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The relationship between attitudes toward women and the motive to avoid success

Rebecca A. Fahrlander
University of Nebraska at Omaha

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN AND THE MOTIVE TO AVOID SUCCESS

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Rebecca S. Fahrlander

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ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

Accepted for the faculth of the College of Graduate Studies of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

Chairman, Dr. George W. Barger, Sociology

Graduate Committee:

Dr. Merlin Hofstetter — Sociology

Dr. Vince Webb — Criminal Justice

Dr. Julie Horney — Criminal Justice

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLES

I. INTRODUCTION

Although a considerable body of knowledge had been developed on the motive to achieve and the motive to avoid failure (Atkinson, 1958, 1964; McClelland, 1953, 1961; Veroff et al., 1953), the motive to avoid success did not receive much attention until Matina Horner began her work in 1965 (Horner, 1968, 1971; Tresemer, 1974). Since 1965, several other studies (Hoffman, 1974; Feather and Raphelson, 1974; Levine and Crumrine, 1975) have focused on the prevalence and consequences of fear of success, but their results have left several questions unanswered.

Motives are defined as relatively enduring dispositions to strive for particular goal-states (Atkinson, 1958:597). The total motivation to perform the act is the sum of the strengths of all the motives that have been aroused by appropriate expectancies of goal attainment cued by the situation (Atkinson and Reitman, 1958).

Psychologists have long sought the sources of motives. One of the most influential pioneers was H. A. Murray (1958), who originated the Thematic Apperception Test. Another pioneer was Sigmund Freud (1935) who searched in dreams and free associations for clues to motives, believing that an individual's actions are often determined by influences unknown to him. Since motives were believed to be disguised in the unconscious, it was necessary for

Freud (1900) to develop a method of interpreting the mental content of dreams and free associations.

However, measuring motivation has remained a problem. Many researchers did not put much confidence in self-ratings because the subject may not know enough about his own motives, or may be unwilling to report them. While some researchers relied on clinical assessment, no method was available for determining to what extent such judgments actually reflected the motives (McClelland, 1958).

It was McClelland (1953, 1961) who began systematic work on the development of an objective measure of individual differences in human motivation. He was influenced by Murray's (1938) earlier work in this area. McClelland aroused human social motives experimentally and then measured the effects on fantasy. From this research came a method of measuring achievement motivation by content analysis of fantasy materials. Research in this area was continued by McClelland's student, J. W. Atkinson.

According to McClelland (1953, 1961) and Atkinson (1958), when a particular kind of motivation is experimentally aroused, thematic apperceptive stories produced by the motivated person contain imaginative descriptions of circumstances that bring about satisfaction or dissatisfaction in him. Achievement motivation imagery was operationally defined as responses to Thematic Apperception Tests that indicated a concern with competition with a standard of excellence, unique accomplishment and the consequences of efforts to achieve (Atkinson, 1958). Examples of responses indicating

achievement imagery would include concern with getting high academic grades, advanced degrees, and unique accomplishments such as inventions. Achievement imagery would also include mention of the lead character being liked and respected for achieving success at a task. The motive to achieve success is essentially a capacity for taking pride in accomplishment (Atkinson, 1964).

In his original experiments, McClelland (1953) created three conditions: achievement-oriented, neutral and relaxed. In the achievement-oriented condition, McClelland sought to arouse a high degree of achievement motivation by involving the subjects' egos. Prior to the administration of the thematic cues, the subjects were asked to work on several tasks that were presented as accurate measures of ability and intelligence. These subjects were told that it was important for them to do well on the tasks.

In the relaxed condition, the subjects were given the same tasks. However, in order to minimize the arousal of achievement motivation, they were told that their performance on the tasks was unimportant, and that the tasks were only in the developmental stage.

In the neutral condition, nothing was done deliberately to weaken or strengthen achievement motivation before the administration of the thematic cues. The cues were merely given in a normal college classroom situation (McClelland, 1953).

In each of these experimental conditions, McClelland's subjects were asked to write brief five-minute stories in response to four pictures. These pictures suggested respectively a work situation, a study situation, a father-son situation, and a young

boy possibly dreaming of his future. Stories were scored for achievement imagery when they contained statements that showed someone in the story was trying to do better in relation to some achievement goal such as doing a better job or getting ahead in the world (McClelland, 1955). The n Achievement (need for achievement) score was determined from scoring the achievement imagery in all four stories. Pictures that contained such obvious achievement-related cues, such as a man at a desk in an office, were shown to elicit stories containing significantly more achievement-related imagery than did pictures without such achievement-related cues. It was found that while the average n Achievement (n Ach) score of a group of subjects may increase significantly as they are placed in more explicitly achievement-oriented situations, those subjects who have high scores in one situation also tend to have high scores in other situations as well (Atkinson, 1964). This method of measurement was shown to have an inter-scorer reliability of .91 or better (McClelland, 1955:404).

In a study of performance on verbal and arithmetic tasks, it was found that persons with high n Ach scores were able to complete more tasks than persons with low scores (Lowell, 1952). However, no consistent relation between achievement motivation scores and academic performance has been demonstrated (McClelland, 1973b).

While some studies have not resulted in sex differences in achievement motivation, others have (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). McClelland et al., (1953) found that women get higher n Ach scores than men under neutral conditions. However, while women do not increase their n Ach scores as a result of competition-arousing

instructions, men do. In both neutral and achievement-oriented conditions, the n Ach scores of women are higher than those of men (McClelland et al., 1953). These results contradict the stereotype that men are more achievement-oriented than women. Women's n Ach scores have been shown to relate to performance in the same way as do men's scores (McClelland et al., 1953).

Field (1951) found that achievement motivation in women can be aroused by referring to their social acceptability, rather than to their intelligence and leadership ability. For men, however, the situation is reversed. In Field's study, social acceptability arousal consisted of a discussion of the importance of social acceptance by a group. In response to this arousal, women's n Ach scores increased significantly, but men's did not. Many women may thus define success differently than men. However, Angelini (1955) argues that achievement-involving instructions are effective on highly competitive women who value intellectual accomplishment. Other researchers believe that any testing situation will serve to raise the level of achievement motivation in women of this culture. The testing situation is especially effective with men around. They find the mean n Ach scores of females to be high under both relaxed and achievement-orientation conditions (Veroff et al., 1953).

As Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) point out, the achievements of adult women, in terms of the kind of success the world values, are obviously less than those of men. The majority of high achievers in business, science, etc. have been men. Although the number of working women has increased, the majority work at low-skilled jobs.

Furthermore, many women are not working at a level that reflects their educational or professional training (Horner, 1971).

Among women, achievement motivation drops between 5 and 10 years after college. At the 10 year point, it begins to rise again, but never quite reaching the level it was 5 years after college (Baruch, 1963). Men between the ages of 21 and 24 tend to have the highest n Ach scores, with men between 35 and 44 having the next highest (Veroff et al., 1974).

It has been suggested that males have a greater need for achievement for its own sake. Males are hypothesized to show more curiosity, task involvement, and persistence. Females are assumed to be more interested in interpersonal relations, whereas sales are more concerned with intellectual endeavors. Thus while men may become successful in high status occupations, most women have to content themselves with having achieving children (presumably males) and associating with high-status, successful men. In spite of all this, when it comes to academic achievement in elementary and secondary school, it is the girls who generally come out ahead (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974).

Inconsistency in the data on women's achievement motivation has often been attributed to measurement or developmental factors. Whatever the factors, many researchers have been frustrated by the hazards of relating achievement concerns in the female population (Weiner and Kukla, 1970). While some members of this population strive for the same professional goals as men, other women place more emphasis on social qualities (French and Lesser, 1964).

Margaret Mead (1949) has suggested that the American woman finds it necessary to develop social qualities if she is to be well accepted by her society. However, the American man who wishes to be well accepted must not emphasize such qualities.

Questions remain concerning the importance of the sex of the thematic cue. Women react differently, for example, to masculine and feminine cues. Some women students showed an increase in n Ach scores under achievement-oriented conditions only to pictures of females. These particular women had much higher grade point averages than would be predicted from their intelligence level. Other women students, however, showed an increase in n Ach scores only to pictures of males. These women tended to be underachievers rather than over-achievers (Lesser et al., 1963). Some research (Veroff et al., 1953; Monahan et al., 1974; Morrison, 1954) found a tendency of both male and female subjects to give evidence of their motivation to achieve almost exclusively in thematic stories about men.

