

FACTORS THAT IMPEDE THE RETURN  
OF THE ADULT WOMAN TO COLLEGE

by

CAROLYN M. ANDRES

B.S., Kansas State University, 1975

---

A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

General Home Economics

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1977

Approved by:

*Ruth Hoeflin*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Major Professor

Document  
LD  
2668  
T4  
1977  
A54  
C.2

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express sincere appreciation to Dr. Ruth Hoeflin for her guidance, support and encouragement throughout this research project. A special expression of gratitude is extended to Dr. Dorothy L. Harrison and Dr. Stephan R. Bollman, members of the writer's graduate committee, for their assistance and helpful suggestions.

Special thanks are due to Dr. Holly Fryer, of the Department of Statistics, for his assistance in formulating and analyzing the computer data for this study.

Deepest gratitude is expressed to the writer's husband and family for their understanding, patience and encouragement during this study.

Finally, a salute to the subjects of this study, who gave of themselves, so we may gain an increased understanding of the adult woman.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
LIST OF TABLES	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	v
INTRODUCTION	1
REVIEW OF LITERATURE	3
Value to Women of the Return to College	3
Continuing Education Programs for Women	4
Profile of Women Who Return to College	6
Reasons of Women for the Return to College	6
Barriers to the Return of Adult Women to College	8
PROCEDURES	10
Selection of Population and Sample	10
The Instrument	11
Statistical Analysis	11
Follow-Up of Subjects	12
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	13
Family Status of the Women	13
Educational Level of the Women and Their Families	13
Employment Status of the Women and Their Husbands, Job Satisfaction of Women	14
Activities of the Women Outside of the Home	15
Reasons of Women for Not Being Enrolled in College Courses	15
Educational Goals of the Women at the Time of High School Graduation	17
Future Goals of the Women	17

	Page
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	18
REFERENCES	20
PAPER FOR PUBLICATION	24
APPENDIX	33



## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. MEANS FOR SELECTED FACTORS OF WOMEN AS RELATED TO THEIR INTEREST IN TAKING COLLEGE COURSES	47
II. OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN AND THEIR HUSBANDS	53
III. ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN OUTSIDE OF THE HOME	53
IV. ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL	55
V. GOALS OF WOMEN	55
VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN	56

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. NUMBER OF WOMEN INTERVIEWED BY VOTING PRECINCTS	34
2. REASONS GIVEN BY ADULT WOMEN FOR NOT ENROLLING IN COLLEGE COURSES	54

## INTRODUCTION

Folland (1) studied the problems and anxieties of women students 30 years of age and older enrolled at Kansas State University. Those women were looking for a career opportunity to give their lives new purpose. Other women probably have a desire for a purpose in life and to contribute to society. Attending college may be their first step to a more meaningful life.

Doty (2) compared the intellectual characteristics, academic problems and study habits of young coeds (median age, 20) and older coeds (median age, 30). She found that the older coeds had more problems in concentrating, reading rapidly and taking class notes. Older women had better study habits; younger coeds had more difficulty remembering academic material. Older coeds were able to compete successfully with a high level of academic performance. Because the older women were highly motivated, they overcame learning handicaps with the application of effective study habits.

Women who return to college constitute an important resource for colleges and society. According to Aansted (3), colleges can establish closer ties with the surrounding community by educating mature women. Cunningham (4) reported that older women in a private college added diversity to the student body, challenged younger students and faculty, and were a source of struggle and reward to the college administration.

An important resource for the job market is provided by women who return to college. The talents and energies of educated men and women are necessary to provide a good life for all of our citizens. Continuing education can make women better citizens by giving them increased knowledge and understanding about the world around them.

Returning to school has many effects on the older women, some of which enrich her life. A woman's positive attitude increases as her education

increases (5). Hansot (6) found that middle class women were suffering from lack of productive work. They want a new identity, separate from the home, and return to college with the thought, "I will do this for me, now."

Older women who have returned to colleges and continuing education programs have been the subject of many research projects. Few studies have focused on women who are interested, but who have not returned to college. Doty (7) compared older women students and non-students. She found that 95 percent of the non-students had interests that could be furthered with college courses. Of the non-students, 70 percent had considered returning to college, yet none had done so. Taines (8) studied women enrolled in a re-entry program. She found that 50 percent of the women in the program had lived in the community for at least 10 years and had not chosen to resume their education previously.

It appears that older women can compete successfully in academic situations. Education is not only valuable to them, but to the college they attend and to society. For these reasons, the objectives of this study were:

1. to determine if women between the ages of 30 and 70 are interested in returning to or entering college for the first time to work on a baccalaureate degree,
2. to identify reasons why those women have not returned to school, and
3. to identify ways to ease and encourage their return.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Value to Women of the Return to College

Should the adult woman be encouraged to go to college? Returning to college can be a valuable experience for adult women. Astin (9) and Gray (10) reported the positive effects of women in continuing education programs. Women in special programs made important psychological gains. They were revitalized with increased confidence and self-esteem. "Being seen as an interesting person - a person with brains instead of somebody's mother - is the most exciting thing that has ever happened to me," was reported by women who returned to college (11). Levine (12) found that for the vast majority, the game of schooling was worth the effort. Through college, women learned to do things they thought they could not do. Markus (13) and Tumaszk (14) also reported a positive impact of the return to college. Self-fulfillment and a sense of accomplishment and achievement were a part of this impact. Adult women reported their personal positive experiences in their return to college (15, 16, 17).

Returning to college also may improve marriage and family situations of adult women (18). Elsner (19) and Weidenbach (20) agreed that the return to college can enhance family and home life. Levine (12) who studied adult women, found that their return to college may bring to the surface some troublesome family differences. However, she also found that women discovered new possibilities in their family relationships. Katz (21) reported that the husband of the returning woman usually is supportive, both emotionally and financially. Benham (22) reported positive benefits of the wife's education in private and social market returns.

Effects on children of returning women also were positive (21). The family is closer together, and the children are more independent and have greater responsibilities than before their mother returned to college. They

also have an increased interest in school and respect for their mother, according to Katz (21). Kline (23) found that grades of children of returning women went up at least one letter grade.

### Continuing Education Programs for Women

The effort to meet the needs of adult women returning to college is not new. Cless (24) pointed out that the purpose of continuing education programs has not changed since they first were offered in the early 1960's. She believed that every institution of higher education should offer programs adapted to the needs of different individuals, and that women of all age groups should have access to high quality education. Mead and Kaplan (25) agreed with Cless when they stated:

"Means of acquiring or continuing education must be available to every adult at whatever point he or she broke off traditional formal schooling."

Three programs are recognized as the beginning of continuing education for women: 1. The Minnesota Plan of the University of Minnesota, 2. the Radcliffe Institute of Independent Study and 3. the Center for the Continuing Education of Women at Sarah Lawrence College.

According to Cless (24), the Minnesota Plan for the Continuing Education of Women was established in 1960. It focused on new structures and timing of education, a new life orientation for younger women and counseling services for adult women. Resources for the program were created within the existing system for the benefit of women beyond the usual college age.

The purpose of the Radcliffe Institute for Independent Study, established in 1961, was to support independent projects of women who had the potential for outstanding achievement (26). The program supported motivated women who wanted to combine their home responsibilities with a career.

Sarah Lawrence College also established a Center for the Continuing

Education of Women in 1962 (27). The program offered special classes for part-time adult women students paralleling the regular curriculum.

Many other programs have been established to assist the adult woman who returns to college, each geared to the needs of the women it serves. Catalyst, founded in 1962, is a national organization headquartered in New York City. It works to retrain and place educated women in rewarding positions (26). Also based in New York is the New School for Social Research. The Human Relations Center of this school offers a certificate program that allows the adult woman to explore new vocational interests or to prepare for advanced academic training (6).

Markus (13) and Buccieri (27) described the Center for the Continuing Education of Women at the University of Michigan. Among its services, the Center offers counseling, scholarships and workshops concerning employment opportunities. Anderson (28) and Taines (8) described a Women's Re-Entry Education Program that serves high risk minority women who are unemployed, of low income and have limited schooling.

Re-entry programs often are established by women for other women. Such a program is SUPPORT '75, which attempted to solve the adjustment problems of mature women returning to campus (29). Nordh (30) described programs for the adult woman at several community colleges.

Workshops or orientation sessions are techniques often used by institutions of higher learning to assist the adult woman in her return to college (31, 32, 33). Rice and Goering (32) found their single in-depth workshop on life-planning to be effective in facilitating planning and decision making of returning adults. Plotsky (34) described an innovative program, Women to Women, which involved both older women students and young women undergraduates. The program has proven beneficial to both groups. The younger students recognize the need for life-span planning, and the older women are

given the opportunity to interact with the young women students.

The University of Massachusetts established Everywoman's Center, to train staff members of women's centers at colleges and universities across the United States. The center designed a model training program to teach staff members how to communicate effectively with administrators of institutions of higher education (35).

