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INFORMATION BEHAVIOR AT HIGHPATH SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY: A CASE STUDY

By

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Dedicated to my lovely wife, Piper.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the roles of graduate theological students' religious faith and degree program affiliation in their information behaviors, particularly their degree-related research behaviors. In 2015, religious intolerance continues to stratify barriers between communities. One domain where faith significantly affects student life is in graduate studies of religion and theology. This study's purpose was to explore problems in information action inherent to the dichotomy between academic study of theology that leads to Master of Arts (MA) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees and professional study of theology that leads to Master of Divinity (MDiv) and Doctor of Theology (ThD) degrees. To locate the most appropriate research subjects for qualitative inquiry, this study first investigated the content of PhD and ThD dissertation acknowledgements using bibliometric analysis. The frequency with which the PhD and ThD dissertations' acknowledgements acknowledge affiliates within their authors' own degree programs and religious faith traditions guided the research design for subsequent interviewing of MA and MDiv students about the roles of their religious faith, degree program affiliation and interpersonal information sources in their research processes. Data were collected, coded and analyzed as a lens into the relationships between authors, affiliations and acknowledgements. The qualitative component – intensive interviewing about Master's students' research processes – qualified the results of the quantitative analysis of PhD and ThD students' interpersonal information source preferences manifest in their dissertations' acknowledgements. The study found that information behavior does relate to degree program affiliations and students' religious faith, thus degree program affiliation and religious faith background should be considered in research consultations and bibliographic instruction in theological libraries.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Library and information science (LIS) has traditionally examined particular kinds of information and information behavior as embedded in a variety of contexts. For instance, information seeking has been studied in the "context of occupations" (Case, 2002, p. 233), among other contexts. This study explores the domain of religion in terms of its information phenomena and processes. The two disciplines I broadly harness for this study are information studies and religion. I narrow the study's scope to the specific context of information science and the research process at Highpath School of Theology.

What do information, information needs, information seeking, as well as information systems and technology have to do with religion, particularly the phenomenon of graduate theological education? Research in LIS on the intersections of theological research behavior and information science is sparse, but as a point of entry, I explore the information behavior of users (students, faculty and librarians) of the Highpath School of Theology Library. Since user studies, suggested Krikelas (1983), "probably form the largest single body of research literature in librarianship" (p. 5), it is hoped that this research will contribute to an underrepresented area of library research: graduate theological research behavior.

In this chapter I introduce the study significance, research problem, prior research (including preliminary study), research design, study mandate, and research climate (ongoing and recent studies). In the four chapters that follow the introduction, I report on the literature review conducted, present the details of the research methodology, present

the results of the research conducted, and, finally, discuss how the results address the research questions.

Cross-cultural Significance of the Study

Throughout history, faith-based communities have come into tragic conflict with one another. In 2015, religious intolerance continues to stratify barriers between native communities, especially those whose cultural identity is embedded in religious conflict, (e.g. Israeli Jews and Palestinian Muslims, Indian Hindus and Pakistani Muslims). Such barriers not only threaten to aggravate socio-political stability in the local communities of multiple faith perspectives, but exacerbate the aggression of ideological fundamentalists.

The significance of faith in decision making is not specific to the Middle East or the Indian subcontinent, to Islam, to Hinduism or to any world religion – it crosses ethnic strata and abides. Indeed, one critical observation of former U.S. President George W. Bush's administration centered on his faith-based approach to information relevance and decision making ("In the World of Good and Evil," 2006). Examining the level of political elites' information access and appraising their intimately personal religious beliefs may provide valuable insight into the role of faith in information behavior. Influential public figures' professions of conservative Christian faith and the former presidential administration's concern for privileged sources are both germane to this research agenda ("Revisiting the World of Good and Evil," 2012).

Although the role of information behavior in political decision making remains a provocative topic, faith's role in information behavior is significant to many individuals' roles and social/institutional networks. One area where profession of faith substantially affects careers *via* institutional policy is in graduate studies of religion and theology

(Wilson, 2002). However, formally hypothesizing and testing the role of faith in information behavior is not the plan of this research. If information behavior is determined to be related not only to degree program but to "faith" itself, Dervin (personal communication, October 15, 2006) has suggested how such conclusions could bear profound import for communication practices among people of different faiths and from different cultures. If recognized paradigmatically, a broadening of the range of significance of research in this domain may engender cultural understanding between ethno-religious groups around and within the United States, and may extend to foster mutual respect abroad by informing multinational diplomacy with cultural sensitivity for relevant faith-based political regimes.

Problem Statement

Theological libraries typically have students and faculty members as their primary users. Such libraries understand their principal mission as meeting information needs related to degree programs and research. However, few empirical studies have reported on the information-seeking behavior or mindset of students in the context of graduate theological education. This study intends to gain increased understanding of how master's-level students studying theology discover and use information sources as they conduct research among theological librarians and faculty. This research study explores the information behavior of graduate students of religion in the research process.

A recent survey (Wilson, 2002) of all accredited institutions that teach religion and theological studies, categorized each school as either a "seminary" or a "secular divinity school," according to the type of degree it awards (p. 132). Seminaries offer the

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professional Master of Divinity degree (MDiv) to aspiring clergy who profess faith[1] during the admissions process; their libraries support graduate studies for students interested in the vocation of ministry (p. 135). Divinity schools award the Master of Theological Studies (MTS), a version of the standard Master of Arts (MA) offered in academic departments within a research university; their libraries cater to the more secular audiences of comparative theology and religious criticism (pp. 139-142).

Theologians have long considered the library as a haven of truth and the articulations of theology (Wicks, 1999, p. 208); less is known about secular students' and religion professors' information-seeking behavior that does not emphasize library use. Traditional information needs and uses studies represent an atomistic approach that focuses on "user behavior primarily in the context of user intersection with systems" (Dervin & Nilan, 1986, p. 14). Theological librarians and secular, academic information professionals require not only a robust understanding of how users interact with information systems but also an awareness of and attention to informal, interpersonal information behavior. To be more efficient information providers/mediators, they require information about what to expect about the needs beyond the characteristics of dogmatic materials, the context of the research process in which information needs occur, how information is used, and whether the information retrieval method is appropriate to the faith-related degree type of patrons.

Preliminary Study and Research Context

The institutional division between the MDiv program for graduate students who profess faith (and typically attend seminaries), and the MA program whose students only

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[1] In the context of seminary applications, faith is conceived as an individual's commitment to the principles of a denomination of organized religion with which the adherent formally affiliates (Wilson, 2002, p. 132).

commit to the academic study of religion, may function as a barrier between these related communities.[2] The information sources acknowledged by students may reflect differences in approach to thesis research and the extent to which students' information behavior may vary according to the type of degree pursued. Through prior analysis of Doctorate of Theology (ThD) and Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Religious Studies dissertation acknowledgements –authors' metatextual reflections – this dissertation's preliminary study discovered personal histories of collaboration, patterns of affiliation, and glimpses into a social world in which information behavior may be considered contingent on degree type and religious affiliation (Milas, 2008b).

Academic degree programs, such as graduate programs in religion, are subdivided into many degree types (e.g. masters, doctorates). Degree types at Highpath School of Theology are distinguished by various characteristics (e.g. duration of coursework, requirements for completion, accrediting organizations etc.). Highpath School of Theology offers both the MA in Theological Discipline degree and the MDiv degree for aspiring clergy.

For profession of faith to be a valid criterion in any institution's admissions, enrollment, and information services policies, its program should be evaluated based on the significance of the faith-based degree distinction as manifest by degree-related information behavior. Upon enrollment, students develop within the degree networks of the MA or MDiv program. In coursework and research, the two degree programs share

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[2] Dervin (2006) prefers to refer to these degree programs as "discourse communities." B. Dervin (personal communication, November 4, 2006) hypothesizes that the barrier exists "to reinforce the power structure of the specialized faculties." Dervin also considers the domain of faith to be so stratified by space and over time that its constituents are not discourse communities but native communities." Addressing these explanatory vectors is beyond the scope of this exploratory study, but they are nonetheless significant to the problem.

the same library resources and the opportunity to garner academic, morale and

information services support from the interpersonal information sources of faculty, peers,

and librarians throughout the wider community of scholarship of Highpath School of

Theology. A lack of relationship between the degree program of the interpersonal

information sources involved in research and the degree for which the student is working

would call into question the relevance of the institutional divisions between MA and

MDiv programs.

The broader purpose of the preliminary content analysis of ThD and PhD

acknowledgements was to form an impression of what information source categories

(roles) and relationships (degree type) may be expected to be present in the population of

Highpath School of Theology. I now highlight the aspects of the preliminary study most

salient to the dissertation research.

Preliminary Study Research Design

For the preliminary study the research setting was Harvard University, where

dissertations are written in two mutually exclusive degree programs—one which prepares

future administrators and ministers and one which prepares future academicians.

• Doctorate of Theology (ThD)

• Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD)

From the sampling frame of Dissertation abstracts (1998-2007), Milas took a

stratified random sample by creating a matrix with cells assigned in relative proportions

according to 292 Papers and Presentations the study populations distribution of Th.D. and

Ph.D. dissertations. Based upon the relative quantity of dissertations, 9 Th.D. and 31

Ph.D. dissertations' acknowledgements sections were randomly selected from their

respective strata to comprise a sample of 40 dissertations' acknowledgements out of 265 (≈15%).

To operationalize the variables of degrees in the units of analysis (acknowledgements), Milas adopted Brenda Dervin's revised sense-making theory with its barrier component. At the 2006 Annual Meeting of ASIS&T, Dervin confirmed the conceptualization of degree type as a barrier in her model, stating, "[it is] potentially impacting students throughout their [doctoral dissertation] research" (October 8, 2006, personal communication).

Quantitative: bibliometric analysis of the frequency with which the acknowledgements of the respective degrees' dissertation acknowledge affiliates of their own degree programs

Qualitative: hermeneutic content analysis of the role of the acknowledgees in each unit of analysis, following a codebook (tested by Hyland, 2004) limited to students, faculty, librarians, and others (e.g. clergy, family etc.)

Data Collection & Analysis

For each unit of analysis, Milas:

1) documented all interpersonal information sources who are acknowledged by first and last name;

2) identified each acknowledgee's affiliation with Harvard per the 2007 catalog; and

3) coded all confirmed Harvard affiliates by program affiliation.

To analyze the data, Milas:

1) counted the number of unique affiliates from each program occurring in each acknowledgement;

2) aggregated the frequencies of Th. and PhD affiliates acknowledged in ThD and PhD dissertations; and

3) measured the aggregated data from the ThD and PhD dissertations' acknowledgements in terms of the percentage of the stratified sample that each comprises.

Results

1) PhD dissertations cut across the "barrier" of degree program;

2) ThD dissertations exhibit insularity in the ThD program;

3) PhD dissertations refer to more librarians than ThD's; and

4) ThD students acknowledge more clergy (Milas, 2008a, p. 294).

Relevance of Preliminary Study to Dissertation Research

By knowing what to expect from the research products of past students, the researcher may select for interviewing those students, faculty and librarians who reflect a wide variety of information source categories, including self-reported religious belief and lack thereof (see Babbie, 2004, pp. 282-283). To explore the information behaviors of stakeholders in the research setting of Highpath School of Theology, by both role (student, faculty or librarian) and type (MDiv affiliate or MA affiliate), I asked the following five overarching research questions:

Research Questions[3]

RQ1: What are the information behaviors specific to the research processes of MA and MDiv students at Highpath School of Theology?

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[3] These questions are fully discussed in Chapter 3; the research instrument for semi-structured interviews may be found in Appendix A.

RQ2: How do Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty (teaching in the MA and MDiv programs) appraise the information behaviors involved in the research processes of MA and MDiv students?

RQ3: What information behaviors specific to Highpath School of Theology MA and MDiv students' research processes do academic librarians see in the Highpath School of Theology Library and/or on campus?

RQ4: What do Highpath School of Theology stakeholders (MA and MDiv students, Highpath School of Theology Library librarians, and Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty) think about the role of degree program affiliation in relation to the information behaviors of Highpath School of Theology students in their research processes?

RQ5: What do Highpath School of Theology stakeholders (MA and MDiv students, Highpath School of Theology Library librarians, and Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty) think about the significance of religious faith in the information behaviors of Highpath School of Theology students in their research processes?

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Research Design Overview

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The nature of the research questions, coupled with the epistemological and ontological assumptions, suggest the need for a research design that allows for the exploration of factors using traditionally qualitative means. These factors were not preselected but were allowed to emerge as the study progressed, using an inductive approach. In order to guard against any tendency for the study to start feeding off the biases of the researcher, the researcher compared the emerging results from ongoing

interviews and with the research questions using techniques suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984). This primarily includes the techniques that would allow analysis during the data collection phase. Most useful are the techniques relating to the recording of the data from each interview and in the coding of transcripts from interviews. Miles and Huberman's contact summary form (1984, p. 52) allowed for the comparison of the results of each interview with the preceding interviews. The researcher's adaptation of that form may be found in Appendix B.

The study sought to take a qualitative research approach to address the research questions. To address the research questions, this study used intensive interviewing (fully discussed in chapter 3). A stratified "purposeful sample" (Creswell, 1998, p. 119) was taken in order to select 2-3 MDiv students, 2-3 MA students, 2-3 faculty, and 2-3 librarians with rich (disparate) backgrounds to interview. This sample can provide representation based on dimensions suggested by previous social science research (Spradley, 1979) and the preliminary study of acknowledgements (Milas, 2008b).

<div align="center">**Research Mandate**</div>

Qualitative research enabled me to pursue a richer and more intimate understanding of the MA and MDiv students, faculty and librarians in the processes of information action than would have been possible with more structured methods such as true experimental and purely quantitative approaches. The emphasis in qualitative research on inductive reasoning fits best with the progressive methodology of the Highpath School of Theology study and the inductive approach to questioning I took during the intensive interviewing of Highpath School of Theology affiliates; exploratory research to investigate the uncharted faith settings of the study population and intensive

investigations of the subjective and faith-informed meanings that motivate the information behavior were particularly well served by the techniques of intensive interviewing.

Learning more about how seminary students understand the information-seeking and research process directly benefits two audiences. First, increased understanding of the student research process benefits theological librarians, who shape onsite collections, provide access to digital information sources, and provide information literacy training to students. In the current environment stressing accountability for education at all levels, it is not enough for librarians to see the work of theological libraries as serving "intrinsic values and goods" (Hook, 2009, p. 20). Rather, librarians are expected to be part of school-wide efforts to improve student learning.[4] Second, increased understanding helps professors, who create assignments for students. Faculty members want students to learn—and write interesting papers for professors to read. Because all theological schools work with finite resources, knowing how students think about the research process and use resources helps librarians and school leaders to be better stewards (Lincoln, 2008).

Recent and Ongoing Related Studies

Penner's (2009) review of the information behavior of theologians casts a wide net "because only a few studies were found that concerned themselves with theologians, and literature in this area is quite scarce" (p. 67). Based on bibliographic searches in several databases,[5] I found six post-2000 research reports that directly focus on students

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[4] The standards of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, for instance, call for theological schools to engage in comprehensive programs of institutional effectiveness (General Standard 1.2.2) and for libraries of such schools to evaluate collections, usage patterns, services and staff (5.4.3).

[5] Databases searched included Library and Information Science and Technology Abstracts (LISTA), Library Literature, and American Theological Library Association Serials (ATLAS).

pursing the work of information gathering in order to write a paper or deliver a presentation.

Brunton (2005) studied the information behavior of students at Brisbane College of Theology based on Briggs' (1999) 3P model which argues that learning and teaching occur in three stages: pre-stage (antecedents of learning), process (learning activities), and product (the outcomes of learning). Brunton sought to learn more about the effectiveness of user training programs. She interviewed six students at the college to gain first-hand descriptions of student perceptions of information seeking. She concluded that students who partnered with librarians and who attended user training employed more effective search strategies and managed their time better than others.

Heinström (2006) studied the patterns of information seeking of students writing Master's theses at Abo Akademi University (Finland). She was attempting to discover, among other research questions, if "patterns of information behavior can be explained by discipline differences" (p. 1441). Her respondents included four students in theology. She found that there was a significant connection between discipline and students who adopted a broad scanning model of information seeking (i.e., they searched widely in many different kind of sources). However, she concluded that the personality of students was more influential on their information-seeking behavior than their specific discipline.

Gaba (2008) is currently studying the research process of MDiv students at theological schools in the Chicago area. She is focusing on specific academic tasks rather than assuming that library use is inherently valuable. Her study conducts group interviews of five to eight students, ideally two groups per research site. She asks a suite of twenty standard questions. In her study, a research paper is defined as "any assignment

where it is up to the student to identify two or more resources for the purpose of writing or speaking on a topic" (Gaba, 2007, p. 73). So far, she has interviewed more than sixty-five students. Gaba has not yet reported broadly on study results. To date, she has discovered that students indicate using Google, online booksellers' search-inside-the-book features, and online catalogs more than they use article databases.

She also found that a first step in research for some students was to ask professors directly to suggest sources. In terms of what makes a text valuable for research purposes, her participants generally wanted trustworthy sources. They identified trustworthiness with the correct doctrinal position of the work or the fact that a professor recommended it to students. Gaba defines student research as a specific academic task requiring the discovery and use of new information. Her approach situates information gathering in what Tanni and Sormunen (2008) would consider assigned learning tasks, and which Gross (2004) would term "imposed queries."

These recent and ongoing studies indicate the paucity of knowledge about the information-seeking patterns of theological students at the Master's level. Milas's (2008) preliminary study focused only on doctoral students. Heinström's (2006) study focused on students at the thesis stage of their academic work and included only four theological students. Brunton (2005) and Gaba (2009) used qualitative methods; the other studies used surveys.

Thus, this study will contribute needed data to the modest extant knowledge base about how Master's students in theological schools find and use information in their assigned learning tasks. In this chapter I have delineated the research problem,

preliminary study, research design, and context of other studies. In the next chapter I

report on the literature reviewed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study explores the domain of religion in terms of its information phenomena and processes. The two disciplines I broadly engage in this literature review are information studies and religion. I narrow the study's scope to the specific context of information science and the research process at Highpath School of Theology. Published research in LIS on the intersections of theological research behavior and information science is sparse, but as a point of entry, I now turn to the peer-reviewed academic publications that generally address both information science and religion.

Religion is a concept that warrants definition here. Clifford Geertz's definition is the most relevant to this study. Geertz (1993) defines religion as "(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in [humans] by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existences and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" (p. 90). The relative scarcity of research connecting this sphere with library and information science is striking (see Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

Methods for the Review

A thorough literature search and subsequent monitoring of the publication front was carried out, mainly by using LISA (Library and Information Science Abstracts; http://oh1.csa.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/factsheets/lisa-set-c.php). The relevant texts were identified on the basis of central keywords – religion, spiritual, esoterica, faith, and mysticism – and their grammatical variations. For journals, their peer-review status was checked from the (printed or electronic) journal information. Books were more difficult

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in this respect, since they almost never mention whether they were refereed or not. Those relevant monographs that met scholarly standards and had been published by a scientific publisher were assumed to have undergone at least some sort of peer-review, and were thus admissible. Since the criteria for including material in the review were strict, no more than 26 articles and books qualified. Only those claims in the publications were accepted which had been justified by appealing to data, logic, or some other rational basis. The end result should therefore represent the best information there is about religion vis-à-vis information. The literature is naturally discussed from the viewpoint of information studies.

Literature Pertaining Primarily to Texts

Bella Haas Weinberg pioneered the intersection of religion with information science; in "Predecessors of Scientific Indexing Structures in the Domain of Religion," she writes: "many scientific information systems thought to have been developed in the computer era were invented about a millennium earlier, in the domain of religion" (2004, p. 133). The systems Weinberg refers to are just a few of the many predecessors of information science in the domain of religion.

Electronic Resources

In the absence of plentiful studies on information seeking in graduate programs of religion, it is necessary to consider the literature examining other disciplines, the humanities being where religion is usually situated. The acceptance of, and difficulties experienced with, the use of electronic resources by humanities scholars become the dominant issue for studies between 1995 and 2008. Stone mentions an early interaction of humanities scholars with computer technology, considering them as being "anti-machine"

and, therefore, reluctant to engage it. Wiberley and Jones mention careful

experimentation with technology in 1989 and revisit the subject in 1994 and again in

2000. They believe that for humanists to adopt electronic technologies for their research,

relevant database content will be crucial as will be search training and perceived time

savings. The Getty project results confirm low search skills and dissatisfaction with

content and imply that, because electronic database design follows science-based theories

and terminology, humanists are currently disadvantaged.

Several later studies follow up this theme to embark on an in-depth exploration of

humanists and their interaction with texts. Buchanan et al. find these "intellectually able

seekers who are not technical in orientation" (218) using electronic resources especially

when they are "new to an area of research," even more so if they are at an early stage in

their career (223). They see a strong relationship between high usage, strong search skills,

and satisfaction with digital libraries (227) but also observe that even though most

participants felt they were successful in meeting their information needs, they could

improve their skills to lower the amount of effort they expended. Buchanan et al. confirm

a notion expressed in various studies that scholars less privileged with access to well-

stocked print libraries are more open to electronic resources.

Studies from 1995 to the present primarily deal with English literature

academicians or, without specifying the discipline, with arts and humanities in general.

