

2012

Family Matters: Influential Factors of Choice Regarding the Family-Career Dichotomy for the Next Generation of Mothers

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Recommended Citation

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FAMILY MATTERS: INFLUENTIAL FACTORS OF CHOICE
REGARDING THE FAMILY-CAREER DICHOTOMY
FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF MOTHERS

A Thesis Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Designation
University Honors

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May 2012

This Study by: Beth Lindberg

Entitled: Family Matters: Influential Factors of Choice Regarding the Family-Career
Dichotomy for the Next Generation of Mothers

has been approved as meeting the thesis or project requirement for the Designation

University Honors

4/24/12

Date

(April Chatham-Carpenter), Honors Thesis/Project Advisor

5/7/12

Date

Jessica Moon, Director, University Honors Program

Abstract

This study was performed for an undergraduate thesis project for a university honor's program. The thesis project sought to discover female college students' viewpoints on stay-at-home mothering and various influences on said viewpoints through the administration of a survey to college women. Various statistical tests, such as t-test, chi-square, correlation, and regression tests, were completed to analyze the data. From this data, it was found that most participants in the study had positive, socially constructed, stereotypical viewpoints of stay-at-home mothers. Three influences were found to be unique predictors for the choice to plan to be a full-time stay-at-home mother: number of hours participant's mother worked outside the home, how important the participant perceived her mother's career was to her, and the importance of religious beliefs for the participant. Professional, academic, and personal implications were discussed.

Introduction

Throughout various time periods in America, the number of women engaging in higher levels of education has fluctuated due to various economic and social factors. Goldin and Katz researched data regarding college graduates over a range of time periods to aid in discovering trends among women in higher education (Blagg, 2006). Goldin and Katz found that in the 1920s similar numbers of men and women attended college, however, most of the women at this time were seeking a degree in education. The researchers discovered that during the 1930s the number of women attending college dropped dramatically due to the Great Depression. They explained this drop as occurring due to a lack in the need for teachers at this time and the fact that most women who married, lost their jobs to men during this time of economic hardship. Goldin and Katz discovered that it wasn't until the late 1950s that colleges began to see an increase in women enrolling. Over the past sixty years, the number of females attending and graduating college has experienced such great increase that now there is a larger percentage of female college students and graduates than males (Blagg, 2006).

Goldin and Katz found that not only have the numbers of female college graduates grown, so have the females' career aspirations. In the 1950s most women expected to pursue part-time or temporary jobs after graduating from college. However, now many women desire a career, rather than a job (Blagg, 2006). These discrepancies raise questions regarding how women view careers as compared to how they view families and their role in either arena. It also raises curiosity in why more women are attending college and if most of these women plan to pursue a career upon graduation.

The purpose of this study was to discover what influences college aged women's beliefs regarding family and career. Through this study I sought to determine what the various views

are about family and career for my peers and why such variety exists. As a soon-to-be college graduate, I was still unsure what I wanted to do upon leaving college. The more I thought about it, the more I realized a pressure to find a job and wondered how my peers felt about this pressure. I had a desire to explore the drive to pursue a career as opposed to a desire to pursue motherhood full time. It seemed to me as though full-time motherhood did not seem to be an acceptable option for a college educated women, and I wanted to discover how my peers felt about this issue.

This work is important because it focuses on a specific age group of women who are making serious and important decisions about their future. Because these women are all in college, they can be assumed to have career goals and aspirations. However, this study is important in discovering what other plans, if any, female college students have regarding life outside of the career path their education supports.

Review of Literature

The Rhetoric of Choice

Prior to the 20th century, most women maintained their work roles within the home. It was not until industrial developments that women began to leave their homes in search of careers for various reasons. During this time, women began to have a choice in pursuing careers. Today, the dialogue on “choice” reigns supreme. Pamela Stone (2007) conducted a study involving 54 women and found their answers regarding leaving the work force to become stay-at-home mothers to heavily involve this idea of choice. She found, “Women’s own understanding of their decisions as implementing choice was further reinforced, as we saw earlier by their husbands, who spoke repeatedly of giving their wives the ‘choice’ to decide whether or not to quit” (p. 113). This supports the idea that women have the ability to choose their occupation, whether it be

at home or in the workforce, and to make this decision at any point. It opens up the perspective that women are not forced into one role or the other, but have the freedom to choose the most desirable, and sometimes necessary, option.

Feminist ideas. The varying degrees of what the term “feminism” has stood for have changed throughout history. Betty Friedan is one of the early advocates for women leaving the typical housewife duties, which she suggests in her book, *The Feminine Mystique*. Meyerowitz (1994) discussed how Friedan put a new spin on the idea of feminism by changing the focus from rights and equality to proposing that, “full-time domesticity stunted women and denied their ‘basic human need to grow’” (p. 229-230). While some believe Friedan’s arguments to be a bit over-generalized and possibly created out of a poor relationship with her own parents, they were ideas that appealed to many women and created a desire for a lifestyle change.

In contrast to Friedan’s “radical” feminist ideas were ideas that often were thought to be more widely accepted. In the postwar era, many authors encouraged women to return to the home. Friedan was one of the few who fought against this idea. While this domestic ideology maintained a strong presence, in the 1960s Friedan’s ideas gained great ground (Meyerowitz, 1994).

Meyerowitz (1994) set out to contrast the two ideas to find which was truly more dominant at that point in history. She examined women’s magazine articles to determine if they advocated domestic or non-domestic roles for women. However, she found a fairly even balance between the two. Competing ideologies were not solely present; they were also present in equal amounts to their audience. This meant that the women had equal exposure to both ideologies and were able to adopt which they preferred.

The Reasons Behind Choice

Past researchers have not only explored the rhetoric of choice, but also reasons that lie behind choice. Regardless of whether these women are choosing to stay-at-home full-time or work full-time, there are factors influencing their decisions. It is rare for a woman to make a decision as important as staying home with her children or pursuing a career on a whim, thus influences play in role in the ultimate role chosen. From past research the following reasons emerged: parental influence, race, media messages and culture, the economy, identity, and drive and motivation.

Parental influence. One part of childhood that directly shapes children's choices as they mature and make their own decisions is the influence of their parents. In her 1980 study, Gerson revealed trends among women's parental influence on their desire to have children. In this study, she asked a question regarding her participants' career orientations, however, she found that career orientation had no relation to parental motivation. While her study contained implications involving the desire to have children, it left much to be desired surrounding the choices women make when they have children. One could not draw conclusions involving women's choices of pursuing career or family if the participants did not even have a desire to have children.

