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DOCTORAL EDUCATION AMONG LATTER-DAY SAINT (LDS) WOMEN: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF A MOTHER'S CHOICE TO ACHIEVE

by

Jonathan Glade Hall

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

Education
(Curriculum and Instruction)

Approved:

Ann M. Berghout Austin Major Professor	Nicholas Eastmond Committee Member
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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

2008

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ABSTRACT

Doctoral Education among Latter-day Saint (LDS) Women: A Phenomenological Study of a Mother's Choice to Achieve

by

Jonathan Glade Hall, Doctor of Education

Utah State University, 2008

Major Professor: Dr. Ann M. Berghout Austin
Program: Curriculum and Instruction

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) have been compellingly counseled by church leaders that motherhood should be women's greatest ambition, and as such that it should demand mothers' full-time in the home; at the same time they have been taught to get all of the education that they can. Mothers with young families must decide if they should continue their educational pursuits, or spend their full-time in the home. This study sought to fill a gap in the literature and understand the lived experience of these women by researching how LDS mothers with young children experience the decision to achieve doctoral education given the counsel that women should spend their full-time in the home fulfilling their primary responsibility of mothering, while

considering counsel that they should get all of the education that they can.

A phenomenological approach was selected to study seven LDS women's experiences of deciding to achieve doctoral degrees as mothers of young children. As a theoretical perspective, *Women's Ways of Knowing* informed this study; the women seemed to occupy a constructed knowing position as they participated in making meaning from church directives concerning their lives. The women appeared to express that spiritual promptings and deep personal desire were most influential in their decisions. Encouragement from family was also emphasized. The women faced challenges of balancing multiple roles while meeting church and family members' expectations concerning their perceived responsibilities. The women expressed that their greatest benefit from achieving their degree was the influence doing so had on their children.

(233 pages)

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I wish to express appreciation to members of my committee. Drs. Lisa Boyce, Deborah Byrnes, Martha Dever, and Nick Eastmond provided an atmosphere of support and encouragement in their responsibilities to ensure quality work. Dr. Dever was instrumental in providing feedback all along the way. I could not have asked for better classmates and recognize their contribution to my education.

Most importantly, I need to thank my wife, Melanie, for her support during this journey. I never could have completed this degree without her ability and willingness to mother our three children with such pure love during times I could not be home. She has sustained me as a student simply because it was important to me. I need to thank my children, Jaden, Courtney, and Tanner, for their patience, understanding, and hugs. I would like to thank my parents for instilling in me an ambitious attitude to strive for excellence. Jonathan Glade Hall

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Theoretical Framework

How women answer questions about what they perceive as truth, authority, and evidence, along with how women know these answers is, according to some scholars, relative to the way women view the world and their part in the world (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986). Answers to these questions reveal meaning concerning how women define themselves, interact with others, conceive morality, and identify a sense of control during life events. Women develop various ways of understanding the world in which they live. In *Women's Ways of Knowing*, Belenky and colleagues share five epistemological perspectives that they believe women utilize in coming to knowledge; they refer to these stage-like categories as silence, received knowing, subjective knowing, procedural knowing, and constructed knowing.

According to Belenky and colleagues (1986), women know themselves and their world according to the epistemological perspective they hold. They propose that a woman in the constructed knowing position will view her place within her environment differently than a woman in the silence or received knowing positions. The *Women's Ways of*

Knowing framework provided a theoretical base, and offered the potential to inform emerging themes of this study.

The Issue: An LDS Mother's Dilemma

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) have been counseled by their church leaders in The Family: A Proclamation to the World (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001) that mothers' primary responsibility is to nurture their children. LDS women have been admonished that mothers should spend their full-time in the home with their children (Benson, 1987; Hinckley, 1997). Leaders of the LDS Church have expressed concern that women may neglect their greatest responsibility of motherhood, in favor of lesser responsibilities (Hinckley; Kimball, 1982). Church leaders have passionately expressed their desire for every mother to be at home with her children.

Additionally, LDS leaders have counseled women that they should get all of the education that they can (Hinckley, 1997, 1999). They have proclaimed that education better equips women to fulfill their primary role of motherhood, and prepares them to contribute to society, all while blessing their own lives and bringing honor to the church. Early church leader Brigham Young (as cited in Hinckley, 1997) insisted that education

was more important for women than for men because of women's influence upon future generations. Education for women has been emphasized within the church with such proclamations as "children may not recover from the ignorance of their mothers" (Kimball, 1982, p. 320).

With these directives in mind, mothers with young families face an interesting conflict. Mothers have been compellingly taught that motherhood should be their greatest ambition, and as such that it should demand their full-time in the home; at the same time they have been taught to get all of the education that they can. Mothers with young families must decide if they should continue their educational pursuits.

Additionally, LDS leaders have not directed how much education women should achieve, other than to urge that it be as much as possible. This issue juxtaposes the secretarial ambitions of one mother with the MD or PhD ambitions of another. Women may perceive that choosing an extensive educational path is more in-line with church counsel, or women may perceive that choosing to stay home with their children to the neglect of pursuing their education is more in-line with directives of the church.

Extant Research on LDS Women's Motherhood and Educational Decisions

A body of research suggests strategies LDS mothers use to think

through balancing family and education, while considering counsel that mothers are to spend their full time in the home, and also that they should get as much education as they can. Vance (2002) performed a content analysis of the themes and directives given in LDS periodicals to women over a 100-year time period. Vance found disparity in the ideals that the LDS Church promoted for its women members; she concluded that motherhood has been most idealized, but also found education to be a strong emphasis. Beaman (2001) studied how LDS women make sense of church directives, noting that LDS women choose how to interpret and reconcile varying church counsel. Mihelich and Storrs (2003) found that LDS women incorporate higher education into the ideology of womanhood, allowing them to "mediate the potential contradictions" (p. 417). Ozorak (1996) observed coping strategies women use to reconcile difficulties within patriarchal religions.

Related Extant Research

Researchers have studied how LDS and other religious affiliation relates to educational attainment (Albrecht & Heaton, 1984; Darnell & Sherkat, 1997; Keysar & Kosmin, 1995; McClendon & Chadwick, 2004; Regnerus, 2003). Additionally, researchers have considered the relationship between religious beliefs, marital roles, and employment

(Chadwick & Garrett, 1995; Lehrer, 2004; Meier, 1972; Sherkat, 2000). Their findings will be reviewed later in this document.

Gaps in Our Understanding of this Problem

While a body of research has suggested some strategies LDS mothers use to think through the counsel that women should spend their full-time in the home fulfilling their primary responsibility of mothering, and that they should get all of the education that they can, there has been a lack of research on how LDS mothers experience the decision to achieve doctoral degrees. Research has failed to reveal understanding about how women experience the decision to achieve doctoral education as LDS mothers of young children. This is an important question because LDS women may find themselves conflicted as they consider church directives along with their personal desires; understanding how women experienced their decision to achieve their degree informs other women as they come to this decision in their lives.

Purpose Statement

This study attempts to fill a gap in the literature by studying how LDS mothers with young children experience the process of deciding to achieve doctoral education. This study informs LDS mothers who desire

to achieve doctoral education, or who are considering pursuing doctoral education, by identifying perceived rewards and challenges from women who have achieved their degrees. This study provides insight as to the experience of making this decision, and demonstrates how some LDS women have understood church directives during this decision. Understanding this group of women on university campuses may also inform universities as to this small segment of their student body as well as informing the LDS Church as to this unique part of their membership.

Research Question

How do LDS mothers experience the process of deciding to achieve doctoral degrees and persist in their decision?

Definition of Terms

Decision (to achieve doctoral degree): The choice to act in a manner that is consistent of someone planning to achieve a doctoral degree. This includes future plans, as well as the time from the initial decision to apply until the degree is awarded, as successful completion requires participants to persist in their decision.

LDS mothers (with young families): Women members who actively participate within the LDS Church, living with their own children, or step

children, who are younger than 17 years of age. These women may be married or single.

LDS directive/counsel: Any articulation from sustained general or local authority figures, and any source that has passed the correlation committee, as evidenced by copyright or publication by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may be included for the purposes of this study. Church leaders assume the position of, at times, speaking on behalf of the Lord, and at other times, speaking words of wisdom as wise, caring individuals. As LDS Church members value both kinds of directives, both are important to this study, and no distinction is necessary.

Patriarchal blessing: Members of the LDS Church may seek personal direction for their lives through what the LDS Church calls a patriarchal blessing. Individuals may go to an appointed person in their local area whom they believe gives them insight from the Lord into their lives. Generally, this special occasion only occurs once in a lifetime. The blessing, or instruction, is written down so that individuals may refer to it throughout their lives.

Patriarchal religion: Religious organization where primary leadership positions are held by males.

Delimitations

1. Participants are tenure track and tenured women professors at schools mainly in the Rocky Mountain region.
2. Participants self report to be active participating members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section begins with a discussion of strategies for the development of this literature review. Next, literature is reviewed beginning with a discussion of *Women's Ways of Knowing* as a theoretical framework. Following which, authoritative directives from LDS Church leaders regarding the issue of LDS women achieving education are discussed. This is followed by a discussion of extant research on this subject and the gaps in understanding this issue.

How Literature Review was Conducted

Extant Research

This review of literature was conducted using multiple database searches provided by the Merrill Library at Utah State University including digital dissertation abstracts, Ebsco Host, Jstore, and Google Scholar. Key words utilized in the searches were: LDS, Mormon, women, education, doctorate, *Women's Ways of Knowing*, Belenky, Gilligan, Miller, feminist, and phenomenology. Digital dissertation abstracts led me to search for specific sources in books and journals from the Merrill Library at Utah State University. Jstore allowed me to search other articles that referenced the articles I had found, and allowed me to search all articles

by a particular author. Web of Science was also used to search for related scholarship.

Extant LDS Church Statements

Statements from the LDS Church were found by searching the official website of the LDS Church. Specific words searched were: mothers, motherhood, home, women, and education. When accessible citations were provided, original sources were sought and reviewed.

The official website of the LDS Church was utilized in this review to find credible directives that are clearly recognized as valid statements from, or sustained by, the LDS Church. LDS leaders proclaim to be prophets and apostles who are responsible to declare divine mandates and counsel (True to the Faith, 2004). LDS Church members value their leaders' words, while especially noting the significant occasions when the Lord's name is invoked. Members of the LDS Church value directives and counsel that are authored or approved by leaders of the LDS Church, whether the directives are intended as the word of the Lord, or simply counsel from a trusted leader.

Theoretical Framework

Creswell (1998) wrote that in phenomenology, the theoretical perspective is decided before the study. An a priori decision is made to

examine the meaning of some specific experience against a stated theoretical framework. This allows researchers to enter the field with greater understanding. A framework to explain LDS mothers' decision-making, in response to church counsel regarding education and mothering, was sought for this study.

Feminist scholarship has proclaimed that women are relational more than autonomous; it has claimed that women are embedded in social relationships more than living separate lives (Chodorow, 1978; Keller, 1985; Linowski, 2004). Feminist researchers have expounded on connection, collaboration, reciprocity, and coconstruction rather than competition, conflict, and autonomy, while addressing particular contexts over a universal context (Belenky et al., 1986; Linowski). Feminist research has focused on the particulars of a context, and the role of knowing that makes a situation complex within various contexts. Gender, race, social class, sexual orientation, and culture have been contextual elements of concern (Linowski).

Within the umbrella of feminist scholarship are many related perspectives for investigating phenomena. One such perspective is the epistemological framework in *Women's Ways of Knowing* by Belenky and colleagues (1986). It proposes stimulating philosophical insight that may be applied to the educational decisions of LDS women who achieve

doctoral degrees, making it a useful framework for this study. This framework was selected because of its relevancy and potential application to the research questions.

Women's Ways of Knowing was published as the result of the work of psychologists Belenky and colleagues' (1986) interest in human development. Foundational to their research is the contribution of Carol Gilligan and William Perry. Other research relating to women's developmental theory springing forth from Gilligan's ideas includes Miller's Relational-Cultural Model. A brief discussion of Gilligan, Miller, and Perry will preface an explanation of woman's ways of knowing.

Carol Gilligan

Carol Gilligan published In a Different Voice in 1982, detailing a need to hear women's voices in developmental psychology (Belenky et al., 1986; Gilligan, 1993). She discovered that men and women reveal differing aspects of human development. Gilligan's study of morality sharply contrasted the work of Piaget and Kohlberg. Rather than studying boys and men to shed light on the morality of rights based on the evolution of moral reasoning, Gilligan's work on morality was organized around the concepts of responsibility and care. She discovered that men primarily relied on abstract laws, universal principles, and impartial justice to judge conflicting notions in an impartial manner. She found that men were

likely to define themselves using expressions of separation and autonomy.

Women primarily utilized a morality of responsibility and care (Gilligan, 1993). Women argued for an understanding of context when making moral decisions, contended that an individual's needs are not always satisfied by general rules, and argued that moral choices are influenced by the experiences of participants prior to the situation. In her research, Gilligan found that women stress the importance of dialogue and mutual understanding; women are also likely to have a conception of self that is embedded in a connection to others.

Jean Baker Miller

Jean Baker Miller, Alexandra Kaplan, Judith Jordan, Irene Stiver, and Janet Surrey are all researchers who have furthered the development of the Relational-Cultural Model (Linowski, 2004). Foremost of these researchers is Jean Baker Miller (1976). Her research in the development of this model sprouts from the work of Carol Gilligan. She theorized that women's developmental progression should not be based on models that reflect women's ability to gain autonomy and independence. Rather than seeking separation and independence from others, this model contends that women developmentally progress through forming connections with other people.

William Perry

William Perry (1970) studied how students' beliefs about the nature and origin of knowledge change over time, and how students' understanding of their ability to gain knowledge evolves. He identified a sequence of epistemological perspectives that people may utilize during identity development. Perry labeled these epistemologies as basic dualism, multiplicity, relative subordinate, and relativism. Perry claimed that people occupy positions ranging from basic dualism, where people passively view the world in polarities of right and wrong, to the position of relativism, where one realizes that all truth is relative, depending on context and the framework an individual is employing to understand the event. This research in modes of knowing interested Belenky and colleagues (1986). They used the Perry model in an attempt to study a group of women. In their study, they found that Perry's positions did not fit the emerging themes of their sample of women. This caused them to create their own model with positions based on the data that emerged from their study. Since then, the positions have been reified, and have assisted researchers' understanding of women's modes of knowing (Clark, 2002; Culpepper, 2004; Swaner, 2003; Westmoreland, 1990).

Women's Ways of Knowing

At the 10-year anniversary of the publication of *Women's Ways of Knowing*, the authors edited a follow-up book detailing advances in understanding women's epistemology. Ann Stanton (1996) provided details regarding *Women's Ways of Knowing* based on her study of women in higher education. She described each epistemological position according to how women in each position perceive knowledge, mind, mode, and voice. Her explanation in addition to Belenky and colleagues (1986) original work is helpful in that the five positions are viewed from consistent angles.

Silence

Women in the silence position receive knowledge through concrete experiences rather than words (Stanton, 1996). Women in this position view themselves as not having the ability to think for themselves. A woman's mode is to survive by obedience to powerful and punitive authority. The voice of a woman in this position is described as silent; lacking an awareness of her power of language to share thoughts and insights. Women in this position perceive themselves as mindless, voiceless, and subject to external authority (Belenky et al., 1986).

Received Knowing

Women in the received knowing position receive knowledge from authorities in their lives (Stanton, 1996). They view themselves as capable and efficient learners who soak up information. Their mode is to be good listeners, remembering and reproducing knowledge, while seeking strategies for remembering. They do not feel capable of joining in the creation of knowledge. A woman in this position is intent on listening, rarely speaking up or offering her opinion. She is dependent on, what she views as, infallible external authorities (Belenky et al., 1986).

Subjective Knowing

Women in the subjective knowing position perceive of knowledge as initiating from within (Stanton, 1996). A woman judges ideas as valid if they feel right to her. A woman in this position fears analysis as this may destroy knowledge. She holds her own opinions as unique and valuable. She loves to explore different points of view, while not being concerned with her own truth matching an external reality. A woman in this position listens to her inner voice to guide her to truth that is right for her. She speaks from her heart, sharing experiences and feelings. Her voice is often heard through journaling. She listens and needs others to listen to her without judging or analyzing. A woman in this position perceives knowledge as personal and private.

Procedural Knowing

Women positioned in the procedural knowing stage recognize that others have different frameworks and realms of knowledge (Stanton, 1996). They recognize the positive role of analysis and ways of creating and evaluating knowledge. These women want to see reality in the world, and are suspicious of subjective knowledge left unexamined. Women in this position may utilize separate knowing strategies making use of logic, analysis, and debate; these women desire accuracy, precision, and adapt their voice to meet standards of logic or discipline. Women in this position also engage in connected knowing strategies, comprising the use of empathy, collaboration, and careful listening; these women desire dialogue to understand clearly and accurately.

Constructed Knowing

Women in the constructed knowing position integrate the strengths of their previously held positions, while examining, shaping, and altering systems of thought (Stanton, 1996). This woman shares a fully engaged two-way dialogue with her heart and her mind. She uses questioning and dialogue to seek truth. She integrates separate and connected knowing modes, and is skillful at examining and critiquing arguments as she listens empathetically to understand. She listens and speaks in a confident,

balanced, and caring way.

Culpepper (2004) additionally offers a valuable description of one who occupies a constructive knowing position. A woman in the constructed knowing position is one who creates knowledge while being excited about learning. Knowledge is understood as contextual. She views herself as one who joins in the creation of knowledge while caring for people and concentrating on others' problems. Her actions spring out of obligation, duty, or responsibility to her perceived mission. She recognizes that stress is inevitable, but finds ways to cope with it. She successfully tolerates internal contradiction. She is aware of her own thoughts and desires as she actively participates in conversations. She embraces her different roles in life. She uses reason and logic in her pursuit of knowledge. She is articulate and reflective, while being sensitive to issues of inclusion, exclusion, separation, and connection. She is attentive to what she thinks, and wants, rather than being worried about others' prescriptions. She does not suppress her feelings. She is comfortable with conflict and ambiguity while not needing to create constant order. She celebrates complexity.

Application of Women's Ways of Knowing to LDS Women

Theoretically applying *Women's Ways of Knowing* to LDS women

with young children, it seemed likely that mothers who decided to achieve doctoral degrees may have shared a constructed knowing position. Others may have shared a procedural knowing position. It appeared unlikely that any LDS mothers who decided to achieve doctoral degrees would share the positions of silence, received knowing, or subjective knowing. *Women's Ways of Knowing* was utilized in this study as it was found to inform emerging themes.

In examining why certain LDS mothers choose such a lofty path as doctoral education while others feel compelled by LDS directives to resist activities out of the home, this theory suggests that LDS women may be situated in different epistemological positions. Which position women hold corresponds to how they view directives from the LDS Church, and how they view their own responsibility in relation to the directives.

For example, mothers positioned in silence know the world through their personal experiences, while feeling a lack of power to make choices for themselves regarding education. Mothers in the received knowing position may hear that they should not pursue activities outside of the home, and never consider the question again because of their complete reliance on external authority. A mother situated in the subjective knowing position depends on her own personal feelings, to determine whether to pursue doctoral education, while being unwilling to

expose these feelings to analysis. A mother positioned in procedural knowing recognizes, analyzes, and debates directives, but does so in others' terms, to understand others' ideas. Finally, a mother situated in the constructed knowing position may thoughtfully consider directives that her primary responsibility is to stay home with her children while also hearing that she should pursue her education; she embraces the complexity of the situation, reasonably and logically considers different perspectives, and uses her own experience in creating the meaning of the directive for herself. This theory suggests that she applies LDS directives to her life in her own terms; the LDS Church is meaningful to women in each position, but how women perceive the church's role is very different.

It appears that the *Women's Ways of Knowing* framework has utility in explaining LDS mothers' decision-making regarding education. Despite its theoretical usefulness, researchers have not looked at LDS women in light of this framework. This research has helped to fill this gap in the literature.

The Issue: An LDS Mother's Dilemma

A Mother's Place

LDS women have been counseled in The Family: A Proclamation to the World (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001) that

mothers' primary responsibility is the nurture of their children. LDS women have been admonished "…the counsel of the Church has always been for mothers to spend their full-time in the home in rearing and caring for their children" (Benson, 1987, ¶ 26). The LDS Church has taught that mothering is women's highest responsibility and ultimate ambition.

Mothers with young children in the home have been consistently taught that they should dedicate their

> primary energies to the companionship and training of their children and the care of their families, and should not seek employment outside the home unless there is no other way that the family's basic needs can be provided. (Oaks, 1975, p. 57)

LDS Church President Spencer W. Kimball declared (as cited in Kimball, 1982):

> Women are to take care of the family--the Lord has so stated--to be an assistant to the husband, to work with him, but not to earn the living, except in unusual circumstances. Men ought to be men indeed and earn the living under normal circumstances. (p. 318)

Spencer W. Kimball continued,

> Too many mothers work away from home to furnish sweaters and music lessons and trips and fun for their children. Too many women spend their time in socializing, in politicking, in public services when they should be home to teach and train and receive and love their children into security. (p. 319)

Kimball further stated that a woman should "become a career woman in the greatest career on earth--that of homemaker, wife, and mother" (p. 320). Church President Ezra Taft Benson (1987) added, "It was never

intended by the Lord that married women should compete with men in employment. They have a far greater and more important service to render (¶ 32). Church President Gordon B. Hinckley (1997) suggested root consequences for mothers being out of the home include delinquency, drugs, and gang involvement for children.

President Spencer W. Kimball (as cited in E. T. Benson, 1987) concluded:

> I beg of you, you who could and should be bearing and rearing a family: Wives, come home from the typewriter, the laundry, the nursing, come home from the factory, the cafe. No career approaches in importance that of wife, homemaker, mother--cooking meals, washing dishes, making beds for one's precious husband and children. Come home, wives, to your husbands. Make home a heaven for them. Come home, wives, to your children, born and unborn. Wrap the motherly cloak about you and, unembarrassed, help in a major role to create the bodies for the immortal souls who anxiously await. When you have fully complemented your husband in home life and borne the children, growing up full of faith, integrity, responsibility, and goodness, then you have achieved your accomplishment supreme, without peer, and you will be the envy [of all] through time and eternity. (¶ 35)

Education for LDS Women

The LDS Church has repeatedly emphasized the importance of women seeking education (Faust, 1986; Hinckley, 1999, 2000, 2007; Oaks, 1975; Young, 1862). LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley (1999) has stressed that men and women should get all of the education that they can. He declared that the “Lord has said very plainly that His people are

to gain knowledge of countries and kingdoms and of things of the world through the process of education, even by study and by faith" (p. 4). He further stated that education will unlock doors of opportunity for those who receive it, and declared that it is worth sacrificing to receive so that LDS members will be able to contribute to society. Hinckley taught that as members receive their education and contribute to society, they will bring honor to their church.

Hinckley (2007) encouraged women to receive all of the education that they can while they are young, as the world is a competitive place that will only get more competitive over time. He specifically stated that education will be of great benefit to married women. Rather than married women drifting along without improving themselves, he encouraged women to make the effort to gain education to enrich their lives and broaden their outlook.

As President Gordon B. Hinckley (1997) has promoted education, he has stated that this directive comes from God by saying:

> The Lord has laid upon you a mandate that you should learn, that you should study, that you should acquire knowledge of things beneath the earth and above the earth and in the earth, of history and kingdoms and countries and cultures (see D&C 88:78–79).… That is a revelation to you, that you should acquire knowledge, and the marvelous thing is that as you acquire knowledge, your capacity will increase. You will be more widely recognized by people of the society in which you live. You simply reflect honor to this Church and build a wonderful name in promoting it. (p. 172)

Education has been stressed as an important responsibility of LDS Church members since the LDS Church was organized. Brigham Young (1862) encouraged women to seek education in music, history, scriptures, geography, customs, law, climate, commerce, and politics. As the President of LDS Church owned Brigham Young University, church leader Dallin H. Oaks (1975) explained that an important purpose of education is to prepare men and women to have successful families. He clearly underscored that the church makes no distinction between men and women relating to the church's conviction about the importance of education. Church leader Russell M. Nelson (1993) called obtaining an education a religious responsibility.

The LDS Church has suggested many purposes of women achieving all of the education that they can. LDS Church President Harold B. Lee (1965) repeated that educating women may be more important than educating men, and advised that education improves women's minds, bodies, cultural awareness, spirituality, ability to serve others, and capability to teach her children and wisely counsel her husband. Education increases a woman's self-esteem, helps her be more interesting, and prepares her to view the world through wise, more mature eyes (Christensen, 1985).

Back in 1877, two Salt Lake women, Lula Greene Richards and

Emmeline B. Wells (as cited in Christensen, 1985, p. 140), offered that "Of all the conditions of women in the world the most deplorable state is of those who despise working for themselves, and who have been allowed to imbibe the idea that woman's position in life is one of dependency." Christensen claimed that a marriage where one spouse is wholly dependent on the other is unhealthy. Education prepares a woman to be strong, independent, self-reliant, and a better wife as well as one who has more to contribute to the marriage. Christensen related that educated women communicate better with their husbands, enabling them to more maturely settle marriage difficulties.

As the wife of LDS Church President Spencer W. Kimball, Camilla Kimball (1977) offered an expectation that women prepare for multiple careers. She once counseled that she "would hope that every girl and woman here has the desire and the ambition to qualify in two vocations—that of homemaking, and that of preparing to earn a living outside the home, if and when the occasion requires" (p. 59). Dallin H. Oaks (1975) reassured women that diligently pursuing a vocationally related education was not inconsistent with motherhood as women's primary responsibility. He explained that a 20-year-old woman normally lives an additional 50 years, and much of that time would not be spent raising children. Education should prepare a woman for the "entire period of her

life" (p. 57). James E. Faust (1986) urged women to get an education that provided women with a marketable skill.

Educational Decisions of LDS Mothers with Children

Mothers with young families must decide if they should continue their educational pursuits. General Young Women's President of the LDS Church Ardeth G. Kapp (1985) has said:

> The question has been asked, if a woman is trained in such broad areas, will she be lured away from the home? In many ways, her education can strengthen her home. Down the road, higher education may give her more opportunity to be with her family, to set her own working hours, to have the know-how to go into business, to prepare her to meet the economic needs of her family if she must become the provider. Knowledge and intelligence are tools that can be used in righteousness or unrighteousness. Proper use can help us better protect and guard our homes. (p. 9)

Church leader James E. Faust (1986) was careful to note that church directives regarding mothers pursuing endeavors outside of the home apply in a general manner to all members, but that their application involves exceptions. Pinborough (1986) urged women to consider that since circumstances vary from home to home, "every family must work out the details for themselves" (p. 22).

Extant Research on LDS Women's Motherhood and Educational Decisions

A body of research suggests strategies LDS mothers use to think through balancing family and education while considering counsel that mothers are to get as much education as they can, and also that they should spend their full-time in the home in fulfilling their primary responsibility of motherhood. This body of extant literature is reviewed beginning with a more detailed review of the most significant studies relating to LDS women achieving doctoral degrees, followed by a brief review of studies related to LDS mothers and education.

Evolution of Ideals for Women in Mormon Periodicals, 1897-1999

Vance (2002) performed a content analysis of the themes and directives given to women in LDS Church periodicals between the years 1897 to 1999. She found disparate ideals held for women between periodicals and within periodicals, while noting changes in ideals during various time periods. The results of her content analysis of the data revealed a tension between directives given to LDS women regarding domestic and social norms. Vance found a dominant ideal of women's achievement outside of the home for LDS women until the 1960s, a major push for mothers with young children to stay at home through the 1970s,

and inconsistent messages during the 1980s and 1990s. She found greater participation by LDS women, and greater autonomy in the Relief Society organization, in the early years of the church.

