



The economic status of married male senior under-graduates, graduates, and GI-benefit students, and attitudes toward a family finance course  
by Shirley Jean Seifert Watson

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE in Home Economics  
Montana State University  
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**Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was to provide information about the major sources of income, major type of expenditures, assets and liabilities, general insurance program, and attitudes toward a family finance course available to and geared especially for the college married student. The questionnaire was personally administered to forty-five GI-Benefit, senior, and graduate married male students during April, 1967, at Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana.

Results indicated that the seniors ranked first, GI-Benefit students . second, and graduate students third in the areas of (1) monthly income, (2) dollar value of physical assets, (3) installment credit, and (4) indebtedness.

As expected, food and housing were the primary expenditures of all respondents, with the GI-Benefit students spending most, and the seniors least.

Most student respondents in each category felt their residence in Bozeman, Montana, reflected an average standard of living.

Thirty-five and one-half percent of all students interviewed indicated they would! not participate in a family finance course, but of those positive replies, another 28.8 per cent of them indicated they felt budgeting would be a most beneficial area of study in family finance.

Ninety-one per cent of all respondents indicated their desire for employment, preferably for study-related positions.

A slight majority of each category (53.3 per cent) felt that major money decisions should be a joint decision between husband and wife.

More wills were in effect by GI-Benefit students (26.7 per cent) than by either of the other study groups.

Car insurance was carried by all the respondents. Some type of life insurance was tcarried by most students. Only 6.6 per cent of the GI-Benefit and 13.3 per cent of the graduate students did not carry any. Family health insurance was carried by over half (66.6 per cent) of all the husbands interviewed.

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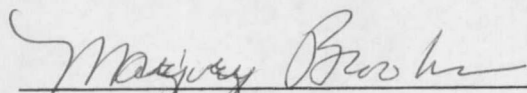
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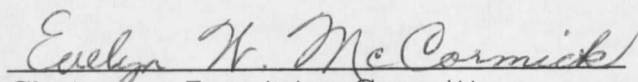
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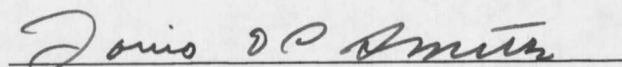
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to provide information about the major sources of income, major type of expenditures, assets and liabilities, general insurance program, and attitudes toward a family finance course available to and geared especially for the college married student. The questionnaire was personally administered to forty-five GI-Benefit, senior, and graduate married male students during April, 1967, at Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana.

Results indicated that the seniors ranked first, GI-Benefit students second, and graduate students third in the areas of (1) monthly income, (2) dollar value of physical assets, (3) installment credit, and (4) indebtedness.

As expected, food and housing were the primary expenditures of all respondents, with the GI-Benefit students spending most, and the seniors least.

Most student respondents in each category felt their residence in Bozeman, Montana, reflected an average standard of living.

Thirty-five and one-half per cent of all students interviewed indicated they would not participate in a family finance course, but of those positive replies, another 28.8 per cent of them indicated they felt budgeting would be a most beneficial area of study in family finance.

Ninety-one per cent of all respondents indicated their desire for employment, preferably for study-related positions.

A slight majority of each category (53.3 per cent) felt that major money decisions should be a joint decision between husband and wife.

More wills were in effect by GI-Benefit students (26.7 per cent) than by either of the other study groups.

Car insurance was carried by all the respondents. Some type of life insurance was carried by most students. Only 6.6 per cent of the GI-Benefit and 13.3 per cent of the graduate students did not carry any. Family health insurance was carried by over half (66.6 per cent) of all the husbands interviewed.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Fulton was concerned about the American family when he stated:

"...never has there been in our history such desperate need for men and women of intelligence and dedication, men and women who will knowingly sacrifice family time to answer a plea to action for larger purposes of awesome urgency" (8).

This investigator was impressed by the sincerity shown by married males interviewed in this sample toward their educational attainment of a college degree. There are presently over one thousand married students at Montana State University. This places married students in the same proportion to total enrollment as the Glick and Carter (10) study, which revealed that among the most frequent college ages, 18-24, about one of every six in college in 1956 was married.

