









Interest Among Master's Degree Students and Graduates in Earning a Doctoral Degree in Leadership

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-  Universities must understand the needs of the marketplace and the needs of students
 -  Universities have limited resources (time and money) for advertising and recruiting
 -  In order to effectively allocate their resources, universities need to know students':
 -  attitudes, preferences, motivations and obstacles

Problem Statement




Investigate the extent to which current master's degree students and those already holding a master's degree are interested in earning a doctoral degree, and the characteristics that affect one's interests, in order to recommend steps to universities for the effective stewardship of their resources.



With special interest in a doctoral degree in Leadership.

Purpose Statement

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- 🐯 **First PhD in the US: Yale, 1861** (Geiger, 1986)
 - 🐯 **First EdD in the US: Harvard, 1921** (Kot & Hendel, 2012)
 - 🐯 **The National Science Foundation recognizes 48 doctoral degrees as equivalent to the PhD** (Kot & Hendel, 2012)

Literature Review



Three main reasons why professional doctorates emerged (Bourner, Bowden & Laing, 2001; Fenge, 2009; Maxwell, 2003)



More relevant for practitioners than the PhD



Employment opportunities outside of academia



The emergence and growth of the information/knowledge economy



Students looked for doctoral programs that were structured to fit their lives (Wellington & Sikes, 2006)

Literature Review



Comparing the EdD and PhD

Course Content and Requirements (Eddy & Rao, 2009)

- EdD used internships and cohort model

Dissertation (Nelson and Coorough, 1994)

- EdD – survey instrument; PhD – experimental design
- PhD – more multivariate statistics
- EdD – oriented to professional practice


Literature Review



Ethical Leadership

-  **Many people perceive MBA students as unethical**
(Castiglia & Nunez, 2010)
-  **Leadership was the most important issue facing businesses** (Schwartz, Bersin & Pelster, 2014)
-  **Employers rated communication skills, interpersonal skills, and leadership skills as most important**
(Eberhardt, McGee & Moser, 1997)

Literature Review

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- RQ1. To what extent are master's degree students/ graduates interested in pursuing a doctoral degree?
- RQ2. What features do master's degree students/ graduates look for in a doctoral program?
- RQ3. What are the obstacles for master's degree students/ graduates in pursuing a doctoral degree?
- RQ4. What factors predict interest in pursuing a doctoral degree, especially in the area of Leadership?

Research Questions

- 🐯 Examined the size of the market for doctoral education
- 🐯 Surveyed potential doctoral students rather than those already in a doctoral program
- 🐯 Examined differences in potential doctoral students based on field and type of degree

Study Significance




 **Survey (online)**

 **Convenience sample**

 **Anonymous**



 **Quantitative analyses**

 Descriptive statistics, chi-square analyses, multiple regressions

Study Design

Institution	Emails Sent	Responses	Response Rate
Avila University	Unknown	36	
MNU	507	51	10.1%
Nazarene Clergy	909	165	18.2%
NTS	None	67	
ONU	2,888	502	17.4%
Penn State University	Unknown	42	
Other	None	18	
No response (missing)		53	
Total		934	

Study Participants

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- 🧠 **Section 1: Level of interest in various doctoral degrees**
 - 🧠 3 questions using Likert scales
 - 🧠 **Section 2: No *interest* in any doctoral degree**
 - 🧠 5 statements using Likert scales
 - 🧠 **Section 3: At least *a little interest* in any doctoral degree**
 - 🧠 Attitudes—21 statements using Likert scales (Brewer & Brewer, 2012)
 - 🧠 Preferences—20 statements using Likert scales (Davis & McCarthy, 2005)
 - 🧠 Motivations and obstacles—17 statements using Likert scales (Forray & Goodnight, 2014)
 - 🧠 **Demographics: age, work status, class load, field of study, and university/organization affiliation**

