions from the reproach of growing racism, segregation, and cultural insensitivity even in the missionary fields (Sweeney, 2005). The Azusa Street Revival of 1906 was the determining factor for the racial integration of blacks, Hispanics, and whites (Sweeney, 2005; Early, 2015). The same revival gave birth to a multitude

of new Pentecostal denominations, and today, there are universities, seminaries, and Bible colleges representative of most denominations and independent churches, from strict holiness to liberal expressions (Early, 2015).

Hispanic Theological Education

The many Hispanic/Latino communities that constitute the greater Spanish-speaking segment of the population are unique yet the same (Ferguson, 2005; Sweeney, 2005; Gonzalez, 2015). A theology that is rich and engages in practice and collaboration (Conde-Frazier, 1998). The history of Hispanic theological education begins outside of the United States and finds the starting point in Latin America (Gonzalez, 2015). Culture has always played a principal role in the Hispanic/Latino church, and at the center of religious beliefs is the understanding of the statutes and law (Martinez, 2018). The expressions of the law are manifested as legalism and liberalism within the church's theological framework and service (Conde-Frazier, 1998). Through the generations, church leaders of both expressions worked unceasingly to connect the church liturgy and service with the current context attempting to help the faithful and the community understand the sincerity of the mission of the church (Conde-Frazier, 1998).

In the Hispanic/Latino church, the integral interpretation or reception of the message is also found in the liturgical and worshipping experiences (Martinez, 2018; Conde-Frazier, 1998; Gonzalez, 2015). Every generation of Latino Protestants had a theologian who reminded the saints of the statutes of God and the invaluable list of benefits received from the Lord (Ferguson, 2005; Martinez, 2018; Gonzalez, 2015). The theologians help the believers interpret the tenets of the Bible to the current context to help practice what is learned from the Bible and make sense of the sociopolitical environment (Martinez, 2018). The Hispanic church is blessed with educators and theologians like Orlando Costas, Fernando Cascante, Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, Justo L.

González, Aquiles Martinez, Hugo Magallanes, Maria E. Cornou, Samuel Solivan, Harold Recinos, Eldin Villafañe, and a myriad of other names than can be listed (AETH, 2021).

Leaders passed the theological fundamentals to the following generations, and today many more are formed and others in the process of formation (Rodriguez & Martell-Otero, 1997). Each leader understands the challenges that every generation encounter in the form of geographical location (whether in the diaspora or the native land), cultural expression, and socioeconomic and political tensions that inflict pressure upon the religious faith (Conde-Frazier, 1998). Faith is connected to identity for Hispanic/Latino communities outside and inside the United States (Espin & Diaz, 1999). Virgilio Elizondo, writing about the role of religion in the Hispanic/Latino communities represented in the United States, declared that "The popular expressions of the faith…are the ultimate foundation of the people's innermost being and the common expression of the collective soul of the people" (Espin & Diaz, 1999). For the Latinos in the diaspora, staying true to the Latino identity and faith means engage in a balancing act managing the external influences of the North American culture, values, and lifestyle (Martinez, 2017).

Writing about the struggles faced in the diaspora, Orlando Costas offers insight into the educational process by maintaining alive the history and the culture through remembering (1982). In other words, the Bible must be read through Hispanic eyes to *make* theology which will have repercussions in the personal lifestyles and the communities of faith (Costas, 1982). The Hispanic/Latino churches are communities of practice (Conde-Frazier, 1998, p. 16). Conde-Frazier stated that Costas' philosophy "Entails developing a pedagogy that would embrace a making of theology that engages both past and present so that the community can look at the potential of its future" (1998, p. 16). For the benefit of the non-Hispanic/Latino reader is

necessary to clarify that, among Hispanic/Latinos, the interpretation of Scripture and the application of the tenets will be contingent on religious tradition or denomination, culture, and ethnicity (Rodriguez & Martell-Otero, 1997; Espin & Diaz, 1999; Martinez, 2017; Costas, 1982).

In the United States, the Mexican American flavor of theology is uniquely different from that of the Cuban American or the Puerto Rican (FTE, 1988; Martinez, 2017). The distinctiveness was better explained by Samuel Solivan:

> We are by and large of urban character, located in the major cities of the country; of low income; predominantly Roman Catholic in affiliation; young; high school graduates; theologically conservative; and politically liberal or independent. We are also people of color… We are a *mestizo* people. (1996, p. 134)

Reaffirming the statement, Justo González agrees writing, "Thus, the sources that are used for the construction of a Latino theology will vary in accordance with the diversity of our locations and their relation to the center or dominant forces" (1997, p. 80).

Levels of Theological Education

Various models of theological education are available today. Among them are the seminary, the Bible college, and the community-based models (González, 2015; FTE, 1988). The following discussion provides insight into each, the effectiveness, and the challenges faced with the models. All fulfill the purpose of expanding theological education in the United States (González, 2015; FTE, 1988).

Seminary

In reality, the seminary is a modern invention (González, 2015; Early, 2015). The exclusive purpose of the seminary was to gain a greater understanding of matters of faith and to combat heresies (González, 2015; Early, 2015). For centuries, people expected the clergy to have attained a certain level of education, a trend observable in the history of the church, in which theologians were highly educated (Early, 2015). Seminaries were study centers where the

students found community during the clerical formation and, through the years, became the study centers of the denominations (Early, 2015; González, 2015). In modern-day seminaries, the focus is centered on specialization and the proliferation of knowledge, but there is an underside (González, 2015). Another aspect of the seminary is the high cost of education; the process has a series of intricacies that make for a complex process of admission to the seminary requiring an undergraduate degree (Hernandez et al., 2016; JVA, 2012; FTE, 1988). As a result, the percentage of minority students admitted to the program is lower than that of white students (FTE, 1988; Hernandez et al., 2016). In terms of accreditation, most seminaries are accredited by the U.S. Department of Education (ATS, 2020a; Hernandez et al., 2016). In terms of the Hispanic population, although seminaries have moved towards inclusivity initiatives, the reality is that only a minimal number of Hispanics can access seminaries (ATS, 2020a).

Bible College

The Bible college focuses on an undergraduate education with an emphasis on the Bible as the main subject (Witmer, 1962b). In essence, all the coursework is viewed through the lens of a biblical perspective (Witmer, 1962b; ABHE, 2015). The Bible colleges are accredited in many cases, but not all (Cook, 1930; ABHE, 2015). The majority of the Bible colleges receive accreditation from the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE, 2015). The intended purpose is to provide the student with a well-rounded education that functions in the real world (Cook, 1930; ABHE, 2015). The advantages of the Bible college are that the institution can serve as a catapult to the university or seminary while providing the biblical and secular education foundation necessary (Cook, 1930; ABHE, 2015; FTE, 1988). Bible colleges are more economical than universities or seminaries and are a perfect option for many students (FTE, 1988; Hernandez et al., 2016; Conde-Frazier, 1998).

Another particularity of the Bible colleges is that the admission process is uncomplicated, requiring only a high school diploma or the equivalent (FTE, 1988; Hernandez et al., 2016; Conde-Frazier, 1998). The majority of Bible colleges are connected to a denomination, but there are independent Bible colleges that serve an expansive spectrum of students from different traditions (FTE, 1988; Hernandez et al., 2016). In essence, Bible colleges focus on pragmatic education (ATS, 2020c). Although Bible colleges provide a more viable solution to access to theological education for Hispanics, there is still an issue with access and affordability that hinders the population from engaging (ABHE, 2015; ATS, 2020a). According to Hernandez's study done in 1995, the higher percentage of Hispanic desertion rates is due to financial hardship or affordability of the programs (1995).

Bible Institute

Experts identify the date of the birth of the Bible institute movement, from 1882 until 1915. In the course of a changing culture, Dwight Lyman Moody is acknowledged as spearheading the movement (Sweeney, 2005). Moody had seen first-hand the work of Dr. H. Grattan Guinness at the East London Institute for Home and Foreign Mission circa 1872 (Sweeney, 2005). The concept of the institute inspired Moody to organize a school to replicate the work of Guinness in the United States (Cook, 1930). Around the time, A. B. Simpson established a program that later will be known as The Missionary Training College for Home and Foreign Missionaries and Evangelists (Cook, 1930). The program was intended to prepare students for evangelistic fieldwork and not for secular careers (Talbot, 1956).

According to Moody, Simpson, and other members of the movement, the times required urgency in the agency of training ministers (Talbot, 1956; Reed, 1947). Moody's program was established in Chicago around 1886 (Sweeney, 2005). The principal representatives of the

movement were thinking of lay church members without gender, age, or race restrictions (Reed, 1947; Talbot, 1956; Cook, 1930). The institutes were not imagined as substitutes for the seminary (Reed, 1947; Talbot, 1956; Cook, 1930). The unique feature of the institutes was the intentional focus on biblical knowledge and in-service practice (Reed, 1947). Bible institute historian, Lenice Reed, stated that the institutes bridged the divide that the seminaries did not connect in the missionary fields (1947).

The educational alternative of the institutes was financially accessible to the majority of the church communities allowing them to send more students for ministry readiness (Brereton, 1990). Scholars identified several unique traits to the Bible institutes: theologically integral, a Bible-centered curriculum, attention to the practical in-service component of the education, preference for missions, emphasis on training both genders for pastoral and missionary work (Daniel, 1980). Later, with the decision to standardize the curriculum, the institutes agreed to uniformity and established regulating bodies called the Evangelical Teacher Training Association (ETTA) and the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) (Eavey, 1964). The AABC began to construct a framework for evaluations and standards for accreditation. and while there are more accrediting bodies, there are fewer Bible institutes due to the changes in the economy in the country and the rise of devious programs known as *degree mills* (Eavey, 1964; Levicoff, 1993).

The communal aspect of the Bible institute provides a common ground for dialogue in which pastors, leaders, and lay members discuss issues that affect each church family and work together to find solutions (Getz, 1969; Conde-Frazier, 1998). The admission requirement for a Bible institute education is simply a high school diploma or the equivalent (Conde-Frazier, 1998; JVA, 2012; Ramirez, 2019). The lay member of the church, the leader, and the pastor can

equally apply and find an education that will prepare each one for service opportunities in the church community (FTE, 1988; Conde-Frazier, 1998; JVA, 2012; Ramirez, 2019). The appeal of the program is that provided an opportunity to people who otherwise never had the prospect to attend a seminary (FTE, 1988; Conde-Frazier, 1998).

The Hispanic Bible Institutes

Even though more institutions of theological education in the United States have moved towards a more intentional development of programs that serve the Hispanic demography, the reality of the issue is that the worldviews are different (Conde-Frazier, 1998; Hernandez et al., 2016). Various models of theological education are available today. Among them are the seminary, the Bible college, and the community-based models (González, 2015; FTE, 1988). Elizabeth Conde-Frazier identifies the unique form of learning as *eclectic and conjunctive* due to the combination of resources and frameworks that in a regular format are not usually found (1998).

Studies demonstrate that the Hispanic Bible institute remains today the most accessible and most used program for the theological education of Hispanics in the United States and the territories (JVA, 2012; Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019). Illiteracy and low levels of education are still a factor disqualifying Hispanics applying to seminary or Bible college (Pew, 2020; Hernandez et al., 2016; Conde-Frazier, 1998; PNPI, 2020). The benefits of the institute include a Hispanic-focused curriculum that addresses the contextual needs of the students, with books written by Hispanic theologians and experts, and in the native language of the student (AETH, 2020a; Ramirez, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2016; JVA, 2012; Conde-Frazier, 1998; FTE, 1988). Denominations have developed a systematic network of institutes to serve the constituency and train the lay members and leaders with the organization's doctrinal and

theological perspective (Conde-Frazier, 1998). In the majority of the cases, the coursework lasts the span of three to four years of continuous study, and the teachings are in the native language of the student body (FTE, 1988; Hernandez et al., 2016). For emphasis, some of the denominations that use the institutes are the Conservative Baptist, Assemblies of God, Church of the Nazarene, and the Southern Baptist (FTE, 1988; Conde-Frazier, 1998; JVA, 2012; AETH, 2013; Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019).

The independent institutes are free to embrace, advocate, and endorse any theological teaching, philosophy, or biblical view, for which Conde-Frazier observed that "Many are fundamentalist or dispensational" (1998). Many local congregations have opted for developing an institute in the church to serve the purpose of training the members, apprenticing, educating the church in evangelism, and fulfilling the local mission (Conde-Frazier, 1998). Typically, the governing body of the church will also administer the institute (AETH, 2013). The birth of the institute is, at times, the response to a local need (AETH, 2013).

Challenges the Hispanic Bible Institutes Encounter

The dynamics in the Hispanic/Latino communities of faith are unique because pastors usually do not have theological education training preceding the pastoral experience (FTE, 1988; Conde-Frazier, 1998; Hernandez et al., 2016). The pastor is bi-vocational or tri-vocational; therefore, a number of Hispanic pastors cannot aspire to be seminary trained because the schedules do not accommodate the busy agendas nor can afford the high cost of education (Conde-Frazier, 1998, Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019). The Bible institute education is affordable and accessible; classes are taught in the language of the Hispanics, in the language of the surrounding community, in the language needed to supply the need of the church (Padilla et al., 2005). Due to the small size of the Bible institutes, whether a denominational, independent,

or local congregation institute, the administrative body and faculty are not usually equipped in matters of leadership, managerial, financial, strategic planning, and other components that help guide the journey of the institution (Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019; AETH, 2014). The main focus of the *instituto* is to train the community of students; therefore, accountability is not a priority for the school because the majority of the faculty and staff are volunteering or receive a minimal stipend (Conde-Frazier, 1998: FTE, 1988; JVA, 2012). The number of staff and faculty are small and serve dual positions to keep the institute functioning (Conde-Frazier, 1998: FTE, 1988; JVA, 2012; AETH 2020b).

The AETH and JVA Consulting surveys demonstrated that a considerable number of *institutos* lack a library or catalog of authors and references where the students can find a variety of resources to inform the educational assignments (JVA, 2012; AETH, 2020b). Additionally, the studies found that there is a lack of technology available to faculty and students to provide an enriched learning experience, and with few exceptions, the *institutos* do not have a website or other media applications available (JVA, 2012; Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019; AETH, 2020b). Most of the books used in the *institutos* belong to the faculty and are usually material printed years ago (Conde-Frazier, 1998). Furthermore, until recently, *institutos* did not have the availability of books written by Latino theologians in the diaspora (AETH, 2013). An initiative of AETH made possible the availability of books (AETH, 2013). The lack of funding to run the *institutos* inhibits the acquisition of a suitable library for many (Ramirez, 2019; JVA, 2012).

Recent reports of the AETH Certification process yielded that only 21% of all the respondents had completed the certification process and followed up with evaluations for quality and performance (Ramirez, 2019: AETH 2020b). Furthermore, the reports revealed that only 29% of the total number completes the self-study and continues to the next phase, and 15%

leaves the self-study incomplete or stops the process after submission (AETH, 2020b). The report does not provide sufficient insight into the factors or reasons for the incomplete self-studies (AETH, 2020b). The lack of expert faculty is an issue that has plagued the Protestant Hispanic churches from the beginning of Latin American Protestant church history (Conde-Frazier, 1998: FTE, 1988; Martinez, 2018; JVA, 2012; AETH 2020b, 2014). The ATS has a record of Hispanic faculty members in 219 ATS accredited institutions for the years 2019 to 2020, which is 4% out of 3,254 faculty members of various races and ethnicities (2020a). The Hispanic female representation is 1%, and the male representation is 3%. A total of 963 or 6% Hispanic students have enrolled in ATS accredited schools from a group of 15,177 students: 1% Hispanic females and 4% males (2020a). The numbers demonstrate that there is a substantial challenge for Hispanics/Latinos (ATS, 2020a). The review of the numbers provides an overview of the size of the issue at hand for Hispanic theological education (ATS, 2020a).

The Hispanic/Latino community in the United States accounts for 18.4 percent or 60,481,746 of the total population (U.S. Census, 2019). When Protestantism reached the Hispanic/Latino population in the United States and the territories, the need for *ministros* (ministers) became a noteworthy concern (Martinez, 2017; Maldonado, 1999). The early nineteenth hundred century saw Hispanic/Latino churches affiliated to a denomination that had to prepare the prospect minister according to the requirements of the sponsoring organization (Martinez, 2018). Rapidly, tensions increased around the requirements for ordination; only one Latino pastor was ordained to the ministry in the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) (Martinez, 2018). The American Baptists established the Seminario Bautista Hispano Americano, in the city of Los Angeles around 1922 (Martinez, 2018).

Until 1964, the seminary served the Hispanic churches by equipping the laity for ministry but had to close due to financial hardship (Martinez, 2018). Martinez states that "Throughout the twentieth-century denominations that expected or required seminary education for their ordained pastors found that very few Latinos could meet all the qualifications" (Martinez, 2018, p. 204). Moreover, Martinez writes that the few that were capable to meet the admission requirements study away from the local communities (2018). At the heart of the issue was the realization that the denominational seminaries were preparing the ministers away from the community that later would serve and deal with realities foreign to that of the Latinos (Martinez, 2018; Conde-Frazier, 1998; FTE, 1988). Many Hispanic clergies are exercising the pastoral duties in the local churches without ordination because most cannot meet the requirements (Conde-Frazier, 1998). Without recognition, the church and the leading un-ordained pastor become a lower rank class within the denomination (Conde-Frazier, 1998).

Juan Martinez states that there has only been one seminary president of Hispanic origin, two Hispanic presidents of Christian universities, and a minimal number of Latino deans with short tenure (2018). The majority of the Hispanic/Latino ministers and congregations find themselves at the margins of society. The Hispanic church suffers at the same time from laity and clergy with low income, undocumented, and unemployed (Padilla et al., 2005). Many of the membership and prospect ministers do not speak English or have ever completed a baccalaureate degree nor have the financial means to cover the costs for admission in seminary (Conde-Frazier, 1998; FTE, 1988; Ramirez, 2019). For such reason, the Hispanic Bible institute plays an important role in the theological education of the Hispanic/Latino community (Padilla et al., 2005; AETH 2021; Ramirez, 2019). The benefit of the Bible institute is that the school is free from rigidly structured programs with the ability to accommodate the curriculum and overall

scope to the pressing needs of the community served (Hernandez & Davis, 2003). The flexibility includes the openness to accept students from any denomination (Hernandez & Davis, 2003).

In summary, the history of theological education validates the relevant position held in the church and the community (González, 2015). The review of the biblical texts demonstrates that the study of the Word is efficient to cause growth and maturity in the life of the believer (Prov. 1; 2 Tim. 3). The historical progression of educating the believers underwent changes, and centers for theological education developed (Early, 2015; González, 2015). Today, the church has seminaries, Bible colleges, and Bible institutes caring for the education of the laity and seasoned leaders (FTE, 1988; ATS, 2020a). To offer a solution to the issue within the Hispanic/Latino community, the churches developed the *institutos* and community-based centers in response to the need for prepared leaders (Conde-Frazier, 1998: FTE, 1988; JVA, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

As a teaching community, the Hispanic/Latino church is serving a population that is in many forms multicultural and bilingual, composed of many nationalities and variations of the Spanish language (Hernandez et al., 2016; Martinez, 2018). In the diaspora, the diverse nationalities cluster together in worship houses and educational centers for nurture and support, both documented and undocumented immigrants, and second and third generations (Rodriguez-Diaz & Cortés-Fuentes, 1994; Martinez, 2018). Challenges exist between cultures about the meaning of being bilingual and multicultural in the diaspora (Rodriguez-Diaz & Cortés-Fuentes, 1994; Martinez, 2017). To understand the situation facing the Hispanic Bible institutes and the issue of the self-studies, the endeavor calls for a brief review of the theories of education, the Christian worldview, and evaluation theories informing the present study.

Theories of Education

The starting point of the theoretical framework is the premise that the main concern of the discipline of education is the student and the process of education (Carr, 2003). Many subjects have enriched the field of education and helped build theories that help explain the process of educating a human being (Carr, 2003). Educational philosophies help inform and understand reality, truth, value, uprightness, and beauty (Anthony & Benson, 2011). Five major educational philosophies derive from centuries of inquiry and consideration: essentialism, perennialism, progressivism, existentialism, and postmodernism (Pazmiño, 1998).

As an educational system, essentialism combines idealism and rationalism, focusing on the transmission of knowledge, discipline, memorization, and presentation (Anthony & Benson, 2011; Knight, 2006; Pazmiño, 1998). Knight writes that the ecclesiastical leader following the theory think that "These are the tried-and-true methods that built the church, so it stands to reason that because they worked so well for nearly two thousand years, this isn't the time to make radical changes" (Anthony & Benson, 2011). In summary, essentialism looks at the past with the intention of passing the heritage to future generations (Anthony & Benson, 2011; Knight, 2006; Pazmiño, 1998).

Perennialism is also known as neo-scholasticism, traditionalism, and neo-Thomism (Carr, 2003). As a philosophy, perennialism supports the idea of "a return to absolutes and a focus on the time-honored ideas of human culture—those ideas that have proven their validity and usefulness by having withstood the test of time" (Knight, 2006, p. 115). As an educational system, perennialism focuses on critical thinking and a course of study of liberal arts, including foreign languages, rhetoric, mathematics, and classical literature (Carr, 2003). From the point of view of Christian education, perennialism considers the authority and authoritarian figures as

gifts from God (Pietsch, 2018). Discipleship is the result of ministry; therefore, the effort is focused on the wholesome preparation of the student (Anthony & Benson, 2011). The final intent of perennialism is to develop law-abiding and productive citizens; contributors to society (Anthony & Benson, 2011; Knight, 2006; Pazmiño, 1998).

The father of existentialism is Soren Kierkegaard and focuses on the relativity of truth. In other words, truth, reality, beauty, and value are dependent on context and the individual's experience (Carr, 2003; Anthony & Benson, 2011; Pazmiño, 1998). The individualistic movement was born out of existentialism; then, the same relativity that gave existence to the philosophy has become the downfall, because in terms of finding agreement, the endeavor is impossible, and philosophers will contradict each other (Anthony & Benson, 2011; Pazmiño, 1998). The discourse is against every traditional form of education; freedom of choice is a core tenet and observed in allowing life to be the curriculum (Pazmiño, 1998). Observed in the ecclesiastical setting, the minister will be overlooking the absolutes of Christianity allowing every believer to choose how the ministry will happen; organization, mission, vision, and strategic planning are not essential for function (Anthony & Benson, 2011; Pazmiño, 1998).

Postmodernism rejects absolutes and considers the multiple ways to perceive and understand the world and reality (Anthony & Benson, 2011). The collection of various perspectives will hold pieces of truth because there are many avenues to knowledge for which the postmodernists advocate a multicultural worldview and to listen to other's opinions on a matter (Anthony & Benson, 2011). The postmodern educational system states that "Education should meet the social need and broaden a student's worldview" (Anthony & Benson, 2011). Another focus is the efforts directed to social justice causes, and diversity is a topic of debate

(Anthony & Benson, 2011). The goal of postmodernism is to expand the individual's worldview while instilling the urgency of reconstructing the global status of cultural politics (Carr, 2003). Progressivism is commonly known as experimentalism, and according to the theory, knowledge is gained through experimentation and careful reflection (Carr, 2003). The core tenet is finding the nature of knowledge; the aim is to use the knowledge in functional ways to benefit humanity: problem-solving following a series of stages: problem, diagnosis, brainstorming, analysis, and implementation (Carr, 2003). In the ministerial setting, the leaders will organize a governing body to lead the group and find what works best for the organization (Anthony & Benson, 2011). John Dewey is considered the father of progressivism: the concern is meeting the student's needs through activity-centered methods and creating an environment of collaborative work (Carr, 2003; Towns & Forrest, 2016). The theory combines pragmatism and some ideas from Darwin of self-discovery and experimentation that shaped a methodology fit for social reform (Carr, 2003).

Dewey's theory and methodology are valuable to the Christian educator because of the biblical support found in the Gospels and Christ's teaching method (Matthew 19:14). According to Towns and Forrest, writing about Jesus' teaching style, the authors state that "His instruction always began with the schema of His disciples and built upon the learner's prior experience. Jesus frequently engaged His learners to the teaching/learning process including cooperative learning techniques" (2016, p. 449).

Christian Education and Worldview

The Christian worldview on man provides a component for developing and constructing a model for education and thought (Pietsch, 2018). Christian education benefits from the research and practices from other fields and is capable of preparing an integrated curriculum for the believers attending education centers and the local church communities (Knight, 2006; Pazmiño,

1988). For such reasons, Pazmiño considers that the best option is to combine theories and build upon the strength of each comprehensive approach to Christian education (1988). George K. Knight states that education and learning are lifelong processes but are distinct in that "Education embodies the idea of deliberate control by the learner or someone else toward a desired goal" (2006, p. 10). On the other hand, learning is distinct because the process is not limited to a place or someone guiding the process (Knight, 2006; Pazmiño, 1998). Another common term used to refer to a form of education is training. Training, according to Knight, refers to understanding without reflective thought or response (2006). Knight states that schooling encompasses all three processes of life experiences: learning, education, and training (2006).

Additionally, philosophy contributes to education in guiding the educational process and acknowledges the influence of the context in Christian education (Pietsch, 2018). The Christian worldview finds some relatable items, and through the ages, the diverse manifestations of Christianism have adopted ideas of the secular philosophies and, on occasions, aligned to some of the theories (Knight, 2006; Pazmiño, 1998). Some Christian leaders have lifted voices against the practice of integrating traits of the theories into theological education (Knight, 2006).

The Judeo-Christian worldview considers that God is at the center of life and desires a close relationship with the created beings (Anthony & Benson, 2011). Man was created to accomplish the plan of the Creator. Judeo-Christianity believes that God is a loving father and teacher, giving great importance to the relationships in the accomplishment of ministry and service (Anthony & Benson, 2011; Knight, 2006). Education was done by community-based institutions such as the local synagogue or the house churches, and the efficacy of the method proved to benefit the entire community, perpetuated through generations (Anthony & Benson, 2011). For Christian education to be effective, educators must build an integrative curriculum.

Pazmiño's interactive biblical model incorporates the developmental concepts with biblical anthropology (1988). Pazmiño reiterates that "Rather, this model serves to identify the various dimensions of persons suggested by biblical sources which must be considered in ministering to and teaching persons" (1998, p.199). The model is as follows: God's sovereignty and grace is the protection coverage within which all other aspects of heredity, maturation, learning, experience, experience-producing tendencies, and the environment operate (Pazmiño, 1998). Learning is also, directly and indirectly, related to the cultural heritage of the individual (Pazmiño, 1998).

Environment refers to the entire context in which a person lives, moves, interacts, and develops (Pietsch, 2018; Pazmiño, 1998). The environment is constituted by various dimensions: religious, aesthetic, cultural, educational, physical, psychological, social, political, economic, familial, and communal (Pazmiño, 1998). Since the environment is experiential and the most direct form in human existence, a person's previous learning influences experience-producing aspects (Pietsch, 2018). Pazmiño states that diversity affirmation in the life of the individual through the home, church, community, and school experiences helps a person initiate engagement and enhances the ability and impact on learning and maturation (Pazmiño, 1998).

The model proposed by Pazmiño is derived from the model proposed by Hollis Caswell (Pazmiño, 1998). Caswell's proposal focuses on the student's needs, social functions, and organized knowledge. Each aspect could be the central foci of education while the other two complement (Pazmiño, 1998). In summary the theories apply as follows: perennialism and essentialism are content-centered, existentialism is person-centered, and progressivism is society-centered (Pazmiño, 1998). If the educator is seeking the wholesome application of the model, then the integration of the model pieces must be re-arranged. Pazmiño proposes a God-centered approach in which God is the authoritative figure, and the other three components are

complementary parts (Pazmiño, 1998). The model works because God is at the center as the absolute truth from which all other components receive value, from which knowledge is derived, being filtered through Scripture (Pazmiño, 1998). The integrative model is apt to apply to the student's needs, the intricacies of the environment, and the ever-changing shape of society and culture (Pazmiño, 1998). A model that values justice and truth as central to the foci and measure of efficacy (Pazmiño, 1998).