#### Profile of Women Who Return to College

What women can be expected to be interested in going to college? The woman who returns to college is not just the middle-class, middle-age, middle-income woman. Older women, minorities, mothers with preschool children and single heads of families also are returning to college (36). Campbell (5) reported that returning women have a wider range of backgrounds and more are single, divorced and widowed, or if they are married, they have fewer children. Astin (37) studied women in a program of continuing education. Eighty percent had some college experience before entering the program. Most had worked full time and planned to work full time in the future. Being a wife and mother plus having a career was important for the self-fulfillment of 75 percent of the participants.

#### Reasons of Women for the Return to College

There were 500,000 women over 30 on the nation's campuses in the fall of 1972. That is double the attendance of the prior decade (19). According to Young (38), 812,000 women, 35 and older attended school in October, 1974. Of this 812,000, 6.2 percent attended elementary or high schools, 26.6 percent attended trade or vocational schools, and 67.2 percent or 546,000 attended colleges. The reasons Elsnor (19) gives for the return to school are increased affluence, more leisure time and changing ideas about the role of the American woman. Early marriage, a lengthened life span and frequent changes



in the pattern of living are also given as reasons for the return of the adult woman (4,39). Mushkin (40) agreed that early marriage and child bearing are reasons for the increased enrollment of adult women. Widowhood or divorce, leaving young children may be other demographic factors (40). Roach (11) found that the return of the adult woman often coincides with "middle motherhood". Children's demands on her time and energy are fewer, and her husband is more involved in his career. Brandenburg (18) stated this is a critical time for women, when they are less needed and feel the pressure of advancing age.

To prepare for employment is given often as a major reason for the return of the adult woman to college. They may want to increase the financial state of themselves and their families (23). Or, they may want to enter a new career or retool for a temporarily abandoned career (41). Women may return to complete an education halted many years before when they married (38). Astin (37) reported that the return may be to update professional skills, or to assist women in making mid-life career changes. Economic necessity or to achieve financial independence also seems to be a stimulus to return (36). Young (38) reported that most women over 35 return to college because of strong career ambitions.

Other women return to college simply to learn more about the world they live in, or to broaden the horizons of their minds (42, 43). Similarly, the reasons may be to develop an understanding of the complexities of life (4, 44), or for personal growth and stimulation (45).

Levine (12) found that going to college can alleviate boredom. Women believe college can help them find new direction and purpose (23). The return to college may provide an opportunity to achieve independence and a sense of identity (9). College is a place where women can escape from marital conflicts (13).

Durchholz and O'Connor (45) stated the return to college may be the need or desire for educational and intellectual achievements. Completing a college education may have been a long sought-after dream (12). Wedel (46) writes why the adult woman should return to college:

"The main thing is that returning to school can give new skills, refurbish old ones, and bring one up to date. I would even urge women who had no intention of taking paid employment to do it because the world is changing so fast today that we all need to learn new things about our society and the world in which we live."

#### Barriers to the Return of Adult Women to College

The return of adult women to college is blocked by situational, institutional and societal barriers. Cross (47) stated that there is a potential clientele eager to participate in learning activities if we can remove discriminating practices and provide programs to meet the needs of women. Valentine (48) listed life's circumstances or situational barriers as lack of time, lack of transportation or lack of place to study. Attitudes of the women themselves also act as barriers. Astin (37) reported that women feel a lack of confidence and guilt about leaving or "abandoning" their homes and families. Campbell (26), Valentine (48) and Perry (49) focused their discussions on the need for good inexpensive child care. They stated that women are concerned about the effect of their activities on their children. The attitude of the husband is another factor. The wife may be allowed to work or attend school, but she also may be required to fulfill all the obligations of wife and mother. Perry (49) stated a woman should not be penalized for being both ambitiously female and intellectually ambitious.

Institutional barriers also may block adult women once they have decided to return to college. Residence requirements, course prerequisites, difficulty of transferring credits and inadequate flexibility of admissions procedures are a few of those barriers (46). Some colleges have established

an age restriction of women who can study at the graduate level (50). Gould and Cross (51) reported that eight to five class scheduling often makes it difficult for anyone who wants to combine her education and job and family responsibilities. Mulligan (52) and Cunningham (4) reported on the difficulty of attending college part-time. Often part-time programs are not available (52). Lack of financial aid is a major barrier, especially for adult women part-time students (4, 48, 51).

Women may not know how to go about returning to college. They also worry about being isolated from young students (37). Campbell (26) reported that adult women suffered from lack of faculty support. Plotsky (53) studied faculty attitudes related to adult students. She found that as teaching experience increased, attitudes toward adult students tended to be more positive.

Even when educational and other barriers are removed, societal barriers will remain. Friedan (54) reported that the "feminine mystique" has kept women from growing to their full potential, making higher education for women seem unnecessary. Gray (10) stated that women resist doing well at the risk of being rejected as unfeminine. The woman's movement has been responsible, in part, for women today to see college as one way to discover their own capacity for growth (10).

## PROCEDURES

### Selection of Population and Sample

The population for this study was women, ages 30 to 70, residing in Manhattan, Kansas. A random sample of 101 women representing each voting precinct within the city (Appendix, p.34) was obtained from a list of women in the 30 to 70 age group using the January 1, 1976 Riley County Enumeration.

The first contact with the women was a letter (Appendix, p.35 ) explaining the project. A telephone call followed the letter. At this time, each woman had the opportunity to ask questions concerning the study. Also, the interviewer asked the woman questions to determine if she met the requirements for the subject:

1. Between the ages of 30 and 70
2. High school graduate
3. Had not completed a baccalaureate degree

If the woman met those requirements, and agreed to participate, a personal home interview was scheduled. Interviews over the phone were given as an alternative, for women who did not wish to be interviewed in their homes. Sixteen interviews were completed over the phone, and 85 interviews were face to face interviews at the home of the subjects. Interviews were conducted by an undergraduate student in Family and Child Development and a graduate student in General Home Economics.

Telephone calls (234) were placed to identify women who fit the requirements of the study. Of the 234 women called, 101 were interviewed during the winter of 1976-77. Of the women called, but not interviewed, 71 had completed a baccalaureate degree or above, 19 had not graduated from

high school, 11 could not be located and 31 refused to be interviewed.

### The Instrument

The interview schedule (Appendix, p. 36) used by the interviewers in this study included questions on the following topics:

1. Family status of the women
2. Educational level of the women and their families
3. Employment status of the women and their husbands
4. Job satisfaction of women
5. Activities of the women outside of the home
6. Reasons of women for not being enrolled in college courses
7. Educational goals of the women at the time of high school graduation
8. Future goals of the women

Interview questions were formulated through conferences with the Dean and Assistant Dean of the College of Home Economics and research faculty. These questions focus on areas which effect the adult woman's interest in advanced education, and were based on a review of the literature and the judgement and recommendation of the research team.

### Statistical Analyses

The chi square was chosen to compare observed and theoretical enumerative data. Variables such as marital status, age, children, education and employment were analyzed using a basic hypothesis that those variables were independent of the adult woman's interest in taking college courses.

Follow-Up of Subjects

At the conclusion of the study, a letter of thanks and a summary of the data were sent to each participant who requested the summary at the time of the interview (Appendix, p. 43).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Family Status of Women

Seventy-seven of the women interviewed had been married from one to 50 years; 15 were widows; and 9 were single, divorced or separated. A review of literature revealed that women who return to college have a wide range of backgrounds, and more are single, divorced and widowed (5). According to chi square analysis, marital status and number of years married had no effect on the interest of women in taking college courses. (Table I, p. 47 ).

The ages of the women ranged from 30 to 69. Age of women was a factor in their desire to take college courses (Table I, p. 47 ). Women 30 to 40 years of age had the most interest. This interest diminished from age 40 through age 60, then increased somewhat ( $P < 0.02^*$ ). A review of the literature indicated that older women were returning to college; it wasn't just the middle-class, middle-age, middle-income woman (36).

Ninety-one of the women had children; 41 had one or two and 50 had three or more children. According to the chi square value, women with children tended to be more interested in taking college courses than women without children (Table I, p.47 ). Women with preschool children and junior or senior high children had as much desire to take college courses as women without children of those ages (Table I, p.48 ). Women with children of elementary school age had more, and women with children out of high school had less desire to take college courses, than women without children of those ages (Table I, p.48 ).

### Educational Level of the Women and Their Families

Seventy-three women had been out of school over 21 years. That would

be expected, because of the ages of the women interviewed. According to the chi square analysis (Table I, p.48), desire of women to take college courses decreased ( $P < 0.005^{**}$ ) as the time they had been out of school increased. The educational level of the woman beyond high school had no relationship to her desire to take college courses (Table I, p.49). This is a reversal of results of a study by Astin (37) who found that college experience was related to women who chose to return to college.

Educational levels of husbands, parents and children of the women varied. Of the husbands, 23 had completed high school or less; 55 had completed more than a high school education. Interest of women in taking college courses increased with the level of the husband's education (Table I, p.49).

Of the women's parents, 36 of the mothers and 45 of the fathers had not completed high school. Only 17 of the mothers and 14 of the fathers had taken some college work. Of the women's children over 18, 48 had completed a 4-year college degree or more. Some of the children were not old enough at the time of the study to have completed college. Chi square analysis (Table I, p.49) showed that the educational level of the parents and children had little or no effect on the desire of women to take college courses.