In measuring achievement motivation, females have generally been given projective tests that use female characters. Thus, the usually lower n Ach scores of women may not reflect their own motivations, but their assumption that females are characteristically not achievers (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974).

McClelland (1951) has conceptualized achievement motivation as consisting of two major orientations: the motive to achieve success and the motive to avoid failure. All individuals are assumed to have acquired both a motive to achieve success and a motive to avoid failure, but one is usually dominant (Atkinson, 1974a).

If the motive for success, expectancy for success and incentive value for success are all very low, the person will be oriented to avoidance of failure. This motive is characterized as the capacity for reacting with shame and embarrassment when failure is experienced (Atkinson, 1964). If a person with a high motive to avoid failure does not meet success on a certain level, he will reduce his level of expectations for that type of task. The person with this motive usually has either very high, unrealistic goals, or low easily achieved goals (Atkinson and Feather, 1966). He experiences career indecision, high anxiety, interpersonal difficulties and underachievement. If a person's vocational goals are very high, the goals may compensate for a lack of personal worth, but these goals become insurmountable obstacles.

A person who fears failure sees all performance-evaluated activities as threatening (Atkinson, 1964). If given a choice, he will avoid achievement-oriented activities. Since this is usually not possible, he will choose to undertake a very easy or very difficult task (Atkinson, 1974a). Intermediate level tasks are avoided. By choosing unrealistically low or high goals, the individual is protecting himself. He believes that he is quite unlikely to fail at a very low level task, and if he fails at an unrealistically high goal, he is not going to be blamed. After all, he has seemed to attempt the impossible (Atkinson, 1964). If a person in whom the motive to avoid failure is dominant actually fails at a very easy task, or succeeds at a difficult task, he will in the future view it as an intermediate level task and tend to avoid it (Atkinson, 1974a).

Mahone (1960) found that most persons who choose unrealistic career goals choose goals that are impossibly high rather than very low. This may be the most socially acceptable way of protecting themselves from anxiety. Also, Feather (1961) found that students with high n Ach scores spent very little time trying to solve a difficult puzzle which they had been told only 5 out of 100 college students were able to solve. They preferred to move on to more realistic tasks. The students with low n Ach scores, however, were very persistent in attempting to solve the very difficult puzzle.

Subjects with low n Ach scores are security-minded and primarily concerned with avoiding failure. However, subjects with high n Ach scores are more concerned with achieving success or attaining a maximum level of aspiration (McClelland and Liberman, 1949). Boys with high n Ach scores are rated by their teachers as showing more pleasure in success than boys who have low n Ach scores (Winterbottom, 1958). According to Crockett (1962), men who have high n Ach scores are more upwardly mobile than are men who have low n Ach scores.

Achievement motivation in women has also been associated with employment patterns. According to one study (Stivers, 1958), high school girls who are highly motivated to achieve are more likely to either get a job or get married immediately after high school, rather than go directly to college. Among older married women, those with high n Ach scores were more likely to either have always been employed outside the home or to have resumed outside employment after interruption. Those with low n Ach scores either never started a career, or had only a brief career which was abandoned (Baruch, 1963).

McClelland et al., (1953) believed that the achievement motive was acquired in childhood. In fact, there is evidence that high n Ach develops out of an early insistence on independence (Winterbottom, 1953, 1958; McClelland, 1955). Mothers who report that they expect their sons to become more independent from them are more likely to have sons that are high in achievement motivation. In particular, they stress that their sons learn at an early age to know their way around the city, to try things for themselves, do well in competition, and make their own friends. Mothers who do not train their sons to be independent have sons that are low in achievement motivation (Winterbottom, 1953). Furthermore, men who rate their parents as unfriendly, unhelpful and unsuccessful tend to have higher n Ach scores than men who rate their parents as helpful, nurturant, friendly and successful (McClelland et al., 1953). Fear of failure is more likely to develop in children who are punished for unsatisfactory behavior but responded to neutrally for satisfactory behavior (McGhee and Teeven, 1965).

Research also indicates that women with high ACT scores are characterized by an avoidance of failure orientation. However, men with high ACT scores are characterized by a striving for success orientation (Mosier, 1971).

More recently, Atkinson and Raynor have become interested in studying not only achievement in the short run, but also cumulative achievement. Raynor (1974) focused on motivational determinants of the pursuit of long-term goals in career paths. He hypothesized that men who are strong in n Affiliation (need for affiliation) and

are also talented may experience fear of success. That is, they may anticipate resentment by their friends for being too much concerned with winning and getting ahead.

Those who fear success may be better off, however, than the types of individuals that Raynor calls the "uptight career striving person" and the "compulsive striver." The "uptight career striving person" has a stronger motive to avoid failure than motive to achieve success and finds himself unable to concentrate and devote much time to career-related activities. The "compulsive striver," on the other hand, spends far too much time and energy working for his career. He is the student who spends almost all of his time studying. He may drain his physical and emotional reserves to the point of a nervous breakdown (Raynor, 1974). Raynor (1974) has called for analysis of achievement activation over long periods of individuals' lives.

McClelland has recently expanded his interests in individual and societal differences in achievement motivation to search for a successful method of increasing achievement motivation in individuals. His goal is to teach individuals how a person with high achievement motivation thinks, talks, and acts. They learn such things as how to code stories for n Ach, how to choose moderately difficult tasks and to set realistic goals (McClelland, 1973a).

The motive to avoid succuss was introduced by Horner to help explain some of the previously unexplained sex differences in achievement motivation studies (Horner et al., 1973). This motive--also referred to as fear of success--was defined by Horner (1971) as the.

disposition to become anxious in competitive achievement situations. It was conceptualized within the framework of expectancy-value theory. This theory places equal emphasis on motive which is stable and enduring, and expectancy and incentive value, which are more transient properties. Expectancy is the probability of a certain outcome occurring. Incentive value is the attractiveness of that outcome to the person (Horner, 1971).

The probability of success at a task is influenced by its objective difficulty and the person's competence. A task will be seen as having more incentive value if it will be important to the person's future goals (Atkinson and Raynor, 1974). When a person is confronted with a particular situation, his expectancy of a successful outcome and the incentive value will be influenced by similar past experiences. That is, if he previously did well at a given task, he will feel he has a very good chance of doing well again. The person perceives that certain tasks will bring a greater sense of accomplishment and satisfaction than other tasks (Atkinson, 1964). A difficult task usually has greater incentive value and less probability for success than does an easy task. Obviously many professions or jobs that require a great deal of competence and effort are precisely the ones that are the most desirable. Indeed, subjects have indicated that the more difficult the job, the better they feel about it (Svetlik et al., 1964). Thus, the tendency to achieve success consists not only of the motive to achieve, but includes expectancy of success and incentive value as well (Atkinson, 1964).

An achievement-oriented situation offers both a chance for success and a threat of failure. According to expectancy-value theory, arousal of dispositions and motives is determined by the expectations or beliefs the individual has about the nature and consequences of his actions, and by the value of these consequences to the individual in relation to his motives (Horner, 1971, 1972). Thus, if achievement-oriented women in our society expect that success will be followed by negative consequences, they will become anxious (Horner, 1972). This anxiety weakens the strength of all positive motivation for undertaking the activity that is expected to have negative consequences (Horner, 1971).

The motive to avoid success is identified as an internal psychological representative of the stereotype of femininity which is inconsistent with competence, independence, competition and intellectual achievement (Horner, 1972). Research has shown that when both men and women describe successful people in academic settings, they describe women as undergoing painful and embarrassing things. However, they describe successful men as having good things happen to them (Monahan et al., 1974).

While achievement anxiety has been viewed as a motive to avoid failure, it is important to differentiate between that motive and the motive to avoid success. The person with a motive to avoid success experiences anxiety not because the expectancy for success is low, but because it is high. Anxiety is brought about not by the possibility of failure, but of success. The possibility of succeeding is accompanied by the possibility of negative consequences. For

example, the woman who plans to become a physician and realizes the expectancy for her success is quite high, may be concerned with the negative responses she will get from her family and friends (Horner, 1971).

Females generally get higher scores on measures of anxiety than do males. Horner suggests that this higher level of anxiety may be due to the fact that women feel threatened by success as well as failure in competitive achievement situations (Horner, 1974).

