



9-1-2001

"Seek Learning, Even by Study and Also by Faith": The Relationship between Personal Religiosity and Academic Achievement among Latter-day Saint High-School Students

Bruce A. Chadwick

Brent L. Top

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/re>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Chadwick, Bruce A. and Top, Brent L. "'Seek Learning, Even by Study and Also by Faith': The Relationship between Personal Religiosity and Academic Achievement among Latter-day Saint High-School Students." *Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel* 2, no. 2 (2001). <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/re/vol2/iss2/12>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

“ Seek Learning, Even by Study and Also by Faith”:

The Relationship between Personal Religiosity and Academic Achievement among Latter-day Saint High-School Students

Brent L. Top and Bruce A. Chadwick

Brent L. Top is Professor of Church History and Doctrine and Associate Dean, Religious Education, BYU. Bruce A. Chadwick is Professor of

From the earliest days of the Restoration, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have placed a high premium on the acquisition of learning—both secular and spiritual. The revelations of the Lord made it clear that education was needed both on earth and in eternity. It was seen as a spiritual pursuit as much so, if not more, than merely a practical necessity.

Education is not separate from theology but rather is a unique and important aspect of both the doctrinal teachings and the religious life of Latter-day Saints. “The glory of God is intelligence,” the Lord declared to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1833 (see D&C 93:36). Earlier, the Prophet had been directed to establish schools for the educational benefit of both children (see D&C 55:4) and adults (D&C 88:127–41). Such schools, whether they were for children or the adult school of the prophets, were deemed to be a unique blending of the secular and the spiritual. “And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom,” the Lord commanded, “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118).

Gaining intelligence through study and faith is to be a religious pursuit—not just an intellectual exercise. Latter-day Saint theology teaches that education affects the spirit and the progress and destiny of the soul beyond this life, not just the mind in mortality. “Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intel-

ligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come” (D&C 130: 18–19).

Latter-day prophets and apostles continue to counsel members of the Church, young and old, to get as much formal education as they can and to make the acquisition of learning a lifetime pursuit. “We have in the Church a strong tradition regarding quality education,” President Gordon B. Hinckley observed. He then further admonished Latter-day Saints: “Get all the education you can. . . . Education is the key to opportunity. The Lord has placed upon you, as members of this Church, the obligation to study and to learn of things spiritual, yes, but of things temporal also. Acquire all the education that you can, even if it means great sacrifice while you are young. You will bless the lives of your children. You will bless the Church because you will reflect honor to this work.”¹

Outside observers—those not familiar with Latter-day Saint theology and practices—may be somewhat surprised by the Church’s heavy emphasis on education and learning since “out in the world,” higher education generally leads to secularization and a decline of religious practices and personal spirituality. A rather extensive body of research documents the secularizing effects of education on religiosity.² A recent article lamented that social scientists “have long ceased troubling themselves with exclusive investigations of the relationship between formal education and religious belief. . . . They could simply assume as a matter of course that formal education induces a weakening of faith.”³ Why then would the Church encourage its members to obtain higher education since such would lead them out of the Church?

Interestingly, recent studies have shown that contrary to worldly trends, the more education Latter-day Saints achieve, the higher is their religiosity—the more committed they are to their beliefs, the more active they are in Church participation, and the deeper their personal spirituality.⁴ One possible explanation for the amazing positive link between higher education and fervent religiosity of Latter-day Saint men and women suggests that rather than slowly eroding religious faith, education results in a critical clash between secular and religious perspectives. An individual is forced to choose one or the other perspective—to be either religious or scientific. This choice does not imply that religious individuals give up or repudiate their education. Rather, their overall view of the world is dominated by a religious perspective, within which they fit their education. Research indi-

cates a large proportion of highly educated Latter-day Saint men and women chose a religious view rather than a scientific perspective, which is manifest in their high levels of religious devotion.

Youth who are still in their formative years are thought to be secularized (made less religious and spiritual) by their education—just like adults—but also for other reasons. Youth are seeking independence from their parents and family; they desire to forge their own unique identity. As a result, teens may decrease their participation in family-encouraged religious activities.

The few studies that have examined high-school students generally conclude that religion is not related to academic achievement. However, a recent study reported that participation in Church activities was related to higher scores on standardized achievement tests and to higher educational expectations.⁵ Because of the doctrinal significance of scriptural and prophetic statements concerning education and because of the remarkable finding concerning adult members, we designed an empirical study to test the relationship between religiosity and educational achievement among Latter-day Saint high-school students.