Hunter (1991) presented possible reasons explaining why some women reject motherhood as primarily based out of their experiences with their own parents. She mentioned relationships with both the father and mother and whether or not they were positive. She also explored the views surrounding the mother's role as either a housewife or career woman and the mother's perceived satisfaction with her role. Participants whose mothers appeared happy and fulfilled tended to desire the same lifestyle. The opposite was also found to be true. When participants believed their mother was dissatisfied with her role, they tended to desire to pursue

the opposing role. Hunter (1991) also examined issues such as parental abuse and neglect and found these to have negative correlations to desiring to be like one's parents.

Leavitt (2005) also found the importance of mother's influence to be a theme throughout her interviews. In fact, she identified one of her themes as "Participants saw their mothers' influence as the most significant in helping them come to their present decision about career and motherhood" (p. 46). Leavitt solidified the same trend as Hunter determining that if these women felt as though there was a positive connection between their mother staying at home and her having a high level of satisfaction, then they were more likely to desire to stay at home as well.

While multiple sources support this idea of parental influence, not all researchers are in agreement. As discussed above, K. Gerson's 1980 study revealed trends regarding motherhood, not necessarily the career-family dichotomy. M. J. Gerson's 1985 study, however, provided an answer to the gaps in Gerson (1980). M. J. Gerson believed that parental example was not the primary influence in determining the choices made by women of pursuing careers or families. From her research, she concluded that families exist within a wider culture, and thus children and adolescents are not shaped solely by what their parents desire or value. She stated, "parental expectations are poor predictors of daughters' eventual choices" (p. 55). This apparent contradiction between the importance, or unimportance, of parental influence is necessary to explore as most women make their decisions regarding work and/or family based on a variety of things; there is not usually one factor. However, one should be wary to disregard the impact of parents altogether, recognizing that multiple studies found parental impact to be significant.

Race. People of different races encounter different life experiences and have different accepted norms. Giele (2008) examined various samples of women ranging from homemakers

to career women to those somewhere in the middle. Race was one of the factors she attributed to the decision to commit to family or career. She looked at white and black women to contrast the differing cultural viewpoints commonly held by each group. Regarding a woman's role as a homemaker, she found white women tended to stay closer to familial norms and tradition by choosing this option, whereas black women who chose to be homemakers were seen as going against the grain of their society.

Media messages and culture. The media is a prevalent source of influence among most groups of society in America. Some say it is a reflection of society, while others argue the media shapes the viewpoints a society holds. Whatever opinion one holds regarding this effect of media, none can argue against the recognition that the media is a strong force and is making an impact in some way. Massoni (2004) remarked, "Kellner (1995, 1) suggested that media have become our 'common culture,' offering us tools in the construction and production of our modern identities" (p. 49). We do not just consume the media blindly, but we use it to shape the way we function and present ourselves.

As stated above, some say the media reflects society, and others say it affects society. While it may reflect society, it does not always do so in an accurate way. Kuperberg and Stone (2008) examined media portrayals of women regarding their choice to leave their careers to become stay-at-home moms. The researchers explored the reasons women leave careers and the discrepancy with ideas the media provides as well as the findings from academic research. Kuperberg and Stone (2008) explained:

In media accounts, the specific reasons women gave for quitting work invariably focused on motherhood, rather than the constraints of the workplace. This contrasts with more academic research involving interviews with women themselves, which finds workplace

obstacles, including long work hours and inflexible schedules, are central reasons for women opting out. (p. 504).

It is important to notice this contrast between actual life experiences and media portrayals.

Reasons for leaving work differed; one source depicted a false reality and purposed a support for certain hegemonic values, and the other revealed actual experiences.

On the opposite side of the coin is the idea that the media affects society. This argument has been widely popularized, especially regarding children and adolescents. Massoni (2004) performed a study involving both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the messages *17 Magazine* gives to young women about the careers they should desire. Her critique of the messages in this magazine extended solely to careers, not careers versus families, although her investigation yielded results that align more closely to the traditional roles of women. She stated, “Superficially, there is some liberatory rhetoric about women’s power, positions, and possibilities. Read more closely, however, the real (and enduring) story is about women claiming temporary positions of power until the possibility of hetero attachment supercedes them” (p. 58). To summarize, Massoni (2004) found that the media messages these women were receiving in their magazines was to pursue a career, but only until the possibility of marriage. Upon that possibility, it is communicated that a woman is to sacrifice her career aspirations to strive for a lasting relationship with a man who will then take care of her, eliminating her need to work.

Culture is another determinant of the views people hold and it can be shaped and altered by the media. Culture can range between countries, states, or even various people groups within a larger society. Various aspects of life, tasks, and roles differ depending on the specific country within which the aspect is contained. The role of mothering is no exception and differs to various

extents in specific cultures. American culture, for example, currently holds motherhood in a somewhat less glorified light than it once did. Many women today are pursuing careers and the country is seeing a shift in cultural values regarding women's rights and roles.

The economy. The economy has been a driving force for the jobs people hold based on the types of work and positions available. Many times, economic conditions dictate the working status of individuals who need to support themselves and their families. For women, the option to stay home may not be a wise or even valid choice depending on the current state of the economy and the provisions their families currently have. Gerson (1985) stated, "women who experienced economic squeezes in the household were likely to be pulled into the workplace, despite their earlier plans or preferences" (p.195). Families sometimes need dual-earning spouses in order to be adequately supported, thus not leaving all women an equal right of choice.

While it may seem to be a more prevalent issue in American society today, women working to help support their families financially is not a new concept. Leighow (1994) supported the idea of economic factors contributing to women's choices to enter the workforce in past decades. She specifically focused on nurses during the post WW II era. She noted, "After two decades of depression and war, families that wanted consumer goods often found that they needed two wage earners to reach or maintain a comfortable standard of living" (p. 38). It seemed in many cases, the choice for women to enter the workforce was out of necessity.

Identity. The way in which one views him/herself can greatly influence what one will accomplish. This idea correlates to a woman's desire and decision to stay home. There are many different areas from which one develops his/her identity. However, one area will usually emerge as the most prevalent, shaping one's choices and decisions accordingly. Women view the choices

of career and family in different lights and have a different inclination towards one or the other. Often, they will choose an option based on certain factors of each role they identify with most.

