

MOTIVATION TO AVOID SUCCESS
IN WOMEN AS RELATED TO YEAR IN
SCHOOL, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND
SUCCESS CONTEXT

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THESIS



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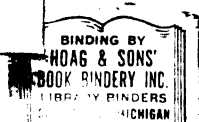
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ABSTRACT

MOTIVATION TO AVOID SUCCESS IN WOMEN AS RELATED TO YEAR IN SCHOOL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS CONTEXT

by

Ida Zektick Kresojevich

Research on achievement motivation in women has received renewed interest. A doctoral project conducted at the University of Michigan by Matina Horner (1968) introduced the concept that women are culturally conditioned to fear success, because of possible negative consequences. She presented a measure which she called the "motive to avoid success" (M-s), which was derived from the scoring of a verbal TAT. The measure was found relevant to the stories of many females and very few males.

The present study was designed to explore the relationship of M-s to several variables traditionally viewed as relevant to achievement motivation: achievement history, as reflected in cumulative grade-point average (GPA); age and developmental stage, as reflected in year in school; and success context, represented by a range of story situations.

Six verbal cues were presented to a sample of 80 undergraduate women, stratified on the basis of college achievement (Hi and Lo GPA) and year in school (sophomore and senior).

Stories were scored by two independent raters for the presence or absence of M-s, operationally defined as "negative imagery about success." Also used was a five point Outcome score, considered an index of optimism, which summarized whether the close of the S's story left the main character approaching or avoiding the success presented in the cue. A third measure asked Ss to indicate their degree of liking for each story. This measure was intended to reflect the individual's willingness to relate to the particular conflicts aroused. Finally, Ss were asked what they expected to be doing in 10 years, their "Future Plans." Analyses of variance and correlations were used to explore the relationships between these variables.

M-s was found in at least one story of virtually every S. Hi GPA women were found to be significantly more negative about success than Lo GPA women. Also, the context of the success situation was found to be important, both in relation to M-s and Outcome. Sophomores were significantly more optimistic about success than seniors. M-s scores of sophomores and seniors did not differ appreciably.

Lo GPA women had significantly higher Story Liking scores than Hi GPA women. Also, a significant interaction was obtained between year in school and success context. Negative correlations between M-s and Outcome measures reached statistical significance for two story types.

Women were grouped into four categories on the basis of their Future Plans, and then groups were compared on the dependent variables. Speculations were offered and hypotheses generated.

In general, the findings obtained replicated earlier claims made by Horner (1968), and further defined the issue of women's feelings about success.

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AS RELATED TO YEAR IN SCHOOL,
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND
SUCCESS CONTEXT

By

Ida Zektick Kresojevich

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DEDICATION

To those who have encouraged, and, especially, those who have discouraged;

To Mother, who thought I would have made a good bookkeeper--
(I would have);

To the undergraduate advisor who told me it was a long hard road, little girl--(it would have been, for a little girl);

To the high school counselor who said I could be a "good" almost anything; who said, if you want to be a Clinical Psychologist, then be one;

To the roomful of old ladies who said, "You have courage," and then handed me the chance to actualize that quality;

To the psychiatrist who told me, at 13, that "happiness" is like jazz--(you were wrong, thank God);

To my husband, who gave all he could;

To everyone who has loved and cared about me, and given so generously of themselves, that I might have this opportunity;

I dedicate this work.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

In a recent study published in Psychology Today, Horner (1969) discussed her finding of a negative achievement motivation, a "motive to avoid success," in women. It is defined as "...the fear that success in competitive situations will lead to negative consequences, such as unpopularity and loss of femininity."

Horner theorizes that in our society there are contradictory pressures influencing a woman's achievement strivings. She is expected to work hard, be a good student, and get good grades. However, it is of foremost importance that she marry. Conflict arises when she finds herself in competitive situations with men. If she succeeds, she may lessen her prospects for marriage. This conflict is maximized during the college years, when school is demanding increasing time and dedication, and society sees her as most marriageable. Horner presented data in support of the view point that women resolve this conflict by choosing to fail.

This notion at once intrigued me, sparking enthusiasm, curiosity, and, of course, skepticism. Much interest centered around the impression that the article was written

from a rather strong women's liberation point of view. This thought was aroused by the author's affirmation that researchers largely have avoided the topic of achievement motivation in women. It was furthered by the general tone of the article, and the rather loaded presentation of experimental hypotheses and methodology.

It is apparent that women's liberation is in vogue at the moment. It is truly difficult to pick up a women's magazine or Sunday newspaper that does not feature an article on the "woman issue." Therefore, in the interpretation of experimental findings it would be important to evaluate the impact of the women's liberation movement as a social phenomenon.

However, as in all research, it would be important to free the design from one's biases to the greatest degree possible (Rosenthal, 1958). Could Horner's results be replicated at a comparable university? Were the findings reliable, or merely artifacts of a particular design and experimenter? Can such a motive be found in all women, or just some portion?

The impression that Horner's biases contributed somewhat too heavily to the experimental design, and to the shaping of findings, coupled with the belief that here is an exciting area greatly in need of further study, left clear the task of replicating, clarifying, and extending her findings.

Review of the Literature

The following discussion indicates the direction of previous research in this area and the theoretical considerations which motivated this study.

The Horner Study

The Psychology Today publication cited earlier (Horner, 1969) highlights one facet of a doctoral thesis (Horner, 1968) conducted at the University of Michigan. The purpose was to explore achievement motivation in women on a variety of tasks in competitive and non-competitive situations, and to attempt clarification of sex differences found in prior research (Lesser et al. 1963; Moss and Kagan, 1961; Lipinski, 1966).

In addition to the five verbal cues presented in studying need for achievement (n-Ach), Horner's experimental group of 90 female and 88 male undergraduates was asked to write a story based on the following verbal lead:

After first-term finals, John (Anne) finds himself (herself) at the top of his (her) medical school class.

The girls wrote about Anne; the boys, John.

The pattern of results was "ambiguous and inconclusive" until the "motive to avoid success" (M-s) was developed. A story was scored for M-s if it expressed any "negative imagery that reflected concern about doing well." Over 65% of the females told stories that fell into this category, as contrasted to less than ten percent

of the males.

Horner conceptualizes M-s as a "psychological barrier to achievement motivation in women." It exists because, for most women, the prospect of success in competitive achievement, particularly against men, is fraught with anxiety.

Also assessed was the performance of these Ss on achievement tasks in a variety of competitive situations. Using Ss as their own controls, it was found that a large number of the men worked better under competition. This was true of fewer than one-third of the women. When achievement scores were examined in terms of M-s, Ss who felt "ambivalent or anxious about doing well" performed best in a non-competitive situation. An unexpected finding is that the girls in Horner's sample who feared success also "tended" to have high intellectual ability and history of academic success.

Certainly, this study is fascinating. The differences found between male and female subjects are striking. However, the relationship between the expression of M-s and behavioral rejection of success is unclear. The expression of "negative imagery" (which also may be considered anxiety) does not necessarily indicate behavioral avoidance.

The findings that Honors women tend to fear success, and express preference for non-competitive situations seemed particularly confusing. How did they get to be Honors students in the first place? Perhaps their expression of M-s

is, rather, an indication of their awareness of societal norms, and of the strain they are experiencing in attempting to deviate. These Honors women may be nodding acceptance of societal taboos in their stories and in their laboratory performance, while nonetheless pursuing their own goals.

Sex-role Development

Brown, in his review article on sex-role development (1958), summarized research showing that from the sixth through the ninth years, most girls show a strong preference for masculine rather than feminine activities. A changeover occurs, probably around the fifth grade. In contrast, boys at all ages show a strong preference for the masculine role. The author suggested that this finding of widespread masculine role preference among girls makes it reasonable to hypothesize that conflict or confusion will be conspicuous in a female's sex-role development.

As a discussant on a panel at the 1969 American Psychiatric Association Symposium on Youth Unrest, Goodman (1969) spoke of sources of anxiety specific to the older adolescent. He pointed out that one of the major challenges facing young people upon the transition from late adolescence to early adulthood, is the achievement of an integration of one's own individual self and the demands of the culture. "It is clear that the successful metamorphosis from the late adolescent to young adult requires an adequate response to many interlocking maturational and developmental

challenges" (p. 1152).

Nevitt Sanford (1962) was more specific in relating his impressions of women students at Vassar.

X ...[The entering college freshman] asks herself how to be feminine though committed to a program of activities that, apparently, have nothing to do with sex roles....she tends to restrict herself rather narrowly to culturally defined feminine activities and interests, and to be much concerned with the question of how she can keep up or increase her attractiveness to men. She still has to learn of the variety of things she might do, of the diversity of roles she might take, without endangering her capacity to carry out essential feminine functions (p. 265).

Steinmann, Levi, and Fox (1964) examined the self-concept of women college students who were attempting this integration of individual needs with cultural expectations, in regard to sex role. They found the conflict predicted by Brown (1958). Their unmarried undergraduates perceived man's ideal woman as significantly more passive and accepting of a subordinate role than they themselves assumed. This disparity may be considered evidence for internalized conflict with regard to a woman's feelings about her attractiveness to men and desirability.

