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Motivational Factors and Gender Differences in the Successful Completion of Music Education Doctoral Programs: A Pilot Study

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Abstract

What accounts for the success or failure of music education doctoral students regarding the completion of their degrees? Though students continue to enter doctoral programs, high attrition rates indicate many are not completing their degrees, including PhD students in music education. Perhaps those who complete this high level of academic achievement are more highly motivated than those who do not. An investigation of the differences between genders regarding motivation and length of time for degree completion is the focus of this study and seeks to answer the following: What effect does motivation have on music education doctoral students in the completion of their degrees? Are there motivational differences between male and female music education doctoral students concerning the completion of their degrees? Is there a difference in the amount of time it takes for female music education doctoral students to complete their degrees as compared to male students? Relating factors of motivation to achievement, the Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation is the framework used in this study. A questionnaire was used in this quantitative pilot study of former music education doctoral students (n=12) at universities in Ohio who obtained their PhDs within the last 15 years. Results indicate no significant difference between genders regarding the length of time for degree completion, though differences were found in motivational factors for starting and continuing in music education doctoral programs until completion. Limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research are suggested.

Introduction

What accounts for the success or failure of music education doctoral students regarding the completion of their PhDs? Though music educators continue to enter doctoral programs, high attrition rates indicate many are not finishing the process (Garner, 2009; González-Moreno, 2012; Mason, Goulden & Frasch, 2009; Groen, Jakobson, Ehrenburg, Condie, & Liu, 2008; Lovitts & Nelson, 2000). It could be argued that those who achieve their degrees are more highly motivated than those who do not realize this goal (Asmus, 1986; Cattell, Barton, and Dielman, 1972). Are the motivational factors and time for degree completion similar or different for males and females who have obtained their PhDs in music education? Using the Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation (Eccles et al., 1983), a contemporary motivational theory, to frame this quantitative pilot study, motivational factors and time to degree completion will be considered, as well as any differences that may exist between genders.

Review of Literature

Considerable literature exists concerning length of time required for doctoral students to achieve their degrees (Abedi & Benkin, 1987; Baird, 1990; Bowen & Rudenstein, 1992; Berelson, 1960; Carmichael, 1961; Evangelauf, 1989; Filteau, 1992; Fletcher and Stren, 1992; Harmon, 1978; Sheridan & Pyke, 1994). A large portion never finish (Katz, 1997; Pyke & Sheridan, 1983). The reasons for this are varied and complex (Seagram, Gould, & Pyke, 1998). Katz (1997) suggests that the biggest obstacle to this accomplishment is the dissertation process. A number of factors have been closely associated with the duration and conclusion of requirements, and most significantly for the dissertation itself (Seagram, et al., 1998). The initial

selection of the dissertation topic has been cited as a primary hurdle (Katz, 1997; Seagram, et al., 1998).

Additional challenges include: continual enrollment status, beginning the dissertation while still early in the program, not staying with the same topic, having a consistent supervisor throughout the dissertation process, cultivating a stable supervisor-student collaborative and working relationship, meeting often with a supervisor, working jointly with supervisor on other research projects (e.g. articles), and less years working in the role of graduate assistant (Seagram, et al., 1998). Furthermore, Green (1997) suggests that those dealing with issues of procrastination need to learn to implement more self-regulatory practices during the dissertation process (as opposed to more oversight by an advisor or committee) to help keep them motivated and on task to the conclusion of their degree.

Gender Differences Across Disciplines Regarding Achievement of PhDs

Differences between males and females have been a common factor to consider regarding time for achievement of doctoral degrees (Sheridan & Pyke, 1994). Tuckman, Coyle, and Bae (1990) found that females took longer than males for degree completion. Sheinin (1989) and Yeates (1991) had similar findings; however, it is unknown if these were statistically significant, as the statistical analysis was absent from these studies. Other findings report the opposite results or suggest differences are discipline-specific (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; MacMillan, 1989).

Other factors found to contribute to discrepancies between the sexes include: financial support (Berg & Ferber, 1983; Fletcher and Stren, 1992), less confidence in women versus men that likely influences one's view of future career aspirations and persistence in the program (Acker, 1977; Berg & Ferber, 1983; Cartwright, 1972; Creager, 1971; Feldman, 1974; Garai, 1968; Hoffman, 1974; Macoby, 1966), and women's view of being deficient in their abilities (Creager, 1971; Feldman, 1974). Seagram et al. (1998) suggest that a longer duration of degree completion is due, at least in some measure, to any number of inequities that females experience during doctoral work.

Many other researchers support the claim that inequities exist in the graduate experience for women as compared to men (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Butcher, 1992; Caplan, 1993; Wong & Sanders, 1982; Pyke, 1996; Sandler & Hall, 1986; The Chilly Climate Collective, 1995; Williams, 1990). This experience is referred to as the *chilly climate construct*, and includes: sexual harassment, frequency of sexist language, and denial of curriculum access, among other factors related to gender, which may contribute to slower rates of degree completion for women (Seagram, et al., 1998). As part of this climate, the scarcity of same-sex gender role models for female students has also been suggested to account for differences between the sexes since mentorship and supervision, especially during the dissertation process, are key components to timely attainment (Bargar & Mayo-Chamberlain, 1983; Bowen & Rundestine, 1992; Braun, 1990; Freeman & Loadman, 1985; Girves & Wemmerus, 1988; Godard, 1992; Hall & Sandler, 1983; Heinrich, 1991; Lyons et al., 1990; McAleese & Welsh, 1985; Seagram, et al., 1998; Woodward, 1993).

In contrast to these earlier findings, González-Moreno (2012), in a study of graduate students in arts programs, reported that though males held a higher view of their competency than females did, the rate of females continuing in the program after a three-year period was significantly higher (66.67%) than males (4.76%). González-Moreno (2012) suggests this was due to females placing a higher value on the graduate school experience itself rather than placing

their highest value in high perceptions of their competence, as males did. Pajares (2002) reported a similar finding, stating that males tended to be much bolder in their level of confidence, even if they did not possess a particular skill set. In Wigfield, Eccles, and Pintrich's (1996) report of males at younger ages, it was also suggested that boys tended toward being more self-admiring and self-assured than girls, who tended toward modesty.

