



NYU  STERN

Salomon Center for the Study of Financial Institutions

**Working Paper Series** **ASSET MANAGEMENT** Research Group

THE IMPACT OF MUTUAL FUND FAMILY MEMBERSHIP ON INVESTOR RISK

Edwin J. Elton  
Martin J. Gruber  
T. Clifton Green

SC-AM-05-01

# **The Impact of Mutual Fund Family Membership on Investor Risk**

Edwin J. Elton

Martin J. Gruber

T. Clifton Green\*

February 2005

## **Abstract**

Many investors confine their mutual fund holdings to a single fund family, either for simplicity or through restrictions placed by their retirement savings plan. We find evidence that mutual fund returns are more closely correlated within than between fund families. As a result, restricting investment to one fund family leads to a greater total portfolio risk than diversifying across fund families. The increased correlation is due primarily to common stock holdings, but is also more generally related to families having similar exposures to economic sectors or industries. Fund families also show a propensity to focus on high risk or low risk strategies, which leads to a greater dispersion of risk across restricted investors. An investor considering adding an additional fund either inside or outside the family would need to believe the inside fund offered an additional 50 to 70 basis points in return to achieve the same Sharpe ratio.

---

\*Elton, [eelton@stern.nyu.edu](mailto:eelton@stern.nyu.edu), and Gruber, [mgruber@stern.nyu.edu](mailto:mgruber@stern.nyu.edu), are Nomura Professors of Finance at the Stern School of Business at New York University. Green, [clifton.green@emory.edu](mailto:clifton.green@emory.edu), is Assistant Professor of Finance at Goizueta Business School, Emory University. We thank Yakov Amihud, Jacob Boudoukh, Stephen Brown, Jeff Busse, Jennifer Carpenter, Robert Whitelaw, and Jeff Wurgler for helpful comments.

# **The Impact of Mutual Fund Family Membership on Investor Risk**

## **Abstract**

Many investors confine their mutual fund holdings to a single fund family, either for simplicity or through restrictions placed by their retirement savings plan. We find evidence that mutual fund returns are more closely correlated within than between fund families. As a result, restricting investment to one fund family leads to a greater total portfolio risk than diversifying across fund families. The increased correlation is due primarily to common stock holdings, but is also more generally related to families having similar exposures to economic sectors or industries. Fund families also show a propensity to focus on high risk or low risk strategies, which leads to a greater dispersion of risk across restricted investors. An investor considering adding an additional fund either inside or outside the family would need to believe the inside fund offered an additional 50 to 70 basis points in return to achieve the same Sharpe ratio.

Individuals often place all of their mutual fund investments with one family of mutual funds. Employer sponsored retirement plans often necessitate this behavior by limiting fund choices to the offerings of a single family.<sup>1</sup> Load fees, which are typically not charged when switching funds within a family, also encourage family loyalty. On a more basic level, investors may restrict their attention to one family to help narrow the search process and simplify record keeping. In this article, we examine whether the propensity of investors to confine their investments to a single fund family influences the risk characteristics of their portfolios.

This issue has received little attention in the literature of financial economics. There are reasons to suspect that the correlation among funds in the same family is lower than correlation of funds across families, and reason to suspect it is higher. The principal reason to suspect that correlation may be lower within families than between families stems from the desire of a fund family to capture as much of an investor's assets as possible. In order to do so, the fund family should offer a diverse set of funds so that the investor need not go outside the family for diversification reasons. Khorana and Servaes (2003) find that product differentiation is effective in obtaining market share. This desire to capture market share should lead a family to offer funds which have lower correlation than randomly selected funds across families.

A second reason to expect diversity among funds offered by the same family is the well-documented impact of having a Morningstar five-star fund or high return fund on cash flows to the fund family as documented by Khorana and Servaes (2003). A recognized strategy for having a top-performing fund is to offer a lot of funds, each of

---

<sup>1</sup> For example, Elton, Gruber and Blake (2004) study over six hundred 401K plans and find that most restrict fund choices to one family. This is relevant for most investors since 401K investments comprise a significant component of investors' financial assets. For example, ICI (2000) reports that more than 60% of 401K plan participants have no other security investments (stocks, bonds, etc.). Moreover, Choi, Laibson, Madrian, and Metrick (2004) estimate that for households with annual incomes between \$20,000 and \$70,000, the median household has less than one month's worth of income invested outside of their 401K plan.

which reacts to different factors (influences). This would result in within-family funds having low correlations.

On the other hand, there are several reasons to expect that funds may be more similar inside than outside fund families. Portfolio managers within families are likely to have access to the same research analysis produced either by internal analysts or by a particular set of external research firms. Many families also have a prescribed investment style that influences the type of securities they hold. A common view on individual companies could lead to similar stock holdings across portfolios with even different objectives. In addition, a family's relationship with an investment brokerage firm could also lead to common holdings of new offerings.

Fund similarities within families may also arise from macro level influences. Portfolio managers may begin the security selection process with an economic forecast that is shared by other fund managers within the firm. For example, a family's portfolio managers may sit on a strategy committee that shares insights regarding the overall economy. A common family-wide economic outlook could result in similar exposures to various economic sectors. Commonalities related to both sectors and individual securities will be greater whenever one portfolio management team manages multiple funds within a family.

In this study we examine how these conflicting influences of demand from the market for diversification and the effect of firm structure effect the correlation between funds in the same family relative to across families.

Our analysis suggests that investors who limit their investments to one fund family hold more highly correlated funds than those who diversify across families. Both within and across objectives, fund return correlations are significantly higher inside than outside fund families. An examination of fund holdings, combined with a factor model to characterize fund returns, reveals that roughly two thirds of the increase in return correlation is related to common stock holdings with the rest attributable to similar

exposures to broad economic factors. The extent of overlap in stock holdings within a family is surprising. Depending on the objective group being considered, as much as 34% of total net assets consist of stocks held in common, for funds with the same objective. For funds with different objectives the median percent of the portfolio held in the same securities is 17% inside the family compared to 8% outside the family. These differences mean that for an investor to select an additional fund inside a fund family rather than outside a fund family often requires an increase in return of from 50bp to 70bp to maintain the same Sharpe ratio on her portfolio.

