

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ATTENDANCE AND NON-ATTENDANCE
OF LDS PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO
NON-RELEASE TIME LDS SEMINARIES

BY

RICHARD J. ARNOLD

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ABSTRACT

It is important in voluntary programs in education that adequate attendance be maintained. It is essential that there be adequate attendance to the non-release seminary program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints if this program is to be maintained.

A review of literature was made to see what factors have been found to contribute to attendance in voluntary programs of educational instruction.

In conducting this study a questionnaire was sent to LDS high school students in Montana to see what factors contribute to their attendance and non-attendance to non-release time LDS seminaries. The results of this questionnaire were tabulated and analyzed.

From the results of the study the author concluded that the attendance of LDS high school students in seminary programs can be improved by greater cooperation between parents and seminary teachers, by forming car pools to aid those students with transportation problems to get to seminary, by having seminary parties as a means of strengthening associations among LDS high school students, and by presenting programs in church meetings which will show the values that students are deriving from seminary.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Because we in the United States have adopted a policy of separation of church and state, some churches have felt a need for programs which would allow religious as well as secular instruction. The Catholic Church has developed a system of parochial schools for the benefit of their membership who desire to send their children to such schools. Other religious groups have taken similar action.

On the high school level the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has developed a program of religious instruction. This program provides release time instruction in geographical areas where there are enough students to merit, and where state laws permit such a program. Under this program students are released from school for one period each day to attend classes of religious instruction. In areas where there are limited numbers of Latter-day Saint students, or where state laws will not allow a release time program, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has developed a non-release time program of religious instruction. This program allows Latter-day Saint high school students to attend classes in religious instruction either before or after school.

A problem for this non-release time program of religious instruction is getting a sufficient number of students to attend these classes.

Statement of the Problem

The problem for this study was to see what factors, as expressed by the students, contributed to their attendance or non-attendance to these non-release time programs of religious instruction.

Procedures of the Study

In order to determine what factors were important in attendance or non-attendance to these programs of religious instruction, the following procedures were followed: The names and addresses of the teachers for the non-release time program of religious instruction in Montana were obtained from the Montana supervisor of these non-release time programs of instruction. Letters were sent to these teachers to obtain the names and addresses of the Latter-day Saint high school students in their areas. From these lists of names a representative sample was selected.

A review of literature was made to determine procedures and methods for constructing a questionnaire. The review of literature also considered studies of factors that were associated with attendance in educational programs. A questionnaire was then constructed and sent to the sample of students which had been representatively selected.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study is limited in the following ways: The representative sample of potential students to these programs of

religious instruction was selected only from Montana. Only students attending public high school, grades 9, 10, 11, or 12 were considered in this study. For purposes of this study attendance meant those who were present seventy-five percent of the time or more, while non-attendance meant those who were present less than seventy-five percent of the time.

Definition of Terms

LDS is used as an abbreviation for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A LDS public high school student is a member of record of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who is presently attending grade 9, 10, 11, or 12 of a public junior high school, or public high school.

A seminary is "a private secondary school operated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for the purpose of providing high school students with week-day religious instruction."¹

A non-release time LDS seminary is a class for religious instruction which is held before or after regular school hours. It is directed by, and follows a course of study outlined by, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Department of Education in Provo, Utah. In this paper a reference to seminary means a non-release time LDS seminary.

¹Taylor, Hal L., "A Study of the Influence of Seminary Teachers on Seminary Enrollment in the Twenty-Seven One-Teacher Seminaries of the State of Utah," Unpublished Master's thesis, School of Education, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, pp. 8-9, 1962.

MIA is an abbreviation for the Mutual Improvement Association.
This is a program for the youth which is sponsored by the Church of
Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature was made to determine the procedures and methods for constructing a questionnaire. The review of literature was also concerned with studies which considered factors that were associated with attendance in educational programs.

Constructing a Questionnaire

The review of literature was conducted to gain information on the method of constructing a questionnaire. It was the desire of the author to develop as objective and effective a questionnaire as possible.

Chamberlin¹ indicated that the best results from a questionnaire would be acquired if these rules were followed:

1. Exhaust other sources of information before sending the questionnaire.
2. Allow the respondents sufficient time for completing the questionnaire.
3. Have the questions clearly worded, and free from ambiguity.
4. Include with the request a self addressed return envelope.
5. Be sure the questions are short, to the point, and objective.
6. Ask only for basic information.
7. Indicate the purpose for wanting the information.

