Abstract

Using social learning theory, expectations for combining career and family were examined for Chinese and American emerging adults. Attitudes and beliefs regarding commitment to, knowledge of, involvement in, and career-family self-efficacy were assessed. There were similarities (e.g., intention to marry, age of marriage, maternal employment) and differences (e.g., number of children, parental leave) for the two cohorts. American women and men reported higher career-family self-efficacy than their Chinese counterparts. Interaction effects were found predicting career-family involvement and career-family self-efficacy. Implications of these findings and directions for future research are discussed.

Career and Family Expectations among Chinese and American Emerging Adults:

Commitment, Knowledge, Involvement, and Self-efficacy

Arnett has argued that socio-cultural changes have resulted in a new life stage between adolescence (conventionally defined as a state of preparation and socialization) and adulthood (Arnett, 2000).  The "emerging adulthood" stage is associated with diverse experiences, lack of long-term commitments, unstable romantic relationships, and initial employment experiences. Darling (2018) concurs and states that the popular press normally examines the lack of obligations, volatile bonds with people, and unstable jobs of emerging adults. It is a tricky stage of life. They are legally and cognitively adults but are often not ready or able to enact the roles most closely associated with adulthood such as employment, marriage, and parenthood. Subsequently, when individuals do assume these responsibilities, they are then considered adults. Therefore, the stage of emerging adulthood apparently ends when people make commitments and decide to take on traditional expected societal roles (Arnett, 2000).  
 There are challenges for emerging adults as they discover that having freedom to explore has benefits and drawbacks.  For example, emerging adults have utilized mental health services at high rates than those older or younger than themselves (Oviatt, Baumann, Bennett, & Garza, 2017) often due to mood disorders, increased anxiety, and higher rates of substance use. Further, since the age of marriage has risen, more young adults are having children prior to marriage, further complicating the transition to adulthood as people work to combine roles and commitments such as partner and parent in ways that are not yet clearly defined (Darling, 2018). Young adults often grapple with complex challenges in preparing for a career while also starting a family.   
 Yet, they are also optimistic; they have hope for their future (Oviatt et al., 2017). Many emerging adults view their future as an array of options with many possibilities for long term success. This may be one of the advantages of having few commitments and obligations; it enables the freedom to explore possibilities. Emerging adults often spend relatively little time helping others but rather placing more emphasis on self as they prepare to enter an increasingly complicated society with respect to family and career involvements.  
 This study was designed to explore family and career expectations of emerging adults in China and the United States. We draw on previous work of Basuil and Casper (2012) and Schneer and Beutell (2018) to frame our study. The former study (Basuil & Casper, 2012) broke new ground in theory and measurement of work-family attitudes of emerging adults. The latter study was an initial look at cross-cultural comparisons of career and family expectations of Chinese and American emerging adults (Schneer & Beutell, 2018). Our overall research strategy is investigating similarities and differences between Chinese and American emerging adults as they consider their plans, expectations, and intentions for the possibilities of combing career and family dimensions of life.

**Theoretical Background**

Social learning theory (SLT, Bandura, 1986; Basuil & Casper, 2012; Thorn & Gilbert, 1998) has been advanced to explain the dynamics of emerging adulthood (Swanson, 2016). Two aspects of SLT are particularly germane in this context: modeling and self-efficacy (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2000). Emerging adults, who are not as subject to normative expectations as are adults (Arnett, 2000) experiment with attitudes and behaviors by observing salient role models, e.g., their parents. In addition to parents, many other people can serve as role models including coaches, teachers, bosses, and even characters from media such as those on television, YouTube, or Hollywood movies. Role modeling processes influence perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors relating to family and career roles (Basuil & Casper, 2012). In fact, we argue that commitment to career and family is more relevant to emerging adults than anticipated work-family conflict (Westring & Ryan, 2011) per se, although work-family conflict is a consideration.

Self-efficacy was identified as a factor affecting emerging adults as well. Self-efficacy is one’s belief in their own abilities to complete tasks and accomplish goals. Research suggests that self-efficacy beliefs are a major component affecting career aspirations and trajectories (Bandura et al., 2000). This is noteworthy since we are asking students to anticipate their levels of commitment to tasks they will enact in the future. Perceived self-efficacy is more important in occupational choice than actual academic achievement. We argue that self-efficacy is an important factor affecting other areas (i.e., family) in addition to career.