The motivating process may have some bearing on student future financial success; however, Glick and Miller (11) wrote that "although it seems safe to conclude that an investment in education generally increases the probability of financial success, it does not guarantee its attainment."

Whether the husbands are attending college for education itself, or the monetary rewards which follow, this investigator would not venture to guess, but would recommend that the primary educational motivations of



college married men would serve as an interesting and enlightening basis for some future study.

Although there appears to be a continuing trend toward marriage of young people who wish to continue their education, many married college students do not finish college (5). The financial ability of married students to meet the primary expenditures required during college attendance should be of major concern to colleges and universities. No studies were found that were concerned with the financial status of married college students in the Western States during the last five years. The present study should be significant to all persons who are concerned with the financial problems of the college or university married male student.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the following among married male students: (1) major sources of income, (2) major types of expenditures, (3) major assets and liabilities, (4) general insurance program, and (5) their attitudes toward a family finance course available to and geared especially for the college family situation.

The chapter following is a review of some of the literature consulted by this investigator. Some previous studies and investigations associated with the financial aspects of college students are included.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"The high level of prosperity which enabled families to subsidize student marriages also permitted marriage upon meager economic reserve but substantial future economic potential," wrote Christopherson, Vandivere, and Kreuger (4).

Adams (1) wrote concerning structural factors affecting parental aid to married children, that the receiving of all kinds of aid was greatest during the first ten years of the young couple's marriage. This finding seemed to agree with results of a comparative study of problems of married and single students conducted by Falk (6). He tried to determine whether married students experienced greater difficulties in following their academic pursuits than did single students. Falk's study indicated that economic concerns for married students were less than for those single students, and it was possible that favorable financial circumstances contributed to the decision to marry before completing college. When parents cannot, or do not, subsidize student marriages, then students may have to seek employment while continuing this education. Kirkendall (18), in writing about married under-graduates on the campus, suggested that the couple might explore the possibility of borrowing money to complete their college education, particularly if they are within a year or two of graduation. He suggested that students may have worked so hard to avoid

borrowing that it interfered with their getting the quality education that they ought to have had. Also, as reported in another study, carrying a combined burden of study and outside work may have lowered student level of performance in many phases of life, both mentally and physically (10).

In a study of historic elements leading to increased employment and acceptability of women in salaried positions, Greenwald and Greenwald (12) concluded in part: "The trend toward marriage at an early age indicated that the female was generally not interested in preparing for a professional career". The married male student may have felt as Bossard (3) explained: "The working wife is an asset". He also wrote that "... the working wife brought security to the marital union even if she was not working". However, Hoffman (17) warned that employment would increase a woman's power vis-a-vis her husband because of the socially defined importance of the monetary contribution. Falk's (6) study indicated a concern that the wife may be assigned conflicting social roles which she could not fulfill. The many roles and responsibilities of wife, mother, housekeeper, and wage earner were emphasized by Frank (7) as some of the conflicting social roles a working wife should expect to assume.

Consumer credit as a financial aid has been used by many young newlyweds. Herrmann (15) addressed a workshop on "The Teenage Parent" presented by the University Extension Service of the University of California in 1964 concerning the economic problems of teen-age newlyweds. He

stated, "...the ~~dependence~~ on consumer credit and parents' help have made real independence almost impossible for teen-age couples" (15).

Marchand and Langford studied the adjustments of married students and their problems and concluded that: "...nearly all of the men were attending school under the 'GI-Bill of Rights', but most families needed supplementary income" (19).

Frank showed concern for the financial management of married students in his report on housing for the married students. Frank referred to the graduate married students when he wrote that they usually had but little income for living and limited funds for purchasing household equipment, which at the end of their residence had to be sold at a sacrifice or moved at considerable expense when they went elsewhere (7).