Wallis (2004) discussed how a change in identity, or loss of identity, can be an issue for many women who leave the career force to stay home with their children. It depends on where a woman finds her identity; if it is in her work, then naturally, that identity will feel lost when the work is removed. Many times women find their worth through the work they can do and the ability they have to excel in a “man’s world.” Wallis (2004) discussed the “sense of pride and meaning that women often gain from their work” (para. 21). Giele’s 2008 study further supported this idea of career women finding their identity in what they can achieve. Giele (2008) stated, “women in the career group had a strong sense of themselves as being different from others—being told they were outstanding, or the smartest in the class, or the person who would become a leader in the future” (p. 409). A woman who gains her identity from her worth or accomplishments may not desire to give up her career and ability to gain recognition for various projects. If she does change roles from a working mother to a stay-at-home mother, she may feel as though she has lost a part of herself and may need to seek an alternate source of identity.

Drive and motivation. As stated above, women view the balance of career and family differently, and thus their motivations will be different. Some women are driven to help support their family by contributing to the income. They may also be more driven to have a place outside of the family. Other women are motivated by their families and are driven to invest all their time, effort and energy into them. While neither option is advocated as better, each evokes different women’s interests and goals. Giele (2008) defined the two poles as nurturance vs. personal achievement.

Further Research Needed

The past literature aids in providing background information regarding this topic, but also helped to form the exact scope of the current study. The researcher was able to determine various informational areas missing from past studies to combine them in the current study. By exploring gaps in previous research, this study was able to attempt to answer some of the lingering questions and contribute new information to this topic of study. The various areas of future research are discussed below.

The samples used in most of the studies reviewed here differ from the subjects desired to be studied by the researcher. While these studies provided an intriguing discussion of past and current patterns of stay-at-home mothers, they have yet to dive into the generation of those who will soon be mothers. With the exceptions of the 2005 study performed by Leavitt and the 1980 study by Gerson, all of the reviewed studies focused on dialogue and viewpoints of women who are currently mothers. Thus, a missing piece was found that focused on today's generation of women who have not yet entered the stage in their life of having a spouse and children.

Leavitt's (2005) study did examine women in college; however, her scope appeared to be a bit too narrow. She investigated only "traditional" college freshmen women at various religious institutions, defining traditional as women whose, "central value system, and cultural mores, emphasize homemaking and childrearing as their primary role" (p.1). Her study also lacked a connection between women in college and the focus of the current study, as she sought to discover these women's experiences in being confronted with the full-time career, full-time mother dichotomy rather than what has shaped their perspectives and currently held beliefs. My study sought to explore a broader range of women by gathering results from women across the

traditional vs. non-traditional spectrum and women of varying ages, religions, and backgrounds by using subjects from a public university.

Gerson's (1980) study also lacked what is desired for the current study as it focused primarily on motherhood in general. She examined unmarried, female undergraduates but yielded results with a different emphasis. She explored these women's views on motherhood in general, not contrasting the ideas of staying home with children or maintaining a career outside of the home.

While the target participants differ between past research and the current study, the procedures also differed. Most of the previous studies utilized qualitative data. Many of the studies involved interviews of women who were already mothers and wanted to gain insight into their experiences through narratives. However, the current study attempted to gain a broader understanding of female college students' influences and views by reaching a greater number of participants through quantitative methods, which appeared to be lacking in prior research.

Many past studies contained data that has now become outdated. Also, since they focused on women who are already mothers, the researchers were focused on a completely different generation than those who are soon becoming mothers today. Times have changed and women are not their mothers. Society is progressing and what was once deemed "normal" has now been tossed aside to allow the emergence of a new "normal." The current study sought to shed light on this new "normal."

Research Questions

Based on past literature and the limitations revealed in such, the following research questions were explored to target, through quantitative measures, an un-researched demographic.

RQ1: What are female college students' views on stay-at-home mothering?

RQ2: What influences female college students' views on stay-at-home mothering?

Methodology

Procedures

This study was administered through the online *Survey Gizmo* survey tool. The survey consisted of 36 questions, which included factual and opinion topics that addressed the respondents' experiences with and views of stay-at-home mothers. Apart from questions 33-35, all questions on the survey were developed by the primary researcher. The survey questions are included in Appendix A. Before the survey was distributed, the researcher obtained approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure ethical practices and treatment of participants. Ninety-eight female students at the Midwestern university were contacted personally by the researcher through a Facebook message; the script for this message is found in Appendix B. The remainder of the female participants were contacted through email via various professors in the researcher's department. The script for contacting professors is attached in Appendix C. All participants were instructed to follow a link included in the message or email, which transferred them to the survey on *Survey Gizmo*. The participants were given three weeks to complete the survey.

Questions 1-19 corresponded with RQ2. They were factual questions that sought to unearth various influences on a person's beliefs about stay-at-home mothering, including: parental example, relationship with parents, socio-economic status, political and religious beliefs,

the media and current relationship status. These influences were chosen to be included in the survey because they emerged as trends in past research conducted with current mothers. The possible factors included: upbringing, parental relationships, socio-economic status or experience, political affiliation/beliefs, importance of religious beliefs, media influence (television and magazines), current romantic relationship status, and source of identity. Questions 20-31 sought to answer RQ1. These questions were more subjective and focused primarily on the respondent's views of stay-at-home mothering and their plans regarding this option. The last few questions, numbers 33-35, were adapted from a Pew Research Center survey of current mothers. The survey questions were included in the report titled, "From 1997 to 2007: Fewer Mothers Prefer Full-Time Work."

Participants

After the survey was launched through *SurveyGizmo*, a link to the survey was sent out to over 200 female students at a Midwestern university. From the 200 plus women that were contacted, I received 143 responses. The majority of participants, 92.9% (n=131), were Caucasian, and their ages ranged from 18 to 36. Other races represented in this study included: Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Other/Multi-Racial. Most participants identified with some form of religion, with 53.5% (n=76) responding as Christian-Protestant and 29.6% (n= 42) responding as Christian-Catholic. Political affiliation responses were as follows: 38.6% (n=54) identified themselves as Republican, 35% (n=49) identified as Independent, and 25.7% (n=36) identified as Democrat.

