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Achievement, Affiliation & Nurturance Needs in College Women: A Comparison by Age & Marital Status

Lochia Farrar
Western Kentucky University

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Farrar,
Lochia A.

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ACHIEVEMENT, AFFILIATION, AND NURTURANCE NEEDS IN COLLEGE WOMEN:
A COMPARISON BY AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

A thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Psychology
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Lochia A. Farrar
May, 1976

ACHIEVEMENT, AFFILIATION, AND NURTURANCE NEEDS IN COLLEGE WOMEN:
A COMPARISON BY AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Recommended 5-7-76
(Date)

Ketla E. Poe
Director of Thesis

C. Clinton Layne

David A. Hill

Approved 6-8-76
(Date)

Elmer Gray
Dean of Graduate College

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Table of Contents

	Page
I. Acknowledgments	iii
II. Table of Contents	iv
III. List of Tables	v
IV. Abstract	1
V. Literature Review	2
VI. Method	10
VII. Results	13
VIII. Discussion	21
IX. References	27

List of Tables

	Page
1. Analysis of Variance for Achievement	14
2. Duncan's Multiple Range Test for Achievement	15
3. Analysis of Variance for Affiliation	16
4. Duncan's Multiple Range Test for Affiliation	18
5. Analysis of Variance for Nurturance	19
6. Duncan's Multiple Range Test for Nurturance	20

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COMPARISON BY AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Lochia A. Farrar

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Directed by: Retta E. Poe, David A. Shiek, C. Clinton Layne

Department of Psychology

Western Kentucky University

Previous research concerning the relative strengths of women's achievement, affiliation, and nurturance needs is reviewed. Based on Bardwick's theories, it was predicted that the need to achieve would be significantly higher for married than for single women and significantly higher, the older the age group. It was also predicted that the need to affiliate would be significantly higher for single than for married women and significantly higher, the younger the age group. Based on Benedek's theories, it was predicted that the need to nurture would not differ significantly between married and single women and that it would not differ significantly among age groups. In order to measure these needs the Personality Research Form-E was given to 120 married and single women. As predicted, results showed that achievement needs increased as a function of increasing age, and affiliation needs decreased as a function of increasing age. In addition, it was found that affiliation needs are significantly lower for married than for single women. It was concluded that affiliation is of central importance in the adolescent period and that adolescent females are preoccupied with meeting this need. Achievement becomes the focus of attention as women grow older. Contrary to prediction, the nurturance need does not appear to have consistent strength in women and seems to decrease with age.

Achievement, Affiliation, and Nurturance Needs in College Women:
A Comparison by Age and Marital Status

In the past few years the changing concept of women's roles as wives, mothers, and career women and the changing expectations that women have for their lives have prompted much speculation about, interest in, and research concerning the need structure and traits of women. Because women now have greater options to choose alternative roles, generalizations about the needs of women are difficult to make. Three needs that appear to be important from examining the literature are the needs to achieve, affiliate, and nurture. The following will be a discussion of the relative importance of achievement, affiliation, and nurturance needs for women and a description of the variables which may be related to the nature of women's achievement, affiliation, and nurturance needs.

Achievement

There has been much controversy over the achievement need in women. The motive to achieve is the need to be competitive in a situation in which there is a standard of excellence (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1958). However, as McClelland (1961) notes, the amount of achievement does not necessarily reflect the strength of the need to achieve. Needs, defined as relatively enduring dispositions to strive for particular goals or aims (Atkinson, 1958), are affected by many internal and external events as they progress into motivation and goal-directed behavior. The final motivation state is a summation

of the motive to approach the goal and the motive to avoid the goal (Atkinson, 1958). Thus, the fact that success does not measure the need to achieve is exemplified in the inconsistent relationship between the achievement motive and performance in females (Horner, 1970).

Data on female achievement motivation are incomplete and inconsistent as compared to data on achievement motivation in males. The greatest difference in achievement between females and males is in their response to achievement imagery. Unlike males, females fail to show an increase in achievement imagery when experimental conditions which arouse achievement motivation, such as the stressing of "intelligence" or "leadership ability", are introduced (Horner, 1970). In neutral conditions women score as high or higher in achievement motivation than men (Horner, 1970).