Supporting these claims, Bar-Tal (1978) reported females' perceptions of their abilities to be much lower than males, and when successful, they often cited luck or external factors as the cause. Nicholls (1975) confirms these findings, with girls linking failure to low ability, yet not attributing success with high ability. Later findings of Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons (1992) note that it is the perception of efficacy that brings about steps to achievement. Pajares (2002) maintains that higher self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulation practices for girls are cultivated in homes and schools where academic skills are stressed, and students are urged to overcome challenges, whether academic or social in nature.

In the last several decades, the number of female graduate students has increased considerably, with women now comprising half of all doctoral students (Mason, et al., 2009). Implementation of these latter practices regarding slowly shifting views of girls' and women's abilities, both culturally and individually, is why, at least in part, the number of successful female doctoral students is increasing. Another large shift has occurred regarding former (male) doctoral students coming from traditional one-earner family households versus today's doctoral students, who consist of both males and females, largely from two-earner households (Mason, et al., 2009).

Seagram, et al. (1998) report an important distinction concerning the finding of the previously mentioned studies, noting that even though females indicated having many more obstacles and were more dissatisfied than men regarding the dissertation completion process, women still finished their degrees at the same rate as men. Even so, there remain genuine challenges that females face concerning doctoral experiences overall, and the dissertation process specifically (Seagram et al., 1998). One study by Hobish (1978) indicates that the dissertation process itself may be more psychologically complex for females than that experienced by males. The angst that some women have felt as a result of competing roles has, at times, been an obstacle to degree attainment (Germeroth, 1991).

In a longitudinal study of 160,000 students holding a PhD in science, social science, and humanities, conducted by several government agencies and the National Science Foundation, it was reported that in two-earner academic households, women were much more likely to defer to men when searching for academic jobs at the same time (Mason, et al., 2009). This seems to be an additional indication that many females in relationships with males (partners or married) are not only less ambitious overall than their male counterparts but also maintain a personal belief system that still largely defers to a man's career aspirations over their own, as prior studies conducted several decades ago initially reported (Acker, 1977; Creager, 1971; Feldman, 1974). Eccles (1987, 2011) affirms this prior research in the *Theoretical Model of Educational and Occupational Choice*, presupposing that cultural socialization factors related to gender at large have a prominent affect not only on the confidence of females in general, but also on their choices of coursework, perception of task value, and their career trajectory.

Motivation and Academic Achievement

Motivation related to academic achievement is “the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained” (Schunk, Meece, and Pintrich, 2008, p. 4). Graham & Weiner (2012) indicate that insight into others’ behavior can be gained by understanding the motivational concepts that drive them. A number of research studies have examined students’ self-efficacy beliefs concerning their academic abilities and its influence on learning and motivation (Schunk, 1991). Asmus (1986) confirms the influence of motivation on achievement as a longstanding fact within the psychological and educational communities, and this extends into the music education profession as well.

Learning and motivation work hand in hand, for as students’ perceptions of their abilities during the learning process increase, so too does their motivation to persist in the continued learning process (Schunk, 2015). Students with higher self-efficacy are also more apt to overcome challenges, exhibit resiliency, and approach tasks more calmly (Pajares, 1996, 2002). Additionally, when students have a strong sense of self-efficacy, self-regulation behaviors are positively affected, ultimately increasing motivation and academic achievement (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 2002; Schunk, 1984, 1989).

While motivational factors can be varied and complex (Ricco, Sabet, & Clough, 2009), Cattell, Barton, and Dielman (1972) report the importance of motivation in academic settings as accounting for 20% to 25% of student achievement. Furthermore, college students who are intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated are more likely to be learners who exhibit higher levels of self-efficacy, self-regulation, and ability to manage their resources (Dupeyrat & Marine, 2005; Duncan & McKeachie, 2005; Pintrich, 2000; Pintrich & Garcia, 1991). Regarding the obtainment of a PhD (a long-term or distal goal), students might be best served if they focus more on short-term (proximal) goals in order to stay motivated, as obtainment of these might increase self-efficacy (Pajares, 2002). The end result would be sustained motivation towards the academic achievement of degree completion.

Motivational and Gender Differences Across Disciplines

Over the last several decades, women have gained more access to opportunities in higher education, which includes more women as graduate students in doctoral programs (Mason et al., 2009). Reasons women are motivated to pursue and then obtain a PhD are varied. Evidence suggests that female graduate students were once largely seen as less ambitious than their male counterparts due to a combination of factors such as societal constraints and their personal belief systems (e.g. view that a husband’s or man’s career is the priority) (Acker, 1977; Creager, 1971; Feldman, 1974).

Success as a female graduate student once meant ‘bucking the norm,’ and she must “develop nontraditional attitudes about the proper role for women...get into and survive in the appropriate graduate school ‘channel’ that will encourage the belief that the rewards of ambition are worthwhile” (Acker, 1977, p. 297). While minimal information was available in the past regarding motivational differences between genders, factors such as “background and demographic characteristics...attitudes and personality...and... structural position in the university (e.g. subject field) and its associated experiences” (Acker, 1977, p. 286) were probable variables in determining the motivation of students, both male and female.

Bhalalusesa (1998), whose case study interviewed six women from countries outside the United States pursuing a PhD outside their home country, affirms the idea that women in other countries and cultures must also break free from cultural belief systems regarding familial roles and responsibilities in order to pursue the PhD path. Interestingly, some of the fathers (as opposed to the mothers), of the participants in this small case study, were the primary ones vying for their daughters and supporting them to aspire in academic success, often beyond their personal achievement (Bhalalusesa, 1998). In fact, the women in this study consciously promoted a different kind of role model to their daughters than their mothers had exhibited to them (Bhalalusesa, 1998), soundly affirming the role that mothers play in shaping their daughter's view of careers for women, themselves included.

Pajares and Valiante (2001) report that differences in motivational beliefs are related more to a cultural belief system that genders assume rather than actual differences existing between them. Pajares (2002) confirms these earlier findings, in that while there may be motivational differences between genders, these may be linked to personal belief systems about gender orientation (e.g. cultural roles). In addition, students' use of self-efficacy and self-regulation (directly linked to motivation/ambition) may very well be the result of prior achievement, access to course content, prejudiced responses, and varied ways of measurement and not tied to gender at all, or at least not as much as other variables (Pajares, 2002).