Survey Instrument

Reliability Test Results

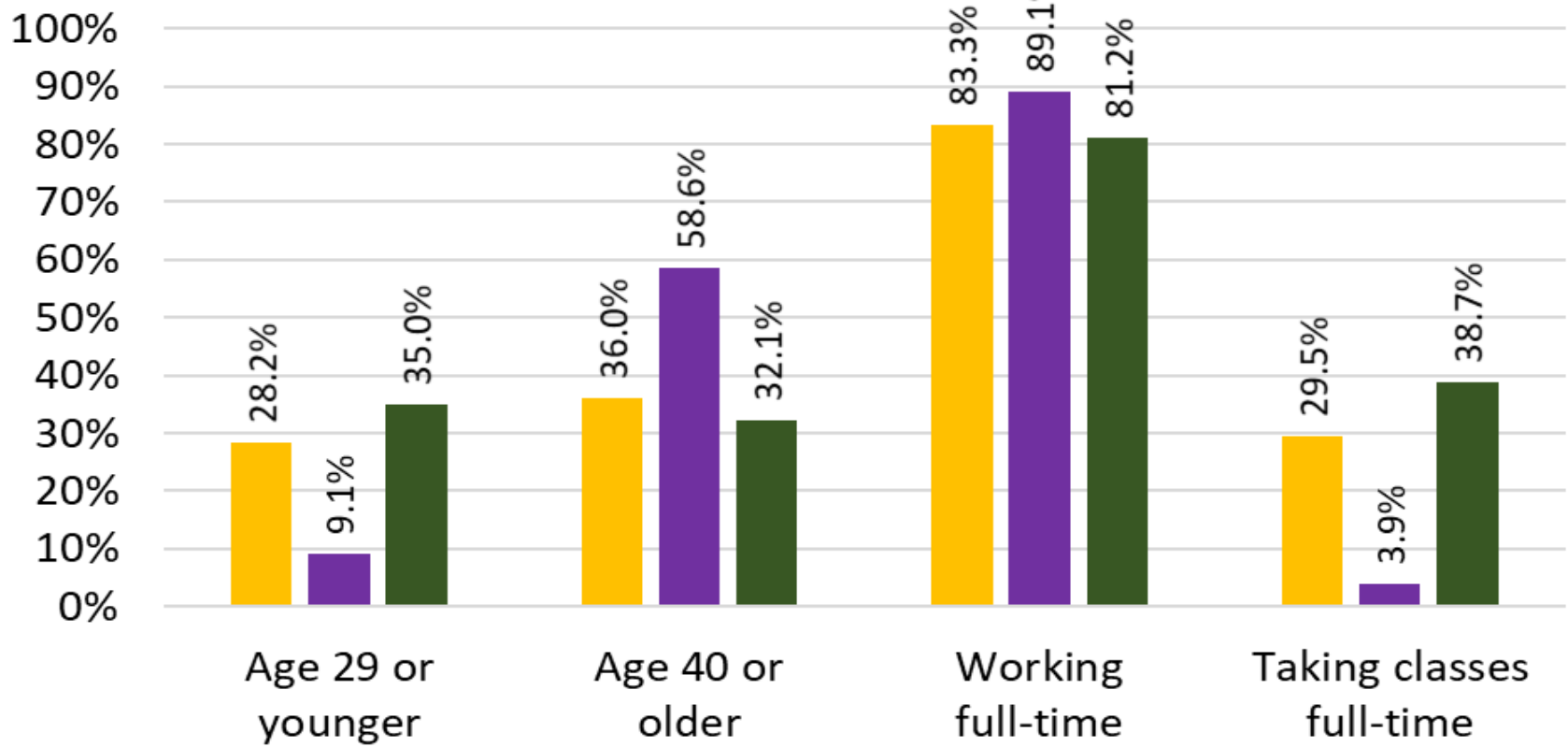
Survey Section	# of Items	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach's α
Section 3 (for those with at least <i>a little interest</i> in any doctoral degree)	58	648	201.4	21.25	.857

Note: .90 and above is excellent; .80 to .89 is good; .70 to .79 is fair; .60 to .69 is marginal, and .59 and below is poor (Yockey, 2016)

Survey Instrument Reliability

Respondent Demographics (n=882)

Overall Naz/NTS Universities



Demographics

Current Field	<i>n</i>	% Overall
Business	60	6.8%
Education	214	24.3%
Healthcare	202	22.9%
Religion/Theology	228	25.9%
Other	178	20.1%
Total	882	100.0%

Note: Fifty-two respondents did not indicate their current field.

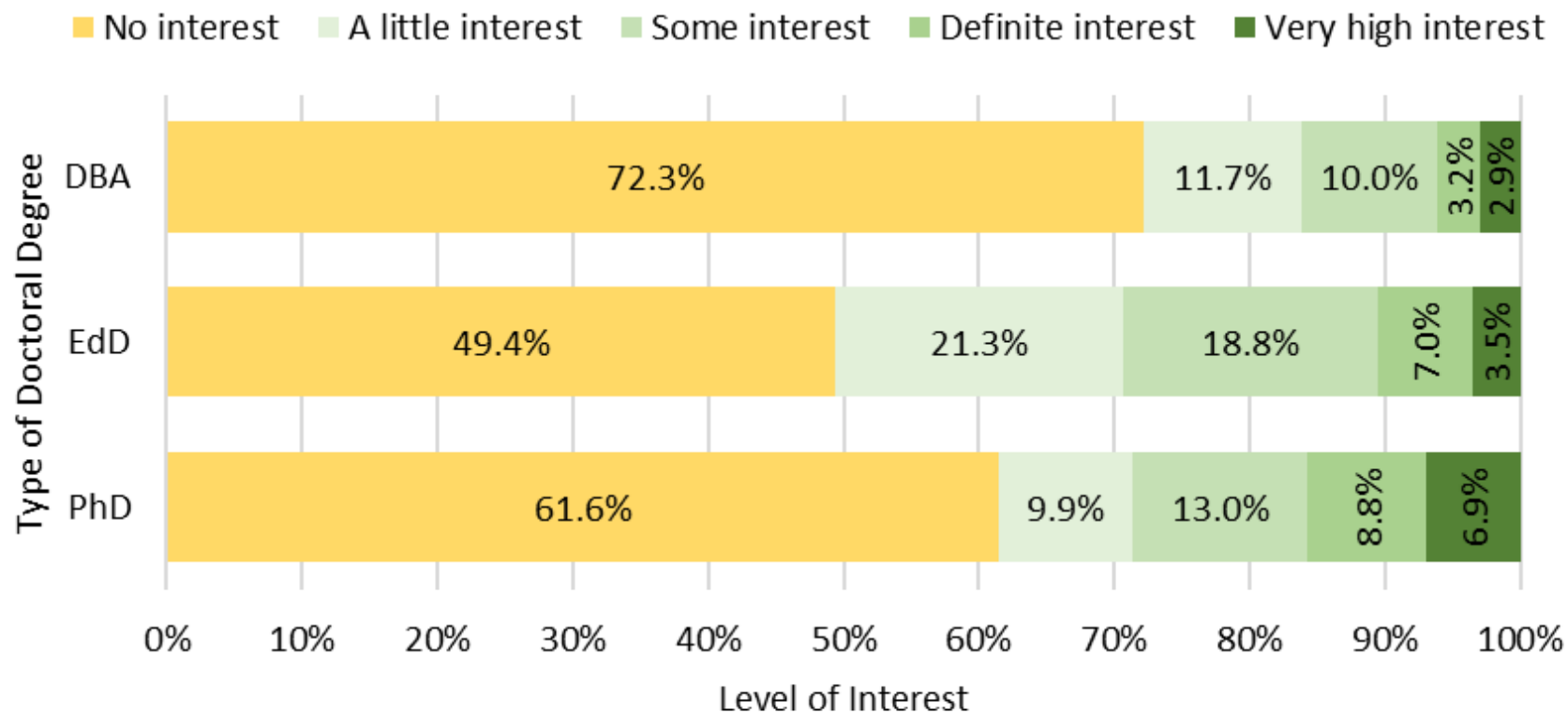
Demographics

RQ1: To what extent are master's degree students/graduates interested in pursuing a doctoral degree?

