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Career Commitment, Family Commitment, and Family/Career  
Conflict Among Young Adults

by

Valerie L. Holms

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Psychology  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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FAMILY/CAREER CONFLICT AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
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## Abstract

The present study examined the relationship between commitment to a future career and commitment to raising a family among never-married adults between the ages of 17 and 23. As well, the potential conflict between career and family commitments, and the roles played in this anticipated conflict by self-esteem, self-efficacy, coping strategies, and knowledge about the experiences faced by dual-career families were investigated. Two samples were studied. The first consisted of 331 university undergraduate students. Of these students, 236 attempted to solicit assistance from high school acquaintances not attending university. An 81% response rate provided a final sample of non-university subjects consisting of 57 males and 126 females. Each subject filled out a questionnaire containing a demographic survey, Career Commitment, Family Commitment, and Family/Career Conflict Scales, and measures of self-esteem, self-efficacy, coping strategies, and knowledge about the experiences faced by dual-career couples. Three 2 (gender) X 2 (status; student vs. nonstudent) analyses of variance with planned comparisons were conducted on the major variables. Students scored significantly higher on the Career Commitment Scale than did nonstudents. In terms of Family Commitment, a significant interaction illustrated that nonstudent females scored higher than did student females and nonstudent males. A significant main effect for gender was found on the Family/Career Conflict Scale, with

females reporting significantly higher anticipated conflict than that expected by males. It was found that respondents with higher commitment to both family and career did not anticipate higher family/career conflict than did the remainder of the sample. Highly-committed individuals reported significantly higher self-efficacy and planned to use a number of coping strategies to a greater extent than other participants. The discussion highlights the similarities and differences among the subsamples, addresses the strengths and limitations of the present study, and suggests directions for future research.

# Career Commitment, Family Commitment, and Family/Career Conflict Among Young Adults

This study examined the relationship between two of the most important decisions young adults make: commitment to a future career and commitment to raising a family. These types of commitment, and the potential conflict between them, were studied among female and male university students, and essentially comparable nonstudents. The roles played in this conflict by self-esteem, self-efficacy, coping strategies, and knowledge about the experiences of dual-career families were also investigated.

This thesis presents a review of a number of issues relevant to the study of career and family choices. It begins with definitions of three major variables: career commitment, family commitment, and family/career conflict. The discussion then turns to the growing phenomenon of dual-career families, exploring both the potential costs and benefits associated with this lifestyle. A look at the current research on the career and family decisions of young adults follows, including an examination of developmental issues at this stage of the life cycle.

Next, the paper examines a number of methodological problems in this area of research. It includes a discussion of the lack of information about non-university populations, followed by a focus on the shortcomings of previous measuring devices. Results of a pilot study conducted to address some of the measurement problems are presented.

Hypothesized links are discussed between self-efficacy, self-esteem, coping strategies, knowledge of women in the work force, and high career and family commitment. Finally, the study designed to test these hypotheses is presented.

#### Definitions of the Three Major Variables

In this study, career is defined as "the developmental sequence of full-time gainful employment engaged in by the individual during the course of his or her working life" (Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980, p. 45). In previous studies, the term career has also been defined more generally to include avocational, familial, and civic roles (Super, 1980). While it is acknowledged that valuable work is done which is non-remunerative, such as housework and volunteer work (Burke & Greenglass, 1987), the separate examination of career and family commitment requires a more limited definition of career.

Career commitment is defined as motivation to pursue the development of an occupation or series of occupations over a long span of time (Super, 1980). Family commitment is defined as an interest in and devotion to having children and raising a family (Holms, 1985).

A recent theoretical model of role conflicts (Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly, 1983) distinguishes between work conflict (incompatible role pressures experienced in the work domain), family conflict (incompatible pressures experienced within the family), and interrole conflict

(pressures in one role that are incompatible with pressures from another role). Family/career conflict, a type of interrole conflict, results when both homemaking and career roles are valued but at the same time viewed as incompatible (Farmer, 1984).

The paper now turns to a discussion of family/career conflict among dual-career families.

### The Growing Phenomenon of Dual-Career Families

#### Dual-Career Families and Conflicts

While men have traditionally been expected to seek both career and family fulfillments, more and more women in our society are also seeking both (Holahan & Gilbert, 1979). While stereotypes suggest that a woman may have little interest in or commitment to a career (Kaufman & Feters, 1980; Osipow, 1975; Rosen & Jerdee, 1974), current research suggests that a woman's career commitment is equal to that of a man's (Graddick & Farr, 1983; Katz, 1986). The increasing numbers of dual-career families reflect structural and value shifts that emphasize women's increased involvement in careers, and a partnership between husband and wife (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1969). However, these shifts have not evolved sufficiently to help women overcome the stresses and conflict involved in combining roles.

Interrole Conflict Among Women. A number of studies have demonstrated that family/career conflict is a major problem among modern dual-career couples. Gordon and Hall (1974) studied sources of conflict within and between various roles (home, nonhome, and self) among 229 married women who had graduated from an American college between 1948 and 1968. The most common conflict, home roles versus nonhome roles, was reported by 31% of the sample. In a smaller study of 28 dual-career families with small children, every woman reported experiencing some conflict between her career and her children (Johnson & Johnson, 1977). Similarly, 200 professional couples with small children were asked in interviews to discuss the most significant problems they had encountered (Heckman, Bryson, & Bryson, 1977). Over half (58%) of the couples mentioned career/family conflicts. Finally, in a sample of 300 married female doctors, lawyers, and professors, 77% reported often experiencing strain between home and career roles (Gray, 1983).

Thus, it appears that two highly demanding work roles added to a couple's family commitments create problems in a large number of two-career families. The problem may be particularly acute for well-educated women. Barnett and Baruch (1985) discovered, in a sample of 238 American women between the ages of 35 and 55, that reports of role conflict increased with greater educational attainment.

Conflicts may not become apparent until people are actually faced with the task of combining roles. For example, Tangri and Jenkins (1986) conducted a 14-year longitudinal study of 117 women who were seniors at a large American university in 1967. By 1981, more of the women were employed than had expected to be in 1967. While, in 1967, the women wanted an average of 3.5 children, they actually had an average of only 1.4 children by 1981. Tangri and Jenkins also found an increase in the number of women reporting that marriage and a career, or children and a career had created conflict. While in 1967 only one-fifth of the sample expected conflict, by 1981, fully half of the women reported experiencing conflict.

One reason for this rise in conflict may be the fact that full-time employment for women usually leads to only a slight reduction in time spent on housework, and has little influence on husbands' work in the home, even among professionals (Coverman, 1985; England & Farkas, 1986; Pleck, 1985; Grant, Ward, Brown, & Moore, 1987). In the latter study of 206 male and female medical school graduates, women and men both considered their families to be as important in their lives as were their careers. However, the women anticipated devoting more time to family life than did the men, even though both anticipated equal numbers of working hours.

Pleck (1978) found strongly sex-segregated family tasks in dual-career families. Similarly, Bryson, Bryson, and



Johnson (1978) reported that wives in dual-career couples assume a disproportionately large amount of the child care. In a third study, 38% of husbands in dual-career couples did no housework (Poloma & Garland, 1971). Finally, Yogev (1981) found that a sample of professional women spent, on average, three times as many hours devoted to childcare and housework as did their husbands; yet the majority of these women believed that their husbands were doing their share, or even more than their necessary share of the domestic work. Thus, in general, women take on a double workload by holding employment outside the home and continuing to take the primary responsibility for housework and childcare (Walker, 1973). Since women assume more of the household tasks, the feeling of being overloaded and overworked among professional women who are combining roles is not surprising (Grant, Ward, Brown, & Moore, 1987; Greenglass, 1985; Yogev, 1983).

The tension, irritability, and physical symptoms of this double workload have been labelled the "weekend stress syndrome" (Szinovacz, 1978). While men begin to feel better as the weekend approaches, employed women begin to worry about catching up on childcare and housework.

The situation for women may improve when men begin to decrease their employment commitments and increase participation in the home (Greenglass, 1985). The "symmetrical family" may emerge, with both the husband and wife sharing equally in the responsibility for home and

childcare as well as holding outside employment (Young & Willmott, 1973). However, Greenglass (1985) is pessimistic about this equality emerging in the near future because men may think that their career advancement would be threatened by a more substantial commitment to work in the home.

Taking on "demasculinizing" household chores may be out of the question. She believes that men are also likely to consider part of their wife's job to be assistance in the advancement of her husband's career.

Interrole Conflict Among Men. Inequalities in homemaking responsibility thus seem to work against women; interestingly, however, they do not necessarily report more role conflict than do men. Holahan and Gilbert (1979) studied the interrole conflict (parent versus profession) among 18 dual-career couples with children and found no differences between male and female conflict scores. The amount of conflict experienced correlated with different attributes of men and women, however. Among women, conflict was related to the level of career aspiration ( $r = .46$ ) and for men, number of hours worked (.48) and professional life satisfaction (.55).

Thus, while attention has naturally focused upon the family and career conflicts of women, men may also experience conflicts. Farmer (1983) has suggested that roles are changing for both men and women, with increased emphasis for women on careers and increasing family emphasis for men. Astin (1984), in turn, believes that basic work

motivation is the same for men and women, but that they make different choices in adulthood because of early socialization experiences and changing social forces.

Karpicke (1980) also advocates the inclusion of both males and females in the study of home/career conflict. She has suggested that the integration of the expanding male sex-role, which includes a greater opportunity for focusing on spouse and parent roles, may lead to conflicts similar to those associated with females.

Emphasis on a single theory for both males and females as well as a need for gender-similarity research rather than gender-difference research is strongly supported by many researchers (e.g., Bernard, 1984; Farmer, 1984; Gilbert, 1984; Harmon, 1984; Hyde, 1985; Kahn, 1984; Stark-Adamec & Kimball, 1984). One of the goals of gender-similarity research is a shift away from the strong focus on gender differences, which may be accomplished by phrasing research questions in terms of the similarities expected between men and women. Harmon (1984) stated that

as long as we accept the premise that women's experiences differ from men's so substantially that they require a different set of theoretical constructs which do not apply to men, our theories of vocational behavior will reinforce the idea that some behaviors are more appropriate for one sex than the other (p. 127).

The traditional family model assumes that men have relatively low psychological involvement in the family and high psychological involvement in their work, while for women the opposite is true (Yogev, 1984). However, Yogev isn't sure if this traditional assumption has ever actually been true. In a study of men's work and family involvement, Pleck (1983) found that men consistently report being less psychologically involved in work than with their family (even though they reported less family involvement than did women). In an earlier study, Sears (1977) followed a group of 486 62-year-old men who were part of Terman and Oden's (1947) longitudinal study of gifted children which began in California in 1921. Sears found that family experience was reported to have been the most important experience for attaining feelings of success and satisfaction. In spite of considerable overall occupational success, the men placed greater importance on achieving satisfaction in their families than in their careers.

While females in Farmer's (1983) study had higher scores than males on the Homemaking Commitment Scale, Farmer was surprised by the relatively high scores for males. Many of the males endorsed statements about never allowing their career to take priority over their family, and being satisfied devoting full-time to home and family, if possible.

O'Neil (1981) has outlined some of the role conflicts and overload experienced by men. He states that

traditionally men are expected to be effective both in the work force (e.g., strong, decisive, and successful workers) and in the home (e.g., as final problem solvers, carpenters, and mechanics). He believes that for some men, the solution to their role overload has been to avoid family conflicts and to concentrate on their breadwinner role. More recently, however, changes in expectations for sex roles have created additional role conflict for men. Thus, men also may experience role conflict from trying to balance their career with increased home responsibilities (Greenhaus & Kopelman, 1981; Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980; Skovholt & Morgan, 1981).

While conflicts appear to exist for both men and women, there are also benefits associated with the dual-career family. Some of these benefits are addressed in the next section.

#### Positive Aspects of Dual Roles

Interest has recently grown in the positive aspects associated with balancing a number of different roles. Nevill (1984) cautions that involvement in multiple roles does not always produce conflict. She proposed a definition of mental health based on two factors: "1) the availability to the individual of a wide range of roles from which to choose, and 2) the ability and freedom to move between those roles" (p. 132). She hypothesizes that the more one's needs are met through a variety of activities, the more satisfied

and successful a person will be. She believes that success in one role leads to success in other roles, while difficulties in one role lead to difficulties in others.

Contrary to Barnett and Baruch's (1985) discovery of a positive correlation between conflict and educational attainment, Nevill and Damico (1978) found that despite heavier time and work-load demands on women in high-status occupations, these women reported less conflict between home and employment than did women in lower-status jobs. Nevill (1984) discussed these results in terms of Astin's (1984) sociopsychological model of career choice and work behaviour. According to Astin, three basic needs underlie work motivation: survival needs (physiological survival), pleasure needs (intrinsic pleasure from work activities), and contribution needs (helping others). As Nevill explains, a "low-status job might only meet contribution needs (i.e., helping out the family) rather than also meeting both survival needs (i.e., being able to support oneself adequately), and pleasure needs (i.e., engaging in rewarding and challenging work)" (p. 132). Thus, she states that combining a low-status job with homemaking would place a disproportionate emphasis on contributory needs while not satisfying further needs. On the other hand, Nevill believes that a woman's pleasure and survival needs are met through high-status employment, with contributory needs being met through home activities, leading to an important complementarity between work and family roles.

Crosby (1984) looked at factors contributing to a satisfying work life. Curiously, she found the best predictor of job satisfaction to be a full life outside of work. Single people in her study were the least satisfied with their jobs. Crosby suggested that multiple roles contribute to contentment and hypothesized that the joys of a home with children may block work disappointments and add to positive feelings, with home concerns serving to put problems in perspective.

Sieber (1974) believes that for professional women, role conflict can be offset by the increased resources, privileges, and enhanced personal worth offered by the professional role. In comparison to housewives, employed wives have been found to have higher self-esteem, self-confidence, personal competence and autonomy (Birnbaum, 1971; Feldman & Feldman, 1973; Ohlbaum, 1971).

On the male side of this "dual-role equation", Lewis (1981) describes the current "men's liberation movement" as "the fostering of opportunities for men to play many new, rewarding, and satisfying roles as fathers, husbands, brothers, sons, uncles, and grandfathers" (1981, p. 257). He describes how many men are eagerly accepting new roles in their families. Similarly, Flicker (1982) writes

The new parent-child psychogenic mode for the 1980's, again a women's movement spinoff, might be characterized as the "equalizing mode" in which the child learns not only that mother and father love him

equally, but that they both give him evidence of equal amounts of time spent in demonstrating this love. In the most advanced forms of this new style, the father spends close to 50% of his time with the child, while the mother pursues a public work role. Gender roles are highly visible as equal in pregnancy, childbirth, and child rearing. The man shoulders an equal responsibility, while the woman obtains a new equality in her quest for self (p. 422).

Thus, while conflicts may exist, there is also the potential for many benefits arising from combining career and family roles. Perhaps young people are attracted by the positive aspects of this lifestyle. As outlined in the next section, a large group of young adults look forward to a combined family/career lifestyle. Labour force statistics presented at the beginning of the section indicate that their desires are likely to become realities.

#### The Anticipation of Family/Career Conflict

Most young women probably should anticipate having to combine a family and a career. Over half of all Canadian women above the age of 16 are employed outside the home (Statistics Canada, 1986). These women can expect to spend an average of 30 years in the work force (Saskatchewan Advanced Education and Manpower, 1984). Economic conditions make employment a necessity for the majority of Canadian women (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women,



1983). High divorce rates in Canada are the major reason that one in ten families is a single-parent female household, with half of these families living below the poverty line (Statistics Canada, 1985). Of all two-parent Canadian families, 51% would fall below the poverty line if the wife left the work force (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1983).

Furthermore, studies of college women show that the majority of such women who are planning full-time careers are also expecting to get married and have children (Bronzaft, 1974; Epstein & Bronzaft, 1970; Komarovsky, 1982; Parelus, 1975; Zuckerman, 1981). In fact, Knaub, Eversoll, and Voss (1983) found that 95% of 213 undergraduate females expected parenthood to be one their adult roles.

Similarly, Rand and Miller (1972) described the emergence of a new cultural norm for women, "marriage and a career". The most popular choice of future lifestyle among their sample of 180 American females in junior high, senior high, and college was "work most of the time, combining a career, marriage, and motherhood" (p. 326).

According to these studies, many young women are highly motivated to pursue a career and, at the same time, to marry and raise a family. While one would naturally expect the largest amount of career/family conflict to be found among those persons (especially women) highly dedicated to both a family and a career, pilot data indicate that this may not always be the case. Among a sample of 322 male and female

undergraduates, those students with high commitment to both a family and a career did not report higher anticipated family/career conflict than did students with lower family and career commitment.