The motive to avoid success is considered to be just one of a complex network of motivational variables including motive to avoid failure (Horner et al., 1973). Once this motive is aroused, it is seen as inhibiting positive achievement motivation (Horner et al., 1973). However, this is not to say that women want to fail, or that they have a motive to approach failure (Horner, 1972). Horner stresses that a motive to approach failure would be a positive motive toward failure, guided by the expectancy that failure would bring positive results. Motive to avoid success, however, inhibits performance of a subject because he or she expects negative consequences to follow the expected success (Horner et al., 1973).

Horner's study (1968) indicated that there were sex differences in the motive to avoid success. The following cue was given to 178 students: "At the end of first-term finals, Anne (John) finds herself (himself) at the top of her (his) medical school class." Women were given the "Anne" cue and men were given the "John" cue. More than 65% of the female subjects wrote thematic stories high in fear of success imagery, while less than 10% of

her male subjects did. Fear of success imagery included the following:

a. negative consequences because of the success;
b. anticipation of negative consequences because of the success;
c. negative affect because of the success;
d. instrumental activity away from present or future success, including leaving the field for more traditional female work;
e. any direct expression of conflict about success;
f. denial of effort in attaining the success (also cheating or any other attempt to deny responsibility or reject credit for the success);
g. denial of the situation described by the cue;
h. bizarre, inappropriate, unrealistic, or nonadaptive responses to the situation described by the cue (Horner, 1974:107).

Reactions to the "Anne" cue included fear of isolation or loneliness as a result of success, and fear of losing one's marriageability. Concerns about one's normality and refusing to believe in the success were other frequent responses. Some of the responses that Horner's subjects gave include the following:

> It was luck that Anne came out on top of her med class because she didn't want to go to med school anyway (Horner, 1974:108).

> Anne is talking to her counselor. The counselor says she will make a fine nurse. She will continue her med school courses. She will study very hard and find she can and will become a good nurse (Horner, 1974:107).

Reactions of the men to the "John" cue were strikingly different from the typical female responses. The following is a typical story written by a male:

> John is a conscientious young man who worked hard. He is pleased with himself. John has always wanted to go into medicine and is very dedicated. His hard work has paid off. He is thinking that he must not let up now, but must work even harder than he did before. His good

> marks have encouraged him (he may even consider going into research now). While others with good first-term marks sluff off, John continues working hard and eventually graduates at the top of his class (Horner, 1974:109).

Horner (1968) also wanted to discover if individual differences in the motive to avoid success affected behavior in achievement-oriented situations. She administered a number of verbal and arithmetic tasks to the subjects in a large mixed-sex competitive condition, which was similar to the typical large classroom or lecture situation. She then randomly assigned the women to three other experimental conditions. Some were placed in a noncompetitive situation where they worked on tasks guided by tape-recorded instructions. The rest of them were divided between two competitive situations in which they worked on the same tasks as in the noncompetitive condition. In one group, the women competed against men and in the other group against other women. Her results showed that women who scored high in fear of success imagery did better working alone than in the competitive condition. Low fear of success women did better in competition (Horner, 1971).

Subjects with high fear of success imagery reported a lower level of importance for doing well than did subjects with low fear of success imagery. Horner thus suggests that women who have a high fear of success will not fully explore their intellectual potential when placed in a competitive setting, especially when they compete against men. They will perform most efficiently in situations that are not competitive (Horner, 1971). As Atkinson (1974a) has pointed out, probably no work situation is optimal for all individuals.

Horner (1971) has suggested that the motive to avoid success is acquired early in life along with other sex-role standards. Young boys are more likely to rise to an intellectual challenge, but girls are more likely to retreat from one (Maccoby, 1966). While girls may feel it is acceptable to do well in school, it is not acceptable to beat boys at most tasks. Early training in independence and mastery contributes to the development of strong achievement motivation, and boys typically receive more of such training (Winterbottom, 1958).

Furthermore, many parents believe that advanced education is of greater instrumental value for males than for females (Williams, 1972). Lopate (1968) suggested that encouragement from the father is of great importance if a girl is to work toward a nontraditional career such as medicine. A girl who grows up in a home environment that permits or encourages her to adopt nontraditional roles is more likely to become a physician than is the girl who is presented with traditionally feminine roles. While it is true that some girls may be able to rebel against the traditional roles and become physicians anyway, only a few do (Cartwright, 1972).

Horner also hypothesized that it would be more characteristic of women to fear success than it would be of men. Capable career-oriented women would be the most likely to be affected, since women who are not seeking success would not be threatened by it. Indeed, women who aspire to nontraditional careers may possibly be more adversely affected by the motive to avoid success than would women who aspire to traditional work (Horner et al., 1973). However,

high fear of success women in her study aspired to traditionally feminine careers such as being a nurse or housewife. Those women who were low in fear of success indicated that they aspired to graduate degrees and nontraditional careers (Horner, 1969).

Schwenn's study (1970) indicated that 11 of the 12 women who showed high fear of success had changed their aspirations toward a more traditional direction, whereas only 1 of 4 of the women who showed low fear of success did so.

Not all studies have supported the hypothesis that women would be more likely to fear success than would men. Heilbrun (1974) found only 41% of the female subjects and 46% of the male subjects having this motive. He suggested that some females may obtain vicarious satisfaction from male success, while others identify with the attributes of their fathers, thus becoming competitive with males. Levine and Crumrine (1975) found no significant difference in fear of success between males and females.

Lois Hoffman (1974) replicated Horner's study, introducing three variations in the story cue to measure the motive to avoid success. In one, the competitive aspect was diminished, in another a less masculine academic area was chosen, and in the last, achievement was communicated privately. None of the variations diminished fear of success imagery. She found that the motive to avoid success had not diminished in women since 1965, despite the women's movement and the increased career orientation of college women. It had, however, increased in men. While 77% of the men showed fear of success, only 65% of the women did. The female subjects in Hoffman's

study indicated that success was feared because of the possibility of social rejection. The male subjects, however, showed more themes that questioned the value of success (Hoffman, 1974).

Some researchers have hypothesized that Horner may have tapped societal stereotypes about acceptable occupations or levels of achievement for each sex, rather than fear of success. Of course in our society--and in most others as well--success is typically defined by men. Thus, success may indeed require sex-role inappropriateness. Feather and Raphelson (1974) gave masculine and feminine cues to both men and women students in Australia and the United States. The results showed that both the Australian and American male students wrote a significantly greater proportion of fear of success stories to the "Anne" cue than to the "John" cue. While the Australian females wrote a significantly greater proportion of fear of success stories to the "Anne" cue than to the "John" cue, their American counterparts reacted about the same to both cues. The researchers also noted that fear of success in Australian women students decreased from 47% in 1971 to 35% in 1972--possibly due to the increased influence of the women's movement in that country.

One explanation offered for fear of success is the cultural explanation (Monahan et al., 1974). Since stereotypes are culturally learned by both sexes, both males and females would be likely to respond negatively to female success in a traditionally male occupation.

Kanter (1976) suggested that women hired as tokens in traditionally male jobs are faced with a variety of problems. Based on observation and self-reports, she noted that they are isolated on the outskirts of the office group and are constantly reminded of how different they are. Males who enter traditionally female careers such as nursing often report a similar kind of hostility. To win the trust of the in group, women who are hired as token members often find themselves acting out the stereotypical role that members of their sex are supposed to play. Furthermore, many women may feel pressured to work doubly hard to prove that a woman can do the job. A woman in a traditionally male job is in a precarious position and is faced initially with emotional stress (Kanter, 1976).

Some studies have found that significantly more subjects wrote fear of success imagery to a female cue than a male cue (Winchel et al., 1974; Monahan et al., 1974) and that even more men wrote fear of success imagery to the female cue than did women (Solomon, 1975; Monahan et al., 1974). Thematic stories written by males often revealed a lot of hostility toward the "Anne" cue, while stories written by females tended to show more denial of success than hostility (Solomon, 1975; Monahan et al., 1974).

Karabenick and Marshall (1974) hypothesized that achievement-related anxiety in women is due to both fear of success and fear of failure. They studied the performance of females on an Alpha-Numeric-Substitutions test against male and female competitors. They found that a majority of the females believed they were less liked by the opponent when they succeeded than when they failed,

and most liked when their performance was about equal to the opponent's. Women who were low in fear of failure and high in fear of success improved their performance less when faced with a male opponent than a female opponent. Low fear of failure and low fear of success women, however, improved more against a male opponent than a female one.