Financial decisions must be made daily by married students. Wise use of the money resource is not easily learned. Neisser (21) reported that young people came to college with attitudes toward money derived from direct experience with it, from explicit teachings in their homes and implicit teachings of the culture. Gross was concerned about management in family living and stated: "The resource of money is most closely related to economics. The concept of scarcity makes inherent the importance of allocation among many uses" (13). Stewart agreed with Gross when he wrote that: "Everyone should know the value of money and appreciate the advantage of thrift. Those who do not have knowledge in these fields are

greatly handicapped" (23).

Heoflin found that college girls (married juniors) recommended that more courses should be made available to non-home economics majors, some of whom seemed to be having more problems in such areas as management, meal preparation, rearing of children and relationships. "These girls found, however, that even a planned budget did not always cover 'emergencies'" (16).

Marull spoke to the Seminar on Home Economics Education for Latin America held June, 1964, in Mexico under the auspices of FAD, UNICEF, and the Mexican Government: "...the training of women so that they can more adequately assume their responsibilities in the modern world inevitably involves a comprehension of all economic aspects inherent in the family structure within our society" (20).

Orata (22) stated that classes should be planned for adults and youth in home-making classes in consumer and distributive education. Henderson (14) suggested that we persuade state departments of education, that instead of certifying for "home economics", they could certify for parts of it. Henderson mentioned four parts, one of which is family finance (which is often taught today by business education teachers who have little background or training for it).

Ugelow spoke before the elementary, secondary, and adult section of the 56th Annual Meeting of the American Home Economics Association

and said that, "...poor money management was one of the primary problems of the homemaker in Cook County, Illinois, and resulted in sketchy meals, non-payment of rent, and lack of adequate clothing" (24). Ugelow's characteristics of poor money management were traits which have been noted in some married college families by this investigator on an informal basis. He quoted a case-worker as saying, "They became mothers as girls and left their own mothers' homes without learning how to become housewives" (24). Perhaps this is a problem which might be studied as a characteristic of some college marriages.

Bogner and Seibert (2) made a study of the social and economic background of students enrolled at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, in 1961. Data revealed that about 25.0 per cent of the students were employed during the academic year. Male students averaged an income of \$562.00 for the school year in contrast to \$150.00 for female students during the school year. Three out of four worked during the summer and earned from \$100.00 to almost \$800.00. Two thirds earned less than \$500.00. About one fifth of the students held a scholarship (men predominated). About half of the scholarships had a value of \$2,000.00 or less when figured over a four-year period.

A study by Glick and Carter (10) was the basis for an article by Gerson (9) on the leisure and marital satisfaction of college married couples.

Glick and Carter (10) selected a sample of fifty couples attending the University of Montana at Missoula, Montana, during winter quarter of 1958 to study marriage patterns and educational living. Eight per cent of the couples had been married less than four years, and 52.0 per cent had one or more offspring. Mean ages were 26.1 and 22.4 for husbands and wives, respectively. Average monthly incomes were fairly well dispersed -- 22.0 per cent had incomes of less than \$175.00 while 30.0 per cent had incomes of \$325.00 or more. The couples tended to be largely independent of parental support. It is interesting to note that individuals who were relatively dissatisfied in marriage felt that their financial situation restricted their leisure activities to a great degree.

Christopherson, Vandiver, and Krueger (4) wrote about the married college student in 1959, based on a study by Christopherson of college marriages in public and private institutions of higher learning between the years 1943 and 1958. The most often mentioned marital disadvantage was financial hardship, but there was little indication that financial strain was unanticipated or unacceptable to the couples in terms of their long range goals. Twenty-four per cent of the wives were attending college and unemployed outside the home; 10.0 per cent were attending college and also were employed outside the home; 31.0 per cent were employed outside the home and were not attending college; and 35.0 per cent were full-time homemakers. Student families were doing very little purchasing on time-

payment plans. Some of the respondents indicated that television saved money which might otherwise have been used for more expensive recreation; television was "company" for the wife and/or children during the hours when the husband was occupied with his studies. A majority of student families received their incomes from two or more sources. Nineteen per cent of the husbands did not contribute directly to the income of their families. The government supplied 52.0 per cent of the World War II and Korean War veteran families with part of their income. Some financial subsidies were received by 38.0 per cent of the student families from parents, ranging from 5.0 per cent of the total money income of the family to 80.0 per cent.