How can one explain this lack of anticipated conflict? Perhaps young people have realistic plans for working out the difficulties involved in the parent/career role. On the other hand, many young people may idealize their futures. Perhaps the real difficulties involved in combining a career and a family are not being considered. While 18-year olds face a number of major life style choices, precise career choices (particularly for university students) or final decisions about getting married and raising a family are not necessarily made until they are older. At age 18, conflicts between combining roles such as worker and parent may not be of immediate concern, or even anticipated.

There is some disagreement in the literature about the existence of family/career conflict among young adults. In Flaherty's (1982) opinion, "the older adolescent experiences much conflict when forced to choose among future roles" (p. 44). She bases her opinion on information gathered through psychotherapy sessions with female adolescents. She states that young women often see career goals as being in conflict with their wishes for marriage and children. Flaherty believes that it is during late adolescence, at a time when more realistic thinking about the future becomes necessary, that women commonly begin to experience this conflict.

Family/career conflict issues were also addressed in a study of male and female students ( $N = 96$ ) in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 (Archer, 1985). Interviews were conducted with each student based on Marcia's (1966) identity-status framework. This framework consists of four descriptive statuses representing the process of identity formation: identity diffusion (uncommitted), foreclosure (committed, yet without consideration of alternatives), moratorium (in crisis, considering alternatives), and identity achievement (committed). Males were twice as likely as females to be diffuse (uncommitted) about family roles, whereas females were four times more likely to be in the moratorium (crisis) or identity achievement (committed) statuses regarding family roles. Males and females did not differ in their use of identity processes in other domains (e.g., occupational choice, sex-role preference).

Archer suggested that the lack of investment by males in the family-career domain showed that females may have a more complex identity to develop, since females are attempting to define themselves in more domains at this point in their lives. She found that the majority of girls planned to establish careers as well as to have families. The girls' approaches to potential conflict between the two included finding support systems to help with childcare, temporarily withdrawing from the workforce while their children were young, or reducing their hours of work when raising children.

Unlike Flaherty and Archer's studies, however, many other investigations have found little evidence of career/parent role conflict among young adults. Shields and Cooper (1983), for example, studied the plans of 280 male and female university students (modal age = 19 years). When asked whether they could foresee any difficulty in attempting to combine spouse, career, and parent roles, over 84% stated that role conflict would not exist or would be little, if any, problem. No sex differences were present in this finding. The authors state that:

the picture that emerged was of a woman who radiates happiness and competence in the face of a physically and emotionally challenging work load. Participants appeared to accept the image of the "supermother" so frequent in the popular media (p. 373-374).

Similar beliefs were discovered by Alpert, Richardson, Perlmutter, and Schutzer (1980). These researchers found that among single male and female undergraduate students, the combined worker-parent role was assigned the lowest conflict score and the highest positive outcome score when compared to the roles of worker, or parent, or spouse, or worker-spouse. The authors were definitely surprised, since research and theory usually point out the highly stressful nature of the dual role. They speculated that this role may be the current societal ideal.

Karpicke (1980) reported similar findings in a study of home/career conflict among 55 male and 80 female

undergraduates. She found that while females reported higher home/career conflict than did males, low mean scores on the scale indicated that, in general, students' career planning was not related to concern about home/career conflict. Karpicke explained that these conflicts may not be personally relevant to the young students at this stage in their lives. She also suggested that female students may have been responding in a socially valued way by seeing today's aspiring career woman unhampered by the traditional female sex role.

The perceived positive and negative aspects of adult female roles have been studied among college females (Bridges, 1987). Bridges found that while a sample of 322 students were aware of some of the negative consequences associated with combined roles (e.g., fatigue, marital conflict), they did not hold realistic ideas about the role conflict connected with the career role, or additional problems connected to combining the career role with a family. As well, the wife/mother/career role was evaluated as the most attractive compared to wife/mother, wife only, and wife/career roles. Bridges suggested that for college women the career role is likely to be highly salient, and that they may be invested in minimizing their perceptions of its negative effects. This phenomenon is similar to the tendency for individuals to perceive the social world in a way that conforms to their self-serving beliefs (Pyszczyński, Greenberg, & Holt, 1985). She suggested that

future research should focus on the basis for this unrealistic approach to some roles, with self-serving cognitive biases and personality characteristics in mind.

Komarovsky (1982) interviewed a group of 232 female college students about their preferred future lifestyles. She found that most young women (86%) preferred to combine a career and a family, yet many demonstrated a lack of realism with respect to the problems they would be likely to encounter in combining their careers and family lives.

In order to find evidence of a perpetuation of the "myth of the superwoman", Henry (1984) reviewed articles in seven American women's magazines from 1975 to 1982. She found that while many of the problems associated with combining a job and family were recognized, nearly one-third of the articles supported the concept of women working a "double day" and very few articles presented realistic alternatives to problems.

Thus, a recurrent theme appears to be an optimistic, perhaps unrealistic outlook that many young people hold toward their futures. It is important to take into account the impact of their current developmental stage in their decision-making. This paper now turns to a discussion of relevant stages in the life cycle.

#### The Development of Identity From Adolescence to Adulthood

The transition period from youth to adulthood is a crucial time for decisions which form the basis of an adult

identity (Johnson & Jaccard, 1980). This period of transition is characterized by a break from family dependence, a break from childhood, and explorations of possibilities and alternatives for adult living.

Erickson's stage theory of development is useful in describing this transition. Erikson (1959) proposed eight stages in the development of the ego, each characterized in terms of polarities of ego qualities. These ego qualities or basic attitudes develop through interaction between the individual and the environment. At each stage a crisis occurs which, when resolved, leads to mastery of a developmental task. The success or lack of success of the resolution contributes to the individual's sense of self and determines his/her success in later stages.

When considering late adolescence, the fourth (industry versus inferiority), fifth (identity versus identity diffusion), and sixth (intimacy versus isolation) stages are the most important. The "industry versus inferiority" crisis occurs during the school years. Successful resolution involves developing a sense of being useful and of "work completion". On the other hand, a sense of inadequacy or inferiority may develop due to a failure to deal with objects or to compete with peers.

Erikson believed that most late adolescents and young adults are involved with the fifth stage, or "identity crisis". During this time, the older teenager must sift through attitudes toward the self and the world and form an

idea of who s/he is, an identity that will become constant across situations. It is at this point, as young people become more independent and look toward the future, that they examine choices and structure their futures in terms of career, marriage, and family.

The next stage, "intimacy versus isolation", is the first stage of adulthood and is characterized by work or study for a specified career, sociability with the other sex, marriage, and creation of a family. The ability to be intimate is related to the person's development of a sense of self. Any uncertainty at previous stages may lead to isolation at this stage, since intimate interactions are stressful for a person who is unsure of his/her identity.

Of course, Erikson's stage theory is subject to variations. For example, the time an adolescent spends in transitional and preparatory roles influences the timing of adult role entry (Marini, 1985, 1987). University education is a transitional role which often occurs prior to entry into the adult roles of worker, spouse, and parent. Those who lack financial resources or lack the desire to continue education after high school tend to enter adult roles, and particularly the role of full-time worker, relatively early. On the other hand, high school students who have higher educational and occupational goals and the resources to continue their education tend to enter the labour force at an older age.



Not surprisingly, the plans of university students have been studied far more extensively than have those of their nonstudent counterparts who chose to follow routes other than university after high school. Two of the few studies which have included nonstudents are discussed in the following section.

#### University/Non-University Samples

In one study, Munro and Adams (1977) conducted a random survey of American college students and working youths, comparing them on Marcia's (1966) four identity statuses: diffusion, moratorium, identity achievement, and foreclosure. They found that a significantly higher number of working youths (45%) than college students (7%) had attained the identity achievement stage (ie., they knew better "who they were" and what they wanted out of life). The authors reasoned that full-time employment might stimulate identity formation, while college attendance may be seen as an extended moratorium or diffusion period. They believed that the abstract nature of a college environment may contribute to the longer period of time taken to finalize commitments.

Rooney (1983) set out to answer the general question "what factors or combination of factors best distinguish

same-age young adults involved in each of three life roles?" (p. 327). She studied 212 high school students three years after their graduation, dividing them into three categories: "student" (22%), "worker" (56%), and "homemaker" (21%). None of the homemakers was male; the number of male and female students was equal; and there were almost twice as many male workers as female workers. Her analysis yielded two significant discriminant functions. On the first function, students were distinguished from workers and homemakers. Rooney found students to have higher educational and career aspirations, higher academic achievement, and a higher perception of parental support than did homemakers and workers. On the second function, homemakers were separated from workers and students. She found that workers and students were more career-committed than were homemakers. She concluded that homemakers and students are distinguishable groups, with workers being more like students on some factors and more like homemakers on others. Based on the differences she found among groups, Rooney made a strong argument for the inclusion of young persons in a broad range of roles in studies of career development, rather than relying primarily on student samples. She believed that the lack of adequate samples was a major methodological problem in this area of research. Other methodological issues will be the focus of the next section.

Methodological Issues

A methodological weakness of some past studies has been the division of women into simple categories thought to represent their career commitment. Some researchers asked women to choose a single lifestyle option from a list of possibilities. For example, Almquist and Angrist (1970, 1971) asked college students to choose one of the following: a) housewife with no children, b) a housewife with one or more children, c) an unmarried career woman, d) a married career woman without children, e) a married career woman with children, or f) other. Similarly, in Zuckerman's (1981) study of female college and university students, women were asked to choose one of six possible lifestyles: 1) full-time homemaking after marriage, 2) full-time homemaking after the birth of the first child, 3) part-time employment combined with marriage and childrearing, 4) full-time career combined with marriage and child rearing, 5) full-time career combined with either marriage or child rearing, or 6) full-time career without marriage or child rearing. In a more recent study, Weeks, Wise, and Duncan (1984) asked female high school students to check one of the following responses: 1) full-time homemaker, 2) homemaker primarily, plus part-time employment, 3) homemaker plus full-time employment, and 4) career woman primarily, plus some homemaking.

Merely characterizing women by their employment status does not determine their separate commitments to work and to a family (Bailyn, 1980). Zuckerman (1981) has criticized the use of these measures of career commitment for their small number of possible responses. In her study of 455 female college and university students, the overwhelming majority expected to be employed in full-time careers fairly consistently. She concluded that the "career versus homemaking" choices, which have been assessed for years, are no longer sensitive to the lifestyles of today's women.

Rooney (1983) also believed that people too often consider interest in a to be career dichotomous to home interests, necessitating an either/or choice, especially for women. She stated that preparing young people for multiple roles is an important task for educators and practitioners, since young men and women will participate in many roles, both sequentially and simultaneously, throughout their lives. The underlying assumption, Rooney stated, is "that individuals are invested and participate in many roles and that all roles are a valued aspect of each person and society" (p.340).

While many young women are planning to combine marriage, a family, and a career, studies assessing the factors related to life plans often dichotomize respondents into "those who are career oriented and those who are oriented toward motherhood and homemaking" (Greenglass & Devins, 1982, p. 59). Greenglass and Devins pointed out that a

problem with many studies examining career-orientation among young women is the elimination of data from women who express a strong interest in both a family and a career. For example, Hoyt and Kennedy (1958) studied the career and homemaking motivation of American college women. A sample of 386 students were asked to respond to items assessing future plans. Of these, 30 career-motivated women and 71 homemaking-motivated women were selected. The remainder of the study focused on these two extreme groups, while 74% of the subjects, many of whom expressed motivation in both realms, were dropped from the analysis.

Assumptions based on this family/career dichotomy are evident in Matthews and Tiedeman's (1964) study of female attitudes toward career and marriage. They stated that most of their scale items were phrased to produce a "marriage-directed response" yet some items were included which had an "obversely oriented framework" in order to illustrate a "career-directed response".

A recent study by Jensen, Christensen, and Wilson (1985) continues this tradition. They asked undergraduate women to rate themselves according to only two dimensions: 1) "I desire to be a parent and not work outside the home", and 2) "I desire to not be a parent but to work full time" (p. 509). Subjects' degree of agreement with these items was used to predict young women's commitment to family or career. These two role options were considered separately, while the combined family/career option was again not

explored. Research ignoring family/career combinations serves to perpetuate the outdated belief that women must choose between family and career.

Backing up this point, Farmer (1985) found that the correlation between career commitment and homemaking commitment among 1,049 grade 9 and 12 students was only  $-.11$ . The two kinds of commitment were thus, for all practical purposes, orthogonal, as they only share 1% of their variance.

In 1985, the present author began developing a scale to measure family commitment (Holms, 1985), on the premise that career and family commitment are independent dimensions. As expected, a small, indeed nonsignificant correlation of  $.06$  was found among 317 female high school students, between scores on a 17-item Marriage/Family Commitment Scale and a 15-item Career Commitment Scale developed by Super and Culha (1976). Pilot study data for 134 female university students similarly produced a small correlation of  $.16$ . Thus, while a few career-oriented students anticipated being single all their lives, and some planned to marry yet remain childless, most wanted to "have it all".

### Instruments For Measuring Key Variables

#### Pilot Study Data

Early in 1987, a pilot study was conducted with 322 male and female students enrolled in Introductory Psychology classes at the University of Manitoba. Students responded

to surveys containing the Career Commitment Scale (Super & Culha, 1976, as revised by Farmer, 1983) and three scales designed by the present author to measure a) marriage commitment, b) family commitment, and c) family/career conflict. Five items were added to the Career Commitment Scale in order to provide an equal number of positively and negatively worded statements. The marriage and family commitment scales, revisions of an earlier Marriage/Family Commitment Scale (Holms, 1985), were developed in hopes of improving their reliability and validity. The Family/Career Conflict Scale was designed as a direct measure of anticipated conflict. As the analysis in the preceding pages reveals, one cannot assume that young persons will necessarily anticipate conflict between their career and family plans. It was thought that an independent measure of this perceived conflict would provide some understanding of the subjects' thinking. All four measures consisted of statements answered on 5-point Likert-type scales ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Subjects completed questionnaires once in February and again four weeks later. The retest included all but 31 of the original subjects, a return rate of approximately 90%. The sample was then restricted to include only single, never-married students, 25 years of age and younger. The final sample consisted of 303 participants (134 females, 169 males) in Part I and 272 (124 females, 148 males) in Part II. The mean age was 19 years.

Results for the Early Versions of the Commitment Scales.

Test-retest correlations for the three commitment scales for 148 males were: .77 for the 20-item Career Commitment Scale, .72 for the 12-item Marriage Commitment Scale, and .84 for the 16-item Family Commitment Scale. The corresponding figures for the 124 returning females were .61, .73, and .92 respectively. Cronbach's alpha was .86 for both males and females on the Career Commitment Scale, .85 for both males and females on the Marriage Commitment Scale, and .95 for females and .94 for males on the Family Commitment Scale. Factor analyses revealed that each of the three scales was essentially unidimensional (only one factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0).

Mean scores on the career, marriage, and family scales were all above the midpoint, in the committed range. Females scored significantly higher than males on Career Commitment (82.8 versus 78.6),  $t = 3.39$ ,  $p < .001$ . There were no significant gender differences on the Marriage Commitment or Family Commitment scales. These results partially replicate earlier findings. Female high school students in Farmer's (1983) study scored significantly higher than male students on Career Commitment and Homemaking Commitment, results which Koski and Subich (1985) failed to reproduce.

Results for the Early Version of the Family/Career Conflict Scale. The test-retest correlation for the 8-item conflict scale was .65 for both females and males.



Cronbach's alpha was very similar: .66 for females and .67 for males. Average conflict scores were slightly below the scale's midpoint, with no gender difference, indicating that students did not anticipate a high degree of career/family conflict. This is especially evident in examining response frequencies on some of the individual items. For example, 80% of both females and males said that they were confident that they would have time to pursue a career as well as have a family. The majority of females (60%) and males (64%) said that combining a career and a family would cause them no problem. Only 19% of females and 13% of males said that they felt pulled between their desire for a career and their desire for a family.

This low degree of anticipated conflict can also be illustrated if we count the number of students who scored "high" in absolute terms on both the Career Commitment and Family Commitment scales (i.e., greater than a score of 79 and 63 respectively, which would place them in the upper quarter of the range of theoretical scores). Fully 31% of the male students and 43% of the females scored this highly on both scales. One might expect that these double-aspiring students would feel the greatest conflict. However, the mean conflict score in this subsample was not significantly different from the mean for the remainder of the sample.

The Enigma of High Commitment and Low Anticipated Conflict

There are a number of possible explanations for these high levels of aspirations and low levels of anticipated conflict. For example, strongly dual-goal individuals may know the difficulties involved but feel that they can overcome them. In other words, they may have high levels of self-efficacy. In a related vein, they may have greater self-esteem. Also, it is possible that these ambitious students have coping strategies in mind for working out problems involved. Finally, if past researchers are correct in their hypotheses, these people may have unrealistic ideas about their futures. Each of these possibilities is explored separately in the following sections.