Vance (2002) reasoned that during a young "charismatic leadership" phase, religious organizations attract women, as women receive more opportunities within the organization than in the socio-cultural environment wherein the organization exists (p. 94). Vance noted that as churches become bureaucratized, women tend to lose freedoms that they previously held. Her content analysis of periodicals argued that the LDS Church has followed this pattern. She additionally found a large variety in the ideals promoted for women in the New Era periodical as compared to the relatively singular message of domesticity in the Ensign periodical.

This article is a high-quality content analysis. Vance presented her article in a logical manner that provides the reader with a greater understanding of the messages LDS women have received over a significant time period. Vance's analysis is highly relevant to this study in that it suggests that a variety of ideals are presented to LDS women, while noting an emphasis on homemaking since the 1960s. This study will help fill the gap between what is written in periodicals and how women live their lives.

Molly Mormons, Mormon Feminists and Moderates: Religious Diversity and the LDS Church

Beaman (2001) investigated how LDS women maintain their autonomy and agency within the patriarchal LDS Church, and how women understand LDS Church directives regarding male authority. Using a qualitative approach, she conducted life history interviews with 28 LDS women. Beaman found a pattern of heterogeneity from the explanations of the women. Using coding procedures, Beaman identified categories of behaviors within LDS women. She labeled the three categories Molly Mormons, Mormon feminists, and moderates. Molly Mormons, a term that emerged from the participant's answers during interviews, represented a stereotype of "good Mormon" women who readily followed church teachings (p. 69). Mormon feminists were described as those who reflected on diminished autonomy of women in the LDS Church, and those who wanted to alter current circumstances. Moderates struggled with the patriarchal nature of the church, but accepted it as long as men behaved responsibly.

Beaman (2001) discovered that these LDS women exercised their agency through boundary negotiation in interpreting church doctrine. She found a "contrast between rhetoric and reality" in married LDS women's working choices (p. 71). Beaman stated that this topic is "complicated for

LDS women, who are taught to be self-sufficient, even though they are expected to marry, have children, and stay at home" (p. 71). The author described a tension in the expectations for women further by concluding that the message of the LDS Church to women is essentially, "be responsible for yourself, yet be dependent on your husbands. Be able to care for yourself, but let your husband be the breadwinner" (p. 83).

Though the women in Beaman's study chose their response to directives, the women all shared a Mormon identity, and desired to be known as such. This study is a good example of life history research, as the researchers were able to clearly illustrate religious commitments by illuminating the participants' lives. Beaman's research is significant because it demonstrates heterogeneous responses to LDS leadership, and identifies a tension in women between being taught to be self-sufficient, and taught to live in dependence upon a husband for means. Beaman suggested that this places the father in a position of power, despite rhetoric placing the mother on a pedestal.

As Vance (2002) found a disparity in the ideals presented to LDS women, Beaman (2001) noted a tension in the response of LDS women to disparate ideals. While identifying a tension in expectations for women, Beaman's research did not specifically investigate women's educational decisions.

Higher Education and the Negotiated Process of Hegemony: Embedded Resistance among Mormon Women

Mihelich and Storrs (2003) questioned how LDS women resisted hegemony, and wondered why they remained participants in a very patriarchal religion. The researchers interviewed 20 LDS women enrolled in an institution of higher education in the northwestern United States. They initially utilized a resistance theoretical framework, while employing an interpretive and qualitative research design to interview the women. Interviews were transcribed and coded for the degree and form of gender role resistance and adherence. Additional categories of educational goals and aspirations emerged from the women's answers. The researchers' initial expectation that the women would articulate resistance during the interviews, failed as the women did not perceive their actions as students in higher education as resistance.

Mihelich and Storrs (2003) then broadened their theoretical framework from resistance to embedded resistance. Through the coding process, they discovered that the women demonstrated five strategies to mediate between traditional gender roles of the church and expanding educational opportunities; they identified these as the ideology of womanhood, a discourse of equality, an essentialist discourse, a discourse of professionalism in relation to motherhood, and the importance of LDS

nomos. The researchers contended that the women's value of LDS nomos explained why they embraced LDS gender regulation, saw little point in explicitly resisting, and easily negotiated the contradictions that arose. Researchers argued that the ideology of womanhood in the LDS Church had adapted to include the pursuit of higher education, allowing for the preservation of LDS nomos.

Mihelich and Storrs (2003) ultimately contended that even though the LDS women did not articulate resistance to the LDS Church, their actions offered a "poignant example of the agency and resistance on the part of the women" (p. 419). The women's almost "unwitting resistance" in pursuing higher education provided a pressure to which the LDS Church has had to respond (p. 419). The researchers labeled these women pursuing higher education as unique participants in the LDS community, and suggested that more research needs to be conducted to examine the contextual elements of women's behaviors.

Mehelich and Storrs (2003) demonstrated that Mehelich could conduct qualitative interviews of LDS women as a male researcher, although the researchers did not address this issue in the article. As a qualitative study, the results were not generalizable; however, the researchers' use of coding allowed them to make important conclusions that a reader may deem transferable to applicable situations. Their lack of

familiarity with LDS Church statements was apparent, in that they were not familiar with long-standing directives that women should receive all the education they can. However, their distance from the LDS Church may have helped their objectivity. They did not specify the specific methodology, other than to label it qualitative and interpretive. This is a significant article because it highly relates to doctoral achieving LDS women, was published recently in Gender and Society, addresses reasons LDS women pursue higher education, and recommends that more LDS women be studied in different contexts.

While Vance (2002) suggested that disparate ideals are held for LDS women and Beaman (2001) suggested a tension in the way women respond to the ideals, Mihelich and Storrs (2003) found a tension specifically between the ideals of LDS women pursuing motherhood and education. Mihelich and Storrs recommended that more studies of LDS women in different contexts be conducted; however, there is a lack of research in the context of LDS mothers who choose to achieve doctoral degrees. This research will help to fill that gap.

The Power, But Not the Glory: How Women Empower Themselves Through Religion

Ozorak (1996) asked what coping strategies women used to reconcile their self-respect with gender inequalities within patriarchal

religions. Ozorak interviewed 61 women from various religious backgrounds. Participants were comprised of college students who responded to a mailed invitation, and of women selected through local congregations. She suggested that women avoided cognitive dissonance by adjusting their religion's "beliefs in a self-protecting way" (p. 18). Through coding the interviews, Ozorak identified coping strategies women employed within patriarchal religions. Thirty-four percent of the women, making it the most popular strategy, legitimized religion's patriarchal bias as tradition, and compared their current opportunities with the opportunities of women in the past, to find optimism for the progress of women.

Another strategy Ozorak (1996) identified was characterized by women substituting or interpreting their own ideas for those offered by their particular religion. Requiring more effort than the other strategies she categorized, it was only used by 13% of the women. However, Ozorak believed that an interpreting strategy had the "greatest potential for liberation through actual change of circumstances" (p. 25).

Ozorak (1996) had a large sample for a qualitative study, interviewing 61 women. However, it is not clear what criteria she used to select the participants. She noted that 15% of the women declared themselves to be agnostic; lending the reader to wonder why they would

be included in a study of how women deal with patriarchal beliefs and practices. A purposeful sampling procedure may have found more women to shed light on the particular research questions.

Again, Ozorak (1996) stated only that this was a qualitative study, and detailed her use of interview and coding as the main procedures. Disappointingly, the article did not relate how the strategies that women used were represented within the three categories of women that emerged. Although religions identified in this study did not include the LDS Church, this study is significant because Ozorak suggested strategies that women use to maintain self-respect when there are perceived gender inequalities.

Ozorak (1996) touted that the strategy with the most potential for changing circumstances was an interpretive strategy where women participated in making meaning from church directives. Her finding supports what *Women's Ways of Knowing* suggests about women situated in the constructed knowing position. Ozorak's study lends credence to the choice of theoretical framework for this current study of LDS women's decision making.

Related Extant Survey Research

The Impact of Protestant Fundamentalism on Educational Attainment

Darnell and Sherkat (1997) analyzed the writings of well-known Protestant authors along with the results from a survey sent out from the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. They contended that conservative ministers preached against secular education because the ministers viewed education as a threat to religious authority. They found that the leaders' teachings had a negative impact on secular educational attainment. The researchers presented a thorough study of survey data, indicating the sample size was nearly 1,700 students. However, not all religious affiliation has been found to have a negative impact on educational attainment as described next.

Secularization, Higher Education, and Religiosity

Albrecht and Heaton (1984) compared the educational achievement of a national sample of LDS members to the general population in 1982. They found that LDS men and women exceeded national averages for educational attainment. As Darnell and Sherkat (1997) found that affiliation with conservative Protestant religions decreases the pursuit of higher education, Albrecht and Heaton found the opposite for members of the LDS Church.

The Impact of Religious Identification on Differences in Educational Attainment Among American Women In 1990

Keysar and Kosmin (1995) studied national survey data from the CUNY Graduate Center to learn about the educational attainment of women who reportedly belonged to a variety of religions. They reported that LDS women were more likely to acquire higher education than women who did not affiliate with a particular religion. This was true despite generally observing that religious women generally married earlier, and that married women were shown to achieve lower levels of education than single women (Heaton & Cornwall, 1989).

This study supports Albrecht and Heaton's (1984) findings and has been referenced repeatedly over the last decade. Given these results, along with the Darnell and Sherkat (1997) study, and the Albrecht and Heaton (1984) study, it appears that people's educational achievement is impacted by the religion with which they affiliate. McClendon and Chadwick (2004) offered additional support for these results, reporting that LDS members were more likely than people who did not specify a religion, to graduate from college.

From these studies, it appears that the effect of religious affiliation on educational attainment has been debated. The tension between motherhood and education, suggested earlier in the review, is related to

this topic. Though research has been conducted regarding the impact of religious affiliation and achieving higher education, none of these studies has examined the impact of religious affiliation on the decision of women with dependant children at home, to pursue doctoral education. Researchers have studied the tension that exists between homemaking and higher education, leaving one to wonder about the decision-making experience for an LDS mother, with children under 17, who decides to continue on and achieve doctoral education. There is a lack of research on this phenomenon.

Religion as a Determinant of Economic and Demographic Behavior in the U.S.

Lehrer (2004) studied previously gathered data from several sources to determine how religion affects American's economic and demographic behavior. Lehrer found a clear division of marital roles taught by the LDS Church. She claimed that LDS Church leaders provided "institutionalized moral support and psychological rewards to mothers who stay home with their young children" (p. 713). Lehrer cites a lower female employment rate in churches that provide these rewarding conditions. However, Lehrer found that religious groups also provided incentives to attain higher education. Lehrer, concluded that more research is needed concerning the educational attainment of LDS

members.

This study helps fill the gap that Lehrer recognized about the need to conduct more research regarding incentives to stay home with children as well as achieving higher education.

Mother-Centeredness and College Youths' Attitudes Toward Social Equality for Women: Some Empirical Findings

Though not current research, Meier (1972) investigated the relationship of sex-role attitudes and parental characteristics as determined from a survey of 219 college students. He published findings that support what LDS Church leaders have said about the importance of a mother's influence on her young children. Meier claimed that mothers influence the character development of children to a greater degree than fathers. Additionally, this study found that a mother's educational attainment significantly influences the children's egalitarian attitudes toward women's roles. However, children in nonreligious homes demonstrated more egalitarian attitudes than children who came from religious homes.

Meier's (1972) research relates to this study as it illustrates the importance of mothers' influence on their children. The education level of mothers affected what ways their children were influenced. It could be argued that a mother with more education may potentially be a better

mother because of the attitudes she passes along to her children.

"That They Be Keepers of the Home": The Effects of Conservative Religion on Early and Late Transitions into Housewifery

Sherkat (2000) studied the Youth Parent Socialization Panel Study, a series of surveys to the same participants over a 30 year time period, and found that a woman who achieved a college degree was less likely to become a full-time housewife. The acceptability of women fulfilling different roles was influenced by a cultural orientation, and was found to be sustained in closely-knit communities of socialization. A reviewer of this research noted that gender role ideology information would be helpful to understand what ideology the women in the survey sample held. The Vance (2002) study, illustrating LDS ideology, is valuable in filling the gap in identifying that there is not a monolithic ideal presented by the LDS Church.

Women's Religiosity and Employment: The LDS Experience

Chadwick and Garrett (1995) examined the survey responses of 1130 LDS women in Utah. They found that employment was related to lower levels of religious activity for LDS women. They reported that LDS women in the study recognized the inconsistency between their actions and their religious beliefs and expressed a desire to minimize the effects of

employment on their religious participation.

The quality of this study could be improved. For example, they cited that a person in a position working with children had a lower religiosity than someone serving in the Relief Society, the women's organization. Members of the church do not self-select their church position, and judging that one position of service makes a person more religious than another is unfounded. The results of this study seem questionable.

Gaps in Our Understanding of this Problem

From the studies contained in this review of literature, we see that a researcher contends that disparities of ideals are held for LDS women. Also, some researchers perceive that there is a tension between the directives concerning mothering and education. Researchers have suggested some strategies women use to make sense of varying church directives, and have additionally investigated the role of religious affiliation with educational attainment and marital roles.

While a body of research suggests some strategies LDS mothers use to think through the counsel that women should spend their full-time in the home while fulfilling their primary responsibility of mothering, and that they should get all of the education that they can, there is a lack of

research on LDS mothers' decision to not only seek higher education, but to achieve doctoral degrees. Research has failed to show how women experience the decision to achieve the lofty goal of doctoral education as LDS mothers. In summary, this study adds to the literature and our understanding by revealing how LDS mothers specifically experience the decision to achieve doctoral education amid counsel that they should spend their full-time in the home.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

A qualitative research design was utilized to examine multiple dimensions and display the complexity of this situation (Creswell, 1998). As this study sought to shed light on women's experiences of deciding to achieve doctoral degrees as LDS mothers, phenomenology was an appropriate methodology. Phenomenology seems to have offered a useful method of describing the meaning of the lived experiences shared by several participants about the specific phenomenon of achieving doctoral education as LDS mothers.

Phenomenology originated with German mathematician Edmund Husserl, who emphasized the search for the essential aspects involved in a phenomenon, and the intentionality of consciousness of participants (Creswell, 1998; Moustakes, 1994). Husserl believed that one's consciousness must be directed at an object, connecting the reality of a phenomenon with one's consciousness of its existence.

Use of Theoretical Perspective

Using a phenomenological approach, I began with a philosophical

idea, and expressed openness to learning about a phenomenon that presented a mystery as to its presence (Creswell, 1998). In this case, *Women's Ways of Knowing* provided a philosophical idea that had the potential to inform how LDS mothers experience the process of deciding to achieve doctoral degrees. I then investigated how participants manifested the phenomenon in their life's experiences, setting aside my own preconceptions, to view the phenomenon through the perceptions of the participants.

Bracketing

Researcher prejudgments were suspended by a process called bracketing (Creswell, 1998). A researcher's suppositions must be set aside, or bracketed, until they are founded, as evidenced in the data. Husserl used the word epoche to describe this suspension of researcher bias. During a bracketing interview, I disclosed, to a fellow student researcher, my own feelings about, and interest in, the study. The interview was transcribed and is included as Appendix D to the dissertation. This process assisted me in setting my own bias aside, insisting that the data drive the meaning making experience. I then proceeded by relying on intuition, imagination, and universal structures to understand participants' experiences.

Description of the Participants

This section describes the use of purposeful sampling to find information-rich cases for this study. Information-rich cases are defined. A description of each participant as an information-rich case follows.

Purposeful Sampling

Purposeful sampling allowed me to select participants who had experienced the phenomenon and who could contribute to the study by thoroughly articulating their experience (Creswell, 1998; Polkinghorne, 1989). Potential participants who had experienced the phenomenon, and were able to articulate their experiences, represented information-rich cases and were sought for this study. Purposeful sampling was used to select participants who could represent an array of rich experiences and perspectives.

To address the research question, selection criteria for acquiring an information rich sample were LDS women who reported to be active members of the LDS Church while making the decision to achieve their doctoral degrees as LDS mothers. Information-rich cases were graduates, because the decision to achieve a doctoral degree is a decision that must be made continually until the degree has been achieved. As women who had previously decided to achieve their degree may eventually decide not

to continue, the most information-rich cases include those who have made the decision to achieve their degree during all stages of the decision-making process, culminating in graduation. Rich cases can provide information relating to different aspects of the phenomenon, from various contexts; for this reason, I sought participants who could provide an array of rich experiences and perspectives from differing ages, geographic locations, family sizes, and family needs.

Participants in the Study

I was made aware of two forums of LDS women who were tenure-track and tenured professors at various universities. The forums met at least annually at national conferences or in local settings in the Rocky Mountain region. They met as a support network of LDS mothers who had chosen to achieve doctoral degrees. Learning about these forums of LDS women allowed me to solicit participants for this study from a collectively large known group of LDS women with doctoral degrees, satisfying my need to find information-rich cases. As professors' religious affiliation can be a sensitive topic, and is protected information, these forums of women allowed me to access many potential participants.

I was able to select participants that represented information-rich cases of LDS mothers who had achieved their doctoral degrees. The participants in this study provided a rich array of experiences and

perspectives as they attended many schools across the United States. As no two participants achieved their doctoral degree within the same state, this sample proved geographically diverse. Six of the women were married and one was a divorced, single mother. Ages of the participants, as they initiated their doctoral studies, ranged from 24 to 37. The mother with the most children had eight, while the mother with the least had one child and was expecting a second. One participant had her fourth child four days before she achieved her doctoral degree. The participants were raised during their childhood in the Rocky Mountain West, four in the state of Utah.

Angie. Angie reported to be a 36-year-old lifelong member of the LDS Church when she began her doctoral program in the 1990s. She graduated at age 43 from a school in the Rocky Mountain West. Angie was married and decided to apply for a doctoral program as the mother of six children, and was pregnant with twins during the application process. She began the program 5 months after they were born, as a mother of eight, with five children who were 5-years-old or younger. Her husband was a stay-at-home father while she had been the breadwinner for the previous 10 years. Her experiences provided rich insight as to the feelings of a mother of a large family, who was in a doctoral program for seven years while acting as her families' breadwinner.

Beth. Beth recalled being 37 years old when she enrolled in her doctoral program in the late 1990s as a lifelong member of the LDS Church and a housewife. She graduated 3 years later at age 40 from a university in the Midwest. Her youngest child was 3 when she decided to begin her doctoral program. She had four children who ranged from age 6 to 11 when she graduated. Beth informed this study as a mother in her 30s with four children as she decided to achieve her doctorate.

Carol. Carol was a married, active member of the LDS church when she decided to enroll in a doctoral program at age 29 in the early 1970s. She graduated 4 years later from a university in the southern states. She had three children when she began her doctorate, and had her fourth child 2 months after she defended her dissertation. Carol informed this study as a mother who in her twenties and was still bearing children when she decided to achieve her doctoral degree.

Donna. Donna shared that she was 24 years old when she decided to enroll in a doctoral program in 2001. She was an active member of the LDS Church, and was not married yet. She got engaged 1 month into her program and got married during spring break of her first year. She graduated at age 30 with one child and was expecting her second. Donna informed this study from the viewpoint of a younger woman, who wanted to be a mother, but was not one until after she began her program.

Her decision to achieve her degree was made in the midst of getting married, and having a first child.

Emily. Emily was an active member of the LDS Church when she decided to enroll in a doctoral program at age 25 in the 1980s. She was divorced and had one child. She graduated at age 30 from a university in the Midwest. Emily informed this study from the perspective of a divorced mother. Her experience of moving to a new part of the country with her child to begin her doctoral program as a single mom provided another rich perspective of achieving a doctorate.

Faye. Faye was an active LDS Church member when she decided to enroll in a doctoral program at age 29 in the 1970s. She graduated 3 years later from a university in the Midwest. She had three young children when she began her doctoral program and graduated four days after she had her fourth child. Faye provided information from someone who decided to achieve her degree already having children, and deciding to further balance motherhood and education as she had a fourth child during the final year of her program.

Ginny. Ginny was 35 when she decided to enroll at a university in the Midwest in the 1990s. She graduated at age 41. She reported to be an active lifelong LDS Church member who had four children. She informed this study as the mother of four children who decided she wanted to go

back to school after having been out of school for some time while she worked in her community.

Data Collection

A coordinator, who normally spearheaded the two forums of women, forwarded a short email survey from me to about 30 potential participants. To maximize variation and promote a broad range of experiences in the participants that took part in the study, the email survey asked the participants to disclose their: age at time they received their degree, the number of years since they achieved their degree, status as lifelong member versus convert to the church, geographic location of schooling, and number of children during the time they worked on their degree. In an effort to select the participants that could provide the most information-rich cases, priority was given to women who were mothers of children at the time they made their initial decision to enroll in a doctoral program. I also sought participants that would represent a variety of geographical locations in their experiences. The email that was sent is found as Appendix B.

The survey asked them to respond to and forward the email with their answers to me if they were willing to participate. I utilized the coordinator to email the surveys so that the confidentiality of the forums

of women would be maintained. I only sent the email to the coordinator; she sent the email survey to the forum members, who could choose to respond to me.

Another perceived benefit of this process was that the women received the solicitation from someone whom they likely trusted. Only those women who expressed a willingness to participate in the study responded to me. Included in the survey was an invitation for the recipients to forward the message to other women who fit the criteria, utilizing a snowball sampling method; these responses however were limited and did not seem to fit the information-rich case.

Following responses from willing members of the forums of LDS women, I determined that seven participants would be selected who met the criteria for information-rich cases for this study. I contacted and individually discussed this study with the selected participants during a brief initial meeting. This initial meeting provided the participants with a time to meet me, feel comfortable with the study, and discuss any questions the participants may have had. The participants reviewed and signed the informed consent form (see Appendix C). I assured the participants that their names would be kept confidential. I explained that my motivation was to allow these women an opportunity to tell their stories in their own words, and to find meaning in the lived experiences of

those who participated in the phenomenon of achieving a doctoral degree as an LDS woman.

I practiced interviewing using five initial questions with three LDS mothers who achieved doctoral degrees prior to meeting with the participants, and found that the questions satisfactorily probed these women's perceived experiences. None of this data were used in this study, nor were the three participants in is practice study included in this study. The initial interview questions are found in Appendix A.

I established a time and place, of the participants choosing, for the interview, and left a copy of initial interview questions with the participants. Disclosing the initial interview questions during the short appointment allowed the participants to preview what they would be asked. This was intended to help the participants feel comfortable with the interview questions, and provide more time for participants to recall their most meaningful answers.

I then met individually with the participants for an interview, at a location of their choosing. All interviews were conducted face to face except one that was conducted over the telephone. Interviews were tape recorded for transcription. I transcribed the data from each participant within a couple days of each interview to promote accuracy.

Following the interview, I contacted each participant to ask if she

had thought of anything that she would like to add to her answers. One participant added information at this time. A transcription of their interview was sent to the participants so they could check for accuracy. Five of the participants chose to clarify comments they had made, and added additional insight. Depending on emerging themes and their personal answers, I consulted with several participants for continual clarification.

Data Analysis

Procedures for analyzing the data were based on the writings of Colaizzi (1978), Creswell (1998), and Moustakas (1994). These major procedures for data analysis are generally accepted, and a similar sequence of steps is used by all psychological phenomenologists (Creswell).

1. After transcribing the interviews I read all of the descriptions in their entirety, making memos and recording thoughts in a research journal.

2. The participants' answers were divided into statements during a process called horizonalization. During this step, each statement was tagged with a code that identified the participant and other unique information. I then coded the data for themes and categories that emerged. Themes were identified by using a color code system. I then

extracted significant statements from each description according to the color they were coded in.

3. These statements were combined to create clusters of meanings. Color coded sheets identified clusters of data from all of the participants. Categories were collapsed until the major themes that resulted were: contributing factors to achieving their doctorate, challenges, rewards and benefits, and perception of LDS Church directives. Within each category, emerged themes as to the women's experiences.

4. The clusters were tied back together to make a general description of the experience. This included a textural description of the experience and a structural description of how it was experienced.

I further followed up with participants to seek clarity and a greater depth of understanding. Several participants accepted the opportunity to clarify their experiences and offer additional insight. Some chose to remove some details that they had shared, while clarifying what they meant to express. I sought additional clarification regarding their experiences until reaching saturation of the essence of their perceived experience. To be sure that I had reached saturation, I reached out one more time, and received no additional insight to support additional themes.

Verification

The data analysis procedure outlined above was developed to find credible results (Creswell, 1998). Additionally, Creswell recommends that researchers utilize Polkinghorne's (1989) five questions during their phenomenological study; the researcher reflects upon these questions to verify that the study has produced credible results.

1. Did the interviewer influence the contents of the subjects' descriptions in such a way that the descriptions do not truly reflect the subjects' actual experience?
2. Is the transcription accurate, and does it convey the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview?
3. In the analysis of the transcriptions, were there conclusions other than those offered by the researcher that could have been derived? Has the researcher identified these alternatives and demonstrated why they are less probable than the one decided on?
4. Is it possible to go from the general structural description to the transcriptions and to account for the specific contents and connections in the original examples of the experience?
5. Is the structural description situation-specific, or does it hold in general for the experience in other situations? (p. 208)

Answering these questions provided triangulation, and verified the credibility of the results.

Question 1 was addressed through the use of a bracketing interview. This interview was carried out by a fellow student researcher prior to the collection of data, and is included as Appendix D. During the

interview, I suspended, or bracketed, my suspicions, allowing the women to answer broad, open-ended questions. During the horizontalization process, data spoke for itself as themes emerged.

Questions 2 and 5 were addressed through the use of member checking. Participants were asked to verify that the written transcription accurately represented the oral interview. Additionally participants were asked to check the data analysis at progressive steps to verify that their experiences were reflected accurately. Participants checked that the findings matched their experience, and were given one more opportunity to further clarify or add information to this study as I asked them to verify the results.

Questions 3 and 4 were satisfied through the use of an audit trail and research journal. A number tag placed on the data during the horizonalization process provided a way to trace data from the interviews to the analysis and conclusions. A fellow student researcher conducted an audit to ensure the accuracy of the analysis. A research journal was kept throughout the process of data gathering and analysis to record my perceptions.

Approval from IRB

A general application and copies of the informed consent form, research questions, questionnaire asking professors to participate, and

assurance document were submitted to the IRB office accompanying a copy of the proposal. The sample population was not considered vulnerable; however, information about personal religious beliefs is a sensitive topic. For this reason, identities were kept confidential in accordance with IRB directives. Participants were not to be pressured; rather they were asked to share the experiences that were meaningful to them in an effort to capture a depth of their experiences.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A Mother's Choice to Achieve

Included in this analysis are four sections that describe how LDS mothers in this study experienced their decision to achieve their doctoral degrees, and one section applying the *Women's Ways of Knowing* framework to the data. Analysis of this decision process considered their experiences through the time of graduation, as it seemed that participants were constantly faced with the decision to continue towards achievement of their degree up until the point of actually receiving it. The five sections are: contributing factors for doctoral achievement, challenges to doctoral achievement, perceived rewards and benefits of the women achieving their degrees, an understanding of the women's perceptions of the counsel of the LDS Church regarding women and education, and an application of *Women's Ways of Knowing* to LDS mother participants.

Contributing Factors for Doctoral Achievement

In this study, LDS mothers shared their experiences of deciding to achieve doctoral degrees. The women expressed many personal reasons for achieving doctoral degrees, many of which appeared to be spiritual in

nature and dealt with their personal desires as well as what they perceived to be direction from God. Family relationships seemed to have the most external influence on most of the women who achieved their degrees. The participants appeared to emphasize their father's influence prominently as they shared their experiences. The women in this study began their doctoral programs from a variety of circumstances, yet they all seemed confident in their abilities to succeed.

