

**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE EXPERIENCES OF CHRISTIAN
MOTHERS NAVIGATING THROUGH SOCIETAL WORLDVIEWS AND SOCIAL
MOVEMENTS**

Holly Neavitt

Department of Community Care and Counseling, Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

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Approved by:

Dr. Mollie Boyd, Committee Chair

Dr. Tracy Baker, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

This study will investigate the lived experiences of Christian mothers as they navigate through various societal worldviews and influences. By examining the available studies on the misuse of Christian doctrine that facilitate the patriarchal worldview and the feminist movement to abolish faith-based gender assignment, the need to investigate the experiences of Christian mothers will be identified. Moreover, the burden of social conformity will be examined. Motherhood can feel like unfamiliar territory as mothers take on their role of motherhood. Investigating these influences and identifying the common experiences mothers face will help to better support Christian mothers. Investigating these lived experiences will be done through a qualitative study. This study will explore the experiences of ten mothers of the Christian faith. The experiences reported by these mothers during their interviews will be analyzed to identify common trends. The findings will focus on what trends are experienced under this societal perception to help identify the impact of these social influences.

Keywords: Patriarchal Worldviews, Religious Teachings, Gender Roles, Feminism, Motherhood, Women's Support

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The purpose of this study is to investigate the misuse of scripture by man, to institutionalize a patriarchal worldview and the feminist agenda, to dissolve the faith-based role of a mother, and to identify how societal norms influence Christian mothers to conform to society. Identifying societal influences and their impacts will allow for the support that Christian mothers receive to modify as societal influences continue to change. Identifying these trends will be done by collecting the lived experiences of Christian mothers through interviews and grouping these trends into categories. The research will begin to show if there is a pattern in these lived experiences. By understanding these lived experiences, the forms of support mothers receive can be advanced (Neubauer et al., 2019). The study will discuss women's societal roles and how religion has been pulled out of context to help support the societal expectation of women. Moreover, the research will identify the conflict arising from the feminist party and the goal of extreme feminist social movements to abolish the faith-based role of a mother and how these perceptions impact Christian mothers.

Background

Motherhood is subjected to the expectations placed by societal norms (Raza, 2021). Mothers experience stigmas that can significantly impact their overall perception of self (Beech et al., 2020). The challenges that arise from society's expectations can cause women, in general, to feel that they are under pressure to choose between family and career (Hernandez, 2019). Identifying these societal views and how these influences impact Christian mothers is essential to establish what aids are required to preserve Christian mothers.

There are significant studies on what a mother can expect to happen during a pregnancy and what a new mother can expect to occur after pregnancy (Dol et al., 2020). Education's role in helping to prepare new mothers in this aspect is excellent (Dol et al., 2020). In many cases, a family planning specialist's information is the most effective form of insight that a mother can receive (Dol et al., 2020). However, the literature and available education does not adequately prepare a mother for the potential struggles that conflicting societal agendas can cause. Christian mothers are under fire today (Corradi, 2021). Understanding the historical establishment of the faith-based role of women helps to provide insight into why the feminist movements found in society aim to dissolve the role (Hernandez, 2019).

Generations of influence heavily burden the unspoken expectation of women (Mattebo et al., 2016). Throughout several generations, women were taught that their gender bound them to the role of motherhood and that their primary function would be to raise children and tend to the home (Mattebo et al., 2016). It is not uncommon for many mothers to hide or avoid sharing their experiences while assuming their role as a mother. The reason many women hide their struggle is a direct result of society placing an expectation on how a mother's should be able to manage what they are experiencing (Mattebo et al., 2016). However, the changes within society and the roles of women are being molded to conform to multiple perceptions and expectations (Hernandez, 2019).

The social push for female conformity is felt by multiple influencing factors, largely the feminist movement (Corradi, 2021). For Christian mothers, there is a sense of greater purpose when entering motherhood (Van Vugt & Versteegh, 2020). From this, Christian mothers feel fulfilled in the role of a mother and find honor in being able to serve both their children and their husband (Van Vugt & Versteegh, 2020). However, the social movement found within feminist

movements calls for the abolishment of the faith-based role of a mother (Wood, 2019). This social reform views motherhood as a device used to hold women in an oppressive light and urges women to choose a career over motherhood because it is considered that motherhood reduces women's ability to reach their full potential (Wood, 2019). Furthermore, it is perceived that a patriarchal worldview institutionalized the faith-based role of mothers to hold women in submission to their male counterparts (Wood, 2019).

This view is compelling many women to seek a career and has become a double-edged sword for many Christian mothers, as their social circles conform to this mindset; the more this conformity happens, the perception of a women's role is expanded (Mynarska & Brzozowska, 2022). Increasingly, mothers feel the burden of being expected to execute both the role of a mother and the role of a working woman to pacify both views (Okoli & Okwuosa, 2020). Substantial research indicates that mothers feel that they need to carry both forms of responsibility (Okoli & Okwuosa, 2020). However, there is limited research on the impact that societal pressures to be conformed have on Christian mothers and their desire to fulfill the faith-based role of a mother.

Situation to Self

Today, much of what is taught regarding female gender roles and female gender expectations weigh heavily on women's societal acceptance (Brauner-Otto et al., 2020). These expectations have been placed on women for generations. As a mother of three daughters, I want to encourage further research for women. For this study, the goal is to investigate gender expectations' impact on Christian mothers. More precisely, the societal urge for women to conform to the will of the feminist party and the dissolution of the faith-based gender role of women is also investigated. The support that mothers receive can be examined and adapted such

that it would include societal gender role adaptations. The study will go further than just supporting women but also educating men.

In addition to my three daughters, I also have two sons. The generational expectations that follow women are often rooted in men's generational teachings about women (Patterson, 2019). Identifying the common experience felt by mothers comes through significant research. This research will help show the impact of the changes within today's society and the impact that societal influences have on Christian mothers.

I have a personal relationship with this topic because I am a mother who currently feels the burdens placed by the societal push to break away from faith-based gender roles. I always wanted to be a mother. Although I dreamed of professional development, motherhood was always part of my plan. For me, I took pride in the spiritual calling of motherhood. I can distinctly remember in early adulthood; just after getting married, random strangers encouraged me to put off beginning a family. I recall statements like "Live a little first" or "Once you have kids, you are grounded." I remember feeling confused because motherhood was so much a part of my perception of becoming an adult that not having children felt foreign.

No one prepared me for what society would make of me becoming a mother. With the birth of my first child, I remember feeling as though members of the feminist movement viewed my coming of motherhood as a strike that set female equality back a generation. I did not understand how my heart could feel so enlightened and connected spiritually to the role of motherhood, and yet, a social movement that proposed female empowerment aimed to strip me of my core belief. I did not understand how the feminist movement for female equality could fight for female rights and then fight to dissolve the right for women to choose to become a mother.

Problem Statement

The feminist movement's agenda to dissolve the faith-based role of a mother has inadvertently caused mothers to feel that they need to carry both roles to pacify social demands (Raza, 2021). The feminist party views the faith-based role of a mother as being institutionalized by a patriarchal agenda (Hernandez, 2019). The establishment of the patriarchy stemmed from men's interpretation of scripture (Wood, 2019). Due to the intertwining of the patriarchal worldview and religion, the feminist movement has sought to dissolve biblically established gender roles (Hernandez, 2019). The feminist party fails to acknowledge that man created and dominated the patriarchal worldview, not God (Bosterud, 2021).

The fight for female equality and the societal break from the patriarchy has inadvertently put the Christian mother under fire (Hernandez, 2019). There is substantial research on the impact these changes have placed on mothers in terms of carrying out both female and male roles, but limited research on the influence that social conformities have on Christian mothers (Goldscheider et al., 2015). The problem is the growth needed to identify the Christian mothers' pressures today and the need for better support to help preserve the Christian mother.

Purpose Statement

The role of a mother is to face societal influences, as the traditional role of a mother is ever-changing (Albertini & Brini, 2020). This phenomenological study aims to understand the impact of societal influences on Christian mothers. The faith-based roles of women are in danger of becoming nonexistent. The theory guiding this study is the Social Cognitive Theory related to gender role theory and the feminist movement's goal of influencing gender roles (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The lived experiences of Christian mothers as they navigate the shift of societal

indifference and the feminist request to disrobe the faith-based role of women require further research.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is to examine why various societal influences hold the perceptions that they do. Moreover, it shows the rationale behind the feminist agenda to dissolve the faith-based role of motherhood and the need for support to be established to preserve Christian mothers (Corradi, 2021). This is important to the maintenance of the Christian home and to allow Christian women to find refuge in their faith. The limited research on the impact that the feminist movement is having on Christian mothers indicates the need for further research to be conducted. There is substantial research on the effect that the feminist movement has on mothers in terms of role expectations and balancing multiple roles, but this research is centered on the struggle mothers are experiencing with balancing expectations (Lee et al., 2019). Further research is needed that specifically investigates the societal influence placed on Christian mothers to conform to the views of social movements geared toward gender dissolution.

This study can be used on a broader scale to provide churches with the insight needed to develop support for mothers in a society urging women to dissolve the role of mothers and seek careers over the family (Corradi, 2021). The role of Christian mothers is under fire by the feminist movement because of the intertwinement of religion and patriarchy (Hernandez, 2019). As a result, the pressure from social influence to conform to the feminist agenda is widely felt and directed to pull women from the role that spiritually connects them with God (Hernandez, 2019). This study will examine how these influences directly affect Christian mothers so that support can be established to directly support mothers through societal conflict.

Research Questions

The focal point of the study is to identify how societal influences derived from the various social movements have affected Christian mothers. The questions that will be answered through listening to these experiences are listed as follows:

RQ1: How do Christian women respond to the perception that adhering to their faith-based role as a mother is patriarchal submission?

RQ2: How do Christian women and Christian mothers face the pull to conform to the changes surrounding gender roles?

RQ3: How do Christian mothers feel about the social movements to dissolve female gender roles rooted in the Christian faith?

RQ4: How do mothers who practice Christianity feel about maintaining their gender roles in the face of societal movements?

RQ5: How has the societal movement to dissolve gender roles impacted mothers who feel connected to their roles as a mother?

RQ6: What support is needed to preserve the role of Christian mothers?

Definitions

1. *Social Cognitive Theory* – A theory developed by Albert Bandura that provides a framework for understanding how people actively shape and are shaped by their environment.
2. *Social Role Theory* – It asserts that the majority of actions are motivated by a socially determined category (Eagly & Wood, 2012).
3. *Social Comparison Theory* - It claims that individuals determine their worth by comparing themselves to others (Gerber, 2020).

4. *Phenomenology* - The study of direct experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
5. *Hermeneutics* - The knowledge of biblical interpretations.
6. *Self-actualization* - Fulfillment of one's talents or potential (Hernandez, 2019).
7. *Patriarchal* - A system of society controlled by men (Woods, 2019).
8. *Feminism/Feminist* - The advocacy of female rights based on gender equality (Corradi, 2021)
9. *Old Testament* - First part of the Christian Bible that provided texts of the law, history, prophecy, and wisdom literature of the ancient people of Israel.
10. *New Testament* - Second part of the Christian Bible that recorded the life and teachings of Jesus.
11. *Marginalization* - The treatment of a group or a person as insignificant (Hernandez, 2019).
12. *Incarnation* - A person who embodies the flesh of a spirit.
13. - A term used to describe the breakdown of an identity to develop another (Reveley, 2019).

Summary

The literature review will provide insight into how man used the scriptures found in the Christian doctrine as a tool to establish a patriarchal society. It is essential to understand how this was done to understand why there are social movements, such as those found within the feminist parties, aimed at dissolving the faith-based role of mothers. This literature study will explain and explore how the Bible has been distorted to support this patriarchal worldview, what God meant for male and female equality, and the feminist rationale for their quest to abolish gender roles. This investigation into the literature in these areas will provide details of how the feminist

movement is inadvertently hurting mothers and show the cause for the needed research into the impact held by these societal influences on Christian mothers.

Investigating the lived experiences of Christian mothers will help to gain a greater understanding of how societal movements are impacting Christian mothers. The research goal will be to identify that there are social movements with an agenda that aims to dissolve the faith-based role of mothers and to identify the need for research that investigates the lived experiences of Christian mothers so that the support that mothers receive can be better tailored to the adversities found. Moreover, support systems can be established to help preserve the values held by Christian mothers.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The societal views of women have been developed through generational teachings that have been developed through various societal influences (Mattebo et al., 2016). It is out of these societal views that expectations are created. The research that will be conducted will explore the historical development of the patriarchal worldview and the feminist fight for equality. The literature review will begin by discussing the development of the patriarchal society that defined the social status of men and women and how man misused biblical teachings to support their objective.

The review examines how the feminist movement has ignited the fight for female equality, the abolishment of gender role assignment, and the feminist attack on Christian women for adhering to their personal beliefs on servitude and motherhood (Hernandez, 2019). This review will delve into further details about the studies that have examined the impact that mothers face because of gender role expectations and how the movement for female equality impacts mothers' societal support (Fényes et al., 2020). The focus of the study will be to identify the need for further research to examine the lived experiences of mothers as they navigate the shifts in societal indifference and feminist demand to strip down the faith-based role of women.

The expectations placed on women are rooted in patriarchal worldviews and are being molded to conform to societal adaptations in gender roles (Corradi, 2021). A substantial amount of research has been conducted on motherhood (Linton, 2019). However, research that investigates the lived experiences of mothers as they navigate patriarchal worldviews, religious teachings, and adaptations to gender roles is limited. The studies or research available provide limited insight

into the lived experiences of mothers and the impact that is felt by the societal drive for female equality and the dissolution of the biblical role of a wife and mother.

The investigation in identifying the impact of these influences will be examined by listening to the lived experiences of mothers and identifying themes that relate to faithfully holding the role of motherhood while shouldering criticism from various feminist views. By searching for articles on the experiences that mothers have had navigating these views, many studies placed a greater insight into their mental health, economic indifference, and access to health care (Mistry et al., 2007).

There is significant research on how motherhood can impact a mother's mental health (Mistry et al., 2007). However, these studies provided limited insight into the experiences of mothers navigating the adaptations in fulfilling gender role expectations and the expansion of the feminist movement. Moreover, research that provided details on the experiences of mothers established that they feel like they are falling short of their expectations (Raza, 2021). Today, mothers are burdened by generations of feminine expectations (Mattebo et al., 2016). As a result, the support that women receive is often subjective. Simultaneously, mothers are subjected to the current fight for female equality that promotes the dissolution of the biblical role of women (Hernandez, 2019).

Investigating mothers' experiences is essential to learning how the changes in societal views are impacting moms and can better support couples as they look to expand their families (Dommermuth et al., 2011). Due to social changes and the role-shifting of a mother, further research that analyzes the current lived experiences of mothers is needed to ensure the most accurate support for mothers (Dommermuth et al., 2011). These articles and studies will support the need for further research on this topic.

Moreover, this review of literature will help to show that Christian women, who faithfully adhere to their biblical roles, are facing challenges stemming from the feminist movements.