- 🐯 20% had *no interest* in any type of doctoral degree
- 🐯 80% had at least *a little interest* in some type of doctoral degree
- 🐯 25% had either a *definite interest* or *very high interest* in some type of doctoral degree

Findings—RQ1

How interested are you in earning any of the following types of doctoral degrees?



Findings—RQ1

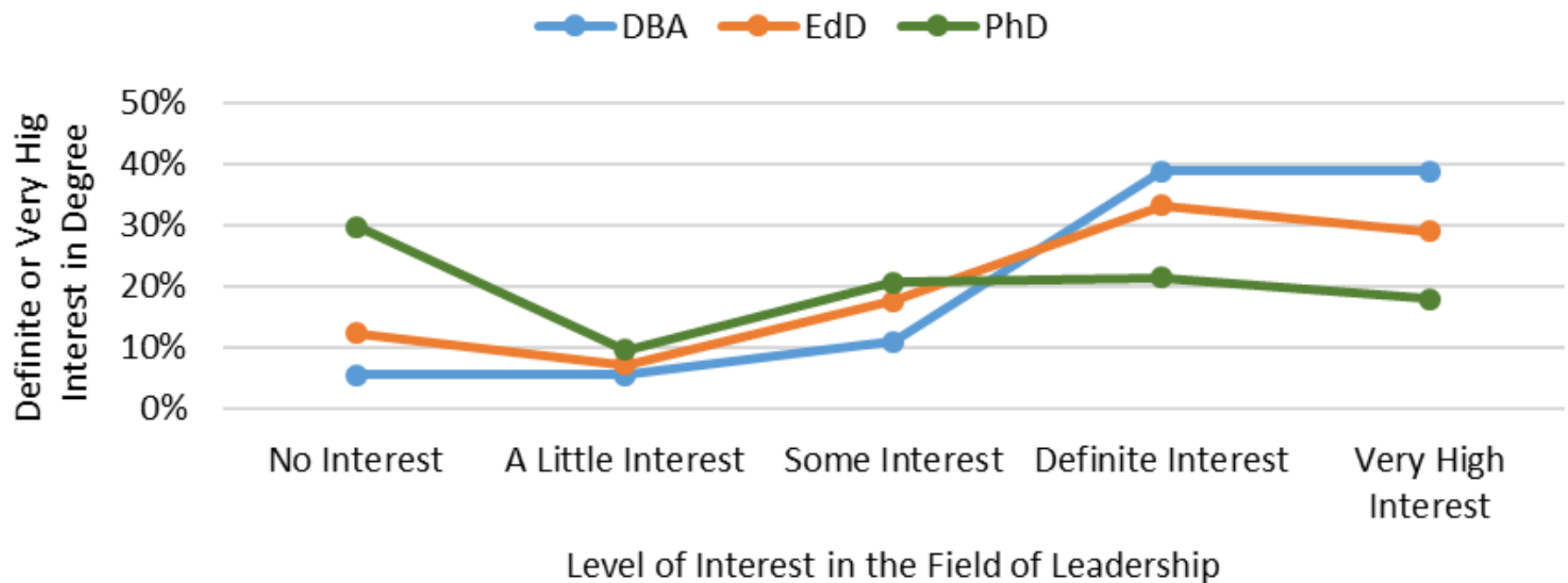
Interest in Type of Doctoral Degree by Current Field

		DBA*		EdD*		PhD*	
Current Field	n	No Int.	Def./VH Int.	No Int.	Def./VH Int.	No Int.	Def./VH Int.
Business	60	21.7%	36.7%	61.7%	10.0%	68.3%	16.7%
Education	214	85.5%	0.5%	22.4%	20.5%	72.0%	11.7%
Healthcare	202	79.7%	2.5%	67.3%	3.0%	75.7%	6.5%
Religion/Theo.	228	77.2%	4.4%	56.6%	7.4%	45.6%	22.4%
Other Fields	178	63.5%	7.3%	50.6%	9.6%	51.1%	23.0%
Total	882	73.2%	5.7%	49.9%	10.2%	61.6%	15.8%