**Gender**   
 Prior research suggests that Millennial generation women and men express a strong desire to have both a career and a family (Goux, 2011). While there is a trend toward more egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles, particularly in the career and family domains, there is evidence to suggest that traditional gender role attitudes are still present. For example, working mothers want their sons to be working parents (97%) but only 38% have such hopes for their daughters (Working mother research institute, 2014) although 92% of these mothers wanted their daughters to have a career.  
 **Maternal employment**   
 An important marker for committing to career and family roles is whether one’s mother was employed during one’s formative years (note that this is directly related to Bandura’s social learning model noted previously). Maternal employment appears to be associated with characteristics of emerging adults such as beliefs about appropriate gender roles, level of self-confidence, and overall adjustment (Weer, Greenhaus, Colakoglu, & Foley, 2006). In reality, the influence of maternal employment is much more complicated than these findings suggest (Lucas-Thompson, Goldberg, & Prause, 2010), but, for our purposes, is presumed to correlate with subsequent attitudes and behaviors of emerging adults as derived from social learning theory. Generally, maternal employment has been considered more important for young women than young men (Weer et al., 2006), but mothers appear to have a greater influence on the millennial generation for daughters and sons. “Being raised by a working mother positively correlates with a daughter’s education level and her choice to work” (Working mother research institute, 2014). For men, their wives are much more likely to work if their mothers worked.  
**Literature Review** Basuil and Casper (2012) utilized social learning theory to examine two sets of antecedents of work and family role planning attitudes among emerging adults (Basuil & Casper, 2012), specifically, their work-family balance self-efficacy and their opinions of their parents' work-to-family (WTF) conflict of 187 college students. Interestingly, the subjects' work-family balance self-efficacy was positively related to their understanding of and commitment to future work and family roles. Furthermore, views of their same-gender parent's work-to-family conflict were also positively related to knowledge about, and commitment to, interest in planning for future work and family roles. Findings suggest that improving emerging adults' self-efficacy to balance work and family may enhance their attitudes toward planning for future work and family roles. Another intriguing finding is that emerging adults appear to be more dedicated to planning for work and family roles when their same-gender parents expose them to, rather than shield them, from work-to-family conflict (Basuil & Casper, 2012).   
 Friedman (2005) researched work–family attitudes among emerging adults among participants who were 46 male and 49 female participants who were enrolled as college juniors and seniors. It was found that men and women had similar levels of work and family commitment, yet for women there was a negative correlation between work and family commitment. The exploratory analyses revealed different relationships between work decision-making status and commitment, as well as family decision-making status and commitment. Interestingly, although men were more likely than women not yet to have *considered* family roles, women were more likely than men to have *decided* about their future family position (Friedman & Weissbrod, 2005).   
 Cinamon (2006) examined anticipated levels of two kinds of work-family conflict (WFC) among 358 students from two universities. The research investigated the contribution of gender, parental models for child care and housework, and self-efficacy to the variance in anticipated WFC, and revealed that the bidirectionality of the relations between work and family life also exists in anticipated conflicts. Importantly, and worthy of continued research, gender-related differences emerged. They found that women expected higher levels of work interfering with family (WIF) and family interfering with work (FIW) and reported lower efficacy in managing these conflicts than men. Exposure to an egalitarian child care model correlated with lower anticipated levels of WIF. Self-efficacy correlated negatively with both types of conflict (Cinamon, 2006). Self-efficacy, family history, and gender thus appear to be important variables in research on career-family commitments among emerging adults.   
 Ezzedeen, Budworth, and Baker (2018) conducted a qualitative study that utilized focus groups to explore subjective perceptions of balancing career and family held by emerging adult women. Their thematic analysis of a sample (n=69) including female university students in a large Canadian metropolitan with a thematic analyses that unearthed six distinct yet overlapping positions on the possibility of balancing career and family: optimism, pessimism, uncertainty, choice, pragmatism, and support (Ezzedeen et al., 2018). Ferssizidis et al. (2010) also examined gender and how motivation and commitment to social values influence wellbeing in men and women at different ages. What was is intriguing about the approach of this study is that college students and older adults in the community were reported on their motivational orientation (intrinsic vs. extrinsic), behavioral commitment to idiographic social values, and their current well-being such as satisfaction with life (positive and negative affect). The results suggest that “behavioral commitment to intrinsically motivating social values was related to greater life satisfaction and positive affect, whereas being committed to extrinsically motivating values was related to greater negative affect. While age and gender did not moderate these relationships, meaningful age and gender differences emerged across value-based motivations, commitment, and indices of wellbeing (Ferssizidis et al., 2010, p. 354).  
 Hall (2016) studied 434 young adults by investigating the relative centralities of anticipated adult roles of career, marriage, and parenthood. Five different “relative centrality” profiles were established: career-centered, child-centered, marriage-centered, marriage and child, and family and career. In relation to commitment, findings revealed that the career-centered and marriage-centered groups “tended to differ the most, with the former being less enthusiastic toward marriage and reporting less cautious beliefs and behavior related to sexuality and risk taking. …. It is argued that the centrality profiles have implications for the decisions that young adults currently make that could lead them along various trajectories toward adulthood that influence if and how adult roles are realized” (Hall & Willoughby, 2016, p. 75).