The factors that participants indicated as contributing to their decision to enroll and persist in their doctoral programs are presented under sections entitled personal reasons, external influences, initial circumstances, and perceptions of ability. Personal reasons that these LDS mothers identified for achieving doctoral degrees included internal desires, feelings of having always known that they would, feelings of personal need, spiritual confirmations, patriarchal blessings, feeling a sense of purpose to influence others, feelings of enjoying education, feeling like quitting was not an option, and preparation for a career. External influences that these LDS mothers identified as encouraging them to achieve their doctoral degrees include their fathers, mothers, parents and families in general, church leaders, faculty members, and personal associations. The section titled initial circumstances describes events of the participants leading up to their decision to enroll in a

doctoral program.

Personal Reasons

Internal desire. The participants in this study strongly emphasized the effect of their own personal desires in achieving their doctoral degrees. The women used a variety of words to express the desires that they felt. Their apparent determination seemed to reflect their true nature and desires; it appeared that the women tried to express that the path they chose was a reflection of their life's purpose. Angie referred to her personal drive as what got her through her doctoral program. Beth declared, "I'm very driven," and indicated that she wanted to pursue her doctorate as soon as she finished her bachelor's degree. She further stated, "I'm just very driven and accomplishment-oriented. I love to make changes, and I always have. I've always had this intense desire to obtain the highest levels of education." Donna explained, "I place a high internal value on education." She expressed her belief that "whatever intelligence you attain in this life will carry with you unto the next."

Emily shared an experience that illustrated her attitude and desire to pursue education and motherhood. She stated:

> I got really sick with my pregnancy. I was horribly, horribly ill while I was pursuing my master's degree. I literally would go to class, stay as long as I could until I had to go throw up, then I would come back to class. I'd go to class, stay as long as I could, leave class to go throw up and come back to class. And I remember

> this one instructor, he just came up to me and he just kind of had this sickened look and a little condescendingly said, "Please, just go home." Luckily that semester, I had a couple of teachers who let me do incompletes, and then once I was more stabilized in my pregnancy I was able to finish all the work.

Faye shared that she was led to achieve her doctoral degree by "a passion to do something for children." She revealed that she had always felt a love for people, and especially felt a need to help little children. Referring to external factors that influenced her to achieve her doctorate, Faye related, "Those were important, yes, but honestly the largest influence came from within. I mean it was a burn. It was a burning desire." She elaborated:

> I mean, people who think intellectually, that they want to get a doctorate with little children, they'll never make it unless they also have an emotional drive, or a spiritual drive, or whatever. It doesn't just come from the mind. It comes from the heart. No. No, it was my path.

Feeling of having always known. Just as Beth stated previously, other women claimed to have always known that they wanted to achieve a high level of education. From childhood, Carol expressed her aspirations when she reflected, "I'd always wanted to be a doctor." Donna said, "I always knew I would do some kind of advanced graduate work." She explained, "I have always felt [that] education can only benefit you, and I really enjoy school; and in any field, if you want to advance to the highest levels, you've got to have advanced degrees." Emily reflected concerning her

decision to achieve her doctoral degree, "I don't know why I always had that in my mind, but I always did. I'd always had this in the back of my mind." Though she did not know when she would pursue the degree, she shared, "I did know at one time I was probably going to go back and get a doctorate." Emily recalled:

> When I was in my freshman year at [a large private university], I took a career inventory test. It's funny, I actually saved that and I got it out a year or so ago just to kind of look at it. I was very intrigued that one of the items that it said I would be interested in was college professor.

Faye related, "It was something that I always wanted from the time that I was young. I wanted to either be an MD or a PhD."

Personal need. Participants seemed to believe that they had a personal need to pursue doctoral education. The participants seemed to recognize their own needs and the importance of fulfilling them. Beth confided, "Through the years I've tried to analyze why I wanted to continue my education along side the challenges of motherhood, and I decided that I just needed to do it. I needed that in my life." Carol explained her desire to achieve her degree as she simply said, "the doctorate was just because I felt like I needed to. It was a felt need to continue learning." Reflecting on her experience of achieving her degree, Emily shared that "you just make sacrifices when you need to get your education." Ginny shared, "this was something I needed to do for my own

sanity."

Spiritual confirmation. The LDS mothers in this study expressed that they believed that they were inspired to achieve their doctoral degrees. Angie seemed to indicate that during challenging times she would rely on her spiritual confirmation to sustain her studies. She reflected:

> I felt like this was really the right direction. I had to keep saying to myself, "okay, I really, at the beginning, felt this was the right thing to do." My husband and I spent a lot of time trying to decide, and we both really felt really good about it, so I had to keep going back to that, saying, "there is a reason I'm doing this."

Beth shared:

> [I] kept getting the confirmation throughout the process that I was on the right track that the Lord wanted me to be on. I had to have His permission to do this, and that's just how it worked. I really needed to feel that this was the right thing to do, and it always felt right. I was blessed to receive a confirmation from the Lord many times that I was to get my masters and my doctorate.

Carol related, "I felt it was the right thing to do. I wasn't doing it to rebel. I felt it was the right thing to do…. I just felt really pushed to get the degree." Emily expressed that she has felt the hand of the Lord in her pursuit of her doctoral degree. She related, "I felt very much that the Lord was mindful of me and leading me, taking care of me. The Lord had a hand in my progression."

Faye shared:

> I dedicated my life to children, and actually that dedication hasn't waned. I mean now I look back on that goal and I think, I mean it just seems sort of arrogant for me to do that, but I did. And it was a

> very serious dedication and I meant it. I wanted to, I really wanted to make a difference on a regional level and on a global level, you know, and very honestly I felt called to do that. I've always been a very religious person and I've had, a very spiritual person I should say, and I've always felt like I had a spiritual partner always with me, you know a guide. There was somebody or something with me just saying, you need to prepare your life in such a way that you'll have the skills and the degree, the opportunity to impact on more than just a locality. It is clear to me that my mission was children.

Regarding her decision to pursue her doctorate as an LDS mother with young children, Faye shared:

> It was a terrible decision, but it was something I was driven to very honestly. And it was an intellectual drive, yes, but it was also a spiritual drive. And actually, when I was getting my PhD, the spiritual force was so strong in back of me to move me through that I was afraid to not do it because I was afraid that I'd be consumed. I can't describe it any other way. I mean it's just, you know, when God wants something, you just don't deny that…. You just move through.

Ginny related that she has received "strong, strong answers" to her prayers concerning her doctoral degree. Answers to her prayers seemed to shout "yes, you're supposed to do that." Expressing her desires to pursue doctoral education, Ginny shared how she asked the Lord in prayer, "Will this hurt my family?" In answer to her question she continued, "And, you know, it was kind of a qualified answer, 'not necessarily,' meaning I could control that. I could get too caught up in that and it could hurt my family, but not if I was careful." Reflecting on whether she had felt spiritual confirmation since achieving her degree she said, "I ask myself if this was spiritually directed, since I've been here? Definitely!"

Patriarchal blessing. Members of the LDS Church may seek personal direction for their lives through what the LDS Church calls a patriarchal blessing, as explained in the definitions section. Individuals may go to an appointed person whom they believe gives them insight from the Lord into their lives. Generally, this special occasion only occurs once in a lifetime. The blessing, or instruction, is written down so that individuals may refer to it throughout their lives. The LDS mothers in this study referred to their patriarchal blessings often, seeming to indicate that the participants felt that doctoral education was part of the personal direction that they received for their lives.

Beth related:

> When I was fourteen, I received my patriarchal blessing. There is a major paragraph in that blessing that talks about my scholarly education. It says that I would have a continued desire to learn and to grow in my scholastic, it calls it scholastic education. It says that I would have a continued desire to seek an education, and that my education would prepare me for some great things that I am supposed to do in my life, and that I would be known as a great teacher among all mankind. And so at fourteen years old, I knew that I would need to get more than a bachelor's degree because it was very clear that education, whatever I chose to do in education, was going to prepare me for life and teaching. I knew at that age that I was supposed to continue my education even past a bachelor's degree.

Beth explained that this counsel has been central to all of her decisions, feeling confident that the instruction came from the Lord. She emphasized, "I think that my initial conscious desire for continued

education came from my blessing. It has been a strong motivator to move forward." Beth emotionally reflected on "those ah-hah moments when I know I have been in the right place at the right time to influence people for good."

Donna stated:

> Who knows, patriarchal blessings are very ambiguous and different in how they come to fruition so you can't bank too much on a certain thing. But it is pretty explicit about how to balance…my career and to pursue education in my field; and I was fifteen when I got it, if I remember. I think I just always assumed from the get-go that I would be in school for a long time, that I was going to have a career. At times when my mom questions my plans, I think she thinks back in her mind, "well it said that she'll be balancing between the two and that's her life's calling." It's definitely guided my expectations regarding a commitment to education, and to a career, for a long time.

Emily shared:

> When I was fourteen I got my patriarchal blessing and one of the things that stood out, and it had a significant impact I'm sure on me, was that I would be known as a great teacher and that people would come to me for advice regarding their lives…. I always had that in the back of my mind. I go back to my patriarchal blessing and I, I read that I have the privilege of associating with those who are not members of the church and they expect me to act in a way that would be appropriate even though they themselves are not so inclined.

Faye elaborated:

> When I got my patriarchal blessing, that was a very profound experience for me, and in that blessing the patriarch said that these feelings that you have when you see people, this is love. And so you have a love for people and you need to realize that. And at the same time I was realizing that myself.

Feeling a sense of purpose to influence others. Angie shared "I just felt like there was something I can do, there's a reason to do this." She elaborated:

> When I started looking for a job, I looked elsewhere. I thought how neat it would be to be in Illinois as a Mormon professor, that there would be some Mormon students there that I could influence and be a good whatever. But I really felt like I was supposed to be here. And this is all feelings, but I really felt I needed to be here because sometimes women students need a positive role model, and what I had seen when I was going through this school was that you either had, if you had a woman with a PhD, that she didn't have a family. It was an either/or situation, and we have a lot of our older women faculty that have never married. People say, well you can't have it all. I think that you have to make choices. I'd never push someone that way, but I feel like they need some role models too.

Other women felt a need to help specific people. Carol shared, "I could help make a difference for young kids with disabilities." Emily shared how she wanted to teach adults and realized "the only way I'll really be able to do that is if I get my doctorate." Emily shared a deep motivation to be an example of an LDS mother through her career. She shared:

> I never in a thousand years thought I'd be eighteen years a professor at [this university], but I think it's been an incredible blessing for me to be here in the world and to have an opportunity for people, I hope, for people to say, "I know someone who's Mormon. They were very impressive," or "I really thought that they were a remarkable person."

Enjoy education. Based on comments from the participants in this study, these women seem to enjoy achieving education. Donna shared,

"I've always liked school a lot and always been really competitive in school. I enjoy it." She continued that "if there's a certain route towards something, I want to do the maximum, the best that I can possibly do." Emily shared that she too had always liked school. Ginny related how studying some personal topics seemed to spur her on to pursue doctoral education. She shared:

> So it was just this really intellectually stimulating time where I was pulling everything together and thought, "I just want to continue this feeling. This is what I want to do. I want to think, pull ideas together, and write them down."

Quitting was not an option. The LDS women in this study appeared to not entertain the idea of anything but graduation. When reflecting on difficult times in her program that seemed to discourage her, Angie shared, "There were too many people, relying [on me]. There's so many people, my parents, my kids, my husband. All these people, I felt, were really kind of pushing for me to make it." Beth would sometimes think:

> "I can't keep doing this!" But, I'm very resilient and I would go to bed and get up rested and say, "I've got to do this. I'm supposed to do this. This is what my life's about." And I would go on. I don't think there was ever a question that I would finish my doctorate because I believe that you must always finish what you start.

Concerning her persistence, Carol called herself stubborn while she explained, "I don't like to quit things. I don't like to just stop." Emily shared, "But even with all my mistakes, even as hard as it was, I don't think there was ever a question of, was I going to quit? It wasn't even a

thought. There's just know way."

Preparation for a career. Participants in this study seemed to believe that they could influence others beyond the scope of their own children. Participants in this study expressed that they were motivated by a desire to qualify for a job that would meet their needs to contribute, financial needs, and their desires for flexibility to attend to family life. Angie had a job, but wanted to "do a little bit better". She reflected, "When I was in the middle of the master's degree, I thought, 'you know, what I need as a mom is I need to have a good job. But I also need to have flexibility because my family is really important to me.'"

Some women in this study expressed that at the onset, they did not know how they would use their degree, only that they knew that they needed to achieve it. Beth recounted, "I wasn't sure how I would ever use it. I just knew that I needed to get it." Upon graduation she related:

> I was offered a couple positions right after that degree to be full-time faculty at colleges. I didn't accept those positions because I chose not to work full-time. I worked part-time. I worked part-time teaching college for many years, since 1991, and also did some consulting and speaking. I went back to working full-time in 2002 when my youngest was in second grade. That was when I made the choice that I could [work full-time]. Being a professor gives me the flexibility to work and continue to keep up with most of the motherhood work as well.

Concerning her decision to pursue her doctoral degree, Carol said, "But there was no, 'and what will you do with it?'" Donna related a desire

to achieve doctoral education before deciding what field she might aspire to. She stated, "I didn't have a set career, something that riveted me, something that I absolutely wanted to do." She further explained that her education is ongoing, and she's never felt limited in what she can attain, or that her current profession is a final resting place. She mentioned with a smile, "I still maintain a list of careers I'm interested in."

As Emily weighed her options as a single mother, she felt like achieving her doctorate would allow her to be home more with her daughter. Emily described her situation:

> I had to support my child. I knew that I was going to have to be the primary bread winner, and so that was critical. It was a very pragmatic decision. I knew that I would be able to support [my daughter] as a college professor.

Emily added, "I guess, to a certain degree, I also wanted to be successful. I definitely wanted to be successful at anything I pursued."

Faye shared:

> I saw a PhD as saying, I'm going to be a mother until my youngest turns eighteen and leaves for college and then I don't see this as a full-time job. I see this PhD as taking me into the next phase of life so I don't go through this major crisis of empty nest and can make the contribution that I want to make in the next phase of life.

Ginny related the following experience regarding what she identified was a need to make a greater contribution:

> I had a hard time being a stay at home mother. It was like, I love my children, I wanted to be a mother, but I had a lot of young mother angst about wanting something else. My talents were not

> home centered. I couldn't do things at home that felt like I was developing myself.

External Influences

The participants expressed that they believed that certain people influenced their decisions to achieve doctoral degrees. The individuals that the participants most commonly expressed as the most influential to them achieving their doctoral degrees were their fathers. It is interesting that the women in this study emphasized their father's influence so much in attaining their doctorate. As might be expected, the participants also discussed their mothers' influence, as well as parents and family generally, husbands, and church leaders.

Fathers. Angie reflected on her youth to the influence of her dad. She recalled:

> I had grown up in a family of all girls, but my dad always said, even when we were very young, that we all should get a bachelor's degree. He just felt like that was really important, and probably, compared to a lot of my friends, our family stressed education more than most of my friends.

Angie related that her father taught her the value of education when she was young by quoting LDS Church leaders. She reflected:

> I remember him talking about a quote from Brigham Young that said something like, if I had to choose between educating my sons and my daughters, I'd educate my daughters because they would educate my grandchildren. I remember that from when I was a young kid. My dad just always said how important education was. I probably was exposed to all the positive quotes about education

and none of the negative about working.

Angie further related how she looked to her father as an example of going back to school. She explained, "My dad went back to school to get his masters degree when I was young, probably twelve. He went to school at night, and so to me, that was just a super important thing to do." She shared how her father reacted at her decision to pursue her doctorate as she related, "I just remember my dad being really excited about having someone go on and earn a degree and doing the PhD thing; super enthusiastic and supportive. My father had always talked about the importance of education."

Beth shared how, though her grandparents were not necessarily educated, her father valued education and stressed its' importance to his children. She remembered her father teaching her that she could get a graduate degree, whether or not she used it overtly. Beth recalled:

> My dad actually finished his undergraduate degree when I was a young child. I mean it took him a little while to do that, but I have vivid memories of moving to BYU in the summers for his masters degree when I was seven and eight years-old, and I watched him do his masters work part-time. I only remember a few things at that age, but I mostly remember being at BYU, loving the experience…and watching him with a family go through and complete his master's degree. And then we had a similar experience with his doctorate degree. We moved from our home in a neighboring state to BYU for two summers and I watched him. I watched him go through his dissertation, my mom typing on a typewriter, very frustrated at times. But I watched him take his courses and go through the whole process of obtaining his doctorate degree. In my mind, even though I was the only girl in a

> very traditional family, I always thought I was going to do that too. I always thought I was going to do that too. I always thought that if he can do that, then I could do it as well. I think these experiences played an important role for me in understanding the value and importance of education. And I think, maybe in the back of my mind, I may have always thought about a doctorate degree.

Carol seemed to likewise learn from the example of her father as she related, "My dad had a master's degree, and so education was really encouraged in my home." Emily expressed how her father influenced her not only to pursue her education, but what to study as she related, "I really wanted to major in history because I love history and my dad said, "You need to get a major where you could actually support yourself if you ever need to." Faye shared of her father's high aspirations for her, stating:

> My dad tried to push me to be an MD… but I wasn't as interested in that sort of thing as I was in education. My dad though, before we got married, took my husband aside and said, "You need to promise me that you will never stand in her way," career wise, my emphasis of course.

When she decided to go to a different state with her children to pursue her doctoral education, Faye reported that her parents did not speak to her for over a month. She further explained, "But at the same time, my father sort of spoke to me on the sly." Throughout the experience, Faye expressed that "he was so supportive…. My dad was a wonderful support. I mean what to say, but my dad was just incredible, just incredible."

Mothers. Beth shared that her mom had an influence on her as she had completed a couple of years of nursing school before having children

and spoke about it often. Emily discussed how her mom had five children in seven years, yet

> she really wanted to finish her degree, so she took courses at [a major university] and then during the summer, we'd go [to another university] and she would take summer school classes for six weeks. We stayed [in the dormitory] and just thought it was fantastic to be there on campus. We had so much fun, but it was a real example to us. My mom really sacrificed to finish her degree. Several years later, she decided to get a law degree after my father was diagnosed with a medical condition that would soon leave him unable to support our family, and there were still kids at home – two more kids were added to the original five over the next ten years. So when they moved to [another state] for his health and for a less stressful but fulfilling career opportunity, mom regularly drove in to [the university] to attend classes and then spent evenings and weekends studying. This went on for three or so years. I eventually came over and helped out for six months during my divorce (and this was where I met the person who helped me get into [the university I attended]). Mom also took a semester at [another law school] to finish. So I had a mother who sacrificed her summer and nights, and ultimately her early "grandmothering years" to finish degrees. Gratefully, my father supported her decisions completely. That was a great example to me.

Parents and family. Without discussing individual family members, some participants commented on the importance of their parents and family's influence in their decision. Angie shared, "my parents bought me a computer, a lap top, when I first went back because they felt like that would be really good." Angie stated, "My family just immediately rallied around." Beth shared, "It really goes back for me to growing up. I think up front I just always thought I would get an advanced degree. Education was just huge in my home." Donna related, "One thing in our family,

which I have always been grateful for is that our family always expected excellence as kids, as students, and education was very important to our family." Donna indicated that she thought about her education from her youth, as she reflected, "I'm sure even in high school I had intended to do some kind of graduate work, not necessarily a Ph.D. because I had considered going to medical school, but definitely something." Emily shared that she felt the support of her family by being apart of legacy of people in her family who set education as a priority. She shared:

> My paternal grandmother taught second or third grade for years and years in [a rural western community]. She was the wife of a farmer and raised six kids and you know, all of their kids have degrees, college degrees, and a couple have graduate degrees, and many of them have been teachers, and all of them love teaching. Three have been professional teachers on my grandmother's side. My dad had an MBA from [a prestigious school]…. I have a legacy of people who were good students, who expected us to be good students, who valued education, who wanted us all to be very educated. I had a great support system and great examples. I was very confident…because education was always encouraged and reinforced in our home.

Faye recalled:

> When I became thirteen, or early in my teens, I thought, gee, I'd really like to get an MD or a PhD, preferably a PhD because I wanted to…this probably sounds very vain-glorious, but I wanted to be in charge of more than just my classroom. I wanted to be in charge of policy, policy for children. When I was seventeen, I did what was very common for a teenager, but now is sort of humorous, but you know, when you're a teenager you have this philosophy that you're the gift to the world, and you're going to be the president of the universe someday. So at seventeen, I dedicated myself to children.

Husbands. The women's husbands also influenced them in their experience of deciding to achieve a doctoral degree. Beth shared that her husband was very supportive, as she explained, "I remember my husband saying… 'got to do another [degree]!' I remember him buying a brief case when I finished my masters, and he said 'this is for your doctorate.'" Beth shared that her husband was very understanding because "he knew that this is what I needed to do in my life." Carol related, "My husband recognized absolutely that it was important for me, and was supportive, and it was a matter of prayer for our family." Faye commented concerning the importance of her husband's influence on her decision as she said, "My husband was very influential, and actually I wouldn't have married him had he not been because that was one of the conditions."

Church leaders. Angie shared concerning her decision to pursue doctoral education:

> I thought that some people in the church might have a problem with it, but I didn't think the church itself would have a problem with it. I don't know that I ever consciously said, "what would the church think?" I think in the church there's just a lot of emphasis on getting your education, the value of education.

Angie discussed how her church leader was also her backyard neighbor and that he was also working on a degree. She related that she felt support from him in her decision. Carol shared that despite not feeling support from most people, "I did have one bishop who was very, very supportive.

He was never demeaning." She expressed relief that she did not have to prepare to answer questions from him about what she was doing. Rather, he would check on her progress and ask questions like, "When do you have prelims? What are they going to look like? What are your toughest classes?"

Donna shared:

> I always felt that kind of support. I think for the most part, but who knows secretly what people think in their own minds. At least publicly, women especially are very encouraging and admiring, saying "oh that's so great. I would love to do something like that. That's really amazing." If anything, outwardly they just express admiration and encouragement. So I feel very supported.

Emily described her ward as very friendly during the time she achieved her doctoral degree. Ginny expressed that the church was an integral part of her life, and that she felt support from her church leaders, who never showed that they were questioning her decisions. Ginny described living in a small town built around a large university, and the types of LDS members that lived there. She told how attending graduate school was completely normal for those that lived in the area. She said, "I didn't feel any restrictions and no judgments." The university atmosphere permeated the LDS Church community there, eliminating potential questions that Ginny could see being asked in some other places such as, "How are you doing it? What are you doing with your kids? What made you decide to do this? How can you do this and I can't? Why are you

doing this?" Because she lived "in the middle of the Country, centered around a university and converts, that normative culture was much more diffuse."

Faculty members. Angie shared how faculty members at the school where she got her Master's degree encouraged her to go and get her doctorate, and then hired her after she completed it. She said, "I think the biggest influence was, you know besides our own decision, was the faculty here." She explained:

> When I was going through the executive MPA program, I talked to some of the faculty and told them I was thinking of doing a PhD, and they really encouraged me to do that because they felt like it was a good field for a mom and it's a field that they need more women in, so they were very supportive of me going back.
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> They were very supportive, and it was the faculty here that helped me get my data set for my dissertation. They are actually the ones who hooked me up with people and all that kind of stuff. One of the faculty members here served on my committee, and so I felt like they were really supportive and all those kinds of things. I think I felt like I couldn't quit. I don't know how often I thought about it, but when I did, I couldn't really because all of these people thought that I could do it.

Carol seemed to express a lack of support from others as she pursued her doctoral degree. She expressed, "I had had professors all along who encouraged me to continue in learning." Donna shared that she "would always have professors say 'oh, you should consider graduate school or being a professor.' My professors were always really encouraging." In addition to telling Donna to continue with her education,

she related how "they were more influential on the nuances of it and helping me choose a good program and things like that."

Emily related how she sought out the advice of a former professor who listened to her circumstances and desires. He immediately counseled her to apply to the best program in the country, and offered to write her a letter of recommendation. She was accepted and completed her doctoral studies there. Faye also expressed, "I had a couple of professors up here who were very, very supportive."

Personal associations. Donna shared how when working with nonprofit groups, she noticed that the heads all had doctoral degrees. She stated, "They all had higher degrees and whether they used it in the particular field or whether it was just a credential or stepping stone to what they wanted to do, it seemed very instrumental." Donna also shared how almost all of her close friends went on to graduate school, indicating a unique social norm among her close classmates. Emily expressed appreciation for her peer group at graduate school for being supportive and nice friends to her.

Initial Circumstances

As the women in this study described their experiences of deciding to achieve doctoral degrees, they seemed to share circumstances from

their lives that they believed played a role in their decisions. Based on what the participants shared, it appears that the participants began their programs in diverse circumstances. Despite the women's seemingly different circumstances in life, each completed the path to doctoral education.

Angie. Angie shared, "My husband's an at-home dad, and so at that stage, I'd been working full time and my husband was an at-home dad for about ten years at the time when we decided I should pursue the PhD." Angie recognized that she played a different role than most LDS mothers with eight children with the statement, "It's interesting because I am probably odder than most people, because most people don't have a husband who stays at home."

Beth. Beth related, "I went through a couple of years up at [a university in the northwestern United States] where my dad was teaching institute." From that time, Beth recalled knowing that she wanted to at least achieve a master's degree as she transferred to [a bigger school]. She said, "Absolutely…that was my plan. So I went for three years and went on a mission." She shared how after her mission she taught at the MTC, got married, finished her bachelor's degree, and taught junior high for a couple of years before having her first child. She related, "I planned to jump back into my masters as soon as I could. I had two children by the

time my husband completed his second masters, and was ready to move on." Beth related that her family moved to the Pacific Northwest. Before the move she visited the city with her husband to find housing, and her husband dropped her off for a few hours at the major university in the area to get information. She said:

> I had studied the pamphlets, and it just happened to be that I ran into exactly the people I needed to see to have things come together quickly. Although I had two young children, I was able to start my masters almost immediately by taking some weekend classes. Everything, every little single thing fell into place. I taught piano so I could trade for babysitting. My mom came out for a couple weeks one summer, and my mother-in-law for a few weeks as well. I remember in a four week period I was able to just get 18 or 20 credits one summer. I mean, everything came together and I knew it was meant to be.

When they moved from that area, Beth said that she knew that it was time to have two more children and stay at home and care for the children. They moved again after five years, and she knew it was again time to enroll in school again and pursue her doctoral degree.

Carol. Carol grew up in a small rural community. Her father had a massive stroke when she was a junior in high school. Her mother was concerned for Carol and decided that she needed to go to college as soon as possible. So, they arranged with the school to complete her junior and senior year courses in one year, and she enrolled [at a university] early. She got married her senior year of college and had a child not long after. As her husband was still attending college, Carol continued on in a

master's degree program. They both graduated with master's degrees after having their second child. She expressed, "at that point I was very burned out. I'd had a bad pregnancy, and was just really tired of [where I attended]. The paternalism was really troubling." They then started moving around the country with employment opportunities. They ended up three years later in [a southern city] where Carol described, "I had my third child, at which point I felt like my brain was just like mush, and I really wanted to take some classes, and I was interested in a degree in psychology." She then began working on her doctoral degree.

Donna. Donna related that she knew her own personality well enough to know that if she was going to achieve her doctoral degree, that it needed to be something she pursued while she was young and right out of her undergraduate program, or not at all. She said:

> I still have tons of career interests, but I felt like the other things were a lot easier, logistically, to table to the future. I can always try out other things down the road, but I knew I wasn't going to go back and get a PhD. Timing wise, it made a lot of sense to go directly into a graduate program.