Most social-science studies examining the effects of religion on behavior of either adults or adolescents have measured religiosity by whether the person is affiliated with a religious organization or by attendance at church meetings. Our studies of the link between religiosity and delinquency have revealed that there are other dimensions of a person's religious life than merely affiliation and attendance. As a result, in this study we examined religious beliefs such as "God lives"; private religious behavior such as personal prayer; public religious behavior, especially Church attendance; spiritual experiences; the importance of religion in people's lives; acceptance of the youth in their local ward by leaders and other youth; and family religious behaviors.

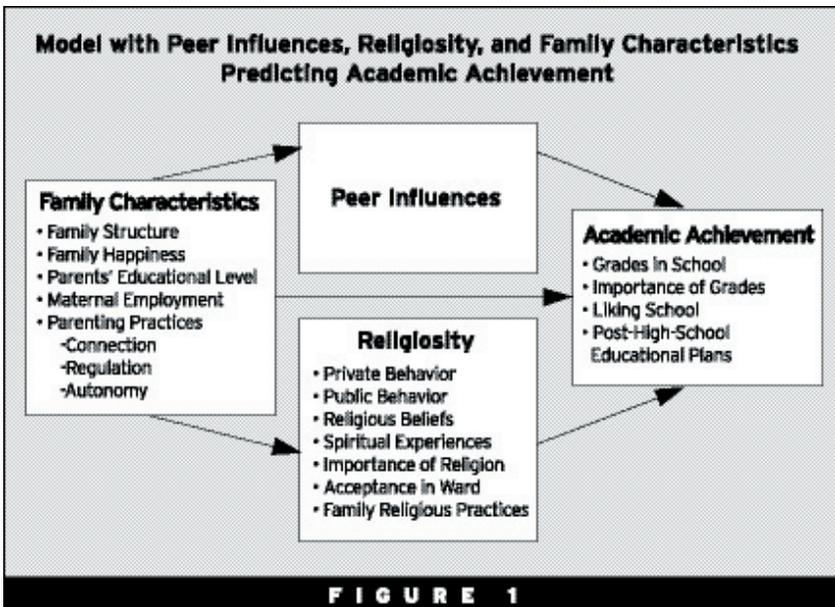
We realize that teenagers' lives are complex, with many forces influencing performance in school. To test the relationship between religiosity and educational achievement in a more real-life situation, we added to the model peer pressures to engage in behavior counterproductive to educational performance such as skipping school and defying teachers.

We also added important family characteristics to the model, including parents' education, family structure, and maternal employment. The father's education has traditionally been identified as one of the most important predictors of the educational achievement of

children.⁶ In addition, parent-child behaviors were included in the model predicting academic achievement. “Connection between parents and children” refers to the emotional bond that develops through expressions of affection and the loving support parents offer their children. Family regulation involves the setting of family rules, monitoring compliance to the rules, and administering appropriate discipline when rules are broken. Finally, psychological autonomy refers to the degree to which children are allowed to come to know and express their own thoughts, feelings, and opinions. It is allowing them, after teaching correct principles, to be themselves. This is not to be confused with behavioral autonomy, such as the freedom to come and go and do. Behavioral autonomy would be granted as part of family regulation through the establishment of family rules and expectations, as well as consequences for disobedience. Rather, psychological autonomy is the freedom teens feel in sharing their thoughts and ideas with their parents. It is the process of becoming confident in their own ability to make competent judgments.

Research Objectives

This study had two specific research objectives. The first was to compare the academic achievement of Latter-day Saint high-school students to that of other students to ascertain the impact of students’ membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on



academic achievement and educational expectations.

The second objective was to test a model predicting academic achievement of Latter-day Saint high-school students from religiosity, peer influences, and family characteristics and processes.

The model is presented in Figure 1. The intent was not to test a comprehensive model completely explaining all possible reasons for why youth succeed or fail in school. Rather, we wanted to demonstrate the relationship between religiosity and educational achievement within the significant context of peer and family influences.

Data Collection

With the cooperation of the Church Educational System and the approval of the respective area presidents, we administered questionnaires to nearly five thousand Latter-day Saint high-school students (ninth through twelfth grades) in four different geographical regions—the east coast of the United States, the Pacific Northwest states of Washington and Oregon, Utah County, and the British Isles. These geographical areas were selected because each is a unique religious environment.

