

Be Fruitful and Multiply: Fertility and Tradeoffs in Latter-Day Saints



Amanda Cook and Claire Hanson Anthropology Program: Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology **Utah State University**

INTRODUCTION

- There are evolutionary trade-offs between energy allocated to reproduction and the self, known as embodied capital.
- The members of the Latter-Day Saint (LDS) faith are urged to marry young and reproduce frequently.
- We expect to see selection toward early and frequent reproduction over embodied capital in the Latter-Day Saint (LDS) culture.
 - Seen in the young average age of first marriage and the average amount of children per household.

BACKGROUND

The principle of allocation

• Limited amount of resources for growth, maintenance, and reproduction.

Human life history trade-offs

- Characterized by trade-offs between energy for current and future reproduction and energy allocated to the self, known as embodied capital.
- Early reproduction produces more children, but limits embodied capital in the form of education and economic success (Hill and Kaplan 1999).



HYPOTHESIS AND PREDICTIONS

- Hypothesis
 - Encouragement toward reproduction in LDS culture has greater trade-offs with embodied capital in comparison to non-LDS populations.
 - LDS culture may influence early and frequent reproduction., this results in energy tradeoffs allocated toward embodied capital (Hill and Kaplan 1999).
- Predictions
 - Correlation between younger age of marriage and being LDS
 - Positive correlation between fertility and age of first reproduction
 - Negative association between both age of marriage and age of first reproduction with education

METHODS

- Online Qualtrics questionnaire using a stratified random sample from Utah State University in Logan, UT and Texas A&M University in College Station, TX.
- N = 149
 - n = 59 practicing Utah LDS members
 - n = 64 non-LDS from both states
 - n = 100 Utah
 - n = 49 Texas
- Unambiguous questions about fertility, first age of reproduction, age at first marriage, and their activeness within the LDS church.

LATTER-DAY SAINTS

- Doctrine
 - A former prophet of the LDS church, Gordon B. Hinckley, in a General Conference message titled "Thou Shalt Covet" said, "To our young adults of marriageable circumstances, I hope you will not put off marriage too long."
 - The LDS faith relies heavily on the concept of marriage and family. According to a talk given by Neil L. Andersen, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles the secondhighest governing body of the church, marriage and family are integral to "God's plan" (2011).



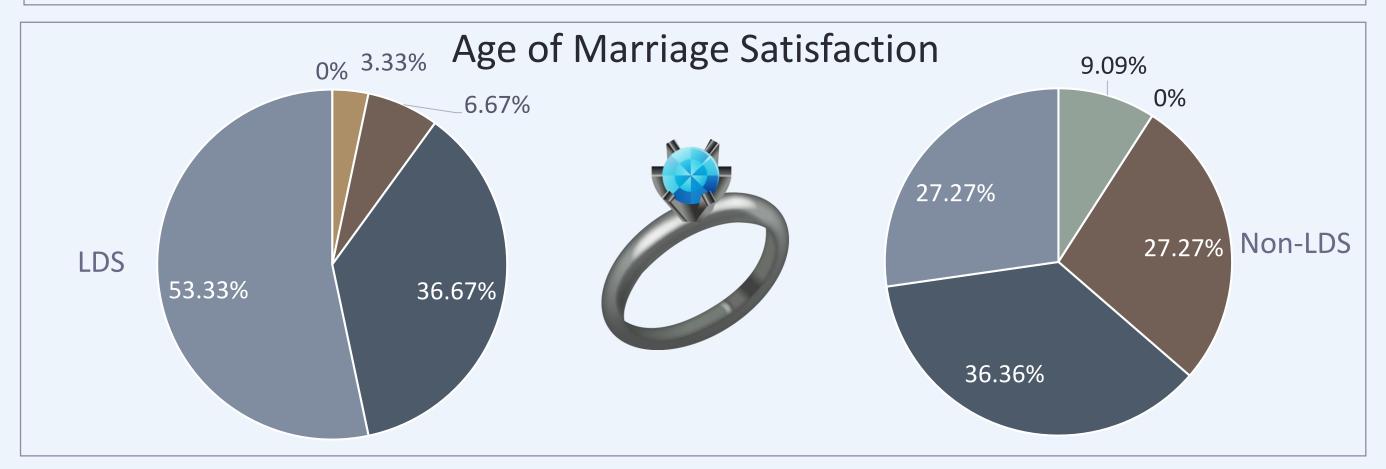
Gordon B. Hinckley

 Strong social pressures toward a young age of marriage, reproduction, and high reproductive frequency (Hinkley 1990).