* $p = .000$


Findings—RQ1

Interest in a Doctoral Degree in the Field of Leadership, by Type of Degree



$p = .000$

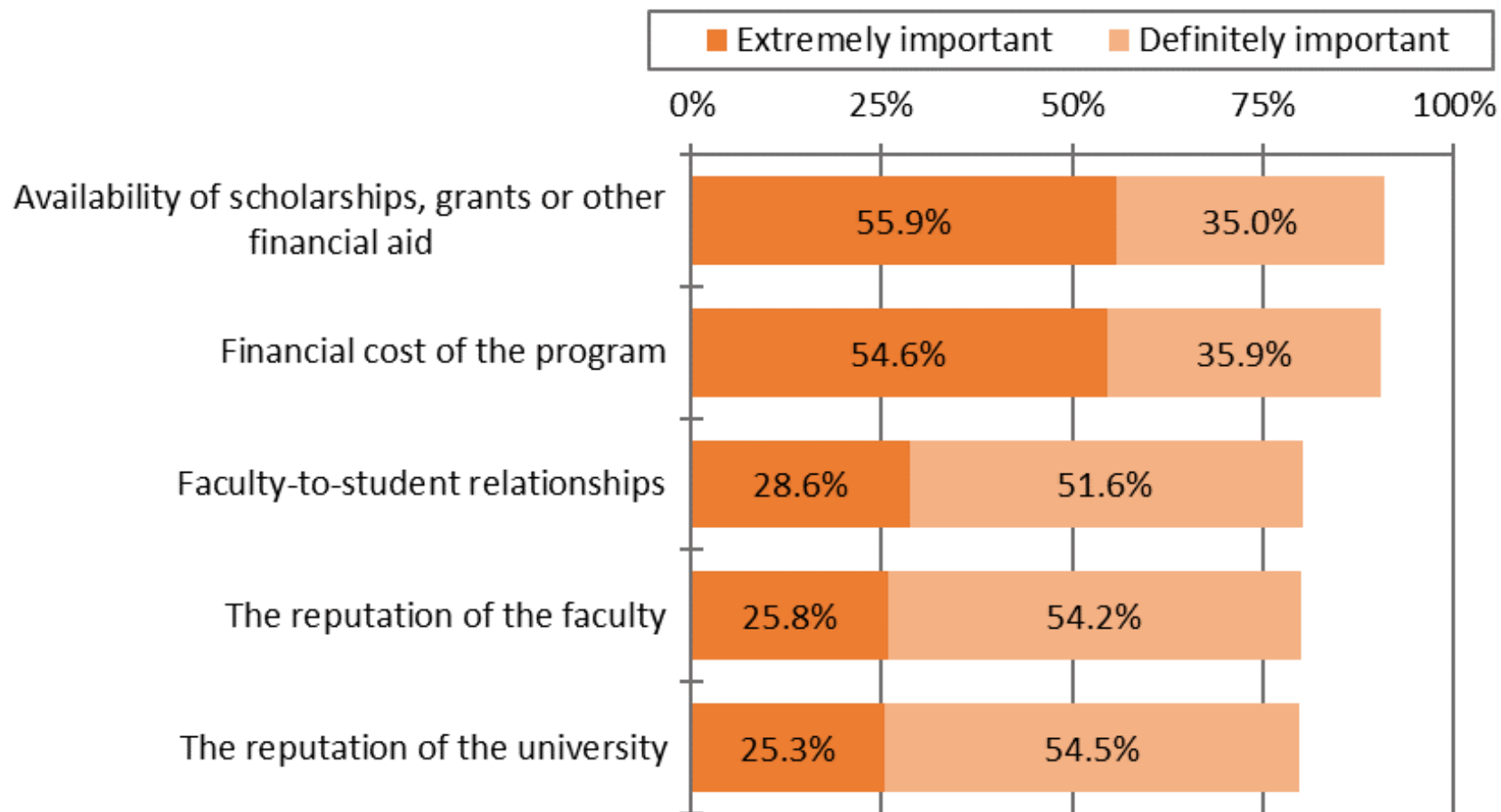
Findings—RQ1

A chalkboard with a question written on it, set against a brick wall with three pendant lights.

RQ2: What features do master's degree students/graduates look for in a doctoral program?