Analysis

The data were coded into numerical values based on specific answers for the close-ended questions and by themes for the open-ended questions. I used SPSS to discover various

influences and factors through a combination of t-test, chi-square, correlation and regression tests. T-tests indicate levels of difference between two groups when compared on a specific variable. I used t-tests to analyze possible media effects by examining the two groups of magazine subscribers and non-magazine subscribers.

Chi-Square tests of independence determine whether or not two variables are independent of each other. I implemented chi-square tests in examining participants' viewpoints of societal effects caused by the increase in working mothers and participants' mothers' roles. I also implemented a chi-square test when discovering if political classification and belief of ideal situation were independent of one another.

Correlations determine the strength of a linear relationship between two variables. In running correlations, I used the three statements of "I plan to be a full-time stay-at-home mother," "I plan to work part-time but be home when my children come home from school," and "I plan to work full-time after having children" as the continuous dependent variables. These were assessed with all other survey questions deemed as continuous as the independent variables such as: "When you were living at home, prior to college, how many hours a week did your mother typically work outside of the home," "If your mother worked outside the home, how important do you think her career was to her," "How many years did your parents place you in daycare," "How many years did your parents place you in after-school care," "How important are your religious beliefs in your everyday life," and indicating agreement with the statement "I consider myself to be a feminist." After conducting correlation tests, regression analyses were run to determine significant, unique predictors for the three main choices of being a full-time stay-at-home mother, working part-time, or working full-time after having children.

Results

Through the survey, my goal was to determine what female college students' views are on stay-at-home mothering and what possible factors influence these viewpoints.

RQ 1: Specific Viewpoints

To determine what the participants held as personal viewpoints on stay-at-home mothering, I primarily concerned myself with examining the frequencies for questions regarding future career and family plans as well as ideal situations. From the family and career plan questions, I discovered that more women desire to be mothers and work, whether that be part or full-time, than to be full-time stay-at-home mothers. To elaborate, in question 28, which stated, "I plan to work full-time after having children," almost half of the respondents indicated a level of agreement. 49.7% (n=71) of participants marked they either agreed or strongly agreed, where only 26.6% (n=38) of respondents indicated they disagreed or strongly disagreed; the remainder of respondents were neutral or found the question to not be applicable. On the other side of the spectrum was question 26 which stated, "I plan to be a full-time stay-at-home mother." For this question, only 19.6% (n=28) of participants marked that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Over half, at 53.9% (n=77), of the students said they disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Another survey question that yielded data on these female students' viewpoints of stay-at-home mothering was question 33, regarding the ideal situation for them as the mother. For this question, 32.2% (n=46) of women believed that the ideal situation for them would be to work part-time. The second most popular response was to work full-time, with 30.8% (n=44) of the participants. Only 15.4% (n=22) of participants indicated that they think the ideal situation is to not work at all outside the home, which was less than the 21% (n=30) who indicated they don't know what the ideal situation would be. Also regarding question 33, a chi-square test of

independence was calculated comparing what participants identified their mothers' role as, in regard to working or staying at home, and what they felt is the ideal situation for them when they become mothers. A significant interaction was found ($\chi^2(139) = 30.838, p < .05$). Women whose mothers did not work at all outside the home tended to believe the ideal situation for them is to be a full-time stay at home mother, while participants whose mothers worked full-time tend to believe the ideal situation is for them to be a full-time working mother. (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1

Crosstab of Ideal Situation When Becoming a Mother

		What do you feel is the ideal situation for you when you become a mother?				
		Working full time	Working part time	Not working at all outside the home	Don't know	Total
When you were living at home, prior to college, would you consider your mother as...	Full time stay at home mother	3	6	11	5	25
	Part time working mother	6	14	7	4	31
	Full time working mother	35	26	4	20	85
Total		44	46	22	29	141

Table 2

Chi-Square Tests of Ideal Situation When Becoming a Mother

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.838	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	29.780	6	.000
Linear-By-Linear Association	5.672	1	.017
N of Valid Cases	141		

Question 35 also addressed what participants believed to be the ideal situation regarding whether or not a mother should work when she has young children, but it referred to what is ideal for children rather than mothers. In this case, again most women, with 38.5% (n=55) of the

participants, responded that “working part-time” was the most ideal situation for children. For this question, the second most popular response was “Don’t know” at 25.2% (n=36). However, “mother not working” received more responses (23.8%; n=34) than working full-time (11.2%; n=16). This reveals a difference in participants’ beliefs on what is ideal for the mother and what is ideal for the child(ren). When viewing the ideal situation from the viewpoint of the mothers, working part-time was most ideal, followed by working full-time. However, when viewing the ideal situation from concern for the children, again working part-time was most ideal, but working full-time was the least ideal. What is best for the mother is not necessarily seen as what is best for the child by the participants in this study.

To analyze further the participants’ viewpoints on full-time stay-at-home mothers versus full-time working mothers, I conducted another chi-square test. A chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing what participants identified their mothers’ role as and if they feel the increase in working mothers with young children is a good or bad thing for society, or if it doesn’t make a difference. A significant interaction was found ($\chi^2(138) = 38.218, p < .05$). Women whose mothers worked full-time tended to see the increase in working mothers as a good thing for society, whereas participants whose mothers were home full-time tended to see the increase in working mothers as a bad thing for society (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3

Crosstab of Beliefs About Increase in Working Mothers and Effect on Society

		Do you feel the increase in working mothers with young children is generally a good thing for society, a bad thing for society, or doesn't it really make a difference?			Total
		Good thing for society	Bad thing for society	Doesn't really make a difference	
When you were living at home, prior to college, would you consider your mother as	Full-time stay-at-home mother	1	19	5	25
	Part-time working mother	6	13	11	30
	Full-time working mother	40	13	32	85
Total		47	45	48	140

Table 4

Chi-Square Tests of Beliefs About Increase in Working Mothers and Effect on Society

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	38.218	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	39.777	4	.000
Linear-By-Linear Association	2.682	1	.102
N of Valid Cases	140		

The results obtained from these questions reveal that for the female college students in my study, some sort of work, at least part-time, is planned and seen as ideal. However, all options are considered acceptable as data revealed that the participants in this study, as a whole, had relatively positive viewpoints of both full-time stay-at-home mothers and full-time working mothers (see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5