A random sample was drawn in each area from the potential seminary student lists generated by the membership records in the respective Church units. The questionnaire was mailed to those selected for the study along with a self-addressed return envelope. The cover letter assured students of complete anonymity. The questionnaire asked about educational achievement, educational aspirations, religious beliefs and practices, involvement in various kinds of delinquent behaviors, and the degree to which the Latter-day Saint youth experience peer pressure to engage in inappropriate activities. Also examined were various aspects of these teens' family life like family structure and parenting practices. Several publications have reported our findings concerning the effects of friends, religion, and family relationships on delinquency among Latter-day Saint youth.⁷

Measurement

Academic achievement was measured by four questions: (1) the student's average grades, (2) the importance of good grades, (3) how well the student likes school, and (4) the student's aspirations for post-high-school education. The response categories for grades ranged from "mostly A's" to "D's and F's." The five response categories for liking school varied from "I like school very much" to "I

dislike school very much.” A set of four response categories ranging from “Extremely important” to “Not important” was used for answers about the importance of grades. Finally, educational expectations were measured by six categories ranging from “I don’t expect to finish high school” to “I expect to get an advanced degree after graduation from college.”

Peer influences were determined by five questions about their friends engaging in antischool activities. The questions are (1) “Have your friends cheated on a test?” (2) “. . . skipped school without a legitimate excuse?” (3) “. . . openly defied a teacher or official at school?” (4) “. . . purposely damaged or destroyed things at school?” and (5) “. . . been suspended or expelled from school?” The four-response categories ranged from “none of my friends” to “all of my friends.” The first four questions were repeated, in which the students were asked whether their friends had ever pressured them to engage in the antischool behaviors. The response categories were “yes” and “no.”

Religious beliefs were measured by ten questions about traditional Christian beliefs as well as beliefs unique to Latter-day Saint theology. For example, we asked whether they believed “Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God.” Private religious behavior involved four questions about the frequency of personal prayer, scripture reading, payment of tithing, and monthly fasting. Public religious behavior included five questions about attendance at various church meetings. A sample question is “I attend sacrament meeting.” Spiritual experiences were determined by three questions about feelings of spiritual guidance, comfort, and forgiveness. “I have been guided by the Spirit with some of my problems and decisions” is a sample question. Eight questions measured feelings about the importance of religion. For example, students were asked to respond to the statement, “My relationship with God is an important part of my life.” Three items measured social acceptance by asking how well the students were accepted in Church settings by their peers, leaders, and adult members of the congregation. An example is “I seem to fit in well with the people in my ward.” Finally, family religious behavior was ascertained with three questions about frequency of family prayer, family scripture reading, and family home evening.

The response categories for questions about religious beliefs, importance of religion, spiritual experiences, and social acceptance varied on a five-point scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” The response categories for the behavioral questions

ranged on a five-point scale from "never" to "very often."

Family structure was determined by our asking with whom the students lived. Responses were coded into two-parent, stepparent, and single-parent families. Maternal employment was measured by our asking the students whether their mothers worked outside the home. Responses included "no," "yes, part time," and "yes, full time." Family connection was determined by responses to ten questions originally developed by Shaefer⁸ and tested by Barber⁹ and his associates. "My mother makes me feel better after talking over my worries with her" is a sample question. Family regulation asked how much parents know about their teens' friends, afternoon and evening activities, spending habits, and use of free time. Previous research has revealed that these five questions provide an excellent measure of family regulation.¹⁰ Psychological autonomy was measured through ten questions about parents' use of psychologically controlling behaviors such as withholding love from a disobedient teenager.

Statistical Analysis

We computed frequencies to demonstrate the levels of specific academic achievement activities reported by the students. Factor analysis was used to combine answers to several questions into a single scale score. For example, grades, importance of grades, liking of school, and educational aspirations were combined via factor analysis into a single academic achievement score for each student. The reliability of each scale was determined by our computing an alpha coefficient.

A sophisticated statistical procedure known as structural equation modeling was used to test the model predicting academic achievement. This procedure first calculates the error in measuring the academic achievement, religiosity, family, and peer variables and suggests ways to strengthen the measurement. It then allows the several independent variables to compete to explain educational achievement and provides an estimate of the amount of academic achievement accounted for by the factors in the model. Structural equation modeling also tests the indirect as well as the direct effects of all the factors in the model on academic achievement.