Horner feels that women do not actualize their need to achieve because of cultural values which stipulate that achievement is unfeminine. Because of these attitudes achievement is not seen by women as a means of obtaining satisfaction or as an incentive, but it is seen by women as a source of negative consequences, social rejection, and guilt. Negative consequences affect the total motivation toward fulfilling the achievement need. This is the basis of Horner's work on the motive to avoid success. Horner states that one way women attempt to escape this conflict is by channeling their need to achieve into feminine activities, such as motherhood and sexual attractiveness.

Crandall (cited in Hoffman, 1972) attributes achievement behavior to the affiliation need. That is, according to Crandall, females are motivated to achieve as a means of obtaining social approval. From

Crandall's point of view achievement is only a means to the goal and not the goal itself.

Hoffman (1972) believes that because the affiliation need is encouraged and reinforced in young females, there is a loss in achievement strivings and intellectual excellence during adolescence. This hypothesis is consistent with the idea expressed by Stein and Bailey (1973) that female achievement is motivated by external, social cues, whereas male achievement is motivated by internal, autonomous cues. When the female reaches adolescence, society stresses feminine roles, and social skills become an area of achievement. Stein and Bailey reject the theory that achievement in females is motivated by the affiliation need. They propose instead that although achievement is a female goal in itself, it is often channeled into acceptable feminine areas. Women channel their behaviors into traditionally feminine areas because behaviors associated with achievement, such as independence, assertiveness, and competitiveness, are not considered feminine characteristics (Stein & Bailey, 1973).

Bardwick (1971) describes two models of achievement in females. In the atypical model, according to Bardwick, the independent female has a high internalized need to achieve such as that found in males. In the second, more common, pattern the dependent feminine girl has fused achievement with affiliation rewards, the source of which is love, praise, and acceptance.

Bardwick hypothesizes that the internalized motive to achieve does develop in women, but for some it develops many years later than in men. When a female becomes secure in affiliation needs,

anxiety over meeting the affiliation need is reduced, and attention is focused upon achievement needs.

Affiliation

The need to affiliate is defined differently by various authors. Atkinson, Heyns, and Veroff (1958) define the need to affiliate as the tendency to move towards others and to elicit positive responses from them. Shipley and Veroff (1958) define the affiliation need as the desire for recovery, maintenance, or attainment of a loving or friendly relationship. Bardwick (1971) defines the need for affiliation in females as the need to acquire love. Affiliation needs are encouraged in young females (Bardwick, 1971), and as the female matures, affiliation needs extend from the loving family relationship to the need for a loving heterosexual relationship. Bardwick also feels that it is through a fulfilling heterosexual relationship that women find their major source of self-esteem.

When a girl reaches adolescence and when striving outside of the family for love produces a new source of anxiety over the affiliation need, the female's attention and behavior become focused on meeting this need (Bardwick, 1971). Bardwick feels that during the period in which affiliation needs are central, other needs become secondary in importance.

Bardwick suggests that the independent self in females develops later than in males, who are encouraged early in life to be independent. The independent self in females develops after the affiliation needs are met, usually after a woman has been married and establishes a firm relationship. Bardwick states that society has rein-

forced this pattern by stressing that in order to be considered a success, it is important for the woman to be a wife and mother, regardless of her other achievements.

Two studies which relate women's roles to affiliation are those of Gump (1972) and Sundheim (1962). In the study by Gump (1972) it was found that college-age women felt that it was possible to be both a wife and mother and to pursue a career at the same time. Gump also noted that most of the careers being pursued by women in the study were traditional careers for women; these traditional careers were considered less apt to interfere with affiliative needs. Gump's study indicates the importance that women feel their roles play in meeting affiliation needs. Traditional roles appear more acceptable and do not interfere with meeting affiliation needs.

Contrasting achievement and affiliation needs in college women, Sundheim (1962) found that there was no significant difference in the strength of the achievement and affiliation needs among those women who viewed their sex roles as including activities outside of traditional feminine roles. Sundheim's study seems to indicate that the strength of the achievement and affiliation needs may depend on how a woman views her sex role.

Bardwick and Douvan (1972) suggest that women tend not to participate in roles or to seek goals which in any way threaten their important affiliative relationships. For example, Bardwick and Douvan point out that many women will not achieve beyond their husband's achievements because of the threat it poses to the relationship.