Kalka (1968) observed a leveling effect in role concepts and social attitudes from the freshman through the senior year, in the college women she studied. It would be interesting to know the makeup of Steinmann's group on this variable. Perhaps her Ss were predominantly freshmen.

Achievement Motivation and Role Conflict

In attempting to discuss achievement motivation in women, it is virtually impossible to separate out the topic of role conflict. In his review article, Turner (1964) presented a consensus view that achievement motivation is considerably more complex an issue in women than it is in men. No one asks a male college freshman, "Would you rather be a doctor or a father?" Yet, a woman student must constantly relate to the cultural expectation that she bear and rear children.

In his commentary on problems in counseling girls at the high school level, Lewis (1965) noted that counselors find it frustrating to talk to girls about post-marriage needs. He found most girls too invested in a future image of wife and mother to be able to see anything else in their lives.

Christensen's (1961) questionnaire survey of 6,000 high-school students found that approximately half the females planned additional formal education. This proportion is higher than among males; however, fewer females intended to finish college. The author concluded: "Apparently more females planned to attend college for social reasons, and fewer for professional reasons, as compared with males."

However, this may not necessarily be the case. Women may indeed see themselves as having either a

marriage or a career. Christensen's statistic may reflect their choice of marriage.

Heilbrun (1963) gave evidence for the female sex-role being in conflict with achievement needs. He hypothesized, in part, that the social role demands of college and the feminine sex-role are incompatible, and that this results in sex role confusion.

Two groups of male and female undergraduates were given measures of role confusion and identification. Heilbrun found that females in general showed greater "value-behavior inconsistency," and that this confusion was restricted to the class of behaviors relevant to achievement motivation, but not to a wider range of interpersonal roles.

Attempting to define the relationship between sex-role conflict and achievement motivation, Lipinski (1966) gave two introductory psychology classes the neutral and achievement-oriented conditions of the McClelland achievement-arousal paradigm. Later, 87 who had been present for both conditions completed several measures in groups: three measures of sex-role identity, the Manifest Anxiety Scale, and the Need for Achievement Scale; and an autobiographical questionnaire.

Subjects grouped on the basis of responses to the sex-role identity measures as masculine-oriented did not increase more in n-Ach scores under experimental arousal than did the feminine-oriented group. Further, the Manifest Anxiety Scale and the Need for Achievement Scale did not differentiate

sex-role conflict groups from other groups. Thus, it is not necessarily a masculine identification which is linked with a need for achievement in women. And, the sex-role conflict is not measured by the Manifest Anxiety Scale. According to these indices, some women who have need for achievement experience sex-role conflict, and some do not.

In concluding, Lipinski (1966) notes that in the autobiographical section, women indicated that achievement areas previously not emphasized by researchers were valued by her women: attaining closer social relationships, and active mastery of problems.

Sundheim (1963) was concerned with the relationship between n-Ach and a whole constellation of variables: sex-role concepts, academic grades, need for affiliation, and curricular choice. With her group of 112 undergraduate women at Temple University, she found that need for achievement was not related to grades. Women in the science curriculum demonstrated the highest need for achievement. Those in the language curriculum came next, while women in elementary education showed the lowest need for achievement. Women in elementary education had the highest need for affiliation; this was significantly higher than the science group. Finally, women who perceived their sex-role as non-traditional did not have a greater need for achievement than for affiliation, nor did they earn higher grade-point averages.

Both Lipinski (1966) and Sundheim (1963) were exploring the idea that masculine-oriented women possess a higher need for achievement. Neither were able to substantiate this claim.

In a similar vein, Rand (1968) hypothesized that homemaking-oriented women and career-oriented women would score at the extremes of a feminine-masculine continuum. With a group of 300 career-oriented and 548 homemaker-oriented college freshmen women, she found that the career-oriented sample scored higher on masculinity measures. However, in four out of six comparisons, the homemaker-oriented girls did not score higher on femininity measures. In fact, on some of the feminine variables, the career-oriented sample exceeded the homemaker group.

Marriageability

The role conflict under discussion in the previous studies, of course, springs from the fear that any deviation from typically feminine behavior may jeopardize a woman's chances for marriage. Still, relatively few researchers have addressed themselves to this topic in a fairly direct fashion.

In a questionnaire sent to women between the ages of 37 and 47, who had graduated from three public high schools between 1931 and 1938, Mulvey (1963) investigated three areas: personal characteristics, employment information, and attitudes and opinions. She concluded:

Marital status exerts the most significant influence of all factors upon the state of happiness of women in the 'middle years.' Specifically, the married state, unbroken and continuous, irrespective of family and/or employment status, is the greatest single contributor to the highest (autonomous) level of adjustment, and thus is a necessary element for a mature integration of personality (p. 38).

Ellis (1952) hypothesized that upward social mobility is frequently inspired by unsatisfactory primary group relations. She noted the tendency for extensive education and occupational success to reduce a woman's chances for marriage, and reasoned that neurotic drives stemming from early childhood experiences could be the true cause of both. With two groups of women, paired for unmarried status and occupational status, she noted that those who had been more mobile gave evidence of poorer childhood relations and were more "neurotic."

Thus we have researchers substantiating society's view that a woman's true happiness lies in marriage; and, that if she strives for a career, she will probably not marry.

In a study of women who took on the challenge of a professional career, Kosa and Coker (1965) found that among women doctors, late marriages are common. The conflicting demands of role expectations of doctor and wife sent some women into pediatrics. Many stayed in public health, when their male colleagues left for private practice. The authors found that within medicine there exists a sex-based division of fields comparable to the division existing

within the professions generally.

Summary

This brief review of the literature attests to the fragmentary nature of available research on achievement motivation in women. It may reflect the fact, as suggested by Horner (1969), that researchers are primarily male. However, it may also evidence that woman's role in our society is in a state of flux.

Economic necessity progressively has been forcing women out of the home into the labor market. The population crisis has made having more than two children questionable, at best. Certainly, it has legitimized birth control. Revised thinking about the sanctity of marriage and the need to preserve the nuclear family has made divorce more attainable.

Previously, it has been unnecessary for women to make a commitment to anything beyond the home. It was assumed her place there was secure. Throughout the fifties, women flirted with the notion of taking a parttime job to supplement the family income. In the sixties, they began to consider returning to work after the children reached school age.

But the notion that woman has a need to achieve, both internally and externally motivated, in a milieu other than the home, is really just beginning to attain social acceptability in the seventies. It is, in some respects, an idea of the future. Thus, we have a very complex

interaction of economic, political, social, and psychological forces culminating in the women's liberation movement.

The sketchiness of prior research may be taken as being indicative of male chauvinism, or mere disinterest. It may also be seen as reluctance on the part of social scientists to study progress.

CHAPTER II

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Goals of the Present Study

The focus of the present study was to clarify and further explore Horner's finding (1968) of a "motive to avoid success" in women.

In first consideration of the problem, many avenues of exploration came to mind. A developmental study could be conducted. Women who had dropped out of a university could be interviewed. Comparable groups of women in middle life who had and had not completed college could be studied.

However, it did not seem appropriate to extend the inquiry without prior elucidation of the construct. Thus, the present study was designed.

A primary goal was to find whether Horner's finding of a widespread "motivation to avoid success" (M-s) could be replicated. To allow for maximum comparability, the same experimental task was employed: namely, the incomplete story technique. Also, a college student population was utilized, as in the Horner study.

In addition to replication, however, further explanation of the construct was sought. In whom can M-s be found? What is the influence of a woman's own achievement

history on her feelings about success? Will a student who has done honors work be as apt to be avoidant of success as one who has barely passed?

The impact of a woman's number of years in college might also bear on the subject. What are the views of a woman who is graduating from college, compared to one in the middle of her four-year bachelor's program? What interaction occurs between a woman student's year in school and her grade-point average?

In addition, it seemed crucial to explore the concept of success in a wide variety of situations. From the outset, it appeared unusual to speak of success as unidimensional, independent of context. Are there differences in response to success when a variety of achievement situations is presented? Are women equally anxious to avoid success, regardless of the realm?

These queries are conceptually related to Atkinson's thinking on achievement motivation (Atkinson, 1964). When discussing the degree of need for achievement demonstrated, Atkinson took into account three factors: a motive to achieve success which the individual carries with him from one situation to another; the subjective probability of success; and, the incentive value of success at a particular activity.

An individual's "subjective probability of success" is influenced by his achievement history, which is reflected in grade-point average. Similarly, Atkinson's mention of

the impact of the particular activity is related to the present discussion of the context of the success situation.

Finally, a woman's prospects for getting married may be relevant to her feelings about success. Horner grouped the M-s responses of her college student Ss into categories. One response category is related to lessened prospects for marriage; another, to loss of femininity. Thus, an additional goal of the inquiry was to examine the responses to success situations given by women who have had some assurance that they are marriageable, and to compare them to those given by women with no such knowledge.

Predictions

The spirit of this inquiry was not totally congruent with traditional hypothesis-testing. Horner's observation (1969) that research on achievement motivation in women has been scarce is accurate. Thus, it was of questionable merit to make directional predictions as to which women will opt for success, which, avoidance of success. The project was not begun in a fixed theoretical framework; rather, it took several relevant variables--grade-point average (GPA), year in school, context of the success situation, and whether a woman as yet had had affirmation of her marriageability--and explored the relationship of each to the criterion measures.