Theories of Evaluation for improvement, performance, and accountability

The ways people learn are directly connected to how evaluations are made (Pietsch, 2018). To evaluate, or as Pazmiño coined the word, *e-value-ate,* the individual identifies, considers, and assigns worth to the value (Pazmiño, 1998). Pazmiño adds that "The effectiveness of evaluation is largely dependent upon the prior careful articulation of purposes and goals that can be considered and measured after regular periods of time" (1998, p. 105). In the process, the evaluator brings together objective and subjective criteria that will be utilized to judge the results (Pazmiño, 1998; Carr, 2003).

Results can be expected or unexpected, for which the evaluator must demonstrate openness to judge (Pazmiño, 1998). The selection for an evaluating approach to educational programs can be overwhelming because of the number of evaluation methods and theories available (Zhang et al., 2011; Pietsch, 2018). The approaches are divided into five different types: pseudo evaluations, quasi-evaluation studies, improvement-and-accountability-oriented evaluation, advocacy and social agenda, and eclectic evaluation (Zhang et al., 2011). The approach selected to work in the present study was the improvement/accountability approach for the reason that "is oriented toward determining the merit and worth of the project or entity being evaluated and encompasses three approaches: decision-and-accountability-oriented studies,

consumer-oriented studies, and accreditation and certification" (Zhang et al., 2011). The accreditation and certification area of the approach is the primary interest of the present research.

Evaluation of an education program is an occasion and prospect for growth and overall benefit to the prospect organization (AETH, 2020a; Martz, 2013; Lusthaus, 1997). The strategic plan of an institution recalls for an evaluation to measure the strengths and weaknesses (Ford & Evans, 2002). The process assumes that a revision of the values and the mission has been completed, and the fundamental question answered is: how is the institution doing? (Malphurs, 1999). The evaluation helps ensure alignment, accomplishment, encouragement, affirmation, correction, and improvement (Malphurs, 1999).

Covington and Rudolph (2016) provide an insider's perspective to the accreditation process, which includes the rigor of meeting the national standards, preparing the self-study, and surviving the site visit. Covington and Rudolph state that reading the shared experiences of other leaders can help and guide fellow leaders in the complexities of navigating accreditation (2016). Interestingly, the authors write:

> Although a large number of EPP's find value in the self-study and external review that come with the national accreditation process, the process itself can be daunting and time-consuming (Brigham Young University, 2010; Levine, 2006). Erickson and Wentworth (2010) found that after interviewing faculty members from 15 universities, some of which were public, private, small, large, secular, and religious, results were similar across education programs. Each institution expressed frustration and even anxiety with the accreditation process (Erickson & Wentworth, 2010). (Covington & Rudolph, 2016)

The authors conclude that regardless of the complexities of the process, the accrediting organizations provide resources and safe practices to help guide the process, approaching the self-study critically and reflectively (Covington & Rudolph, 2016).

Ford and Evans (2002) write that the utility and value of self-assessments surpass beyond the mere quality to cover areas such as product development, accounting, information systems,

manufacturing, strategic planning, and functional disciplines. Ford and Evans write that "Self-assessment essentially serves as an information system for managers interested in identifying and improving organizational processes" (2002, p.26). According to Ford and Evans, the conductors of the self-assessment should consider various factors influencing assessments, such as validity, guidance, concreteness, diagnostic, affiliation, and conceptual domain (2002). Below, the reader can find a brief discussion of some of the accountability, performance, and improvement theories of evaluation.

The Performance Accountability Quality Scale

The PAQS is helpful "for obtaining expert opinions based on a theory-driven model about the quality of a proposed measurement system in a not-for-profit agency" (Poole et al., 2000). Another use for PAQS includes assessing the technical needs of the organization and "the progress in the development of a sound performance measurement system" (Poole et al., 2000). According to a review done by the state of Louisiana:

> Performance accountability allows more accurate assessment of the resources needed to support activities; drives effective allocation of existing resources; and increases credibility when requesting new resources. Performance accountability supports informed decision making." (Louisiana DOA, 2020).

The model is excellent for defining outcomes, measuring, evaluating performance, and using results (Louisiana DOA, 2020; Poole et al., 2000). For the present study, the theory did not provide an encompassing evaluation exhaustive enough for the AETH Certification program and the constituency served.

Wilber's Integral Theory (or AQAL Model)

Wilber's Integral Theory uses four quadrants or realities, recognizing if the person has a relationship or interconnectedness with another; also, the theory determines the internal and external realities (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2009; Wilber, 1997, 2001). The model has five elements:

quadrants, lines, levels, types, and states (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2009; Wilber, 2008). Whether used separately or combined, the elements help understand simple or complex reality. The dimension of being can be used to understand the competency of the leadership (Holden, 2009; Prewitt, 2004; Reams, 2005). The theory can be implemented to understand the internal and external dimensions of reality and the individual and collective dimensions (Integral Business Leadership Group, 2020; Prewitt, 2004; Holden, 2009; Reams, 2005). For the present study, the theory was not thorough enough to consider all the processes of implementation necessary to evaluate the AETH Certification program impartially.

The Context-Input-Process-Product Evaluation Model

To help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Bible institutes that did not complete the self-study phase of the certification process, the researcher had identified the Context, Input, Process, Product Evaluation model. The benefit of using the model is found in the collection of information that signals the weaknesses and strengths of the program, project, organization, or resources (Mathison, 2005). The theory focuses on evaluating the management of the program through four stages of evaluation, seeking to find causes for weaknesses and opportunities for improvement (Yale, 2020). The four stages examine the goals and mission, the plans and resources, the actions and components, and the outcomes or fulfilled objectives (Mathison, 2005; Yale, 2020). The theory informed the study in finding the impact and sustainability of the program, also, on how the mission and core values of the program played or not a relevant role (Mathison, 2005; Yale, 2020). The model was excellent for decision-making processes in an organization, and for relevant education improvement because of the improvement accountability approach.

The CIPP model, which initially was intended for curriculum evaluation, can be effectively adapted and implemented for measuring the quality and effectiveness of a program process (Aziz et al., 2018; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The Context (C), Input (I), Process (P), and Product (P) evaluation covers the background and goals (*context*), material and human resources (*input*), implementation of the plan (*process*), and outcomes (*product*) (Aziz et al., 2018; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). To better evaluate the self-studies' responses to the AETH certification program, the CIPP was implemented with both summative and formative perspectives of evaluation (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

Another factor influencing the preference for the CIPP model was the fact that "Among dissertations made publicly available, 150 doctoral dissertations in 88 universities within and outside of the United States have applied the CIPP Evaluation Model" (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 331). Among the universities are Old Dominion University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Purdue University, and Texas A&M University; for research in education, health, administration, and leadership, among others (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

Evaluators of Theological Education

Learning centers dedicated to theological education are expected to follow specified standards and criteria for the administration of the institution (ATS, 2020c). According to the Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE), "Theological education in its multiple forms of delivery, dedicates itself to a common enterprise: serving the good of the church" (2020, p. 2). FTE was established in 1954 and provided networking, grants, fellowships, resources, and mentoring for leaders, pastors, and theological educators (2020). The need arose to regulate and unify the curriculum of the seminaries, Bible colleges, and Bible institutes (Eavey, 1964). The

movement was beneficial in providing the opportunity for the development of many accrediting organizations specifically for the regulation and accreditation of undergraduate programs of theological education (Eavey, 1964). Some of the benefits of the accreditation of a theological program are the integrity and quality of the programs offered by the accredited institution (ATS, 2020c; AETH, 2021; ABHE, 2020a).

Ibrahim stated that "Quality assurance is in most cases encouraged by continuous self-assessment and by seeking some form of internal or sometimes external validation or accreditation" (2014, p. 109). Evaluations are considered "A support strategy for institutional development and change" (Rebolloso et al., 2005). Research done by Hughes and Teodoro concluded:

> Accreditation helps articulate an organization's goals and expectations to street-level bureaucrats. If so, then accreditation might help public managers to build the sense of mission in an organization that Wilson (1989) and Kaufman (2006) described as critical to agency performance. (Hughes & Teodoro, 2013)

Two of the most influential regulating bodies for graduate theological education in the United States are The Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS/COA) and The Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) (ATS, 2020c; ABHE, 2020). The ABHE has international recognition and has a directory of over 180 member institutions of postsecondary education that account for more than 58,000 students and over 2,493 programs of study (ABHE, 2020). The accreditation process for ABHE holds three values: voluntary participation, self-study, and peer review (ABHE, 2020). ABHE has identified several challenges to the accreditation process: (1) mission is unclear, (2) gathering of data is inadequate (3) misunderstanding of and inexperience with correct procedures for efficiency, (4) distrust among staff, (5) uncommitted leadership, (6) deficiency in resources, and (7) inadequate planning (ABHE, 2020).

ATS has more than 270-member graduate schools and a directory of member organizations interested in the wellness and progress of theological education. The services expand to research, resources to assist member schools, accrediting, and support to member schools and organizations (ATS, 2020a). ATS holds four core values: diversity, quality and improvement, collegiality, and leadership (ATS, 2020c). ATS works diligently to improve and revise the standards for theological education and accreditation. The ATS Commission on Accrediting is recognized by the United States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation for the trustworthiness of the procedures and the array of resources provided to the member institutions (ATS, 2020c).

Evaluating the Hispanic Bible Institutes

Evaluation involves the collection of data, analysis, interpretation, and reports on the findings (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The evaluation of Hispanic theological education has received little attention until recent years, when the first studies on the subject were published (FTE, 1988; Conde-Frazier, 1998; Hernandez et al., 2016). Elizabeth Conde-Frazier wrote on the subject:

> Little is known about Bible institutes in the Hispanic Protestant community. Most of the information on these institutes is anecdotal or may include a brief general description of them. No study exists that describes and analyzes their structures, theology, pedagogy, curriculum or how they engage the wider dominant culture and public life and discourse. (Conde-Frazier, 1998, p. 5)

In 1996, Dr. Roberto Amparo Rivera used the responsive evaluation approach to study the adequacy of the resources of a theological education program (Rivera, 1996). Rivera found three main difficulties:

> (1) the qualitative nature of theological education, (2) the dilemma of its ultimate clientele, and (3) the reluctance of theological institutions to submit to a process that attempts to apply reason to faith, could plausibly be addressed through program evaluation. (Rivera, 1996, p. 6)

Furthermore, Rivera (1996) acknowledges the relevance of observing standards of education and evaluating theological education.

According to Rivera, "Program evaluation has to do with the process of assessing whether the invested resources are adequate to produce the desired results, and whether the outcomes are attained as a result of the program activities" (1996, p. i). Rivera states that "Accreditation evaluation focuses mostly on meeting minimum standards; but some standards are so abstract or vague that it is hard to use them as valid measures of educational quality or achievement" (1996, p. 6). To help initiate in some cases and other instances improve the evaluative process, Rivera recommends periodic assessments, "focusing on how participants perceive and interpret situations from different vantage points, and what they consider successful theological education" (1996, p. 8).

The Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana (AETH)

For thirty years, AETH has provided the Christian Hispanic/Latino constituency of the United States and Central and South America with services that entail the promoting of quality theological education (AETH, 2013). Some of the services include the publishing of theological literature suitable for teaching in Bible institutes and graduate schools (AETH, 2021). Publications that contain the Hispanic Christian worldview in the native language of the Hispanic population, and written by Hispanic scholars (AETH, 2014). Every year, AETH organizes lectures, online conversations, and Encuentros (encounters) with experts in theological education (AETH, 2021). The membership includes researchers, leaders of educational organizations, denominational leaders, authors, lecturers, pastors, and students (AETH, 2021).

In 2013, AETH received recognition from ATS/COA for the AETH Certification program and the effort to certify the quality of the programs offered by the Hispanic Bible institutes in the United States and Puerto Rico (AETH, 2013). AETH is the first organization providing such services to Hispanic theological education (AETH, 2013). The AETH Certification program guarantees that the students graduating from an AETH certified institute meet the expectations of equivalency to a baccalaureate degree and can apply to ATS accredited institutions (AETH, 2014; 2020a). The benefits to the institutes extend to helping improve the quality of the programs offered and the inclusion into a circle of institutions that provide quality theological formation to the Hispanic/Latino community (AETH, 2014; 2020a).

Presently, AETH has 228 active members, distributed in levels identified as individual, institutional, and student (AETH, 2020b). Of the total amount of 76 institutional members, 44 are Hispanic Bible institutes, from which 34 are participating or had participated in the AETH certification process (AETH, 2020b). The other institutional members are seminaries and parachurch organizations (AETH, 2020b). Historically, AETH has collaborated with over 168 Hispanic Bible institutes and ministry formation programs of a diversity of traditions from across the United States and Puerto Rico since the formation of the organization in 1992 (AETH, 2020b).

One of the initiatives developed by AETH, through a grant from the Lilly Foundation, was the communities of practice called ReDET, a network of theological entities under the leadership of Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier (ReDET, 2021). ReDET offers the space for conversation and collaboration between entities. In such setting, Bible institutes side by side with seminaries and other parachurch and theological education organizations share needs and counsel each other on procedures and legalities (ReDET, 2021). ReDET also has a CoLab, a

virtual reading platform in which the members can find literature on strategic planning, e-learning modules, library collaboration, intercultural materials, and second-generation resources; resources that help enrich the work of the Bible institutes and Hispanic seminaries (ReDET, 2021). The Justo and Catherine Gonzalez Resource Center is a library containing a collection of Hispanic/Latino literature written by Hispanic/Latino theologians and experts available to the community and located in the AETH offices in Decatur, Georgia (AETH, 2021).

AETH Certification

The process of AETH Certification is comprehensive and covers all aspects of the operation of the applicant organization. (AETH, 2020a). The process is divided into three stages: the institutional self-study, the site visit, and the peer review of the report for a final decision of the Certification Council Committee (AETH, 2018). The process begins with the completed eligibility application for certification. The application is divided into six sections: (1) general information, (2) organizational background and governance, (3) finances, (4) facilities, (5) educational programs, and (6) enrollment (AETH, 2018). A grading system is used to review the application to help in the decision of eligibility, and then, the AETH Certification Committee is responsible for the review of all the documentation produced by the applicant organization (AETH, 2018).

Every applicant institution receives a handbook detailing all the steps of the process for every stage with institutional and educational standards and criteria required to meet (AETH, 2018). The first stage, the self-study, requires the applicant institution to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school, provide the mission, disclose how the school is implementing the strategic plan, how often each is reviewed, and identify areas that need improvement (AETH, 2018). The second stage, the site visit, requires that selected members of the Committee visit the

applicant institution (AETH, 2018). The final stage is the Council review and the final decision; entails a reading of the written report presented by the visiting Committee (AETH, 2018). Once the decision is reached, the Executive Committee will issue the certification document (AETH,2018). The AETH Certification Committee has two goals: (1) to promote and improve the theological education of the Hispanic Bible institutes, and (2) to provide an accessible pathway to admission into ATS accredited seminaries to the *institutos* graduates (AETH, 2018). The responsibility of the eight members of the Committee is to certify the educational programs of the *institutos* and not the institution (AETH, 2018). The Committee oversees the compliance of the institutional and educational standards (AETH, 2018).

Incomplete self-studies

According to the recent survey and the AETH records, the AETH certified Hispanic Bible institutions are 21% of all the Hispanic Bible institutes members, which completed and followed up with evaluations for quality and performance (Ramirez, 2019: AETH 2020b). Another set of surveys revealed that 29% of the total number is presently undergoing the process of self-study, and 15% left the self-study incomplete or completed the study but cannot continue to the next phase (AETH, 2020b). The unknown reasons for incomplete self-studies raised concerns about the competency of the applicant institution, questioning the understanding of the operational aspects and the comprehension of the institutional and educational standards (AETH, 2020b). Although many *institutos* achieved the certified status, others did not, but unfortunately, the reasons for stopping the process in the self-study phase were not fully known (AETH, 2020b).

Related Literature

The current section contributes to understanding some of the reasons why many Hispanic Bible institute leaders are not fully prepared to implement a strategic plan and establish sustainable schools. An in-depth survey of related literature is presented to the reader to provide a supporting structure and information to the study. The section will discuss sources as follows: 1) Hispanic community and identity, 2) the growth of the Protestant Hispanic church, and 3) Hispanic/Latino Bible institutes as educational opportunities in communities.

Hispanic Community and Identity Literature

The twentieth-century census reports demonstrated more than once the growth and changing society of the United States (U. S. Census, 1988, 2020a). Hispanic/Latino community of first, second, and third generations representing every Spanish-speaking country are contributing to the changes recorded in every census report (Martinez, 2018). The country's landscape has seen the birth of the first Hispanic church and the growth to become a force in the Protestant ecology (Martinez, 2018).

The U. S. Census Bureau

The data recorded by the U.S. Census provides essential statistics, figures, and data that help support the research. For example, the initial study on Hispanic theological education conducted in 1988 reported the findings of the U. S. Census Bureau, stating that, at the time, Hispanics were 6.4 percent of the population, and projected that Hispanics would be 17.6 percent of the population by the year 2080 (FTE, 1988; U. S. Census, 1988, 2020a). According to the Bureau findings, the Hispanic population remains concentrated in significant numbers within a few states (1 million or more), namely Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Texas, New Jersey, New York, New Mexico, and Illinois, not including the U. S. territories (2020a).

The numbers are inclusive of the second and third generations of Hispanic/Latinos in the United States. According to the U. S. Census report published in 1991, the total number of citizens at poverty level in 1989 was 31.5 million or 12.8 percent compared to 31.7 in 1988 or 13.0 percent. The female-led households were 51.7 percent of the total population, with a competitive 46.8 percent in Hispanic families (U. S. Census, 1991).

Semega et al. (2020) published a consumer report for the US. Census Bureau in September 2020 stating that there were 34.0 million citizens in poverty, or 10.5 percent of the population (Semega et al., 2020). Hispanics totaled 15.7 percent, and although the percentage accounts for the lowest numbers since 1972 poverty is still a factor affecting the Hispanic/Latino community in the country (Semega et al., 2020). The percentage of Hispanic female householders in the nation was 22.2 or 3.3 million families (Semega et al., 2020).

Fox (2020) released another report providing a glimpse of the issue afflicting the country and most specifically the Hispanic/Latino population and the dependency on government programs to supplement the income. Hernandez et al. state that "Overall, the Hispanic community remains disproportionately affected by poverty, low education levels, poor health, and discrimination" (2016, p. 39). Nevertheless, in many ways, Hispanic/Latinos are making contributions to the economy and the society and, according to Hernandez et al., "are positioned to be a dynamic force for generations to come" (2016, p. 35).

Hispanic Identity

In this section, the review introduces works and studies done on Hispanic identity. Hernandez et al. (2016) state that a notable feature of the Hispanic/Latino community in the United States is the diversity of races and variations of the language, philosophy, cultural expression, and faith (Hernandez et al., 2016). Collective identity in the Hispanic community is

demonstrated in various ways: socially, culturally, linguistically, and recently, politically (Hernandez et al., 2016). The faith in Jesus unites the diversity (Hernandez et al., 2016).

Therefore, religious life is deeply rooted and expressed mainly in the Catholic and Protestant circles (Hernandez et al., 2016). Moreover, church life is imparting spiritual care and meeting many needs for the congregation members and the community at large (Hernandez et al., 2016). One of the services that the congregations provide is the relational aspect. Values, traditions, habits, are practices exchanged connecting the church to the neighborhood (Hernandez et al., 2016). For that reason, Hernandez et al. recommend the following:

> Given the role that congregations play in ministering to the needs of their people and the surrounding communities, religious leaders must be trained to meet the unique, diverse, and evolving needs of Latinos/as in the United States. Latino/a leaders, therefore, need to be prepared to serve changing diverse Hispanic churches and communities. (2016, p. 39)

The FTE study (1988) found that "The last few years brought about a growing consciousness of solidarity among the various groups of Hispanic Americans —a consciousness which does not yet overcome group pride and prejudice, but which is nevertheless significant" (FTE, 1988). Socially, Hispanic/Latinos are uniting for common causes that affect labor, health, education, and law (FTE, 1988). Since the ethnic group is underrepresented, engagement brings solidarity (FTE, 1988). Hispanic Americans are learning to be more involved politically and have representation in the government arena (FTE, 1988). The FTE study concluded that although the differences among groups are undeniable, the commonality of the need for a voice brings strength and unity versus merely staying voiceless and being ignored (FTE, 1988).

A warning is in place: "Let us not idolize our culture that we oppress another Hispanic who does not speak as we do, or even one who has never learned how to speak Spanish because the pressures of society were too great" (FTE, 1998). One common trait among Hispanic/Latinos is that "Citizens from other nations are more than statistics. They are friends and relatives" (FTE,

1988). Rivera-Rodriguez (1998) perceives the community and identity as very important to the diaspora's first generation; the immigrants who remember the motherland. Rivera-Rodriguez writes that in the process of adaptation to the new realities, the individuals undergo a process of self-appropriation, self-definition, self-direction, and self-determination (1998). The author emphasizes the bicultural status of the diaspora Hispanics, meaning that each lives in two worlds yet does not wholly belong to either (Rivera-Rodriguez, 1998). Martinez (2017) states that culturally, the language is the prime identifier for the group, and the traditions are common to every representative of the Hispanic/Latino group. The strong retention of the traditions and language, even within the second and third generations, help strengthen the identity and dignity (Martinez, 2017). Unfortunately, the second and third generation of Hispanic Americans, although born and raised here, suffer discrimination, and are treated less than full citizens (Martinez, 2017). The Pew Research Center studies state that 80 percent of the Hispanic/Latino population claim to be Christians (2014; 2007). The Pew study adds:

> The practice of religion is distinctively ethnic. Two-thirds of Latino worshippers attend churches with Latino clergy, services in Spanish and heavily Latino congregations. While most predominant among the foreign born and Spanish speakers, Hispanic-oriented worship is also prevalent among native-born and English-speaking Latinos. That strongly suggests that the phenomenon is not simply a product of immigration or language but that it involves a broader and more lasting form of ethnic identification. (2007)

The Growth of the Hispanic Protestant Church

Maldonado (1999) delineates the history of the Hispanic Protestant church in the United States. The focus of the study was to present how the Hispanic church has been overlooked for over a century. The work gathered data and reports from around the country dealing with theological and cultural factors, theological perspectives, and religious manifestations characteristic of the Hispanic community (1999). Maldonado discusses how during the establishment and development of the Hispanic church, various identifiers were coined to refer to

the believers: *evangélicos, aleluyas, los hermanos, and Protestantes (1999).* Maldonado states that “Hispanics have historically played lesser roles in denominational structures and leadership positions. In other words, they have been on the margins of their denominations as well” (1999, p. 14).

Rodriguez-Diaz et al. (1994) contribute to the discussion of the history of the Hispanic/Latino church in the United States by documenting oral history. Rodriguez-Diaz was approached by The Pew Charitable Trust and McCormick Theological Seminary to preserve the history for future generations. The study presents “The stands taken by historians who have gone before us…” and “this work will look at how we can construct our own methodology from a colonial, migrant, and exiled Hispanic perspective” (Rodriguez-Diaz et al., 1994, p. 29). Espin and Diaz (1999) presented a collection of essays on systematic Catholic theology manifested as contributions to society, church and community relationship, identity, and destiny. The work demonstrates the effort of both churches to collaborate and continue the intercultural dialogue on the history of the Hispanic church in the country, focusing on the issues that are common to both (Espin & Diaz, 1999). Both traditions are impacting the United States’ academy and preparing leaders for ministry, giving a voice to the community, and uniting (Espin & Diaz, 1999).

Hispanic/Latino Bible Institutes as Educational Opportunities in Communities Literature

The consensus across the country is that “The basic demographic trends of the Latino population in America have already been presented: a high poverty, relatively low-education minority” (Maldonado, 1999). The preparation of the Hispanic/Latino leaders determines the impact of any church initiative in the community (Hernandez et al., 2016). According to the statistics, the number of Hispanic/Latino students in ATS-accredited seminaries is low compared to Whites, Blacks, and Asian Americans (ATS, 2007).

Leadership competency

Hernandez et al. states:

> The presence of Hispanics in theological education also has a ripple effect: the more Latinos/as there are in seminaries and other institutions, the more religious leaders of other ethnicities are able to engage with Hispanic culture, thus better preparing them to serve this rapidly growing community. (2016, p. 38)

The competency of the leaders is critical to making a difference in service (Hernandez et al., 2016). Not only do the leaders serve in the church, but in the community, the leaders are reaching out to other institutions and serving as a bridge, facilitating the communication (Hernandez et al., 2016). A seminary-educated leader will have the opportunity to influence and serve more efficiently than one that did not receive a formal education (Hernandez et al., 2016). In contrast, the Hispanic/Latino church leadership and prospect leaders can benefit from non-degree options already available from seminaries, church denominations, local church programs, and Bible institutes (Hernandez et al., 2016).

An example is the certificate program as an alternative provided by Calvin Theological Seminary, giving students the convenience of a program entirely in Spanish, teachings on topics relevant to the needs of the community of faith and the neighborhoods (Hernandez et al., 2016). An added benefit is that the program is offered at no cost, and the student is awarded three credit hours per course, preparing the student for continued education in the future (Hernandez et al., 2016). Unfortunately, the program is not available at every seminary in the country (Hernandez et al., 2016). The focus remains on the Hispanic Bible institute alternative pathway.

Institutional competency

The Bible institutes provide an essential educational opportunity to the Christian Hispanic/Latino population, to both denominational or non-denominational (AETH, 2021). According to Hernandez and Davis' research, 47 percent of Latino leaders have received theological education in Bible institutes (2003). The Hernandez and Davis' study states the following:

> The numbers go up depending on the denomination: 79 percent of Pentecostals, 59 percent of nondenominational, 53 percent of Baptists, 48 percent of Roman Catholics, and 58 percent of other denominations have attended Bible institutes or Diocesan-training institutes. (2003, p. 44)

The benefit of the Bible institute is being free from rigidly structured programs with the ability to accommodate the curriculum and overall scope to the pressing needs of the community served (Hernandez & Davis, 2003). The flexibility includes the openness to accept students from any denomination (AETH, 2013). Due to the popularity and quality of education of a certain institute, branches and extensions are developed to benefit other geographical areas (AETH, 2013). Some institutes have as many as thirty extensions operating simultaneously (AETH, 2013). Another benefit is the low cost of the program, making theological education accessible to the leaders that cannot afford seminary (Ramirez, 2019).

The diversity of Bible institutes is also noted in the varied quality of education provided at each institution (Ramirez, 2019). For that reason, AETH presented an initiative to regulate and assure the best quality in the theological education offered at Hispanic Bible institutes (AETH, 2021). The initiative includes a comprehensive procedure in which the AETH parallels the requirements of certification of Bible institutes to the conditions and prerequisites of accreditation with ATS (AETH, 2021). The 2016 study done by Hernandez et al. reviewed the findings of the initial AETH survey to Bible institutes done in 2012 demonstrating that although

the Bible institutes are a preferred pathway to theological education among Hispanics, the unavoidable reality is that there is a need for improving the quality of theological education (2016). Some *institutos* have difficulty understanding the role of a governing board, others lack a library, others are unaware of resources in the local proximity (seminaries, Bible colleges, seminaries, other institutes), yet others are missing bibliographic information and materials for faculty, and staff continued education (AETH, 2013; Ramirez, 2019).

Another finding was that the Bible institutes "Do offer training that demonstrates some level of social engagement that could enhance Latino/a ministry" (Hernandez et al., 2016). The community-based characteristic of the Bible institute provides leadership skills in the local community with the benefit of practice within the local community of faith and neighborhood (Hernandez et al., 2016). Other benefits include "Helping students with individual-level skill sets, like Bible knowledge, theology, doctrine, Church history, spiritual formation, and general self-betterment" (Hernandez et al., 2016). Furthermore, the study demonstrated that the Bible institutes do indicate a need to establish a system of accountability and the development of instruments like a business or operational or strategic plan to implement (Hernandez et al., 2016).