Palmer and Neumann (1999) emphasize changes in information-seeking behavior as

humanists are increasingly involved in interdisciplinary work. As a response to the

frequent admission that humanists need more training to effectively use electronic

resources, East (2001) provides a robust information literacy syllabus for humanities researchers.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Literature Pertaining Primarily to Systems</h2>

Systems Studies

Some digital information systems chiefly incorporating sacred texts are described in the research literature. PHI/CCAT CD-ROM contains "biblical and related texts prepared by the Computer Assisted Tools for Septuagint Studies project (CATSS) and the Centre for Computer Analysis of Texts (CCAT) in conjunction with the Packard Humanities Institute (PHI)" (Cornell, 1989, p. 7). Hyper Joseph "combines hypertext, information retrieval, literary studies, Biblical scholarship, and linguistics" (Nissan et al., 1996, p. 16). On the other hand, OM Information Service (OMIS) provides CD-ROM and:

> Web access to selected extracts from the writings and sayings of spiritual leaders, saints, seers, mystics, and scholars, and also to biographical sketches and list of works of some of these sources. Web access has been made interesting through display of related images and rendering of background music. The user and search interfaces have been designed for the novice user. (Rajashekar et al., 1998, p. 1; see also Neelameghan, 2001)[6]

Those four articles are quite specific case studies, and they are beginning to be somewhat outdated, so may that brief presentation suffice. For now, it is enough to note the existence of databases devoted to religion, and the fact that religion is present on the internet (see Barzilai-Nahon and Barzilai, 2005), too. Indeed, in early 2008, inputting the

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[6] OMIS is not currently available via the World Wide Web

Google search query "religion OR mysticism" already yielded hundreds of millions of hits. In 2015, the same search retrieves nearly one billion hits.

Practical System Implications

Leaning on the findings from an earlier inquiry, Smiraglia (2002) contends that theology probably belongs to "the core canon of literature in academic libraries" (p. 229). Theology is usually understood as a field of study in the humanities, whereon theological literature is academic by nature. However, theology also refers to the teachings of a particular religion (see, e.g. Peterson, 2006). Neither Smiraglia's (2002) nor Karp and Keck's (1996) data analyses differentiate between these two senses. In addition, both articles examine library phenomena in the context of more than one religion.

A sample of 469 bibliographic records from the theological collections of one university library and one seminary library in the USA was drawn in Smiraglia's (2002) later investigation. It is best to characterize the results presented therein as some sort of "demographic" evidence about theological literature. The works' mean age was over one hundred years, being thrice as old as the works in other, more general pieces of research. Smiraglia (2002, p. 939) shows how the theological works differed in the two libraries. Those in the seminary library exhibited a narrower variety of languages; the oldest work was centuries newer than the oldest work in the university library; on an average, however, the seminary library works were older. The years demonstrate the temporal broadness of theological literature (Smiraglia, 2002). The disparity of the two collections is indisputable. It seems the university library possessed a better stock of theological works in their coverage of languages, age range, and recency. This is something of a surprise, for one would expect that a special library would be adept in its own territory.

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Smiraglia offers no explanation for the difference. The size of the collection cannot be the determining factor here, because the seminary library held about 400,000 bibliographic records as opposed to the university library's 65,000 records (Smiraglia, 2002). One might argue that it was the purpose of the library that was crucial: the seminary library served education, whereas the university library served research. If so, a similar difference in the distribution of works would be expected in any such case, say, between a musicological collection and that of a conservatory library. At any rate, the age of the theological works indicates that they have a longer history than mundane ones, and that their number has been growing at an accelerated pace. Nearly all of the theological works in Smiraglia's study were instantiated in the form of monographs: narrative nonfiction, theses, lectures, sermons, reports, and handbooks. In number, nonfiction was by far the largest category of works (Smiraglia, 2002). But to categorize information as fiction or nonfiction requires considerable information processing and bears considerable impact on the information itself.

<div align="center">**Literature Pertaining Primarily to People**</div>

User Studies in General

User studies, suggested Krikelas (1983), "probably form the largest single body of research literature in librarianship" (p. 5). According to Bisco (1967), cited by Brittain (1970), "the first known empirical studies of the needs and uses of information, in contrast to the recorded uses of stored materials, were reported by Bernal […] and Urquhart […] at the Royal Society Scientific Conference during June and July of 1948" (p. 13). Within three decades of these British beginnings, Crawford (1978) estimated that more than 1,000 such studies had appeared in print. In the last decade alone more than

500 information-need and user studies have been published (Dervin and Nilan, 1986; Hewins, 1900). Rohde's (1986) recent research yielded more than 2,000 potentially relevant documents in one database alone. Reviews of this literature in the *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* volumes (*ARIST*), which began in 1966, now number eleven.

Menzel (1966) wrote the first review of user studies for *ARIST*, which concentrated, as did most of the later *ARIST* reviews, on information use and needs among scientists and technologists. Preceding Menzel's study were reviews by Davis and Bailey (1964), who examined 438 user studies relevant to engineering, and by the Auerbach Corporation (1965), who reviewed 676 items related to Department of Defense user needs. The second *ARIST* review was compiled by the Herners (1967) and dealt with the various methods used in user studies.

Paisley's (1968) *ARIST* review is one of the most cited, with its call for more theory. He suggested a need for what Merton (1967) called "theories of the middle range." Paisley also outlined a ten-point conceptual framework of how scientists function as users. These ten "concentric circles" of the various systems within which information users (at least scientific information users) operate are culture, politics, discipline, specialization, invisible college, formal organization, work team, economy, formal information system, and -- the most foundational system of all -- what Paisley called "the scientist within his own head" (p. 460). This latter is recognition of the internal cognitions and process orientation of the information concept.

Allen's (1969) *ARIST* review of information needs and uses reduced Paisley's list of ten to six by collapsing several categories. Lipetz (1970) in his *ARIST* review

examined the measurement instruments and methodologies common to user studies, noting the proliferation of questionnaires in particular. He, too, noted the absence of theory in the field of user studies. The 1971 *ARIST* review of user studies by Crane and the 1972 review by Lin and Garvey looked at models of information-seeking behavior, based primarily on general communication models.

Martyn, in his 1974 *ARIST* review, suggested that the study of users fell into three basic periods: during the 1950s and early 1960s the chief area of concern was the broadly based information needs and uses of scientists and technologists, during the mid-1960s the emphasis shifted to better methods on the one hand and fewer studies on the other, and during the late 1960s and early 1970s the study of the economic benefit on information and its effects became prominent. Martyn (1974, p. 5) argued that "the age of the dinosaur, the period of the broadly based, discipline-wide user study, is over," anticipating some of the concerns for more individually based, situationally focused studies that Dervin and Nilan (1986) were to call for. Crawford (1978) also conveniently summarized earlier *ARIST* reviews and noted the trend toward more studies of a wide variety of users.

One of the most comprehensive reviews of the literature of user studies in general is that by Dervin and Nilan in the 1986 *ARIST* volume. Their research focused on "the conceptualizations that drive the research" (p. 3) in this field and is especially pertinent to the present study. They categorized the corpus of this literature into two distinct genres: the majority of studies which observe users in terms of systems and the minority of studies that look at users in terms of users.

The bulk of the studies in this area, Dervin and Nilan argued, are system oriented and fall into one of six broad approaches: 1) the demand on systems/resources approach (measuring the extent to which users use different services), 2) the awareness approach (focusing on respondent awareness of current services), 3) the likes-dislikes approach (examining user satisfaction with various services), 4) the priorities approach (generating library wish lists), 5) the community profile approach (doing demographic surveys of users), and 6) the interests, activities, and group membership approach (assessing user interests and involvement).

Dervin and Nilan criticized these "traditional" approaches for focusing on the system, not the user. In particular, the majority of the studies done to date, in their view, concentrated on only objective, not subjective information; viewed users as passive recipients rather than as active constructors of information; sought broad generalization that tended to ignore situation-specific contexts; looked atomistically at only one encounter between a user and a system rather than holistically at users' broader information needs; focused on easily observable external behavior rather than pursuing the internal cognitions of users; and concentrated so much on finding predictable group behavior that "systematic individuality" was overlooked. Based on these observations, the reviewers called for a shift to "an alternative paradigm," one that focuses on the user and how he or she seeks information concerning situations about which their knowledge is incomplete (cf. the ASK model of Belkin, 1980).

In the most recent *ARIST* review of user studies, Hewins (1990) noted that much of the then-current research in this area did follow the alternative paradigm and was much more user focused. She pointed to the critical-incident technique popularized by Allen

(1966) as an increasingly popular and productive method for researching users'

information needs and behaviors. This new paradigm and approach are particularly

prevalent in studying professionals as users. She cited as one example the growing body

of literature in medical informatics, which studies the information needs and uses of the

medical profession, a literature that has been reviewed by Elayyan (1988).

Unfortunately, similar research among other professionals is not as prolific. In

many ways Faibisoff and Ely's statement from the 1970s is still true: "The literature

regarding information needs of educators, clergymen, lawyers, doctors, social workers,

and other professionals is scanty" (1976, p. 7). While a few professions have been

researched at some length, for example, physicians (Elayyan, 1988), engineers (Kremer,

1980), and scientists (Martyn, 1987), a number of groups -- particularly in the humanities

-- have been left unexplored (though see Wiberly and Jones, 1989, and Vale, 1988). One

such professional group whose information needs and uses have been little studied is the

clergy, despite the fact that there are as many ministers in America as there are physicians

(537,000 in medicine and 541,000 in ministry) and considerably more clergy than

scientists (541,000 versus 395,000).

Studies of Information Seeking in the Humanities

In the absence of plentiful studies on information seeking in graduate programs of

religion, it is necessary to consider the literature examining other disciplines, the

humanities being where religion is usually situated. A few studies in religion should be

noted. Brink (1995) examined information seeking in religion but did not consider

information sources. One study of information seeking by Wicks (1999) found that the

pastors studied used informal sources in care-giving and administrative activities.

However, Wicks found that the use of informal sources decreased in preaching activities where biblical research would be undertaken. The relationships among the information behaviors of theology faculty, students and librarians must still be explored.

Stone (1982), Watson-Boone (1994), and Wilson (2000) surveyed the principal research on information seeking in the humanities, covering the period from 1970 to 2000. One significant conclusion Stone drew from her examination of the literature was that individual interpretations play a significant role in humanities research. "One consequence of this individualistic nature," Stone wrote, "is that collaborative efforts among humanists are less normal than in the sciences, and the notion of the invisible college, which has been explored more fully in the sciences, is less visible" (1982, p. 294). She made reference to a report by Fabian and Vierhaus (1978) that described the conclusions of a gathering of various humanities scholars to discuss the future of humanities research. In their report, they stated that "[t]o a large extent, humanistic research has always been individual research, research pursued by a single scholar, and this is likely to remain so in the foreseeable future" (p. 550). Stone also cited the idea of the invisible college described by Crane (1972). Crane used a detailed questionnaire to explore how information is communicated and disseminated within scientific communities. Crane explored the role of informal communication and its impact on research, communication that she distinguished from formal, collaborative relationships. It is interesting that Crane understood her research as supporting an earlier study by Coser that concluded that "most intellectuals cannot produce their work in solitude […] interaction with peers is necessary for the development of ideas" (1965, p. 3). It was

Crane's intent to demonstrate that this informal exchange of information also takes place in the sciences.

Watson-Boone (1994) built upon Stone's review by presenting the development of research from 1982 to 1992. She revisited Stone's picture of the humanities scholar, noting particularly the characteristics of "working alone." Several studies described the materials used by humanities scholars, notably Stern (1983), Culler (1985), and Broadus (1987). These studies used citation analysis and inter-library loan logs to determine the types and frequencies of use of research materials. Since these study techniques only uncovered formally cited works in completed studies, the results could not indicate whether people as informal information sources played a role in the information-seeking process.

Watson-Boone (1994, p. 211) briefly noted a study that is a self-description and analysis of the information-seeking process followed by Stephen Nissenbaum to study the poem "The Night before Christmas." A closer examination of Nissenbaum's study itself reveals a description of the information sources used in his research, including, as his second source, a knowledgeable colleague's suggestion (1989, p. 206). Nissenbaum then went on to describe the exchange of ideas that were pivotal to the development of this research. Noteworthy, the interpersonal exchange occurred early in the research process, prior to a visit to the library, a point not likely to be uncovered since scholars rarely cite personal discussions in their research publications. Basker (1984), examining information gathering by British philosophers, concluded that 45% of those interviewed went to colleagues rather than the library as a starting point. In this study, librarians played limited roles, except for archivists and special collection librarians who might

have been viewed as having a specialized knowledge of particular collections, and librarians with superior database searching skills that the scholars lacked. Sievert and Sievert (1989) examined the browsing activities of twenty-seven philosophers and determined that only three had formally collaborated on a research project. This study did not consider possible informal collaboration.

Wiberley and Jones (1989) examined scholarly isolation in a study that also cited Stone's assertion that the literature states that humanities scholars work alone. They interviewed eleven humanities scholars and found that "all eleven were chosen for their year's fellowship based on projects that they conceived alone and were executed single-handedly" (p. 639). However, Wiberley and Jones noted that two scholars made use of computers for email correspondence (p. 640). They also noted that bibliographies were considered a convenient but not essential tool for staying current, complementing "reading the literature itself and talking with other specialists" (p. 642). In neither case was an attempt made to follow up the role of informal collegial communication in information seeking. Of the studies Watson-Boone considered, seven were citation analyses, four were questionnaires, three were interviews, and two were personal reflections. Citation analyses, however, usually cannot identify informal information sources such as colleagues. Additionally, as the Wiberley and Jones study suggests, even where interviews uncover the use of these sources, the assumptions of the researchers regarding information-seeking behaviors can inhibit exploration of the role of these sources.

In "Human Information Behavior" (2000), T. D. Wilson reviewed the literature in information studies that takes as its focus the user rather than the information system.

Although his intention was to consider information seeking from the perspective of the human user, it is interesting to note that Wilson only alluded to the interaction with human sources in his initial definition of information behavior, in which he included "face-to-face communication" (p. 49).

Two other useful studies should be noted here. The first is Broadbent (1986), where questionnaires were used to discover how faculty would identify the library materials needed. Word of mouth accounted for 13.5% of the sources used. It is possible that some of the interactions included in the other category may also have been informal communications that were not identified as such by the researchers, who interpreted word of mouth as consisting only of face-to-face correspondence. This placed informal sources at fifth out of seven sources used. The researchers expected that more "mature" researchers would be more likely to utilize informal communication, such as "after dinner discussions, casual meetings with colleagues, and correspondence" (p. 27). However, they discovered no significant variation in the use of formal and informal sources among faculty at different ranks. In the second study, Lonnquist (1990) explored the methods used by scholars to gather information. Interviews were used to collect data. Lonnquist concluded that informal information sources were valued when there was a need to obtain information quickly. Lonnquist also found that "if the research topic was very internationally oriented, the importance of an informal network increased especially abroad" (p. 198).

Studies about Interpersonal Information Sources

Lonnquist (1990) found two specific reasons for the use of people as information sources: speed and, perhaps, remote access. Lonnquist presupposed that perceived

expertise in an area was also a reason. Julien and Michels (2000) explored the use of

personal information sources in information seeking. In their study, information source

selection was explored as the respondents attempted to solve problems that occurred in

daily life. It was found that, in 45 of 88 interviews, participants turned first to personal

sources of help for their questions (p. 18). Julien and Michels wrote, "The apparent

preference of information sources was direct personal contact. People talk to people when

they face a problem or issue in their daily lives" (p. 19). It is significant that respondents

described both instrumental reasons (e.g., perceived expertise, speed) and affective

reasons (e.g., developing social ties, enjoyable encounter) for their preference for

personal contact. Although convenience may play a role in the choice of people as

information sources, it is not necessarily central, as individuals can go to considerable

effort to interact with people sources. The role an informal source plays in the

information-seeking process may, therefore, be complex and may not be related only to

instrumental information needs. This may be significant: if informal sources are used

predominately in the early stages of information seeking, with its associated feelings of

uncertainty (Kuhlthau 1993, p. 339), then informal sources may provide encouragement

and assurance as well as key information.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The literature review above discusses current knowledge concerning information and religion from several different fields. Each provides a conceptualization of information that could be described as religious information. The primary reason that this study uses a qualitative design is that our conceptualizations of theological information behavior are varied and ill-defined. No one field of research contains a conceptualization that completely describes or explains these phenomena. There is a need to attempt a synthesis of all the particularistic approaches. This study takes into consideration these various views to address the research questions.

In addition to the overall research design, methods, and procedures, this chapter will discuss other relevant topics such as the known biases, the use of theory, constraints and limitations.

This study attempts to get at the individual's understanding of this phenomenon to understand it from his/her point of view in the way that he/she understands it. At the very least our understanding can be improved by providing conceptualizations that are grounded in data captured in the theological research environment.

An axiological assumption (Creswell, 1994) is that this research is value-laden and biased. These biases are an inescapable aspect of having one researcher bringing his/her experience and education to bear on one problem. As a result, this study is viewed as an interpretation of interpretations. That is, the researcher is merely interpreting the evidence that is collected during the time period of the study and is, thus, subject to

cognitive capacity of the researcher to understand what is being said and of the limited and biased manner in which these interpretations can be made.

A methodological assumption is that this is an interpretive study dealing with meaning. Specifically it is about the meaning that participants ascribe to their thoughts and feelings about the theological research process. Although this researcher will attempt to capture participants' meaning, the end product is merely the researcher's interpretation of that meaning.

Epistemological foundations for this study are derived from a philosophy of American pragmatist traditions, primarily the work of Charles Sanders Peirce (1878). The epistemological extensions of his pragmatist philosophy assert that knowledge is gained when significance has been attached to life experiences. Further, there is no one valid significance because each person's experience is different. Each person attaches significance in his or her own way based on his or her understanding of the situation. This is sometimes referred to as a process of sense making where each person is attempting to make sense of his or her experience. In this way each person would have a slightly different sense of reality. Each would also be aware of the way in which this sense differs from those around one's self as well as from the so-called social reality.

Using this epistemological view makes it difficult for the researcher to consider quantitative methods, which would not allow the researcher to find the sense or the meaning that the individuals attach to these experiences. Without knowing the informant's world, it would have been inappropriate, perhaps invalid, for this researcher to pose a framework of questions in a survey or a similar instrument. Why do that when

the means (simply asking) are at hand to do otherwise—and gain a richer understanding in the process?

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the information behaviors specific to the research processes of MA and MDiv students at Highpath School of Theology?

RQ2: How do Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty (teaching in the MA and MDiv programs) appraise the information behaviors involved in the research processes of MA and MDiv students?

RQ3: What information behaviors specific to Highpath School of Theology MA and MDiv students' research processes do academic librarians see in the Highpath School of Theology Library and/or on campus?

RQ4: What do Highpath School of Theology stakeholders (MA and MDiv students, Highpath School of Theology Library librarians, and Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty) think about the role of degree program affiliation in relation to the information behaviors of Highpath School of Theology students in their research processes?

RQ5: What do Highpath School of Theology stakeholders (MA and MDiv students, Highpath School of Theology Library librarians, and Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty) think about the significance of religious faith in the information behaviors of Highpath School of Theology students in their research processes?

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to address the research questions. To address the research questions, this study used intensive interviewing. A stratified "purposeful sample" (Creswell, 1998, p. 119), was taken in order to select 2-3 MA students, 2-3 MDiv students, 2-3 faculty, and 2-3 librarians with rich (disparate) backgrounds to interview.

Field Setting

Information sources often differ according to the type of degree pursued (Ocholla, 1999). In order to sample MA and MDiv students whose academic institution offers both degrees, and whose community (faculty, library, peers etc.) is stratified by degree type, the researcher interviewed users of the Highpath School of Theology Library.

Highpath School of Theology is a fictitious name, automatically generated by a web-based fictitious school name generator. The actual name of the institution where data collection took place has been replaced by the name Highpath School of Theology in order to protect the anonymity of the research participants.

The seminary or divinity school represented by the name Highpath School of Theology is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools and its Library participates in the American Theological Libraries Association. However, Highpath is not only located in a very demographically diverse region of North America, it is also considerably more ecumenical than many seminaries and divinity schools in the Association of Theological Schools. Whereas many member institutions have homogenous denominational compositions, historically educating future clergy of a specific theological sensibility, Highpath stands out with a broad denominational

composition and outlook. For example, MA and MDiv degrees are offered to students of many denominations and multiple faith traditions, including Buddhism and Judaism. Students are taught by faculty affiliated with non-Christian religions and non-religious faculty. Similarly, its library staff and library collection reflect the ecumenical breadth that sets Highpath apart as more inter-religious than most North American seminaries and divinity schools.

Research took place at the Highpath School of Theology Library, where users include faculty, librarians, and students. The Library's information seeking population, the students, are differentiated by the degree program in which they teach or study. The Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MA) program is an academic degree program that aims to prepare future faculty for further academic study of religion. The Master of Divinity (MDiv) program is a professional program designed to prepare students for the vocation of ministry. Faculty and librarians at Highpath School of Theology may support both degree programs, but they may cater to one of the degree programs according their background in theological studies.

To examine the MA and MDiv degree programs, Highpath School of Theology was chosen specifically because it meets both of the criteria; it has MA and MDiv programs and specialized faculty and librarians. Using Highpath School of Theology is appropriate because of the interfaith character that informs its admissions policies and shapes its student body, thus fulfilling Rubin and Rubin's (1995) call for study populations to include "represent[ativeness] of the range of points of view" (p. 66).