Self-Efficacy

Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory has made recent contributions to the study of career development (Betz & Hackett, 1986; Lent & Hackett, 1987). This theory, focusing upon the expectations a person holds about successfully performing a certain behaviour, states that the belief in one's success exerts a powerful influence on behaviour. Self-efficacy beliefs determine the decision to go ahead, the effort expended, and the amount of persistence at the task. Accurate and strong expectations of personal efficacy are critical to the initiation and persistence of behaviour.

In a review of research examining career self-efficacy, Lent and Hackett (1987) pointed out that studies of college

students consistently indicate that self-efficacy beliefs are predictive of important indices of career entry, such as college majors and academic performance. Since behaviours associated with career pursuits are so important to a person's emotional, psychological, economic, and social well-being, the examination of the role of self-efficacy expectations in the career development process appears to be relevant (Lent & Hackett, 1987). Similarly, personal efficacy expectations associated with plans for a family, plans which may be viewed as equal in importance to those for a career, should be studied. It is possible that high self-efficacy among young adults who are highly committed to both a career and a family may contribute to their lack of anticipated career/family conflict. People who "want it all" may feel they will experience little conflict because they think they can "do it all".

#### Self-Esteem

While self-efficacy has been found to have a moderate positive correlation with self-esteem, the two concepts are different (Sherer, Maddux, Mercandante, Prentice-Dunn, Jacobs, & Rogers, 1982). Self-efficacy involves belief about one's abilities, while self-esteem represents an attitude or sense of self-worth.

Higher levels of self-esteem have been found to be correlated with higher career involvement (Hall & Schneider, 1973) and increased ability to resolve career/family

conflict (Kinnier & Katz, 1987). Studies have also indicated that the combining of many roles throughout adulthood leads to higher self-esteem than does the exclusive focus on either family or occupational roles (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Birnbaum, 1975).

Stafford (1984) studied 474 female university alumnae ranging in age from the mid-20s to the mid-50s. She found that self-esteem was higher when women's desired roles were congruent with their actual roles. For example, homemakers who wanted a career had low self-esteem, yet homemakers who desired to be homemakers did not.

Richardson (1975), in turn, studied 97 undergraduate females between the ages of 19 and 23. They rated 58 adjectives in terms of themselves, their ideal woman, a career woman, and a homemaker. Self-esteem was measured by the discrepancy between one's self and one's ideal woman. She found that high self-esteem was related to a perception of being similar to a career woman and having a high career orientation. Women whose aspirations were oriented toward the homemaking role generally had medium to low levels of self-esteem. Richardson suggested that her findings support assumptions of an ambivalence experienced by women pursuing a traditional path in a society that today values careers over a homemaker role. Higher self-esteem in career-oriented women may help them to deviate from a traditional role.

Since women who are highly committed to a career appear to have high self-esteem, their ability to deal with conflicts arising between work and family may also be high. Thus, one can hypothesize that higher levels of self-esteem are associated with a higher commitment to both a career and a family, and may partly explain why doubly committed persons do not anticipate experiencing a great deal of conflict.

### Coping Strategies

Young people may anticipate very little personal career/family conflict because they have formulated coping strategies for the future. For example, Greenglass (1982) found that the greater importance female undergraduates placed on a career, the more likely they were to plan to delay marriage and childbearing in order to accomodate all three. Farmer (1983) has suggested that the identification of coping strategies perceived by young adults would permit the identification of different levels of home/career difficulties and permit counselors and therapists to intervene at an early stage.

Hall (1972) identified three strategies for coping with interrole conflict. Type I coping, called "structural role redefinition", involves a lessening of the conflict by mutual agreement on new role expectations. Type II coping, or "personal role redefinition", involves the changing of one's own attitudes and perceptions of the role, rather than

actually changing the role itself. Type III coping, or "reactive role behavior" involves increased attempts to meet demanding role expectations with no attempt to change the structure or personal definition of the role. Hall found Type III strategies to be least effective in managing interrole conflict and to be negatively related to a woman's satisfaction with life roles. This strategy is similar to the attempts to be a "superwoman". Those women using Type I or II strategies were more satisfied than were those using Type III strategies with the way they handled life roles.

In a study using these strategy categories, Beutell and Greenhaus (1983) surveyed 115 couples with children and found that 69% of the women in the sample reported at least one home-nonhome conflict. They found that Type I and II coping strategies are more successful than Type III strategies. However, even though attempting to make time for everything (Type III) was not likely to be successful, these authors found that Type III coping was attempted more often than either Type I or Type II.

Delayed decisionmaking, which may be one of the ways that women "cope" with this conflict, may have detrimental effects on their ability to support themselves adequately. Rapoza and Blocher (1976) found that 25% of the females in their sample of 1,577 male and female senior high school students were unable to report an educational or vocational plan. They suggested that waiting for a spouse may account for their lack in planning, and referred to it as the

"Cinderella Effect" or "waiting for the magic slipper".

They also stated their concerns about women facing a life in the work force based upon economic necessity, a life which may be hampered by delays in decisions. Dowling (1981) found similar results in her interviews with women, many of whom she found to be waiting in limbo until their spouses took over responsibility for their lives.

It is expected that dual-goal individuals who have definite coping strategies in mind do not expect to experience more conflicts than less-committed individuals.

#### Knowledge about the Experiences of Dual-Career Families

Perhaps dual-goal persons anticipate little conflict because they have unrealistic ideas about the future they are choosing (Bridges, 1987; Komarovsky, 1982; Shields & Cooper, 1983). Pedro (1982) surveyed 82 female high school students about their career planning strategies. She included a 25-item true-false measure of facts about women's occupational experience and found that students who knew more of the facts had a higher achievement orientation. Knowledge of this kind has been found to be important in increasing young women's career awareness (Woodcock & Herman, 1978). Since the majority of young people in the pilot study were not expecting high levels of conflict between home and career, it would be interesting to test their knowledge about the experiences faced by dual-career families.

### Summary of the Present Study

In essence, the present study was an examination of career and family commitment among first-year university students and their counterparts who are not in university (hereafter referred to as "nonstudents"). The study consisted of two parts. In the first, gender and group (student vs. nonstudent) differences in career commitment, family commitment, and family/career conflict were investigated. A number of hypotheses about these variables (described below) were tested.

In the second part, subjects with strong hopes for both career and family involvement were compared with the remainder of the sample. Exploratory analyses were used to test whether self-efficacy, self-esteem, coping strategies, and knowledge of the experiences encountered by dual-career families differentiated between these two groups of subjects.

### Part I

Hypotheses Regarding Career Commitment. It might be expected that people who have chosen to continue their education in university have higher career goals and aspirations than do those who choose to enter the work force directly from high school. This difference may be even more likely for women than for men, since there appears to be less of a societal expectation for women than for men to achieve in a career. While societal pressures on men to



achieve in a career may push many men with low career commitment into university, these pressures are not as strong for women. Thus, it is possible that women who choose a university education are even more likely than are men and non-university women to have high career aspirations.

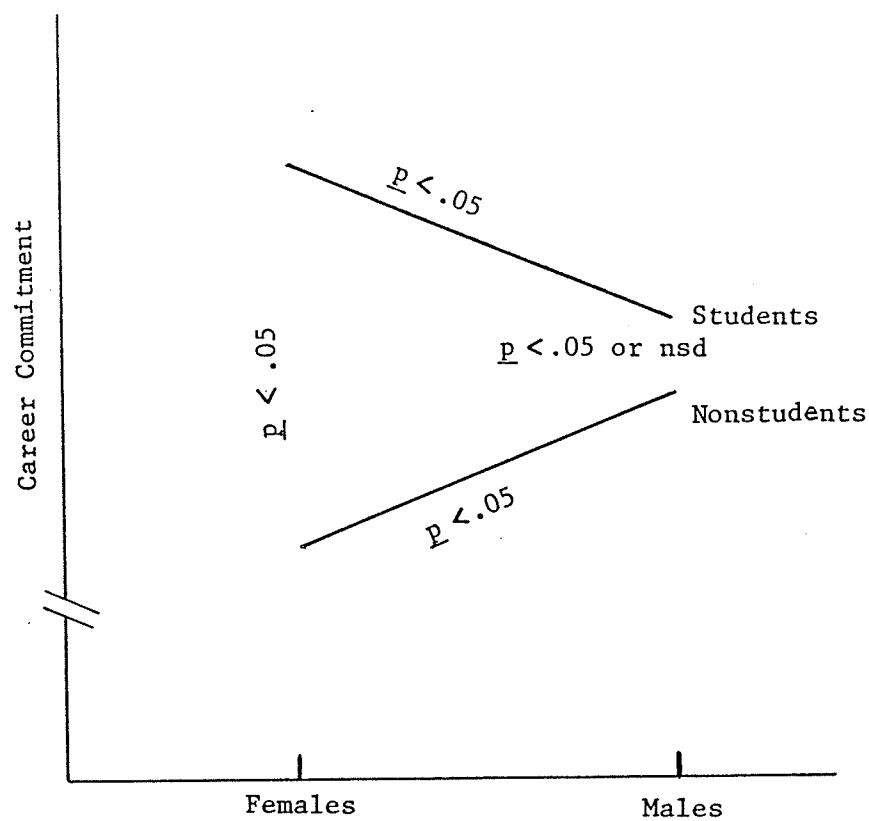
Therefore, in terms of career commitment, it was hypothesized that: a) among females, students would score significantly higher than nonstudents; b) among males, students would score significantly higher than or equal to nonstudents; c) among students, females would score significantly higher than males; and d) among nonstudents, males would score significantly higher than females. These hypotheses are represented in Figure 1. In terms of an ANOVA model, a significant main effect for Status (student vs. nonstudent), and a significant interaction between Status and Gender was predicted.

Hypotheses Regarding Family Commitment. Traditionally, women are expected to be more highly committed to a family than are men. Some research supports this expectation (Inglis, Greenglass, & Perri, 1987; Farmer, 1983) yet the pilot data for this study do not. Female undergraduate students in Farmer's (1983) study scored significantly higher on the Homemaking Commitment Scale than did male students. However, the Homemaking Commitment Scale pitted career commitment against homemaking commitment (Farmer, 1985). When marriage and family commitment were measured

independent of career commitment in the pilot study for the present research, differences between males and females on the three types of commitment were not present. Perhaps no differences appear among students, since female students are likely to be a select group in terms of their career commitment. However, there may be gender differences which conform to traditional expectations in a nonstudent sample.

Therefore, in terms of family commitment, it was hypothesized that: a) among females, nonstudents would score significantly higher than students; b) among males, nonstudents would score significantly higher than or equal to students; c) among students, female scores would not be significantly different from male scores; and d) among nonstudents, females would score significantly higher than males.

Figure 1. Hypothesized student/nonstudent and male/female scores on the Career Commitment Scale.

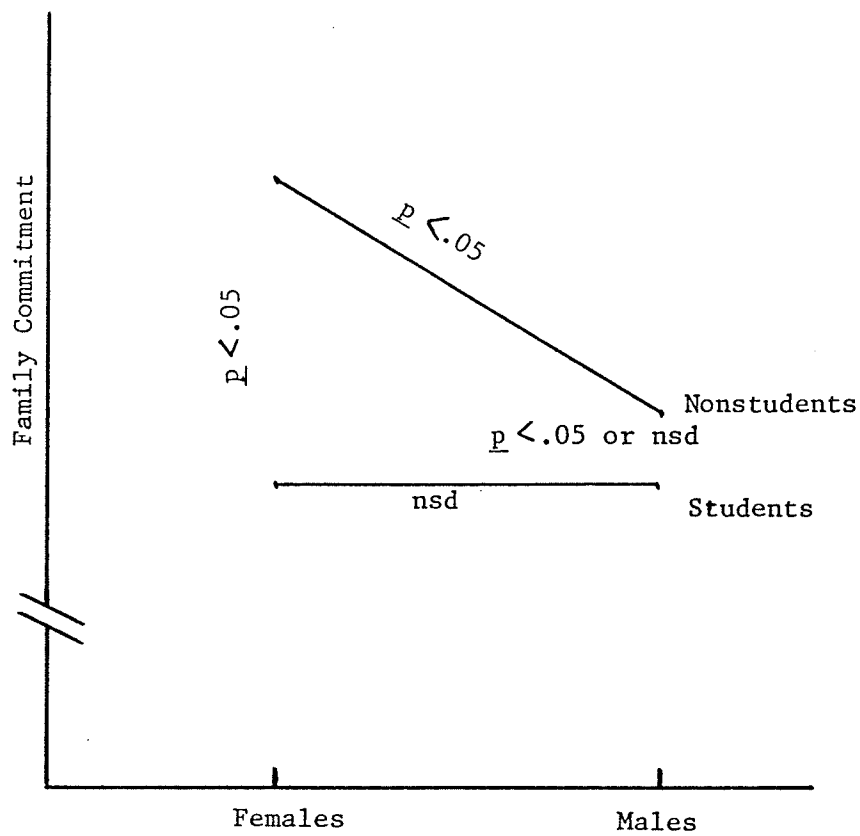


These hypotheses are represented in Figure 2. Significant main effects for Status and Gender were predicted, as well as a significant interaction between the two.

Hypotheses Regarding Family/Career Conflict. Male and female students tested in the pilot study did not differ significantly in terms of their anticipated career/family conflict. Yet, since the burden of childrearing and homecare falls mainly on women, one would expect female conflict to be higher. This may be the case among the nonstudent sample, yet female students do not appear to anticipate greater conflict than do their male counterparts. The literature examining the new male role, possibly a characteristic of many male university students, suggests that similar role conflicts are arising among men and women. Conflict is also more likely to occur in families where both spouses have highly demanding, professional careers. Thus, one would expect more anticipated conflict among university students than among their peers who are not pursuing a university education.

It was thus hypothesized, in terms of career/family conflict, that: a) among students, male scores would not differ significantly from female scores;

Figure 2. Hypothesized student/nonstudent and male/female scores on the Family Commitment Scale.



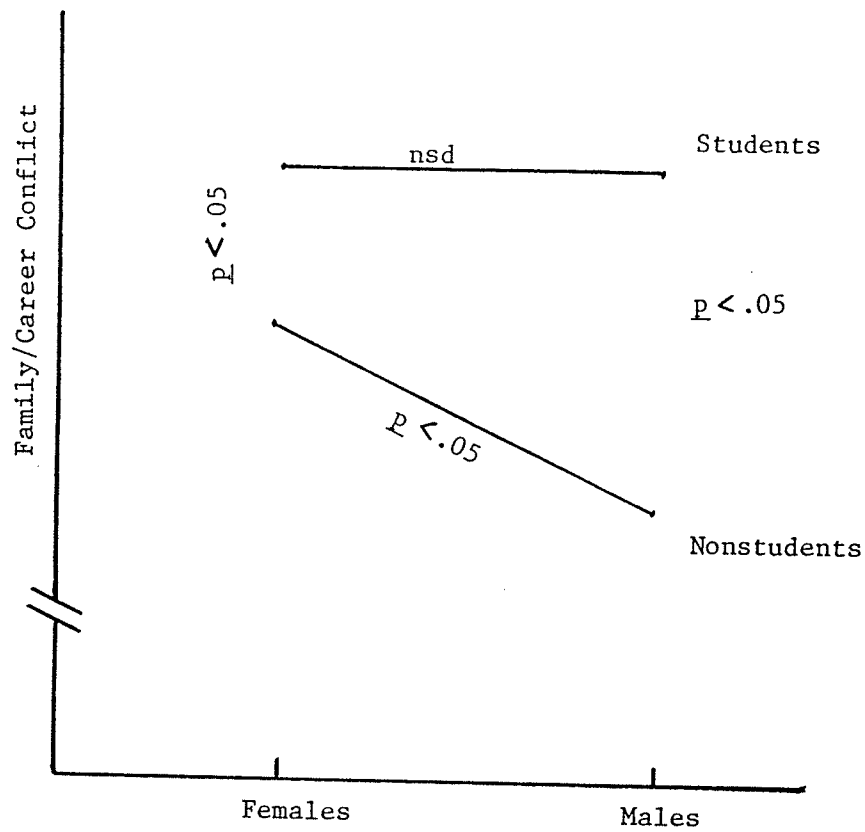
b) among nonstudents, females would score significantly higher than males; c) among females, students would score significantly higher than nonstudents, and d) among males, students would score significantly higher than nonstudents. These hypotheses are represented in Figure 3, illustrating the prediction of significant main effects for Status and Gender, and a significant Status X Gender interaction.