All the observations indicated by Hernandez et al. in 2016 were similar to the initial findings in the 2013 AETH study. The findings demonstrated that although a large number of *institutos* are denominational, the *instituto* does not receive sponsorship from the denomination but is sustained by the fees charged for courses and the local church (AETH, 2013). The report states the following:

> Most instituto directors contacted in our study stated that their programs need to be self-supporting and at their level this limits the possibilities of further development in other areas that they would like to explore in order to expand the quality and scope of service. However, there are a few exceptions of institutos that receive considerable support from their denomination. They are usually among those that serve as centers for ministerial training for the ministers of the denomination. (AETH, 2013, p. 5)

Nevertheless, the role of the *instituto* is significant in the early education of leaders that will later pursue education in seminary or Bible college (AETH, 2013). The AETH 2013 study estimated that the number of *institutos* were at least 200 in Puerto Rico (Catholic and Protestant), some 175 in the Western regions and the Southwestern region of the United States, and similar amounts in the Northeast and Midwest regions. In other words, the initial estimate surpassed 950 Hispanic Bible institutes in the areas where AETH provides services (AETH, 2013). AETH's decision to strengthen the Hispanic Bible institutes envisions the development of a relationship between seminaries, Bible colleges, and Bible institutes in the form of cross-fertilization and dialogue to help promote community ministries (AETH, 2013; 2021).

Personal Enrichment

At the personal level, the students receive skills and personal development through the theological education at the Bible institute level that otherwise may not occur (Hernandez et al., 2016; FTE, 1988; Conde-Frazier, 1998). The skills identified are public speaking, cultural sensitivity, civic responsibility, quantitative skills, critical thinking, an understanding of Latino/a theology, primary elements of Christian doctrine, and cultural and community engagement (Hernandez et al., 2016; Conde-Frazier, 1998; Maldonado, 1999). Consequently, the Bible institutes are providing access to education and fulfilling a need for leadership development in the local community and the church (Maldonado, 1999).

Rationale for Study and Gap in Literature

Although the previously discussed contributors to the literature base are experts in the field of Hispanic theological education and Bible institutes, each in an area of specialization, the studies did not focus on the area of certification of Hispanic Bible institutes or the self-study phase. The following section discusses the rationale for the study and the gap in the literature.

Rationale for the Study

As mentioned above, the number of Hispanic Bible institutes in the country is vast and increasing, thus the pressing need for a regulating organization to unify and evaluate the quality of the theological education offered. Hispanic researchers like Perez Bullard (2015), Miranda et al. (2005), and Stevens-Arroyo (1998) have explored the impact of Latino religious education in urban settings across the United States. Historians and theologians like Espinoza (2014), De La Torre (2009), and Rodriguez (2011) researched and evaluated the future of the Hispanic church in the United States.

Experts in the field of evaluation of programs like Perez & Ceja (2015) and Poole et al. (2001) have developed evaluations that are useful for many programs. After researching about the status of the Hispanic theological education, Dr. Fernando Cascante concluded that further study is needed in the area of consistency in critical self-examinations of ministry formation programs, from the most basic to the seminary level and including the local church setting (Cascante, 1992). Cascante suggests that further research should consider three domains of the organizations under scrutiny; in other words, internal and external influencers: personal, instructional, and institutional (1992). Moreover, Cascante states that “The main purpose of the analysis of consistency is to be both a model for the critical self-examination of the program and a sound starting point for reform, change and transformation in theological education” (1992, pg.

213). Although the study is important as supporting literature on the relevance of self-evaluation, Cascante's research does not focus on the topic of the present study. Another study presented by Peña, Hernandez, Sotelo-Turner, Dirks, and Verhulst on the need to equip Latino/a seminarians to serve the local communities found surprisingly high percentages of Latino/a seminarians that indicated needing training in specific areas or subjects (2006). Such areas included assessing community needs (66%), strategic planning (67%), fundraising (48%), managing a non-profit organization (42%), and managing a board (49%), and many others related to aspects of the church (2006). The study concluded that the most needed areas of training were assessing community needs, conflict management, and strategic planning (Peña et al., 2006). The researchers stated that such training should be incorporated into all types of seminaries and schools of theology (Peña et al., 2006). The FTE study recommended further research of the entire network of Hispanic/Latino theological education, considering the matter as a growing challenge (1988).

A study on accreditation demonstrates the relevance of a peer-driven evaluation and the benefits to the leaders, students, and the overall organization (Barber & McNair, 2017). The literature discussed above does not provide insight on the topic for the present study nor set a precedent for future studies on the AETH Certification. Considering the supporting literature above and to provide various avenues of information to the research, a mixed-method approach incorporated comprehensive methodology to undergird the researchers' focus of study.

Gap in the Literature

The literature review discussed the findings of several researchers and other supporting information on the present state of the Hispanic/Latino community in the United States and issues that influence the context in which Hispanics, churches, and Bible institutes live and

operate. Groundbreaking studies like the FTE research done in 1988 were the opportunity that brought Hispanic Bible institutes to the spotlight, for seminaries were not fully aware of the existence of a Hispanic ecology of community-based Christian education. Other studies done focused on program development and evaluation of a program, as in the case of Rivera's work (1996). The studies on Bible institutes have significantly profited from the wisdom and insight brought by Dr. Conde-Frazier, whose experience and work with Hispanic Bible institutes expanded to more than three decades. Conde-Frazier (1998) had presented the case study of two Hispanic institutes providing evidence of the role each played within the greater ecology of theological education in the United States. The contribution Conde-Frazier's study was offering to the present research was found in the Hispanic Bible institutes-focused investigation on particular issues in the areas of curriculum design, purpose, location, and similarities between urban institutes. According to Conde-Frazier, focusing on the similarities allows for a reciprocal relationship between *institutos* and collaboration between communities of practice. Such partnership can facilitate the evaluation of *institutos* but did not answer the inquiry of the present study.

The study conducted by Dr. Caraballo (1983) focused on the development of a certificate program that was developed specifically for a Hispanic constituency and designed to meet the needs of a particular community. The program was purposed to improve the ministerial skills in the urban setting while acquiring theological education and secular skills (Caraballo, 1983). The program recognized the bicultural and bilingual needs of the community and the leaders. Similarly, the studies conducted by Dr. Edwin Hernandez and a cohort of experts (1995, 2007, 2016) have addressed the issues surrounding the theological ecology of the country and the Hispanic population. The focus mainly remained on surveying the state of theological education

at large and how inclusive seminaries are towards Hispanic/Latino students (Hernandez et al., 1995, 2007, 2016). A gap existed in the field of certification of Bible institutes in the area of competency in completing the first phase of the self-studies for AETH certification processes. The gap was better described as missing research on first time AETH certification self-study results and missing research on recertification of Hispanic Bible institutes self-study phase. There were no studies about the Hispanic Bible institutes' self-studies responses phase for AETH certification in the areas of leadership efficacy, accountability, and organizational competency. The present study was groundbreaking in the AETH certification program, providing current information on the inner workings of the self-study and the major influencers in the response process. Additionally, the present study provided new information on the status of the Hispanic/Latino Bible institutes since the publication of the previous studies discussed above.

Missing research on AETH certification self-study phase results

After reviewing the data collected from AETH and the studies mentioned above, the researcher concluded that a gap existed in the AETH certification self-study phase (AETH, 2021). Unfortunately, there were no previous studies to refer or compare. Although the studies of Caraballo, Conde-Frazier, Rivera, and Hernandez et al. had made outstanding contributions to the study of Hispanic Bible institutes and community-based programs, the present study was the first evaluation to the AETH Certification program, seeking for trends and factors to explain the incomplete self-studies. The detailed review of the literature also yielded a gap in the literature in the AETH recertification self-study phase of Hispanic Bible institutes. The valuable insight from accrediting institutions like ATS and ABHE informed the study. Since AETH's standards and certification processes derived from the accreditation and standards of ATS, the researcher sought similarities and marked differences in the processes of certification and recertification

(ATS, 2020c; AETH, 2021). Nevertheless, none of the literature reviewed had considered the factors causing the incompletion of the self-studies. The researcher had explored many scholarly databases and failed to find studies that could be used to compare findings. Communications with ATS and ABHE revealed that there were no known studies on self-studies completion (T. Tanner, personal communication, February 2, 2021) and that the present study was useful to many accrediting organizations (R. C. Kroll, personal communication, February 9, 2021). The proposed study intended to fill the gap, although partially, and to contribute to the research on Hispanic Bible institutes and accreditation.

Profile of the Current Study

Chapter Two has presented a survey of the literature informing the study. The literature review demonstrated that accrediting institutions had established methods for overseeing and assessing the function and strategic health of the theological education providers. The self-study phase covers the areas of fundraising, library resources, faculty staffing, sustainability, and the strategic plan. In the process of understanding the dynamics surrounding the decision to certify the quality of the Hispanic Bible institutes, the researcher reviewed various studies seeking factors influencing the economic, identity, and ecclesiastical status of the Hispanic/Latino communities in the United States. Chapter Three discusses the mixed-methods evaluation methodology of the research and the evaluation model guiding the study. Consideration was given to the sample population, the data collection, and the data analysis. Furthermore, the researcher briefly presented the tools for the data analysis, and the computer-assisted methodology that helped expedite the process. The ethical considerations were also included in the chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter One provided a description of the status of the Hispanic/Latino Bible institutes in the United States and the challenges some of the *institutos* encounter. Chapter Two reviewed the literature associated with the topic of the present study revealing a gap exists in the study of Bible institutes leadership's efficacy, accountability, and competency in completing the first phase of the self-studies for the AETH certification process (FTE, 1998; Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019). The purpose of Chapter Three was to focus the discussion on the planned methodology for the evaluation of the factors influencing the incompletion of the self-studies in the AETH certification process and provide a brief description of the process. The exploratory mixed-methods approach helped answer the research questions using a four-phase evaluation of the AETH Certification program.

The mixed-methods approach included reviewing the existing data, the AETH documents, and interview responses, segregating the variables for correlations and frequencies (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Creswell, 2014). Purposive sampling helped summarize the categories of the samples and facilitated the use of the evaluation model guiding the research (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Creswell, 2014). The researcher used integrative analysis and statistical software for accuracy and reliability (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Finally, the findings were interpreted and correlated with the prospect of generalization to the Hispanic Bible institutes in the United States. The study was guided by the Context, Input, Process, Product evaluation model or CIPP (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

Research Design Synopsis

The Problem

Theological education in the continental United States has suffered a crisis for decades (Babcox, 2017). Challenges in the form of economic constraints, reduced enrollment numbers, changing demographics, and operational issues (Ramirez, 2019; Babcox, 2017). In contrast, Hispanic Bible institutes continue to grow, proliferate, and are working hard to improve the quality of the theological education offered through the process of certification (AETH, 2021; Ramirez, 2019). However, an initial review of the responses of the AETH certification process' self-studies phase indicated the following trends: a considerable percentage of the responses demonstrated (1) no indication of a proposed budget to operate, (2) a vague understanding of what was a governing board, (3) some did not have a strategic plan, (4) others had non-expert faculty, and (5) many had no library or media resources available to students (Ramirez, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2016; Conde-Frazier, 1998).

The literature review suggested the causes for the problem requiring the exploration and demonstrated that many Bible institute leaders faced challenges to access the wholesome preparation that can provide the needed success in ministry; those challenges were influenced by the economic, identity, and ecclesiastical status of the Hispanic/Latino communities (JVA, 2012; AETH, 2020b; Ramirez, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2016; Conde-Frazier, 1998). Professional readiness and access to education on strategic planning and self-evaluations can be a challenge for some leaders and organizations. Many Hispanic/Latino Bible institutes began the process of certification but ceased the progress without completing the self-study without asking for assistance or providing the reason (AETH, 2020b). According to the AETH records and prior research on Hispanic/Latino Bible institutes, there were no studies available about the Hispanic

Bible institutes' self-studies responses phase for AETH Certification (AETH, 2020b; Ramirez, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2016). In a recent correspondence with the researcher of the present study, the Director of the Accreditation Department at The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) (T. Tanner, personal communication, February 2, 2021) commented that ATS lacks knowledge of any study done on the completion of the self-study phase of accreditation. In a communication with the Director of the Commission on Accreditation at the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) (R. C. Kroll, personal communication, February 9, 2021), the researcher was encouraged to continue the study because the topic of the present study was relevant to several agencies.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this exploratory sequential study was to evaluate the AETH Certification program and the self-study responses by collecting data to determine the factors that prevented Hispanic Bible institutes from successfully fulfilling the requirements, exploring the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. At this stage in the research, the AETH certification self-study was generally defined as the Hispanic/Latino Bible institute's state of the organization in which the leadership examines the status of the strategic plan, budget, staff's professional readiness, and program offerings operating within the United States. The evaluation model steering the research was the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP).

Research Questions

To successfully implement the CIPP evaluation model in the study the researcher produced the following questions for the investigation, endeavoring to define the context of the AETH Certification program and if the program's self-study phase was fulfilling the original objectives.

RQ1. Context evaluation: How are the constituents' needs of the *institutos* aligned with the goals and circumstances of the AETH certification program?

RQ2. Input evaluation: How do the *institutos* describe the resources, procedural designs, or strategies of the AETH certification program, and which alternatives can increase the completion of the self-studies?

RQ3. Process evaluation: How are the established AETH certification self-study processes being followed?

RQ4. Product evaluation: What is the impact generated by the completion and incompletion of the AETH certification self-study on the Hispanic Bible institutes and the leadership?

Research Design and Methodology

Chapter three describes the methodology applied to the research. The study used QUAL and QUAN approaches. Palinkas et al. provided clarity of purpose for the use of the mixed-methods approach in a study:

> In such designs, qualitative methods are used to explore and obtain depth of understanding as to the reasons for success or failure to implement evidence-based practice or to identify strategies for facilitating implementation while quantitative methods are used to test and confirm hypotheses based on an existing conceptual model and obtain breadth of understanding of predictors of successful implementation (Teddie & Tashakkori, 2003). (Palinkas et al., 2015)

The evaluation was guided by the CIPP Evaluation model and gave consideration to AETH member institutions' certification self-studies responses (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The CIPP was addressed in the present chapter and included a brief definition of the mixed-methods research approach selected for the study, the theoretical and historical foundations of the research, and the motivations for choosing the approach (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The methodology for the study involved the collection of data, the analysis, and the use of both QUAL and QUAN approaches in the same study (Creswell, 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The usefulness of mixed-methods research was found in the versatility of combining two research techniques that complemented each other without overlaps (Creswell, 2014; Tashakkori

& Teddlie, 2010). By building on the strength of the previous phase, the approach helped "Develop and construct better measurements with specific samples of populations and to see if data from a few participants (in qualitative phase) can be generalized to a larger sample of a population (in quantitative phase)" (Creswell, 2014, p. 226). For the present study, neither QUAL nor QUAN alone was sufficient to provide the factors and tendencies at work in the incompletion of the self-studies phase of the AETH certification of Hispanic Bible institutes. The CIPP model was selected for the present study because CIPP accentuated exhaustiveness and inclusiveness in the evaluating of systems, projects, and programs (Stufflebeam, 2002).

The versatility of the CIPP evaluation was that the framework provided a model for incorporating and joining together the evaluation into the development and administrative/managerial aspects of the program under study (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Since the CIPP model was guided by four evaluations, the following undertakings were accomplished for each assessment: (1) an outline of the type of evidence necessary for decision making; (2) data collection; and (3) data integration for tactical decisions (see Table 1) (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The QUAL phase began with the *context evaluation* (RQ1) and encompassed the recognizing needs, problematic assets, and areas in the context (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The assessment also established a foundation for the purposes that guided the procedures of improvement of the program (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The *input evaluation* (RQ2) focused on the collection of data related to all the resources available and policies necessary (strategies, budgets, and plans) to accomplish the set goals (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Additionally, the evaluation revealed the restrictions; such restrictions required the erudition and comprehension of resources and tactics, including the effectiveness of such plans and strategies to attain the expected outcome (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

The QUAN phase began with the *process evaluation* (RQ3) and focused on data collection to scrutinize the operation of the program and provided the opportunity to assessing difficulties and obstructions that impaired the progress of the program and the elaboration of early solutions (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). An added focus of the evaluation was the advantage to assess strengths and weaknesses and the correlation to the outcomes (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Then, the *product evaluation* (RQ4) focused on verifying, deciding, and concluding how the goals were accomplished and which were not fulfilled, and whether the program addresses the needs of the constituency served (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The activity included the elaboration and administration of methods and instruments; also, the outcomes of the evaluation were utilized to decide for maintaining the program in the current state or implementing modifications for efficiency (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

The data collection involved text and numerical in sequence, from a smaller sample to a larger sample of the population (Creswell, 2014). In the design, the researcher presented the claims by progressively moving through the stages: exploratory (data collected from the participants in context), instrument development (used the data collected from participants), and administration of the instrument to a sample population (Creswell, 2014). The researcher segregated the variables seeking for correlations and frequencies; then, the researcher implemented the instrument to obtain valid results (Creswell, 2014). For the purpose of the present study, the researcher outlined the various stages and evaluations according to the CIPP evaluation model in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1

Framework of the Study

Context evaluation (QUAL) Answers RQ1	○ Collection and analysis of AETH's archives and existing documents ○ Conduct interviews AETH *institutos* ○ Describe the context ○ Identification of needs and goals
Stakeholders' engagement	○ Contacting prospect AETH Bible institute participants to join the study ○ Collect signed consents
Input evaluation (QUAL) Answers RQ2	○ Examine AETH standards ○ Conduct interviews AETH Certification Committee ○ Identify the content of self-study guidelines ○ Design of the instrument for scrutiny (pilot tool)
Process evaluation (QUAN) Answers RQ3	○ Expert panel test of the instrument ○ Conduct survey with stakeholders ○ Use monitoring instruments
Product evaluation (QUAN) Answers RQ4	○ Analysis of data (QUAL and QUAN) ○ Determine validity and reliability ○ Determine if goals are met ○ Report writing ○ Final recommendations

The QUAL section of the study began with the context evaluation, reviewing the AETH certification archives. During the context evaluation phase, the researcher conducted interviews, described the context, and identified the needs (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Correspondingly, the study included a session of interviews with the participants, collected data from open and close-ended exploratory questions, observations, and the review of existing records to identify locally relevant indicators (Creswell, 2014). The interviewer asked questions to find any relationship and determine the factors leading to the incomplete self-study information (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell, the questionnaire is "an inquiry process of understanding" and adds that the approach serves the purpose to build a "complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting" (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). A contribution of the questionnaire was the active involvement

of the participants in the setting (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the data yielded was influenced by the values given by the participants' perspectives and "produces an understanding of the problem based on multiple contextual factors" (Miller, 2000).

The next phase was the input evaluation, in which the researcher reviewed AETH guidelines and standards for certification, including the guidelines for the completion of the self-study (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Then, the data collected from the content review and the content evaluation were analyzed and used to design a pilot instrument for scrutiny (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The process evaluation phase included the survey pilot instrument to evaluate the AETH certification self-study section on a larger sample population (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The product evaluation gathered all the data collected in the form of QUAL and QUAN data to test how consistent, dependable, and trustworthy was the instrument used for the self-studies (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Also, the evaluation determined if any recommendations or modifications were necessary (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

The QUAN section focused on the data collection and the process of analysis used in the research, including a close-ended questionnaire in a survey form with regards to the organization's strategic plan (if one exists), accountability, efficacy, and certification process (Creswell, 2014). The QUAN approach depended heavily on numerical data (Charles & Mertler, 2002). The toolkit of resources included questions, cause and effect thought process, measurement formulas, observations, identification of specific variables, and testing with assessment models chosen by the researcher (Creswell, 2014). The approach allowed the researcher to isolate variables and found relationships and frequencies using instruments that produced outcomes and scores with proven reliability and validity (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

In addition, the approach included linguistic and transcendental techniques that encouraged the pool of participants to respond individualistically and conceded the researcher to allow for free in-depth expression in the responses resulting in a more enriching experience (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Creswell, 2014). Integration, priority, and implementation are items that the researcher was mindful to consider during the study (Creswell, Plano-Clark, Guttman, & Hanson, 2003). Accordingly, the implementation made emphasis on the data collection and analysis, whether in sequence, parallel, concurrently, etc. (Creswell, Plano-Clark, Guttman, & Hanson, 2003). Finally, the integration referred to the process of connecting both QUAL and QUAN data (Creswell, Plano-Clark, Guttman, & Hanson, 2003).

The survey and interview parts of the CIPP evaluation were offered in the native preferred language of the participants, whether Spanish or English, to secure the best and most intact responses, and conveying the message accurately. The researcher considered it necessary to translate the responses upon request for the dissertation review board with utmost caution to maintain the integrity of the responses. The exploratory questions covered the issues discussed above and related to the model of the program, availability of the centers, socio-economic questions, effective leadership, and accountability (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

The CIPP evaluation data was examined and processed by considering the interviews' transcripts, analysis of the survey answers, finding similarities and differences in the responses (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Some of the tools involved finding repeated themes, shared or common experiences, and patterns in the documentation. A computer program was utilized to store and analyze the collected data and facilitated the proper management and accuracy of the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Field notes were taken throughout the process.

Qualitative Research Methodology: Context and Input Evaluations

The QUAL section entailed selecting institutions that had undergone the eligibility and self-study phases of the AETH Certification process from the categories of complete and incomplete. The researcher examined the contextual conditions under which the program was organized and operated. The intended purpose was to have a maximized, significant, and appropriate diversity to the central research questions guiding the study. During the QUAL data analysis stage, the data was coded, and the researcher analyzed the emergent themes, observing similarities and differences of themes in all evaluations. The researcher developed visualizations of the data. Finally, the researcher wrote the interpretation of the data by presenting the meaning of the evaluations. The presentation included a comprehensive discussion of the findings and the recommendations for possible future studies in the topic or related topics.

Setting

The AETH Certification program offices were located in Orlando, Florida. The total number of members of the Certification Committee was six Board-elected members and two ex-officio members (eight members) (AETH, 2020a). The duties included reviewing applications, interviewing applicants, facilitating the Certification stages of the program, site visits, and report writing (AETH, 2018). Every member of the Committee was proficient in an aspect of the Certification that enriched the decision-making process of the Committee (AETH, 2018). The program did not require that the applicant organizations visited the AETH office instead the initial stages were done remotely, but the visitation stage required a visit of the AETH Certification team to the applicant's *instituto* facilities (AETH, 2020a).

AETH had a membership of 228 listed affiliates, of which 76 were institutional members, and 152 were individual leaders and students (AETH, 2020b). The participant institutions were located in different cities in the United States and Puerto Rico (AETH, 2020b). Every institution was a theological education program serving the Christian Hispanic population of the local communities, with presential and online course offerings (AETH, 2020b). Most institutions had a standalone building in which the programs were offered, while others used the local church facilities (Ramirez, 2019; AETH, 2019). The program protocols for the applicant *institutos* required that every applicant undergoes eligibility scrutiny, and, if eligible, the institution could continue the institutional self-study, the verification visit, and the Council decision stages, in that order (AETH, 2018).

During the stage of application for eligibility, every institution received the Handbook of Certification, which contained the guidelines for every phase of the program (AETH, 2018). The AETH Certification team was responsible for the follow-up and the revision of the documents presented by each institution seeking Certification (AETH, 2018). The length of the process depended on the preparedness of the institution that was pursuing the certificate (AETH, 2020b). The researcher had secured permission with the AETH Board Chair and the Executive Director to use the existing archived data (see Appendices A and B).

Participants

The participants were members of the Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana (AETH), Bible institutes or theological education undergraduate, or ministry formation programs offered to the Hispanic population; and the members of the AETH Certification Committee. The participants of the QUAL phase did not participate in the QUAN phase as recommended by Creswell and Plano Clark for the mixed-methods approach: “The individuals in the first stage of

the data collection are typically not the same participants as those in the third stage. Because the purpose of the quantitative stage is to generalize the results to a population, different and more participants are used in stage 3" (2007, p. 123). For the QUAL phase, a sample of 32 Hispanic Bible institutes were selected from the population of institutions that were undergoing or had undergone the self-study phase, from each category: complete and incomplete. Only 32 institutions met the criteria from a population of 76 AETH institutional members. The researcher used a sample size calculator provided by Survey Monkey™, resulting in a representation of 42 percent of the institutional members of AETH. The sample had a confidence level of 95 percent with a margin of error of 5 percent. Of the 76 institutional members, 34 had applied for the AETH Certification program, but 32 had completed or were in the process of the Certification (AETH, 2020b).

AETH Certification reports stated that the 32 institutes in the program were in different stages, and 21 had passed or were finalizing the self-study stage (AETH, 2020b). The total number of 32 included the *institutos* that had detained the process at the self-study stage. Also, the eight AETH Certification Committee members participated in the context and input evaluations responding to interview questions related to the program's process and the constituency. All interviews were conducted separately (see Appendices G and H). The final participant pool was expected to be close to the original number of 32 participants. The technique for sampling was purposive sampling, which is commonly used in QUAL studies when resources are limited (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Palinkas et al. states:

> This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In addition to knowledge and experience Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) note the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner. (2015)

A study conducted by S. L. Stevens following the mixed-methods approach and the CIPP Evaluation Model to assess the effectiveness of a Washington State childcare program observation tool serves as an example of the above (2017). The study was IRB approved. By implementing the design, the researcher was able to improve the focused monitoring observation tool increasing the reliability and efficiency of the procedures (Stevens, 2017). Another study was conducted by V. F. Hanchell (2014) using the CIPP model to evaluate a Christian college undergraduate program. After completing every evaluation, the researcher concluded that, in general, the program was functioning appropriately but provided areas for reinforcing and improvement to the benefit of the student body and the faculty (Hanchell, 2014). The study was also IRB-approved.

Bustamante, Nelson, and Onzwuegbuzie demonstrated the development of an instrument using the same methodology proposed in the present paper (2009). The researchers used a mixed-methods approach with a web-based survey that participants answered with open and closed-ended questions about the relevance of a tool called the Schoolwide Cultural Competence Observation Checklist (SCCOC) (Bustamante et al., 2009). After collecting the data, the researchers analyzed all using an iterative process for coding and then contrasted and compared to find emerging themes (Bustamante et al., 2009). The analysis yielded four major themes and other subthemes. The use of the mixed-method and such instrument for analysis was sufficiently

important to inform other investigations and helped develop pieces of training for cultural sensitivity and other assessments (Bustamante et al., 2009). The invitations and consent to participate were sent to all participants via email. All invitations and consents delineated the ability to schedule appointments for the interviews, and the researcher's contact information should any questions stemmed.

Role of Researcher

According to the classic QUAL approach, the role of the researcher is to collect, codify, and analyze the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Corbin states that the researcher should remain independent, whereas Strauss encourages a more intentional relationship with the participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). For the present study, the researcher was challenged to remain neutral but collaborative through all the phases of the study. Accordingly, the researcher was aware of the possibility of conflict with personal biases and was considering diligently pathways to mitigate the intrusion while remaining neutral (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2000).

Following the advice of authors Creswell and Creswell, researchers need to mitigate the conflict with the intrusion of personal biases. To do so, the researcher needed to "explicitly identify personal "biases, values, and personal background, such as gender, history, culture, and socioeconomic status (SES) that shape their interpretations formed during a study" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 183). The authors add that the researcher must reflect on past experiences and how each one shapes interpretations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Additionally, the researcher acknowledged that the professional experience and the familiarity with the field of study might inadvertently pattern the elaboration of perceptions and ideas. The researcher had an informal relationship with the participants because of the role as the provider of the initial documentation and consultation for the prospective institutions inquiring

about the AETH certification process. Although the researcher did not participate in the remaining scrutiny (the eligibility phase, self-study phase, on-site visit phase, and certification commission decision phase), the knowledge acquired through experience was sufficient to correctly inform the study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Another challenge that seemed like an opportunity was sharing the same status as collaborators and members of the same culture. The awareness of the dynamics at work in the relationship played a vital role during the interviews as the interviewer and interviewee collaborated (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Since the researcher had some prior interpersonal relationship with most of the participants, implied that there were various levels of continuing relationships that may have complicated the design of the methodology. Therefore, the researcher was obligated to seriously reflect on the meaning of the collaboration, the context, and the findings of the study for the Hispanic Bible institutes in general. The reflection was a continual process since relationships were active and underwent changes.