Emily. Emily related that she married her husband soon after he returned from an LDS mission. He was a third semester freshman and she was a senior. Emily finished her master's degree while her husband finished his bachelor's degree. Two weeks after graduating with her master's degree, Emily recalled giving birth to their daughter. She said, "I

crossed the stage eight and half months pregnant with our daughter and, stayed home with her for a year while [my husband] continued to finish his degree." She then taught school for a year, and then moved to a city where he could attend medical school. In the second year of her husband's medical school, Emily shared that her husband separated from her. Emily reported to have been teaching as an adjunct professor with her master's degree. Following this, Emily and her daughter went to stay with her parents for a couple of months. This was at a time when she related that her mom was getting her JD degree. Emily revealed:

> So I was thinking, "What am I going to do?" I always was thinking in the back of my mind that after we'd had our kids--I remember thinking that I'll have two girls and two boys, you know. I had this image that he's going to be the doctor and I'm going to help out with the office and we'll have these kids and we'll live in the west, or whatever, and that really was my image. And then I thought, "When the kids are in school, I'll go back and get my PhD."

Emily shared how reflecting back to these thoughts caused her to seek out some former professors at a conference. One of them recommended a school for her to achieve her doctorate, and as an alumnus, wrote her a letter of recommendation. She related applying to the school and beginning to cram to take the GRE. She vividly remembered getting a phone call from the school a month after she had applied, informing her that she was accepted, was given a tuition remission, a teaching stipend, and notified that she did not have to take the GRE. She recalled, moving to

a new part of the country as a recently divorced mom with her daughter "in an ironic twist of fate doing earlier than expected what I'd always kind of thought I would do…several years down the line."

Faye. Faye recalled taking premed classes during her undergraduate degree and doing very well in them. She related being one of the few females taking these classes. Following her bachelor's degree, she recounted teaching school for 2 years and getting married. She remembered thinking about medical school when she realized that her determination to serve children was as strong as ever, so she sought a master's degree and began a doctoral degree when her third child was 1 year old.

Ginny. Ginny recalled being a freshman in college and finding interest in psychology. However, she remembered meeting someone with a master's degree in psychology who was not able to find work. She was concerned about majoring in something that she felt she would need a doctorate to use. She reported not feeling like she could make that kind of commitment so early in her life. She decided to pursue a field where she felt that a bachelor's degree was more useful by itself. She finished her junior year by getting married to her husband who was finishing his bachelor's degree. Ginny shared how she had one child during her master's program and was expecting her second when she graduated. She

wanted to get a doctoral degree, but found out that her desired institution only had full-time programs and would not hire their own graduates. Ginny remembered being discouraged from learning that, so she instead joined the local city planning commission as a member of the parks committee and taught part time at a local community college while having a third child. Ginny shared, "my husband, after we had been married for 10 years, decided he wanted to go back to school, so…he started medical school." When they decided to move their family for his residency, Ginny decided it was time for her to achieve her doctoral degree.

Perception of Ability

Angie confessed, "I don't think I've ever had anything stretch me as hard as doing the PhD program." She recalled her experience as a test of who she was. Ginny believed, and warned other students, "just don't drop out because you're afraid you might fail." Despite the fears and difficulty inherent in education at the doctoral level, these women all ultimately made the decision to complete their degrees. Their perceptions of their abilities encouraged them in their initial decisions.

The mothers in this study seemed to express confidence in their abilities to succeed in their programs. They indicated that they felt like their previous experience in school prepared them to succeed in their doctoral program. Angie recalled, "I thought that it would all be about,

you know, studying and school, which I was decent at; and about that I wasn't too worried." Beth related, "During my masters work I knew that I was good at school, that I was a good thinker. I got feedback that I could make a difference." Carol shared, "I did well in school." Donna said, "And then once I started college I was part of a scholars group that just were incredible, ambitious people, and it's just assumed, a default, that of course you'll go on to do graduate work." Emily shared, "I was a good student, and I liked school. I was quite serious about it because I felt I would do a good job." Reflecting back on her decision to begin her doctoral program, Emily said, "I was very, I think I was just incredibly, blissfully ignorant about what a big deal it was to go to [a prestigious university] and also just about how incredibly difficult the program would be. But I learned quickly and accommodated." Faye shared, "I have always been a very organized person and I have a lot of energy. I'm a very nervous person actually, but that's good because that means I have a lot of energy and so I just set up schedules." Ginny said that "in high school, I loved school."

In this study, LDS mothers shared their experiences of deciding to achieve doctoral degrees. Participants indicated that personal reasons, external influences, initial circumstances and perceptions of their ability were all factors that contributed to their decisions. The women expressed

many personal reasons for achieving doctoral degrees, many of which appeared to be spiritual in nature and dealt with their personal desires as well as what they perceived to be direction from God. Family relationships seemed to have the most influence on the women achieving their degrees. The participants appeared to emphasize their father's influence prominently as they shared their experiences. The women's initial circumstances at the time they began pursuing their degrees greatly varied, but all seemed to be confident in their abilities to succeed.

Challenges to Doctoral Achievement

The LDS mothers in this study seemed to have faced many challenges as they achieved their doctoral degrees. Participants seemed to face challenges stemming from their own desires and expectations, as well as from the desires and expectations that others held for them. The women in this study appear to have successfully balanced doctoral achievement with their continued desire to place motherhood at the forefront of their lives, while often struggling against varying expectations from many different people.

Challenges that these LDS mothers expressed are organized in several categories. The first category is titled the difficulty of balancing motherhood and doctoral education, with subcategories titled LDS

mothers as students, strenuous programs, feelings of being overwhelmed, missed family time, guilt and desire to make up for time deficiency, and lack of role models. The second category is titled perceived roles and responsibilities of LDS mothers, with subcategories titled caring for their children, housekeeping and running errands, church responsibilities, and embarrassment. The third category is titled the husband's role of an LDS mother and doctoral student. The fourth category is titled LDS mothers' priority of motherhood. The fifth category is titled the need to balance, multitask, and prioritize. The sixth category is titled study habits of LDS mothers. The seventh category is titled discouragement from people, with subcategories titled school counselors, faculty members, family members, church members, and isolation.

The Difficulty of Balancing Motherhood with Doctoral Education

The women in this study shared their perceptions of the difficulty of balancing motherhood with doctoral education. Participants seemed to reflect on their experiences with a sense of satisfaction, having successfully persevered to their degrees. Many participants shared that achieving doctoral education as a mother was often more difficult than they imagined it would be.

Many of the LDS women seemed to feel that their experiences were

strenuous and they expressed feeling overwhelmed. They missed time with their families, and tried to make up for it during times that they were available. The women expressed a desire to have seen more mothers serve as role models for them as they pursued their doctoral education. Their expressions seemed to describe various aspects of their challenges as students and mothers.

LDS mothers as students. Angie disclosed her perception of how doctoral programs are wary of mothers with this comment:

> I remember when I was applying to the PhD program, and people kept telling me, oh, you need to go and meet with the people up at [a large local University], and I said there is no way I am going pregnant. There's just, there is no way because I knew that would be sort of a black mark, you know. So I did everything over the phone and email so they didn't know I was pregnant.

She reflected, "I had my twins in April, and I started my program in September." The twins were not Angie's only children. She discussed further, "At that time, my oldest would have been twelve. We had five who were 5 and under. So, it was a crazy time." Angie had a total of eight children ranging in age from 5 months to 12 years old at the time she began her doctoral program.

Angie humbly shared "I don't think I did a very good job actually of balancing" education with motherhood. She reflected, "That was the hardest part for me I think. Like I said, I don't think I did a very good job."

Faye recalled her decision to pursue her education as a mother with young children as she said, "It wasn't easy. It was a horrible struggle. It was a terrible struggle." Faye remembered having one child as she began her master's degree, and having her second child the first week of the second semester. She had her third child the year before she began her doctoral studies, and her fourth child was born four days before her graduation ceremony for her PhD. Faye recalled the difficulty of continuing her education as a mother as she said:

> That was really very hard because I felt like the message I was getting was, and this is reinforced by the practice that I saw around me with all my friends, that you attended school until you fell in love and got married. Then you dropped out regardless of where you were. I had several friends who dropped out with just one semester to go, several friends, but I continued on going to school.

Strenuous doctoral programs. Angie confessed, "I don't think I've ever had anything stretch me as hard as doing the PhD program." She reflected on her experience as a test of who she was. As Beth thought about motherhood in the midst of her journey towards her doctoral degree she remembered, "It's been a challenge. I just thought having and raising children would be easier. I thought it would be more natural and that they would mind better or something." She continued, "Getting my doctorate degree along with raising my children and working part-time was different than I had expected. Life got so busy. It changed my life in a really stressful way." Beth appeared to struggle as she tried to share her

feelings about being a mother while she achieved her doctoral degree as she commented, "Occasionally I think everything got overwhelming as I tried to balance all of my life roles. It's hard for me to describe it, but it's just huge." Ginny reminded herself to continue without fear of failure.

During her first year in her doctoral program, Emily shared "I taught three undergraduate public speaking courses and I attended three doctoral courses, each course requiring us to read approximately 200 pages a week. It was an extremely rigorous program." Emily remembered beginning her program as she said, "I think I was incredibly green my first semester and I'm sure many a professor looked at me and said, 'What the heck is she doing here?'" Despite the fears and difficulty inherent in education at the doctoral level, these women all ultimately made the decision to complete their degrees.

Feelings of being overwhelmed. These LDS women appeared confident in their purpose and drive, yet still seemed to express moments of concern. Beth revealed, "I think I got right up to my cracking point a few times…during my doctorate program." Donna shared that "you have to put in the hours, and it's pretty intense." Emily remembered, "It was a very, very difficult time for me, personally and emotionally; to be honest, even spiritually. I honestly, looking back, don't know how I made it through."

Emily further related discouraging feelings from her educational experiences as she shared:

> Probably to me, the biggest thing was I really became seriously depressed. I just was overwhelmed and you know, it just was very hard, especially the second and third year. It was a challenge. I was able to function, but it was, you know, I had never experienced anything like that before. So, I was really very unprepared.

Ginny remembered a "doubt factor" the first year of her doctoral program where she thought, "I should just quit so I don't have to fail." She continued, "My third daughter just told me recently "there were times I could hear your footsteps across the wood floor upstairs and I was nervous that you were upset or angry about something." Concerning the time she was achieving her doctoral degree, Ginny admitted, "I know I was more on edge and not quite as calm as I normally am."

Missed family time. Angie appeared to believe that the hardest part of her doctoral education was the lack of flexibility in her schedule. She said,

> During those years that I was taking classes everyday, I felt like I missed, kind of, those years because I wasn't able to go to programs and that kind of stuff. I missed a lot of things, but that's why I had to keep telling myself, "In the end, this is all going to be worth it."

Carol, Donna, and Faye each shared that they had to live apart from some of their family during the time they worked on their doctoral degrees.

Beth expressed her desire to be home with her family as much as she could. However, even though she was home, she often labeled herself

as being "psychologically unavailable." She laughed as she further explained:

> My daughter, who is now fifteen, said something I still laugh about when I think back to those times. I remember one time when she was seven or eight years-old, she came up to my office and tried to talk to me. She finally said, "Mom, you're not listening." I stopped my work and for some reason said, "The literature would say that I am here but psychologically unavailable." And so about a week later, she opened my office door and said, "Mom, are you psychologically unavailable or can I come in and talk?" Although I was busy often while at home, I always believed it was important to be in the home as much as I could when my children were home. I still believe this.

Beth shared that she felt like it was important to be at home where her children were, even if she was not able to spend much time with them as they may have wanted. Concerning her hectic study schedule, she explained, "My kids are just used to it." As she described the many times a child would call for her and another would call back, "She's working in the office." Beth expressed, with a smile, her opinion that her children will remember that phrase often as they reflect on their mom's education.

Ginny stated, "I didn't postpone motherhood at all." As she thought about the difficulty of balancing her education with motherhood she said, "There's little doubt that my oldest daughter…definitely did not get enough attention." She insightfully recalled:

> I underestimated the amount of attention thirteen to seventeen year-olds need and made sure my four year-old got all she [needed]. I was more worried about the younger one and thought the older one would be okay. I way underestimated a teenager's

> needs, and wasn't as calm, as she was going through her kind of emotional volatility…. I could have done better with my oldest.

Guilt and desire to make up for time deficiency. The mothers in this study seemed to express a desire to make up time that they missed with their families during other times that they could be available. Beth revealed her struggle as she said, "I did go through lots of years of beating myself up for everything. So, that's a hard thing. I beat myself up for a number of years because I thought I wasn't 'right.'" She stressed her desire to serve others and make a difference in the world and then added, "I didn't like to cook, sew, and make crafts. I remember wondering why the Lord made me the way he did when he wanted me to stay home with my children."

Carol expressed that during the time she achieved her doctoral degree that she felt "a lot of guilt." She reflected:

> And then of course, there was relief society, sacrament meeting…general conference. If I wasn't carrying enough guilt, they always managed to add to it considerably, depending on who the president of the church was at the time, and what the theme was.

Carol seemed disheartened as she said, "I don't remember for years, one Sunday where I didn't feel dismissed or devalued in some way."

Donna seemed to reflect on her education through the eyes of her child. She said, "I have my own second guessing within myself of trying to manage my own priorities and commitments and thinking, 'Am I being

a good mom and spending enough time with [my daughter]?'"

Faye shared, "I was always really worried about whether there was a sense that I was deficient as a mother, but honestly, through a lot of spiritual introspection, I came to the understanding that…my mission was to serve others on a larger level."

Ginny expressed cheerfully:

> My school ended in early May and my kids didn't end until the end of May so I helped with fieldtrips and kind of made up for some of the guilt of not being a good mother during the year. Went to the science museum, I mean every year we did something.

Beth shared her determination to not take money away from the family. It seemed as though she wanted to independently pursue her education as a personal endeavor. She related, "I was very adamant that I paid personally for every penny of the education that I got. It did not come out of family funds. For some reason, I thought that was important." She admitted, "I don't know what psychological thing is behind that, but I taught aerobics, gave workshops and lectures for clubs, hospitals, and companies. I always had [enough]. I didn't have a lot of extra, but all my earnings went to pay for my education."

Lack of role models. Carol shared, "I had no role models. I hadn't met anyone…. There was one faculty member in my master's degree that was a woman. She was a widow. Her husband had passed away years ago." As a mother with young children, Carol reflected on the struggle of

balancing motherhood with doctoral education as she continued, "There were not a lot of role models for how that's done, how people do it." Carol had three children when she began her doctoral program. She related, "If all your kids were identical maybe it wouldn't be so bad. They're all different, and do different things." Carol shared an experience that illustrated the lot of a mother pursuing her doctorate as she remembered:

> I was competing with some very, very bright students, and my daughter one day was running a low grade temp. I couldn't figure out what it was. We took her to the doctor, [because] it was getting higher. We were just about to do a spinal tap, because we were afraid it was meningitis when he recognized the tell-tell sign of chicken pox. So, I took my first set of finals in a highly competitive, top tier school, with three kids with chicken pox. I was trying to stay up with the kids, because they were miserable, itching and scratching. It's very difficult.

Carol shared that in addition to mothering children at home; she also defended her dissertation while she was having a very difficult pregnancy.

Donna also expressed a lack of role models for balancing motherhood with education. She believed that most of the LDS women professors that she had known were single, older women whose children were grown, or women whose husbands stayed home. Emily walked across the stage for her master's diploma almost nine months pregnant. Later she divorced, and raised her daughter as a single mom throughout her doctoral program, without similar models to emulate.

Ginny seemed to indicate that she really struggled to know if she could achieve a doctoral degree as a mother. After feeling self-doubt creep in when professors seemed to wonder if she could complete the program, she searched for role models that could provide evidence that it was possible. She was discouraged when she could not find any. However, she shared:

> Two things happened that pulled me out of that within the next week or two. One was Laurel Thatcher Ulrich won Pulitzer Prize for Midwives Tale. I had met her the summer before at an Exponent II retreat where she was the keynote speaker and walked with her early in the morning and she talked about that she had finished her PhD with five children. It took her ten years to do it. And here she was getting the Pulitzer Prize for her work that took another ten years! That's what I needed to know. I needed to know that someone had done it and at the same time I also remember talking to Margaret Tescano the summer before and she just completed her book Strangers in Paradox while she was getting her PhD in classic literature with languages in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. She still had her dissertation to do, but she had four children, just each were about three years older that my children. With those two pieces of information, I said, okay, there are LDS women who have gotten PhDs before with children and I pulled back out of it.

Each mother seemed to pursue an uncertain path. The women appeared to express the difficulty of achieving their degrees while mothering their children. The women pressed forward with mothering and their doctoral education despite the difficulties.

Perceived Roles and Responsibilities of LDS Mothers

The LDS mothers in this study expressed that they felt they were

supposed to play particular roles in their family. These expectations made their studies more challenging. The roles and responsibilities that they discussed related to caring for their children, housekeeping and errands, and fulfilling church responsibilities. The women seemed to express embarrassment about seeking doctoral education if they thought others believed that it did not fit into their roles as LDS mothers.

Beth remembered growing up as the only girl in her family, and that her mom tried to teach her how to cook and sew as a part of her role as a woman. She light-heartedly recalled that domesticity

> has never been real interesting for me, but I have such a strong testimony, and knew that…I needed to be the mom. And I needed to be in the home. Part of that is because I took it upon myself because that was my role. I should be the one to give.

Even before Ginny went back to graduate school, she seemed to feel like she was not able to meet her husband's expectations for her role while he was in graduate school with young children. She shared, "our house was kind of open and there wasn't a quiet place to study and [he] was just kind of, not complaining, but dissatisfied a lot. It just crushed me that nothing I did was good enough."

Caring for their children. The mothers shared their desires to care for their children during this busy time. They appeared to look for ways to minimize any negative impact on their children. Beth shared that she tried not to use daycare. She said, "[I] just used it a couple of days a week in the

afternoons. That's how it worked for me to feel with the Lord like I was okay." Beth arranged her schedule to accommodate her children as much as she could, as she explained:

> I coached my kids' teams, and taught at the research university I was attending, and was able to do consulting as well. In my doctoral area they were in need for that. But I would choose companies, like one company paid me fifty dollars an hour for consulting and it was two miles away from the house, so I could do my on-site work when my youngest was in preschool. It worked well.

Carol also appeared to be wary about using daycare as she stated, "If I needed childcare, I usually arranged for someone from the [church] that I knew, so the kids felt comfortable."

Emily shared how she found herself, as a single mom, moving with her four year-old daughter to a different part of the country to attend a school with which she was not very familiar. She expressed concern about using childcare as she shared:

> The hardest thing I did, honestly that first year, was put my daughter in daycare. Obviously I had very little money. I tried to get her into the [university's] childcare, but I couldn't get her in. So, there was kind of a United Way-Head Start, whatever, across the river [in a neighboring community] that was very inexpensive and was well run.

Emily continued, "Pretty much that first year, she was in daycare during the day when I was teaching classes and going to school." During her second year in her doctoral program, Emily found an all-day kindergarten for her daughter. Since that time, Emily only occasionally had to rely on

childcare. For example, she shared, "If I had night classes over the years, I had friends. I had two good friends that really loved [my daughter]." She also shared, "I had actually one of my students baby-sit my daughter at night when I had night classes."

Although Emily was the only single participant in this study during her doctoral education, other women cared for their children, in the absence of their husbands. Carol reported a time when her husband received a job promotion and moved while she finished her doctorate. Faye took her children out of her home state while she achieved her doctoral degree.

Housekeeping and running errands. As opposed to caring for their children, household cleaning and errands appear to be perceived responsibilities that the participants in this study felt comfortable delegating to others. Beth reported, "We hired a house keeper, and that was important to me." Carol likewise said, "I had someone come in and do cleaning for me."

Ginny shared:

> The real critical, critical part was that we hired college students to come over after school two, three, four days a week from four to six, or three to five, or four to seven and do the driving, do the grocery shopping, make sure the art supplies that had to be in school for the next day got picked up. I could be at home and could manage the traffic and they could go out and do what they needed to do and I could keep working.

Church responsibilities. Carol remembered, "I felt that part of motherhood was also being a good member of the church and being active." Carol remembered many responsibilities and assignments that were delegated to her during this busy time. Ginny recalled her church leaders' effort to give her assignments that she could handle, given her schedule.

Embarrassment. Not only did the participants express the difficulty of achieving doctoral education as a mother, but some appeared embarrassed at the lofty accomplishment if they thought others did not believe it fit into their role as an LDS mother. Angie noted that she did not tell most people that she achieved her doctoral degree. She said, "It was just easier not to tell them. Not that I was ashamed of it, but kind of, a little bit embarrassed about saying that I was going back for a PhD." She added,

> I didn't want to call attention to that fact. When I meet people, it is pretty rare for me to say that I have a PhD. People usually find out after a while and they go, "Oh, I didn't know that you have a doctorate degree." Someone else will tell them or something, but I rarely will tell people.

Faye reported that when she was pursuing her undergraduate degree,

> they were doing this big study of where students would end up in four years, in eight years, and so on. We had to check what degree we hoped would be our ultimate degree, so I checked a PhD or an MD, and I remember folding the paper over so that no one could

> see because I was just so worried that people would see that. So you know, it was a pretty hostile climate.

The Role of a Husband of an LDS Mother and Student

Some mothers in this study seemed to become frustrated when they perceived that their husbands placed less priority on their doctoral education than on their own perceived responsibilities as husbands. Some women seemed to think that their husbands felt like the women should adjust their educational endeavors to care for their children while they, as husbands, did not feel a need to adjust their schedules to meet their children's needs. Beth appeared to share some frustrations regarding her husband's role during her experience of achieving her doctorate. She stated:

> I have a supportive husband, and he's wonderful particularly if you put him beside a lot of men in the church, because he's supportive. But in his mind, he's got his place, and I have my place. Like during the summer when I'm trying to work full-time because I've got a research grant and he's, "Sorry, I have to go to work." So whatever happens, I stop. He doesn't. He and I have struggled a bit through the years about this. We have a good relationship, and great marriage, but we still struggle. My work is a lower priority to him. He just has to deal with me when I get frustrated because it's not fair sometimes and he knows that. Once when I was frustrated he told me that I shouldn't have had kids if I wanted to do all of the other stuff too. That didn't go over to well, and he has never said that again.

As Beth continued to share about her husband's role, it seemed as though she did not want to place all of the blame on him. She also talked

about the role she played in these exchanges. She said:

> He's a good guy, but, but I did everything, and you know what? Part of that is me. [I felt like] I should be the one to give. You know, you feel that as a woman. I think LDS women feel that very strongly; we are very complex creatures!

She continued, "Although I have challenges with my husband, I think part of the struggle is housed within my own assumptions and the words and actions that come forth because of those assumptions."

Carol appeared to feel similarly as she related that her husband's role as a provider seemed to take precedent to her education. If the children had needs that conflicted with her degree, she stated, "my husband was very helpful, but he would never take off work. But he was helpful in the evenings."

Ginny shared:

> And so, after I got accepted, my husband spent from that moment until I started trying to talk me out of it. He'd say, "Now I'm not trying to talk you out of getting a PhD, just the timing! How can we possibly do this when I'm doing a surgery residency?" which as I calculated it later, for the first two years was eighty-five hours a week.

Ginny continued:

> I tried numerous ways and numerous explanations of why it had to be this way and why it had to be now. He didn't really want to hear it. He just wanted me to change my mind, and that's where I still ask myself, "Where did I find the strength to say that I'm going to do this, and it doesn't matter how much you try and talk me out of it, I'm going to do this?"

LDS Mothers' Priority of Motherhood

Just as the women in this study articulated that they felt pressure from their husbands to adjust their educational endeavors to care for their children, the mothers themselves expressed desires to place the care of their children as their first priority. The participants' frustration appeared to not come from being unwilling to sacrifice to care for their children, but from the expectation from others that they do so. The participants seemed to express a desire to choose.

Angie suggested, "I don't think that I will ever be a star in the academic world, but I have chosen not to do that because I feel like my family comes first. I spend more time with my family than I would if I were striving to be a star."

Beth expressed her priority as she stated, "[I have] always felt very strongly about what I was supposed to, to be a good mother, and that is being at home with my kids." She continued:

> I desired to be a mother because that's what I needed and wanted to be. I always wanted to be a mother. Obeying the commandments of the church has always weighed heavily upon me. I knew that I wanted to get my education and be a mother as well. I mean I knew that motherhood is a primary purpose of life…and so there was never a question even when I was getting pregnant for my fourth child and having many struggles.

Carol shared that she could not do everything expected of her if she was not home all of the time. She simply said, "I learned to prioritize."

Donna likewise shared, "[having children] is a much higher priority to me. It's going to be more rewarding and have more lasting impact than any professional things I do." She continued, "So I'll just go ahead and have kids when I want to have kids and let everything else work around it. So, that's kind of my philosophy now and how I ended up doing it with my first daughter." Referring to her first child, Donna said, "I had her in my fourth year of graduate school and I was able to work from home a lot." She continued:

> I'm not nearly as competitive as I used to be. This is not my number one priority, because I care more about my daughter. I think probably if I weren't a member of the church, motherhood wouldn't be as salient of a priority in my life, so that's definitely affected how I approached it, how I balanced my time throughout my PhD. Whereas I had to be number one in high school and college, once I had my daughter in graduate school, I was much more willing to be satisfied with simply doing well, but not necessarily having to be the best. I don't want to be a total slacker, but to do well, and to do what it takes. I don't care anymore about being the best because it just frankly isn't my top priority. So that definitely changed how I approached both my education and now how I now balance my time in my career. For many of my friends who don't have kids, or they have children, but their career is their number one thing; they are spending a lot more time on projects than me, but who cares? I'll get to it when I get to it. I have more important things to do.

Concerning the pursuit of her education while mothering, Faye explained, "You know, both were very strong desires, although I'd always felt that if push came to shove, motherhood would come first. And I can honestly say that I think it has."

In order to put her role as a mother first, Ginny related how she took fewer classes at a time. She kept the question in mind, "How can I keep my children forefront and still do what I need to do?" Ginny shared how she was able to take some classes through independent study so that she could stretch out the time to finish them while spending more time at home.

The Need to Balance, Multitask, and Prioritize

Despite the mothers' declarations that balancing doctoral education with motherhood is difficult, and their insistence motherhood is their priority, the mother's in this study found ways to achieve their doctoral degrees. The mothers discussed their abilities to handle multiple responsibilities.

Beth shared, "I have done more, with kids, than most women in this church. I mean, doing the degrees, being able to work part-time. I just can multi-task probably more than anyone else I've met." Beth continued to share her thoughts on the "intensity of multiple roles, and trying to do it all with kids, coaching, church, school, part-time work, and then always trying to be in the home as much as possible." Beth expressed that she had "strong desires for both" motherhood and education.

Faye similarly related:

I mean I just felt very strongly that my mission was service to more

> than my family. And I hate to say that because it sounds like I'm trivializing the family, but I mean you can probably even hear it in my voice now, the stress of that decision. It was a terrible decision. It was difficult, but I decided that I was not going to put off my children. And I decided that my children would always come first, but I did find my career and my education was very important. So when people would ask me to put a percentage on things, I really couldn't say much more than my children are 55% and my career is 45%. And honestly many times I felt like, privately although I would never admit this, that it was 52%, 48%, you know.

Study Habits of LDS Mothers

These LDS mothers found various ways to accomplish their studies. Angie shared, "I tried not to bring any work home." She explained further:

> I did all my reading, or sometimes I'd teach a class as a PhD student, TA work, or grading, and I did that all on the bus or I did it there, so that when I came home, I was home. I just felt like that would be really important because I didn't have very much time, so I felt like what little time I had, had to be completely devoted to being a mom.