We also find evidence that fund families show a propensity to focus on either high risk or low risk strategies. Within each objective, families are significantly more likely to have mutual funds with standard deviations higher or lower than the median standard deviation for that classification. While this phenomenon does not increase the risk of an average investor's portfolio, it does increase the distribution of risk across investors. The increased dispersion increases the probability of having very high risk by investing exclusively in one family. Taken together, our results indicate that confining mutual fund investments to one family has a detrimental effect on investor risk that is statistically and economically meaningful. On average, portfolios of funds within families result in greater overall risk and greater risk clustering than similar portfolios created from funds across families.

The reason these results arise and their importance can be illustrated by considering two funds in the same family: The Eaton Vance Special Equities Fund and Eaton Vance Tax Managed Small Cap Growth Fund. The Investment Company Data Inc. (ICDI) classifies the special equity fund as Aggressive Growth and the small cap fund as Long-Term Growth. They have separate prospectuses and are categorized on the family's web site in different groups of funds. The prospectus of the Special Equities Fund states the objective as "Growth in Capital" whereas the Managed Small Cap Growth Fund's

stated objective is “A diversified fund seeking long-term after-tax returns by investing in emerging growth companies.”

An investor looking at standard materials from Eaton Vance would have little reason to believe the funds were similar. However, the correlation between their monthly returns over a five-year period is 0.995. Both funds employ the same portfolio manager. The rank order of the major holdings in the two funds is the same, with only small differences in percentages invested. The rank order of the amount invested in each economic sector is the same, with only small differences in the percentages invested in any sector. Thus, an investor hoping to diversify by buying shares of both funds would be disappointed with the resulting risk profile.

Our study focuses on characteristics of investor risk. If certain families have funds that consistently outperform on a risk-adjusted basis, investing in a single family may be optimal even though portfolio risk is elevated. Our results highlight the added risks associated with this type of strategy and the added return necessary to compensate for this risk.

The paper is organized as follows: Section I discusses the sample and the data sources we use in the study. Section II examines the correlation between fund returns within and between fund families, where funds are grouped according to standard objective classifications. Section III shows the impact of increased correlation within a family on the increased return an investor should require for adding a firm within a family rather than outside the family. In Section IV we begin our examination of the determinants of the increased correlation by applying factor models to remove the impact of various economic sectors. This allows us to examine return correlation due to sector and security bets as opposed to macro market bets. Section V examines the actual security holdings of funds to examine the extent to which higher correlation within a fund family is due to holding the same securities. In Section VI we study the propensity of

families to engage in high or low risk strategies by studying similarities in fund standard deviations. Section VII offers conclusions and implications for investors.

## **1. The Data**

The principal source of our data is the CRSP Mutual Fund Database.<sup>2</sup> Our initial sample is all fund families that existed in January 1998 and the mutual funds that were part of these families. We use objective classifications from Investment Company Data Inc. (ICDI) to categorize funds and eliminate the following: specialized funds, index funds, international funds, money market funds, single state municipal funds, precious metal funds, sector funds, and utility funds. This left us with funds in eleven ICDI objective categories. From this list we eliminate duplicate funds (versions of the fund that differ only in the expenses charged), which are of two varieties. First, many funds have multiple share classes related to different fee structures and we eliminate all but the class with the longest history. Second, many families offer the same fund to institutional investors or to financial planners under different names, and we eliminate the duplicate funds. Finally, we perform a detailed examination of pairs of funds that were highly correlated to ensure that duplicate funds are removed from the sample.

After removing duplicate funds, we then eliminate all fund families with a single remaining fund. For this remaining set of families we draw a final sample by randomly selecting one in three fund families while maintaining the same distribution of families in terms of the number of mutual funds offered. The resulting sample consists of 988 unique funds from 100 different families. Table 1 shows the number of funds within four broad objective categories (stock, combination, high-yield, and bond), and eleven subcategories.<sup>3</sup> The vast majority of families offer a stock fund, either aggressive and/or

---

<sup>2</sup> CRSP database suffers from omission bias, a form of survivorship bias. See Elton, Gruber and Blake (2001). Survivorship bias is not important for this study because we are looking at diversification at a point in time and we have data on all funds at that time.

<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, the aggregate classification “stock” will refer to funds with aggressive growth or long-term growth ICDI objectives; “combination” will refer to funds with both stocks and bonds in their portfolios as

long-term growth. Most families also offer at least one combination fund and one bond fund. Across objectives, the median number of funds per family is six. The largest family in the sample had 85 distinctly different funds.

For each fund we draw monthly returns for up to five years starting January 1998. In what follows, if a fund ceased to exist we calculated correlations over the common period (none had less than a year's data). In addition to data on fund families and returns, we also collect data on fund stock holdings from Thompson Financial Services' Mutual Fund Holdings database. We obtain portfolio holdings for funds that report their holdings for December of 2000.

## **II. Correlation Within and Between Fund Families**

The first attribute of fund family risk we explore is fund return correlation. We calculate correlations for each pair-wise combination of fund objectives. Specifically, for each fund within a fund family we compute the correlations with all other funds in the family with a given objective and the correlation with funds outside the family with the same objective. For example, when calculating the average correlation within the family between aggressive growth and long-term growth funds, we also calculate the average correlation between an aggressive growth (long-term growth) fund within a family and long-term growth (aggressive growth) fund from outside the family. We then average these results across all families. We calculate statistical significance using two methods: a two-sample t-test of difference in mean correlations, and a one-sided binomial test that the proportion of families with greater within-family correlations is greater than 0.5.

The results are presented in Table 2. The table documents a pattern of increased correlation within families. For example, consider combining a stock fund with a combination fund. The fifth row of Table 2 shows that 78 fund families offered at least

---

designated by the objectives Total Return, Growth and Income, Balanced, and Income; and "bond" will refer to Ginnie Mae, High Quality Bond, High Quality Municipal Bond, or Government Securities funds.

one stock fund and one combination fund. The average correlation between stock funds and combination funds is 0.757 if they are inside a family and 0.709 if they are from two separate families. For 67% of the families, selecting stock and combination funds from inside the family results in a higher correlation than selecting from two different families.

For each of the broad objective pairs shown in Table 2, within-family correlations are higher than between-family correlations.<sup>4</sup> Combining funds into stock-stock, combination-combination, and stock-combination pairs results in statistically significant higher return correlations within families than outside families using both t-tests and the binomial test. The influence of fund families on return correlations is weaker among bond funds. None of the correlations involving bond funds are statistically significant according to t-tests.