Frequencies of Which Best Describes a Stay-At-Home Mother

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Caring, nurturing, gentle	94	65.7	66.7	66.7
	Frustrated, lonely, constrained	5	3.5	3.5	70.2
	Happy, satisfied, fulfilled	26	18.2	18.4	88.7
	Incompetent, lazy, unmotivated	1	.7	.7	89.4
	Happy, constrained, nurturing, un-ambitious	15	10.5	10.6	100.0
	Total	141	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.4		
Total		143	100.0		

Table 6

Frequencies of Which Best Describes a Full-Time Working Mother

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Ambitious, intelligent, capable	94	65.7	66.7	66.7
	Happy, satisfied, fulfilled	25	17.5	17.7	84.4
	Frustrated, overworked, run-down	8	5.6	5.7	90.1
	Ambitious, capable, cold, overworked	14	9.8	9.9	100.0
	Total	141	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.4		
Total		143	100.0		

While constructing these questions, “caring, nurturing, gentle” and “ambitious, intelligent, capable” were designed to carry positive connotations. However, these are socially constructed positive terms. The way in which the majority of participants responded also indicated a stereotypical viewpoint of both working mothers and stay-at-home mothers, but again with a positive connotation. Despite their seemingly positive views of all options, the participants made choices about which they planned to pursue. Thus, research question 2 was

necessary to examine. This question helped to discover what were some possible reasons women make the choice between two seemingly favorable options.

RQ2: Influences on Viewpoints

After analyzing the data regarding what viewpoints my participants held, I performed further analyses to determine trends and predictors regarding specific influences. Each type of test, Chi-Square, t-test, correlation and regression, revealed different types of data. Thus, the results are organized by test to focus on specific relational and prediction results. Also, no specific theme was found to be significant across various testing methods, in exception to predictors found through regression analyses.

Chi-Square test. One influence that was found to be significant through a chi-square test was political classification. A chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing participants' political classification and opinion of ideal situation for children. A significant interaction was found ($\chi^2(137) = 40.161, p < .05$). Participants who consider themselves to be conservative are more likely than those who consider themselves to be liberal or moderate to think the ideal situation is for the mother to not work at all (see Tables 7 and 8).

Table 7

Crosstab of Ideal Situation for Children

		In your, opinion, what is the ideal situation for children?				Total
		Mother not working	Mother working part-time	Mother working full-time	Don't know	
Which of the following would you classify yourself as?	Conservative	25	18	5	5	53
	Liberal	1	7	7	12	27
	Moderate	4	19	1	13	37
	N/A	4	9	3	6	22
Total		34	53	16	36	139

Table 8

Chi-Square Tests of Ideal Situation for Children

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	40.161 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	42.074	9	.000
Linear-By-Linear Association	9.009	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	139		

T-tests. An independent-samples *t* test comparing if participants subscribe to magazines and if they plan to stay-at-home full-time found a significant difference between the two groups ($t(136) = 3.360, p = .001$). Non-magazine subscribers ($m = 2.7379, sd = 1.8786$) were more neutral to being full-time stay-at-home mothers than magazine subscribers ($m = 1.9714, sd = 1.09774$) who were more likely to disagree with the statement “I plan to be a full-time stay-at-home mother.”

To examine the other end of the spectrum, an independent-samples *t* test comparing if participants subscribe to magazines and if they plan to work full-time after having children found a significant difference between the two groups ($t(138) = -4.455, p = .000$). Non-magazine subscribers ($m = 3.2571, sd = 1.36599$) were more neutral to being full-time working mothers than magazine subscribers ($m = 4.1714, sd = .92309$) who were more likely to agree with the statement “I plan to work full-time after having children.” There was no significance between magazine subscriptions and the desire to have children or stay-at-home part-time. The *t* test revealed a possible media influence in that non-magazine subscribers tended to be neutral no matter the choice, but the more likely a participant was to subscribe to a magazine, the less likely she was to plan to stay-at-home full-time (see Table 9).

Table 9

T-test of data involving magazine subscriptions and future plans

	Do you currently subscribe to any magazines?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
I plan to be a full-time stay-at-home mother	No	103	2.7379	1.18786	.11704
	Yes	35	1.9714	1.09774	.18555
I plan to work part-time but be home when my children come home from school	No	105	3.5333	1.18538	.11568
	Yes	35	3.3143	1.05081	.17762
I plan to work full-time after having children	No	105	3.2571	1.36599	.13331
	Yes	35	4.1714	.92309	.15603

Correlation tests. To examine upbringing, or past experience, multiple independent variables were tested. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between participants' plans of staying at home or working and how many hours a week their mother worked outside the home while they were still living at home, prior to college. A strong positive correlation was found ($n=141$, $r = .378$, $p < .001$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. The more likely a participant's mother was to work a greater number of hours outside of the home, the more likely a participant is to plan to work full-time after having children. Table 12 shows this correlation, as well as the negative correlation for plans to be a stay-at-home mother. Through the Pearson correlation coefficient, a strong negative correlation was found ($n=139$, $r = -.413$, $p < .001$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. The more likely a participant's mother was to work less hours outside the home, the more likely a participant is to plan to be full-time stay-at-home mother.

Other past experience questions also produced significant correlations. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between participants' plans of staying-at-home or working and how important they think their mother's career was to her. A strong

positive correlation was found ($n=128$, $r = .338$, $p < .001$), indicating a significant linear relationship between two variables. The more participants believe their mothers' career was important to her, the more likely they are to plan to work-full time after having children. A strong negative correlation was found ($n=126$, $r = -.378$, $P < .001$), for respondents who are planning to be full-time stay-at-home mothers and how important they felt their mother's career was to her (see Table 12).

Years in daycare and afterschool care were also examined for correlations. These yielded similar results to the two questions stated above. Strong positive correlations were discovered between years in daycare and afterschool care and the plan to work full-time after having children (years in daycare: $n = 138$, $r = .332$, $p < .001$) and (years in afterschool care: $n=141$, $r = .234$, $p < .001$). The greater amount of years that participants spent in daycare and after school care was related to participants who were more likely planning to work full time. Strong negative correlations were discovered for years in daycare and afterschool care and the plan to be a full-time stay-at-home mother (years in daycare: $n= 136$, $r = -.340$, $p < .001$) and (years in afterschool care: $n = 139$, $r = -.208$, $p < .001$). In other words, the fewer number of years spent in daycare and afterschool care yielded responses of participants who are more likely to plan to stay-at-home full-time. One interesting correlation appeared with the plan to work part-time. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between participants' plans of working part-time but being home when children come home from school and the number of years their parents placed them in daycare. A strong negative correlation was found ($n=138$, $r = -.274$, $p < .001$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. Participants whose parents placed them in daycare fewer years desire to only work part-time. However, no significant relationship was found between plans to be only work part-time and years spent in

after school care (see Table 12). This could open up ideas regarding the age of the children when choosing to work full-time vs. part-time, but future research would be necessary to explore this topic.