In a study conducted by Ostrove, Stewart, & Curtin (2011), social class, not gender, was the primary determinant for students' experiences in graduate school and future career ambition, a feeling of belonging, and outcomes for their academic perceptions of self and career aspirations. Bhalalusesa (1998) also concedes this point in her recognition that fathers promoting higher education for their daughters are ones from a higher socio-economic and educational status and view the education of their children as one of responsibility, irrespective of gender.

Bhalalusesa (1998) suggests that though the determination to commit to higher education studies may be connected to advancing in their careers, that is not the case with all, as motivational reasons may vary according to life stage, especially in connection with pursuing doctoral work. Key factors of intrinsic motivation for these women included the desire of being successful in careers and developing professionally in an autonomous way (Bhalalusea, 1998). They had to be exceptionally determined in order also to balance their desire to have and maintain a family concurrent with their PhD pursuits, and in some cases, go against family wishes (e.g. divorce) in order to reach their academic and professional goals (Bhalalusesa, 1998).

The primary reason given in a large study of women in midlife who had chosen to pursue graduate studies (both at the master's and doctoral level) was related to "concepts of security and complexity, [with] the greatest motivating factor seem[ing] to be related to the theme of security" (Carlson, 1999, p. 50). The idea of complexity could be in connection with already "demanding roles within the family and community" (Carlson, 1999, p. 50). Personal and professional challenges were also motivators to pursue graduate studies, as were issues related to change (e.g. current workplace), and the desire for personal and professional growth (Carlson, 1999).

Motivational Factors in Music Education

Reasons students have for pursuing a PhD in music education vary, just as students themselves represent a diverse population. In a small case study, two first-generation college students state their reasons as such: "to enact change in the field of music education and to fulfill

our personal ambitions” (Vasil & McCall, 2017, p. 72). Dust (2006) conducted a small-scale study on motivational factors in the pursuit of graduate studies in music education, masters and doctoral level included. Both male and female respondents indicated the exact same motivational factors, though the rankings differed, as males indicated “(a) intellectual development, (b) professional development, (c) personal development, and (d) potential for a new and satisfying career” and females indicated “(a) intellectual development, (b) personal development, and (c) potential for a new and satisfying career (d) professional development” (Dust, 2006, p. 162). Though not generalizable due to the small-scale nature of the study, the differences in the genders should be noted, and also measured against later studies by Teachout (2004a, 2004b) which indicate a few motivational factors (i.e. desire to influence future generations of music educators, love of learning and intellectual fulfillment, and particular faculty member or university) similar to the small-scale study (Dust, 2006).

In a study by Teachout (2008), doctoral students preparing to become music teacher educators cited both the rapport of the university and good relationships with faculty as being highly influential and key to the successful completion of their degrees. The desire to influence the next generation of music educators and the music education profession itself were additional factors (Teachout, 2008). The most highly influential item cited in their success, however, was the desire for teaching opportunities in a tenure-track college position (Teachout, 2008).

The literature exhibits a large number of studies related to the issue of attrition in PhD programs, particularly related to the dissertation process itself. For those who successfully finish their programs, time to completion varies both across and within disciplines and gender. This occurs for a number of reasons, some of which are complex. Time for degree completion for females has generally been shown to be longer than males, however, some studies report this as being the case only within specific disciplines.

Differences between males and females have also been noted regarding personal and professional motivation and achievement and potential barriers to success. Personal belief systems affecting self-efficacy have also been shown to impact self-regulation and resource management, and ultimately motivation that yields academic achievement. This is in addition to discrepancies in the doctoral student experience itself. While differences between males and females are evident, not as clear is the effect that personal belief systems and perceptions alongside cultural biases play into supporting or serving as a hindrance to success.

Theoretical Framework

Motivation resulting in action has at its core a longing for need fulfillment; achievement motivation as related to the educational setting is linked to learning and student needs (Schunk, 2015). A large amount of research has been conducted in the areas of motivational theories, including its classical and contemporary application. One well-established cognitive process theory of motivation is Atkinson’s *Expectancy-Value Theory* from 1964 (Schunk, 2015). Contemporary expectancy-value theories are based on the Atkinson model that veers in an opposite direction from theories focused on stimuli and response, expanding beyond Maslow’s *Theory of Human Motivation and Hierarchy of Needs* (Maslow, 1943) and emphasizing a more intricate cognitive process (Schunk, 2015).

Atkinson’s model relates components of “achievement performance, persistence, and choice” to personal beliefs about expectancy and task value (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p. 118). Essentially, this means that behavior is dependent upon the expectancy of a particular outcome

linked to performing a specific behavior and the value placed on that outcome; thus, if an outcome is valued and it is believed that it can be achieved, motivation to action will be the result (Schunk, 2015).

The Expectancy-Value Model, a contemporary motivational theory developed by Eccles, Wigfield, and their colleagues (Eccles, 1984; Eccles et al., 1983; Wigfield, 1994; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992), delves deeper than the original model. It provides contrast and complexity in two primary ways: first, in its explanation of both expectancy and task, including psychological, social, and cultural factors; and second, in the relation of values as positive rather than a negative, if/then relation (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Whereas expectancy and value are presumed to impact performance, persistence, and task choice, expectancy and value are influenced by general beliefs about ability specific to tasks such as: “perceptions of competence...difficulty of different tasks, and individuals’ goals and self-schema” (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p. 18).

There are influencing factors upon these as well including: “individuals’ perceptions of other people’s attitudes and expectations on them, by their affective memories, and by their own interpretations of their previous achievement outcomes” in conjunction with the personal awareness of task and explanation of outcomes influenced by a number of other factors such as belief systems, cultural environment, and history itself (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p. 18). While the prior expectancy model of Atkinson focuses on expectations in outcomes, the newer model of Eccles et al. centers on expectations of personal efficacy, which aligns with the earlier thoughts of Bandura (1997) on self-efficacy (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

The four aspects of task-value as determined by Eccles (1983) are: attainment value (personal value placed on doing well on the task), intrinsic value (enjoyment received from the performance of the task or personal interest in the subject), utility value (how the task aligns with personal goals), and cost (essential component to value that assesses the cost with value of the benefits). All of these components combine to create what is known as the Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Using this theoretical framework, motivational factors as connected to task-value, and in conjunction with gender differences, will be considered concerning doctoral students in music education who are successful in obtaining their PhDs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this pilot study is to determine what effect motivation has on music education doctoral students in the completion of their degrees, and if there are motivational differences between males and females who were successful in this achievement.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What effect does motivation have on music education doctoral students in the completion of their degrees?
2. Are there motivational differences between male and female music education doctoral students concerning the completion of their degrees?
3. Is there a difference in the amount of time it takes for female music education doctoral students to complete their degrees as compared to male students?