Bardwick and Douvan feel that a conflict results when the woman's

desire to achieve a stable and rewarding heterosexual relationship coincides with her desire to participate in competitive achievement and to succeed. This conflict in women would not exist, according to Bardwick and Douvan, if either affiliation or competitive achievement were the only aspect of a woman's self-concept. Conflict exists because both the achievement and affiliation needs are important parts of a woman's self-concept.

Nurturance

A third important aspect of a woman's self-concept is nurturance. Changing attitudes toward motherhood would suggest the possibility that women's need to nurture young children has also changed. In defining nurturance as the provision of care for the young and maternal drive as the tendency for the female animal to engage in caring for the young, Chaplin (1968) implies that there exists in females a tendency to nurture young children. Murray broadens the concept of nurturance by defining the nurturance need as the need to protect, aid, and nourish a helpless organism (Chaplin, 1968), not just young children.

Several writers, such as Morgan (1972) and Benedek (1970), stress the importance of the need to nurture in women. Morgan (1972) discusses the results of pupil reaction tests which showed that there is a powerful and instantaneous subcortical response in women upon the sight of a baby.

Similarly, Benedek (1970) approaches the nurturance need from a psychobiological point of view, relating it to the need for motherhood. She stresses that the female may actively strive for

motherhood because of her biological systems of hormones and reproduction. Benedek does not dismiss the environmental influences upon motherhood behaviors. She defines nurturing as not only nourishment and nursing but also as a whole variety of sociocultural roles, including rearing, moral training, discipline, and instruction. The biological process, coupled with the sociological role which stresses the importance of the female to nurture the young, may in fact produce a need to nurture (Bardwick, 1974). Parental love and nurturance may be the result of an evolutionary process (Bardwick, 1974) which becomes a source of gratifying a psychological need to nurture.

In summary, various theories have been presented about the existence, source, and strength of the achievement, affiliation, and nurturance needs. The literature indicates that the achievement, affiliation, and nurturance needs in women interact and affect each other. According to the literature, regardless of women's need to achieve, affiliation is an important and necessary need which must be met. Bardwick indicates that once the affiliation need has been met, women develop an independent self which allows focusing on the achievement need; the independent self develops later in women than in men. Because age may be an important factor related to the need to achieve, and because the affiliation need is thought to be affected by success in heterosexual relationships, age and marital status were investigated in this study. In addition, the effects of age and marital status on nurturance needs were also investigated.

It was expected that the affiliation need would be higher in single females and in younger females because of the theory that

affiliation is of central importance until it has been met in a stable heterosexual relationship and until an independent self develops past the stage of adolescence. For these same reasons it was expected that older females and that married females would score higher in achievement needs. It was further anticipated that nurturance needs would be consistent across age groups and regardless of marital status because of the biological factors common to all women.

The following hypotheses were investigated:

- H₁ The need to achieve will be significantly higher for married women than for single women.
- H₂ The need to achieve will be significantly higher, the older the age group.
- H₃ The need to affiliate will be significantly higher for single women than for married women.
- H₄ The need to affiliate will be significantly higher, the younger the age group.
- H₅ There will be no significant difference in the need to nurture between married and single women.
- H₆ There will be no significant difference in the need to nurture among age groups.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were white, female, graduate and undergraduate college students from Western Kentucky University. The 120 subjects were volunteers, assigned to six groups according to the factors of age and marital status. Three age levels were used: 18-19 year olds, 21-23 year olds, and 25-30 year olds. Marital status included married and single women; for the purposes of this study, "single" denotes women who have never been married. Divorced, separated, and widowed women were not included as subjects because it was felt that the effects of a previous marriage might confound the results.

Subjects were recruited from lower level psychology courses and by telephone in order to complete groups. Some subjects were given extra credit in their psychology courses, and other subjects were offered feedback on the results of the test. Subjects were also informed that all data were confidential and would be used only for the purpose of this research.

Instrumentation

The Personality Research Form (Jackson, 1974) was used to assess the achievement, affiliation, and nurturance needs. The PRF was developed around Murray's framework and description of personality variables (Jackson, 1974). Twenty-two personality scales were developed to measure personality traits within the range of normal subjects. Form PRF-E is the revision of Jackson's original work and

lists the norms for college students.

Questions were drawn from item pools and are bi-polar in nature. Questions are answered either true or false, and each scale consists of 16 items.

Two scales for appraising validity have been included; they are the Infrequency Scale and the Desirability Scale. The Infrequency Scale was developed to identify careless, non-purposeful, invalid responses. The Desirability Scale was developed to measure the tendency to respond in a socially desirable or undesirable manner.