The stories were examined for negative imagery about success, what Horner calls M-s. In addition, the outcome of

the story was also considered. It was possible that negative imagery about success would be directly related to a negative story outcome. However, it was also possible that a story would contain negative imagery (M-s) and still have an outcome that presented the main character as approaching success.

To allow for maximum exploration of the concepts involved, no specific hypotheses were formulated. Statistical analyses were planned accordingly to facilitate this process.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

General Procedure

Subjects were selected from the population of female undergraduates at Michigan State University. Preliminary groups of high and low achieving sophomores and seniors were sent questionnaires to gain information about their "Marriageability." Subjects were then invited to participate in a two-hour research session. In small groups, Ss were administered six incomplete stories, paralleling closely the technique used by Horner (1968). They were also asked to indicate their degree of liking for each story. Finally, each S was requested to state what she thought she would be doing in ten years.

Subject Selection Criteria

From the population of full-time undergraduate women students enrolled at Michigan State University, potential Ss met the following criteria:

Class: Ss must have been classified by the University as having either sophomore or senior status. (Seniors graduating that quarter were exempted, since the research would require participation during the next months, and students are seldom available after graduation.)

Grade-Point Average (GPA): A woman must have earned a cumulative GPA in one of two categories: Hi GPA: 3.4 to 4.0 inclusive (high B or A); or, Lo GPA: 2.0 to 2.29 inclusive (low C, the university's lowest average acceptable for senior status).

Marriageability: A woman must have placed at either extreme of a marriageability continuum, ranging from "single, dating no one person exclusively," to "married" or "engaged, with fairly definite wedding plans."

Selection Procedure

Information concerning both Class and GPA were available from the grade sheets issued for all students at the close of each school term. Thus it was possible to form four preliminary groups of full-time women students as follows: Senior Class, Hi GPA ($n=293$), and Lo GPA ($n=323$); Sophomore Class, Hi GPA ($n=376$), and Lo GPA ($n=702$). By use of a table of random numbers (Snedecor, 1946) group size was reduced to equal that of the smallest group, Hi Seniors.

It became necessary, however, to contact women themselves to group them according to Marriageability. For this purpose, a letter of introduction and a simple questionnaire were mailed to the four groups of women. (See Appendix A.) The number of Ss in each group was again reduced, from 293 to 261, because many of the seniors had no addresses listed in the university's Student Directory.

The letter introduced the project as doctoral research conducted by a female graduate student in psychology for and about women students. It requested return of the enclosed questionnaire, and explained that many who comply would be re-contacted to participate further via a two-hour story-writing session.

The questionnaire asked the recipient to give her name, address, age, year in school, and marital status. This item, however, was elaborated from the usual "single, married, widowed, divorced" format to include a wider range of single statuses. Four more alternatives were listed:

- formally engaged
- informally engaged, with fairly definite wedding plans
- dating steadily, with no definite plans for the future
- dating no one person exclusively

This index aimed at subdividing each of the previously-formed four subject groups according to the extremes of the marriageability continuum. "Hi" marriageability was designed to include the "married" and the "formally engaged" categories, while "low" referred to the "dating no one person exclusively" alternative.

Of the 1,044 questionnaires mailed, 38 were returned because of inaccurate or insufficient address. Thirty-two replied, indicating disinclination to participate. Many identified themselves; some were helpful enough to give a reason for their refusal. Three-hundred and thirty women filled out and returned the questionnaire as directed, indicating in the schedule provided their preference for

the scheduling of a two-hour story-writing session.

Twelve out of 335 women who indicated that they would participate were above 24 years of age. These were not included in the study, the rationale being that women undergraduates at age 25 and above at a school where they are clearly in the minority can be expected to have had a sufficiently different life experience such that grouping them with younger undergraduates loses meaningfulness. Also, the present research attempted comparability with Horner's study (1968). Since her Ss are described as "...girls and boys, all undergraduates at the University of Michigan," it is probably fair to assume that she did not use women above the mid-twenties.

Of the 323 returns considered usable, 139 were seniors and 184, sophomores. In both classes, high achieving Ss were more likely to respond. Eighty H1 GPA Seniors and 119 H1 GPA Sophomores volunteered for the story-writing session as compared to 59 Lo GPA Seniors and 65 Lo GPA Sophomores.

The women's responses to the Marriageability index of the Questionnaire (Appendix A) showed that it would have been difficult to meet the rigors of the eight group design as had been planned. Only nine Lo GPA Sophomores were at the "hi" extreme of the Marriageability continuum. This compared to 16 Lo GPA Seniors, 31 GPA Sophomores, and 32 H1 GPA Seniors.

Since an eight group equal cell design had been planned, stratified random procedures call for the limiting of cell frequencies to equal that of the smallest cell, in this case nine. Such a drastic reduction in sample size would have made statistical analysis of the data difficult to interpret. Therefore, it was decided to use a four group design and omit the Marriageability variable.

Four potential subject groups were formed, reducing all groups to 59, the frequency of the Lo Senior group. Thus, 236 women who had responded to the earlier questionnaire were sent a letter requesting their attendance at a research session to be held the following week. (See Appendix B.) Each woman was assigned to a specific group meeting which in most cases corresponded to her previously stated preference.

Experimental Sample

From the group of women students who had responded to the Questionnaire, subsamples were drawn through a procedure which stratified according to GPA and Year in School, such that there were 20 potential Ss per cell. The mean grade-point averages for the senior groups were as follows: H1, 3.61; Lo, 2.20. Comparable means for sophomores were: H1, 3.62; Lo, 2.17.

All Ss were between the ages of 18 and 24 inclusive. The sophomore group average age was 19.5 years; the average of the seniors was 21.5 years. Within both classes, the

Hi GPA Ss were several months younger than the Lo GPA Ss.
Four seniors were married; all other Ss were single.

The women participating represented a variety of the curricula offered by the university. While the largest groups were from Home Economics and Education (n=9 each), together they comprised only 23% of the sample. Those Ss remaining were scattered among fields ranging from English to Human Medicine, Television and Radio, to Agriculture.
(See Appendix C.)

Although exact data were not collected, it was observed that several women attending the story-writing sessions were black.

Measures

Incomplete Stories

Six incomplete stories were presented. Each was in the form of a one-sentence description of a situation assumed close to the experience of a college woman.

One story was identical to that used earlier by Horner (1968). The remaining five were developed for this study.

The Horner story reads as follows:

After first-term finals, Anne finds herself
at the top of her medical school class.

A second achievement story attempted to meet the high occupational level of the Anne (medical school) story, yet be independent of the specific aegis of the medical profession.

At the end of her first year in graduate school, Mary sees an announcement in the department newsletter that hers is the only student research project that will be funded.

Both the medical and the graduate school stories attempted to represent masculine-oriented success situations (M-ach). Competition with classmates, male and female, is maximized. Also, dedication to career and life-long employment are expected. Aggressive competitiveness and a work orientation are both at odds with the traditional feminine sex role. Thus, the grouping of these stories as M-ach.

The other two stories also dealt with some aspect of a woman's achievement. One presented outstanding achievement in professional education for teaching.

Returning to her dorm after spring break, Judy finds that she has received a 4.5 for student teaching.

This story attempted to exemplify a feminine-oriented success situation (F-ach). Teaching in our society is considered an acceptable vocation for a woman. Thus, competition with men is not so highly maximized. Further, there are no extensive career demands, and working hours are thought to be adaptable to child-rearing and homemaking.

The final achievement story dealt with success within the realm of the home-based woman.

After a busy morning of getting the children off to school and seeing her husband off to work, Joan opens the mail to find that she has won the National Homemaker of the Year Award.

This story was classified also as F-ach. It was added to be at the opposite end of the continua represented, from career--homemaker, competitive--non-competitive, and non-traditional--traditional role behavior.

Two additional stories were developed to serve as buffers in the experimental task.

Soon after her arrival on campus as a transfer student, Marcie sees an announcement that it is rush week for the campus sororities.

And:

Lynne finds a circular in her mailbox announcing that the Peace Corps will be recruiting on campus.

Both of these "neutral" stories were comparable to the core stories of the study, the achievement stories, in that they dealt with would-be college women receiving some kind of news. They were added to provide variety in the experimental task, and to make the focus of the study less immediately apparent.

The order of presentation of the stories was as follows: one achievement situation, one neutral, two achievement, one neutral, one achievement.

One arrangement of the stories was made. Half the Ss responded to the stories in this order, and half received a booklet with the order of the stories reversed. Thus, no given story was always the first presented, yet in all cases the first story was an achievement story.

The first page of each booklet contained fairly standard TAT-type instructions (Murray, 1943, p. 3):

On the following pages you will find described several situations, each of which might form the basis for a story. What I would like you to do is expand each of them into a story.

Tell what may have led up to the current situation. Include what the main character is thinking and feeling. Tell what happens, and how it all turns out. Remember that a good story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

There are no "right" or "wrong" stories. Feel free to go where your imagination takes you.

