

## การกำหนดเป้าหมายในการมีครอบครัว อาชีพและการศึกษาต่อของ นักศึกษาหญิงชั้นปีที่ 4 ระดับปริญญาตรี

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### บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้ได้กำหนดความสัมพันธ์ของการวางแผนคุณค่าของนักศึกษาหญิงชั้นปีที่ 4 ในระดับบัณฑิตศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการวางแผนการมีครอบครัว อาชีพ และการสำเร็จศึกษาของพวกเขา ก่อนรับปริญญาบัตร รวมถึงความสัมพันธ์ที่สำคัญระหว่างการมีครอบครัวและอาชีพหลังจากสำเร็จการศึกษาและค่านิยมในการทำงานซึ่งประกอบไปด้วย การอยู่กับความจริง ความสำเร็จ สาธารณูปโภค และ ค่าใช้จ่าย ที่นักศึกษาได้เรียนรู้จากการเรียนในระดับมหาวิทยาลัย การออกแบบเชิงบรรยายของงานวิจัยนี้ได้นำมาใช้กับนักศึกษาหญิงจำนวน 379 คนจากมหาวิทยาลัย โฮลีย์ แองเจิล (HAU) ซึ่งผู้เข้าอบรมได้ทำแบบทดสอบ 4 ชุด ได้แก่ (1) แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับข้อมูลทั่วไป (2) แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับระดับครอบครัวและอาชีพ (3) แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับความสนใจในการศึกษาต่อ (4) แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับค่านิยมในการศึกษา ทั้งนี้แบบสอบถามแรกจะสอบถามถึงข้อมูลส่วนตัวและอายุของผู้เข้าร่วมเพื่อวัตถุประสงค์ในการอธิบาย ส่วนแบบสอบถามชุดที่สองจะถามถึงข้อมูลครอบครัวและอาชีพ ซึ่งแบบออกเป็น 16 ระดับซึ่งพัฒนาออกแบบโดยแบดเทิล สำหรับวัดการกำหนดเป้าหมายของการมีครอบครัวและการทำงาน ในแบบสอบถามชุดที่สามและสี่จะถามถึงความตั้งใจและค่านิยมในการศึกษาต่อในระดับที่สูงขึ้นซึ่งแบบสอบถามชุดนี้ได้พัฒนาออกแบบโดยแบดเทิลเช่นเดียวกับชุดที่สอง ซึ่งประกอบด้วย การประมวลผลของลิเคิร์ท 2 ประการ คือ การตอบคำถามแบบ ใช่ หรือ ไม่ โดยใช้ทฤษฎีการวัดผลของแอ็คเชิลส์และคอสส์ลิคผลการวิจัยพบว่านักเรียนที่สำเร็จการศึกษามีการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางครอบครัวและอาชีพโดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในค่างานแท้จริงผลกระทบต่อการศึกษาเน้นเน้นการจัดทำหลักสูตรทั้งระดับปริญญาตรีและปริญญาโทในหลักสูตรที่อาจช่วยเพิ่มความตั้งใจของนักศึกษาในการศึกษาต่อในระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา

**คำสำคัญ :** การกำหนดเป้าหมาย ความเป็นจริง ความสำเร็จ สาธารณูปโภค ค่าใช้จ่าย

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## Value Orientation of Fourth Year College Women towards Family, Career and Graduate Studies

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### Abstract

The study determined the relationship of fourth year college women's value orientation to their family, career, and graduate studies as well as the relation between their orientation to the relative importance of career and family in their adult lives and the Task Values (Intrinsic, Attainment, Utility, and Cost) that they associate in the pursuit of their graduate studies. The descriptive correlational design was utilized to the 379 female students of Holy Angel University (HAU). The participants completed four instruments: a brief demographic questionnaire that provided information about age, course, major, and section; the Family and Career Scale (FCS); the Intention to Pursue Graduate Studies Questionnaire; and the Valuing of Education (VOE) Scale. The demographic questionnaire sought information about the participants' age, course, major, and section primarily for the purpose of describing them. The Family and Career Scale (FCS) is a 16-item scale developed by Battle (Battle & Wigfield, 2003) to measure family versus career orientation. The Intention to Pursue Graduate Studies Questionnaire was developed by Battle and Wigfield (2003). It has two Likert-type items rated on a 10-point scale ranging from definitely will not (1) to definitely will (10). It was based on a similar question used by Eccles and colleagues (1983) to assess students' intentions to take more Math. Findings revealed that the graduating students had a highly remarkable family and career orientations particularly in the Intrinsic Task Value. Implications for education emphasized on the preparation of both undergraduate and graduate degree programs on the curricula that may enhance the students' intention to pursue their graduate studies.