In selecting items for the PRF-E, emphasis was placed on minimal interscale correlation so as to allow the test to reflect a greater number of constructs. Interscale correlations were .01 between the achievement and affiliation scales, .18 between the achievement and nurturance scales, and .42 between the affiliation and nurturance scales. Reliability data for Form E using a college sample was estimated with the Spearman-Brown split-half procedure using an odd-even method of dividing items. The reliability coefficients were .57 for achievement, .86 for affiliation, and .65 for the nurturance scale (Jackson, 1974). Normative data for female college students on the PRF-E include the raw score mean for each scale; for achievement the mean was 10.00 out of a possible 16 items, for affiliation the mean was 8.93, and for nurturance the mean was 10.90.

Procedure

The test was administered individually or in small groups of two or three. The subjects were administered the test in small rooms with a quiet atmosphere. The administration of the test took approx-

imately 45 minutes. The subjects were instructed to read the self-explanatory instructions on the front of the booklet and were told to give their names only if requesting feedback. Subjects were asked to answer all items in order to increase the reliability of the test.

Twenty subjects were placed in each of the six groups according to the variables of age and marital status. Group 1 consisted of single 18-19 year olds. Group 2 consisted of married 18-19 year olds. Group 3 consisted of single 21-23 year olds. Group 4 consisted of married 21-23 year olds. Group 5 consisted of single 25-30 year olds. Group 6 consisted of married 25-30 year olds.

Design

For each dependent variable of achievement, affiliation, and nurturance, a separate analysis of variance was computed. A 2 x 3 factorial design was used to combine the independent variables of age and marital status.

When necessary to determine the direction and location of significant differences, a Duncan's Multiple Range Test was used. The alpha level used in testing hypotheses 1,2,3, and 4 was .05. Because of the prediction of no difference, with hypotheses 5 and 6 an alpha level of .10 was used in order to reduce the chance of a Type II error, the probability of accepting a null hypothesis when it is false.

Results

Achievement

The results of the analysis of variance (see Table 1) indicated that there were no significant effects for marital status and that there was no significant age and marital status interaction effect on the need to achieve. The results of the analysis of variance did indicate that age had a significant effect on the need to achieve. In order to determine the direction and location of the differences among cell means the Duncan's Multiple Range Test was utilized. The results of Duncan's procedure (see Table 2) indicated that there was a significant difference between the means of the 18-19 age group and the 21-23 age group. The mean of the 18-19 age group was significantly lower than the mean of the 21-23 age group. There was no significant difference between the means of the 21-23 age group and the 25-30 age group, nor between the 18-19 age group and the 25-30 age group.

Affiliation

The results of the analysis of variance (see Table 3) showed that marital status had a significant effect on the need to affiliate. Married subjects were found to have significantly less need to affiliate than subjects who had never married. There was no significant age and marital status interaction effect on the need to affiliate. It was also found that age had a significant effect on the need to

Table 1
Analysis of Variance
for Achievement

Source	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Age(A)	55.800	2	27.900	3.399 *
Marital St.(B)	4.800	1	4.800	0.585
A x B	22.200	2	11.100	1.352
Error	935.688	114	8.208	

* $p < .05$

Table 2
 Duncan's Multiple Range Test
 for Achievement

Group		18-19	25-30	21-23
	Mean	9.50	10.10	11.15
18-19	9.50	—	0.60	1.65 *
25-30	10.10	1.29	—	1.05
21-23	11.15	1.36	1.29	—

Note: Differences between the rank ordered means are located in the upper right hand portion of the matrix, and the Duncan's least significant ranges are in the lower left hand portion.

* $p < .05$

Table 3
Analysis of Variance
for Affiliation

Source	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Age(A)	110.816	2	55.408	4.829 *
Marital St.(B)	97.200	1	97.200	8.471 *
A x B	25.350	2	12.675	1.105
Error	1308.090	114	11.474	

* $p < .05$

affiliate. To further determine the direction and location of the differences among cell means the Duncan's Multiple Range Test was employed (see Table 4). The results of Duncan's procedure indicated that the mean of the 18-19 age group was significantly higher than the means of the 21-23 age group and the 25-30 age group. There was no significant difference between the means of the 21-23 age group and the 25-30 age group.