Scoring Procedure

Each story had two ratings, given by two independent raters, the author and a female undergraduate student.¹ All identifying information was removed from the story booklets and each was assigned a code number, to allow for "blind" ratings, and to insure confidentiality.

M-s Scores

Stories were scored for M-s, operationally defined as the expression of any negative imagery about success. The criteria used were those presented by Horner (1968). The following examples were given:

- negative consequences because of the success
- the anticipation of negative consequences because of the success
- negative affect because of the success

¹The author wishes to thank Sue Carne for serving as rater.

- instrumental activity away from present or future success, including leaving the field for more traditionally feminine work such as teaching, nursing, or social work
- any direct expression of conflict about the success
- denial of the situation described by the cue; changing it in some way
- bizarre, inappropriate, unrealistic or non-adaptive responses to the situation

Each story was scored for the presence or absence of M-s. A high M-s score reflected the expression of anxiety about success, fear of the consequences of doing well. A low M-s score reflected the absence of such negative sentiment in the stories.

Outcome Scores

A five-point Outcome score was also used. This variable attempted to reflect whether the close of the story left the main character approaching (5) or avoiding (1) success. The neutral point (3) was reserved for those cases in which no outcome was provided, or where it was impossible to determine what the main character would do with regard to the specific situation presented.

A high Outcome score, then, reflects optimism that all will turn out well. In the end, the heroine has integrated the success into her life style. A low Outcome score means that the stories ended with the heroine leaving or undoing the success presented in the verbal cue.

The Outcome measure was added to provide a new dimension to the measuring of women's feelings about success. Horner (1968) notes that bright women express M-s. It was of interest to observe how Ss respond on the Outcome measure. Also of importance was the relationship between M-s and Outcome in general, since this should give some indication of the impact of a woman's anxiety on her overall feelings about pursuing success.

Story Liking

In addition to writing six stories, each S was asked to indicate how much she liked each of the stories. A chart listing the name of each main character in each of the stories, and a forced-choice format with five alternatives, from "Strongly Like" to "Strongly Dislike" was provided.

It was of interest to explore the relationships between Story Liking and Outcome, and Story Liking and M-s. Story Liking may provide an index of the overall attraction of a particular success situation.

Future Plans

A brief space was allowed for each S to respond to the question, "What do you plan to be doing 10 years from now?"

Grade-Point Average

Each woman was asked to provide her GPA. Thus, all Ss knew that this information was at hand for experimental

use. By making it available, they were giving permission for its inclusion in the study.

Comments

The last item in the experimental booklet asked for evaluative thoughts and comments.

Procedure

A booklet containing the following items was distributed to each S: an instruction sheet; six pages, each headed with an incomplete story and restated instructions; and two pages requesting story choice, future plans, GPA, and comments.

Seventy-four of the 80 Ss studied took part in the experimental task in groups of about 20. The remaining six wrote in two's, or individually. For all sessions, the procedure was highly similar.

First, I introduced myself as the graduate student who has been corresponding with them, and thanked them for coming. They were then asked to self-address the envelopes being distributed, so that a summary of the project's findings could be mailed to them.

After the envelopes were collected, experimental booklets were distributed in such a way that no two Ss seated adjacently received identical booklets. Thus, no two neighbors were writing about a particular situation at one time.

Once the booklets were distributed, the following statement was made:

As stated in the first letter you received, all the information collected in this study will be treated as confidential material. If you find anything presented here to be distasteful or not to your liking, you have every right to decline participation. Of course, I hope this will not be the case. Nevertheless, I very much respect your right to participate or not participate in any research being carried out.

Next, the instructions were read aloud, and it was stated that they would have about ten minutes to spend on each story. They would receive a signal when one minute remained, and also when to go on to the next story.

If the instructions were understood, the signal to begin was given. All stories were timed with a stopwatch. While it was observed that some Ss used about a minute of the second story's time to finish the first, by the third story they were keeping up with the group.

When the story-writing was completed, Ss were told:

You are finished with the story-writing. Now some additional information is asked of you. I think you will find it self-explanatory. If not, please ask. Since women tend to take varying amounts of time with this part, you may leave when you are finished. Again, thank you for participating.

In leaving, a number of women remarked that they were looking forward to finding out "what you come up with."

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Inter-Rater Agreement

Two raters working independently scored the six stories twice; once for M-s, and once for Outcome. These ratings were then summed for each story type, for each variable.

Comparisons between raters on these summed scores showed that in at least 80% of the cases, the scorings were identical or within one point. This degree of inter-rater agreement was considered satisfactory for the ratings to be averaged. The mean ratings were used in the analyses of variance.

Motive to Avoid Success

Average M-s scores for Ss in each experimental group for each story type are presented in Table 1. M-s was higher among high achieving women, regardless of whether they were sophomores or seniors. Little disparity was apparent in the mean M-s scores as a function of Year in School.

Table 1
Mean M-s Scores for each Experimental
Group as a Function of Story Type

Year in School	GPA	
	H1	Lo
M-ach		
Soph.	1.86	1.70
Senior	1.94	1.82
F-ach		
Soph.	1.75	1.72
Senior	1.80	1.62
Neutral		
Soph.	1.74	1.55
Senior	1.76	1.70

These data were examined through a 2 (GPA x 2 (Year in School) x 3 (Story Type; a repeated measure) analysis of variance (Winer, 1962, pp. 337-349). The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2
Summary of Analysis of Variance: M-s Scores

Source of Variation	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<u>F</u>
Between <u>Ss</u>	79	31.31		
GPA	1	3.75	3.75	10.56*
Yr. in School	1	.60	.60	1.69
GPA x Yr. in School	1	0	0	0
<u>Ss</u> within groups	76	26.96	.355	
Within <u>Ss</u>	160	32.17		
Story Type	2	3.44	1.72	9.71**
GPA x Story Type	2	.05	.025	.141
Yr. in School x Story Type	2	.79	.395	2.23
GPA x Yr. in School x Story Type	2	.88	.44	2.48
Story Type x <u>Ss</u> within groups	152	27.01	.177	

*p/ .005

**p/ .0005

This analysis revealed a statistically significant main effect for GPA, such that high GPA Ss show more M-s than do Lo GPA Ss. A statistically significant main effect was also obtained on the index of success context, Story Type. Thus, a woman's anxiety about success varied with

regard to the context of the success situation. No statistical support was obtained for the notion that Year in School influences M-s.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of M-s scores for each experimental group for each story type. The highest M-s scores occurred on M-ach stories. Less was seen on F-ach stories, and least on Neutral stories.

Outcome Scores

The mean Outcome scores for each experimental group are shown in Table 3. The sample as a whole was a fairly optimistic group.

Table 3

Mean Outcome Scores for each Experimental
Group as a Function of Story Type

Year in School	GPA	
	Hi	Lo
M-ach		
Soph.	4.54	4.91
Senior	4.30	4.56
F-ach		
Soph.	4.59	4.88
Senior	4.51	4.65
Neutral		
Soph.	3.34	3.71
Senior	3.21	2.64

Within groups of both Hi and Lo GPA Ss, sophomores were more optimistic about success. This effect was most marked among the Lo GPA sophomore Ss, who expressed the highest degree of optimism of any group in the study.

A second analysis of variance was performed on these data and the results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4
Summary of Analysis of Variance: Outcome Scores

Source of Variation	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<u>F</u>
Between <u>Ss</u>	79	438.68		
GPA	1	5.10	5.10	$\angle 1$
Yr. in School	1	29.40	29.40	5.668*
GPA x Yr. in School	1	10.01	10.01	1.930
<u>Ss</u> within groups	76	394.18	5.187	
Within <u>Ss</u>	160	896.0		
Story Type	2	415.46	207.73	64.213**
GPA x Story Type	2	7.657	3.829	1.184
Yr. in School x Story Type	2	8.257	4.129	1.276
GPA x Yr. in School x Story Type	2	8.826	4.413	1.364
Story Type x <u>Ss</u> within groups	152	491.8	3.235	

*p/ .025

**p/ .0001

This analysis revealed significant main effects for Year in School and Story Type. Sophomores had consistently higher Mean Outcome scores than seniors. And, with regard to Story Type, women gave the highest Outcome scores to F-ach stories; less to M-ach, and least to Neutral stories.

Story Liking

The mean Story Liking Scores for each experimental group are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Mean Story Liking Scores for each Experimental
Group as a Function of Story Type

Year in School	GPA	
	H1	Lo
M-ach		
Soph.	2.92	3.65
Senior	3.60	3.80
F-ach		
Soph.	3.65	3.70
Senior	3.15	3.50
Neutral		
Soph.	3.48	3.75
Senior	3.40	3.60

Among both sophomores and seniors, low achieving women had higher mean Story Liking scores than did the high achievers.

No disparity was apparent between the Story Liking scores of sophomores and seniors.