Results

Each year a national study is conducted among graduating

high-school seniors. The survey examines many different factors including academic achievement, post-high-school plans, drug and alcohol usage, premarital sex, as well as demographic items. The results are published in an annual report entitled *Monitoring the Future*. In light of the unique doctrinal emphasis on education and learning for Latter-day Saints, we wanted to know how our students' academic performances compare with national averages. The results

TABLE 1

Grades Received in High School by LDS
and National Sample of Seniors

Young Men			Young Women	
Grades	LDS (N=326)	National Sample (N=7398)	LDS (N=419)	National Sample (N=8101)
As	40.3%	19.7%	54.5%	29.0%
Bs	44.6	50.5	40.4	52.2
Cs	13.3	28.2	8.0	18.1
Ds	1.8	1.6	1.2	0.8
TOTALS	100%	100%	100.1%	100.1%

were remarkable. As seen in Table 1, the Latter-day Saint seniors received significantly higher grades than the national average for the same age group.¹¹ The differences are substantial for both young men and young women.

Similarly, Latter-day Saint seniors had much higher expectations for post-high-school education than the national average. As seen in Table 2, the educational expectations of Latter-day Saint young men were considerably higher than the national sample of young men. Over half of the Latter-day Saint twelfth-grade boys reported that they expect to obtain a graduate or professional (for example, law or medicine) degree compared to less than 20 percent of seniors in the national study. Although the post-high-school educational expectations among Latter-day Saint young women were somewhat higher than those expressed of young women in the national study, the gap is not as large as for young men.

As noted earlier, most research dealing with the academic achievement of adolescents has cited father's educational level as one of the most significant factors in predicting academic achievement. Table 3 compares the reported educational level of the fathers

TABLE 2

Post-High-School Educational Expectations
of LDS and National Samples of Seniors

Young Men			Young Women	
Educational Level	LDS (N=326)	National Sample (N=7398)	LDS (N=419)	National Sample (N=8101)
Technical/Vocational	13.2%	9.8%	7.0%	7.5%
2-Year College	9.1	16.7	9.7	17.5
4-Year College	27.5	54.4	56.8	53.2
Graduate/Professional	50.2	18.8	26.2	21.7
TOTALS	100%	99.7%	100.1%	99.9%

in both our sample of Latter-day Saint seniors and the national sample of graduating seniors. The educational level of the fathers of the Latter-day Saint students was generally higher than that of the national sample. Over three-fourths of the Latter-day Saint twelfth graders reported that their fathers had obtained at least some col-

TABLE 3

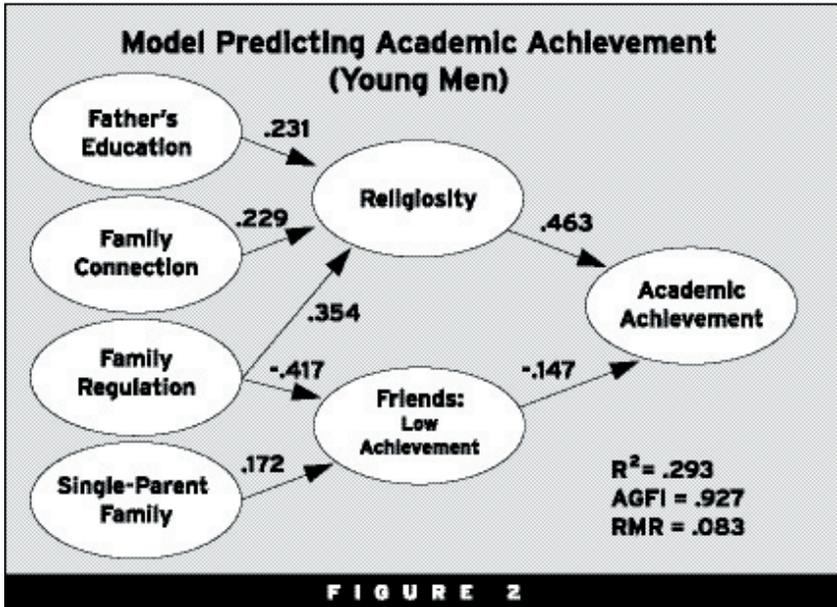
Educational Level of Fathers of the
LDS and National Samples of Seniors