Findings—RQ2

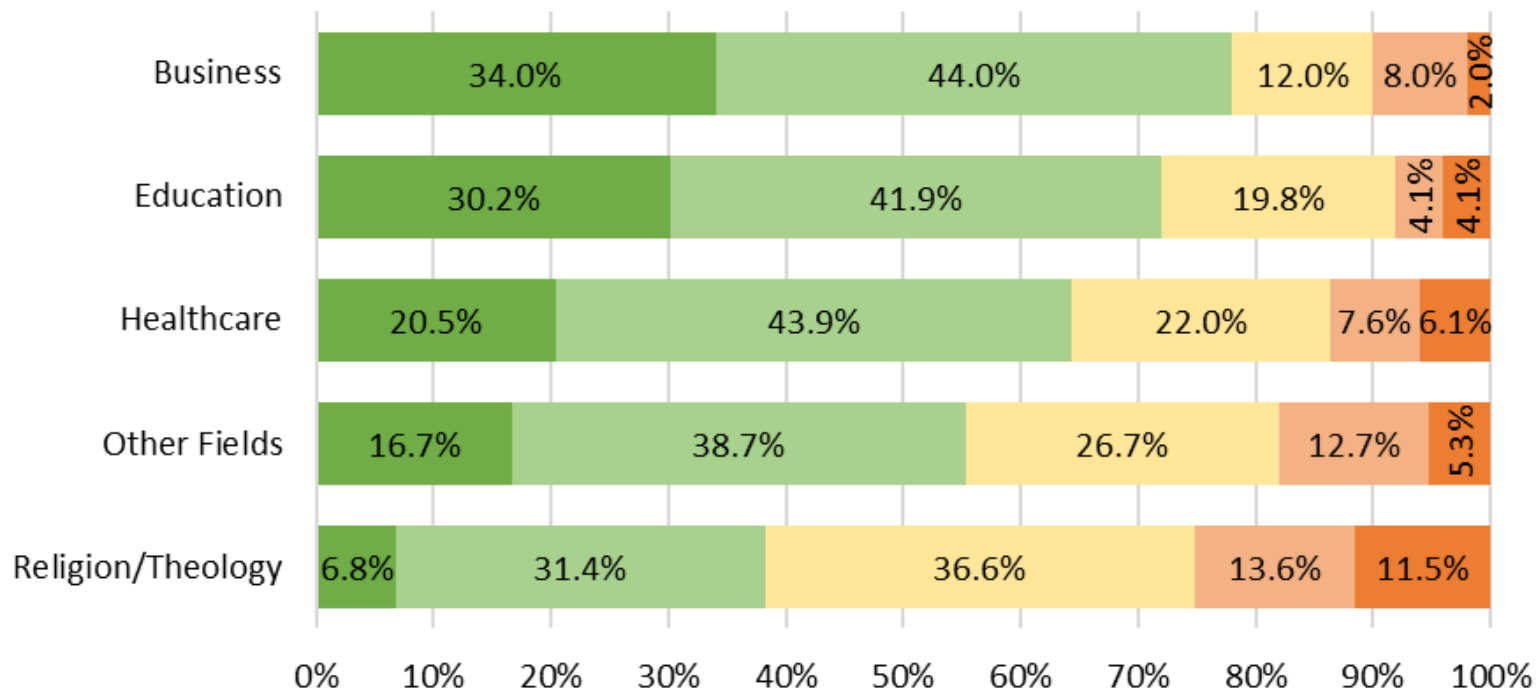
Preferences for Doctoral Education



Findings—RQ2

"The availability of evening classes" by Field of Respondent

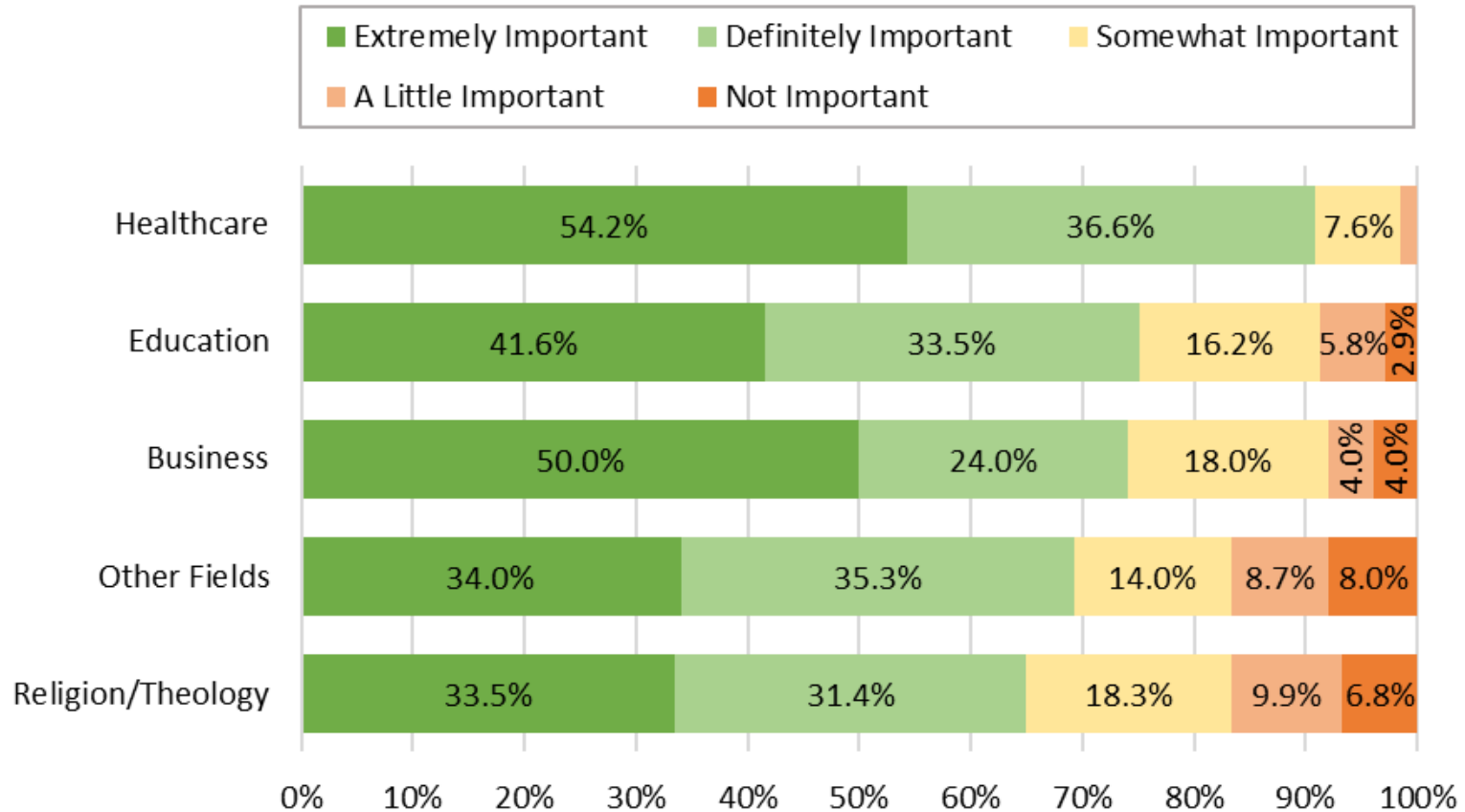
■ Extremely Important
 ■ Definitely Important
 ■ Somewhat Important
■ A Little Important
 ■ Not Important