## Part II

Hypotheses Regarding Dual-Goal Subjects With High Career and High Family Commitment. As noted earlier, recent studies have reported relatively low levels of anticipated career/family conflict among young adults in university. Furthermore, results from the pilot study, which was designed to examine career/family conflict among those students who are highly committed to both a career and a family, indicated no differences in anticipated conflict between this group and the remainder of the sample. However, it is this group that one would expect will face the most potential interrole conflict in the future. Therefore, it was thought that students with high levels of career and family commitment may have certain characteristics which contribute to their lowered anticipated conflict--characteristics including higher self-efficacy, higher self-esteem, and coping strategies.

Therefore, it was hypothesized that the group of

Figure 3. Hypothesized student/nonstudent and male/female scores on the Family/Career Conflict Scale.



students with high commitment (in absolute terms) to both a family and a career would not score significantly higher on the Family/Career Conflict Scale than would the remainder of the student sample. It was also hypothesized that the highly committed students would, as a group, have significantly higher scores on self-esteem, self-efficacy, coping strategies, and knowledge about the experiences faced by dual-career families than would the remainder of the student sample.

While very little is known about the nonstudent population, it was hypothesized that the relationship between career and family commitment, conflict, self-esteem, self-efficacy, coping strategies, and knowledge of women's experiences would be the same as for the student sample. In other words, the underlying model holds that commitment in both career and family areas is a personality characteristic, the influence of which will transcend the difference between being a student and a nonstudent.

#### Method

##### Subject Recruitment

Student participants (N = 348) answered a 6-page questionnaire during their regularly scheduled, 75-minute Introduction to Psychology classes. The study was described as a survey of important life-style choices and decisions facing young people, such as career plans and family plans. (See Appendix A for the exact instructions read to



subjects.) The university student sample was restricted to men and women between the ages of 17 and 23, who had never been married, resulting in the deletion of 17 respondents who were married and/or over the age of 23. The final student sample of 331 subjects consisted of 141 males and 190 females.

In order for the researcher to obtain the non-university sample, students were asked to address an envelope to a single, same-sex/same-age high school acquaintance who decided not to attend university. Persons attending a non-university post-secondary institution such as a trade school or secretarial school were eligible. Of the 331 students, 236 (71%) provided a friend's address. (Two of these students originally addressed envelopes to one another, but when this situation was detected, took advantage of a second opportunity to enlist the help of a nonstudent.) A numbered questionnaire and a stamped envelope addressed to the investigator was mailed to each address. Non-university participants were instructed to mail their responses to the investigator. The nonstudents were also sent covering letters (Appendix B) explaining the purpose of the study and the way in which their names were obtained, along with a \$1.00 token reward for participation. It was made clear to the nonstudents that their participation was entirely voluntary. Each students received one course credit for their own participation and a second credit when their acquaintance's questionnaire was

returned. Of the 236 surveys mailed, 192 were returned, a response rate of 81% (or 58% of the entire student sample). Nine surveys in the nonstudent sample were deleted from the analysis for the following reasons: over age 23 (1), still attending grade 12 (1), attending university (1), married (5), duplicate response (1). The final sample of 183 nonstudents consisted of 57 males and 126 females.

#### Sample Characteristics

The mean age of both the student and nonstudent samples, as assessed by a Demographic Survey, was 18.5 years; understandably, since each student-nonstudent pair went to school together. The majority (84%) of student participants were in their first year of university, with an additional 12% being in their second year. Most of the students were enrolled in the faculties of Arts (58%) or Science (26%), with some students enrolled in Nursing (5%), Administrative Studies (1%), Physical Education (3%), Engineering (1%), Education (2%), or other faculties (3%).

Among the non-university sample, many subjects worked full-time (48%), while some were half-time trade school student/half-time workers (18%) and 16% worked part-time only. Fifteen percent were students only, and 3% were neither students nor workers. Subjects' occupations were rated using the 1981 Socioeconomic Index for Occupations in Canada (Blishen, Carroll, & Moore, 1987). Possible occupation scores on this scale range from 20 to 102. The

nonstudents occupations actually ranged from 21 (service station attendant) to 58 (business manager). Mean occupation scores were similar for males (32.5) and females (31.9). As one would expect, most of these occupations required little training or educational background.

The parental occupations of all subjects were also obtained and rated on the same index. Each subject was assigned a background socioeconomic status (SES) score based on the parents' occupations. In the case where two occupations were reported in a family, the higher of the two occupation scores was used. While the background SES scores of both students and nonstudents covered the entire range of the Blishen et al. scale, university students' families scored significantly higher than did nonstudents' families (means of 55.6 vs. 49.7,  $t[494] = 4.23$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

The university student sample reported higher marks in Grade 12 English and Mathematics than did the nonstudents (English,  $t[512] = 5.65$ ,  $p < .001$  and Mathematics,  $t[512] = 7.86$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Not surprisingly, the university students also planned to complete significantly more education than the nonstudents did, with the latter typically aspiring for a trade school diploma or perhaps one or two years of university at some point.

The 1981 Socioeconomic Index was used to classify each subjects' "Ideal Job" and "Expected Job". Students occupational ideal ( $M = 63.5$ ,  $SD = 15.1$ ) was significantly higher than that of nonstudents ( $M = 53.0$ ,  $SD = 14.9$ ),

$t[478] = 7.29, p < .001$ . Students' expected occupation ( $M = 64.0, SD = 13.4$ ) was also significantly higher than that of nonstudents ( $M = 51.0, SD = 13.4$ ),  $t[450] = 9.71, p < .001$ .

The religious backgrounds of the two groups of subjects were similar: 28% of the students and 26% of the nonstudents grew up in Catholic homes, 62% of students and 69% of nonstudents were raised in Protestant homes, 5% of the students and 4% of the nonstudents came from Jewish or Greek Orthodox backgrounds, and 18% of the students and 17% of the nonstudents were not raised within a religion.

Nearly all of the students (96%) and the nonstudents (96%) planned to get married. However, students wanted to get married at an older age ( $M = 25.3, SD = 2.3$ ) than did nonstudents ( $M = 24.0, SD = 2.3$ ),  $t[477] = 5.59, p < .001$ . Most students (92%) and nonstudents (93%) were also interested in having children, with subjects planning on two to three children, on average.

To summarize, then, the student and nonstudent samples were the same age, from the same set of religious backgrounds, and showed the same widespread desire to marry and to have children. However, although the members of each pair had gone to the same high school, the families of the university students were a little higher in SES than were the families of the nonstudents. The students also had earned higher grades in high school, aspired to higher SES occupations, and planned to wait a little longer before

getting married. Many of the nonstudents had already entered the work force at rather low-level jobs.

## Results

### Psychometric Properties of the Major Instruments For the Entire Sample

The following instruments were used to measure the principal variables in the study.

#### Career Commitment

The Career Commitment Scale was originally developed by Super and Culha (1976) as part of the Work Salience Inventory. A high score on this scale indicates an enjoyment in making plans for the future and a desire to have a job of which to be proud. The scale has been found to significantly discriminate students or employed workers from homemakers (Rooney, 1983).

Farmer (1983) used 14 of the original 17 career commitment items after a reliability analysis indicated that the three deleted items lowered the internal consistency. She also added one item. Farmer reported a Cronbach's alpha reliability based on high school students (grades 9 and 12,  $N = 1,234$ ) of .83 (indicating a mean interitem correlation of about .26). Ten of the items were worded in a committed, protrait direction and five were worded in an uncommitted, contrait direction. As mentioned earlier, the size of the test was increased to 10 protrait and 10 contrait items for

the present study, based on the results of a pilot study (Appendix C). As well, some items discovered to be connected weakly to each other were reworded to improve their intercorrelation. Furthermore, the response scale was increased from -2 to +2, to -4 to +4, a change likely to increase the internal consistency of a measure (Altemeyer, 1988, p.41-42).

The average score (144.9 on a possible range of 20 to 180) indicated that a high level of career commitment existed among the overall sample. The mean interitem correlation among the 20 items, without any "gluing effects" of response sets, was .29, producing an alpha of .89 for the entire sample ( $N = 331 + 183 = 514$ ) (Table 1).

#### Family Commitment

The Family Commitment Scale, developed by the author, consisted of 16 items, balanced against response sets, which examined the importance of parenting in one's life (Appendix D). This measure, too, was answered on a -4 to +4 basis, and again scores were high overall ( $M = 111.6$  on a theoretical range of 16 to 144). Responses to the 16 items intercorrelated .54 on average, resulting in an alpha reliability of .95 (Table 1).

Table 1  
Psychometric Properties of Measures Used

Measure	N	Number of Items	Item Mean	Scale Mean	Scale Variance	Mean Intercorrelation	Alpha
Career Commitment	514	20	7.2*	144.9	441.4	.29	.89
Family Commitment	514	16	7.0*	111.6	598.9	.54	.95
Family/Career Conflict	514	14	4.8*	66.6	303.7	.23	.81
Self-Efficacy	514	10	7.3**	72.9	123.1	.33	.81
Self-Esteem	499	10	6.6**	65.7	194.4	.37	.84
Coping Strategies	504	10	3.8**	38.0	103.3	.08	.48
Knowledge	511	10	5.3**	53.1	101.6	.09	.51

\* 9-point response scale

\*\* 10-point response scale

### Family/Career Conflict

The balanced 14-item Family/Career Conflict Scale was also designed by the author, to tap subjects' anticipation of future conflict between pursuing a career and raising a family (Appendix E). Overall, subjects expected only moderate amounts of such conflict ( $M = 66.6$ , possible range = 14 to 126). With a mean interitem correlation of .23, the alpha reliability of the scale was .81 in the present study (Table 1).

### Self-Efficacy

Fibell and Hale (1978) constructed a measure of generalized expectancy for success among undergraduates, which they defined as "the expectancy held by an individual that in most situations he/she will be able to attain desired goals" (p. 924). Their final scale, a balanced 30-item measure, had a 6-week test-retest correlation of .83, with a split-half reliability coefficient of .90 for females and .91 for males. Scores on the instrument were significantly correlated with the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale ( $r[26] = -.58$ ,  $p < .01$ , for males and  $r[58] = -.48$ ,  $p < .01$ , for females), the Beck Depression Inventory ( $r[25] = -.61$ ,  $p < .01$ , for males and  $r[57] = -.54$ ,  $p < .01$ , for females), and the Beck Hopelessness Scale ( $r[26] = -.69$ ,  $p < .01$ , for males and  $r[59] = -.31$ ,  $p < .01$ , for females).



It also had a significant but low correlation with the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale for females ( $r[69] = .26, p < .05$ ) but not for males ( $r[34] = .15, p < .05$ ).

Fibel and Hale performed a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation on answers to their 30 items. This procedure yielded four factors, the first of which accounted for 63.9% of the common variance and consisted of 10 items reflecting an individual's sense of general efficacy.

The 10 items comprising this first, general factor were included in the present study (Appendix F). Two items were rephrased in the contrait direction in order to create a balanced measure. Subjects indicated their answers on 10-point scales that ranged from 0 to 9. Overall, the sample expressed a rather high level of self-efficacy (item mean = 7.3). With a mean interitem correlation of .33, the internal consistency of this Self-Efficacy scale was .81 in the present study (Table 1).

### Self-Esteem

Self-esteem was assessed using Rosenberg's (1979) 10-item Self-Esteem Scale (Appendix G). Rosenberg reported scores on this scale to be positively correlated with assertiveness and the number of extra-curricular activities engaged in and negatively correlated with shyness and depression among 5,024 male and female high school students.

Pilot data for the present study revealed a correlation of  $-.57$  for females and  $-.52$  for males between self-esteem scores and scores on the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, Ward Mendelson, Mock, & Erbaugh, 1961).

Silber and Tippet (1965) referred to this instrument as a measure of global self-esteem reflecting a "subjective estimation by S of his overall feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with self" (p. 1025). The self-esteem score correlated with the Self-Image Questionnaire (Heath, 1965)  $.83$ , and the Repertory test (Kelly, 1955)  $.67$ . The two-week test-retest reliability for a group of 28 college students was  $.85$  (Silber & Tippet, 1965).

In the present study, items were answered on a 0 to 9 basis. Self-esteem scores were high in the overall sample (item mean = 6.6). The mean interitem correlation was  $.37$ , producing an alpha of  $.84$  (Table 1).

### Coping Strategies

A 10-item Coping Strategies Instrument (Appendix H), designed by the author, investigated young people's plans for combining a career and a family. The scale was

developed with Hall's (1972) Type I strategies in mind. Individuals were asked to what extent they were planning particular ways to adapt their lifestyle in order to accomodate both a career and a family. Examples of items on this survey include: "I am counting on friends and relatives helping to raise my children while I pursue a career" and "I shall delay having children until my career is well established". Subjects indicated the extent to which each statement applied to them on ten-point scales from Not At All True Of Me (0) to Very True Of Me (9). There was no presumption that the strategies would be intercorrelated on this instrument, which was essentially a check-list of individual plans; and, indeed, they hardly were (.08). Nor was it intended that a sum score across the ten items ( $\alpha = .48$ ) would be used, but rather that dual-goal subjects' endorsement of individual items would be examined.

#### Knowledge about the Experiences of Dual-Career Families

The Knowledge about the Experiences of Dual-Career Families Instrument was also designed by the author and included ten statements which sample respondents' knowledge of current trends in both the labour force and the family (Appendix I). Examples of items, half of which are factually true, include: "In the vast majority of dual-career families today, the responsibility for housework

and childcare lies mainly with the wife" and "A young woman today can expect to spend an average of 30 years working at some job or another during the rest of her life". Agreement with statements was indicated on 10-point scales from Not At All True (0) to Very True (9). It was hoped that knowledge of these issues would be found across items, so that a stable summed "knowledge" score could be computed. However, the level of interitem correlation (.09) was so low ( $\alpha = .51$ ), that such scores must be seen as very unreliable. The item mean (5.3) indicates that knowledge about the actual experiences of dual-career families is rather limited in these samples, and that many of the subjects may simply have been guessing.

#### Psychometric Properties of the Scales

##### Among Students and Nonstudents

Table 2 breaks the preceding analysis into its student and nonstudent components. It can be seen that the scales performed equally well in the two samples. Table 2 also presents the demographic data described earlier, broken down by its student-nonstudent origins.

Table 2  
Psychometric Properties of Measures Used (Students/Nonstudents)

Measure	N	Number of Items	Item Mean	Scale Mean	Scale Variance	Mean Intercorrelation	Alpha
Career Commitment (Students) (Nonstudents)	331 183	20 20	7.4 7.0	147.6 140.0	399.1 483.0	.30 .28	.89 .88
Family Commitment	(S) 331 (N) 183	16 16	6.8 7.3	108.8 116.8	599.0 560.2	.54 .53	.95 .94
Family/Career Conflict	(S) 331 (N) 183	14 14	4.8 4.7	67.3 65.3	301.8 306.4	.24 .22	.82 .80
Self-Efficacy	(S) 331 (N) 183	10 10	7.3 7.2	73.4 72.0	120.3 127.7	.33 .33	.81 .82
Self-Esteem	(S) 316 (N) 183	10 10	6.5 6.7	64.8 67.2	190.4 198.7	.35 .40	.83 .86
Coping Strategies	(S) 331 (N) 173	10 10	3.8 3.9	37.8 38.6	104.6 100.9	.09 .06	.51 .42
Knowledge	(S) 331 (N) 180	10 10	5.4 5.2	53.9 51.7	107.0 89.2	.10 .08	.54 .45
Father's Job	(S) 320 (N) 170	1 1		53.3 46.8	264.3 199.2		
Mother's Job	(S) 226 (N) 113	1 1		45.8 42.5	205.7 177.4		
Education Planned	(S) 331 (N) 180	1 1		5.6 3.9	.3 1.7		
Ideal Job	(S) 314 (N) 166	1 1		63.5 53.0	228.5 221.9		
Expected Job	(S) 297 (N) 155	1 1		64.0 51.0	180.7 179.5		
English	(S) 331 (N) 183	1 1		5.0 4.6	.7 .6		
Math	(S) 331 (N) 183	1 1		5.1 4.4	.9 1.0		

Table 3, in turn, presents the same analyses, only in terms of the second major independent variable--gender. Here, more substantial differences appeared, with the reliability of the career commitment, family/career conflict, and self-esteem scales all being greater for females than for males.

#### Correlations Among the Major Variables

Correlations among all the variables in the study, for the entire sample, are shown in Table 4. Most important for subsequent analyses are the relationships among the three major dependent variables: Career Commitment, Family Commitment, and Family/Career Conflict. As anticipated, these correlations are all quite low (with only one reaching statistical significance even with a large sample). For all intents and purposes, then, scores on these scales were independent of one another, and the hypotheses concerning them can be tested with independent analyses.