This research will provide the background of women's expectations and the roles which social norms have placed on women throughout history. This review examines how man's manipulation of scripture aided in establishing a patriarchal worldview and how this biblical manipulation has fueled feminist activists to strip down the biblical and spiritual role of a woman. Additionally, this review examines the findings from studies investigating the personal, emotional, and spiritual impact that mothers have experienced.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this literature review will be guided by the Social Cognitive Theory of Maslow (1945) (Bandura, 2006). Additionally, Social Role Theory and Social Comparison Theory will aid in developing the review of this literature (Gerber, 2020). Social role theory and social comparison theory help provide a guide to understanding how societal expectations are influenced (Gerber, 2020). Together, these theories provide the framework for the investigation found within this study. Moreover, these social theories work together to provide the basis for gathering data for research, helping the researcher identify why there is a fundamental need to feel accepted, compare oneself to another, and identify where they are in terms of living up to their gender roles and gender-placed expectations (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

As women enter motherhood, it is not uncommon for them to reflect on themselves compared to other mothers and identify where they fall into their social role (Reveley, 2019). When women become a mother, many influences impact that transition (Reveley, 2019). These influences are often rooted in religious calls to self and the social roles of the time (Mattebo et

al., 2016). The literature review will examine the various influences that may affect women as mothers. These theories will help guide the research within this literature review and help establish the need for further research to be conducted.

Understanding these theories is essential to understanding why women face challenges in motherhood. These theories will help guide future research developments by providing current changes in gender role expectations and adding insight into the influencing factors for social conformity prevalent amongst Christian mothers. The changes occurring in gender roles and the drive for gender equality influence the perception of value that many women give themselves (Cavapozzi et al., 2021). The insight given through these theories will help support the research.

The research will use a qualitative research design through phenomenology, which entails the description of everyday experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The goal will focus on the challenges that Christian mothers experience. The research will aim to identify the trends expressed through mothers' experiences. The research will be gathered by interviewing Christian mothers and listening to their experiences with adhering to their biblical and faith-based roles of mothers and the challenges caused by social movements aimed at dissolving the biblical gender role of women.

Related Literature

Man Created the Patriarchy

Wood (2019) examined the role of religion in helping to form gender inequality and investigated how cultural practices contributed to female inequality in a patriarchal context. Wood (2019) detailed how religion was used as a tool to allow the establishment of gender inequality by reflecting on scripture used to facilitate the patriarchal agenda of society. Genesis 1:26-31 is seen throughout the research to have provided the foundation for the establishment of

man's patriarchal worldview (Bosterud, 2021). Genesis 1:26-31 says that God created all humankind, including males and females, in his image and that both males and females were called to hold domain over the earth and all that which inhabited the earth. Additionally, God called men and women to multiply and nourish their children. In the patriarchal view, this scripture setting is often presented out of context because Man was created first (Bosterud, 2021). Wood (2019) provided a biblical description of God's intention and elaborated that men were not given domain over women; rather, men and women were called to rule equally side-by-side so that together they could have children and attend to their overall well-being, not a part (Wood, 2019).

Wood (2019) defines the act of female inequality as the cruelty that sets men and women apart socially and gives a sense that men and women do not have the same rights within society. Inequality is derived from cultural and historical influences and religious customs that are predominant within society. The marginalization and oppression of women are as old as biblical history. Wood (2019) elaborated that it is essential for history to be known as understanding history and society's historical viewpoints help identify where intentions went wrong.

The patriarchal perception acquired momentum because it was perceived as being endorsed by God, which shaped societies throughout history in both the past and the present (Wood, 2019). Wood (2019) used the imagery of a tree to demonstrate how deep the root of male-centered dominance is and described the trunk of the tree as a social institution, such as education, church, and politics. These social institutions are built upon patriarchal roots and are responsible for how women are perceived (Wood, 2019). The branches of the tree are used to illustrate the way the patriarchy interacts with the institutions, and the leaves of the tree are used to illustrate the passiveness of those who do not separate from the patriarchy (Wood, 2019). This

illustration is essential to understanding how patriarchal worldviews stay in existence. This article is relevant to be included in this literature review as it gives a reflection on how deep patriarchal worldviews are within our social system. Moreover, it gives light on how ingrained female inequality is within society and why there is a need for movements like the feminist movement to shake the leaves from the tree.

There is a stereotypical generalization stemming from the Genesis teaching of Adam and Eve, which depicts that Eve was made for Adam and, therefore, Eve was lesser than Adam. Eve convinced Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, which by patriarchal standards was enough to lead to justifying the idea that men are superior to women. Men of the historical church viewed the female gender as Eve's incarnation (Wood, 2019). These teachings have been passed down by generations and have garnered gender stereotypes that provide the characteristics of the roles of men and women. Gender inequality and gender roles comprise religious teachings, philosophical viewpoints, superstitions, and man-made traditions (Wood, 2019).

The creation of the fall from grace stories of Genesis has been used as a tool to gain control over women throughout biblical history and into the present day. The manipulation and misrepresentation of scriptures have led to the oppression and marginalization of women today and remain the furthest from the will of God. Jesus was known for opposing the social norms of his time. Jesus is seen throughout the Bible reaching out to women and aiding women who were often cast aside (John, 4:1-42). Reflecting on the story of Mary Magdalene, a prostitute, Jesus went to her and showed her grace, which asserted that women have value (Mark 16:9) (Luke 8:1-3). The Bible is filled with testimonies on how Jesus came to the aid of women. Jesus refused to bend to the patriarchal mentality of his time (Wood, 2019).

Throughout history, the doctrine has been used to maintain a patriarch within society (Wood, 2019). Male-dominated areas can be seen in various aspects of society (Hernandez, 2019). Although there are movements to change this perception, this thought has been ingrained into society through generational teaching (Mattebo et al., 2016). In the Old Testament, it is often perceived that God demands obedience from humankind, including men and women (Wood, 2019). This was not to identify a difference between men and women. God is identified as a male figure. This perception gains light in Genesis 1:27, “God created man in His own image.” In the patriarchal view, the identification of “His” identifies God as being male (Wood, 2019). Moreover, the image of God is seen grasped under the concept that man was in God's image, and God created women to be a companion for man (Genesis, 2:18). As a result of this perception, many who followed the Old Testament absorbed the idea and thought that men are above women (Bosterud, 2021). This perception was in opposition to Jesus’s teachings of love and equality (John 13:34).

In maintaining a patriarchal society, the focus of religion would weigh heavily on the scripture that supported the establishment of patriarchal ideas (Bosterud, 2021). This would provide a basis for support to demand the need for women to be submissive to their male counterparts. The view of men being superior to women has kept its momentum for centuries. These views helped the patriarchal understanding of women's roles within that society (Bosterud, 2021).

The Bible’s Truth on Inequality/Equality

Within today's society, there is an increase in the societal movement promoting women's equal rights (Hernandez, 2019). Due to man's creation of a patriarchal worldview, by using scripture from Christian doctrine, many are calling for the complete rejection of faith-based

gender role assignments (Corradi, 2021). However, if we examine the Bible to determine if scripture promotes the idea that men are inherently more significant than women and, therefore, they should have the domain of women, we see that the Bible encourages gender equality on all social levels (Bosterud, 2021). Throughout the Bible, women have held leadership positions that show without question the support that the Bible provides for gender equality (Bosterud, 2021).

Throughout Christian doctrine, there are several parts where women are often portrayed as marginalized and submissive in their roles (Bosterud, 2021). However, the doctrine was written during a time when society promoted the marginalization of women. Society should notice from the doctrine that the Bible contains stories of exceptional women (Bosterud, 2021). The fact that Bible contains accounts of women like Sara, "a mother of nations" (Genesis 17:16); Rebekah, "Mother of Twins" (Genesis 24); Rachel, "God has taken away my disgrace" (Genesis 29); Deborah "Judge over all Israel" (Judges 4 and 5), Esther "Willing to Sacrifice" (Esther 4), Mary "mother of Jesus," and Mary Magdalen "Faithful" demonstrate God's desire for men to see that women are to be treated as equals despite the patriarchal worldview of the Bible's written time. The doctrine of the Old Testament was recorded during a time when patriarchal influence on society and religion was at its highest periods in history (Bosterud, 2021). From this time and through much of history, women have played active roles throughout many significant events; however, many of these women remained nameless because of the patriarchal view of women during this era (Bosterud, 2021).

The creation story of Genesis and the Fall story of Genesis provided men with the basis for establishing a patriarchal view in society. However, if we dive into Genesis and absorb the scriptures, it can be identified that God did not create men and women for men to hold superiority over women. Genesis 1:26 - 27 and Genesis 2:18 - 24 provide details on the love that

God has for all humans (Bosterud, 2021). God created both man and woman in his image, and his plan for us was for men and women to hold relationships to produce a more comprehensive creation. Moreover, the Genesis story shows us that women were created from the rib of man (Genesis 2:21), which justifies God's intention for a woman to be beside the man (Bosterud, 2021). Women were not created from the head of man to symbolize women being above man or from the foot of man, symbolizing for women to be below man, but from his rib to be by man's side (Genesis 2:21). Furthermore, Genesis gives us a deeper understanding of the sexual distinctions between men and women. Reflecting on Genesis 2:25, "they were both naked and felt no shame," there was no focus on the sexual difference (Bosterud, 2021).

The Old Testament was written during a time when the patriarchal view of women could be seen and felt by the various descriptions and the lack of recognition (Bosterud, 2021). However, Jesus provided teachings in the New Testament, which stood in opposition to the patriarchal view of the time. Women were essential in Jesus' life (Bosterud, 2021). Jesus and his commitment to include women in his teachings provided crucial insight into God's will for gender equality. The teachings of Jesus support the interpretation that women should be seen as equal (Bosterud, 2021). A prominent story of Jesus and the equality he showed for women can be found in John 4:1-42. "And there, Jesus gave the Samaritan, a woman, a sinner, cast away the water so she would thirst no more" (John, 4:13-15).

Even in Jesus' death and resurrection, Mary Magdalene, redeemed by Jesus, is seen (Matthew 27:56). Mary Magdalene was the first to discover that Jesus' tomb was empty (Matthew 28:1). And it was women, not men, who were instructed to share the good news of Jesus (John 20:11-18). This act of Jesus was pivotal in showing that Jesus entrusted women to share the good news and that women and their spiritual roles are significant (John 20:17). The

significance of Jesus' coming, and his teachings, provide the law as God ordained it to be. This interchanges the notion from the Old Testament to be seen as the way before Christ and the New Testament to be the way God wills for his people to live by. Jesus' greatest commandments first call for men and women to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind. The second is that we shall love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:35-40). These commandments do not claim that God intends for men to be superior to women but rather that we are all to love God above all else and to love one another equally.

Despite the misuse of scripture throughout the ages to justify women's inequality culturally, socially, and economically, Biblical scripture cannot be used responsibly to justify inequality (Bosterud, 2021). The Bible does not promote the exclusion of women, nor does it encourage the complete submission, dominance, or control of women by men (Bosterud, 2021). Throughout the Bible, there are many unnamed women; however, the named women offer inspiration and guidance for women today, regardless of the societal view on women. Man created the patriarchy, not God (Bosterud, 2021).

The Feminist Against the Christian mother

Motherhood is a role that has become a hot topic within feminist, evangelical, and political debates (Hernandez, 2019). These debates range from topics of abortion, reproduction, and the gendered belief that it is a woman's primary function to become a mother (Hernandez, 2019). Within the feminist party, affixing the role of motherhood to a woman simply because of her gender disseminates the patriarchal religious-based idea about gender, marriage, and reproduction (Hernandez, 2019). These perceptions disconnect any positive representation of Christian motherhood.

Throughout the feminist movement, feminists have identified motherhood as a role that is limiting, isolating, and patriarchal (Hernandez, 2019). Feminists, such as Woolf and Wollstonecraft, assert that women who become mothers will never reach their full self-actualization (Hernandez, 2019). Wollstonecraft further asserts that women's first duty is to care for themselves, and that motherhood should come second to anything else (Hernandez, 2019). Radical feminists like Ti-Grace Atkinson and Shulamith Firestone denounced motherhood as a "calling" by asserting that motherhood gave a false sense of female empowerment and lacked agency, power, and fulfillment (Hernandez, 2019).

The attack on Christian mothers can be seen from extremists like Miller McLemore, who said that it is essential for women to study religion and motherhood because religion "bolsters old lies about motherhood" (Hernandez, 2019). Furthermore, religion perpetuates the idea that women's sole purpose is to become mothers and caregivers (Hernandez, 2019). Feminists who hold this belief see that women who follow faith-based gender roles prioritize their children and husband above themselves. Theology scholar Cristina Grenholm contributed to this belief by noting that the construction of motherhood in religion influences how we understand motherhood (Hernandez, 2019). Furthermore, Grenholm asserts that motherhood is central to Christian theology; however, motherhood is highlighted and then shadowed by subordination positions derived from patriarchal views rooted in Biblical narrative (Hernandez, 2019).

The feminist party criticizes the relationship between motherhood and religion because of the perceived patriarchal nature of religion, the ideologies rooted in patriarchy, and the unequal gender relations between men and women or husbands and wives (Hernandez, 2019). The feminist movement often pulls scripture to identify that motherhood is an oppressive role enforced by religion (Hernandez, 2019). This is often in reference to the Quiverfull movement

insinuating that women's primary role was to populate the earth with multiple children, ensuring that God's quiver gets full (Hernandez, 2019). The Quiverfull movement was formed under their patriarchal family system. This meant that the children born to fill God's quiver were born in God's name but would be under the husbands'/fathers' rule (Hernandez, 2019).

These practices restricted women's ability to use contraceptives or any other means to prevent pregnancy (Hernandez, 2019), affirming that women's body was for the sole purpose of reproduction. This movement further confirms the feminist movement's agenda and rationale to dissolve gender roles and the faith-based role of motherhood because religion and the patriarchy are intertwined (Hernandez, 2019). This view allows for the persecution of Christian mothers, causing a societal force to place motherhood under fire.

In a traditional family structure that encompasses a patriarchal view, women's ability to decide for themselves about family planning and pregnancy is restricted (Mattebo et al., 2016). In the study by Mattebo et al. (2016), a qualitative study was conducted that examined the lived experiences of women who were a part of a traditional patriarchal family structure. This study provided insight that could be used as a resource to answer why various healthcare policies, both international and national, that support the empowerment of women and promote gender equality take time to initiate due to surrounding environmental influences stemming from individuals' cultural and religious perspectives (Mattebo et al., 2016).

The study by Mattebo et al. (2016) concluded with findings that 'Patriarchal traditional family structure has a significant impact on women's decision-making authority.' This form of family structure creates a barrier for women to have charge of their bodies (Mattebo et al., 2016). This finding is one of the many reasons that members of the feminist party shunned adherence to

the females' role of reproduction. Many women whose families are structured around a patriarchal view have limited decision-making in their reproduction choices.

Mattebo et al. (2016) identified that many perceptions held by multiple traditional family structures were founded or influenced by unspoken traditional beliefs. Additionally, they noted that sometimes traditional thinking and traditional belief go too far. Mattebo et al. (2016) detailed how many women shared experiences that detailed the willingness of family structures to put the health and well-being of a mother at risk for the sake of receiving a child and or grandchild.