#### Employment Status of the Women and Their Husbands, and Job Satisfaction of Women

Fifty-seven of the women interviewed had a job outside the home. Ninety percent of all women had worked in the past, planned to work in the future, or were working at the time of the interview. The jobs of the women ranged from skilled to professional levels (Table II, p.53). The women worked from one to 40 and over hours a week (Table I, p.50). Of the women working at the time of the interview, 55 of 57 said they were satisfied with their jobs. From chi square analysis (Table I, p.50) it was determined that the fact that a woman had a job outside the home and the amount of hours worked had no relation



to interest in taking college courses. This was in contrast to data from a study reported by Astin (37) in which most women in a continuing education program had worked full time in the past and planned to work full time in the future.

The more satisfied a woman was with her job, the less interested she was in college courses. However, only three women were dissatisfied with their jobs, so this conclusion is of no real value (Table I, p.50). Those women not working at the time of the interviews, but who planned to work in the future had more desire to take college courses than did those not planning to work (Table I, p.51). In the literature (41, 47, 38), preparation for employment was given as a major reason for the return of the adult woman to college, which was in agreement with the sample for this study.

The occupations of the husbands also ranged from semi-skilled to professional (Table II, p.53). The husband's occupation did have an effect on the woman's desire to take college courses. Wives of skilled laborers ( $P < 0.06+$ , near  $*$ ) had less interest than wives of professionals (Table I, p.51).

#### Activities of the Women Outside of the Home

Women interviewed spent none to over 8 hours a week in non-job related activities outside of the home (Table I, p. 51). Ten women reported no activities outside of the home. The activities most often reported (Table III, p.53) were club or social activities, church-related activities and special interest classes. According to chi square analysis (Table I, p.51), interest in taking college courses increased ( $P < 0.10+$ ) with time spent on activities.

#### Reasons of Women for Not Being Enrolled in College Courses

All women were asked reasons for not being enrolled in college courses

whether or not they stated an interest in taking college courses (Figure 2). Fifty-four of the women said their family came before their education, and 22 stated attending college would add unneeded stress on their family. This agreed with a study in the literature (37), the results of which indicated that women often feel guilty about "abandoning" their homes and families.

Twenty-seven women gave spending time with their children as a reason for not taking college courses (Figure 2). Three women stated a need for a babysitter. This indicated little need for child care for the women in the sample, which was in contrast to reports of several authors (26, 48, 49). However, few women in the sample had children which would need child care. Only three women said their husband or family did not want them to take college courses. The attitude of the husband was given as a barrier by Perry (49).

Lack of time was given by 47 women as a reason for not taking college courses. Thirty-two said their job outside of the home kept them too busy (Figure 2). This is reasonable, because 36 women reported working over 30 hours a week. Lack of time was a situational barrier mentioned by Valentine (48).

To prepare for employment was given as a reason for return to college (41), yet 23 women believed college courses would not help them get a job or a better job (Figure 2).

Thirty-three women stated a preference for other activities to further education (Figure 2). Eleven believed they could not do college level work. Nineteen gave being too old as a reason, 16 gave lack of energy. Seven women had medical reasons for not taking college courses.

Thirteen women lacked money to take college courses (Figure 2). Eleven said they did not know how to go about it. Both of those reasons were given in the literature (4, 48, 51). None of the women gave unavailable trans-

portation as a reason for not taking college courses.

#### Educational Goals of the Women at the Time of High School Graduation

The women interviewed were asked, if at the time they left high school, they planned to continue their education. Sixty-three said they did, 38 did not plan to do so (Table I, p.51). According to chi square analysis (Table I, p.51), plans at the time of high school graduation to further their education were not related to interest in taking college courses at the time of the interviews.

Living in a college community, many of the women knew of others who had taken college courses. That had no effect on the desire of the women to take college courses (Table I, p.52).

In the first six months after they left high school (Table IV, p.55), 43 women worked and 42 attended a specialized school or college. Several women who wanted to go on to school reported that they could not do so because of financial limitations.

#### Future Goals of the Women

To determine their goals, the women were asked, "If you could do what you wanted most in the world, what would you do?" (Table V, p.55). Travel was the answer given by 35 of the women, and another 35 said that they were happy with their lives the way they were. Only three said going to school was their goal.

Most women had difficulty answering what they would be doing five years from the time of the interview (Table VI, p.56). Four stated that they would be going to school. Compared with 57 who were working at the time of the interviews, 44 predicted that in five years they would be working full or part-time outside of the home.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The interest of adult women in taking college courses was studied through interviews with 101 women in Manhattan, Kansas. The purposes of the study were to determine if adult women were interested in taking college courses, their reasons for not taking college courses, and ways to encourage them to return. The sample included women in every voting precinct within the city.

Forty-six of the 101 women interviewed were interested in taking college courses. Results indicated that women who had a desire to take college courses, also had a strong responsibility toward their families, and believed their family came before their education. Another main reason concerned lack of time; many women already were combining family and job responsibilities.

Interest of adult women in taking college courses was affected by:

1. Age of the woman
2. Whether or not she has children
3. Whether or not she has grade school children and children out of high school
4. Years out of school of women
5. Educational level and occupation of husband
6. Time women spent on activities outside of the home
7. Plans of women to work in the future

Recommendations that evolved from this study were:

1. Colleges should make adult women aware of the diversity of available courses that meet their interests and needs, especially in the area of home economics. Women interviewed had a limited view of college courses.

2. Access to educational opportunities must be opened wide. A special course for adult women planning to return to school is recommended. Of the women interviewed who were interested in college courses, 63 per cent desired such a course.
3. Counseling for young and adult women is desirable to help them plan for and include education in the future. Most women interviewed had difficulty thinking about or planning for the future.
4. Women who have no interest in college courses, must not be made to feel that they should go to college. Many women already had full lives through their jobs and their families.

## REFERENCES

1. Folland, Laura P. Factors Influencing the College Entrance of the Adult Woman. Unpublished master's thesis, Kansas State University, 1976.
2. Doty, Barbara A. "Some Academic Characteristics of the Mature Coed." The Journal of Educational Research 61 (4): 163-165; Dec. 1967.
3. Aansted, Judy. A Study of Mature Women at Santa Fe Junior College - A Topical Paper. Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 057 797, January 1972.
4. Cunningham, Sister Madonna Marie. The Older Student. Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 089 162, August 1973.
5. Campbell, Jean W. "The Nontraditional Student in Academe" in Women in Higher Education, Furniss, W. Todd, and Graham, Patricia Albjerg, editors. Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1974.
6. Hansot, Elizabeth. "A 'Second Chance' Program for Women" in Women on Campus - the Unfinished Liberation, Change Magazine, editors. New Rochelle, N.Y.: Change Magazine, 1975.
7. Doty, Barbara A. "Why Do Mature Women Return to College?" Journal of the National Association of Women's Deans, Administrators, and Counselors 29 (4): 171-174; Summer 1966.
8. Taines, Beatrice. "Older Women, Newer Students." Community and Junior College Journal 44:17; Aug. 1973.
9. Astin, Helen S. "A Profile of Women in Continuing Education" in Some Action of Her Own, Astin, Helen S., editor. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1976.
10. Gray, Eileen. Everywoman's Guide to College. Millbrae, Calif.: Les Femmes, 1974.
11. Roach, Rose Marie. "Honey Won't You Please Stay Home." Personnel and Guidance Journal 55 (2): 86-89; Oct. 1976.
12. Levine, Adeline. "Between the Stages of Life: Adult Women on a College Scene." Educational Horizons 54 (4): 154-162; Summer, 1976.
13. Markus, Hazel. "The Return to School." Educational Horizons 54 (4): 172-176; Summer, 1976.
14. Tumas, Sister M. Florence. "Women and Education." Contemporary Education 63 (4): 202-204; Feb. 1972.
15. Auer, Mary A. "A Grandmother on Campus." Journal of the National Association of Women's Deans, Administrators, and Counselors 36 (3): 137-138; Spring 1973.