When funds are grouped according to more narrowly defined objectives, we find fourteen of the correlation differences are statistically significantly higher within families at the one percent level using the t-test. Using the binomial test, eleven are statistically significant at the one percent level and fifteen are significant at the five percent level. The results for bond funds remain weak after partitioning funds into the more narrowly defined objective categories.

The correlations reported in Table 2 are generally reasonable in magnitude. The correlation between two stocks funds is higher than the correlation between a stock and a combination fund, which in turn is higher than the correlation between a stock and a high yield bond fund, which is higher than the correlation between a stock and a bond fund. The high correlation between combination funds is somewhat surprising. We show later that combination funds hold the highest percentage of stocks in common both for funds inside and outside the family, which may reflect a similar equity objective (stability of

---

<sup>4</sup> In the interest of space we omit several groupings with a smaller likelihood of commonality based on the type of securities held, such as Ginnie Mae–Aggressive Growth. In general the omitted objective pairs show higher correlation inside than outside families, although the differences tend to be small and none are statistically different from zero.

return). The high correlation among high yield bond funds is also intuitive, due to the relative homogeneity of strategy across funds. The correlation between bond and stock funds and bond funds and combination funds is negative, reflecting the correlation between stocks and bonds during the sample period.

As a robustness check, we examine whether the results are sensitive to the method used to classify objectives. Brown and Goetzmann (1997) find evidence that funds classify their objective in a strategic way that reduces the accuracy of reported classifications. Although this is less of a concern for our broad objective measures, we also group funds into eleven style categories based on cluster analysis approach similar to Brown and Goetzmann (1997). Although some of the funds are reshuffled into different categories, the difference in correlations within and between groups are very similar to the results shown in Tables 2 and are not reported for brevity.

We also examine whether the correlation differences are sensitive to the size of the family. Grouping families into categories based on the number of funds in the family gives results similar to those in Table 2 with no pattern across different size families. Thus, the number of funds in a family did not change the relation of within family correlation to between family correlation.

While we believe examining correlation differences is more illuminating for understanding differences between internal and external funds, it is covariance that affects total portfolio risk. One should expect that correlation differences carry over to covariance differences because funds that are internal when we examine one fund family are external when we examine a different family.<sup>5</sup> Table 3 tests this directly. In Table 3 we compute differences in covariance within a family and between families when two stock funds, a stock and a combination fund, or two combination funds are combined. In each case within-family covariance is higher by approximately 8.7% to 17.7%. The

---

<sup>5</sup> This relationship between relative correlations and covariances can be shown analytically.

differences are statistically different at the 1% level for funds of the same category, and 5% across categories. These differences become more important as the number of funds increases because covariance risk becomes the dominant factor in determining total risk.

We now examine the economic significance of the correlation pattern discussed above.

### **III. The Significance of Correlation Differences Within and Between Fund Families**

The correlation differences shown in Table 2, while generally statistically different, are small in magnitude. In this section we use two approaches to show that the correlation differences are economically meaningful. First, we calculate the extra return an investor would need to justify adding an additional fund within a family rather than outside a family while maintaining the same Sharpe ratio. Second, we explore the number of internal funds that need to be added rather than an external fund to maintain the same risk.

#### **A. Return Differences**

Initially we examine the following question. Assume an investor is adding an additional fund and can add a fund from the same family or from a different family. How much higher must the return on the fund in the same family be so that adding this fund results in the same Sharpe ratio as adding a fund from outside the family? Table 4 presents the results for different initial portfolios and the addition of one or two new funds. In calculating return differences we assume investors place an equal amount in each fund.<sup>6</sup> We further assume that all stock funds have a variance of returns equal to the average for stock funds in our sample and likewise for combination funds (reported in Table 1), and rely on the correlation estimate from Table 2. Finally, we use as expected returns the realized returns on the S&P Index and small capitalization stocks from

---

<sup>6</sup> The 1/n rule has supported empirically by Benartzi and Thaler (2001) and Liang and Weisbenner (2002).

Ibbotson (2004). If the fund being added was a combination fund, we assume it had an equal amount in stocks and bonds and used as an expected return on bonds the realized return on long-term bonds from Ibbotson (2004).

Table 4 presents the results assuming an investor initially owned from one to seven stock funds (column 1) and added either an additional stock fund, two additional stock funds, or a combination fund. Elton, Gruber & Blake (2004) report more than 80% of 401K plans offer six or more funds to participants. The Investment Company Institute reports that the median number of funds held directly by individual investors is three. Thus, we focus on the rows corresponding to larger numbers of initial funds. Consider the impact of additional funds when the investor starts with five. If the investor adds a large cap stock fund, the investor would have to believe the same family fund offered an additional 54bp of return to justify staying within the family. If the fund being added was a small cap mutual fund, the investor would have to believe the same family had an additional 72bp of return to justify staying within the same fund family. Similar numbers occur for adding two stock funds and somewhat lower numbers for adding a combination fund. Clearly, the more funds the investor currently holds within a fund family, the greater the return required to add an additional fund within the same family.

Under many assumptions the addition of a fund and the amount added depends on the ratio of alpha to residual risk. This is the Treynor Black rule (1973) with single index models, and is the Elton Gruber (1992) rule for multi-index models. We computed the percentage increase in alpha required to have the same desirability of adding a same-family fund as adding a new family fund. In calculating this we used the correlations and variances from the two- and six-factor models discussed in Table 5.

To have the same alpha over residual risk from adding a fund in the same family rather than outside the family using the two-index model required an increase in alpha of 23% to 39% if adding one fund to an existing three to six funds, 20% to 37% if adding

two funds, and 18% to 28% if adding a combination fund. Similar results hold if the six-index model is used.

Thus, although the correlation differences shown in Table 2 are small, the amount of extra return or alpha required to justify adding a fund from the same family rather than from a new family is substantial. Similar results hold when we examine risk.

## **B. Risk Differences**

An alternative way to examine the importance of the correlation differences shown in Table 2 is to examine the impact of the higher within-family correlation on the number of funds that must be added to obtain a given level of risk.