Nurturance

The results of the analysis of variance indicated that there were no significant effects for marital status and that there was no significant age and marital status interaction effect on the need to nurture. However, age did have a significant effect on the need to nurture (see Table 5). The Duncan's Multiple Range Test was again used to determine the direction and location of the differences among the cell means (see Table 6). The results of Duncan's procedure indicated that the mean of the 18-19 age group was significantly higher than the mean of the 25-30 age group. There was no significant difference between the means of the 18-19 age group and the 21-23 age group.

Table 4
 Duncan's Multiple Range Test
 for Affiliation

Group		25-30	21-23	18-19
	Mean	8.88	9.25	11.08
25-30	8.88	—	0.37	2.20 *
21-23	9.25	1.53	—	1.83 *
18-19	11.08	1.61	1.53	—

Note: Differences between the rank ordered means are located in the upper right hand portion of the matrix, and the Duncan's least significant ranges are in the lower left hand portion.

* $p < .05$

Table 5
Analysis of Variance
for Nurturance

Source	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Age(A)	52.866	2	26.433	4.123 *
Marital St.(B)	7.500	1	7.500	1.170
A x B	4.200	2	2.100	0.328
Error	730.892	114	6.411	

* $p < .10$

Table 6
 Duncan's Multiple Range Test
 for Nurturance

Group		25-30	21-23	18-19
	Mean	11.05	12.10	12.65
25-30	11.05	—	1.05 *	1.60 *
21-23	12.10	.953	—	0.55
18-19	12.65	1.006	.953	—

Note: Differences between the rank ordered means are located in the upper right hand portion of the matrix, and the Duncan's least significant ranges are in the lower left hand portion.

* $p < .10$

Discussion

The results support the hypothesis that the need to achieve increases with age. As age increased from the 18-19 age group to the 21-23 age group, the need for achievement increased significantly. Likewise as hypothesized, the need to affiliate decreased with age. As the age increased from the 18-19 age group, the need to affiliate decreased significantly. These results indicate that, as Bardwick (1971) and Hoffman (1972) suggest, during adolescence the female is actively concerned with meeting affiliation needs and therefore gives less attention to fulfilling achievement needs. It is during this time in a woman's life that establishing a functioning heterosexual relationship is of prime importance. Since the need to achieve does increase from the 18-19 age group to the 21-23 age group, it may be concluded that the subject's affiliation needs have either been met or that the anxiety over meeting these needs has been dealt with effectively.

In addition, the results of the present study cast doubt on the theories which propose that achievement is used as a means of meeting the affiliation need. As shown in the present study, the need to affiliate and the need to achieve are two separate needs which tend to conflict with each other. Although it is possible that women may resolve the affiliation-achievement conflict by deliberately inhibiting the achievement need during late adolescence, a more likely explanation may be that during the adolescent period

women are simply more preoccupied with their affiliation needs and do not become concerned with meeting achievement needs until a later age.

The third important finding in the present investigation is that marital status, contrary to the hypothesis, does not affect the need to achieve. This finding suggests that marriage itself is not considered a means of achievement, and it may be a contradiction of the theory (Stein & Bailey, 1973) that women channel their achievement needs into acceptable feminine roles such as that of a wife.

Although marital status was not found to significantly affect the need to achieve, marital status does affect the need to affiliate. Perhaps married women have a lesser need to affiliate because this need is being met in their marriage relationship. Bardwick (1971) would appear to be correct in suggesting that women transfer affiliation needs to heterosexual relationships as they reach adulthood. Because achievement needs do not appear to increase after marriage and the decrease of affiliation needs, it may be that the achievement and affiliation needs are more independent of each other than has been proposed in the literature. Again the development of achievement and affiliation needs may be affected more by the age of the woman than by the resolution of conflicting roles. That is, women may be preoccupied with affiliation needs until a more independent self-concept emerges and achievement becomes a goal.

A fourth important finding of the present study concerns the need to nurture. Contrary to the hypothesis, the need to nurture appears to vary with age. Though there is no difference in the mean

nurturance needs between the 18-19 age group and the 21-23 age group, there is a decrease in the need to nurture from the 21-23 age group to the 25-30 age group. However, as hypothesized, there is no significant difference between married women and single women in the need to nurture. The lack of significant difference between married and single women in the need to nurture support Benedek's (1970) contention that the need to nurture is common to all women and may have a biological basis. The difference among the age groups may indicate, as Benedek (1970) contends, that there is also an environmental influence on the need to nurture. One explanation for the decrease in the need to nurture may be that women are focusing on the nurturance need at specific times in their lives. The need to nurture may be stronger at earlier times in a woman's life when she is biologically more able to nurture through motherhood. To support this theory it would be necessary to determine if the need to nurture continues to decline after the ages of thirty, forty, and fifty, when women are less likely to be bearing children.