Young Men			Young Women	
Educational Level	LDS (N=326)	National Sample (N=7398)	LDS (N=419)	National Sample (N=8101)
Grade School or less	3.8%	5.1%	3.1%	3.8%
Some High School	7.4	11.1	10.7	10.4
High School Graduate	8.5	29.5	11.2	34.5
Some College	24.6	18.2	37.2	21.3
College Graduate	25.9	22.2	31.2	20.6
Graduate Degree	29.9	13.9	6.6	9.4

lege education as compared to only about half in the national study. It is interesting that for some unknown reason, young men report their fathers have higher education than do young women.

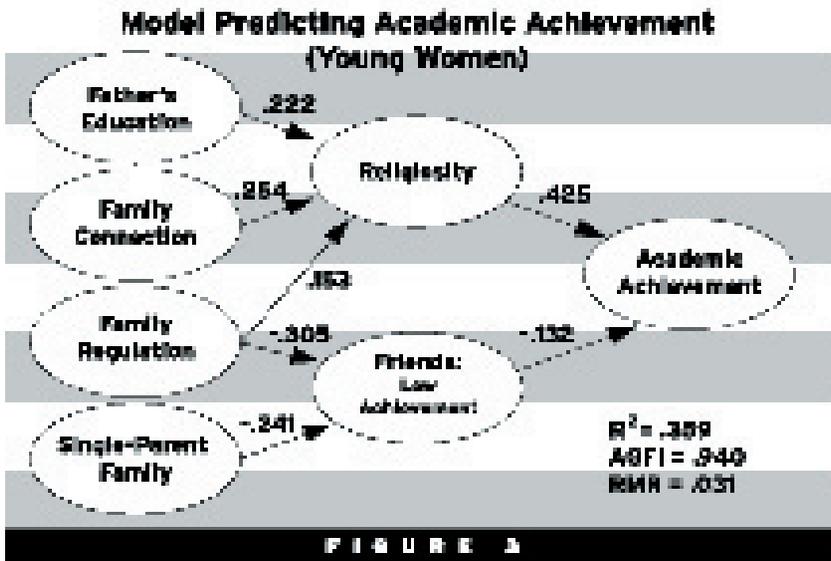
The models predicting academic achievement for young men is presented in Figure 2 and for young women in Figure 3. Although we expected religiosity to be a significant factor, we were somewhat sur-

prised that it emerged as the strongest predictor of academic performance for both young men and young women. The beta coefficients of 0.463 and 0.425 indicate a powerful relationship. In other words, the more religious a Latter-day Saint youth is, the more likely he or she will do well in school and have high aspirations for continued education and learning. These findings certainly refute the secularization hypothesis advocated by many social scientists. Among



Latter-day Saint young people, at least, education does not make a person more secular, more irreligious, less active in church activities, and less spiritual in personal life. In fact, these findings show just the opposite to be true.

Peers also had an effect on academic achievement; and since we measured behaviors detrimental to school performance, the relationship is negative. In other words, if a Latter-day Saint teen's friends are low academic achievers and place little value on education, the Latter-day Saint youth will be less likely to do well in school. It was very encouraging to see that the negative influence of peers' low academic achievement is quite small, especially in comparison to religiosity. It would be interesting in future research to include measures of peer pressures and examples supportive of school in addition to the negative behaviors. It is anticipated that the effect may be larger than that for negative pressures.



We were surprised that family characteristics had only limited direct impact on academic performance. None of the family factors were directly related to school performance for young men, and only family connection and granting of psychological autonomy were significant for young women. It was especially surprising that father's education was insignificant since this is contrary to what has been found in extensive research with national samples of American youth.

One of the advantages of structural equation modeling is its ability to identify indirect effects. As can be seen in the two figures, family factors do have powerful indirect effects on school behavior. For young men, parental regulation—the setting of rules, monitoring compliance, and administering appropriate discipline—emerged with strong indirect influence through both religiosity and the influence of friends. Family regulation was especially influential for young men in the process of the selection of friends and in strengthening their ability to resist pressure to skip school and engage in other inappropriate behaviors. In other words, the higher the parental regulation, the less likely the young man would associate with youth in trouble at school and the greater would be his religiosity, both of which would enhance the young man's academic achievement.