Consider the following exercise. Assume an investor holds a fund with a particular objective, and she is considering adding one or two new funds to her portfolio.<sup>7</sup> The investor can add these funds from inside or outside the fund family. For each new outside fund, we calculate the number of new inside funds that would need to be added to arrive at the same level of portfolio risk. We make two simplifying assumptions. We first assume that equal amounts are invested in each fund. Our second simplifying assumption is that all funds within an objective classification have the same variance, which we measure as the average across all funds with that objective.

Consider an investor who holds either a stock or a combination fund and wishes to add another fund from the same or different family. In order to have no more risk, adding same-family funds rather than one fund from a different family, the investor would have two or three same-family funds. If the investor currently held more than one fund, then the number of same-family funds that need to be added to have no more risk is substantially larger.

## **IV. What explains the higher correlation?**

---

<sup>7</sup> The Investment Company Institute reports that in 2002 the median (mean) number of stock funds held by individual households that hold at least one mutual fund is 3 (5). We have excluded mixtures of stock and bond funds because as shown in Table 2 for these categories there is no increase in correlation by selecting funds within a family, rather than between families.

In this section we use a number of diagnostic approaches to examine the portfolio management activities that lead to the increased correlation among funds within families. We begin with a macro level approach. If portfolio managers within a family begin the security selection process with a shared economic forecast, we may expect similar exposures to different economic factors. We examine this hypothesis with a number of multi-index models, beginning with a two-factor model.

### A. Two-Index Model – Sensitivity to Bonds and Stocks

Combination funds own both bonds and stocks, stock funds frequently own some bonds, and bond funds often contain some securities with stock-like attributes. Thus, we begin with a two-index model where stock returns are measured using the value weighted CRSP index and bond returns are measured using the Merrill Lynch aggregate U.S. Corp/Gov/Mortgage bond index. For each fund in our sample we estimate a least squares regression on five years of monthly data to estimate the following relationship:<sup>8</sup>

$$R_i - R_F = \alpha_i + B_{is} (R_s - R_F) + B_{iB} (R_B - R_F) + e_i$$

Where  $R_i$  is the return of fund  $i$ ,  $R_F$  is the riskless rate,  $R_M$  is the return on the stock index,  $R_B$  is the return on the bond index,  $B_{is}$  and  $B_{iB}$  are the sensitivity of fund returns to the stock and bond index,  $\alpha_i$  is the non-market return, and  $e_i$  is a random error. Under the two-index model, the correlation between two funds,  $i$  and  $j$  is given by:

$$\frac{\text{cov}(R_i R_j)}{\sigma_i \sigma_j} = \frac{B_{is} B_{js} \sigma_s^2 + B_{iB} B_{jB} \text{cov}(SB) + B_{is} B_{jB} \text{cov}(SB) + B_{iB} B_{jB} \sigma_B^2 + E(e_i e_j)}{\sigma_i \sigma_j}$$

where  $\sigma_s^2$  and  $\sigma_B^2$  are the variance of the stock and bond indexes and  $\text{cov}(SB)$  is the covariance between indexes,  $\sigma_i^2$  and  $\sigma_j^2$  are the standard deviation of funds  $i$  and  $j$ , and  $E(e_i e_j)$  is the covariance of the fund return residuals.

---

<sup>8</sup> For the regressions we require the fund to have at least 36 monthly return observations.

The above expression separates the correlation between funds into two parts, the correlation due to systematic movements and the part due to residual movements. This decomposition allows us to examine how much of the higher correlation within a family is due to systematic market effects and how much is due to residual effects. Residual correlation can come about because two funds hold the same securities or because they are sensitive to similar factors not captured by the two-factor model. For example, a family may employ similar style choices such as emphasizing small stocks or large stocks or have a similar sensitivity to a particular industry factor such as technology stocks.

An increase in systematic correlation would come about if funds in the same family have similar portfolio sensitivities to bonds and stocks. For example, if the average combination fund is equally invested in stocks and bonds, but a particular family chooses to hold 70% in bonds, we would expect to observe higher systematic within-family correlation. The average difference in within-family correlation compared to between-family correlation due to residual correlation is the difference in the value of  $E(e_i e_j) / \sigma_i \sigma_j$  for the two groups.

In Table 5 we examine the within- and between-family correlation due to residual commonality for the pairs of objectives where within-family correlation is higher than between-family correlation at a statistically significant level. We start by examining the aggregate groups from Table 2, for the two-index model. As shown in Table 5, Panel A the contribution to overall correlation from residual correlation is higher for two funds in the same family than when funds are in the two different families. The differences in residual correlation are significant for the same three broad objective cases (stock-stock, stock-combination, and combination-combination) where difference in overall correlation were significant in Table 2. If one compares the differences in correlation in Table 4 with the differences in correlation in Table 2, then it is apparent that the higher overall within-family correlation is almost completely due to higher residual correlation. For the three aggregate pairs where the differences are significant the percentage of the overall

differences in correlation due to differences in residual correlation are 110% (stock-stock), 100% (stock-combination), 104.3% (combination-combination).

A similar pattern exists for the more narrowly defined objective categories. The residual correlation accounts for more than 80% of the difference in within-family and between-family correlation except for aggressive growth with growth and income (where it accounts for 66%), long-term growth with growth and income (75%), and balanced with balanced (48%). Note that the only pairings where systematic influences have an important influence on correlation differences are pairings involving combination funds. This implies that one of the reasons these funds have higher within-family correlation is that they make similar choices concerning the split between stocks and bonds.

## **B. Multi-Index Models**

Panel B of Table 5 shows the results for a six-factor model, which adds the Fama-French size and value factors (Fama and French, 1992), and decomposes the bond factor into three separate bond indexes (government, mortgage-backed, and high yield). The table indicates that higher residual correlation within a family is still an important component of the overall increase in correlation, but its relative importance falls. For the four cases shown in Table 2 where within-family correlation was significantly higher than between-family correlation, the percentage of the overall difference due to residual correlation from a six-index model was 78% (stock-stock), 48.3% (stock-combination), 58.7% (combination-combination), or an average of 62%. Comparing Panels A and B, about 41% of the difference in the residual correlation between within and between family funds is explained by common factors beyond market factors.