The Story Liking scores were examined through a third analysis of variance. The results of this analysis are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Story Liking

Source of Variation	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<u>F</u>
Between <u>Ss</u>	79	78.60		
GPA	1	5.40	5.40	5.619*
Yr. in School	1	.02	.02	.017
GPA x Yr. in School	1	.15	.15	.156
<u>Ss</u> within groups	76	73.04	.96	
Within <u>Ss</u>	160	92.33		
Story Type	2	.19	.09	.172
GPA x Story Type	2	.81	.40	.73
Yr. in School x Story Type	2	6.09	3.04	5.541**
GPA x Yr. in School x Story Type	2	1.71	.85	1.55
Story Type x <u>Ss</u> within groups	152	83.54	.55	

*p/ .02

**p/ .005

This analysis revealed a statistically significant main effect for GPA, such that Lo GPA women had higher mean Story Liking scores than Hi GPA women. A significant interaction was obtained between Year in School and Story Type. Comparison of the mean Story Liking scores of seniors to those of sophomores within each story type, presented in Table 5, revealed a tendency for seniors to have higher Story Liking scores than sophomores on M-ach stories. No marked trend was apparent in similar comparisons of mean Story Liking scores for F-ach and Neutral stories.

Future Plans

All responses to the item "What do you plan to be doing 10 years from now?" were surveyed. Four categories were developed to summarize the data.

Responses were placed in the "Marriage and Career" (MC) category when any combination of work and homemaking was mentioned. Thus the term "career" was used loosely, to encompass the range from "numerical analyst" to "clerk at a University;" and to include full-time employment and freelance work.

The responses of Ss who reported that they saw themselves as "a wife," "wife and mother," or "pregnant with the second child," were grouped in the "Homemaker" (H) category. Those which mentioned employment exclusively--e.g., "teaching high school English"--were grouped as "Careerist" (C).

In two cases, the item was left blank. Three women gave comments of the "can't say" variety. These five responses were grouped in a category labelled "Don't Know" (DK).

Table 7 summarizes the responses given by each experimental group.

Table 7
Future Plans Expressed by
each Experimental Group

Year in School	GPA	
	H1	Lo
MC (n=52)		
Soph.	16	13
Senior	13	10
H (n=19)		
Soph.	3	7
Senior	2	7
C (n=4)		
Soph.	1	0
Senior	3	0
DK (n=5)		
Soph.	0	0
Senior	2	3

The majority of the participants expected to combine marriage and employment. Less than 25% saw themselves as being solely

homemakers. Five percent mentioned "career" exclusively.

The DK category was used exclusively by seniors; and all whose responses were in the C category were Hi GPA Ss. More Hs occurred among Lo GPA Ss, and more Hi GPA Ss saw themselves as handling homemaking tasks in combination with employment.

No appreciable change was apparent in the future plans of women students between the sophomore and senior years of college. The number in each class who opted for MC, C, and H was approximately equal.

Table 8 presents a regrouping of Ss according to their expressed future plans. Shown here are the mean M-s, Outcome, and Story Liking scores for each new group. Also included is a column listing comparable means for the sample as a whole.

Table 8
Mean M-s, Outcome, and Story Liking Scores
as a Function of Future Plans

	MC	H	C	DK	Sample
	(n=52)	(n=19)	(n=4)	(n=5)	(n=80)
<u>M-s</u>	1.72	1.67	1.84	1.76	1.73
Outcome	4.16	4.08	3.96	4.00	4.16
Story Liking	3.34	3.68	3.63	3.66	3.50

Women in the MC category were of course most similar to the "average" S in the study, since they were the group most numerous. In general, they were relatively anxious about success, yet felt that they would be able to succeed at what they set out to do.

Women in the H category expressed only slightly less M-s than average, while their degree of optimism (as reflected in the Outcome score) also was slightly lower.

Women in the C group expressed more M-s than average. Their Outcome scores for both M-ach and F-ach stories were the highest of all the Future Plans groups; namely, 4.7 and 4.88. The mean M-s score shown in Table 8 reflects their distaste for the Neutral stories. Mean Outcome score for the C group on the Neutral stories was 2.3, and the mean Story Liking score was 3.25. Both were the lowest obtained for all Future Plans groups.

Women in the DK group were also slightly more anxious about success than average, but their mean Outcome scores were comparatively lower.

Mean Story Liking scores of women in the MC category tended to be somewhat lower than the overall average of 3.5; whereas, comparable means for women in H, C, and DK categories all were higher, and relatively similar. While again this was a post hoc comparison with the

unequal groups, nevertheless, the tendency for women in these groups to respond that they liked the stories more than MC women was marked.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Motive to Avoid Success

Negative imagery about success (M-s) was expressed by all Ss on several of the six stories. Hi GPA women expressed significantly more anxiety about success than Lo GPA women.

For the college woman with a high GPA, the possibilities for succeeding are everpresent. By definition, the high achieving woman is one who has continually involved herself in competitive situations and won. Because she is bright, she is aware both intellectually and experientially of the taboos of the culture. Having performed well academically, she has been encouraged to pursue her education. This has meant choosing and preparing for a career.

However, the media and the culture they represent challenge, if not openly deplore, a woman's meaningful career involvement outside the home. Television commercials express concern that the working wife will not be able to express her love for her family through well-prepared meals. Her laundry may be less superbly clean and sweet-smelling than that of her neighbor. What the commercials fail to reflect is that many families cannot have that washer-dryer unit without the wife's employment; and, further, that many

loving mothers in one-parent homes spend their limited off-hours at the laundramat, where the emphasis is simply on getting the job done.

In a much-read book of the sixties, Betty Friedan (1963) likened the discrepancy between the reality of women's lives and the image to which they are trying to conform to a "schizophrenic split."

Conflict is heightened for the high-achieving woman. It is not surprising that when presented the possibility of being awarded a 4.5 in student teaching, or a highly-sought research grant, high-achievers respond with anxiety. Throughout their educational careers, they have been encouraged to perform with distinction. Yet, when faced with actualizing their potential vis-a-vis the world of work, they are cautioned that the male ego is frail, that men cannot stand the stress of competition with women of ideas and actions. Given that there is no status for women in our society comparable to that of "confirmed bachelor," women have good reason to be anxious about success. Rather than do battle with these cultural imperatives, it is far more usual for high achieving women to opt to avoid success, and to feel guilty that they "haven't made much of themselves."

For the Lo GPA woman, success is less routine. In her pattern of low achievement in college, there may be operating a combination of factors. It is likely that she is less gifted than her classmate with a 3.6 cumulative

average. However, she may also be expressing behaviorally a reluctance to engage herself in competition, and deal with its accompanying stresses. Such an attempt at the resolution of conflict through the inhibition of intense competitive strivings for academic excellence has been noted by Kagan (1964).

Statistical analysis also indicated that Story Type is relevant to the discussion of M-s. Such a finding is in keeping with Atkinson's notion that the context of the success situation is an important factor in analyzing achievement motivation (Atkinson, 1964).

A ranking of the means revealed the highest anxiety to have been generated by M-ach stories, less by F-ach stories, and least by the "control" or Neutral stories. Thus, there is a tendency for women to respond with conflict when presented masculine-oriented achievement situations. Further, both of these conditions aroused more M-s than did the Neutral or control stories.

This trend is in keeping with Horner's notion that anxiety about success is culturally conditioned in women, such that they are encouraged not to enter traditionally masculine-oriented professions. The present study elaborated on this hypothesis by supplying evidence for the corollary that women will feel less conflicted about such traditionally feminine endeavors as teaching and homemaking.

However, it should be noted that these comments are based only on a ranking of means, and, as such, must be considered speculative.

The relationship between Year in School and M-s did not reach statistical significance; the difference in means was negligible. It may be that one's year in school is a temporary identity which does not strongly influence one's long-term achievement strivings and the accompanying anxieties. Rather, these anxieties are present to an equal extent in both sophomores and seniors, suggesting that by the sophomore year in college women have already been responding to these issues. Some degree of resolution has been attained, and this balance remains relatively unchanged through the college years.

The M-s data obtained in the present study supported Horner's contention that "honors" women experience heightened anxiety about success (Horner, 1968). This is true despite some important differences in design.

Horner's Ss were "predominantly freshmen," as compared to the stratified random sample of sophomores and seniors used in the present study. She used a captive audience, in that participation in her experiment was presented as a course requirement, whereas the present study relied on volunteers. It is of value to note further that Horner's study employed a male experimenter. This was in contrast to the female E used in the present design. And,

finally, some mention should be made of the replication of findings across universities. While it is difficult to make precise statements on such issues, I think it would be acknowledged that the intellectual climates of the University of Michigan and Michigan State are sufficiently diverse as to warrant mention. U. of M. has a reputation for having high entrance requirements, and for being extremely competitive academically. M.S.U. has a more open stand on admissions, and the intellectual atmosphere tends to be more relaxed.

Outcome Scores

Outcome scores for all Ss tended to be fairly high. The relationship between Outcome and Year in School reached statistical significance, such that sophomores had higher Outcome scores than seniors.

It is not surprising that sophomore women were more positive about how everything would turn out. For them, post-college life was still safely "the future." While there may have been some stress awaiting, for the most part graduation was seen as a wide line dividing college life and "the world." All possible future plans were positively tinged. The senior, on the other hand, was closer to that line, and realized it isn't nearly as substantive as she'd thought. She realized, reluctantly, that if she were not married or engaged, she was expected to go to graduate school or get a job.