Examination of Table 4 will reveal only a few substantial correlations, none of which is surprising. Subjects' ideal job and expected job correlated .78. Family commitment scores were correlated .60 with number of children planned, and -.38 with age for marriage. Self-efficacy and self-esteem scores were correlated .46.

Table 3  
Psychometric Properties of Measures Used (Males/Females)

Measure	N	Number of Items	Item Mean	Scale Mean	Scale Variance	Mean Intercorrelation	Alpha
Career Commitment	(Males) 198 (Females) 316	20 20	7.1 7.3	142.9 146.1	381.0 476.6	.23 .34	.85 .91
Family Commitment	(M) 198 (F) 316	16 16	6.6 7.2	105.1 115.8	570.8 574.0	.48 .57	.94 .95
Family/Career Conflict	(M) 198 (F) 316	14 14	4.4 5.0	61.2 70.0	222.3 325.8	.18 .25	.75 .83
Self-Efficacy	(M) 198 (F) 316	10 10	7.2 7.3	72.4 73.2	114.6 128.7	.30 .35	.79 .83
Self-Esteem	(M) 190 (F) 309	10 10	6.7 6.5	66.8 65.0	164.9 211.9	.31 .41	.80 .86
Coping Strategies	(M) 194 (F) 310	10 10	3.8 3.8	37.7 38.3	99.3 106.0	.09 .09	.52 .48
Knowledge	(M) 197 (F) 314	10 10	5.1 5.5	50.7 54.6	99.1 97.6	.08 .09	.48 .51
Dad's Job	(M) 191 (F) 299	1 1		51.9 50.5	235.4 260.5		
Mom's Job	(M) 141 (F) 198	1 1		44.8 44.7	214.6 187.6		
Education Planned	(M) 197 (F) 314	1 1		5.2 4.8	1.1 1.6		
Ideal Job	(M) 183 (F) 297	1 1		60.6 59.5	291.5 225.8		
Expected Job	(M) 173 (F) 279	1 1		61.8 58.1	237.3 201.1		
English	(M) 198 (F) 316	1 1		4.7 5.0	.7 .6		
Math	(M) 198 (F) 316	1 1		4.8 4.9	1.1 1.0		

Table 4

All Correlations Among Major Variables

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Career	-.08	-.04	-.02	.07	.10*	.38*	.07	.08	.11*	.15*	.10*	.13*	.20*	-.08
2. Family		.04	.09	-.00	.09*	.13*	-.05	.03	-.02	-.07	-.02	-.04	-.38*	.60*
3. Conflict			.06	.19*	-.11*	-.13*	-.06	-.07	.01	-.02	.07	.02	-.13*	-.00
4. Coping Strategies				-.02	.01	.01	-.02	.02	-.10*	-.13*	-.06	-.07	-.12*	-.03
5. Knowledge					-.11*	-.08	.06	.07	.06	.05	.14*	.11*	.01	.02
6. Self-Esteem						.46*	.04	.11*	-.08	-.08	.03	-.05	-.01	.09
7. Self-Efficacy							-.00	.09	.03	.02	.12*	.02	.01	.06
8. Father's Job								.23*	.18*	.21*	.07	.13*	.15*	.01
9. Mother's Job								.08	.09	.09	.26*	.16*	.05	.02
10. Ideal Job										.78*	.17*	.21*	.16*	.04
11. Expected Job											.15*	.27*	.18*	-.03
12. English Mark												.27*	.04	.00
13. Math Mark													.05	-.02
14. Age to Marry														-.20*
15. Number of Kids														

N=514

\*p &lt; .05, two-tailed



Table 5 presents the correlations among the same variables, only separately for students and nonstudents. One can again see no large pattern of association among the three primary scales. The few substantial relationships again contain no surprises. The same result is obtained when the data are analyzed according to gender (Table 6).

#### Part 1: Tests of the Main Hypotheses

To test the first set of hypotheses, three 2 X 2 between groups analyses of variance were performed on career commitment, family commitment, and family/career conflict. Independent variables consisted of "gender" (male and female) and "status" (university students and non-university subjects). The mean scores of the resulting four subgroups are presented in Table 7. Analyses were performed by the SPSSX ANOVA program (Spss Inc., 1986), using the unweighted means approach for unequal cell sizes (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983). Results of the evaluation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance, based on Harris' (1975) criteria, were satisfactory in all cases. No unusual univariate outliers were detected.

Table 5

All Correlations (Males/Females)

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Career (M) (F)	.07 -.19*	-.06 -.06	-.17* .07	-.08 .14*	.20* .05	.48* .33*	.02 .11	-.02 .15*	.09 .13	.10 .21*	-.09 .09	.21* .09	.07 .33*	.10 -.19*
2. Family (M) (F)		-.13 .05	.05 .10	.09 -.13*	-.07 .21*	.03 .18*	.00 -.07	-.02 .06	.10 -.09	.09 -.14	-.09 -.04	.04 -.11	-.25* -.39*	.61* .59*
3. Conflict (M) (F)			.08 .04	.10 .18	-.19* -.06	-.20* -.12*	-.06 -.04	-.13 -.03	-.15* .12*	-.18* .11	-.11 .11*	.16* .11	.03 -.06	-.17* .04
4. Coping Strategies (M) (F)				-.02 -.02	-.03 .03	.02 .01	-.05 -.01	.00 .04	-.10 -.10	-.15 -.11	-.06 -.07	-.15* -.03	-.14 -.09	-.03 -.03
5. Knowledge (M) (F)					-.21* -.05	-.17* -.04	.07 .07	.12 .03	.11 .04	.07 .08	.07 .15*	.18* .05	-.04 .16*	.05 -.03
6. Self- Esteem (M) (F)						.43* .47*	.05 .02	.10 .12	-.06 -.09	-.10 -.08	.01 .07	-.03 -.06	-.01 -.05	.07 .11
7. Self- Efficacy (M) (F)							-.04 .02	.15 .04	.03 .03	.00 .03	.13 .10	.11 -.04	.05 .00	.09 .03
8. Father's Job (M) (F)								.26* .20*	.32* .08	.33* .13*	.11 .06	.18* .10	-.03 .26*	.04 -.00
9. Mother's Job (M) (F)								.18* .00	.32* .09	.32* .09	.18* .22*	.05 .14*	.07 .05	.01 -.01
10. Ideal Job (M) (F)									.81* .76*	.25* .13*	.25* .13*	.23* .20*	.13 .17*	.10 .01
11. Expected Job (M) (F)										.26* .11		.32* .25*	.13 .16*	.05 -.06
12. English Mark (M) (F)												.25* .27*	.11 .11	-.01 -.02
13. Math Mark (M) (F)													.03 .10	.08 -.10
14. Age to Marry (M) (F)														-.16 -.21*
15. Number of Kids (M) (F)														

N = 514

\*p &lt; .05, two-tailed

Table 6  
All Correlations (Students/Nonstudents)

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Career (S) (N)	-.06 -.03	-.05 -.06	-.06 -.09	.07 .03	.09 .16*	.40* .34*	.05 .02	.08 .02	.07 .06	.07 .13	.08 .04	.13* .01	.12* .25*	-.12* -.01
2. Family (S) (N)		.04 .07	.04 .19*	.04 -.04	.03 .17*	.07 .28*	.06 -.20*	.03 .08	.06 -.01	.04 -.09	-.02 .09	-.01 .05	-.31* -.42*	.60* .60*
3. Conflict (S) (N)			.08 .03	.20* .17*	-.12* -.08	-.21* -.02	.00 -.23*	-.05 -.10	-.05 .07	-.10 .05	.08 .03	-.01 .02	-.14* -.16*	.00 -.01
4. Coping Strategies (S) (N)				-.02 .00	-.03 .06	-.01 .07	.06 -.20*	.05 -.03	-.09 -.08	-.12* -.09	-.09 .02	-.09 -.03	-.10 -.11	-.06 .04
5. Knowledge (S) (N)					-.10 -.10	-.13* -.00	.04 .04	.01 .17*	.03 .03	.04 -.04	.11* .15	.11* .02	-.08 .10	.05 -.03
6. Self- Esteem (S) (N)						.39* .59*	.11 -.06	.16* .03	.02 -.19*	.02 .18*	.03 .10	-.00 -.06	.07 -.09	.09 .07
7. Self- Efficacy (S) (N)							-.00 -.03	.07 .08	.02 -.00	.01 -.06	.09 .15*	.01 .01	.03 -.07	.03 .12
8. Father's Job (S) (N)								.26* .09	.15* .05	.16* .05	.01 .07	.11 -.02	.03 .29*	.06 -.06
9. Mother's Job (S) (N)								.05 .05	.05 .05	.05 .06	.26* .22*	.21* -.06	.04 -.01	.09 -.06
10. Ideal Job (S) (N)										.75* .78*	.11* .08	.12* .10	.05 .15*	.11 -.03
11. Expected Job (S) (N)											.12* -.07	.16* .14	.05 .12	.05 -.11
12. English Mark (S) (N)												.19* .24*	.02 -.09	-.03 .10
13. Math Mark (S) (N)													.00 -.10	-.01 .00
14. Age to Marry (S) (N)														-.18*
15. Number of Kids (S) (N)														-.23*

N = 514

\*p &lt; .05, two-tailed

Table 7

Subgroup Means and Standard Deviations for Career Commitment, Family Commitment, and Family/Career Conflict

Measure		<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Career Commitment	(Student Males)	141	144.2	19.6
	(Student Females)	190	150.0	19.9
	(Nonstudent Males)	57	139.5	19.1
	(Nonstudent Females)	126	140.2	23.2
Family Commitment	(Student Males)	141	105.5	23.4
	(Student Females)	190	111.3	25.0
	(Nonstudent Males)	57	104.1	25.2
	(Nonstudent Females)	126	122.5	20.6
Family/Career Conflict	(Student Males)	141	61.1	15.4
	(Student Females)	190	72.0	17.4
	(Nonstudent Males)	57	61.5	13.8
	(Nonstudent Females)	126	67.0	18.7

Career Commitment

Career commitment varied significantly with status, as demonstrated in Table 8, with  $F(1, 510) = 13.3, p < .001$ . Students had significantly higher career commitment, on average (147.6), than did nonstudents (140.0). An eta-squared value of .025 indicates that status differences explain between 2% and 3% of the variation in career commitment. No statistically significant main effect for gender was found. Nor was there a significant interaction between status and gender affecting career commitment.

Students (S) scored significantly higher than did nonstudents (N) on 9 out of the 20 career commitment items (using a cutoff of  $p < .01$ ). The largest differences occurred on item 2, "I could get everything I really want out of life WITHOUT having a career" ), (Mean [S] = 7.7, Mean [N] = 6.8,  $t[512] = 4.22, p < .001$ ), item 8, "I could be fully satisfied in life WITHOUT establishing a long-term career" (S = 6.4, N = 5.2,  $t[512] = 4.81, p < .001$ ), and item 10, "Planning for and succeeding in a career is NOT my main concern", (S = 6.8, N = 5.9,  $t[512] = 4.48, p < .001$ ).

Planned comparisons were tested using the conservative, Bonferroni  $t$ -test which takes into account unequal cell sizes (Morrison, 1983). Since 12 comparisons were tested in all (four for each of the three dependent variables in the study), the Bonferroni critical  $t(120)$  value of 2.68 for  $p < .05$  was used (Kres, 1983). Among females, students

Table 8  
2 X 2 Analysis of Variance of Career Commitment

Source of Variance	Adjusted SS	df	MS	F
Male/Female	1113.99	1	1113.99	7.06
Student/Nonstudent	5665.62	1	5665.62	13.32*
Interaction	698.63	1	698.63	1.64
Explained	9605.83	3	3201.94	
Residual	216853.91	510	425.20	
Total	226459.74	513	441.44	

\*p < .001

scored significantly higher on career commitment than did nonstudents, with  $t(314) = 4.17$ ,  $p < .05$ . Among males, student scores were not different from nonstudent scores. Among students and among nonstudents, female scores were not significantly different from male scores (Figure 4).

#### Family Commitment

Inspection of Table 9 reveals that family commitment scores differed significantly according to gender  $F(1, 510) = 28.05$ ,  $p < .001$ , with females showing higher scores (115.8) than did males (105.1). Status also showed a significant but much smaller main effect  $F(1, 510) = 4.72$ ,  $p < .05$ , with nonstudents (116.8) scoring somewhat higher than did students (108.8), overall. Furthermore, the interaction between Gender and Status was significant,  $F(1, 510) = 7.60$ ,  $p < .01$ , as depicted in Figure 5. An eta-squared value of .043 indicates that the interaction of Gender and Status can account for about 4% of the variance in family commitment.

Among females, nonstudents scored appreciably higher than students, with  $t(314) = 4.17$ ,  $p < .05$ . Among males, nonstudent scores did not differ from student scores. Among students, female scores did not differ from male scores, and among nonstudents, females scored significantly higher than did males,  $t(181) = 4.90$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Nonstudent females (NF) scored significantly higher than

Figure 4. Student/nonstudent and male/female scores on the Career Commitment Scale.