16. Brewster, Delva C. "The Call of the Campus." Journal of the National Association of Women's Deans, Administrators, and Counselors 36 (3): 139-142; Spring, 1973.
17. Margolis, Diane Rothbard. "A Fair Return" in Women on Campus - The Unfinished Liberation, Change Magazine, editors. New Rochelle, N.Y.: Change Magazine, 1975.
18. Brandenburg, Judith Berman. "The Needs of Women Returning to School." Personnel and Guidance Journal 53 (1): 11-18; Sept. 1974.
19. Elsner, David M. "Mrs. Suzy Coed" in What Do Women Really Want? Graham, Ellen, editor. Chicopee, Mass.: Dow Jones, Books, 1974.
20. Weidenbach, Charleen. "College for the Privileged Adult Women." Adult Leadership 24 (5): 162; Jan. 1976.
21. Katz, Joseph. "Home Life of Women in Continuing Ed" in Some Action of Her Own, Astin, Helen S., editor. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1976.
22. Benham, Lee. "Benefits of Women's Education Within Marriage." Journal of Political Economy 82 (2): S57-S75; March/April 1974.
23. Kline, Carlye M. "Educational Planning for Mature Women" in Recurrent Education, Mushkin, Selma J., editor. Washington, D. C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, National Institute of Education, 1973.
24. Cless, Elizabeth L. "The Birth of an Idea: An Account of the Genesis of Women's Continuing Education" in Some Action of Her Own, Astin, Helen S., editor. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1976.
25. Mead, Margaret and Kaplan, Frances Balgley, editors. American Women. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1965.
26. Campbell, Jean W. "Women Drop Back In: Educational Innovation in the Sixties" in Academic Women on the Move, Rossi, Alice S., and Calderwood, Ann, editors. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1973.
27. Buccieri, Claudia. "Continuing Education: If At First You Don't Succeed." College and University Business 48 (2): 84-86; Feb. 1970.
28. Anderson, Dru. "De Anza Builds a WREPutation." American Education 10 (4): 30-33; May 1974.
29. Scott, Ruth and Holt, Lillabelle. "The New Wave: A College Responds to Women Returnees." Phi Delta Kappan 58 (4): 338-339; Dec. 1976.
30. Nordh, Deborah M. "The New Woman and the NOW College." Community and Junior College Journal 43 (1): 15, 48; Aug./Sept. 1972.
31. Manis, Laura B. and Mochizuki, June. "Search for Fulfillment: A Program for Adult Women." The Personnel and Guidance Journal 50 (7): 594-599; March 1972.



32. Rice, Joy K. and Goering, Margaret L. "Women in Transition: A Life-Planning Workshop Model." Journal of the National Association of Women's Deans, Administrators, and Counselors 40 (2): 57-61; Winter 1977.
33. Powell, Joann and Rodgers, Anne. "Orientation to College: Meeting the Needs of Mature Women." Journal of College Student Personnel 16 (5): 432; Sept. 1975.
34. Plotsky, Frances A. "Women to Women: A Program for Older Women Students and Younger Women Undergraduates." Journal of College Student Personnel 16 (3): 248; May 1975.
35. Hoffman, Charlotte K. "The Women's Educational Equity Act." American Education 12 (8): 34-35; Oct. 1976.
36. Howard, Toni A. "Reentry Programs" in Meeting Women's New Educational Needs, Rose, Clare, editor. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1975.
37. Astin, Helen S. "Adult Development and Education" in Some Action of Her Own, Astin, Helen S., editor. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1976.
38. Young, Anne McDougall. Going Back to School at 35 and Over. Special Labor Force Report 184. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1975.
39. Wells, Jean A. and Magruder, Harriet G. "Education Programs for Mature Women." The Education Digest 37 (5): 42-45; Jan. 1972.
40. Mushkin, Selma J. "An Agenda for Research: A Summary Analysis" in Re-Current Education, Mushkin, Selma J., editor. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, National Institute of Education, 1973.
41. Hechinger, Fred M. "Education's New Majority." Saturday Review 2 (26): 14-18; Sept. 20, 1975.
42. Bulles, Richard Nelson. What Color is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job Hunters and Career Changes. Berkeley, Calif.: Ten Speed Press, 1972.
43. DeMott, Benjamin. "Adult Ed - The Ultimate Goal." Saturday Review 2 (26): 27-29; Sept. 20, 1975.
44. Continuing Education Programs and Services for Women. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Labor, Wage and Labor Standards Administration, Women's Bureau, January 1968.
45. Durchholz, Pat and O'Connor, Janet. "Why Women Go Back to College" in Women on Campus - The Unfinished Liberation, Change Magazine, editors, New Rochelle, N.Y.: Change Magazine, 1975.



46. Wedel, Cynthia C. "Spending Women's Second Life Creatively" in The Working Mother, Callahan, Sidney Cornelia, editor. New York: Mac Millan Co., 1971.
47. Cross, K. Patricia. "Women Want Equality in Higher Education." Educational Horizons 52 (2): 72-75; Winter 1973-74.
48. Valentine, J.A. "Liberal Arts College and the Experienced Learner." Adult Leadership 23: 235-236; Feb. 1975.
49. Perry, Caroline. "Mother's Going Back to School is Hard on All of Us" in The Working Mother, Callahan, Sidney Cornelia, editor. New York: MacMillan Co., 1971.
50. Westervelt, Esther Manning. Barriers to Women's Participation in Postsecondary Education. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Education Division, 1973-74.
51. Gould, Samuel B. and Cross, K. Patricia. Explorations in Non-Traditional Study. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1972.
52. Mulligan, Kathryn L. A Question of Opportunity: Women and Continuing Education. Washington, D. C.: National Advisory Council on Extension and Continuing Education, March 31, 1973.
53. Plotsky, Frances A. "The Ivory Tower and Students Older Than Average." Journal of the National Association of Women's Deans, Administrators, and Counselors 39 (1): 21-25; Fall 1975.
54. Friedan, Betty. The Feminine Mystique. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1963.

## PAPER FOR PUBLICATION

Because of the recognition of the importance of dissemination of information based on research, a paper for publication in the Journal of Home Economics has been included as part of this thesis. The Journal of Home Economics was chosen because the improvement of the quality of family life is of concern to home economists. College and high school instructors can play a vital role in counseling and encouraging the adult woman. The purpose of this paper is to summarize the procedures and results of the study and to suggest recommendations concerning the return of the adult woman to college.

TODAY'S ADULT WOMAN:

TOMORROW'S COLLEGE COED?

Carolyn Andres  
Justin Hall 119  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, Kansas 66506  
913-532-5500

Carolyn Andres is a master's degree candidate in home economics and a Graduate Research Assistant.

Dr. Ruth Hoeflin  
Justin Hall 119  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, Kansas 66502  
913-532-5500

Ruth Hoeflin is Dean of the College of Home Economics at Kansas State University.

Contribution No. 3j, Department of General Home Economics, Kansas  
Agricultural Experiment Station, Manhattan, Kansas 66506.

Susan, 42, is married to a college professor. They have two children, one in junior high school and one in high school. Before marriage, Susan attended college for two years and worked as a secretary for five years. She enjoys spending time with her children and is involved in club activities and volunteer work. Is Susan ready to return to college?

After receiving training at a business school immediately after graduating from high school, Evelyn has worked full time much of her life. Evelyn and her husband, a telephone repairman, have three children; one is in college and two are married. She enjoys working with house plants and is active in her local church. Does Evelyn, age 56, want to begin taking college courses?

Adult women, who have demonstrated their capability to compete successfully at the college level (1), are an important resource for colleges and for society. Returning to college has a positive impact on adult women; women of whatever age, who have that goal should be encouraged to pursue it.

Are women over age 30 interested in returning to college, or going there for the first time? If they are, what has kept them from taking that first step to enroll in college courses? Folland's (2) study of factors that influenced adult women to return to Kansas State University, pointed up a concern to identify women who have a desire to return, but have not yet returned to college. Few studies have focused on those adult women who are interested in returning to college or entering college for the first time, but who have not done so.

### How the Study Was Conducted

For this study, we selected, by random sampling, 101 women, aged 30 to 70, residing in Manhattan, Kansas. They represented each voting precinct within the city. All women interviewed were high school graduates; none had completed a baccalaureate degree. An introductory letter explaining the project and a phone call to determine if the woman met the requirements of the study preceded each interview.

The interview schedule included questions on: employment and job satisfaction, activities outside the home, interest in college courses, educational and future goals, and demographic data. Our selection of questions was based on a review of literature and suggestions from faculty in the College of Home Economics.

### The Typical Subject

The typical woman interviewed was 49, married (77 percent), and had three children. She had been out of school for 19 years and may or may not have had some training or education beyond high school. Her husband had a skilled or professional position and had some college. Her parents had no education beyond the high school level. The typical woman was working when interviewed, or had worked in the past (90 percent). If employed, she worked 31 hours a week in a skilled position, perhaps as a bookkeeper or secretary, and was satisfied (95 percent) with her job. She spent an average of five hours a week on activities outside the home -- such as church-related activities, club or social events, special-interest classes, volunteer work, and children's school and youth activities. The typical woman would enjoy traveling, but seemed happy with her present life. She predicted that five years from now she will be working (43.5 percent) or remaining at home with her family (38 percent).

### Is the Adult Woman Interested in College Courses?

Of the 101 women interviewed, 46 were interested and 55 were not interested in taking college courses. Age was a factor; the desire tended to diminish at age 40 through age 60, then rose somewhat. Women 30 to 40 years of age had the most interest. Women with children wanted to take college courses more than women without children, and those whose children had graduated from high school had much less interest in taking college courses than those whose children were still in school. Women's desire to take college courses definitely decreased the longer they were out of school.

The husband had a definite effect on a woman's desire for college courses. The higher the level of her husband's education and occupation, the greater was a woman's interest in taking college courses. Wives of skilled laborers had less interest than did wives of professionals.

Of the women currently not working outside of the home, those who planned to work in the future showed a greater desire to take college courses than did those not planning to work. Also, the more hours a woman spent on activities outside of the home, the more she wanted to take college courses. Marital status, number of years married, education beyond high school, educational level of parents and knowledge of others who had taken college courses had little or no effect on the desire of adult women to take college courses.