One may further speculate that this disparity in the Outcome scores of sophomores when compared to those of seniors may reflect the impact of the women's liberation movement. There have been stirrings to lead the college woman to feel that by the time she has to take on the world, societal pressures will have eased. The sophomore may have been optimistic that there would be more support for her to depart from traditional goals than there has been for her older sister.

A statistically significant relationship between Outcome and Story Type was also found. Mean Outcome scores revealed a tendency for Ss to be most optimistic about the possibilities for incorporating success in traditionally feminine achievement situations, into their futures. They were next optimistic about traditionally masculine achievement situations. The Neutral situations ranked lowest. This trend may reflect the social desirability of success in traditionally feminine achievement situations. However, the fact that mean Outcome scores for both masculine and feminine achievement situations were both high and fairly similar would caution against overinterpretation. In this case, a narrow interpretation of this main effect is more appropriate; namely, that the specific achievement context of the success situation is a factor in the degree of optimism or pessimism expressed.

No significant relationship was obtained between GPA and Outcome, neither as a main effect nor in any of

the situations examined, except where considered in interaction with Year in School. Then it was found that GPA was significantly related to Outcome among sophomores. Thus it may be that among sophomores, achievement strivings operate to enhance the overall mood of optimism seen in sophomores as a group. But, in general, women's optimism or pessimism seems only partly related to their feelings about achievement.

To explore this relationship in more detail, the correlations between M-s and Outcome for each story type were obtained. The results suggested that the relationship between anxiety about success and optimism varies with the degree of anxiety experienced. As shown in Table 3, most anxiety was expressed on M-ach stories; a moderate amount was seen for F-ach stories. Least was evoked by Neutral stories. Under conditions inducing a fairly high degree of anxiety, as the anxiety increased, M-s accounted for a small but important decrease in optimism; $r(\text{M-ach}) \text{ M-s} \times \text{Outcome} = -.251, p \leq .05$. Under conditions of moderate anxiety (F-ach), there was little relationship between anxiety and optimism; $r = -.112$. Within a fairly low level of anxiety, M-s also accounted for a small amount of the change in Outcome; $r(\text{Neutral}) = -.325, p \leq .01$.

One possible interpretation is that the anxiety which women feel about success in traditionally masculine success situations is more likely to influence them to turn away from success than is the anxiety they feel about F-ach situations. In F-ach situations, rejecting success is tantamount

to an alienation from one's identity as a female. It is possible for a woman to accept success in traditionally feminine endeavors without being overjoyed. Little threat is engendered. However, the threat induced by success in M-ach situations produces an anxiety which does press for a resolution in the form of moving away from success.

In general, it may be stated that M-s is one factor in determining a woman's projection of how she will react to success. However, the magnitude of the correlations suggests that there are other important factors which await recognition.

Story Liking

The tendency for low achieving women to have been more accepting of the stories, and more positive in their ratings of them seems related to the finding that Lo GPA women had less anxiety about success than Hi GPA women. In other words, since the task stimulated less anxiety in them, it is understandable that they could say they enjoyed the task. Also, being less involved in academics, they would have had a tendency to be less critical of the experimental task.

On the other hand, Hi GPA Ss may have had several reasons for being less accepting. It is true that they found the task anxiety-arousing. However, the arousal of anxiety in itself may not have been perceived as entirely negative. This is substantiated by the low positive

correlations between M-s and Story Liking: $r(\underline{M-ach}) = .185$; $r(\underline{F-ach}) = .06$; $r(\text{Neutral}) = .294$. The only correlation to have reached statistical significance occurred for the Neutral stories ($p/.01$), which evoked the least anxiety of the three story types. Again, it appears that within a range of low levels of anxiety, as anxiety increased, Story Liking also increased. Other factors might have been operating as well. Perhaps, Hi GPA women are more discriminating in general, such that they were critical of the verbal cues. They may also have found the task less able to hold their interest throughout the experimental session.

The configuration of findings which emerged lends itself to speculation about the possibility that patterns of high and low achievement among college women may actually represent two different modes of coping with feelings of anxiety about success. Perhaps the low achiever tells herself that the world is rosy, that anything is possible for a woman if she puts her mind to it. The reason she is not planning for a career, she may rationalize, is that she is not smart enough. (One must realize, however, that males with identical grades don't see as a viable alternative staying home and being "househusbands.") Hence, the low achiever expressed less M-s than her high achieving counterpart.

Lo GPA Ss also were more accepting of the stories, and the experimental situation as a whole. Further, sophomore Ss with low GPAs expressed more optimism than did those whose GPAs indicated that they were high achievers. Again we have the picture of the passive, acquiescing, non-discriminating female who is not anxious about success in college because it really is not all that important to her. Notice that among all the women in the study, seniors were less optimistic about success than sophomores. This shift in attitude was more marked among Lo GPA Ss. Perhaps, by the senior year, faced with the success of graduation, this defensive facade of low achievement and denial wears thin.

No differences were obtained as a function of story type on the measure of Story Liking, except in interaction with Year in School. The finding that seniors had significantly higher scores on M-ach situations than sophomores may indicate that seniors welcomed the opportunity to think about such possibilities. The opportunity for seniors to engage themselves in M-ach situations was far closer to reality for the seniors than it was sophomores; whereas, such was not the case in both F-ach and Neutral situations.

In attempt to understand what the Story Liking scores were measuring, correlations were obtained between Story Liking and Outcome. The findings were as follows: $r(\text{M-ach}) = -.02$; $r(\text{F-ach}) = .012$; $r(\text{Neutral}) = .147$. Thus it would seem that the Story Liking score as used here

does not tap optimism. Further, it only minimally reflects M-s. Possibly, Story Liking, as used in this study, tapped a willingness to involve oneself in the experimental task, and a receptivity to discussing the conflicts aroused at this level of study. Whether Lo GPA Ss were actually more "open" and less defensive about their feelings about success is another issue.

Marriageability

The number of engaged or married undergraduate women who responded that they might be able to participate was so small that the Marriageability variable could not be studied as planned. There were several indications as to why this occurred.

A fair number of the women who declined wrote, saying that they were too busy. Often, they held a job, some in addition to home and child-care responsibilities. Some objected to the fact that they would not be paid. One noted that if she could be reimbursed for transportation to and from her home, a distance of some 80 miles, she would make the trip. A general trend was that the "highly marriageable women" as a group experienced numerous demands on their time, and here was one demand they were able to decline.

Future Plans

The exclusive use of the DK category on the part of seniors (as shown in Table 8) may reflect the fact that graduation was bringing "the future" up close. Their responses may have had a stronger note of realism than those of sophomores. It may have been harder for them to respond that they would be homemaking when no prospect of husband was in sight.

The exclusive use of the C category by Hi GPA Ss was probably good reality testing--or a self-fulfilling prophecy. Certainly, careers are more open to women who have outstanding academic backgrounds.

The tendency for most Hs to have Lo GPAs is feasible. The woman with a relatively poor academic record probably does not feel particularly competent in regard to the world of work. The consideration should be allowed that she may not feel terribly happy about homemaking, either. But, it is easier for her to slide into getting married and raising a family than to pursue employment.

In light of the significant main effect obtained for GPA on the M-s data, it appears that while Hi GPA Ss evidenced considerable anxiety about success, they also saw themselves as pursuing it.

The findings that most Ss stated that they intended to combine marriage and employment, and that there was relatively little change in their thinking between the sophomore

and senior years of college, are conceptually related. Most obvious is the fact that all the women in the sample were "achievers." In some ways, the categorization of Hi GPA and Lo GPA is misleading. Any woman who is at least a sophomore in college has demonstrated academic ability and personal competence, and a need to achieve.

Also, all the women in this study have been subjected to the "socialization" referred to by Millett (1970) in her discussion of ideological bases for Sexual Politics. They have learned the "...highly elaborate code of conduct, gesture, and attitude..." appropriate to the feminine sex role, as well as what is taboo (Millett, 1970, p. 26). Through the process of identification, they have learned that to feel good about themselves, to feel worthwhile as human beings, they must get married; and, in most cases, have children. Departure from the internalized role model results in guilt, anxiety, and self-censure. Finally, if there are biological drives to reproduce, they feel them.

Given these needs and pressures, then, it seems understandable that the majority of the women in this study gave Future Plans responses in the MC category; and, that the Future Plans responses of sophomores and seniors were not appreciably different.

The analysis of M-s, Outcome, and Story Liking scores according to expressed future plans is presented mainly as a means for generating hypotheses. With so few Ss in each of several groups, no real conclusions can be

drawn. However, the opportunity for comparing projective data with overtly stated plans should not be overlooked. Therefore, the following speculations are offered.

A possible interpretation of the finding of high M-s and high Outcome scores among C women is that women who see themselves employed ten years hence, who do not mention marriage and family in their future plans, may tend to be more anxious than average about success. However, they are also more optimistic that all will turn out well. Thus, they are making their anxiety work for them. One possible drawback to their solution is that they are meeting their achievement needs through the suppression of culturally based emotional desires for home and family.

A possible interpretation of the finding of low M-s, high Outcome among H women is that women who have opted for a life of homemaking have reduced their anxiety about success by deciding to avoid it, enabling them to feel that a woman can do anything she wants; the world is wide open. However, they are dealing with their conflict through the suppression of achievement needs.