In a patriarchal worldview, women are seen as objects of reproduction (Hernandez, 2019). The feminist party can reinforce this perception by utilizing the in-depth findings from the study by Mattebo et al. (2016). Moreover, this allows the feminist party to show fault in the biblical teachings supporting this form of submission. This has led to the promotion of the deletion of the faith-based gender role of a mother, asserting that women cannot meet their fullest potential as mothers (Hernandez, 2019). The impact of these movements has burdened women by placing pressure to choose between motherhood and career. (Klobas & Ajzen, 2015).

From an extreme feminist standpoint, motherhood interferes with a women's earning potential and ability to reach their full potential (Corradi, 2021). It is viewed that in a male-dominated society, men prefer to get their female counterparts impregnated to keep future mothers at home (Corradi, 2021). It becomes a straightforward statement for a husband or male spouse to say, "you stay home with the children because I will make more money than you." The feminist view of motherhood continues the cycle of women being restricted to the home because of the perceptions that the world holds for the earning potential of men in comparison to women (Corradi, 2021). This places an increased demand on women to postpone having children and instead seek a career.

Society has conflicting views on what is acceptable for women (Oláh et al., 2018). As a result, many women feel compelled to begin their families while also pacifying the societal expectations of holding a job (Tazi-Preve, 2019). Extreme perceptions of the feminist party call for women to dismiss primary roles that are affixed to the female gender (Tazi-Preve, 2019). Moreover, the feminist party wishes to dissolve gender role expectations entirely. Those within the feminist party who hold this mindset fail to realize that motherhood is not just for the child but for the mother, too (Corradi, 2021).

Reshaping Gender Roles

Rich was one of the first feminist writers who addressed the various influences that place expectations on mothers (Stewart, 2021). The address helped formulate many mothers' beliefs about being good mothers. It is the basis on which mothers hold themselves in comparison. The report stated three beliefs that mothers had for themselves and rated themselves. These three beliefs were that it is the mothers' responsibility to provide the primary care of their children, that the care that children receive should be child-centered and that caring for their children should satisfy the mothers' needs (Stewart, 2021).

The expectation is that a home should mirror the traditional domesticated arrangement (Sherkat, 2000). This arrangement means that the mother stays home and provides all the immediate childcare needs and attends to the house, while the father provides the income for the household (Sherkat, 2000). There have been many things within society that have called for the reshaping of the duties of a mother (Stewart, 2021). The feminist movement has ignited a great response, and the roles that women are said to fulfill are changing (Stewart, 2021). However, mothers continue to be held to a subconscious standard. This standard is regulated by society and is institutionalized as a tool by which mothers are judged (Stewart, 2021). A mother will endure

high pressure within the western culture to be a good mother (Kiley & Vaisey, 2020). Identifying through lived experiences what mothers are comparing themselves to and identifying the current perceived expectations will help understand how societal norms are influencing mothers.

Society places an expectation on mothers not only to be the primary caregivers to their children but also to be able to balance working and household responsibilities (Pfau-Effinger, 2004). This stems from the fight for female equality and the patriarchal view that mothers are responsible for household responsibilities. Raza (2021) provided an approximation for the number of parents who are struggling to maintain a healthy work and family balance. Roughly 57% of parents who work full-time struggle to establish balance, while moms make up 47% of the present US workforce (Raza, 2021). These mothers face difficulties while trying to maintain a healthy work/home balance as they struggle to find a balance between work and the additional duties expected of them when it comes to family and child responsibilities (Raza, 2021). This is where social role theory can be seen (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

Gender inequalities have reduced over the past few decades; however, these inequalities still exist (Raza, 2021). Within today's society, the fight for equality has inadvertently called on women to hold the duties of family responsibilities and now income. Three specific areas within the literature are studied in detail, including the work-family balance, social support, and how well the work-family balance is established. The study identified that ecological theories generally investigate work-family research. However, the research shows cause for more studies required to be done on women, specifically mothers, who are trying to find a balance between who they are as a mother and what they are expected to do by society (Raza, 2021).

Through bioecological studies that have been conducted, the research gives insight into the influences that mothers receive. This included both immediate and remote environments. The

contents of the study conducted by Raza (2021) used secondary data from longitude studies found in "working mothers' physical activity and eating habits," which was a study conducted by Grzywact in 2013. The sample was derived from a multistage stratified random sampling technique. This looked at work-family balance, relationship quality, non-standard work schedules, family spillover, family workplace policies, and race. The results indicated variations in crossed mothers from diverse groups. It indicated a need for additional research to better understand the findings in-depth. The experiences of family spillover are felt by mothers and are reported across multiple studies. The need for further research to help identify the adaptations in maternal roles and the changes in expectations placed on mothers is available but is limited (Rodríguez-Planas & Tanaka, 2022).

The expectations placed by religion are seen throughout the world. Okoli & Okwuosa (2020) provided excellent detail on the issues surrounding gender roles. This study gives descriptions of lived experiences of Nigerian women under the traditional patriarchal society of Nigeria. Including this article within the research literature is important because it helps bring more attention to society's impact on influencing the expectation in general. The article titled "The marginalization of women economically, socially, and politically is a worldwide phenomenon" goes into detail on how gender roles have affected women since biblical times. For much of history, society has inappropriately used the church as a form of biblical backing to influence the primary role of women. Why this mindset is in opposition to the teachings of Christ was thoroughly investigated. The societal marginalization of women goes against being equal (Okoli & Okwuosa, 2020).

Okoli and Okwuosa (2020) identify what commonly used scripture used to back society's patriarchal mindset and then argue a different perspective that men and women should be seen as

equal and should be accepted as such by society. Much of what is written within the Bible is reflective of the interactions held between the men of the time. This was a societal representation of where women were perceived in the masculine and highly patriarchal society.

Although Nigeria has a higher perception of a patriarchal organization, there are similar parallels in the lived society worldwide (Okoli & Okwuosa, 2020). Studying this literature and understanding the role that gender role influences have on women is essential to understanding why many women develop a sense that they are expected to act and perform a certain way. Similarly, in the article presented by Raza (2021), *A Longitudinal Examination of Work-Family Balance among Working Mothers in the United States: Testing Bioecological Theory*, a longitude examination of work-family balance among working mothers in the United States, Nigerian women make up 47% of the Nigerian agricultural labor force (Okoli & Okwuosa, 2020). Many works are taking place in developing the Christian foundation in Nigeria. Still, the influences of social norms formed under a patriarchal society continue to mold the mindset of many women and many mothers.

Across many origins worldwide, there is an unspoken expectation that mothers hold for themselves (Olivetti et al., 2020). This expectation is influenced by various worldviews and societal views (Okoli & Okwuosa, 2020). Many of these perceptions force mothers to feel and believe that they must suffice primary caregiver responsibilities and financially support their families (Huizenga, 2021). Adapting to the role of the mother while balancing societal expectations can make it difficult for mothers to believe that they are going to be okay (Huizenga, 2021). Bringing these issues to light and investigating these lived experiences helps to normalize these experiences and the emotions felt through the numerous transitions that occur during motherhood.

The study of Okoli and Okwuosa (2020) examined the roles that mothers perform outside the traditional caregiver role of mothers. There were limitations to the study because the study solely examined the impact that a normalized patriarchal view of women and the shift in gender inequalities have had on mothers. More precisely, the study looked at the difficulties that mothers face with the work-home balance of responsibilities adopted under the expectations held by the female gender role. However, the perspective that mothers are content with maintaining the role of motherhood and adhering to the caregiver's responsibilities should be examined. This would provide greater insight into the impact of the adaptations of the female gender roles and the effect that it is having on mothers.

The importance of identifying the misuse of scripture to fuel the patriarchal narrative is that many women feel a deep connection to their spiritual beliefs (Dilmaghani, 2018). Since the feminist movement is deeply rooted in the abolishment of the patriarchy, the faith-based role of women is often torn down by the feminist agenda (Hernandez, 2019). More specifically, the extreme side of feminism views motherhood as a form of slavery, forced by a patriarchal need for men to have control over reproductive practices (Corradi, 2021). The extreme feminist view is that motherhood contradicts the feminist theory because motherhood objectifies the female body for a male-driven agenda (Corradi, 2021).

There are opinions within the feminist movement that criticizes motherhood and argue that motherhood degrades female potential (Marshall & Shepherd, 2018). The feminist argument implies that motherhood is a part of a patriarchal institution that enslaves women to objects of production (Corradi, 2021). In many religions, childbearing is a call to a higher purpose. Scripture explains that all of God's children have a purpose, and while the scripture has been seen to be manipulated for man-made agendas throughout history, the word of God remains.

There are aspects of the feminist movement that aim to convict women who hold close to the gender role expectations set by their biblical teachings. A perspective of the feminist movement is that motherhood is a form of submission to a patriarchal society (Corradi, 2021). However, it was concluded that motherhood is a form of female empowerment and is a pivotal piece of feminist theory. Nonetheless, the feminist movement has a substantial influence on the shaping of today's society, and the influence of the movement weighs heavily on women and their role in society. The extreme movements under the feminist agenda intend to find a way to liberate women from the need to reproduce. However, this feminist agenda fails to connect that motherhood is not just for the children but for the mothers, too (Corradi, 2021).

Social Pressure to Conform

There is substantial literature to show that culture is established through a variety of beliefs, preferences, values, and social norms (Cavapozzi et al., 2021). The teachings of an individual's culture are passed down from one generation to another generation through various social interactions (Cavapozzi et al., 2021). In the Christian worldview, gender roles play a substantial factor in an individual's identity (Wood, 2019). However, studies on societal norms have shown that there is a strong influence on women to conform (Carrara, 2020). The social pressure for female conformity often influences the drive for women to enter the labor market (Cavapozzi et al., 2021)

The decision of Christian mothers to either follow their faith-based role, which strives for the ultimate role of motherhood or to dismiss the faith-based role and pursue a career, is heavily influenced by social pressures (Cavapozzi et al., 2021). Parents and family members, along with primary educators, help to establish gender role identities. These individuals become the role models that help young girls to shape their perceptions and model thereafter (Cavapozzi et al.,

2021). However, as young adults, women often look to the females around them or with whom they have close relationships, such as their peers and or potential neighbors (Cavapozzi et al., 2021). These comparisons and contrasts that occur around this time influence and solidify women's personal identities (Stier & Kaplan, 2020). Conformity to the social norm becomes heavily weighted on women who hold close to their spiritual values. What a young woman's peer group values, as far as gender roles, provides the social influence to conform (Stier & Kaplan, 2020).

Figure 1

A Representation of the Total Effect of Peers' Gender Role Attitudes on Female Labor Market Outcomes

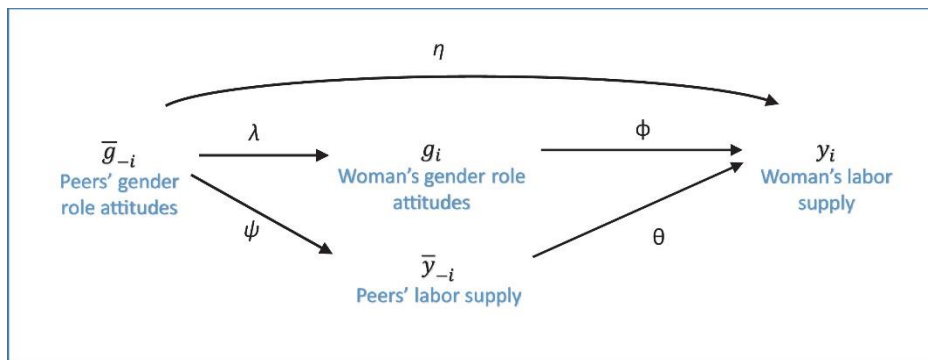


Figure 1 provides a geographical representation of the components that affect women when contemplating their choices on conforming to the social norm, which includes dismissing religious values and entering the labor market. This figure indicates the value conveyed by peers' norms for self-signaling (Cavapozzi et al., 2021). Moreover, this figure identifies that the first mediated effect is entirely attributed to conformity, whereby the focal women's personal gender role attitude reflects their peers' norms and, in turn, influences their employment decision. The first mediator is women's personal thoughts on gender roles, "g_i": that is, peers' gender role norms affect the focal women's own gender role attitudes, which in turn affects their own labor

supply. In Fig. 1, the effects of "g⁻i" on "gi" and of "gi" on "yi" are denoted with λ and ϕ , respectively, and represented by the first and second horizontal arrows. This mediated effect, therefore, is given by the product of λ and ϕ (Cavapozzi et al., 2021).

When women are making their choice about conforming to the social norms of seeking a career, they take into account the perceptions of their peers regarding their actions and how those actions would be received (Cavapozzi et al., 2021). This is where social comparison can be identified (Gerber, 2020). This figure indicates that an individual's perceptions are often negligible, which allows the first mediated effect open to conformity. This, in return, allows for the perception individuals hold to be influenced by their peers, which influences women's decision to seek a career over family (Cavapozzi et al., 2021).

Effects of Societal Pressures

Overload

Lovell and Butler (2015) conducted a study on the societal expectations of women and mothers. This finding concluded that mothers perform roles that are growing substantially. The increase and adaptations to the female gender role, in support of the female fight for equality, has caused many mothers to experience responsibility overload (Lovell & Butler, 2015). The study gave insight into the impact of mothers dealing with increased responsibility; however, the research did not provide details on the trends that are experienced by mothers who are trying to adapt to the increase in gender role responsibility. More research is required to identify the longevity of feelings of overload. It can be easy to underestimate how overwhelmed a mother is when she first becomes a mother (Lovell & Butler, 2015). Lovell and Butler discuss how the changes in mothers' life can cause feelings of exhaustion. The changes in the daily routine can have a great impact on the mothers' social abilities (Goldscheider et al., 2015).

Loneliness

As mothers' transit into motherhood, the demands of motherhood often take priority over social gatherings and or events (Mandai et al., 2018). The reduction in social activities can result in feelings of loneliness (Mandai et al., 2018). Many studies predict the potential for loneliness in mothers of young children. In the studies conducted by Mandai et al. (2018), seclusion among mothers with children under the age of three years old was substantial. This study is needed to show the need to investigate why there is a rate of loneliness among new mothers. Many of the reasons for this is the change in social circles (Mandai et al., 2018).

Loss of Social Circles

The social and societal aspects of becoming a mother can be seen to place a burden on mothers (Dumas et al., 2018). There is a pull within today's society to put off raising a family and focusing on career-building and self-development (Crompton et al., 2005). As a result, new mothers may feel isolated as their social circle changes and new friendships are made (Honda et al., 2020). These journal articles detail maternal isolation, the impact of family origin and societal views, and changes in social relationships. Lee (2019) provides details on the experiences that first-time mothers have with feelings of loneliness (Lee et al., 2019).

It is not uncommon for new mothers' social circle to take on a new form, seeking companions who also have children. For example, friends who have grown up together may become distant when one friend expands her family and the other decides to build on her career. The divide between women who seek careers and women who enter motherhood is becoming well-defined within today's society (Peterson et al., 2021). The fight for female equality has resulted in many women opting out of establishing a family and focusing on their careers (Bolzendahl et al., 2004). Social circles tend to be of like-minded people, which often causes

distance in friendships of this nature. Further investigation into this incident is needed to identify if the social divide is directly related to the shift in gender role expectations.