¹Chamberlin, Leslie J., "Reluctant Respondents: Information Seekers Most Likely to Fail," Clearing House, March, 1963, pp. 427-9.

8. Avoid "colloquial expressions". Use only generally accepted terminology.
9. Don't cause embarrassment by asking for "pro" or "con" expressions to controversial issues.
10. Be sure the grammatical construction is correct, and that the questionnaire is correctly spelled.
11. Prepare detailed instructions as to how the questionnaire should be completed.

Nixon² indicates that the questionnaire should be referred to as a "form" or an "instrument", not as a questionnaire or a check list. Brimm³ suggests that a questionnaire should: ask specific questions, contain a minimum number of items, leave space for comments, and not ask the respondent to sign his name.

Jackson and Rothney⁴ did a study to determine the thoroughness of the questionnaire as compared with the interview as a means of gaining information. They concluded that the interview is the better method for gathering more complete information. They also indicated that respondents answered factual questions more often than they did those questions which called for an evaluation. Subjects were also found to respond more consistently to factual data than they did to open ended

²Nixon, John E., "Mechanics of Questionnaire Construction," Journal of Educational Research, March, 1954, pp. 481-7.

³Brimm, R. P., "Questionnaires Canvass Parents, Pupils, Teachers," Clearing House, January, 1954, pp. 269-70.

⁴Jackson, Robert M., and Rothney, John W. M., "A Comparative Study of the Mailed Questionnaire and the Interview in Follow-Up Studies," Personnel and Guidance Journal, March, 1961, pp. 569-71.

questions. Finally, they observed that the longer the questionnaire the lower the percentage of responses that would be received on each succeeding page.

Ahrens⁵ believes that the questionnaires can be made almost as reliable as interviews by doing the following:

1. Having adequate sponsorship for the questionnaire.
2. State clearly the purpose of the study.
3. Have a worthy topic to study.
4. Have the questionnaire well organized.
5. Allow the respondents to answer with a check mark. Keep subjective replies to a minimum.
6. Have the questions clearly and briefly worded.
7. Ask only for information which is unavailable from other sources.
8. Use proper mechanical form.
9. Be sure that the demands of the questionnaire are reasonable.
10. Promise a summary of the results to respondents who may be interested in having them.

Mooren and Rothney⁶ did a study to see if there would be greater responses to a questionnaire if it were personalized. To do this they sent to each person a questionnaire which was handwritten, and accompanied the questionnaire with a short personal note. They sent typed

⁵Ahrens, H. I., "Validity of the Questionnaire," Science Education, February, 1950, pp. 41-42.

⁶Mooren, Robert L., and Rothney, John W. M., "Personalizing the Follow-Up Study," Personnel and Guidance Journal, March, 1956, pp. 409-12.

questionnaires of typical form construction to a control group. These groups were matched as nearly as possible. Mooren and Rothney found that there was no significant difference in the rate of responding, or in the number of responses received from the two groups.

This is a general summary of the information which was available on the procedures and methods of constructing a questionnaire. The next question was what factors should be considered in this particular questionnaire?

Factors Associated With Attendance in Educational Programs

Certain factors seemed to be of primary importance in determining attendance in educational programs. Some of these factors were: pupil-teacher relationships, personal characteristics of the individual, transportation, influence of people other than the teacher, and miscellaneous factors associated with attendance.

Pupil-teacher relationships are central to the functioning of educational programs. Hollister⁷ feels that children make a better adjustment to the school if teachers are prepared to understand them, to meet their needs, and to handle problems of discipline as they arise. Along this same line, Punke⁸ indicates that in the past adjustment to school has been too much of a one sided proposition, with the teacher

⁷Hollister, William G., "A Bridge of Feelings," National Education Association Journal, September, 1959, pp. 34-6.

⁸Punke, Harold, H., "Pupil-Teacher Relationships of High School Seniors," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, May, 1961, pp. 64-71.

setting the rules and the student adjusting to them. He feels there should be a shifting in this adjustment process. He would like to see more of a working relationship between the teacher and the student. A relationship which was based on mutual understanding. Punke also indicates that students appreciate teachers who are qualified and who have teaching ability. He points out that on the high school level there is a desire among the students to have more men teachers.