In Feather and Simon's (1973) study, only 35% of the female subjects and 25% of the male subjects wrote fear of success imagery. The researchers suggested that this low percentage of fear of success may be due to reduced emphasis on competition on the contemporary scene. They found that high fear of success subjects attributed success less to external causes, and failure more to external causes than did low fear of success subjects.

In a later study, Feather and Simon (1975) found some interesting differences in reactions to male and female success and failure. Males who succeeded--regardless of whether the success was in a traditionally male or female occupation--were seen as luckier, wiser, more logical and honest than males who failed. This was not the case, however, for females. They were seen as being luckier if they failed. Furthermore, subjects gave males more personal credit for their success than they did females. It has been shown that men attribute less ability to women than do other women. They also perceive women in such traditionally masculine professions as medicine as having an easier task than men (Feldman-Summers and Kiesler, 1974). Women doctors are frequently viewed as unwanted intruders or second-class members. Consequently, they may develop

feelings of anger, frustration and anxiety (Wolman and Frank, 1975).

A survey (Kanter, 1976) of 111 white collar employees showed some interesting differences in men's and women's attitudes toward promotion. The men showed greater interest in advancing in rank than the women did. Some of the women indicated that their families were more important to them than job promotion. However, Kanter noted that two-thirds of the women employees in this company held dead-end jobs. Thus their lack of interest in promotion may have been a realistic attitude. She hypothesizes that it is not so much a personality style that shuns success so much as it is a real lack of opportunity to succeed that separates the ambitious women from the unambitious, and the men from the women.

Winchel, et al., (1974) studied the impact of coeducation on fear of success. Females at coeducational high schools wrote significantly more fear of success imagery than did females from non-coeducational schools. All but one of the females who showed fear of success had been educated in coeducational elementary schools. The researchers thus suggested that young girls may learn to avoid success in the presence of male classmates.

As they grow up, girls are faced with a conflict situation in which they want to do well, but not <u>too</u> well. They soon become aware of the kinds of occupations they may realistically hope to enter (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). Social and psychological pressures limit certain careers primarily to men. Those few women who manage in spite of these pressures to pursue a traditionally masculine career do so at a price. They may feel anxious, guilty and unfeminine

(Horner, 1971).

The results of Winchel et al.'s (1974) study raise the question of whether attendance at an all girls school would be more beneficial to females than would attendance at a coeducational school. It has been suggested that women can better develop their potential in women's colleges where the problems of competition against men are absent. However, these women may eventually be hampered by the fact that they were educated in a protective atmosphere which was devoid of opportunities to confront these problems. Having postponed competition with men for 4 undergraduate years, these women will find themselves in the "real world" where women are not supposed to perform better than men at certain tasks (Horner, 1971).

Tresemer (1974) doubted that women really show fear of success imagery more than men. He noted that in various replications of Horner's study, the proportion of women who wrote fear of success themes varied from 11% to 88% and the proportion of men varied from 14% to 86%. He also noted that when M. L. Katz changed Horner's cue to include the information that half of Anne's classmates are women, fear of success imagery decreased.

According to Tresemer (1974), high fear of success women consider having a family to be more important than a career. They also view themselves as somewhat less feminine than do low fear of success women. Women also like and admire other women who achieve, but many of them may themselves be afraid to try because of the cost involved (Spence and Helmreich, 1972b).

Horner's work has been subjected to criticism by Tresemer (1974). He questioned Horner's (1968) conclusion that women who have a high motive to avoid success do worse in competition than those who have a low motive to avoid success. Achievement behavior was measured by an anagram test, in which the subjects were required to write as many words as possible from the word "generation." This anagram test has been the target of criticism.

Tresemer (1974) pointed out that while the effect of the motive to avoid success on performance in an anagram test may be statistically significant, it is usually very small. He questioned just how important a three word difference is on such a test. Those women who did better alone than in competition may include high achievers who prefer to work against their own standards of excellence. Furthermore, Horner (1968) found fear of success imagery to be more prominant among honors than nonhonors students.

Thus, questions remain as to whether the motive to avoid success is currently more characteristic of women than men, and whether it is characteristic of a majority of women. It is also unclear why some women have this motive and others do not. The purposes of this research are: (a) to investigate what differences exist between men and women in the motive to avoid success; and (b) to investigate the relationship between women's attitudes toward women and motive to avoid success.

While early studies (Horner, 1968; Feather and Simon, 1973) indicated that more women had high fear of success than did men, some recent studies have not supported those results (Hoffman, 1974;

Heilbrun, 1974; Levine and Crumrine, 1975). In view of the many negative consequences that successful women must face, women would seem to have more to fear from success than men. While success is considered to be consistent with the masculine identity, it is considered to be inconsistent with the feminine identity.

On the basis of these findings, hypothesis I is offered:

> More women than men will show motive to avoid success imagery in response to thematic cues. Motive to avoid success will be measured according to Horner et al.'s (1973) scoring manual.

If more women than men do have this motive, it may have important implications for our society. It could prove to be an obstacle to the advancement of women, since women who have this motive may be less likely to reach their potential and to break out of traditional occupational roles. It may also help to explain why such a small proportion of women have been able to achieve success in our society. In recent decades the various social and legal barriers that have limited women's activities have been recognized. Many of these barriers are being removed. Even though women may have considerably greater opportunity today than in the past to achieve success, it remains obvious that they are not really expected to be as successful as men are. If they strive for success, they must face many negative responses from their family, friends and acquaintances.

Previous research has raised questions as to what effect the women's movement may have had on fear of success. Feather and Raphelson (1974) noted that fear of success was less common among

American women students than among their Australian counterparts. Also, the percentage of Australian women with fear of success decreased from 1971 to 1972. Feather and Raphelson suggested that these differences may have been influenced by the stronger and earlier impact of the women's movement in the United States.

Others (Monahan et al., 1974) have suggested that negative responses to a woman's success may be due to the learning of male and female stereotypes. Thus there may be some relationship between attitudes toward women and fear of success.

To examine this relationship, hypothesis II is offered:

> Women who score high on the short version of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence and Helmreich, 1973) will show less motive to avoid success imagery in response to thematic cues than will women who score low on the scale. The short version of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale is a Likert-type scale which includes statements about the roles and rights of women in regards to vocation, education, intellectual activities, sexual and dating behavior, and marriage and etiquette.

Those women who view themselves as having the same rights and responsibilities as men would seem to be very aware of the psychological and social barriers that they face, but be less anxious about achieving success. They have rejected many of the stereotypes about women. They would probably be better prepared to deal with others' negative responses to their success than would women who have conservative attitudes toward women. Liberal women would probably be more determined to pursue their goals regardless of the social pressure to lower their goals. Conservative women, on the other hand, would accept the traditionally passive role of women, and become anxious in a situation that offered a chance of success.

II. METHOD

The non-random sample used for this research consisted of 148 male and female students enrolled in three undergraduate classes at the University of Nebraska at Omaha during the 1976 first summer session. The classes were Introductory Sociology, Social Problems, and Social Psychology. Only those students who voluntarily agreed to participate were included. It was necessary to eliminate 10 of the questionnaires and thematic tests since they had been completed in an unscorable manner. Thus, the final sample consisted of 138 students. Eighty-one of these were females and 50 were males. The remaining 7 persons did not answer the sex question.

Data collected from the 138 students consisted of their attitudes toward women, motive to avoid success, and sex. Background information consisted of college class, age, religious affiliation and frequency of religious attendance. In addition, information was collected regarding parental dominance and father's occupation.

The instruments were administered to the subjects in a standard classroom situation. The researcher told the subjects that they would be given a test of creative imagination and a questionnaire. The subjects were instructed to use identification numbers only, not names, on both the test and questionnaire. The subjects were assured of the anonymity of their responses.

The test booklet for the motive to avoid success, which may

be found in Appendix A, consisted of a cover sheet containing instructions, and three pages, each with a verbal thematic cue placed near the top of an empty page. After the booklets were handed out, the researcher read the instructions aloud. If the subjects had no further questions, they were instructed to begin writing a story to the first cue. A time limit of four minutes was allowed for the subjects to write a story to each cue. The researcher kept time and instructed the subjects when it was time to go on to the next cue.

After the completion of the thematic stories, they were gathered up by the researcher. A questionnaire was then distributed, which consisted of 25 questions concerning attitudes toward women, and 7 additional background questions. This instrument may be found in Appendix B.

The motive to avoid success was measured according to the scoring guidelines of Horner, et al., (1973). The original scoring manual was developed by Horner in 1968, and became the standard measure of the motive to avoid success. The 1973 manual includes a number of revisions. David Tresemer, who was critical of Horner's 1968 manual, assisted her in formulating the current one.

Following the guidelines of the manual, three thematic cues were used. The manual does not specify any particular cues, leaving the choice to the researcher. The first cue, developed by the researcher, was: "Linda has just found out that she has been accepted by a top-ranking law school." The second cue was a modified version of Horner's original cue: "At the end of his first year in medical school, Bob finds himself at the top of the class." The

third cue, also developed by the researcher, was: "After earning a master's degree in psychology, Mary decides to continue to work for a Ph.D." The intent was to find cues which offered some variety of occupational goals, and which would not be easily recognizable by the subjects as fear of success cues. Some studies have shown that fear of success imagery varies with the types of occupational goals offered in the cues, and with the degree of stress on competition (Karabenick and Marshall, 1974; Alper, 1973). Furthermore, previous research has suggested that subjects respond differently to a female cue than to a male cue (Winchel et al., 1974; Monahan et al., 1974; Solomon, 1975). Thus it was considered desirable to include both male and female cues.

Horner et al.'s (1973) practice materials were used according to standard procedures outlined in the appendix of J. W. Atkinson's Motives in Fantasy, Action and Society. A scoring reliability of .98 was obtained.

Tresemer (1974) has found that women scorers tend to find more fear of success imagery than men do. Because of this possibility, a male scorer re-scored a sample of protocols of 20 subjects. The re-scorer reliability achieved was .856 . While scoring the stories, the scorers were not aware of the sex of the subjects, or of their responses to the questionnaire. All protocols were scored for one story at a time. During the scoring of the second and third stories, the scorers were unaware of the subject's score on the first story.

Horner et al.'s (1973) manual includes two methods for determining the final motive to avoid success score, but does not recommend one over the other. In this study the continuous scoring

method was used. According to this method, scores for each category are summed across stories. The final score is computed by weighting each category with the weights given. Scores may range from -2 to +8 for one story and from -6 to +24 for all three stories. The scoring categories and the weights given to each include the following:

A. Contingent negative consequences (+2);
B. Non-contingent negative consequences (+2);
C. Interpersonal engagement (+2);
D. Relief (+1);
E. Absence of instrumental activity (+1);
F. Absence of others (-2) (Horner et al., 1971:1).

Categories A through E indicate the presence of the motive to avoid success. F, however, is a counter-indicative category.

The range of motive to avoid success scores obtained from these cues was from -6 to +15, with a mean of 1.68 (S=4.47) for females and 1.56 (S=4.50) for males. A comparison of the means by t tests indicated that there was no significant difference between the means of the females and males. In applying the t test to each cue separately, there was no significant difference found between the means of females and males on either the "Bob" cue or the "Mary" cue. However, the females' mean was significantly higher ($p < .05$) than the males' mean for the "Linda" cue. These results may be found in Table II (p. 35).

The range of motive to avoid success scores were divided into three groups. The lower third included those scores ranging from -6 to 0, which indicate an absence of the motive to avoid success. The middle third included scores from +1 to +7, which indicate a moderate level of the motive to avoid success. The upper third included

scores ranging from +8 to +15, which indicate a high level of the motive. As illustrated in Table I, 64 (39 females, 22 males) subjects were in the absence of fear of success category, 64 (37 females, 24 males) in the moderate category, and 10 (5 females, 4 males) in the high category.

Thus, only 6% of the females and 8% of the males showed high fear of success; 46% of the females and 48% of the males showed a moderate level of fear of success; 48% of the females and 44% of the males showed an absence of fear of success. The application of the Chi Square test showed that there were no significant sex differences in fear of success.

The application of the F test indicated that there was a significant ($p<.05$) difference in the mean fear of success among the three cues. More specifically, the Scheffe test showed that the mean of the "Linda" cue was significantly ($p<.05$) higher than that of the "Mary" cue. However, there were no significant differences between the "Linda" and "Bob" cues, or between the "Bob" and "Mary" cues.

The short version of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence, et al., 1973) was used to measure the subjects' attitudes toward women. This instrument is a Likert-type scale which consists of 25 questions, each with four response alternatives, about the roles and rights of women in regards to vocation, education, intellectual activities, sexual and dating behavior, and marriage and etiquette. This instrument may be found in Appendix B.

The short version of the AWS was developed to replace the

original 55 item scale. Correlations between the scores on the short and full versions were .95 or above (Spence, et al., 1973:219).

The range for each item is from 0 to 3. The total AWS score is obtained by summing the scores on all 25 items. Total scores on this scale could range from 0 (the most conservative) to 75 (the most liberal). Thus, subjects who scored near 0 would be classified as very conservative or traditional in their attitudes toward women. They would not view women as having the same rights and responsibilities as men. Subjects who scored near 75, on the other hand, would be classified as very liberal or pro-feminist in their attitudes. They would view women as being entitled to the same rights and responsibilities as men.

As illustrated in Table III, the mean was 56.70 (S=11.12) for females and 47.74 (S=13.73) for males. A comparison of the means by t tests indicated that the mean of the female subjects was significantly ($p<.01$) higher (more liberal) than the mean of the males.

Dividing the range of the subjects' scores into thirds, 45 subjects fell in the high (liberal) category, which contained those scores between 61 and 75. The mean score for females in this group was 66.86 (S=4.41) and the mean for males was 66.89 (S=3.52). Another 45 fell in the moderate category, with scores between 48 and 60. This group had a mean of 54.50 (S=4.35) for females and 52.94 (S=3.83) for males. The remaining 48 subjects fell in the low (conservative) category, which included scores below 48. The mean for this group was 41.81 (S=3.80) for females and 36.87 (S=9.80) for males.

Finally, a Pearson product-moment correlation was computed

between the AWS scores and motive to avoid success scores. For the entire sample, the coefficient of correlation between these two scores was .10. In looking at only the females, the coefficient of correlation was .15; for the males it was .03. These results are included in Table IV.

III. RESULTS

In view of the results of Horner's study, it was hypothesized that more women would show motive to avoid success imagery in response to thematic cues than men would. This hypothesis was not supported by the data. Only 6% of the females had high fear of success scores. A somewhat larger percentage of males--8%--had high fear of success. A moderate level of fear of success was indicated by 46% of the females and 48% of the males. A total absence of the motive was shown by 48% of the females and 44% of the males.

Thus, contrary to the hypothesis, slightly more men showed fear of success than did women, although this difference did not approach significance. The mean fear of success score for females was 1.68 (S=4.47), which was higher than the mean of 1.56 (S=4.50) for the males. However, the t test showed that this difference was not significant. In summary, not only were there no significant differences in the number of men and women with fear of success, but there were no significant differences in the mean scores of the men and women either.

While the total motive to avoid success score was based on all three cues, the scores for each cue were also analyzed separately. Males responded to the "Bob" cue with a slightly higher mean fear of success than did the females. For the "Mary" cue, females showed a slightly higher mean than did the males. These differences did

TABLE I

SEX DIFFERENCES IN THE MOTIVE TO AVOID SUCCESS

Motive to Avoid Success	Females (N=81)	Males (N=50)	χ^2	p
High	5	4	.30	n.s.
Moderate	37	24		
Absence of	39	22		

TABLE II

MEAN MOTIVE TO AVOID SUCCESS SCORES

Cue	Females (N=81) M	Males (N=50) M	t	p
"Linda" cue	1.37	.60	2.07	<.05
"Bob" cue	.68	.92	-.63	n.s.
"Mary" cue	.37	.04	.98	n.s.
All 3 cues	1.68	1.56	.05	n.s.

not approach significance.

However, results of the responses to the "Linda" cue were different. Females responded to this cue with significantly higher ($P<.05$) fear of success than did the males. Thus, if motive to avoid success scores had been based on only this one cue, the results would have been quite different. It should be remembered that Horner's original research in 1968 used only one cue to measure the motive to avoid success. Feather and Raphelson's (1974) subsequent study also relied on only one cue.

The sex of the lead character in the cues was apparently not as important as other qualities. While there was no significant difference in the mean fear of success between the "Bob" cue and either of the other female cues, there was a significant difference between the two female cues. The subjects responded with more fear of success to the "Linda" cue than to the "Mary" cue.

The mean scores for fear of success obtained in the present study are quite low. This lack of anxiety about success was evident in the content of the stories. Only an occasional story showed the hostility or bizarre responses that Horner (1968) and Solomon (1975) found to be so prevalent in their stories. While Horner's subjects frequently showed concern about the normality of the lead female character, or refused to believe in her success, this was not the case in the present study.

Responses to the "Linda" cue showed a stronger concern with self-doubt than did the responses to other cues. Questions were raised as to whether "Linda"'s success could continue. Indeed,

a few of the stories ended with her death. There was frequent mention of "Linda" celebrating her acceptance into law school, and with her pride in accomplishment. Accompanying this, however, there was sometimes mention of the possible negative reactions of friends, family, or acquaintances. There was also frequent mention of the feminist movement in these stories. Some of the responses (which have not been corrected for grammatical errors) to the "Linda" cue included the following:

> Years of hard work had finally paid off for Linda. Since Grade School, when she had decided to become a lawyer, all her work at school and some work outside school had been directed at this goal. It seemed to her that this acceptance was the culmination of her life up to this point.
>
> She had worked long and hard for this acceptance and was very thankful for the feminist movement for opening the door for women with average scores to law school. She now hoped that she could master her intended profession and make a success of her lifelong goal. There were many things to do now, preparations must be made and money give to the friend who fixed her.
>
> She decided to tell everyone by putting it in her small town newspaper the week before she went home. When Linda went home the following week people greeting her on the streets met her with various reactions. The reactions were mostly favorable except for her ex boyfriend. He told her she was crazy to become a lawyer when all she'd be doing was wasting money and time because he was sure Linda would end up married barefoot and pregnant anyway. Linda told him that was exactly the reason he was her <u>ex</u> boyfriend and walked away!
>
> It has been months since Linda sent in her application. Now her dream come true--law school. Linda has always wanted to be a lawyer and now maybe she'll make it. Linda, being as exited as she was, decided to go out and really get drunk. She went to her favorite pub, got real drunk, hopped in her car and while driving home ran into a train and was killed instantly. Linda will probably never become a lawyer.

Many of the reactions to the "Bob" cue were quite positive stories about "Bob"'s hard work resulting in rewards. On the other hand, there was a noticeable difference in the content themes of these stories and those of the other cues. While it might have been expected that a male cue would induce more positive reactions than would a female one, this was not the case. A common theme running through the responses to the "Bob" cue was a strong concern with what other people may think of his achievement, and how this success might affect his personality. For example, "Bob" was portrayed as a conceited, obnoxious snob and too much of a bookworm. He was also depicted as a cheater, and as a person under strenuous pressure to be a success and to maintain his standing in the face of competition. Drugs were sometimes necessary so "Bob" could keep going under this extreme pressure.

These themes were seldom mentioned in responses to the other cues. In spite of the fact that "Bob" was a male, there was considerable concern with his social abilities. He was depicted as having doubts about the value of achievement at the cost of social activities. Many subjects doubted if being at the top of the class was worth all the sacrifices. Among the stories written to the "Bob" cue were the following:

> Bob finding himself at the head of his class was unbossable to live with. Every place we would go all you'd hear is how well Bob is doing hows he's going to be such a fine Doctor. He has such a big head. I wonder how long it will be before he leaves his wife. Probably he will wait until he has gotten all the way through. You know this is the way an awful lot of men do.

> Bob was under pressure because the only direction to go was down, so he didn't date or nothing so he could study. His friends thought he was a social dud and had contempt for his position since medical school competition cuthroat. Bob drops out of medical school and marries Linda from law school and now everthings right for everybody.
>
> Bob should be happy to be at the top of his class but he looks troubled. And, he darn well should be. Bob is probably a high D student. But, Bob has been cheating. This entire first year was one big cheating sessions. Bob cheated on his tests, labs, papers--infact he has cheated anyone he could all his life. Let's see how well Bob will do next year. I'm going to turn Bob in to the proper authorities.

In general, the stories for the "Mary" cue were quite positive. The lead character was shown as enjoying her success, doing what she had always wanted to do. It was often mentioned that in working toward a Ph.D. in psychology, "Mary" was one of the few women in a man's profession. She was depicted as achieving high personal goals and at the same time being able to help others.

Although "Mary" was generally depicted in a favorable manner, a few stories showed a highly negative reaction to her success. Included among the stories were the following:

> Mary is ambitious. She's got her head on straight, she's sweet; innocent; perfect child; well on her way to leading a happy life. She's got her master's degree in psych; yet she wants to make it <u>all the way</u>! She's gone this far; why not get her Ph.D.? Why not? She's got time in her life now; she's unmarried; she's young, alive...Why not <u>do it now</u>; she may never get the chance again?
>
> Women in these kind of jobs ain't even funny. Mary just as well forget it 'cause when in Rome, do as the Romans do, period. Women in high positions are a fountain of useless information because they have no power or prestige of maleness. They make a circus out of the degree.

A second purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between attitudes toward women and the motive to avoid success. It was hypothesized that women who score high on the short version of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence and Helmreich, 1973) would show less motive to avoid success imagery in response to thematic cues than would women who score low on the scale. This hypothesis was not confirmed, however. The coefficient of correlation between the two scores was .15, indicating that AWS scores and fear of success are neither positively nor negatively associated. This lack of association was true of the males, as well as females. The coefficient of correlation between males' AWS and fear of success was .03.

Overall, the subjects in this study had moderate scores on the AWS. The mean score is probably somewhat higher than would be found among a random sample of the American population. As would be expected, the mean of the female students was significantly higher than that of the males. Three females actually obtained the highest possible score of 75 on the AWS. No males score this high, although one did approach it at 74. While the range of the scores of females was from 35 to 75, the range of the males' scores was from 5 to 74.

A clearer picture of the subjects in this sample may be gained by looking at various background data. First of all, most of the subjects were under age 25. In summary, 25% of them were under 20 years of age; another 43% were between 20 and 25; 16% were between 26 and 30; 14% were over 30. The remaining 2% of the subjects did not specify their age category.

TABLE III

MEAN ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN SCORES

Females (N=81) M	Males (N=50) M	t	p
56.70	47.74	4.09	<.01

TABLE IV

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN AWS SCORES AND MOTIVE TO AVOID SUCCESS

	AWS Scores		
	Females (N=81)	Males (N=50)	Total (N=138)
Motive to Avoid Success	.15	.03	.10

The subjects were nearly equally distributed across college class levels, with 25% of them freshmen, 27% sophomores, 20% juniors and 22% seniors. Another 6% were otherwise classified or not responding.

In looking at religious affiliation, Protestantism was on top, with 43% of the subjects. Another 28% described themselves as Catholics, 1% as Jewish, and 12% as affiliated with other religions. Fourteen percent claimed no religious affiliation or interest, and 2% did not respond.

When asked how frequently they attend religious services, 33% replied that they attended weekly. Another 17% gave their attendance as once every two to four weeks, and 25% as between one and six times per year. An additional 22% said they do not attend religious services at all, and the remaining 3% did not reply.

The subjects were also asked to identify which of their parents seemed to make the most decisions while they were growing up. In response to this question, 28% named their mother as the principal decision-maker, 46% said both parents made about an equal number of decisions, and only 22% named their fathers. The remaining 4% left the question blank.

The last background item gathered was on the father's occupation. This was coded according to the United States Census Occupation Classification code. The largest percentage (28%) of this group had fathers in professional, technical and managerial occupations. Skilled laborers and craftsmen comprised the second largest category, with 17%. Following this were sales and clerical workers, with a

total of 14%. Another 9% said their fathers were semi-skilled or industrial laborers. Eight percent were in the category of farmers and farm labor, and another 8% were in the miscellaneous category which includes students, military personnel and unemployed persons. Not surprisingly, only 4% came from families of unskilled laborers and less than 1% came from families of service and domestic workers. The father's occupation was not available from 11% of the subjects.

IV. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The first hypothesis predicted that more women than men would fear success. However, no support was found for this hypothesis. These results do not corroborate Horner's (1968) original findings. They are consistent, however, with the findings of Levine and Crumrine's (1975) more recent study, which showed no significant sex difference for fear of success.

Horner's (1968) data suggested that fear of success was more characteristic of women than men, and was quite widespread in the female population. These findings caused a great deal of concern. For, it was assumed that a majority of women had this motive, and that it must have negative behavioral results. Horner found that women with high fear of success reported a lower level of importance for doing well than did subjects with low fear of success. In addition, the high fear of success group performed less well in competition at an anagram task than did the low fear of success group. Thus, if a large number of women feared success, it was assumed that they would not fully explore their intellectual potential in competitive situations. Of course, to achieve success in our society, individuals typically are required to go through several stages of competition.

However, subsequent studies have resulted in inconsistent findings. Many studies done within the last two or three years

have suggested that large numbers of women do not fear success (Heilbrun, 1974; Levine and Crumrine, 1975; Feather and Raphelson, 1974). Indeed, Heilbrun (1974) found that 46% of the male subjects showed fear of success, but only 41% of the females did.

One possible explanation for these results is that the changing social environment in the United States has reduced women's anxiety concerning success. In line with this explanation, Feather and Raphelson's (1974) findings suggest that fear of success has been reduced with the increasing influence of the women's movement. According to this data, fear of success was more prevalent among Australian women in 1971 than among their more liberated American counterparts. Also, fear of success decreased among Australian women students from 1971 to 1972.

It must be remembered that Horner's data was gathered in the mid 1960's. At this time, the women's movement had only begun to get off the ground after decades of dormancy. It was not nearly as widely publicized in the mass media then as now. Since that time, it is probable that more and more people have become aware of the different ways in which males and females are socialized in our culture. Moreover, there has been a steady proliferation of feminist literature, rap groups, women's organizations, and university courses in feminism.

Therefore, it would seem probable that women college students today are much more aware of the social and psychological barriers that women have faced. Women's organizations and universities are making some efforts to help women enter a wider variety of occupations,

and to deal with the problems they may face. Women students in 1976 may perceive fewer negative consequences of success than did women students in the previous decade, or at least feel that they are better prepared for them.

The fact that 74% of the subjects in this study indicated that decision-making was either shared by their parents, or entrusted to their mothers, may partly explain why they showed relatively little fear of success or hostility to the female cues. Horner (1971) has suggested that the motive may be acquired early in life along with other sex-role standards. These particular subjects' upbringing may have enabled them to more easily accept women in decision-making roles. This acceptance may be more characteristic of college students today than it was 10 or 11 years ago.

In summary, fewer women today may expect success to be followed by negative consequences. Or, they may feel that they can handle the negative consequences. Thus, they would not experience anxiety concerning success.

It is also possible that the motive to avoid success is more complex than was previously realized. The importance of which thematic cues are used has been questioned by previous researchers (Winchel et al., 1974; Monahan et al., 1974; Karabenick and Marshall, 1974; Alper, 1973). In the present study, no significant differences were found in the fear of success scores between the female cues and the male cue. There were some qualitative differences in the content of the stories, however.

The subjects seemed more concerned with the effects of success on "Bob"'s personality and social life than on "Linda"'s or "Mary"'s. For example, they showed "Bob" as being obnoxious and conceited, whereas "Linda" and "Mary" were not described in such a manner. Indeed, "Bob" was sometimes described as neglecting his family or postponing marriage because of his career plans. Yet, this is the type of description that one might more typically expect to be directed at a woman. This suggests that the subjects' responses may be providing more information about their attitudes toward the medical profession and the status of being "number one," than about actual fear of success.

The medical profession requires its members to be away from their families a great deal, and to sacrifice much of their personal lives. Also, medical students are apparently perceived as more likely to become conceited than are students in other professions. While it is acceptable to be an above average student, it is less acceptable to be the top-ranked student. Much of the subjects' concern with "Bob"'s conceit could be due to his being at the top of his class. For example, some subjects remarked that "Bob" was working harder than was necessary. They suggested that if he would have taken it a bit easier, he could have enjoyed life more, yet still have been a good student.

Fear of success scores appear to be dependent on the nature of the specific cue used. In Horner's (1968) study, the cue was: "At the end of first-term finals, Anne (John) finds herself (himself) at the top of her (his) medical school class." Women were given the

"Anne" cue and men were given the "John" cue. In Horner's case, females may have found that a woman achieving success in a medical career to be especially anxiety provoking. Since medicine has been traditionally defined as a man's profession, women may assume that women medical students would face a great many negative consequences. Males, on the other hand, would feel less anxiety about success in a male profession.

In the present study, the cue concerning success in the medical profession did not prompt any significant difference in fear of success between the sexes. This may have been due to the fact that the lead character was a male, and neither males nor females may find a male medical student's success especially anxiety provoking.

However, while the medical school cue did not provoke any more anxiety than the other cues, it did provoke a different type of response, as was previously mentioned. This would seem to indicate that there is a highly complex process occurring when the subjects respond to these cues. In the case of the "Bob" cue, they may not only be responding to success, but also to the medical profession and to the status of being "number one." Subjects did not react to "Bob"'s top rank with extreme anxiety. However, they did question the value of it, and voiced concern with the negative effects it has on the personality. Thus, subjects rejected the values of a "compulsive striver" (Raynor, 1974) who spends most of his time and energy on his career. While it is acceptable to strive for high occupational goals, these goals should not be too high.

In comparing the "Linda" cue and the "Mary" cue, the "Linda" cue prompted significantly higher fear of success scores. Again, it may be that Horner's method is not tapping a motive to avoid success so much as it is measuring responses to success in particular occupations. While the responses to the "Linda" cue did not show much hostility or concern with the loss of social qualities, they did show concern for "Linda's" self doubts. Perhaps law is seen as a more competitive, anxiety-provoking career than other careers such as psychology. It is also possible that the subjects perceived "Mary" more positively because by earning a Ph.D. in psychology she was not only achieving a high personal goal, but helping others as well. In fact, this was a common theme in those stories. A law career may be viewed as bringing primarily selfish goals such as money, status, and political office to the person, but not really helping many other people.

While lawyers are given a rather high status in our society, they are also frequently stereotyped as devious, shrewd, money-mad characters that are not above unethical or illegal activities. This stereotype is supported by recent reports that they have been involved in various government scandals. In addition, lawyers have more opportunities to use the legal loopholes to their personal advantage than do members of less powerful professions.

A Ph.D. in psychology may be viewed in a much more positive manner than a lawyer. While the Ph.D. is also given a high status, he is not typically seen as resorting to unethical or illegal activities to acquire more money. Thus, the particular occupational

goals in the cues and the societal stereotypes about those occupations may account, at least in part, for the different levels of fear of success.

The instrument for measuring this motive presents problems because it is open to much more subjectivity on the part of the scorer than is a questionnaire. Previous research on achievement motivation has shown questionnaires to be less adequate than thematic analysis. However, additional research is needed to improve the instrument for measuring fear of success.

In light of the present research, it is questionable whether Horner et al.'s (1973) system is actually measuring fear of success. The scores derived from this instrument seem to be dependent on the number and type of cues used. Horner's study (1968) used only one cue whereas the present one used three. If the present study had only relied on the "Linda" cue, the results would have been quite different, since the females showed significantly higher fear of success to this cue than did the males.

The present system relies on the analysis of three stories per subject. It is doubtful that three stories really reveal much about the subject's fear of success. Each scorer has to analyze a large number of very diverse stories according to six general categories. This allows for considerable personal interpretation by the scorer of both the content of the stories and what should be included in each particular category.

The stories may provide some information as to the subjects attitudes toward certain occupations, and their concern with

negative consequences to success in these occupations. It is doubtful if the stories can tell us with much accuracy whether a person has a motive to avoid success. At any rate, the low percentage of subjects with high fear of success scores would suggest that fear of success is not the problem it was previously assumed to be.

If fear of success is not more characteristic of women than men, it cannot adequately explain prior sex differences in achievement motivation. It cannot explain why fewer women than men are achieving success in many fields.

The weakness of fear of success as an explanatory concept becomes even more clear in an analysis of the assumptions behind it. For example, Horner et al., (1973) stressed that there was no direct link between fear of success and traditional or non-traditional occupations. That is, women who were housewives would not be expected to fear success any more than women who were lawyers or business managers. Indeed, Horner et al., (1973) assumed that some housewives may have less fear of success than women in non-traditional occupations because the housewives might not even <u>want</u> success. But how do we know if the woman really does not want success, or if she is denying a desire for success because she knows she cannot achieve it, or because she fears the consequences of success? If women in non-traditional occupations are assumed to fear success somewhat more than do housewives, it would not seem to be doing them much harm. For if a woman fears the consequences of success in a male-dominated career such as law, yet becomes a lawyer in spite of this, it can

hardly have inhibited her success very much.

Horner et al., (1973) have ignored the woman who supposedly does not want success and thus does not seek a career. Since virtually all men pursue some career outside the home, it could be assumed that most of them want some degree of success. The theory behind fear of success research has not dealt with how success is defined differently for women than men, or why fewer women than men want success outside the home.

It is only those women who want success yet fear the consequences of success that Horner et al., (1973) have defined as problematic. They will accept a woman's own self-judgement that she does not want success. They would not, however, accept her self-judgement that she does not fear success. Yet the two seem equally difficult to discover.

Moreover, if fear of success is acquired in childhood and adolescence, a lack of desire for success would probably be acquired then also. Many young girls may have learned early that there was not much point in setting high goals for themselves, when barriers would make it extremely difficult for them to reach the goals. In addition, they may have learned that not as much was expected of them in regards to occupational success as was expected of males. They are not really expected to want success or to strive for it. Young boys, on the other hand, are pushed into the competitive arena so that they have a good chance of achieving success as adults. It is less acceptable for an intelligent male to not want success than it is for an intelligent female.

Thus, fear of success does not adequately explain why fewer women than men achieve success in certain fields such as business or science. It was assumed to be a psychological barrier that inhibits performance. However, focusing attention on this supposed psychological barrier may divert attention from other much more effective barriers. For example, attention could be focused on businesses and professional groups that operate to keep women out of their top ranks.

The second hypothesis predicted that women with high scores on the Attitudes Toward Women scale would show less motive to avoid success than would women with low AWS scores. The data did not support this hypothesis. In addition, no association was found between AWS scores and fear of success scores among the males.

While the insignificant difference between males' and females' fear of success scores may be explained by the increasing effect of the women's movement since the 1960's, the rejection of the second hypothesis casts some doubt on this explanation. For it would seem that those women who were the most affected by the women's movement would have the highest AWS scores, and at the same time experience less anxiety concerning success. But in fact, women with high AWS scores are no less likely to fear success than are women with low or moderate AWS scores.

Again, one possible explanation is that the instrument is not really measuring fear of success, but is tapping attitudes towards occupations and competition. If fear of success scores are dependent on the nature of the specific cue and the number of cues,

as was suggested earlier, this could account for the lack of association with AWS scores. A law career may raise anxiety in a person for reasons that have nothing to do with attitudes toward women or the negative consequences of success. The subjects may be responding to the societal stereotypes about law, medicine and psychology rather than to success in general.

In summary, the purposes of this research were to investigate the sex differences in motive to avoid success, and to investigate the relationship between women's attitudes toward women and motive to avoid success. Previous research had left questions as to whether the motive was more characteristic of women than of men and why some women have this motive others do not.

First of all, the data of this research suggest that women and men do not differ significantly in this motive. Also, the mean level of fear of success imagery is so low as to cast doubt on its supposed deleterious results. Consequently, fear of success may not be the psychological barrier that it was assumed to be--either for men or women.

According to Horner's assumptions, the motive to avoid success inhibits performance because the person with this motive expects negative consequences to follow success (Horner et al., (1973). Yet men, who would be assumed to face fewer negative consequences to success than would women, fear success no less than women. Moreover, in comparing the fear of success scores of males and females, it might be assumed that males would be no more likely than females to be successful in our society. This is obviously not the

case. Neither sex shows a very high level of fear of success. Thus, it is doubtful that it could have much of an inhibitory effect on the performance of females or males. It does not adequately explain why women have been underrepresented in many high status occupations.

A major question raised by this research is whether the present instrument really provides an accurate measure of a motive to avoid success. The method of measuring this motive is as yet new and its subjectivity remains a problem. Various researchers have used different cues. The present data suggests that the instrument may be tapping societal stereotypes about various occupations.

The results of this investigation suggest future research possibilities. Primarily, more work could be done to improve the instrument for measuring the motive to avoid success. At present, the instrument is extremely subjective, and its validity remains unproven. The development of an objective questionnaire would be advantageous.

In addition, further analysis of the theoretical assumptions of fear of success research may be fruitful. For example, it is assumed that women who are oriented to non-traditional careers would be most likely to be affected by fear of success, since women who do not want success would not be threatened by it. This leads to the conclusion that women who are housewives or clerical workers are not more successful because they do not want success. Yet women who are in higher-status, non-traditional jobs are supposed to have a fear of success which will inhibit their performance. These

internal contradictions need to be examined

Sex differences in achievement motivation are apparently far too complex to be accounted for by fear of success alone. Future research could focus on the processes that cause some women to not want success, and thus not to seek careers outside the home.

Finally, it may be more valuable for research to focus on how educational, legal and occupational barriers to women can be removed, than to focus on how negative consequences can lead to a fear of success. For it takes more than high n Achievement and ability to reach success in this society.

In conclusion, Horner's work was an important first step in attempting to fill in the gaps in the study of women's achievement motivation. However, the present instrument seems an inadequate measure of the motive to avoid success. The inconsistent results of studies done since 1968 would indicate that this motive is only one part of a complex explanation of why potential is inhibited.

APPENDIX A

MOTIVE TO AVOID SUCCESS TEST

INSTRUCTIONS:

ON THE FOLLOWING THREE (3) PAGES, YOU WILL BE PRESENTED WITH THREE (3) WRITTEN SENTENCES. YOUR TASK IS TO WRITE A STORY TO EACH SENTENCE. WRITE FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND WORK RAPIDLY. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG STORIES. SPELLING AND GRAMMAR ARE NOT IMPORTANT. YOU WILL HAVE FOUR (4) MINUTES TO WRITE EACH STORY. I WILL KEEP TIME AND TELL YOU WHEN IT IS TIME TO GET READY FOR THE NEXT SENTENCE.

Social Security # _____

1. Linda has just found out that she has been accepted by a top-ranking law school.

Social Security # _____

2. At the end of his first year in medical school, Bob finds himself at the top of the class.

Social Security # _____

3. After earning a master's degree in psychology, Mary decides to continue to work for a Ph.D.

APPENDIX B

ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN QUESTIONNAIRE

Social Security # _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

THE STATEMENTS LISTED BELOW DESCRIBE ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY THAT DIFFERENT PEOPLE HAVE. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS, ONLY OPINIONS. YOU ARE ASKED TO EXPRESS YOUR FEELING ABOUT EACH STATEMENT BY INDICATING WHETHER YOU:

(A) agree strongly (B) agree mildly (C) disagree mildly, or

(D) disagree strongly

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR OPINION BY BLACKENING EITHER A, B, C, or D ON THE ANSWER SHEET FOR EACH ITEM.

1. Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than of a man.

2. Women should take increasing responsibility for leadership in solving the intellectual and social problems of the day.

3. Both husband and wife should be allowed the same grounds for divorce.

4. Telling dirty jokes should be mostly a masculine prerogative.

5. Intoxication among women is worse than intoxication among men.

6. Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry.

7. It is insulting to women to have the "obey" clause remain in the marriage service.

8. There should be a strict merit system in job appointment and promotion without regard to sex.

9. A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage.

10. Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers.

11. Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together.

12. Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.

13. A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man.

14. Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.

15. It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks.

16. In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children.

17. Women should be encouraged not to become sexually intimate with anyone before marriage, even their fiances.

18. The husband should not be favored by law over the wife in the disposal of family property or income.

19. Women should be concerned with their duties of childbearing and house tending, rather than with desires for professional and business careers.

20. The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.

21. Economic and social freedom is worth far more to women than acceptance of the ideal of femininity which has been set up by men.

22. On the average, women should be regarded as less capable of contributing to economic production than are men.

23. There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted.

24. Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeship in the various trades.

25. The modern girl is entitled to the same freedom from regulation and control that is given to the modern boy.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

26. College class:
(A) Freshman (C) Junior (E) Other
(B) Sophomore (D) Senior

27. Age.
(A) Under 20 (C) 26-30
(B) 20-25 (D) Over 30

28. Your religious interest or affiliation is:
(A) Protestant (C) Jewish (E) None
(B) Roman Catholic (D) Other

28. Your religious interest or affiliation is:
(A) Protestant (C) Jewish (E
(B) Roman Catholic (D) Other

(A) Once a week (C) About 1-6 times a year
(B) Once every 2-4 weeks (D) Not at all

30. Which of your parents seemed to have made the most decisions while you were growing up?
(A) Mother
(B) Father
(C) Both made about an equal number of decisions

31. What was your father's primary occupation while you were growing up? Be specific: _____

32. Sex: (A) Female (B) Male

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