As mentioned above, family connection and psychological autonomy were directly related to the school behavior of young women.

Importantly, both also made indirect contributions as well. Thus, connection and autonomy directly impacted achievement and indirectly did so through religiosity and friends' influence. In addition, family regulation and father's education made indirect contributions to predicting academic achievement. It should be noted that mother's employment was insignificant in the context of the other family characteristics. Most important, however, was the fact that for both the young men and young women, religiosity was the strongest predictor of success at school.

Given that religiosity has such a powerful impact on academic success, we determined the relationship between the specific dimensions of religiosity and achievement. Bivariate correlations provide information about how strongly one religious factor, by itself, relates to academic achievement. Table 4 reports the bivariate correlations between the various dimensions of religiosity and academic achievement. Each of these various dimensions of religiosity showed strong, statistically significant correlation with academic

TABLE 4

Bivariate Correlations between Religious Factors and Academic Achievement

Factor	Young Men N=1557	Young Women N=1997
Private Religious Behavior	.411	.417
Total Religiosity	.392	.414
Importance of Religion	.389	.396
Acceptance at Church	.284	.266
Public Religious Behavior	.280	.298
Spiritual Experiences	.245	.300
Religious Beliefs	.200	.300
Family Religious Activities	.147	.187

Academic Achievement factor computed from grades, importance of grades, liking school and educational aspirations. All figures had a .001 significance level.

achievement. It is important to note that the strongest bivariate correlation for both young men and young women was private religious behavior—praying privately, reading the scripture on their own, fasting, and those other activities that are between the individual and God alone.

It was somewhat surprising to us that, although statistically significant,

family religious activities (such as family prayer, family home evening, family scripture study, etc.) showed the least powerful correlation with academic achievement (0.147 for young men and 0.187 for young women). We will discuss possible explanations for this result later in this article.

In the “real world,” the several factors influencing academic achievement do not work in a bivariate manner—one on one. They work simultaneously and interact together. Three dimensions of religiosity were found through factor analysis to be so closely related (in other words, measuring much the same thing) that they were combined into a single factor. Private religious behavior, importance

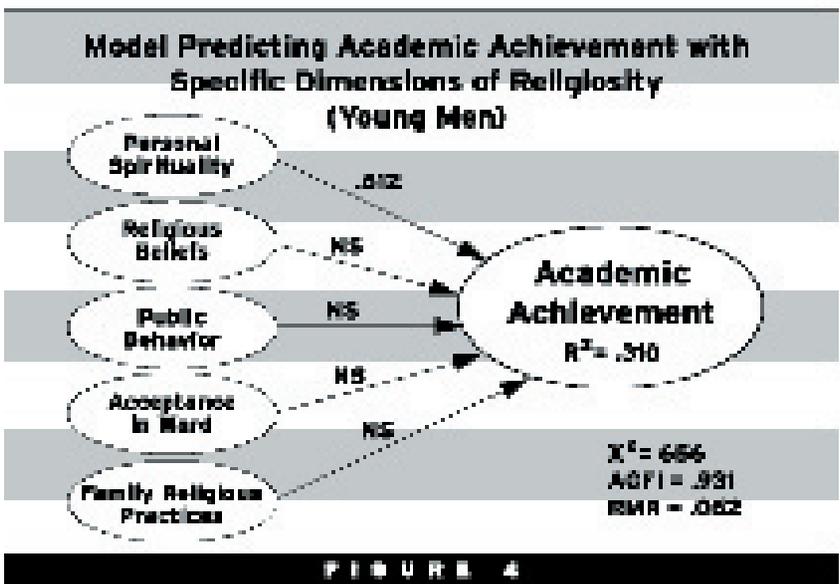
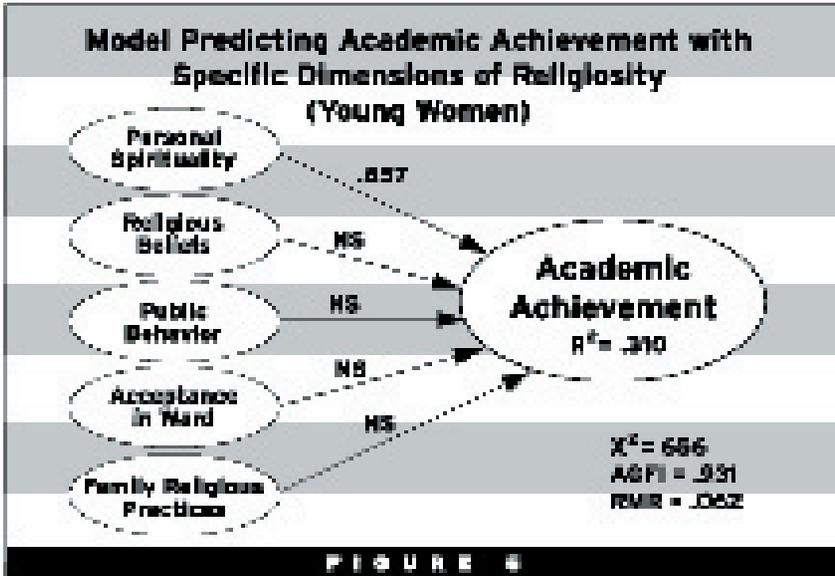