Units of Analysis

The units of analysis were the users of the Highpath School of Theology Library. The units of observation were the intensive interview transcripts of the students, faculty and librarians.

Participant Selection

The broader purpose of Milas's preliminary content analysis of ThD and PhD acknowledgements (discussed in Chapter I) was to form an impression of what information source categories (roles) and relationships (degree type) may be expected to be present in the population of a graduate school of theology. By knowing what to expect from the research products of past students, the researcher was able to select for interviewing those students, faculty and librarians who reflect a wide variety of information source categories, including, self-reported religious belief and lack thereof (see Babbie, 2004, pp. 282-283).

Applying Theory to Method

The main part of the theory used in the study is constituted by the sense-making theory. In essence, this theory generally deals with how an individual makes sense of his or her environment in a given situation, and specifically how seeking information serves bridging "gaps" or "discontinuities" that the individual has perceived in reality. In the case of this study, the problem is about how people make sense of their situation, their need for sources of information for their theological scholarship, their seeking and/or finding this information, as well as their use of the information.

Sense-making theory is appropriate for three reasons. Firstly, the theory enables scrutiny of the meanings that are given to the degree designations MA and MDiv, and to

information action – a concept that is anticipated to occupy a prominent position in data analysis and implications for future study in information behavior generally. Secondly, the sense-making theory presupposes that information action is not a static state, but a dynamic process – another important aspect of the current study. Thirdly, the approach makes it possible to get at a particular, actual situation that a student has undergone.

General background concepts also belong to theory. They have little analytical value, but knowing them is vital for designing the study effectively. Two concepts that warrant definition here are "information action" and "thick description." Information action is a term that comes from Wersig and Windel (1985); it can be defined as action that "involves various forms of users' conceptual and physical contacts with information" (Raber, 2003, pp. 38-39).

"Information action" is a broad concept that contains the three major stages of an information process: information need, seeking, and use (see Case, 2002, pp. 146-148). The term "thick description" derives from the work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973). Shutt (2006, p. 293) explains, "[c]entral to much qualitative case study research is the goal of creating a thick description of the setting studied – a description that provides a sense of what it is like to experience that setting from the standpoint of the natural actors in that setting." This study uses a theory-grounded approach to consistently integrate the ethnomethodology of "thick description" with the sample of subjects, as it is informed by categories of social networks and roles.

Procedure

The researcher, Patrick Milas, introduced himself as a researcher; the participant may have assumed that the researcher was simply a visiting scholar to the Highpath

School of Theology academic community. The researcher asked if the participant would submit to a series of questions, and if the student agreed, the researcher obtained informed consent in writing, and asked questions with consideration of the most immediate data being provided by the student. The researcher continued with questioning for up to 45 minutes (Dervin, 2006).

The research questions (see Appendix A) served as a loose guide as the researcher *qua* instrument forms questions extemporaneously, according to the responses of the participant and in order to solicit the most complete account of the information sources in the research process[7] with "grand tour" questions (Schutt, 2006, p. 312). These questions simply include:

How did you go about your research?

Who was helpful in your research?

How were they helpful?

How did you know them?

Ensuring Valid and Reliable Data

The approach in this study's qualitative research design corresponds closely with Schutt's (2006, pp. 286-356) outline in which he treats qualitative methods and qualitative data analysis; issues related to the validity and reliability of this study's data are addressed at each stage of its research design. For the sake of consistency with the order in which qualitative research is introduced by Schutt (2006), the most salient

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[7] The method of data collection recalls the so-called "micro-moment time-line interview" (see Dervin, 1983; Dervin, 1992) that had been the main method the researcher associated with the sense-making theory until B. Dervin (personal communication, 2006) suggested the "dialogic interview" for intensive interviewing, prompting the pre-interview content analysis at "Doing Ethnography"; this interview technique facilitates the accurate investigation of information action as a process.

connections between his explanations and this study's instantiations of the methodology are addressed in parallel.

Stake (1995) presents a case study as a "study of the particularity and complexity of a single case […] activity within circumstances […] sequentiality […] and wholeness of the individual" (as cited in Schutt, 2006, p. 293). In this sense, this study is a case study of Highpath School of Theology affiliates. The wholeness of the individual was observed through the intensive interviewing (p. 309).

To develop the best grand tour questions, this study took a stratified purposeful sample to respond to Schutt's (2006) suggestion, "to prepare for this active interviewing, the interviewer should learn in advance about the setting to be studied. Preliminary […] inspection of written documents should be done to uncover assumptions, to make explicit what the person might […] have left implicit" (p. 312). The preliminary study of ThD and PhD acknowledgements' inspection and coding was conceived according to the field's standards of information source type, and the variable of the acknowledger's relation to the source.

Thus, the precedent for similar methodology affirmed its reuse for the purposes of the preliminary study. Becker observes that:

> No set standards exist for evaluating the validity or 'authenticity' of conclusions in a qualitative study, but the need to consider carefully the evidence and methods on which the conclusions are based is just as great as with other types of research. Individual items of information can be assessed in terms of [various] criteria:
>
> (1) How credible was the informant?
>
> (2) Were the statements made in response to the researcher's question, or were

they spontaneous? (as cited in Schutt, 2006, p. 337)

For (1), the person was new to the researcher and vice versa. The sampling technique for the preliminary study of Harvard University's ThD and PhD dissertations' acknowledgements and the situation of the Highpath research setting legitimize the "informant's" credibility. The informants were expected to be able to express themselves more fully in person given the emic nature (p. 327) of the setting (as opposed to the etic focus that an analysis of research products [e.g. theses, dissertations] alone would be limited to). To address (2), the methodology of the open-ended, intensive interviewing allowed for a high degree of spontaneity.

Limitations

Given the advantage of the representativeness (see Schutt, 2006, p. 276) of Highpath School of Theology (by degree and denomination), its small population warranted in-person interviews as much as the research area of interpersonal information sources warranted intensive interviews. However, since the questionairre was administered primarily in-person,[8] there are low odds of: avoiding social desirability bias; avoiding interviewer distortion; meeting personnel requirements; implementing quickly; and keeping costs low. These are all limitations typical of the selected methodology.

Ethical Considerations

Some ethical considerations inherent to this study's methodology were mitigated by its field setting (see "field setting" above) and the researcher's relationship (Schutt, 2006, pp. 310-311) with Highpath School of Theology officials. The situation of research under the auspices of the Office of the Dean of Faculty ensured willingness to participate.

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[8] Two interviews were conducted via Skype/tele-conferencing.

The Office of the Dean of Faculty served as a mediator on issues of research integrity (approving and monitoring the research), ownership of data (removing the names and other identifiers from data collected), and use of results (preventing any profit from them). The researcher also assured the participants of confidentiality and privacy in reporting. Schutt (2006) emphasizes "confidentiality is the primary focus of ethical concern in research" (p. 79).

Other Methodological Issues Related to this Research Area, Questions and Approach

The units of analysis in the preliminary study were acknowledgements – a genre which is still not well-known. However, acknowledgements are "not trivial, meta-textual flourishes, rather they are formal records of often significant intellectual influence" (Cronin & Overfelt, 1994, p. 183) which point to strong networks of association between researchers. This study, building on the preliminary study's findings, examined those networks of associations among roles (i.e. student, faculty or librarian) and types (i.e. degree program affiliation [MA or MDiv]) students and their information sources.

Further research could improve validity and reliability by having a larger sampling frame of graduate students of religion and a research team with more than one researcher. These two improvements would: (1) provide for greater validity, given a larger study subpopulation of each degree type for a stratified sample; and (2) enable intercoder reliability of the information source types attested in interview transcripts.

Key Reasons for a Qualitative Rather than Quantitative Approach

This study is exploratory in nature. It builds on the preliminary study which investigated a larger set of data and discovered patterns that related the acknowledgees'

roles' (student, faculty or librarian) and types' (ThD-affiliated or PhD degree program affiliated) frequency to the author's situated context - either PhD student or ThD student.

To further explore the research behaviors of graduate students of religion already evidenced by the content of their completed dissertations' acknowledgements, this study focused on the meanings of information sources in research rather than on quantifiable phenomena.

The research problem lends itself to a qualitative methodology. It collected rich interview transcripts from two or three research subjects from each role category (student, faculty or librarian) to enrich the general data collected on the larger population of the preliminary study. Qualitative methods also afford for unique data of depth (without predetermined types of responses so common to quantitative/survey questionnaire approaches, such as the categorization of acknowledgees by role and type in the preliminary study) that fits the goal of rich or "thick descriptions" of the research process rather than measurement of specific variables that may be counted (Patton, 2002, pp. 13-14).

This research design is challenging in that it attempts to inculcate inherently subjective perspectives on ultimate reality or a "higher power" into individuals' accounts of research behavior. Qualitative methods allow for sensitivity to the situation of theses of theological education, rather than universal generalizations about citation frequency in theses. Finally, the attention to the impact of my values on the course of the analysis rather than presuming the possibility of objective investigation is most possible when employing qualitative methods to address the research questions.

Conclusions About the Adoption of the Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research enabled me to pursue a richer and more intimate understanding of the MA and MDiv students, faculty and librarians in the processes of information action than would have been possible with more structured methods such as true experimental and purely quantitative approaches. The emphasis in qualitative research on inductive reasoning fit best with the progressive methodology of the Highpath School of Theology study and the inductive approach to questioning I took in the intensive interviewing of Highpath School of Theology affiliates; exploratory research to investigate the uncharted faith settings of the study population and intensive investigations of the subjective and faith-informed meanings that motivate the information behavior were particularly well served by the techniques of intensive interviewing.

Finally, qualitative research involves an approach to questioning and investigating different from that used in experimental and quantitative research. Qualitative research is inductive and idiographic, whereas experiments and quantitative (i.e. surveys) tend to be conducted with a deductive nomothetic framework. Both approaches can help information scientists learn about the information behavior in the domain of religion; in later iterations of the research study of faith-related information behavior, I remain open to incorporating either experimental or quantitative approaches, or both.[9]

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[9] Those quasi-quantitative data could also benefit from and be enriched with the documentation of the qualitative data from the interviews.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter will present the results of data collected during interviews with four stakeholder groups: librarians, faculty, MA students and MDiv students. It will proceed in the order of the research questions and interview questions. Each interview question corresponds to one of the following five research questions.

RQ1: What are the information behaviors specific to the research processes of MA and MDiv students at Highpath School of Theology?

RQ2: How do Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty (teaching in the MA and MDiv programs) appraise the information behaviors involved in the research processes of MA and MDiv students?

RQ3: What information behaviors specific to Highpath School of Theology MA and MDiv students' research processes do academic librarians see in the Highpath School of Theology Library and/or on campus?

RQ4: What do Highpath School of Theology stakeholders (MA and MDiv students, Highpath School of Theology Library librarians, and Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty) think about the role of degree program affiliation in relation to the information behaviors of Highpath School of Theology students in their research processes?

RQ5: What do Highpath School of Theology stakeholders (MA and MDiv students, Highpath School of Theology Library librarians, and Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty) think about the significance of religious faith in the

information behaviors of Highpath School of Theology students in their research processes?[10]

Results are presented according to the stakeholder groups of interview participants who responded to the questionnaire: all participants, only Master's students (both MA students and MDiv students), only faculty, only librarians, and a combination of students and faculty.

Demographics

Student participants:

Participant 1: Secularist, MA, white, male

Participant 2: Christian MA, black, male

Participant 3: Buddhist MDiv, white, female

Participant 4: Jewish MDiv, white, male

Faculty participants:

Participant 5: Secularist, white, male

Participant 6: Quaker, white, male

Participant 7: Muslim, Arab, male

Librarian participants:

Participant 8: Christian, white, male

Participant 9: Secularist, Hispanic, male

Participant 10: Christian, white, male

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[10] The questionnaire in Appendix A details the correspondence between research questions, interview questions and interviewee roles (i.e. student, faculty, librarian).

Data Collected from All Interviewees

Would you be willing to talk about your faith background? [RQ1; all participants]

The students and faculty who were interviewed all responded positively, either with "yes" or "sure." The two MDiv students and one MA student all gave a one-word response. One MA student, Participant 1, elaborated:

I grew up in Church of Christ. I was confirmed and participated but basically in high school I began to veer away from the Church. Well, really, the main reason is I moved away from home at that point and went to kind of like a boarding school type situation. But by college I really began to doubt, um, the worth, of going to church every Sunday. And then by grad school I pretty much kind of put organized religion behind me and that has not changed.

Two faculty participants gave one-word answers but one faculty member specified "I'm a Muslim. Here I teach Islamic philosophy, theology and spirituality." Two of the librarians interviewed responded either with "yes" or "sure" whereas one librarian stated "I don't know that I would really. Yeah."

What is your current religious status/practice, if any? [RQ1: all participants]

This question was answered by every participant from all three stakeholder groups, students, faculty and librarians. The responses ranged from "unaffiliated" and "non-believing" to "practicing" and "ordained." The organized religions represented include: Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

The MA students interviewed expressed current religious statuses of "unaffiliated" and "Christian mystic," respectively. The Christian mystic, Participant 2, first traced his family's religious background and then stated "I do identify as a Christian

and I will be ordained as a Disciples of Christ minister as well as a United Church of Christ minister."

The MDiv student participants identified as a practicing Zen Buddhist and a practicing Conservative Jew, respectively. The Zen Buddhist student, Participant 3, articulated that he "practice[s] on a weekly basis with a [Vietnamese] congregation here in Highpath." The Jewish MDiv student, Participant 4, first explained how her family "fluctuated between Reform Judaism and conservative Judaism" and then stated "now, as an adult I would consider myself a Conservative Jew."

The faculty stakeholder group was comprised of one practicing Muslim, one non-believing Christian (hereafter "secularist"), and one member of the Religious Society of Friends called Quakers. The Islamic faculty member clarified "it's more than an academic subject for me. I take it seriously […] I'm especially interested in spiritual aspects of the tradition, Islamic tradition." The Quaker faculty member, Participant 6, delineated his religious and intellectual biography, stating:

> I was raised in an atheist household. I had a conversion to evangelical Christianity at 14. Also become involved in the Charismatic movement. Over studies at a Christian college and seminary in California I found myself engaging contemporary philosophy and science. I studied with a Lutheran theologian in Germany called Wolfhart Pannenberg […] And I thoroughly imbibed with Lutheran theology. I did my PhD at Yale in Philosophy and Religious Studies […] And over the years, some twenty-five years of teaching, that has sort of settled into this sort of radical, mystical form of Christian faith and practice, which the Quakers practice in an unprogrammed means and a theological position

that is deeply Wesleyan in orientation. The significance of Wesleyan theology is that is doesn't accept a dichotomy between what Americans consider progressive and evangelical. So personal holiness and social holiness go hand in hand in Wesley's thought. A deep abiding presence of God and that God speaks, through scripture and other sources, goes hand-in-hand with the belief that we are called to be radical spokespersons for Jesus Christ in the world, including and especially to the poor and marginalized persons. That's the beauty of the harmony that Wesleyan spirituality offers and that in my own spiritual life is central.

Participant 9 stated that he was "not religious. I have no affiliation." The other two members of the librarian stakeholder group identified as Christian but each participant described a different version of Christianity. Participant 8 responded that he is ordained in the Church of the Nazarene. He described other library staff members' faiths, stating, "Highpath doesn't require any confession of faith from anyone of the faculty or staff. So on staff here in the Library we have a fairly conservative Baptist, a sort of liberal Presbyterian, a Buddhist, an atheist, and a Charismatic, among the professional librarians." Participant 10, who was hesitant to speak about faith when asked the first interview question (above), offered a rich response about current religious status/practice:

Yeah, I didn't want to talk about my faith background, but I guess current is OK. I occasionally go to church. When I go to church it's usually to a Catholic church. So I've said I didn't want to talk about my background but I've been considering becoming Catholic. I grew up in an Evangelical Protestant context and so on. I happen to work in a Methodist school. That's more what my background is, more what I'm familiar with. I occasionally go to church. I was a teacher for ten years

and I taught a world religions class. I would take students to various gatherings or

invite speakers in from various world religions. I'm not Greek Orthodox but I

would go to Greek Orthodox services to support a student. I have a PhD in

Religious Studies and I study Early Christianity. So for me a lot of various

Christian traditions are fascinating and the way they've preserved those traditions

that have been around for a long time [is fascinating].

Which degree program are you more closely affiliated with? (MA, MDiv) Could you

describe the nature of your association? [RQ4; all participants]

This question was answered by every participant from all three stakeholder

groups: students, faculty and librarians. The responses to the question of which degree

program participants are more closely affiliated ranged from "not close to anything" and

"it's sort of an evolution" to "more on the MA side" and "both." The degree programs

identified include: Master of Arts (MA), Master of Divinity (MDiv), Doctor of

Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Ministry (DMin).

The MA students interviewed expressed current or recent enrollment in the

Master of Arts in Theological Discipline. Participant 1 was in his final year of the MA in

Theological Discipline program; his concentration was in Religious Education.

Participant 2 had just graduated with the MA degree and had just begun studies in the

MDiv hybrid program. Since his answers to interview questions primarily recall his

experience of theological education and library research as an MA student for the

immediately previous two years, he has been classified as an MA student for the purposes

of this dissertation project.

Participant 3 identified as most closely affiliated with the "MDiv in Interfaith Chaplaincy Program." Participant 4 first explained: "[i]t's sort of been an evolution. As a Jew I never thought I'd be getting an MDiv. But it's worked out really nicely […] Basically I was doing the MA in Interfaith Chaplaincy through Highpath Lincoln University when we had ties with them. Which was a three year program." After delineating her academic history in an MA program, the student described the MDiv in Interfaith Chaplaincy program with which she is currently most closely affiliated. She related:

> Then when the separation of the two institutions happened […] When I became an MDiv student it was really nice because all of the classes I had taken thus far already mapped over into this new program […] And so my relationship with the program is in that regard. It's one that we're working to advertise more. I think we probably have a dozen or [fewer] MDiv in Interfaith Chaplaincy […] Because it's different. It's pretty non-traditional. And I think a good majority of us or at least half of us are non-Christian. So it's really neat in that regard.

All of the faculty members interviewed have affiliations with both the MA and the MDiv programs at Highpath School of Theology. The faculty stakeholder group was comprised of one faculty member who is most closely affiliated with the MDiv program and two faculty members who are most closely affiliated with the MA program.

Participant 6 first expressed that his affiliation is "equal between MA and MDiv," then later said "possibly more MDiv." He continued to describe the nature of his affiliation. He advises students in both programs and offers elective courses in both programs. However, he teaches the MDiv curriculum core course called Systematic

Theology for Ministry. The elective course he currently offered, Wesleyan Theology, was "mostly for MDiv students," he said.

Participant 7, like the other two faculty members, first answered "actually both," then specified "I am more involved in the Islamic Studies MA program." He elaborated that he encounters students from the hybrid and on-campus MA program. His encounters with MDiv students occur because students have to select a class outside of their own tradition; he explained:

So if they're studying Christianity then primarily you are just studying the Christian tradition. But it is required that they should take a class, which they all take classes, which deals with other traditions, too. So I am having a lot of students from that [Christian] tradition. But its primarily Islamic MA students, but also seriously involved in the MDiv program I can say.

Participant 5's response to this interview question was particularly expressive. He talked both about which programs he is most closely affiliated as well as which programs' students he typically prefers. He is closest to the PhD students. However, he leads the MA Colloquium, required of all MA students. A New Testament scholar, he regrets that more MA students are not interested in studying New Testament. While MDiv students are interested in New Testament studies, he has issues teaching them. He reasoned:

Because it's more of a professional school commitment than it is an academic commitment and some of these people are quite pious and conservative in their orientation. And I unabashedly teach critical, historical critical methodologies. And so that there's a certain about of alienation that happens in some courses.

Especially the introductory course. I know that it's happening now in the course that I'm teaching right this term.

The library stakeholders also responded about their degree program affiliations and lack thereof. Participant 9 answered, "I'm not close to anything since I have no [theological subject] area of expertise." Whoever needs help, he helps. Participant 9 provides assistance to both MA, MDiv and PhD students who need help navigating online resources, learning how to use an e-book, learning how to search through the database, determining why a database is not functioning properly, and/or discovering good databases for a given subject.

Participant 8 is most closely affiliated with the PhD program. He facilitates directed studies for the students in New Testament. He also serves on students' exam committees and their dissertation committees. He has far less contact with MA and MDiv students. He added that there is a Doctor of Ministry (DMin) degree program on campus. He does not have direct contact with DMin students either.

Participant 10 has both formal and informal affiliations with degree programs at Highpath School of Theology. The formal affiliation that he has pertains to PhD and DMin students; he is the thesis secretary. He ensures that dissertations conform to Highpath's formatting guidelines. The informal affiliation is with the MA program. He stated:

> So far in what's happened in day-to-day reality I've been more in conversation
> with MA students and MA faculty. I mentioned this MA Colloquium. I taught
> half of one of the first classes in that colloquium, research methods, and so on.
> My sense is, and this isn't saying much, but research is more of an expectation

more with MA programs generally than MDiv programs. And that makes sense

that I would be pulled in to help more with the MA program.

Do you see students working in groups on research? [RQ1; all participants]

The responses ranged from "seldom" and "no" to "sometimes" and "yes."

Participant 3 reported "no" whereas Participant 4 reported "yes, I see group work but I

typically see them working on a class presentation […] I haven't seen as much formal

research in a small group." Participant 1 reported, simply "rarely," whereas Participant 2

reported "yes […] I take a course on the History of Judaism, and so my partner was a

Jewish student and so we would meet at the Library [and] talk about the articles we read.