In the process, the researcher and the participants gained a greater understanding of the levels of collaboration since the researcher is a second-generation Hispanic/Latina, multi-ethnical and multilingual. Regarding the theological position, the researcher is left from the center among Evangelicals and right from the center among mainline churches. Moreover, the collaboration informed the meaning of the data. For such reasons, the researcher maintained a record of observations and field notes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Yet, the researcher maintained a “sustained and extensive experience with participants” (Creswell, 2003, p. 184). The interpersonal relationships with the participants helped increase the participation and connection throughout the duration of the study. Additionally, the researcher was aware of the school’s protocol to test data analysis and all methods utilized in the study. The

researcher was aware that the academic advisor, the mentor, and the dissertation committee remained attentive to all procedures pertaining to the study.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher was aware of the possibility of ethical concerns arising throughout the study. The study was educational and social in nature but did not include sensitive or confidential information. The researcher had secured permission to conduct the study with the Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana (AETH) via email. The researcher requested a formal permission letter and signed consent contained in the Appendices (see appendices A and B). Every participating institution received informed consent that the researcher developed. Also, the participants were all over the age of nineteen and competent of making an informed decision.

To provide additional protection to the identity of the participants, the researcher identified every participant institution with an identification number that enabled all to participate in the study. The same practice was effective for interviews, surveys, data collection, and analysis of video recordings, field notes, images, transcripts, and electronic documentation. To protect the data, the researcher arranged to maintain all documentation locked in a metal file cabinet in the researcher's office, to which no other individual had access. The researcher strictly adhered to the guidelines established by the Institutional Research Board (IRB) and secured permission for leading the study (IRB, 2001).

The researcher is employed by AETH as an assistant to the Executive Director, but the duties did not include participating in the Certification process nor the decision-making stages of the program (researcher's job description in Appendix N). The researcher's AETH duties included providing the application and Handbook for Certification to all applicants to the program. The position did not have the required level of clearance for inclusion in the AETH

Certification program processes. All participants in the study were pledged confidentiality. The participation did not entitle to benefits, and there was minimal risk.

The details were disclosed in the consent forms provided to the participants and preapproved by the Liberty University IRB (see Appendices D, F, and I). The data collected in the researcher's computer contained no personally identifiable information connecting to the participants but was stored in secured drives protected by a complicated and strong password. The researcher used non-identifiable information for the coding software in the researcher's personal computer. Moreover, the management of recorded interview sessions was handled as follows: to prevent the possibility of voice recognition, the interview was conducted in an isolated room, and the transcribed recordings were safely stored in secured drives.

Once the voice and video recordings were downloaded, the ZOOM™ platform record was destroyed to protect the identity of the participants. Every participant was assigned a numerical identifier to manage the records in the computer software. The researcher stored the chart for all identifiers in a locked metal storage cabinet along with the research documents. The researcher planned to destroy such a chart at the end of the study after the data outcomes were confirmed as truthful and correct. For increased protection, the computer used during the research was set to lock after five minutes of inactivity. Only the researcher had the passwords to the computer, drives, and software. Only the researcher had the key to the storage cabinet. In compliance with the IRB guidelines, the documentation was set to be destroyed promptly after completing the study.

Guidance measures for the participants' informed consent included a statement explaining that the data collected, analyzed, and interpreted was shared with members of the academy but was impossible to identify the individual participants of the study, safeguarding the

anonymous status. Finally, the researcher was responsible for applying and completing all forms related to permissions and providing all the necessary information about the participant institutions, including methodology, details of the processes, and conditions of the investigation.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

According to Palinkas et al., the mixed-methods design is the preferred approach for evidence-based, innovative practices, treatments, interventions, and programs (2015). The first phase of the mixed-methods study maintained the focus on the exploratory character of the study (Creswell & Plano, 2011). The support of research scholars enriched the design of the present study, but this researcher adhered to the framework outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2018) and the CIPP evaluation model (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Accordingly, the QUAL portion of the study helped develop the QUAN portion (see Figure 2).

Collection Methods

For the current study, the researcher chose the purposive sampling strategy as the most appropriate to the aims of the study and to maintain consistency (Palinkas et al., 2015). The four CIPP evaluations (context, input, process, product) are management-oriented and allowed the administrators of the programs to judge if the decisions benefited the programs or not. The evaluations were both formative and summative, aiming to improve the program (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). One more benefit of the CIPP evaluations was found in Stufflebeam's design focusing on the processes of administrative decision-making (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The framework of the evaluations enabled the analysis of the outcomes of the four evaluations or decision-making processes connected to the program.

Once the samples were selected, the data collection process began using semi-structured interviews with every participant institution representative and the AETH Certification

Committee members (Creswell, 2014). The collection of data was facilitated by using the ZOOM™ meeting platform for the interviews and the QSR NVivo™ computer software for the data analysis. Also, the researcher used the existing data provided by AETH. Accordingly, the CIPP evaluations for the QUAL phase yielded the data needed through the analysis of the existing data, and the interview responses, in the context and input stages (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

Document Analysis

According to the CIPP model, context evaluation involves collecting and analyzing existing data (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). AETH had a vast quantity of records that included applications for certification, surveys, studies, and other written documentation that served the purpose of informing the present study. The researcher secured consent to review the existing documentation that enriched the data collection and observed the AETH and IRB guidelines for the management, review, and storage of the documents (Creswell, 2014). The researcher considered the studies done by other researchers and reviewed the literature and the existing data available through AETH.

Since the sample population was affiliated with AETH, the organization had demographic records of each participant (AETH, 2020). The researcher considered the development of the Hispanic Bible institutes invited to the study. The focus helped integrate the data for analysis. The input evaluation reviewed the interview responses that introduced the participants' perspective to the study, processed the data with the QSR NVivo™ software to find the frequency of themes, coded the findings, and prepared the data for integration to the QUAN portion of the study (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

Purposive Sampling

The purposive sampling technique involved the willingness to participate and the availability of the volunteered participants. Also, the approach involved the participants' "ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner" (Palinkas et al., 2015; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). A noteworthy aspect of the sampling was that the purposive sampling helped narrow and captured the variations and similarities (Palinkas et al., 2015; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The challenges of purposive sampling included an unclear understanding of the range of variation, for which the researcher foresaw that several attempts to sample selection were necessary to fulfill the theoretical saturation (Palinkas et al., 2015; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Another advantage of purposive sampling was the ability to summarize categories of samples in the present multistage strategy design.

Interviews

As part of the CIPP context evaluation, all interviews were conducted via Zoom™ to accommodate the participants (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The interview transcripts, images, video recordings, and notes were documented and collected for analysis (Creswell & Plano, 2011). The interview had 15 open and close-ended questions that helped identify any relationship and determined the factors leading to the incomplete self-study information (see Appendices G and H). Also, the questions included probe and follow-up questions for the exploration of perspectives, values, and indications of modifications of practices.

In addition, the approach included linguistic and transcendental approaches that encouraged the pool of participants to respond individualistically and conceded the researcher to allow for free in-depth expression in the responses resulting in a more enriching experience. The instruments contents were presented in the preferred language of the participants, Spanish or

English, to secure the best and most intact responses and as an attempt to convey the message accurately. All interview sessions were conducted separately. The Zoom™ interviews were transcribed and analyzed for frequency of themes using the QSR NVivo™ computer software. The transcribed audio was color-coded for each identified theme. The interviews answered the question: (RQ1) How are the needs of the *institutos* accorded with the goals of the AETH certification program? The interviews were an important tool to gather the perspective of the participants with regards to the effectiveness, value, and effects of the program. The collected data explained performance and usefulness. See Figure 1 for sample interview questions.

Figure 1

Sample Interview Questions for QUAL Phase

QUAL Phase: CIPP Evaluations: Context and Input
■ **Participant's Interview** 1. Explain the effectiveness of the AETH Handbook for Certification, Section Two, and the activity of completing the AETH Certification self-study. *Probe: Was the process easy and comprehensive or difficult and intricate? Was the process similar to other self-studies for accreditation done before?* 2. What section of the self-study presented the greater hardship to complete? Why or Why not?
■ **Committee's Interview** 1. How many evaluations have been done to the AETH Certification program since 2013? Monthly? Quarterly? Yearly? *Probe: Is there a performance evaluation used for a Committee member? Describe.*

Observations

The researcher took notes throughout the entire portion of the study. The notes included what the researcher experienced throughout the interview. Also, the researcher documented the interaction with the participants. In addition, the researcher maintained a personal journal that served as an additional source of information that enriched the data collection and analysis.

Figure 2

Proposed Instrumentation for QUAL Phase

QUAL Phase: CIPP Evaluations: Context and Input
• The interviews will have 15 open and close-ended questions that will help identify any relationship and determine the factors leading to the incomplete self-study information. Also, the questions will include probes and follow-up questions for exploration of perspectives, values, and indications of modifications of practices. (see Appendices G and H) • Observations • Archived Documents • Literature Review • Recruitment Letters and Follow-Up emails (see Appendices C and E) • Consent Forms (see Appendices D and F)

Procedures

Context Evaluation

During the context evaluation, the researcher examined the components of the AETH Certification program and ascertained the setting, environment, terms, and situations influencing the execution of the program. The researcher examined the goals and objectives and included other archived material. After reviewing the existing data provided by AETH during the context evaluation, the researcher contacted the AETH members participants and communicated the intent to invite each one to voluntarily participate in the study (see Appendix C) (Stufflebeam &

Zhang, 2017). Purposive sampling was implemented for the selection of the pool in the study (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Consent was sent to the participants to state voluntary willingness to participate in the study and answer the questions of the interview. The interview included fifteen open and closed-ended questions that the researcher sent to every participant prior to the interview date. Every participant was informed about the intention to record the interview, and all responses transcribed verbatim for analysis, following IRB protocols (IRB, 2020). The researcher concluded the interview by asking the participants if any doubt or questions needed clarification. Some verbalized and asked questions, and the researcher responded and gained insight into the understanding of every question and the accuracy of the responses. Every participant was informed that the transcription was available for review and correction if necessary. The questions remained focused on the background of the *instituto*, the governing board, finances, facilities, programs, the faculty, the student body, the management of the student information, the AETH Certification program, and the self-study tool.

The intentional selection of the sample helped maximize the validity and efficiency of the process (Palinkas et al., 2015). Although the saturation was forecasted by using a theory or conceptual framework, in the case of the CIPP model, the researcher reached saturation that emerged from the data (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Palinkas et al., 2015). The researcher was aware of the contextual factors that influenced the data collection, such as how clear were the objectives, the support of the interest groups, administrative authorities, and the availability of resources (Peters et al., 2013). Once the information was collected, all was prepared for analysis.

The evaluation answered the question: (RQ1) How are the needs of the *institutos* accorded with the goals of the AETH certification program? The findings from the archival review and interview responses were transferred to QSR NVivo, were coded, and found theme

frequency. The repetition of a theme 5 times or more was considered a strong response, 3 to 4 times was considered a moderate response, and 1 to 2 times was considered a weak response.

Input Evaluation

The CIPP input evaluation was used to help the AETH Certification Committee make decisions grounded on the framework of the program, and in the process, ascertained what type of resources were accessible (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The evaluation answered the question: (RQ2) How do the *institutos* describe the resources, procedural designs, or strategies of the AETH certification program, and which alternatives can increase the completion of the self-studies? The responses to the interview to the AETH Certification Committee individual responses were complementing the responses to the context interview questions. The Committee answered fundamental questions such as (a) What is the AETH Certification Committee doing in the Certification program? (b) What type of resources is the program using? (c) What resources are being provided to the applicant institutions to build support and assistance during the process of Certification?

Every participant was informed about the intention to record the interview, and all responses were transcribed verbatim for analysis, following IRB protocols (see Appendices D, F, and I) (IRB, 2020). Each participant was informed that the transcription was available for review and correction if necessary. Once the information was collected, all was prepared for analysis. The interview was transcribed for coding and transferred to QSR NVivo™, coded, and found theme frequency. The repetition of a theme 5 times or more was considered a strong response, 3 to 4 times was considered a moderate response, and 1 to 2 times was considered a weak response.

Data Analysis

Analysis Methods

The CIPP model guiding the study provided reliability and validity and maintained the emphasis on monitoring the development of the processes (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The benefit of the model was found in the possibility to assess interrelationships that occurred between action, conditions, and meaning (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Another benefit was that while the researcher was examining the data, other subareas of interest arose and informed the study (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Creswell, 2014). For the best use of the CIPP model, the researcher used the data collected from the semi-structured interviews and categorized, compared, and conceptualized for easy coding (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). To facilitate the process and handling of the information collected, the researcher used the QSR NVivo™ software, which simplified and helped maintain the integrity of the process of organizing, analyzing, and finding themes and categories (see Figure 3) (QSR NVivo, 2020; Creswell, 2014).

Figure 3

Proposed Statistical Measures and Data Analysis for QUAL Phase

QUAL Phase: CIPP Evaluations

Context and Input → QSR NVivo™ software

- Triangulation by software assistance
- Transcription and coding of all archived data, audio, and interviews
- Crosstab tool for themes analysis and the spread of codes
- Queries for categories and other emerging themes
- Conversion of coded material to statistical material

The qualitative data was analyzed using triangulation and assisted by the QSR NVivo™ software (QSR NVivo, 2020). Every piece of information collected from the participants was kept in the software in separate folders; every audio record was uploaded and transcribed, coded, and verified for accuracy (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Creswell, 2014). Since some of the audio recordings were in Spanish, the software translated and performed the coding process (QSR NVivo, 2020). All recorded observations were uploaded and coded (Creswell, 2014). The archived data was uploaded, analyzed, and stored using the QSR NVivo™ software, which facilitated the search for codes (QSR NVivo, 2020). The Crosstab tool in QSR NVivo™ software enabled the researcher to analyze themes present and all that emerged to dimensionalize themes (QSR NVivo, 2020). The researcher was able to run queries for categories and associations of themes (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Creswell, 2014). Once the transcribed data was uploaded, the software helped convert the coded data to statistical material and exported all to SPSS™ for integration (QSR NVivo, 2020; Creswell, 2014).

The interview responses were transcribed and analyzed, which enabled the assessment of the existing practices of the program and useful to gather information on the reasons for the development and execution of the Certification program. The interviews of the institutes and the Committee were conducted separately. The interview responses from the institutes answered the following context evaluation (RQ1) question: How are the needs of the *institutos* accorded with the goals of the AETH certification program? The interview responses of the Committee answered the following input evaluation (RQ2) question: How do the *institutos* describe the resources, procedural designs, or strategies of the AETH certification program, and which alternatives can increase the completion of the self-studies? The researcher reviewed documents pertaining to the program: policies, budget, and archived AETH data.

Trustworthiness

By utilizing both QUAL and QUAN methods, the researcher ensured that the findings had integrity (Bergman, 2008). By using measurement tools that were usually associated with each approach, the researcher tested for validity (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The researcher was aware that the QUAL measurements were different from the QUAN measurements, increasing the concern to observe adherence to IRB guidelines and preserve the validity and reliability of every stage of both phases of the process (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). Adhering to the protocol, the researcher was supervised by a team of scholars and experts in the field under consideration that ensured the procedures were done with diligence and following the established guidelines of Liberty University and IRB. Additionally, the researcher ensured that the participants felt comfortable answering the questions without hesitations or inhibitions.

Credibility

The credibility was established through triangulation. All participants were asked the same set of questions prepared for each particular interview stage of the evaluation. To maintain credibility, every participant was assured an opportunity to verify and review the statements given to the researcher. Additionally, the participants were able to add missing or inadvertently overlooked information during the interview process. The researcher diligently worked to converge all the instruments utilized throughout the entire QUAL phase.

Moreover, the researcher maintained continual communication with the participants reviewing aspects related to common themes and categories (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2009; Holden, 2009; Wilber, 2008). Such communication helped maintain the accuracy of the responses. Also, the researcher worked on writing and recording accurate descriptions and records of the findings. Finally, the researcher invited a consultant to audit the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Dependability

The data collected was coded to identify patterns, keywords or phrases, and repeated themes and categories. By doing so, the data was transferable to continue the QUAN study in phase two (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Esbjorn-Hargens, 2009; Holden, 2009; Wilber, 2008). The researcher was aware that in the QUAL portion, the researcher needed to be flexible as the setting contexts changed. To ascertain dependability, the researcher used well-defined instructions and descriptions of the data collection procedures.

Confirmability

A consultant was invited to review and confirm that every aspect of the evaluation was conducted according to the specifications of the IRB. The responses were transcribed and confirmed with the participants. The information was processed and organized into themes and

essential quotes, providing the participants' perspectives on the experiences with the program. Also, the participants' points of view, themes, excerpts, and quotes were merged to illustrate the core experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Biases were considered and attended in a timely manner.

Transferability

The researcher used the findings in the QUAL phase and integrated them with phase two and developed a survey instrument that was utilized in the QUAN phase to include a larger population and tested the transferability of the findings. For that reason, the researcher chose a mixed-methods approach considering the approach an important piece that confirmed and gave meaning to the data and was useful for applying the findings to other settings.

Quantitative Research Methodology: Process and Product Evaluations

The collected data from the QUAL phase and QUAN results were processed for analysis using statistical software (the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 27). The researcher prepared and distributed an online survey instrument (cross-sectional) during the CIPP process evaluation to make inferences about the general population (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; McMillan, 2000). The survey was developed using the Context-Input-Process-Product theory (CIPP). The CIPP model can be used to assess education reliability, school improvements, teacher training, human resource development, services of non-profit organizations, and technical development (Lee et al., 2019).

The model is very flexible, and the criteria can be utilized and modified according to the evaluation objective and field (Lee et al., 2019). To include the model in the survey, the researcher focused the questions on objectives, achievement, focus, and operation guidelines. The results provided numerical data for analysis. As a result, the researcher identified the

missing data, prepared descriptive statistics, and made additional essential findings: homoscedasticity, singularity, normality, multivariate outliers, and multicollinearity.

Population

The study considered the Christian Hispanic Bible institutes' population in the United States and Puerto Rico. The study focused on Hispanic Bible institutes that operated in the local communities that had a historical relationship with AETH. The Bible institutes were chosen using purposive sampling as in the QUAL portion of the study (Palinkas et al., 2015). The researcher identified 101 Hispanic Bible institutes and ministry formation programs that met the criteria set for the QUAN survey. The population represented a comprehensive portion of the Hispanic Bible institutes in the United States and Puerto Rico. The researcher did find a similar study to corroborate the use of the sampling technique. Research done by Sancar et al. used purposive sampling in an investigation of an educational program in which the CIPP technique was used to prepare the instruments successfully (Sancar Tokmak, 2013).

Sampling Procedures

The researcher used purposive sampling. The chosen population was composed of 101 Hispanic Bible institutes that are members or were members of AETH representative of the Hispanic Bible institutes in the United States and Puerto Rico, regardless of the length of membership (AETH, 2020b). The sample was representative of denominational and non-denominational, certified, and non-certified, traditional, and non-traditional Hispanic Bible institutes. The pool of participants was delimited to the voluntary participation of the institutions. The researcher used a sample calculator provided by Survey Monkey™ (2020). Since AETH had collaborated with 168 Hispanic Bible institutes throughout the years, the sample represents 60 percent of the population with a confidence level of 95 percent and a margin of error of 5 percent

(Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The participant institutions completed a survey, which required a commitment from the institutions to accomplish the process. A willing leader representative from each institution was responsible for completing the survey. The final participant pool was expected to be close to the original number of 101 participant institutions.

Limitations of Generalization

The nature of the mixed-methods approach provided strength to the study by drawing from the QUAL and QUAN approaches, thus reducing the limitations of both techniques (Creswell, 2014). The mixed-methods technique allowed the comparison of various perspectives drawn from the QUAL and QUAN approaches, provided for a reliable explanation of results, allowed for the development of measurement instruments, and integrated the points of view of the participants (Roberts, 2010; Creswell, 2014). The results of the study, then, were generalized to the Hispanic theological education community and can be utilized to promote agreements between entities to serve more constituencies.

In general, the study was influential in understanding the relevance of faculty and staff's continued education, professional readiness, and elevated the urgency to prepare effective and qualified Christian leaders. Another generalization that was drawn from the study was the opportunity to review the self-study responses on the status of student enrollment and what strategies the theological education centers could implement to increase credibility, sustainability, and open the access to resources. Moreover, the resulting outcomes provided comparative data that may serve to seek funding to grant a subsidy to students; also, the same may serve the Hispanic Bible institutes leaders to encourage continued education among faculty and for the overall improvement of the operational practices (Ramirez, 2019). The findings served to suggest improvements to the AETH Certification program and to increase general

effectiveness; findings that informed the decision-making process. Finally, in terms of accredited and certified institutions, the study provided current data on the findings of initial and subsequent self-studies completed by the educational institutions and the effectiveness of the self-study tool.

Since the study used both QUAL and QUAN methodologies in a CIPP evaluation model, the research had advantages and limitations. Some of the advantages of the utilization included the awareness that the mixed-methods research technique was helpful for in-depth studies and provided better interpretation (Hughes, 2016). The use of both QUAL and QUAN approaches was dynamic and meaningful (Hughes, 2016). Some limitations of the mixed-methods (MM) were, as Hughes described, “Interpreting data using the MM can be complicated and time intensive given that the data and interpretations are often abstract” and, “Conducting MM requires training and mastery of methodology” (Hughes, 2016).

Ethical Considerations

The QUAN portion of the study did not include sensitive or confidential information. Every participant institution received informed consent that the researcher developed. Participation was not entitled to benefits, and there was minimal risk. The details were disclosed in the consent forms, preapproved by the Liberty University IRB, which were provided to the participants (see Appendices D, F, and I). Also, the participants were all over the age of nineteen and capable of making an informed decision. To provide additional protection to the identity of the participants, the researcher identified every participant institution with an identification number that enabled all to participate anonymously throughout the length of the study. The practice was successfully implemented to the survey, data collection and analysis, field notes, images, transcripts, and electronic documentation. The researcher had secured permission to conduct the study with the Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana (AETH) via email.

The researcher requested a signed letter granting permission and received the collection of archived documents related to the Hispanic Bible institutes. The researcher planned and followed closely the guidelines established by the Institutional Research Board (IRB, 2001). As part of the protocol, all information pertaining to the study was kept locked in a metal file cabinet in the researcher's office. Only the researcher had a key and access to the documentation, drives, computer, and software. In compliance with the IRB guidelines, the documentation will be destroyed in a timely manner after the completion of the study.

All records entered in the computer were safely stored in a drive with a strong password. The researcher's computer was programmed to lock after five minutes of inactivity, and only the researcher had the password. Only information that was classified as non-identifiable was transferred to the SPSS™ software for statistical analysis. The surveys were downloaded from the Survey Monkey platform and securely stored in the drive and transferred to the SPSS™ software. Guidance measures for the participants' informed consent included a statement explaining that the data collected, analyzed, and interpreted was shared with members of the academy but was impossible to identify the individual participants of the study, safeguarding the incognito status. Finally, the researcher was responsible for applying and completing all forms related to permissions and provided all the necessary information about the participant institutions, including methodology, details of the processes, and conditions of the investigation. All records pertaining to the study were kept in a metal file cabinet in the researcher's office for which the researcher was the only individual with access.

Proposed Instrumentation

The QUAN data collection utilized a survey as the primary approach. The versatility of the survey included the possibility of arranging and performing interviews by phone, online,

computer-assisted, or face-to-face (SIS, 2020). For the present study, the chosen instrument was a computer-assisted survey. The process evaluation in the CIPP model implemented the survey instrument and collected all responses from the interviews and the survey for analysis (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The product evaluation was the final stage of the integration of all data, presentation of the outcomes to the stakeholders, and expedited the preparation of the final report (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The data was collected utilizing a survey containing 12 closed-ended questions, "on Likert scale category responses of 1 to 5 (1 being low and 5 being high) seeking to ascertain how influence is communicated" (Luna, 2019a). Utilization of the Likert rating scale contributed to the QUAN material by collecting data that included variations such as agreement, frequency, quality, importance, and likelihood (see Figure4) (McLeod, 2019).

In doing so, the data on influence, relationships, and intervention effectiveness were easily translated into statistical quantities that measured integration and helped interpret the outcomes for confirming or disconfirming the case. The participants received instructions in the recruitment, and the consent document explained the QUAN phase survey (see Appendices I, J, and K). To increase participation, the researcher sent professional reminder emails to the participants.

Figure 4

Proposed Instrumentation for QUAN Phase

QUAN Phase: CIPP Evaluations Process and Product

1. Survey – 12 questions using the Likert Scale (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (see Appendix J)
2. Recruitment Letters (see Appendix K)
3. Consent Forms (see Appendix I)

The CIPP model is an advantageous assessment technique that can be used to assess education reliability, school improvements, teacher training, human resource development, services of non-profit organizations, and technical development (Lee et al., 2019). The content of the survey was developed to implement the CIPP model and collect numerical data that measured and helped predict the variables and related factors. The QUAN phase research questions are: **RQ3.** Process evaluation: How are the established AETH certification self-study processes being followed? **RQ4.** Product evaluation: What is the impact generated by the completion and incompletion of the AETH certification self-study on the Hispanic Bible institutes and the leadership?

Research Procedures

The researcher prepared and distributed an online survey (cross-sectional) with the intention of making inferences about the general population (McMillan, 2000). The survey was developed using the Context-Input-Process-Product theory (CIPP). The model is very flexible, and the criteria can be utilized and modified according to the evaluation objective and field (Lee et al., 2019). The researcher focused the questions on objectives, achievement, focus, and operation guidelines. The choice for the survey as a method to collect data during the process evaluation was established on several factors: the instrument must be easy to use, must measure what is under consideration in the study (validity), and must remain consistent (reliability) (Creswell, 2014; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The AETH Certification Board and other experts from accrediting organizations (panel of experts) reviewed the contents to assess the validity of the instrument. The cross-sectional design of the survey consisted of 12 questions. The participants were able to provide the perspective on lived experiences: objectives, achievement, focus, operation guidelines, and how the situation can be improved. Observations from video

conferences, interviews, existing data, secondary data, and archived data were collected, reviewed, analyzed, and scrutinized for interpretation and integration (Luna, 2019a). The existing, secondary, and archived data provided sufficient information to prepare a timetable of the unfolding evaluation, attitudes, and behavior of the participants. The combination of both methods provided the numerical percentage probability of the chances for the incompletion of self-studies and the likelihood of prevention.

Process Evaluation

The process evaluation examined the status of the procedures design instituted in the program, which were executed appropriately. The question guiding the evaluation was: (RQ3) How are the established AETH certification self-study processes being followed? The information for the mechanism of the program was collected from the interviews and archived documentation reviews from the QUAL portion of the study, transcribed, coded, and analyzed in the QSR NVivo™ software. The themes that emerged from the QUAL instruments and analysis were transferred to the SPSS™ for further analysis and development of the survey instrument. The survey instrument derived from the literature review, the archived AETH documents, and the responses to the interviews (see Appendix J). The survey contained 12 statements such as: (a) The institution performs self-studies regularly, (b) The faculty and administrative staff undergo performance evaluations every year, (c) The institution evaluates the program's data for periodical reports. The researcher was aware of the need to edit and revise the survey questions; the previous was an example of the type of questions utilized and varied according to the results of the QUAL portion of the study (see Figure 5 for additional samples). The survey was administered to one leader per *instituto.* The above questions did not change after the interview responses were received and analyzed in the QUAL portion.

Figure 5

Sample Survey Questions for QUAN Phase

QUAN Phase: CIPP Evaluations Process and Product

Survey to Hispanic Bible Institutes:

Likert Scale: **1** = Strongly disagree **2** = Disagree **3** = Neutral **4** = Agree **5** = Strongly Agree

- The Bible institute holds a certification/accreditation from an accrediting organization and has experienced the process of a self-study. 1 2 3 4 5
- The administration of the Bible institute has a team dedicated to the periodic evaluation of the institute's performance. 1 2 3 4 5

Two experts were consulted to determine the validity and quality of the content of the survey instrument in place of a pilot test. The experts discussed the relevance of the questions, and the suggested changes were implemented. The experts were members of accrediting institutions whose expertise informed the validity and reliability of the instrument. Once the instrument was revised, the researcher emailed the website link to the Survey Monkey™ platform to all participants. A follow-up email was sent out a week after the initial email. The link directed the user to the webpage containing the consent form and the survey.