FIGURE 4

of religion, and spiritual experiences were combined into the factor personal spirituality. To ascertain the relative strength of each of the remaining five dimensions of religiosity as they compete against each other to predict academic achievement, we computed additional structural equation models. The results are shown in Figures 4 and 5.

Although each of the various dimensions of religiosity was found to be statistically related to academic achievement when bivariate correlations were computed, this was not the case when they had to compete against each other in a multivariate model. For both young men and young women, personal spirituality was such a strong indicator of academic achievement that all the other dimensions of religiosity



were statistically insignificant. The beta coefficients for personal spirituality on academic achievement of the young men and young women were respectively 0.612 and 0.657. This is an extraordinarily powerful effect. In other words, the most significant factor, by far, in determining how well Latter-day Saint youth will do in school and how much they value education is their own personal spirituality—the degree to which they have internalized gospel teachings and experienced spiritual things in their lives. This is contrary to the study noted earlier arguing that the social support received at church was the important religious factor.

Conclusions

So what do all these findings mean to us? What things have we learned from this study that can benefit religious educators, parents, and anyone interested in helping youth in their transition from adolescence to adulthood?

First, we have learned that religion is much more powerful in affecting the lives and academic achievement of youth than many people and publications have acknowledged in the past.

Perhaps one of the reasons for this finding is that religiosity has usually been examined only as an external factor, such as religious affiliation and/or church attendance. What we have learned over and over again is that the real power of religion is found in religious convictions and personal practices, for both young and old. The external

dimensions of religiosity—affiliation and attendance—have power in a person’s life only when they become means to an end, not the end themselves. The “end” they must lead to if they are to have any meaningful impact on a person is internalization of gospel principles, individual testimony, and personal experience with spiritual things. All that we do—whether in our classrooms, with our families, or through our service in the Church—should focus on that “end.” Those we teach and serve must come to know for themselves, by learning and spiritual experience, the truths and goodness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Then, religion has real power in the lives of youth.

The second major lesson we learned from this research was the unique and significant relationship between religious education and secular education of Latter-day Saint teens. Just as the statistical link between the two is unique to Latter-day Saints, so too is the theology of learning and education. Latter-day Saints are quite unique in their belief that education—both religious and secular—has eternal significance. Each type of education is linked to the other. Literacy and secular learning open doors for religious education. The better able a person is to read the scriptures, the more likely he or she is to gain greater gospel knowledge and experience the workings of the Spirit. From our research, we see a definite link the other way as well. Religious education and spiritual development encourage greater academic achievement. The relationship becomes cyclical—greater academic achievement leads to higher spirituality, greater spirituality leads one to more learning, and so on.

Yet the question may arise, “Which comes first?” That is the age-old chicken-and-the-egg paradox. It is probably impossible to isolate which factor comes first, as both are inextricably linked (at least to Latter-day Saints). What we do know, however, is that the greater the personal spirituality (religious internalization) of a Latter-day Saint youth, the higher his or her academic achievement. Why is this?

There are probably many reasons—both theological and sociological. It is highly unlikely, however, that Latter-day Saint youth consciously make the link between religiosity and academic achievement. No one is likely saying, “I am going to get a personal testimony so I can do better in my math class!” The effects are more subtle than that. It appears that academic achievement, zeal for learning, and aspiration for further education come as a natural by-product of increased religiosity.