Identifying the lived experiences of Christian mothers to determine if there is a substantial social impact because of the burden of adhering to societal norms can help new mothers to understand the changes that may occur in their social settings. Moreover, support for mothers in this area can be better established. Many stressors come about when change occurs (Blau et al., 2013). Evaluating lived experiences of new mothers and pulling out patterns within these experiences can help new mothers understand that the transition into motherhood has a bearing on all new mothers. Moreover, examining the influence that societal norms and gender roles have over mothers' views may help identify why social circles change during the transition into motherhood.

Changes in social circles as women become mothers carry a large impact on the overall emotional well-being of mothers and parents in general (McLeish & Redshaw, 2017). The impact that both patriarchal worldviews and the feminist movement have had on mothers is substantial (Okoli & Okwuosa, 2020). The conflicting view and the push for women to assume more male-focused roles have hindered their relationships, as some of them choose to become mothers and some choose to pursue careers (Okoli & Okwuosa, 2020). The powerful notions behind each action place a stigma on each choice and have essentially created a divide between the career-driven woman and the family-focused woman (Corradi, 2021). As a result, the drop-in support for mothers can be seen in the decline of several relationships as more social circles urge for more female conformity (Corradi, 2021).

According to Scheppingen et al. (2018), there is a need for women to support mothers, as this would help establish a higher level of self-esteem in new mothers. They provided findings

on the changes that occur during the transition into motherhood. The details of self-esteem and relationship satisfaction as new mothers transit into motherhood when mothers are met with support are also provided. Additionally, details regarding the personal struggles that mothers face with self-esteem when they perform the role of motherhood and how the changes in social circles impact overall self-image have been found. Moreover, Scheppingen et al. (2018) detailed findings on how women's identity shifts as they transit into motherhood and the need for continued research on the relationship satisfaction of mothers. The data were limited in the sense that the findings did not account for the shifts in societal perceptions of motherhood. As a result, further research should be conducted to evaluate the impact of societal perceptions of motherhood concerning the societal support received by mothers.

As outlined in this literature review, there are many studies on the transition of women to motherhood. Much of the available research investigates the mental health changes that occur in women post-pregnancy and during the early years of child-rearing; however, there is limited research exploring mothers' lived experiences through the shifts in societal views (Donaghy & Harland, 2019). The research investigates the theory that women are significantly impacted by the shift in gender roles, and there are studies on the increases in role responsibilities, but the studies are limited. Using mothers' experiences can help establish the trends that are occurring with Christian mothers within today's society. There is a gap in research supporting the experiences of mothers as they adhere to various societal views regarding gender role responsibility and the societal influence to conform to the current societal views on motherhood. The education that women receive today is often stagnated (Reveley, 2019).

The change in social roles influences the perceptions that mothers have of themselves as they transition into motherhood, which identifies the transition of motherhood as being fluid and

ever-changing (Reveley, 2019). Exploring the trends within this experience will help to identify the common occurrences of mothers during this time of entering motherhood. Identifying the lived experiences of Christian mothers and the changes that occur in their social life can help to identify if there is a substantial amount of change that occurs. Determining this can help Christian mothers and mothers, in general, to better understand why the changes in social circles are occurring and for mothers to feel less alone during this happening. Evaluating lived experiences of mothers and pulling out patterns within the experiences can help to better establish the support needed to preserve the overall well-being of mothers.

Motherhood

Motherhood is a challenging period where a new mother is enduring physical, psychological, and emotional changes (Beech et al., 2020). Identifying the various factors that influence mothers can help to establish a better support system for them. In her research titled *Becoming Mum: Exploring the Emergence and Formulation of a Mother's Identity During the Transition into Motherhood*, Reveley (2019) identified that earlier research conducted on mothers' transitioning into motherhood explored identity as a static entity. Reveley (2019) conducted research using the assemblage theory. This allowed the researcher to look at how a new mother's identity is developed by pulling from varied influences and external factors. This was done to understand how women re-establish themselves under the role of motherhood.

Reveley (2019) conducted interviews with ten mothers at different stages of motherhood. This provided the lived experiences of these women through various stages of motherhood. Through the lived experiences, the researcher looked to identify how a woman's identity was stripped apart and came back together because of the changes that required her to make to secure the role of the mother. He examined the interviews to identify where the new mothers' identity

would deterritorialize as their new routine became part of their everyday life. Through this investigation, the findings determined that there were four dominant themes in the interviews. These four dominant themes were emotional turmoil, reconstruction of relationships, getting comfortable with the baby, and rediscovering the self (Reveley, 2019). Using the assemblage theory in this research sheds light on becoming a mother.

The article, *Integrated Motherhood: Beyond Hegemonic Ideologies of Motherhood* by Dow (2016) helps give more of a perception that moves outside the standard definition of motherhood. This article is needed in the sense that society is changing. As a result, the description of a mother is changing (Dow, 2016). These are necessary to give the basis for what is perceived to be the role of mothers (Dow, 2016). However, transitions today are altering the role of motherhood, and many mothers are striving to find balance (Dow, 2016).

The act of motherhood carries many responsibilities (Britton et al., 2019). Naturally, the focus is on what actions are seen in mothers. Women's identity and perception of self-undergo many changes when they become mothers (Shloim et al., 2020). In the article, *Motherhood*, is like a roller coaster lots of ups, then down, something chaotic, Shloim et al. (2020) need to explain why this kind of research is necessary. The role of being a mother is met with many changes (Shloim et al., 2020). Examining the impact that society is placing on mothers in addition to these changes requires further research. There are substantial studies on what physical and hormonal changes occur in women (Shloim et al., 2020). However, there are few pieces of literature in this area that shed light on how women are impacted by the pressure to adapt to social shifts.

Motherhood is difficult, and mothers' experiences need to be looked at more closely (Shloim et al., 2020). Motherhood becomes a sense of identity for many women (Reveley, 2019).

The process of fully adapting to the role of a mother alone is a journey (Van Vugt & Versteegh, 2020). Motherhood as a journey can be felt by women regardless of religion, which is often dismissed by the feminist movement (Corradi, 2021). As a result, the feminist party overlooks that motherhood is not solely for reproduction or to allow male dominance of women but for women themselves (Corradi, 2021).

Life of Service

The Christian Bible calls us to live by the example of Jesus. Jesus lived a life that was in service to others. The Old Testament is used in many ways to facilitate a patriarchal worldview that asserts male dominance over women. However, not even man can remove God's intention from the scripture. A man can take scripture and manipulate it in a way that facilitates man's preconceived notion. However, by examining the Old Testament, God's word remains through societal influences. In the creation story, women were created from the rib of Adam (Genesis, 2:21). This was God's way of symbolizing where women stand. Women are to stand beside men. Women were not created from the head of men to be above them; or from the feet of men to be beneath them, but from their ribs to be beside them.

The New Testament brings in the beauty of Jesus, who stands against the societal norms of his time. Jesus set the ultimate example for us to follow. Jesus did not separate men from women in his lessons. When Jesus spoke of his greatest commandments, he did not differentiate between men and women. Jesus himself never placed himself in a position that was higher than those around him. In John 13:15, Jesus provides the ultimate example of what it means to serve and encourages us through his actions to serve others. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, and this was to show the world the need for mankind to live their lives in a state of service to others (John 13: 1-17).

Philippians 2:3-5 calls us to do nothing out of selfishness but to have humility and value others above ourselves without seeking any gain for ourselves but to hold the interest of others above our own. Moreover, Philippians 2: 3-5 asserts that we should have the same mindset as Jesus. To serve as Jesus served means that we need to genuinely care for the needs of people. Today, Christian mothers are faced with societal pressures to conform to social norms. Jesus did not stress about the social norms (John 4:8-26). Instead, he allowed the Holy Spirit to lead him in his ability to serve and love and help other people. "You, my brother and sisters, are called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love" (Galatians 5:13)

The gender roles that are derived from Christian beliefs are a gift from God (Schnabel, 2017). We are born with a set of gender laws, which help guide us in our ability to serve others. Men are biologically stronger than women, which helps men to be able to serve in areas that require strength and endurance, which is often perceived as being the provider (Schnabel, 2017). Women are biologically softer and biologically maternal (Schnabel, 2017). This provides them with an area to serve by way of raising children. Neither of these roles identifies men as being greater than women or women as being lesser than men. These roles identify where an individual's strength of service may be found. This gender identification allows for a balance between the sexes (Schnabel, 2017). Motherhood is a blessing in the ability to serve someone other than ourselves (Van Vugt & Versteegh, 2020).

Life Satisfaction

Research conducted by Van Vugt and Versteegh (2020) found many mothers who conform to the gender roles expressed in religious teachings find satisfaction in the single role of mom. Many mothers feel a new sense of spiritual connection to the role of motherhood. Mothers

reported that entering motherhood has given them a purpose for life. Many mothers believe that the birth of their child has given them a new purpose for life. The research provided in the study by Van Vugt and Versteegh (2020) defended the statement that many mothers feel a spiritual connection towards conceiving and raising their babies.

Richter et al. (2021) found that mothers embrace their identity as now moms and dismiss their previous essence of who they were. Mothers often feel a sense that they are resolved to a higher calling when they assume the role of a mother (Richter et al., 2021). The study gave insight into the connectedness that these mothers experienced in the solitary role of the mother and did not detail any additional roles that mothers carry. More research would be beneficial in this area to identify if mothers who feel this connection have dismissed the societal expectation for the female gender role. Moreover, research in this area lacks insight into how new mothers with this mindset respond to the societal shift in gender roles.

Summary

Today, there is a great desire for women to be seen as equal, and as a result, there are many conflicting perceptions of the role that women hold (Corradi, 2021). Many women who have grown up in religious homes may feel that their success comes from getting married, starting a family, and being homemakers (Mattebo et al., 2016). However, society then says, no, you do not have to do that (Corradi, 2021). Today, society advocates for women to have their independence (Hernandez, 2019). Moreover, today society pushes women to choose between having children and not having children (Corradi, 2021). Additionally, society largely encourages women to decide on having a career over having a family in the present era (Corradi, 2021). However, women who continue that path of bringing children into the world now face challenges in establishing the balance between what society says they should have done and what they feel

they are called to do through religious teaching or their spiritual connection with God (Okoli & Okwuosa, 2020).

The movements within today's society encourage women to see themselves as carrying out the same gender role as men (Okoli & Okwuosa, 2020). Societal perception influences insist that if women decide to become a mother, they should also be able to maintain a career, keep a household, and maintain the responsibility of motherhood (Okoli & Okwuosa, 2020). There is a stigma that if a new mother cannot balance these responsibilities, she is somehow falling short (Okoli & Okwuosa, 2020). The female fight for equality has inadvertently set an expectation that women must perform both roles (Raza, 2021). However, there is scant evidence to back claims that Christian mothers are now receiving improved support as they navigate cultural pressure to fit in.

As far as time can date back, women have been the primary caretakers of children (Mattebo et al., 2016). When a mother gives birth to a child, it is assumed that the mother will be the one who provides care to that child. These duties generally consist of the primary responsibilities of caring for the well-being of her child (Mattebo et al., 2016). Today's society is branching out into different opinions on what a traditional role is for a mother and or a traditional role for a father and what expectations lie within those roles (Orloff, 1993). The historical expectations of women's roles and the current societal perception of what women should be allowed to often do conflict (Corradi, 2021).

The historical perception of women has been transforming (Wood, 2019). The view that women should be homemakers and raise children is no longer a universally accepted notion. Societal perceptions have had many influences throughout history. The most dominating perception is the patriarchal worldview. This view was established based on religious

manipulation; however, the biblical scripture that was predominately used to support the patriarchal agenda was taken out of context. The manipulation of scripture allowed for the perception that women were lesser than men to have substantial standing (Wood, 2019). With the foundation of these perceptions being formed on a religious principle, the interworking of the male-controlled society was firmly planted. Because the feminist party can link the establishment of male dominance to the Christian doctrine, the faith-based role of the mother is under fire.

This study of the available literature shows that there have been substantial changes within society (Hernandez, 2019). The primary goal of the feminist movement is to dissolve gender roles entirely (Hernandez, 2019). As a result, Christian mothers are under pressure to conform to societal views (Cavapozzi et al., 2021). Further research into the lived experiences of mothers will be needed to identify the commonalities between the experiences that Christian mothers are confronting as they navigate through the influences surrounding them. More precisely, there is cause for more significant research to be done to develop better support for mothers as they navigate the societal pressures and demands that want to dissolve the faith-based role of motherhood. This will help Christian mothers to understand that they are alone and that feelings stemming from the societal pressure to conform are valid feelings. Lastly, this study will bring light to what support is needed to help preserve the faith-based role of Christian mothers.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The proposed research topic will be a qualitative study that investigates the lived experiences of Christian mothers as they navigate through societal worldviews and influences. More precisely, the research will aim to identify how man's misuse of scripture to facilitate the Patriarchal worldview curtails women and the feminist movement to the dissolution of faith-based gender roles. The study aims to identify the impact of these societal influences on the Christian mother as she strives to maintain her faith-based role in motherhood. There is a gap in research that looks to identify how these influences impact the Christian mother. Determining the factor(s) will better aid in the church's ability to establish the support needed to preserve the Christian mother.

Design

This study aligns with the Hermeneutical Phenomenology, as this study will provide descriptions and interpretations of the lived experiences of mothers (Fuster, 2019). Hermeneutical phenomenology is a method used to interpret the essence of lived experiences and recognize the meaning of the importance of the collected experience. This allows for the study of every mother's lived experience from their perspective so that the complexity of the lived experience can be understood. Moreover, awareness can be raised by finding and identifying meanings surrounding the phenomenon. Interpreting the data through a hermeneutical approach allows for the lived experiences to be interpreted not just through the conversation itself but what is behind what is not said. The process includes collecting interviews from Christian mothers, reflecting on their lived experiences, identifying the phenomenological subject, interpreting,

identifying the meaning of the identified phenomenology, and revealing its significance, as well as reflecting on the lived experiences (Fuster, 2019).

Research Questions

RQ1: How do Christian women respond to the perception that adhering to their faith-based role as a mother is patriarchal submission?

RQ2: How do Christian women and Christian mothers face the pull to conform to the changes surrounding gender roles?

RQ3: How do Christian mothers feel about the social movements to dissolve female gender roles rooted in the Christian faith?

RQ4: How do mothers who practice Christianity feel about maintaining their gender roles in the face of societal movements?

RQ5: How has the societal movement to dissolve gender roles impacted mothers who feel connected to their roles as a mother?

RQ6: What support is needed to preserve the role of Christian mothers?

Setting

Face-to-face interviews will take place in an area that is comfortable for the participants and adheres to the current pandemic status. The designated place(s) for the interviews to be held is York Library and or a conference room at Fort Mill Cooperative Preschool. There will be flexibility to adhere to the current pandemic crisis. Should the nature of the pandemic shift, interviews will be conducted via zoom meeting.