Mill⁹ indicates that the teacher is an important image to the student. If students admire a teacher they tend to adopt the attitudes of this teacher. These attitudes affect their readiness to learn. If the teacher demonstrates a favorable attitude toward the student, and toward the subject being taught, then the student will tend to adopt this same attitude.

As a means of improving the relationship between teachers and students, Craig¹⁰ has suggested the following principles.

1. Teachers should be just, honest, and fair with all students.
2. Teachers should take a personal interest in their students.
3. Students should always be given reasons "why" certain things are required.
4. Teachers should have a well planned program of work.
5. Teachers should be loyal to their students.

⁹Mill, Cyril R., "Attitudes Affect Pupil Learning," Educational Leadership, January, 1960, pp. 212-16.

¹⁰Craig, R. N., "Teacher-Student Relationships," Agricultural Education Magazine, May, 1960, pp. 259-61.

6. All directives to the students should be clear and positive.
7. Work which the teacher demands of the student should be within the capacities of the student.
8. Teachers should give recognition and awards for the worthwhile achievements of their students.
9. Teachers should give the students courteous treatment.
10. Teachers should admit mistakes which they may make.
11. Teachers should use their position and rank in a helpful way rather than dictatorially.
12. Teachers should maintain proper professional distance between himself and the student. It is important to avoid too much familiarity.

Proper teacher-pupil relationships are necessary for admiration and respect. The personality of each individual is also very important.

Personal characteristics of the individual also play a significant part in their attendance in educational programs. It was interesting to note the different effect that the personal characteristics of the individual had on responding to questionnaires, and on attendance. Concerning responses to questionnaires Mooren and Rothney¹¹ found that: girls generally respond faster and more completely than boys, those with high intelligence respond faster than those with lower intelligence, and those who do well in their school work respond faster than those who do poorly in their school work.

¹¹Mooren and Rothney, op. cit. pp. 409-12.

Similarly, Greene¹² found that best attenders have higher grades, higher I.Q. scores, favorable socio-economic levels, and favorable parental attitudes. Spaulding¹³ indicated that attendance in school was related to masculinity and femininity:

Attendance in secondary school was observed to be related to masculinity-femininity by Webb (1963). Good records of school attendance were found by boys and girls with high femininity scores. Conversely, those with records of extensive absenteeism had low femininity scores. These data were in essential agreement with Cattell's (Cattell and Others, 1962) finding that submissiveness and docility were the personality traits most highly related to school success.

In contrast with the finding of Spaulding, Ulmer and Verner¹⁴ found that females discontinued attendance to classes in a junior college adult program, more often than did males. This discrepancy can perhaps be explained because of the different level of instruction. One being a secondary school, where attendance is compulsory, and the other being an adult program where attendance is voluntary. As important as these personal factors are, it is also essential that the student be able to get to the location of the educational program.

Transportation to public schools is a recent program which has expanded rapidly. Much money is spent in providing this service to the

¹²Greene, J. E. Sr., "Factors Associated with Absenteeism Among Students in Two Metropolitan High Schools," Journal of Experimental Education, Summer, 1963, pp. 389-94.

¹³Spaulding, Robert L., "Personality and Social Development; Peer and School Influences; Correlates of School Attendance," Record of Educational Research, December, 1964, pp. 589-90.

¹⁴Ulmer, R. Curtis, and Verner, Coolie, "Factors Affecting Attendance in a Junior College Adult Program," Adult Education, Spring, 1963, pp. 153-8.

school children in our communities throughout the United States.

Information on transportation as a factor influencing attendance to educational programs was limited primarily to attendance in adult classes. Ulmer and Verner¹⁵ found that distance from school was not an important factor in determining attendance to adult classes at a junior college.

Davis,¹⁶ on the other hand, found that the distance from instruction centers played an important part in the attendance of farmers to adult evening classes. He found that farmers who lived five and a half miles or more from the center of instruction attended the classes more regularly than did those farmers who lived less than five and a half miles from the centers of instruction.

Influences of people other than the teacher are important in programs of educational instruction. Taylor¹⁷ did a study to see what influence the seminary teacher had on the enrollment in 27 one-teacher seminaries in Utah. He found that the people who were most important in influencing the students attendance to seminary were the parents. The influence of the parents was followed by that of the church leader, then the seminary teacher, then friends, and finally older brothers and sisters. This shows to some extent the part of the parents in directing

¹⁵Ulmer and Verner, op. cit. pp. 153-8.