$\chi^2 (16, N = 695) = 73.978, p = .000$

Findings—RQ2

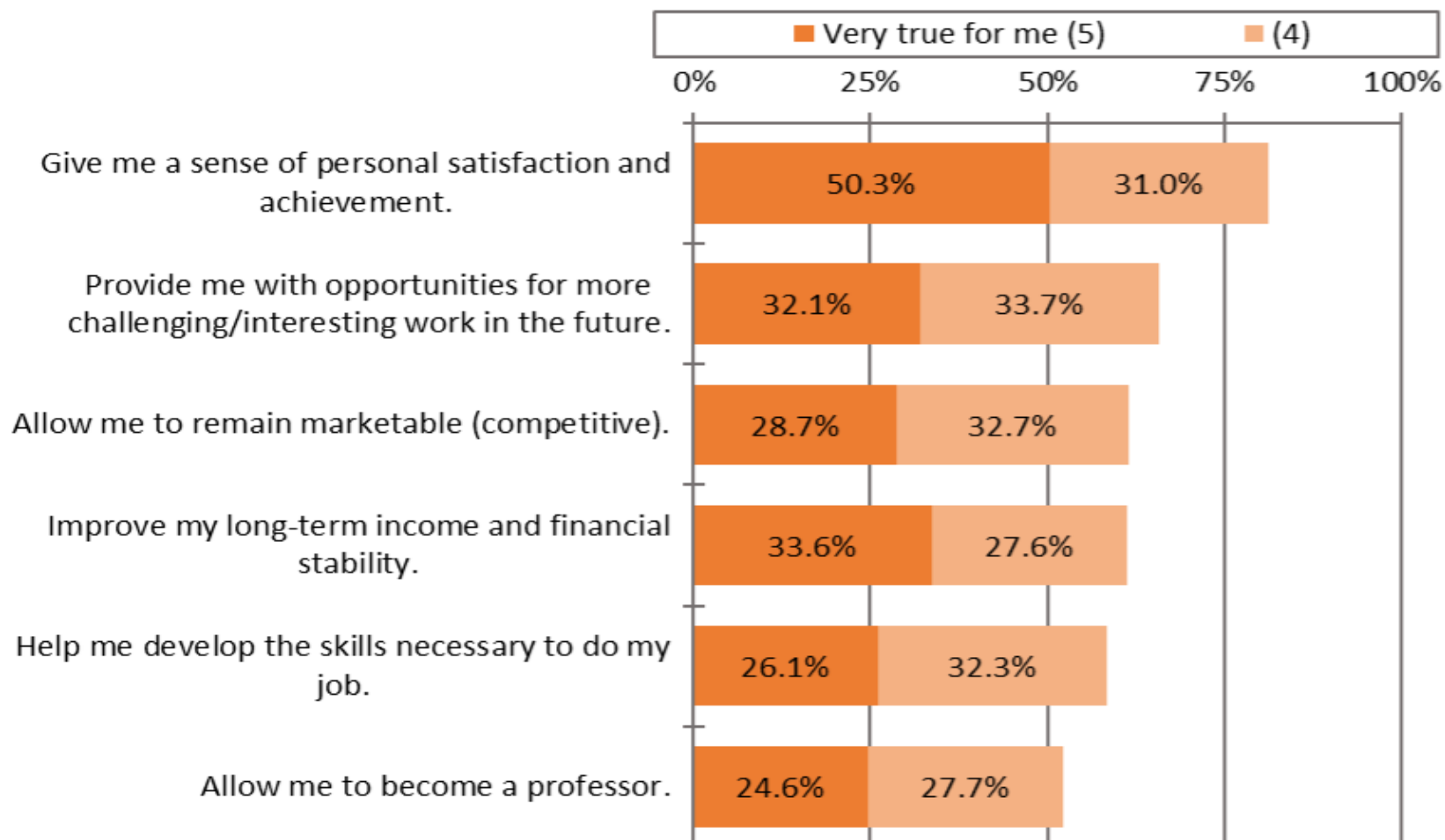
"The availability of online classes" by Field of Respondent