Table 12

Correlations of past experiences

		I plan to be a full-time stay-at-home mother.	I plan to work part-time, but be home when my children come home from school.	I plan to work full-time after having children.
When you were living at home, prior to college, how many hours a week did your mother typically work outside the home?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.413** .000 139	-.138 .103 141	.378** .000 141
If your mother worked outside the home, how important do you think her career was to her?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.378** .000 126	-.068 .448 128	.338** .000 128
How many years did your parents place you in daycare?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.340** .000 136	-.274** .001 138	.332** .000 138
How many years did your parents place you in afterschool care?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.208** .014 139	-.140 .098 141	.243** .004 141

The influence of the importance of religious beliefs was also discovered through correlations. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between participants' plan to be a full-time stay-at-home mother and the importance of religious beliefs. A strong positive correlation was found ($n = 139$, $r = .459$, $p < .001$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. Participants whose religious beliefs were more

important plan to be full-time stay-at-home mothers. A strong negative correlation was found ($n=141$, $r = -.368$, $p < .001$) for the relationship between importance of religious beliefs and participants who plan to work full-time after having children. The less participants value their religious beliefs, the more likely they are to plan to work full-time after having children.

Another influence discovered through the calculation of a Pearson correlation coefficient was the relationship between participants who plan to work full-time after having children and the extent to which they consider themselves to be a feminist. A strong positive correlation was found ($n=142$, $r = .394$, $p < .001$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. Participants who consider themselves to be feminist are more likely to plan to work full-time after having children. A Pearson correlation coefficient was also calculated for the relationship between participants' plan to be a full-time stay-at-home mother and extent to which they consider themselves to be a feminist. A strong negative correlation was found, ($n= 140$, $r = -.258$, $p < .001$). This shows that the more likely participants were to consider themselves to be feminist, the more likely they are to plan to work full-time after having children.

Regression tests. A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict participants' plans to be a full-time stay-at-home mother based on the significant correlations reported in the previous section, along with a few other variables: desire to have children, number of hours their mother worked, if participant considers herself to be a feminist, how much television the participant watches, importance of mother's career, and importance of religious beliefs. A significant regression equation was found ($F(6,113)=11.753$, $p < .001$), with R^2 of .378. From the data, unique predictors that influence the choice of female college students to plan to be a full-time stay-at-home mother included: number of hours their mother worked outside the home, how important they thought their mothers' career was to her, and the importance of religious

beliefs in their everyday lives (see Table 13). Therefore, women were more likely to view stay-at-home mothering in a positive light and desire to pursue this option because of these three influences. The data revealed that 38% of the reasons why female college students plan to stay-at-home full-time are due to these three influences.

Table 13

Coefficients Revealing Unique Predictors for Plans to be a Full-Time Stay-At-Home Mother

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (constant)	2.505	.670		3.739	.000
When you were living at home, prior to college, how many hours a week did your mother typically work outside of the home?	-.131	.050	-.216	-2.644	.009
If your mother worked outside the home, how important do you think her career was to her?	-.249	.101	-.205	-2.455	.016
How important are your religious beliefs in your everyday life?	.287	.079	.320	3.658	.000
On average, how much television to you watch a day?	-.049	.125	-.031	-.391	.696
I consider myself to be a feminist.	-.097	.094	-.081	-1.036	.302
In the future, I desire to have children.	1.97	.106	.150	1.865	.065

Another multiple linear regression was calculated to predict participants' plans to work full-time after having children based on the same factors as the previous regression analysis. A significant regression equation was found ($F(6,118) = 11.282, p < .001$), with R^2 of .365. Unique predictors for female college students who plan to work full-time after having children included: number of hours their mother worked outside the home, importance of religious beliefs in their everyday lives, extent to which participants consider themselves to be a feminist, and the desire

to have children (see Table 14). These four influences can persuade women to have less positive and desirous viewpoints of stay-at-home mothering. The data revealed that 36% of the reasons why female college students plan to work full-time after having children are due to these four influences.

Table 14

Coefficients Revealing Unique Predictors for Plans to Work Full-Time After Having Children

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (constant)	2.406	.746		3.226	.002
When you were living at home, prior to college, how many hours a week did your mother typically work outside of the home?	.186	.053	.284	3.474	.001
If your mother worked outside the home, how important do you think her career was to her?	.142	.111	.107	1.277	.204
How important are your religious beliefs in your everyday life?	-.161	.083	-.164	-1.939	.055
On average, how much television to you watch a day?	.225	.138	.128	1.636	.104
I consider myself to be a feminist.	.289	.101	.227	2.869	.005
In the future, I desire to have children.	-.234	.108	-.172	-2.170	.032

A multiple linear regression was also calculated predicting participants' plans to work part-time but be home when their children get home from school based on these same factors. A significant regression equation was found ($F(6,118) = 2.354$, $p < .05$), with R^2 of .107 (see Table 15). The only unique predictor was importance of religious beliefs, which accounted for 10.7% of the reasons why female college students plan to work part-time. This predictor is still significant, but not as great as those for full-time stay-at-home or full-time working plans.

Table 15

Coefficients Revealing Unique Predictors for Plans to Work Part-Time

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (constant)	2.544	.787		3.235	.002
When you were living at home, prior to college, how many hours a week did your mother typically work outside of the home?	-.001	.056	-.019	-.200	.842
If your mother worked outside the home, how important do you think her career was to her?	-.065	.118	-.055	-.552	.582
How important are your religious beliefs in your everyday life?	.182	.088	.207	2.063	.041
On average, how much television to you watch a day?	-.275	.147	-.173	-1.873	.064
I consider myself to be a feminist.	.198	.106	.174	1.867	.064
In the future, I desire to have children.	.074	.111	.063	.671	.504

Discussion**Findings**

In this study, RQ1 explored “What are female college students’ views on stay-at-home mothering?” Data produced from frequency analyses and chi-square tests, revealed that, for the most part, all options are viewed favorably and the choice depends on various factors and individual families. The participants in this study seemed to possess a positive, socially constructed, stereotypical view of both stay-at-home and working mothers. However, even with a primarily positive view of the spectrum from full-time stay-at-home mothers to full-time working mothers, most participants plan to work at least part-time after having children.