¹⁶Davis, Philip B., "Selected Factors Associated with Attendance at Adult Farmer Classes," Agricultural Education Magazine, February, 1961, pp. 179-81.

¹⁷Taylor, op. cit. p. 56.

the educational programs of their children. Several other factors may be important when considering attendance to voluntary educational programs.

Miscellaneous factors associated with attendance are mentioned in a study by Davis¹⁸ where he considered factors related to attendance of farmers in evening classes. He found that:

1. Farmers attended classes most regularly during the winter months. In February and March attendance was particularly high.
2. Farmers who attended most regularly indicated that the method of instruction was important to them.
3. Farmers who attended regularly indicated that they were interested in information that would help them solve their problems.
4. Evening was found to be the best time of the day for farmers to attend classes of instruction.
5. A planned program which extends over a period of years was found to be more effective in improving attendance than a sporadic program.
6. Able instructors were an important part of the program. Seventy-five percent of the respondents indicated that the ability of the instructor influenced their attendance.
7. The personality of the instructor influenced the attendance.
8. Farmers who were members of car pools had better attendance than those who were not.

¹⁸Davis, op. cit. pp. 179-81.

From this study it is apparent that there are several factors that play a part in affecting attendance or non-attendance to voluntary programs of instruction.

Summary

In this chapter a review of literature was made to determine the methods and procedures for constructing a questionnaire. Several studies reported procedures which should be followed if the most meaningful data is going to be obtained by means of a questionnaire.

The review of literature was also concerned with studies that presented information about attendance and non-attendance in voluntary educational programs. Consideration was given to: pupil-teacher relationships, personal characteristics of the individual, transportation, influences of people other than the teacher, and miscellaneous factors associated with attendance.

CHAPTER III

IDENTIFICATION OF FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO ATTENDANCE AND
NON-ATTENDANCE OF LDS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO
NON-RELEASE TIME LDS SEMINARIES

The purpose of this study was to identify those factors that the students felt contributed to their attendance or non-attendance to non-release time LDS seminaries. The data for this study came from the students themselves.

Research Method

In order to identify those factors which the students felt contributed to their attendance or non-attendance to seminary, the following research method was employed. The names and addresses of the non-release time LDS seminary teachers in Montana were obtained from the supervisor of the Montana non-release time LDS seminary program. Letters¹⁹ were sent to these teachers requesting the names and addresses of the potential LDS seminary students in their areas who attended public high schools, grades 9, 10, 11, or 12. These teachers were asked to distinguish between those students who attended seminary at least 75% of the time and those who attended seminary less than 75% of the time. Twenty-two letters were sent to teachers in Montana, from whom 14 replies were received. From these 14 lists a representative selection was made of 200 students to whom questionnaires were to be sent. One hundred of these students were selected from the group having attendance of

¹⁹See Appendix A

75% or more. Another 100 students were selected from the group having attendance of less than 75%. Each group was composed of 50 boys and 50 girls. In the selection of this sample the author avoided selecting brothers and sisters, feeling that by so doing a more representative sample would be obtained. With the sample selected it was necessary to develop an instrument to determine what factors were important in influencing their attendance.

Developing the Questionnaire

In developing the questionnaire²⁰ consideration was given to the information learned in the review of literature. The responses to the questions were organized in such a way as to allow the subject to be able to answer with a "X". There were open ended questions which allowed the students to give their personal reasons for attending or not attending seminary. A letter of introduction²¹ accompanied the questionnaire. This letter indicated the purpose and sponsorship of the questionnaire. It also indicated that the names of the students were not to be included on the returned questionnaire. In this cover letter students were encouraged to comment on any of the questions in the questionnaire. A special request was made to encourage student responses to the open ended questions. It was requested that the questionnaire be returned as quickly as possible, however a date was not suggested. Stamped self addressed return envelopes were included in the letter received by the

²⁰See Appendix C

²¹See Appendix B

students.

The questionnaire was concerned with particular factors which could influence attendance. These were: transportation; season of the year; influence of the teacher; influence of peers; influence of parents; influence of persons other than peers, parents, or the seminary teacher; interest in religion; time of class instruction; and information presented in seminary. The questions were phrased in such a way as to have a positive and a negative question related to each of these areas. An attempt was made to develop objective questions and to avoid simply stating positive questions in a positive, and then in a negative way.