### Reasons Adult Women Do Not Take College Courses

From the figure we see that reasons given by the women who did (46) and did not (55) desire to take college courses were similar. Thirty of the women who wanted to take college courses and 24 of those who did not said that their families came before their education. Lack of time was a

reason expressed by 24 of those with a desire for college courses, and by 23 of those who lacked the desire. Of the women who did not want to take college courses, 22 said that their jobs kept them too busy and 21 preferred other activities. The belief that college courses would not help them get a better job was expressed by 7 of the women who were interested and by 16 who were not interested in taking college courses. Of the women who had no desire to take college courses, 16 thought that they were too old, and 12 stated that they lacked the energy. Reasons such as lack of money and transportation were given by only a few women. Child care was not listed as a major reason; however, few women had children in need of child care.

#### Implications and Recommendations

Continuing education is valuable to the adult woman by increasing her confidence and giving her a sense of achievement. Adult women are important to colleges by adding diversity to the student body, and to society by providing an important resource for the job market. We recommend that colleges concerned about encouraging the return of the adult woman consider these suggestions:

1. Colleges should make adult women aware of the diversity of courses that meet their interests and needs. Many women we interviewed had a limited view of college courses, especially in the area of home economics. Home economics has much to offer the adult woman. For example, through courses in family and child development, she can receive help in understanding herself and her family. In management and family economics, she can learn how to manage her time and energy to allow for her job, her family and continuing education. Foods and nutrition offers the adult woman an opportunity to discover and meet her family's nutritional needs. The adult woman can identify

and utilize more economical ways to clothe her family and design her own living environment through courses in clothing and textiles and interior design. Home economics can help her find a new or better job that combines her education and her own family experiences in working with other families.

2. If adult women are going to return to or enter college, the door must be opened wide. Colleges can encourage the return by making it easy for adult women to enroll and register and by offering a special course designed especially for adult women. Of the women we interviewed and who were interested in college courses, 63 percent desire such a course. The College of Home Economics at Kansas State University offers a seminar for adult students that emphasizes how to learn and take tests, effects of the return to college on your family and career planning, and offers the opportunity for interaction with other adult women students. Because adult women often work in addition to performing their roles as mothers and wives, time is an important commodity to them. Courses should be offered at flexible times, such as in evenings or summers and at convenient locations.

3. Counseling with and helping young women make life-long plans are important. They need to know possible alternatives for employment and education, so that they can plan for future education. Adult women, in fact, must be convinced that education is possible and desirable. Most women interviewed had difficulty thinking about or planning for the future.

4. A college education is not meaningful or necessary for everyone. Many women we interviewed had full lives through their jobs and their families and saw no need for a college education. Women who have no interest in college should not be made to feel they should go to college.

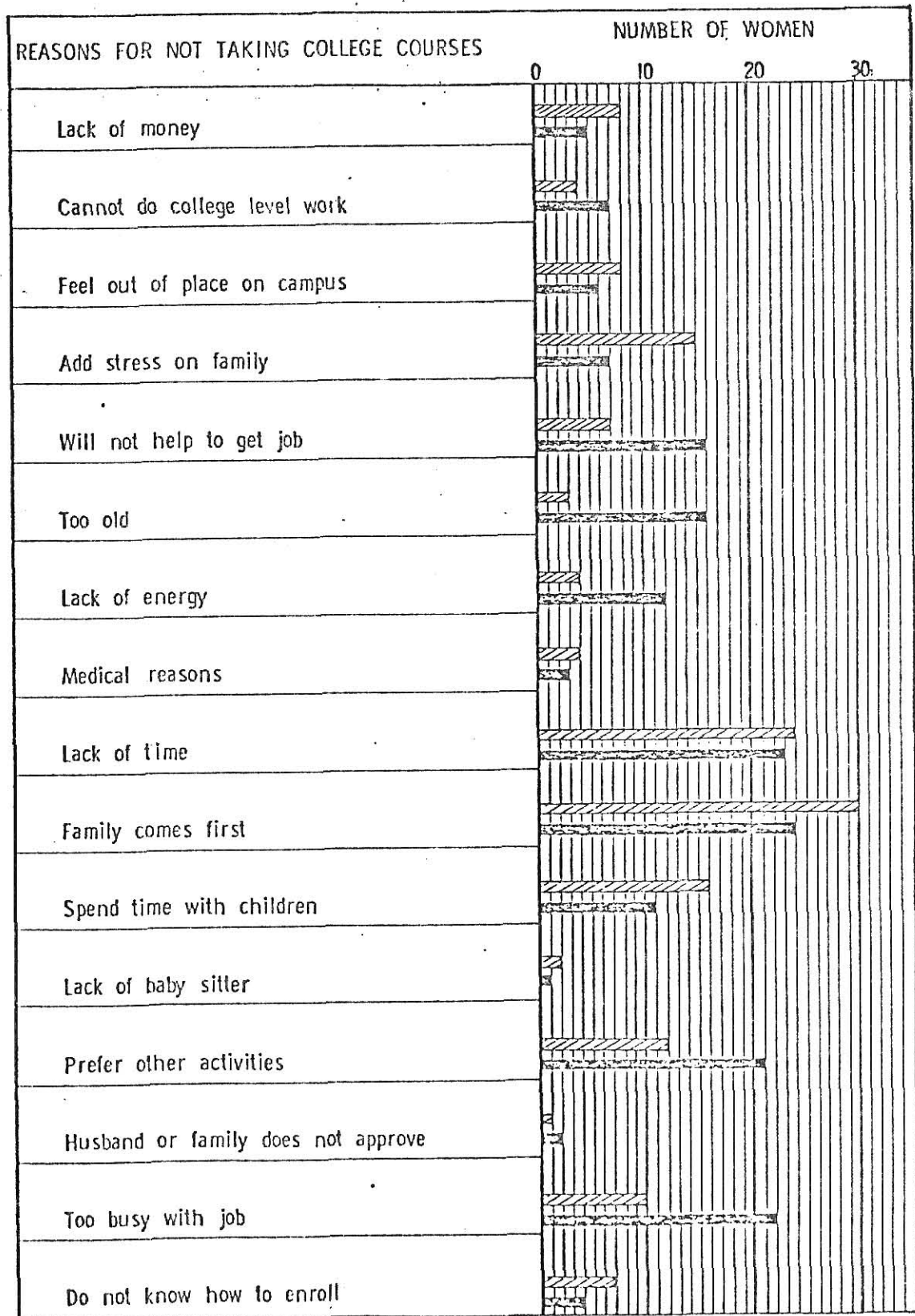
Is today's woman, then, tomorrow's college coed? She can be, if we interest her by showing her what we have to offer, and giving her confidence to take that first step to enroll in college courses.



## REFERENCES

1. Doty, Barbara A. "Some Academic Characteristics of the Mature Coed." The Journal of Educational Research 61 (4): 163-165; Dec. 1967.
2. Folland, Laura P. Factors Influencing the College Entrance of the Adult Woman. Unpublished master's thesis, Kansas State University, 1976.