And we would do research about that and so that's one way we would find more

resources in the Library."

None of the faculty interviewed could affirm that the information behavior of

students included working in groups on research. Participant 5 stated, "I don't know

about the library. You would have to ask the library staff about that." Participant 6

replied "rarely." Participant 7 responded "not that I'm aware of."

The librarians could affirm that group work happens, though not in the library.

Participant 9 mentioned how "sometimes in the Edgar Center [student community center]

it may not be a group project, but I have seen [students] pool their resources; they do

crowdsource. I do see students actively engaging in that." Participant 10 shared, "I don't

think I have seen that yet. I've only been here a couple months." Finally Participant 8

contextualized the various responses from stakeholders and explained the main reasons

for the negative responses: institutional culture and library building design. Participant 8

reported:

Seldom. Part of that is that historically the culture was not set up well for that. We have two conference rooms. And that's all. And it's very much set up on a model of individual research. It's not designed to encourage [group work]. We are actually in the process of repurposing an area that would be designed for study but as of now there's almost none that goes on in the Library. The group study that happens on campus happens across the green here at the student center. Students study in there in groups. But the perception is the Library should be quiet and it was designed for that in in culture in had been reinforced.

Interpersonal interactions often extend beyond face-to-face encounters. Tell me about how, if at all, Highpath School of Theology MA and MDiv students' use digital communication and/or social media as part of the research process. [RQ1; all participants]

Both MA students interviewed expressed active involvement in digital communication and social media. Participant 1 said initially that he had nothing to say about digital communication; he said "I don't see a lot of Skyping when it comes to bringing in somebody from the outside for a class topic." He then offered that he uses Facebook for social sharing of information. He added that he and a small group of students are currently developing "an intra-community webpage so people can post art, articles, ideas, commentary, politics. All through a theological lens."

Participant 2 explained that students at Highpath School of Theology use a digital communication and educational technology called LifeSize. He described LifeSize as "a way into research." He elaborated:

So in my class on the Hebrew Bible we had a tele- or video-conference with

Jewish students at AJR [Academy of Jewish Religion] […] so we were able to

converse back and forth in the text as Christians. And what they saw as Jews and

what lens you use to understand that […] so that's one way we were able to bring

that color in. Another way is social media, which I know is not a traditional

research source, but, uh, one professor in particular I can think of uses Twitter a

lot to tweet ideas or quotes or an article [and] she's a practicing Muslim. So I

have used her articles to get a different perspective on an issue, because I know

one as a male I have perspective, as a Christian I have a perspective, as an

African-American and as a Southerner I look at things a little differently […]

looking at her tweets, or reading articles on Facebook that people post is one way

that I can access different information and perspectives on issues […] when I'm

investigating the conflict in Israel and Palestine I can, one, read articles about it,

but also, I can just look on Facebook. And on Facebook I have classmates who

are Muslims and they will post their opinion. And their opinion is their opinion

and that's a form of research because I can see that is what he think or what she

thinks. I can figure out where that comes from. What is that idea based in? What

theory in the Koran informs this? So it gives order to the questions to inform the

research.

Participant 3 responded that interpersonal interactions, both face-to-face and

otherwise are not part of his standard practice; he summarized his comments, stating,

"I'm a lone wolf." In contrast Participant 4 reported at length on the role of digital

communication in course delivery and research-related interpersonal interactions in the hybrid MDiv program's online courses. She explained:

> One of the things I like about it is that we're able to learn with each other through, doing online, as opposed to face-to-face, is we have the online thing called Sakai and we're able to do forums, post forums, and just have general discussions and talk about the readings and the, just our ideas about the research and for projects and papers, and we're able to, a lot of those we're able to see our peers' thoughts and we're able to comment on each others' and have, like a forum thread. And respond directly to each other. And one of the things I like about it is, because it's in writing and it's not face-to-face, you have to be very careful with your words, for me it helps me to be very deliberate in the words that I use. Because it can't necessarily be deleted, sometimes you're able to edit it, but it's a little more permanent than the kind of interactions that we have in the classroom where it's real-time, face-to-face, where you can go and explain yourself.

The faculty interviewed fell into one of two categories in their responses to this question: (1) they expressed either a lack of familiarity with digital communication and social media, or (2) a strong advocacy for their use in learning, research and community life. Participant 7 said that he was not familiar with the issue and did not have enough information to answer the question. Participant 5 responded that he was not the person to ask about digital communication or social media but that he knows it happens. He continued to explain that it happens in his own large courses for which he has a teaching assistant set up and monitor the Sakai system's online chat rooms for students to connect

with each other. Participant 6 was the strongest faculty advocate for digital communication and social media; he articulated:

Digital communication and social media play a huge role for CST students. They, in their classes already, are involved in posting responses to a shared site and sometimes interacting online in their responses to their reading and to their research. Even in classes that are face-to-face classes [there are] weekly [online] sessions. Their data acquisition is largely digital, through our Library and through other sources. Their use of the internet constitutes an increasing percentage of their reading time and of the sources that they cite. And, finally, they are active users of Facebook, with a number of Facebook forums where they'll meet in the context of their classes and their community life.

The librarians all had unique remarks about interpersonal interaction, digital communication and social media. Participant 8 reported that he receives "half a dozen emails a week" primarily about New Testament research (his subject specialty). Participant 9 put email use into further perspective: "I'll have five emails for every face-to-face interaction. So they [students] very much embrace the non-face-to-face interpersonal aspect of working with librarians." Participant 10 provided the richest response:

One of the things we've tried to do in the last few months is establish a virtual or online reference presence. So prior to my arrival, people could either email or call in and now we've expanded with a service called Springshare Libanswers so it allows us to tweet questions or text questions so we've established a twitter account to go with the library. It's the first one that they've had. We don't have a

library Facebook page. This online reference service also allows for chat reference. So we just tried to expand the different modes that reference services can be delivered in. And from some what I can tell so far it's only been in place for about a month and a half but it seems to be usually we have questions come in through text while they're in class, maybe not a good time (laughs). Asking about their textbooks and if we have them. But we've been making announcements once or twice a week on our Library Twitter page and that's linked together with the School's Twitter page which is very active […] to make sure that library services are available digitally.

How useful do you think various kinds of information behavior activities are in the research process? [RQ4; all participants]

Participant 1 addressed the issue of the usefulness of various kinds of information behavior from his personal perspective and from the perspective of a seminary student. He explained that he will be interviewing people and asking "not-too-terribly invasive, but definitely personal questions." By "personal" he explained he meant "soul-searching." For his research purposes the various kinds of information behavior he found useful were the kinds that can take place within different kinds of geographical and institutional contexts. He stated, "[w]hether you're talking about a coffee shop or in the park or maybe after a meditative meet. So I think the behavioral aspect of it would just be something I'd take as a mental footnote and it's kind of subjective really." Participant 1 considered various kinds of information behavior to be especially useful in the context of "seminar student behavior […] since we're generally talking about the practice of faith."

The MDiv students interviewed had diverging opinions on the usefulness of various kinds of information behavior. Participant 3 does not usually discuss anything about his research with his peers. He instead caters his research to the professor's expectations, avoiding informal conversations about research methods or topics with peers. By contrast Participant 4 considers various kinds of information behavior, especially unintentional encounters, to be "really useful." She elaborated:

> [w]hen you mentioned that I kind of thought about the kind of conversations I have socially either in passing or just hanging out with my peers in our apartment at night or something and we have, we'll be hanging out in a social setting but we'll be having these theological conversations. And it will be really neat, more likely than not, I'm learning something new every time I interact with them and so you know they'll say something that will spark my curiosity and then I'll ask them questions about it and then you know later on go look it up and do further research. But it's often in those conversations that just sort of, you know, happen either in passing or just relaxing with friends that really spark some good ideas and further interests.

The faculty interviewed consider various kinds of information behavior to be "radically influential" and "indispensable." Participant 7 found various information behavior, especially unintended encounters, to be useful in terms of reaching goals in a timely manner. Juggling priorities including children and the durations of academic programs is better facilitated by various information behavior. Coming up with an effective time management plan has been highly effective in his own research. As far as his students are concerned, his observation has been that it is effective in their research,

too. He explained, "[s]o when I see [a] healthy family life or when I see [a student] having a family […] these informal interactions [with] family are making a person a more responsible one. So students are having more tendencies to realize their projects in a more timely and more disciplined manner."

Participant 6 opined that the greatest challenge is organizing one's information acquisitions behavior in a way that is rational, critical and self-reflective. He explained how the key task for students assigned a sermon or paper is: to recognize what information she does not yet have, what information is already a part of her tacit knowledge, how she can acquire the missing information, how she can organize this information, and then how she can present it for her reader. Given this instance of the relevance of a task to various kinds of information behavior, seminaries do not do a good job of assisting students with the process, he said. He explained that he knew about the shortfall of critical thinking in seminaries because of his prior experience at a state university philosophy department for twelve years where there was a course aimed exactly at this interview question – at assisting students in getting better at this process. He concluded, "[b]ut we offer virtually nothing. Virtually no critical thinking. Direct or indirect, in the seminary curriculum."

The librarians interviewed had different perceptions of the usefulness of various information behavior activities. Participant 9 thought all information behavior activities are important, "because you can learn anything from anywhere," he said. He observed that how people collect data and how they seek information are very diverse. Participant 9 did not think any particular type of information behavior should be more heavily weighted than others; any kind of information gathering is as important as any other.

Although people develop their information seeking behavior in various ways, that does not mean any particular approach is any less relevant or less important. He summarized his position, stating, "I think it just comes down to an individual basis. And I think depending on the person, any different practice can be just as helpful."

Participant 10 answered, "that's sort of a 'both/and' question for me." He also observed that people gain knowledge through a wide variety of sources including their pastors, family and friends. The way he tries to explain or conceptualize research to Highpath graduate students in the MA Colloquium is by teaching them how "scholarship is a community and it's a conversation and so in order to do good research one has to, in a way, apprentice oneself to that conversation. Listen to that conservation, find one's voice in that conversation." He elaborated that interpersonal interaction is especially important in religious studies because there's an avid belief in major world religions that certain people are also sources of authoritative knowledge. He tells his bibliographic instruction students, "It may be best to go to talk to this person in this local community, you may get more insight into this or that topic than [you would if you only] consulted a book. So there's that African proverb, and I don't know if it's apocryphal or not, but you know 'when an old person dies it's like a library burns.' So you know people are walking libraries so I would like to think that in terms of information behavior and information seeking people would be open to learning in all kinds of ways.

He also observed that information does not have to be printed to be valid; he endeavors to teach what information counts as a credible academic source and insure that students are citing credible academic sources.

Do you see any indications that Highpath School of Theology MA and MDiv students' religious faith or lack thereof matters in the way they go about the research process? Do you see it in the Highpath School of Theology Library? Around campus meeting places such as the dining hall, gym, or chapel? [RQ5; all participants]

There are three components to this interview question. All participants replied to this question, but not everyone addressed all three components. In general, the participants did see indications that religious faith mattered in the research process for students. Most participants did not see much evidence of faith-specific behavior in the Library, but many saw indications of students' religious faith at campus meeting places.

Participant 1 responded that if religious faith is not generally apparent, it is probably because "people are so focused on getting it done and getting it done on schedule and getting it done the way they intend that maybe faith may potentially slip back a couple of notches in terms of importance." Muslims' religiosity is more visible and more consistent than that of Christians or Jews who the participant knows personally; he explained, "with the Christian students I hang out with we tend to be pretty liberal and as such kind of flexible at the rules, when it comes to the rules – of drinking and just letting loose a little bit."

Participant 2 found that religious faith influences what kind of books students buy and books the Library buys. He said that when he first began his studies there were no explicit section on Sikhism or Jainism, and although Judaism was represented in the collection, there was not a robust section on Islam. But, because there are more students who have different faith affiliations, or people who are more agnostic coming to

Highpath, "because they're humanist or something like that, our collection has to grow,"

he stated. Otherwise they would not be meeting the needs of students. He described

curricular effects the new inter-religious precedent has brought to Highpath. He

explained:

> There are classes now that are offered on the Relativity of Religious Truth. Which
>
> in that course you're going to read everything from William James to John Hick
>
> to Paul Tillich. You're going to read a breadth of things. You're going to read
>
> Eastern philosophers. So those things have influenced and so those books have to
>
> be bought now and they need to be on the shelves in order to inform and to meet
>
> the needs of the school.

Around campus Participant 2 saw indications of students' religious faith. When he served

as the Chairman of the Interreligious Council, one of the biggest qualms was over what

was to be done with the chapel. Because the chapel has a large cross prominently

featured, it is a Christian chapel. And so the questions became: can we have worship

spaces that are hospitable for a myriad of faiths? Do you take the cross down? Do you

leave it up? He explained that Highpath follows the Methodist calendar, with its seasonal

banners. Currently there is an interfaith banner with multiple religious symbols that

always hangs. He understands the necessary compromise.

Participant 2 described the campus prayer room. Formerly a Christian prayer

room, it is now used more by Islamic students. To accommodate Islamic usage Highpath

needed shoe racks and prayer books. "Where is the line between being a mainly Christian

institution and having religious bases that are acceptable to greater faiths?" he asked.

Highpath is now a pork-free campus. When they have a pizza party they have halal meat

and kosher meat and a lot of vegetarian fare because there are Jains who avoid harming animals. They are increasingly aware of intermingling behavior based on religious beliefs, "not reading in a book, right, but by personal experience," he said. Religious beliefs affect the spaces and they affect the conversations. The conversations, the interpersonal information sources, fraught with a myriad of religious concerns, affect the students' research processes.

Participant 3 also found evidence for religious faith impacting students' research, particularly in conversations. Unless someone is wearing some demonstrably religious garb he would have to have a conversation with someone about whatever their religious identity or practice would be. "There are a lot of assumptions to be made and they're usually wrong," he stated, laughing. He found no difference in the way MA and MDiv students go about their research.

Participant 4 would not distinguish between MA and MDiv students in terms of how religious beliefs affect students' research behavior. Of the religious spaces on campus she found them all helpful as places for contemplation, prayer, meditation, worship, relaxation. She elaborated, "I know specifically, for me, as an MDiv student every Tuesday we have community chapel that is an ecumenical interreligious service. I really appreciate that forty-five minutes [each] week because it leaves me space to clear my mind so when I go back to doing my work it can help me focus a lot more." She did not see any evidence of religious faith in the Highpath Library. She mentioned the meditation room frequented by Muslim students and spoke of a Biblical garden in which there is no religious iconography; it's intended to be a space for meditation and contemplation where there used to be a little labyrinth built into the natural grounds (now

overgrown). She provided an example of religious life visible on campus: "[s]ometimes we'll put a rope labyrinth on the lawn right in front of the chapel and that is often a space used for labyrinth walking which is a meditative or spiritual practice."

The faculty members' responses to the question linking religious faith and the research process varied considerably. Participant 7 stated that religious commitments are the main factor that determines the way research will progress. He explained, "[a] lot of the people as far as I can see are taking their traditions seriously here. And they are choosing a topic in accordance with that. So I can answer that, yes, it is the majority of students are being influenced by their religious commitments, in terms of picking a topic, how to run it and how to finalize it."

Participant 5's response was consistent with Participant 7's comment. He said, "Oh absolutely. It is, in fact, I think the general ethos of the school," but he added, "and I'm not exactly happy about it." He thought that too many projects are identity-related. He considers identity and religious commitments to be pastoral care issues, "and I don't consider it scholarly" he said. He continued:

> So the answer is yes our students are encouraged to own their identity and speak
> from it and to research inside of it. But there are some of us who are pushing for a
> more humanist and scholarly and even liberal arts way of answering those
> questions and push issues of philosophy, inter-religious issues so I get pretty tired
> of some of this high-identity research.

Participant 5 also sees the impact of students' own religious faiths in research practices in the context of the School of Theology Library. But he does not think it's confessional. He clarified, "[t]hat is I don't the Library has a theological line or

denominational pitch. It rather is related to the kinds of students we want to attract. So, for example, we've just inherited a very large Wiccan collection. And that doesn't mean we're interested in having more witches on campus. What we do want is that collection to be there. And we now will have some students who will come and want to have access to that." Another contemporary example he gave is the effort to bolster the Islamic collection, because Highpath is moving in the direction of a multi-religious seminary.

Around campus Participant 5 sees religious faith among smaller religious groups. Some of them are more intentional than others. There is a Korean choir. There used to be a Korean prayer group that met almost every day. There is a Lutheran discussion group that meets on a regular basis. He observed, "I'm sure that there are a lot of friendships of people who feel an affinity with each other spiritually for some reason or other. Even atheists." He said that the School of Theology almost has two student bodies. One student body lives on campus and tends to be made up of international students, mostly Asian students. He opined,

> I think our students are oriented not in terms of their religious experience as much
> as their ethnic identity. So that our students I think are more conscious of ethnic,
> or gender identity, so women's groups or Korean groups or African-American
> groups. You might think that at a theological school that these subgroups are
> driven more by faith and so on but I think it's more by cultural identity.

Participant 6 saw a strong correlation between students' religious faith and the research process. His students who come from a very conservative, and often hierarchical religious background will often approach the research process in a faith-centered manner. They will ask, "What does scripture say on this topic?" and use the scriptural testimony

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as the salient information for answering the question or they will ask their pastor, or bishop or ministry supervisor what is the right answer or ask "how do we answer that question?" And answer accordingly. Methodists, Presbyterians, and others in the middle of the mainline spectrum combine scriptural and traditional sources with appeals to their own thinking and experience, so they would have a blended or hybrid model of information acquisition and prioritization. And those on the very left end of the spectrum such as the Unitarian Universalists will make no appeals to authoritative sources and rely very heavily on individual experience, he observed. He did not observe any evidence of religious faith inside the Highpath School of Theology Library, but there were indications that religious faith affects the communications process, thereby affecting the research process around campus. He explained that the reason why there is more visible religiosity at the campus level than at the Library level is that they were involved in giving birth to an interreligious university, which subsequently left. Over the last five years they have thought very carefully about public spaces being open and inviting to people of multiple faith traditions, including the chapel. They established a prayer room for the Muslim daily prayers, a wash room for the purification that comes before that. Spaces that were not threatening to Jews and Muslims were envisioned. Types of events that were equally inviting to all were planned. They also have worked on having spaces and types of meetings that invite in other ethnic traditions in the area which include African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and the Korean population of students. All of these are examples of their consciously molding common space to invite in religious difference, cultural difference.

In these spaces with individuals and groups Participant 6 suspects that religious faith is impacting worldviews and having an effect on the research process of the degree-seeking students. As a Methodist, ecumenical and interreligious school, "that is the water in which we swim," he said. Through their dialogue with those of other religions, professors regularly see the way that Jewish interests and Jewish community formation influence the students in what they choose to write about, how they gather information about it and how they produce it. The same is true of Muslim students who approach questions in a very different way. The same applies to the various members of the Christian family. He gave one example:

> I gave a class, I gave a lecture on Muslim-Christian dialogue. And the assignment was quote 'to present the Trinity for Muslims'. And that gave him the chance to think about how to present this information in a way that Muslim students can take on, in a way that fosters Muslim-Christian dialogue and helps them to be strong clergy and laypersons in their congregations and that is all about information acquisition, organization and presentation.

The Library staff shared their perspectives on students' religious faith and the research process. Participant 8 considers that there is a difference in the students in the MDiv program and the MA program. The MDiv goal is to be ordained and to enter into full-time ministry. The questions they ask and the kind of answers they want are always shaped by what they perceive to be the needs of the church. The students in the other master's programs are either "trying to work out religious questions of their own and they're really not questions tied to the church. Or else they're preparing for doctoral programs and they don't see their career in the church and questions they ask are sort of

either of a personal existential nature or their of a strictly academic nature." It's somewhat like the difference between students of theology and religious students; there are some students even at the master's level who are not religious at all. They have no interests in how these texts affect life in the church. There are other students who only care about learning's relationship to the church, he said.

So some students are only interested in critical Biblical studies and other students are really not interested in critical Biblical studies at all; they are only interested in how to preach the Bible. He stated, "It's a very different set of questions, it's a very different set of resources. I see that on the resource end. They say 'hey, can we get this thing, this resource?' so I see the difference."

Participant 9's response to this interview question differed the most from the other research participants. He does not see any indications "at all" that students' religious faith affects the way they go about the research process. He elaborated:

> When I'm helping a student I don't ask them, 'are you doing it because you believe or you don't believe or what's your angle?' I don't ask that or anything like that. And they don't divulge that information. But from what I notice, no, there is absolutely no difference in how they conduct research or do anything like that. How they seek help.

Near the Highpath School of Theology Library there is the Edgar Center. It's a community center where students will gather sometimes for small group class discussion or just to hang out, and Participant 9 has heard numerous times various religious talks going on. Whether or not those conversations are taking place in the context of the classroom or just friendly chitchat because one person is genuinely interested in trying to

learn more about another person's faith, he cannot say one way or the other. He said that

he has never seen a disrespectful argument. It always seems like a genuine yearning for

understanding and knowledge. There are community conversations there as well, where

staff/faculty will get together and discuss various topics about diversity, religion and

sexual orientation. Those are always respectful discussions, he said. He elaborated:

> People are always willing to open up and nobody slams anybody's opinion or
>
> beliefs or anything like that. Everything comes from a good-natured place, a
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> caring place. And I think that helps, too, with the research, because in those
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> conversations people are always open and when you're open you get a lot more
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> information from people and you understand, rather than just looking directly
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> from the textbook. When you add, I mean, it's anecdotal, but sometime anecdotal
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> information can be pretty helpful in research.