$\chi^2 (16, N = 695) = 42.874, p = .000$

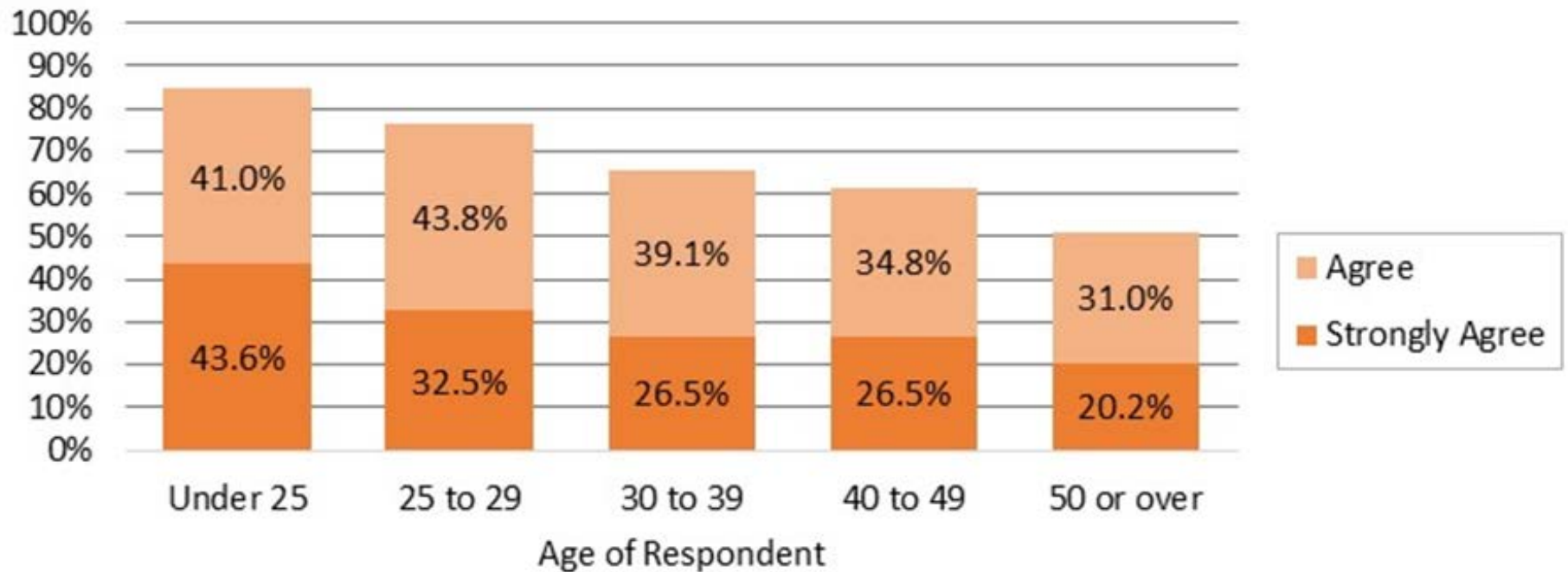
Findings—RQ2

Motivations for Doctoral Education



Findings—RQ2

"I believe a doctoral degree will enhance my career advancement" by Age



$$\chi^2 (20, N = 690) = 43.787, p = .002$$

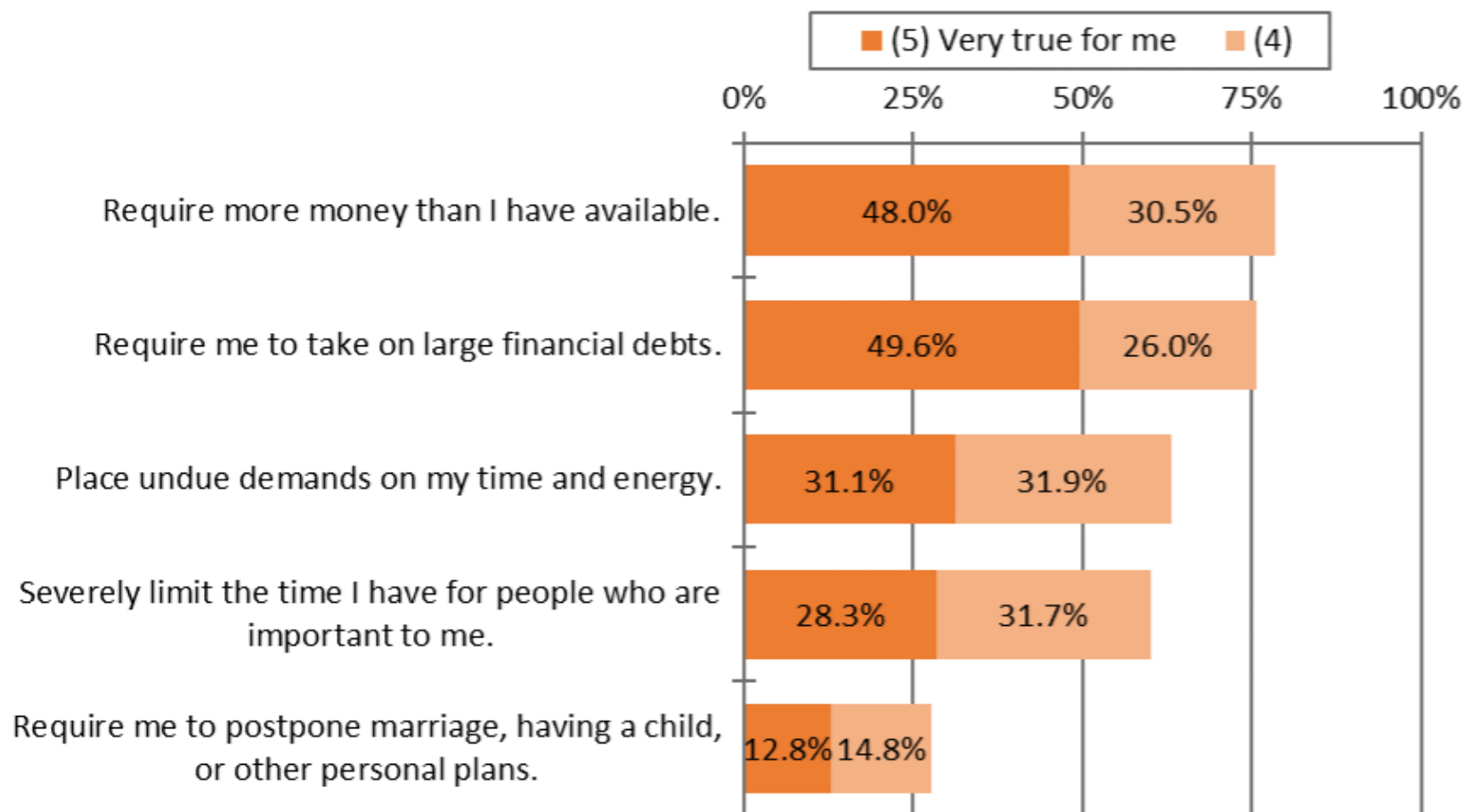
Findings—RQ2



RQ3: What are the obstacles for master's degree students/graduates in pursuing a doctoral degree?

