

A Quantitative Comparative Study of **Employee Engagement Among Full-time Pastors** in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NAD) and Its Relationship to Level of Participation in Annual Pastoral **Continuing Education (CE)** (2020)

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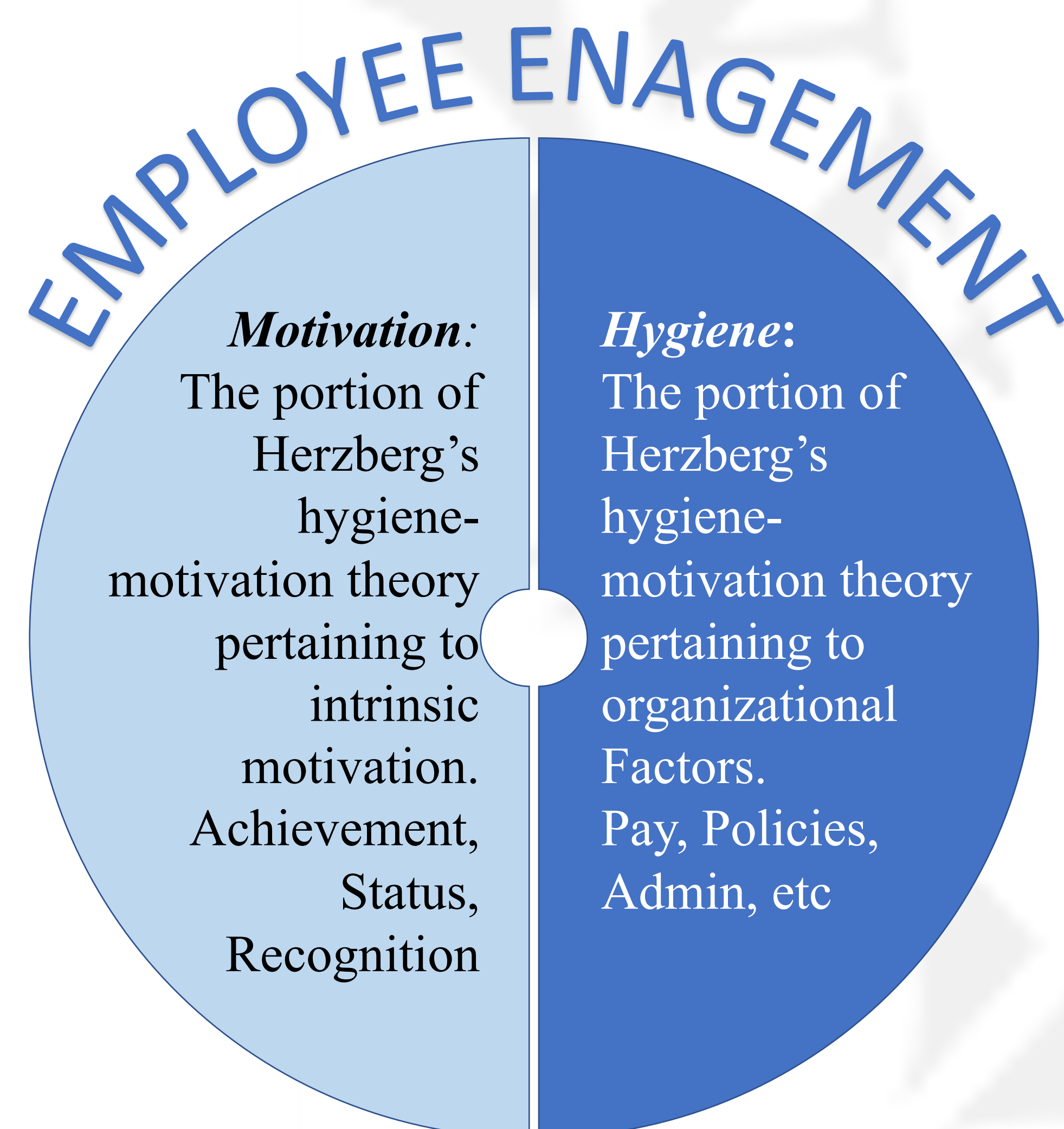
INTRODUCTION

This study focused on pastors working in various professional settings of pastoral ministry within the NAD. The purpose was to determine the level of relationship between CE involvement and employee engagement of the Adventist full-time pastor in the NAD. It explored additional factors related to employee engagement, learning, self-determination, motivation, and CE factors. This study filled a research gap and represented an attempt to determine whether pastors who strive to improve professional practice through CE had higher levels of employee engagement than those not pursuing CE. This study presents a new theoretical Adventist pastor development model integrating several theories and concepts including: the call, the Seven Core Qualities of the NAD pastor, Andragogy, CE, SDT and employee engagement.