Product Evaluation

The final evaluation of the program and the self-study tool included assessing whether the goals were met or not. The question guiding the evaluation was: (RQ4) What is the impact generated by the completion and incompletion of the AETH certification self-study on the Hispanic Bible institutes, the leadership, and the program? The QUAL data from the documents and interviews and the QUAN survey and analyses were used to assess the overall effectiveness of the AETH Certification program. The evaluation included the identification of the recurring

themes from all the resources in narrative form. By using triangulation, the data collected was assessed for validity (Ary et al., 2002). The assessment included a comparison of the results and an evaluation of the influence and significance of the themes identified in the previous phases' evaluations. Using a combination of QUAL and QUAN outcomes produced compelling and credible evidence. Finally, the evaluation ended with the dissemination of the narrative of the findings of the study.

Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures

The systematic process of the QUAN method allowed for the implementation of analytical tools that included regression analysis, independent sample t-tests, variance calculations, and correlated t-tests (SIS, 2020). The researcher had selected SPSS™ software to process the statistical analysis (see Figure 6). The results of the CIPP evaluations were used to compare/relate the variations and carefully examine how extreme was the case, the intensity of the event, and any random or remarkable differences (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Palinkas, 2015; Creswell, 2014). When utilizing integrative analysis, a "funnel approach" was implemented to process the data from "general" to "specific," aimed to narrow the scope, which was useful to find "similarities," differences, and "intervention effectiveness" (Palinkas, 2015). The collected data was processed for analysis using statistical software (the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 27, SPSS™). The data from the process evaluation was collected utilizing a survey containing open-ended and closed-ended questions, "on Likert scale category responses of 1 to 5 (1 being low and 5 being high) seeking to ascertain how influence is communicated" (Luna, 2019a). Using the Likert rating scale contributed to the conversion of QUAL material into QUAN material by collecting data that includes variations such as agreement, frequency, quality, importance, and likelihood (McLeod, 2019).

Figure 6

Proposed Statistical Measures and Data Analysis for QUAN Phase

QUAN Phase: CIPP Evaluations

QUAL and QUAN data will be integrated for analysis

Process and Product Evaluations → IBM SPSS™ software

- Descriptive analysis to find Z scores, standard deviation, mean
- Frequency statistics to find repeated counts
- Correlation statistics using the Pearson's r
- t-Tests, paired t-Tests to compare groups and find confidence range intervals
- Inferential statistics to find equal variances, assumed and not assumed

The results provided numerical data for analysis. The researcher began by running basic statistical operations with the descriptive analysis tool (Research by Design, 2017). The data collected underwent analysis and converted descriptive statistics to Z scores and found how the scores differed from the mean in the units of standard deviation, both negative and positive (Research by Design, 2017; Palinkas, 2015). The test for frequencies used the categorical values and found repeated counts in the evidence (Palinkas, 2015; Creswell, 2014). Since the SPSS™ software compared variables, the researcher ran a query for correlation using the Pearson's correlation tool and measured the relationship between variables and denoted the significance using the advantage of a larger sample (Research by Design, 2017; Creswell, 2014). The researcher continued by analyzing the factors and found how the sample mean differed from the larger pool of institutes after running t-Tests (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Palinkas, 2015; Creswell, 2014; Research by Design, 2017).

By running the paired sample t-Tests the researcher found that the mean of the sample was in some cases different to the larger pool, while in other cases was not, also found that the mean was not always the same as the compared group, and found the range of confidence interval (Creswell, 2014; Research by Design, 2017). The importance of the t-Test in the study was found in reaching the conclusion that the findings were significant by statistical evidence (Creswell, 2014; Research by Design, 2017). Other statistical application to the data was the inferential statistics which found the equal variances both assumed and not assumed, using two unrelated groups and comparing means, standard deviations, and standard error means (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Palinkas, 2015; Creswell, 2014; Research by Design, 2017). Finally, the findings of the QUAN stage were interpreted and correlated to the findings of the QUAL in a discussion and concluded with recommendations for future studies related to the topic (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Palinkas, 2015; Creswell, 2014).

Chapter Summary

Chapter three described the methodology and procedures needed to execute the research study. The problem under study required a mixed-methods model with a CIPP application. The QUAL and the QUAN parts integrated the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) model. The study was divided into two parts: part one dedicated to the QUAL research methodology (context and input evaluations) and part two focused on the QUAN research methodology (process and product evaluations). In addition, the researcher reflected on the expected and unexpected ethical considerations that arose during the execution of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this exploratory sequential study, as stated in chapter one, was to evaluate the AETH Certification program and the self-study responses by collecting data to determine the factors that prevent Hispanic Bible institutes from successfully fulfilling the requirements set by the AETH Certification Handbook, exploring the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. The first sections of the chapter will focus on the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of the data collected. The following sections, organized by research questions, will address the results of the analysis, and the evaluation of the research design, taking into consideration the literature review and theoretical framework presented in chapters two and three, respectively. The QUAL section of the study collected data from interviewing 28 participants through the Zoom™ application. The QUAN section of the study collected data from an online survey of 17 respondents. The main conclusive results of the data analysis are derived from the data collected in both phases and gave answers to the research questions.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

The researcher used an exploratory sequential method approach. To fulfill the requirements of the evaluation, the researcher used information provided by AETH in the form of archived data. The data comprised the years 2013 to 2020. Another strategy included interviewing leaders of the Hispanic Bible institutes and members of the AETH Certification Committee. The QUAL portion of the project was interviews with qualified participants, 28 in total, conducted by the researcher. The QUAN portion involved a survey to 101 participants disseminated via emails administered online, of which 17 participants responded. The defined purpose established in Chapter One, along with the four research questions, steered the direction

of the study. By implementing the CIPP model, the researcher was using the evaluation as a tool to "help make programs work better for the people they are intended to serve" (Nicholson, 1989, p. 313). Every participant provided information through the interviews and the online survey, answering questions of general knowledge about the AETH Certification program, the application for eligibility, and the organizational self-study.

The Context evaluation detected the possible issues and measured the needs by using interviews and analyzing the archived data and historical documentation. Then, the Input evaluation weighed the changes that could be implement by searching the available literature, field notes, and analysis of collected data from the interviews. Moreover, the data collected from the Context and Input evaluations were used to develop a survey instrument, implemented during the Process evaluation to explore if the same factors applied to all the Hispanic Bible institutes, in general. The Product evaluation was carried out to find if there was a difference between the groups by combining the results of the qualitative and the quantitative assessments.

The results of both types of data were organized around the themes that emerged and deliberated in the research questions that follow:

RQ1. Context evaluation: How are the constituents' needs of the *institutos* aligned with the goals and circumstances of the AETH certification program?

RQ2. Input evaluation: How do the *institutos* describe the resources, procedural designs, or strategies of the AETH certification program and which alternatives can increase the completion of the self-studies?

RQ3. Process evaluation: How are the established AETH certification self-study processes being followed?

RQ4. Product evaluation: What is the impact generated by the completion and incompletion of the AETH certification self-study on the Hispanic Bible institutes and the leadership?

Qualitative Interview

The task of developing the interview derived from the findings gathered from the literature review presented in chapter two and the research methodology selected and outlined in chapter three. The interviewed questions covered the concerns identified in chapter two and integrated all into the study as part of the CIPP phases of evaluation. The interview sets can be found in Appendices H and J. After receiving the approval for the interview questions and the consent forms from IRB, the interviews were arranged and implemented by contacting the participants through electronic message invitations using the Liberty University's student assigned email and making phone call. The email letter invitation briefly explained the purpose of the study, how the interview was planned, the intended exploration of the experiences, and each participant's involvement with the AETH Certification program. None of the participants received compensation for the interview.

The researcher identified 32 Hispanic Bible institutes and 8 AETH Certification Committee members that met the criteria for the interviews. The initial response was slow. However, the researcher made five attempts to encourage the prospective participants to volunteer for the study. After the initial attempts to contact the participants, the researcher found that 1 Hispanic Bible institute was no longer open for service, 2 verbally declined the invitation, and 9 did not respond to the invitation. Only 20 Hispanic Bible institutes participated in the interview. The 8 Committee members participated in the interviews. The total number of interviewed participants was 28. The interviews were done via the Zoom™ platform. Every voluntary participant was scheduled and assigned an identification number to maintain confidentiality. To reduce the possibility of any bias or any connection to the identity of the respondents, the only demographic information the researcher annotated was whether the

participant was male or female. The other piece of information collected referred to the certification status, obtained from the archived data and not from the interview (certified or not).

Every voluntary participant completed and returned a consent to the researcher. After obtaining signed consent, the interviews were conducted and recorded using Zoom™. The participants were divided into two groups: the first group were 20 AETH members Hispanic Bible institutes leaders and the other group were the 8 AETH Certification Committee members. Two sets of questions were used to give direction to the interview process: one for the Hispanic Bible institutes, and another for the AETH Certification Committee members (see figures 7 and 8). The researcher described the project's purpose and the framework of the methodology to the participants. Each interview consisted of fifteen open and close-ended questions. The length of the interviews ranged from 30 to 50 minutes: some responses were succinct, while others were detailed. Notes were taken throughout the activity.

All interview responses were downloaded from the Zoom™ platform; then, collected into groups, and transcribed. Next, the data was uploaded to the NVivo 12 software for analysis. The researcher used the transcription module from NVivo 12™ (R1) version software to transcribe the interviews, and each one was carefully reviewed for exactitude. The researcher began the process of deeper analysis that produced various categories, streams, significant quotes, themes, and subthemes that will be discussed in this chapter and will resurface in the Research Question examination, and in the conclusions presented in chapter five.

Figure 7

QUAL Phase Interview Questions Set 1

Interview Questions for AETH Certification Committee Members

1. How long have you been a member of AETH?
2. How long since you joined the Certification Committee?
3. Explain the AETH Certification program. What are the components and objectives of the Certification? How long does it take for the entire process?
4. Explain the effectiveness of the Handbook for Certification.
5. Describe the eligibility process.
6. How is the flow of communication with the stakeholders? What are the needs of the stakeholders?
7. Is there a preparation period that the applicants must pass prior to the start of the Certification process?
8. Describe the self-study phase of the Certification program. How many institutions are going through the process now?
9. Explain the procedure(s) to managing the incomplete self-studies. What is the expected outcome of the self-study? What is the relevance of the self-study for the applicant institutions?
10. What is the incompletion rate of the site-visit phase?
11. Describe the instruments used by the Committee to monitor the various stages of Certification? Explain the data reporting procedures, including the storage of reports and stakeholder information.

Figure 7 continued

Interview Question for AETH Certification Committee Members
12. How many evaluations have been done to the AETH Certification program since 2013? Monthly? Quarterly? Yearly?
13. What body oversees the operations of the AETH Certification program?
14. What is the program's budget?
15. Explain how the program can be improved to maximize the rate of completion of all stages of the Certification and future plans for expansion.

Figure 8

QUAL Phase Interview Questions Set 2

Interview Question for Hispanic Bible Institutes
1. How long has your institution been a member of AETH?
2. Does your institution hold a certification or accreditation from another accrediting organization? How long has your institution been accredited/certified?
3. Explain the effectiveness of the AETH Handbook for Certification, Section One, that you received during the eligibility phase and prior to beginning the self-study phase.
4. Describe the eligibility application process.
5. Explain the effectiveness of the AETH Handbook for Certification, Section Two, and the activity of completing the AETH Certification self-study.
6. What section of the self-study presented the greater hardship to complete? Why or why not?
7. What was the outcome of the self-study phase?
8. Do you believe that the self-study phase addressed all the areas of operation (both weak and strong)? How?

Figure 8 continued

Interview Question for Hispanic Bible Institutes
9. Explain the effectiveness of the Handbook for Certification, Section Three, and the transition from the self-study phase to the site visit phase.
10. How did the staff and faculty prepare for receiving the evaluation team?
11. What were the outcomes of the site visit evaluation?
12. How did the AETH Certification process impact the quality of the operations of the Bible institute?
13. How prepared was the institute's team to undergo every portion of the Certification process?
14. Explain the type of support received from the AETH Certification Committee through the entire process.
15. What barriers can be identified to the completion of the AETH Certification program?

Quantitative Survey

The survey was developed using the results of the analysis of the QUAL phase data. The researcher used the discoveries of the literature review presented in chapter two, the AETH archived data, and the interviews responses analyses to develop a survey instrument for the QUAN phase. The survey instrument included 12 questions that covered general organizational structure and self-study evaluation practices in the participant institutions. In other words, the survey included questions about the components of a traditional certification or accreditation self-study process. The researcher invited three experts to test the pilot survey: one is an expert in Hispanic Bible institute operations, and two are experts in theological schools' accreditation procedures. After sending the invitations, two experts responded, Dr. Tom Tanner, Director of Accreditation at the Association for Theological Schools (ATS), and Dr. Robert Kilgore, who

has dedicated many years serving the needs of Hispanic Bible institutes in the United States as a consultant and as a site visitor for accreditation processes. The first page of the survey was the consent form, followed by the twelve-question survey. The Likert Scale was chosen for the response selection of the degree of agreement: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree (see figure 9). As recommended by the experts, eleven questions had a comment box that provided the opportunity for an expanded response.

Figure 9

QUAN Phase Likert Scale Survey Questions

Survey Question for Hispanic Bible Institutes
1. The administration of the Bible institute has established an organizational structure that includes the following: statutes, regulations, a mission statement, and a strategic plan. 1 2 3 4 5 Comments:
2. The administration of the Bible institute has secured adequate funds from reliable sources of revenue, established a verifiable budget, and developed a strategic financial plan for long-term success that are audited periodically to match the evolving needs of the organization. 1 2 3 4 5 Comments:
3. The Bible institute's facilities are suitable and can accommodate the administrative offices, a library with both bibliographic and audio/visual resources, and classrooms. 1 2 3 4 5 Comments:
4. The institute's educational programs offerings are available in a catalog, disclosing the requirements for completion. 1 2 3 4 5 Comments:
5. The institute's faculty members hold a master or doctoral degree in the subject taught. 1 2 3 4 5 Comments:

Figure 9 continued

Survey Question for Hispanic Bible Institutes

6. The faculty receives adequate compensation for the work, corresponding to the professional readiness. 1 2 3 4 5
   Comments:

7. The administrative staff understand the purpose and have received training on the function of an accreditation/certification process and what the organizational self-assessment entails. 1 2 3 4 5
   Comments:

8. The institute's present operational condition is at acceptable levels to begin and successfully complete a self-study. 1 2 3 4 5
   Comments:

9. The administration of the Bible institute has inquired about the AETH Certification. 1 2 3 4 5
   Comments:

10. The Bible institute holds a certification/accreditation from an accrediting organization and has experienced the process of a self-study. 1 2 3 4 5
    Comments:

11. The administrative staff of the Bible institute needs mentoring in the areas of organizational structure and operations, financial and strategic planning, educational programs, curriculum revision, and recruitment. 1 2 3 4 5
    Comments:

12. Hispanic Bible Institute: Denominational_____ Non-denominational_____

    Years established: 1 to 5_____ 6 to 10_____ 11 to 20_____ 20 to 30_____ 31 or more_____

The last question of the survey was divided into two sections intended to collect demographic data that was instrumental during the analysis stage. The initial draft of the survey was approved by the IRB, and the same format was used to develop the published QUAN survey version. The researcher was guided by the challenges the Hispanic Bible institutes encounter,

including demographic and educational challenges findings yielded by the literature review in chapter two to inform the selection of the structure and overall design of the survey (see pages 46 to 50). The expert consultants' recommendations about the survey pilot test provided good information that was implemented and helped improve the efficiency and clarity of the survey instrument. The survey was uploaded to the Survey Monkey™ platform along with the consent for participation. An electronic invitation was sent to 101 Hispanic Bible institutes with a historical relationship with AETH. After sending the electronic letter invitations, the response was slow and briefly stagnant. The researcher followed the initial invitation with a second and third electronic invitations. After following up with three attempts of electronic communication, the researcher continued with two attempts with phone call to each prospect participant to personally invite them to join the study and complete the survey. During the invitation stage, 7 leaders of *institutos* verbalized a refusal to participate, 9 *institutos* are no longer providing services, and 68 never answered the invitation. In summary, 17 respondents completed the survey with 0 incomplete surveys.

A recurrent response that the leaders of the *institutos* verbalized during the invitation stage was a hesitation to answer an online survey, considering the virtual environment complicated. The researcher reassured each one about the ease of use of the Survey Monkey platform. Each voluntary participant checked a box in agreement to participate located in the consent page of the survey, acknowledging that the content was read, and the participant voluntarily agreed to complete the survey. That step allowed the respondent to proceed to the next page to complete the online survey.

Demographic and Sample Data

Qualitative Participants

Chapter One established that the criteria for participation in the study was to be a Hispanic Bible institute, member of AETH, and older than 19 years of age. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. Leedy et al. defined purposive sampling as follows, "Purposive sampling entails choosing those individuals or objects that will yield the most information about the topic under investigation" (2019, p. 242). Accordingly, the sample for the QUAL portion of the study was 28 participants, distributed among 20 Hispanic Bible institutes and 8 AETH Certification program representatives, who voluntarily agreed to an interview.

The researcher assigned unique identification numbers to each participant to provide anonymity. To safeguard the integrity of the responses, each interview was recorded, identified with the participant's unique number, and transcribed for analysis and prevention of biases in the process. Every voluntary participant was individually interviewed by the researcher. During the interviews, the researcher was able to collect some demographic pieces and confirm some of the data reviewed during the examination of the archived data provided by AETH, which was useful for the investigative project (see Tables 2 and 3). The participants were divided into two groups described below: AETH Certification Committee members and Hispanic Bible institutes representatives. Two sets of fifteen questions were prepared for each group.

Table 2

Origin of the Participant Hispanic Bible Institutes

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Denominational	14	70
Non-denominational	6	30
Total	**20**	**100**

Table 3

Distribution of Participants

Participants	Male	%	Female	%
Hispanic Bible Institute Representatives	11	55%	9	45%
AETH Certification Committee Members	4	50%	4	50%
Total = 28	**15**		**13**	

As presented in Table 2, the respondents selected to self-identify as denominational participants, representing a 70% (*n*= 14) of the total sample, and non-denominational participants, representing a 30% (*n*= 6) of the total sample. The results confirm the statements in the literature review, in chapter two and pages 45 and 46, of the interest that the denominations have in the training of the lay members and constituencies (FTE, 1988; Conde-Frazier, 1998, JVA, 2012; AETH 2013; Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019). Table 3 provides the participant distribution and the gender composition of the respondents. The 28 respondents were divided into two subgroups. The *institutos'* representatives had a 55% male representation (*n*= 11), and a 45% female representation (*n*= 9). The 8 Certification Committee representatives had

a balanced representation of 50% males (*n*= 4) and 50% females (*n*= 4). Both groups' percentages in Table 3 demonstrate gender inclusion in the work teams in each category.

Quantitative Participants

The QUAN portion required that the qualified participants were a Hispanic Bible institute, member of AETH, and older than 19 years of age. A sample of 17 participants voluntarily signed the consent; and then, completed and submitted the survey instrument. Equally important during the QUAN phase was the safeguarding of the respondents' identity during the process of completing the survey. The researcher assigned unique identification numbers to each participant, and each stayed anonymous during the online survey activity.

To limit the possibility of any bias, the researcher only collected demographic information related to the denominational status, years of operation, and certification or accreditation status. The researcher sent 101 invitations for the online survey using the Liberty University student's email. The invitation was sent in the form of a letter containing a brief description of the project and the purpose of the study. After several electronic messages with a slow response, the researcher attempted to contact the prospective participants by phone. During the invitation stage, 7 leaders of *institutos* verbalized a refusal to participate, 9 *institutos* no longer provided services, and 68 *institutos* never answered the invitation. Only 17 Hispanic Bible institute respondents voluntarily consented and completed the survey.

The 17 participants were divided into two main categories, of which 47.1% (*n*= 8) self-identified as a denominational Hispanic Bible institute while the remaining 52.9% (*n*= 9) self-identified as a non-denominational Hispanic Bible institute. Although the numbers are not too different, in the survey, the non-denominational *institutos* were the larger group participating and demonstrating an interest in the content of the study. Although the percentage for the

denominational *institutos* is slightly lower, the literature review presented in Chapter Two in relation to the denominations' interest in developing training systems to educate the laity and the leaders is adequately represented in the survey findings (FTE, 1988; Conde-Frazier, 1998, JVA, 2012; AETH 2013; Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019). Please refer to Table 4 to see the distribution.

The online survey collected information about the years established providing services, which was an important criterion for analysis. Of the 17 respondent *institutos*, 17.6% (*n*= 3) were 1 to 5 years established, 23.5% (*n*= 4) were 6 to 10 years established, 17.6% (*n*= 3) were 11 to 20 years established, 23.5% (*n*= 4) were 20 to 30 years established, and 17.6% (*n*= 3) were 31 or more years established. Please refer to Table 5 to see the distributions. Further analysis was done to assess the relationship between the years established and the identification with a denomination as factors for the completion or incompletion of the self-studies.

Table 4

Distribution of Hispanic Bible Institute Participants

Variable	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Denominational	8	47.1
Non-denominational	9	52.9
Total	**17**	**100**

Table 5

Years Established

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1 to 5	3	18
6 to 10	4	23
11 to 20	3	18
20 to 30	4	23
31 or more	3	18
Total	**17**	**100**

Data Analysis and Findings

Qualitative Data

The section summarizes the findings and responses of the participants to the interviews and provides some of the findings of the results collected.

RQ1

Context evaluation: How are the constituents' needs of the *institutos* aligned with the goals and circumstances of the AETH certification program?

The analysis of the archived data included records of the Hispanic Bible institutes as follows: those who expressed an interest, others that were in the process of completing the certification stages, and those who completed the Certification program. The purpose of the content evaluation was to appraise the existing records of the AETH Certification program and the self-study responses of the Hispanic Bible institutes seeking to understand the needs of the Hispanic Bible institutes and how the goals of the Certification program satisfy the needs of the *institutos*. The above question guided the exploratory process and helped recognize and isolate a

repeated theme: the readiness of the institution's leaders in matters of organizational structure and function will determine the success rate in the certification process. The theme was an important variable and component in the interview process to both participants: AETH Certification Committee members and Hispanic Bible institutes participants.

The scrutiny of the literature presented in Chapter Two revealed that out of 34 institutes members of AETH that had begun the process of certification with an inquiry and an application, only 10 had concluded the stages, including successfully completing the self-study stage, and attained the certified status. In other words, only 29% of the *institutos* had satisfied the requirements. The findings agree with the challenges identified in the literature review in Chapter Two regarding patterns that ABHE identified. The ABHE identified seven challenges that surfaced in higher education institutions during accreditation processes, and some are identical to the challenges that the *institutos* encountered. The challenges are: (1) the mission was unclear, (2) the gathering of data was inadequate (3) there was a misunderstanding of and an inexperience with correct procedures for efficiency, (4) there was distrust among the staff, (5) some had uncommitted leaders, (6) others suffered with deficiency in resources, and (7) there was inadequate planning (ABHE, 2020). Although the scope of the present study did not encompass all the challenges listed above, the context evaluation results agreed with ABHE in that the organizational readiness and professional preparedness of the leaders contributed to the successful attainment of the certified status. The same theme was carried throughout the following evaluations and was an instrumental piece in the development of the survey instrument.

RQ2

Input evaluation: How do the *institutos* describe the resources, procedural designs, or strategies of the AETH certification program and which alternatives can increase the completion of the self-studies?

The input evaluation centered around the methodology used in the certification process. The interview tool used for the evaluation followed the framework proposed in Chapter Three, and included questions related to the Certification Handbook and the various documents and reports necessary to submit during the process. Also, the interview explored the relationship between the Committee members and the *institutos* throughout the process of Certification. The theme that was initially identified during the context evaluation became a reoccurring theme in the input evaluation, and two emerging themes were identified: development of comprehensive forms and templates; and the need for better communication, more support, and mentoring. The analysis of the categories yielded various themes and subthemes. Once the analysis was completed, the researcher had identified eight codes and three main themes (see Table 6).

Table 6

List of Codes, Subthemes, and Themes Derived from the Interviews

Codes	Subthemes	Themes
Unprepared institutes do not complete the process	Subtheme 1: Length of the process is determined by preparedness	Theme 1: The readiness of the institution's leaders in organizational structure and function will determine the success rate in the certification process
Unawareness about organizational structure	No subtheme identified	
Difficulties understanding the certification handbook	Subtheme 2a: Language used in Handbook is not familiar to Bible institutes	Theme 2: Development of comprehensive forms and templates
Hispanic Bible institutes need training on the certification processes	Subtheme 2b: Some have another accreditation	
The need to standardize forms for institute's reports	Subtheme 2c: The need for templates to standardize submission of reports	
Controversy over curriculum, unsecured budgetary practices, cost of certification, and limited or no access to a library	No subtheme identified	
Request for more support	No subtheme identified	Theme 3: Need for better communication, more support, and mentoring
New Committee members need training on procedures	No subtheme identified	

The codes, subthemes, and themes identified echoed the findings of the surveys done by AETH, JVA Consulting, and Ramirez; and echoed the study done by Hernandez et al., that were reviewed in Chapter Two. The surveys' results demonstrated that the challenges that the *institutos* encountered in the years 2012, 2016, 2019, and 2020 are still prevalent (JVA, 2012; Hernandez et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019; AETH, 2020a, 2020b).

Theme 1: The readiness of the institution's leaders in organizational structure and function will determine the success rate in the certification process. The review of the archived data demonstrated little understanding of matters related to organizational structure. The interviews with Hispanic Bible institute leaders demonstrated that the initial results of the archived data review were correct. Participant number 21019 declared that the experience of previously undergoing the process was a learning experience. The participant added that the awareness of the *instituto*'s leadership on how to proceed and knowing what was expected was key to the completion of the other stages of the certification process. By gathering a support team to focus on the certification process, the *instituto's* team was able to complete the process in one year from beginning to end. Participant 21022 stated that the AETH certification was the first exposure to a certification process. Since the team was not experienced, the process took five years to complete. According to the participant, the Handbook was difficult to understand because the language was misleading, and the *instituto's* leaders had many corrections to make to the organizational practices to meet the AETH Certification standards.

Participant 21024 stated that the process was straightforward and effective nevertheless, opted to stop the process at the point of the self-study because the *instituto's* leadership considered that the self-study did not address all the areas the *instituto's* leaders deemed necessary. Participant 21033 claimed that the *instituto's* leaders did not continue the process because the leadership understood that the certification process was more than what the team was ready to do. Participant 21039 stated that the certification was accomplished because of the denominational affiliation's support and organizational structure. Participant 21012 claimed that the AETH certification standards were set too high to be realistic and the cost of the process was high and an important factor to consider.

Subtheme 1: Length of the process is determined by preparedness. A considerable number of participants agreed that if the *instituto* did not have the AETH Certification educational standards in place, had an effective organizational structure, nor experience in certification processes, the endeavor would have taken longer in comparison with an *instituto* that had all the pieces in place. Participant 21022 expressed that the *instituto* began the process of certification in 2016 but finally achieved certified status in 2021 because there were multiple areas of the organizational structure, curriculum, and facilities that needed to be corrected. In the case of participant 21023, the *instituto* required improvements in the areas of budgeting, strategic planning, having suitable facilities, students' record-keeping, faculty stipends, and other governance pieces. Although the process began in 2016, the corrective measures were taking time to implement. Participant 21024 agreed that unpreparedness in more than one area caused the *instituto* to detain the process. The three participants mentioned above concurred that the leaders of the Hispanic Bible institutes are educators and not acquainted with matters of governance, strategic planning, and overall organizational management.

Theme 2: Development of comprehensive forms and templates. Participant 21110 declared that the Certification Handbook was difficult to understand, causing the *instituto's* leaders to seek the help of consultants to clarify the Handbook's instructions. Participant 21109 stated that the Handbook's language was unclear and complicated. The greater obstacle was deducing the concepts that were relevant in the sections about the curriculum. The participant and the *instituto's* team suggested that an immediate solution would be a chart included in the Handbook explaining the concepts and all criteria. Participant 21024 asserted that the formulation of reports and submission of documentation was problematic and challenging.

Participant 21022 recommended adding a checklist of standards, simplifying the language, and including templates to avoid submitting unnecessary information and documentation.

Subtheme 2a: Language used in Handbook is not familiar to Bible institutes.