RQ2 asked “What influences female college students’ views on stay-at-home mothering?” From chi-square tests, t-tests, and correlations, significant connections were found to exist between the following: (a) participants who tended to identify as more conservative are more likely planning to be full-time stay-at-home mothers; (b) participants who were more likely to subscribe to magazines are more likely planning to work full-time after having children; (c) as the number of hours a participants’ mother worked outside the home increased, so did the participants’ plans to work outside the home; (d) participants who perceived their mother’s career as being more important to her were more likely to respond that they are planning to work full-time after having children; (e) the fewer amount of years a participant spent in daycare and afterschool care, the more likely she is planning to be a full-time stay-at-home mother; (f) the greater the importance that religious beliefs played in participants’ daily lives, the more likely they are to plan to stay-at-home full-time; and (g) the less likely a participant was to identify herself as a feminist, the more likely she is to plan to stay-at-home full-time.

Of these influences, the following were also found to be significant predictors regarding the plan to be a full-time stay at-home mother: number of hours their mother worked outside the home, how important they thought their mothers’ career was to her, and the importance of religious beliefs in their everyday lives. The following were found to be significant predictors regarding plants to work full-time after having children: number of hours their mother worked outside the home, importance of religious beliefs in their everyday lives, extent to which participants consider themselves to be a feminist, and the desire to have children.

Some of the results produced from my study are similar to those found in previous literature. In regards to parental influence, my study found that the more important a participant believed her mother’s career was to her, the more likely the participant was to pursue a career.

This is similar to what Hunter (2001) found about females pursuing the same role as their mother if they felt their mother was happy with her role. Both studies found positive parental influence to factor into participant's decisions of choosing the same option.

The only other piece of my findings that was similar to past literature was the influence of feminist ideas. In my study, participants who were more likely to consider themselves to be feminist were less likely to be stay-at-home mothers. This is similar to Meyerowitz's (1994) discussion of Friedan's belief that stay-at-home mothering was an equality issue which only resulted in women being stunted from reaching their full potential. It seems as though the women in my study who consider themselves feminists, may believe something along these lines, as they were less likely to plan to be full-time stay-at-home mothers.

No other studies that I reviewed prior to performing this research study included significant data on the influence of religious beliefs. However, I found this to be highly significant. While other researchers explored various parental influences, they did not produce significant data on the influence of the number of hours one's mother worked outside the home. This, again, was found to be highly significant in my study. These differences in findings indicate the importance of continual research in similar areas. They show that results can differ based on a plethora of factors and one study does not have the capabilities of exploring all factors.

Limitations

This study produced important results and helped to fill in some gaps from previous research, but it also contained limitations. The major limitation comes from the participants. I used a convenience sample, meaning that I primarily used people with whom I had previous relationships with or who were easy to access. As a result, all of the students were from one

Midwestern university, and many fell into a similar category. As seen in the description of the participants in the methods section, over 90% of the women were Caucasian and had some religious beliefs. The majority of my participants would be considered conservative when compared among a variety of spheres, and thus this sample is not an accurate depiction of the country as a whole. One of the factors addressed in previous literature was race, however, due to my sample, I was not able to even begin to explore this possible influence.

Another limitation lies within the quantitative nature of this study. Because I covered a variety of topics and performed an overview, I was not able to dive deeper into specific topics. When analyzing the data, I found common influences and some predictors, but I was not able to discover more about each of these. I was able to draw conclusions from the data, but as the data remained concrete, there was not room for further exploration beyond given options and responses.

A final limitation results from the nature of this project. Because of the short amount of time allotted to complete this research, I did not have the capacity to include a larger range of participants from which to sample. I was constrained to obtaining results from my 143 respondents for lack of time and resources while completing this thesis during an undergraduate semester. Had I had more time to devote to this project and expertise in research, my study may have benefitted from a greater range of participants and depth of information.

Future directions

Limitations are beneficial to note to indicate that further research should be done to support and elaborate upon this topic. Because one of my limitations was the lack of variety in participants, one area to do further research would be to use a similar set of questions on a different sphere. By incorporating a wider range of variance in participants, a researcher could

discover if this study is an accurate depiction of women in college across the country or if it is specialized to the Midwest. Future research could thus discover differences and similarities in viewpoints and influences.

The depth of information was another limitation and thus something that could further be studied. A future researcher could pull the specific viewpoints, influences and predictors from this study and formulate another study that elaborates upon these specifics. By fleshing out these findings, new influences could be found or further support for specific influences could be emphasized. While this study has been helpful in targeting a new demographic in relation to their viewpoints and influences on stay-at-home mothers, there is always more to be studied.

Implications

This research study is important on four main levels, academic, professional, social, and personal. Regarding academic implications, the information in this study helped to fill in some of the gaps that existed in previous research on this topic. As mentioned earlier, much of the research on stay-at-home mothers has been done with current mothers as the participants. Also, much of the previous research was qualitative in nature. My study focused on women who are not mothers, but many who desire to be someday, and was quantitative in nature. The data produced was unique in some of the demographics of the participants, and also in the trends, relationships, and predictions discovered through quantitative questions and analysis.

This research study and data produced can also be useful for the professional world as a whole. Employers and companies can know trends among the amount of women who plan to enter the workforce. This can also help men and women alike in gauging how competitive the job market will be with more people entering it. Fifty years ago, most women did not work outside the home but primarily concerned themselves with duties around the home and family.

However, this research shows that now, at least for my sample, more women are planning to do some form of work outside the home. Today's economy and job market are struggling, and it is important to be aware of the continued increase in women desiring to work.

Not only is the study important for the academic and professional spheres, it can also be important for women who plan to be mothers. Because this study not only found trends but also predictors, these predictors can indicate influences of choice for future women. This could help women in college to consider life choices they make about career and family and the possible influence it could have on their future daughters' choice to pursue either option.

For my purposes, this research study assisted me in gathering the results I had originally intended to discover. To some degree I was able to gain insight into both of my research questions through the answers of the participants. From the data, I was able to find what typical college women views are on stay-at-home mothering and working mothers and what trends existed within viewpoints and influences. This was important for me because it helped shaped the context of the culture in which I belong and gives me insight into my peers and comparisons between our viewpoints.