Findings—RQ3

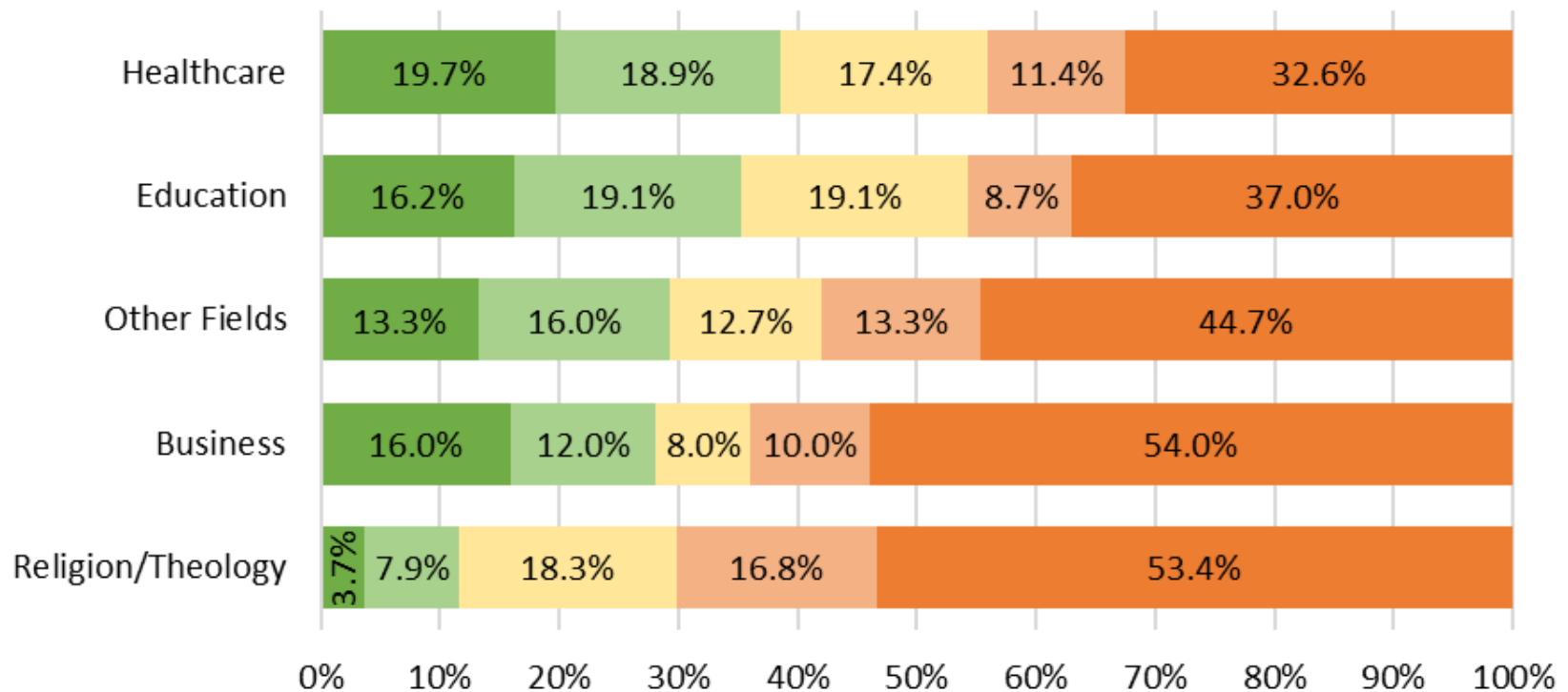
Obstacles to Pursuing a Doctoral Degree



Findings—RQ3

"Require me to postpone marriage, having a child, or other personal plans" by Field of Respondent

■ (5) Very true for me ■ (4) ■ (3) ■ (2) ■ (1) Not at all true for me ■ Not applicable



$\chi^2 (16, N = 696) = 50.545, p = .000$

Findings—RQ3

RQ4: What factors predict interest in pursuing a doctoral degree, especially in the area of Leadership?

- 🧠 Used **Multiple Ordinal Regression** (because dependent variable was ordinal)
- 🧠 Looked for independent variables with the highest correlation to the dependent variable
- 🧠 Looked for independent variables with low correlations to other independent variables
- 🧠 Looked for independent variables with some theoretical value for being included in the model

Findings—RQ4

Model for predicting the level of interest in the EdD:



- 🧠 Interest in “A doctorate in Leadership”
 - 🧠 A doctoral degree will “Allow me to become a professor”
 - 🧠 A doctoral degree will “Provide me with opportunities for more challenging/interesting work in the future”
-

- 🧠 Model fit: $\chi^2 (12, N = 689) = 122.093, p = .000$
- 🧠 Model explained 17.3% of the variance in the level of interest in the EdD (Nagelkerke $R^2 = .173$)
 - 🧠 Medium effect size (Yockey, 2016)


Model for predicting the level of interest in “A doctorate in Leadership:”

- 🧠 Interest in a “DBA”
 - 🧠 “I would like to learn more about leadership.”
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- 🧠 Model fit: $\chi^2 (9, N = 716) = 305.025, p = .000$
- 🧠 Model explained 36.3% of the variance in the level of interest in a doctorate in Leadership (Nagelkerke $R^2 = .363$)
 - 🧠 Large effect size (Yockey, 2016)

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- 🧠 Respondents were generally interested in a degree typically associated with their current field
 - 🧠 Some variables are universally important (cost, financial aid, sense of satisfaction, ability to work)
 - 🧠 Many variables are influenced by age or field of study
 - 🧠 Many do not see the benefit of a doctoral degree when weighed against the cost
 - 🧠 There was a gap between the importance of ethics and interest in learning more about ethics
 - 🧠 Not a lot of interest in completing a doctoral degree entirely online—except for those in Healthcare

Conclusions

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- 🧠 The EdD in Ethical Leadership would have more appeal to those in Business as a DBA degree
 - 🧠 Universities should build relationships with the business community (discover their needs; helps with recruiting/financing)
 - 🧠 Opportunities for financial aid need to be communicated clearly and often
 - 🧠 The EdD in Ethical Leadership has limited appeal to those in Religion/Theology (most likely to those in large churches, administrative positions, or those interested in becoming a professor)

Implications

- 🐯 Lack of respondents from state universities
- 🐯 Most of the respondents had some affiliation with the Church of the Nazarene
- 🐯 Only four fields separated out in the analyses
- 🐯 No way to track who really goes on to do doctoral work

Limitations

More research is needed:

- 🐯 **Among students at state universities**
- 🐯 **Among those in fields other than business, education, healthcare, and religion/theology**
- 🐯 **Using a longitudinal methodology in order to track who actually pursues a doctoral degree**

Recommendations

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