Participants: 739 NAD Pastors (15% of Population)

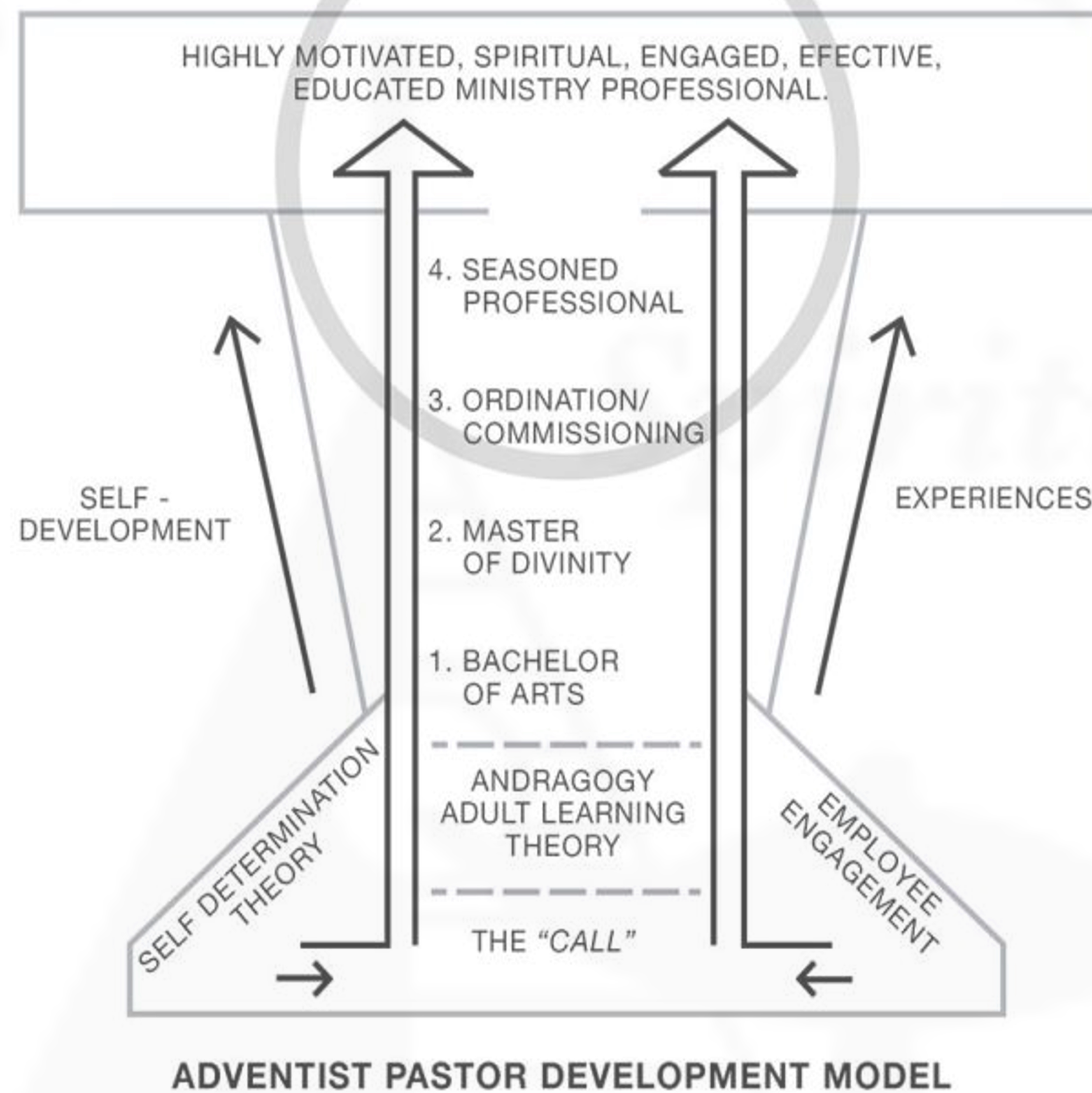
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there a relationship between level of involvement in CE and employee engagement among pastors in the Seventh-day Adventist church?
2. What additional factors impact employee engagement of the Adventist pastor?
3. What type of CE to Adventist pastors prefer?



Employee engagement: The measurable, active, positive psychological state, performance driven behaviors, and organizational commitment evidenced through connectedness and positive work activities, which go beyond the status quo, and where employees optimize their performance utilizing their skills, abilities, energy, and discretionary efforts for the good of the organization.

Adventist pastoral development model theoretical framework (circle indicates research focus)



FINDINGS – QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH USAGE

Significant positive synergistic factors and relationships

- Age, the 'Call', having adult children no longer at home, and ethnicity – Asian & Other
- The relationship between those 70+, reporting 21+ annual CE hours, with children no longer at home, report the best employee engagement scores
- Most popular CE activities: Conventions

Factors with no statistical impact on scores

- CE as a stand-alone factor did not significantly impact employee engagement
- Gender, marital status, & academic degree level

Negative factors and relationships

- Family suffering, feeling like leaving ministry, doubting God's call, children still at home, no children at all, ethnicity – African American
- Regional Conferences had worse scores than State Conferences
- Least popular CE activity: Creating CE content for peers

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PASTORAL PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

• Education –

- Clarify God's call' into ministry
- Reinforce the importance of professional CE
- Highlight relationship development at all levels of education
- Develop unique CE supports for ethnic and gender groups

• CE Policy

- Compliance to NAD L policy (annual CE policy)
- Include incentives, promotion and succession planning in the pursuit of CE

• Coaching & Mentoring

- Use older, seasoned, mature pastors to mentor and coach younger pastors

• Work Environments

- Increase intentionality in creating positive work environments
- Implement mental health checkups for pastors
- Implement confidential reporting and counselling support programs for pastors
- Urgently work to explore regional conference work environments and address components contributing to low employee engagement

• Family Supports

- Increase efforts to support pastors with young families
- Develop assessment, intervention, and evaluation tools to identify and mitigate family suffering associated with ministry

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