Participants

The research will contain participants who are Christian mothers. For research purposes, there will be 10 participants. These participants are mothers whose children attend Liberty

Church in York, South Carolina, or participate in the Fort Mill Cooperative Preschool Nursery. Participants will be recruited through a mutual relationship, which allows the researcher to know that the participant is a Christian mother and is adhering to her role of motherhood through the lens of faith-based servitude. Moreover, these participants will be mothers who have previously identified their Christian faith and their desire to follow the gender roles that are promoted by the Christian doctrine. Additional eligibility criteria will be that the participant is a natural citizen of the United States. This requirement ensures that the worldviews and societal movements are based on the same country of origin. The participants are also required to be mothers with children who are currently under the age of eighteen years. This will ensure that the experience reported is being provided is consistent. The researcher will personally speak with participants to ensure eligibility and to ask if they would be willing to be interviewed for this study.

Each participant will be given details on the goal of the research and the benefit of participating in the research. The benefit of further research is to provide a deeper understanding of the impact that Christian mothers are experiencing stemming from the feminist agenda to dissolve the faith-based role of a mother. A greater understanding of this will help to equip the support that is offered to mothers as they combat the criticism from various societal influences. The research will analyze the lived experiences of Christian mothers by grouping trends in their experiences to help gain a greater understanding of the experiences that are occurring.

Participants will receive consent forms that outline details of informed consent to participate in the research study. Participants will be made aware of potential risks associated with participating in the research study. Participants will understand that participating in this research is voluntary. Furthermore, participants in the research study will understand that they can discontinue their participation in the research study at any time.

Procedures

The researcher will submit for Institutional Review Board Approval (IRB). Once approval is granted, the researcher will seek the suitable participants needed for the study. Participants of the study will be provided with a verbal description of the study and explained how their interview would help to identify the trends among Christian mothers. The participants will then receive a consent form and be granted time to consider their participation. After the potential participants take time to think about their participation and choose to continue into the research study, a time for the interview and a specific location will be scheduled.

The Researcher's Role

As a Christian mother who desires to serve faithfully in her role as a mother, the researcher holds a personal investment in this research project. The researcher's faith-based role as a wife and as a mother has allowed the researcher the opportunity to hear stories of struggles from other Christian mothers. However, to obtain the most accurate information, the researcher will need to put aside her own perspective to allow the phenomenon across other Christian mothers to be seen. As a mother, the researcher will maintain a personal relationship with this subject in terms that researcher will passionately commit herself to the authenticity of the study. Moreover, she will be committed to transcribing the most accurate description of the participants who are interviewed without inserting personal views. The researcher understands the importance of the nature of the study and aims to provide the most accurate information due to the timeliness and relative need for research of this nature.

Data Collection

Interviewing is the predominant mode of obtaining data in qualitative research (Heppner et al., 2016). Semi-structured: This will provide consistency across interviews but allow mothers

to express their experiences in-depth. The transcription will be a thick description of the interviews that are conducted. Information will be processed through an analytic process. The transcription of the interview will be analyzed through the four logical sets outlined in the fourth edition of the Research Design in Counseling textbook (Heppner et al., 2016).

- Read the transcript of each interview several times
- Divide transcripts into meaningful themes
- Transform each theme or trend into psychologically sensitive language
- Synthesize the transformed meaning of themes

Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me as if we had just met one another.
2. Please share with me the specifics of your faith-based view of motherhood.
3. How do you define gender roles under your faith-based view, and how would you say this view aligns with societal norms?
4. Describe how your faith-based view impacted your decision to have children.
5. When you consider your role as a mother, what impact did the changes occurring in the female gender role have on you?
6. How did you feel when you found out you were going to be a mother, and did you worry about how motherhood would affect you socially?
7. How has becoming a mother impacted your social friendships?
8. What impact has the push for mothers to carry caregiver/household responsibilities while maintaining employment had on you? Describe the challenges that have arisen because of this societal shift.
9. What societal influences impacted your thoughts on becoming a mother?

10. Describe the religious and or societal influences that impacted you most in your role as a mother, and did these influences contradict each other? If so, how?
11. Did these societal influences force you to question yourself or the way you believe?
12. In terms of your faith-based role as a mother and social movements to dissolve gender roles, what is something you would want to share with future Christian mothers?
13. What kind of faith-based support have you received from your church to help you confront the societal pull to conform to the dissolution of the faith-based role of a mother?
14. How do you feel support for Christian mothers can be implemented and or adapted to support mothers in their decision against societal pressures to conform?
15. How would you describe the way the social movements and worldviews regarding motherhood have impacted you?
16. Is there anything you want me to know about the impact that social movement and or your religious beliefs have had on you in terms of motherhood?

Data Analysis

The first step in this procedure is to collect the transcriptions for each participant. These transcriptions will be from the semi-structured interviews that share the lived experience of each mother. The data found within these transcriptions will then be organized. The data will be organized by coding the transcribed interviews. These code words will then be categorized. From here, interpretations of the trends will be made. To keep the findings and themes transparent, reflective journaling will occur throughout this process. This will help to ensure that there is transferability, and that researcher bias is not present.

Trustworthiness

To reduce the potential for researcher bias, the questions that are asked during the interviews will be those that have the participants share their personal experiences. This will work to prevent participants from responding to the questions in a way that they feel the interviewer wants them to. To avoid bias by the interviewer, data will be looked at across research to check for alternative explanations. Furthermore, the researcher will identify if there are personal biases that are influencing the interview questions that intentionally lead the participants to respond in a particular way or in a way that meets the hypothesis. The potential for interview bias, question-order bias, and word bias will be strongly averted. Moreover, data that does not support the hypothesis will not be omitted from the interview reports.

Credibility

The researcher will use unbiased interpretations while identifying themes and concluding the findings of the participants' interviews. Moreover, participants will be provided with their transcribed interviews. This is to ensure that the most accurate interview is transcribed and used for theme interpretations. Moreover, this provides participants with the opportunity to correct any errors within the transcript.

Dependability and Confirmability

A transparent description of every step taken to obtain research and to create final reports will be kept. This will ensure that there is an explanation for each step and detail recorded within the final findings of the reported research.

Transferability

The researcher will ensure that all transcribed interviews reflect exactly what is heard by collecting the data needed from everyone's lived experience. These recordings will be stored, and

detailed transcriptions will be used to show the balance between each interview, the transcriptions, and the themes that are identified.

Ethical Considerations

To maintain confidentiality for the participants in the study, pseudonyms will be used to prevent the participants' identification from becoming known. Participants receive knowledge of what their interview will consist of with adequate time to decide whether they wish to continue participating in the study. Participants will not be blindsided by the questions asked. All audio recordings and transcribed text will be stored on a password-protected laptop. Furthermore, the participants will be made aware of what themes were developed from their interviews and how they will be presented within the final research findings.

Summary

The study will be conducted using a hermeneutic phenomenological design about lived experiences of Christian women as they navigate societal influences and the pressures to conform to societal norms. The literature research concluded that there is a need for further investigation into the lives of Christian mothers and how these influences are impacting them. Data will be collected through interviews and then transcribed into meaning for themes. These themes will be analyzed and then interpreted. The findings will outline what effect societal pressures to conform to societal norms have on Christian mothers. Thereby, the research will allow for the current support to be evaluated and the development of support systems that can help preserve Christian mothers.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter four will provide detailed results of the qualitative phenomenological study that examined the lived experiences of Christian mothers navigating societal changes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The data was collected by interviewing ten mothers who identified themselves as Christian mothers and met the requirements of this study. The demographics of the participants were that they were all born and raised in the United States, and the participants had children whom they birthed and who are currently under the age of eighteen. The participants were between the ages of 25 and 50 years. To ensure that each participant qualified for the research study, each participant was individually screened. All interviews were conducted either through video calls or face-to-face meetings. The interviews varied from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the level of detail provided by the participant. An audio recording of the interviews was taken to ensure that the transcribed data was accurate. These interviews were then transcribed. Once the interviews were transcribed, each participant was provided with a copy of their transcription to ensure accuracy. NVIVO was used as a tool to help organize codes, categorize, and identify themes within the transcriptions. The data was then further analyzed to answer the research questions.

Participants

Interviews were conducted individually. The process of collecting the interviews consisted of the researcher reading each question to the participant, and the participant responded to the direct question. The interview questions were asked in the same order for each participant and did not place a predisposition on any one question. The interviews did not deviate from the questions, and the researcher refrained from commenting on the statements provided by the

participants. This was done to ensure that there was no influence from the researcher throughout the process of collecting the needed data. Each participant adhered to the interview format and remained focused on only answering the given question. All participants who volunteered for the study maintained their involvement, and the study did not experience any volunteer dropping from the study.

Participant One: JP

The participant is twenty-eight years old and has one daughter. Her daughter is seven years old. She was born in Galveston, Texas, and grew up in La Marque, Texas, with six brothers and two sisters. She stated that she is Mexican American. The participant works at a prison in Galveston, Texas, and her educational background is in Criminal Justice. She is currently engaged and will get married in December 2022. She believes that Christian mothers are struggling due to the lack of support. She has experienced the burden of the societal push to conform to more secular roles. She stated that she had felt the demands placed by society and felt as though she would never be enough. The statement made by JP correlated with findings from multiple studies that show that mothers are forced to place work commitments as a priority over their families (Evertsson, 2013). She stated that she had been forced to neglect her role as a mother, often to satisfy the needs of her employment. JP stated she has had her supervisor call her out during a staff meeting, along with three other women, saying that he could not count on them to perform overtime because they had "mom responsibilities." JP stated that this made her feel like she had to prove him wrong, which meant not being the one helping her daughter through homework and or tucking her daughter into bed on various occasions. The impact that society demands on mothers is felt by numerous women (Benard & Correll, 2010). The participant grew up attending church and found Jesus at First Love Pentecostal church, where

she received the Holy Spirit for the first time. She attended a non-denominational church, a fellowship church, in her early twenties, where she attended for seven years. JP recently began attending a new church and identifies the church as her new church home. She is attending the Ark Church, a non-denominational church. The participant is involved in the church's marriage counseling and is a part of the women's ministry group.

Participant Two: KM

The participant is forty-one years old, married, and has three children. Her children are ages fourteen, ten, and six. She stated that she experiences fear for her children because of societal changes in gender role expectations. She is from Martinsville, VA, but resides in York, SC. The participant stated that she is a white American. The participant grew up in a Brethren Church, which she stated is like Baptist but gentler. Her grandparents were Primitive Baptists, which she stated was "all fire and brimstone!" The participant stated that her grandparents showed her the Love and Compassion of Jesus Christ. She now attends a non-denominational church where all are welcomed and loved. KM volunteers with the children's ministry. Her educational background is in exercise science with a concentration in Cardiac Rehab and Nursing. The participant now works from home to be able to be there for her children. KM stated that finding a balance is complicated but that she is thankful that she can work from home. KM stated that the Covid pandemic was good for her in that way. She stated that before being able to work from home, she struggled to find balance. Women who choose to start their family in early adulthood, as opposed to later in life, often report the burdens and pressures placed on them by society (Benard & Correll, 2010). KM stated that being a mother is her greatest purpose, but she struggles with the pull that society is placing on women as society calls for shifts in gender roles. KM stated that adhering to her faith-based role even though the societal burdens have helped her

feel more connected to her spiritual relationship with God and has helped her to value the importance of motherhood.

Participant Three: AT

The participant is a thirty-two-year-old mother of three children, two boys, and a girl. Her sons are seven and four, respectively. AT's daughter is two. The participant stated that her race is Puerto Rican/American and Russian, but she was raised in the White American culture. The participant was born and raised in California; however, she relocated to South Carolina after high school. She has experienced not feeling like she is doing enough as a mother because of the additional roles that society is placing on women, but that being a mom is all she has ever wanted. Mothers' feeling as if they are not living up to societal expectations or as though they are not enough is a commonly felt burden and has increased during the shifts in gender role expectations (Meacham, 2012). She stated that she feels that she is often discriminated against because she has children. Through the research, it has been identified that several mothers feel penalized for choosing to have children (Wuestenenk & Begall, 2022). She stated that she had been told that she was not viewed as being reliable because she had children. She stated that she was told that she would probably need to call out of work too often because she has multiple children. Mothers often experience discrimination (Benard & Correll, 2010). AT stated that she has experienced needing to accept a reduced wage compared to those of the male gender or those who do not have children. Mothers are often penalized for having children by being offered lower pay rates due to gaps in employment or being considered entry-level due to their lack of employment (Gangl et al., 2009). AT stated that this is a societal tactic to push women to move away from the traditional concept of having children in early adulthood and drives them to seek a career first; AT attended Winthrop and studied psychology. She adopted the route of being a stay-

at-home mom instead of pursuing a career. She was raised in the church her whole life and had been attending her current church and serving in the kid's ministry for the last three years. The participant stated, "It's a foundation I fall back on and one I hope to provide my children with as well."

Participant Four: KS

The participant is a thirty-four-year-old mother of two. She has been married for over twelve years. She has two daughters; they are ten and eight years old. She was born and raised and currently resides in Clover, SC. The participant stated that her race is white. She has worked as a registered nurse since 2010 and is currently a school nurse at one of the local elementary schools. KS stated that with the burdens placed on her and the pull that society places on her to collect more secular views and role responsibilities, she often experiences anxiety. KS stated that she often feels worn down and finds it difficult to juggle work responsibilities and child-raising responsibilities. Many mothers, including the participants, expressed difficulties with balancing both roles (Oláh et al., 2018). KS stated that societal views and pressures do not make it easy on women who want to have children and mothers who choose to also work to help support their families. Given how much the cost of living is increasing, more mothers are looking to join the workforce to help contribute to the well-being of their families (Collins, 2019). As a result, many mothers are struggling to navigate life through being a mother while also being a woman in the workforce (Collins, 2019). KS sees how important it is to instill faith-based values in her children because she feels the world will teach them against the scripture. She grew up in an Independent Baptist church. She stated that she was in church every Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday evening, and other scheduled services. She attended a private Christian

school. She is currently a member of a non-denominational church, serves as nursery director, and helps in the Awana ministry.

Participant Five: HD

The participant is forty years old and a mother of three children. Her children are ages sixteen, twelve, and nine. She has one daughter and two boys. She feels that not all the vicissitudes in gender role expectations are bad. HD stated that she might not agree with all the vagaries, but she is happy to see more possibilities and opportunities for her daughter. The participant stated that she feels that she had to work harder to get to where she is now and hopes that her daughter does not need to face these same struggles. The gendered difference in employment is often a source of disappointment and is seen as a disadvantage (OECD, 2017). However, she stressed that despite seeing some positives, she feels weighted down by needing to help navigate her children through various societal views. HD stated that while there are some positive changes in societal views, she does not agree with all the views. She was born in the Carolinas and stated that she grew up in and currently lives in York, SC. The participant stated that her race is white. She attended York Comprehensive High and then attended Lander University, where she graduated in 2004. She then obtained her Masters in Divergent Learning from Columbia College in 2006. She will complete a second master's in Educational Leadership from Winthrop University in May 2023. She grew up in a Methodist church and still attends the same church today. The participant has served as Sunday School Chair, Worship Chair, and many other leadership roles. She and her family attend church weekly at the same church she attended while growing up.