Faye also appeared conscientious of her time with her children. She shared:

> I tried to never do coursework or professional work while my children were awake, but then that meant that I'd usually get up around four, three-thirty or four. I did that routinely through the early part of my career and of course my schooling, to study and to get my professional work done, and you know, wouldn't go to bed until eleven or twelve.

Carol seemed to share her desire to be available for her children when they were home in this comment, "In the evenings I concentrated on

what they had done in school, what they were accomplishing, and spent a lot of quality time with them." Having had one child, Donna spent her study time balanced between her home and school, depending on the circumstances and needs of her daughter.

Discouragement from People

Angie remembered that people appeared to wonder why she was seeking a doctoral degree. She said they "seemed to think that was sort of a crazy thing to do for a female, for a mom." Angie continued, "I don't know if challenge is the right word to use, but I felt like I had to explain myself and defend that choice. Every time we met new people we had to justify that decision, it felt like." Angie perceived:

> [People thought] that I wasn't doing what I ought to be doing. Achieving a PhD just seemed uppity. A master's degree is one thing, but the PhD is too much. So when I started my program at [a Midwestern university], lots of people thought I was nuts, but it was good.

School counselors. Carol shared that during her youth, she expressed to her guidance counselor, who she noted was also a church leader, a desire to be a doctor. She said, "[He] strongly counseled me not to do that, that I needed to get something more functional like teaching or nursing, and be a wife and mother." Years later Carol visited a southern university to inquire about their doctoral programs. She shared, "[I went to visit] the folks at the [major university in the area], and they were as bad as my

guidance councilor in high school." Carol remembered being asked, "Why do you want to take classes with a husband whose working and two kids?" They reportedly suggested that Carol should audit a class. Carol reflected that their response motivated her to try harder. She explained, "It ticked me off. I took the GRE and started a doctoral program in '72."

Faculty members. Donna shared how she felt that professors had suggested to her that having children is acceptable at certain times. Donna said, "If you still talk to people, they'll say 'well, there are a couple of good times to have kids.'" Donna recalled hearing professors counsel that after prelims is a good time to have children, while others said "you really want to wait until after you have tenure because it's so intense on that tenure-track leading up to that point."

Ginny remembered, "There was this pivotal moment where I just wondered what I was doing." Ginny recalled:

> About a month into the program…one of the faculty members kind of talked to me…and said, "We had a graduate student that had kids at [another University], and she didn't last through the first semester."

Ginny shared that her doctoral program held a social for all of the students and professors and their children. When invited to the social, Ginny joked to the administrative assistant:

> "I'm not sure I'll bring all my children." She said, "How many children do you have?" I said, "Four." I watched her eyes kind of roll up at me and then look back down. And I'm sure she told the

> department head and others. I think I took three of my children. And I could just feel questions in their minds when they saw me there. One married couple there from the department tried to offer some advice and be helpful, talked about daycare in the area and what they did. I just nodded and acknowledged them. Then when I got home it was like this major second thought. "What am I doing? What makes me think I can possibly do this?"

Ginny reported that she went home and "had doubts" about what she was doing as she wondered if what she was doing was even possible.

Family members. Family members were not always encouraging to these women. Donna shared that she was not sure if her family was "totally supportive." She shared that overall they were very encouraging about her education, but when it came to her PhD and professional plans, one sister and her mother sometimes questioned how she could effectively balance all of that and motherhood. However, Donna shared that she had other siblings who have pursued careers and trusted that she would choose what was best for her family.

In what sounds like a more extreme situation, Faye shared:

> My parents quit speaking to me for about a month and a half, two months before I went back to [school] because they felt that it was inappropriate for me to do that. My in-laws were much more vocal about it and said some pretty hurtful things, but I could handle that. I just said that we had made our decision, and actually my husband was so supportive that eventually he told his parents that enough was enough.

As previously stated, Ginny shared how her husband tried to discourage her from the moment she was accepted into her doctoral program.

Church members. Angie shared, "As part of the LDS culture, in the [congregation] I was in, and they were great people, it seemed a little extravagant to some people to go on and get a PhD." Carol recalled, "My husband caught a lot of flack from the priesthood leaders about letting his wife work on a doctorate degree." She explained, "None of it was directed against me personally, well sometimes it was me personally, but not usually. Usually it was just…I didn't have my priorities straight." Carol continued, "I was in the unacceptable range, or the range where one is viewed with suspicion." In her words:

> I had a temple marriage, an active husband, he was employed, and I had kids. You don't go to school with that combination. For me, going to school was just as dangerous as working outside the home. It was as dangerous as working outside the home in terms of being viewed with skepticism.

Carol related that her experience of going to church during this time "wasn't very warm and fuzzy." She felt like local church members were generally not very encouraging. Reflecting back, Carol seemed to express frustration, indicating that she would have appreciated more support from her local church members. She expressed:

> Because I was outside the home, I kind of aligned myself with those groups who were being minimized, because they didn't fit the two parents, father is the provider mold. And so consequently, I would say things in [church], and get into healthy discussions with [church leaders] sometimes.

Carol seemed to express sadness as she reflected on how she felt

she was treated during that time in her life. She explained it as

> feeling like what you were doing was the right thing to do, and feeling like from a spiritual standpoint it was the right thing to do. You had that confirmation, but not having support within the church; over the years, yes, but not during the program.

Faye recalled, "People in a religious community did not make it easier at all. There were some very difficult things that were said to me." Faye reflected on these experiences as she said "[they were] severe and they were profound." She related:

> When I went back and got my master's degree…the [church leader] called me in and told me that I was abandoning my children and that I was not being a good mother because I was getting my masters. And I told him that "the last time I checked, it was the Church of Christ not the Church of Bishop So-and-So," and I named him. I said, "This is what Christ wants me to do. This is what I need to do." He said, "Well, you're getting false revelation." And I said, "Well, maybe I am. Maybe I'm not, but I don't believe I am." And it was really very, very ugly.

Later, when Faye went back to achieve her doctoral degree, she recalled that the bishop expressed his disapproval, to which she remembered having said, "'Well, I don't want to hear from you or from anybody else because this is what I'm doing.' And to his credit, he respected me." She further explained:

> So, I go back to school [in the Midwest], and the first Sunday that we were there I had to call and find out where they met, where church met. Whoever it was that I had called said, "Oh you've moved to town? What are you doing here?" I said, "Well, I'm here for graduate school." "Oh, your husband's here for graduate school." And I said, "No, I'm here for graduate school." "Oh, well, where's your husband." "Well, he's here with me now and he's

> going back to Utah."
>
> So, when we went to church, my husband was with me, we were there with our three little children. We walked up the steps to the church and meeting us in front of the doors was the stake president and the bishop. And they said, "Stop. You are not welcome here. You are doing the wrong thing. Go home." And I said, "The last time I checked it wasn't your church, it was the Church of Christ." And I just walked right around and it was funny what they did. They stood right in front of the doors. I just walked right around them and went in. And my husband felt like he needed stay and bicker with them, and I just pulled his arm and said I was going in. And from then on I made sure that I was always a few minutes late to church, sacrament meeting, and I'd walk right down the isle, right past the bishop's nose and sit right on the front seat.

When Faye began teaching after having returned to her family, she recalled that people continued to disapprove of what she was doing.

Isolation. Carol reflected that one of the hardest challenges for her in achieving her doctorate was the feeling of isolation. Faye remembered "how lonely and isolated I was in the beginning." Emily expressed feeling alone as she moved with her daughter to began her doctoral program in a new state.

Summary

It appears that the mothers in this study seemed to have faced many challenges as they achieved their doctoral degrees. Participants seemed to face challenges stemming from their own desires and expectations, as well as from the desires and expectations that others held for them. Despite social and sometimes very emotional challenges, the

women in this study appear to have successfully balanced doctoral achievement with their continued desire to place motherhood at the forefront of their lives. The women often struggled against varying expectations from many different people. These participants seemed to continually choose to achieve their doctoral degree while facing many challenges along their journey.

Rewards and Benefits

In this study, LDS mothers identified many rewards from achieving doctoral degrees. The benefits most commonly expressed by the sample of women related to their children and family. It is interesting that when engaged in such a lofty, time consuming, and sometimes lonely journey as achieving a doctoral degree, that LDS women sited their perceived influence and effects to their children as their largest reward. Even in the midst of the rigor of a doctoral program, the women focused first on the welfare of their children. Additionally, the women passionately shared some personal benefits from their experiences of achieving their degree.

The rewards and benefits presented in the first section have to do with the mothers' perceived influence on their children. Rewards in this section include modeling for their children the value of education,

confidence, equality in marriage, acceptance of differences, and striving for excellence. Qualifying for a career that allowed the lifestyle and flexibility to fulfill their desired roles within their families is also included in this section. The next section reveals personal benefits that the women expressed about achieving a doctoral degree; these benefits are satisfaction, personal fulfillment and needs, the desire to influence others, financial rewards, and the belief that they were following an inspired path.

The Women's Perceived Benefits to their Children

Value of education. In achieving their doctoral degrees, the LDS mothers in this study strongly believed that their actions served as an example for their children. They believed they had modeled for their children the value of education by achieving all of the education that they could, a teaching that is strongly emphasized by the LDS Church. These women desired that their children achieve higher education and hoped that their children learned the importance and value of it from their example. They wanted their children to learn that sometimes people make large sacrifices that are worthwhile. The women were eager to share the achievements of their children and enthusiastically shared their children's success stories when expressing what they considered to be their greatest

rewards. Angie shared, "I feel like my kids see that I value education…so they work harder than they would." Angie further declared that the benefit to her children from achieving her doctorate has made her achievement worth it. Carol delighted in the effectiveness of teaching her children to value education by example and celebrated that her daughter "went from her bachelor's to Columbia for a PhD." Emily expressed gratitude that her daughter achieved her bachelor's degree in business and Ginny shared that two of her daughters are married with young children, but that when they reflect on their education, they believe "it doesn't have to be over at this point in time." Ginny said that a reward for her achieving her degree was her children feeling an "openness and seeing a broader future."

Confidence. By achieving their doctoral degrees, it seems the participants believed they modeled self-confidence for their children. They hoped their actions have influenced their children to have more confidence in themselves. Concerning achieving her doctoral degree, Angie related, "I've always felt like it makes me have more confidence, and I think that's a positive thing. I think that they [her children] see that education gives you self-confidence. I think that they probably have more self confidence because I do." Carol found that achieving her doctorate encouraged her children to persevere at difficult tasks. She said that "they

certainly could never come to me and say that this is too hard to do, because they knew [what I was doing]. They weren't afraid to move into areas that might have been challenging."

Equality in marriage. Through achieving their doctoral degrees the participants felt like they modeled for their children a marriage involving equal partners. Faye pointed out that her children have referred to her and her husband's actions during her pursuit of a doctorate as wonderful examples. Angie pointed out that her children have learned about equality from observing her marriage relationship as a mother and as one who has a doctoral degree. Concerning her marriage, she related, "When we make decisions, we make them together. I think they have seen that, and I think that is going to help them too." Angie further stated that "as far as making decisions, there are certain things that their dad does a lot better than I do, and there are things that I do better than their dad." Carol has used the skills she has gained through her doctoral studies, and shared concerning her degree, "It has helped me with how I analyze situations and how I handle things with the family and with the church." Ginny shared how her husband did not have the expectation to be "taken care of" while she was achieving her doctoral degree. She appreciated the feeling of being "equally yoked" with her husband instead of being fully dependent on him. Ginny further stated, "I believe that our relationship is [one of] such

deep mutual respect…in a way that I don't think could have happened without that."

Acceptance of individuals. By achieving their doctoral degrees, the participants felt rewarded in modeling for their children traits of acceptance towards others and an understanding of personal choices. Carol shared how her children have had a "very high tolerance for diversity." She further stated, "Part of that is because of what I did. They are very accepting and nonjudgmental." Faye expressed that "our kids say over and over again what kind of example they had in the home. It was helpful too because their friends saw me as kind of a rebel, you know, this cool rebel, because at least for our three older children, I had done something that the other mothers wouldn't dare do."

Excellence. By achieving their doctoral degrees, the participants believed they modeled excellence for their children. Expectations for their children were naturally high as their mother's personal expectations were high. The mothers in this study felt that their children were sometimes viewed under a microscope during their academic experiences, and felt rewarded by the standard of excellence they were able to show their children and that their children seemed to internalize. Carol emphasized, "You know, I just have different skills than I would have had, which has been helpful." Faye recalled that "women just saw what my children

became, you know, and our children are very endearing too, and we've always taught them to be good with adults and respectful to adults and so their primary teachers loved them." Many of the children, both male and female, of the participants in this study have gone on to achieve higher education including PhDs and MDs. The participants likewise were pleased that their children in general have continued to follow the teachings of the LDS Church as they raise their own children.

Flexibility. Another important reward that these LDS women discussed was qualifying for a career that offered flexibility for the women to fulfill their desired role within their family. The LDS mothers felt a great responsibility to nurture their children and expressed that they were greatly rewarded upon finishing their doctoral degree to find employment that allowed them to be able to meet their children's perceived needs and actively be involved in their lives. In this study, LDS mothers who achieved their doctoral degrees wanted to achieve a lifestyle where they could be available for their children, including attending their children's school and extracurricular activities. Angie said, "I really try to go to as much of that, if not all of it, that I can." She continued, "I think I chose going for the PhD partly because of the flexibility. I can't imagine a better job, and I've had all of the flexibility you can imagine." Speaking of her eight children, Angie added, "It's pretty rare for me to miss any activity of

my kids." Donna shared, "I do think that academia is more amenable to the flexibility that you'd want as a mom." Emily related:

> My ability to support, as well as my ability to see every single game, every single activity my daughter ever did, my ability to be able to travel in the summer with my daughter, to travel internationally with my daughter over the years, has just been an incredibly enriching experience for both of us and, as a career there couldn't have been a better choice for me, especially as a single mom.

The Women's Perceived Personal Benefits

Satisfaction. The women expressed that doctoral education brought deep satisfaction and fulfillment to their lives. They expressed a gap in their lives that doctoral education filled. This sample of LDS mothers who achieved doctoral degrees appeared to be comprised of driven women who found academia stimulating and rewarding. Angie declared "I love it, and I'm so glad I did it! No question. It's everything that I thought it would be. It's been everything I wanted and more." Beth added:

> It gave me something to look forward to. I don't care what other people say to me, it's this internal accomplishment and need, and I don't care if anybody knows. I just have this accomplishment when I get done. That internal satisfaction that came from those years is the primary reward for me because I know it was right and it prepared me for many future endeavors.

Carol related that her education brought her satisfaction as she became "very comfortable working in the male context, which most, many, Mormon women aren't." Donna recounted her experience stating "it's just

stimulating, they were all so nice, very collegial, not competitive at all. I had great collaborators and just stimulation all the time." Emily reflected:

> I can't imagine a more unique opportunity for me, than what was given me, and yet it's made all the difference. It was wonderful. It was wonderful. And then of course there was the intellectual joy of being able to pursue a degree and be able to just work with such great minds.

Personal fulfillment and needs. Doctoral education seemed to allow the participants to fulfill deep, personal needs. Beth thoughtfully recalled part of her experience:

> I went through a lot of really challenging years, but the schooling was what helped me. Going to school gave me, in a strange kind of way, permission when working full-time didn't seem like an option for me. Going to school part-time and working part-time seemed like a choice. And it is what kept me sane and what kept my mind working. And it is what kept my mind and everything. As my husband will tell you, during those first years when he was in school and I was home with two small, active children… I lost myself and became depressed. I can remember very clearly coming home after my first weekend of taking courses again for my masters' degree. I had taken a one-credit counseling class on a Friday and Saturday and had been home for two years with little to do besides taking care of a baby and toddler. I was smiling and telling him about everything I had learned. He got unusually emotional and said, 'You're back. This is who you are. It is nice to have you back. You were gone for a few years and now I have you back.' And I just got so excited because I could think, and I could do, and I could better myself again. And so it was beautiful. School was worth it. I know that I've done, back to my patriarchal blessing, what I was supposed to do in my life. I've done something that was difficult but it was what was needed to move me forward toward what I am supposed to become.

Carol observed concerning her decision, "It was probably something I decided subconsciously that helped me deal with some serious mental

health issues that when I'm very busy, very engaged, very pushed, some of the problems that I have are not as evident."

Opportunity to influence others. Doctoral degrees appeared to allow participants the opportunity to fulfill a need to influence others. Beth revealed:

> I think it gives me credibility. I believe that education is central in some of the things that I do and will continue to do. I have strong influential capabilities and the opportunities that are emerging before me are humbling. I'm seeing this clearer and clearer as I get asked to speak for many audiences. I am researching things that are so applicable for the development of young women. I just feel like I'm supposed to be doing this work and its going to lead to things that will help people and help in the church efforts down the road. And it's hard because I don't see everything, but I'm seeing pieces come together. I'm doing this research to understand and somehow benefit women to be an influence and have strong leadership so that they can be better in their homes, in their churches, in their communities, in the state governments, in the change that needs to happen. There's a gap. I believed strongly that somehow that there is a place for my work and my education and my experience to help fill that gap. I really believe that somehow I will need to continue to make a difference that most other women can't make.

Beth shared her thoughts on the relationship between motherhood and success in other areas. She said, "I've studied in-depth the benefits of motherhood on the development of leadership for women, and it's very powerful. I now understand that it's my experiences with motherhood that have given me so many skills with leadership."

Carol shared:

> Well, for one thing, because of where I was viewed within the church, kind of on the edge, okay, which I really wasn't. I was able

> to empathize with women that were struggling, women that didn't have the ideal life, okay. And I think that I was able to be fairly effective in working with them, and connected with them.

Further, Carol felt, "I was able to, I think because I was in a doctoral program, I was able to…I don't know, have more level conversations with priesthood leaders where it wasn't the priesthood leader and a woman, saying 'a-hum, a-huh.'" Donna related, "It's really rewarding. And I don't know if it is so much the intellectual stimulation that is rewarding as it is feeling like you're doing something meaningful." Emily reflected that "it's been a wonderful career that has given me an opportunity to do some good things, not only for me but for my child, and I hope also for the church."

Financial rewards. Participants cited financial rewards from achieving their doctoral degrees. Donna reasoned:

> In comparisons with programs like medical or law school, with a PhD, if you go to a top program, they pay you. You don't graduate with a cent of debt. In deciding between medicine and a PhD, that was definitely a factor because I didn't ever want to be in a position where student debts compelled me financially to have to work."

Emily shared:

> I think women, especially for those who are socialized to be mothers and who are grateful for the opportunity to be mothers think of money making as a secondary pursuit and yet, sadly, many of us end up being the support of our family. And even though, my husband was faithful in child support most of the time, definitely, the primary burden of taking care of my daughter was put on me, at least financially, and of course emotionally, spiritually, and physically too. So definitely to me, one of the

> greatest rewards of the PhD was being able to support my daughter well. So many women are not able to get the high paying or the well paying jobs and so they do the two and three jobs which give them limited time to spend with their child. When I was relief society president dealing with ward welfare issues, I saw several women struggle with "underemployment" that an educational degree could have prevented. And, so yeah, I am concerned and I have talked on various occasions to young women at stake youth conferences and tell the girls that the prophet has said to be educated. And that's not only to develop ourselves--since none of us can be saved in ignorance. The Lord expects us to pursue truth and to do all that we can to develop our talents while we're here on earth. It is so important, I think, to gain wisdom, plus the fact that more educated mothers can better educate and prepare their children to be successful. So it's critical for moms to be extremely well educated, and at the same time, if you want a high or decent paying job, you need to have your degree.

Faye shared, "And the money, I mean the money has been nice too, you know, but it's just been wonderful." Ginny stated, "Of course financially, we are better off than we ever expected. Then the other side of this is that my husband at this point in time says that our education is absolutely the best investments we've ever made, in multiple ways."

Feelings of inspiration and direction. Participants felt that through following their inspired path, their families have been blessed spiritually. Faye explained:

> I can't even begin. I can't even begin. When I was pursuing [my doctorate], by far the greatest reward was this 360 degree cushioning that I felt by the Spirit. I mean I, the Spirit lived with me, ate with me, just you know. During the time I was getting my degree there was a spirit of peace in my home. I mean that was my way of knowing that what I was doing was right. And since then you know as I look back on my life, on twenty-six years, my husband and I and my children say over and over again that it was

> the single best decision besides getting married and having children that we've ever made in our lives because we just always had a spirit of peace in our home. And we never had any quarrels. There was just a spirit of peace in our home.

Ginny relates regarding her career following her education, "I'm not so linked to this career that I couldn't step away from it, but it just felt like the right place to be." Ginny continued:

> I took a social psych class and a stats class and got into that first social psych seminar and I was like, 'I am finally where I belong.' I always felt like I was bumping the edges [prior to going back to school], but it was really the culture, cultural boundaries. I just didn't quite fit. And I wasn't quite satisfied and got into that seminar and I'm like, 'Ahhh, I finally, this finally feels right. It's like, you're teaching me these concepts and I've thought about them and I didn't have the words.'

Summary

It is truly fascinating that in this study the benefits most commonly expressed by the sample of women related to their children and family. Children seem to play a central part in the lives of these women, and they often measured their experiences in relation to their children. The women seemed to feel that they modeled for their children the value of education, a confidence in themselves, equality in marriage, acceptance of differences, striving for excellence, and the ability to qualify for a career that allows the lifestyle and flexibility to fulfill their desired roles within their families. Additionally, the LDS women passionately shared some important personal benefits from their experiences of achieving their

degree, such as personal fulfillment, the desire to influence others, and financial rewards.

Perception of the Counsel of the LDS Church

This part of the data analysis is divided into two sections. The first section is what participants believed that the LDS Church counseled about education. The subsections are organized as: the perception that the LDS Church counseled women to achieve education; the perception that the LDS Church counseled that even mothers should achieve education; and the perception that the LDS Church counseled single women to seek education, but was wary of married women achieving education with young children. The second section is named understanding differences between others' experiences and individual actions. Subsections include the perception that the gospel stands independent of church members' counsel, the perception that women are all different, and follow different paths, the perception that LDS women may make their own choices, the perception that personal revelation may direct women in making their choices.

What Participants Believed the LDS Church Counseled about Education

Most of the mothers in this study seemed to indicate that they

believed that the LDS Church counseled that women should pursue education as a primary objective in this life. The women's perceptions differed on whether being married and having young children changed the church's counsel as to the acceptability of achieving education. Beth felt that she had the blessing of the church to achieve her doctorate as a mother with young children, while Carol and Faye shared that they felt opposition from church leaders. Emily illustrated how she and a fellow student felt that they were treated differently by church members based on their marital status while in their doctoral program.

Perception that the LDS Church counseled women to achieve education. Several of the women alluded to the idea that they believed that the church supported women in their efforts to pursue education, and taught the importance of all women obtaining education. Angie remembered from her childhood when her father taught her that the church expected her to seek education. She recalled that her dad had emphasized that "Brigham Young said something like, if I had to choose between educating my sons and my daughters, I'd educate my daughters because they would educate my grandchildren." Beth commented regarding her education, "I never doubted that [choice]…. I never felt guilty about the education." Referring to times she had heard LDS Church leaders teach about the importance of achieving all of the education you could, Carol

said, "I always took that 'getting an education' seriously." Donna reflected on counsel that influenced her as she grew up. She related a teaching, which she believed was particularly meaningful and influential for her. She recited, "Whatever intelligence you attain in this life will carry with you unto the next." Ginny recalled that the church's support for education "clearly was a factor" in her decision to pursue her doctoral degree.

Emily indicated her belief that teachings from the LDS Church about the importance of education for its members seemed particularly influential to her. She felt strongly "that we were expected to be as intelligent a people as possible." Emily continued:

> The Lord doesn't want us to look like a bunch of ignorant hicks. He wants us to be the most successful, the most intelligent, the most creative, the most ambitious people on earth, and that we should confidently pursue excellence in whatever we do.

Emily explained that she did not believe that the LDS Church counseled that achieving education necessarily meant achieving specific degrees, but did believe that if formal school was available, it should "definitely be pursued." She stated, "It should not be a secondary thing. It should definitely be a primary pursuit to be as educated as you possibly can and to take every opportunity in your life to increase your education."

Perception that the LDS Church counseled that even mothers should achieve education. Beth articulated that she felt that the church discouraged employment for mothers with young children, but felt like the importance

of achieving education seemed like a constant teaching of the church. She stated, "Going to school kind of gave me, in a strange kind of way, permission to achieve. When working full-time didn't seem like a choice for me…going to school seemed like a choice." Beth appeared emotional as she reflected on the influence of the church's counsel that mothers with young children should be in the home. She explained:

> If I did not have that testimony I would have done things different because being a mom and being in the home is the hardest thing in life. I love my children, but doing domestic stuff sucks. I find no fulfillment in those duties and responsibilities. Changing diapers and cooking dinner is not rewarding for me. I spent a lot of years feeling like I wasn't right because I didn't like that stuff…. I even had a hard time reading stories to my children and just doing kid stuff.

Perception that LDS the Church counseled single women to seek education, but was wary of married women achieving education with young children at home. Donna reflected that she was single when she initially made her decision to achieve a doctoral degree, but that she continued with her decision after she got married. She seemed to indicate that as a single woman, the church was especially encouraging of her to seek advanced education. She laughed, "They're supportive, especially if you're single. It's like they say 'well, you better think of something to do with your life since you're not married.'" Concerning mothers with young children, Donna shared her feelings about how her perception of the church's teachings have influenced her choice:

> I don't think that it would be such a dilemma in my mind if I weren't a member of the church and had the perspective of the eternal ramifications of how you raise a person. So because of that, throughout my PhD and working, I would hope that anything that takes me away from full-time motherhood, causes some kind of internal turmoil. I would say that is directly related my belief in the gospel and understanding of an eternal perspective of why we're here and the capacity for human potential and divine nature of kids. That affected me throughout in terms of how I balance my time and even how I balance my time now.

Though Carol seemed to believe that the LDS Church had always taught that "women need an education," she expressed that she felt that the church emphasized family even more. She noted that she believed that the church taught, "Family's always more significant, and I agree it is…. I'm not denying the importance of being a mother…. Nobody ever taught about the idea of balance." Recalling her own experience, Carol shared, "It would have been okay if I would have been single or childless, or if my children had left the nest. All of those are acceptable. I was in the unacceptable range, or the range where one is viewed with suspicion." Faye seemed vigorously challenged by her local church leaders as to her decision to achieve her doctoral degree.

Emily recalled being a recently divorced mom as she began her doctoral program. She related:

> I had a good friend, when I was getting my doctorate at [a Midwestern university], she was getting her doctorate in English, and she had three kids, and was a member of [my church]. She was a good friend. She was probably my closest friend there. I remember one day she turned to me and she said, "You're so

> lucky." And I go, "What, so lucky?" And I go "why?" She goes, "well, because you can pursue your doctorate degree with [your child] being watched over by other people and no one in the church criticizes you for doing that. In my case, I even have my husband watching my kids, but I get criticized for doing that." I felt really bad for her and I thought, "Well, who would have the audacity to judge her like that?"

Understanding Differences between Other's Expectations and Individual Actions

Many participants in this study seemed to recognize differences between what they perceived as LDS Church counsel or norms, and their own personal decisions as LDS mothers. Several of the women recalled learning to separate their understanding of the gospel from what church members sometimes counseled. They seemed to do this on occasions when they did not understand or agree with the counsel. Participants also shared their belief that there was not one single path through life that is right for everyone, but that after hearing counsel, women may choose what is best for them. Participants seemed to indicate that they were especially confident when they felt that their choices were based on personal revelation.

Perception that the gospel stands independent of church members counsel. Three participants seemed to indicate that they had heard discouraging counsel regarding their decision to achieve higher education as mothers of young children, but separated that from their personal understanding of

the gospel. Carol remembered that during her experience of deciding to achieve her doctoral degree, she felt like she was acting contrary to what "was being taught at the pulpit." She clarified her decision as she explained, "Now, did I feel that was the gospel? Not necessarily. Did I feel that was how the brethren were interpreting things? Yes. But I felt the gospel was true."