Participant 10 also had thoughtful reflections on master's degree students,

religious faith and the research process. He gave an example of an MA student for whom

research is not just an academic process, but also a process of personal discovery. The

student really cares about certain topics that are very much related to what he's practicing

in his life. Thus the reference librarian observed, "I do think I see a correlation between

the two." They are there because of some kind of faith commitment and faith background

and that is what has led them to Highpath School of Theology. "Whether that makes them

more intense researchers or not, or more than people who are approaching things from a

strictly secular point of point of view, I don't know," he said.

Sometimes students' faith is visible or apparent or stated. Participant 10 cited a

case in which a student identified himself as personally religious. "I don't see a lot of

people wearing faith on their sleeves," but sometimes they self-identify, he said. He has had a student he helped who is Muslim make it obvious early on in the conversation that he was a practicing Muslim. He led an orientation for the Bayan [mainly Muslim] students. One student who is Jewish happened to be attending that orientation even though she attends the Academy of Jewish Religion. He does not think it is fair to assume that anybody is one faith or another. Somebody could be studying at Bayan and not be Muslim.

Sometimes you can tell from people's garb: "We do have Muslim students who where a hijab or a burka and it's fairly obvious then upfront," he said. This is not to say that Christians cannot wear those things; it is just that Christians in the United States tend to not wear those particular garments. Sometimes people dress in a way that identifies themselves religiously. At Highpath there is a Jewish student – a rabbi, a chaplain and a TA – who wears his kippah, his prayer cap. He is not Orthodox, but he always wears a dark suit. So it is fairly obvious when he comes in that he is Jewish, he said. So religious behavior being what it is, people self-identify with their clothing.

Data Collected from Student Interviewees

Tell me about a time you talked about a research assignment with a fellow Highpath School of Theology student that you found useful. [RQ1; students]

This question was asked of the participants from the student stakeholder group, including two MA students and two MDiv students. Participant 1 did not give a specific instance of a useful research conversation but generally described types of conversations, stating:

"[i]t's definitely been in the last week of so. Because I'm second year so I'm

working on my thesis right now as well. And, ironically, it is going to involve

interviewing people (laughs) just like you are. This last week, I don't specifically

remember when, but it's just kind of like it happens all the time […] I guess [what

is useful is] just getting feedback. Not necessarily in particular looking for

specific detailed feedback. But just being able to generally tell that someone

understands, generally speaking, more likelier than a non-seminary student. Not

that [a non-seminary student] wouldn't give valuable feedback. It's just that we're

soaked and dumped in this environment, you know, that feedback is going to

come from a place of closer understanding and relation.

Participant 2 provided a specific example of how conversations were in the research

process. He explained that during the last semester of his MA program he wrote a

research paper comparing *agape* (Greek: love) as defined by Martin Luther King, Jr. to

the concept of *taqwa* (Arabic: piety) in the Islamic tradition. He elaborated:

I was wondering how they can inform each other in order to have a more

pluralistic society. So I talked with faculty members and fellow students to gain

additional perspective and then I used the Library to find sources, mainly

Christian sources, and some articles were available on *taqwa*, from an Islamic

point of view. At Highpath we have Bayan, which is an Islamic graduate study

program. So I consulted with Muslims on their understanding of *taqwa*. Or

basically their understanding of consciousness of God and man, or fellow

humanity. So I would talk to them about their experience of that practically. And

the theoretical concept. And then Christians, what is the role of love in your theology.

Neither of the MDiv students offered a specific example of how a conversation had been useful for their own research assignments, but Participant 4 articulated how a conversation she had was useful to another student. Participant 4 described how a fellow student asked her about a research assignment on interreligious dialogue. The MDiv student reviewed a paper she had written on the topic and shared her bibliography with her peer. He was then able to proceed with further research. So in this instance talking about a research assignment was useful to a student, but not for the purposes of the interviewee's own research. Participant 3 responded simply: "Gee. I kind of keep to myself [laughs]. Nothing comes to mind."

Could you tell me about a research project on which you are currently or were recently working? [RQ1; students]

Two MA students and two MDiv students responded to this question. Participant 1 briefly stated that he was currently working on a research project about the religious and theological implications of dreaming within Islam. Participant 2 understands sermon preparation to be a type of research project. He had recently preached a sermon on the gospel of Mark in which Jesus is quoted as having said "there will be no more signs for this generation" (Mark 8:12). He further recounts aspects of his recent sermon research process, stating:

> And so I consulted some New Testament PhD students about [it], as well as
> commentaries in the reference section of the Library. And then I talked to some
> students about why you look for signs to get a practical understanding and what

that means to them and then I used psychology. So I talked to, um, some librarians, and found out we had some books on psychology about why we need such signs for affirmation or confirmation or insights. And so that research took two weeks to write the sermon because I wanted to be very thorough. I didn't want to just go up there and say, 'oh well I thought about this, and this is my theoretical, and this [is] what my theology is, and this [is] my exegesis on the text.'

Participant 3 mentioned how he had worked on a research paper on Buddhist feminism the previous semester. Participant 4 first explained that her Master of Divinity (MDiv) with an emphasis of Interfaith Chaplaincy was originally a Master of Arts (MA) degree program. She added that the new and current MDiv program requires either a thesis or a case study as a summative exercise. For her degree she chose to conduct a case study. She elaborated:

So currently I'm working on it. I'm hoping to be finished with it by the end of this calendar year. It's a case study that I'm using of my experience this past summer with CPE which is Clinical Pastoral Education. So I'm doing a unit of CPE in a hospital this summer and I'm taking an instance that I had with a family in the hospital and I'm writing up the verbatim encounter and analyzing my social location and their social locations and I'm using a model from Carrie Doehring [Highpath faculty member] who does work on pastoral care counseling and using her format to assess that care and conversations. So I'm looking at a theological assessment of the encounter and the patient and the family, doing a personal assessment, like a self-evaluation of how I was able to or not able to provide care

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for them looking at some of my story, my background and seeing how my social

location and identity was either used as resources or roadblocks for providing

care. So that's currently this semester's main project. I don't know if you'd

necessarily call it research but that's the main piece that I'm engaged with at the

moment.

What else could you tell me about the role that personal contacts play in your

research in general? [RQ4; students]

This question was answered by the interview participants in the student

stakeholder group. Participant 2 explained that personal contacts play an auditing role for

research and writing. Feedback from both fellow theology students and his research

audience (such as a congregation) help the interviewee to conduct effective research. He

related, "[t]o feel their qualms with the text you will know how to interpret it and

simplify it for the audience."

Participant 1 framed his response to the questions in terms of his current thesis

project. His work involves interviewing human subjects. He explained:

the people who I'm looking for in my research are people like me. Who, um, who

have some faith in the concept of transcendence whether you want to call it that,

or God, Universe, Spirit, Whatever. Um, but people who also have that, but do not

want and aren't necessarily looking for a community of fellow believers to share

that belief and faith with. So for me personal contacts are going to be huge.

The MDiv students focused on the roles of faculty contacts in their research.

Participant 3 simply stated, "I usually try to cater my research strategy to what the

professors are expecting. I can sum it up in one sentence." Participant 4 also

acknowledged the importance of professors. She especially appreciates the role her faculty advisor plays in developing her summative exercise, a case study. The advisor assists by directing the student to specific information sources, nurturing research skills and improving writing techniques. Participant 4 also noticed that the professor for her Pastoral Education Publication class is quick to suggest relevant scholars and their academic works for students' further research.

During your Highpath School of Theology degree-seeking research activities do you think about your own religious beliefs? Do you ever notice them guiding you to a particular peer or mentor? [RQ5; students]

The four student participants all said that they do think about their own religious beliefs during degree-related research activities. Whether they noticed religious beliefs guiding them to a particular peer or mentor varied.

Participant 2 thinks about his religious beliefs in the course of degree-related research activities. He also notices his religious beliefs guiding him to a particular mentor, a fellow African-American Christian with whom he closely identifies. His mentor, Monica Coleman, inspired the interviewee to pursue graduate studies at Highpath School of Theology. He read her book *Making a Way or No Way*. He explained that he is drawn to her because she is an African-American professor who is Christian and he feels they have similar experiences. Her understanding of process theology is compatible with the interviewee's beliefs in mysticism.

Another reason he was drawn to Highpath is an Islamic woman professor. He stated, "I don't know if I want to say this in the interview, but I used to joke and call her 'Yoda' because I felt like she was a wealth of knowledge and information because she

would talk to me and expand my mind beyond just what Christians were doing or what the theory says. She was a piece of mediation." The participant described typical conversation topics that included Sufi writers, Christian mysticism and education. He called the interactions "life-giving." They helped to breathe new life into his research. The participant's religious beliefs and ethnic worldview guided him to certain mentors. "One, because of her race and tradition and the other because I think our spirits were alike," he said.

Participant 1 thinks "everyday" about his religious beliefs in the course of degree-related research activities. He also notices his religious beliefs guiding him to a particular mentor, his advisor. He gave an example of his thinking about religious beliefs during the course of a class. He was taking a class on Islamic philosophy and theology and the class was beginning a unit on Sufism and mystical aspects of Islam. In his degree-related coursework he learned about Al-Jazawi, who broke down three distinctions in the religious or spiritual path. The course content included learning the three distinctions. The participant explained:

The first is hearing the Word, which we all do, or have done in some shape or form. The second is kind of like seeing that which is told to you, seeing it in practice, so you see people praying and you praying and what the results might be for that person. But the third is the most essential, which is actually incorporating what you've heard and what you've seen into your being so that you're soaking it in. The metaphor is you're walking in the fire. So, for me, I really have to think about it. Do I really do that third aspect? And I had to answer that honestly, I'd say most of the time, not. But then that kind of ties into what would be the point

of faith or God, at all? What would be the point? If you're not going to

incorporate this third element*?* So that third element is something I think about

constantly. Not just on a superficial level. Not just being nice to people. But really

invoking that God-experience within you.

Although the participant thinks about and "lives out" his religious beliefs, he at first

stated that he did not notice them guiding him to a particular mentor or peer. Later in the

interview he changed his mind and said that he chose his advisor because spiritual

formation is what he is most interested in.

Participant 4 thinks about her religious beliefs in the course of degree-seeking

research activities. She does not notice her religious beliefs guiding her to a particular

mentor or peer. She attributes the fact that her beliefs do not guide her to certain peers of

mentors to the lack of Jews in the campus community. She explained,

I don't particularly seek out people, peers, professors or colleagues from my own

faith tradition. I think I find more guidance and helpfulness from within the

community here. And most of the people happen not to be Jewish. So I don't

know. Maybe that is my religion dictating that in some strange way.

Participant 3 thinks about his religious beliefs in the course of degree-seeking

research activities. He thinks about them when he is studying something that is part of his

religious belief system. He described being more aware of how critical he should or

should not be about it, and how his beliefs affect what he researches, what he does not

research, and things that he thinks are worthy of his time to research or not, or potential

worth of topics for investigation.

He also notices his religious beliefs guiding him to particular peers, fellow Buddhists. He stated that as a Buddhist he would want to talk with someone who is conversant in Buddhism. "And someone who is a practitioner even has more insight into the subject and study as well. But those are few and far between around here," he said.

Data Collected from Faculty Interviewees

In giving out assignments do you welcome informal research references? [RQ2; faculty]

All three faculty members interviewed affirmed that they welcome informal research references. Participant 5 responded simply "that's very nice. That's very valuable, sure" whereas the other two faculty members gave specific details about how they welcome and encounter informal research references.

Participant 7 assigns research projects that necessitate informal, interpersonal interactions that will warrant being referenced in the research paper. He not only welcomes but requires informal research references. He encourages his students to interact with people outside of library sources, to pursue informal research references such as "sources, persons, NGOs and institutions. Visiting a mosque, speaking to a rabbi, chief or priest."

Participant 6 explained what format he requests students use for informal research references; he stated:

> I ask them to footnote conversations. But I have explicitly said that I invite them to discuss the questions, say for an essay their writing, with their classmates, with clergy persons and with others. And to let that inform the answers. The writing must be their own but the conversations are part of the learning process, including

stating in words that what you're trying to work out for your writing. As long as it's footnoted I want them to honor the community of writing that they're a part of.

Participant 8, though a librarian, holds faculty status/rank. He is involved with the review of various research-related student assignments. He addresses informal research references, stating:

We have a PhD programs in practical theology […] where they do pastoral counseling and those kinds of degrees. A lot of those have interview components with [some] interviewing fifty Korean women about their religious experience the last twenty years […] And since I chair the institutional review board all those come through me to be sure they protect privacy and all that, but I don't serve on any committees. In New Testament studies where I work, the nature of the work really is a print discipline […] once in a while you'll find that someone had a conversation with someone at SBL [Society for Biblical Literature] or something and it was particularly useful. And once in a while you'll find a footnote "I'd like to thank so and so for our personal conversation" or "our email". But it would be really rare if a dissertation would have more than one on two of those kinds of footnotes. And sometimes that would simply be at the front of the, in the preface, or the acknowledgements, where they thank that person for the conversation and it wouldn't even be mentioned later. In the Practical Theology they do that routinely but I'm not really involved in those dissertations.

How do you think your students go about gathering information? What do you see that process being like? How much do your students talk to each other? [RQ2; faculty]

There are three aspects to this question and the three faculty members who answered this question carefully addressed all three aspects. Participant 5 explained that his students begin gathering information with online resources, including the online library catalog. Books are more popular than journal articles or reference materials. The faculty member's suggestions in class affect which publications students consult. He elaborated:

I think they're prone to certain authors. Especially ones that I mention in class or that they become familiar with. I encourage them, although I don't known if this is true, to find one contribution that they very much like and then to bore down on the bibliography that's in that work. That's much more familiar then, for me, than their going to ATLA or New Testament Abstracts which is my field.

Participant 5 claimed that students talk to each other to a great extent. He thought the reason why was that students consider it safer for them to get feedback from each other about their projects.

Participant 6 described the process of information gathering as beginning with interpersonal interaction. He stated:

So when I end a class it's not uncommon that nobody moves. Nobody leaves the room. They turn to each other. They engage in discussions. I'll hear them planning to meet over coffee to continue talking. They talk by phone. And again they use digital communication to collaborate. For example I require them to do

student leadership. Each student twice a semester. In groups of two but sometimes

more and I require them to at least to coordinate their presentation so that some

learning goes on in that way.

He also contextualized the communication as community-centered; since many of the

students live in the area it's possible for them to meet on a more regular basis than at a

commuter institution.

Participant 7 spoke about a common occurrence of teaching Islamic philosophy,

Islamic Judaism or Islamic Christianity to a class with a variety of religious traditions

represented. He provides discussion prompts and intensive dialogue is necessary in the

class. Like Participant 5, Participants 6 and 7 emphatically expressed that their students

talk to each other "in class," "around the campus" and "continuously."

As a relevant side note, Participant 7 observed that there are a lot of students who

use English as their second language. He articulated "[i]t may be that there is some

difficulty for them in terms of reaching the material or effectively using the material from

the library although they are willing to do that."

How useful do you consider students' research approaches? [RQ2; faculty]

Two of the three faculty members interviewed expressed misgivings about the

usefulness of students' research approaches. The other faculty member, Participant 7,

said that in the previous week students had asked him for book lists and were enthusiastic

about research, but aside from that he was unsure about what else students' research

approaches entailed.

Participant 6's misgiving centered around students' "extremely limited" ability to

move from a classroom assignment to organized research as preparation for the writing

process; he said, "I do not give us high marks [for] training them in those skills."

Participant 5 thought that the usefulness of research approach was related not only to degree program type, but also to the length of time the had been in the program. The MA program students' approaches were more viable than the MDiv students'. Students in the doctoral program were more successful in research. He stated, "There's so much remedial education that is needed to know what the issues are. In fact I encourage them not to be too adventuresome in a master's project or in a paper for a class because the chances in this field of being both novel and correct are almost nil […] I don't encourage novel research until relatively late in the career."

Can you give me an example of a valuable informal research finding? [RQ2; faculty]

Each of the three faculty members interviewed was able to provide an example of a valuable informal research finding. Participant 7 answered this question in three ways: from his history as a former student, from his observations of current students, and from his current practice as a faculty member. As a student he interacted with his faculty advisor and cited the interactions during his PhD work. He has observed that current students cite interactions with their faculty advisors. About the value of informal research to his work as an assistant professor he stated: "[i]n my own discussions and writing my own lectures I cite some of the faculty members. So I think I can say effectively that I did that and that students, they do do that."

Participant 6 recalled three examples of valuable informal research findings. First, he spoke about the case of a student speaking with her pastor about the connection between theology and preaching and how through the conversation she came to a "fuller

understanding of the living link between theological reflection and study and rightly

defining the word of God." The second case the faculty member remembered was a

student who described working in a hospital and moving back and forth between a dying

person (a teenage girl who was estranged from her parents) and her parents in the waiting

room. She values the experience she had as a ministry student helping the family to

reconcile before the teenage girl died. Third, he recalled stories of a student working with

churches, synagogues, and mosques to find housing for homeless people; the way in

which those conversations with rabbis, imams, and the pastors molded his entire

understanding of ministry and his own calling were valuable informal research results.

Participant 5 focused on valuable informal research findings relevant to his own

research agenda. He recounted "Sure, just this summer I was at a conference and […]

heard someone give a paper, and I went to them after the paper and I said […] I'm

interested in pursuing this. Where should I go? […] And they gave me very helpful

suggestions. In fact I probably did that two or three times." He further elaborated that his

interaction involved asking for links, trading business cards and subsequent web-based

communications.

Data Collected from Librarian Interviewees

Do faculty come to you for bibliographic instruction? What else do you see? [RQ3;

librarians]

All three professional librarians responded to this interview question

affirmatively. Participant 8's comments give relevant context to all of the librarians'

responses. Participant 8 explained that since there are other professional librarians who

work under him, faculty sometimes contact him for bibliographic instruction. He sends

the requests to the reference librarian. He added, "[w]e also have a digital services librarian who does some of that. Information literacy, instruction, and class. But I don't do any of it personally."

Participant 9 related that faculty go to him to prepare for students' requests for assistance; "[s]o the staff don't ask me directly for help; they ask me for help on their students' behalf," he explained. Faculty ask him to demonstrate bibliography creation, vet resources, and provide instruction on how to conduct research.

Similarly, Participant 10 mentioned that faculty typically go to him to set up in-class library instruction sessions. He stated:

> Bibliographic instruction can be used in a broad sense, and can just mean an introductory session about how to do research, but if you think of it in terms of how to discover new tools or introducing people to new tools or databases I've had a few experiences with that so far.

One of the experiences Participant 10 described involved the MA Colloquium, a required research course for MA students. He was asked to present for an hour and a half about how to research in the humanities, particularly religious studies. The faculty member who requested the presentation also attended the presentation and reported having learned a great deal. The faculty member was particularly impressed with the librarian's demonstration of the digital repository *Sourca Greca,* which includes classical Greek texts dating to the 6th century C.E.

Do students come to you for research assistance? What else do you see? [RQ3; librarians]

All three professional librarians responded to this interview question affirmatively. Participant 8's comments give relevant context to all of the librarians' responses. Participant 8 explained that since there are other professional librarians who work under him, he often sends the requests to the reference librarian whose job it is to answer questions from MDiv and Masters-level students. He added, "[i]f they are a PhD student in New Testament or in Bible they sometimes come to me because that's where I have my graduate research and where I've published and got my own research. So PhD students who are specialists in my area often do. The others don't. They go with one of the other librarians."

The other librarians responded very emphatically that students go to them for research assistance. Participant 9 referred to digital reference transactions whereas Participant 10 described more face-to-face reference encounters.

Participant 9 spoke about how he answers research-related questions digitally and how he answers technology-related questions virtually. He expressed the sentiment that librarians are expected to know everything; students use the library as a "giant information hub." They ask about: events happening on campus; how to procure a student ID card (business office); where the computer lab is; and how to access and use computer and printers.

Participant 10 provided a rich narrative describing reference services at Highpath School of Theology. He explained that some research consultations are five-minute discussions, others are twenty-minute or thirty-minute scheduled appointments, and yet

others are two-hours in duration. He has participated in seven or eight such consultations during his tenure at the CST Library. One appointment he described was with an Academy of Jewish Religion (a CST affiliate) MA student; the topic for the two-hour appointment was conceptualization of a subject for her master's thesis.

In addition to answering questions from students in the academic master's program, Participant 10 assists students in the Course of Study program (ministerial training). Within the United Methodist Church there are different tracks one can take to become a pastor. One is an ordination track which requires seminary and another track involves lay preaching first, followed by what's called Course of Study or Licensing School. Besides being a seminary, Highpath is also a Course of Study and Licensing School. The reference librarian interviewed mentioned that he taught Licensing School classes in the past at a different Methodist school.

Participant 10 was most enthusiastic about helping students from licensing classes; he described a recent instruction/reference encounter:

> I had four students come in from the Course of Study [program] and I think [that was] largely because they met me at a library orientation we had at the start and I made it very clear that I'm here to help you with your assignments, I'm here to help you with your research, please come in. Students who have never done an exegetical paper, a paper on a passage of the Bible, were, for the first times in their lives, pulling books off the shelves, pulling Bible commentaries off the shelves, we looked at some Bible software that looks up words and Bible lexicons and those sorts of things to help. So I probably met with those students for probably altogether about three or four hours.