Participant Six: TF

The participant is a forty-three-year-old mother of two girls. Her daughters are thirteen and eight years old. She is a first-generation college student from Appalachia. The participant stated that her race is white. She was raised in a Freewill Baptist home. Currently, the participant is a member of the Lutheran Church, where she serves as a parent volunteer in several Lutheran and Methodist children's programs. She feels very strongly about how her children are exposed to the changes in societal views and strives to shield her children. In 2021, she served on the national faith-based initiative, Education Council for the Girl Scouts of America, and helped create and lectured in the Girls of Faith webinar series. The participant is currently a stay-at-home mom. She holds a degree in media studies but chooses to place raising children as a priority over her career dreams. The participants stated that one of the most devastating experiences was feelings of being punished by the labor market for choosing to put her career on hold and choosing to raise her children. The participant stated that she has experienced rejection and has had a gap in employment help against her. The participant stated that she feels that motherhood and taking time to raise children should not be viewed as a "gap" in employment. The statements from the participant have been documented across much research related to this topic. Gaps in employment negatively affect women (Orloff, 1993).

Participant Seven: FW

The participant is a thirty-six-year-old mother. She has six children, including five boys and one girl. The ages of her children are sixteen, fifteen, fourteen, thirteen, eleven, and seven. FW was born in the United States and currently lives in York, SC. She stated that her race is white-American. The Participant's father is a deacon, and her mother is a Sunday school teacher. The participant stated that her mother also operates the church food pantry. She was raised in a

Baptist church home. FW stated that she was taught to know the truth and that God created the heavens and the earth and sent his son to die for our sins. FW stated that she is raising her children under that same truth but stated that she fears the pressures that her children are going to face because she feels the burden of everyday life. Her husband joined her at her home church. She has a degree in theater production and dance education with a minor in Music Theory. She is working on her master's in elementary education and business. Currently, she works for La-Z-Boy furniture as the Allocations manager. She stated that she works from home and can be there for her kids when needed. She stated that she tries to raise her kids in God's light and teach them to be the best versions of themselves and to show God's love in everything they do.

Participant Eight: TA

The participant is a thirty-five-year-old mother of two. She has two daughters; they are twelve and ten. She expressed that she is burdened by the need to balance both her faith-based roles and what society says she should be doing. She stated that above that, she experiences stress due to the amount of exertion to keep her daughters from being exposed to the impressions of society. TA stated that she could not turn on the TV without worrying about what influences were going to be presented to her daughters. Many parents are feeling an increase in responsibility to educate their children and to help their children to navigate the changes that are occurring with societal views on gender (Doucet, 2015). The participant is a Baltimore, Maryland-born native but resides in Chester, SC. She stated that her race is African American TA stated that she was brought up to acknowledge God and the power of prayer but going to church was not pushed as much as it was in her friend's home. She moved to SC during her first year of high school in 2000. TA is married to her high school sweetheart right out of our school. She stated that after her children were born, she developed a passion for the medical field due to

complications she had during her deliveries. Her desire to have a more significant relationship with God grew through having her children because she wanted to raise them knowing about God and Christianity. TA stated that she struggles to get through school but was passionate about instilling faith in her home. TA's focus for her children has been to raise them in a godly way. TA stated that once her children became more independent, she began pursuing her college education. In May 2022, she completed her BSN and is now an emergency trauma nurse. She stated that without the birth of her children, her faith in God, and the support of her husband, she would not be where she is today. TA stated that her overall goal is to go back and begin the NP (Nurse Practitioner) program, stay connected to her church, and make memories with her husband and children.

Participant Nine: AR

The participant is a fifty-year-old mother of five. Her children's ages range from sixteen to thirty-two. She stated that her race is white. She currently works remotely at Duke Energy. She stated that she chose the path of raising children over a career. She stated that although she was late in life starting her career and late in life going to college, she is humbled by how much she has grown. She stated that she did feel rejected by her work peers but continued to push forward. It was interesting that AR mentioned feeling rejected; the research shows that many women struggle with discrimination (Verniers & Vala, 2018). Discrimination is one of the largest reports regarding employment and gender (Kleven & Landais, 2017). AR stated that she loves learning and plans to start her next adventure in Biblical History. AR stated that her greatest blessing is that all her children professed their faith in Jesus Christ. The participant stated that this had brought a sense of peace to her in this turbulent world. She is impatiently awaiting grandchildren. She plans to retire early, spend all her money on them (grandbabies) and love

those babies for the rest of her life. The participant was saved at an outdoor tent revival with her grandmother when she was twelve. Since that time, she stated that she has tried to hold firmly onto God. Her husband is a pastor; through the years, he has grown as her support. The participant stated that she purposefully sets her thoughts, actions, and words to be non-judgmental. She stated that with every goal she has, with every growth she endures, she chooses to be like Christ.

Participant Ten: DW

The participant is a thirty-five-year-old mother of three children. She has three boys, and their ages are fifteen, six, and five. She lives in Rock Hill, SC., but stated that she grew up in Camden, SC. The participant stated that her race is white. She stated that she got pregnant young and decided to focus on raising her oldest son over pursuing her education. She stated that she and her husband married very young and have done all they can to remain faithful to God and his timing. DW stated that she received her GED three years ago and is now in college. She is working towards obtaining her degree in elementary education. DW stated that she would graduate in two more years. She did not start going to church until she was twelve, but when she started going, she loved God from the beginning and has never stopped loving him. DW stated that since Covid hit, she has not been to church, but she is ready to start returning and getting her children in church.

Results

To collect data, a series of 16 questions were asked of each participant. These 16 questions were used to help answer the 6-research question the researcher aimed to understand. The study aimed to understand what impact societal influences and societal changes are having on the Christian mother. In the first step of analyzing the transcriptions, a coding table needed to

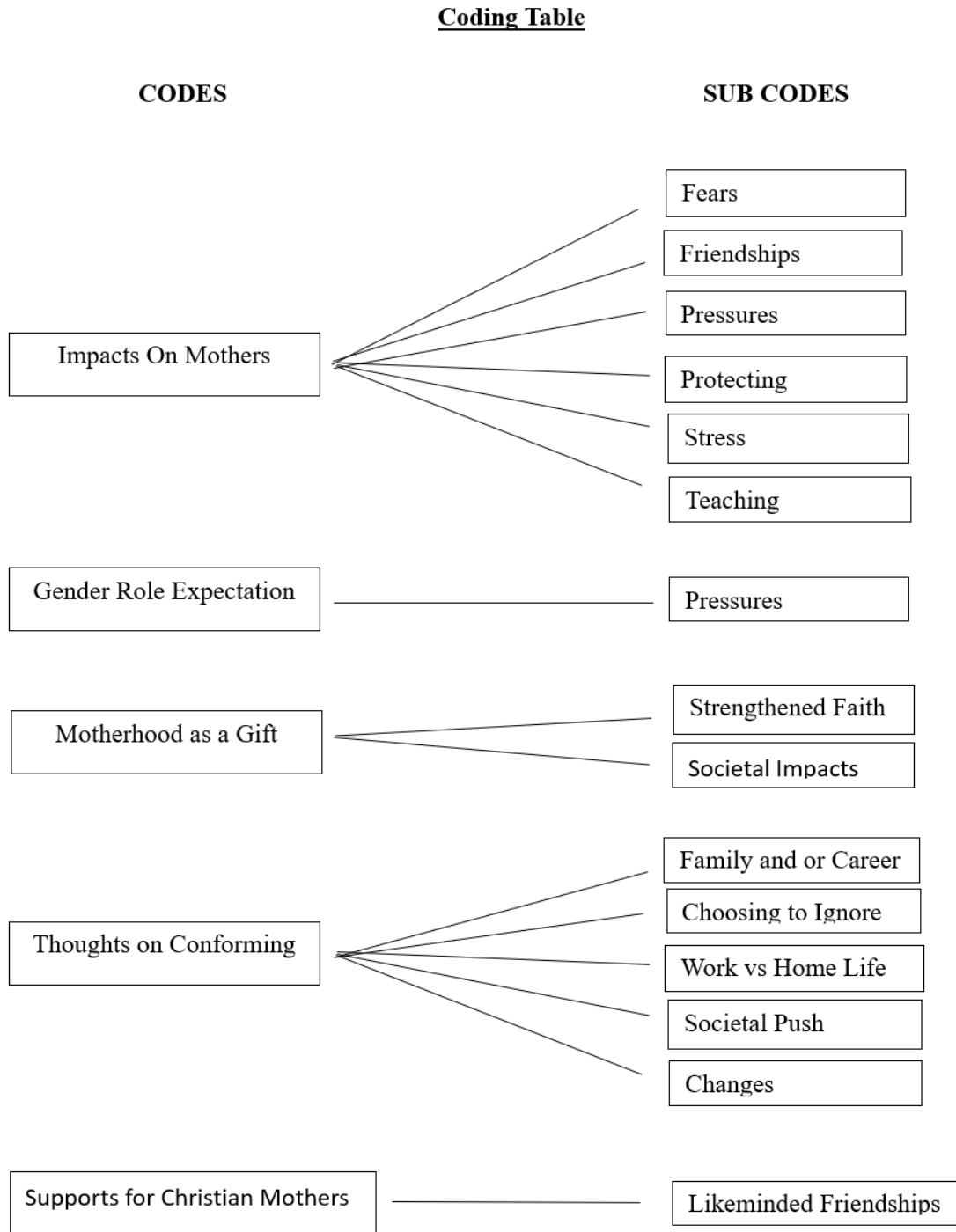
be established. The coding table was manually created, and NVIVO was used as a tool to manually code the transcribed data. Deductive coding was initially used to help analyze the data. These would have been predetermined codes based on the questions that the research was asking each participant. However, additional codes emerged from the data sets. As a result, a hybrid approach was used to help code the transcriptions. Coding began with a set of deductive codes, and new codes were added based on the data as trends emerged. This allowed for line-by-line coding, refining my codes as the researcher moved through the transcriptions using direct quotes from participants to form codes. This reduced any inferred meaning as the codes are derived from the original transcription.

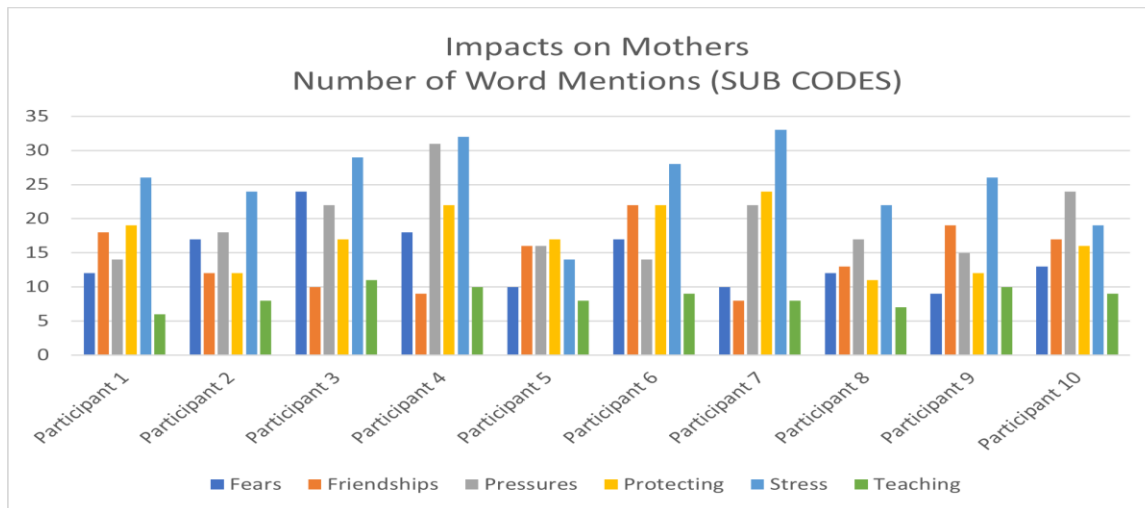
Theme Development

While analyzing the data and placing quotes into categories, trends that were not expected began to emerge. The study aimed to understand how or if societal changes are impacting Christian mothers. By creating the coding table, trends on how Christian mothers are affected began to emerge. Five categories emerged. These categories are listed in the order that the themes were generated. The categories identified are impacts on mothers, gender role expectations, motherhood as a gift, thoughts on conforming, and support for Christian mothers. Each category grouped additional codes. Sub-codes under the category of Impacts on Mothers were identified as fear, friendships, pressures, protecting children, stress, and teaching children. Sub-codes under the category of Gender Role Expectations are responsibilities. Sub-codes under the category of motherhood as a gift are Strengthened Faith and Societal Impacts. Sub-codes under the category of Thoughts on Conforming are Family and Career, Choosing to Ignore, Work vs. Home Life Balance, Societal Push, and Changes. Sub-codes under the category of Support for Christian Mothers are Likeminded Friendships.

Table 1

Coding Table



Graph 1*Impacts on Mothers***Research Question Responses****RQ1: How do Christian women respond to the perception that adhering to their faith-based role of mother is patriarchal submission?**

The findings from the lived experiences identified that Christian mothers do not see their roles as mothers as adhering to patriarchal submission. The findings show that Christian mothers view motherhood as a blessing from God. Moreover, Christian mothers state that having children and being in the role of mother has strengthened their faith (Adsera, 2006). Furthermore, Christian mothers do not place attention on the societal movement's perception that motherhood is patriarchal submission (Perales & Bouma, 2019). There are many quotes throughout the study that support this finding.

P- KM: *"To be a mother is the most amazing gift, and because of the sacrifice of Jesus, I can do that and mold them to see the greatest love in history."*

P- JP: *"Nonetheless, I believe all children are a Gift from God."*

P- AT: *"God has given me the greatest job, and it is to teach and raise these humans."*

P- AR: *"I knew I had been given a gift from God, they are the center of my calling as a mother, and I was not concerned about what society thought. Society tries to place an input, but I press into my faith, and I feel grounded by doing so."*

RQ2: How do Christian women and Christian mothers face the pull to conform to the changes surrounding gender roles?

The findings from the study illustrate how Christian women, in general, believe that each gender holds responsibilities, and that biblical scripture helps to define these roles based on a man's and a woman's physical abilities. The consensus is that these roles help to provide balance. These gender role assignments are not meant to hold one gender above or below another but help to aid in the equal partnership of a man and a woman. The lived experiences show that many Christian mothers feel weighed down by the changes in gender role responsibility and/or expectations that society is placing on women. The findings in prior research collaborate with the findings in the present study that changes in gender roles are indeed impacting mothers (Goldscheider et al., 2015). The research indicates that these mothers have felt stretched in different directions and burdened by the pressures of society to conform to the changes in gender roles (Sung, 2018). The findings from the study show that Christian mothers identify biblically based roles as helping family units hold the balance. These quotes help to provide a better understanding of the findings.