Angie explained, "I separate the gospel from people, and so I didn't feel any tension as far as the gospel is concerned. I didn't feel any tension like that." Angie candidly added, "But then I don't know if I was setting up barriers, psychologically. I mean, I think I probably should have because a lot of people do, but I didn't." It is interesting that Angie apparently noted that other people may sense a tension in what has been said regarding the roles of LDS mothers of young children, yet she did not feel that way.

Faye shared, "The biggest challenge, of course, was the church. [The problem was] how I interpreted church doctrine…. A mother doesn't do this, and a mother doesn't do that, and so on." She continued, "But once I got beyond that, then the biggest challenges were from the church authorities, and that was really quite severe." Faye explained that she did not feel that these challenges were wasted. She said:

> One good thing that happened was my testimony of the gospel grew. I could tell how I felt about it and I could tell that what was

> important to me was the church's definition of what God is. I wanted to stick with it for that reason.

Perception that women are all different, and may follow different paths. Some of the women felt it was important to share their belief that all members of the LDS Church are different, and may pursue different directions, but that each may be right for that individual. Donna shared, "There are so many different routes and careers that might allow us to fulfill our mission in life. It may not matter what context we ultimately choose, but more how we act around people wherever we are." Emily explained, "We are not cookie cutters in the church. We are all unique and have unique paths and unique opportunities." Referring to statements made by LDS Church leaders regarding the role of women, and her assumption that women would apply teachings individually, Ginny shared, "You have to consider the whole range of women they are talking to."

Emily further discussed that achieving doctoral degrees may likely lead to women being out of the home as they pursue careers. Regarding the church's concern for this, Emily reflected, "I think very few women selfishly pursue careers. I don't think it is selfish to develop a talent. I think that's what is expected of us."

Referring to how her daughter had started a business with her husband, Emily said, "I know she wants to be a mom and she's working

with her husband. I think she'll be a wonderful mother just like she's a wonderful contributor to the business, and they don't detract at all from each other. I think they build on each other." Emily further explained why she encourages her daughter in this pursuit:

> I really do think that it's important for people to have a life that extends beyond their family. I think men kind of naturally have that, but a lot of times women don't. I do think it's very important to be well rounded and being well rounded also includes time developing your own talents and your own identity, your own self. To me it's just building on the talents that are given to us, and there are lots of ways that can happen.

Perception that LDS women may make their own choices. A majority of the women described their belief that they chose their own actions after receiving counsel. Angie noted that she believed that a lot of mothers with young children in the church worked, but that she perceived that most did not have great jobs. Going through her doctoral program, she said she felt like "it was kind of okay if you worked, but it was not okay if you had a degree. It's like it was acceptable to work, but not to do well." She further said that she felt like it was acceptable for mothers to work out of desperation, but not acceptable to make a conscious decision to work.

Referring to Angie and her husband's decision that she achieve her doctoral degree to assist her in being the bread winner to their family of ten, she said:

> Over the years, almost every time we get a new bishop they'd call my husband in and talk to him about that. And then they'd call me

> in. I think that they thought that I was somehow kind of being mistreated. And I'd say this is a very conscious decision that we made.

Reflecting back on her decision to achieve her doctorate to assist her as the breadwinner, while her husband stayed home with the children, Angie stated, "I know it's odd. I know all that kind of stuff. I understand the church doctrine, and I believe 100% in that. For our situation, this is what works, and this is the right thing for us." It appears that Angie felt comfortable making her own choices after having received counsel from the church.

Carol remembered church leaders and members who expressed that they did not approve of her decision to achieve her degree. As she thought about things that were said to her, she recalled:

> None of it was directed against me personally. Well, sometimes it was me personally but not usually. Usually it was just [that] I didn't have my priorities straight. I felt very comfortable with my priorities. My husband felt very comfortable with my priorities, our priorities, because they had to be the family's priorities.

Donna shared that she believed that

> within the church there's a fine balance: We really want educated women. We want our members being leaders in the world and all this, yet we also want strong families. Frankly, I think that even within the church, people aren't sure where their alliances are and how you manage them practically. So, I think they just stay out of your personal business.

Faye shared:

> I mean the doctrine was troublesome, but I got over it. I had such

> profound spiritual experiences that for me personally, it would have been unthinkable to have denied those experiences. You just couldn't do it. So, for that reason, I didn't know how the doctrine could reconcile with it, but I just decided not to worry about it.

Faye shared how she was able to come to the point of not worrying about it, while she remained a faithful member of the church. She explained:

> I just did a lot of study of the church's doctrines, and was just struck over and over again that the church was developed on the premise that a person had to exercise his free agency and his freedom of thought in order to develop the church, and that was an eternal principle. So, if it applied then, it applies now. Actually there was a scripture…that really helped me get beyond the doctrine, or beyond the colloquial version of the doctrine. That scripture said if you study things out, then if you act on your own accord, you can't be held accountable if you're trying to do what is right, and if you're honestly trying to follow true pathways.

Ginny discussed her perception of the teachings of the LDS Church as she said, "You know we have this 'be a stay-at-home mom, put your primary focus on your children,' but 'develop your talents.' It's kind of contradicting and so I put things together that worked." Ginny further explained that she felt it was important for women to be able to figure things out for themselves. She shared, "It is so important for each individual woman, mother, to have their own testimony, their own sense of self" so that they can have a "sense of their own faith to be able to stand on their own." Ginny shared that the LDS Church's "support for education clearly was a factor" in her achieving her doctoral degree. Yet despite this support for education, she recalled, "I clearly felt like I was

doing something counter-normative" within the church.

Even though Ginny may have felt like her decision to achieve her doctoral degree was counter-normative, she did not feel that her decision was counter to what the Lord wanted her to do. She related, "I have to make some of these decisions myself. The church can give general advice and then I have to decide for myself. So I felt no guilt, in terms of going against the church."

Perception that personal revelation may direct women in making their choices. Participants in this study identified contributing factors that seemed to lead them in deciding to achieve doctoral degrees. Some of the contributing factors the participants identified were that they felt a deep need, had a drive or strong desires, and felt led spiritually, including direction from their patriarchal blessings. These contributing factors seem to indicate that personal revelation is an important reason that these mothers decided to achieve their degrees.

When Faye was challenged by local church leaders who did not feel that it was appropriate for her to pursue her doctoral degree as a mother of young children, she remembered saying, "well, the last time I checked, the church was built on personal revelation." On another occasion during a church meeting, Faye recalled saying:

> I think this is probably a good time to say that I made my choice based on personal revelation and I will not answer any more

> questions about it. I won't talk about it, and I don't want any of you to talk to me about it because I've made my choice. This is the way it is.

Summary

It appears that the women in this study perceived that the LDS Church proclaimed the importance of education for women, but that the participants perceived the counsel regarding mothers seeking education differently. The women seemed comfortable separating their own situations from their perceptions of church teachings. The next section offers an explanation of this phenomenon.

Application of *Women's Ways of Knowing* to LDS Mother Participants

The *Women's Ways of Knowing* framework by Belenky and colleagues (1986) was applied to the data provided by the participants in this study. Data may have been presented in earlier sections of this dissertation, and is referenced here to illustrate the women's positions within the *Women's Ways of Knowing* framework. Data have been analyzed from each participant and are presented according to the individual.

As a theoretical perspective, *Women's Ways of Knowing* suggests that an LDS mother, with young children, may be expected to exhibit behavior according to which epistemological position she holds. A woman who is

situated in the constructed knowing position may thoughtfully consider directives that her primary responsibility is to stay home with her children while also hearing that she should pursue her education; she embraces the complexity of the situation, reasonably and logically considers different perspectives, and uses her own experience in creating the meaning of the directive for herself. This theory suggests that she applies LDS directives to her life in her own terms.

Theoretically applying *Women's Ways of Knowing* to LDS women with young children, it seemed likely that mothers who decided to achieve doctoral education may share a constructed knowing position. In this section, data for each participant is illustrated according to five criteria that seem descriptive of someone positioned in the constructed knowing position. The organizational criteria are as follows: thoughtfully considered directives; embraced the complexity of the situation; reasonably and logically considered different perspectives; actions based on obligation, duty, or responsibility to her perceived mission; and used her own experience in creating the meaning of the directive for herself. Data from each participant illustrates her inclusion within the subcategory.

Angie

Thoughtfully considered directives. Angie thoughtfully considered

authoritative counsel that she received in her youth. As an authority figure, her father taught the importance of the LDS Church directive that women should focus on motherhood and that they should also get as much education as they could. She recalled:

> I had grown up in a family of all girls, but my dad always said, even when we were very young, that we all should get a bachelor's degree. He just felt like that was really important, and probably, compared to a lot of my friends, our family stressed education more than most of my friends.

Angie related that her father taught her the value of education when she was young by quoting LDS Church leaders. She reflected:

> I remember him talking about a quote from Brigham Young that said something like, if I had to choose between educating my sons and my daughters, I'd educate my daughters because they would educate my grandchildren. I remember that from when I was a young kid. My dad just always said how important education was.

Embraced the complexity of the situation. Angie's situation was complex in that before she began her doctoral degree, she had been the breadwinner, and her husband was an at-home dad to their eight children. She said, "It's interesting because I am probably odder than most people, because most people don't have a husband who stays at home." She noted that she believed that a lot of mothers with young children in the church worked, but that she perceived that "it was kind of okay if you worked, but it was not okay if you had a degree. It's like it was acceptable to work, but not to do well." She further said that she felt like it was

acceptable for mothers to work out of desperation, but not acceptable to make a conscious decision to work as she had done.

Reasonably and logically considered different perspectives. Angie remembered that people appeared to wonder why she was acting against the cultural norm and seeking a doctoral degree. She said they "seemed to think that was sort of a crazy thing to do for a female, for a mom." Angie continued, "I don't know if challenge is the right word to use, but I felt like I had to explain myself and defend that choice. Every time we met new people we had to justify that decision, it felt like." Angie perceived:

> [People thought] that I wasn't doing what I ought to be doing. Achieving a PhD just seemed uppity. A master's degree is one thing, but the PhD is too much. So when I started my program at [a large university], lots of people thought I was nuts, but it was good.

Angie shared, "As part of the LDS culture, in the [congregation] I was in, and they were great people, it seemed a little extravagant to some people to go on and get a PhD."

Concerning her decision to pursue doctoral education, Angie shared "I thought that some people in the church might have a problem with it, but I didn't think the church itself would have a problem with it." She said that she felt great support from faculty members at an LDS Church-owned school where she had attended previously and where she worked. She explained, "They really encouraged me to do that because they felt like it was a good field for a mom and it's a field that they need

more women in." Angie perceived that faculty members felt she could be a great mom and make a contribution outside of her children. She felt like this was an opportunity to do more good that she could otherwise have done by being an at-home mom. Though Angie shared that she felt like she missed a lot of her children's activities, her perspective lent her to think, "In the end, this is all going to be worth it."

Actions based on obligation, duty, or responsibility to her perceived mission. Angie indicated an apparent deep dedication to her perceived mission. Angie seemed to indicate that during challenging times she would rely on her spiritual confirmation to sustain her studies. She reflected:

> I felt like this was really the right direction. I had to keep saying to myself, 'okay, I really, at the beginning, felt this was the right thing to do.' My husband and I spent a lot of time trying to decide, and we both really felt really good about it, so I had to keep going back to that, saying, 'there is a reason I'm doing this.'

Angie confessed, "I don't think I've ever had anything stretch me as hard as doing the PhD program" as she recalled her experience as a test of who she was. During this testing, Angie indicated that she felt a responsibility to succeed.

Used her own experience in creating the meaning of the directive for herself. It appears that Angie was able to participate in what LDS Church directives meant to her as she applied them to her life. Regarding church members who questioned her decision to achieve her doctorate, Angie

explained, "I separate the gospel from people, and so I didn't feel any tension as far as the gospel is concerned. I didn't feel any tension like that." Angie candidly added, "But then I don't know if I was setting up barriers, psychologically. I mean, I think I probably should have because a lot of people do, but I didn't." It is interesting that Angie apparently noted that other people may sense a tension in what has been said regarding the roles of LDS mothers of young children, yet she did not feel that way. This theory seems to suggest that she may not have felt a tension because she was occupying a different epistemological position than the others she was referring to may have occupied.

Angie's sense of purpose and mission as she participated in the meaning making experience of her roles is apparent in the following paragraphs. Angie referred to her personal drive as what got her through her doctoral program. She shared, "I just felt like there was something I can do, there's a reason to do this." She elaborated:

> When I started looking for a job, I looked elsewhere. I thought how neat it would be to be in Illinois as a Mormon professor, that there would be some Mormon students there that I could influence and be a good whatever. But I really felt like I was supposed to be here. And this is all feelings, but I really felt I needed to be here because sometimes women students need a positive role model, and what I had seen when I was going through this school was that you either had, if you had a woman with a PhD, that she didn't have a family. It was an either/or situation, and we have a lot of our older women faculty that have never married. People say, well you can't have it all. I think that you have to make choices. I'd never push someone that way, but I feel like they need some role models too.

Angie reflected on her own needs as a mom, and what she believed she should be doing as a good mother. She recalled, "When I was in the middle of the master's degree, I thought, 'you know, what I need as a mom is I need to have a good job. But I also need to have flexibility because my family is really important to me.'" She added, "It's pretty rare for me to miss any activity of my kids."

Angie shared, "I feel like my kids see that I value education…so they work harder than they would." Angie further declared that the benefit to her children from achieving her doctorate has made her achievement worth it. Angie related, "I've always felt like it makes me have more confidence, and I think that's a positive thing. I think that they [her children] see that education gives you self confidence. I think that they probably have more self confidence because I do."

Angie pointed out that her children have learned about equality from observing her marriage relationship as a mother and as one who has a doctoral degree. Concerning her marriage, she related, "When we make decisions, we make them together. I think they have seen that, and I think that is going to help them too." Angie further stated that "as far as making decisions, there are certain things that their dad does a lot better than I do, and there are things that I do better than their dad."

Angie declared "I love it, and I'm so glad I did it! No question. It's

everything that I thought it would be. It's been everything I wanted and more." Referring to Angie and her husband's decision that she achieve her doctoral degree to assist her in being the bread winner to their family of ten, she said:

> Over the years, almost every time we would get a new bishop, they'd call my husband in and talk to him about that. And then they'd call me in. I think that they thought that I was somehow kind of being mistreated. And I'd say "this is a very conscious decision that we made."

Reflecting back on her decision to achieve her doctorate to help her as the breadwinner while her husband stayed home with the children, Angie stated, "I know it's odd. I know all that kind of stuff. I understand the church doctrine, and I believe 100% in that. For our situation, this is what works, and this is the right thing for us." It appears from these statements that Angie believed in the LDS Church directives, and felt comfortable making her own choices after having received counsel from the church. She seems to have participated in making meaning from the directives for her life.

Beth

Thoughtfully considered directives. Beth expressed her consideration of LDS directives as she stated, "I desired to be a mother because that's what I needed and wanted to be." She continued:

> I always wanted to be a mother. Obeying the commandments of the

> church has always weighed heavily upon me. I knew that I wanted to get my education and be a mother as well. I mean I knew that motherhood is a primary purpose of life…and so there was never a question even when I was getting pregnant for my fourth child and having many struggles. My doctor said, "Why do I want to do this?" I said, "Because it is right. The Lord wants me to have four kids!"

Beth also felt that she had the blessing of the church to achieve her doctorate as a mother with young children. Beth commented regarding her education, "I never doubted that [choice]…. I never felt guilty about the education."

Embraced the complexity of the situation. As Beth thought about motherhood in the midst of her journey towards her doctoral degree, she remembered the complexity of her situation of pursuing two directives of the LDS Church simultaneously. She recalled, "It's been a challenge. I just thought having and raising children would be easier. I thought it would be more natural and that they would mind better or something." She continued, "Getting my doctorate degree along with raising my children and working part-time was different than I had expected. Life got so busy. It changed my life in a really stressful way." Beth appeared to struggle as she tried to share her feelings about being a mother while she achieved her doctoral degree as she commented, "And then, just all the kids, and life. It's just huge. It's hard to picture, but it's just huge." Beth revealed, "I think I got right up to my cracking point a few times…during my

doctorate program."

Beth expressed her desire to be home with her family as much as she could, and stressed her desire to serve others and make a difference in the world. She explained, "I beat myself up for a number of years because I thought I wasn't 'right.' I didn't like to cook, sew, and make crafts." Beth revealed, "I remember wondering why the Lord made me the way he did when he wanted me to stay home with my children."

She recalled that domesticity

> has never been real interesting for me, but I have such a strong testimony, and knew that…I needed to be the mom. And I needed to be in the home. Part of that is because I took it upon myself because that was my role. I should be the one to give.

Beth appeared to share some frustrations regarding her husband's role during her experience of achieving her doctorate. She stated:

> I have a supportive husband, and he's wonderful particularly if you put him beside a lot of men in the church, because he's supportive. But in his mind he's got his place, and I have my place. Like during the summer when I'm trying to work full-time because I've got a research grant, he says, "Sorry, I have to go to work." So whatever happens, I stop. He doesn't. He and I have struggled a bit through the years about this. We have a good relationship and great marriage, but we still struggle. My work is a lower priority to him. He just has to deal with me when I get frustrated because it's not fair sometimes and he knows that. Once when he was frustrated he told that I shouldn't have had kids if I wanted to do all of the other stuff too. That didn't go over too well, and he has never said that again.

As Beth continued to share about her husband's role, it seemed as though she did not want to place all of the blame on him. She also talked

about the role she played in these exchanges. She said, "He's a good guy, but, but I did everything, and you know what? Part of that is me. [I felt like] I should be the one to give. You know, you feel that as a woman." She continued:

> I think LDS women feel that very strongly; we are very complex creatures! Although I have challenges with my husband, I think part of the struggle is housed within my own assumptions and the words and actions that come forth because of those assumptions.

Beth continued to share her thoughts on the "intensity of multiple roles, and trying to do it all, and with the kids, and the coaching, and the church, and the school, and also some work on top of that, and always trying to be in the home."

Beth expressed that she had "strong desires on both" motherhood and education as she explained:

> If I did not have that testimony I would have done things different because being a mom and being in the home is the hardest thing in life. I love my children, but doing domestic stuff sucks. I find no fulfillment in those duties and responsibilities. Changing diapers and cooking dinner is not rewarding for me. I spent a lot of years feeling like I wasn't right because I didn't like that stuff…. I even had a hard time reading stories to my children and just doing kid stuff.

Reasonably and logically considered different perspectives. It appears that Beth really wanted to find a way to apply the directives of the church in a way that would satisfy her needs while being obedient to the church's counsel. Beth thoughtfully recalled:

> I went through a lot of really challenging years, but the schooling was what helped me. Going to school gave me, in a strange kind of way, permission when working full-time didn't seem like an option for me. Going to school part-time and working part-time seemed like a choice. And it is what kept me sane and what kept my mind working. As my husband will tell you, during those first years when he was in school and I was home with two small, active children… I lost myself and became depressed. I can remember very clearly coming home after my first weekend of taking courses again for my masters' degree. I had taken a one-credit counseling class on a Friday and Saturday and had been home for two years with little to do besides taking care of a baby and toddler. I was smiling and telling him about everything I had learned. He got unusually emotional and said, 'You're back. This is who you are. It is nice to have you back. You were gone for a few years and now I have you back.' And I just got so excited because I could think, and I could do, and I could better myself again. And so it was beautiful. School was worth it. I know that I've done, back to my patriarchal blessing, what I was supposed to do in my life. I've done something that was difficult but it was what was needed to move me forward toward what I am supposed to become.

Beth shared her thoughts on the relationship between motherhood and success in other areas. She said, "I've studied in depth the benefits of motherhood on the development of leadership for women, and it's very powerful. I now understand that it's my experiences with motherhood that have given me so many skills with leadership."

Actions based on obligation, duty, or responsibility to her perceived mission. Beth appeared to illustrate her felt responsibility to qualify for situations where she could serve people. She shared:

> [I] kept getting the confirmation from the spirit throughout the process that I was on the right track that the Lord wanted me to be on. I had to have His permission to do this, and that's just how it worked. I really needed to feel that this was the right thing to do,

> and it always felt right. I was blessed to receive a confirmation from the Lord many times that I was to get my masters and my doctorate.

Beth related:

> When I was fourteen, I received my patriarchal blessing. There is a major paragraph in that blessing that talks about my scholarly education. It says that I would have a continued desire to learn and to grow in my scholastic, it calls it scholastic education. It says that I would have a continued desire to seek an education, and that my education would prepare me for some great things that I am supposed to do in my life, and that I would be known as a great teacher among all mankind. And so at fourteen years old, I knew that I would need to get more than a bachelor's degree because it was very clear that education, whatever I chose to do in education, was going to prepare me for life and teaching. I knew at that age that I was supposed to continue my education even past a bachelor's degree.
>
> School was worth it. I know that I've done, back to my patriarchal blessing, what I was supposed to do in my life. I've done something that was difficult but it was what was need to move me forward toward what I am supposed to become.

Beth explained that this counsel had been central to all of her decisions, feeling confident that the instruction came from the Lord. She emphasized, "I think that my initial conscious desire for continued education came from my blessing. It has been a strong motivator to move forward." Beth emotionally reflected on "those ah-hah moments when I know I have been in the right place at the right time to influence people for good."

Beth would sometimes think:

"I can't keep doing this!" But, I'm very resilient and I would go to

> bed and get up rested and say, "I've got to do this. I'm supposed to do this. This is what my life's about." And I would go on. I don't think there was ever a question that I would finish my doctorate because I believe that you must always finish what you start.

Regarding her doctoral degree, Beth recounted, "I wasn't sure how I would ever use it. I just knew that I needed to get it."

Used her own experience in creating the meaning of the directive for herself. Beth illustrated her experience of joining in the creation of what directives meant for her. Beth confided, "I kept trying to analyze why I kept trying to go to school with the challenges of motherhood, and I just needed to. I needed that in my life." Beth added:

> It gave me something to look forward to. I don't care what other people say to me, it's this internal accomplishment and need, and I don't care if anybody knows. I just have this accomplishment when I get done. That internal satisfaction that came from those years is the primary reward for me because I know it was right and it prepared me for many future endeavors.

Beth revealed that over time, she participated in making meaning out of her decision to achieve her doctoral degree. She disclosed some of the meaning she has formed from her decision when she said:

> I think it gives me credibility. I believe that education is central in some of the things that I do and will continue to do. I have strong influential capabilities and the opportunities that are emerging before me are humbling. I'm seeing this clearer and clearer as I get asked to speak for many audiences. I am researching things that are so applicable for the development of young women. I just feel like I'm supposed to be doing this work and its going to lead to things that will help people and help in the church efforts down the road. And it's hard because I don't see everything, but I'm seeing pieces come together. I'm doing this research to understand and somehow

> benefit women to be an influence and have strong leadership so that they can be better in their homes, in their churches, in their communities, in the state governments, in the change that needs to happen. There's a gap. I believed strongly that somehow that there is a place for my work and my education and my experience to help fill that gap. I really believe that somehow I will need to continue to make a difference that most other women can't make.

Carol

Thoughtfully considered directives. Carol expressed that during the time she achieved her doctoral degree, she remembered directives about the importance of being an at-home mother. It is apparent that these directives weighed heavily on her. She reflected:

> And then of course, there was relief society, sacrament meeting…general conference. If I wasn't carrying enough guilt, they always managed to add to it considerably, depending on who the president of the church was at the time, and what the theme was.

Referring to times she had heard LDS Church leaders teach about the importance of achieving all of the education you could, Carol said, "I always took that 'getting an education' seriously." Carol seemed to believe that the LDS Church had always taught that "women need an education." She expressed that she felt that the church emphasized family even more than achieving education. She expressed her believe that the church taught that "family is always more significant," and then added her personal belief, "and I agree it is…."

Embraced the complexity of the situation. Carol seemed to express the

complexity of the situation in her admission that the church has always counseled women to get all of the education they could get, but that being a mother is always more important than education. Carol expressed, "I had no role models. There was one faculty member in my master's degree that was a woman. She was a widow. Her husband had passed away years ago." As a mother with young children, Carol reflected on the complexity of balancing motherhood with doctoral education without having "role models for how that's done, how people do it."

Carol shared that she could not do everything expected of her if she wasn't home all of the time. She simply said, "I learned to prioritize." Carol seemed to share her desire to be available for her children when they were home in this comment, "In the evenings I concentrated on what they had done in school, what they were accomplishing, and spent a lot of quality time with them."

Reasonably and logically considered different perspectives. Carol related that she encountered many people who tried to influence her decisions about how to apply the directives of the church to her life. She stated:

> I had a temple marriage, an active husband, he was employed, and I had kids. You don't go to school with that combination. For me, going to school was just as dangerous as working outside the home. It was as dangerous as working outside the home in terms of being viewed with skepticism.

Carol related that her experience of going to church during this

time "wasn't very warm and fuzzy." She felt like local church members were generally not very encouraging. Reflecting back, Carol seemed to express frustration, indicating that she would have appreciated more support from her local church members. She expressed:

> Because I was outside the home, I kind of aligned myself with those groups who were being minimized, because they didn't fit the two parent, father is the provider mold. And so consequently, I would say things in a relief society [an adult women's] meeting, and get into healthy discussions with [church leaders] sometimes.

Aside from perceiving various seemingly negative perspectives on mothers achieving doctoral education, Carol formed a positive perspective. She shared, "It has helped me with how I analyze situations and how I handle things with the family and with the church." Carol shared how her children have had a "very high tolerance for diversity." She added, "Part of that is because of what I did. They are very accepting and nonjudgmental."

Carol emphasized, "You know, I just have different skills than I would have had, which has been helpful." Carol observed concerning her decision, "It was probably something I decided subconsciously that helped me deal with some serious mental health issues that when I'm very busy, very engaged, very pushed, some of the problems that I have are not as evident."

Carol shared:

> Because of where I was viewed within the church, kind of on the edge, which I really wasn't, I was able to empathize with women that were struggling, women that didn't have the ideal life. And I think that I was able to be fairly effective in working with them, and connected with them.

Actions based on obligation, duty, or responsibility to her perceived mission. Carol explained her dedication to achieving her degree as she simply said, "the doctorate was just because I felt like I needed to. It was a felt need to continue learning." Carol related, "I felt it was the right thing to do. I wasn't doing it to rebel. I felt it was the right thing to do…. I just felt really pushed to get the degree." Carol shared, "I could help make a difference for young kids with disabilities." Carol called herself stubborn while she explained, "I don't like to quit things. I don't like to just stop."

Used her own experience in creating the meaning of the directive for herself. Carol seemed to express her commitment to her ability to make meaning from directives of the church as she applied them for herself. She remembered

> feeling like what you were doing was the right thing to do, and feeling like from a spiritual standpoint it was the right thing to do. You had that confirmation, but not having support within the church; over the years, yes, but not during the program. Carol reflected that one of the hardest challenges for her in achieving her doctorate was the feeling of isolation…. I'm not denying the importance of being a mother…. Nobody ever taught about the idea of balance.

Carol remembered that during her experience of deciding to achieve her doctoral degree, she felt like she was acting contrary to what

"was being taught at the pulpit." She clarified her decision as she explained, "Now, did I feel that was the gospel? Not necessarily. Did I feel that was how the brethren were interpreting things? Yes. But I felt the gospel was true." It seems that Carol perceived directives from the LDS Church, but did not view them as external authoritative expression for which she had no control. It appears she was able to thoughtfully find meaning in the directives for herself.