Other important factors should be investigated in future studies of the need to nurture. One factor that might affect the need to nurture is the number of children a woman has. The need to nurture may decrease as it is met through mothering. It would be important to find if women who do not have children have more need to nurture than those with children or if women without children find other ways to express nurturance needs.

Further research on the effect the biological system may have on the nurturance need should be conducted. Varied hormone levels

may affect the need to nurture; this could be determined by comparing the need to nurture in women with varied hormone levels in women.

In further examining the results of the need to nurture, it is noted that no significant difference occurred between the means of the 18-19 age group and the 21-23 age group. It may be that women in the 18-19 age group and the 21-23 age group are less likely than women in the 25-30 age group to have had children or to have considered the ramifications of doing so. Those women in the 25-30 age group may have had more time to contemplate the mother role and society's view of parenthood and therefore may desire children less, which may in turn affect the nurturance need. This may be especially true in this study because college-educated women were used.

Although the achievement need significantly increased from the 18-19 age group to the 21-23 age group, the achievement need did not increase from the 21-23 age group to the 25-30 age group. It is possible that the academic setting influences the increased need in the 21-23 age group. This is the time when a segment of the academic life is usually coming to an end with the completing of an undergraduate degree. Therefore, perhaps for these subjects attention is focused upon achievement. On the other hand, many of the women in the 25-30 age group were just beginning school as undergraduates or were graduate students who had already achieved bachelor's degrees. Therefore, since these subjects may have been at a different developmental point in their academic careers, they may not have been as concerned with achievement needs.

There is a similar change in the developmental pattern of the

affiliation need. Although there is a significant decrease in the affiliation need from the 18-19 age group to the 21-23 age group, there is no significant difference between the 21-23 age group and the 25-30 age group in the need to affiliate. It may be that during the 25-30 age period affiliation is less important than it is during the adolescent years. Further research with extended age groups might indicate whether the need decreases further or becomes stable.

Other variables that might be investigated in future studies of achievement, affiliation, and nurturance needs in women are length of marriage and previous marriage. In addition, various attitudes about appropriate sex roles could conceivably affect these needs and thus should be investigated. It would also be helpful to determine if patterns similar to the ones suggested in the present study exist in the general population. Finally, though there is no direct indication from this study that the three needs are interrelated, a comparison of the relative strength of the three needs at different ages would contribute important information to the understanding of the roles played by achievement, affiliation, and nurturance needs in women.

In summary, the purpose for the present study was to compare the achievement, affiliation, and nurturance needs in women at different age levels and with varied marital status. It was found that age affects significantly all three needs and that only the affiliation need was affected by marital status. The achievement, affiliation, and nurturance needs appear to be three separate needs which are

met independently. It may be that certain needs exert relatively more influence during particular periods in women's lives, thus resulting in women's giving greater attention to the needs which predominate.

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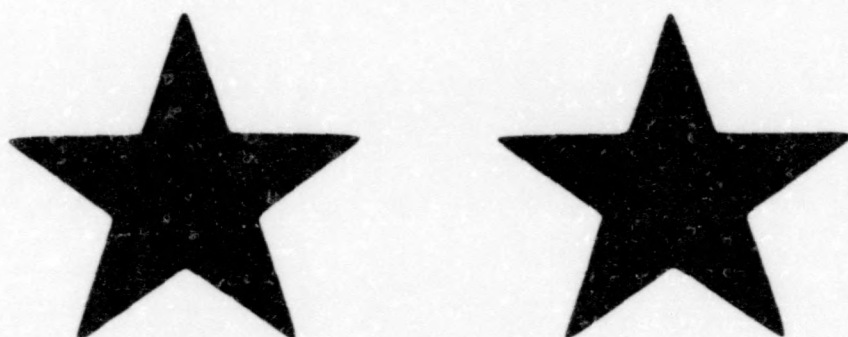
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Farris,

Nana S.

1982

CORRECTION



***PRECEDING IMAGE HAS BEEN
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