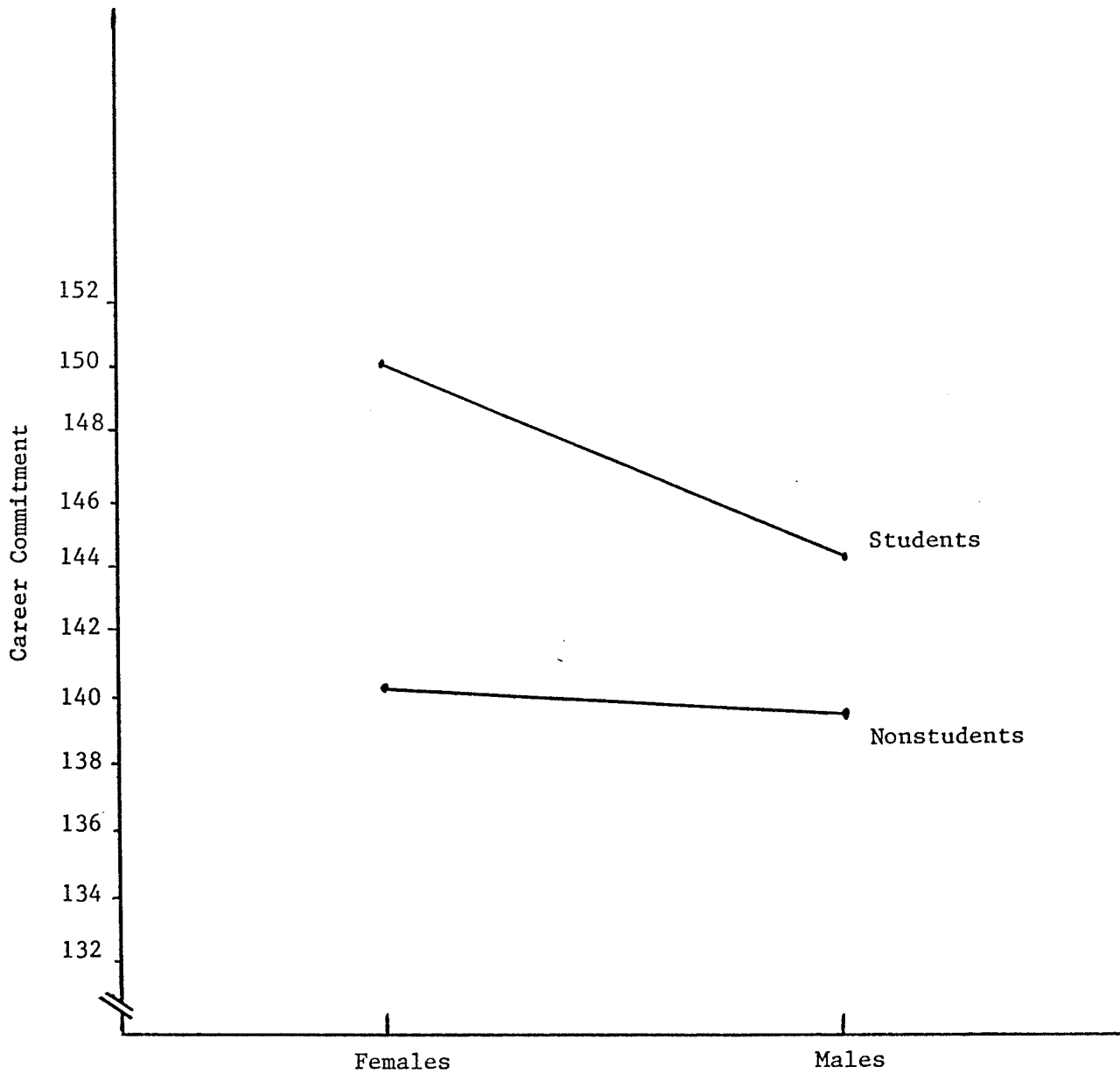




Table 9  
2 X 2 Analysis of Variance of Family Commitment

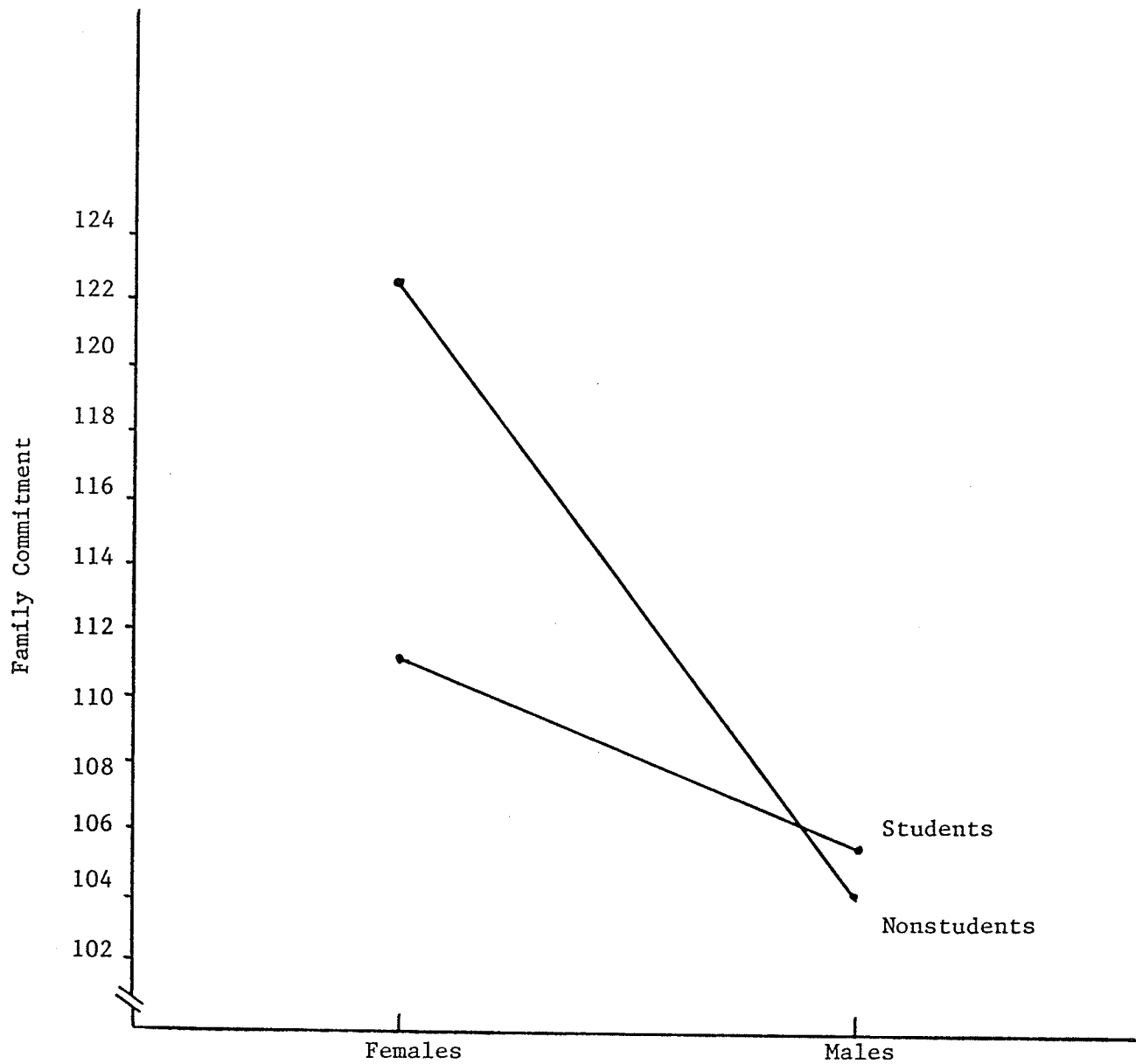
Source of Variance	Adjusted SS	df	MS	F
Male/Female	15590.98	1	15590.98	28.05*
Student/Nonstudent	2622.67	1	2622.67	4.72**
Interaction	4225.76	1	4225.76	7.60***
Explained	23726.88	3	7908.96	
Residual	283514.39	510	555.91	
Total	307241.26	513	598.91	

\* $p < .001$

\*\* $p < .05$

\*\*\* $p < .01$

Figure 5. Student/nonstudent and male/female scores on the Family Commitment Scale.



did student females (SF) on 11 of the 16 family commitment items. The largest differences were found on item 5, "I look forward to parenting" (NF = 7.8, SF = 6.8,  $t[314] = 4.72$ ,  $p < .001$ ), item 7, "I want the satisfaction of watching children grow from day to day" (NF = 8.0, SF = 7.3,  $t[314] = 4.69$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and item 9, "A major goal in my life is to raise healthy, happy children" (NF = 7.9, SF = 7.0,  $t[314] = 4.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ). All but two of the scales' items differentiated between nonstudent females (NF) and nonstudent males (NM). The largest differences were found on item 11, "My future plans do NOT include caring for children" (NF = 8.3, NM = 6.8,  $t[181] = 4.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ), item 14, "There are more important things in life to me than being a parent" (NF = 6.1, NM = 4.5,  $t[181] = 4.34$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and item 5, "I look forward to parenting" (NF = 7.8, NM = 6.3,  $t[181] = 4.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

#### Family/Career Conflict

Family/career conflict varied significantly by gender, as detailed in Table 10, with  $F(1, 510) = 25.08$ ,  $p < .001$ . Females anticipated more conflict, on average, (70.0) than did males (61.2). No statistically significant main effect for status was found. Nor was there a significant interaction between gender and status affecting family/career conflict. About 5% of the variance in family/career conflict can be explained by the gender difference (eta-squared = .047).

Table 10  
2 X 2 Analysis of Variance of Family/Career Conflict

Source of Variance	Adjusted SS	df	MS	F
Male/Female	7108.19	1	7108.19	25.08*
Student/Nonstudent	526.60	1	526.60	1.86
Interaction	767.46	1	767.46	2.71
Explained	11266.66	3	3755.55	
Residual	144564.17	510	283.46	
Total	155830.83	513	303.76	

\*p < .001

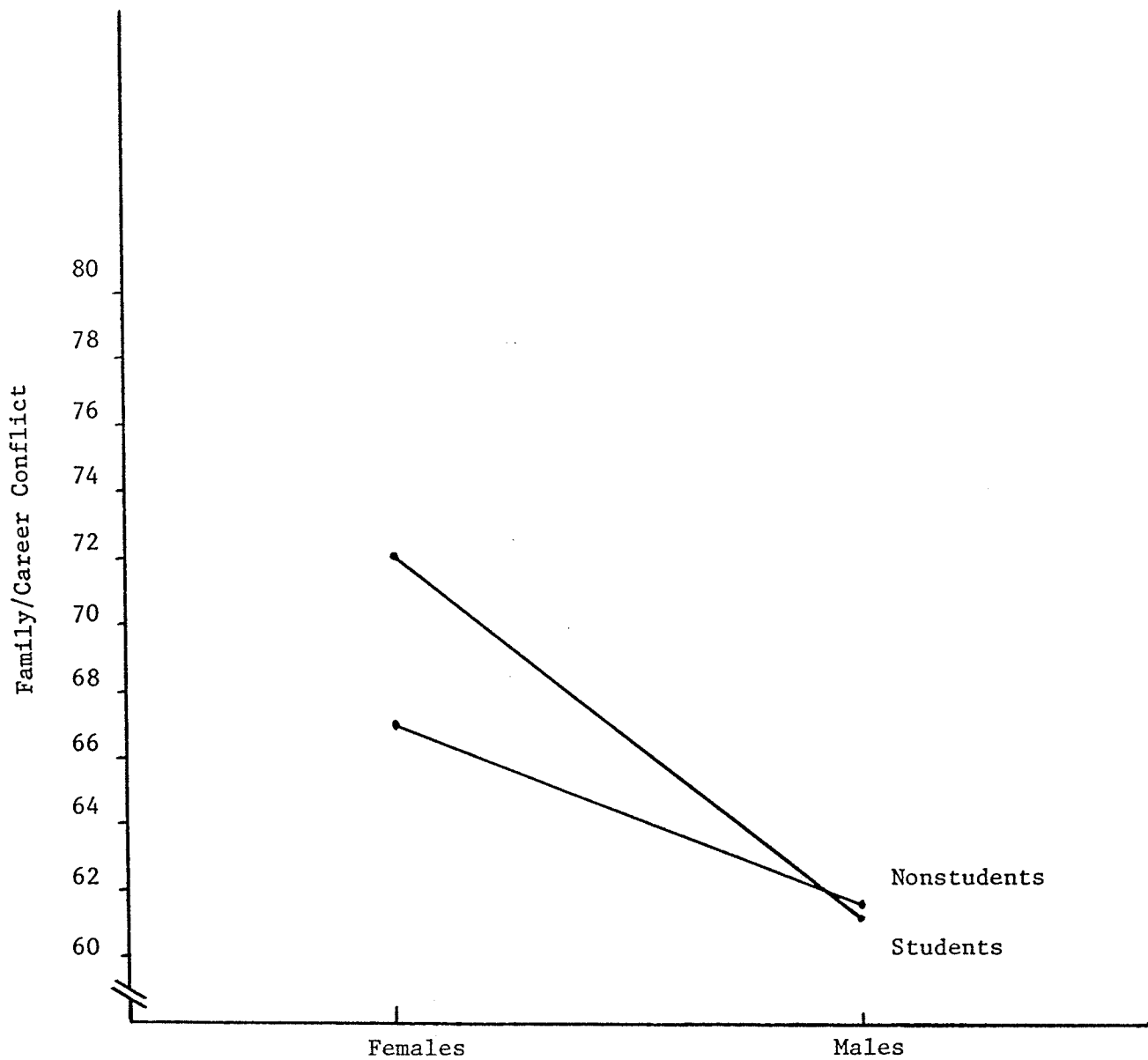
Females (F) scored significantly higher than did males (M) on 6 of the 14 family/career conflict items. The largest differences occurred on item 1, "I think that a full-time career might cut into the time I want to spend raising a family" ( $F = 6.0$ ,  $M = 4.6$ ,  $t[512] = 6.32$ ,  $p < .001$ ), item 2, "I sometimes wonder how I will have time for both a career and a family" ( $F = 6.3$ ,  $M = 4.5$ ,  $t[512] = 8.69$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and item 5, "I sometimes feel pulled between my desire for a career and my desire to raise a family" ( $F = 5.0$ ,  $M = 3.6$ ,  $t[512] = 6.64$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Among students, female scores (72.0) were significantly higher than male scores (61.1),  $t(329) = 5.82$ ,  $p < .05$ . Among nonstudents, female scores (67.0) did not differ significantly from male scores (61.5). Among males and among females, student scores did not differ from nonstudent scores (Figure 6).

#### Controlling for the Effects of Socioeconomic Status

Due to the significant difference between students and nonstudents in terms of socioeconomic status, three analyses of covariance, paralleling those just described, were carried out in order to control for the influence of SES.

Figure 6. Student/nonstudent and male/female scores on the Family/Career Conflict Scale.



Tables 11, 12, and 13 reveal that adjustment for the covariate SES made no difference to the results of the three analyses just described.

Part 11: Analyses of Highly Dual-Goal Subjects

In order to examine high levels of commitment to both a career and a family, subjects were divided into two groups based on their scores on the Career and Family Commitment Scales. High commitment was defined as a score in the upper quarter of the 9-point (i.e., 8-interval) response scale, namely, between Moderately Agree (7) and Very Strongly Agree (9) (on a protrait item). Thus, "highly committed" subjects were those whose total score was equal to or above 140 ( $20 \times 7$ ) on the Career Commitment Scale, and greater than or equal to 112 ( $16 \times 7$ ) on the Family Commitment Scale. By this definition, 175 subjects were highly committed to having both a career and a family (69 female students, 34 male students, 58 female nonstudents, and 14 male nonstudents). (Females, whether students or nonstudents, were more likely than males to be pursuing both goals.) The remaining 339 subjects, not highly committed to both objectives, can be used for purposes of comparison. This analysis, therefore, compares the highly dual-goal subjects with the remainder of the sample (i.e., those subjects who are not as strongly committed to both goals).

Table 11  
 2 X 2 Analysis of Covariance of Career Commitment

Source of Variance	Adjusted SS	df	MS	F
Male/Female	754.41	1	754.41	1.77
Student/Nonstudent	5198.52	1	5198.52	12.22*
Interaction	830.25	1	830.25	1.95
Covariate SES	75.21	1	75.21	.67
Explained	9544.16	4	2386.04	
Residual	20853.78	491	425.36	
Total	218397.93	495	441.21	

\* $p < .01$



Table 12  
 2 X 2 Analysis of Covariance of Family Commitment

Source of Variance	Adjusted SS	df	MS	F
Male/Female	12902.48	1	12902.48	23.05*
Student/Nonstudent	2955.61	1	2955.61	5.28**
Interaction	3312.07	1	3312.07	5.92**
Covariate SES	213.83	1	213.83	.38
Explained	21771.25	4	5442.81	
Residual	274808.59	491	559.69	
Total	296579.84	495	599.15	

\* $p < .001$

\*\* $p < .05$

Table 13  
2 X 2 Analysis of Covariance of Family/Career Conflict

Source of Variance	Adjusted SS	df	MS	F
Male/Female	6211.45	1	6211.45	22.13*
Student/Nonstudent	574.81	1	574.81	2.05
Interaction	982.82	1	982.82	3.50
Covariate SES	997.32	1	997.32	3.56
Explained	11976.64	4	2994.16	
Residual	137794.60	491	280.64	
Total	149771.24	495	302.57	

\* $p < .001$

As expected, no significant differences were found in the amount of family/career conflict anticipated by highly committed students ( $M = 68.7$ ) compared with the less committed students ( $M = 66.8$ ) ( $p > .39$ )

nor were the respective differences among nonstudents (65.1 vs. 65.5) significant ( $p > .90$ ) (Table 14). These results set the stage for the analysis of how and why highly dual-goal young adults think they will be able to "have-it-all".

Highly committed students scored significantly higher on self-efficacy ( $M = 75.9$ ) than did the remainder of the students ( $M = 72.3$ ,  $t[329] = 2.95$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Also, highly committed nonstudents scored significantly higher than did the remainder to the nonstudents (76.2 vs. 69.3,  $t[181] = 4.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

No significant differences were found between the self-esteem scores of highly committed and less committed subjects in either sample. Also, contrary to expectations, dual-goal subjects were not more knowledgeable about the problems faced by dual-career families than were subjects who were committed to both goals.

Differences did appear among coping strategies, however.

Table 14

Comparison of Highly Committed and Less Committed Students and Nonstudents

Measure	Students						Nonstudents					
	High Commitment / Less Commitment			High Commitment / Less Commitment			High Commitment / Less Commitment			High Commitment / Less Commitment		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Family/Career Conflict	103	68.7	20.2	228	66.7	15.9	72	65.1	18.4	111	65.5	17.0
Self-Efficacy	103	75.9	9.6	228	72.3	11.4	72	76.2	9.5	111	69.3	11.6
Self-Esteem	100	65.4	14.7	216	64.5	13.4	72	68.6	12.2	111	66.3	15.2
Knowledge	103	55.2	10.1	228	53.3	10.4	71	51.6	10.1	109	51.7	9.1
Coping Strategy 1	103	6.7	2.2	228	5.1	2.6	70	6.7	2.3	103	5.9	2.7
Coping Strategy 2	103	6.5	2.4	228	6.2	2.4	70	5.5	2.8	103	5.1	2.9
Coping Strategy 3	103	1.4	2.3	228	1.5	2.1	70	2.1	2.7	103	1.8	2.4
Coping Strategy 4	103	6.2	2.9	228	5.3	3.0	70	6.0	3.0	103	5.5	3.1
Coping Strategy 5	103	6.3	2.8	228	5.3	2.6	70	6.3	2.7	103	5.2	2.8
Coping Strategy 6	103	2.4	2.6	228	2.6	2.3	70	2.6	2.6	103	2.9	2.8
Coping Strategy 7	103	1.8	2.5	228	1.9	2.1	70	1.6	2.0	103	1.6	1.9
Coping Strategy 8	103	2.6	3.0	228	2.2	2.5	70	2.5	2.6	103	3.0	3.0
Coping Strategy 9	103	1.4	2.2	228	1.5	2.1	70	1.5	2.3	103	1.4	2.1
Coping Strategy 10	103	4.9	0.7	228	5.1	0.7	70	5.0	0.1	103	5.1	1.1

Highly committed students reported that they were planning to use coping strategies 1 ( $t[329] = 5.76, p < .001$ ), 4 ( $t[329] = 2.69, p < .01$ ), and 5 ( $t[329] = 2.95, p < .005$ ) to a greater extent and coping strategy 10 ( $t[329] = 2.41, p < .03$ ) to a lesser extent than did students with lower commitment. As well, highly committed nonstudents planned to adopt coping strategy 5 to a greater extent than did nonstudents who were not highly-committed to both ( $t[171] = 2.58, p < .03$ ).