**U.S. and Chinese emerging adults**   
 Although limited, there has been some cross-cultural research that compares emerging adults from different countries/cultures with respect to career and family commitment (Karaś, Cieciuch, Negru, & Crocetti, 2015; Schneer & Beutell, 2018; Twenge, 2011; Winograd & Hais, 2012; Xiang, Ribbens, Fu, & Cheng, 2015). The research so far has found similarities and differences between U.S. and Chinese emerging adult Millennials (Schneer & Beutell, 2018). Consider the following quote:

Generational theorists have not definitively named the Millennials’ Chinese counterparts. Some observers, however, have called at least their urban segment “Little Emperors.” Similar to American Millennials, this generation was often reared by their own hovering “helicopter parents” in a highly protected, hyper-attentive manner that reflected the importance of these special children—the product of China’s “one child” policy—and the great expectations their parents had and continue to have for their offspring. The result of this upbringing are cohorts of civic-minded, pressured, conventional, patriotic American and Chinese young people who revere their parents, are optimistic about their nation’s future, and open to the world (Winograd & Hais, 2012).

Fascinating similarities and differences abound in the generations of the two countries. Xiang et al. (2015) conducted research that concurs with the cultural aspects and finds that the generational differences in the U.S. are generally larger, and that a strong, traditional culture is powerful in work-related views that is steadier across generations in China.   
 These findings harmonize with remarks suggesting that between-culture differences in values are greater than within-culture differences (Xiang et al., 2015). It is intriguing that, while the U.S. generations have no gender differences in regard to their attitudes toward career, and notwithstanding, and the Chinese socialist doctrine highlights gender equality at work, it appears that traditional gender roles of men and women are still persistent in China. In addition, cultural changes in U.S. and Chinese samples are different (Xiang et al., 2015). Research reveals that gender difference between U.S. generational groups in work values and attitudes are different from Chinese generational groups. Gender differences exist for each U.S. generation, but only the Chinese Millennials and Social Reform (born in the 1970s) generations have statistically significant gender differences in desired traits. This suggests that gender differences of Chinese generational groups are more clearly delineated than gender differences of U.S. generations, implying that Chinese economic and social reforms have produced stronger changes to the perceptions held by women in Chinese society (Xiang et al., 2015).  
 Based on the themes emerging from this literature, including gender, parenting, maternal employment, emerging adult cognition, combining career and family responsibilities coupled with research on Chinese and American emerging adults, we consider three research questions (RQs) in this study:

1. What differences and similarities exist between Chinese and U.S. emerging adults in plans, expectations, and intentions for marriage, family, and career, as well as attitudes toward combing career and family (commitment, knowledge, involvement, and self-efficacy) and maternal employment?

2. Are there gender differences in the variables identified in RQ1?

3. Are there interactions between nationality (China & America), gender, and maternal employment for career and family variables (commitment, knowledge, involvement, and self-efficacy)?

**Method**

**Participants**

The sample consisted of Chinese (n= 56) and American (n=59) undergraduate students, the vast majority of whom were business students (N=115). All were enrolled in business classes. Four academic majors accounted for 80% of the variance: international trade (44.3%), marketing (18.3%), finance (9.6%), and management (7.8%). Research questionnaires were administered in the classroom setting as part of a series of assessment exercises. The average age of the participants was 20.84 years, ranging from 18-27 years, with a mode of 21 years. With respect to gender there were 48 (41.7%) females and 65 (56.5%) males.

**Measures**

Demographic variables (i.e., gender, age, major area of study, and nationality), future plans for marriage, family, and family in relation to career were assessed using a questionnaire that appears in the Appendix. The measure of maternal employment also appears in the Appendix.

We utilized measures of career and family perceptions from a questionnaire used by Basuil and Casper (2012). This set of four variables measure career and family perceptions in the following areas: commitment; knowledge; involvement; and self-efficacy in a career-family context. Each of these variables was rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Items were averaged to yield the scale score with higher scores indicating higher levels of each variable. Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was used to measure scale reliability.