The above studies have not compared the married students by academic groups, nor have they investigated the major expenditures, assets, liabilities, and insurance coverage of the students. The following chapter will present the results of those areas as revealed by this investigation.



### CHAPTER III

#### EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

Instrument: A structured interview form was devised with the assistance of faculty members of the Home Economics, Education, and Economics Departments at Montana State University. The form (see Appendix A) was used to obtain information about the major sources of income, major expenditures, assets and liabilities, attitudes toward their level of living, attitudes toward a family finance course, labor force potential, existence of a will, wife's knowledge of the location of financial papers, general insurance plan, and the attitude of the married male student toward borrowing money to finish college.

The original questionnaires were administered to ten volunteers, and revisions were made on the basis of their recommendations.

Sample: An IBM listing of married-status male students was obtained from the registrar's office. From this list fifteen students were randomly selected from each of the following mutually exclusive categories: GI-Benefit, Senior, and Graduate Students. Upon the recommendation of the graduate committee, fifteen students from each of the three categories were recommended as an appropriate sample population since they were to be randomly selected. This made a total sample population of 45 male married students. Appointments were made with those selected for personal administration of the data gathering form.

It was found that the GI-Benefit students' average academic class standing was 3.13, or junior. There were three freshmen, two sophmores, five juniors, one senior, three graduate students, and one special graduate student. The other two categories were comprised, 100.00 per cent each, of senior and graduate students.

There were 3.6 children per GI-Benefit family. The family size of GI-Benefit students ranged from two to seven. The senior families averaged 3.06 children per family and ranged in size from two to five members. There were 2.73 children per graduate student family ranging in number from two to four. Many of the GI-Benefit students were new or returning students who had already begun their families. The numerous offspring of the seniors may have been the result of early marriages before college. Sixty per cent of the graduate students interviewed indicated that their family numbered three persons, and one third of them indicated that their family consisted only of the husband and wife. Table I on the following page shows the size of each family.

TABLE I

Size of Families by Number\* and Percentage<sup>+</sup> of Total from Each Category

Size of Family	GI-Benefit		Senior		Graduate		All Students	
	No.*	Percent-age <sup>+</sup>	No.*	Percent-age <sup>+</sup>	No.*	Percent-age <sup>+</sup>	No.*	Percent-age <sup>+</sup>
2	3	20.0%	7	46.7%	5	33.3%	15	33.4%
3	6	40.0	2	13.3	9	60.0	17	37.8
4	4	26.7	4	26.7	1	6.7	9	20.0
5	...	....	2	13.3	...	....	2	4.4
6	...	....	...	....	...	....	...	....
7	2	13.3	...	....	...	....	2	4.4
Total Family Members	54		46		41		141	
Mean	3.6		3.1		2.7		3.1	

\* The number of families embracing this household size, including the student interviewed.

<sup>+</sup> The percentage of married students in this category who represented each household size.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The major sources of income for all groups of the study sample were from the employment of husband, employment of the wife, and from the monthly allowance of the "GI-Bill of Rights" (see Table II on the following page). Data furnished by the respondents indicated that the most popular monthly income brackets were: \$300.00 - \$399.00 for the senior and graduate student families, and \$400.00 - \$499.00 for the GI-Benefit student families at Montana State University during spring quarter of 1967 (see Table III on page 15).

The GI-Benefit student families had a higher monthly income than did the senior or graduate families. The total monthly income for this group, \$7,028.00, provided each family with a mean monthly income of \$468.53, a median of \$470.00, and an income which ranged from a low of \$150.00 to a high of \$675.00.

The major contribution toward the monthly income of GI-Benefit student families was made by the working wives who earned from \$50.00 to \$150.00 monthly. Sixty-six and six-tenths per cent of the wives contributed, monthly, an average of \$278.10 to their families. The total average monthly earnings of the wives, \$2,781.00, would have allowed only \$185.40 per GI-Benefit family if their combined salaries had been used to represent all wives of the GI-Benefit students interviewed. Their median income and

























































































