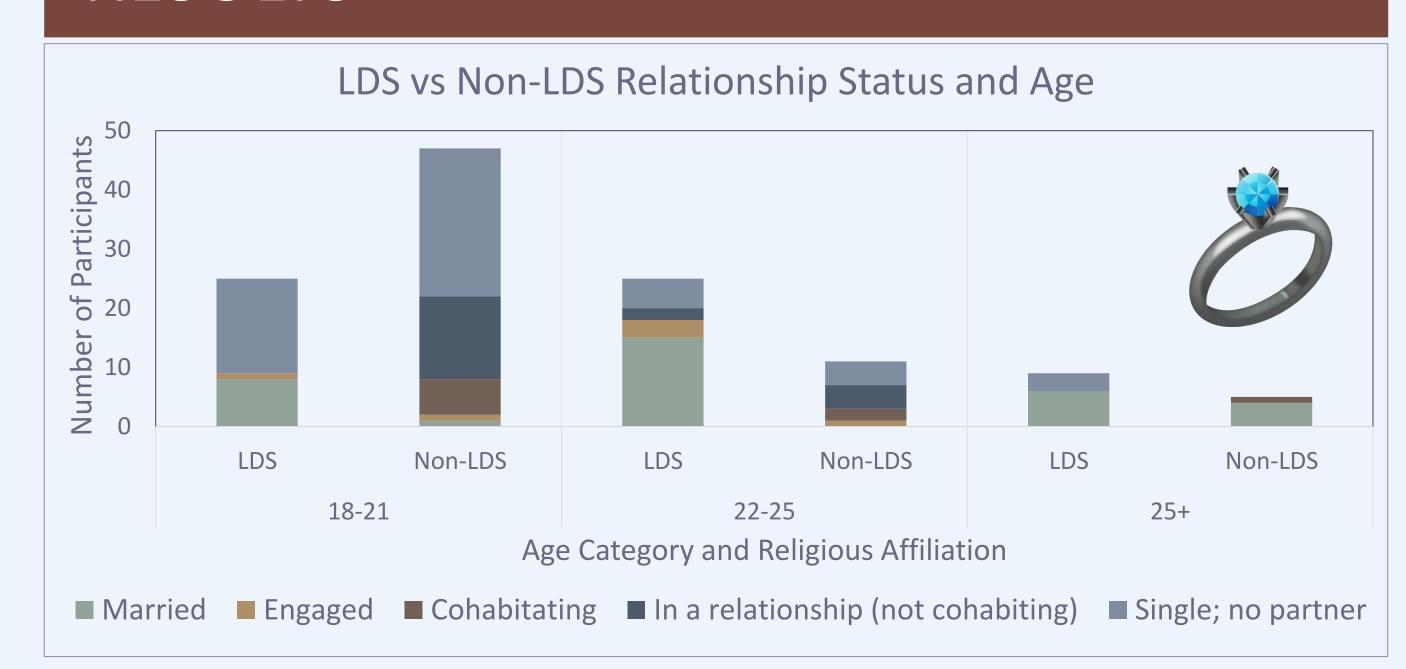
RESULTS **Education Satisfaction**

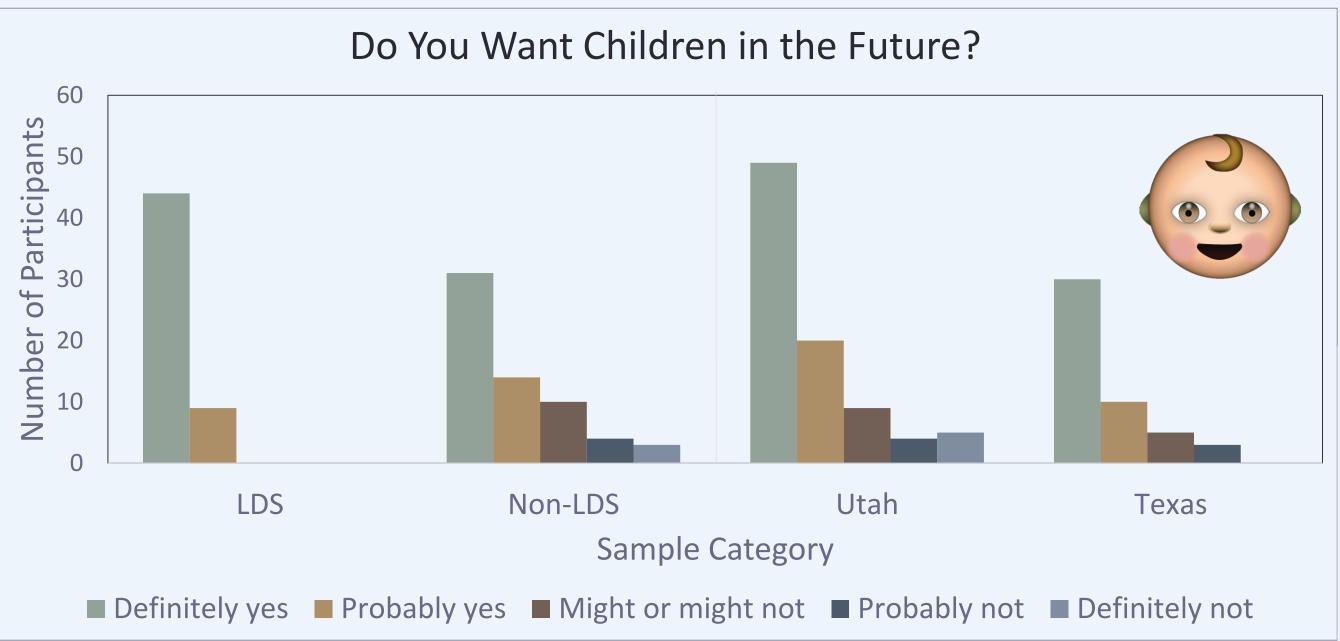


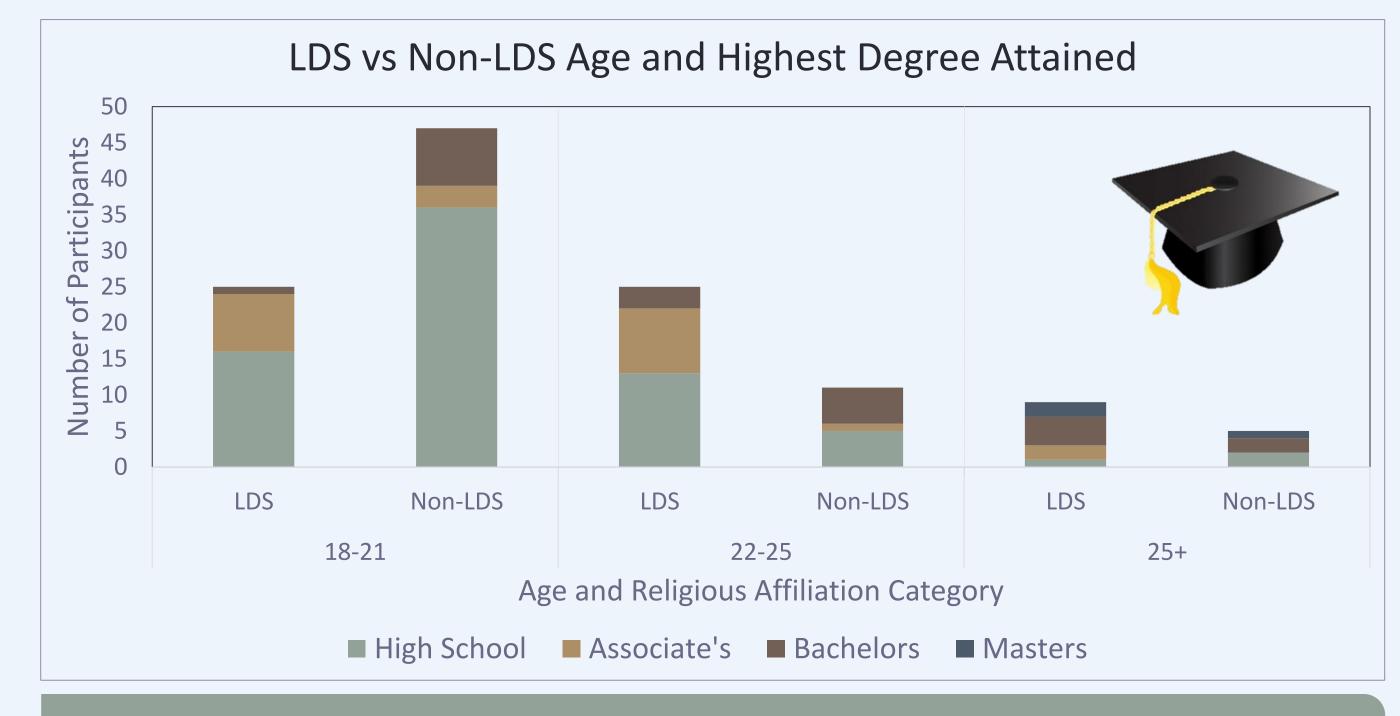


■ Extremely Dissatisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Somewhat Satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Extremely Satisfied

RESULTS







CONCLUSIONS

- Predictions supported:
 - LDS have an earlier age of marriage
 - Strong desire for children and satisfaction with marriage
 - Less satisfaction with education and longer to complete degree
- Evolutionary trade-off between young age of marriage and education.
- Religious affiliation affects life history traits.

Proclamation To The World . Ensign, September 23. https://www.lds.org/topics/family-proclamation?lang=eng, accessed October 21

Sincerest gratitude to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies for granting us the RGS Undergraduate Student Travel