**Career and family commitment (Commitment).** Commitment was assessed using six items (e.g., I am committed to having a lifelong career in addition to raising a family). Coefficient alpha was .71.

**Career and family knowledge (Knowledge).** Knowledge was assessed using three items (e.g., I know a lot of strategies for combining a family with a career in a way that minimizes the stress involved). Coefficient alpha was .63.

**Career and family involvement (Involvement).** Involvement was assessed using six items (e.g., I seem to spend a lot of time these days thinking about how I will combine my work and family responsibilities). Coefficient alpha was .66.

**Career and family self-efficacy (Self-Efficacy)**. Self-efficacy was assessed using six items (e.g., Whatever obstacles are presented in trying to balance work and family roles, I am sure I can handle them). Coefficient alpha was .74.

**Data Analysis**  
 Research questions 1 and 2 were tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA) with nationality (RQ1) or nationality and gender (RQ2) groups as independent variables. Tukey post hoc tests were used to assess statistically significant following a significant overall F value. RQ3 was tested using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to control for relationships among the four dependent variables (commitment, knowledge, involvement, and self-efficacy). Independent variables of gender, country, and maternal employment (2 X 2 X 3) were tested using a between-subjects design.

**Results**

Table 1 reports the means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations for multi-item and demographic variables (i.e., gender, age, nationality). Self-efficacy was correlated with commitment to and knowledge of combining family and career but only weakly related to involvement. Nationality was significantly related to commitment and self-efficacy.  
 In order to test our first RQ (i.e., Do Chinese and American exhibit differences and similarities with respect to marriage and family plans, having children, the number of children, number of years of work before having children, parental leave, child care, resuming work after having children, maternal employment, modifying career plans, and attitudes toward combining career and family roles?) we conducted an ANOVA (see Table 2). For the marriage variables, U.S. respondents were significantly more likely to expect to marry (*F*(1,113)=5.30, *p*<.05)(93% US, 79% China) and to work significantly more years before they plan to marry (*F*(1,93)=24.91, *p*<.001)(6.65 years U.S., 4.49 years China). No differences were found in marriage age; all respondents who indicated that they planned to marry also planned to work after getting married. US emerging adults were less likely (*F*(1,90)=3.22, *p*<.05) to quit their job if their spouse was transferred to a new job in a new city than Chinese (53% U.S., 62% China).   
 US participants expected to have more children (2.82 U.S., 1.67 China) (*F*(1,95)=53.50, *p*<.001), and to remain in the workforce for more years before having children (7.75 years U.S., 5.68 years China) (*F*(1,94)=13.52, *p*<.05). No differences were found with respect to maternal employment. With respect to the four career-family attitudinal variables two were significantly different. US respondents were significantly higher than their Chinese counterparts on commitment to combining career and family (*F*(1,108)=10.30, *p*<.01) and career-family self-efficacy (*F*(1,109)=25.15, *p*<.05).  
 RQ 2 examined gender differences in addition to country differences (see Table 3). Thus, we compared four groups: U.S. men; U.S. women; Chinese men; and, Chinese women. No gender differences were found for intention to marry or expected age of marriage. U.S. men indicated that they would work significantly (p<.001) more years before marriage than Chinese men and women, while US women planned to work significantly longer before marriage than Chinese women. With respect to the number of months of parental leave after the birth of the first child, U.S. women (6.63 months) and Chinese women (8.92 months) reported significantly (p<.05) more months of leave than U.S. men (1.54 months) or Chinese men (2.83 months). A similar pattern of gender differences existed for expectations that a spouse would quit working and stay at home to care for the children: (3% women, 33% men).   
 U.S. men were significantly (*p*<.05) more committed to combining career and family life than Chinese women (*M*=3.58)(Table 3). However, Chinese women reported higher (*p*<.05) levels of career-family involvement than U.S. men. For career-family self-efficacy US men and women scored significantly higher (*p*<.001) than their Chinese counterparts. Finally, no differences were found for knowledge relating to combing career and family.  
 RQ3 examined interaction effects for gender, country (China vs. U.S.), and maternal employment predicting career and family variables (i.e., commitment, knowledge, involvement, and self-efficacy). The 3-way interaction term was not statistically significant. However, three, two-way interactions were significant. The first centered on involvement in of work family planning by maternal employment (*F*(1,108)=10.30, *p*<.01). Figure 1 shows a noticeable difference between Chinese and U.S. responses when mothers worked part-time, with US respondents showing lower levels of involvement.   
 Figure 2 displays the interaction of gender and nationality predicting career-family self-efficacy (*F*(1,108)=10.30, *p*<.01). There is a significant gap in self-efficacy for Chinese women, who reported lower levels of self-efficacy. Our third, and final 2-way interaction effect (Figure 3), examined gender and maternal employment in relation to career-family self-efficacy (*F*(1,108)=10.30, *p*<.01). As shown in Figure 3, the largest difference between women and men on work-family self-efficacy existed when mothers did not work with women reporting lower levels of self-efficacy.