According to the interviews, many participants rated the language of the Handbook as vague and needing to be more specific. Others, like participant 21016, agreed that the instructions for the self-study were complicated and confusing. Many demonstrated frustration for lacking the competency to understand the instructions. In contrast, a lower number did not find anything misguiding or complicated about the language used in the Handbook. Participant 21005 was satisfied with the straightforward instructions in the Handbook. Participant 21017 stated that the leaders at the *instituto* completed the tasks in the Handbook, and the response received from the AETH Certification Committee left the team questioning what AETH was expecting, or what were the AETH expectations for the *institutos*. Participant 21022 expressed that the Handbook is vague, because by following the instructions of the Handbook, the team was misled and submitted incomplete documentation. The participant recommended that the AETH Certification team corrected the verbiage in the Handbook and provided guidance to the *instituto* leaders through the self-study stage. Table 7 demonstrates the status of each participant Hispanic Bible institute at the time of the interview.

Table 7

AETH Certification Status for Participant Hispanic Bible Institutes

Certification Stage	Number	Percentage
Eligibility	8	40
Self-study	1	5
Verification visit	1	5
Certified	7	35
Re-certified	3	15
Total	**20**	**100**

Subtheme 2b: Some have another accreditation. At least seven participant *institutos* held an accreditation or certification from another accrediting organization. Participants 21023, 21033, 21039, 21009, 21017, 21019, and 21020 stated that the *institutos* were accredited or certified prior to beginning the process of certification with AETH. The recurrent comment was that the AETH Certification did not provide the support nor a good flow of communication that other accrediting or certifying organizations provided. Participant 21005 stated that most of the *institutos* that had achieved AETH certified status were connected to a larger organization that ensured sustainability. The participant added, "AETH Committee must recognize the reality of the Bible institutes and see the common purpose the Bible institute is seeking to accomplish. Not all the Bible institutes would be capable of fulfilling all the stages" (21005).

Subtheme 2c: The need for templates to standardize submission of reports. According to participant, 21019 the Certification program could be improved by developing and implementing standardized forms and metrics for reporting progress and document submissions. *Instituto* 21019 elaborated on the complicated process that the leadership underwent trying to

understand what the Certification Committee wanted to read in the reports and figuring how to present the data in a comprehensively and effectively way. Participant 21022 recommended that a checklist be included in the Handbook along with templates for the various reports to submit to avoid submitting excessive information. Participant 21029 agreed that templates were needed to help standardize the submissions of reports and other required documents. Participant 21109 recommended that a short video or webinar should be part of the process with the purpose of educating applicants on all aspects of the process. Participant 21110 declared that sample forms and templates should be included in the Handbook chapters and appendices.

Theme 3: Need for better communication, more support, and mentoring. Participant 21005 claimed that during the process of certification the *instituto's* leadership did not have regular contact with the Committee members except for the initial conversation. The participant continued stating that the Committee did not offer guidance or mentoring. The *instituto's* team did not receive any training prior to or during the process. Participant 21009 testified that the *instituto's* leadership did not receive support or communication from the Committee, which left the team frustrated with the process. Similarly, participant 21012 stated that the *instituto* did not receive mentoring or guidance to understand and properly use the Handbook. Participant 21016 noted that the leadership did not receive support from the Committee. Table 8 demonstrates the connection that the members of the Committee had in relation to the Hispanic Bible institutes. Interestingly, half of the Committee members belonged to a certified *instituto,* and the other half did not. The balance in perspectives of Committee members that had participated in the AETH Certification process as a candidate *instituto* and others that had not should set the arena for a more comprehensive and balanced review of submissions, guidance through the process, and wholesome communication with the candidate *institutos*.

Table 8

AETH Certification Committee members' relationship to Certified Institutos

	Number	Percentage
Belonging to a AETH Certified Hispanic Bible institute	4	50
Not related to a AETH Certified Hispanic Bible institute	4	50
Total	**8**	**100**

Quantitative Data

RQ3

Process evaluation: How are the established AETH certification self-study processes being followed?

The process evaluation was intended to explore further the results of the context and input evaluations. Using the findings of both evaluations and the framework described in Chapter Three, approved by the IRB, the researcher developed the survey instrument focusing the questions on the themes and subthemes that arose from the interviews and archived data examinations. The survey covered aspects of the typical self-study for certification or accreditation, included in the AETH Certification Handbook and similar to any accreditation procedures, attempting to gain insight into the perspective of Hispanic Bible institutes that have not experienced the AETH certification process. The *institutos* were from denominational and non-denominational contexts, and some had other accreditations but not an AETH Certification. All responses remained confidential, and the researcher ensured that the anonymity of each participant was safeguarded. For the purpose of simplicity, the researcher presented here Table 9 containing the questions of the survey instrument, the frequencies, and percentages, and Table 10 containing general statistics that helped explain the responses of the participants.

Table 9

Frequency of Responses to Survey Questions to Hispanic Bible Institutes

Q1. The administration of the Bible institute has established an organizational structure that includes the following: statutes, regulations, a mission statement, and a strategic plan.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Neutral	1	5.9	5.9	17.6
	Agree	8	47.1	47.1	64.7
	Strongly agree	6	35.3	35.3	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Q2. The administration of the Bible institute has secured adequate funds from reliable sources of revenue, established a verifiable budget, and developed a strategic financial plan for long-term success that are audited periodically to match the evolving needs of the organization.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Disagree	2	11.8	11.8	23.5
	Neutral	4	23.5	23.5	47.1
	Agree	7	41.2	41.2	88.2
	Strongly agree	2	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 continued

Q3. The Bible institute's facilities are suitable to accommodate the administrative offices, a library with both bibliographic and audio/visual resources, and classrooms.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Disagree	1	5.9	5.9	11.8
	Neutral	4	23.5	23.5	35.3
	Agree	9	52.9	52.9	88.2
	Strongly agree	2	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Q4. The institute's educational programs offerings are available in a catalog, disclosing the requirements for completion.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Agree	11	64.7	64.7	70.6
	Strongly agree	5	29.4	29.4	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Q5. The institute's faculty members hold a master or doctoral degree in the subject taught.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Disagree	1	5.9	5.9	17.6
	Agree	7	41.2	41.2	58.8
	Strongly agree	7	41.2	41.2	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 continued

Q6. The faculty receives adequate compensation for the work, corresponding to the professional readiness.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	17.6	17.6	17.6
	Disagree	1	5.9	5.9	23.5
	Neutral	5	29.4	29.4	52.9
	Agree	4	23.5	23.5	76.5
	Strongly agree	4	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Q7. The administrative staff understand the purpose of and have received training on the function of an accreditation/certification process and what the organizational self-assessment entails.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Disagree	3	17.6	17.6	23.5
	Neutral	3	17.6	17.6	41.2
	Agree	6	35.3	35.3	76.5
	Strongly agree	4	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Q8. The institute's present operational condition is at acceptable levels to begin and successfully complete a self-study.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	2	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Neutral	3	17.6	17.6	29.4
	Agree	7	41.2	41.2	70.6
	Strongly agree	5	29.4	29.4	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 continued

Q9. The administration of the Bible institute has inquired about the AETH Certification.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Disagree	2	11.8	11.8	23.5
	Neutral	1	5.9	5.9	29.4
	Agree	8	47.1	47.1	76.5
	Strongly agree	4	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Q10. The Bible institute holds a certification/accreditation from an accrediting organization and has experienced the process of a self-study.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	23.5	23.5	23.5
	Disagree	4	23.5	23.5	47.1
	Neutral	3	17.6	17.6	64.7
	Agree	3	17.6	17.6	82.4
	Strongly agree	3	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Q11. The administrative staff of the Bible institute needs mentoring in the areas of organizational structure and operations, financial and strategic planning, educational programs, curriculum revision, and recruitment.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Neutral	4	23.5	23.5	35.3
	Agree	6	35.3	35.3	70.6
	Strongly agree	5	29.4	29.4	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 continued

Q12. Years established and type of Hispanic Bible institute.

Years established	N	%
1 to 5	3	17.6%
6 to 10	4	23.5%
11 to 20	3	17.6%
20 to 30	4	23.5%
31 or more	3	17.6%

Hispanic Bible institute	N	%
Denominational	8	47.1%
Non-denominational	9	52.9%

After reviewing the above results yielded from the survey, the researcher identified conflicting responses discussed next. When the *institutos* were asked about organizational structure components, the results of Q1 demonstrate that 82.4% (*n*= 14) of the *institutos* claimed to have an organizational structure. The next question, Q2, dealt with the financial state of the *institutos*, and 53% (*n*= 9) claimed that the organization was financially secured; but 23.5% (*n*= 4) were neutral about the issue, and 23.6% (*n*= 4) claimed that the *institutos* were not financially secured. The last two groups added to almost half of the number of respondents.

The responses to Q6 dealt with the compensation paid to the faculty. The respondents claimed that the *instituto* paid adequate compensation to faculty members, 47% (*n*= 8), but 29.4% were neutral on the issue while 23.5% (n= 4) responded negatively. The last two groups made up more than half of the number of the respondents. The results of Q7, dealt with the level

of understanding about certification and accreditation processes and self-studies, and reflected that 58.8% (*n*= 10) of the *institutos'* staff understood the processes and that 17.6% (*n*= 3) were neutral. In comparison, 23.5% (*n*= 4) claimed not to understand.

In Q8, 72.4% (*n*= 12) of the respondents claimed that the *institutos* were in sound operational levels to satisfactorily complete a self-study. Reaching Q11, the responses were: 64.7% (*n*= 11) in favor of needing mentoring in the areas of organizational structure and operations, financial and strategic planning, educational programs, curriculum revision, and recruitment, and a surprising 23.5% (*n*= 4) took a neutral position on the issue. Table 10 helps to summarize the information and highlight potential variations and relationships.

The review of the responses proved that the discoveries of the literature review in Chapter Two, and the context and input evaluations yielded the correct themes and issues. The survey included core aspects of the organizational structure and strategic planning that were necessary to operate an organization, regardless of the size, and to secure the sustainability of the institution. All are aspects that were components of a certification and accreditation process.

Moreover, Q1, Q7, Q8, and Q11 results demonstrated that, although the *institutos* claimed having an organizational structure (Q1) with sufficient readiness to complete an accreditation (Q7) and a self-study (Q8), the follow up question (Q11) reflected that more than half of the respondents acknowledged that the *institutos'* staff needed mentoring in all aspects of the organizational structure with almost a quarter of the respondents remaining neutral. The research work done on Hispanic Bible institutes presented in Chapter Two (see page 47) stated that the administrative body of the *institutos* were not necessarily trained in subjects related to leadership, managerial, financial, strategic planning, and mechanisms that guided the functionality of the institution (Hernandez et. al., 2016; Ramirez, 2019; AETH, 2013).

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
				Statistic	Std. Error	
Q1	17	1.00	5.00	3.9412	.30281	1.24853
Q2	17	1.00	5.00	3.2941	.29412	1.21268
Q3	17	1.00	5.00	3.5882	.24343	1.00367
Q4	17	1.00	5.00	4.1176	.22496	.92752
Q5	17	1.00	5.00	3.9412	.32619	1.34493
Q6	17	1.00	5.00	3.2941	.34047	1.40378
Q7	17	1.00	5.00	3.5294	.29850	1.23073
Q8	17	1.00	5.00	3.5882	.32152	1.32565
Q9	17	2.00	5.00	3.8824	.24075	.99262
Q10	17	1.00	5.00	2.8235	.35599	1.46779
Q11	17	1.00	5.00	3.7059	.30636	1.26317
Q12 Years established	17*	1.00	5.00	3.0000	.34300	1.41421
Q12 Hisp. Bible Inst.	17*	1.00	2.00	1.5294	.12478	.51450
Valid N (listwise)	17					

*Note: Question 12 had two components that were important to the Process evaluation.

RQ4

Product evaluation: What is the impact generated by the completion and incompletion of the AETH certification self-study on the Hispanic Bible institutes and the leadership?

The product evaluation was mainly concerned with finding the achievements, benefits, and expansions of the program by focusing on the outcomes. Attention was given to the impact on the leaders and on the AETH. Additionally, there was a concern with consistency of processes. Equally important was how the outcomes reflected on the leaders and whether the needs initially identified had been met. Attention was given to the results of the survey instrument for the assessment of the overall impact; then, analyzed the responses of the survey

instrument in SPSS™. The following tables in the chapter present the findings, including t-test scores, Pearson-r correlations, and the resulting significance level. During the data analysis phase, following the methods outlined in Chapter Three, the researcher conducted correlations tests. The researcher found that there was a strong correlation between the years that the *instituto* operates providing service and the understanding of accreditation or certification processes. The *p*-value was found at a $p = -431$, meaning that there was a significant probability of a relationship between the two variables. The connotation impacted the findings and explained the reason for the ten organizations that were certified under the AETH Certification program. Most of the certified institutions had been operating for more than fifteen years and seven of the *institutos* were directly connected to a larger parent denomination (AETH, 2020b).

Another finding was the correlation between the operational condition of the *instituto* and the years of operation. The *p*-value was found at $p = -.312$, meaning that there was also a significant relationship between the variables. The findings in both cases confirmed the discovery in the literature review regarding the interest that churches and denominations had in the training of the laity and leaders (Conde-Frazier, 1998). The findings also confirmed the results of the studies of Conde-Frazier, FTE, and JVA, and validated the prevalence of the correlation (Conde-Frazier, 1998; FTE, 1988; JVA, 2012). Interestingly, the researcher found no particular significance between the years of operation and being accredited or certified. The *p*-value was found at $p = .000$, meaning that there was no relationship between the variables.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine if the relationship between the years of operation and the understanding of what was accreditation or certification occurred by random chance or not. The researcher found that there were significant differences (t (df) = 5, $p = .002$) in the resulting totals with the mean (M) scoring for the variable Years Established ($M =$

4.3333, *SD* = .57735) higher than for the variable Understanding of Accreditation / Certification (*M* = 4.0000, *SD* = 1.15470). The significant differences were great, reflected in the mean (mean difference = .3333, 95% CI: -1.56341 to 2.23008), and the researcher could not assume that both variances were equal. Additionally, the researcher could not conclude that the variable Years Established was the only factor influencing the variable Understanding of Accreditation / Certification. The assumption was rejected. See Table 11 to review the possibility for a random occurrence calculated.

Table 11

Independent Sample t-Test

Group Statistics		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q7 –	Years established	3	4.3333	.57735	.33333
	Understanding of accreditation / certification	4	4.0000	1.15470	.57735

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
Independent Samples Test		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q7 –	Equal variances assumed	35.714	.002	.452	5	.670
	Equal variances not assumed			.500	4.571	.640

		t-test for Equality of Means			
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Q7 –	Equal variances assumed	.33333	.73786	-1.56341	2.23008
	Equal variances not assumed	.33333	.66667	-1.42986	2.09652

Table 11 continued

Independent Samples Effect Sizes		Standardizer[a]	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval Lower	Upper
Q7 –	Cohen's d	.96609	.345	-1.183	1.840
	Hedges' correction	1.14909	.290	-.994	1.547
	Glass's delta	1.15470	.289	-1.247	1.780

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes. Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation. Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor. Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

Another remarkable finding during the data analysis confirmed the findings performed during the correlation tests. The independent samples t-test conducted compared the variable for the Years Established and the variable Operational Condition. In the process, the researcher found that there were significant differences (t (df) = 5, p = .027) in the calculated scores with a mean result for the variable Years Established of (M = 4.0000, SD = .0000) lower than for the variable for the Operational Condition (M = 4.2500, SD = .95743). The mean differences were great, reflected in the mean (mean difference = -.2500, 95% CI: -1.70603 to -1.20603), and significant. Therefore, the researcher could not assume equality. The variances were unequal in the population, and the possibility of random occurrence was rejected. Finally, an unexpected relationship of means was found. The independent samples t-test conducted compared the variable for the Years Established with the variable for Mentoring Needs.

The researcher found significant differences (t (df) = 5, p = .052) in the calculated scores with a mean result for the variable Years Established of (M = 5.0000, SD = .0000) higher than for the variable for Mentoring Needs (M = 3.7500, SD = .50000). The mean differences were great, reflected in the mean (mean differences = 1.25000, 95% CI: .48961 to 2.01039), and

noticeably significant. The researcher assumed equality of variances and accepted the assumption. The finding was noteworthy and confirmed the literature review discovery of low literacy in matters of leadership, managerial, financial, strategic planning, and other components; therefore, accountability was not considered a priority in the areas mentioned above (Hernandez et al., 2016; AETH, 2013; Ramirez, 2019; FTE, 1988; JVA, 2012; Rivera, 1996).

Rivera was correct in stating that many organizations were disinclined to undergo an evaluative process (Rivera, 1996). According to Rivera, the decision became a deficiency for many (Rivera, 1996). Rivera's findings were relevant and prevalent today and resonated in the current study in the form of many leaders of *institutos'* reluctance to participate. The final product evaluation effectively demonstrated the factors that prevented Hispanic Bible institutes to complete the self-study phase and continue to the next stage of the certification process. The same factors played a role in the capacity to fulfill the requirements. Also, demonstrated the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. Such factors included: mentoring needs, the organizations' operational conditions, the degree of the understanding on accreditation and certification, and a lack of organizational structure readiness.

Evaluation of the Research Design

The present study was the first conducted to evaluate the AETH Certification program, to find the factors preventing some Hispanic Bible institutes to continue beyond the self-study phase of the program. The literature on Hispanic Bible institutes was limited and the researcher found that most of the literature dated as far back as 1988. In other words, the topic is relatively new and not a well-known subject in academia. As such, not many Christian educators or researchers had ventured to study or research a community-based program that provided a path to study theological education in the heart of the local communities. A type of program focused

on serving the Hispanic/Latino neighborhoods. A final word of evaluation to the research design in the present chapter follows, presenting the weaknesses and strengths of the design of the study.

Strengths

One of the strengths of the design was the incorporation of the CIPP evaluation that was included in the framework of the study in Chapter Three. The CIPP brought structure and helped formulate the necessary questions in every stage of the evaluation (Mathison, 2005). Each of the four assessments (context, input, process, product) proved crucial to facilitate the management of the data, from the archived data, the interviews, and the survey (Mathison, 2005). The benefit of using the CIPP evaluation was found in the ability to collect data to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the organization (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Every piece of data was scrutinized according to the stage and the corresponding evaluation. The CIPP model was a primary factor in the decision-making process of the study and provided guidance for improvements and accountability when implemented to the data (Stufflebeam, 2017).

Another strength is the convenience of having access to the AETH membership and leadership archives. By securing permission from the Executive Board of AETH, the researcher could access a database of members throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. The researcher was able to contact individuals from the AETH database, which included a comprehensive list of Hispanic Bible institutes and ministry formation programs that were invited to participate in the study. Other strengths included the combination of QUAL and QUAN methodologies outlined in Chapter Three, which was a strong framework and a solid foundation to assemble upon the building blocks of the study. The additional tools used in the study included the NVivo 12™ and SPSS™ software, which were used to save, sort, transcribe,

and analyze data. The tools made the workflow more efficient, enabling the researcher to proceed as outlined in the methodology chapter. One of the efficient tools for the study was the Zoom™ application, which allowed for virtual meetings and recordings of the video calls. Every tool was compatible with the other and made merging the resources a swift task. The Survey Monkey™ platform offered everything necessary to design, launch, collect responses, and initiate the data analysis of the survey instrument. The validity of the survey instrument was substantiated by two experts: one in the area of accreditation and the other in Hispanic Bible institutes.

Experts were consulted to identify any studies, surveys, or literature available directly related to the self-studies for accreditation and certification. Furthermore, two experts who are members of two of the major accreditation organizations in the United States (ATS and ABHE) agreed that a study on the completion rates of self-studies was never done for higher education institutions and never heard of one study done for Hispanic Bible institutes self-studies. Moreover, the study contributes to the previous studies on Hispanic Bible institutes and Hispanic ministry formation programs by focusing on the AETH Certification program. Additionally, the study provides a new perspective on the contribution of Hispanic Bible institutes to the larger ecology of theological education in the country.

The current study is contributing to expanding the previous studies presented in the literature review on Hispanic theological education initiated by FTE in 1988, the Conde-Frazier study in 1998, the JVA Consulting survey in 2012, the Hernandez et al. study done in 2016, and the Ramirez survey in 2019, by providing current data on the subject. The current study also provided up to date information on the socio-economic situation of the *institutos,* the leadership preparedness, faculty expertise, level of literacy on organizational structure, and the evaluation

practices of the *institutos* and ministry formation programs in the Hispanic/Latino community (ATS, 2020; AETH, 2020b). Furthermore, the study provided recommendations for possible solutions to the challenges found in the degree of readiness in administrative aptitude and the inconsistencies found in the mechanisms used by local denominational and non-denominational Hispanic Bible institutes as each contextualized the operations of the local religious education organizations (De La Torre, 2013; FTE, 1988; Hernandez et al., 2016). Finally, the study brings light into the practices of the AETH Certification program and to the degree that the program is meeting the needs of the constituency and fulfilling the objectives of the program (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

Weaknesses

As mentioned above, the topic of Hispanic Bible institutes was not popular and little literature was found. To provide a fair, unbiased, and balanced presentation of the state of the Hispanic theological education and of the AETH Certification program, the researcher had to invest a considerable amount of time and effort communicating with fellow Hispanic/Latino theologians and educators to locate literature to review. One of the weaknesses was the length of time needed to contact the participants and setting the interview appointments. In more than one occasion, the timeline was affected by the unresponsiveness of the prospective participants. The researcher was directly experiencing the difficulty outlined by Dr. Roberto Amparo Rivera stating that many organizations were disinclined to undergo an evaluative process (Rivera, 1996).

Finally, the most important weakness was the inexperience of the researcher designing the framework for a successful study. Although the researcher was knowledgeable in the use of Zoom™ and Survey Monkey™, others had to be learned. The CIPP, NVivo 12™, and SPSS™

were new tools that the researcher had not worked with, so part of the process involved self-training on each tool. The time invested in self-training reduced the time dedicated to research, contacting prospect participants, and data analysis and writing.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The previous chapter presented a recollection of the findings of the study regarding the evaluation using the CIPP evaluation methodology applied to the AETH Certification program and the self-study responses. To accomplish the goal, the researcher sought to determine the factors that prevent Hispanic Bible institutes to successfully fulfilling the requirements and considered the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. The present chapter focused on the significance of the findings reported in chapter four connected with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two in the sections of the theological and theoretical frameworks. Chapter Five will be divided into the following sections: research purpose, RQs, research conclusions, implications, and applications, research limitations, and items to consider for further research on the topic of Hispanic Bible institutes.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this exploratory sequential study was to evaluate the AETH Certification program and the self-study responses by collecting data to determine the factors that prevented Hispanic Bible institutes from successfully fulfilling the requirements, exploring the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. The AETH certification self-study was generally defined as the Hispanic Bible institute's state of the organization in which the leadership examined the status of the strategic plan, budget, staff's professional readiness, and the program offerings for *institutos* operating within the United States (AETH, 2018). The evaluation model steering the research was the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP).

The AETH Certification program had been operating since 2013 and providing services to *institutos* and ministry formation programs in the United States and Puerto Rico (AETH,

2018). Also, the AETH Certification program was not evaluated before, therefore, there was no precedence to compare to and state fluctuation in the results observed or if the program had demonstrated a historical record of the effects on the stakeholders and the program members.

Research Questions

The CIPP evaluation model was implemented in the study and the following questions guided the investigation helping define the context of the AETH Certification program and if the program's self-study phase was fulfilling the original objectives.

RQ1. Context evaluation: How are the constituents' needs of the *institutos* aligned with the goals and circumstances of the AETH certification program?

RQ2. Input evaluation: How do the *institutos* describe the resources, procedural designs, or strategies of the AETH certification program and which alternatives can increase the completion of the self-studies?

RQ3. Process evaluation: How are the established AETH certification self-study processes being followed?

RQ4. Product evaluation: What is the impact generated by the completion and incompletion of the AETH certification self-study on the Hispanic Bible institutes and the leadership?

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

Conclusions

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the AETH Certification program and the self-study responses by collecting data to determine the factors that prevented Hispanic Bible institutes from successfully fulfilling the requirements, exploring the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. The following sections contain the conclusions, implications, and applications of the present study.

RQ1. Context evaluation: How are the constituents' needs of the *institutos* aligned with the goals and circumstances of the AETH certification program? Question one addressed the

needs of the *institutos* and those of the stakeholders; and asked how the goals of the AETH Certification program were directly or indirectly addressing the needs. The review of the archived data included the program's Handbook, the educational standards, the applications for certification, the submitted self-studies, the meeting minutes, and all communication documentation between the *institutos* and the Certification Committee members (emails, letters, memorandums, etc.). The common theme identified during the review was that there was a correlation between the professional readiness of the leadership in the Hispanic Bible institutions and the successful completion of the certification process. The finding was better explained as follows: the more the leadership knew about organizational structure and function, the greater the readiness and comprehension of the components necessary to successfully complete a self-study and the certification or accreditation process. The information gathered was an essential component utilized in the interview process that followed this evaluation.

The documents of *instituto* number 21001 demonstrated that the leadership of the institution did not understand the process of certification and were under the impression that a certification was a simple application and fee transaction and not one that included an intricate series of reports and site visits. The *instituto* number 21056 began the process of certification but stopped at the self-study phase stating that the *instituto* was undergoing an organizational re-structuration. According to the archived documents on 21056, the Committee was concerned about the organizational management of the finances, the faculty, and the enrollment. The *instituto* number 21008 lacked a financial plan, did not have a defined strategic plan, and an unsuitable facility, therefore, was not eligible to continue the process.

The discoveries of the initial evaluation yielded that the general benefit of the AETH Certification program was as follows: the program enabled Hispanic Bible institutes that achieve

the certified status to be a part of the ecology and "circle of institutions that, for its quality, can develop more agreements with seminaries or universities and attract more students" as recorded in the AETH website (AETH, 2018). The same was confirmed by the content of the AETH Certification Handbook (2018). According to the Handbook, "the certification guarantees the quality and relevance of the courses and programs that are offered" (2018). The Handbook resonated with the purpose of enhancing the quality of theological education and organizational processes as reflected in the educational standards and guidelines for the self-study. The data reviewed on the *institutos* that achieved the certified status concurred with the Handbook and agreed with the standards for the *institutos* that had all the organizational structure in place. Meanwhile, those that lacked or had a deficient organizational structure did not achieve the certification. The review yielded that the greater number of certified institutes were connected to a larger organization or denomination with a solid organizational framework in place (AETH, 2020b).

RQ2. Input evaluation: How do the *institutos* describe the resources, procedural designs, or strategies of the AETH certification program, and which alternatives can increase the completion of the self-studies? Question two was directed to explore practices, procedures, and approaches used by the AETH Certification Committee and implemented by the representative members during the certification stages. The evaluation was expanded to include the content of the Handbook, which was the primary source of the directives for both *institutos* and Committee members. The documentation and types of reports to prepare and submit during the various stages were considered for both *institutos* and Committee members. The findings yielded by the data review during the evaluation done in RQ1 reinforced the discoveries during the exploration done in RQ2 that found the type of relationship transpiring between the *institutos* and the

Committee during the various stages of the certification process. The findings yielded the following: the theme that surfaced during the RQ1 evaluation re-surfaced during the interviews of RQ2, with two other themes identified as the need to develop comprehensive forms and templates, and the need for better communication, more support, and mentoring.

A total number of 20 out of 32 *institutos* participated in the interviews yielding eight codes, three major themes, and two subthemes. The first theme derived from the interviews was: the readiness of the institution's leaders in organizational structure and function would determine the success rate in the certification process. Participant number 21019 declared that the experience of previously undergoing a similar process and the awareness of the *instituto's* leadership on how to proceed and what was expected, was crucial to completing the other stages of the certification process. By gathering a support team to focus on the certification process, the *instituto's* team was able to complete the process in one year from beginning to end.

Participant 21022 stated that the AETH certification was the first exposure to a certification process. Since the team was not experienced, the process took five years to complete. According to the participant, the Handbook was complicated to understand because the language was misleading. The *instituto* had many corrections to implement to the organizational practices before meeting the AETH certification standards.