The finding of a moderate degree of M-s coupled with a low mean Outcome score among the DK group may suggest that women who are uncertain about their future plans are experiencing a fair degree of anxiety, and are relatively pessimistic that they can succeed. They have not been able to resolve their conflict via commitment to a given life style.

There was a tendency for H and C women to have higher Story Liking scores than MC women. One possible interpretation is that women in the MC group may be more actively aware of the need to maintain a balance between achievement needs and the pulls of home and children. Thus, most elements of the conflict are conscious. Women in the H and C groups may be coping with the conflict throughout the use of defense mechanisms, welcoming the chance to re-work and re-repress. Hence, the higher Story Liking scores.

The DK women are similar to the H and C women, in that they cannot express either set of needs. This results in a similarly high Story Liking score.

Story Content

While the present study attempted to measure quantitatively the issues involved in women's feelings about success, it should also be noted that the incomplete story method provides data which are qualitatively rich. To explore the subjective meaning of the verbal cues, it seemed appropriate that a brief analysis of story content be presented. Obviously, there are many pitfalls to such an approach. One reader's summary may differ markedly from that of the next, in that what seemed noteworthy to one might be ignored by another. Nevertheless, the following discussion is offered in hopes of communicating some idea of what the stories were like.

M-ach Stories

Identification with the father was a frequent theme of the M-ach stories.

Anne admired her father greatly, he was an eyes-ears-nose and throat (sic) specialist and Anne wanted to follow in his footsteps, taking the place a son would have taken.

Her father (now deceased) had always been the neighborhood's physician, and she had always wanted to live up to his ideals. Ever since she had been knee-high to a grasshopper she had been at her father's office--cleaning, watching, imitating.

It was mainly her father's influence and encouragement that helped her to decide to go into medicine...

and

Anne had always been an industrious girl. Her father, a doctor, used to say, "My Anne will go far!"

However, the relationship with mother was not as gratifying. Mom was perceived as being less supportive.

Somehow, after talking to Mom about [her success], Anne feels as though those ten weeks were just spent marking time and the future holds only more of the same.

And, in another instance:

...her mother, although pleased with Anne's grades, wonders whether or not Anne has chosen a field (major) which will allow her to marry and raise a family.

The departure from a woman's traditional role by being successful in a man's world was seen as having painful consequences, both internal and external.

...after her elation at getting fantastic grades, she found she wasn't very happy or satisfied. She had so far gotten little else out of college life besides grades. She hadn't made many friends or had any new experiences. In fact, even the kids in her medical school class hated her for raising the curve.

She is a loner, and in being No. 1, she has only succeeded in becoming more alone. She has become tense and unhappy in her work. Going at her present pace, Anne may soon find that she is headed for a breakdown.

Now that she was in college she found herself putting herself in the place of a social outcast. Her friends wanted her to do things with them but she stuck to her studies. She was proud, but also very socially frustrated.

The long-term consequences of Anne's success varied with her ability to satisfy what was perceived as a woman's needs for marriage and family.

Anne was fairly lonely, but she was determined to please her parents....Since she was well adjusted she is now an M.D. specializing in pediatrics. She never did marry, though. She loved humanity, but not people.

Anne continues to achieve good grades, graduates near the top of her class, and at graduation becomes engaged to a fellow classmate.

And the top is a damn lonely place....She ends up at the top of the whole heap, goes into practice, and kills herself at the age of thirty-one with some of those drugs she learned about back in the chem. building at good old M.S.U.

It is the rare story which leaves the main character content with no mention of marriage.

In the future Anne will specialize her field (sic) and go on to be one of the most highly acknowledged and hard working doctors in the country.

Anne had just shown herself and everyone else that there is plenty of room at the top for determined, hard working, capable professional women.

Several instances were presented in which Anne left medical school for marriage.

Anne enrolls for Co-ed Social Dance the next term. She falls in love with her dance partner and quits school to get married.

Ten years later, Anne and her husband were introduced at a party--"Here is the famous Dr. Halstead. And this is his wife Anne. She bakes the best apple pies."

In the following story, the author was more explicit about possible effects of dropping out of school to get married.

In 15 years, he is very successful. She is just a housewife. Relations with him deteriorate and she commits suicide. She felt she could no longer tolerate her jealousy for him for a position she could have held.

In very few instances, the author presented Anne as having been able to combine marriage successfully with her career.

Anne is now a full-fledged doctor and is very happy. She has a husband who too is a doctor. One day they are planning to start a family.

And:

After she graduated she specialized in pediatrics and did very well even though she got married too. After the children came along, she had to give up her practice for awhile but soon she was able to pick it up again parttime. Anne realized her goal very well.

F-ach Stories

Identification with the mother was a frequent theme of the F-ach stories.

Joan comes from a big family and has always had a lot of the housekeeping responsibilities to deal with. . . Joan has found real fulfillment and happiness in her role as homemaker for Tom and the kids.

Although elements of the relationship may be lacking, there seems to be a common factor of gratification from following in mother's footsteps.

(Joan) knew that her mother had nominated her... The contest had been sponsored by one of her mother's many "women's" magazines. Joan had no patience with them at all---in a world torn with strife, hunger, poverty, and war---these magazines cared only for baking a better meatloaf... Joan called her mother to tell her the "good" news...

"National Homemaker of the Year"! Wouldn't her mother die! She had always said that Joan would make a lousy housewife.

In both stories, while daughter experienced alienation from mother's values, the daughter still anticipated telling of the honor.

Several stories expressed concern about possible negative consequences having ensued from the acceptance of the award.

(Her husband) was surprised but glad that Joan turned down many of the public appearance offers she received. Both reasoned that the children were still young, and Joan found to her surprise she had no desire for any different life.

The award, however, became a great burden... She was expected to travel a great deal, and to leave her husband and children for weeks at a time. Of course, the prestige was alluring, but Joan felt that she would rather be Mrs. Diamond than National Homemaker. She eventually played the whole thing down, feeling that it took too much time away from her original interest---her family.

It is difficult to understand what it was about this success that had to be avoided. It may be simply that it signified a departure from passivity.

Another recurring theme was that of the "joke." Here the husband sent the bogus "award."

...isn't he a dear. He knows I've been depressed lately. He always does the right thing to cheer me up.

Joan didn't exactly qualify for so high a distinction....but...she realized her husband was "up to his tricks" again, and was cheered...

In another instance, Mother was the perpetrator.

Her mother burst into fits of hysterical laughter. "You didn't really believe that, did you, Joanie?"

Some stories presented Joan as unfulfilled despite the honor.

(Joan) is not really proud of her award. She knows her husband will be very proud of her but she still feels inadequate, unsatisfied and jealous of his daily opportunity to get away from the rut.

Also noticed was an undercurrent of hostility toward the husband which ran through many of the stories, though seldom overtly.

(Joan) just had to prove to herself she wasn't as bad as her husband, Chuck, said she was...She didn't even tell Chuck when she won...Maybe she'd just keep the money and not say a word. Besides it would be fun to shock the pants off of him when he saw her picture in the paper...

Her husband could not understand her excitement until she told him that the prize included a trip to Europe. This would be their first vacation in years.

It is possible that the jokes and depression mentioned in earlier examples were all ways of trying to keep the hostility hidden.

Finally, there were a considerable number of examples where the heroine felt very happy and receptive of the success.

Needless to say, it made her day, and she had finally gained the recognition everyone felt she deserved so much.

Joan is very proud...and is doing what she has always wanted to do--be a good wife and mother.

Joan is quite pleased to receive the Award...it made her feel important as a mother, wife, community leader and person.

Neutral Stories

The non-success situation did not seem to arouse the feelings that the success stories did. As a whole, the stories tended to be less impassioned. A common theme seems to be that the main character thought about the situation presented, decided to give it a try, and rejected it on well-thought-through grounds.

In the sorority story, one almost had the feeling that what was being asked was something like, "Do you like spinach?" The answers ranged from "never touch it" to "yes, I think it's great."

Some women mentioned the need to make friends, with sorority providing structure and security.

In the end, she decided to remain independent and face the challenge of MSU without benefit of a security group.

Sometimes the story focused on boyfriends and the importance of such relationships.

One year later she was pinned to a guy from a fraternity. They would make a very well-matched couple.

The notion of little conflict being expressed is typified by this example.

She has never been very interested in sororities so she just forgets about it. Marcie decided to get a job in the dorm cafeteria to occupy her time.

I'm not gonna join a hypocritical sorority if I have to spend the rest of my days alone. So she didn't rush. And she lived happily ever after.

It was the rare story which mentions the opportunity to be rejected.

Quiet and sensitive, she is ever so deeply hurt by something completely unnecessary.

Finally, there is the story of the girl who found her niche.

Marcie is a real joiner...She is finally matched with the sorority she wants and through them meets many more people and is active in many projects.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Critique

While considerable care was taken in selection of Ss, in retrospect, some possibly important deficiencies in the procedure used must be noted. First, a limitation in the generality of the conclusions which can be drawn from the data was enforced by the use of the University Director as the means of identifying potential Ss. Those students able to list addresses at registration tend to be the more traditional. Students returning in the fall with no definite place to live tend to be more adventuresome and carefree, and perhaps less responsible.