**Discussion**

The findings address two aspects the anticipated futures of emerging adults: plans, expectations, and intentions for marriage, family, and career, on the one hand, and attitudes toward combining career and family on the other. Considering family plans, differences and similarities were found between the Chinese and U.S. cohorts. Not surprisingly, although the percentages of respondents planning to have children were similar in both countries, there was a significant difference with respect the number of children expected, with Chinese respondent’s planning on having fewer children than U.S. respondents. Although China’s one-child policy might portend such an outcome, it is less clear with the recent easing of this policy how expectations might be affected. Easing the one-child policy has not had an immediate impact, possibly because bureaucratic procedures and limited paid leave (98 days), and the high cost of raising a child (Larson, 2014). It might reflect a shift an inclination for a population that was raised to believe that one is the correct number of children to have. Pressures on emerging adults to care for parents and grandparents might necessitate having fewer children in order to meet career demands and eldercare needs.   
 Although China’s one-child policy has been relaxed to the point where emerging adults may be pressured by the government to have children, it is not clear how this will work in practice (particularly in light of the above discussion). The one-child policy has created a dearth of new entrants for the workforce (China’s working age population decreased in 2012 for the first time) and a significant imbalance in gender with many more men than women among emerging adults. China’s one-child policy coupled with relatively young retirement age (60 for Chinese men and 55 for women) is creating too many retirees and too few entering workers. As such, the Chinese may have to increase the retirement age (Zhang, 2013). The United States also faces demographic shifts in the workforce that will necessitate structural changes.  
 Our findings indicated that maternal employment did not differentiate between the four groups comprised of Chinese and Americans by gender. Maternal employment was still an important variable despite the insignificant main effect. However, previous work comparing these same groups using a different sample from China and the USA did find significant differences (Schneer & Beutell, 2018). Chinese men reported the highest level of maternal employment, but this number was not significantly different than the level reported by Chinese women. Also, career-family commitment was highest for men when their mother worked full-time and for women when their mother worked part-time (Schneer & Beutell, 2018). Other studies have demonstrated the importance of maternal employment in the USA. For example, Chait Barnett, Gareis, Boone James, and Steele (2003) reported that “male and female college seniors who were reared in a household with an employed mother, especially one employed full-time, expect less difficulty in integrating their future romantic relationship with either their or their future partner’s career” (p. 315).  
 Modelling and self-efficacy, from Bandura’s theory (Bandura, 1986; Bandura et al., 2000; Basuil & Casper, 2012) are related to maternal employment but are also important to expectations for combining career and family. We found main effects and interaction effects indicating that respondents from the USA have higher career-family self-efficacy than Chinese respondents. In other research, Chait Barnett et al. (2003) found that emerging adults whose mothers combined work and family endeavors felt more confident in their ability to do so. Riggio and Desrochers (2006) reported that women reported higher levels of self-efficacy related to parenting and work than did men. Further, men whose mother did not work indicated lower levels of self-efficacy than men with employed mothers.  
 The emerging adults, like those in this study, represent a substantial and diverse wave of new workforce entrants who will challenge organizations with their expectations and beliefs, particularly regarding career and family. They expect workplaces to be responsive to their needs. In particular, they are more motivated by personal values than climbing the corporate ladder. Further, emerging adults expect flexible workplaces, particularly when it comes to meeting personal and family goals (Goux, 2011). And, unlike previous generations such as Baby Boomers who “live to work”, emerging adults “work to live” by seeking work flexibility in both time and space mediated by technology (Beutell, 2013).  
**Potential Limitations** Several possible limitations should be noted. Study variables were assessed using self-reports. Although there were several response formats, it is possible that response set affected ratings on scales with the same anchors. Unmeasured variables may also have affected the results. Our sample size was adequate but ideally should have been larger. The reliability coefficients for knowledge and involvement were lower than .70. The Chinese participants, who did have acceptable English proficiency, may have perceived some of the questions differently than U.S. respondents. This comparative study of Chinese and American emerging adults could mask variability that may exist within countries.   
**Future Research** Studying emerging adults from countries beyond China and the U.S. is necessary. Hofstede’s (1993) cultural dimensions such as masculinity-femininity, time orientation, individualism-collectivism, etc. could be useful in selecting countries for future studies. How committed are emerging adults to their espoused future plans? It seems inevitable that plans would change but how they change should be investigated. Longitudinal research could identify individual and cohort effects to determine whether plans unfold consistently or uniquely across countries. We need to understand how the life plans of this large group of emerging adults affect organizations in relation to career-related measures, health, and overall wellbeing (Karaś et al., 2015). Maternal employment is worthy of much more research (Chait Barnett et al., 2003; Weer et al., 2006) as a variable influencing career and family among emerging adults (Riggio & Desrochers, 2006). Particular emphasis should be given to country influences on the impact of maternal employment. Finally, the observed differences in career-family self-efficacy, indicating higher self-efficacy for respondents from the U.S., need to be explored more fully.