Participant 21024 stated that the process was straightforward and effective; nevertheless, the leaders opted to stop the process at the point of the self-study because the *instituto* leaders considered that the self-study did not address all the necessary areas. Participant 21033 claimed that the *instituto* did not continue the process because the leaders considered the certification process more of a task than what the team was prepared to do. Participant 21039 stated that the certification was accomplished because of the denominational support and organizational

structure. Participant 21012 claimed that the AETH certification standards were set too high to be realistic, the cost was high, which was a relevant factor to consider for a small institution.

The second theme derived from the interviews was the development of comprehensive forms and templates. Participant 21016 agreed that the instructions for the self-study were complicated and confusing. Many participants expressed frustration for lacking the competency to understand the instructions. In contrast, a few participants did not find anything misguiding or conplicated about the language used in the Handbook.

Participant 21005 was satisfied with the straightforward instructions in the Handbook. Participant 21017 stated that the leaders at the *instituto* completed the Handbook tasks but the response received from the AETH Certification Committee left the team questioning what exactly AETH expected. Participant 21022 expressed that the Handbook was too vague and not acceptable because the team was misled and submitted incomplete documentation. As a result, the AETH Certification team corrected the verbiage in the Handbook and guided the *instituto* leaders through the self-study stage.

The third theme derived from the interviews was the need for better communication, more support and mentoring. Participant 21005 claimed that during the process of certification the *instituto's* leadership did not have regular contact with the Committee members except for the initial conversation. The participant continued stating that the Committee did not offer guidance or mentoring. The *instituto's* team did not receive any training prior or during the process.

Participant 21009 testified that the *instituto's* leadership did not receive support or communication from the Committee. The experience left the team frustrated with the lack of follow up during the process. Similarly, participant 21012 stated that the *instituto* did not receive

mentoring or guidance to comprehend and properly use the Handbook. Participant 21016 noted that the leadership did not receive support from the Committee in any stage of the process.

RQ3. Process evaluation: How are the established AETH certification self-study processes being followed? Question three explored deeper into the procedures involved in the stages of certification and particularly within the self-study stage. The findings from RQ1 and RQ2 were analyzed and utilized to develop a survey instrument. The purpose of the survey was to explore the possibility that the same factors that were discovered in the Hispanic Bible institutes that participated in the QUAL phase were also found in the *institutos* that never attempted to obtain an AETH Certification. The findings yielded similar practices, proficiencies, and understandings. For the compilation of the responses, refer to Tables 9, 10, and 11, in Chapter Four.

RQ4. Product evaluation: What is the impact generated by the completion and incompletion of the AETH certification self-study on the Hispanic Bible institutes and the leadership? Question number four was intended to identify the benefits, achievements, and ways to expand and improve the program. After analyzing the data, the researcher identified correlations between the number of years in operation and the operational aptitude and readiness. The years in operation had no significant influence on the decision to obtain certification or accreditation. The factors that were identified as influencers in the completion of the self-study phase and completion of all phases of the certification process were the following: (a) a need for mentoring in organizational structure, (b) the organizational readiness and operational condition of the *instituto,* and (c) the degree of understanding of what is a certification or accreditation.

Implications

The implications of the present study reflect the data that was reviewed, collected, and analyzed. After analyzing the QUAL data, the findings demonstrate that the factors that prevent Hispanic Bible institutes from successfully fulfilling the requirements and making an impact on stakeholders and the Certification program are: (1) the readiness of the institution's leaders in organizational structure and function determine the success rate in the certification process, (2) the need for the development of comprehensive forms and templates, and (3) the need for better communication, more support, and mentoring. Secondary themes surfaced during the evaluations which were closely related to the three major themes referenced above: the length of the process was determined by preparedness, the language used in the Handbook was not familiar to Bible institutes (some *institutos* had another accreditation), and the need for templates to standardize submission of reports. The analysis of the QUAN data confirmed that the QUAL phase conclusion coincided and included the same factors influencing Hispanic Bible institutes that had not undergone the AETH Certification process.

The anticipated findings in the study were the relationship between the years of operation of each *instituto* and the understanding of accreditation and certification processes; also, the relationship between the years established and the operational condition. Nevertheless, the same was not true for a relationship between the years established and whether the *instituto* held an accreditation or certification. The most unexpected finding was the relationship between the years established and the variable of mentoring. The finding indicated great differences in the means making for a significant result. The mean for years established was higher (M = 5.0000, SD = .0000) than the mean for mentoring (M = 3.7500, SD = .50000).

The factors are: (1) a need for mentoring, knowledge on organizational structure and operational condition, (2) the understanding of what is an accreditation and a certification, (3) and the need to develop an organizational structure readiness or having a deficient one. The significance of this conclusion made the study of Hispanic Bible institutes more relevant, not only for the Hispanic/Latino communities across the nation but pertinent to all the organizations involved in theological education, including churches and parachurch entities. The findings reaffirmed the discoveries highlighted during the development of Chapter Two in the literature review, about the lack of educational opportunities available to the Hispanic/Latino community and financial disparities reported in the U.S. Census reports (U. S. Census, 1988, 2020a). Therefore, the factors that influenced the Hispanic/Latino community at large also impacted the community-based theological education providers, thus influenced the theological education ecology. Moreover, the conclusions aligned with the challenges to accreditation mentioned in the ABHE report (ABHE, 2020).

Theological Implications. The results of the study supported the implication that the work of educating our Christian leaders was a core tenet of the Church (Erickson, 1998). The significance of a well-educated believer was reflected in the Scriptures and echoed by the history of the Church (Prov. 1:7; 22:6; 2 Tim. 3:16; Gonzalez, 2015; Conde-Frazier, 2021). For the Hispanic/Latino Christian community, the task encompasses a multiplicity of layers that are connected to the formation of the leadership guiding the developmental journey of other leaders in the local community of faith (Estep, 2002). The study's literature review highlighted the varied Hispanic/Latino communities that conformed the Spanish-speaking segment of the population in the United States (Ferguson, 2005; Sweeney, 2005; Gonzalez, 2015).

Cultural and religious identity are integral and connected to church liturgy, expressed in liberalism and legalism (Conde-Frazier, 1998). The findings of the study demonstrate that the Hispanic/Latino community is still engaged in the balancing of faith and identity while finding a place within the theological education ecology. As Conde-Frazier stated, "Entails developing a pedagogy that would embrace a making of theology that engages both past and present so that the community can look at the potential of its future" (1998, p. 16).

The Hispanic Bible institutes are unique within the theological education ecology. The *institutos* were formed to solve a problem: other models of theological education were inaccessible to Hispanic/Latinos (Conde-Frazier, 1998). The community-based model made for a flexible framework to train leaders with theological education that accommodated to the contextual needs. To advance the work of educating the leader in the local community of faith, the denominations developed the community-based centers of training. Non-denominational churches also developed such centers to meet the needs of the local churches. Another finding in the study echoed the discoveries of the literature review. Educational and professional preparedness are factors disqualifying Hispanics from applying to higher education institutions (Pew, 2020; Hernandez et al., 2016; Conde-Frazier, 1998; PNPI, 2020).

The leaders of the *institutos* that participated in the study mentioned the various challenges that prevailed and influenced the daily performance of the duties. Some of the challenges mentioned in the interviews and surveys are:

- the financial hardships that affect the community also impact the *instituto's* financial state since the *instituto* was tuition-funded,
- the difficulty to find competent and proficient team members for the administration who were knowledgeable in matters of organizational structure and financial processes,

- the difficulty to hire and compensate faculty with a master's degree or higher, and
- the insufficient understanding of what a certification or accreditation requires, in terms of organizational readiness and report submissions.

The theological implications to the findings and the content of the present study should not be overlooked. The deficiencies presented herein are not remaining within the *instituto* but are practices and challenges influencing the students, the faculty, the leaders, and as a result, find the way to the local church communities.

The literature review in Chapter Two presented the same deficiencies in the form of challenges affecting the early beginnings of the Hispanic Bible institutes. Decades later, the AETH survey done in 2012 and the Ramirez survey done in 2019 testified of the persistence of the challenges. The following are some of the statements given by QUAL interview participants in response to questions related to the challenges mentioned above. Participant 21016, spoke about the letter received from the AETH Certification Committee resulting from documentation submitted during the process and relating to organizational structure, and stated the following,

> Some of their worries about the responses that I gave at that particular time… the members of my board were few. So, at that time I have a… three or four and looked like they are… like family. And then, it didn't show that we have a budget. The annual budget. Financial stability. But there is no question of what type of income we need and how much, you see? I decided not to go further for their accreditation, I think, I think that it was too complicated. (Participant 21016)

Participant 21022 stated that the leadership wanted to learn about accreditation and certification to raise the standard of quality and service but were unaware of the intricacies of the process and how unprepared the institution and leaders were at the time the decision to begin the process was made. Although the president was proficient in administration and finances, there was more to the process, like the educational standards and criteria for organizational structure needed. The team had to seek the services of a consultant in governance and administration to

receive guidance. Participant 21033 claimed that the *instituto* did not continue the process because the leaders understood that the certification process was more than what the team was prepared to do. Participant 21039 stated that the certification was accomplished because of the denominational affiliation support and organizational structure. Participant 21012 claimed that the AETH certification standards were set too high and not realistic; and the cost of the process was high, which impacts the budget of the smaller institutions.

The needs of the Hispanic church for competent leaders are latent (Padilla et al., 2005). The challenges are also persistent. The Hispanic Bible institute is key in mitigating the need to offer theological education to the Hispanic/Latino community (Padilla et al., 2005; AETH, 2020a; Ramirez, 2019). The Word is clear on the importance of education to cause growth and maturity in the life of the believer (Prov. 1; 2 Tim. 3). Training and strengthening the *institutos* in organizational structure and operations reflect in the performance and the quality of the services provided to the community of faith.

Theoretical Implications. Language, culture, identity, educational preparedness, and context are major influencers in the formation of the Christian Hispanic/Latino leaders. Therefore, Hispanic/Latinos living in the United States use both Spanish and English, and practice both Latin American and the Anglo-American traditions (Hernandez et al., 2016; Martinez, 2018). An excerpt from the interviews revealed the reality of the community the *institutos* served daily:

> We work with our immigrants, first generation immigrants that have Spanish as their primary language, very little English, if nothing at all. They are… The majority of our students do not have legal documentation. That's a big struggle. So, immigration is a big issue. The majority of our students don't have the ability to secure a formal high school diploma or equivalency. They haven't completed that type of a degree process. But what they do have is a sense of call. They do have a desire, a deep desire to further in their education. They have a deep desire to want to help, help their children, offspring, and to be contributors to their church and the leadership of the church. They just don't know

> how. So, in our institution and through the connection that we have with our denomination, we serve as introductory courses. We are an introductory step to helping them get connected with the discipline of studying, to really understand what academics is about, to get a sense of what their lives can mean or what they can gain from actual diving into a deeper understanding of theology, ethics, of biblical interpretation, of those courses that we offer and the significance of that for their lives. (Participant 21017)

The participant continued stating what the *instituto* leaders wanted to see happening:

> Education is key, I believe it, because I'm a product of it and I feel that it's given me a great opportunity and see how it enhances our church, our Spanish speaking church in the United States. We have a lot of pastors that don't have any type of formal education that are probably self-taught, that have learned what they've learned on their own or, you know, online or whatever way they've done it, are going to the church, people are going to the church and the institutes that pop up. There are lots of Bible institutes everywhere… and that tells me that people really have a desire to learn. What if there is a way to really start to connect them and to unify so that, so that we can bring resources and bring ourselves together it would really make, I think, more of an impact. (Participant 21017)

Participant 21022 expressed that after completing the process, one item needed improvement: the Handbook needed a sort of map guiding the way through the certification stages and sample templates that could provide a visual of what the Committee expected to receive in the form of reports.

The literature review stated that the AETH was "a network of people and institutions" serving communities of faith and certifying the quality of theological education programs (AETH 2021). Among the services offered, there is an initiative called ReDET, a network of theological entities, in which the organizations cooperate and communicate in a setting called communities of practice (ReDET, 2021). The intention is to provide a space where the institutions can develop professionally, spiritually, and institutionally (ReDET, 2021). The program is offered to Hispanic Bible institutes and ministry formation programs. The ReDET is a system in place and available to the *institutos* for the fostering of such experiences, but currently is by invitation only.

The realities of the Hispanic Bible institutes in completing the self-study phase of the certification resound strongly and evoke a review of the educational model presented by Pazmiño in Chapter Two of the current work, in which the expert proposes an integrative model that is God-centered, gives attention to the needs, the intricacies of the environment, and the fluctuating shape of culture and society (Pazmiño, 1998). The ReDET is a space where the *institutos* can engage socially while learning (ReDET, 2021). The integrative and collaborative characteristics of the initiative provides a support system for problem solving, consulting, sharing ideas, interpersonal relations among peers and institutions, and find resources for personal and organizational development (Conde-Frazier, 2021).

By applying the four phases of the CIPP evaluation, the researcher was able to efficiently explore the context, the needs of the *institutos* and the AETH Certification Committee, produce an instrument to evaluate *institutos* outside of the Certification program and determine what factors are influencing the completion of the self-study phase of the Certification program. Thus, the four-part evaluation yielded a comprehensive list of the challenges that both participants and Committee encounter.

Applications

The information presented in this study is useful. First, is useful to the AETH organization and the AETH Certification Committee. The procedures and findings presented in this study will contribute to the research on certification of Hispanic Bible institutes and Hispanic ministry formation programs, enriching the study of accreditation of theological education programs, and will help enhance the certification procedures for community-based programs (AETH, 2013; FTE, 1988; Conde-Frazier, 1998). The study highlights the benefits of the assessment of quality and efficacy of theological education and the mutual opportunity for

service found in the agreements formed between Hispanic Bible institutes, seminaries, and universities to serve more constituency (AETH, 2020a). The findings provide a glimpse into the state of the AETH Certification program practices, the processes, and perspective of the *institutos*. Moreover, the findings are presenting current data on self-studies in the Hispanic Bible institutes (FTE, 1988; Ramirez, 2019; AETH, 2020b). Furthermore, the study contributed with a new understanding of how the Hispanic Bible institutes are perceived in the country and the impact of faculty and staff's professional readiness, and how effective and qualified is the leadership. Also, provides the point of view of the *instituto* and how each understand the intricacies of running an organization. Keeping the above statements in mind, the recommendation is in place for the AETH Board of Directors and the AETH Certification Committee to consider developing a pathway for the AETH Hispanic Bible institutes membership that seek to begin the Certification process providing guidance into the various stages of the Certification. The pathway should include access to the ReDET communities of practice, and the virtual library offered by that program.

Considering that ATS and AETH hold probably the greater numbers of affiliated Hispanic theological institutions among their members, makes for a significant source for information that can benefit and impulse the progress of the study, in terms of the transparency of the reporting, self-evaluation practices, and willingness to share the findings of the reports (ATS, 2020a; AETH, 2020b). In terms of the AETH certified institutions, the study provides current data on the findings of initial and subsequent self-studies completed by the Hispanic Christian education institutions (AETH, 2020b; 2018; 2013). The self-studies provide information on the socio-economic situation of the organization, faculty expertise, governance, evaluation practices, useful for assessments development and training purposes (ATS, 2020b;

AETH, 2020b). The study is relevant to accrediting organizations like The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) and to several accrediting agencies by generating current data on the state of the Hispanic theological education. The data collected in the study can be used as a reference for further studies on organizational self-studies and for following up on the trends presented here. The present research helps respond to the challenges found in leadership preparedness in administrative aptitude (De La Torre, 2013; FTE, 1998; Hernandez et al., 2016). Additionally, the study found the reasons and recommended solutions to the inconsistency found in the mechanisms used by the local denominational and non-denominational Hispanic Bible institutes as each contextualize the operations of the local religious education organizations (De La Torre, 2009; 2013; FTE, 1988; Hernandez et al. 2016).

The evaluation brought insight into the practices of the AETH Certification program and to the degree that the program meets the needs of the constituency and fulfilling the objectives of the program (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Moreover, the study expands the previous studies on Bible institutes and Hispanic ministry formation programs by focusing on the AETH Certification program. The study provides a new perspective on the significant contribution of Hispanic Bible institutes to the larger ecology of theological education in the country. The study is contributing to expanding the previous studies presented in the literature review on Hispanic theological education initiated by FTE in 1988, the Conde-Frazier study in 1998, the JVA Consulting survey in 2012, the Hernandez et. al. study done in 2016, and the Ramirez survey in 2019, by providing current data on the subject. The study also provided information on the socioeconomic situation of the *institutos,* the leadership preparedness, faculty expertise, organizational structure literacy, and evaluation practices of the *institutos* and ministry formation

programs in the Hispanic/Latino community (ATS, 2020a; AETH, 2020b). Furthermore, the study is providing recommendations for possible solutions to the challenges found in the degree of readiness in administrative aptitude and the inconsistencies found in the mechanisms used by local denominational and non-denominational Hispanic bible institutes as each contextualize the operations of the local religious education organizations (De La Torre, 2013; FTE, 1988; Hernandez et. al., 2016). For a comprehensive list of applications to the study, see Figure 10. Finally, the study brings light into the practices of the AETH Certification program and to the degree that the program is meeting the needs of the constituency and fulfilling the objectives of the program (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Refer to Figure 11 for the list of practices, descriptions, and further reading.

Figure 10

Summary of application of research.

Application for the AETH and AETH membership	• New data about how the Hispanic Bible institutes are perceived and perceive themselves in the country and the impact of faculty and staff's professional readiness, and how effective and qualified is the leadership. • Prepare a pathway for the AETH Hispanic Bible institutes membership that seek to begin the Certification process providing guidance into the various stages of the Certification. • The study identified the reasons and recommended solutions to the inconsistency found in the mechanisms used by the local denominational and non-denominational Hispanic Bible institutes as each contextualize the operations of the local religious education organizations. • Brings insight into the practices of the AETH Certification program and to the degree that the program meets the needs of the constituency and fulfilling the objectives of the program
Application for other accrediting agencies and theological education institutions	• The study will help expand the opportunities for service in collaboration agreements between *institutos*, seminaries, and universities. • The findings are presenting current data on self-studies in the Hispanic Bible institutes that will serve the accrediting organizations to compare the weaknesses and strengths of higher education institutions, *institutos,* and the Hispanic focused programs in universities and seminaries. • The findings will provide insight into the context and services offered by the Hispanic Bible institutes that can inform the way the accrediting organizations, seminaries, and universities approach the Hispanic communities. • Responds to the challenges found in leadership preparedness in administrative aptitude in the greater theological education ecology. • The study helps understand the challenges to access educational opportunities in the Hispanic community and other minority groups, because it is possible that the same challenges faced by Hispanics may be found in other minorities.

Figure 11

Recommended practices for the AETH Certification program.

Title	Description	Further reading
Assignment of a mentor	Establish a guidance team to increase organizational and administrative aptitude by explaining the benefits of the self-study. Service will be available until completion of the program creating a pathway to the certification program to attain certified status. Preparation of a series of webinars or pre-recorded short sessions explaining the stages of the certification program and report submission. The mentor can help clarify the criteria for certification and help the leaders understand if goals are being achieved and confirms the work of the institution.	Appendix O Appendix P
Flow of communication	A strategy must be in place to pass information from the *instituto* to the AETH Committee and from the Committee to the *instituto*. Develop a consistent system of communication. The use of software and applications can facilitate the flow of information. Establish a guidance team to be the liaison for initial and follow up contacts on behalf of the AETH Certification Committee.	
Standard report forms / templates	Develop a standardized template for report submissions to help the Hispanic Bible institutes understand the type of reporting to submit. The activity should be intended to encourage a culture of accountability and self-evaluation. The templates can be added as appendixes to the Handbook.	Appendix O Appendix R
Testing organizational readiness	Assess the certification readiness, prior to the *instituto* submitting the application, with a readiness test. The test shall cover the areas of certification / accreditation processes, strategic planning, financial aptitude, educational standards, and recruitment.	Appendix Q

Research Limitations

The study was limited to religious educational institutions, specifically, Hispanic Bible institutes, accredited and non-accredited, denominational, and non-denominational, in various areas of the United States and Puerto Rico. The benefit of the ample geographical scope of the study resided in the opportunity to provide a greater sampling area within the AETH affiliate institutes and the generalization of the findings. The study was limited to religious institutions therefore it was not including secular non-religious educational institutions. Since the study was not discriminating against Christian traditions, the researcher provided an unbiased analysis that can be applied to both denominational and non-denominational ministry formation groups. This study was limited to leaders of Hispanic Bible institutes with an age over 19 years of age. Younger participants were not included in the sampling pool, therefore, non-eligible to participate. Finally, the study was limited to Hispanic Bible institutes that have been established and operating for a minimum of five consecutive years. The five-year parameter gave the researcher a good overview of the functionality and performance outcomes of the organization, such as the fulfillment of goals, strategic plan, continued education of staff, etc.

Further Research

The focus of the present study was on the AETH Certification program and the impact on the constituency served. This section is dedicated to recommendations for further study. Since the Hispanic Bible institutes are an understudied item, a recommendation is in place to expand the study by including an exploration of the impact of scholarity and the social context on the overall completion of the stages of the certification program. The correlation may prove to be a determining factor. Unfortunately, the correlation between scholarity and social context was beyond the scope of the present study. Another recommendation is to examine the cultural

aspects and influence of tradition on the initiative of the leaders to seek a certified status for the Hispanic Bible institute or ministry formation program that each one of the participants of the present study represented. Additionally, the study did not explore the influence of identity on the pursuit of theological education. Religion and cultural identity are very important to the Hispanic/Latino communities. The exploration can include a project focused on such relationship in the first, second, and third generation leaders and how the services provided by the *institutos* meet the needs of the community served.

As mentioned earlier, the present study is the first of its kind for AETH and the AETH Certification program. There is an opportunity to continue the study of Hispanic Bible institutes and the AETH Certification program and continue exploring the various components of the certification. A recommendation is in place to study the impact of the communities of practice managed by the ReDET initiative and how the relationships developed, and the trainings provided influence or not the aptitude in organizational structure and the overall functionality of the *institutos* and ministry formation programs. Future studies can provide a wealth of data with new and current information that can help improve and strengthen the services and the preparedness of the leaders in the *institutos*.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Permission Request

September 20, 2020

Dr. Edward Delgado
Dr. Fernando Cascante
Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana
8401 Valencia College Lane
Orlando, Florida 32835

Dear sirs:

As a graduate student in the Christian Leadership in Education Program of the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The proposed title of my research project is "An Evaluation of the Responses to Self-Studies for AETH Certification of Hispanic Bible Institutes." The purpose of my research is to evaluate and identify the factors that prevent Hispanic Bible institutes to successfully fulfill the requirements, exploring the effects on the stakeholders and the Certification program.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research with AETH and use AETH surveys, Hispanic Bible institute self-studies responses, and other data that may inform research. The identities of the Bible institutes will remain anonymous throughout the research, as I intend to assign pseudo-names to each. Additionally, I want to use your membership lists to recruit participants for my research.

Participants will be asked to participate in a recorded interview with me. My formal research questions will be provided to them in advance of our first meeting. The data will be used to explore and understand the factors at play in the completion of the certification self-study. 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 [email]. A permission letter is attached for your convenience.

In His service,

Marta Noemi Luna, MDiv
Doctoral Student
Liberty University

Appendix B – Reply to Permission Request

(The permission letter is a pdf. Provided as a separate pdf document.)

AETH
Association for Hispanic Theological Education

February 19, 2021

Marta Noemi Luna, MDiv
Doctoral Student, Liberty University

Dear Marta Noemi Luna,

Thank you for requesting permission to conduct your research with AETH and use AETH surveys, Hispanic Bible institute self-studies, and other data to inform your research. The permission is granted exclusively for the use in your dissertation, titled "An Evaluation of the Responses to the Self-studies for AETH Certification of Hispanic Bible Institutes," at Liberty University.

After reviewing your request, permission is granted subject to the terms specified below:

- The identities of the Bible institutes will remain anonymous throughout the entire research.
- You are granted permission to use the AETH membership database to recruit participants for you research.
- The material can be posted to the university's online repository and open dissertations as per the university's requirements.
- No additional material or printed copies may be reproduced in any form without obtaining written permission from AETH.
- Additional permission must be obtained prior to publishing your research work material commercially.
- Include an appropriate credit line acknowledging the author, copyright date, and "Used by permission" on any images, tables, or figures. The credit should appear immediately below the image, figure, or table.
- No deletions, changes, or any insertions may be made to AETH material.
- You are given permission to quote the surveys, studies, AETH Certification Standards, AETH Certification Handbook, and other material, including appropriate credit.

The granting of this permission requires your written commitment to comply with the above terms and to provide AETH with the following:

- A copy for our records of any printed materials that result from your research, in addition to the dissertation itself, once approved.
- A separate document with the summary of the mayor findings and recommendations of your dissertation work as well as with any findings and observations that may not be directly related with the goals of your dissertation but that could be of benefit for the work of AETH with Bible Institutes. This document should be submitted no later than two months after your dissertation is approved.

With our best wishes for this important stage of your doctoral studies and looking forward to learn from the results of your research,

Respectfully,

Dr. Fernando A. Cascante

Cc: Rev. Dr. Edward F. Delgado, President Board of AETH.

Appendix C – Recruitment Letter for Interview Participants

ELECTRONIC MAIL RECRUITMENT FOR INTERVIEWS

Dear [Participant]:

As a graduate student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership degree. The purpose of my research is to evaluate the AETH Certification program and the self-study responses to determine the factors that prevent Hispanic Bible institutes to successfully complete the process, exploring the effects on the applicants and the AETH Certification program, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 19 years of age or older, a Hispanic Bible institute member of AETH and are completing/have completed the AETH Certification program. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in an online interview with the researcher, using the Zoom meeting platform, about your experience completing the AETH Certification program and self-study. It should take approximately 30 minutes to complete the procedure listed. Every participant will be assigned a numerical identification. All responses will be kept confidential.

In order to participate, please contact me at [phone] or [email] for more information and to schedule an interview.

A consent document will be emailed to you prior to the interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please email the signed document to [email]. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey.

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Sincerely,

{Student]
Liberty University, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity
Graduate Student
[email]

Appendix D – Consent Form for Interview Participants

CONSENT FORM

AN EVALUATION OF THE RESPONSES TO SELF-STUDIES FOR AETH CERTIFICATION OF HISPANIC BIBLE INSTITUTES

[Student]
Liberty University
John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

You are invited to participate in a research study that evaluates the AETH Certification program's self-studies and processes, and the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a Hispanic Bible institute member of AETH and are completing / have completed the AETH Certification program and are over the age of 19. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

Background Information: The purpose of the study is to evaluate the AETH Certification program and the self-study responses by collecting data to determine the factors that prevent Hispanic Bible institutes to successfully fulfill the requirements, exploring the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. [Student], a Doctoral Candidate in John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University is conducting the study.

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

1. Participate in an online interview, using the Zoom meeting platform, about your experience completing the AETH Certification program and self-study. The interview should take no longer than thirty minutes.
2. You will receive and review a set of questions that will be used during the interview. The questions will arrive by email a week prior to the virtual interview.
3. On the date and time of the meeting you will connect via Zoom. A link will be sent to you for your convenience. The interview will be recorded, and the information will remain confidential.
4. At the end of the interview, you will have the opportunity to ask questions to the interviewer. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Risks: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include the contribution of new Hispanic Bible institute-specific information. The study will enrich the study of theological education accreditation and will help enhance the certification procedures for community-based programs.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

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.

- Every participant will be assigned a numerical identification. All responses will be kept confidential. Interviews will be conducted by the researcher in a secure and private location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. The participant's responses will be transcribed, categorized, and coded without names.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and drive, and may be used in future presentations, but the researcher will not disclose the participant identities or how named or identifiable individuals responded. Paper documentation will be stored in a locked cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, all audio recordings will be deleted, all surveys will be permanently deleted, and all paper documentation will be shredded through a secure shredding service.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure: The researcher serves as assistant to the Executive Director at AETH. To limit potential or perceived conflicts researcher will ensure that all data is stripped of identifiers. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or AETH. 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 Question: The researcher conducting this study is [student]. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [phone] and email: [email]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, [professor], at [email].