The same general pattern exists when we use the more narrowly defined ICDI classifications. When pairing aggressive growth with aggressive growth, 81% of the additional correlation within families is due to residual correlation. When grouping aggressive growth with growth and income, 36% is due to residual correlation, and when

grouping balanced with balanced, 33% is due to residual correlation. For the remaining categories, roughly 50% of the difference in correlation is due to residual risk. While some of the increased correlation is due to a common sensitivity to non-market factors, the residual is still an important component.<sup>9</sup>

If we have successfully captured all of the relevant factors, then the remaining correlation in residuals is due to common holdings. In addition, some of the effect of common holdings may be captured in the loadings to non-market factors. Thus, it is worthwhile to examine the effect of common holdings directly.

## V. Common Holdings

We now examine the extent to which common holdings of individual stocks translate into increased return correlations within fund families. We first document the amount of common holdings and then relate this to fund return correlations.

### A. Difference in Common Holdings

The first question to examine is whether funds in the same family hold more securities in common than funds in different families. The simplest measure of common holdings for two funds is to sum the minimum fraction of the portfolio held in any stock  $i$  between the two funds or:

$$\text{COM}(A, B) = \sum_i \min(X_{Ai}, X_{Bi}). \quad (6)$$

where  $X_{Ai}$  is the fraction of fund  $A$ 's portfolio invested in stock  $i$ , and  $X_{Bi}$  is the fraction of fund  $B$ 's portfolio invested in stock  $i$ .

For most mutual funds included in the Thompson Financial database, the aggregate amount invested in stocks does not equal 100% of total net assets. The

---

<sup>9</sup> We also fit an eight-factor model that uses five industry portfolios and the three bond indexes and find similar results.

principal reason for this is that most mutual funds hold some cash. Certain mutual funds such as balanced funds may hold a large fraction of their assets in bonds and the Thompson database only includes stock holdings. A second possible reason is that some small stock holdings may not be included in the Thompson database. Equation (6) can understate the impact of common holdings for it assumes that there are no holdings of common stocks omitted from the Thompson database and there is no impact (extra correlation) due to bonds held in common. The effect of these omissions on return correlations should be small, both because the Thompson database contains a large fraction of common stock holdings and because the correlation between any pair of bonds is so high that common holdings does not cause much of an increase in correlation. The reason for this will be clear shortly when we examine how common holdings affect correlation.

Nevertheless, in order to clarify the extent of common holdings, we formulate a second measure that expresses the holdings as a fraction of the total identifiable amount of common stock held in the portfolio so the percentages add to 100% as follows:

$$\text{COM}'(A, B) = \sum_i \min \left( \frac{X_{Ai}}{\sum X_{Ai}}, \frac{X_{Bi}}{\sum X_{Bi}} \right)$$

Which of these measures is more accurate depends on the proportion of holdings, whether bonds or stocks, not shown in the Thompson database that are held in common. If the only securities held in common are those listed in the Thompson database, then the first measure is accurate. If the portion of securities held in common for those omitted from the Thompson database is the same as the portion of stocks held in common for those included in the Thompson database, then the second measure is an accurate measure of common holdings. Both of the measures can be calculated for pairs of funds inside the family and pairs of funds in different families.

The results are shown in Table 6. The table shows the common holdings for all stock and combination funds combined and for each of the subcategories.<sup>10</sup> Examining Panel A reveals (even under our conservative measure of common holdings) a surprisingly high level of common holdings and a larger increase in common holdings when one compares within-family funds with between family funds. Starting with the aggregate comparison, we see that within families the grouping stock-stock has 13.3% of the portfolio in common, for stock-combination groupings the overlap is 14.9%, and for combination-combination it is 27.4%. Furthermore, all of these percentages are more than twice as large as the percentages of common holdings in the same category when a fund inside the family is compared to a fund outside the family, and all of the differences are statistically significant at the 1% level.

When we examine the more narrowly defined objectives we see similar overall results. In all cases, funds in the same family hold more stocks in common than funds outside the family. Nine of the 14 combinations are statistically significant.. Panel B documents the same pattern of results for the alternative measure of common holdings. The logical question to ask is how much of the increased correlation between funds in the same family is due to this phenomenon.

## **B. Impact of Common Holdings on Correlation**

If we assume for the moment that the variance of all stocks can be reasonably represented by a single number  $CVAR$  and that the covariance between pairs of stocks can be represented by a single number  $CCOV$ , then we can express the covariance between two funds which hold only stocks but hold some securities in common as:

---

<sup>10</sup> We lose some observations due to an insufficient match of TNA/fund name between CRSP and Thomson. The table omits the Balance-Balance and Total Return-Total Return groupings due to insufficient number of observations.

$$\text{COV}(R_A, R_B) = \sum_{i \in S} X_{Ai} X_{Bi} \text{CVAR} + \sum_{i=1}^N \sum_{\substack{j=1 \\ j \neq i}}^N X_{Ai} X_{Bj} \text{CCOV} \quad (7)$$

Where  $S$  is the set of all stocks held in common and the summation is across stocks not held in common. Note that the first term shows the impact on covariance when two stocks are held in common, and the second term when they are different stocks.<sup>11</sup> For all stocks not held in common either  $X_{Ai}$  or  $X_{Bi}$  must be equal to zero. Thus we can write the equation as:

$$\frac{\text{COV}(R_A, R_B)}{\sigma_A \sigma_B} = \sum_{i \in S} \frac{X_{Ai} X_{Bi}}{\sigma_A \sigma_B} [\text{CVAR} - \text{CCOV}] + \sum_{i=1}^N \sum_{j=1}^N \frac{X_{Ai} X_{Bj}}{\sigma_A \sigma_B} \text{CCOV} \quad (8)$$

Since we only have information on stock holdings, we underestimate the effect on common holdings for funds which have bonds in their portfolio or where small holdings of stocks are left out. However, since pairs of bonds should be highly correlated, the difference between variance and covariance is small and examining the first term of Equation (8) shows the impact on portfolio correlation should be small. Thus, we will only present data assuming we have all the common holdings.

The first term on the right-hand side of Equation (8) represents the contribution of common holdings to the correlation between fund  $A$  and fund  $B$ . We compute the average for this statistic when fund  $A$  and fund  $B$  are in the same family, and a second average for the case where they are in different families. We then take the difference in this ratio and divide it first by the total correlation difference and second by the residual correlation from the one-index model (similar to the number in Table 4).<sup>12</sup> The first represents the fraction of the difference in correlation between funds in the same family and funds not in the same family that is due to the difference in common holdings.