Of the 200 questionnaires which were sent out 122 were returned. This is a return of 61%. Bennett and Hill²² indicate that a return of 60% is good for a mailed questionnaire. Since it has been observed²³ that those who favor the sponsor of a questionnaire respond better than those who do not favor the sponsor, it was not too surprising to see a return of 83% for the attender group, and a return of only 39% for the non-attender group. According to the review of literature, girls should respond to a questionnaire more frequently than boys. The non-attender group supported this observation. Of the 39 responses from this group, 24 were received from girls, while only 15 were received from boys. The number of responses from the attender group was similar for boys and girls. Two possible explanations for this similar number of responses

²²Bennett, Carson, M., and Hill, Robert E. Jr., "A Comparison of Selected Personality Characteristics of Responders and Nonresponders to a Mailed Questionnaire Study," Journal of Educational Research, December, 1964, p. 178.

²³Ibid. p. 178.

are: First, the high rate of responses by both boys and girls in the attender group would tend to bring about an equal number of returns. Second, many of the boys who attended seminary indicated that they did so after considerable parental persuasion. This same parental persuasion may have been present in their answering this questionnaire. After the questionnaires were returned an evaluation was made.

Evaluation of Responses

The responses to this questionnaire were tabulated. This tabulation is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1. FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES FOR ATTENDERS AND NON-ATTENDERS, BOYS AND GIRLS IN ANSWERING THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

No.	Sex	Agree		Agree Slightly		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree Slightly		Disagree	
		Att.	Non-att.*	Att.	Non-att.	Att.	Non-att.	Att.	Non-att.	Att.	Non-att.
1	Boys	14	4	5		1		2	3	17	7
	Girls	11	6	1	3	1	2	1	1	25	10
2	Boys	14	7	3		4		1	1	19	5
	Girls	10	5	2	1	5	4	2	1	20	11
3	Boys	3		6		2		4	2	26	6
	Girls		1	5	1	1	5	5		28	10
4.	Boys	38	9			3					2
	Girls	38	19	1			3		1		1
5	Boys	2	1	1		3		1		34	12
	Girls	4	1	3	1	4	4	1		27	16
6	Boys	1	5	5	2	1		1		33	7
	Girls	3	4	5	2	2	1	1	2	28	13
7	Boys	35	10	2	1					4	1
	Girls	33	14	3			2	2	1	1	7
8	Boys	28	3	7	2	4		1		1	5
	Girls	34	9	5		10					1
9	Boys	1	2	1	1	2				37	9
	Girls						2		2	39	19

TABLE 1 (Continued)

No.	Sex	Agree		Agree Slightly		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree Slightly		Disagree	
		Att.	Non-att.	Att.	Non-att.	Att.	Non-att.	Att.	Non-att.	Att.	Non-att.
10	Boys	34	9	5	1	1	1	1	1		
	Girls	35	18	2	1	1	1	1			1
11	Boys		5		1	3	1	6	1	32	6
	Girls	5	7	4		9	6	1	2	20	7
12	Boys	2	1	1	2	3	2	2		33	7
	Girls		1	1	1	3	3			35	17
13	Boys	8	2	1	2	1		4		27	10
	Girls	4	5	1	4	1	3	2		31	10
14	Boys	3	1			1	4	5	1	32	7
	Girls	3	2	6		4	3	3	3	23	13
15	Boys	36	5	2	3	3	4				1
	Girls	34	12	4		1	6	1			
16	Boys	29	6	7	1	5	4		1		2
	Girls	29	15	8		1	2			1	4
17	Boys		1		2	1	1	2		38	10
	Girls				1	1	2	1	1	37	17
18	Boys	29	6	5	2	3	2			3	4
	Girls	20	8	3	4	9	5	1		6	5

TABLE 1 (Continued)

No.	Sex	Agree		Agree Slightly		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree Slightly		Disagree	
		Att.	Non-att.	Att.	Non-att.	Att.	Non-att.	Att.	Non-att.	Att.	Non-att.
19	Boys	34	7	3	1	3	1	1	3	2	
	Girls	25	15	4	1	1		6	2	4	
20	Boys	31	3	5	1	1	5	2	1	3	
	Girls	35	12	3	2	1	5			1	1

*Att. is an abbreviation for attender, Non-att. is an abbreviation for non-attender.