Donna

Thoughtfully considered directives. LDS Church directives seemed to have influenced Donna years before she applied to a doctoral program. She related a teaching, which she believed was particularly meaningful and influential for her. She recited, "Whatever intelligence you attain in this life will carry with you unto the next." Donna shared that this teaching had helped her to understand the significant role that education should play in her life as a mother.

Embraced the complexity of the situation. Donna expressed the complexity of hearing directives that mothers should be home with their children, the importance of obtaining education, and of receiving personal direction that she should balance a career and motherhood. She reflected:

> Patriarchal blessings are very ambiguous and different in how they come to fruition so you can't bank too much on a certain thing. But it is pretty explicit about how to balance…my career and to pursue

> education in my field; and I was fifteen when I got it if I remember. I think I just always assumed from the get-go that I would be in school for a long time, that I was going to have a career, and even when my mom questioned me. I think she thinks back in her mind, "well it said that she'll be balancing between the two and that's her life's calling." It's definitely guided me to thinking that I need to have expectations that I need to be committed to education, and to a career, for a long time.

Donna shared her feelings about how her perception of the church's teachings have influenced her choice:

> I don't think that it would be such a dilemma in my mind if I weren't a member of the church, and had that perspective of the eternal ramifications of how you raise a person. So because of that, throughout my PhD and working, I would hope that anything that takes you away from that full-time, causes some kind of internal turmoil. I would say that is directly related my belief in the gospel and understanding of an eternal perspective of why we're here and the capacity for human potential and divine nature of kids. That has affected me throughout in terms of how I balance my time and even how I balance my time now.

Donna shared that she believed that

> within the church there's a fine balance like "we really want educated women. We want our members being leaders in the world and all this, yet we also want strong families." I think that even within the church, people aren't sure where their alliances are and how you manage it practically. So, I think they just stay out of it.

Reasonably and logically considered different perspectives. Donna explained her perspective that her education is ongoing, and that she felt in no way limited in what she could attain and achieve as an LDS mother. She mentioned with a smile, "I still maintain a list of careers I'm interested in." Concerning education, Donna related, "It's really rewarding. And I

don't know if it is so much the intellectual stimulation that is rewarding as it is feeling like you're doing something meaningful." She later shared, "There's a lot of things and a lot of ways that we can fulfill our mission in life. It may not matter what context we are in, but more how we act around people wherever we are."

Actions based on obligation, duty, or responsibility to her perceived mission. Donna shared her commitment to her education as she shared that getting married did not deter her as she began her doctoral program. She remembered,

> I started dating my husband right before I… left to go start my PhD. We were very serious and everybody knew that, and we ended up getting engaged a month later and dating long distance which we have done for many years of our marriage…. Apparently, once I moved out to start everybody just thought that [I would] quit the program and come back for [him]. And I remember when I heard that, I just laughed. I thought that was so funny because that never crossed my mind one time, and as soon as my husband finished residency he got a fellowship…and came out to me.

Used her own experience in creating the meaning of the directive for herself. Donna also expressed a lack of role models for balancing motherhood with education. She believed that most of the LDS women professors that she had known were single, older women whose children were grown, or women whose husbands stayed home.

Donna shared, "[having children] is a much higher priority to me. It's going to be more rewarding and have more lasting impact than any

professional things I do." Despite what she heard from others, she continued, "So I'll just go ahead and have kids when I want to have kids and let everything else work around it. So, that's kind of my philosophy now and how I ended up doing it with my first daughter."

Emily

Thoughtfully considered directives. Emily was a divorced mother at the time she made the decision to apply for a doctoral program, and successfully completed her program as a single mom. She related her concern desire to be successful in a single parent situation. In the face of needing to begin a career to provide for herself and her young child, Emily expressed her belief that doctoral education would prepare her best to care for her daughter. She related:

> I have talked on various occasions to young women at [church settings] and tell the girls that the prophet has said to be educated. That's not only to develop ourselves, because none of us can be saved in ignorance. The Lord expects us to pursue truth and to do all that we can to develop our talents while we're here on earth and there is nothing more important, I think, than learning wisdom, coupled with the fact that educated mothers have more intelligent and better prepared, more successful children. So it's critical for moms to be extremely well educated, but at the same time, if you want a high or decent paying job, you need to have your degree.

Embraced the complexity of the situation. Emily reflected that as a divorced mom, she decided that doctoral education was important despite the time and attention that it would demand before she would be able to

start her career. She expressed understanding a larger scope than her immediate needs. She recalled "It's been a wonderful career that has given me an opportunity to do some good things, not only for me but for my child, but I hope also for the church." Emily further shared some insight concerning the complexity of advanced education for women:

> I think women, especially for those who are socialized to be mothers, and who are grateful for the opportunity to be mothers, think of money making as a secondary pursuit. Yet, sadly, many of us end up being the support of our family. And even though, my husband was faithful in child support most of the time, definitely the primary burden of taking care of my daughter was put on me, at least financially, and of course emotionally and physically…. So many women are not able to get the high paying or the well paying jobs and so they do the two and three jobs and have limited time to spend with their child and I have had incredible opportunities to spend time with my daughter.

Reasonably and logically considered different perspectives. Though many members of the LDS Church have feared that devoting time to interests other than their families indicated that mothers were neglecting their families, Emily shared a deep motivation to be an example of an LDS mother through her career. She shared:

> I never in a thousand years thought I'd be [so long] a professor at [this University], but I think it's been an incredible blessing for me to be here in the world and to have opportunity for people, I hope, to say, "oh, I know someone who's Mormon. They were very impressive, or I really thought that they were a remarkable person."

Emily weighed her options as a single mother; she felt like achieving her doctorate would allow her to be home more with her

daughter. Emily described her situation:

> I had to support my child. I knew that I was going to have to be the primary bread winner, and so that was critical. It was a very pragmatic decision. I knew that I would be able to support [my daughter] as a college professor."

Emily related:

> My ability to support, as well as my ability to see every single game, every single activity my daughter ever did, my ability to be able to travel in the summer with my daughter, to travel internationally with my daughter over the years, has just been an incredibly enriching experience for both of us and, as a career there couldn't have been a better choice for me, especially as a single mom.

Emily reflected:

> I can't imagine a more unique opportunity for me, than what was given me, and yet it's made all the difference. It was wonderful. It was wonderful. And then of course there was the intellectual joy of being able to pursue a degree and be able to just work with such great minds.

She felt strongly "that we were expected to be as intelligent a people as possible." Emily continued:

> The Lord doesn't want us to look like a bunch of ignorant hicks. He wants us to be the most successful, the most intelligent, the most creative, the most ambitious people on earth, and that we should confidently pursue excellence in whatever we do.

Actions based on obligation, duty, or responsibility to her perceived mission. Emily shared an experience that illustrated her attitude and desire to pursue education and motherhood. She stated:

> I got really sick with my pregnancy. I was horribly, horribly ill while I was pursuing my master's degree. I literally would go to

> class, stay as long as I could until I had to go throw up, then I would come back to class. I'd go to class, stay as long as I could, leave class to go throw up and come back to class. And I remember this one guy, he just came up to me and he just kind of had this sickened look and a little condescending said, "please, just go home." Luckily that semester, I had a couple of teachers who let me do incompletes, and then once I was more stabilized in my pregnancy I was able to finish all the work.

Emily shared that "you just make sacrifices when you need to get your education." Emily expressed that she has felt the hand of the Lord in her pursuit of her doctoral degree. She related, "I felt very much that the Lord was mindful of me and leading me, taking care of me. The Lord had a hand in my progression."

Emily shared:

> When I was fourteen I got my patriarchal blessing and one of the things that stood out, and it had a significant impact I'm sure on me, was that I would be known as a great teacher and that people would come to be for advice regarding their lives…. I always had that in the back of my mind. I go back to my patriarchal blessing and I read that I have the privilege of associating with those who are not members of the church and they expect me to act in a way that would be appropriate even they themselves are not so inclined.

Emily shared, "But even with all my mistakes, even as hard as it was, I don't think there was ever a question of, was I going to quit? It wasn't even a thought. There's just know way."

Used her own experience in creating the meaning of the directive for herself. Emily discussed the idea that achieving doctoral degrees may likely lead to women being out of the home as they pursue careers.

Regarding the church's concern for this, Emily reflected, "I think very few women selfishly pursue careers. I don't think it is selfish to develop a talent. I think that's what is expected of us."

Emily explained, "We are not cookie cutters in the church. We are all unique and have unique paths and unique opportunities." She seemed to feel very comfortable accepting the directives from the LDS Church and deciding how to apply them to her unique situation. Emily participated in making the meaning behind directives, and finding direction for herself.

Faye

Thoughtfully considered directives. Faye recalled the importance of motherhood and education in her life as she said, "Both were very strong desires, although I'd always felt that if push came to shove, motherhood would come first. And I can honestly say that I think it has."

Embraced the complexity of the situation. Faye remembered continuing her education as a wife and mother when she saw other women she knew decide to stop seeking their education when they got married. She said,

> That was really very hard because I felt like the message I was getting was, and this is reinforced by the practice that I saw around me with all my friends, that you attended school until you fell in love and got married. Then you dropped out regardless of where you were. I had several friends who dropped out with just one semester to go, several friends, but I continued on going to school.

Faye shared the difficulty of making her decision to pursue her

doctoral degree as a mother of young children. She recalled, "It wasn't easy. It was a horrible struggle. It was a terrible struggle." Faye exclaimed:

> It was a terrible decision, but it was something I was driven to very honestly. And it was an intellectual drive, yes, but it was also a spiritual drive. And actually, when I was getting my PhD, the spiritual force was so strong in back of me to move me through that I was afraid to not do it because I was afraid that I'd be consumed. I can't describe it any other way. I mean it's just, you know, when God wants something, you just don't deny that…. You just move through.

Reasonably and logically considered different perspectives. Faye seemed to believe that educational decisions impacted one's entire life span, and needed to be considered with this perspective in mind. She shared,

> I saw a PhD as saying, I'm going to be a mother until my youngest turns eighteen and leaves for college and then I don't see this as a full-time job. I see this PhD as taking me into the next phase of life so I don't go through this major crisis of empty nest and can make the contribution that I want to make in the next phase of life.

Faye explained that though she was not behaving according to cultural norms, seemed to act contrary to some church member's perspectives, that she felt comforted in her decision. She related:

> I can't even begin. I can't even begin. When I was pursuing [my doctorate], by far the greatest reward was this 360 degree cushioning that I felt by the Spirit. I mean I, the Spirit lived with me, ate with me, just you know. During the time I was getting my degree there was a spirit of peace in my home. I mean that was my way of knowing that what I was doing was right. And since then you know as I look back on my life, on twenty-six years, my husband and I and my children say over and over again that it was the single best decision besides getting married and having children that we've ever made in our lives because we just always had a spirit of peace in our home. And we never had any quarrels.

There was just a spirit of peace in our home.

Actions based on obligation, duty, or responsibility to her perceived mission. Faye shared that she was led to achieve her doctoral degree by "a passion to do something for children." She revealed that she had always felt a love for people, and especially felt a need to help little children. Referring to external factors that influenced her to achieve her doctorate, Faye related, "Those were important, yes, but honestly the largest influence came from within. I mean it was a burn. It was a burning desire." She elaborated:

> I mean, people who think intellectually, that they want to get a doctorate with little children, they'll never make it unless they also have an emotional drive, or a spiritual drive, or whatever. It doesn't just come from the mind. It comes from the heart. No. No, it was my path.

Faye underscored:

> I dedicated my life to children, and actually that dedication hasn't waned. I mean now I look back on that goal and I think, I mean it just seems sort of arrogant for me to do that, but I did. And it was a very serious dedication and I meant it. I wanted to, I really wanted to make a difference on a regional level and on a global level, you know, and very honestly I felt called to do that. I've always been a very religious person and I've had, a very spiritual person I should say, and I've always felt like I had a spiritual partner always with me, you know a guide. There was somebody or something with me just saying, you need to prepare your life in such a way that you'll have the skills and the degree, the opportunity to impact on more than just a locality. It is clear to me that my mission was children.

Faye elaborated:

When I got my patriarchal blessing, it was a very profound

> experience for me and in that blessing the patriarch said that these feelings that you have when you see people, this is love. And so you have a love for people and you need to realize that. And at the same time I was realizing that myself.

Faye similarly related:

> I mean I just felt very strongly that my mission was service to more than my family. And I hate to say that because it sounds like I'm trivializing the family, but I mean you can probably even hear it in my voice now, the stress of that decision. It was a terrible decision. It was difficult, but I decided that I was not going to put off my children. And I decided that my children would always come first, but I did find my career and my education was very important. So when people would ask me to put a percentage on things, I really couldn't say much more than my children are 55% and my career is 45%. And honestly many times I felt like, privately although I would never admit this, that it was 52%, 48%.

Used her own experience in creating the meaning of the directive for herself. It appears that Faye relied on her ability to apply directives from authority to her life as she experienced her decision-making process. When she decided to go back East with her children to pursue her doctoral education, Faye reported that her parents did not speak to her for over a month. Faye shared:

> I was always really worried about whether there was a sense that I was deficient as a mother, but honestly, through a lot of spiritual introspection, I came to the understanding that…my mission was to serve others on a larger level.

She related previous experiences from her life that may have influenced her confidence to become an active participant in forming the meaning of directives in her life. She said:

> When I went back and got my master's degree…[a church leader] called me in and told me that I was abandoning my children and that I was not being a good mother because I was getting my masters. And I told him that "the last time I checked, it was the Church of Christ not the Church of Bishop So-and-So," and I named him. I said, "This is what Christ wants me to do. This is what I need to do." He said, "Well, you're getting false revelation." And I said, "Well, maybe I am. Maybe I'm not, but I don't believe I am." And it was really very, very ugly.

Faye shared, "The biggest challenge, of course, was the church. [The problem was] how I interpreted church doctrine…. A mother doesn't do this, and a mother doesn't do that, and so on." She continued, "But once I got beyond that, then the biggest challenges were from the church authorities, and that was really quite severe." Faye explained that she did not feel that these challenges were wasted. She said:

> One good thing that happened was my testimony of the gospel grew. I could tell how I felt about it and I could tell that what was important to me was the church's definition of what God is. I wanted to stick with it for that reason.

Faye shared:

> I mean the doctrine was troublesome, but I got over it. I had such profound spiritual experiences that for me personally, it would have been unthinkable to have denied those experiences. You just couldn't do it. So, for that reason, I didn't know how the doctrine could reconcile with it, but I just decided not to worry about it.

Faye shared how she was able to come to the point of not worrying about it, while she remained a faithful member of the church. She explained:

> I just did a lot of study of the church's doctrines, and was just

> struck over and over again that the church was developed on the premise that a person had to exercise his free agency and his freedom of thought in order to develop the church, and that was an eternal principle. So, if it applied then, it applies now. Actually there was a scripture…that really helped me get beyond the doctrine, or beyond the colloquial version of the doctrine. That scripture said if you study things out, then if you act on your own accord, you can't be held accountable if you're trying to do what is right, and if you're honestly trying to follow true pathways.

It appears that Faye was able to listen to directives from the LDS Church, and instead of relying on what others were telling her they meant for her, it seems Faye was able to participate in the meaning-making experience herself to decide how they applied to her life. It appears that Faye did not dismiss the church, or its counsel; rather, it seems that she was able to contribute to the meaning of the directive for herself.

Ginny

Thoughtfully considered directives. Ginny related that she had considered the directives to "be a stay-at-home mom" and "put your primary focus on your children," as well as the directive to "develop your talents." She recalled that the church's support for education "clearly was a factor" in her decision to pursue her doctoral degree.

Embraced the complexity of the situation. Ginny expressed her belief that the directives to stay at home and to achieve education seemed contradicting. Addressing the complexity of her decision, she related that to know if she should pursue her doctorate at that time, she prayed to ask

God, "Will this hurt my family?" Ginny expressed that she felt "kind of a qualified answer. Not necessarily meaning I could control that. I could get too caught up in that and it could hurt my family, but not if I was careful." Ginny seemed to sense the difficulty of pursuing both directives before she enrolled.

Reasonably and logically considered different perspectives. Ginny's perspective seemed to differ with many of the LDS women that she knew. Ginny related the following experience regarding what she identified was a need to make a greater contribution than what was normally expected of women within her church's culture. She shared:

> I had a hard time being a stay at home mother. It was like, I love my children, I wanted to be a mother, but I had a lot of young mother angst about wanting something else. My talents were not home centered. I couldn't do things at home that felt like I was developing myself.

Ginny related her feelings as she began her doctoral program,

> I took a social psych class and a stats class and got into that first social psych seminar and I was like, 'I am finally where I belong.' I always felt like I was thumping the edges [prior to going back to school], but it was really the culture, cultural boundaries. I just didn't quite fit. And I wasn't quite satisfied and got into that seminar and I'm like, "Ahhh, I finally, this finally feels right. It's like, you're teaching me these concepts and I've thought about them and I didn't have the words."

Ginny said that a reward for her achieving her degree was her children feeling an "openness and seeing a broader future." She appreciated the feeling of being "equally yoked" with her husband

instead of being fully dependent on him. Ginny further stated, "I believe that our relationship is [one of] such deep mutual respect…in a way that I don't think could have happened without that."

Actions based on obligation, duty, or responsibility to her perceived mission. Ginny related that she had received "strong, strong answers" to her prayers concerning her doctoral degree. Answers to her prayers seemed to shout "yes, you're supposed to do that." Reflecting on whether she had felt spiritual confirmation since achieving her degree she said, "I ask myself if this was spiritually directed since I've been here? Definitely!"

Ginny shared:

> And so, after I got accepted, my husband spent from that moment until I started trying to talk me out of it. He'd say, "Now I'm not trying to talk you out of getting a PhD, just the timing! How can we possibly do this when I'm doing a surgery residency?" which as I calculated it later, for the first two years was eighty-five hours a week.

She continued:

> I tried numerous ways and numerous explanations of why it had to be this way and why it had to be now. He didn't really want to hear it. He just wanted me to change my mind, and that's where I still ask myself, "Where did I find the strength to say that I'm going to do this, and it doesn't matter how much you try and talk me out of it, I'm going to do this?" This was something I needed to do for my own sanity.

Used her own experience in creating the meaning of the directive for herself. Ginny shared, "You have to consider the whole range of women they are talking to" when leaders of the LDS Church make directives.

Ginny discussed her perception of the teachings of the LDS Church as she said, "You know we have this 'be a stay-at-home mom, put your primary focus on your children,' but 'develop your talents.' It's kind of contradicting and so I put things together that worked." Ginny further explained that she felt it was important for women to be able to figure things out for themselves. She shared, "It is so important for each individual woman, mother, to have their own testimony, their own sense of self" so that they can have a "sense of their own faith to be able to stand on their own." Ginny shared that the LDS Church's "support for education clearly was a factor" in her achieving her doctoral degree. Yet despite this support for education, she recalled, "I clearly felt like I was doing something counter-normative" within the church.

Even though Ginny may have felt like her decision to achieve her doctoral degree was counter-normative, she did not feel that her decision was counter to what the Lord wanted her to do. She related, "I have to make some of these decisions myself. The church can give general advice and then I have to decide for myself. So I felt no guilt, in terms of going against the church." It seems that Ginny is comfortable participating in the process of applying directives to her own life, and deciding what they mean. The directives appear meaningful to Ginny, but only as she reflected on them did she decide what the meaning really was for her.

Summary

It appears that *Women's Ways of Knowing* has great utility in this study. *Women's Ways of Knowing* served as a helpful tool to inform this study on how these LDS mothers experienced their decision to achieve their doctoral degrees. Each participant seemed to share ideas that illustrated someone who occupied a constructed knowing position, indicating that the women participated in the construction of the meaning of the LDS Church directives in their own lives.

This theory does not claim that a person in the constructed knowing position values the directives of the LDS Church any more or less than individuals who hold other positions; rather the theory offers a useful understanding for how the participants came to experience their decisions. As women who held the constructed knowing position, the directives seem to have come less from an authority figure as rigid declarations. Rather, the women appear to have felt comfortable sharing in the authority to make meaning out of the LDS Church directive. For one in the constructed knowing position, the directive means little as a stand-alone statement; the meaning comes within one's own personal context.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study attempted to understand the lived experience of some women by studying how LDS mothers with young children experience the process of deciding to achieve doctoral education. Additionally, are these mothers acting as would be expected from someone occupying a constructed knowing epistemological position? This chapter will discuss findings from the data analysis, the significance of these findings, and recommendations for future research. The women discussed their careers and children in greater detail than what is discussed in this paper as the research questions helped to frame what was included.

Findings

Included in this analysis are four sections that emerged during analysis that describe how LDS mothers in this study experienced their decision to achieve their doctoral degrees, and one section applying the *Women's Ways of Knowing* framework to the data. Analysis of this decision-making process considered their experiences from their earliest recollection through the time of graduation, as it seemed that participants were constantly faced with the decision to continue towards achievement of their degree up until the point of actually receiving it. Categories that

emerged were: contributing factors for doctoral achievement, challenges to doctoral achievement, perceived rewards and benefits of the women achieving their degrees, and an understanding of the women's perceptions of the counsel of the LDS Church regarding motherhood and education. *Women's Ways of Knowing* was also applied to the data gathered from LDS mother participants. A simplified summary of findings is included as Appendix E.

Contributing Factors for Doctoral Achievement

In this study, LDS mothers shared their experiences of deciding to achieve doctoral degrees. Areas of interest that emerged from the experiences that the participants shared included a desire to achieve their doctoral degree because of personal reasons, the presence of external influences, and the participants' initial circumstances and perceptions of their ability to succeed.

Personal reasons. The women expressed many personal reasons for achieving doctoral education, many of which appear to be spiritual in nature and deal with their personal desires as well as what they perceived as direction from God. Personal reasons for these LDS women achieving doctoral education that emerged in this study include the women's internal desires, a feeling of having always known that they would

achieve graduate education, feeling a personal need to achieve their degrees, spiritual confirmations that they were doing what the Lord wanted them to do with their lives, perceiving that their patriarchal blessings indicated that higher education is a part of their life's journey, feeling a sense of purpose to influence others, feeling the joy of education, feeling like quitting was not an option, and seeking preparation for a career. Interestingly, as supported by the several themes spiritual in nature, the women seem to have strongly believed that achieving their doctoral degree was what God wanted them to do. The women's desire for education appears to have been central to their core desires and felt purposes of life.

External influences. Family relationships seem to have had the most external influence on most of the women who achieved their degrees. The participants appeared to emphasize their father's influence most prominently as they shared their experiences; participants singled out their father's more than other family members. External influences that these LDS mothers identified that emerged as encouraging them to achieve their doctoral degrees include their fathers, mothers, families in general, church leaders, faculty members, and personal associations. Interestingly, some of the participants expressed that they felt challenged by different men within the church; however, their fathers seemed to

generally act as an important contributing factor in their daughter's decision.

Initial circumstances. The women in this study began their doctoral programs from a variety of circumstances. The participants provided examples of women achieving doctoral education as LDS women in various circumstances. Participants seemed to show disparity in their age, location, marital status, and family size. Regardless of their circumstances at the inception of their doctoral journey, they all seemed confident in their abilities to succeed.

Challenges to Doctoral Achievement

The LDS mothers in this study seem to have faced many challenges as they achieved their doctoral degrees. These challenges appear to stem from their own desires and expectations for themselves, as well as from the desires and expectations that others held for them. The women in this study appear to have successfully balanced doctoral achievement with their continued desire to place motherhood at the forefront of their lives, while often struggling against varying expectations from many different people.

Specific challenges that emerged from these LDS mothers were the difficulty of balancing motherhood and doctoral education; dealing with the perceived roles and responsibilities of LDS mothers; the husband's

role of an LDS mother and doctoral student, an LDS mothers' priority of motherhood in the midst of doctoral work; the need to balance, multitask, and prioritize; the study habits of LDS mothers; and discouragement from people.

Difficulty of balancing motherhood and doctoral education. Challenges that these LDS mothers expressed emerged as several categories. The first theme was the difficulty of balancing motherhood and doctoral education. The participants seemed to address the challenges of being LDS mothers and doctoral students; they highlighted being challenged by strenuous programs leading some of them to occasional feelings of being overwhelmed. They discussed the challenges of missing family time and activities, sometimes feeling guilt and desire to make up for missed family time. Some of the participants noted a lack of role models for them.

Perceived roles and responsibilities of LDS mothers. Another theme was what the participants' perceived as the roles and responsibilities of LDS mothers. Many women seemed to discuss their belief that is was their responsibility to care for their children. In addition, some women discussed responsibilities of housekeeping, running errands, church responsibilities, and a feeling of embarrassment if they perceived that others did not feel that seeking doctoral education was a proper role of an LDS mother.

The husband's role. The husband's role emerged as an area of possible challenges for LDS mothers and doctoral students. Many of the participants expressed frustration that their husbands viewed their own responsibilities as having a higher priority than their wives achieving their doctoral degrees. Though husbands were perceived as being supportive of their wives, during stressful times, many husbands saw their wife's education as an area that they could intrude upon.

LDS mother's priority of motherhood. The LDS mothers in this study appear to hold motherhood as their primary priority. Just as husbands generally seemed to feel that their wives needed to place mothering as their highest priority, the women themselves seemed to also feel motherhood was their priority. The women appeared passionate in their insistence that their children took precedence over their educational pursuits.

Need to balance, multitask, and prioritize. Some of the women expressed that they felt a need to balance, multitask, and prioritize in order to achieve their doctoral degrees as mothers. The mothers seemed to face choices of when to be with their children and when to devote to their education, in accomplishing their desires and duties. Many women addressed their study habits as LDS mothers, and shared their struggle to be available for their children.

Discouragement from people. The women in this study faced discouraging situation where they perceived that people sought to deter them from achieving their degrees. Participants perceived discouragement from school counselors, faculty members, family members, and church members.

Rewards and Benefits of Achieving Doctoral Education

The LDS mothers identified many rewards from achieving doctoral degrees. The benefits that emerged as the most commonly expressed by the sample of women related to their children and family. It is interesting that when engaged in such a lofty, time consuming, and sometimes lonely journey as achieving a doctoral degree, that LDS women sited their perceived influence and effects to their family as their largest reward. Even in the midst of the rigor of a doctoral program, the women focused first on the welfare of their children. Additionally, the women passionately shared some personal benefits from their experiences of achieving their degree.

The rewards and benefits that the women identified relating to their children include modeling the value of education, creating a feeling of confidence, demonstrating equality in marriage, teaching their children to accept differences in other people, the determination to strive for

excellence, and demonstration of the resolve to qualify for a career that allows the lifestyle and flexibility to fulfill their desired roles within their families. The personal benefits that the women expressed about achieving doctoral degrees included feeling satisfaction and a personal fulfillment of their needs. They also cited their desire to influence others, financial rewards of a career, and the belief that they were following an inspired path.

It is truly fascinating that in this study the benefits most commonly expressed by the sample of women related to their children and family. Children seem to play a central part in the lives of these women, and they appear to often measure their experiences in relation to their children. Additionally, the LDS women passionately shared some important personal benefits from their experiences of achieving their degree.

Perception of the Counsel of the LDS Church

The women's perception of LDS counsel and directives is an important backdrop of their experiences as LDS mothers achieving doctoral education. The participants appear to have had the perception that the LDS Church counseled women to achieve education. Some had the perception that the church taught that even mothers should achieve education, while others seemed to feel that the LDS Church counseled single women to seek education, but was wary of married women with

young children achieving education.