Method

A descriptive design was utilized for this study. Evidence was obtained through Qualtrics using an online questionnaire. Qualtrics and SPSS were used to analyze survey responses. Approval for the study was secured through the Institutional Review Board.

Participants

The sample comprised 12 former doctoral students in music education from universities in Ohio who successfully completed their degree programs within the last 15 years (2003-2018). Participants include six males and six females. Fifty percent of participants received their doctor of philosophy degrees within the last three years.

Instrument

Data was collected using a structured survey instrument based on a questionnaire, *Student Motivation in Graduate Music Programmes: An Examination of Personal and Environmental Factors* (González-Moreno, 2012), designed by Patricia A. González-Moreno, Professor of Music Education at the Autonomous University of Chihuahua, Mexico. The original survey instrument includes a combination of 25 close-ended, open-ended, and 5-point Likert scale questions designed to investigate the views of postgraduate students in the arts, including both masters and doctoral levels. The survey was translated from Spanish to English using Google Translate. It was then further adapted to omit or alter initial questions not applicable for present participants. Deleted questions include numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 in the initial “General Information” and “Teaching Experience” sections.

All other survey questions remain true to the original design, apart from translation. Additional questions were created to replace or alter those deleted and to focus on information relating to participants with a PhD in music education only (See Appendix). All responses were treated as confidential, and no personally identifiable information was collected as part of the survey. Validity was strengthened through a review of the translated and adapted questionnaire by a known researcher in the field of music education in addition to the original design by a published researcher in the profession.

The initial portion of the survey utilizes a close-ended response format and examines the following: gender; marital status; number of children; work status during completion of the dissertation; the number of months to complete coursework, dissertation, and total time in program; if students had taken a break from coursework or dissertation work, and if so, length and reason(s) why; and financial support. The second portion of the survey examines the number of years of teaching experience, specific areas worked as a music educator (general music, choral, instrumental, other), and educational levels taught.

The next portion of the survey deals with concepts related to motivational factors along with student perceptions surrounding various aspects of the graduate setting. This includes 10 questions utilizing a 5-point Likert scale (Questions 16-24, 26). In addition, three open-ended responses (Questions 14, 15, and 25) are included to further examine reasons for entering a doctoral program in music education, reasons for completing a doctoral program in music education, and what factors negatively affected the academic experience in the doctoral program.

A letter stating the purpose of the study, along with an invitation and link for consent/non-consent to complete the survey, was emailed to three graduate coordinators of universities offering a doctorate in music education in the state of Ohio. Coordinators were asked to forward the invitation and link to former doctoral students who had successfully completed a PhD in music education in their respective programs within the last 15 years. A reminder email was sent to coordinators three weeks following the first request. Two coordinators initially responded stating that they would forward the invitation and survey link. The third coordinator responded that potential participants could not be reached due to lack of available contact information; additionally, it was against university policy to communicate with former students for this purpose.

Results

A total of 12 individuals agreed to take part in the study. It is unknown to the researcher what percentage of potential participants this includes, as graduate coordinators, not the researcher, were responsible for the distribution of the survey to former PhD students. This sample includes an equal number of males ($n=6$) and females ($n=6$), with 50% of participants completing their degrees since 2015.

Of the 12 respondents, 67% of participants (four females and four males) worked full-time while completing doctoral work. One female and one male combined working and being a graduate assistant, one female worked as a graduate assistant only, and one male did not work at all. Only one of the participants took a break from coursework at all during completion of the degree. This was a 9-month break taken by a married male who worked full-time and also had four children. (See Table 1). All those working full-time were married, with the exception of two participants; one was single and one listed *other*, so the specific status is uncertain. Of those not working full-time, two were married and one was in the process of divorcing (See Table 2). Six participants had children which includes: three males with four children each; one female with one child; one female with two children; and one female with three children (See Table 3).

The average time of degree completion for all participants was 74.5 months for females and 61.5 months for males, with a combined average of 68 months (See Table 4). (The average amount of time for those working full-time to finish PhD completion was 85 months for females and 73.5 months for males.)

Table 1. Work status during completion of the dissertation

CATEGORY	MALES	FEMALES
Working full-time	4	4
Combination of working and graduate assistant	1	1
Graduate assistant only	0	1
Did not work	1	0
Took a break while in doctoral program	1	0

Table 2. Marital status during completion of the dissertation

CATEGORY	MALES	FEMALES
Single	1	1
Married	4	4
Divorced	0	0
Other-unnamed	0	1
Other-Separated pending finalization of divorce	1	0

Table 3. Number of children during completion of the dissertation

CATEGORY	MALES	FEMALES
Children	3	3
One Child	0	1
Two Children	0	1
Three Children	0	1
Four Children	3	0

Table 4. Number of months for PhD completion

CATEGORY	Average # of months for PhD completion
Males	61.5 months
Females	74.5 months
All Participants Combined	68 months

*For those working full-time (67%), the average was 85 months for females and 73.5 months for males.

Participants were asked the following question related to personal value: *How important were each of the following factors in your decision to continue in your doctoral studies through completion of the program?* and rank each of the 11 choices using a 5-point Likert scale. Two areas scored equally as the top choice by 100% of survey responders. These include: *Interest in teaching future music educators or other professionals in music* and *Interest in teaching at the university level*. Four areas scored equally as respondents' second-highest answer at 62.50%. These include: *Desire to learn and develop intellectually; I wanted to learn more about my area of interest; Interest in obtaining a higher university degree; and Interest in improving my teaching practice*. Additional categories include *Interest in participating in an artistic and intellectual environment increased* (50%); *Interest in learning from expert music educators and academics* (37.50%); *Interest in responding to a particular problem in music education* (12.50%); *Interest in research* (0%); and *Interest in participating in research projects with experts in the world* (0%) (See Table 5).