**Conclusion**

This study reports differences and similarities between Chinese and American emerging adults in career and family decisions. The most important variables in this study were self-efficacy, maternal employment, gender, and participant’s country (China and U.S.). The findings on emerging adults can help organizations understand the impact of career-family expectations that have critical implications for human capital management. Organizations must be cognizant of prepared to deal with the expectations that emerging adults bring to the world of work including support for combining career and family.

References

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist, 55*(5), 469-480. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.55.5.469

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action : A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., & Pastorelli, C. (2000). Self-efficacy beliefs as shapers of children's aspirations and career trajectories. *Child Dev.*

Basuil, D. A., & Casper, W. J. (2012). Work–family planning attitudes among emerging adults. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 80*(3), 629-637. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.01.017>

Beutell, N. J. (2013). Generational Differences in Work-Family Conflict and Synergy. *International Journal of Environal Research and Public Health, 10*, 2544-2559. doi:10.3390/ijerph10062544

Chait Barnett, R., Gareis, K. C., Boone James, J., & Steele, J. (2003). Planning ahead: college seniors’ concerns about career–marriage conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 62*(2), 305-319. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/S0001-8791(02)00028-3>

Cinamon, R. G. (2006). Anticipated Work‐Family Conflict: Effects of Gender, Self‐Efficacy, and Family Background. *The Career Development Quarterly, 54*(3), 202-215. doi:doi:10.1002/j.2161-0045.2006.tb00152.x

Darling, N. (2018, March 11). Emerging Adulthood: The Twenty-Someting Stage of Life. *Psychology Today*.

Ezzedeen, S. R., Budworth, M.-H., & Baker, S. D. (2018). Can I have it all? Emerging adult women’s positions on balancing career and family. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, 37*(6), 566-581. doi:doi:10.1108/EDI-06-2017-0138

Ferssizidis, P., Adams, L. M., Kashdan, T. B., Plummer, C., Mishra, A., & Ciarrochi, J. (2010). Motivation for and commitment to social values: The roles of age and gender. *Motivation and Emotion, 34*(4), 354-362. doi:10.1007/s11031-010-9187-4

Friedman, S. R., & Weissbrod, C. S. (2005). Work and Family Commitment and Decision-Making Status Among Emerging Adults. *Sex Roles, 53*(5), 317-325. doi:10.1007/s11199-005-6755-2

Goux, D. (2011). Millennials in the Workplace. Retrieved from <http://www.bentley.edu/centers/center-for-women-and-business/millennials-workplace#_ftnref1>

Hall, S. S., & Willoughby, B. J. (2016). Relative Work and Family Role Centralities: Beliefs and Behaviors Related to the Transition to Adulthood. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues, 37*(1), 75-88. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10834-014-9436-x>

Hofstede, G. (1993). Cultural constraints in management theories. *Academy of Management Perspectives, 7*(1), 81-94. doi:10.5465/ame.1993.9409142061

Karaś, D., Cieciuch, J., Negru, O., & Crocetti, E. (2015). Relationships Between Identity and Well-Being in Italian, Polish, and Romanian Emerging Adults. *Social Indicators Research, 121*(3), 727-743. doi:10.1007/s11205-014-0668-9

Larson, C. (2014). Why China's Second-Baby Boom Might Not Happen. *Bloomberg Businessweek*.