**Keywords:** Value Orientation, Intrinsic, Attainment, Utility, Cost

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## Introduction

Studies conducted during the late 1980s and early 1990s revealed changing trends in women's ideas about careers. Researchers found that movement by women into predominantly male occupations was increasing, background differences between women choosing traditional versus non-traditional career paths were becoming less pronounced, and women's interest in achieving attainment goals (prestige, authority, and high income) was increasing as well. The gap between the importance females placed on family and career goals was closing with many women placing a stronger emphasis on career goals. College women's educational and career choices were guided by factors such as value priorities emphasizing family over career, sex-role conceptions regarding which careers were appropriate for females, patterns of encouragement from significant others, traditionality of choice, and expectations for success (Betz & Fitzgerald 1987; Fox, Pasternak, & Peiser, 1982; Novack & Novack, 1996; as cited in Battle & Wigfield, 2003). Valuation of Education is a research method that assesses the value of educational attainment; its goal is to identify both the actual monetary value of diplomas and degrees to their recipients, in terms of expected salaries, and to identify the monetary value of educated employees over less educated employees to employers (retrieved from <https://gmatclub.com/forum/valuation-of-education-is-a-research-method-that-assesses-99844.html>).

The US Department of Commerce (1999), in its statistical abstract of the United States, disclosed that the majority of women continue to occupy jobs that conform to female cultural stereotypes. Between the years 1983 and 1998, there was little change in the extent to which women dominated fields such as nursing, teaching and caring for young children, clerical positions, minor accounting jobs, ancillary health care workers, and food service. It discussed further that despite these changes in many women's attitudes toward careers, statistics still showed that many of the higher paying and more prestigious occupations (e.g., architects, engineers, mathematical and computer scientists, natural scientists, physicians, and lawyers) continue to be dominated by men.

This clearly indicates that even if many women's career attitudes are changing this is not reflected in their career choices. Hence, there is a need to continue addressing women's occupational attitudes and choices to understand better their careers. The present study focused on this issue by examining a central construct in one model of occupational choice-women's valuing of education and its relation to family and career as well as its intention to pursue graduate studies.

## Theoretical Framework

A variety of psychological models have been attempted by researchers to explain women's occupational attitudes and choices. As quoted by Battle and Wigfield (2003), Fassinger's study affirmed that four major variables- *ability*, *agentic traits*, *feminist orientation*, and *family and career orientation*-would predict women's career orientation, math orientation, and career choice. It also presented that having high ability, liberal sex role attitudes about work and family, and instrumental personality traits such as high levels of self-confidence were the major determinants of career orientation for college women. These variables predicted women's choices of non-traditional, science-related careers that were high in prestige. Together with O'Brien, Fassinger (1990) confirmed these findings in a sample of high school women. It also revealed that their relationship with mothers emerged as an equally important predictor of career orientation and career choice.

Researchers adopting expectancy-value models of achievement motivation examined a number of career-related processes and work-related outcomes, including addressing the issue of career choice emphasizing on the individuals' expectancies and values that are crucial determinants of career choice (Feather, 1992; Lynd-Stevenson, 1999). A unique aspect of this model is Eccles and colleagues' focus on achievement values as a key factor influencing intention and choice. Four major components of the subjective valuing of a task or activity were proposed: *attainment value or importance*, *intrinsic value or enjoyment*, *utility value or usefulness of the task*, and *cost* (Eccles et al., 1983; Wigfield, Battle, Keller, & Eccles, 2002). Battle and Wigfield (2003) defined *attainment value* as the importance of doing well on a

given task. Murray, as noted by Myers (1995)), further added that it is the desire for significant accomplishment and for rapidly attaining a high standard. *Intrinsic value* is the enjoyment one gains from doing the task, similar in certain respects to notions of intrinsic motivation (Eccles, 1987). Intrinsic Motivation, as specified by Apruebo (2009), involves the rewards that come from within the individual, such as the desire to satisfy curiosity. Battle and Wigfield (2003) also defined *Utility value* or *usefulness* that refers to how task completion facilitates future goals; for instance, taking a math class to fulfill a requirement for a science degree while *Cost* refers to what the individual has to give up to do a task as well as the anticipated effort one will need to put into task completion.

Eccles (1987) expanded the model to educational and occupational choice for he believed that individuals base such choices on their expectancies-that they can meet the educational demands and succeed at a given career and their valuing of that particular educational or occupational goal. Eccles et al. (1983) believed that “one’s perception of the value of an activity is more important in determining one’s decision to engage in that activity while one’s self-concept of ability is more important in determining one’s actual performance once involved in the activity”. Battle and Wigfield (2003) added that task value therefore is the more crucial portion of the model to examine in terms of understanding women’s intentions to pursue a particular career-related activity such as graduate studies.