The responses to the questionnaire were evaluated in the following manner.

First, the chi square technique was applied to determine if there was a significant difference between the responses of the attenders and the responses of the non-attenders to each of the questions on the questionnaire. The results showed that there was a significant difference between attenders and non-attenders on 11 of the 20 questions. This information is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2. χ^2 VALUES WITH AN INDICATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AT THE .05 LEVEL FOR: ATTENDERS AND NON-ATTENDERS, MALE ATTENDERS AND FEMALE ATTENDERS, AND MALE NON-ATTENDERS AND FEMALE NON-ATTENDERS, TO ITEMS ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

No.	χ^2 Att.*and Non-att.	Sig.	χ^2 Male Att. and Female Att.	Sig.	χ^2 Male Non- att. and Female Non-att.	Sig.
1	3.09		4.8		5.59	
2	.499		1.19		5.01	
3	20.07	x	3.96		6.07	
4	12.29	x	4.04		4.33	
5	9.26		2.51		1.76	
6	11.91	x	2.73		4.56	
7	11.38	x	6.72		6.38	
8	39.60	x	7.03		9.71	x
9	8.41		4.15		7.09	
10	4.67		1.18		1.21	
11	16.94	x	18.45	x	3.69	
12	5.23		4.18		.99	
13	13.27	x	2.15		2.33	
14	8.82		9.68	x	1.51	
15	18.38	x	1.39		7.51	
16	19.67	x	3.64		5.18	
17	15.02	x	.28		3.69	
18	6.72		7.18		.74	
19	7.01		7.62		3.42	
20	26.45	x	3.79		6.42	

*Att. is an abbreviation for attender. Non-att. is an abbreviation for non-attender.

Attendees to LDS seminaries agreed with the following statements significantly more than did non-attendees.

1. Religion is a very important part of my life.
2. The seminary class was held at a time when I could attend.
3. Seminary has helped me understand what I have been taught in MIA and Sunday School.
4. The information taught in seminary was new and/or worthwhile.
5. I have a testimony of the gospel.
6. I enjoyed my seminary teacher.

On the other hand, non-attendees agreed with the following statements significantly more than did attendees.

1. Information presented in seminary only repeats what I have been previously taught.
2. It was difficult for me to attend seminary because we live so far from where the class was held.
3. My parents did not care if I did or did not attend seminary.
4. I had other obligations to meet during the time seminary was taught.
5. I do not get along well with students who attend seminary.

Second, the chi square technique was applied to see if there was a significant difference between boys and girls within each group. The results are presented in Table 2. Among non-attendees it was found that girls agreed that seminary had helped them understand what they had been taught in MIA and Sunday School significantly more than did boys. Among attendees it was found that boys disagreed with two statements significantly more than did the girls. These two statements were:

1. My parents did not care if I did or did not attend seminary.
2. Nobody encouraged me to attend seminary.

It appears that there is an overlapping in the responses of the boys to these two questions. The results of these questions indicates that boys receive more parental encouragement to attend seminary than do girls.

Third, the chi square technique was applied to see if the season of the year; Fall, Winter, or Spring, made any difference in attendance in seminary. With both groups combine a score of 3.74 was obtained. This indicates no significant difference in attendance for the various seasons of the year for the combine group. A score of 1.07 was obtained for the attender group alone. This again indicates no significant difference in attendance for the various seasons of the year. For the non-attender group a score of 9.86 was obtained. This indicates a significant difference. The responses indicate that non-attenders attend seminary most during the Fall, and least in the Spring. In addition to the specific questions asked in the questionnaire the students were given the opportunity to respond to open ended questions.

Responses of the Students to the Open Ended Questions

Individual responses by the students throughout the questionnaire, and to the open ended questions, added to the understanding of those factors which contributed to their attendance or non-attendance to seminary. These responses are presented for each group individually. Responses made in the body of the questionnaire, questions 1-20, will be

presented first. Then responses to questions 23 and 24 will be presented. Those statements which occurred most frequently will be placed on the top of the list, and the frequency of each response will be indicated in parenthesis behind the statement.