Table 15 presents the means and standard deviations for each variable in all four subgroups. Highly committed female students were significantly more likely to endorse coping strategy 1 (flexible career) ( $t[188] = 4.18, p < .001$ ), and coping strategy 4 (money for daycare) ( $t[188] = 2.23, p < .03$ ), than were the remainder of the sample of female students. Highly committed male students also reported that they would be significantly more likely to use coping strategy 1 than would the remainder of the male student sample ( $t[139] = 3.87, p < .01$ ). None of the coping strategies differentiated between highly committed and less committed female nonstudents or male nonstudents, however.

Table 15

Comparison of Highly Committed and Less Committed Subgroups

Measure	Students						Nonstudents					
	High Commitment / Less Commitment						High Commitment / Less Commitment					
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Family/Career Conflict (Males) (Females)	34 69	57.9 74.0	18.7 19.0	107 121	62.1 70.8	14.1 16.3	14 58	64.9 65.2	13.6 19.5	43 68	60.4 68.6	13.9 18.1
Self-Efficacy (M) (F)	34 69	76.0 75.9	9.4 9.8	107 121	72.0 72.5	10.7 12.0	14 58	76.1 76.3	8.4 9.8	43 68	69.6 69.1	11.7 11.6
Self-Esteem (M) (F)	32 68	66.8 64.7	14.1 15.0	101 115	65.7 63.4	12.1 14.4	14 58	69.5 68.4	9.1 12.9	43 68	68.2 65.1	14.7 15.5
Knowledge (M) (F)	34 69	51.7 56.9	10.1 9.7	107 121	51.3 55.0	10.4 10.2	14 57	47.4 52.6	10.0 9.9	42 67	49.3 53.3	8.6 9.1
Coping Strategy 1 (M) (F)	34 69	6.7 6.7	2.1 2.3	107 121	5.1 5.2	2.5 2.7	14 56	6.2 6.9	2.5 2.3	39 64	5.5 6.2	2.7 2.6
Coping Strategy 2 (M) (F)	34 69	6.4 6.5	2.5 2.4	107 121	6.3 6.0	2.3 2.5	14 56	5.1 5.6	2.6 2.8	39 64	5.6 4.7	2.6 3.1
Coping Strategy 3 (M) (F)	34 69	1.1 1.6	1.8 2.5	107 121	1.0 1.9	1.6 2.5	14 56	1.0 2.4	2.1 2.8	39 64	0.7 2.5	0.9 2.7
Coping Strategy 4 (M) (F)	34 69	6.8 5.9	2.6 3.0	107 121	5.7 4.9	2.8 3.1	14 56	6.9 5.7	2.2 3.2	39 64	6.1 5.1	2.6 3.3
Coping Strategy 5 (M) (F)	34 69	4.8 7.0	2.9 2.5	107 121	4.2 6.3	2.3 2.5	14 56	4.6 6.8	3.0 2.4	39 64	4.1 5.9	2.5 2.7
Coping Strategy 6 (M) (F)	34 69	2.6 2.3	3.0 2.4	107 121	3.0 2.3	2.2 2.3	14 56	2.4 2.6	2.3 2.7	39 64	3.4 2.6	3.0 2.7
Coping Strategy 7 (M) (F)	34 69	1.5 1.9	2.1 2.7	107 121	2.0 1.7	2.2 2.1	14 56	2.2 1.5	2.3 1.9	39 64	2.2 1.3	2.4 1.6
Coping Strategy 8 (M) (F)	34 69	3.2 2.3	3.1 3.0	107 121	2.2 2.1	2.4 2.6	14 56	3.5 2.3	2.3 2.6	39 64	2.5 3.4	2.8 3.1
Coping Strategy 9 (M) (F)	34 69	1.7 1.2	2.5 2.0	107 121	1.8 1.2	2.4 1.8	14 56	1.6 1.5	2.4 2.3	39 64	1.6 1.3	2.1 2.1
Coping Strategy 10 (M) (F)	34 69	5.4 4.7	0.8 0.5	107 121	5.4 4.9	0.8 0.5	14 56	5.4 4.9	0.6 0.6	39 64	5.8 4.7	1.1 0.8

## Discussion

Evaluation of the Samples and Instruments EmployedPossible Sample Biases

The present study is limited, in terms of generalizability, to one region of North America (Manitoba). Possibly, different results would be found in other areas of Canada or in other countries.

The student sample, consisting of 83% of the persons enrolled in the classes involved, is probably representative of introductory psychology students between the ages of 17 and 23 at the University of Manitoba. However, some selection bias is present among the nonstudent sample, since the student intermediaries (59% of the male students and 81% of the female students) probably chose friends, or at least approachable acquaintances, as contacts. The relatively high nonstudent response rate (81%) greatly reduces the chance of an unrepresentative sample of such contactees. The nonstudents do not, of course, represent accurately all of the non-university peers who went to high school with the introductory psychology students. Nevertheless, they do provide the opportunity to study another group of young adults--yoked with members of the student sample for age, gender, and high school--who made very different decisions about what to do with their lives following high-school graduation.

Psychometric Evaluation of the Measures Used

The instruments used in the present study appear reliable enough to provide a reasonable test of the hypotheses. The improved Career Commitment Scale, and the Family Commitment and Family/Career Conflict Scales developed for this study have alpha reliabilities ranging from .81 to .95 (Table 1). Similarly, the Self-Efficacy scale adapted from Fibel and Hale's (1978) work, and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem instrument have alphas greater than .80. All of these instruments, it should be noted, are balanced against response sets. The Coping Strategies measure was conceived of as a checklist, not a scale; so its low alpha is understandable. Only the Knowledge Scale, also developed for this study, proved markedly unreliable; its signal-to-noise ratio of nearly 1:1 was likely caused by a great deal of guessing on the part of subjects who did not know the true answers to the questions.

The fact that these scales proved to be as reliable for nonstudents as for students (Table 2) is both noteworthy and encouraging. The nonstudent sample reported lower grades in their high school courses, and had lower occupational aspirations than did the university students with whom psychological tests are more frequently used. However, the tests worked as well in the one sample as in the other.

Females answered most of the instruments with greater consistency than did males. Possibly, females took the study more seriously, or were more interested in the topic.



Part of the difference may also be an artifact since alpha is sensitive to the range of scores produced (Cronbach, 1949); the female sample had more extreme scores on Career Commitment and Family/Career Conflict than did males. There was no such difference on the Family Commitment Scale, however, and it had equal alphas for males and females.

#### Correlations Among the Variables

As expected, there were no meaningful correlations among the three major variables (career commitment, family commitment, and family/career conflict) for the sample as a whole (Table 4) or for any of the subsamples (Tables 5 and 6). This result is consistent with previous data (Holms, 1985), and demonstrates that the constructs may be viewed independently. In other words, (and the assumptions of some earlier researchers notwithstanding), one's level of commitment to a career did not depend upon one's family commitment, and vice versa. In addition, the amount of family/career conflict anticipated is not necessarily related to the level of commitment expressed. These results provide empirical support for the suggestion, made by a number of researchers (Farmer, 1983; Greenglass & Devins, 1982; Rooney, 1983; Zuckerman, 1981), that the dichotomous conceptualization of career/family interests is no longer relevant. This is especially true, since most young people are planning a combination career and family lifestyle.

Discussion of the Hypotheses: Part ICareer Commitment

Student participants reported a higher commitment to a career than did non-university participants. As illustrated in the results of the analysis of covariance (Table 11), this difference in career commitment could not be accounted for simply by the difference in socioeconomic background between students and nonstudents. However, since only a very small amount of the variance in career commitment (2% to 3%) was accounted for by the differences between students and nonstudents, there are obviously many other factors, such as family background, academic ability, and achievement motivation, which may determine a person's level of commitment.

The difference in the level of career commitment between students and nonstudents was greater among females than among males, with female students reporting a significantly higher commitment to a career than did female nonstudents (refer to Figure 4). As one would expect, young women who pursue a university education have higher career aspirations than those women who do not. Due to pressures on men to achieve in a career, more men than women with lower career commitment may decide to attend university, which would help to explain the similar student-nonstudent career commitment scores among males.

Contrary to both Farmer's (1983) finding and the pilot study, yet consistent with Koski and Subich (1985), female

students in this sample did not score significantly higher than their male counterparts. The difference between scores in Farmer's (1983) study, while statistically significant, was small in absolute terms (62.4 for males, 64.9 for females). The difference in the present study was 150 versus 144.4, which was not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ). One can say, in any event, that men and women are much more similar in their commitment to a career than traditional expectations suggest. The stereotypical assumption that females in university are simply biding their time until they can find a marriage partner, and that their exploration of a career is merely a "pseudoexploration" in order to fill space and time until they marry (Archer, 1985; Osipow, 1975) was not supported. It appears that, at least in terms of long-range planning for a career, females are as committed as are males.

It was also predicted that male nonstudents would be significantly more career-committed than would female nonstudents. There was, in fact, no difference between the two groups. Female nonstudents, while less career-oriented than their female counterparts who went to university, appear to anticipate working in their foreseeable future, and place as much importance on a career in their lives as do male nonstudents.

Family Commitment

All four hypotheses regarding family commitment were supported by the present data. In terms of family commitment, male scores in both the student and nonstudent groups were similar. Also, among students, male and female scores did not differ. The major difference occurred for females not attending university, whose family commitment scores were significantly higher than the scores of both nonstudent males and student females. Thus, young women who choose to work or pursue vocational training directly after high school appear to have a higher commitment to having children than do women who pursue a university education. Furthermore, in this study, these young women wanted to marry at a significantly younger age ( $M = 23.6$ ) than did student females ( $M = 24.7$ ,  $t[301] = 4.74$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

These findings raise the question of whether the nonstudent females, not the student females, may be the ones about to face the most difficult future. That is, these young women who expect to marry sooner and who have a greater desire for a family, are not as career-oriented as university women, yet may need to maintain a career out of economic necessity. Furthermore, the nonstudent females may be less able to afford childcare than women with more education and higher-level jobs.

Family/Career Conflict

None of the four hypotheses regarding family/career conflict was supported. Rather than having equal conflict scores, females reported a significantly higher anticipated conflict score than did males. Consistent with Archer's (1985) research, but different from the pilot study results, females expressed greater concern about combining a career and a family than did males. Yet, one should note that the females' scores are high only in relation to the males' scores. As noted earlier, few subjects in this study expressed great concern over combining a career and a family. The female mean (70.0) was still below the midpoint of the scale (80).

One notes, in this context, that females were also significantly more knowledgeable about the problems two-career families experience than were males (54.6 vs. 50.7,  $t[509] = 4.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, their greater anticipation of conflict may merely reflect this greater awareness of the difficulties ahead.

Interestingly, the emphasis on a partnership between husband and wife (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1969) was reflected in responses to the coping strategies item "What percent of the work involved in raising your children would you expect your spouse to do?". Most respondents, both male and female, reported "50%". It appears that both men and women are planning to share equally when it comes to childrearing; whether they actually do remains to be seen. The belief

that raising children should be left up to women may be less socially acceptable now than in the past. As well, young men may be looking forward to a greater personal investment in their roles as fathers than have men in the past, even if they are not aware of the potential difficulties involved.

Contrary to expectations, conflict scores were not significantly higher among students than among nonstudents. In this sample, individuals expecting a more demanding, professional career did not anticipate more conflicts than did individuals who were not planning a university-based career. The absence of a difference in scores between male students and male nonstudents may reflect an overall belief among men that family concerns are of little relevance to their career plans. Also, while female student scores were higher (72.0) than those of female nonstudents (67.0), this difference was not significant. Thus, the career path chosen by women does not seem to be related to the amount of conflict they expect.

The fact that these subjects, almost all of whom plan to have a career and a family, anticipate so little conflict is similar to Bridges' (1987) finding that college students' perceptions of the multiple-role situation seem to be positive and one-sided. Also consistent are findings that college students expect little difficulty in combining roles (Shields & Cooper, 1983), perceive career, spouse, and parent roles as compatible (Klemmack & Edwards, 1973), and evaluate the worker/parent role positively (Alpert, Richardson, Perlmutter, & Shutzer, 1980).

Karpicke (1980) suggested that low career/family conflict among young women may be due to a tendency to respond in a socially desirable way by viewing women as highly career-committed and not limited by traditional sex-role demands. It is possible that the participants in this study have been influenced to some extent by the "supermother" myth and are looking at their future roles through rose-coloured glasses. The results from the Knowledge items suggest that ignorance about the real difficulties ahead is widespread. Karpicke also stated that this conflict may not be of focal concern at this stage in a young person's life. Possibly, the items on the Family/Career Conflict Scale developed for the present study were not tapping relevant issues for these individuals.

#### Discussion of the Hypotheses: Part II

The second part of the present study demonstrates that not even the young men and women with the highest levels of commitment to both a career and a family are anticipating family/career conflict. Are these highly committed individuals prepared to cope with family/career conflicts? Exploratory analyses indicate that perhaps they are, to some extent. Both students and nonstudents with high level family and career commitments reported higher self-efficacy than did other subjects. These highly committed individuals seemingly hold high expectations about their ability to reach their goals. According to Bandura (1977), a belief in

success exerts a powerful influence on one's behaviour in terms of the decision to go ahead, the effort expended, and the amount of persistence at the task. If this is the case, these highly committed individuals may have the stamina and determination to combine successfully a career and a family, and may be better able to overcome difficulties when they arise.

Self-esteem did not differentiate people with high commitments from people with lower commitments to both a family and a career. Assuming that Rosenberg's scale is valid as well as reliable, it appears that one's general sense of self-worth does not relate to whether or not one's level of commitment is high, and thus does not help to explain why those people with higher commitments do not report more potential feelings of conflict.

Compared to students with lower career and/or family commitment scores, students with high scores were more likely to agree that they are counting on a career flexible enough to allow time off for raising children (Strategy 1), planning to have a career which will provide enough money for day care (Strategy 4), and planning to start a career right away but working less when their children are young (Strategy 5). High scorers were also significantly more likely than other scorers to say that they would do more of the work in raising children than their spouse (Strategy 10).



The first three strategies are somewhat realistic. For example, women who delay childbirth by first getting the education or training they need in order to establish themselves in a field often have higher salaries and more schedule flexibility (Bingham & Stryker, 1987). Careers with flexible schedules usually require more preparation and education (for example, psychologists, architects, and electricians are more likely to be able to choose their own hours than are airline attendants, store clerks, or secretaries). Thus, the higher one's aspirations, the more freedom one might have for parenting. Also, planning to have a career in order to have enough money for child care demonstrates that childcare costs are acknowledged as a legitimate concern in the minds of young people, and that day care is a feasible option to one spouse staying at home full-time.

However, endorsing the last strategy (planning to do more of the work involved in raising the children than their spouse) indicates that these highly committed individuals may tend to take on large amounts of responsibility. Similar to the "supermother" stereotype, this attempt to "do-it-all" may be an unrealistic way of trying to cope with a combination family and career. This finding is underscored by the low knowledge scores (item mean = 5.4), indicating that these young people, like those with less commitment to both goals, have a limited awareness of the problems experienced by two-career families in today's

society. For example, only 4% of the entire sample believed that the following statement was "very true" (a score of 8 or 9 on a 9-point scale): "Most married mothers who work do so because the family definitely needs the money".

There is no question that economic necessity will dictate that most of the women in this generation will be employed outside the home. Many will form two-career partnerships with spouses, others will head households as single parents. Plus, not only are young women expecting to work, they are also as committed to a career as are men. There is also evidence that home/career conflicts do exist (Gordon & Hall, 1974; Johnson & Johnson, 1977; Heckman, Bryson, & Bryson, 1977; Gray, 1983) and, in fact, increase over time (Tangri & Jenkins, 1986). Thus, it seems inevitable that many of the participants in the present study will have to deal with the problems of combining a career with a family at some point in their lives, and while they believe strongly in themselves, and they have some ideas about how they will do this, they may also be somewhat naive in terms of the difficulties encountered by two-career families.

