



## KLX Project – Summary of Research Findings

Many varied viewpoints about life issues were expressed in the conversations. This summary lists only the findings that ‘most’ or ‘many’ (2/3rds) of the co-researchers reported in the interviews. Observations are based primarily on significant similarities between the groups. Conclusions about differences between the groups are made only on a limited basis, as the nature of the research was not indented to exhaust differences, but to discover similarities.

	Leipzig Co-researchers	Knoxville Co-researchers	Observations
GENERAL	The historical context is one factor that shapes people’s perspective of life. Young adults in Leipzig grew up in a significant time of change related to German Reunification. This change was evident in the areas of work, life stresses, and spiritual viewpoint.	Knoxville is located in a “conservative” region of America. It is influenced by strong community and family values. The church is still an influential aspect of society in Knoxville. The young adults grew up in stable political times.	
WORK	Most of the co-researchers were currently employed, yet job-related fears are a significant issue, specifically the concern that they can find a job at their level of training or that they may be required to move to retain their employment opportunity.	The fear of unemployment was not significant the Knoxville co-researchers. Many enjoy their work and find a great sense of accomplishment and/or satisfaction in what they do professionally. They face issues related to high expectations from their jobs, like long hours, responsibilities and demanding bosses. Many expressed a desire to improve their careers through continuing education. Many also attached great significance and satisfaction to working in careers that contribute directly to helping people, relieving human suffering, or making the world a better place.	The Americans tended to start working earlier and then return to school for further education. The contrast of unemployment rates is significant between these two cities, with the employment issue being significantly smaller in Knoxville.  While work was significant to both groups, there is evidence that other areas of life are more important than career advancement.

LIFE PHILOSOPHY	<p>The most frequent response to 'meaning of life' was "improving yourself or your life circumstances," "helping others", and "being a good member of society". Many co-researchers expressed the importance of relationships with family and friends.</p> <p>The co-researchers perceived themselves to be "open-minded" and took great pride in it.</p>	<p>The most frequent response to 'meaning of life' was to be happy and/or satisfied with the life you have, and to be a "good person". Fulfillment was expressed in terms like "achieving one's ambitions", "increasing one's self-understanding and awareness", "having as many enjoyable experiences as one can", and "having a life filled with good relationships".</p>	<p>Both groups expressed some aspect of being a "good person" as an important ingredient of life. Both groups also expressed relationships as an important aspect of life.</p> <p>The American co-researchers talked in terms of self-improvement and self-fulfillment. While this was also part of the German expression, their terms were more centered on people's interaction in society.</p>
ACTIVITIES	<p>The Leipzig co-researchers expressed a mixed reaction to 'free time': some had too much and others too little. Most activities related to a desire to be with others. The internet activity (interaction) was significantly expressed.</p>	<p>The Knoxville co-researchers expressed a value of being very active in life. Activities expressed related to doing things with others, and their relaxing times were often spent alone.</p>	<p>The interaction in relationships was evident in both groups. The value of doing things with others is important. There were some in both groups that expressed a sense of loneliness and/or not having enough to do.</p>
LIFE STRESSES	<p>Fear of unemployment was the most mentioned in Leipzig. Stresses related to Reunification were expressed in the following areas: more choices to make (making it harder to make decisions), less time and opportunity for community relationships and caring about each other, greater selfishness in their own generation, and less job security.</p>	<p>Many Knoxville co-researchers expressed that they are "pretty satisfied" with their lives and that they have no unmet needs. While the co-researchers did not frequently express unemployment as a fear, most stated finances as a point of stress, along with working in jobs that are unfulfilling or do not pay enough.</p> <p>Many co-researchers stated that the Iraq War, political issues, and/or environmental concerns are top worries for them.</p>	<p>Evidence in both groups appeared in the area of life priorities causing stress, i.e. being too busy or not having enough time for relationships. Concerns over global politics and the global environment were also evident in both groups. The fear of finances was a significant stress factor in both groups.</p>