Table 5. Personal factors in continuing doctoral studies through program completion

CATEGORY	PERCENT OF RESPONDERS
Interest in teaching future music educators or other professionals in music	100%
Interest in teaching at the university level	100%
Desire to learn and develop intellectually	62.50%
I wanted to learn more about my area of interest	62.50%
Interest in obtaining a higher university degree	62.50%
Interest in improving my teaching practice	62.50%
Interest in participating in an artistic and intellectual environment increased	50%
Interest in learning from expert music educators and academics	37.50%
Interest in responding to a particular problem in music education	12.50%
Interest in research	0%
Interest in participating in research projects with experts in the world	0%

Participants were asked the following question related to professional value: *How important were each of the following factors in your decision to continue in your doctoral studies through completion of the program?* and rank each of the six choices using a 5-point Likert scale. The top choice by 75% of responders was *Develop my professional career*. Two areas scored equally as respondents' second highest answer at 50%. These include: *Expand the impact of my work as a music educator* and *Opportunity to contribute to the music education profession*. Additional categories include *Frustration with current state of music education in different educational levels* (25%); *Opportunity to increase knowledge resulting from research in my specific interest* (12.50%); and *Importance of disseminating knowledge and applying it in the field of music education* (12.50%) (See Table 6).

Table 6. Professional factors in continuing doctoral studies through program completion

CATEGORY	PERCENT OF RESPONDERS
Develop my professional career	75%
Expand the impact of my work as a music educator	50%
Opportunity to contribute to the music education profession	50%
Frustration with current state of music education in different educational levels	25%
Opportunity to increase knowledge resulting from research in my specific interest	12.50%
Importance of disseminating knowledge and applying it in the field of music education	12.50%

Participants were asked the following relating to environmental value: *How important were each of the following factors in your decision to continue in your doctoral studies through completion of the program?* and rank each of the 9 choices using a 5-point Likert scale. The top choice by 75% of responders was *The support and conviction of family, friends and/or colleagues*. The area scoring second highest was *Geographical location of the university* at 50% and third was *The support and guidance of teachers and advisors* at 37.50%. Four areas were equal at 12.50% and include: *The reputation of the university*; *The reputation of the program*; *The reputation and experience of teachers*; and *Friends or acquaintances who have obtained a doctorate*. Two categories elicited a 0% response rate. These include: *The quality of spaces and university infrastructure* and *Collaboration and support among program partners* (See Table 7).

Table 7. Environmental factors in continuing doctoral studies through program completion

CATEGORY	PERCENT OF RESPONDERS
The support and conviction of family, friends and/or colleagues	75%
Geographical location of the university	50%
The support and guidance of teachers and advisors	37.50%
The reputation of the university	12.50%
The reputation of the program	12.50%
The reputation and experience of teachers	12.50%
Friends or acquaintances who have obtained a doctorate	12.50%
The quality of spaces and university infrastructure	0%
Collaboration and support among program partners	0%

Gender differences

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the amount of time spent on PhD degree completion for males and females. No significant difference (sig.=.05) was found in scores for males (M=54.00, SD=22.58) and females (M=62.00, SD=19.08); $t(5) = -.493$, $p = .64$, (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference= -8.00, 95% CI: -49.72 to 33.72) was moderate (eta squared = .06).

Open-Ended Survey Response

Differences were found in primary and secondary motivational factors for continuing doctoral work until degree completion in the open-ended response section. Participants were given the opportunity to respond to three questions using an open-ended response format. A maximum of three reasons was permitted, listed in order of importance from most to least important.

Participants were asked to state the most important reasons why they decided to enter a doctoral program in music education. Five males and three females responded to this question. The most recurrent theme in male responses was a desire to work in higher education. The most common answer for females related to being professionally challenged or broadening their perspective, followed by a PhD being necessary to obtain a position or tenure in their current position. Other common answers for males included professional advancement relating to salary schedule in current position or a collegiate position or future financial security.

Other reasons stated by males and/or females include: the desire to deepen knowledge or continue learning in an area of passion, to get back into the college/university environment as a student, to guide and teach future and/or practicing music educators, to set a good example of continuing education for current students, to reach personal goals, and, on a rather humorous note, to be able to wear a fancy gown and hood (See Table 8).

Table 8. Reasons to Enter a Doctoral Program

CATEGORY	MALES	FEMALES
To work in higher education	5	
To be personally challenged or perspective broadened	0	2
Professional advancement relating to salary schedule in current position or a collegiate position or future financial security	2	0
To deepen knowledge or continue learning in an area of passion	2	0
To get back into the college/university environment as a student	0	1
To guide and teach future and/or practicing music educators	1	0
To set a good example of continuing education to current students	0	1
Necessary to obtain a position in higher education or tenure current position	0	2
Wanted the professional challenge	0	1
“To be able to wear a fancy gown and hood!”	1	0
Perception that PhD is a more substantial achievement than the DMA	1	0

Secure financial assistance for my children to go to college	1	0
Personal goal to earn a PhD	1	0

Participants were asked to state the most important factors that affected their decision to complete their doctoral program. Five males and two females responded to this question. The most frequent response by male participants as well as one female participant related to a strong desire to complete something that was started, aversion to failure/giving up, desire to complete because a lot had been sacrificed during doctoral work, and/or demonstrating completion to family, friends, and students.

Further reasons male participants cited included: they could apply for higher ed./collegiate positions, financial considerations or family's financial well-being, value of knowledge gained during coursework, satisfaction of personal goals, self-fulfillment as a first-generation college student whose parents had very little education but placed great value on education, and finally, on a lighter note, the "tons of money I would make as a college professor...couldn't get through it without laughing." One other reason cited by a female participant was that the PhD was required for tenure in her current position (See Table 9).