While the coping strategies instrument sometimes differentiated highly committed students from less committed students, it was less effective in differentiating higher and less committed nonstudents. High scoring nonstudents planned to use only one strategy (starting a career right away but working less when the children are young) to a

greater extent than the remainder of the nonstudents. That these highly-committed people have fewer plans might be reason for concern since the present study's results seem to point to the possibility that nonstudents, and especially nonstudent females, may face the most difficulty combining a career and a family in the years ahead.

It is possible that items on the coping strategies scale were more appropriate to the lifestyles of individuals attending university. Had subjects been given the opportunity to generate a list of their own strategies, very different results might have been obtained. A great deal of information about the various strategies planned might be gathered more effectively in interviews or open-ended questions. Also, including both "realistic" (e.g., Type I Strategies; Hall, 1972) and "unrealistic" (e.g., Type III Strategies) strategies would give a clearer indication of the feasibility of these young people's plans.

As well, data related to the sequence of events planned throughout each participant's life were not collected. This information would be very useful in extending our understanding of these young people's plans for combining a career and a family. Super's (1980) Life-Career Rainbow model, which illustrates the varying emphasis placed on nine major roles (child, student, leisurite, citizen, worker, spouse, homemaker, parent, and pensioner) throughout one's life, might be useful as a guide for eliciting information about the plans young adults have for the numerous roles they will eventually adopt.

Back to the low anticipation of conflict found in the present study, Bridges (1983) found that college women were aware of some of the potential difficulties involved in combining roles, such as marital conflict, physical fatigue, mental exhaustion, guilt, conflicting demands, and worry about role performance. However, despite their awareness of potential problems, a strong desire for motherhood and a wife/mother/career role remained. Many benefits were associated with this role, including pride, husband's contribution to household duties, stimulation, and fulfillment of potential.

Most of the young people in this study planning to combine roles do not foresee family/career conflicts. Perhaps the benefits they anticipate outweigh the costs involved. It seems that many young people with strong commitments in both domains believe that they will be successful in their future endeavours. Their confidence may actually help them to find ways to combine roles effectively.

In order to prepare young people for their futures, Farmer (1983) believes that counsellors and educators should discuss the possible obstacles faced by two-career families with students in high school and help them to plan ways to overcome these obstacles. In addition, Holms (1985) suggested helping young women to plot life plans in terms of different stages in order to promote better understanding of the issues involved in combining roles.

Young men should also be included in this process. Koski and Subich (1985) believe that there is little justification for differential career and life planning or education and training experiences for male and female students. Men and women deserve similar treatment, since in most studies, including the present one, just as many gender similarities as differences are evident in career and family commitments. For example, males intended to employ coping strategies similar to those of females. Young men and women discussing these issues together may begin to understand each other's role concerns and start to develop the communication skills important to their future partnerships. Rather than the segregation of sexes, groups for both males and females may help young people work together to plan realistic and rewarding futures.

#### Strengths and Limitations of the Present Study

The use of a sample of non-university participants in a study of family and career commitment was probably an important feature of the present study. Most previous research looked at university students without an examination of their high school classmates who did not attend university. It is clear from the data obtained that the two kinds of high school graduates do not face identical futures or hold identical plans.

The study was also enhanced by the large sample size ( $N = 514$ ), the high response rate among the nonstudents (81%),

and the cooperation on the part of participants (all of whom answered almost every question).

Also, this study went a step further than past research by looking at the roles played by self-efficacy, self-esteem, coping strategies, and knowledge of dual-career families in relation to family and career commitment and conflict. The discovery of higher self-efficacy scores among highly career-committed and family-committed individuals begins to explain the absence of anticipated conflict among this group. As well, the examination of some of the actual coping strategies endorsed by young people sheds light on the thinking behind their career and family plans.

Many more factors than simply gender and post-high school career path account for one's level of career commitment, family commitment, and anticipated family/career conflict, as demonstrated by the small eta-squared values in the present study. However, the goal of this study was to compare subsamples of individuals rather than to explore the wide range of influences on career and family commitment. Other researchers (e.g., Farmer, 1985; Gottfredson, 1981) provide a rich source of information in this regard.

While testing procedures in the present study for students were uniform, and questionnaires were filled out independently in the presence of both a male and a female experimenter, control over administration and testing conditions was decreased once questionnaires were mailed.

Thus, there are differences in the administration which may have added to differences between the groups. However, there were no indications that the data which were received were not valid. (Many nonstudent respondents indicated on the survey that they were happy to have the chance to be involved, were eager to help a friend receive course credit, and were interested in the study and its results.)

Another strength of the study was the development and use of psychometrically adequate scales, increasing confidence in the results obtained. However, the study is limited by the validity of self-report data, especially in terms of structured, forced-choice questions. As stated earlier, these types of questions may not uncover some of the problems which are relevant to these groups. The two studies reporting the presence of career/family conflict among young women (Archer, 1985; Flaherty, 1982) used interviews to gather the data. While it is possible that during interviews, the interviewer may trigger discussion of possible conflicts which would not otherwise arise spontaneously, it is also possible that paper and pencil tests are not as effective at drawing out the internal struggles faced by many individuals. Interviews are seldom used due to costs in terms of time and efficiency. However, interviews and discussion groups remain an important and fruitful way of exploring issues of personal concern and may generate many ideas for ways to help young people plan for their futures.

Another method of measuring home/career conflict, introduced by Farmer (1984), involves the use of a projective technique in which subjects generate stories based on their reactions to ambiguous sentence cues. While the instrument's reliability was reported to be low (Cronbach's alpha for three subscales = .37, .39, and .23), and additional validity data is required, with further refinement this technique might also provide valuable information about family/career conflicts.

Longitudinal studies would, of course, be especially useful in this area of research. Since this study assessed only commitment and anticipated conflict, it would be useful to discover how these reported plans correlate with actual behaviour and experiences.

Burke and Greenglass (1987) point out that most research has approached the relationship between work and family in terms of negative influences and conflicts, rather than in terms of positive, complementary influences. Some attempts in the present study have been made to acknowledge young people's desires for multiple roles and discover ways they plan to accomplish their goals. In this way, young people can be encouraged to develop their full potential, and at the same time, be guided in ways they may find most profitable.

#### Conclusion

Almost all of the participants in this study plan to combine a career and a family. While they may not be aware



of some of the difficulties this combination entails, many, at least, have confidence in their ability to succeed and have begun to plan ways to handle the double load.

More differences were found in the female nonstudent/student comparison than in any of the other three comparisons. Since female university students have been studied far more extensively than their non-university peers, much more attention to the latter group is warranted. This is especially true since these young women, with higher family commitment than university women, and still a substantial level of career commitment, may actually have the toughest road ahead of them.

Many more gender similarities than gender differences were reported in the present study. The discovery and reporting of these similarities is important, since it deemphasizes gender inequalities. By stressing the similar commitments of men and women, the limiting aspects of traditional expectations for both sexes can be challenged. Perhaps one of the best ways to prepare young people for a rewarding future is to encourage them to work toward an equitable world for men and women.

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Appendix A

## Instructions to Subjects

I'm going to hand out some booklets. If you haven't picked up and addressed an envelope for your friend's survey and would like to, please raise your hand so my assistant can bring you one.

This task involves filling out a survey which asks questions about your future plans as well as some things about you as a person. We'll get into that in a few minutes, but there are a few things I'd like to say first about general procedures.

First, I'm going to pass an attendance sheet around, on which I'd like you to print your survey number and your name. This information is important for two reasons. First, it provides proof for you, just in case you lose your experimental credit card between now and April, that you did complete this survey and are entitled to credit even though you have lost your card. Secondly, I will match your survey number to your friend's questionnaire and in that way, will be able to make sure you get a credit for it and not anyone else.

I'd like to tell you that it is very important to this study that everyone fills out the survey independently. That means that it is important you do not talk about the specific survey questions with your friend who will be filling it out until after they have finished. It's all right if they know in general what the survey is basically about, but it's standard procedure that they know no more about it when they begin to answer it, than you yourself know now. So please don't discuss it with them until they have mailed me their responses.

Finally, I'd like you to know that you do not have to answer any particular item on the questionnaire if you do not wish to. This is always true of any experiment run in the psychology department here.

Okay, now take a look at the first page of the booklet and the IBM sheet. I'd like you to be very careful in marking your responses on the IBM sheet. Please do not make any stray marks on the sheet and give only one response to each item. If you change an answer, please erase the old answer thoroughly. And, of course, make sure you keep track of which statement you are responding to on the sheet. Please note that you will begin making your answers in Section 1, in space 104. As it says on the first page of the booklet:

This survey is part of an investigation of the important career and family decisions young people face. You will probably find that you agree with some of the statements, and disagree with others, to varying extents. Please indicate your reaction to each of the statements by blackening a bubble in SECTION 1 of the IBM sheet, according to the following scale:

Blacken the bubble labelled

- 4 if you VERY STRONGLY DISAGREE with the statement.
- 3 if you STRONGLY DISAGREE with the statement.
- 2 if you MODERATELY DISAGREE with the statement.
- 1 if you SLIGHTLY DISAGREE with the statement.

- +1 if you SLIGHTLY AGREE with the statement.
- +2 if you MODERATELY AGREE with the statement.
- +3 if you STRONGLY AGREE with the statement.
- +4 if you VERY STRONGLY AGREE with the statement.

If you feel exactly and precisely Neutral about a statement, blacken the "0" bubble.

Once you have finished the first task, then go right on to the next task in the booklet. The first three tasks are to be answered on the IBM sheet, and the last task should be answered right in the booklet. There are instructions at the beginning of each task.

Keep on working until you finish the booklet. You will not have to rush to finish all the material by the end of the period, but you should try to work at a steady pace. Don't spend a lot of time on any one question.

When you finish the entire booklet, put the IBM sheet back inside the booklet, and bring all the materials up to the front of the room, where my assistant will give you your experimental credit for today's work. If you have forgotten your card, we'll give you another one which you should staple to the first.

You may begin.

Appendix B

Department of Psychology  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3T 2N2

Hello,

I am a graduate student at the University of Manitoba, doing a study for my Ph.D. I am studying the career and family plans of young people such as yourself, seeing for example, how the plans of women and men might be similar, or different.

As you probably know, one of your friends from high school gave me your name (in fact, even addressed the envelope this came in) as someone who might be willing to answer my survey of questions. This person will receive a small reward, worth 1% of the grade in a course, for helping me do my study, if you answer the survey and mail it back to me.

As you can also see, I have sent you another small reward, \$1.00, if you will help me out. But it is an important principle of scientific research that no one should ever do something in a study that they don't want to do. So if you really do not want to answer my survey, please do not. (I will ask you to send the dollar back in the enclosed envelope, though. Graduate students don't have many dollars to spare.) Your friend will not lose any marks if you decide not to respond.

I think you will find my survey interesting, if you choose to answer it. You are not asked to sign your name anywhere. The survey number just tells me who gets the 1% credit if you answer and return the survey.

If you would like to know the results of my study, which I won't know for several months, you can do this in several ways. If you wish, just put an envelope addressed to yourself in the "return envelope" and I'll send you a summary early in 1989. Or, you can phone the Psychology Department (474-9338) say, in late January, and leave your phone number for me. I'll call you then as soon as I know the results.

I appreciate your giving me your time so far, and hope you will help me in the important job of understanding the plans of young adults such as yourself. Please call me if I can answer any questions you might have.

Yours truly,

Valerie Holms, M.A.  
Graduate Student

Bob Altemeyer, Ph.D.  
Research Supervisor

Appendix C



Career Commitment Scale

1. I like to think about plans for my future career.
2. I could get everything I really want out of life WITHOUT having a career.
3. To me, a career is a way to express myself.
4. All I expect to look forward to when I'm working full-time will be holidays.
5. I like to have a career goal to work toward.
6. I don't care too much about whether I advance myself in a career.
7. My career will give meaning to my life.
8. I could be fully satisfied in life WITHOUT establishing a long-term career.
9. I would want to move ahead in my occupation, not stand still.
10. Planning for and succeeding in a career is NOT my main concern.
11. The career that interests me the most will give me a chance to really be myself.
12. I do not look forward to my life in the work force.
13. I do NOT consider myself "career-minded".
14. I would gladly take on extra work that would help advance my career.
15. If I won the lottery I'd forget about having a career.
16. Whether or not I establish a career is really NOT that important to me.
17. To me, a career would give me a sense of pride and accomplishment.
18. If I had a choice, I would NOT pursue a career at all.
19. Planning for a specific career is worth the effort.
20. I like to think about the career I'll develop in the years ahead.

Appendix D

Family Commitment Scale

1. I could be happy WITHOUT having children.
2. I consider having a family very important.
3. I do NOT want to have children.
4. Children will give meaning to my life.
5. I look forward to parenting.
6. I'm NOT willing to make a commitment to caring for children.
7. I want the satisfaction of watching children grow from day to day.
8. I think that raising children will be more of a HARDSHIP than a joy.
9. A major goal in my life is to raise healthy, happy children.
10. Being a parent, to me, is one of the most important jobs.
11. My future plans do not include caring for children.
12. A family will be a major time commitment in my life.
13. I am not oriented to having a family.
14. There are more important things in life to me than being a parent.
15. I could be satisfied spending most of my time with my future family.
16. Having children would NOT fit in with my personal goals and lifestyle.

Appendix E

Family/Career Conflict Scale

1. I think that a full-time career might cut into the time I want to spend raising a family.
2. I sometimes wonder how I will have time for both a career and a family.
3. My career plans will have no effect on my family plans.
4. My plans for a family will not affect my career.
5. I sometimes feel pulled between my desire for a career and my desire to raise a family.
6. Combining my career with raising a family will not cause a problem in my case.
7. I want to have a family but my career goals may make this difficult.
8. I believe I'll have time to pursue a career to its fullest as well as raise a family of my own.
9. The decision of how far to advance my career will not be made more difficult by my wish to raise a family.
10. Deciding how to fit a family into my life as a career person may be difficult.
11. How I will fulfill everything in my personal/family life and still have a successful career is often on my mind.
12. I feel that I'm being pulled in many different directions by my work and personal desires.
13. If I work really hard I can get everything I want out of my career and my family life.
14. I believe that I will easily overcome any of the difficulties combining a career and a family might entail.

Appendix F

Self-Efficacy Scale

1. In the future I expect that I will be unable to accomplish my goals.
2. In the future I expect that I will not be very good at learning new skills.
3. In the future I expect that I will carry through my responsibilities successfully.
4. In the future I expect that I will discover that the good in life outweighs the bad.
5. In the future I expect that I will NOT get the promotions I deserve.
6. In the future I expect that I will succeed in the projects I undertake.
7. In the future I expect that I will discover that my life is not getting much better.
8. In the future I expect that I will be listened to when I speak.
9. In the future I expect that I will fail at most things I try.
10. In the future I expect that I will be successful in my endeavors in the long run.

Appendix G



Self-Esteem Scale

1. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. I certainly feel useless at times.
10. At times I think I am no good at all.

Appendix H

Coping Strategies Instrument

1. I am counting on pursuing a career that will be flexible enough to allow me the time off I'll need for raising children.
2. I shall delay having children until my career is well established.
3. I shall delay starting my career until my children are in school or older.
4. I plan to have a career which will provide enough money to pay for good day care for my children.
5. I plan on starting my career right away, but I shall work less when my children are young.
6. I am planning on pursuing a career in which I can do much of the work at home.
7. I am counting on friends and relatives helping raise my children while I pursue my career.
8. I am not going to decide on my career goals until I have worked out arrangements with my spouse.
9. I plan on having a job in which my children can be with me at work.
10. I intend to marry someone who will do \_\_\_\_\_% of the work in raising our children.

"0"=0%	"2"=20%	"4"=40%	"6"=60%	"8"=80%
"1"=10%	"3"=30%	"5"=50%	"7"=70%	"9"=90% or more

Appendix I

Knowledge About Dual-Career Families Instrument

1. When both husbands and wives work outside the home they end up spending equal amounts of time doing the household chores.
2. Most dual-career families do NOT have difficulty finding adequate childcare for their young children.
3. In families where both parents work, most of the burden of finding child care falls on the woman.
4. Most dual-career families could be comfortably supported by the father's income alone.
5. Most married mothers who work do so because the family definitely needs the money.
6. A young woman today can expect to spend an average of 30 years working at some job or another during the rest of her life.
7. In dual-career families, it is usually the husband who sacrifices his career goals in favour of his wife's, if one of the parents has to concentrate on raising the children.
8. People who do the hiring for companies think women will have more trouble balancing home and career responsibilities than men will.
9. In the vast majority of dual-career families today, the responsibility for housework and childcare lies mainly with the wife.
10. Highly educated, professional women (e.g. lawyers) do not spend more time looking after the home and children than do their husbands.