---

<sup>11</sup> The covariance between two stocks is  $\rho_{ij} \sigma_i \sigma_j$ . If they are held in common,  $\rho_{ij} = 1$  and  $\sigma_i = \sigma_j$  and the covariance becomes the variance.

<sup>12</sup> The correlation numbers are not identical to those in Table 4 due to the omission of funds without a sufficient match between CRSP and Thomson.

The results are reported in Table 7. Common stock holdings account for 44% of stock-stock, 43% of stock-combination, and 89% of combination-combination correlation differences when we use our conservative estimate of common holdings. The estimates using the narrowly defined objective groupings show a similar pattern. The smallest ratio of correlation difference related to common holdings is 27%. Overall, common holdings explain roughly 50% of the difference between the correlation in fund returns (as well as residual fund returns) for funds inside and outside the family.

## **VI. Differences in Variance Across Fund Families**

In addition to increased correlation, limiting investments to one family may also result in a greater dispersion of risk across investors. If several funds within a family share a similar strategy, we might expect fund variances not to be randomly distributed across families. Thus, if investors are restricted to one family, then similar strategies within families would cause a greater dispersion of portfolio risk among investors than if high- and low-variance funds were randomly dispersed across fund families.

We measure the propensity of families to choose high risk or low risk strategies by constructing a binomial test.<sup>13</sup> We begin by calculating the median standard deviation for each of the ICDI categories. We then label all funds with standard deviations above (below) the median for that objective as HIGH (LOW). We then examine whether the distribution of HIGHS and LOWs within fund families is different from that expected by chance.

Define  $Y_{g,h}$  as the number of HIGHS obtained for fund family  $h$  when there are  $g$  funds in family  $h$ , and let  $T_{g,h} = (Y_{g,h} - 1/2g)^2$ . If the assignment of high and low variance funds to a fund family is random, then we would expect on average for a fund family to have  $g/2$  HIGHS. Thus,  $T_{g,h}$  becomes large if high risk funds are concentration

---

<sup>13</sup> We thank Gary Simon for suggesting this approach.

in some families while low risk funds are concentrated in others. If the distribution of HIGHs and LOWs within a family is random, then under the null the  $Y_{g,h}$  are independent binomial  $(g, \frac{1}{2})$  random variables and the test statistic  $T_{g,h}$  has the following moments:

$$\begin{aligned}
E[T_{g,h}] &= E\left[\left(Y_{g,h} - 1/2g\right)^2\right] = \text{var}(Y_{g,h}) = \frac{g}{4} \\
\text{var}[T_{g,h}] &= \text{var}\left(Y_{g,h} - 1/2g\right)^2 \\
&= \left\{ E\left[\left(Y_{g,h} - \frac{1}{2}g\right)^4\right] - \left[E\left(Y_{g,h} - \frac{1}{2}g\right)^2\right]^2 \right\} \\
&= \left\{ \left(3g^2\left(\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 + g\left(\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}\right)\left(1 - 6\left(\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}\right)\right)\right) - \left[g\left(\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}\right)\right]^2 \right\} \\
&= \frac{g(g-1)}{8}
\end{aligned}$$

Letting  $H$  be the total number of fund families and  $g_h$  be the number of funds in family  $h$ , we can test risk clustering using the following normally distributed test statistic:

$$\begin{aligned}
Z &= \left( \sum_{h=1}^H T_{g,h} - \sum_{h=1}^H E[T_{g,h}] \right) / \sqrt{\sum_{h=1}^H \text{var}(T_{g,h})} \\
&= \left( \sum_{h=1}^H (Y_{g,h} - g_h/2)^2 - \sum_{h=1}^H (g_h/4) \right) / \sqrt{\sum_{h=1}^H \frac{g_h(g_h-1)}{8}}
\end{aligned}$$

Performing the risk concentration test for stock, combination, high-yield, and bond categories separately results in t-statistics equal to 3.02, 3.03, 0.63, and 2.8. The test across all fund objectives is 4.09. All are significant at the 1% level, with the exception of high-yield bonds. Another way of conceptualizing the extent of concentration of variance is to note that for 22 out of the 100 fund families in our sample every fund in the family was in the high or low variance group. High and low variances are more concentrated in families than would be expected by chance.

## VI. Conclusion

Individual investors often restrict the mutual funds they select to the offerings of a single fund family. In addition, a common structure of 401K and 403B plans is that all the offerings are from one family. In this paper we show that this restriction causes investors on average to have higher risk portfolios than if they selected similar funds across different fund families. The principal reason for this higher risk is that funds within a family have higher correlation than if funds were selected from two families. This higher correlation holds for all ICDI categories involving stock and combination funds both when two funds are in the same ICDI category or when they are in two different ICDI categories.

For an investor to have the same Sharpe ratio when adding another fund from within a family rather than from another family would require the in-family fund to have an additional 50 to 70 basis points in extra return.

Why does this increase in fund return correlation come about? When we split the increase in correlation between common response to market movements and increase due to residual correlation, we find that for most combinations more than 90% is due to residual correlation. Examining the effects of common holdings on the increase in correlation, we find about 60% of the increase in correlation is due to common holdings. Thus about 30% is due to a common response to factors other than the market, such as industry and sector factors. The surprising result of this analysis is the size of common holdings. Depending on the group examined, between 4% and 34% are held in common with a median within family holding of roughly 16%.

There is another source of risk in addition to the increased fund return correlation. High and low risk funds are concentrated in different families. While this doesn't increase an investor's average risk, it does increase the distribution of risk across investors. The increased distribution raises the probability of having a bad outcome by investing in only one family. Overall, the results suggest that on the basis of risk and in the absence of proven ability of certain families to produce excess return, investors would

be wise to build portfolios of funds from different families, and that retirement plan administrators would do well to include offerings for more than one mutual fund family.