Among the non-attenders one student indicated that he participated in extra-curricular activities during the time seminary was held. He stated however, that he would give up his extra-curricular activity if he felt seminary was worthwhile. Another non-attender agreed that it was difficult to attend seminary because he lived so far from where the class was held, then he added that this was just an excuse. A non-attender who agreed that he got along well with other seminary students, added that this was only during seminary, and that he had little to do with them at school. One non-attender girl answered the question about encouragement on the part of her parents by indicating that her father was inactive in the LDS church, and didn't care if she attended or did not attend. Her mother felt that it would be good for her to attend seminary.

Individual responses of non-attenders revealed that these students did not attend regularly because:

1. It was too hard to get up early in the morning. (10)
2. I simply was not interested in seminary. (8)
3. I had too many other responsibilities. (5)
4. I didn't feel I benefitted from the classes. (2)
5. My school shift made attendance at seminary difficult. (2)
6. The teacher of the seminary class maintained poor discipline. (2)

7. I had a hard time in school. (2)
8. My parents are not LDS. (1)
9. I felt out of place. (1)
10. My father had a personal conflict with the bishop. (1)
11. I didn't understand the program. (1)
12. The teacher ask me not to return. (1)

Reasons which non-attenders gave for their occasional attendance in seminary were:

1. I plan to go on a mission. (2)
2. I wanted to learn more about the gospel, (2)
3. I had a boy friend or girl friend who attended seminary. (2)
4. I felt it started the day off right. (1)
5. I enjoyed the parties. (1)

The individual responses of attenders presented some interesting differences and similarities when compared with the responses of non-attenders. Of those students who attended seminary, one indicated that he gave up extra-curricular activities in order to attend seminary. Another student indicated that a car pool solved her transportation problem. One of the students, who apparently attended an afternoon seminary class, indicated that she would have preferred a class taught before school. One of the attenders agreed with the statement that her parents didn't care if she attended seminary or not, then she added that her parents are not members of the LDS church. One person felt that seminary interfered with pre-school activities, and that she would like to have release time.

Individual responses given by attenders which expressed their personal reasons for attending seminary were:

1. It helped me better understand the gospel. (25)
2. I desired to gain a testimony of the gospel. (17)
3. It helped me better explain the church to my friends. (16)
4. I felt it was a good way to start the day. (13)
5. It helped me be a better person. (13)
6. It helped me prepare for a mission. (9)
7. I enjoyed the lessons. (9)
8. It gave me an opportunity to associate with LDS youth. (8)
9. My parents made me attend. (4)
10. Seminary was fun. (3)
11. My girl friend attended seminary. (2)
12. It gave me an opportunity to drive the car. (2)
13. It was a way to school. (2)
14. It forced me to study the scriptures. (2)
15. I didn't have to milk. (1)

Individual reasons which attenders gave for their occasional non-attendance to seminary were:

1. I needed the extra sleep. (10)
2. I was sick. (6)
3. I had too much homework. (6)
4. My transportation was a problem in the winter. (3)
5. I was traveling on a school function. (2)
6. I had to help at home. (1)
7. I felt that my time in seminary was not well spent. (1)

8. We changed teachers often, and the lessons were poorly organized. (1)

9. I got married in May. (1)

The responses of the students to the open ended questions gave more information about their reasons for attending and not attending seminary.

Summary

In this chapter the method or research for gathering the data from the students is explained. The technique which was used in constructing the questionnaire is described. The results of the questionnaire are analyzed. The chi square technique was applied to see if there were significant differences in the responses of the attenders and the non-attenders to the questionnaire. The chi square technique was applied also to see if there were significant differences between boys and girls in the same group. Individual responses of the students to the open ended questions of the questionnaire were presented in order of their frequency of occurrence.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The emphasis which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints places on the seminary program indicates the concern which they have for student attendance in this program. The purpose of this study was to learn what factors contribute to attendance and non-attendance of LDS high school students to these seminary programs. It was hoped that this study would show areas in which steps may be taken to improve the attendance of LDS high school students to these seminary programs.

Summary

To carry out this study the names and addresses of the seminary teachers in the State of Montana were obtained. Letters were then sent to these teachers requesting lists of the names and addresses of the LDS high school students in their areas. It was also requested that the teachers indicate those students who had attended seminary 75% of the time or more, and those who had attended seminary less than 75% of the time. Questionnaires were developed and sent to a representative sample of these seminary students. One hundred questionnaires were sent to each group. The responses of the students to this questionnaire were tabulated. The chi square technique was applied to determine three things.