Data Collected from Multiple Groups: Students and Faculty

Do you interact with librarians about research assignments? Do you see other

faculty or students doing so? [RQ2; students and faculty]

Both of the MA students reported that they interact with librarians, whereas only

one of the MDiv students interacts with librarians. The faculty participants were also

asked about interactions with librarians; although faculty interacted with librarians it was

not typically about research assignments.

Participant 2 did not report seeing faculty or other students interact with

librarians, but he gave a rich account of his own interactions. He explained:

> There's a digital librarian that I interact with – reference librarian. Whenever
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> there's a question that someone can answer for me. But usually the digital
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> librarian is the one I use for access to different periodicals and research that I like
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> and so he's very helpful in that process. The reference librarian is good for
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> helping with bibliographies and finding and narrowing my search. Where I
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> mentioned earlier my topic on taquah and agape there's a wide breadth of
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> approaches you can take. So the reference librarian at the time was able to help,
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> say, well maybe you should consider some sources around this point. And here's
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> some authors for you to read. And here are some others so you can get the
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> opposite opinion on it. It was helpful for the research project.

In contrast, Participant 1 claimed that he was generally very confident about his own

approach to research and interacts with librarians only occasionally.

The MDiv students both mentioned that they work in the library and interact with

librarians. Participant 3 recalled an interaction about how CST [Highpath School of

Theology] structures their digital resources. He explained that he was providing a critique to a librarian about how disorganized the digital resources were. Participant 4 simply stated she interacts with librarians "on occasion." Neither Participant 3 nor Participant 4 mentioned anything about seeing faculty or other students interacting with librarians.

Each of the faculty members interviewed had a different reason for interacting with librarians. Participant 7 contacts librarians to ensure that lists of books for his classes are available for his students in the library. He also served on a committee that regulates Library policies; committee work involved interaction with the library director, a librarian.

Participant 5 consults with librarians about the research projects he assigns as part of the MA colloquium. He explained how he has Library staff come to his classroom to talk about online references in particular. About other faculty interacting with librarians he said,

> I don't think many faculty value the Library. Or there are some, I would say that more than half the faculty I've never seen in the Library. Now somebody else told me that I need to be careful about that observation because some people have their teaching assistants or research assistants go the Library to get things for them. And others are in fields where its not the CST Library that would be most important. And for others there's an awful lot of online research. Especially in things that are more current interests such as ethics or pastoral counseling. But the Library is very important for a Biblical scholar. You know we have good holdings that way. I think often students are intimidated and don't know how to manage talking to Library staff about how to get their material.

He also mentioned that there were other libraries in the area that he and other faculty and students use. He gives tours of the relevant stacks to doctoral students. He expressed disappointment that Highpath students do not seem to make much use of other libraries. He stated, "[s]o I think this brick-and-mortar attitude toward libraries – 'this is our library and that's it' – is unfortunate."

Participant 6 answered the interview question about interaction with librarians from the perspective of his personal habits and he offered observations about other faculty and students. He related that he is "on the end of the scale for that kind of interaction" but that he does interact sometimes. He observed that about one quarter of the entire faculty engage librarians about research projects they are assigning to students. He added that with a recently hired research librarian and fairly new library director, the level of engagement of librarians about research assignments is expected to increase. Finally he explained "I would also add that that kind of interaction is much more extensive at the PhD level for research projects than in the MA level."

Could you tell me about anyone with whom you have spoken/ corresponded about a research project you were assigned or have assigned? [RQ4; students, faculty and one librarian]

This question was answered by the participants from the faculty and student stakeholder groups, as well as the librarian who has faculty rank and many faculty responsibilities although he is not teaching faculty. All except one of the interview participants provided an example of an interaction related to research. The students mentioned examples of interactions about projects they were assigned by Highpath

faculty. The faculty generally spoke about research projects they had assigned to students.

Three of the four students interviewed gave examples of instances of asking a professor about a research project. The other student, Participant 4, cited examples of when she was asked about research by others (peers). Participant 2 spoke about consulting his MA thesis advisor about research resources. He explained that after investigating a topic himself he would next consult a librarian. After consulting a librarian he would approach a faculty member. He gave two examples. One example involved approaching the dean of Highpath School of Theology. He recalled:

> I looked at [my research topic] from a liberation perspective, I looked at it from a traditional historical perspective, but then she would say something like "well did you look at this from a feminist perspective?" "Did you read bell hook's *Book of Love*?" And I would go, "well, no." And she would go "well maybe you should read that and that can give you a an different insight."

The second example involved Neer Sheik, who primarily teaches classes on the history of Islam. Participant 2 asked Sheik for research assistance and Sheik answered, "Well what you're doing is theoretical, but if you look at the legal tradition in Islam you'll get a whole bunch on this topic." The student expressed great pleasure recounting how helpful the dean and the professor were when consulting about the research project he was assigned.

Participant 1 responded that he had had three correspondences in the previous two weeks pertaining to his thesis, also called the integrative seminar project. He stated that two out of three faculty members consulted about research projects they had assigned

gave almost immediate feedback. The student considered the third faculty member with whom he recently corresponded to be "slow with feedback, but I will always get it back and it usually tends to be something I'm looking for. I don't have to [ask] a second round of questions and I choose these people specifically because they are masters in their area of the interest that I'm looking to build on." Participant 1's concern for the timeliness of faculty responses to research correspondence was unique among the interview participants.

Participant 3 remembered asking a Buddhist social ethics professor the previous semester about what "legitimate resources for a particular project would have been." The student was interested to learn which authors he should pay attention to and which he might skip; he was interested in any insight the Buddhist social ethics professor had into the credibility of certain authors relevant to his assigned research project.

Participant 4 was the student whose examples involve being asked about her work rather than asking herself. The previous weekend she was on a panel at the United States President's Interfaith Campus Challenge (2014). She had the opportunity to talk about the work she was doing. She spoke about engaging in the classroom and also on the campus at large doing interfaith work. She was able to talk to students from various colleges and universities across the country about what kind of work goes on at Highpath. Another example of her correspondence is when her friends and family ask her about her work. She explained, "[b]ecause especially for my friends and family who are Jewish it's especially unfamiliar for them. They need further explanation when I tell them what kind of degree I'm getting. Because it's very non-traditional."

The three faculty members and the librarian who holds faculty rank all answered this question. All but one of those four provided a specific example of a research-related interaction. The one faculty member who did not provide a specific example was Participant 5. He said that he almost never spoke or corresponded about a research project he assigned. He could not remember an instance. There were times, he said, that he has helped a student by connecting them with an expert colleague but those instances are rare.

Participant 7 gave three examples of "mutually enriching interaction" that he had at Highpath School of Theology. First, he is in touch with fellow Islamic studies faculty for moral support since the campus "has a Christian majority." The second type of interaction he has is inter-religious; he explained, "[o]ne of the goals that here we are trying to realize is the interaction between different faiths so faculty members are interacting with each other, speaking to each other, learning from each other." A recent example of such interaction was Participant 7's service on the faculty executive committee. He is expected to participate in ongoing discussions on religion and science. The third way he interacts pertains to his own research agenda. He stated, "I am also obviously in touch with several faculty here in realizing my own research project and getting their help and consulting them. I do that too. So at the faculty level, we have, I would say, serious interaction."

Participant 6 categorized the types of people he speaks and corresponds with about research assignments: other faculty, Christian leaders and his students. He speaks to other faculty, mostly at Highpath but also those who teach similar classes whose experiences are inspirations for him and vice versa. Since he works with Christian leaders

from around the United States he asks them to describe the needs of the Church and new needs for ministry. Dialogues with Church leaders deeply influence the kinds of assignments he constructs. With the third category, students, he has had intimate, intensive discussions inside and outside of class. He reported that whenever he speaks or corresponds with students about research assignments,

> I am soliciting and receiving feedback about assignments and whether the class is helping them achieve their goals. And that's feedback in real-time that deeply influences not only my assignments for a given class but my whole orientation toward assignments in future classes.

Participant 8 gave two examples of interpersonal interaction about research and one observation about his own research products. The first example occurred in the previous week. A New Testament professor in the British Isles, sent him an article to read. He had submitted it as an article and he was doing a final review prior to publication. So Participant 8 read it for the New Testament professor and gave feedback. Participant 8 has a number of friends who are scholars in the field and he does critiques their work for them. The second example of interaction about research was his active participation in the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) conference every year. While attending he has conversations on whatever he is working on with lots of different colleagues there. He mentioned that he does not typically send his own writing out for peer feedback, although he talks to the colleagues in New Testament studies at Highpath routinely. Finally he observed that, "[while] I've published several books, I don't think I've ever footnoted an informal reference or conversation. I've just done the kind of the

thing in the preface or acknowledgements saying 'I'd like to thank say and so for the conversations we've had, but not a specific example'."

Is this type of informal communication typical of your research and has your practice changed? [RQ4; students and faculty]

This question was asked of the participants from the faculty and student stakeholder groups. The responses ranged from "no" and "it doesn't fluctuate much" to "yes" and "it's involved."

Participant 1 reported that within the previous three years he had rarely engaged in informal communication, so informal communication was not typical of his research, nor had his practice changed. Participant 2 answered that it was typical of his research, but it had not always been typical. He mentioned prior efforts to glean what information he needed from reading books and subsequently realizing that knowledge is also contextual. Consulting people in his research field, actual practitioners, was found to be very effective. He explained, "meeting with people and hear[ing] their actual reactions is a little different because you can read their emotions [and] theories are often different than practice."

Participant 3 chose not to answer this interview question. Participant 4 described informal research communication as an evolution for her. She partially attributes the evolution of informal communication practices to her evolving professional aspirations. She related:

> I think the conversations I'm having now are a lot more specific and a lot more
> honed in on what chaplaincy is and what I can do with the work. So I think it's
> gone from at least at the beginning of my time at Highpath I had just sort of a

general interest in interfaith work and interfaith education and now it's become more specific.

Two of the faculty interviewed reported that informal communication is typical of their research and that their practice has changed. One faculty member, Participant 5, said that it was not typical. He added, "I've always been – you know – there's a certain about of hubris in being a professor […] We think we know it all so why would we want to contact somebody else, especially when we're shepherding our own, you know."

Participant 7 shared that he has learned a great deal from informal research communication. He said that it is now natural for him to integrate informal communication into his research and into his own teaching style. Participant 6 gave examples of how informal communication is typical for him. He collaborates on writing books and writing a number of international projects. The teamwork involved in collaborative academic writing produces stronger products than solo-authored projects. He said that he adopted a more collaborative research style during his three years as dean of the Highpath School of Theology. He finds that his colleagues' self-understanding and self-management of duties have increased through the use of informal communication. He also perceived increased informal communication to be a function of age. He explained:

> you are less anxious about pleasing students or seeming to know everything. And it becomes easier to say 'hey, what do you all think?' And I believe the quality of my assignments has risen directly in proportion to the amount of dialogue that I do with students and faculty about it.

This chapter presented the results of the interviews with MA students, MDiv students, faculty and librarians. The following chapter will discuss those results in light of the research questions that guided the study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the results presented in the previous chapter. It will proceed in the order of the research questions:

RQ1: What are the information behaviors specific to the research processes of MA and MDiv students at Highpath School of Theology?

RQ2: How do Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty (teaching in the MA and MDiv programs) appraise the information behaviors involved in the research processes of MA and MDiv students?

RQ3: What information behaviors specific to Highpath School of Theology MA and MDiv students' research processes do academic librarians see in the Highpath School of Theology Library and/or on campus?

RQ4: What do Highpath School of Theology stakeholders (MA and MDiv students, Highpath School of Theology Library librarians, and Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty) think about the role of degree program affiliation in relation to the information behaviors of Highpath School of Theology students in their research processes?

RQ5: What do Highpath School of Theology stakeholders (MA and MDiv students, Highpath School of Theology Library librarians, and Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty) think about the significance of religious faith in the

information behaviors of Highpath School of Theology students in their research processes?[11]

RQ1: What are the information behaviors specific to the research processes of MA and MDiv students at Highpath School of Theology?

Research Assignments

Students in both the MA and MDiv programs received research assignments from Highpath faculty as part of their degree coursework. Examples of research assignments present in the data included directed independent studies; dissertation exams; credo assignment; blog posts; summative exercise; exegetical papers and sermons. An earlier study of information seeking by Wicks (1999) found that the pastors he studied used informal sources in care-giving and administrative activities; the use of informal sources decreased in preaching activities where biblical research would be undertaken. This case study of Highpath stakeholders found that theology faculty, students and librarians all considered sermons to be types of research projects.

Information Sources

The information sources that Highpath students use, as reported by the students, faculty and librarians, included both print and digital resources. Print resources mentioned include physical books, lexicons, concordances, the Wiccan collection and the Koran. Digital resources included OCLC's Worldshare, ATLAS, New Testament Abstracts, *Sourca Greca* and e-books readable on Kindles. Highpath stakeholders expressed no preference for digital resources over print resources or vice versa.

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[11] The questionnaire in Appendix A details the correspondence between research questions, interview questions and interviewee roles (i.e. student, faculty, librarian).

Gaba (2007) discovered that students indicate using Google, online booksellers' search-inside-the-book features, and online catalogs more than they use article databases. In the present study Google was rarely mentioned and booksellers' search-inside-the-book features were not mentioned at all. It is unknown what "online catalogs" Gaba (2007) refers to since article databases are themselves largely online. The results of the present study add to Gaba's (2007) findings about patterns in students' information-seeking.

Informal Communication and Interpersonal Information Sources

Informal communication was prevalent among Highpath students. Many examples of informal communication, both in-person and online, were provided by the student participants, including: conversations with clergy, academic and professional conferences, crowdsourcing, shepherding, and various kinds of feedback on research products. When informal communication impacted the research process directly, the contact person was cited in the research product (e.g., thesis, summative exercise) as an interpersonal information source. Interpersonal information sources fell into three categories, previously conceived by Hyland (2004): moral, academic and technical. In Hyland's (2004) analysis of 240 theses and dissertations across six disciplines, the categories of moral, academic and technical support emerged as the most prevalent reasons for student's giving credit in theses and dissertations acknowledgements.

All three of the roles (student, faculty and librarian) and both types of degree program (MA and MDiv) stakeholders provided interpersonal support of moral, academic and technical kinds. Moral support for students came from fellow students (regardless of degree program affiliation), faculty, clergy and librarians. Academic support for students

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came primarily from faculty, clergy and librarians. Technical support for students came primarily from faculty and librarians. The present study extends Hyland's (2004) research on interpersonal information sources in the domain of graduate theological studies.

RQ2: How do Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty (teaching in the MA and MDiv programs) appraise the information behaviors involved in the research processes of MA and MDiv students?

The Highpath School of Theology faculty answered questions about their faith backgrounds, current religious practice, affiliations with degree programs, interpersonal information sources and digital communication, informal research references cited in projects they assign, interaction with librarians, and the usefulness of students' research approaches in general.

Highpath School of Theology stands out in the diversity of religious traditions represented among its faculty. The faculty interviewed included one secularist (atheist), one practicing Muslim and one Quaker. Although these faculty come from disparate religious traditions, their appraisals of the information behaviors involved in the research processes of MA and MDiv students were very similar, with one exception. In general, the religious faculty (the Muslim and the Quaker) appraised the significance of religious I faith in students' research process differently than the secularist faculty member did. I suspect that the religious faculty are transposing the significance of their own religious faith onto the significance of religious faith for their students. For example, the Muslim faculty member, Participant 7, explained, "my religion inspires me in many ways, so yes, it also affects deeply how I teach the topic, how I see life, how I act in the campus, how I define the Other, how I interact with it. It is deeply influential, fundamentally I can say.

In my personal life and in my scholarly projects." I suspect that the religiously inspired information behaviors and worldviews of Participants 6 and 7 influenced their appraisals of their students' information behavior. Similarly, Participant 5's secular perspective may affect his assumption that religious faith is irrelevant to his students. If it was significant to the faculty member, the faculty member perceived it to be significant to his students.

The faculty participants had similar or complementary responses to the questions asked about their perceptions of students' research practices. They all welcome informal research references in the research products of their students (e.g., theses, case studies, sermons). They gave examples of valuable informal research findings, many achieved through interpersonal interaction with spiritual leaders, academic advisor and ethnic peers.

The results from the interviews indicate that the faculty highly value their own as well as their students' interpersonal interactions. The faculty encourage their students to cite their informal information sources in their research assignments. The informal information sources students cite vary greatly, often crossing the boundaries of the student's own religion and degree program. One faculty participant, Participant 5, observed that, "our students are oriented not in terms of their religious experience as much as their ethnic identity." Participant 5 explained that most of the community life of students took place in dormitories and other places he would not be privileged to. From what he could see on campus, students gathered and studied among students of the same ethnic background, particularly international students. For example, a Vietnamese Christian would be more likely to associate with other Vietnamese students (i.e. Vietnamese Buddhist students) than other Christian students of a different ethnicity.

Heinström (2006) studied the patterns of information seeking of students writing master's theses at Abo Akademi University (Finland). She concluded that the personality of students was more influential on their information-seeking behavior than their specific discipline. The present study adds to Heinström's (2006) research by providing some evidence that the ethnic identity of graduate students of religion provides a more familiar social network and arena for informal communication than students' religious identity.

Brunton (2005) concluded that students who partnered with librarians and who attended user training employed more effective search strategies and managed their time better than others. In the present study, the faculty participants all considered that their students' research products were better when they had had bibliographic instruction in their classes and that researchers who sought assistance from librarians were more successful generally. Participant 7, a Muslim faculty member stated that students with family commitments were more likely to manage their time well. Thus the present study adds to Brunton's (2005) study of information seeking by identifying family life as yet another criterion for appraising student's potential for successful time management in the research process.

RQ3: What information behaviors specific to Highpath School of Theology MA and MDiv students' research processes do academic librarians see in the Highpath School of Theology Library and/or on campus?

The Highpath School of Theology librarians answered questions about their faith backgrounds, current religious practice, affiliations with degree programs, interpersonal information sources and digital communication, interaction with faculty about

bibliographic instruction, research assistance to students, and the usefulness of students' research approaches in general.

The sample of Highpath School of Theology library staff was more religiously homogeneous than the faculty, MA students or MDiv students interviewed. The librarians interviewed included one secularist (atheist) and two Christians, one of whom is ordained clergy and one of whom holds an MDiv, the professional degree for clergy. In general, the Christian librarians appraised the information behavior of students differently than the secularist librarian did.

The issue about which the greatest disparity emerged was student research assistance. The Christian librarians considered both the degree program and the religious faith of students to be relevant in research consultations and bibliographic instruction. The secularist librarian responded that "there is absolutely no difference in how they conduct research or do anything like that."

This difference in perceptions could be because of the greater familiarity the Christian librarians had with graduate theological education, they both had graduate degrees in religion whereas the secularist librarian did not. Two other reasons why the secularist librarian's perception stands apart from the other librarians interviewed are that his upbringing was non-religious and that his primary mechanism for student assistance and interaction is electronic.

The other two librarians described lifelong religious journeys through various streams of religious thought and practice. Those biographical perspectives could contribute to their appreciation of what effect differences in identity, religious and non-religious, MA affiliate and MDiv affiliate have in the way students go about the research

process. One Christian librarian spoke about how the attire of the student can intimate the significance of the student's religious identity with their encounters with the world; two examples were given, one Jewish and one Muslim. The Jewish student was identifiable by his *kippah* (Hebrew: skull cap) whereas the Muslim student was identifiable by her *burqa* (Arabic: veil). Before beginning the research consultation the students were already communicating background information about their information needs; each brought their religious practice to their encounters with the world. The research process and seeking librarians' assistance is one such type of encounter. The more the librarians know about the background of the student seeking assistance, the better s/he can customize the research consultation.

The electronic research consultation, often simply an email, minimizes obvious indications of the cultural background of the student asking for assistance; attire, accent, and body language are crowded out in the virtual reference transaction whereas they are available for interpretation, possible relevance, and application to the broader context of information needs the student brings to the research consultation. Since Participant 9, a secularist, referred more to digital reference transactions whereas Participant 10, a Christian, described more face-to-face reference encounters, the socio-cultural anonymity inherent to digital reference may contribute to Participant 9's opinion that religious faith and degree program are irrelevant to students' research process.

The types of questions Participant 9 referred to were also heavily non-academic. He stated, "[students] ask about: events happening on campus; how to procure a student ID card (business office); where the computer lab is; and how to access and use computer and printers." That these were the types of questions Participant 9 encountered on a

regular basis may suggest that the more advanced questions where religious faith and degree sought would be relevant were asked to the other librarians who have substantial religious backgrounds and graduate degrees in theology themselves.

One way in which this case study relates to prior research is that it adds to Brink's (1995) examination of information-seeking in religion by collecting data about information sources. Brink (1995) did not look at information sources at all, whereas the present study's interview methodology allowed for participants to identify information sources, physical and digital resources as well as interpersonal information sources. A survey with only closed-ended questions could not solicit the kind of rich responses that the open-ended question of "What else do see?" did in the present study.