This analysis seems to aid in understanding how LDS mothers, who are active members of their church, experience the decision to pursue a course that they may feel is contrary to directives from their church. Analysis suggests that some women held the perception that the gospel stands independent of church members' counsel. Many felt the perception that women are all different, and therefore follow different paths. Many expressed their perception that LDS women may make their own choices, and that personal revelation may direct women in making their choices. The women seemed to indicate that they that felt personal communication from God in some fashion was more important that the LDS Church's general counsel,

Application of Women's Ways of Knowing to LDS Mother Participants

The *Women's Ways of Knowing* framework by Belenky and colleagues (1986) was applied to the data provided by the participants in this study. Data was referenced to illustrate the women's positions within the *Women's Ways of Knowing* framework. The women were found to each occupy a constructed knowing position within the framework, as they thoughtfully considered directives that their primary responsibility was to stay home with their children while also considering that they should

pursue her education. The participants illustrated their ability to embrace the complexity of the situation, reasonably and logically consider different perspectives, and ultimately use their own experience in creating the meaning of the directive for themselves. The women seemed to apply LDS directives to their lives in their own terms.

It appears that *Women's Ways of Knowing* has great utility in this study. *Women's Ways of Knowing* served as a helpful tool to inform this study on how these LDS mothers experienced their decision to achieve their doctoral degrees. This theory does not claim that a person in the constructed knowing position values the directives of the LDS Church any more or less than individuals who hold other positions; rather the theory offers a useful understanding for how the participants came to experience their decisions. As women who held the constructed knowing position, the directives seem to have come less from an authority figure as rigid declarations. Rather, the women appear to have felt comfortable sharing in the authority to make meaning out of the LDS Church directive. For one in the constructed knowing position, the directive means little as a stand-alone statement; the meaning comes within one's own personal context.

Significance

The result of a phenomenological study is that the reader understands the essential essence of the experience, and comes away thinking "I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 46). Because of this research, readers will better understand what it is like to experience the decision to achieve doctoral education as an LDS woman and mother. This study is important as it will provide understanding of the experience of an under represented population on university campuses.

This research may be useful to LDS Church administration in understanding the experiences of some of its members. It may be useful to institutions of higher education in understanding this unique group on their campuses, and in attracting additional students. This research may be particularly useful to LDS mothers who have decided to achieve doctoral degrees, or who are in the process of deciding to achieve doctoral education; insight may assist individuals in understanding themselves and relating to others.

Recommendations

An important finding of this study is that when engaged in such a lofty, time consuming, and sometimes lonely journey as achieving a doctoral degree, that LDS women cited their perceived influence and

effects to their family as their largest reward. The women seemed to want to tell of their children's accomplishments and successes. It would be interesting to do a large-scale study of the circumstances of children of mothers who choose to work full-time in their home compared to those who sought doctoral education while their children were young. Is one route generally more beneficial for children than the other? Additionally, as the mothers seemed to strongly believe that the greatest benefit of their decision was the influence they perceived for their children, what would fathers express as their greatest benefits of them achieving their doctoral degrees as LDS fathers of young children? How do they compare?

Another finding contends that the participants in this study occupied a constructed knowing position within the *Women's Ways of Knowing* framework. It would be interesting to apply the *Women's Ways of Knowing* framework to the population of LDS Church members. Are there other segments of the LDS Church population where those positioned in the constructed knowing stage are likely to be found?

This study found that important factors that the participants identified as contributing to their decision to achieve doctoral education were spiritual promptings and deep personal desires. It would be fascinating to interview women who have made a conscious decision not to pursue doctoral education while their children were young to discover

what factors lead to that decision. Do these women stay home because of authoritative directives? Would they site spiritual promptings as a reason for their decision?

Finally, as this study sought to understand the experiences of LDS mothers deciding to achieve doctoral education, it would be interesting to study how husbands experienced the decision of their wives to achieve doctoral education. What feelings did their husbands have? How did they perceive that their wife's decision affected them? How did they perceive their wife's decision affected their children? What are the greatest rewards they perceive from their wife's decision?

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Initial Interview Questions

Initial Interview Questions

Initial interview questions participants were asked are listed below. As themes emerged, questions were refocused.

1. As you reflect on the experience of achieving your doctoral degree, can you talk about what led to this educational path?
2. How did you balance your educational desires with the desires of motherhood?
3. What influences do you recall in your decision to pursue your doctorate?
4. What were your biggest challenges relative to deciding to achieve your degree?
5. What were your biggest rewards relative to deciding to achieve your degree?

Appendix B

Email Questionnaire

Email Questionnaire

The coordinator forwarded the message below to the forums LDS women with doctoral degrees.

My name is Jonathan Hall. I am a doctoral student working with Dr. Ann Austin at Utah State University. You are receiving this email because I understand that you are an LDS woman who has achieved her doctoral degree. I am excited to study how LDS mothers experience the process of deciding to achieve doctoral degrees and I am grateful for [the coordinator] assisting me in getting this message to you. In my quest for information-rich participants, I am hoping that you will respond to this email. Based on these responses, I will ask up to eight participants to share with me their experience of deciding to achieve a doctoral degree. I have been fascinated by the experiences of those women I have heard from to this point, and am excited to hear your experiences.

Thank you in advance for your help in this research. Please forward your answers to the below questions to me at jonathanhall@cc.usu.edu. Also, if you know of other LDS women who have achieved their doctoral degrees, will you please forward this email to them as well?

Again, thank you so much for your time,
Jonathan Hall

1. Do you consider yourself to be an active member of the LDS Church?
2. What was your age at the time you began your doctoral degree?
3. What was your age at the time you achieved your doctoral degree?
4. Are you a lifelong member or convert of the LDS Church?
5. Where did you receive your doctoral degree?
6. How many children did you have when you began your degree?

7. How many children did you have when you achieved your degree?

8. What is your name, preferred phone number, and email?

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

This consent document must be printed with your dept. letterhead on each page before being given to the participant

Date Created: September 26, 2007

INFORMED CONSENT
Doctoral Education among LDS Women: A Phenomenological Study of a Mother's Choice to Achieve

Introduction/ Purpose
Professor Ann M. Berghout Austin in the Department of Family, Consumer, and Human Development and graduate researcher Jonathan Glade Hall at Utah State University are conducting a research study to find out more about how LDS mothers experience the process of deciding to achieve doctoral degrees. You have been asked to take part because we understand that you are an LDS woman who has achieved a doctoral degree. There will be approximately eight participants in this research.

Procedures
If you agree to be in this research study, the following will happen to you.

1. You will be interviewed by the graduate researcher regarding your experience of initially deciding, and your persistence in, achieving your doctoral degree. The length of this interview will be approximately an hour.
2. The researcher will follow up by phone two days after this interview to inquire if there is anything else you would like to say. Additionally, the researcher may seek clarification, request you to check the transcribed interview for accuracy, and ask further questions if emerging themes warrant.

New Findings
During the course of this research study, you will be informed of any significant new findings (either good or bad), such as changes in the risks or benefits resulting from participation in the research, or new alternatives to participation that might cause you to change your mind about continuing in the study. If new information is obtained that is relevant or useful to you, or if the procedures and/or methods change at any time throughout this study, your consent to continue participating in this study will be obtained again.

Risks

Participation in this research study may involve some added risks or discomforts. These include:

1. Sharing personal experiences and decisions with the graduate researcher.
2. There are minimal additional anticipated risks involved in this study.

This consent document must be printed with your dept. letterhead on each page before being given to the participant

Date Created: September 26, 2007

INFORMED CONSENT
Doctoral Education among LDS Women: A Phenomenological Study of a Mother's Choice to Achieve

Benefits
There may or may not be any direct benefit to you from these procedures. The information gained from this study may have either direct or indirect benefit to participants now or in the future. The investigator, however, may learn more about how
LDS women experience the decision to pursue doctoral education.
Possible benefits include:

1. Providing understanding of the essential experiences of LDS women's decision to achieve doctoral degrees and how it relates to self actualization.
2. Providing a resource to LDS women who are considering, or in the process of achieving doctoral degrees.
3. Provides Universities with understanding of an underserved population

Explanation & offer to answer questions
Jonathan Hall has explained this research study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Professor Austin at 797-1527.

Extra Cost(s)
There will be no costs for participating in this research.

Payment
There will be no payment for participating in this research.

Voluntary nature of participation, right to withdraw without consequence
Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence or loss of benefits. You may be withdrawn from this study without your consent by the investigator if you are found not to meet the criteria for the study.

Confidentiality
Research records will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and state regulations. Only Dr. Austin and Jonathan Hall will have access to

the data which will be kept in a locked file cabinet in a locked room. Personal, identifiable information will be kept for five years from the completion of the study. Voice recordings of interviews will be kept

This consent document must be printed with your dept. letterhead on each page before being given to the participant

INFORMED CONSENT
Doctoral Education among LDS Women: A Phenomenological Study of a Mother's Choice to Achieve

in a locked filing cabinet in a locked room for five years from the completion of the study.

IRB Approval Statement
The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human participants at USU has approved this research study. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights, you may contact the IRB at (435) 797-1821.

Copy of consent
You have been given two copies of this Informed Consent. Please sign both copies and retain one copy for your files.

Investigator Statement
"I certify that the research study has been explained to the individual, by me or my research staff, and that the individual understands the nature and purpose, the possible risks and benefits associated with taking part in this research study. Any questions that have been raised have been answered."

Signature of PI & student or Co-PI

_____	_____
Signature of PI	Signature of student
Dr. Ann M. Berghout Austin Hall	Jonathan Glade
Principal Investigator	Student Researcher
(Telephone—435-797-1527)	(Telephone—801-763-5836)

Signature of Participant By signing below, I agree to participate.

_____	_____
Participant's signature	Date

Appendix D

Bracketing Interview

Bracketing Interview

What is the background of your study? What is it? What do you want to know?

It all started in the summer of 2006 while I was on campus at Utah State University. One of the professors shared an experience with her class, which was passed on to me by a fellow classmate. To my understanding, this professor related that she had decided to go back to school to get her masters degree at Brigham Young University. On her first day of classes, one of her male professors singled her out and told her that she did not belong in that academic program, but that she belonged at home. She reportedly answered that he did not have to have let her in. He answered that he didn't, but that he had voted against her. When I heard this, I was shocked and amazed at her experience on her first day. She was doing something that already took a lot of courage, going back to school, and then to add to this your own professor who from day one acted like she didn't belong! I was quite intrigued. As I thought more about what I had heard, I wondered about this professor's rationalization for saying such a thing to someone on her first day of school. I wondered how he justified this action, and also wondered about his personal beliefs that seemed to be surfacing here. As I discussed this incident with others, I found that many LDS women had their own stories of dealing with similar attitudes in their journey through graduate education programs.

During this time, I had been thinking about a topic for my doctoral dissertation. The professor who I had chosen to be my chair had suddenly accepted a position at another university, and I was not sure that the topic I had chosen was what I really wanted to study. I coincidentally had been thinking about a presentation that I attended in 2005 where a professor shared her historical dissertation. It was about the role of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) in regard to the emergence of institutions of higher education in Utah. I thought that it would be really interesting to conduct a historical dissertation, and tried to brainstorm ideas that might be interesting. The topic that I decided would be interesting to study was to identify what roles women have played within the LDS Church during its history to this point. I was aware of church leaders sending the women back east during times of war to attend medical school so they could come back to Utah to work. I was also aware of church leaders later calling on women to celebrate their duty of housewives and to be full-time, stay-at-home mothers. As I mentioned this topic of LDS women's educational paths to classmates and professors, people seemed to think that it was interesting, but that a historical dissertation would be a hard sell at Utah State University.

One day Dr. Deborah Byrnes asked me what topics I had interest in for my dissertation. One that I mentioned was the topic of LDS women

and education. She told me that I should contact Dr. Ann Austin, and talk to her about the topic. I did so, and found a chair who was willing to support my interest in this topic. During this same time period, I was searching the Digital Dissertation Abstracts database to find any related studies that had been carried out. A couple of dissertations out of BYU caught my interest. One studied LDS women who achieved doctoral degrees to learn about the role that mentors played as they achieved their degrees. In the recommendations section of this study, the author suggested that someone perform a qualitative study to discover why LDS women decided to pursue such a lofty educational path. This recommendation set me off and running. The specific aspects of my study evolved over time, made some turns as I learned about different methodologies and their utility to access specific kinds of information, and the topic narrowed.

I want to understand the experience of LDS women as they went through the process of achieving a doctoral degree. I have chosen the doctoral degree because of its rigor, and the dedication required to achieve it. To me, it exemplarily satisfies the mandates of LDS leaders that people should get all of the education that they can. It is fascinating to me to learn about women's experiences. As I have looked at LDS literature, I find an abundance of statements on education for women that are very,

very positive. I have not found any negative comments about getting education. I have found plenty of statements specifically for women that state how education is going to help them no matter what they do in life. I do not know what I am going to find, but I am fascinated by the question of how LDS women experience this decision to achieve doctoral degrees. **You are not a woman, you are a male. Do you think these women who you interview are going to be straight with you?**

I have thought about that concern. This is why I am going to have an initial meeting with the participants. I want to just meet them, answer any questions that they have, and help them to feel comfortable with the study. I'll leave a copy of initial interview questions that I will ask them during out interview, in an effort for them to know exactly what I am looking for, which is to understand the essence of their experience. I am not trying to shape their experience into looking like anything. I just want to let these women tell their stories, and then analyze those stories for essential elements of their experiences.

I should appear unbiased, because as far as I can tell, I truly am. I personally feel the value of having mothers at home with their children during their crucial youth. I personally value education, and feel like everyone should get all of the education that they can. How should mothers deal with these important life decisions? I do not know. I have

two daughters in elementary school right now. I am not sure how I will counsel them, although I have already started talking to them about achieving higher education, and I take their current education very seriously. It is very important to me that they learn all they can, and become highly educated. I currently teach religious education for the LDS Church to teenagers in high school, and have taught religious education for several years to students while they were achieving higher education. I am mandated each year by my employer to teach both the males and the females the importance of achieving all of the education that they can. I am directed to teach the salary benefits of achieving more education and to give helpful hints to getting in to good schools. I do not know how to answer my students as to how to pursue masters and doctoral education if married with young children. I only encourage them that they should if they have that desire. I am excited to learn from the experiences of the women I interview with doctoral degrees to see how they experienced their decisions. I do not know how women experience this decision. I want to understand the essences of their experiences.

Do you think they are going to trust that?

Yes, I hope so. Actually, I am confident that I can have a trusting relationship with the women I interview based on my experiences so far. I have met with a few women during the process of planning this study. I

have interviewed a past professor, a currently employed professor, and a woman working on her dissertation, among others. As I discussed my background, research question, and interview questions with them, I found them to be very responsive, helpful, and they appeared to be very open and candid with me. The women I have spoken with have been very supportive of me.

I really am not trying to prove anything. I want to understand, and allow interested readers to understand, what it is like for LDS mothers who achieve doctoral degrees. Just being interested enough to do this study has seemed to help people open up to me. They have all been pretty passionate about their personal decision and their experiences. I have not met anyone who did not act interested in it, and want to help.

One of the researchers in my literature review is Mihelich. He is a man that conducted qualitative interviews of LDS women in bachelors degree programs at a university in the northwestern United States. He did not address his in the article, but I noted his research with interest, partly because he is a male.

What if your wife, as the mother of three children at home…how old are they?

Eight, five, and three.

What if she just came home one day and said "I want to start a doctorate

next year." Knowing that you work full-time out of the home, what would you say?

If she wanted to, then that would be great. I am definitely pro education. We would sit down, several times initially and probably many more times during the course of the degree, and figure it out. One of the women that I have spoken with shared about she and her husband's decision regarding this. They decided to let a family member care for their children during the day, and they felt very comfortable with that. Another one had children after the degree, but currently deals with that dilemma as a working mom. A single working mom in a doctoral program relies on a friend to provide daycare, and a helpful mom to baby-sit on nights she has classes.

What would you do?

I think women should be free to pursue whatever they want to just as men should be able to pursue whatever they want to. Parents will have to figure this out together. I would have to talk with her. I have no easy answers.

So, she has a bachelors right now?

Yes.

Has she ever worked outside of the home since you've had children?

Yes.

What did she do?

Taught school.

While you had kids?

Yes. We had Jaden in February, and she fulfilled her teaching contract until the end of the school year. She felt it was the honorable thing to do, as she had committed that time to the school district. To her credit, she felt it was her obligation to those students to finish the school year out. It was very, very hard to leave a newborn baby and go to work. We were lucky to have someone we felt we could trust Jaden with, or we would not have done it. It was very, very difficult. If that is anything like the experiences I will hear, I will have tissues, because it was very, very hard. I think we made a difficult decision, and I believe we made a good decision for us, and for all of the people that our decision affected.

So she just finished out that year?

So she finished out the year, then she switched to tutoring. She has been doing this off and on for the last eight years. When she tutors, I will get home, we will eat together as a family, then I will care for the kids at night, and she will go to student's homes and tutor them. She has the opportunity to get out, go somewhere, and do something that she is very good at. And it gives her another aspect of her life.

What level did she teach?

She taught sixth grade, but she tutors high school kids. She is amazing at math. If you call the Alpine School District, and ask for a tutor, they will refer you to her.

How do you think the women you interview are going to say that they balance their education desires with their desires for motherhood?

I think that they are going to want to be the best moms that they can possibly be. I think that it is a particular kind of person that has the drive to get a doctoral degree, whether you are a man or a woman. I think there is a particular kind of personality. I think there is a drive, usually. I think this kind of person is not going to be satisfied with life without fulfilling whatever intellectual potential they feel they have. I do not think they are going to be a happy mom, ignoring part of themselves if they have this inner drive to do this. I think that they would be better, in all aspects of their lives, if they were fulfilling their ambitions. Not everyone has the same ambitions. My guess is that the women that I am going to interview happen to have these ambitions. I think that is one thing that they will share.

What influences do you recall in your decision to pursue your doctorate?

My dad, number one. He has his doctorate, and I have always thought that was great. He studies and teaches religion all day, but it

makes him more well rounded that he has studied others topics as well. I think it helps him be a better teacher. I have learned that in doctoral work, eventually your topic becomes very narrow, but you have become dedicated to learning along the doctoral journey.

Number two; I am just a big believer in learning. That is why, for this study, I do not want my research questions to include questions about working. I could do this same study to find out how LDS mothers experience working, but I really want to know about education. That is what I am more interested in. I am a big believer in education. Why am I getting this degree? This degree will likely not help me in my career. In fact it has taken opportunities away, at least postponed them, while I have been doing this. In fact, it has made me distracted from goals I have at work, but as much as it has distracted me time wise from my job; hopefully it has given me more breadth as I approach issues or concerns. It has helped me be more open-minded, and hopefully has helped me provide more wisdom in my teaching, and will throughout the rest of my life as well.

Mine is more of a "why not?" I still remember the day I decided to apply for the doctoral program. It was very casual. One of my students at the University of Utah suggested it. I mentioned it to my boss, who supported me. I called my wife, who thought that would be fine. I called

Dr. Byrnes, who was very helpful and I hurried and got my application in. It was very sudden, but I really wanted to do it. It is amazing that I have stuck with it. It is my personality to stick with things though.

When you went through this casual process, did you ever think, "how is this going to affect my relationship with my children and family?" as a mother might tend to think.

No, because I thought it would be a similar commitment as getting my masters, only longer. I did not anticipate the abundance of time and attention it would take to go through the doctoral process.

What was your masters in?

Human Resources Management

And your bachelors?

Psychology and Business Management

But this brings up something important. In asking how LDS mothers experience the process of deciding to achieve their doctorate degrees, I am not limiting the experience to their initial decision to pursue the degree. I am working under the assumption that until you get the degree, everyday is a decision. And so, at this point I could stop. I could make that decision, and I could not get the degree. I could decide other things are more important, or I could decide that this wasn't for me after all.

So, even though at the time I didn't think about my relationship with my family being affected by achieving this degree, I have since then. But I still personally have the firm conviction that even though it may be hard for a few years, and they are important years, that there are ways to make it through.

Would the world be a better place if every dad decided that they could not get that much schooling, or could not do that much work because they needed to be home six hours a night with their children? Then no dads would achieve doctoral degrees. Or, would the world be a better place if every mother decided that they couldn't get a doctoral degree because of the time and energy it would require? Do I want to send my two daughters to a school where there are no LDS women teaching? I dare say that the influence of LDS mothers on a university campus is an important thing for LDS parents that are sending their children off to be educated in the ways of the world. Many parents would feel that this group of teachers is important to their children's education.

Do you find yourself trying to overcompensate as a parent for the time and energy you put into achieving your doctoral degree?

I find myself feeling like I should overcompensate. But, if I really looked at it, I haven't, I don't think. I would have taken piano lessons with Jaden anyway. I would have probably done the same activities with my

kids, I think.

What have been your biggest challenges relative to relative to deciding to achieve your degree?

My challenges have been not having enough time, not having enough time, and not having enough time. I have had to leave my family, and stay up in the dorms at Utah State during the summers. During the rest of the school year, I have had to balance my full-time job of teaching with going to school at night, and doing homework in any available window in-between. In addition, I have been involved in church positions, and my wife and I have had one baby while building and selling three homes since I started my doctoral degree.

I feel like the easiest time for me to concentrate on school has been during the summers on campus. I feel like it has been a lot easier when I only had one big thing to do with my time. During the school year, my time is in high demand, and I have had to make tough sacrifices to fit everything in. One of the most obvious sacrifices has been my sleep. I have averaged much less sleep in the last few years than prior to that time. I have also not lived in a home during the last three years that received any television reception. I have not had time to miss it. Luckily my children have become avid readers thanks to the great example of my wife.

I assume that "time" will be a very common answer from the women that I will interview. I also think that the women I interview will tell me that some people in their lives discouraged them from pursuing such a lofty path.

I have had a few people question why I decide to do this, and try to discourage me from pursuing it further, but I do not think that I have nearly faced the kind of discouragement that the women I interview will tell me about. I assume that the women I interview will account that they receive these kinds of comments daily.

What kinds of comments have you received?

Comments made to me have come from people who do not value education as much as I do. I haven't been told that I'm doing the wrong thing as much as I have been told by some that my children and wife should be my priority, and education shouldn't be.

What have been your biggest rewards relative to deciding to achieve your degree?

I am a convert to being pro-education. In high school I thought that school was just something to get through so that I could do what I really wanted to do. Over the course of my 10 years of higher education, I have slowly become aware of how education changes me, rather than simply providing me an avenue to pursue more things in my life. I have been

deeply enriched by this doctoral program. I am more understanding of other people, and have a greater tolerance for ambiguity than I have in the past. I read with more of a critical eye, and recognize bias to a greater degree in people's behavior.

Appendix E

Summary of Findings

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Contributing Factors for Doctoral Achievement

A. Personal reasons for achieving doctoral degrees
   1. Internal desires
   2. Feelings of having always known that they would
   3. Feelings of personal need
   4. Spiritual confirmations
   5. Patriarchal blessings
   6. Feeling a sense of purpose to influence others
   7. Feeling of enjoying education
   8. Feeling like quitting was not an option
   9. Preparation for a career

B. External influences encouraging them to achieve their doctoral degree
   1. Fathers
   2. Mothers
   3. Parents and families in general
   4. Church leaders
   5. Faculty members
   6. Personal associations.

Challenges of Achieving Doctoral Degree

A. Difficulty of balancing motherhood and doctoral education
   1. Balancing motherhood as students
   2. Strenuous programs
   3. Feelings of being overwhelmed
   4. Missed family time
   5. Guilt and desire to make up for time deficiency
   6. Lack of role models

B. Perceived roles and responsibilities of LDS mothers
   1. Caring for their children
   2. Housekeeping and running errands
   3. Church responsibilities
   4. Embarrassment if felt that others were suspicious of actions
   5. A perceived precedence of their husband's role outside of the home
   6. LDS mothers' place motherhood as their first priority
   7. The need to balance, multitask, and prioritize

8. Finding time to study as LDS mothers

C. Discouragement from people
   1. School counselors
   2. Faculty members
   3. Family members
   4. Church members
   5. Feeling of isolation from those who feel mothers should not be out of the home for school.

Rewards from Achieving Degree

A. Modeling for their children
   1. The value of education
   2. Confidence
   3. Equality in marriage
   4. Acceptance of differences
   5. Striving for excellence
   6. Qualifying for a career that allows the lifestyle and flexibility to fulfill their desired roles within their families

B. Personal benefits that the women expressed about achieving a doctoral degree satisfaction
   1. Personal fulfillment and needs
   2. The desire to influence others
   3. Financial rewards
   4. The belief that they were following an inspired path.

What Participants Believed that the LDS Church Counseled about Education

A. The perception that the LDS Church counseled women to achieve education
B. The perception that the LDS Church counseled that even mothers should achieve education
C. The perception that the LDS Church counseled single women to seek education, but was wary of married women achieving education with young children
D. Understanding differences between other's expectations and individual actions

Understanding Differences between Others' Expectations and Individual Actions

A. The perception that the gospel stands independent of church members' counsel
B. The perception that women are all different, and follow different paths
C. The perception that LDS women may make their own choices
D. The perception that personal revelation may direct women in making their choices

Doctoral Decision Finding:

A woman may thoughtfully consider directives that her primary responsibility is to stay home with her children while also hearing that she should pursue her education; she may embrace the complexity of the situation, reasonably and logically consider different perspectives, and use her own experience in creating the meaning of the directive for herself. Her actions may be based on obligation, duty, or responsibility to her perceived mission. She applies LDS directives to her life in her own terms.

Appendix F

Letter from Auditor

LETTER FROM AUDITOR

To Whom It May Concern:

I have analyzed the emerged themes and findings from this study and I successfully traced them back to the raw data provided by the participants. An audit trail was sufficiently kept to allow this process. I verify that from my perspective, the stated themes are accurately based on the raw data of this study.

Regards,

Melanie Hall

CURRICULUM VITAE

JONATHAN GLADE HALL

EDUCATION

Utah State University, Logan, Utah
Doctor of Education, expected 2008

- Curriculum & Instruction
- Dissertation Title: Doctoral Education among LDS Women: A Phenomenological Study of a Mother's Choice to Achieve
- GPA: 4.0

Utah State University, Logan, Utah
Master of Social Science, 2000

- Major: Human Resources Management
- GPA: 3.7

Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah
Bachelor of Science Degree, 1997

- Major: Psychology, Minor: Business Management
- Major GPA: 4.0

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Presenter, Teaching with Technology Conference

- August 10-11, 2005
- Presentation Title: Confessions of a Technologically Timid Adult Student

Presenter, Tri-area Summer Symposium

- August 17-19, 2005
- Presentation Title: Curriculum of Questions

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Principal, Waterford Seminary, 2005 – Present
Adjacent to The Waterford School,

- Supervise and in-service faculty of eight teachers
- Guide student counsel in planning and carrying out student activities

Faculty, Salt Lake University Institute
Adjacent to the University of Utah, 2003 – 2005

- Facilitated classroom discussion of undergraduate and graduate students
- Stimulated student learning and application of difficult texts
- Advised student council officers in meeting the needs of 7,300 students

Faculty, Sandy Institute
Adjacent to Salt Lake Community College, 2002 – 2003

- Instructed students

Principal, Eastmont Middle School Seminary
Sandy, Utah, 2000 – 2003

- Supervised all program administration such as quality of teaching, personnel, public school and community relations, physical facilities, reports, records and budgets.
- In-serviced faculty in teaching methodology, curriculum, and policies
- Addressed the needs and concerns of students

Faculty, Eastmont Middle School Seminary, Sandy, Utah, 1998 – 1999

Faculty, Gunnison High School Seminary, Gunnison, Utah, 1997 – 1998

Supervisor and Coordinator of English Training, Mission Training Center
Provo, Utah, 1995 – 1997

- Hired, trained, in-serviced, scheduled teachers in the English Area

HONORS & ACTIVITIES

Leadership Scholarship, Brigham Young University
Basketball Team, Brigham Young University