FAMILY	<p>Most co-researchers expressed significant distance, disconnection, and/or infrequent communication with their parents as something undesirable. Most co-researchers expressed that marriage was not important or necessary to having the love or family they wanted. They expressed dissatisfaction or apprehension toward the responsibilities expected of them in partnership-relationships.</p>	<p>Many co-researchers expressed that family was the most important thing in life. About two-thirds had warm and positive things to say about their families and described these relationships as 'close'. About one-third reported stressful or distant relationships with their families. Most expressed a desire to be married someday, even if they experienced broken homes as a child. Many reported that their parents are divorced.</p>	<p>Family relationships were an important value in both groups, even though there was a lot of evidence of broken homes or estranged relationships. The value of marriage was expressed more often with the Knoxville co-researchers, while the importance of family was expressed more often in Leipzig.</p>
FRIENDSHIPS	<p>Most Leipzig co-researchers stated that friendships required great time, trust, and investment; their friendships take a long time to develop and last for a long time. Most co-researchers expressed a desire to talk about deep personal things, including spiritual issues. Yet they stated that it was uncomfortable, difficult, and/or inappropriate for them to talk about these things with others (with the exception of their very close friends). Many co-researchers expressed a desire for deeper conversations about issues related to their personal lives.</p>	<p>Most Knoxville co-researchers stated having two categories of friends: a few 'close friends' and a larger network of acquaintances or casual friends. Many said that close friendships take time to develop and most report having developed them in school, college, and work. Close friendships were defined as someone who is loyal, knows both their good and bad sides, and will always be available to provide support in times of need. Most co-researchers say that they share their troubles and stresses with their close friends, and many report turning to them for advice.</p>	<p>Friendship is a high value that was expressed by both groups. Both groups expressed a desire to have a "safe" place to discuss life issues. These relationships take time to develop. While there was apprehension in both groups to discuss philosophical or spiritual issues with casual relationships, there was a stated desire for these types of conversations.</p>

SPIRITUALITY	<p>Most Leipzig co-researchers stated that they base their moral decisions about right and wrong on personal things like their heart, their emotions, their experiences, or their friends' opinions, rather than any kind of moral authority, leader, principles, or religious teaching.</p> <p>Most co-researchers expressed what they think about God was influenced by the way they were raised. Most said they didn't believe in God, and some expressed questions about the benefits of continuing to believe that way. Most co-researchers expressed a lack of knowledge about God and spiritual matters, and reported that they try to be tolerant of others by not asking or talking about their spiritual views.</p>	<p>Most Knoxville co-researchers indicated truth is individually determined and not absolute. They most frequently reported using their feelings from previous experiences as their basis for determining right from wrong. Most trust their own judgment in issues of truth and morality. Most of the co-researchers do not participate in any religious group, yet most describe themselves as "spiritual". Most said they believe in God, but disagreed on who or what he is.</p> <p>Most co-researchers expressed that they believe people are shaped primarily by their life experiences, and do not change significantly unless they experience suffering or personal crisis.</p>	<p>Both groups expressed that moral decisions should be based on individual judgment. Each group was influenced by how they were raised.</p> <p>Each group expressed a wide variety of view points about God and also stated that tolerance of others' views is important. The spiritual views of both groups were shaped by external factors: their parents' viewpoint and/or church attendance as a child.</p>
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CHURCH	<p>Most Leipzig co-researchers perceived churches in Leipzig not to be relevant to them and their friends. They attributed this to the churches being outdated, institutional, and out of touch with people’s real needs and problems. Churches could be more relevant to young adults...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) by actively and visibly going into the community to help people who are in need;</li> <li>b) by providing opportunity for people outside the church to experience warm, welcoming, and supportive relationships with people from the church who truly care about them;</li> <li>c) by providing safe places where people can have frank and open-minded discussions about the things that really matter to them.</li> </ul> <p>Most co-researchers said that they would not attend a church unless they went with a close friend.</p>	<p>Most of the Knoxville co-researchers attended church as a child and had first-hand and personal opinions about church, yet most are not involved with the church today. Most felt strongly that the message and people of the church are too judgmental and critical of others. Many perceive Christians as being hypocritical and that their life and actions are in contradiction with what they claim to believe.</p> <p>Many co-researchers stated that adherence to any particular religious belief system is not important to them, yet they also expressed that their own belief system is very important to them. Churches could be more relevant to young adults...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) by being more tolerant, open, and accepting of the beliefs, viewpoints, and lifestyles of others;</li> <li>b) by providing safe opportunities to have personal and honest conversations about God, other religions and beliefs, and relationships, giving people the chance to investigate and discuss their own beliefs;</li> <li>c) by being loving, caring, and encouraging;</li> <li>d) by engaging in the community and offering tangible help with problems;</li> <li>e) by being more environmentally conscious.</li> </ul>	<p>Church attendance as a child was a significant difference between the groups. Each group felt that the church (organization) was irrelevant today to society. Issues of hypocrisy, controversy and narrow viewpoint were expressed by both groups.</p> <p>Yet, each group felt that a ‘changed’ church had a place in society, specifically naming a place for safe interaction on spiritual issues, helping people in need, and providing a community that cares/loves one another.</p>
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