P-HD: *"It causes women who are mothers and want to be mothers to carry more than they need to or to feel like they need to be doing more. I've been the stay-at-home mom; I've been the working mom, and society is always wanting more."*

P-JP: *"I believe wives are supposed to submit to their husbands As the husband spiritually leads the family. But this view, in my opinion, does not align with societal norms due to females wanting to be equal to men. I believe men and women were created to be equal, but they have different roles."*

P- HD: *"I feel like the husband should be the head of the household and that I, as his wife, should be his helpmate. I believe that a husband and wife should have equal roles within the household. As we are both created in God's image, we are equal in our marriage."*

P- KM: *"I define gender roles as equals. While yes, Dad is Dad and Mom is mom, we are equally responsible. My faith says that the man is the head of the household; however, it also says that we are to support each other in all things. Therefore, we have a partnership, not a dictatorship."*

RQ3: How do Christian mothers feel about the social movements to dissolve female gender roles rooted in the Christian faith?

Through the study, it has been revealed that Christian mothers are pressing into their faith and choosing to ignore the pressure to conform. The study shows that there is an awareness, but that mothers are choosing to use this as a teaching platform for their children. Christian mothers find that the social movements aimed at dissolving the faith-based role of a mother/woman are causing a change in how much women are now expected to carry (Fernández, 2013). Women today are often forced to carry both the roles identified biblically and socially to avoid feelings of disapproval or failure (Seedat, 2021).

P-KM: *"We can't always conform to a society says we should be."*

P- AR: *"As the feminist movement drove and redefined the roles of women, it became "normal" for a female to work and supplement the income of our family. Men and women are different, and God gives us each gift and defining roles. Society has blurred these roles, where men are no longer considered the leader of the family."*

P- AR: *"I feel many overlook the impact societies redefining the role of women has made on the Christian father and husband. I feel that Christian mothers should join to help protect the future generations and to learn together how to teach their children how to understand why society is changing."*

RQ4: How do Christian mothers feel about being ostracized by societal movements by remaining in their faith-based gender roles?

The study conducted did not identify that social seclusion or exclusion as inciting feelings of being ostracized. The study identified that Christian mothers hold a perception that changes to their social circles have occurred. In general, Christian mothers viewed these happenings in a positive light and referenced this happening as forming a support system with more like-minded people. The consensus in the study is that these mothers do experience a loss in friendships but that they were able to develop a support system that helped to support the continued effort to pursue their faith-based roles.

P- JP: *"I did notice that friends, whom I thought were close, stopped coming around. I lost friends. I guess you can say our paths separated, but I did see friendships end. Becoming a mom and putting my career second was a choice, and it did not align with other people's goals. It's okay. It's kind of sad thinking about it, but I am happy."*

P- KS: *"I feel like relationships naturally changed when I became a mother because my priorities shifted. I no longer wanted to go out and do the things that I once enjoyed because my desire was to be with my baby. I also feel like some friendships fizzled because of the difference in morals and values. I thought more about whom I wanted my children to be around and the things I did not want them exposed to."*

P- DW: *"I lost a lot of friends after I had my first son, but when it comes down to it, I think that some people are just not meant to be in your life. God puts people in your life, and when he does, he gives you the best people."*

RQ5: How has the societal movement to dissolve gender roles impacted mothers who feel connected to their roles as a mother?

The study has provided great insight into this question and has identified that many Christian mothers feel that they must reduce themselves in society, especially when it comes to their children and what their children are exposed to. These mothers have experienced the need to protect their children from external influences that go against their biblical standards of teaching. There is a growing fear of what the world will be like when their daughters are at childbearing age. There is an increased need to teach their children biblical lessons and to teach against the changes that are occurring in society. In general, the research shows that the movement to dissolve the female gender role has called on Christian mothers to protect their daughters (and sons) from what they are viewing on television, hearing on the radio, and or being taught in school (Knight & Brinton, 2017). Additionally, the study showed that mothers are feeling the burdens of extra responsibility and societal expectations (Calver, 2020). The demands are increasing within society (Smyth, The demands of motherhood: Agents, roles, and

recognition, 2012). The participants shared details of experiencing feelings of being overwhelmed and anxious. Quotes from the study show the burden that these changes are impacting Christian mothers with.

P- DW: *"The female gender role changes impacted my role as a mother emotionally because mothers are put here to love their children and do what they can for their child, but society is demanding more than just women being mothers, but for mothers to carry many different roles. Women are expected to do so much, especially mothers."*

P- JP: *"Society will try to break you down as a mother with all of their expectations."*

P- AR: *"I had to update my conversations with my child to include whatever new thought society was pursuing and provide the biblical response."*

P- KM: *"They have jaded me a bit. Honestly, I'm scared to death for my girls when it comes to society and becoming mothers."*

P- JP: *"Social movements and worldviews to me have tried so long to tell mothers they should be a certain way, and if they are not, then they aren't good mothers. I believe it makes mothers feel incapable and sometimes even worthless. The world puts so much pressure on mothers, and sometimes we tend to feel nothing we do will ever be enough. It's a never-ending cycle. I believe it has impacted me by comparing myself to other mothers."*

P- KS: *"I have personally felt overwhelmed with being pulled in all the different directions. I have never really considered myself to be a depressed person, but I finally gave in and had a discussion with my doctor about the anxious feelings I*

have felt like I am going 100MPH 100% of the time with no shut-off. There are no sick days, no real days off. I was placed on an antidepressant and can tell such a big difference."

P- KM: *"I have found that it truly does affect me mostly in a negative way. My anxiety is through the roof most of the time."*

P- JP: *"The impact it has had on me can be overwhelming and stressful at times."*

P- DW: *"Society is demanding more than just women being mothers, but for mothers to carry many different roles. Women are expected to do so much, especially mothers."*

P- TA: *"Social movements and world views have left me more protective with my girls. I am more cautious about what they watch on tv, listen to, and the friends they socialize with. I try and monitor what I can to make sure they are viewing and seeing age-appropriate material. I don't want friends or other outsource to teach or introduce anything to my child I haven't."*

RQ6: What support is needed to preserve the role of the Christian mother?

The study shows that many Christian mothers seek support from their church families and community; however, the changes that have occurred within society have occurred at an alarming rate (Scarborough et al., 2019). The support that Christian mothers receive needs time to develop to know what works and what does not. Currently, Christian mothers are pressing into each other and relying on each other for guidance and support. The study shows that there is a great need for additional support, but there has not been a significant indicator of what can be implemented to support Christian mothers. It was identified in the study that Christian mothers strive to be there for each other, but more is needed in response to societal changes. These quotes

from the study help to provide an understanding of how Christian mothers feel about the available support:

P- JP: *“There really aren’t societal supports for mothers.”*

P- HD: *“My church offers women’s groups and studies, but there could be more. The world is changing, but the support really hasn’t modified or adapted to the changes.”*

P- KS: *“I don’t believe there is any specific support group for this at church. Having Christian friends is one way that I get support Sermons on family/parenting also help with this.”*

P- AT: *“I think support for all mothers across the board needs to be increased.”*

P- TF: *“I am a Christian. I believe that it is important to surround myself with people who support my beliefs and worldviews. I think this made it easier to maintain the faith-based role of a mother. I was surrounded by other stay-at-home moms who were Christians.”*

Summary

This chapter provided a detailed description of the Christian mothers who participated in the study. A study was conducted on ten-Christian mothers. The study consisted of sixteen interview questions. The study used the lived experiences of the ten participants to answer the questions that the study aimed to identify. This chapter provided details on how the researcher used the answers to help identify codes, categories, and themes. Once codes, categories, and themes were identified, the researcher then interpreted the data.

The study identified how Christian mothers are impacted by the changes in society's movement to gain gender role equality. Mothers report that they feel that they are struggling to

maintain the balance of both roles, which has been identified in previous research (Galván, 2022). It is increasingly felt among mothers that they must carry both roles to be accepted by peer groups (Galván, 2022). However, many Christian mothers report that they have had a substantial change in their social groups since having children. At the same time, the research identified that these Christian mothers are seeking to hold on to their faith-based gender roles, many states that they wish to hold employment but are often subjected to discrimination (Petrongolo & Ronchi, 2020).

Furthermore, Christian mothers are facing the burden of added maternal responsibility when raising their children (Field et al., 2021). The participants in this study express the growing need to modify their teachings to help their children through navigating the indoctrination of change that is expressed on television and in their school peer groups. Additionally, many mothers in the study reported feeling as though their voice is being minimized when it comes to what their children are exposed to and how their children are being educated, and that they fear for the future of their children. The conclusion of this chapter summarizes the research questions and the study findings.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Overview

A summary of the findings identified will be provided in this chapter. Following the summary of the findings, the chapter will provide a detailed discussion of the findings. This detailed discussion will provide the reader with supported statements from the participants to support the interpretation that the researcher is outlining. The discussion section will provide a relationship between the study and the literature review. A summary will provide a discussion on implications as well as delimitations and limitations to show how the researcher implanted various decisions that the researcher made to define the boundaries of the study and to identify potential weaknesses within the study. A discussion on recommendations for future research is provided. The recommendations for future research will be based on the study's findings, delimitations, and limitations.

Summary of Findings

The data was collected through interviews with ten participants. These ten participants provided answers to sixteen interview questions. The responses were based on the participants' lived experiences and were aimed at helping the researcher answer six questions. The study analyzed the responses from the participants to establish codes, categories, and trends. The analyzed data was then interpreted to answer the study's six questions.

RQ1

How do Christian women respond to the perception that adhering to their faith-based role of mother is patriarchal submission? The responses from the ten participants indicated that Christian mothers who are actively engaging in their faith-based role of motherhood do not adhere to the societal perception that motherhood is a form of patriarchal submission. Based on

the research, Christian mothers identify their role as a blessing from God. Furthermore, motherhood has given them purpose and overall life satisfaction (Baxter et al., 2015). The responses from all ten participants can be ascertained. An example of statements from participants that helped form this interpretation is as follows: participant TF stated, "I believe motherhood is a gift from God." Statements like this were made throughout the interviews with each of the participants. Additional statements made by participants KM, KS, JP, and most of the participants were that children are God's greatest blessings.

RQ2

How do Christian women and Christian mothers face the pull to conform to the changes surrounding gender roles? The study could identify through the study that Christian mothers believe that faith-based roles are given by God, helping to establish a balance. This balance does not set men above women but ensures that responsibility is held by both genders. The impact that Christian mothers reported during the study was feeling weighed down by the fluctuations, expectations, and responsibilities. Christian mothers and women, in general, are feeling the pull and burdens of society to expand their roles to take on responsibilities that are normally carried by opposite genders (Zhou, 2017). This interpretation is supported by statements collected from the participants. These statements reflected each other. Participant KS stated, "God created gender roles for a reason. Men cannot do our jobs, and we cannot do theirs," and the participant HD stated: "I feel that women have a role, just like men. These roles are given to help create balance in relationships and help them thrive. Societal influences disrupt these roles, and it is one of the issues that relationships have." These statements are reflective of statements made regarding this research question.

RQ3

How do Christian mothers feel about the social movements to dissolve female gender roles rooted in the Christian faith? The study was able to identify through the participant responses that Christian mothers who are adhering to the roles actively choose to ignore the pressures to conform. The study showed that there is an awareness, but this awareness is urging mothers to teach their children against these secular changes and to instill the roles that are formed under the biblical doctrine. When interpreting the data, the study identified that mothers felt that they were being forced socially to carry out both roles or face disapproval and or projections of failure. As a result, many other participants reported feeling overwhelmed, anxious, and or feeling as though they were failing. Participant AR stated, "My faith-based view on family no longer aligns with what modern society would consider normal." Participant KS stated, "We cannot let the devil make us falter in our resolve to carry out our roles in motherhood," and HD stated, "The changes of the female role in society or what the media tells us how women should be, have had no impact on me or my role as a mother. It places stress, but it did not alter me in my role of being a mother. I don't raise my children to be followers of society's dictates." Statements like these were heard throughout the study, facilitating the study to identify that Christian mothers are steadfast in their beliefs.

RQ4

How do Christian mothers feel about being ostracized by societal movements by remaining in their faith-based gender roles? As the researcher interpreted, the study did not identify a specific exclusion or Christian mothers' feelings on the impact of being ostracized. However, the study indicated that Christian mothers identify their social circles as changing. Christian mothers often feel the weight of the loss of friendships; however, this phenomenon is

projected in a more positive light. The study identified that Christian mothers often reference these events as their support system shifts with more like-minded people. Moreover, the participants reported experiencing loss of friendships but reported that having these forfeitures have been beneficial to their support systems. These losses in friendships are reported as painful, but they have been good for them to help continue their faith-based roles. Participant HD shared, "Becoming a mother has brought me many friends that I may not have had before having children. I also lost friends through becoming a mother. Our lives just didn't align anymore," and participant KM shared that friendships "have changed but for the better, I now have a whole network of wonderful women who help support me. Those who were more career-focused kind of clung together, and those who were more family-focused clung together." These quotes are like the descriptions shared by each participant and are seen through the findings of many research studies (Davis & Moore, 2010).

RQ5

How has the societal movement to dissolve gender roles impacted mothers who feel connected to their roles as a mother? Through the collected data, the study identified that Christian mothers had been greatly impacted by this change in gender roles. The study found that many other participants reported that they have experienced needing to reduce themselves in social settings that are more secular. Many participants stated that they needed to hush their beliefs and feelings in the face of adversity and fear of backlash. As a result, these mothers have felt an increased need to protect their children and what they are exposed to. Participants have reported that there is a growing fear of what the world would be like when their daughters are at childbearing age and what pushes and influences are going to be pressed upon them. The study revealed that the dissolution of the female has called for them to protect their children from what

they see on television, hear on the radio, or are being taught in school. Many mothers report that a lot of these situations are being taken out of their hands, and they are losing control over what their children are being taught. This interpretation is supported by the interpretation of lived experiences of the participants. These statements reflect commonly expressed experiences.

Participant TF stated, "I feel like I have less power, respect, and influence when dealing with my children," and participant AR stated, "I had to update my conversations with my child to include whatever new thought society was pursuing and provide the biblical response." The participants felt similarly to the statement made by participant DW, "Society places a burden on women that really isn't fair," and the statement made by AT, "I am exhausted."

RQ6

What support is needed to preserve the role of Christian mothers? The study showed that Christian mothers are pressing into their church homes and their faith-based communities. However, the rate of change occurring within our society is making it difficult for backings to adapt in a time-sensitive manner. The study indicates that Christian mothers are pressing into their support systems and relying on each other for support and guidance. However, many Christian mothers are unable to identify what forms of support are available directly through their churches. Participant HD stated, "Society wants to see women as men and then provides no support," and participant JP stated, "There really aren't societal supports for mothers." Statements like this identified that there is a greater need for additional backing to assist Christian mothers with instilling faith-based values in their children and helping reduce the burden that gender role changes are inducing.

Discussion

The study conducted was able to collaborate with the literature review in many of the identified areas. This discussion begins by providing a brief review of how the study analyzed the data and established codes. From this, the discussion will look to identify how the researchers collaborated with the literature review regarding overload, as identified by Lovell and Butler (2015); loneliness, as identified by Mandai et al. (2018); and loss of social circles, as identified by Honda et al. (2020); and life satisfaction as identified by Van Vugt and Versteegen (2020). This discussion will provide a brief statement on the findings of each area from the literature review and then provide a discussion on the additional findings that the study was able to identify. The discussion of the additional findings will provide a clear contribution to the previous research and studies that have been conducted.