This research suggests that as young Latter-day Saint students increase in gospel knowledge, obtain a personal testimony, and experience the workings of the Spirit in their lives, they have a greater desire to live in a way that will please God. This spiritual quest for excellence impacts more than just a youth's "religious life" or church experience. When a young person possesses the "light of the gospel" deep within his or her soul, the desire to "walk in the light" spreads into all aspects of life, including education. The more we feel and experience the light, the more we will seek after light and truth—intelligence, which is the "glory of God."

In a special fireside for youth and young adults, President Hinckley urged young Latter-day Saints to "be smart." His admonition was as much spiritual as it was practical:

You belong to a church that teaches the importance of education. You have a mandate from the Lord to educate your minds and your hearts and your hands. The Lord has said, "Teach ye diligently . . . of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and kingdoms—that ye may be prepared in all things" (D&C 88:78–80).

PL

Mind you, these are not my words. These are the words of ~~the Lord who loves you~~. He wants you to train your minds and hands to become an influence for good as you go forward with your lives. And as you do so and as you perform honorably and with excellence, you will bring honor to the Church, for you will be regarded as a man or woman of integrity and ability and conscientious workmanship. Be smart.¹²

We can help the young people with whom we labor to fulfill this "mandate from the Lord" by remembering that religious education and secular education go hand in hand. If we want to strengthen the youth academically, we will work to strengthen them spiritually. Testimony, personal prayer, private scripture study, feeling the Spirit in heart and soul, and striving to live the principles of the gospel that have been learned all work together to enhance educational achievement—both here and hereafter.

Notes

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 169, 172.
2. See Mark Regnerus, "Shaping Schooling Success: Religious Socialization and Educational Outcomes in Metropolitan Public Schools," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 39, no. 3 (September 2000): 363–70 for a review of this literature.
3. Daniel Carson Johnson, "Formal Education vs. Religious Belief: Soliciting New Evidence with Multinomial Logit Modeling," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 36, no. 2 (June 1997): 231.
4. Stan Albrecht, "The Consequential Dimension of Mormon Religiosity," *Brigham Young University Studies* 29, no. 2 (spring 1989): 57–108; Stan Albrecht and Tim B. Heaton, "Secularization, Higher Education, and Religiosity," *Review of Religious Research* 26, no. 1 (September 1985): 43–58.
5. Mark D. Regnerus and Glen H. Elder Jr., "Staying on Track in School: Religious Influences in High and Low-Risk Settings," paper presented at the American Sociological Association meetings, August 2001.
6. David L. Featherman and Robert M. Hauser, *Opportunity and Change* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 233–36; Dennis Gilbert and Joseph A. Kahl, *The American Class Structure: A New Synthesis*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Dorsey, 1982), 168–96.
7. Brent L. Top and Bruce A. Chadwick, "Helping Teens Stay Strong," *Ensign* 29, no. 3 (March 1999): 27–34; for a more in-depth examination of the methods and results of this study, see "Raising Righteous Children in a Wicked World," *Brigham Young Magazine* 7, no. 2 (summer 1998): 41–51; Brent L. Top and Bruce A. Chadwick, "The Power of the Word: Religion, Family, Friends, and Delinquent Behavior of LDS Youth," *Brigham Young University Studies* 33, no. 2 (fall 1993): 293–310; Bruce A. Chadwick and Brent L. Top, "Religiosity and Delinquency among LDS Adolescents," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32, no. 1 (March 1993): 51–67.
8. Earl S. Schaefer, "Children's Reports of Parental Behavior: An Inventory," *Child Development* 36 no. 2 (June 1965): 413–24.
9. Brian K. Barber, Joseph E. Olsen, and Shoba C. Shagle, "Associations between Parental Psychological and Behavioral Control and Youth Internalized and Externalized Behaviors," *Child Development* 65, no. 4 (August 1994): 1120–36.
10. S. M. Dornbusch et al., "The Relation of Parenting Style to 'Adolescent School Performance,'" *Child Development* 58, no. 5 (October 1987): 1244–57; Barber, Olsen, and Shagle, *ibid.*
11. The numbers in the table reflect only those LDS twelfth graders from the three regions of the United States from which we gathered data. We did not include the results from the same-age youth in Great Britain because the school system there is quite different and, as a result, would not have given a valid comparison.
12. Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth," *Ensign* 31, no. 1 (January 2001): 4–5.