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## ABSTRACT

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### DO FACULTY MEMBERS AND ADMINISTRATORS OF CCCU SCHOOLS VIEW ADAPTIVE INITIATIVES AS IN CONFLICT WITH OR IN SUPPORT OF CCCU SCHOOLS' UNIQUE REASON FOR BEING?

This study sought to understand if faculty members and administrators perceived that the use of market sensitive, adaptive initiatives caused conflict within Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) institutions because they resulted in a movement away from mission. CCCU institutions have a strong mission orientation, which previous literature suggested should result in their pursuing values driven, interpretive initiatives; illustrated by decisions and actions that are derived from preserving or accomplishing the mission and have little to do with external marketplace driven growth activity. However, for the last twenty five years CCCU institutions have been hard pressed by an economic and social environment which has forced them to adopt a large volume of market sensitive, adaptive initiatives such as adding adult degree completion programs, non-liberal arts graduate programs, and innovative off-site delivery models. This situation created difficulties for CCCU schools because institutions that are naturally interpretive, yet feel driven to behave in an adaptive manner, are bound to have some internal tension over their strategic choices particularly when some stakeholders perceive these actions pose some risk to mission attainment.

An online survey involving faculty and administrators at 32 CCCU institutions confirmed that faculty viewed adaptive initiatives as significantly harmful to mission, while administrators viewed adaptive initiatives as significantly supportive of mission attainment. Institutions were also categorized and analyzed according to exhibiting high or low levels of adaptive behavior; analysis indicated these two types of institutions were fundamentally different in their view of adaptive initiatives. Additional findings include faculty appear to be influenced in their views by their working environment, and faculty and administrators feel reasonably good about the progress that their respective institutions are making towards mission attainment despite the view of faculty that many of the adaptive strategies are harmful to mission. A conceptual framework was developed utilizing Ansoff's product market matrix as a methodology to organize adaptive and interpretive initiatives. The results of this study were discussed, focusing on the impact of this data on institutional marketing, recruiting, and managing institutional change.