## References

- Benartzi, Shlomo and Richard Thaler, 2001, Naïve diversification strategies in defined contribution saving plans, *American Economic Review* 91, 78-98.
- Brown, Steven and William Goetzmann, 1997, Mutual fund styles, *Journal of Financial Economics* 43, 373-399.
- Choi, James J., David Laibson, Brigitte C. Madrian, and Andrew Metrick, 2004, "Consumption-Wealth Comovement of the Wrong Sign," NBER Working paper.
- Das, Sanjiv R., and Ranghuram K. Sundaram, 2002, Fee speech: Signalling, risk-sharing, and the impact of fee structures on investor welfare, *Review of Financial Studies* 15, 1465-1497.
- Elton, Edwin J. and Martin J. Gruber, 1970, Homogeneous groups and the testing of economic hypotheses, *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis* 5, 581-602.
- Elton, Edwin J. and Martin J. Gruber, 1992, Non-normal multi-index return-generating process, *Review of Quantitative Finance and Accounting* 2 (1), 5-16.
- Elton, Edwin J., Martin J. Gruber and Christopher R. Blake, 2002, A first look at the accuracy of the CRSP mutual fund database and a comparison of the CRSP and Morningstar mutual fund databases, *Journal of Finance* 56(6).
- Elton, Edwin J., Martin J. Gruber and Christopher R. Blake, 2003, The adequacy of investment choices offered by 401K plans, Unpublished manuscript, New York University.
- Fama, Eugene and Kenneth French, 1992, The cross-section of expected stock returns, *Journal of Finance* 47, 427-465.
- Ibbotson Associates, 2004, *Stocks, bonds, bills and inflation*, Chicago, Illinois.
- Investment Company Institute and Securities Industry Association, 2000, *"401(k) Plan Participants: Characteristics, Contributions, and Account Activity*.
- Investment Company Institute and Securities Industry Association, 2002, *Equity Ownership in America, 2002*.
- Ivkovich, Zoran, 2001, Is blood thicker than water: Spillovers in mutual fund families, Unpublished manuscript, University of Illinois.
- Khorana, Ajay, and Henri Servaes, 2003, An examination of competition in the mutual fund industry, Unpublished manuscript, Georgia Institute of Technology.

- Liang, Nellie and Scott Weisbenner, 2002, Investor behavior and the purchase of company stock in 401K plan design. Unpublished manuscript, University of Illinois
- Mayaysky, Harry, and Matthew Spiegel, 2001, A theory of mutual funds: optimal fund objectives and industry organization, Unpublished manuscript, Yale University.
- Massa, Massimo, 2003, How do family strategies affect fund performance? When performance-maximization is not the only game in town, *Journal of Financial Economics*, 67, 249-304.
- Nanda, Vikram, Z. Jay Wang, and Lu Zheng, 2004, Family values and the star phenomenon, *Review of Financial Studies*, forthcoming.
- Treynor, Jack, and Fischer Black, 1973, How to use security analysis to improve portfolio selection, *Journal of Business*, 46 (1), 66-86.

**Table 1**  
**Mutual fund family summary statistics**

| Objectives            | Number<br>Of Funds | Number<br>Of Families | Median<br>Per Family | Maximum | Average<br>Return | Average<br>Risk |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Stock                 | 384                | 94                    | 3                    | 29      | 0.21              | 7.30            |
| Aggressive Growth     | 166                | 75                    | 2                    | 10      | 0.26              | 8.08            |
| Long-term Growth      | 218                | 82                    | 2                    | 19      | 0.16              | 6.70            |
| Combination           | 275                | 83                    | 2                    | 18      | 0.23              | 4.49            |
| Total Return          | 50                 | 30                    | 1                    | 5       | 0.40              | 3.52            |
| Growth and Income     | 128                | 65                    | 1                    | 9       | 0.19              | 5.48            |
| Balanced              | 65                 | 47                    | 1                    | 4       | 0.22              | 3.33            |
| Income                | 65                 | 47                    | 1                    | 4       | 0.17              | 4.38            |
| High Yield Bond       | 39                 | 31                    | 1                    | 3       | -0.08             | 2.67            |
| Bond                  | 290                | 74                    | 2                    | 25      | 0.46              | 0.94            |
| Ginnie Mae Bond       | 40                 | 21                    | 2                    | 5       | 0.48              | 0.67            |
| High Quality Bond     | 105                | 56                    | 1                    | 9       | 0.47              | 0.95            |
| Municipal Bond        | 79                 | 43                    | 1                    | 5       | 0.40              | 1.09            |
| Government Securities | 66                 | 43                    | 1                    | 10      | 0.49              | 0.93            |
| All Objectives        | 988                | 100                   | 6                    | 85      | 0.28              | 4.47            |

The table shows characteristics of the fund families considered in the study. The Stock, Combination, and Bond objectives are decomposed into subcategories. The Number Of Families refers to the number of families with at least one fund of that objective category. Median Per Family refers to the median number of funds for the subset of families that offer a fund of that objective. Maximum refers to the largest number of funds of that type for any family. Also reported is the average return and standard deviation for each objective classification. The sample period covers 1998 through 2002, and the return and objective data are taken from the CRSP mutual fund database.