Lucas-Thompson, R. G., Goldberg, W. A., & Prause, J. (2010). Maternal work early in the lives of children and its distal associations with achievement and behavior problems: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 136*(6), 915-942. doi:10.1037/a0020875

10.1037/a0020875.supp (Supplemental)

Oviatt, D. P., Baumann, M. R., Bennett, J. M., & Garza, R. T. (2017). Undesirable Effects of Working While in College: Work-School Conflict, Substance Use, and Health. *The Journal of Psychology, 151*(5), 433.

Riggio, H. R., & Desrochers, S. J. (2006). Maternal Employment:Relations With Young Adults' Work and Family Expectations and Self-Efficacy. *American Behavioral Scientist, 49*(10), 1328-1353. doi:10.1177/0002764206286558

Schneer, J. A., & Beutell, N. J. (2018). *Commitment to Career and Family among American and Chinese Business Students*. Management. Rider University, School of Business.

Swanson, J. A. (2016). Trends in Literature About Emerging Adulthood:Review of Empirical Studies. *Emerging Adulthood, 4*(6), 391-402. doi:10.1177/2167696816630468

Thorn, B. L., & Gilbert, L. A. (1998). Antecedents of work and family role expectations of college men. *Journal of Family Psychology, 12*(2), 259-267. doi:10.1037/0893-3200.12.2.259

Twenge, J. M. (2011). Generational differences in mental health: Are children and adolescents suffering more, or less? *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 81*(4), 469-472. doi:10.1111/j.1939-0025.2011.01115.x

Weer, C. H., Greenhaus, J. H., Colakoglu, S. N., & Foley, S. (2006). The Role of Maternal Employment, Role-Altering Strategies, and Gender in College Students’ Expectations of Work–Family Conflict. *Sex Roles, 55*(7-8), 535-544. doi:10.1007/s11199-006-9107-y

Westring, A. F., & Ryan, A. M. (2011). Anticipated work–family conflict: A construct investigation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 79*(2), 596-610. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2011.02.004>

Winograd, M., & Hais, M. D. (2012). Want to see better US-Chinese relations? American and Chinese Millennials could be key. *New Geography*.

Working mother research institute. (2014). Mothers and Daughters (and fathers and sons).

Xiang, Y., Ribbens, B., Fu, L., & Cheng, W. (2015). Variation in career and workplace attitudes by generation, gender, and culture differences in career perceptions in the United States and China. *Employee Relations, 37*(1), 66-82. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/ER-01-2014-0005>

Zhang, Y. (2013). China to raise retirement age. *Global Times*.

Table 1  
  
 *Means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations among the study variables*

Mean SD 1 2 3 4 5 6

1. Gender 1.42 .50

2. Age (years) 20.84 1.36. -.21\*

3. Country 1.49 .50 -.07. -.22\*

4. Commitment 3.81 .57. -.03 .02 -.30\*\*

5. Knowledge 3.05 .70. -.09 -.02 -.02 .27\*\*

6. Involvement 2.66 .59 .18 -.27\*\* .13 -.20\* .06

7. Self-Efficacy 3.57 .63 -.06 .15 -.44\*\* .52\*\* .39\*\* -.07

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Note. \**p*<.05 \*\**p*<.01

Gender (1=male, 2=female); Country (1=US, 2=China)

Table 2  
*ANOVA Comparing Chinese and American Students on Major Study Variables*

**U.S. China**

*M SD M SD F*

Marry? 1.07 .25 1.21 .41 5.30\*

Marry Age (years) 27.98 2.46 26.81 3.89 3.24

Years BF Marry 6.65 2.27 4.48 1.88 24.91\*\*

Quit job for spouse 1.34 .48 1.50 .51 2.50

Have Children? 1.07 .25 1.25 .44 7.85\*\*

Number of Children 2.82 .91 1.67 .54 53.50\*\*\*

Age at Birth of 1st Child (years) 29.86 2.34 29.12 1.86 2.81

Work BF Children (years) 7.75 3.03 5.68 2.30 13.52\*\*\*

Work after Children 1.06 .31 1.00 .00 1.24

Months Leave after Child 3.89 3.97 5.36 5.77 2.16

Spouse quits Job 1.83 .38 1.77 .43 0.52

Children if no Care 1.30 .46 1.37 .49 0.51

Mother Worked 2.39 .92 2.62 .63 2.45

Commitment 3.97 .59 3.63 .50 10.30\*\*

Knowledge 3.06 .75 3.04 .66 .04

Involvement 2.58 .67 2.73 .48 1.73  
Self-Efficacy 3.84 .56 3.30 .57 25.15\*\*\*  
  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Note. \**p*<.05 \*\**p*<.01 \*\*\*p<.001 Marry? (1=yes, 0=no); Quit job for spouse (if spouse was transferred to a new job in a different state?) (1=yes, 0=no); Have children? (1=yes, 0=no); Work before children=years of work before having first child; Work after children (1=yes, 0=no); Leave after children=number of months for parental leave; (Expect) spouse (to) quit(s) job (to care for child/children) 1=yes, 0=no; Children but no care=would you have children if you knew that you would have to quit your job because no other childcare was available (1=yes, 0=no); Mother worked (when you were 8 years old) 1=no, 2=part-time, 3=full-time; Commitment, Knowledge, Involvement, Self-Efficacy = the average of items (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) with higher scores indicating higher levels on the variable.