REASONS GIVEN BY ADULT WOMEN  
FOR NOT ENROLLING IN COLLEGE COURSES



Women interested in taking college courses

Women not interested in taking college courses

## APPENDIX

# **ILLEGIBLE DOCUMENT**

**THE FOLLOWING  
DOCUMENT(S) IS OF  
POOR LEGIBILITY IN  
THE ORIGINAL**

**THIS IS THE BEST  
COPY AVAILABLE**

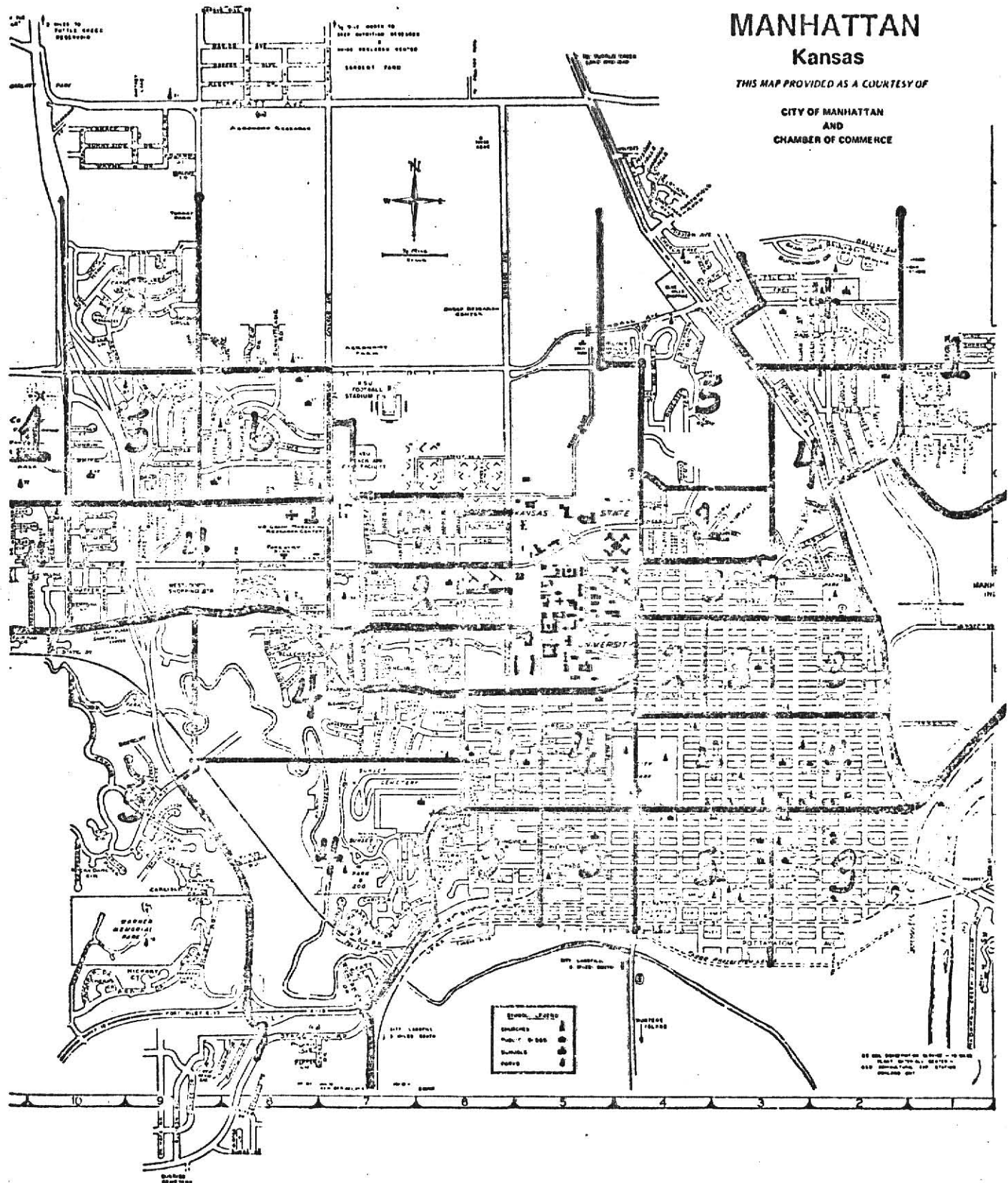


Figure 1. Number of Women Interviewed by Voting Precincts



Office of the Dean  
College of Home Economics  
Justin Hall  
Manhattan, Kansas 66506  
Phone: 913 532-5500

November, 1976

You have been selected to participate in a research project of the College of Home Economics concerning activities and interests of women in Manhattan. We will be telephoning you within the next two weeks to explain our plans and how you can help us. We hope you will be included in our study.

If you are willing to participate, we want to assure you that all information you give us will be kept strictly confidential.

We look forward to talking with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Ruth Hoeflin'.

Ruth Hoeflin  
Dean

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Artyce Hedrick'.

Artyce Hedrick  
Research Assistant

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Carolyn Andres'.

Carolyn Andres  
Graduate Research Assistant

Interview Number \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE  
Fall, 1976

We would like to thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. Any information you give us will be kept strictly confidential. If at any time you do not want to be in this study, just tell us. Or if there are any questions you do not want to answer, you don't have to. However, we feel all of our questions are important and we hope you won't be uncomfortable in answering them.

\* \* \*

5. Are you currently single, married, widowed, divorced or separated?

(5-1) 3 single  
(5-2) 77 married  
(5-3) 15 widowed  
(5-4) 5 divorced  
(5-5) 1 separated

6. (If married) How many years have you been married?

(6-1) 3 1-5 years  
(6-2) 4 6-10 years  
(6-3) 22 11-20 years  
(6-4) 26 21-30 years  
(6-5) 20 31-40 years  
(6-6) 2 41-50 years  
(6-7) 0 51 + years

7. What is your age?

(7-1) <u>16</u>	30 to 35	(7-5) <u>11</u>	51 to 55
(7-2) <u>12</u>	36 to 40	(7-6) <u>15</u>	56 to 60
(7-3) <u>13</u>	41 to 45	(7-7) <u>8</u>	61 to 65
(7-4) <u>16</u>	46 to 50	(7-8) <u>10</u>	66 to 70

8. Do you have any children?

(8-1) 91 Yes  
(8-2) 10 No

9. How many?

(9-1) 9 one  
(9-2) 32 two  
(9-3) 18 three  
(9-4) 14 four  
(9-5) 18 five or more

10. How many are preschool age?  
(including kindergarten)

(10-1) 5 one  
(10-2) 3 two  
(10-3) 2 three  
(10-4) 0 four or more  
(10-5) 80 none

11. How many are in grades one thru six?

(11-1) 16 one  
(11-2) 8 two  
(11-3) 0 three  
(11-4) 0 four or more  
(11-5) 66 none

12. How many are in jr. high and high school?

(12-1) 17 one  
 (12-2) 13 two  
 (12-3) 5 three  
 (12-4) 1 four or more  
 (12-5) 54 none

13. How many are out of high school?

(13-1) 14 one  
 (13-2) 21 two  
 (13-3) 16 three  
 (13-4) 17 four or more  
 (13-5) 23 none

14. The next few questions concern how far your family has gone in school.  
 How many years have you been out of school?

(14-1) 2 1-5 years  
 (14-2) 7 6-10 years  
 (14-3) 8 11-15 years  
 (14-4) 10 16-20 years  
 (14-5) 73 21 + years

15. What is the last grade you have completed?

(15-1) 0 0-7th grade  
 (15-2) 0 8th grade  
 (15-3) 0 some high school  
 (15-4) 44 high school graduate  
 (15-5) 18 training beyond high school (specify)  
 (15-6) 38 some college

Beauty School - 1  
 X-Ray Technology - 1  
 Nurses Training - 5  
Business College - 11

When did you attend college?

(16-1) 31 right after high school  
 (16-2) 8 over the years since high school

(15-7) 1 junior college graduate  
 (15-8) 0 4-year college graduate  
 (15-9) 0 some graduate work  
 (15-0) 0 graduate or professional degree

What is the last grade completed for your

husband?

mother?

father?

children (over 18)?

(17-1) <u>0</u>	(18-1) <u>8</u>	(19-1) <u>15</u>	(20-1) <u>0</u>	0-7th grade
(17-2) <u>2</u>	(18-2) <u>28</u>	(19-2) <u>30</u>	(20-2) <u>0</u>	8th grade
(17-3) <u>5</u>	(18-3) <u>11</u>	(19-3) <u>11</u>	(20-3) <u>0</u>	some high school
(17-4) <u>18</u>	(18-4) <u>37</u>	(19-4) <u>31</u>	(20-4) <u>6</u>	high school grad.
(17-5) <u>6</u>	(18-5) <u>7</u>	(19-5) <u>2</u>	(20-5) <u>3</u>	training beyond H.S.
(17-6) <u>16</u>	(18-6) <u>4</u>	(19-6) <u>8</u>	(20-6) <u>17</u>	some college
(17-7) <u>0</u>	(18-7) <u>1</u>	(19-7) <u>0</u>	(20-7) <u>2</u>	Junior college grad.
(17-8) <u>8</u>	(18-8) <u>3</u>	(19-8) <u>3</u>	(20-8) <u>27</u>	4-year college grad.
(17-9) <u>3</u>	(18-9) <u>1</u>	(19-9) <u>0</u>	(20-9) <u>4</u>	some graduate work
(17-0) <u>22</u>	(18-0) <u>1</u>	(19-0) <u>1</u>	(20-0) <u>7</u>	grad. or prof. deg.



21. (If married) What does your husband do?

(21-1) 2 unskilled or semi-skilled  
 (21-2) 21 skilled  
 (21-3) 6 military  
 (21-4) 4 government employee  
 (21-5) 26 professional, managerial, executive  
 (21-6) 17 college professor  
 (21-7) 1 student  
 (21-8) 0 unemployed  
 (21-9) 0 other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

22. Do you have a job outside the home?

(22-1) 57 Yes  
 (22-2) 44 No

23. (If yes) How many hours a week do you work on the average?

(23-1) 3 1-8 hours  
 (23-2) 7 9-16 hours  
 (23-3) 8 17-24 hours  
 (23-4) 3 25-30 hours  
 (23-5) 6 31-39 hours  
 (23-6) 30 40 + hours

Describe your job. Unskilled or Semi-skilled - 7 (12%); Skilled - 30 (53%);  
Government Employees - 4 (7%); Professional and Managerial - 16 (28%)

24. (If no) Have you ever had a job outside the home?

(24-1) 34 Yes  
 (24-2) 10 No

Describe your last job. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

25. (If no) Do you plan to work in the future?

(25-1) 11 Yes  
 (25-2) 36 No

26. What did you do in the first six months after you left high school?

(26-1) 25 attended college  
 (26-2) 8 got married  
 (26-3) 43 worked  
 (26-4) 17 attended specialized school (nursing, business, beauty)  
 (26-5) 0 other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (26-6) 8 stayed at home

27. At the time you left high school, did you plan to continue your education?

(27-1) 63 Yes  
 (27-2) 38 No

## 28. What activities are you involved in outside the home?

In addition, are you involved in any of these activities?

Children's school activities?

(28-1) 29 Yes

(28-2)        No

Youth activities?