The transcribed interviews from the participants were coded using a coding table established by the researcher. NVIVO was used as a platform to organize the data, as it was coded manually by the researcher. A hybrid approach was used to develop the codes to analyze the data. A deductive coding system was established based on the questions, and additional codes were added manually to the coding table as trends in the data emerged. This allowed for coding to be done line by line, refining codes as the researcher moved through the transcriptions and used direct quotes from participants to form codes. This reduced any inferred meaning as the codes are derived from the original transcription.

Overload

The literature review revealed that Christian mothers and mothers, in general, experienced an overload. This overload was seen throughout the study conducted. As cited in Lovell and Butler's study, mothers are bearing roles that are growing substantially (Lovell &

Butler, 2015). The study identified how mothers are feeling the burden of bearing supplementary role responsibilities as society demands equality across gender roles (Meacham, 2012). This concept pulls men and women further from their faith-based roles. Christian mothers feel that the gender roles that are identified in the Bible help to establish balance. As the dissolution of faith-based gender roles continues to rise, the burden of unbalanced role responsibility is felt (England, 2010). The study was able to identify these burdens through the lived experiences of Christian mothers. Additionally, the study identified that the female gender role responsibilities have increased, but the support offered has not been ensured.

Loneliness and Loss of Social Circles

The study was able to identify that there are significant changes that occur in social circles as women choose to conform to more secular views and or choose to adhere to their faith-based gender roles. The study was not able to confirm that there was a sense of loneliness experienced by mothers, as identified by Mandai et al. (2018) in the literature review. Mandai et al. (2018) identified that changes in social circles could result in feelings of loneliness. However, the study was able to identify that Christian mothers do report feelings of sadness as their social circles change. Despite these reported feelings of sadness, the study found that the participants did not report feelings of loneliness. The study's findings concluded that the participants identified their change in social circles as an indispensable requirement. The study showed that the occurrence equipped the participants with a more like-minded support system and that this happening was a form of progress.

Life Satisfaction

The study was able to confirm the findings within the literature review that Christian mothers identify their roles in motherhood as a gift from God. This further confirmed and

validated the statement from Van Vugt and Versteegen (2020) that mothers feel a spiritual connection to their roles in motherhood. The researcher identified that the participants viewed their children as a gift of God. The study conducted provided greater insight into whether the Christian mothers felt that their faith-based roles held them to a state of submission. The participants in the study provided insight into how Christian mothers identify faith-based roles as creating balance across gender role responsibilities. The study conducted was able to expand this, though, by identifying that Christian mothers view their roles as equal and/or shared responsibility in their gender roles. Moreover, Christian mothers view their roles as being assigned by God. Their consensus throughout the study was that men and women had assigned roles that allowed a partnership across relationships. This ensures a balance of responsibilities and, therefore, brings satisfaction in life as they adhere to the roles that God has assigned them. The sense of equality is felt through the participants as their spouse adheres to their roles, minimizing societal perceptions that motherhood is patriarchal submission and amplifying that adhering to faith-based roles ensures that men and women are bearing responsibilities according to their God-given abilities.

Contribution

The study carried out was able to identify the findings within the literature review. Many mothers are burdened by the societal shift to dissolve the faith-based role of a woman, especially mothers (Barth, 2016). Christian mothers are impacted by these changes in many ways. As outlined in the literature review, mothers feel the need to carry both their faith-based role responsibilities and the need to hold the responsibilities that society says. As a result, many mothers feel overburdened. The participants in the study showed that many mothers feel frustrated and overwhelmed by the obligations placed on them by society. Several mothers

reported feelings of anxiety and feeling as though they were falling short (Corrigall & Konrad, 2007). Additionally, many mothers reported that they feel that society is always going to demand more of them as the call to conform to the dissolution of gender roles strengthens. Many mothers feel that there is a call for mothers to carry both role responsibilities, while society has implemented little support for mothers adhering to their faith-based roles (Stam et al., 2014). The participants in the study reported an increase in their nurturing responsibilities, as they are now feeling the burden of protecting their children from the increase in societal exposures and teaching their children before society shows them otherwise. Furthermore, the study identified that there is a need for additional support to be implemented to support the continued adherence to the faith-based role of motherhood.

Implications

Theoretical Implication

A Christian perspective helped to inform the study of the impact that societal changes have on Christian mothers. The researcher began the study with the assumption that the participants would have had more lived experiences that are related to the negative perceptions caused by society on motherhood. This assumption was based on the literature review and formed the initial question that motherhood is seen as a patriarchal submission (Hernandez, 2019). While various social movements pushed this narrative, it was not such for Christian mothers. The study identified that the participants were aware of this view, but the perception was not shared. Christian mothers dismiss the idea that motherhood is a form of patriarchal submission.

The researcher assumed that the research would show an impact on Christian mothers in the form of adhering to their faith-based roles; however, the study identified more of an impact

on a Christian mother's role as a parent, considering the societal urge for women to conform to more secular views. As a result, Christian mothers are feeling the impact of needing to teach their children and protect them from society. Christian mothers feel the burden of needing to minimize themselves to pacify society (Heaton, 2011). Christian mothers feel as though they are losing control over the influence that society has on their children. Moreover, the research identified that the changes in society have a greater impact on Christian mothers in terms of responsibility overload and teaching their children against secular views (Bolzendahl et al., 2004).

Furthermore, the study indicated that Christian mothers make a conscious decision to ignore the push to conform and choose to press into their faith. The societal movement to have a career over family is felt by Christian mothers, who report the feeling of being “punished” should they choose to enter the workforce after raising their children (Zhang, 2022).

Empirical Implications

The findings within this study align with other empirical studies. This study confirmed the findings in the literature review that indicated that Christian mothers experience overload, loneliness and loss of social circles, and life satisfaction (Lovell & Butler, 2015). Furthermore, the study identified findings from previous research that showed that Christian mothers are carrying out more responsibility because of the changes in societal views or gender role responsibility (Benard & Correll, 2010). The impacts are placing a burden of unspoken expectations that result in an increase in feelings of being overwhelmed and symptoms of anxiety (Bohner et al., 2011). The findings collaborate with the studies identified in the literature review.

Practical Implications

The recommendation to counselors and/or ministers is to institute internal provisions for Christian mothers who are facing an influx of adversity in society. The research showed that

there is little assistance in place for Christian mothers. The participants expressed that they often rely on their like-minded friends and press into their biblical teachings. However, when discussing what supports are available, the researcher noted the difficulties that the participants had with answering this question. There is an immediate need for the church to increase support as quickly as society is driving the dissolution of faith-based roles. Christian mothers are striving to balance nurturing their children, teaching them biblical foundations, and shielding them from the influences that are being pressed against them by society (Boyd et al., 2016).

Delimitations and Limitations

To establish consistency for the study, the researcher outlined boundaries by setting clear eligibility requirements for the potential participants of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The delimitations are the that each participant met eligibility, which defines a targeted population. Eligibility required that each participant be a Christian mother. These mothers must be actively adhering to the faith-based role of motherhood and hold a strong desire to follow the gender roles that are promoted by the Christian Doctrine. Eligibility further requires that the participant be a natural-born citizen of the United States to ensure that the worldviews and the social movements are based on the same country of origin. Lastly, eligibility required that the participants must be mothers with children who are currently under the age of eighteen, which was to ensure that the experience reported was consistent. These eligibility requirements excluded members of society who have no children, are over the age of eighteen and are mothers of the Christian faith who may have been born and raised outside of the United States. The delimitations placed limitations on the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher implanted various decisions regarding eligibility, which may have weakened the scope of the study. In consideration of the delimitations placed on the study, the researcher recommends further research that includes Christian mothers who have children that are over the age of eighteen and Christian mothers who were not born in the United States. Furthermore, recommendations for future research should include women who are of the Christian faith but have chosen to follow roles that are more secular and have decided against the traditional faith-based roles. Conducting future research to compare Christian mothers who are adhering to their faith-based gender roles and Christian women who have chosen to follow more secular gender roles will help to identify the occurrences that this happens and help to understand what pulls Christian women to follow more secular roles.

Summary

The study concluded that Christian mothers who are actively engaging in their faith-based roles of motherhood do not absorb the perception that motherhood is a form of a patriarchal society (Bessey, 2018). Moreover, Christian mothers view their motherhood as a gift from God (Frejka & Westoff, 2008). The study identified that Christian mothers resist the pull to conform to general dissolution because they believe that faith-based roles are given by God to balance the genders. However, Christian mothers felt that they were being forced to carry out both roles; if not, they perceived that they might have to face disapproval or be designated as incompetent in society (Smyth, *Rethinking Social Roles: Conflict and Modern Life*, 2021). Many Christian mothers report feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or as though they are not living up to a standard (Aisenbrey et al., 2009).

The study identified that many Christian mothers have also experienced a shift in their social circles as they choose to adhere to their faith-based roles (Mishra & Parasnis, 2017). This happening is reported as being positive, but there are senses of sadness when these relationships end. However, the study indicated that many Christian mothers identify their shifts in social circles as being for the good and surrounding them with more like-minded people. Furthermore, the study identified that Christian mothers feel they must reduce themselves in social settings that are more secular (Xie & Zhou, 2022). Additionally, Christian mothers feel the increased need to protect their children against which they are exposed socially (Berghammer, 2009). As a result, there is an increased need for support for Christian mothers. Assistance is considered necessary to help preserve Christian mothers.

Their shift in gender roles stems from many different influences, largely the social movement for gender equality (Sung & Smyth, 2022). However, as these influences take hold, many women feel burdened by these changes (Sung & Smyth, 2022). There is an increasing need for women to meet certain unspoken expectations to help fuel the objective of these social movements. These expectations place stress on women, especially mothers (Guetto et al., 2015). It is evident through the research of previous studies and this study recently conducted that mothers are feeling overwhelmed by the pressure that social influences are placing on them and are left feeling the weight of disapproval by standing in their faith and adhering to their faith-based roles (Guetto et al., 2015). More than ever, help is needed for Christian mothers whose future is in jeopardy.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A**Institutional Review Board Application**

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 16, 2022

Holly Neavitt

[REDACTED]

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-990 A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY THAT INVESTIGATES THE EXPERIENCES OF CHRISTIAN MOTHERS NAVIGATING SOCIETAL WORLDVIEWS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Dear Holly Neavitt, [REDACTED]

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review.

This means you may begin your research with the data-safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants' research is exempt from the policy outlined in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of

public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

YOUR STAMPED CONSENT FORM(S) AND FINAL VERSIONS OF YOUR STUDY DOCUMENTS CAN BE FOUND UNDER THE ATTACHMENTS TAB WITHIN THE SUBMISSION DETAILS SECTION OF YOUR STUDY ON CAYUSE **IRB**. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. MICHELE BAKER, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

RESEARCH ETHICS OFFICE

Appendix B**Informed Consent****Consent**

Title of the Project: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY THAT INVESTIGATES THE EXPERIENCES OF CHRISTIAN MOTHERS NAVIGATING SOCIETAL WORLDVIEWS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Principal Investigator: Holly Neavitt, M.A, Liberty University

Co-investigator(s): [REDACTED]

Invitation to be part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a Christian mother, at least 18 years of age, and have children under the age of 18. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about, and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is the purpose of this research is to better understand what impact societal worldviews and social movements are having on faith-based gender roles, specifically mothers. The research will help to define what support is needed to help preserve the Christian mother.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

Carry out a face-to-face interview with the researcher. The interview audio will be recorded. The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study; however, the purpose of the study is to provide a benefit to society.

Benefits to society include the ability to utilize the data collected from the given interview to identify impact(s) so that assistance can be adapted to preserve the Christian mother.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study include the following:

“The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.”

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous. Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer, where only the researcher will have the password, and it may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Your Consent

By signing this document, you agree to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me as if we had just met one another.
2. Please share with me the specifics of your faith-based view of Motherhood.
3. How do you define gender roles under your faith-based view, and how would you say this view aligns with societal norms?
4. Describe how your faith-based view impacted your decision to have children.
5. When you consider your role as a mother, what impact did the changes occurring in the female gender role have on you?
6. How did you feel when you found out you were going to be a mother, and did you worry about how motherhood would affect you socially?
7. How has becoming a mother impacted your social friendships?
8. What impact has the push for mothers to carry caregiver/household responsibilities while maintaining employment had on you? Describe the challenges that have arisen because of this societal shift.
9. What societal influences impacted your thoughts on becoming a mother?
10. Describe the religious and or societal influences that impacted you most as you in your role as a mother, and did these influences contradict each other If so, how?
11. Did these societal influences force you to question yourself or the way you believe?
12. In terms of your Faith-based role as a mother and social movements to dissolve gender roles, what is something you would want to share with future Christian mothers?

13. What kind of faith-based support have you received from your church to help you confront the societal pull to conform to the dissolution of the faith-based role of a mother?
14. How do you feel support for Christian mothers can be implemented and or adapted to support mothers in their decision against societal pressures to conform?
15. How would you describe the way the social movements and worldviews regarding Motherhood have impacted you?
16. Is there anything you want me to know about the impact that social movement and or your religious beliefs have had on you in terms of Motherhood?

Appendix D

Consent for Site Usage for Interviews



Holly Neavitt
Doctoral Candidate for the School of Behavioral Health
Liberty University

February 18, 2022

Ms. Neavitt,

Per our telephone conversation earlier today, February 18, 2022, and with the permission of myself and the York County Library Directory, [REDACTED], you are welcomed to use any area of the library's public space for your meeting. York County Library is currently providing limited public seating and tables that are spaced appropriately for social distancing.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to call me at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Branch Manager
York Public Library





Feb 18, 2022

To whom it may concern;

Fort Mill preparatory school authorizes Holly Neavitt, a doctoral candidate at Liberty University, to utilize the conference room to hold face-to-face interviews adhering to her dissertation completion.

Sincerely,



Fort Mill Cooperative Preschool

Appendix E

Social Media Recruitment

Facebook group 1:

Attention liberty church Facebook group: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for an Ed.D in Community Care and Counseling: Marriage and Family at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to better understand what impact societal worldviews and social movements are having on faith-based gender roles, specifically mothers. To participate, you must be a Christian mother, at least 18 years old, and with children under the age of 18. Participants will be asked a series of interview questions which should take about 30-60 minutes to complete. If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please message me/contact me through Facebook messenger. Through a Facebook messenger, I will verify eligibility and provide you with a consent document. The consent document must be completed prior to research participation.

Facebook group 2:

Attention Fort Mill preparatory Facebook group: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for an Ed.D in Community Care and Counseling: Marriage and Family at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to better understand what impact societal worldviews and social movements are having on faith-based gender roles, specifically mothers. To participate, you must be a Christian mother, at least 18 years old, and with children under the age of 18. Participants will be asked a series of interview questions which should take about 30-60 minutes to complete. If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please message me/contact me through Facebook messenger. Through a Facebook messenger, I will verify

eligibility and provide you with a consent document. The consent document must be completed prior to research participation.