Soft Options or Practical Reality? A Study of Practical Course Options for HSC Students in Seventh-day Adventist Schools in NSW

Juanita Marie Harder, Avondale College

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Dr. Cedric Greive

Abstract
This study examines the perceptions of senior students in four Seventh-day Adventist schools in New South Wales toward the range of subject options available at their school. In particular, the study focuses on students’ perceived levels of satisfaction in relation to the availability of practical subjects. It also examines the nature of the factors involved in influencing students’ choice of subjects and their perceptions of the relative status of practical versus academic subjects. Finally, the study examines students’ choices in relation to their post-secondary aspirations. These aspects of subject options are examined in the light of the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education to establish whether there is consistency between their philosophy of a holistic approach to education and the options that are available to senior students. A questionnaire involving attitudinal items set against a 5-point Likert scale was used to generate data about their sense of satisfaction with the subject options at their school, about their feelings in relation to the status of practical versus academic subjects and their choice of subjects in relation to their future aspirations. These data were analysed using the SPSS statistical package. The results indicated that most students reported that they were adequately catered for in relation to subject offerings. However, there were pockets of concern about the limited subject options for practically oriented students for the HSC. A large number of students indicated that they chose their own subjects for the HSC and that they chose them with the aim of attending university. Student responses also indicated that there was a pervasive belief among the students that academic subjects were of greater worth than practical subjects and received higher recognition from the school. Hence, the recommendation was made that there is a need for more balanced approach in providing commendation and affirmation of student choice and performance in practical and academic subjects within Seventh-day Adventist schools. Finally, it is recommended that students’ satisfaction levels in relation to their subject options be constantly monitored to ensure student needs and desires are being met throughout the HSC.

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Harder, Juanita Marie, "Soft Options or Practical Reality? A Study of Practical Course Options for HSC Students in Seventh-day Adventist Schools in NSW" (2003). Theses Bachelor Honours. 4.
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