(29-1) 9 Yes

(29-2)        No

Church related activities?

(30-1) 47 Yes

(30-2)        No

Volunteer social service activities?

(31-1) 30 Yes

(31-2)        No

Arts and crafts or special interest classes?

(32-1) 35 Yes

(32-2)        No

Club or social activities?

(33-1) 49 Yes

(33-2)        No

Continuing or adult education?

(34-1) 15 Yes

(34-2)        No

University for Man courses?

(35-1) 9 Yes

(35-2)        No

Other activities: \_\_\_\_\_

## 36. How many hours a week do you spend on these activities?

(36-1) 62 1-8 hours

(36-2) 16 9-16 hours

(36-3) 8 17-24 hours

(36-4) 3 25-30 hours

(36-5) 1 31-39 hours

(36-6) 1 40 + hours

## 37. Would you be interested in taking college courses?

(37-1) 46 Yes

(37-2) 55 No

(If yes) What reasons have kept you from taking college courses?  
(If have taken college courses) What reasons have kept you from taking college courses now?

(If no) Since you live in Manhattan near two colleges, what has kept you from taking college courses?

Other women have given the following as reasons. Do any of these apply to you?

I don't have the money

(38-1) 13 Yes  
(38-2) 88 No

My family comes before my education

(47-1) 54 Yes  
(47-2) 47 No

I couldn't do college level work

(39-1) 11 Yes  
(39-2) 90 No

I spend my time with my children

(48-1) 27 Yes  
(48-2) 74 No

I would feel out of place on campus

(40-1) 14 Yes  
(40-2) 87 No

I can't find a babysitter

(49-1) 3 Yes  
(49-2) 98 No

Attending college would add un-needed stress on my family

(41-1) 22 Yes  
(41-2) 79 No

I prefer other activities to further education

(50-1) 38 Yes  
(50-2) 63 No

College courses won't help me get a better job

(42-1) 23 Yes  
(42-2) 78 No

My husband or family doesn't want me to

(51-1) 3 Yes  
(51-2) 98 No

I'm too old

(43-1) 19 Yes  
(43-2) 82 No

My job (outside the home) keeps me too busy

(52-1) 32 Yes  
(52-2) 69 No

I don't have the energy

(44-1) 16 Yes  
(44-2) 85 No

I don't have a way to get there

(53-1) 0 Yes  
(53-2) 101 No

Medical reasons

(45-1) 7 Yes  
(45-2) 94 No

I'm not interested in college courses

(54-1) 37 Yes  
(54-2) 64 No

I don't have the time

(46-1) 47 Yes  
(46-2) 54 No

I don't know how to go about it

(55-1) 11 Yes  
(55-2) 90 No

Other reasons:

Which of the reasons you have given is most important?

56. Do you know any friends or neighbors who are taking or have taken courses at Kansas State?

(56-1) 79 Yes

(56-2) 22 No

57. Have you heard about the course for adults interested in returning to school offered by the College of Home Economics?

(57-1) 37 Yes

(57-2) 64 No

58. Would you be interested in taking this course?

(58-1) 29 Yes

(58-2) 72 No

59. (If not presently employed) Are you interested in getting a job outside the home?

(59-1) 9 Yes

(59-2) 39 No

What kind of job would you like if you could do what you wanted to do?

60. (If presently employed) Are you satisfied with your current job?

(60-1) 52 Yes

(60-2) 3 No

61. (If not satisfied) Would you like to change jobs?

(61-1) 3 Yes

(61-2)        No

What type of job would you like to have?

62. If you could do what you wanted most in the world, what would you do?

(62-1)	<u>35</u>	Travel
(62-2)	<u>3</u>	Go to school
(62-3)	<u>5</u>	Get a job outside the home
(62-4)	<u>0</u>	Get married
(62-5)	<u>0</u>	Start a family
(62-6)	<u>4</u>	Stay at home with my family
(62-7)	<u>35</u>	Happy with my life now
(62-8)	<u>19</u>	Other (specify) _____

63. Five years from now what will you be doing?

(63-1)	<u>9</u>	Traveling
(63-2)	<u>4</u>	Going to school
(63-3)	<u>30</u>	Working full-time outside the home
(63-4)	<u>14</u>	Working part-time outside the home
(63-5)	<u>0</u>	Getting married
(63-6)	<u>0</u>	Starting a family
(63-7)	<u>38</u>	Staying at home with my family
(63-8)	<u>6</u>	Other (specify) _____

Thank you for participating in our study! After we finish our study, would you like a summary of our results?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No



Office of the Dean  
College of Home Economics  
Justin Hall  
Manhattan, Kansas 66506  
Phone: 913 532-5500

July, 1977

Thank you for your participation in an interview last winter,  
sponsored by the Dean's Office of the College of Home Economics.  
You helped to give us an insight into adult women in Manhattan.

Enclosed is a short summary of the information we collected. Again,  
thank you for your interest and support of Home Economics Research.

Sincerely,

Ruth Hoeflin  
Dean

Carolyn Andres  
Graduate Research Assistant

Enclosures

The adult woman in Manhattan, Kansas . . .

Does she have a job outside the home?

What activities is she involved in?

What will she be doing five years from now?

During the winter of 1976-77, 101 interviews were conducted, representing every voting precinct within the city, to answer these questions and others.

### The Typical Woman

The typical woman interviewed was 49, married and had three children. She was a high school graduate, and may or may not have had some training or education beyond high school. Her husband has a skilled or professional job and has had some college. The parents of the typical woman had a high school education or less, while her children were likely to be college graduates.

### Does She Have a Job Outside the Home?

Fifty-seven of the women interviewed were working outside the home. Another 34 women had worked in the past or planned to work in the future, leaving only ten women who had never worked. The typical woman worked 31 hours a week and had a skilled position, such as secretarial or bookkeeping. Sixteen women had professional or managerial positions. Of all women working, 95 percent were satisfied with their jobs.

### What Activities is She Involved in?

Women in Manhattan spend an average of five hours a week in activities outside the home. Forty-nine women were involved in club or social activities, 47 in church related activities, 44 in special interest activities,

38 in children's or youth activities, 30 in volunteer activities and 15 active in adult education classes.

Forty-six women were interested in taking college courses. Many reasons were given why they had not yet enrolled in college courses. Top reasons concerned the importance of their children and families, and lack of time. With a job and family, time for education was hard to find. Some women preferred other activities to education or believed that college courses would not help them get a better job. Other women said they did not have the money, could not do college level work or would feel out of place on campus. A few women felt they were too old or just did not know how to go about it.

#### What Will She Be Doing Five Years From Now?

Most women had difficulty answering what they would be doing in the future. Forty-four said they will still be working full or part-time, 38 will remain at home with their families, and 19 gave other goals.

The women interviewed were also asked, "If you could do what you wanted most in the world, what would you do?" Thirty-five women would like to travel, but another 35 were happy with their lives the way they were.

#### Summary

Women in Manhattan seem to be satisfied with their lives, whether staying at home with their families, or combining their family life with a job. This is a refreshing result, when so often we hear that women today are not satisfied with their lives.

For those women interested in college courses, we urge you to take that first step and enroll in a college class. The College of Home Economics will offer a seminar this fall designed especially for you, the adult woman.



It gives you the opportunity to find out how to go about it and to share your fears with other adult women. The course is not limited to women who plan to take home economics classes, but is open to any adult woman who is returning to college, or entering college for the first time. Come learn the ropes about going back to school.

Table I. Means for Selected Factors of Women as Related to Their Interest in Taking College Courses

Factor	<u>Interest</u>		Total	Chi Square Analysis
	Yes	No		
<u>Marital Status</u>				
Married	37	40	77	$\chi^2_1 = 0.82$
Single, widowed, divorced or separated	9	15	24	$P < 0.36$
Total	46	55	101	
<u>Number of Years Married</u>				
$\leq 20$	17	12	29	$\chi^2_1 = 2.08$
$> 20$	20	28	48	$P < 0.15$
Total	37	40	77	
<u>Age</u>				
30-40	19	9	28	$\chi^2_3 = 9.58$
41-50	13	16	29	
51-60	7	19	26	$P < 0.02^*$
61-70	7	11	18	
Total	46	55	101	
<u>Children</u>				
Yes	44	47	91	$\chi^2_1 = 2.92$
No	2	8	10	
Total	46	55	101	$P < 0.09^+$

Table I. (Continued)

Factor	<u>Interest</u>		Total	Chi Square Analysis
	Yes	No		
<u>Preschool Children</u>				
Yes	11	10	21	$\chi^2_1=0.50$
No	35	45	80	
Total	46	55	101	P<0.48
<u>Junior and Senior High Children</u>				
Yes	23	24	47	$\chi^2_1=0.41$
No	23	31	54	
Total	46	55	101	P<0.52
<u>Grade School Children</u>				
Yes	21	14	35	$\chi^2_1=4.51$
No	25	41	66	
Total	46	55	101	P<0.03*
<u>Children Out of High School</u>				
Yes	29	49	78	$\chi^2_1=9.66$
No	17	6	23	
Total	46	55	101	P<0.002**
<u>Years Out of School (of Women)</u>				
1-10	8	1	9	$\chi^2_2=10.71$
11-20	11	7	18	
≥ 21	27	46	73	P<0.005**
Total	46	54	100	

