

REJOICE IN THE MUSIC: WHAT WILL GET YOUNG ADULTS BACK TO CHURCH?



The decreasing number of young adults that attend church services is a disquieting reality that churches currently face. In an attempt to increase attendance of young adults, building relationships with them could encourage more frequent attendance.

A recent study was conducted by Lizré Orton, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), to examine ways in which churches could increase young adult church attendance. Marketing activities, such as relationship marketing and building relationships through adapting elements in the church servicescape, could contribute toward maintaining a relationship with young adults. Elements in the church servicescape, namely music, layout and design, and signs and symbols, were investigated.

The study was conducted amongst a sample of 200 church members, aged 18 to 30 years at three different church denominations. The results showed that music was the most noticeable relationship marketing element. Although no clear relationships between church attendance and the three servicescape elements (music, signs and symbols, nor layout and design) were found, the majority of the respondents indicated that type of music played influenced their motivation to attend church services. The results indicated that music, signs and symbols, and layout and design are all inter-linked, suggesting that young adults who are aware of one element might view all three elements in the servicescape of the church as one. Thus all three elements play a role in influencing the church servicescape.

Since young adults view music as the most important motivator to attend church services, churches should consider the type of music to be played when planning their service offering to young adults. Churches armed with the knowledge of influences of the elements in the servicescape can constantly improve and customise their service offering to the intended target market.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2011 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Lizré Orton, under the supervision of [Michelle van der Merwe](#).