Table 3   
  
*ANOVA Comparing Study Variables by Gender and Country*

**U.S. China**

(1) (2) (3) (4)

**Male Female Male Female**

Marry? 1.06 1.07 1.27 1.14 ns ----

Marry Age (years) 28.41 27.48 27.46 26.83 ns ----

Years BF Marry 7.21 6.00 4.83 3.89 \*\*\* 1>3,4; 2>4

Quit job for spouse 1.38 1.29 1.46 1.53 ns ----

Have Children? 1.06 1.07 1.34 1.14 \*\* 3>1,2

Number of Children 2.69 2.98 1.74 1.67 \*\*\* 1>3,4; 2>3,4

Age at Birth of 1st Child (years) 30.00 29.70 29.50 28.58 ----

Work BF Children (years) 8.11 7.34 6.13 5.17 \*\*\* 1>4

Work after Children 0.96 1.16 1.00 1.00 \* 2>1

Months Leave after Child 1.54 6.63 2.83 8.92 \*\*\* 2,4>1; 2>1,3;4>3

Spouse quits Job 1.38 1.21 1.26 1.44\* 1>2; 3>2,4

Children if no Care 0.58 0.74 0.71 0.68ns ----

Mother Worked 2.57 2.19 2.61 2.60 ns

Commitment 3.98 3.96 3.68 3.58\* 1>4

Knowledge 3.04 3.09 3.17 2.85 ns

Involvement 2.41 2.80 2.72 2.76\* 4>1

Self-Efficacy 3.85 3.82 3.38 3.19\*\*\* 1,2>3,4   
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Note. \**p*<.05 \*\**p*<.01 \*\*\*p<.001 Marry? (1=yes, 0=no); Quit job for spouse (if spouse was transferred to a new job in a different state?) (1=yes, 0=no); Have children? (1=yes, 0=no); Work before children=years of work before having first child; Work after children (1=yes, 0=no); Leave after children=number of months for parental leave; (Expect) spouse (to) quit(s) job (to care for child/children) 1=yes, 0=no; Children but no care=would you have children if you knew that you would have to quit your job because no other childcare was available (1=yes, 0=no); Mother worked (when you were 8 years old) 1=no, 2=part-time, 3=full-time.

Figure 1  
  
*Career-family involvement by maternal employment and nationality*



Figure 2   
  
*Interaction between career-family self-efficacy by gender and nationality*

**

Figure 3  
  
*Career-family self-efficacy by gender and maternal employment*

**

Appendix

*Questions assessing marriage, family, career and family, and maternal employment*

Q1. Do you plan to get married? 1. Yes 2. No (If ‘No’ go to Q6).

Q 2. If you plan to get married, at what age do you think you will marry? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Q3. How many years will you work before getting married? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Q4. Will you continue to work after you are married? 1. Yes 2. No

Q5. Would you quit a job you like if your future spouse was transferred to a new job in another city? 1. Yes 2. No

Q6. Do you plan to have children? 1. Yes 2. No (if ‘No’, go to Q14)

Q7. How many children do you want to have? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Q8. At what age do you think you will have your first child? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Q9. How many years will you work before having your first child? \_\_\_\_\_

Q10. Do you plan to continue working after having your first child? 1. Yes 2. No

Q11. After the birth of your child, how many months do you plan to stay home (not working) to care for him/her? \_\_\_\_\_\_ months

Q12. Do you expect your spouse to quit working and stay home to care for your child/children? 1. Yes 2. No

Q13. Would you still have children if you knew that you would have to quit your job and stay home to care for them because there was no adequate alternative childcare available? 1. Yes 2. No

Q14. When you were in second grade (age 8), was your mother employed?

1. No 2. Yes – Part-time employed 3. Yes – Full-time employed

Q15. I am: 1. Male 2. Female

Q16. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years

Q17. My Major(s) is (are) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Q18. My nationality is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_