Table 9. Factors Affecting Decision to Complete Doctoral Program

CATEGORY	MALES	FEMALES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to complete something that was started/prove that I had "what it took" to finish • Complete because a lot had been sacrificed during doctoral work • Demonstrate completion to others • Not giving up/aversion to failure 	5	1
Could apply for higher education/collegiate positions	2	0
Financial consideration and/or family's future well-being	2	0
Value of knowledge gained during coursework	1	0
Satisfaction of personal goals	1	0
Self-fulfillment as a first-generation college student whose parents had very little education but placed great value on education	1	0
Required for tenure in current position	0	1
"tons of money I would make as a college professor...couldn't get through it without laughing."	1	0

Participants were asked to state the most important factors that had negatively impacted their academic experience in the doctoral program. Though this question does not directly ask about motivation and/or length of time to degree completion, the responses might provide insight into possible barriers to degree completion. Three males and two females responded to this question. Three male responses included: unprepared professions; changes to degree program while I was completing it (but this was at most a minor inconvenience); and the music education faculty was in flux during the progress of my program, and each new adviser had a different idea

of what my dissertation should look like. Four female responses included lack of communication between professors, certain incompetent faculty, departure of advisor, and instability of program (see Table 10).

Table 10. Factors most negatively impacting academic experience in the doctoral program

CATEGORY	MALES	FEMALES
Unprepared professors; certain incompetent professors	1	1
Instability of program; Changes to the degree program while I was completing it, “but this was at most a minor inconvenience”	1	1
The music education faculty was in flux during the progress of my program, and each new advisor had a different idea of what my dissertation should look like.	1	0
Lack of communication between professors	0	1
Departure of advisor	0	1

Discussion

This study attempts to shed light onto the motivational factors and gender differences of male and female music education doctoral students in the completion of their degrees. The results of the survey indicate that females took longer for this achievement than males. This supports prior research by Tuckman, Coyle, Bae (1990), Sheinin (1989), and Yeates (1991), but is in contrast to findings of Bowen & Rudenstine (1992) and MacMillan (1989), who suggested differences were gender-specific. Though gender differences were found regarding the amount of time to degree completion, these were not statistically significant.

Regarding factors related to continuing in a doctoral program until degree attainment, the following primary motivational factors of participants were revealed: *personal-interest in teaching future music educators* and *Interest in teaching at the university level*; *professional-develop my professional career*; and *environmental-the support and conviction of family, friends and/or colleagues*. Though gender distinction could not be ascertained on questions concerning *factors in the decision to continue in doctoral studies through completion of the program*, gender differences were found on questions regarding the *most important reasons for entering a doctoral program in music education*, *most important factors affecting the decision to complete their doctoral program*, and *factors most negatively impacting their academic experience in the doctoral program*.

The primary motivational factor for males in deciding to enter a doctoral program was *a desire to work in higher education*, followed by *professional advancement relating to salary schedule in current position, collegiate position, or future financial security*. These findings align to some extent with those by Dust (2006) who reported the *potential for a new and satisfying career* as the fourth top reason to pursue a graduate degree (master’s or doctorate) for males.

Teachout (2008) reported *teaching opportunities in a tenure-track college position* as the top motivation for degree completion (not initially entering a program), though results were not gender specific in that study. The primary factor for females was *being professionally challenged or perspective broadened*, followed by *necessary to obtain a position in higher education or tenure in current position*. Dust (2006) confirms these findings reporting *personal development*

as the second top reason to pursue a graduate degree (master's or doctorate) for females and *professional development* as the fourth top reason.

These differences might be viewed as extrinsically motivating factors for males versus intrinsically motivating factors for females. Factors of *professional and personal development* were also found to be key intrinsic motivators of females in studies by Bhalalusesa (1998) and Carlson (1999). Though prior research suggests intrinsically motivated students may lean more towards higher levels of self-efficacy, self-regulation, and resource management (Dupeyrat & Marine, 2005; Duncan & McKeachie, 2005; Pintrich, 2000; Pintrich & Garcia, 1991), the findings in this study may or may not serve to contradict this in some measure due to the faster degree completion rates by males, who appear to primarily be extrinsically motivated regarding reasons to enter a doctoral program initially.

The primary motivational factor for males in deciding to complete their doctoral program was a desire to *demonstrate completion*. One other female also expressed this as a strong motivating factor, and another indicated that her motivation was related to a requirement for tenure. Since fewer females than males answered this question, a primary motivation for females was not readily apparent.

There was no single primary factor that stood out for males or females as having negatively impacted their academic experience in the doctoral program. The common answers concerning *unprepared/incompetent professors*, *instability of program*, *lack of communication between professors*, and *departure of advisor* seem to indicate an overriding theme related to a disparity in doctoral program design and even faculty at times. This might be cause for concern more than appears on the surface, as a previous study by Teachout (2008) indicates *reputation of and connection with faculty/university* as being key factors to successful degree completion (p. 15).

It is uncertain as to the degree of negative impact these factors had on these particular participants in relation to motivation and timing of degree completion. It is apparent, however, that these successful PhD students have high levels of self-efficacy, resulting in high levels of motivation, as seen in their ability to persevere despite challenges (with the program and/or faculty), just as previous research indicates (Pajares, 1996, 2002). In addition, their motivation ultimately leads them to academic achievement, which is confirmed by Bandura (1986), Pajares (2002), and Schunk (1984, 1989). In this case, the ultimate academic achievement is the obtainment of a PhD.

Limitations

Though pilot studies are designed on a small-scale as a precursor to larger ones, it is important to note this as a limitation in the current study. Though all participants are representative of the main target group, which is students who have completed their PhDs in music education within the last 15 years, those responding were all from universities in Ohio, which is a limit to the study. In addition, no potential participants from one of the three universities in Ohio were included due to particular university constraints that did not allow for alumni to be contacted for research purposes. Data from the third institution may have yielded different results from current findings or increased the statistical strength of findings in differences between the genders.

The last limitation is regarding technical and survey access issues with the Qualtrics survey itself. Though a preview of the survey was determined to be seemingly without error by

the researcher, it was determined that there was indeed a problem which did not allow the first few participants to access the *multiple answers* portion of a particular open-ended text response. This was made known to the researcher after a graduate coordinator at one of the universities sent an email to the researcher stating that a participant had indicated there was a slight issue with the survey. It is unclear if access to other questions may have also been an issue, as there were not as many female responses on a few questions in the survey. There also appeared to be some confusion as to whether summer months should or should not be included when listing the number of months for coursework, dissertation, and degree completion. The researcher discovered this after one of the participants mentioned this in an open-ended text response.