The data that was produced from this study was not the only beneficial element from this study; the entire process was beneficial at a personal level. The process of designing my own research questions based on an area of interest and limitations of past research, and actually conducting the study and analyzing the data, stretched me in new ways. Throughout my college career, I spent my time learning about researchers' discoveries and supported theories. However, now I was able to turn from the consuming side of research to the producing side of research in conducting my own study and contributing to the greater body of literature.

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Appendix A

Survey

Demographics:

1. What is your race?

Asian/Pacific Islander

Black/African-American

Caucasian

Hispanic

Native American/Alaska Native

Other/Multi-Racial

Decline to Respond

2. What is your classification?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Graduate

3. What is your age? _____

4. What is your major?

5. When you were living at home, prior to college, how many hours a week did your mother typically work outside of the home?

none

0-5

6-10

11-15

16-20

21-30

31-40

40+

6. When you were living at home, prior to college, would you consider your mother as:

a full time stay-at-home mother

a part time working mother

a full time working mother

7. If your mother worked outside the home, how important do you think her career was to her?

Not important at all

Barely important

Somewhat important

Important
Very important

8. How many years did your parents place you in daycare?
 none
 1 year
 2 years
 3 years
 4+ years
9. How many years did your parents place you in after-school care?
 none
 1 year
 2 years
 3 years
 4+ years
10. From what you are aware of, how often did your parents argue with each other?
 Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always
11. How would you describe your relationship with your mother?
 Extremely negative Negative Neutral Positive Extremely Positive
12. How would you describe your relationship with your father?
 Extremely negative Negative Neutral Positive Extremely Positive
13. At what age did you have your first job?
 13 or under 14-15 16-17 18-19 20+ N/A
14. While working, were you required to pay for things yourself?
 Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always
15. How much of your college tuition are you paying?
 None Less than Half Half More than half All
16. What is your political affiliation?
 Democrat
 Republican
 Independent
 Other (please specify) _____
17. Which of the following would you classify yourself as?
 Conservative
 Liberal
 Moderate
 Other (please specify)

N/A

18. What is your religious affiliation?

Christian-Protestant

Christian-Catholic

Atheist/Agnostic

Muslim

Other (please specify) _____

19. How important are your religious beliefs in your everyday life?

Not at all

Not very

Somewhat

Very

Essential

20. On average, how much television do you watch a day?

0-1 hours

2-3 hours

3-4 hours

4+ hours

21. What television shows do you primarily watch? (check all that apply)

Sitcoms

Drama

Reality

News

Other (please specify) _____

22. Do you currently subscribe to any magazines?

Yes (please specify) _____

No

23. What is your current romantic relationship status?

Single

Dating

Engaged

Married

Other (please specify) _____

24. In your opinion, which of the following grouping of words best describes a stay-at-home mother?

Caring, nurturing, gentle

Frustrated, lonely, constrained

Happy, satisfied, fulfilled

Incompetent, lazy, unmotivated

Happy, constrained, nurturing, unambitious

25. In your opinion, which of the following grouping of words best describes a full-time working mother?

Irresponsible, negligent, cold

Ambitious, intelligent, capable
 Happy, satisfied, fulfilled
 Frustrated, overworked, run-down
 Ambitious, capable, cold, overworked

Indicate your agreement with the following statements.

26. I plan to be a full time stay-at-home mother.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

27. I plan to work part-time, but be home when my children come home from school.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

28. I plan to work full-time after having children.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

29. For the above responses, explain why these are your future plans.

30. In the future, I desire to have children.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Indicate your agreement with the following statement.

31. I consider myself to be a feminist.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

32. Which of the following do you feel is your primary source of identity?

Personal achievements

Relationships

Intelligence

Possessions/money

Other (please specify) _____

33. What do you feel is the ideal situation for you when you become a mother?

Working full time

Working part time

Not working at all outside the home

Don't know

34. Do you feel the increase in working mothers with young children is generally a good thing for society, a bad thing for society, or doesn't it really make a difference?

Good thing for society

No difference

Bad thing for society

Doesn't really make a difference

35. In your opinion, what is the ideal situation for children?

Mother not working
Mother working part-time
Mother working full-time
Don't know

36. Is there anything else about your beliefs about stay-at-home or working moms you would like to tell me?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix B

Email Recruitment for Survey

Hello, my name is Beth Lindberg, and I am a senior here at UNI studying General Communication working to complete my honor's thesis. As a senior, I am nearing graduation and exploring options for the future, thinking about both career and family life. From this, I am interested in discovering what other college women's beliefs are on this topic and determining what/if any trends exist among influences and beliefs. For my thesis research project, I have composed a 36-question survey regarding the topic of stay-at-home mothering and would appreciate your participation. The survey should only take about 5-10 minutes. If you are interested in taking the survey please follow this link:

<http://www.surveymoz.com/s3/731528/Family-Career-Dichotomy-of-the-Next-Generation-of-Mothers>

If you have any questions regarding the survey, or would like more information, please contact me at lindbere@uni.edu. Thank you.

Appendix C

Email Recruitment via Organizational Leaders and Professors

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Beth Lindberg, and I am a senior at UNI studying General Communication. I am currently in the process of conducting research for my honor's thesis project on the topic of influences and beliefs about stay-at-home mothering. I was wondering if you would be willing to forward the following message via email to female members of your group/class as possible participants for my survey. As an alternate option, I would also be willing to come to a meeting/class period to recruit participants. Your cooperation would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or are interested in assisting me, please email me at lindbere@uni.edu. Thank you.

Forwarded message:

Hello, my name is Beth Lindberg, and I am a senior here at UNI studying General Communication working to complete my honor's thesis. As a senior, I am nearing graduation and exploring options for the future, thinking about both career and family life. From this, I am interested in discovering what other college women's beliefs are on this topic and determining what/if any trends exist among influences and beliefs. For my thesis research project, I have composed a 36-question survey regarding the topic of stay-at-home mothering and would appreciate your participation. The survey should only take about 5-10 minutes. If you are interested in taking the survey please follow this link:

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/731528/Family-Career-Dichotomy-of-the-Next-Generation-of-Mothers>

If you have any questions regarding the survey, or would like more information, please contact me at lindbere@uni.edu. Thank you.