Several researches have become interested in the overall processes by which individuals make decisions. Eccles and his team (1983) studied both intentions to pursue an activity and actual choices of which activity to pursue. They discovered that task value emerged as the most powerful predictor of students’ educational plans and as the only significant mediator of sex differences in actual course enrolment.

In a related work Farmer (1985) found that intrinsic values related to individuals’ choices of difficult tasks did not address all the value components. However in the study of Battle and Wigfield (2003) they addressed this gap in the literature and had three main purposes: to assess whether the components of task value originally defined by Eccles and colleagues (1983) and empirically assessed in the Mathematics achievement domain by Eccles and Wigfield (1995) could be empirically identified with respect to women’s valuing of graduate education; to assess how different aspects of task value predict college women’s intentions to attend graduate studies; and to assess how women’s family and career orientation, a construct that can be tied to the cost issue in expectancy-value theory could be related to the value they attach to graduate studies.

From the results and other recent studies of women’s career orientations, it reveals that present-day college women may be engaged more of a wellness or personal agency approach to higher education and career advancement than the previous generations. Education and career advancement appeared to be opportunities to fulfill intrinsic needs for personal importance, enjoyment, and usefulness, rather than responsibilities to be cautiously considered after planning for anticipated complications (e.g., Hallett & Gilbert, 1997; Langan-Fox, 1991; Phillips & Imhoff, 1997).

## Objectives

The study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent do fourth year college women perceive their valuation of graduate studies and the relative importance of family and career in their adult lives?
2. What is the relation between fourth year college women’s orientation to the relative importance of career and family in their adult lives and the Task Values (intrinsic, attainment, utility, and cost) that they associate in their pursuit of graduate studies?

## Materials and Methods

The descriptive correlational research design was utilized in the study. A convenience sample of 379 was gathered from the fourth year college women of Holy Angel University during the 1<sup>st</sup> Semester of School Year 2012-2013.

It was administered to the following: College of Arts, Sciences, and Education (CASED)-Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts (AB Comm), Bachelor of Science in Psychology (BS Psych), Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED), and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED); College of Business and Accountancy (CBA)-Bachelor of Science in Accounting Technology (BSAT) and Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) major in Marketing Management; College of Hospitality Management (CHM)-Bachelor of Science in Culinary Arts Management (BSCAM), Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM), and Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM); College of Information and Communications Technology (CICT)-Bachelor of Science in Computer Science (BSCS) and Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT); and College of Nursing and Allied Medical Sciences (CNAMS)-Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). The College of Engineering and Architecture (CEA) and the College of Criminal Justice Education and Forensics (CCJEF) were not included because these are said to be “non-traditional fields” of study for women. The students taking up Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSA) were not also considered because BSA is a five-year course.

## Materials

The participants completed four instruments: a brief demographic questionnaire that provided information about age, course, major, and section; the Family and Career Scale (FCS); the Intention to Pursue Graduate Studies Questionnaire; and the Valuing of Education (VOE) Scale.

The demographic questionnaire sought information about the participants’ age, course, major, and section primarily for the purpose of describing them.

The Family and Career Scale (FCS) is a 16-item scale developed by Battle (Battle & Wigfield, 2003) to measure family versus career orientation. The FCS in this study was conceptually similar to the Orientation to Occupational and Family Integration (OOFI) Scale devised by Gilbert (Hallett & Gilbert, 1997) but the items on the FCS checked on the participant’s ideas about women’s roles rather than first person projections for future personal role-taking. Considering their more general belief about women’s roles reflected a conceptual similarity to the OOFI but aligned the instrument more closely with Eccles’s (1987) theoretical framework. The framework dwelt on the cultural stereotypes associated with specific activities as a specific influence on achievement-related behavior and choice. Eccles indicated the internal consistency (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$ ) for the FCS was .89 while Hallett and Gilbert reported that the reliability of the OOFI was about .76. All items were answered on 1–5 scales, with endpoints labeled *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*. The questions that were asked about the participants’ perceptions placed emphasis on family and career in their adult lives.

The Intention to Pursue Graduate Studies Questionnaire was developed by Battle and Wigfield (2003). It has two Likert-type items rated on a 10-point scale ranging from *definitely will not* (1) to *definitely will* (10). It was based on a similar question used by Eccles and colleagues (1983) to assess students’ intentions to take more Math. This variable was also used as a dependent variable in analyses of how the task value subcomponents predicted the participants’ intention to pursue graduate studies. Participants checked one of the five responses signifying their intention to attend graduate studies, including *very definitely will not*, *probably will not*, *am not sure*, *probably will*, or *very definitely will*. A final question that was asked of participants was to select a category that would best identify the first and second most important personal reasons they had for attending graduate studies out of a field of seven options. These options were worded to give specific or pragmatic examples of central concepts related with each of the task value orientations. An example is category #1, *money, status, career* which was intended to measure the utilitarian (utility value) benefits of having an advanced degree and added statements to

consider such as “I will make more money or I will get a more prestigious job”. This data was utilized as an additional measure of task value and to analyze how closely participants’ scores on the task value subscales reflected their answers to a simplified or less configured measure of the constructs.

The Value of Education (VOE) scale was also devised by Battle and Wigfield (2003). It consists of 51 items inquiring about the participants’ different aspects of valuing of graduate education from the *intrinsic*, *attainment*, *utility*, and *cost* task value components described by Eccles and colleagues (1983). The items were modified from the original items in assessing valuing of Math; more so additional items were included by Battle and Wigfield (2003) to present a more in-depth assessment of each proposed task value component. Eight items measured the degree to which the participants would foresee a sense of “liking” or “enjoyment” in their pursuit of graduate studies. Ten items checked on the attainment value or the extent to which the participants would associate a sense of personal importance or meaningfulness with the pursuit of graduate studies. Nine items considered the utility value or the degree to which participants would associate a sense of usefulness toward the completion of future life goals with the pursuit of graduate studies.

The remaining 24 items assessed the anticipated costs or personal sacrifice the participants would associate in their pursuit of graduate studies. The variable was broken down conceptually into the following four sets of items: (1) five items checked on the participants’ personal effort required to complete the task in relation to the task’s worth; (2) six items focused on the loss of time for other valued goals; (3) six items concentrated on the psychological cost of failure or participants’ assessments of the likelihood of success based on negative beliefs about their ability to succeed; and (4) seven items identified success at what cost, or an expressed ambivalence about the worth of pursuing graduate studies based on some of the negative affiliative consequences associated with achieving success in graduate school (being awarded an advanced graduate degree). All items were answered on a 1-5 scale, with endpoints labeled *strongly agree* and *strongly disagree*. The Cronbach’s alpha values for internal consistency ranged from 0.82 to 0.93 for each of the subscales.

## Data Collection

The questionnaires were group administered except for the CICT where the questionnaires were individually administered. Since the CICT graduating students were already deployed in their practicum during that time they no longer had regular classroom meetings. Hence, their practicum coordinator volunteered to administer the questionnaires to each participant assigned to meet her for practicum purposes. Approximately 15-20 minutes was used in accomplishing the questionnaires.

## Ethical Considerations

The researcher secured written and verbal permission from the concerned dean and chairperson of the college. On the other hand, verbal permission was sought from the faculty members who were handling the classes of the participants. Answering the questionnaires was done on a voluntary basis. The nature and objectives of the study, the guarantee of confidentiality of data, and the anonymity of participants were specified in the cover letter thereby assuring them that their answers were purely utilized for the study’s purposes.

## Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation and inferential statistics like correlation. All test statistics computation was performed using the *Statistical Package for the Social Science* (SPSS) version 20.

## Results

### *Sample Description*

Three hundred seventy-one or 97.88% of subjects ranged in age from 18-21 years and eight or 2.12% were between the ages of 22-34. The study was administered to fourth year college women taking up College of Arts, Sciences, and Education (CASED) particularly Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts with area of specialization in Broadcast Journalism (n=5) and Advertising and Public Relations (n=5), Bachelor of Science in Psychology (n=15), Bachelor of Elementary Education (n=14), and Bachelor of Secondary Education (n=14); College of Business and Accountancy (CBA) specifically Bachelor of Science in Accounting Technology (n=73) and Bachelor of Science in Business Administration major in Marketing Management (n=41); College of Hospitality Management (CHM)-Bachelor of Science in Culinary Arts Management (n=5), Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (n=103), and Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (n=44); College of Information and Communications Technology (CICT)-particularly Bachelor of Science in Computer Science with area of specialization in Systems Development (n=16) and Bachelor of Science in Information Technology major in Multimedia Technology (n=14); and College of Nursing and Allied Medical Sciences (CNAMS)-Bachelor of Science in Nursing (n=30).

In terms of the participants' valuation of graduate studies and their relative importance to family and career in adult life, Table 1 revealed that the highest score was distributed to the *intrinsic* subscale (M=4.07, SD= .856) while the lowest score was given to the *cost* subscale (M=3.12, SD=1.032). The subscales on *importance to family and career* (M=3.66, SD=1.009), *utility* (M=3.63, SD=1.019), and *attainment* (M=3.47, SD=1.056) were ranked second, third, and fourth, respectively.

**Table 1**

Fourth year college women's responses on valuation of graduate studies and relative importance of family and career in adult life

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Intrinsic	4.07	.856
Attainment	3.47	1.056
Utility	3.63	1.019
Cost	3.12	1.032
Importance of Family and Career	3.66	1.009

Correlational analyses were employed to address the relationship of the participants' orientation to the relative importance of career and family and their valuation of graduate studies with intention to pursue graduate studies. Utilizing Pearson's correlation coefficient, Table 2 reveals a statistically significant relationship.

**Table 2**

Relationship of fourth year college women's orientation to the relative importance of career and family and their valuation of graduate studies with intention to pursue graduate studies

	Intention to Pursue Graduate Studies
	-.093
Importance of Family and Career	$p = .189$
Valuation of Graduate Studies	
	-.240
Cost	$p = .001$
	.196
Utility	$p = .005$
	.280
Attainment	$p = .001$
	.416
Intrinsic	$p = .001$

## Discussion

Majority of the fourth year college women consider the *intrinsic* task value as the most significant as regards their valuation for graduate studies. As earlier noted *Intrinsic value*, as defined by Eccles et al. (1983), is the enjoyment one gains from doing the task, similar in certain respects to notions of intrinsic motivation. The participants find the idea of being a graduate student to be very appealing and exciting and that they look forward to advancing their knowledge by exploring new and challenging ideas in graduate school.

An examination of family and career reveals the participants' belief that they can manage combining their career with the responsibility of taking care of a family. This is because they feel that women who have a career make better mothers and that working mothers set good examples for children.

These college women's beliefs further prove the findings of Battle and Wigfield (2003) that present day college women are more engaged of a wellness or personal agency approach to higher education and career advancement than the previous generations. This means that the participants plan to continue working outside the home whether they have children or not. They feel that having children stay with a caring person other than them for most of the day is a good experience for their children. Battle and Wigfield (2003) also noted the findings of Hallet and Gilbert (in 1997) who confirm that both roles are possible to be assumed by college women; that family orientation and career orientation are related (in Farber, 1996); and that college women have strong career goals (in Novack & Novack, 1996). Examining the item contents of both *utility* and *attainment* give interesting findings since the response patterns of the fourth

year college women show that they may or may not find graduate studies as an important part of their adult lives. Some participants believe that their life goals can be met without a graduate education whereas some, on the other hand, think that a graduate degree will be very useful for what they want to do in the future.



More likely than not, realizations of what one likes, and what one is, are components of a woven life fabric that remain fairly consistent across contexts, even as the nature of the task in question changes (Markus & Wurf, 1987 as cited in Battle & Wigfield, 2003).

Findings indicate that the *cost* subscale has the lowest score, indicating that cost concerns are the least prominent. Hence, the participants do not conform with ideas like “thinking about all the work required to get through and being uncertain in getting a graduate degree”, “taking time away from other activities I want to pursue while still young”, “preventing me from being able to focus on marriage and family”, “losing track of some valuable friendships”, and “worrying that I will waste a lot of time and money”. They believe that getting a graduate degree requires more effort but they are still willing to pursue it. The lowest impact of *cost* on intentions, combined with its lowest mean level only indicates that things have indeed changed. The fourth year college women in this study see few costs associated in their pursuit of graduate education.

## Conclusion

The results of the study indicate the importance that HAU fourth year college women give to their family and career. They consider education and career advancement as their avenue to fulfill their intrinsic value or enjoyment. Relative to this, administrators and teachers in both undergraduate and graduate degree programs may work hand in hand to prepare curricula that may enhance the students’ intention to pursue graduate studies. They may also serve as role models by continuing and finishing their graduate studies.

Since the background of the participants is varied they may have different learning experiences and opportunities. Similarly, the data gathered from them may not honestly demonstrate their feelings at the time the data was collected. The US Department of Commerce (1999), in its statistical abstract confirmed this by emphasizing that although many women’s career attitudes are changing this is not reflected in their career choices. Future studies that may have the same aim may also employ qualitative research design. The use of illustrative cases may make the generalizations derived from statistical treatment more concrete.

Exploring further the effects of valuation of education is another indication of serving the society. Hence, even if male and female college women may have different learning experiences and opportunities, the study may also be conducted to the male college students and understand how motivational process evolves within them. Other factors may also be included to identify further the participants’ explicit career goals. Other researches may continue examining the college women’s family and career orientations to understand more the motivational process of women.

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