Table I. (Continued)

Factor	Interest		Total	Chi Square Analysis
	Yes	No		
<u>Education of Women Beyond High School</u>				
None	25	37	62	$\chi^2_1=2.12$ $P<0.15$
Some	21	17	38	
Total	46	54	100	
<u>Educational Level of Husband</u>				
High School or less	6	17	23	$\chi^2_3=9.00$ $P<0.03^*$
Some College	11	11	22	
4-year Degree	5	3	8	
Graduate Study	17	8	25	
Total	39	39	78	
<u>Educational Level of Mother</u>				
Grade School	13	23	36	$\chi^2_2=2.14$ $P<0.34$
High School	25	23	48	
Some College or above	8	9	17	
Total	46	55	101	
<u>Educational Level of Father</u>				
Grade School	18	27	45	$\chi^2_2=2.54$ $P<0.28$
High School	19	23	42	
Some College or above	9	5	14	
Total	46	55	101	

Table I. (Continued)

Factor	<u>Interest</u>		Total	Chi Square Analysis
	Yes	No		

---

<u>Educational Level of Children Over 18</u>				
High School & Some college	7	21	28	$\chi^2_2=4.35$ $P<0.11$ (near +)
4-year Degree	14	13	27	
Graduate Study	5	6	11	
Total	26	40	66	

<u>Job Outside the Home</u>				
Yes	24	33	57	$\chi^2_1=0.62$ $P<0.43$
No	22	22	44	
Total	46	55	101	

<u>Hours Worked Outside of the Home</u>				
None	22	22	44	$\chi^2_3=4.56$ $P<0.21$
1-16	5	5	10	
17-39	10	7	17	
40+	9	21	30	
Total	46	55	101	

<u>Job Satisfaction of Women</u>				
Yes	21	31	52	$\chi^2_1=0.80$ $P<0.37$
No	2	1	3	
Total	23	32	55	

Table I. (Continued)

Factor	<u>Interest</u>		Total	Chi Square Analysis
	Yes	No		
<u>Plans to Work in the Future</u>				
Yes	10	1	11	$\chi^2_1=8.21$
No	15	21	36	
Total	25	22	47	$P<0.004^{**}$
<u>Occupation of Husband</u>				
Semi-skilled or skilled	6	15	21	$\chi^2_3=7.25$
Government or military	4	6	10	
Professional	17	9	26	$P<0.06^+$ (near *)
College Professor	10	7	17	
Total	37	37	74	
<u>Time Spent on Activities Outside the Home</u>				
1-8 hours/week	25	37	62	$\chi^2_1=2.66$
8+ hours/week	17	12	29	
Total	42	49	91	$P<0.10^+$
<u>Plans to Continue Education</u>				
Yes	29	34	63	$\chi^2_1=0.02$
No	17	21	38	
Total	46	55	101	$P<0.90$

Table I. (Continued)

Factor	<u>Interest</u>		Total	Chi Square Analysis
	Yes	No		
<u>Knowledge of Others Who Have Taken College Courses</u>				
Yes	36	43	79	$\chi^2_1=0.00$
No	10	12	22	
Total	46	55	101	P<0.99

---

+ Significant at the 10% level of probability

\* Significant at the 5% level of probability

\*\* Significant at the 1% level of probability

Table II. Occupations of Women and Their Husbands

	Unskilled & Semi-skilled	Skilled	Military	Government Employee	Professional & Managerial	College Professor	Student
men	7	30	0	4	16	0	0
wives	2	21	6	4	26	17	1

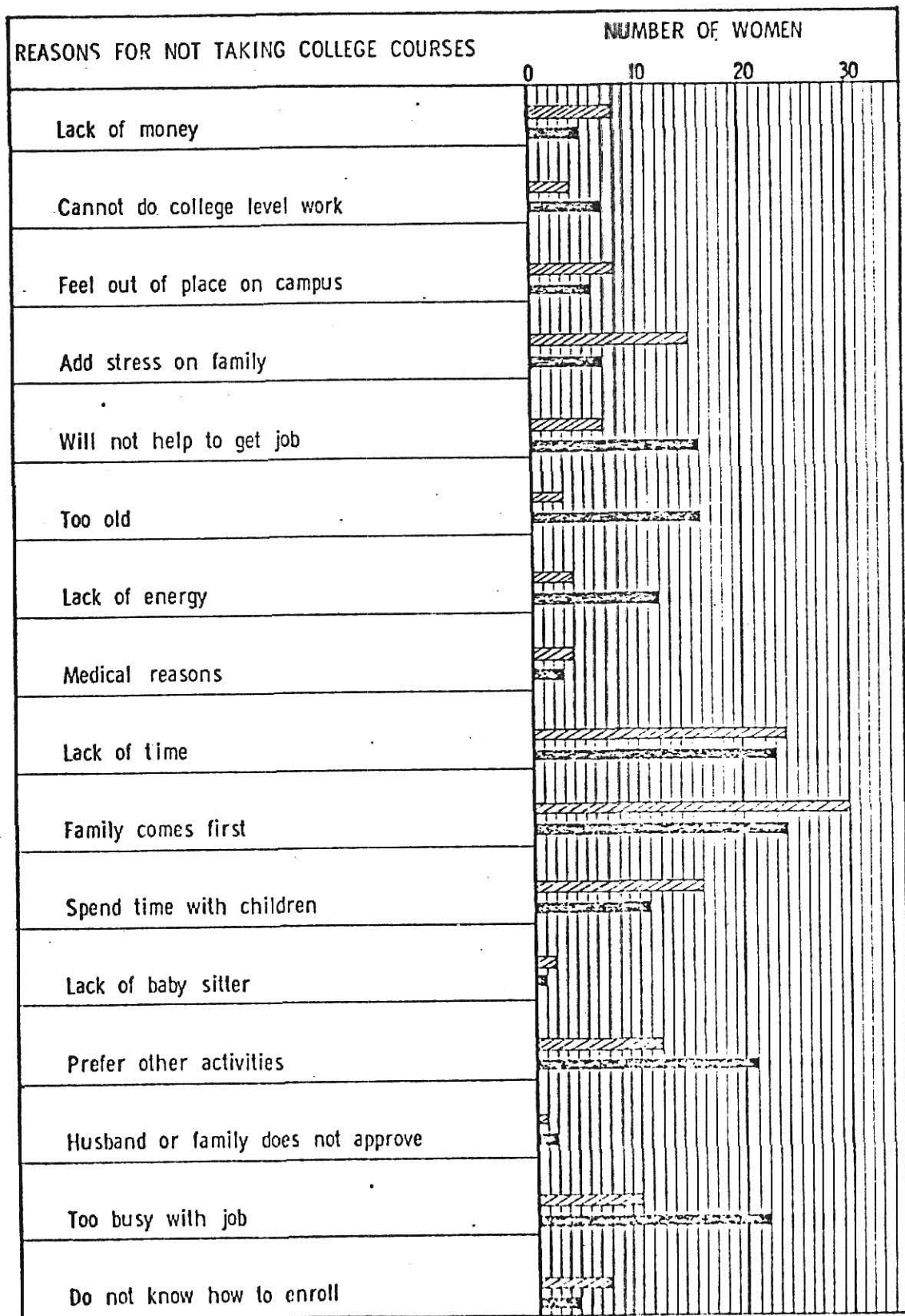
53

Table III. Activities of Women Outside of the Home

	Club or Social	Church- Related	Special Interest Classes	Volunteer & Social Service	Children's School & Youth	Continuing & Adult Education
men	49	47	44	30	38	15



**Figure 2**  
**REASONS GIVEN BY ADULT WOMEN**  
**FOR NOT ENROLLING IN COLLEGE COURSES**



Women interested in taking college courses

Women not interested in taking college courses

Table IV. Activities of Women in the First Six Months After High School

	Attended College	Got Married	Worked	Attended Specialized School	Stayed At Home	Total
Women Responding	25	8	43	17	8	101

Table V. Goals of Women

	Travel	Go To School	Get A Job	Stay At Home With Family	Happy With My Life Now	Other
Women Responding	35	3	5	4	35	19

Table VI. Future Activities of Women

	Traveling	Going To School	Working	Staying at Home With Family	Other
Women Responding	9	4	44	38	6

FACTORS THAT IMPEDE THE RETURN  
OF THE ADULT WOMAN TO COLLEGE

by

CAROLYN M. ANDRES

B.S., Kansas State University, 1975

---

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

General Home Economics

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1977

The interest of adult women in taking college courses was studied through interviews with 101 women in Manhattan, Kansas. A major purpose of the interviews was to identify reasons why adult women, who were interested, had not enrolled in college courses. The sample included women in every voting precinct within the city. Results indicated that women who had a desire to take college courses also had a strong responsibility toward their families, and believed their family came before their education. Another main reason for not enrolling in college courses concerned lack of time, since many women already were combining family and job responsibilities. If the adult woman is to become a college student, she must have confidence in her own ability, knowledge of what colleges have to offer and free access to educational opportunities.