1. What factors indicated a significant difference between attenders and non-attenders.

2. What factors indicated a significant difference between boys

and girls in the same group, both attenders and non-attenders.

3. Was there a significant difference for attendance of either group because of the season of the year?

Finally, the responses of the students to open ended questions were tabulated and arranged in order of frequency of occurrence.

Conclusions

From the material gathered in this research project the author feels that the following conclusions are appropriate.

1. Students who want to attend seminary will be able to do so.
2. Students who don't want to attend seminary will interests or responsibilities which they must attend to, which conflict with the time of seminary instruction.
3. The time of class instruction is not a deterrent to attendance. Students who attend regularly indicate that getting up in the morning is hard for them as frequently as do those who do not attend seminary.
4. The season of the year is not, in itself, a deterrent to seminary attendance. Inclement weather does not distract from seminary attendance.
5. Transportation to seminary can be obtained for students who are really interested in attending seminary.

It is also the conclusion of the author that certain factors are very important in influencing attendance. These factors are:

1. The personal concern of the individual about religion. This is expressed by the students with such comments as: I desire to gain a

testimony, I have a desire to better understand the gospel, I want to be able to explain the church to others, I want to prepare for a mission, I want to be a better person.

2. The influence of the teacher. This is expressed by the students when they indicate that they like the teacher, enjoy the lessons, and feel that seminary is a good way to start the day.

3. Influence of the parents. This is indicated by several students because they say they attend seminary because their parents make them.

4. Students express the desire to associate with other LDS youth. Therefore the author concludes that peer associations are important in improving attendance in the seminary program.

Recommendations

It is the recommendation of the author that seminary teachers visit the homes of potential seminary students and encourage their attendance in seminary. This should help the parents of these students to understand the seminary program, and the part they can play in encouraging their children to participate in the seminary program. It is recommended that the seminary class present programs in church meetings which will show the influence of this program in the lives of the students. It is recommended that car pools be arranged to allow all students the opportunity to attend seminary. Seminary socials should be a regular part of the seminary program in order to strengthen the peer association among the seminary students.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Letter Sent to Teachers

Letter Sent to Teachers

June 10, 1965

Dear

As partial fulfillment of the Masters of Education degree I have undertaken a study to determine what factors contribute to attendance or non-attendance of LDS high school students to non-release time seminars.

I need your help in this study. I have a questionnaire to send to the LDS high school students in Montana. I would appreciate your sending me the names and addresses of all the LDS high school students in your area who have or have not been attending seminary. Will you please indicate those students who have attended seminary at least seventy-five per cent of the time.

Since I must meet a rapidly approaching deadline, your immediate attention to this matter will be greatly appreciated. I would like to have this information by Wednesday, June 16, if possible.

Thanking you in advance for your effort in my behalf, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Richard J. Arnold

Appendix B
Letter Accompanying Questionnaire

Letter Accompanying Questionnaire

June 18, 1965

Dear LDS High School Student:

As a research project at Montana State College, I am investigating what factors contribute to attendance and non-attendance of LDS high school students to non-release time LDS seminaries. You can be of great service to me in this endeavor.

Will you please complete the enclosed form and return it to me as quickly as possible.

Any comments you make concerning any of the questions will be appreciated. Your personal comments are requested in answering questions 23 and 24.

Please do not put your name on this form.

Thanking you in advance for your immediate attention to this matter, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Richard J. Arnold
Graduate student
Montana State College

Appendix C
Questionnaire Sent to Students

	Agree	Agree slightly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree slightly	Disagree
13. I had other obligations to meet during the time seminary was taught.					
14. Nobody encouraged me to attend seminary.					
15. The information presented in seminary was new and/or worthwhile.					
16. I have a testimony of the gospel.					
17. I do not get along well with students who attend seminary.					
18. My parents encouraged my attendance at seminary.					
19. Transportation to seminary was not a problem for me.					
20. I enjoyed my seminary teacher.					
21. I attended seminary most during					
Fall					
Winter					
Spring					
About the same all year around					
22. I attended seminary least during					
Fall					
Winter					
Spring					
About the same all year around					

23. Reasons, other than those already mentioned, which I had for attending seminary are:

24. Reasons, other than those already mentioned, which I had for not attending seminary are: