

Latter-day Saint Women and Leadership: The Influence of Their Religious Worldview

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Abstract

The article examines theories, assumptions, concepts, experiences, and practices from the Latter-day Saints' (LDS, or the Mormons) religious worldview to expand existing theoretical constructs and implications of leadership development and education for women. The article elucidates LDS doctrine and culture regarding women and provides specific strategies and guidelines to assist people involved with leadership development for LDS women. The article contains four sections: (1) overview of the LDS religion, (2) doctrine and culture, (3) theoretical frameworks, and (4) implications for research and practice. Analysis provides a foundation for leadership scholars and practitioners, particularly those who work directly with LDS women, to facilitate the development and growth of LDS women as leaders.

Introduction

Dialogue and scholarship focusing on developing women for leadership roles has recently increased in many sectors, countries, and geographical regions (Longman & Madsen, 2014; Madsen, Ngunjiri, Longman, & Cherrey, 2015; Ngunjiri & Madsen, 2015). Scholars have called for more integrative and inclusive leadership development theories, as well as expansion of both quantitative and qualitative research (e.g., Day, 2011; Madsen, 2013), which should bolster efforts to prepare more women leaders. Much remains to be done to develop women leaders effectively within a host of different cultures and contexts.

Examining perspectives, assumptions, and practices about women and leadership from a multisector, multinational, and multicultural perspective can provide insight to those who want to develop women for influential roles in paid and unpaid sectors (e.g., business, government, nonprofit, community, and home) (Johansen & McLean, 2006; Madsen et al., 2015). Yet, to be most effective in working one-on-one or in groups with potential and emerging women leaders, leadership scholars and practitioners must recognize how disparate worldviews—cultural backgrounds, values, beliefs, and assumptions—may impact a woman's understanding of and aspirations toward leading. Further, understanding the influence of worldviews regarding leadership can provide the precise information needed to customize developmental interventions (e.g., mentoring, coaching, and training) for women in particular settings or groups. One such category is religion, and this article focuses on a worldview perspective from one global world religion—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS, also known as the Mormons).

This article offers new perspectives into the theory and practice of developing women leaders around the world by addressing the impact of the LDS worldview in the shaping of leadership for its female members and those whom they influence. It is based upon an integrative literature review that considers current theory on women and leadership coupled with scholarly research and current doctrine from canonical scriptures and other sources. In sum, this article will examine theories, assumptions, concepts, experiences, and practices from the LDS worldview to expand the existing theoretical constructs and implications of leadership development and education for women. More specifically, it will help readers comprehend LDS doctrine and culture relating to women, and it will provide specific strategies and guidelines that will assist those who are involved with leadership development for LDS women. The article has four sections: (1) overview of the LDS religion, (2) doctrine and culture, (3) theoretical frameworks, and (4) implications for practice.

Overview of the LDS Religion

LDS historical documents and canonical scriptures state that, in 1820, a 14-year-old boy named Joseph Smith sought divine direction to learn which church he should join. Mormons believe that Joseph was visited by and taught through a heavenly manifestation of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, and that he was instructed to restore Christ's church to the earth as it was in ancient times, including a foundation of prophets and apostles. The doctrine was based on a notion of eternal progression. Because of members' beliefs in an additional record of scripture called *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ*, the church became popularly known as the Mormon Church. This record contains teachings from prophets and Christ himself to ancient inhabitants of the American continents (the ancestors of modern-day Native Americans). Members believe that these records were delivered to and translated by the prophet Joseph Smith through divine assistance (www.lds.org; www.mormon.org).

In the past 185 years, the LDS church has become one of the fastest-growing religions in America and around the globe (Eckstrom, 2012; LDS Church, 2015). With over 15 million members and approximately 85,000 full-time missionaries, it is expected to continue this growth in years to come. Because of the church's headquarters being located in Salt Lake City, Utah, and its origins in upstate New York, it is commonly viewed as a U.S.-based religion. However, Peterson (2013) reported that 56% of the church's members lived outside the United States and Canada in 2013, with a substantial percentage living in South America and Mexico. In the United States and Canada, the LDS church is the fourth-largest religious denomination behind Catholics, Southern Baptists, and United Methodists (Lindner, 2011). These statistics suggest that it is increasingly likely that LDS female members will comprise at least a noticeable portion of communities and the workforce around the world, particularly in the Western hemisphere (Nielson, Madsen, & Hammond, 2006). More significantly, the LDS worldview profoundly shapes the ways members perceive learning, development, and leadership for women.

LDS theology asserts that Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God and the Savior of the world and that we live to serve Him and to teach of His eternal plan for all of humanity (www.mormon.org). In addition, anyone born on earth is a spiritual child of a loving God (Heavenly Father) who sent us to this earth in a moral state to learn and grow. For many members, every aspect of their lives is influenced by their faith in Jesus Christ and His teachings

at home, at work, and in the community. Prominent core values of the LDS church include strengthening families; helping others; exercising free choice; being educated; and doing missionary work, humanitarian aid, community service, and family history. Although the church does have its critics, according to Nielson et al. (2006), “religious and other experts have recognized the positive contributions of the church to society, including humanitarian aid efforts, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, the church welfare program, and its emphasis on families and lifelong learning” (p. 383).

LDS publications tout that the Relief Society, an organization created by the church for women 18 and older, was established in 1842 and is the oldest and largest women’s organization in the world. Its purpose is to build faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and homes, and help those in need (LDS, 2011a). Since the early days of the church, women have been encouraged (and many ordained) to expound scriptures, exhort the church, seek their own salvation, receive personal revelation, and lead in a variety of callings and capacities. Women in Utah Territory enjoyed personal rights that exceeded those of women in the U.S. In fact, Utah was the second state to give women suffrage, and in 1896 Utah women were the first females to vote in a national election (Haddock, 2010).

However, since that time there have been influences that have changed these views of gender equality and opportunity, at least for some, including perspectives and practices from both inside and outside of the church organization and its membership. Yet, interestingly, one female LDS scholar wrote a provocative article titled, “I am a Mormon Because I am a Feminist” (Cassler, 2010). The following section outlines some key LDS doctrines influencing women in leadership positions and then discusses cultural perspectives and elements that sometimes thwart the work of women in leadership roles. These can be useful in designing interventions to increase leadership aspirations, capabilities, and knowledge for individuals and groups within some LDS circles.

Doctrines and Culture that Affect Women in Leadership

One of the foundational doctrines in LDS theology is that a major purpose of living on earth is to learn and grow so we can become more like God and that we lived as spirit children with God before this life and will live again after death. Hence, learning and education have always been significant; shortly after Mormon pioneers began settling the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, they established schools and post-secondary institutions (“Our Heritage,” 1996). Nielson et al. (2006) wrote an article on the worldviews of adult learning in the workplace through a Mormon lens and identified five key principles: emphasis on lifelong learning, self-reliance, personal development by mentoring, hard work (no idleness), and obligation to employers. At the heart of these matters includes worldviews of the teleology of mortal existence and its importance within the theme of individual progression, which is also central to the discussion of how the LDS worldview influences women and leadership among its members.

Based on LDS doctrine, teachings, and values, there are four broad perspectives of development that LDS women may consciously and unconsciously consider regarding leadership, leadership development, and leadership education: (1) an eternal perspective, (2) a motherhood perspective, (3) a community perspective, and (4) a personal revelation perspective.

Some exploratory evidence confirms that there are differences between doctrine and culture, at least as it is practiced in Utah (Madsen & Hanewicz, 2011a). However, although scholarly research is limited on LDS women more broadly, there are at least some publications on Mormon women in Utah that may be useful for this discussion. It is important to note, however, that these cited studies were exploratory and generalization is limited. The paragraphs that follow outline important doctrines within these four perspectives and then highlight several cultural challenges (perspectives or practices) that may impede the leadership aspirations, ambitions, and development of LDS females.

An Eternal Perspective. First, LDS theology focuses on the purpose of earth life as preparing oneself to become more like God and to live with Him and His Son Jesus Christ in the life after death. Therefore, the whole focus on development is that learning and increasing our knowledge will help us in the eternities. For example, the *Doctrine and Covenants* (Smith, 1952), one of four canonical scriptures, states, “Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantages in the world to come” (130: 18–19). Hence, lifelong learning is a central teaching, along with continuous improvement and development. This includes the goal of preparing to become leaders (e.g., kings, queens, priests, priestesses) in the hereafter (Smith, 1957).

Some researchers document a disconnect between doctrine and culture, especially current formal educational practices and leadership aspirations among some Latter-day Saint women (Madsen, 2015). For example, Utah women are less likely to graduate from college, particularly at the bachelor’s degree level and higher, than other women across the U.S. (Madsen & Sarin, 2013). One in-depth mixed-methods study found that some LDS women reject formal and informal educational opportunities when they become mothers—and that these women do not understand the value of completing their degrees (Madsen & Hanewicz, 2011a). Researchers (Madsen & Hanewicz, 2011a) also found that many Utah women in their sample did not believe they could or should integrate roles, such as mother, student, employee, and community volunteer. However, the pulpit sometimes contradicts the Utah culture; in recent decades, church leaders have encouraged women to attend and complete college (e.g., Hinckley, 2001). The disparity is compounded by perceptual evidence that some LDS women do not believe they should or could be leaders (Madsen, 2015). More research is needed in this area, but as leadership development often begins with aspiration to lead, this is an important area of future inquiry. Overall, the tension between family, religion, education, and work is very real for many LDS women.

Another element is highlighted by one scripture that is often quoted in LDS settings: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Being perfect is mentioned in all four sets of canonical scriptures, which many LDS women interpret literally. They believe they must have no mistakes or flaws, being completely correct or accurate, or being entirely without fault or defect (“perfect,” n.d.). This doctrine of being perfect encourages church members to continue to grow, learn, and improve themselves, but Doty (as reported by Lockhart, 2013) found that misinterpretation of this doctrine has led to high levels of antidepressant use within Utah—much of it linked to what she calls “toxic perfectionism.” In an in-depth qualitative study, Namie (2013) also argued that women’s views of perfectionism have led to Utah’s having one of the highest rates of plastic surgeries per capita in the U.S. Research

has shown that individuals faced with these types of challenges are less likely to desire and attain leadership positions (Merriam & Cafferela, 1999).

A Motherhood Perspective. Second, Mormons are taught from childhood about the importance of family and marriage in an LDS temple, which is believed to create an eternal unit if family members are worthy of those blessings. LDS theology stresses the importance of motherhood for all women, so the motherhood perspective—whether a woman is a parent or not—is central to her identity. *The Family: The Proclamation to the World*, released in 1995 by The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, states:

Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. . . . Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. The family is ordained of God. . . . [F]athers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. (LDS, 1995, para. 6)

According to LDS teachings, raising children in love and righteousness is the most important leadership role that parents have on this earth. As a former LDS prophet, Harold B. Lee, said, “The most important of the Lord's work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own homes” (LDS, 2012a, p. 160). Another former prophet, Spencer W. Kimball, taught that one of our roles is to raise our children to become leaders in the eternities as well: “We do not rear children just to please our vanity. We bring children into the world to become kings and queens, and priests and priestesses for our Lord” (LDS, 2012b, p. 331).

Anecdotal evidence shows that many LDS (and non-LDS) women do not understand the role that motherhood can have in developing leadership knowledge and skills. Madsen (2008, 2009) found in her qualitative studies with U.S. governors and university presidents that motherhood was one of the most important developmental tools for women to learn leadership skills. She found 67 skills/competencies (e.g., balancing priorities, patience, advocacy, picking your battles, forgiveness, multitasking, delegating, listening, time management, negotiation) that these leaders attributed to parenthood. Culturally, there are LDS women who do not seek leadership roles and do not aspire to lead or even to identify themselves as leaders, in part because their view of *leadership* is different from what they *think* a leader is.

As previously mentioned, one study found that LDS women in Utah did not believe they could integrate life roles—that, if they were a mother, they needed to be a full-time mother and not finish college, serve in society, or work outside the home (Madsen & Hanewicz, 2011a). Therefore, they did not believe they could or should become leaders. One study reported that participants felt that there is a mindset, in Utah at least, that women should not be leaders. There are perceptions that men are better leaders, a lack of understanding or belief in women’s own worth and power, and a comfort—by men and women—in women holding support roles (Madsen, 2015). This is also true regarding perceptions in society at large (Powell, 2012).

A Community Perspective. The third perspective is that serving and helping others is central to one's life purpose. Both doctrine and culture in the LDS faith emphasize that service can help people truly find themselves and earn their own exaltation. Moses 1:39 (*Pearl of Great Price*) states, "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." Hence, the objective for eternity is to lift and develop other people for exaltation. And, Mosiah 2:17 (*Book of Mormon*) states that "when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God." LDS theology also highlights the need to "help others help themselves," as self-reliance is at the core of the well-known church "welfare" system (www.lds.org). It is also important to note that local LDS congregations (called wards and stakes) do not have paid ministries. Local leaders extend callings to active church members (men and women) to serve in various roles, including teacher, administrator, music director or pianist, youth adviser, ward council member, and more. Men and women teach each other by giving sermons and prayers in church services. Importantly, some local congregational leaders choose to be much more inclusive in terms of empowering women in their congregations and giving them a true seat at the table; other local unit leaders do not.

Church leaders have also stressed the importance of being involved in the broader society. As former LDS prophet, Gordon B. Hinckley, (2001) said,

The whole gamut of human endeavor is now open to women. There is not anything that you cannot do if you will set your mind to it. I am grateful that women today are afforded the same opportunity to study for science, for the professions, and for every other facet of human knowledge. You are as entitled as are men to the Spirit of Christ, which enlightens every man and woman who comes into the world. . . . You can include in the dream of the woman you would like to be a picture of one qualified to serve society and make a significant contribution to the world of which she will be a part. (para. 40)

Many LDS women provide vast service within church settings, but some are less likely to be civically engaged, particularly in leadership roles (Madsen & Backus, 2014).

It is important to note that many LDS members view the role of their leaders differently from most of society. In one of their well-known scripture passages (*Doctrine and Covenants* 121), words or phrases that describe the characteristics of a leader include being faithful to Christ and full of charity; having kindness, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, and confidence in Christ; being humble and having virtuous thoughts and love unfeigned; and making decisions based on principles of righteousness. In addition, when a leader needs to correct someone, he or she should do it without guile reproving when prompted and then afterward increasing love toward that individual. Members are directed not to have hearts set on the things of the world, aspire to the honors of men, gratify their pride and vain ambitions, be hypocritical, or exercise control, dominion, or compulsion over people. Servant leadership is a natural theoretical framework that describes how many members may view leadership, as it focuses on building and perfecting each other while lifting and serving (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002). Yet, even with this more feminine lens of leadership, some members—women and men—do believe women should be leaders within their religious, civic, or business environments. It is important to note that this perspective also exists throughout the world for LDS and non-LDS people.

A Personal Revelation Perspective. Finally, a personal revelation perspective provides another framework that LDS women may use to view their various life responsibilities and roles. According to one LDS source, “Women... seek, receive, and act on personal revelation in their callings and in their personal lives” (LDS, 2011a, pp. xi–xii). Prayer, scripture study, and church and temple attendance provide a basis for reflective worship and growth. Finding answers for oneself through direct communication with God is taught from childhood and encouraged for all. Doctrine articulates that all individuals can receive personal revelation directly from God to guide their choices and decisions. His revelation can be received via thoughts and promptings through the Holy Ghost.

Culturally, at least some of the members’ spiritual strength comes from the full-time LDS mission experience that has traditionally been considered essential for young men. However, in 2013, the age of mission service for young women changed from 21 to 19, and many more women are now serving. Missions provide critical leadership development training and experience for all who participate. Yet, one exploratory study (Madsen, 2015) suggested that there are still perspectives, individually and collectively (within and without church membership), that women are not or should not be leaders (influenced by their definition of leadership) and that women do not need to have the same level of doctrinal intelligence and scriptural knowledge as men. This is not supported by LDS theology (Sorensen & Cassler, 2004), but it continues to impact some LDS women’s aspirations to influence beyond the family and lead in other societal roles.

Finally, there is one privilege that those not of the LDS faith do not understand and that Latter-day Saint women and men sometimes overlook as well: the privilege of having access to priesthood *power*. According to Dew (2015), although women are not ordained to hold “the priesthood,” women can have “as much access to priesthood power for their own lives as do ordained men” (p. 33). Women actually use priesthood *authority* when they serve missions and other callings. Women and men have equal access to priesthood *power*, if they live worthily, and have access to the associated blessings. It is true that men are ordained to the priesthood and have *keys* and *authority* in ways that women do not, but church members who do not deeply understand these doctrines may have a limited understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and personal power.

Theoretical Frameworks

This article has provided a review of the LDS church doctrines and cultural challenges—identifying four perspectives that guide prevailing views on women and leadership—that may influence their women’s leadership worldview. Although progress is being made, there is clearly a gap in the literature in terms of individual and organizational leadership theories that focus on women. Yet, some theories can provide helpful insights to generate recommendations and implications for research and practice. Table 1 provides a list and descriptions of the nine leadership theoretical frameworks deemed to be most applicable in moving this conversation from doctrine, culture, and theory to practice.

Table 1. Selected leadership theories and theoretical frameworks.

| Theoretical Framework | Description |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Authentic | Emphasizes being genuine and understanding how self-concept relates to actions. Leadership can be nurtured and developed over time. Centers on compassion, purpose/passion, values/behaviors, relationships, and self-discipline (Northouse, 2015). |
| Calling | Focuses on a type of transcendent summons originating beyond the self and “an approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness” that holds values and goals about helping others as a primary sources of motivation (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007, p. 4). |
| Identity | Traces the construction and internalization of a leader identity and suggests that identity creation is central to the process of becoming a leader. Entails a set of relational and social processes through which one comes to see self and others as leaders (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). |
| Intersectionalities | Studies the effects of the many intersecting contexts (e.g., race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, ability, religion, and education) faced by leaders, typically related to systems of oppression and discrimination. |
| Power | Identifies the role of power and influence in leadership, often considering the source and amount of power available to leaders. May include, for example, a critical interpretation of internal and external constraints, the ability to use persuasion, or focus on a myriad of other elements. |
| Purpose | Focuses on developing an “elevated sense of purpose and conveying that sense to others,” as leaders are “most effective when they pursue purposes that are aligned with their personal values and oriented toward advancing the collective good” (Ely et al., 2011, p. 476). |
| Second-Generation Gender Bias | Reveals hidden structural and cultural barriers to women as leaders. Seeks to understand the often invisible yet powerful barriers that arise from cultural beliefs, structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that unintentionally favor men (Ely et al., 2011). |
| Servant | Builds on the natural feeling individuals have to serve first and then consciously aspire to lead. Emphasis is on making sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being met. Focuses on building consensus, social responsibility, and shifting authority to followers (Northouse, 2015). |
| Transformational | Explores the process by which an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. Focuses on the needs and motives of followers and tries to help them reach their fullest potential (Northouse, 2015). |

Implications for Practice and Research

To create a shift toward implications for practice within leadership development and education, Table 2 highlights the four perspectives outlined previously, with their related LDS doctrines and cultural challenges. Some useful theoretical frameworks are then listed, followed by implications for practice in the form of learning objectives. These implications that can guide those who facilitate or assist in leadership development initiatives for individuals and/or groups of LDS women. For example, at the individual level, if a manager is mentoring an LDS female employee, the implications may help guide developmental conversations.

Table 2. Latter-day Saint Women and Leadership Worldviews: Doctrine, Culture, Theoretical Frameworks, and Implications

| Perspective | LDS Doctrine | Cultural Challenges | Useful Theoretical Frameworks | Learning Objectives (Implications for Practice) |
|--------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Eternal | purpose of life; eternal progression; ongoing lifelong learning; becoming like God; becoming leaders; continuous improvement | lack of college degrees; depression; perfectionism; lack of integration perceptions; low aspirations to lead | authentic, calling, identity, power, purpose, servant, transformational | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore values, calling, purpose, gifts, and strengths • Learn about purpose of lifelong learning and education and also learning to lead for life and beyond • Strengthen aspirations to learn and lead |
| Motherhood | motherhood is the most important role; family is central; raise children to lead; parents are equal partners | limited understanding of motherhood being a development tool, of what integration can mean and do, of what leadership can mean and why women should be leaders, of raising leaders, and that parents are equal partners | authentic, calling, identity, intersectionalities, power, purpose, second-generation gender bias, servant, and transformational | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that motherhood can develop leadership abilities and that women should help their children develop leadership • Strengthen understanding of what leading means and why women should lead • Explore the concepts of integration, power, intersectionalities, calling, and equal partnership • Discover expanded views of purpose |
| Community | serving others is critical and is a primary purpose of life; service is linked to exaltation; self- | lack of civic engagement; narrow view of leadership, humility, and responsibility to society; view that | authentic, calling, identity, intersectionalities, power, purpose, second-generation gender bias, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and discuss doctrine and counsel on serving broadly within family, church, and community settings |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|---|--|
| | reliance is key; serve LDS members and others; women can and should lead; definition of leader is unique | LDS women cannot or should not lead; lack of opportunities for some to lead | servant, and transformational | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen understanding of leadership, humility, and responsibility to society • Broaden view of self-reliance to include earning college degrees and participating in ongoing development • Strengthen confidence and voice |
| Personal Revelation | can receive direct revelation from God (personal and for church callings); should do so daily; find answers for oneself; priesthood power and authority; full-time mission age changes | lack of understanding about priesthood authority/power and the value of mission service; perceptions that women do not need to know scriptures/doctrines like men; perception that women should not be leaders | authentic, calling, identity, intersectionalities, power, purpose, and transformational | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand understanding of priesthood authority and power, as well as other related doctrines • Learn about various types of developmental experiences for LDS women, including serving full-time missions • Increase aspirations to study doctrines and use voice in religious settings • Transform views that women can and should be leaders in the home and beyond |

After comparing the perspectives, doctrines, and cultural challenges, this final section provides implications for practice within each theoretical framework (see Table 1). Both practitioners and scholars can use these to design various leadership development studies and formal/informal interventions (e.g., mentoring; coaching; experiential learning experiences, exercises, and reflective activities; and training, development, or education programs) specific to women with this worldview:

1. *Authentic*: Design interventions to help LDS women understand their core values, assumptions, passions, and strengths. Help these women make a stronger impact in the home and community, support them in developing a deeper understanding of LDS doctrine, and then facilitate developmental relationships and experiences that help them see their value, find their voices, and integrate various life roles. Feminine styles of leadership are increasingly valued in many workplaces and other settings (Gerzema & D'Antonio, 2013), and women can strengthen their leadership abilities while remaining true to their authentic selves. Women do not need to lead like men to be successful. Content and dialogue around these topics can be beneficial.

2. *Calling*: Remind LDS women of their calling to be mothers, but also help them understand that they are called to do other important work, including lead. Teach them to be prepared and self-reliant (e.g., finish college degrees, be lifelong learners, study and understand their own doctrines) whether they work for pay or not. Create activities to help them reflect on personal callings and revelation. Many leadership programs already use exercises and tools to facilitate these types of self-exploration and discussion, so researching best practices would be useful. Provide literature that helps them see the value of community engagement and the way it relates to the eternal, motherhood, community, and personal revelation perspectives.
3. *Identity*: Similar to interventions for any women, design specific ways to help LDS women construct and internalize their own leader identities. Teach women about the dynamics between perfectionism, confidence, and leadership, and encourage them to step forward and begin leading in any setting. Taking action is the key to gaining confidence, so help women see that they can have a strong leadership identity and still fail and make mistakes—all part of learning and growing. According to Ely, Ibarra, and Kolb (2011), people become leaders by developing a sense of purpose and internalizing a leadership identity. Women need to envision themselves as leaders, so content and discussion around what leading and leadership means more broadly can help them understand they can and should be leaders.
4. *Intersectionalities*: Provide educational experiences to help women understand the various intersecting contexts within and beyond LDS settings. Help them recognize their own assumptions and barriers, internal and external, and the intersectionalities that may exist even within neighborhoods. Frame this primarily within the eternal and community perspectives and provide training on how inclusivity strengthens influence. Women must understand the inequalities that they see between and among groups. At the same time, intersectionalities (e.g., race, class, gender, ability, nationality) produce unique experiences and can empower women to strengthen their influence in workplaces and communities. Leadership development initiatives can use assessments, exercises, cases, group discussions, guided reflections, and more.
5. *Power*: Although some scholars define these words differently (French, Raven, & Cartwright, 1959), the majority of women struggle with the term “power,” so reframing it as “influence” may be helpful. The importance of increasing power can be linked to LDS theology and many practices, such as becoming more self-reliant through finishing college degrees, learning new skills, reading and studying scriptures and doctrine, receiving personal revelation, and stepping forward to make a difference in communities. Design interventions that help women see the importance of being an example of strength, stability, and leadership. Women typically, and LDS women may even more profoundly, need to understand that power does not need to be about themselves; it can be framed as beneficial to others and as a force for good.
6. *Purpose*: Recommendations for this framework are similar to those of the authentic and calling frameworks. Continue to help women link personal values and goals with advancing the collective good. Design interventions that focus on raising women’s

aspirations to influence and lead, broadening their understanding of what leadership can entail (e.g., motherhood is leadership), and teaching them that they need to prepare now for roles as influencers and leaders in the eternity. As Ely et al. (2011) explained, instead of defining themselves by gender stereotypes, anchoring leadership development in purpose helps women reflect on who they want to be and direct their attention toward shared goals. Doing so will be particularly powerful in working with LDS women.

7. *Second-Generation Gender Bias*: Create interventions to help individuals understand unconscious biases that arise within cultural beliefs, structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that unintentionally favor men (Ely et al., 2011). Without a good understanding of these biases, people retain learned stereotypes that do not serve men or women well. There are a host of tools and resources to help trainers, developers, mentors, and influencers expand this understanding. In addition, teach LDS women strategies to work effectively within—and skillfully change—perceived and real structural and cultural barriers, particularly when there is a disconnect between doctrine and culture.
8. *Servant*: Utilize this framework to help women understand they are already leaders and that leadership can take many forms, depending on one's style, values, and authentic self. Design training and exercises that help women explore how important specific constructs and roles (e.g., service, charity, love, kindness, and motherhood) are to servant leadership. Also, help them see that being a servant leader is not a subordinate role but can be powerful and influential if developed and refined. Use examples of LDS and non-LDS leaders, both men and women (including Christ himself), who have used servant leadership to change lives, communities, and the world at large.
9. *Transformational*: Transformation is a key concept of LDS theology and practice, and it can be consciously applied to leadership through interventions that help women develop a deeper understanding of both transformational leadership and learning, which are the core of leadership development. Create content and experiential learning opportunities to help LDS women understand and practice lifelong learning, integration of roles, authentic leadership styles, and valuing their own strengths and gifts. Help them understand that all relationships, roles (e.g., motherhood), and opportunities can help them develop leadership if they are acting, reflecting, and then transforming. Teach them deeper reflection tools that will help them learn more effectively from experience. As the late Warren Bennis (1989) stated,

There are lessons in everything, and if you are fully deployed, you will learn most of them. Experiences aren't truly yours until you think about them, analyze them, examine them, question them, reflect on them, and finally understanding them. The point, once again, is to use your experiences rather than being used by them, to be the designer, not the design, so that experiences empower rather than imprison. (p. 92)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the LDS church is one of the fastest-growing religions in the world. Yet, to date, an examination of the LDS religious worldview with an eye to how those beliefs influence LDS women in leadership roles has not been undertaken. Using this analysis of LDS perspectives, doctrine, cultural challenges, theoretical frameworks, and implications for research and practice can result in more focused and productive leadership theory building and research, especially more effective targeted leadership development and education interventions. Although many challenges that some LDS women face are similar to those of women throughout the world, customized interventions and initiatives for women within a specific religious worldview—including space for discussion and reflection—may help them find the aspirations and motivations to learn to lead in whatever setting they choose. In the future, more leadership scholars and practitioners will study, interact with, and conduct leadership training and development programs in which LDS women are present. This analysis provides a foundation for thinking critically about how to better prepare LDS women to step forward and prepare to lead. It also provides an examination of theories, assumptions, concepts, experiences, and practices from one worldview that may assist in expanding the existing theoretical constructs and implications of leadership education for women more broadly.

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