In several instances, the Questionnaire (Appendix A.) further tended to eliminate the more unconventional women. In requesting information about marital status, the study identified itself too strongly with establishment biases by giving no mention of less traditional liasons, such as "living together" arrangements.

Also, the introductory letter referred to the potential Ss as "girls." Most females involved in the women's liberation cause would have been alienated by such an appellation.

Thus, the generality of the findings presented here must be limited by the realization that the women studied came from a fairly conservative sector of the population of college females. A future project might focus on studying sex-role conflict within a less traditional setting, such as the commune. The results of such a study would give some indication of whether or not the conflict changes with external living arrangements.

Difficulty was also apparent in the request for the woman's year in school on the Questionnaire (Appendix A.). By providing a forced-choice format, women who were a term out of sequence but who otherwise might have qualified eliminated themselves. Some responded saying that they couldn't participate because they were freshmen, or whatever. It can be inferred that a fair number felt they had received the mailing erroneously, and that because they were not "sophomores or seniors" they did not respond. Obviously, all year levels should have been listed.

Bias may have been introduced by the signing of correspondence with the title "Mrs." Experimenter effect (Rosenthal, 1958) may have prompted Ss to respond to the Future Plans item by opting for marriage and employment out of an unconscious need for approval. Or, having a married female graduate student as a communicator (Cohen, 1964) may have influenced Ss at an even earlier stage of S selection such that women interested in career or home-making exclusively may have felt put off. Regardless, the

E's title is of course an important issue which should be considered more carefully in future research design.

However, the most serious criticism of this study is that the Marriageability variable was not investigated. The reasons for the difficulty in obtaining Ss with certain characteristics are not completely clear. Indeed, it is probable that highly marriageable women have less free time. However, they obviously are people who manage to accomplish a great deal in spite of their many responsibilities; so one must question why they found it so easy to refuse.

It may be that the topic touched a sensitive area, one which the women were reluctant to have probed. Not mutually exclusive is the thought that women who are married or very nearly so hold a closer identity with married women than with college women. If this were the case, they would tend to feel they had little to contribute that would "fit"; i.e., meet with the E's expectations and approval.

Some support for this explanation was given by the returns from women over age 25. Several expressed concern that their views might not be relevant or worthwhile; for example, what does a 33-year-old mother of three have to say that would be important. Perhaps some of the younger married women also felt this alienation.

The main inference to be drawn, however, is that the incentives of the present study were not sufficient for the married woman to participate. Of necessity, future research would need to provide different incentives. Payment for

participation should be considered. Another kind of letter might be used, geared to an exploration of the demands facing the young college wife. However, a preliminary speculation is that the recently married college woman is dealing with much through isolation and repression. If such is the case, she will not respond to a direct approach. A more veiled discussion of the project might be necessary.

Future Research

Since the study suggests that there is no significant change in women's concern about success between the sophomore and senior years, it would be interesting to study these same issues among adolescents. Stories might be collected from a Girl Scout troop or possibly a high school club or sorority.

A provocative study has been reported (Weston and Mednick, 1970) since the inception of this project. The authors noted no differences in M-s as a function of social class. They also explored inter-college differences by using samples at two universities. Examining groups of black and white females, they found blacks to express significantly less M-s than their white counterparts.

Thus it would seem that the area of women's feelings about success has begun to be explored. It is hoped that more tenacious souls will follow.

Integration of Findings

Horner's postulate (1968) that there exists in women a motive to avoid success, operationally defined as "the expression of negative imagery about success," is supported by the findings of this study. The college women who participated seemed to be operating from the frame of reference that one should feel some degree of discomfort with all success.

This may reflect a socio-religious point of view, the so-called Protestant ethic; i.e., the notion that one should be modest and undeserving. However, it does not explain why this phenomenon is so much more prevalent among women than men (Horner, 1969). Possibly, this "rejection" of success has more to do with the cultural expectation of passivity in the female role (de Beauvoir, 1953; Millett, 1970). Thus, it would be unfeminine to feel happy about personal success, even in stereotypically feminine endeavors.

More revealing, however, is the finding that some successes are more universally intolerable than others. Those arousing the most conflict are the result of involvement in non-traditionally feminine endeavors, where competition is maximized. This is especially true of the high achieving college woman who, by definition, has the greatest likelihood of pursuing such goals. Basically, no change occurs in the amount of anxiety about success expressed while in college. If anything, some studies suggest that

college tends to have an effect on personal values such that seniors are more similar to one another than freshmen (Kalka, 1968). It is likely that this influence is "traditionalizing," which in this instance would pressure high achieving women to concern themselves with getting married.

In general, the women surveyed tended to believe that women will be able to integrate success into the mainstream of their lives. However, this was more true of sophomores, who still have not experienced the stress of graduation.

Finally, responses to the Future Plans item lead to the speculation that there is a tendency for the woman who is trying to do something other than involve herself in the "marriage and part-time job" arrangement--which has been emerging for educated women in the past 20 years--to feel the need to rethink and rework her decision. She is departing from the expected and she is experiencing heightened stress.

It could be that the next 20 years will see women become more dissatisfied with their lot in general. As homemaking comes to be seen as less fulfilling and less worthy, all those women wanting to have a family and also go to work are going to be demanding good quality child-care and more help with the housework. The market for floor wax may decline as women challenge the ethic that a spotless house is the royal road to inner peace and

contentment.

To have impact on lessening the stress inherent in achievement for a woman, inroads must be made far earlier than college. Since upon entering high school students often are forced to decide among college preparatory, business, and home economics majors, it would seem that the decision-making process must take place in earlier grades.

The most significant need is for the presence of appropriate female role models in the professions, and in high level positions in government and business. The absence of such figures has made it necessary for women to repress their "femininity" and emotional/sexual needs in order to achieve. Those who have been unsuccessful at the repression often have been unable to face societal pressures and pursue their careers. In large part, those who have succeeded career-wise have been the angrily competitive intellectualized females so often caricatured.

It is hoped that the ferment of the present times will encourage women who have achieved some measure of integration of roles to come forth and be visible, to share their experiences and encourage others. This may enable women of the future to experience commitment to competence without the guilt and pain of their predecessors.

It should be noted in closing that emphasis on the problems of women will no doubt result in a heightened awareness of the difficulties faced by men in our culture.

Perhaps the next years will lead to an increased openness to dealing with the "masculine" and the "feminine" in us all.

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CHAPTER VII

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APPENDICES

CHAPTER VIII

APPENDIX A

Introductory Letter and Questionnaire

April 3, 1970

Dear Woman Student:

I am a graduate student working on my Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. Part of the requirement is designing and carrying out a research project which is then written up as a dissertation.

For my project, I have chosen to study the views of sophomore and senior women on certain issues. Now is a time of tremendous interest in woman as a person. Psychologists and educators are finding a need to learn about woman's feelings about herself, and herself in relation to the world around her. It is my goal to combine, through this research, personal concern and involvement in these issues with my professional training. Thus, by enlarging the knowledge base in this area, we could make it more possible for psychologists and others in the helping professions to be more understanding of and responsive to the needs of women.

To select my sample, I will need some general information about a large number of girls. To help me do this, will you provide the information requested on the enclosed questionnaire? When I have received your replies, I will be asking many of you to return for a two-hour research session.

That session will be held during the week of May 11th. At that time, in a large group, I will be asking all of you to complete a series of stories. This is all that I can tell you about it now. However, this kind of research has been done previously, and participants usually responded with interest and enjoyment. In recognition and appreciation for your help, I will send all who respond a summary and discussion of the entire project when all results have been computed and studied.

I would like you to return the questionnaire by April 12th. Shortly after, you will be notified about further participation. Please respond promptly. Although nothing especially revealing is being asked, all information will, of course, be handled confidentially.

If you have any questions, please feel free to
call me at home, 487-3137.

Thank you for your help.

Cordially,

(Mrs.) Ida Kresojevich

Mrs. Ida Kresojevich
Department of Psychology
109 Olds Hall

APPENDIX B

Letter of Assignment to Research Session

109 Olds Hall
Campus
May 5, 1970

Dear

Thank you very much for your response to my questionnaire. I was pleased and encouraged to find that you are interested and willing to participate in this project.

In accord with the time preferences you listed, your research session has been scheduled for the following time:

Date: _____

Time: _____

Place: _____

I look forward to meeting with you then.

If your schedule has changed and you cannot attend this session, please call me at home, 487-3137, before 9 a.m. or after 5 p.m.

Again, thank you. I am aware of how valuable your time is, and I sincerely appreciate your efforts.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Ida Kresojevich

mr

APPENDIX C

Number of Subjects in Each Academic Curriculum

<u>Curriculum</u>	<u>Number of Ss</u>
Home Economics	9
Elementary & Special Education	9
Psychology	7
Mathematics & Statistics	6
English	5
Human Medicine	4
Social Science	4
Agriculture & Natural Resources	3
Nursing	3
Arts & Letters	2
Biological Science	2
History	2
Music	2
Lyman Briggs	2
Romance Languages	2
Other	9
No Preference	<u>9</u>
	80

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