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

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the

study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

☐ The researcher has my permission to video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____	_____
Printed Subject Name	Signature & Date

Appendix E – Follow Up Email Recruitment for Interviews

FOLLOW-UP ELECTRONIC MAIL RECRUITMENT FOR INTERVIEWS

[Recipient]

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership degree. Last week an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to respond if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is [Date].

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in an online interview with the researcher, using the Zoom meeting platform, about your experience completing the AETH Certification program and self-study. It should take approximately 30 minutes to complete the procedure listed. Every participant will be assigned a numerical identification. All responses will be kept confidential.

In order to participate, please contact me at [phone] or [email] for more information and to schedule an interview.

A consent document will be emailed to you prior to the interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please email the signed document to [email]. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey.

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Sincerely,

[Student]
Liberty University, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity
Graduate Student
[email]

Appendix F – Consent Form for AETH Certification Committee Participants

CONSENT FORM

AN EVALUATION OF THE RESPONSES TO SELF-STUDIES FOR AETH CERTIFICATION OF HISPANIC BIBLE INSTITUTES

[Student]
Liberty University
John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

You are invited to participate in a research study that evaluates the AETH Certification program's self-studies and processes, and the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a team member of the AETH Certification program and are over the age of 19. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

Background Information: The purpose of the study is to evaluate the AETH Certification program and the self-study responses by collecting data to determine the factors that prevent Hispanic Bible institutes to successfully fulfill the requirements, exploring the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. [Student], a Doctoral Candidate in John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University is conducting the study.

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

1. Participate in an online interview, using the Zoom meeting platform, about the AETH Certification program and self-study. The interview should take no longer than thirty minutes.
2. You will receive and review a set of questions that will be used during the interview. The questions will arrive by email a week prior to the virtual interview.
3. On the date and time of the meeting you will connect via Zoom. A link will be sent to you for your convenience. The interview will be recorded, and the information will remain confidential.
4. At the end of the interview, you will have the opportunity to ask questions to the interviewer. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Risks: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include the contribution of new Hispanic Bible institute-specific information. The study will enrich the study of theological education accreditation and will help enhance the certification procedures for community-based programs.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

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.

- Every participant will be assigned a numerical identification. All responses will be kept confidential. Interviews will be conducted by the researcher in a secure and private location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. The participant's responses will be transcribed, categorized, and coded without names.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and drive, and may be used in future presentations, but the researcher will not disclose the participant identities or how named or identifiable individuals responded. Paper documentation will be stored in a locked cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, all audio recordings will be deleted, all surveys will be permanently deleted, and all paper documentation will be shredded through a secure shredding service.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure: The researcher serves as assistant to the Executive Director at AETH. To limit potential or perceived conflicts researcher will ensure that all data is stripped of identifiers. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or AETH. 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 Question: The researcher conducting this study is [student]. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [phone] and email: [email]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, [professor], at [email].

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

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the

study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

☐ The researcher has my permission to video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____	_____
Printed Subject Name	Signature & Date

Appendix G – Interview Questionnaire for Participants

HISPANIC BIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Interviewee #: Gender:

Interviewer:

Date:

Introduction

Thank you for responding to the request of an interview with me to talk about the AETH Certification program, which is one of the main services offered by the Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana (AETH). The main objective of the study is to evaluate the quality, value, effectiveness, and outcomes of the Certification program and the self-study phase of the program from the point of view of the applicant. During the interview, I will not be evaluating you, but rather my focus is directed to learn more about the process of the program, the self-study phase, and the procedures that will improve, in general, the various parts of the assessment, including the support provided through the activity.

16. How long has your institution been a member of AETH?

    Probe: Are you 19 years old or older? What is your education level?
    Probe: How long since you applied to begin the process of the Certification program?

17. Does your institution hold a certification or accreditation from another accrediting organization? How long has your institution been accredited/certified?

    Probe: Was a self-study part of the accreditation/certification process? Briefly, describe the process.

18. Explain the effectiveness of the AETH Handbook for Certification, Section One, that you received during the eligibility phase and prior to beginning the self-study phase.

    Probe: Was the content of the Handbook informative and practical? What recommendations would you indicate for the inclusion of supplementary material?

19. Describe the eligibility application process.

    Probe: What component(s) of the application was(were) difficult to understand and complete? What recommendations would you indicate for the improvement of the form and process?

20. Explain the effectiveness of the AETH Handbook for Certification, Section Two, and the activity of completing the AETH Certification self-study.

    Probe: Was the process easy and comprehensive or difficult and intricate? Was the process similar to other self-studies for accreditation done before?

21. What section of the self-study presented the greater hardship to complete? Why or Why not?

22. What was the outcome of the self-study phase?

    Probe: Was the outcome expected? Were there recommendations and were any implemented?

23. Do you believe that the self-study phase addressed all the areas of operation (both weak and strong)? How?

    Probe: What recommendations would you indicate for the improvement of the process?

24. Explain the effectiveness of the Handbook for Certification, Section Three, and the transition from the self-study phase to the site visit phase.

    Probe: Do you think of any recommendations that can improve Section Three?

25. How did the staff and faculty prepare for receiving the evaluation team?

    Probe: Was the checklist useful prior, during, and after the visit? How? Was the timeline ample for the activity?

26. What were the outcomes of the site visit evaluation?

    Probe: Was the visit successful? Why or Why not?
    Probe: Do you think the activity informed the institute about the program's needs?

27. How did the AETH Certification process impact the quality of the operations of the Bible institute?

    Probe: Was the experience useful to the Bible institute? Did the experience obstruct the operations and workload of the staff and faculty? How?

28. How prepared was the institute's team to undergo every portion of the Certification process?

    Probe: What particular areas presented difficulty to the institute's team? Explain.

29. Explain the type of support received from the AETH Certification Committee through the entire process.

    Probe: Did the Committee representatives respond to the requests for assistance?
    Probe: Was there any training or preparatory period prior to the initiation of the process?

30. What barriers can be identified to the completion of the AETH Certification program?

    Probe: Explain how AETH can maximize the completion rate of all the phases of the program.

Conclusion of the Interview:

As we close this interview, I want to thank you for participating and taking time from your agenda. Let me remind you that all the information shared during the interview is confidential. Before we conclude, do you have any questions to ask me?

Additional topics discussed:

Appendix H – Interview Questionnaire for AETH Certification Committee

AETH CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Interviewee #: Gender:

Interviewer:

Date:

Introduction

Thank you for responding to the request of an interview with me to talk about the AETH Certification program, which is one of the main services offered by the Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana (AETH). The main objective of the study is to evaluate the quality, value, effectiveness, and outcomes of the Certification program and self-study phase of the program from the point of view of the Committee. During the interview, I will not be evaluating you, but rather my focus is directed to learn more about the process of the program, the self-study phase, and the procedures that will improve, in general, the various parts of the assessment, including the support provided through the activity.

1. How long have you been a member of AETH?

   Probe: Are you a church-attending person? Are you 19 years old or older?

2. How long since you joined the Certification Committee?

   Probe: What is the recruitment process? Is there an established training period? Describe the training.
   Probe: Are the Committee roles pre-assigned? Explain how the roles are distributed.
   Probe: How is the flow of communication within the Committee?

3. Explain the AETH Certification program. What are the components and objectives of the Certification? How long it takes for the entire process?
   Probe: What are the benefits of the AETH Certification to the stakeholder, the Certification program, and the AETH membership at large?
   Probe: What are the needs, if any, of the Certification program?
   Probe: How many certified Bible institutes to date?

4. Explain the effectiveness of the Handbook for Certification.

   Probe: How effective and practical is the content of the Handbook? What recommendations, if any, would you indicate for the inclusion of supplementary material or editions?

5. Describe the eligibility process.

   Probe: What are the components of the eligibility phase? Is there a grading system?
   Probe: Explain the process of grading an application.

6. How is the flow of communication with the stakeholders? What are the needs of the stakeholders?

   Probe: What is the response time? How the team assigns the person responding?
   Probe: What trends do you identify as common needs of the stakeholders? How do you categorize the needs: (a) organizational procedures competency, or (b) individual professional readiness?

7. Is there a preparation period that the applicants must pass prior to the start of the Certification process?

   Probe: Is there a face-to-face meeting, or phone conference, or video tutorial dedicated to guide the stakeholders in the preparation for the various stages and instruments of the Certification program?
   Probe: What recommendations would you indicate for the inclusion of tutorial/guidance material prior to the start of the Certification process?

8. Describe the self-study phase of the Certification program. How many institutions are going through the process now?

   Probe: What trends or themes do you identify in the self-studies? How do the current trends or themes compare to those since the beginning of the Certification program in 2013?
   Probe: Are those trends or themes been/being addressed? Explain the measures taken to address the issues. Are there any incomplete self-studies? How many?

9. Explain the procedure(s) to managing the incomplete self-studies. What is the expected outcome of the self-study? Why is the relevance of the self-study for the applicant institutions?

   Probe: What are the common reasons or factors for the incomplete self-studies?
   Probe: What type of follow-up is given to the stakeholders? Any probing survey, or communication? Any suggested training?
   Probe: What recommendations would you indicate for the improvement of the process?

10. What is the incompletion rate of the site-visit phase?

11. Describe the instruments used by the Committee to monitor the various stages of Certification? Explain the data reporting procedures including the storage of reports and stakeholder information.

Probe: Checklists? Communications logs? Report instruments?
Probe: How many reports? What is the frequency?
Probe: Do you have an assigned Committee member collecting data and producing reports?
Probe: What is the final destination of the report? Where is the report stored?

12. How many evaluations have been done to the AETH Certification program since 2013? Monthly? Quarterly? Yearly?

    Probe: Is there a performance evaluation used for a Committee member? Describe.

13. What body oversees the operations of the AETH Certification program?

    Probe: What are the plans for future expansion of the program?

14. What is the program's budget?

    Probe: How is the program sustaining operations?
    Probe: What is the impact of the budget on the goals and objectives of the program?

15. Explain how the program can be improved to maximize the rate of completion of all stages of the Certification and future plans for expansion.

    Probe: What are the areas of concern?
    Probe: What recommendation(s), if any, do you give for the improvement of the program?
    Probe: What are your expectations for the success of the program?

Conclusion of the Interview:

As we close this interview, I want to thank you for participating and taking time from your agenda. Let me remind you that all the information shared during the interview is confidential. Before we conclude, do you have any questions to ask me?

Additional topics discussed:

Appendix I – Consent for Survey Participants

CONSENT FORM

AN EVALUATION OF THE RESPONSES TO SELF-STUDIES FOR AETH CERTIFICATION OF HISPANIC BIBLE INSTITUTES

[Student]
Liberty University
John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

You are invited to participate in a research study that evaluates the AETH Certification program's self-studies and processes, and the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a Hispanic Bible institute that participate/participated or receive/received services of AETH and over the age of 19. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

Background Information: The purpose of the study is to evaluate the responses to the AETH Certification self-study phase and the program's processes by collecting data to determine the factors that prevent Hispanic/Latino Bible institutes to successfully fulfill the self-study phase and exploring the effects on the stakeholders and the AETH Certification program. [Student], a Doctoral Candidate in John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University is conducting the study.

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

1. Participate in an online survey, using the Survey Monkey platform, about the certification of programs, evaluation procedures, and the AETH Certification program services. The survey should take no longer than 20 minutes.
2. You will receive a link connecting you the Survey Monkey platform.
3. Sign the electronic Informed Consent form and begin answering the questions. The information will remain confidential.

Risks: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include the contribution of new Hispanic Bible institute-specific information. The study will enrich the study of theological education accreditation and will help enhance the certification procedures for community-based programs.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

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.

- Every participant will be assigned a numerical identification. All responses will be kept confidential. Surveys will be conducted by the computer assisted application Survey

Monkey in a secure and website. The participant's responses will be transcribed, categorized, and coded without names.

- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and drive, and may be used in future presentations, but the researcher will not disclose the participant's identity or how named or identifiable individuals responded. Paper documentation will be stored in a locked cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, all surveys will be permanently deleted, all paper documentation will be shredded through a secured shredding service.
- Surveys will be recorded, transcribed, and will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher and the research assistant will have access to the data.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure: The researcher serves as assistant to the Executive Director at AETH. To limit potential or perceived conflicts researcher will ensure that all data is stripped of identifiers. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or AETH. 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 or 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 Question: The researcher conducting this study is [student]. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [phone] and email: [email]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, [professor], at [email].

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

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

☐ The researcher has my permission to video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____	_____
Printed Subject Name	Signature & Date

Appendix J – Survey Participants

HISPANIC BIBLE INSTITUTE ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

(Please be aware that I will edit and revise this survey. This is an example of the type of questions and will vary according to the results of the QUAL portion of the study)

Denominational Bible Institute _____

Non-Denominational Bible Institute _____

Years established: 1 to 5____ 6 to 10 ____ 11 or more ____

Enrollment size: 10 to 50 _____ 51 to 100 _____ 101 or more _____

Introduction

Thank you for participating in the survey. Read the following statements below and indicate your level of agreement.

Likert Scale Questions

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

---

1. The Bible institute holds a certification/accreditation from an accrediting organization and has experienced the process of a self-study. 1 2 3 4 5
2. The administration of the Bible institute has a team dedicated to the periodic evaluation of the institute's performance. 1 2 3 4 5
3. The administration of the Bible institute has inquired about the AETH Certification. 1 2 3 4 5
4. The administration of the Bible institute has established statutes and regulations that are assessed periodically to match the evolving needs of the organization and the community served. 1 2 3 4 5

5. The institute's present operational condition is acceptable levels to begin and successfully complete a self-study. 1 2 3 4 5
6. The administrative staff has received tutoring/mentoring on what the process of an organizational self-evaluation entails and the type of report that needs to write documenting the process and the findings. 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix K – Email Recruitment Letter for Survey

ELECTRONIC MAIL RECRUITMENT FOR SURVEY

Dear [Participant]:

As a graduate student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership degree. The purpose of my research is to evaluate the AETH Certification program and the self-study responses to determine the factors that prevent Hispanic Bible institutes to successfully complete the process, exploring the effects on the applicants and the AETH Certification program, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be a Hispanic Bible institute member of AETH and are completing/have completed the AETH Certification program. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in an online survey, using the Survey Monkey platform, about the certification of programs, evaluation procedures, and the AETH Certification program services. The survey should take no longer than 20 minutes. Every participant will be assigned a numerical identification. All responses will be kept confidential.

In order to participate, click on the link provided below or contact me at [phone] or [email] for more information.

A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please click the link to proceed to the survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey.

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

To begin the survey, please click on the hyperlink below:
[Hyperlink]

Sincerely,

[student]
Liberty University, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity
Graduate Student
[email]

Appendix L – Follow Up Email for Survey Participants

FOLLOW UP ELECTRONIC MAIL RECRUITMENT FOR SURVEY

[Recipient]

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership degree. Last week an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to respond if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is [Date].

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in an online survey, using the Survey Monkey platform, about the certification of programs, evaluation procedures, and the AETH Certification program services. The survey should take no longer than 20 minutes. Every participant will be assigned a numerical identification. All responses will be kept confidential.

In order to participate, click on the link provided below or contact me at [phone number] or [email] for more information.

A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please click the link to proceed to the survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey.

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

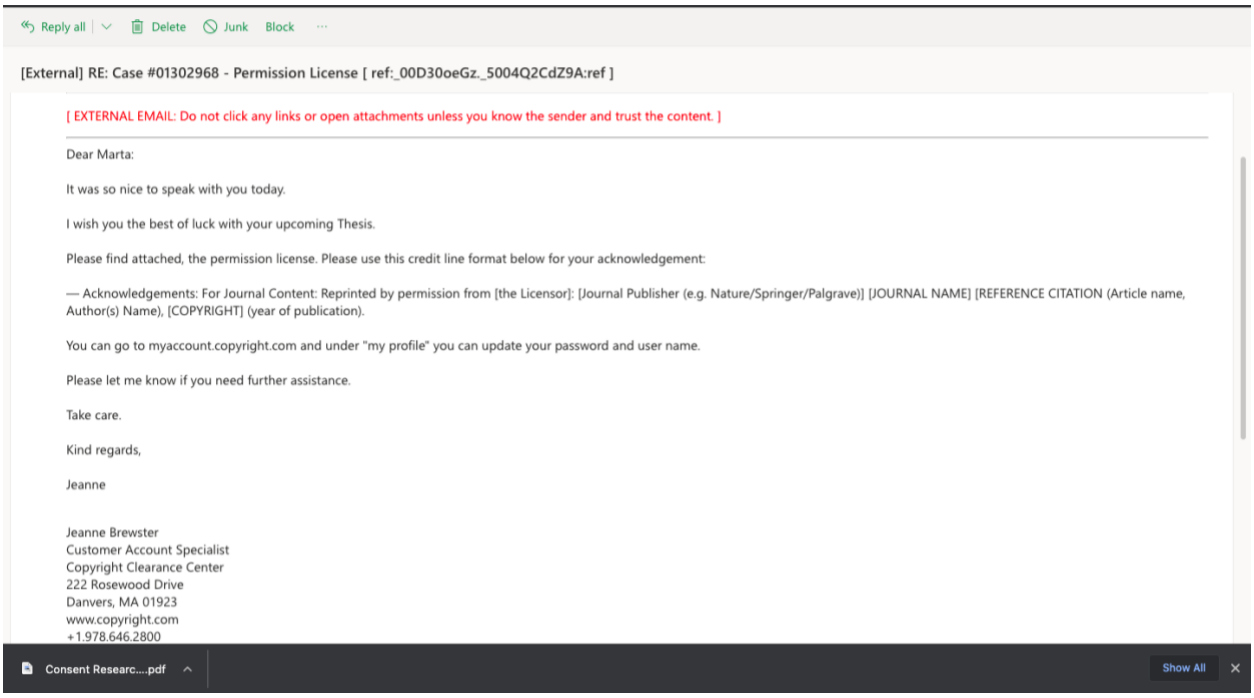
To begin the survey, please click on the hyperlink below:
[Hyperlink]

Sincerely,

[student]
Liberty University, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity
Graduate Student
[email]

Appendix M – License to Use CIPP Material

(The electronic correspondence is shown here. Complete license is a pdf document. Provided as a separate pdf document.)



Reply all | Delete | Junk | Block | ···

[External] RE: Case #01302968 - Permission License [ref:_00D30oeGz._5004Q2CdZ9A:ref]

[EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open attachments unless you know the sender and trust the content.]

Dear Marta:

It was so nice to speak with you today.

I wish you the best of luck with your upcoming Thesis.

Please find attached, the permission license. Please use this credit line format below for your acknowledgement:

— Acknowledgements: For Journal Content: Reprinted by permission from [the Licensor]: [Journal Publisher (e.g. Nature/Springer/Palgrave)] [JOURNAL NAME] [REFERENCE CITATION (Article name, Author(s) Name), [COPYRIGHT] (year of publication).

You can go to myaccount.copyright.com and under "my profile" you can update your password and user name.

Please let me know if you need further assistance.

Take care.

Kind regards,

Jeanne

Jeanne Brewster
Customer Account Specialist
Copyright Clearance Center
222 Rosewood Drive
Danvers, MA 01923
www.copyright.com
+1.978.646.2800

Consent Researc....pdf | Show All

Appendix N – Researcher's Job Description

AETH

Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana

Membership Services Specialist Job Description

This job description refers to the design of the position of the "Membership Services Specialist" that is part of the Sustainability Unit.

1. Purpose of the position
   The fundamental purpose of this position is to ensure that AETH members experience the best service and enjoy the greatest amount of benefits possible, so that:
   - feel part of the organization,
   - develop in the use of services and grow as members in their consumption,
   - remain linked as members, hopefully for life,
   - invite others to join, and
   - express their satisfaction, to be members of AETH, in every possible way

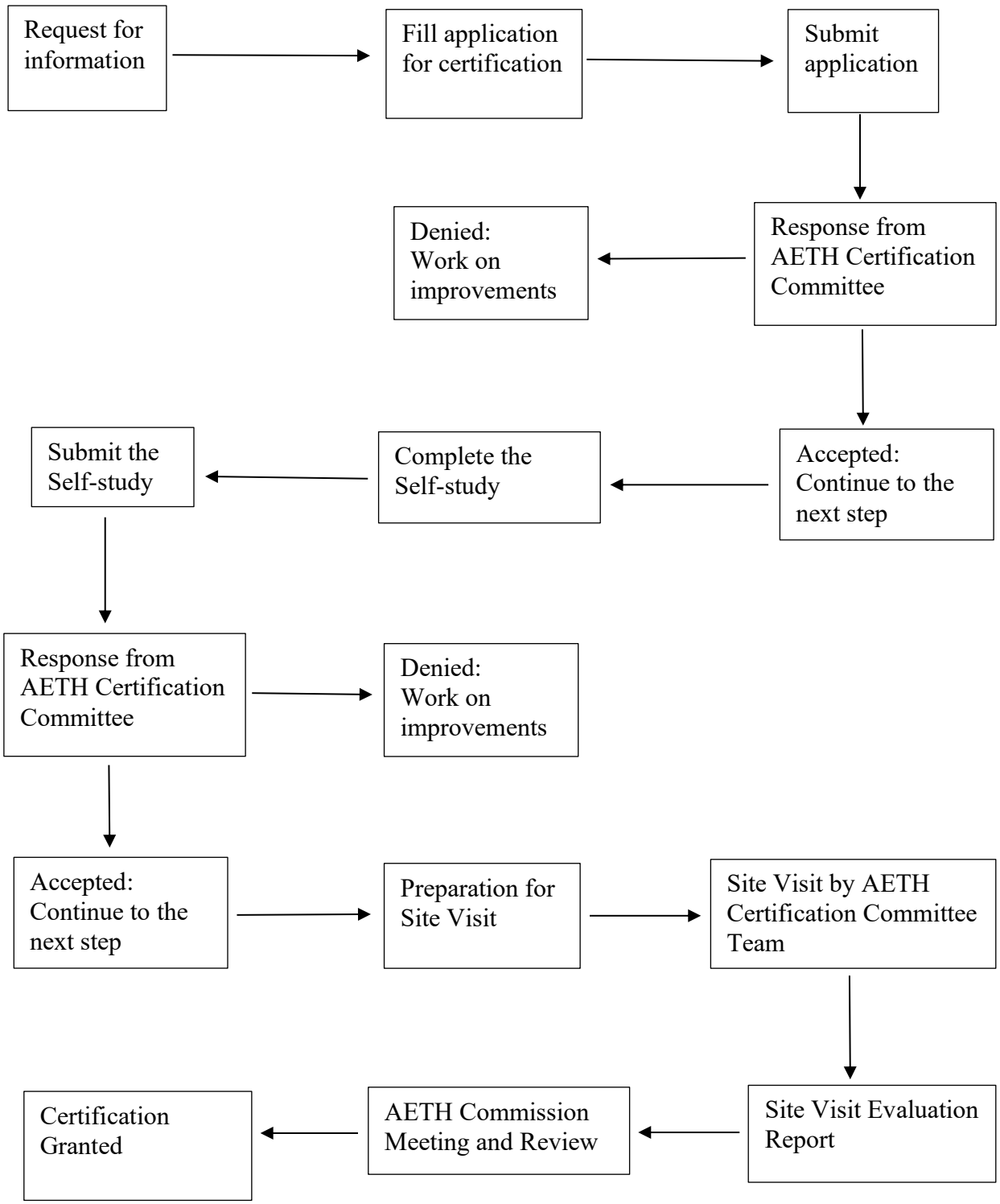
2. General roles and responsibilities of the position
   - Ensure that the Member Services function is financially self-sustaining, contributing to the income plan established by the Sustainability Coordinator or the Executive Director, and meeting the minimum criteria of managing a balanced budget.
   - Implement a service culture that is widely recognized and valued by users and members of AETH, proposing improvements in the processes associated with the management that affects them directly and indirectly.
   - Prepare annual plans and budgets, disaggregated monthly to guide your activities and the volunteers that you manage to link to help you in your work. These plans must have the approval of your immediate superior for their execution.
   - Develop the monitoring system for each month's plans and report monthly based on the key indicators of the approved plan.
   - Design, implement or coordinate campaigns to increase the recruitment of new members in accordance with the growth goals established by the Sustainability Coordinator or the Executive Director.
   - Coordinate the organization of activities and events that contribute to the satisfaction, well-being and development of the members.
   - Design and implement strategies for loyalty and development of members, through which their level of purchases, contributions, donations and volunteer work grow as the time of their membership matures. As instruments for this purpose, it will administer the following services:
     - The AETH volunteer
     - The local or regional chapters of AETH
   - Keep the net loss of members at zero, implementing strategies that prevent members from interrupting their membership or replacing those who do not renew it.
   - Resolve all matters that involve complaints or dissatisfaction with the service on the part of users or members.
   - Ensuring the quality of the information used in all service processes and in the up-to-date maintenance of the CRM (Client Relations Manager).
   - Coordinate with other organizational units the implementation of fundraising campaigns or the use of volunteers that involve current members.

Appendix O – Sample AETH Certification Self-study Financial Statement

This form is suggested as a template for the reporting of an *instituto's* Financial Statement:

Fecha / Date Diciembre 31/ December 31	Año Corriente/ Current Year 2018	Año Pasado/ Past Year 2019
Assets/Activos		
Investments/Inversiones	$	$
Accounts receivables/Cuentas por Cobrar	$	$
Cash/Cash advances/Efectivo/Adelantos	$	$
Contributing income/Contribución ingresos	$	$
Property net/ Neto de Propiedad	$	$
Equipment net/ Neto de Equipo	$	$
Expenses (prepaid)/Gastos (prepagados)		
Total assets/Total de Activos	$	$
Liabilities / Net assets Pasivos/Activos Netos		
Liabilities/Pasivos		
Accrued expenses/Gastos Acumulados	$	$
Accounts payable/Cuentas por Pagar	$	$
Deferred rent/Renta Diferida	$	$
Deferred revenue/Ingreso Diferido	$	$
Total Liabilities/Total de Pasivos	$	$
Net assets/Activos Netos		
Designated – unrestricted Designado – No restringido	$	$
Temporarily – restricted Temporero – Restringido	$	$
Undesignated - restricted No Designado - Restringido	$	$
Total net assets/Total Activos Netos	$	$
Total liabilities and net assets Total Pasivos y Activos Netos	$	$

Appendix P – Steps for AETH Certification



Appendix Q – Sample Self-assessment for Self-study Readiness

Answer the following questions by selecting Y or N. Each Y response is equal to 1 point. Add the total at the bottom.

A. Mission and Vision

Are the mission and vision statements current? Y _____ N _____

Can they be used to steer the processes of planning, research, and directing the self-study process? Y _____ N _____

Are the mission and vision known to all team members and integrated into the annual staff trainings? Y _____ N _____

B. Expected Adjustments in the Organization

Is the governing board implementing changes or adjustments to any areas included in the self-study?

- Strategic plan Y _____ N _____
- Board Y _____ N _____
- Finances Y _____ N _____
- Faculty Y _____ N _____
- Curriculum Y _____ N _____
- Facilities Y _____ N _____
- Recruitment Y _____ N _____

C. Management of the Organizations' Reports and Data

The reports and data are classified and arranged in a certain order to facilitate the planning, research, and submission stages, and are accessible to the team. Y _____ N _____

The team can identify the type of financial reports required for the self-study. Y _____ N _____

D. *Instituto's* Staff, Faculty, and Student Body

The board, administrative staff, and faculty understand their role during the self-study proceedings. Y _____ N _____

There are zero factors that can delay the self-study. Y _____ N _____

Total Score: _____

14 – 12 (Ready) **11 – 9** (Address low score areas and test again) **8 – below** (Not ready)

Appendix R – Checklist of Documents Needed for the Self-study

Use the checklist to guide the self-study process. Once completed, include it in the documentation submitted to the AETH Certification Committee.

AETH Certification Standards	Enter X in the applicable cell below.		
	Completely addressed	**Moderately addressed**	**Not addressed**
Instituto leadership list (name and role)			
Mission statement			
By-laws of *instituto*			
Budget			
Strategic financial plan			
Map and description of facilities			
Library			
Educational programs list			
Requirements for completion			
Faculty qualifications			
Evidence of faculty compensation			
Admission requirements			
Graduation requirements			
Grading system			
Maintenance and security of records			

Notes: