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The Correlation Between the Motive to Achieve and the Motive to Affiliate in College Women

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between the motives to achieve and to affiliate in college senior women and to compare that correlation earlier findings that consistently produced a significant negative relationship. It has been suggested in the 1970's that for women achievement and affiliation were becoming less adversarial and approaching a more balanced coexistence. These motivations were measured by the frequently utilized Edward's Personal Preference Schedule in an effort to help strengthen the comparability of the present results with those previous findings. Interviews were conducted in an effort to shed light on whether these women perceived the conflicts demonstrated by the correlation of achievement and affiliation. Consistent with the findings of past research, there was a significant negative correlation (-.32) between achievement and affiliation. Despite the prevalence of the super-woman notion, which reflects a meta-successful combination of career and family aspirations, many women appear to perceive these life dreams as adversarial. It seems that a combination of motives does not imply balance or coexistence for that matter, as many women continue to wrestle with the conflict between these apparently incompatible aspirations.
The Correlation Between The Motive to Achieve and the Motive to Affiliate in College Women

Since the pioneering days of motivational research in the 1950's, women's motive to achieve has been surrounded by a slowly dissipating cloud of controversy and confusion. This was not very surprising as the early research largely ignored women and focused solely on men. Blumen, Isaksen and Leavitt (1983) attributed this to the prevailing social definition of achievement which had focused on masculine values to the exclusion of women stating, "male-associated characteristics of competence, task orientation and rationality serve as the cornerstones of western achievement".

As in many other areas of psychological research where women have not received equal attention, because they have often been considered to be deviant or simply mysterious, as they fail to fit in the models derived on the basis of masculine data (Gilligan, 1982). McClelland (1951 as quoted by Gilligan 1982) supported this contention stating, "Psychologists have tended to regard male behavior as the norm and female behavior as some kind of deviation from that norm".

Another reason that women's motive to achieve (MACH) has remained largely enigmatic until recently was that the measures that were utilized to examine women were derived from the early male based data. During the 1970's, many researchers began to question the validity of various measures as they applied to women. Fredreich (1976) stressed the necessity of broadening the definition of MACH beyond the traditional confines of
"competition with a standard of excellence to culturally approved male pursuits and modes".

Ryujin (1983) examined the effectiveness of the Thematic Apperceptive Test (TAT) as a measure of MACH for women and concluded that it was essentially weak. Women were considered divergent from the traditional intellectual and competitive forms of achievement towards which this projective measure was directed. Lyons (1976) suggested that the TAT was invalid for women because it was filled with sex biased cues.

When women's MACH was examined, gender differences began to emerge. Ryujin (1983) found that women tended to be more concerned with task competence beyond the traditional arenas, including affiliative relationships. Some researchers perceived a clear dichotomy between men and women's MACH, in that they were differentially based on mastery and social approval, respectively (Phillips, 1974 & Hoffman, 1972). Stewart and Chester (1982, as quoted by Jenkins, 1987) concluded from a literature review that the apparent sex differences in MACH are in part a result of the lack of comparable data and of "gender differences in role norms, socialization and personal values".

As researchers began to suggest explanations for the apparent differences between men and women's MACH, the motive to affiliate (MAFF) seemed to be crucial to understanding the mystery of women's achievement motive. Atkinson, Heyns and Veroff (1958, as quoted by Phillips, 1976) defined MAFF as "any evidence of concern over establishing, maintaining or restoring a positive affiliative relationship with another person".
Gender differences have been found in both MACH and MAFF, in that feminine subjects have higher MAFF and lower MACH than their masculine peers (Gama, 1985). Using a projective test, the TAT and an objective measure, the Edwards Personal Preference Scale (EPPS), these motives have been found independent of each other in men but not in women (Schroth, 1985). McCelland (1951, as cited by Phillips, 1974) was the first to suggest that social rewards facilitated MACH in women but not in men. Bardwick (1971) proposed that women choose one of two routes for expression of their MACH, either the adoption of the "feminine girl" approach which involves a fusion of MACH and MAFF or a seemingly more "masculine" approach, incorporating a strong internalized MACH expressed in an autonomous and competitive manner.

There has been substantial debate concerning the relationship of MACH and MAFF in women. Oliver (1974) supported Carlson's (1972) proposal that achievement and affiliation are considered masculine and feminine motivations and occur in various combinations of levels in different women. Many researchers have suggested that these motives are compatible in women (Schroth, 1985, Grawelski & Rodgen, 1980, Fredreich, 1976, Stein & Bailey, 1973 Gump, 1972). In a literature review, Phillips (1974) concluded that women's MACH is 'affiliative in nature. Schroth (1985), using the TAT and the EPPS, concluded that women satisfy their MACH via their MAFF through activities such as nurturing. Stein and Bailey (1973) extended this idea proposing that affiliative behavior has often been
a vehicle for the satisfaction of MACH because it has been considered an appropriate avenue for women to attain excellence.

Several researchers purport the relationship between these motives is negative (Sedney & Turner, 1975), and that the nature of this correlation can cause psychological conflict in women, especially in those who are particularly sensitive to environmental pressures to conform to traditional sex roles (Bickman, 1976). The apparent conflict between these motives seems to inhibit performance under some conditions. Schneider and Green (1977) found academic performance decrements in GPA of students who scored high MAFF and either high or low MACH on the Personality Research Form, as compared to their high MACH low MAFF peers. This finding was consistently found in both males and females, suggesting that this motivational conflict was not completely confined to women's experience. In a literature review, Hoffman (1972) concluded that both academic and professional women will suppress individual achievement, such as input of ideas in a group setting, to maintain a positive rapport with others.

It becomes increasingly evident that sex roles and the cultural pressures to conform to them is crucial to fully understanding the relationship between MACH and MAFF, as it has been correlated with gender and not sex (Hardin, 1976 as quoted by Gama, 1985). Horner (1972) supported this contention stating that both men and women tend to evaluate themselves by sex role stereotypes.

Many studies found that women's MACH were differentially aroused according to their adherence to the traditional sex roles. Grawelski and
Rodgen (1980) using the Wellsley Role Orientation Scale (WROS) found that traditional and nontraditional women's MACH was differentially facilitated by affiliative and achievement arousal. Gama (1985) using the Personality Research Form, found women classified as androgynous, with high MACH and MAFF, did not display any psychological conflict in the face of achievement arousal. Alper (1973) using the Alper Thema Method, found that traditional women, as classified by the WROS, produced highly affiliative forms of achievement stories, such as being the husband's helpmate.

It seems apparent that the cultural pressures to conform to sex roles can result in both psychological conflict and a restriction in behavior. Gump (1972) suggested that women who see individual achievement as in conflict with the fulfillment of the traditional roles of wife and mother experience psychological conflict. Using the Fand Sex Role Inventory and the Elation Depression Scale, she found those women to be less happy and contented than others who did not perceive such a disparity between these motives. Phillips (1974) suggested from her findings that many women are motivated to achieve in a manner that has been dictated by their sex role.

Not all women have been encumbered with this sense of restriction over their choice of mode through which they seek achievement. Grawelski and Rodgen (1980) suggested that senior college women classified as nontraditionals interpreted a wider variety of situations as potential achievement opportunities. These women also appear to have benefitted in other ways. They were more autonomous, individualistic and had greater career commitment than their more traditional peers (Tangri, 1972). Tangri
(1972) also found the nontraditional women did not suffer in the area of affiliative heterosexual relationships, as a result of their deviation from their sex role. Despite all the apparent benefits, it seems that a divergence from the traditional expectations has not been without a price. Tangri (1972) found "role innovators", women who entered careers in which women were significantly underrepresented (<30%), had greater self doubts concerning ability and identity than their traditional peers.

As women are approaching the end of college, they are faced with many decisions concerning post graduate life, which seem to be reflective of their grappling with cultural pressures and their own internal motives. The relationship between the motive to achieve and to affiliate appears to be an important factor in the determination of women's attitudes and plans for the future. Career orientation and plans concerning the establishment of heterosexual relationships have been two of the primary areas that senior college women seem to focus on when planning post graduate life. The attitudes held by women at the end of their college career appears to be a strong indicator of long term career choices. Jenkins (1987), using a TAT and an open-ended questionnaire, found college senior women's MACH was predictive of occupational choices 14 years later. Gump (1972) considered this point in life to be "crucial in development" and proposed that conflict often resulted from a perceived contradiction between the fulfillment of a woman as an individual and as a wife and mother.

Sedney and Turner (1975), using the EPPS and interviews, examined two models of the development of career orientation (C-O) in women. They
found the correlation of MACH and MAFF to be low and negative. Their results provided strong support for a the "enrichment model" developed by Almquist and Angrist (1970). This model suggested that women with high C-O display less traditional behaviors because they prefer to occupy their time with other activities. It provides a causal sequence for the development of C-O suggesting that a high MACH leads to high C-O which results in a deemphasis of heterosexual affiliations.

Oliver (1974) found women who intended to seek a career after college had higher MACH and lower MAFF than their peers who aspired to be homemakers. The type of career that women desired appeared to be reflective of the cultural pressures to conform to sex roles, as women with high MACH were more likely to seek careers that were easily accessible to them, such as teaching (Jenkins, 1987). Women who chose to enter high status positions were more likely to suppress of MAFF for the expression of MACH (Sid & Lindgren, 1982). It seems that few women are unaffected by the cultural pressures to conform to traditional roles, as women with a high MACH and aspired to high status careers often needed strong affiliative support from a male. Bickman (1972) found such college seniors often got the encouragement they needed from a strong heterosexual relationship.

Bickman (1972) utilized the TAT and interviews to examine senior women's attitudes and plans of post graduate life. She found that women who intended to marry within the first year after graduation had higher MAFF and lower MACH than women who intended to remain single during that time. Those who sought early marriage also experienced greater
difficulty in the decision making process because they questioned their ability to succeed in a career or even to function autonomously. Bickman (1972) found this self doubt often resulted in their "foregoing individual achievement for marriagibility".

These women tended to put all the decisions concerning their lives, such as future career choice, in the hands of the man with which they were involved. They also expressed an intention of assuming the role of helpmate, thus seeking vicarious satisfaction of their MACH via their MAFF.

College senior women who Bickman classified as "independents" actively chose to maintain control over the direction of their lives. From her experience as a clinician, she proposed that these women had a strong independent identity and that they were comfortable making life decisions from their own knowledge base. The independent women were not foregoing affiliations to strive for their achievement aspirations. Many had steady boyfriends and intended to marry them after their career was established.

Bickman's (1972) findings suggest a trend towards balance between MACH and MAFF and a loosening of the cultural reigns for many women as they begin to face life after college. This was purported by several other researchers, such as Phillips (1974) who concluded that an apparent prevalence of "uncertainty and ambivalence in both men and women" and a developing trend away from sex role stereotypes, especially in women. Fredreich (1976) supported this as he found men were beginning to include affiliative success in their inner standards of personal achievement.
Women do not seem to have resigned themselves to this motivational struggle, in that they appear to be actively seeking a balance between the satisfaction of both MACH and MAFF. Veroff, and his colleagues (1980) conducted a comparative study of motives between women of 1956 and 1976. Using a TAT, they found that the level of MAFF was maintained while MACH increased significantly cross-generationally. Gump (1973) found white middle class college seniors of the early 1970's had greater concern for the realization of their own potential than for the nurturance of growth in others. This sentiment was markedly different from that of college women in 1953 who expressed equal concern for the development of self and others.

My intentions for examining the relationship between the motive to achieve and to affiliate in women and their attitudes and plans for post graduate life was to see if college senior women of 1989 differ from those of the 1970's. Several researchers suggested that women were tending toward a balance between their MACH and MAFF as the restrictions of their sex roles began to lift, with the increasing number of women entering the work place and the notion of egalitarian marriages became popular (Veroff, 1980, Bickman, 1972, Gump, 1972). Contrary to this notion of a trend-like departure from traditional sex roles and acquisition of motivational balance, it seems that little has changed for women in the 1980's. Schroth (1985) suggested that women's motivational conflict was primarily resultant from sex role stereotypes, and consequently, many women appear to rechannel their motive to achieve into socially acceptable affiliative avenues. Hopefully, the results from this study will provide a reflection of the current
status of this motivational relationship and shed light on the current social message concerning the apparently changing roles of women in the American society.

Method

Subjects

Sixty women from the University of Richmond's Senior class were randomly selected to participate in this study. All subjects were in the process of completing their final semester, pending graduation in May, 1989. Subsequent to the testing, eight of this sample were chosen on the basis of their MACH and MAFF scoring combinations, specifically high-high, low-low, high-low and low-high.

Materials

The Edwards Personal Preference Scale (1959) was the measure utilized to assess the motivations to achieve and to affiliate. It is a forced-choice questionnaire concerning the discernment of statements the subject felt most accurately described her characteristically or affectively. It is comprised of 15 scales, including achievement, affiliation, deference, order, exhibition, autonomy, intraception, succorance, dominance, abasement, nurturance, change, endurance, heterosexuality and aggression.

A standard interview consisting of 11 questions concerning their perceptions of the prevailing social pressures directed at college senior women, their life's dreams and their attitudes towards careers and family. A
tape recorder and a dictaphone were employed to record the interviews with the 8 chosen subjects accurately.

Procedure

Eighty women of the senior class were requested by mail to participate in the motivation testing portion of the study on a volunteer basis. All were made aware of the general purpose of the experiment, namely their attitudes and feelings about post graduate life. Before taking the test, all subjects were made aware of the nature of the instrument and the anonymity and restricted availability of their results. Their informed consent was formalized by a signed debriefing statement.

The Edwards Personal Preference Scale was administered in small groups and individually, on the basis of convenience to the subjects. The MACH and MAFF scores were calculated and transformed into standardized percentile scores based on the provided EPPS normatives for college women.

Upon completion of the testing process, eight women were chosen for the interviewing process on the basis of their MACH and MAFF scores. Of the eight requested, all volunteered their time for this portion of the study. Two were selected from each combination, specifically, high-high, low-low, high-low and low-high. In comparison to the normative scores for college women provided in the EPPS manual, scores in the 85th percentile or higher were classified as high, and the low category comprised scores which fell below the 15th percentile. Although the interviewer was not blind to the subjects' performance on the EPPS, the questions were standardized to help guard against bias. See appendix A for a verbatim list of the interview questions.
The interviews were tape recorded and transcripts were created. The interview transcripts were analyzed for within and between group response similarities and differences, in an effort to shed light on the controversy surrounding the correlation between MACH and MAFF.

Results

A Pearson Product Moment Correlation calculated with the standard scores revealed a significant negative correlation between the MACH and MAFF percentile scores $r(60) = -0.32$ \( p < .007 \). This appears to suggest that the findings of this study were consistent with that of past research, which purported an inverse relationship of comparable significance.

Insert Table 1 about here

To examine the structure of the EPPS for this restricted population, a Factor Analysis with a varimax rotation was performed on all 15 subscale raw scores. Five factors were produced which accounted for 50.4% of the variance among the fifteen EPPS subscale raw scores. The first factor, which produced the most significant percentage of variance (15%) was one which appeared to most closely represent the masculine sex role stereotype. The scales with the highest positive loadings on this masculine factor were achievement, autonomy, aggressiveness and abasement. This factor's
significant negative loadings were deference, affiliation and nurturance, which strengthened the notion of masculine sex role stereotypes. The second factor, which accounted for 14% of the communality, seemed to encompass the feminine sex role stereotype. The positively loaded subscales of this feminine factor were affiliation, nurturance and succorance. Order, dominance and endurance were the significant negatively loaded variables, which served to fortify this feminine factor.

The three remaining factors appear to have been produced primarily from one specific subscale. One such factor, namely the third, was change, which accounted for 9.6% of the common variance. Edwards (1959) defined this variable as "...to do new and different things, to travel, to meet new people, to experience novelty and change in daily routine, to experiment and try new things..." The fourth factor was primarily composed of abasement, which accounted for 7.4% of the variance and Edwards (1959) defined it as "...to feel guilty when one does something wrong, to accept blame when things do not go right...to feel depressed by inability to handle situations, to feel timid in the presence of superiors, to feel inferior to others in most respects".

The fifth factor was dependence. It was composed of a positive loading of exhibition which Edwards (1959) defined as "...to talk about personal achievements, to be the center of attention, to use words others do not know the meaning of, to ask questions others cannot answer". A significant negative loading on this factor was autonomy. Edwards (1959) defined this variable as "...to say what one thinks about something, to be
independent of others in making decisions, to feel free to do what one wants." Together these variables seem to suggest dependancy, especially in terms of social approval. This final factor accounted for 5% of the communality.

Discussion

Given the significance level of the present study's correlational results, it seems that the motivational conflict between MACH and MAFF has been prevalent in today's college senior women, as they approach post graduate life. It seems imperative to note that the relatively small sample size and restricted population sample may have effected the directionality and strength of the produced correlation, and therefore, it seems inappropriate to conclude that we can generalize to college senior women. Despite this note of caution, it does seem admissible to consider the potential implications of this significant result, as several researchers predicted a tendancy toward a balance between these motivations with the apparent growing flexibility in gender roles (Gump, 1972, Bickman, 1972, & Schroth, 1985). The results of the present study were markedly consistent with that of past research, as Sedney and Turner (1975) found a correlation of .26, at the .007 significance level. It seems important to keep in mind that despite the significance of the correlation, it has accounted for less than 15% percent of the variance. Therefore, one must consider the apparent breadth of individual differences in this sample of college women, when interpreting the results of this study.

From the nature of this statistical comparison, one might conclude that little has changed in women's experience of affiliative and achievement
issues during the last decade. This assumption appears to be inappropriate given the apparent contrast between the attitudes purported in the interviews concerning life plans and social pressures by college seniors today and their peers of the 1970's.

Among the four scoring combination groups that were interviewed, the social message concerning post graduate plans for careers and families seems widely agreed upon. All of the women were quite cognizant of the "super women" ideal, which was born in the early 1980's and has been growing in popularity ever since. They all defined this social model with great facility as, a woman who "can do it all", thus implying a balance between a successful and dynamic career and a flourishing family. One woman, whose scoring combination was high MACH and low MAFF, defined this ideal as a woman who "...does everything, and she's never tired. She's a super wife, mother, friend, with a perfect body. She's just perfect and encompasses it all and can handle it all".

Although the women were in agreement on the apparently overwhelming social pressures to "do it all", the scoring groups differentiated themselves in their attitudes concerning the integration of this model into their personal lives and aspirations. The women who scored high on MACH and low on MAFF differed from their peers in that they were most acutely aware of the personal achievement and career facet of this super woman ideal. When they discussed their post graduate work, both women glowed with enthusiasm and anticipation for their future opportunities for challenge and success. As far as family plans and other affiliative issues, such as
boyfriends, these concerns were a distant and even remote second to their personal achievements. One woman stated that her career plans took primacy as, "they effect everything, because if I want to go to medical school that's four years. I have to do a residency and internship, and that's at least seven years, so I can't see myself getting married. I don't know where I'd have time to."

Women whose aspirations and plans seemed to represent another variation of the inverse relationship between achievement and affiliation were those with low MACH and high MAFF scores. These women were faced with a similar conflict, but instead of welcoming the opportunity to achieve in a career, like their high MACH and low MAFF peers, they harbored strong resentment towards the social pressure to have a career and the perceived widespread derogation of the wife and mother role. A woman adamantly discussed this issue stating, "I've felt the pressure, and I feel like I'm reacting or retroacting maybe. I guess I questioned my ability to go out and pursue something really hard core, like something in the business world. I just want to have kids and get married, like women in the 50's and 60's. I feel like I'm reacting against all this corporate woman stuff." Consistent with their scores, they revealed minimal interest in career opportunities, as one stated, "I'm just not into it (the career search) at all. I would rather settle down right away, that's much more important. I mean, hopefully, I won't have to work. I'd rather just raise a family."

It seems that the only women who did not reveal some anxiety or an aversion to this super woman ideal were those who scored comparably in
both, either high or low in both MACH and MAFF. Both high scoring subjects eagerly discussed their life's plans which encompassed this super woman balancing act of career and family goals. Their responses were suggestive of a strong internalization of this model and perceived it as the only viable avenue for total fulfillment as a women in 1989. They expressed an enthusiasm for achievement in all areas of their lives, including careers and family domains. One woman communicated this desire for virtually total perfection, as she stated, "I do want a career. I want to be excellent and be the supermom, basically. I just want to be able to keep growing in my career, be able to expand on that and at the same time have a family. I want to be a housewife, but I want to be the ideal housewife. I want to bake my own bread, can my own jam and sew my own clothes. I want to be a household executive-make it a job."

The women whose MACH and MAFF scores were both below the 15th percentile were similar to their high scoring peers, in that they shared a desire to have a successful family and fulfilling career. It was their attitude which differentiated them from the other extreme score group. Both had relatively lucid plans but were considerably more relaxed about their future. One woman suggested this "all in good time attitude", as she stated, "I definitely want to have a family but not for a while--at least after graduate school. I think I'll probably get married during school, but I want to enjoy a few years with him, before I start having kids. I want to be a therapist and I figure that I'll be able to establish a practice out of my home
.....that way I can be with my kids when they're young, which I think is really important."

In an effort to shed light on this curious combination of the traditional inverse relationship between the motives to achieve and to affiliate and this relatively novel feminine ideal, it seems appropriate to examine the nature of sex roles in the 1980's. Given the nature of the interviews, women's roles appear to have shifted somewhat to incorporate this super woman ideal, as one woman suggested in her interview, "First, they (women) were all housewives, and then they were getting more into the working world. Today, I think they are trying to establish a medium now and see that they can have a family and pursue a fulfilling career."

Granted, this apparent adjustment of women's sex role has allowed for greater freedom of socially endorsed avenues for personal fulfillment for women, it has not been without a price, namely added requisites for the total woman. One women conveyed her sense of added pressure and difficulty in her fulfillment of this new super woman role, as she stated, "I feel that if I want one and not the other (a career and a family) that I'm not being a full woman. If I decide that I want a family and ...not a great career, then there is something wrong with me. If I just want a career and don't want ten kids then there's something wrong with me too."

One potential source for the reconciliation between the maintenance of the inverse motivational relationship and the apparent altercation of the female sex role stereotype lies in the results of the factor analysis in which two major factors, that appear to be the traditional masculine and feminine
sex role stereotypes were produced. The results of the present study were fairly consistent with factor analysis previously conducted on the EPPS. Using a college sample, consisting of both men and women, Dixon and Ahern (1973) produced five factors, namely dominance, social control (1), social control (2), dependancy and freedom. Comparable to the feminine factor of this study, Social control (1) included positive loadings of affiliation and nurturance and a negative loading of achievement. Social control (2) was quite similar to the masculine factor, as it was composed of positive loadings of achievement, endurance and order and a negative loading of affiliation.

It seems that the shift of the feminine sex role has not been paralleled by changes in the structure of society, which would make this super woman ideal feasible for most women. Consequently, the super woman model's lack of fit with reality has left many women with the persistent conflict between their achievement related and affiliative desires. One woman illustrated the virtual unrealizability of the super woman ideal, as she stated, "I think there is definitely a pressure (to do it all), but you have to put it in perspective. I think it's a great ideal, but a little unrealistic. There are only so many hours in a day....It might not be attainable ideal." It seems to be more problematic for college senior women of 1989 than their peers of previous decades, as they also have to handle their sense of failure at the fulfillment of the total woman ideal, which appears to be unrealizable in the eyes of many women.

It is suggested that in future research a larger sample size from a more diverse university community may be more effective in the attainment of a representative sample of american college senior women. Also, a larger
number of participants in the interview portion of this study may prove more enlightening, as this small group served only to give a slight intimation of attitudes of women concerning achievement and affiliative concerns for post graduate life. A further improvement may be made upon the interviewing process by leaving the interviewer blind to the scores of the participants to further protect the data from bias. It may prove useful to examine further the nature of the motivational relationship in the future. The addition of a sex roles measure, such as the Bem Sex Role Inventory, would allow for a direct examination of the factor analysis results and could further substantiate the role gender issues play in this motivational conflict in women, which was proposed in this study.
References


References


References


References


References
Table A-1
Factor Matrix of the EPPS Subscales

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Correlation Between

Appendix A
Interview Questions

1) When you think of who ____ (NAME) ____ is, what three adjectives come to mind?

2) What do you perceive to be the primary social message directed towards college senior women in 1989?

3) How would you define today's "Super Woman"?

4) Have you felt any pressure from these messages?

5) What is your life's dream?

6) Would you like to have a family? When?

7) Do career intentions effect your plans in any way?

8) Would you like to stop working to have your children? Ideally, for how long?

9) During college, which areas of your life (i.e. school work, various relationships) have been most satisfying?

10) Into which have you put the most energy?

11) Do you expect these (satisfaction, direction of energy) to change in any way after graduation?