Extending Brink's (1995) research on information-seeking in religion, this study found that print resources remain important to graduate theological research. Participant 10 spoke at length about how, after bibliographic instruction, he saw "students actually pulling concordances off the shelves." Digital resources also played a significant role in Highpath students' research process as did interpersonal information sources accessed electronically. Participant 9 put email use into perspective: "I'll have five emails for every face-to-face interaction. So they [students] very much embrace the non-face-to-face interpersonal aspect of working with librarians." Participant 10 also affirmed how librarians serve as interpersonal information sources, explaining how students email, call, and increasingly interact through a service called Springshare Libanswers that allows students to tweet questions or text questions to the Library's twitter account.

RQ4: What do Highpath School of Theology stakeholders (MA and MDiv students, Highpath School of Theology Library librarians, and Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty) think about the role of degree program affiliation in relation to the information behaviors of Highpath School of Theology students in their research processes?

The Highpath School of Theology stakeholders interviewed answered questions about their affiliations with degree programs and the usefulness of various kinds of information behavior activities. The students and faculty were asked to give examples of their informal communication about research projects, noting whether those examples were typical of their research practices and whether their practices had changed over time. The students were also asked about the role their personal contacts play in research in general.

Informal communication was prevalent among Highpath students. When informal communication impacted the research process directly, the contact person was cited in the research product (e.g., thesis, summative exercise) as an interpersonal information sources. Interpersonal information sources fell into three categories, previously attested by Hyland (2004): moral, academic and technical. Both types of degree program (MA and MDiv) stakeholders provided interpersonal support of moral, academic and technical kinds. The present study extends Hyland's (2004) research on interpersonal information sources in the disciplines of applied linguistics, biology, business studies, computer science, electronic engineering and public administration into the domain of religious studies and theology.

Most participants stated that degree program was relevant to information behavior of students. Generally MA students were expected by the faculty to perform more rigorous research in the course assignments than MDiv students. Librarians noticed that MA students are expected to do more research than MDiv students. Faculty teaching MA courses request bibliographic instruction more often than for MDiv courses. One possible explanation for why bibliographic instruction is requested more for MA courses than MDiv courses is that the MA program is designed as a "feeder" into further graduate education in religion (i.e. ThD in New Testament, PhD in Interreligious Dialogue etc.) for which more academic research will be required. The faculty may see bibliographic instruction as a touchstone for the ongoing development of MA students' research skills. The faculty interviewed who teach MDiv courses explained that they require students to use clergy and community leaders as information sources in their projects. It may be that the type of research for MDiv courses is more practical and applicable to the ministerial aspirations of the students. The MDiv is also a terminal, professional degree leading to ordination rather than leading to a PhD program as the MA program does. Participant 2 and Participant 4, students with experience in both degree programs, also acknowledged that the MA program is more research-oriented than the MDiv program.

Two participants responded that degree affiliation was irrelevant to the research process, Participant 3 (Buddhist MDiv student) and Participant 9 (secularist librarian). It is interesting to note that neither Participant 3 nor Participant 9 attests to a belief in a deity. There were two other non-believers in the study population, Participant 1 (secularist MA student) and Participant 5 (secularist faculty member) who affirmed that the research expectations for, and information behaviors of, MA students were more

rigorously academic than MDiv students'. That the research process for MA students' was more rigorous than that of MDiv students was the prevailing perception among the other stakeholders in the study population. One reason for this perception is that the participants were all stakeholders in an academic environment where academic criteria for judgment dominate. If the participant pool were stakeholders from a religious community for which the MDiv program prepares their members for ordination, the kind of field research required for MDiv students might be judged to be more rigorous than the mainly academic research MA students conduct.

RQ5: What do Highpath School of Theology stakeholders (MA and MDiv students, Highpath School of Theology Library librarians, and Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty) think about the significance of religious faith in the information behaviors of Highpath School of Theology students in their research processes?

This case study found that the participants who acknowledged having religious faith perceived religious faith to be significant in their own information behaviors and those of others. The participants who identified as "not theist," "not religious," and "humanist" (described elsewhere as "secularist") did not perceive religious faith to be relevant to their own information behaviors or those of others. This phenomenon transcended the categories of types (MA student or MDiv student) and roles (e.g., students, faculty and librarian); participants' perception that religious faith is significant to students' research processes was directly related to the faith background of the participant.

The present study was designed to solicit data from adherents from a variety of

organized religions to represent the demographics that comprise "religious faith." Highpath School of Theology provided a particularly rich population to study because graduate theological studies are now (2014) being offered for MAs in both Christian and Islamic Studies and where MDivs are being granted to Jews, Buddhists, Christians, and Secular Humanists/Non-theists by faculty who are similarly diverse in their religious sensibilities and affiliations and lacks there-of. This approach satisfies Strauss and Corbin's edict that "[t]he researcher samples places and persons where he or she expects that differences in the properties of a concept will be maximized" (p. 280).

Limitations

In addition to the limitations brought on by the very nature of qualitative research, this study had some significant limitations of its own that will need to be addressed in future research. These limitations relate primarily to three factors, including the fact that the researcher acted alone throughout the project, thus introducing potential biases and errors in interpretation; the homogeneous nature of the participant pool with regard to gender and race, and the minimal nature of demographic data collected, making it difficult to draw conclusions based on demographic factors.

The most significant limitation of this study is the fact that it was conducted by one person, the researcher gathering and analyzing the data alone. The lack of input from others can introduce a significant bias to findings. In addition, errors of interpretation can, without the input of others familiar with the data, lead to erroneous conclusions. The study will need to be replicated in order to provide confirmation and refinement of these findings.

Although a very rich quality of data were collected this study was conducted with a very small sample. This small sampling could be considered a limitation, although the qualitative nature of the study and the depth and breadth of the data collected argue against this as a true handicap. Likewise, the study itself was designed to be exploratory in nature rather than explanatory. More research will certainly be required to confirm and add to the conclusions here, but even with the small sampling, what has been discovered and explored at least begins to fill a significant gap in the literature regarding graduate degree programs, religious faith and theological education.

Another limitation of the study, however, is that except for two participants, all were white males. The purposeful sample of MA and MDiv students, faculty and librarians intended to solicit data from both MA and MDiv students and from faculty and librarians. No effort was made to recruit participants of any particular race, gender or age. It is unknown why there were not more participants in the demographic categories of female and non-white among student participants. The library staff and faculty were observed to be primarily white males, which could suggest why the library staff and faculty who volunteered to participate were all white males. As a result, no conclusions can be drawn based on any gender or race-based comparison.

While the findings here can only be said to be true for this select grouping of theology students, faculty and librarians, it remains to be seen whether the results can apply not only to other graduate students of theology but also to graduate students in general. The interest for this particular project was in the faith-informed research and educational environment of graduate theological education, but these frameworks have been used in the context of graduate studies in general. This project has demonstrated that

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at least with a sub-population of graduate theological stakeholders these frameworks provide a valid lens through which to examine them.

Recruiting subjects was a significant challenge throughout the course of the project. The first challenge was recruiting a research site. Several non-denominational and denominational, secular and religiously-affiliated divinity schools and seminaries were contacted to participate. Some institutions declined to participate, one institution agreed, but its library staff were unavailable during the period the data was to be collected. Finally, Highpath School of Theology emerged and agreed to participate, beginning in September 2014. While it was assumed that Highpath students, faculty and staff who participate in online education would be eager to conveniently participate in a Skype interview, the majority of participants preferred in-person interviews, which were conducted the week of September 15 through September 19, 2014. In future research projects, on-site recruitment will be utilized more heavily.

Future Research Directions

Further research is definitely warranted. This project should be replicated with the limitations discussed above addressed in order to confirm the findings independently. Beyond this, however, several areas of potential interest emerged in the course of analysis as being beyond the scope of the current study but worthy of future inquiry:

1) How do theologians identify adepts whose feedback they trust in the research process?

This study solicited feedback from faculty and students about who they recently interacted with about a research project. The data collected address the who, what, when and where, but not the why. The most common response from students was that they seek

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feedback from their professors so that they can meet their professors' expectations in their research assignments. It would be beneficial to know how theologians, beyond the situated context of assigned research projects counting towards an academic degree, go about selecting adepts for counsel.

2) How does the use of informal communication evolve and change over time?

Participants' responses to the interview question "Is this type of informal communication typical of your research and has your practice changed over time?" were revealing. Some participants did not engage in much, if any, informal communication. Other participants engage in informal communication constantly and increasingly. Discovering more about the contours of the development of effective informal communication over the course of a theological career could reveal its usefulness and warrant a greater precedent for interpersonal information sources in theological research processes and their citation in research products.

3) In what ways could curricular design and institutional culture account for patterns in information behavior among Highpath stakeholders?

This study uncovered anecdotal evidence of the research process of a Muslim faculty member and Jewish and Buddhist MDiv students matriculated at Highpath, a school of theology affiliated with a Christian denomination. Further research on the information behavior of Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist researchers in a more native environment where the curriculum and work expectations are prescribed or overseen by their respective native traditions' authorities may be beneficial for comparative purposes.

4) What does the research process of theology students look like across the degree programs offered by North American seminaries', including Bachelor of Arts in Religion (BA), Master of Theological Studies (MTS), Master of Divinity (MDiv), Master of Theology (ThM), Doctor of Ministry (DMin), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Theology (ThD)?

This study analyzed data from MA and MDiv students, but graduate schools of theology, including Highpath, offer additional degrees. Applying the research question pertaining to the role of degree program in the research process, to the broader study population of all seminaries and divinity schools accredited by the Association of Theological Schools, could provide a means through which learning about the research process in general and degree program relevance specifically might be supported.

Conclusion

Combining previously tested theories and methodologies of social roles/types to establish the categories of MA student, MDiv student, faculty member, and librarian proved an effective research design to solicit rich data on the theological research process. The interviewing component of the methodology, coupled with open-ended questions such as "What else do see?" enabled the researcher to collect data that was unpredicted and can fortuitously provide new directions for further research. Because the research site of Highpath School of Theology not only hosts stakeholders of multiple religious sensibilities (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and secular humanism), but also offers both academic degree programs (MAs) and faith-related degree programs (MDivs), Highpath proved to be a particularly fertile environment for thick descriptions. This research adds to prior and ongoing research trajectories, including user studies of

humanities scholars, interpersonal information sources in the research process, and social

network theory development.

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH QUESTIONS, INTERVIEWEES AND INTERVIEW

QUESTIONS

Research Questions	Interviewee Roles	Interview Questions
What are the information behaviors specific to the research process of MA and MDiv students at Highpath School of Theology?	all	Would you be willing to talk about your faith background?
	students	Tell me about a time you talked about a research assignment with a fellow Highpath School of Theology student that you found useful.
	students	Could you tell me about a research project on which you are currently or were recently working?
	all	Do you see students working in groups on research?
	all	Interpersonal interactions often extend beyond face-to-face encounters. Tell me about how, if at all, Highpath School of Theology MA and MDiv students' use digital communication and/or social media as part of the research process.
How do Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty (teaching in the MA and MDiv programs) appraise the information behaviors involved in the	faculty	In giving out assignments do you welcome informal research references?

Research Questions	Interviewee Roles	Interview Questions
research processes of MA and MDiv students?		
	faculty	How do you think your students go about gathering information? What do you see that process being like? How much do your students talk to each other?
	faculty	How useful do you consider students' research approaches?
	faculty	Can you give me an example of a valuable informal research finding?
	faculty, students	Do you interact with librarians about research assignments? Do you see other faculty or students doing so?
What information behaviors specific to Highpath School of Theology MA and MDiv students' research processes do academic librarians see in the Highpath School of Theology Library and/or on campus?	librarians	What is your current religious status/practice, if any?
	librarians	Do faculty come to you for bibliographic instruction? What else do you see?
	librarians	Do students come to you for research assistance? What else do you see?
	librarians	How useful do you consider students' research approaches

Research Questions	Interviewee Roles	Interview Questions
		to be? Are some more valuable than others?
What do Highpath School of Theology stakeholders (MA and MDiv students, Highpath School of Theology Library librarians, and Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty) think about the role of degree program affiliation in relation to the information behaviors of Highpath School of Theology students in the research process?	all	Which degree program are you more closely affiliated with? (MA, MDiv) Could you describe the nature of your association?
	students, faculty	Could you tell me about anyone with whom you have spoken/ corresponded about a research project you were assigned or have assigned?
	students, faculty	Is this type of informal communication typical of your research and has your practice changed?
	students	What else could you tell me about the role that personal contacts play in your research in general?
	all	How useful do you think various kinds of information behavior activities are in the research process?
What do Highpath School of Theology stakeholders (MA and MDiv students, Highpath	all	Do you see any indications that Highpath School of Theology MA and MDiv students' religious faith or

Research Questions	Interviewee Roles	Interview Questions
School of Theology Library librarians, and Highpath School of Theology graduate faculty) think about the significance of religious faith in the information behaviors of Highpath School of Theology students in the research process?		lack thereof matters in the way they go about the research process? Do you see it in the Highpath School of Theology Library? Around campus meeting places such as the dining hall, gym, or chapel?
	students	During your Highpath School of Theology degree-seeking research activities do you think about your own religious beliefs? Do you ever notice them guiding you to a particular peer or mentor?

APPENDIX B

CONTACT SUMMARY FORM[12]

Contact Type (Check with X):

Visit: _____

Phone:_____

Other (Specify)_____

Contact Date:_____

Today's Date_____

Written by_____

Location: _____

In answering each of the following questions, enumerate as needed, and write on back of

sheet if not enough space.

---

[12] Modification of Miles and Huberman (1994:51‑54).

1. Are there specific things that you would like to learn at this contact?

2. Who were the actors present at the contact? Provide real names or pseudonyms if necessary, degree program affiliations (MA, MDiv [or other], and positions (student, librarian, faculty or other).

3. What were the main issues or themes that struck you in this contact?

4. Were there specific issues that you picked up from your observations that you might want to explore further at next contact?

5. What new or (or remaining) questions that you have in considering the next research participant (interview subject)?

APPENDIX C

HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Florida State
U N I V E R S I T Y

Office of the Vice President for Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 03/23/2015

To: Theodore Milas

Address:

Dept.:   INFORMATION STUDIES

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
   Information Behavior: A Case Study

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal
referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and two members of the Human Subjects
Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per 45 CFR § 46.110(7)   and has been approved
by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to
the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does
not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached
to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research
subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 04/22/2015   you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of
the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your
responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee
prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required
to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal
Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to
research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that
he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the
department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in
compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance
Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Gary Burnett
HSC No. 2014.12665

APPENDIX D

HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

FOR CHANGE IN RESEARCH PROTOCOL

Florida State
U N I V E R S I T Y

Office of the Vice President For Research
Human Subjects Committee
P O Box 3062742
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM (for change in research protocol)

Date: 09/04/2014

To: Theodore Milas

Address:

Dept: INFORMATION STUDIES

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human subjects in Research
Project entitled: Information Behavior at　　　School of Theology: A Case Study

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the requested change/amendment to your research protocol for the above-referenced project has been reviewed and approved.

Please be reminded that if the project has not been completed by 04/22/2015 , you must request renewed approval for continuation of the project.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Don Latham
HSC NO. 2014.13089

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

FSU Behavioral Consent Form
Information Behavior at   School of Theology: A Case Study

You are invited to be in a research study of information seeking and use in graduate theological education. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a student, librarian or faculty member at   School of Theology. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Patrick Milas, School of Library and Information Studies (Florida State University).

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to explore the information seeking and use of students, faculty and librarians involved in graduate theological education. The study seeks to explore how degree program affiliation (M.Div. or M.A. and/or religious belief may affect the approach   School of Theology affiliates take to the research process.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:
Read and if you agree, sign this consent form,
Set up an appointment to be interviewed, and,
Answer a series of questions about your information behavior for about 45 minutes.

Risks and benefits of being in the Study:

The risks of completing the interview are minimal. This study will be beneficial in that it can contribute to understanding the nature of theological research behavior among students, librarians and faculty. Ultimately, it could contribute to ongoing efforts to improve the quality of theological education and cross-cultural understanding.

Compensation:

You will not receive payment or compensation for participation in this study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent permitted by law. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Data will be kept on the password-protected computer of the principal researcher. Data will be kept for three years (2014-2016) with the backups of papers, and backups will be stored in a locked cabinet of the principal researcher.

FSU Human Subjects Committee approved on 7/11/2014. Void after 4/22/2015.
HSC # 2014.13089

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with _____ School of Theology or Florida State University. You decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Patrick Milas. You may ask any question you have now. If you have a question later, you are encouraged to contact me at _____. Faculty advisor: Dr. Don Latham,

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the FSU IRB at 2010 Levy Street, Research Building B, Suite 276, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2742, or 850-644-7900, or by email at humansubjects@fsu.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

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

_____   _____
Signature   Date

APPENDIX F

HIGHPATH SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY CASE STUDY CODE BOOK

RQ

Acronym for: Research Question

IQ

Acronym for: Interview Question

Note:
1. Some interview questions were asked to all participants interviewed. For example, all were asked about faith background.
2. Some interview questions were stakeholder-specific. For example, only librarians were asked if faculty come to them for research instruction.
3. Three distinct interview questions sets were used for students, faculty and librarians, respectively.
4. The research methodology was semi-structured interviewing. During the interviews the responses to one question in some cases prompted the interviewer to ask questions slightly differently and to ask unanticipated follow-up questions. Between the interviews the interviewer considered the emerging results and re-ordered some question sets.
5. For each interview the IQs are numbered; given notes 1-4, the coder should not assume that IQ numbers from Interview Transcripts A through J (1 through 10) correspond directly to each other. [Drawing such correspondences will be required later in the data analysis]
6. The interview questions invite participants to elaborate on various topics. They also lend themselves to binary responses in general (e.g. examples from the data: "Not consciously […] but what we do is [….]"; "A definite yes").
An attempt was made to determine, if, to any extent, the participant response was positive. If there was any interpretive margin for answers such as "seldom" or "sometimes" followed by several paragraphs clarifying the response, the coder interprets those responses to testify to an information behavior phenomenon sometimes occurring, and it is coded "positive" and further described it terms of frequency, location, and the participant's relation to the stakeholder type (e.g. faculty asked "Do you see student working in groups on research?").

ORI

Acronym for: Organized Religion Indicator

Notes:

1. This code applies to terms that indicate one or more words in the data set signify a type of organized religion (e.g. Roman Catholic Church)
2. This code applies regardless of participants' current religious status or practice.
3. When this code is applied the coder attempts to identify and notate whether the code refers to an organized religion that the participant relates to from early childhood or currently (code: native) or has later adopted (code: adopted) or is using to refer to an organized religion other than his/her own (code: other).

Examples (from the data): Church of Christ; Islam; religious garb; Church of the Nazarene; Buddhist; Charismatic; Academy of Jewish Religion; Wiccan; pork [religious dietary laws institutionalized]; interfaith [term for multiple ORIs]; interreligious; Lutheran; Christian college; Christian seminary; United Methodist; Religious Society of Friends; Quakers; (radical) Wesleyanism; evangelical Christianity; Protestant denominations; Methodist district superintendents; para-church organizations; interfaith collaborations; conservative; hierarchical religious background; mainline spectrum; Unitarian Universalists; Ecumenical; Anglican; non-believing Christian; Evangelical Holiness; Disciples of Christ; denomination; Sikhism; Jainism; pork-free; halal meat; kosher meat; practicing Jew; Reform Judaism; Conservative Judaism; Conservative Jew; Evangelical Protestant; Catholic; Greek Orthodox; Nation of Islam; kosher laws; burqa; kippah [Hebrew: skullcap]; Orthodox [Jewish]; Wicca; Wiccan tradition

RFI

Acronym for: Religious Faith Indicator

Notes:
1. This code applies to terms that indicate one or more words in the data set signify religious faith or lack thereof (e.g. "I believe")
2. When this code is applied the coder attempts to identify and notate whether an instance suggests that the participant is (code: positive) or is not (code: negative) indicating religious faith.