Conclusion

This pilot study has endeavored to determine the effect motivation has on music education doctoral students in the completion of their degrees and if gender differences exist regarding motivation and the amount of time it takes to accomplish this substantial achievement. In this study, differences were discovered in the time to completion as well as motivational factors, and though females took longer than males to complete their PhDs, this difference was not statistically significant. Insight was gained, however, into the motivational factors and gender differences of females and males who were able to complete their PhDs in music education and the timeframe in which they accomplished this task.

The top factors for continuing doctoral studies through completion for all participants (non-gender-specific) include the following: personal- *interest in teaching future music educators or other professionals in music* and *Interest in teaching at the university level* (chosen by all participants), professional - *develop my professional career* (chosen by the majority of participants), and environmental - *the support and guidance of teachers and advisors* (chosen by the majority of participants).

As noted in the literature review, while motivational differences are noted between the genders, well-known theorists cite environmental and personal factors to be the primary source for these differences (Pajares, 2002). The top answer males reported for entering a doctoral program related to a desire to work in higher education, followed by responses relating to increased salary, financial security, and/or advancement. The top female response centered on being professionally challenged or perspective broadened, followed by the need to have a PhD to obtain a position or tenure.

The top response by males regarding factors affecting their decisions to complete the doctoral program related to the strong desire to complete something they had started, aversion to failure/giving up, and other closely related expressions of this idea. There was no top response by females, as none responded to this question. One female did cite the same top reason as males, and another cited that it was needed for tenure.

No differences were discovered between genders concerning factors negatively affecting their academic experience while in their respective doctoral programs, as males and females both cited issues with perceived incompetence or unpreparedness with faculty and instability of program and new advisors related to this, in addition to lack of communication between professors.

Results from this study indicate that while there are some commonalities between the genders as to motivational factors, there are also distinct differences. In addition, the amount of time it takes for females to complete their PhDs remains longer than males, just as a number of

studies have indicated. Even so, there is much more to discover about the motivational factors and time to completion of successful music education PhD students as well as differences between genders, and future large-scale studies would aid in this effort.

One of the most surprising findings in this study was the lack of personal or professional importance participants placed on research in the completion of their doctoral programs. The factors negatively affecting students' academic experience may be the key to solving this mystery. Could it be that negative perceptions of faculty and programs, including lack of quality working relationships with professors, impact students' education in such a way that they do not understand research to be a standard component both in doctoral studies and in future professorial work? It might be valuable to investigate the correlation between students' perceptions of the importance of research in relation to their perceptions of faculty, programs, and communication between professors. Other topics to consider in future research might include an evaluation of gender differences related to personal belief systems and their effect on self-efficacy and achievement in music education doctoral students and music education faculty.

While this study gave an opportunity for important motivational factors and gender differences regarding successful PhD scholars in music education to be recognized, at least on a small scale, much more insight is needed in order to fully understand the link between motivation and academic achievement, in this discipline specifically. In this way, graduate program coordinators might better design their programs to align in such a way as to promote success for more students in the future. As the number of female graduate students has risen in recent years and may increase in the future, it is essential that differing motivational needs be addressed by program coordinators, with the goal of creating programs that lead to higher success rates for music education doctoral programs.

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Appendix

Questionnaire for Postgraduate Doctoral Students in Music Education

*Translated and adapted from a survey in “Student Motivation in Graduate Music Programmes: An Examination of Personal and Environmental Factors” (González-Moreno, 2012).

General Information

1. Gender: Male Female
 2. Year that you obtained your PhD in Music Education: _____
 3. Marital Status during completion of dissertation:
 Single Married Divorced Other _____
 4. Number of children during completion of dissertation: _____
 5. Work status while completing dissertation:
 Full-time
 Part-time
 Worked as graduate assistant only
 A combination of working as a graduate assistant and/or working either full-time or part-time
(For example: One year of dissertation work may have been spent as a graduate assistant while another year may have been spent working full-time)
 Did not work (Full-time or part-time student only)
 6. Number of months to complete *coursework* (before beginning dissertation): _____
 7. Number of months to complete *dissertation* (after coursework was completed): _____
 8. Total number of months to complete doctoral program from beginning to end? _____
 9. Did you ever take a break from coursework or dissertation work after entering the program?
 Yes No
If you answered yes, how many months were you not actively enrolled in coursework or dissertation work after entering the doctoral program, and why did you take a break (e.g. medical reasons, financial reasons, other)?
No. of months not active enrolled: _____
Reason(s): Medical Financial Other _____
 10. Was financial support obtained for the completion of your doctoral studies? Yes No
-

Teaching experience

11. Number of years of music teaching experience: _____
 12. Areas in which you have worked as a music educator (check all that apply):
 General music
 Instrumental music
 Choral music
 Other: _____
 13. Educational levels in which you have worked as a music educator (check all that apply):
 Preschool
 Primary (K-2)
 Intermediate (3-5)
 Middle school (6-8)
 High school (9-12)
 Higher education (undergraduate level)
 Higher education (graduate level)
 Other: _____
-

Personal and Professional Interests

14. What were the most important reasons why you decided to enter a doctoral program in music education?

(List a maximum of 3 reasons in order of importance, 1=most important, 3=least important)

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

15. What were the most important factors that affected your decision to complete your doctoral program?

(List a maximum of 3 reasons in order of importance, 1= most important, 3= least important)

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

16. How important were each of the following factors in your decision to continue in your doctoral studies through completion of the program?