Examples (from the data): "I believe God is still talking to us"; "I really began to doubt"; ordained; Atheist; DMin; ministry; imams; rabbis; religious experience; "entirely secular – non-theistic"; confession of faith; creed; spiritual formation; secular schools of religions; doctrinal statement; personal holiness; "belief that we are called"; credo; non-believing Christian; humanist; pious; "I'm not a theist"; Christian mystic; agnostic; humanist; "not religious. I have no affiliation"; practicing Jew; non-Christian; ordination track; lay preacher; Licensing School; spiritually powerful experience; Wiccan belief; practicing Muslim; "it's more than an academic subject for me. I take it seriously"; religious commitments

MATTERS

Stands for: related to students' religious faith mattering (or not) in the way they go about the research process

Examples: "I see a strong correlation"; "they will ask their pastor, bishop or ministry supervisor what is the right answer"; "hybrid model of information acquisition and prioritization"; "no appeals to authoritative sources"; "rely very heavily on individual experience"; "affects how we teach, how we give assignments, how we evaluate them and how we mentor"; "it is the general ethos of the school […] we want people to know where they're coming from"; "He's in a MA program. I think his research is not just an academic process for him I think it's a process of personal discovery. He really cares about certain topics that are very much related to what he's practicing in his life and so on"; "By and large [faith] is what led them here. Whether that makes them more intense researchers or not than people who are approaching things from a strictly secular point of point of view […] I am not sure"; "Their religious commitments are the main factor in this faculty which determines which determines, or conditions seriously, the way their research will progress. A lot of the people as far as I can see are taking their traditions seriously here. And they choosing a topic in accordance with that. So I can answer that, yes, it is the majority of students are being influenced by their religious commitments, in terms of picking a topic, how to run it and how to finalize it"; "[religious faith's impact on social engagement is] part of life on this campus that you see that kind of interaction between students outside of their faiths. That is part of the reason why this campus is distinguished"; "As I said I am a practicing Muslim and I do think that my religion inspires me in many ways, so yes, it also affects deeply how I teach the topic, how I see life, how I act in the campus, how I define the Other, how I interact with it"; "although in many places a scholar should put a distance between himself and the subject matter, but when it comes to religion those boundaries are becoming obscure, vague. So to understand the religion one also should practice or one should delve into it experientially. So this experiential knowledge that I value a lot. I trying to combine in my own lectures and my overall scholarly pursuit I am trying to combine a scholarly objective and a participant's subjectivity"; "So that is to say: a big yes to your question. It truly affects, yes"

SI

Acronym for: Student Indicator
Examples: "Master's level students"

  Degree-specific SI subset:

    MASI

        Acronym for: Master of Arts Student Indicator
        Sub-categories: Religious Education
        Examples (from the data): Religious Education; "getting their foot into an academic track"; "more oriented to doing research [and] deal with things outside the Christian discourse"; "I have an MA […] so I have an affiliation with that"

MDivSI

> Acronym for: Master of Divinity Student Indicator
> Sub-categories: Interfaith Chaplaincy
> Examples (from the data): Interfaith Chaplaincy; "professional school commitment"

PhDSI

> Acronym for: Doctor of Philosophy Student Indicator
> Examples: "different stage in their career and their life typically" traditional academic reasons

Organized religion-specific SI subset:

CSI
> Acronym for: Christian Student Indicator
> Examples (from the data): Christian students

BSI
> Acronym for: Buddhist Student Indicator
> Examples (from the data): Buddhist

JSI
> Acronym for: Jewish Student Indicator
> Examples (from the data): Jewish students

MuSI
> Acronym for: Muslim Student Indicator
> Examples (from the data): Muslim students; "can't be in a position to question the Koran"

WSI
> Acronym for: Wiccan Student Indicator
> Examples (from the data): Wiccan student; witches

Course delivery-specific SI subset:

HYBRID
Stands for: hybrid degree program or course related
Examples: hybrid version; most hybrid students are working; "Um, I just had someone die today, and that's my job"; virtual students; "tend to email professors"; distance students; "combination of online learning and interaction as well as face-to-face"

RES
Stands for: residential degree program, course or stakeholder
Examples: "required to do internships or practicum"; "part of the culture"; in-person classes

CONTRAST

Stands for: response that contrasts HYBRID and RES categories
Examples: "if I'm in a class of five people we can dialogue more in person, then go to the Library and research together"; "[as a hybrid student] I always feel more rushed to explain the idea, like, get straight to the point"; "From a distance you are more, there's time constraints on what you talk about, and so, you're conversation is rich, but you're not going to get the background information that you're going to get in a classroom setting every week, which informs bibliographies more and makes them more robust"; "And you can have a rich email conversation, but it's an email conversation. You lose an element I think when you're just emailing people"; "I like that they have those options because people […] are able to be on a residential campus can do that and people who […] can't pick up and move, maybe they have families or jobs are able to the hybrid program and it just makes it a lot more convenient"

COMPARE:

Stands for: response that compares categories/roles or types explicitly
Examples: "MA students tend to have stronger research skills are score higher on that critical approach to information acquisition, organization and presentation"; "With weaker educational backgrounds they to struggle more with the basic competence with acquiring, using and presenting information"; "it really depends on the program"; "[MAs are] more oriented to doing research [and] deal with things outside the Christian discourse"; "no, there is absolutely no difference in how they conduct research or do anything like that"; "[when MA] I was doing a lot more actual research papers and I was interacting with [librarians more]"; "research is more of an expectation more with MA programs generally than MDiv programs"; "more on the MA side than the MDiv but that's not because I was told that's my job description its that its the MA faculty who have asked me to help out with research instruction"; "So yeah I do think I see a correlation between to the two"

ProgI

Stands for: Degree Program Indicator
Limit to: references to programs where stakeholders are not interviewed nor directly referred to by interview participants
Examples: DMin; doctoral programs; pastoral counseling; MLS; undergrad; Masters in Library and Information Science; BA in American Studies; PhD in Religious Studies

FI

Acronym for: Faculty Indicator
Examples: advisor; faculty members; professor; full professor; Professor of Theological Bibliography; chair; ex officio; teaching faculty; advise; "assembled for publication"; "I encourage them to bore down on the bibliography"; "have their TAs or RAs go to get things for them"; Biblical scholar; "I've given tours on my own of the holdings"; shepherding; tenure-track positions; Church Historian; thesis advisor; Dean of the School; mediation; Islamic woman professor [aka Yoda]; "helpful honing in on my

writing"; "helpful pointing me in the right direction for research, and different skills" MA faculty; "looking like penguins and academic regalia"; assistant professor; "teaching a class"; "[faculty committee] regulates the policies of the library"

LI

Acronym for: Librarian Indicator
Examples: librarian; staff; professional librarians; reference librarian; digital services librarian; acquisitions; library director; cataloging; "chief accreditation officer"; support side; Thesis Secretary; co-teaching research methods; circulation librarian; "nurse maids [or] midwives [birthing Bayan]"

IS

Acronym for: Information Source
Examples (present in the data): resources; materials; collection; books; authors; info.; New Testament; Bible; physical book; works; preface; acknowledgements; volume; chapter; "The Predicament of Belief" (Oxford University Press, 2011); "certain authors I mention in class"; links; the web; Wiccan collection; Islamic collection; Koran; Greco-Roman religion; multi-thousand dollar series; German titles; French titles; Italian titles; periodicals; bell hook's *Book of Love*; the field; John Hick; Paul Tillich; William James; Eastern philosophers; Monica Coleman [African-American Christian professor]; Coleman's book Making a Way of No Way; notes; self [personal assessment or self-evaluation]; patient; social locations; Dennis MacDonald; Greek and Latin texts; Homer; lexicons; Greek classics; Bible commentaries; African proverb; journal articles; book reviews; American evangelical songs; Paul [Apostle]; Muhammed; Buddha

> DIRE (stands for digital resources [see SOCMED for social media)
> Examples: digital resources; catalog; Google; databases; system; discovery tool; OCLC's Worldshare; federated searching; internet; search mechanisms; modes of searching; ATLAS; New Testament Abstracts; e-reserve; JSTOR; kindles; "resources, digitally and remotely"; HULU; NETFLIX; Internet Public Library; Sourca Greca; digital repository; Bible software; Wikipedia; OCLC's Worldcat; search discovery service
>
> PUBS (stands for publishers)
> Examples: "Christian publishers like Kendale or Zondervan or IVP"; "critical publishers like Fortress, Degroiter, Brill, Europe"; Oxford University Press; YPB or Yankee Paperback Books

CLERGY

Stands for: religious leader
Examples: pastor; imams; rabbis; bishops; Christian leaders; leaders in the emerging church movement; "strong [laypersons] in their congregations"; Martin Luther King, Jr.;

Methodist pastor; ordination track; lay preacher; Licensing School; United Methodist Bishop; chaplain; Wiccan priestess

IISI

Acronym for: Interpersonal Information Source Indicator

Examples (present in the data): feedback; "meet and talk"; "conversations with people"; "faculty contact me but I send them to the reference librarian"; "help guide research"; ongoing informal discussion; inter-religious […] interaction; [see SOCMED for social media]; footnote conversations; "utilizing ministry situations"; "level [and] kind of interaction [with librarians]"; "colleagues engage collaboratively"; "Jewish community formation influence the students in what they choose to write about, how they gather information about it and how they produce it"; "[informal research references are] very valuable, sure"; conference; "[s]ome of our students are wedded, or linked at the hip to their advisors"; contact somebody else; "say right off the top"; "on Facebook I have classmates who are Muslims and they will post their opinion […] and that's a form of research"; do research together; dialogue; consult; interpersonal; chatting; "virtual students tend to email professors"; small group class discussion; community conversations; crowdsourcing; "So they [students] very much embrace the non-face-to-face interpersonal aspect of working with librarians"; "working on group projects for, like, a class presentation"; "talk to students […] across the country about [our] work"; "Springshare Libanswers […] allows us to tweet […] or text questions"; "scholarship is a community and it's a conversation and so in order to do good research one has to, in a way, apprentice oneself to that conversation; "certain people are also sources of authority"; "people are walking libraries"; [event] invitation; substantive discussion; "interaction with sources, persons, NGOs and institutions"; "speaking to a rabbi, chief or priest"; "So in that [faculty library committee] I see an interaction with faculty and with a librarian, who is the head, actually, of this library"; "[IISI] I can say it's radically influential in my own research"; "[religious faith's impact on social engagement is] part of life on this campus that you see that kind of interaction between students outside of their faiths. That is part of the reason why this campus is distinguished"

Subcategories: moral support, academic support, technical support

MORAL: inspirations; "deeply influences […] my whole orientation"; "I get letters and comments that their life has changed"; "interactions with their adjudicatories"; self-understanding; "helped me live out the values of my community"; shepherding; "to feel their qualms"; "helped me to breathe new life into my research"; "CST was very kind and generous and basically was able to take the students who were Highpath Lincoln students and kind of make sure that they had a program to go into"; "the kind of conversations I have socially either in passing or just hanging out with my peers in our apartment at night […] having these theological conversations […] I'm learning something new every time I interact with them and so you know they'll say something that will spark my curiosity and then I'll ask them questions about it and then you know later on go

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look it up and do further research. But it's often in those conversations that just sort of, you know, happen either in passing or just relaxing with friends that really spark some good ideas and further interests"; [community chapel] leaves me space to clear my mind so when I go back to doing my work it can help me focus a lot more"; "research consultations, where it's more than a five minute discussion, where it's an appointment, you know its twenty, thirty minutes, sometimes up to two hours of help"; the grapevine; "One of the goals that here we are trying to realize is the interaction between different faiths so faculty members are interacting with each other, speaking to each other, learning from each other"; "I am also obviously in touch with several faculty here in realizing my own research project and getting their help and consulting them. I do that too. So at the faculty level, we have, I would say, serious interaction. Mutually enriching interaction"; "I've learned a lot from those interactions and naturally I integrate it into my research and into my own teaching style"; "These informal interactions these students that are having a family are making a person a more responsible one. So students are having more tendencies to realize their projects in a more timely and more disciplined manner"

ACADEMIC: "soliciting and receiving feedback about assignments"; "conversations transformed my assignments"; "conversations with my colleagues were important"; teamwork; "quality of assignments has risen in proportion to the amount of dialogue that I do with students and faculty"; "I definitely consult with librarian as I teach the MA Colloquium"; I consulted with Muslims; "So I talked to, um, some librarians"; give pointers; topic narrowing; "[faculty] don't ask me directly for help, they come to me and ask me for help on their students' behalf"; "what are good databases for this subject?"; "pull up a previous paper […] and suggest some directions"; "I was able to utilize that bibliography that I had compiled as a resource for him. And then he was able to Google some works […] explore writings […] and using those bibliographies […] find more authors"; "met with me for two hours to conceptualize what her masters thesis would be about and how to do research"; "encouraging them to interact with people outside library sources, alongside with library"; "several of them, came to me and asking for a book list for there cause for their research topic"; "I cited [my advisor's] material as a student"; "And as a new professor here as far as I can observe in class they [students] do that [cite their professors] too"; "In my own discussions and writing my own lectures I cite some of the faculty members. So I think I can say effectively that I did that and that students, they do do that [cite interpersonal information sources]. Yeah, yes.

TECHNICAL: self-management; "[hybrid students] rely on each other to talk about technical things like did the portal work for you"; "why a database isn't working; "how to use an e-book"; "contact [librarians] for another kindle [book]"; "make sure dissertations conform to our school's formatting guidelines"; "I did interact but not in the way that I consulted them but I with a list of books I contacted the librarians and we made sure that they have the books here"

MI

Acronym for: Metacognitive Indicator

Examples (present in the data): certainty; doubt; faith; assumption; transcendence; mystical; existential; Atheist; "been conscious to hire"; "religion as a cultural phenomenon"; observation; orientation; "as you age you a less anxious about pleasing students or seeming to know everything"; tacit knowledge; critical thinking; "consciously molding our common space to invite religious difference, cultural difference"; commitment; self-conscious point of orientation; levels of sophistication; hubris; evidence; consciousness; insights; liberal; ethos of the campus; theoretical stuff; basic stuff; introductory level [participant is using judgment]; "analyzing my social location and their social locations […] using a model"; non-traditional; self-reflection

SNI

Acronym for: Social Network Indicator

Examples (present in the data): community; small circle of people; faculty; staff; curriculum committee; institutional review board; support service committee; dissertation committees; dissertation exams committees; culture; group study; Korean women [ethnic, demographic group studied by CST students according to IRB chair / library director]; Practical Theology [degree program in which interpersonal interaction is common]; board of ordained ministry; Society for Biblical Literature; outsider; social holiness (cf. personal holiness); footnote conversations; "ethnic traditions which include African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic American, and the Korean population of students"; trade business cards; Korean choir; Korean prayer group; "people who feel an affinity with each other spiritually for some reason or other. Even atheists"; pluralistic society; small groups; cohort; MDiv friends; MDiv colleagues; Interreligious Council; pizza party; residential campus culture; consortium; "how I affiliate"; friend; family; campus community; Jewish community; Highpath College Consortium; "eclectic community of religious persuasions"; Korean student association; subcultures; Korean subculture; Christian custom; same cultural background; conservative Protestant circles; liberal Protestant circles; friendships; faculty executive committee

LOC

Stands for: Location

Examples (present in the data): coffee shop; park; Library; City of Highpath; office; chapel; Bayan University; Academy of Jewish Religion; Special Collections (CST); conference rooms; green; student center; seminar rooms; Klinebell Institute [offers pastoral counseling studies]; University of the West [a Buddhist school]; Christian college; Christian seminary; United Methodist seminary; Div school; University of Chicago [Div school]; "Harvard Div School"; real estate; building; book warehouse; Germany; Yale; prayer room; wash room for the purification; "spaces that were not

threatening to Jews and Muslims"; Union Theological Seminary; Widener Library [Harvard]; Butler Library at Columbia; Honald Library at Highpath Colleges; Victorville; Los Angeles; San Diego; dormitories; Africa; Asia; Hawaii; Alaska; UCLA; Southerner; the shelves; Phoenix; Virginia; Cal [California] State, Fullerton; San Jose State University; Edgar Center; community center; computer lab; Conservative synagogue; hospital; East Coast; Highpath Lincoln University; Washington, DC; Biblical garden; Ghana; Portugal; UC Irvine; seminary; Licensing School; Kansas; Protestant places; self-standing institution; United States; rooms

DEITY

Stands for: transcendent entity, source of inspiration, or object of religious devotion
Examples (from the data): Lord; Buddha; God-experience; Jesus

PROJ

Examples: research project; class assignment; thesis; paper; research; directed independent studies; dissertation exams; graduate research; interview components; data acquisitions; classes; learning process; writing; core courses; curriculum; credo assignment; international projects; facing a task; "assignment to present the Trinity to Muslims […] that fosters Muslim-Christian dialogue […] is all about information acquisition, organization and presentation"; Master's project; novel research; language exams; classical research project; sermons; blog posts; summative exercise; case study; theological assessment of [social/clinical] encounter; class presentation; twenty to thirty page research papers; reflective papers; [U.S.] President's Interfatih Campus Challenge panel/workshop; Course of Study [ministerial training]; exegetical paper; final papers; dissertation; discussion prompts

CoP

Stands for: Community of Practice

Examples: meditative meet; congregation; fellow students; peers; staff; cultural shift; discourse; "spokespersons for Jesus Christ"; community life; community of writing; classmates; adjudicatories; Christian family; Jewish community; Methodist calendar; "Just having that positive affirmation from the Jewish community is really helpful in affirming the work that I'm doing"; "Ask a question or put in a query and get a response back and it needs to be on the top first page and top five results or it doesn't really matter. That's not research (laughs)"; faith environment

BIBLIO

Stands for: bibliographic instruction
Examples: "information literacy, instruction, and class"; "tour students on how to do research in the humanities"; "Bibliographic instruction is a fairly, can be used in a broad sense, and can just mean an introductory session about how to do research, but if you

think of it in terms of how to discover new tools or introducing people to new tools or databases I've had a few experiences with that so far"; research consultations; library orientation

USE

Stands for: FI and LI opinions of usefulness of students' research approaches

Examples: "spectrum is extraordinarily wide"; "ability [is] extremely limited"; "It really depends on the program […] not helpful at all until second year of the MA program"; "pretty useful"; "based on my students behavior, they are using library effectively. But, we have a lot of students who use English as their second language"

INFOACT

Stands for: responses/perspectives of information behavior activities' usefulness
Examples: indispensable; information acquisitions behavior; organize; observations; worst-case scenario; task; science; preparing a sermon; "there be some difficulty for them in terms of reaching the material or effectively using the material effectively from the library, although they are willing to do that"

PRAC

Stands for: event of religious or spiritual practice
Examples: (chapel) service; "blessings over events"; religious expressions; "specific Methodist times"; Muslim daily prayers; "to bond with their particular religious community"; "Korean prayer group that met almost every day"; "Lutheran discussion group that meets on a regular basis"; gone to church; preached a sermon; vegetarian; humanist planetary run; humanist feel the earth under their feet; "every Tuesday we have community chapel that is a ecumenical interreligious service [JSI]"; contemplation, prayer, meditation, worship, relaxation; rope labyrinth walking; Korean and go up early every morning to prayer; Korean Student Association event; American evangelical songs; circumcision; Wiccan practices; practicing Muslim

EVENT

Stands for: event, social or academic but not overtly religious in nature
Examples: diversity event; convocation; major academic events

LIBWORK

Stands for: library work
Examples: acquisitions; circulating; processing; digital services; "25% […] responsibilities […] is to teach a course"; hiring; collection development; budget; personnel; information literacy; cataloging; administration; "modes of conveying [innovations in online databases] to students"; "laying the foundations for a more organic

connection of the library resources with the educational project"; acquisitions policy; "helping with bibliographies"; "come into classes and show how to vet resources, how to conduct research"; virtual reference service; "loaded [e-books] with as many of the course reserve books as we could"; "figure out [hybrid course resources delivery] kinks"; "People will always be asking us how to print and how to access all the computers"; make a profile with a bookseller; handle student [book and kindle book] requests; establish a virtual or online reference presence; Springshare Libanswers; reference services; "try to tell if a request is coming in from somebody within the student population or student/faculty community"; "accommodate information seeking behavior"; migrated our catalog; being adept at print research; [processing] donation; collection development decisions

CB

Stands for: code book
Examples: in coder's comments "add to CB"

STUDWORK

Stands for: student work
Examples: texting; preached sermons research; exegesis; reading articles on Facebook; seminar writing; MDiv research; chairman; Trying to navigate; getting materials; "figuring out cultural context"; negotiating [online chat] times; "log on and ask a librarian or they can ask us a question and we can then respond by either text message or SMS, through email, they can tweet at us"; "contact [librarians] for another kindle [book]"; send in an interlibrary loan request; watch documentaries; "pull up a previous paper […] and suggest some directions"; "Google some works […] explore writings […] and using those bibliographies […] find more authors"; "writing up the verbatim encounter"; "working on group projects for, like, a class presentation"; "engaging in the classroom and also on the campus at large doing interfaith work"; "pulling Bible commentaries off the shelves"; being adept at print research; field trips

SOCMED

Stands for: social media
Examples: Facebook; "posting responses to a shared site"; "interacting online in their responses to their reading and research"; online chat rooms; SAKAI; twitter; tweet; "one [Muslim] professor uses Twitter a lot"; "Springshare Libanswers […] allows us to tweet […] or text questions"; "We don't have a library Facebook page"

CURR

Stands for: curriculum
Examples: ministry courses; core courses; Systematic Theology for Ministry; Wesleyan Theology; theory classes; Old Testament; New Testament; Ethics; History; "second-year MDiv art of ministry classes"; preaching; pastoral counseling; critical thinking;

"Virtually no critical thinking, direct of indirect, in the seminary curriculum"; Muslim-Christian dialogue; educational process; MA Colloquium; History of Judaism; Relativity of Religious Truth; Social Justice; Clinical Pastoral Education; Interreligious Studies program; Early Christianity; Course of Study; Judaism; Christianity; academics; Islamic philosophy, theology and spirituality; academic subject; Islamic Christianity; Islamic Judaism; "it is required that they should take a class, which they all take classes, which deals with other traditions, too"

EDTECH

Stands for: educational technology/systems to support communications & research
Examples: LifeSize [video-conferencing]; "video-conference with Jewish students at AJR [Academy of Jewish Religion]"; hybrid program; blog posts; kindles; fully online; Sakai; Springshare Libanswers; CD/DVD version; online version; Triple Live; Millennium; "given headphones to wear during the service and then live translation of all the Korean elements of the service were provided for us as we were participating in the service"

IDEA

Stands for: concept or ideological component of a religious or academic discipline
Example: agape; ahimsa [non-violence]; taqwah; American culture; Muslim studies; Jewish studies; Buddhist studies; mystical traditions; process theology; interreligious programming; pluralism; model; pastoral care counseling; publicity; religious studies; diversity training; intra-Jewish; "thieves on the cross"; "orthodoxy of the Nicene Creed"; "religion and science discussion"

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