(1=Not Important At All, 5=Very Important)

Desire to learn and develop intellectually	1	2	3	4	5
I wanted to learn more about my area of interest	1	2	3	4	5
Interest in participating in an artistic and intellectual environment increased	1	2	3	4	5
Interest in learning from expert music educators and academics	1	2	3	4	5
Interest in obtaining a higher university degree	1	2	3	4	5
Interest in improving my teaching practice	1	2	3	4	5
Interest in teaching future music educators or other professionals in music	1	2	3	4	5
Interest in teaching at the university level	1	2	3	4	5
Interest in research	1	2	3	4	5
Interest in responding to a particular problem in music education	1	2	3	4	5
Interest in participating in research projects with experts in the field	1	2	3	4	5

Usefulness of Doctoral Program to Purposes

17. How useful do you consider your doctoral program to have been in regard to the following purposes?

(1=Not Useful At All, 5=Very Useful)

Personal development	1	2	3	4	5
The improvement of my professional practice in general	1	2	3	4	5
Applicability of the courses to my teaching practice	1	2	3	4	5
To obtain an academic position upon completion of degree	1	2	3	4	5
A future increase in my income	1	2	3	4	5
As a means to develop my skills in investigation	1	2	3	4	5
As a means to develop my management skills in the field of music education	1	2	3	4	5

Importance of Factors to Continue in Doctoral Program

18. How important were each of the following factors in your decision to continue in your doctoral studies through completion of the program?

(1=Not Important At All, 5=Very Important)

Develop my professional career	1	2	3	4	5
Expand the impact of my work as a music educator	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunity to contribute to the music education profession	1	2	3	4	5
Frustration with current state of music education in different educational levels	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunity to increase knowledge resulting from research in my specific interest	1	2	3	4	5
Importance of disseminating knowledge and applying it in the field of music education	1	2	3	4	5

Cost factors

19. How much did each of the following factors affect you during your doctoral studies?

(1=Very Little, 5=Very Much)

Economic cost of the program	1	2	3	4	5
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Time needed to do research and write the dissertation	1	2	3	4	5
Family responsibilities (being a mother/father; spouse; other)	1	2	3	4	5
Reduction of income while working to obtaining the degree	1	2	3	4	5
Accumulation of debts	1	2	3	4	5
Anxiety in relation to giving up my current job	1	2	3	4	5
Detriment of my development as a musician due to academic work	1	2	3	4	5

Self-perception of Competence and Skills

20. How competent do you feel performing each of the following activities?

(1=Not Competent At All, 5=Very Competent)

Teaching at the university level	1	2	3	4	5
Teaching at the elementary and/or secondary level	1	2	3	4	5
Searching for information	1	2	3	4	5
Reading and understanding of academic/scientific documents	1	2	3	4	5
Analysis and synthesis of information	1	2	3	4	5
Writing in general	1	2	3	4	5
Writing scientific articles	1	2	3	4	5
Presentation of information orally	1	2	3	4	5
Collaborative work	1	2	3	4	5
Preparation of proposals	1	2	3	4	5
Project management	1	2	3	4	5

Confidence in Abilities

21. How confident do you currently feel to satisfactorily perform in the following activities as a result of your completion of the doctoral program?

(1=Very Little Confidence, 5=Very Confident)

As a musician/performer	1	2	3	4	5
As an academic/professor	1	2	3	4	5
As a researcher	1	2	3	4	5
As a collaborator in research and/or educational projects	1	2	3	4	5
As a project manager	1	2	3	4	5
As speaker / lecturer	1	2	3	4	5

Perception of Task Difficulty

22. How difficult do you consider the following tasks?

(1=Not Difficult At All, 5=Very Difficult)

Professional practice as a music education professor (in general)	1	2	3	4	5
Conducting teaching activities (in general)	1	2	3	4	5
Conducting classes at the university level	1	2	3	4	5
Conducting research	1	2	3	4	5
Performing the search and synthesis of information	1	2	3	4	5
Performing statistical analysis	1	2	3	4	5
Performing qualitative information analysis	1	2	3	4	5
Writing a dissertation or other type of research reports	1	2	3	4	5
Writing academic articles	1	2	3	4	5
Verbal presentations (e.g. speaker at conferences)	1	2	3	4	5
Planning, organization and execution of projects	1	2	3	4	5
Fundraising for projects (educational, research, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Planning, organization and execution of projects	1	2	3	4	5

Environmental factors

23. How important were each of the following factors in your decision to continue in your doctoral studies through completion of the program?

(1=Not Important At All, 5=Very Important)

The support and conviction of family, friends and / or colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
The reputation of the university	1	2	3	4	5
The reputation of the program	1	2	3	4	5
The reputation and experience of teachers	1	2	3	4	5
Geographical location of the university	1	2	3	4	5
The quality of spaces and university infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5
Friends or acquaintances who have obtained a doctorate	1	2	3	4	5
Collaboration and support among program partners	1	2	3	4	5
The support and guidance of teachers and advisors	1	2	3	4	5

24. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)

At the beginning of the doctorate program, I received a detailed academic orientation	1	2	3	4	5
I received advice frequently regarding my academic and professional interests	1	2	3	4	5
The requirements and expectations of the program were clearly defined in writing and/or on web pages and reinforced through conversations with each doctoral student	1	2	3	4	5
The program has a collective intellectual and social life	1	2	3	4	5
Social and cultural events were promoted to establish links between doctoral program participants	1	2	3	4	5
Personally, I actively participated in the social and cultural activities promoted in the doctoral program.	1	2	3	4	5
New students are quickly integrated into the social and cultural activities	1	2	3	4	5
There are mechanisms to ensure collaboration between beginner and advanced doctoral students	1	2	3	4	5
The departmental culture seems to say "join our family" instead of saying "do your job and graduate"	1	2	3	4	5
There is a balance between support and competition between graduate students	1	2	3	4	5

25. What were the three factors that most negatively impacted your academic experience in the doctoral program?

(List a maximum of 3 reasons in order of importance; 1=most important, 3=least important)

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

26. How negatively did the following factors affect your academic experience?

(1=Very little, 5=Very much)

Lack of facilities and university infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5
Frequent distractions and interruptions for the adequate performance of academic activities	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of family support	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of sufficient support from the faculty, due to my own work quality and/or work ethic	1	2	3	4	5
Inadequate communication with professors and/or advisors	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of collaboration and communication between colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
Being away from the university and/or advisors during dissertation preparation and the carrying out of research	1	2	3	4	5
Complying with the academic requirements while also maintaining a part-time or full-time job	1	2	3	4	5
Pressure in my current job to obtain the doctorate degree	1	2	3	4	5

The job responsibilities of my current position	1	2	3	4	5
Difficulty adjusting to the student role	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you very much for your help!