**Table 2**  
**Return correlations by objective within and outside fund families**

| Objectives                                    | Obs | Within          | Outside         | t-stat | Percent<br>Larger | Binomial<br>p-value |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|--------|-------------------|---------------------|
|                                               |     | Family<br>Corr. | Family<br>Corr. |        |                   |                     |
| Stock – Stock                                 | 77  | 0.774           | 0.734           | 3.70   | 0.714             | 0.000               |
| Aggressive Growth – Aggressive Growth         | 41  | 0.780           | 0.738           | 2.49   | 0.634             | 0.030               |
| Aggressive Growth – Long-term Growth          | 62  | 0.757           | 0.718           | 3.66   | 0.661             | 0.004               |
| Long-term Growth – Long-term Growth           | 42  | 0.805           | 0.774           | 2.33   | 0.690             | 0.004               |
| Stock – Combination                           | 78  | 0.757           | 0.709           | 4.71   | 0.667             | 0.001               |
| Aggressive Growth – Total Return              | 28  | 0.710           | 0.706           | 0.26   | 0.536             | 0.286               |
| Aggressive Growth – Growth and Income         | 48  | 0.695           | 0.660           | 2.50   | 0.667             | 0.007               |
| Aggressive Growth – Balanced                  | 39  | 0.719           | 0.681           | 2.57   | 0.718             | 0.002               |
| Aggressive Growth – Income                    | 22  | 0.644           | 0.631           | 0.68   | 0.636             | 0.067               |
| Long-term Growth – Total Return               | 28  | 0.772           | 0.735           | 2.19   | 0.821             | 0.000               |
| Long-term Growth – Growth and Income          | 52  | 0.793           | 0.757           | 2.26   | 0.673             | 0.004               |
| Long-term Growth – Balanced                   | 44  | 0.844           | 0.769           | 4.92   | 0.864             | 0.000               |
| Long-term Growth – Income                     | 26  | 0.740           | 0.716           | 1.17   | 0.577             | 0.163               |
| Stock – High Yield Bond                       | 31  | 0.498           | 0.495           | 0.34   | 0.645             | 0.035               |
| Stock – Bond                                  | 70  | -0.146          | -0.142          | -0.43  | 0.400             | 0.940               |
| Combination – Combination                     | 55  | 0.835           | 0.766           | 5.32   | 0.782             | 0.000               |
| Total Return – Total Return                   | 10  | 0.839           | 0.731           | 2.73   | 0.800             | 0.011               |
| Total Return – Growth and Income              | 23  | 0.766           | 0.734           | 1.25   | 0.696             | 0.017               |
| Total Return – Balanced                       | 16  | 0.777           | 0.760           | 0.69   | 0.750             | 0.011               |
| Total Return – Income                         | 16  | 0.769           | 0.719           | 2.16   | 0.625             | 0.105               |
| Growth and Income – Growth and Income         | 30  | 0.857           | 0.805           | 3.11   | 0.767             | 0.001               |
| Growth and Income – Balanced                  | 34  | 0.868           | 0.799           | 4.05   | 0.824             | 0.000               |
| Growth and Income – Income                    | 20  | 0.845           | 0.809           | 2.63   | 0.800             | 0.001               |
| Balanced – Balanced                           | 12  | 0.920           | 0.832           | 3.52   | 1.000             | 0.000               |
| Balanced – Income                             | 18  | 0.824           | 0.803           | 1.10   | 0.611             | 0.119               |
| Income – Income                               | 4   | 0.859           | 0.836           | 0.40   | 0.500             | 0.313               |
| Combination – High Yield                      | 31  | 0.476           | 0.472           | 0.48   | 0.484             | 0.500               |
| Combination – Bond                            | 67  | -0.147          | -0.132          | -1.69  | 0.403             | 0.929               |
| High-Yield Bond – High-Yield Bond             | 6   | 0.890           | 0.858           | 1.92   | 0.833             | 0.016               |
| High Yield Bond – Bond                        | 30  | 0.009           | 0.007           | 0.15   | 0.567             | 0.181               |
| Bond – Bond                                   | 50  | 0.688           | 0.686           | 0.21   | 0.560             | 0.161               |
| Ginnie Mae Bond – Ginnie Mae Bond             | 11  | 0.808           | 0.723           | 1.76   | 0.818             | 0.006               |
| High Quality Bond – High Quality Bond         | 23  | 0.663           | 0.613           | 1.44   | 0.696             | 0.017               |
| Municipal Bond – Municipal Bond               | 20  | 0.929           | 0.913           | 1.91   | 0.850             | 0.000               |
| Government Securities – Government Securities | 14  | 0.856           | 0.851           | 0.19   | 0.714             | 0.029               |

The table reports average return correlations of funds within and outside fund families. Correlations are averaged first within families and then across families. The number of observations is the number of families with at least one pair of funds matching the objectives being considered. “Stock” refers to funds with Aggressive Growth or Long-Term Growth objectives; “Combination” refers to Total Return, Growth and Income, Balanced, or Income; “Bond” refers to Ginnie Mae funds, High Quality Bond, High Quality Municipal Bond, or Government Securities. The sample period covers 1998 through 2002, and the return and objective data are taken from the CRSP mutual fund database.

**Table 3**  
**Difference in fund return covariance inside and outside fund families**

| Objectives                | Obs | Difference<br>in Return<br>Covariance | t-stat | Percentage<br>Difference |
|---------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|
| Stock – Stock             | 77  | 0.000394                              | 2.50   | 10.0                     |
| Stock – Combination       | 78  | 0.000414                              | 1.86   | 17.7                     |
| Combination – Combination | 55  | 0.000133                              | 2.47   | 8.7                      |

The table reports average return covariance difference of funds within and outside fund families. Covariances are averaged first within families and then across families. The number of observations is the number of families with at least one pair of funds matching the objectives being considered. “Stock” refers to funds with Aggressive Growth or Long-Term Growth objectives; “Combination” refers to Total Return, Growth and Income, Balanced, or Income; “Bond” refers to Ginnie Mae funds, High Quality Bond, High Quality Municipal Bond, or Government Securities. The sample period covers 1998 through 2002, and the return and objective data are taken from the CRSP mutual fund database.

**Table 4**

**Additional return (%) necessary to maintain the same Sharpe Ratio when adding funds inside rather than outside the fund family**

| # of Funds<br>Currently<br>Held | Add One<br>Stock Fund |            | Add Two<br>Stock Funds |            | Add One<br>Combination Fund |            |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|
|                                 | Large Cap.            | Small Cap. | Large Cap.             | Small Cap. | Large Cap.                  | Small Cap. |
| 1                               | 0.298                 | 0.397      | 0.314                  | 0.417      | 0.339                       | 0.451      |
| 2                               | 0.415                 | 0.552      | 0.400                  | 0.533      | 0.404                       | 0.538      |
| 3                               | 0.476                 | 0.634      | 0.454                  | 0.604      | 0.431                       | 0.574      |
| 4                               | 0.514                 | 0.684      | 0.490                  | 0.651      | 0.446                       | 0.593      |
| 5                               | 0.539                 | 0.718      | 0.515                  | 0.686      | 0.455                       | 0.606      |
| 6                               | 0.558                 | 0.742      | 0.535                  | 0.712      | 0.462                       | 0.614      |
| 7                               | 0.572                 | 0.761      | 0.550                  | 0.732      | 0.466                       | 0.621      |

An investor is assumed to start with a number of mutual funds held within a fund family and adds one or two additional funds. The table shows the additional annual return the funds from inside the family would have to provide in order to maintain the same level of risk-adjusted performance as when adding funds from outside the family. Outside funds are assumed to earn the average return for Large Capitalization or Small Capitalization stocks as reported by Ibbotson-Sinquefeld (13% and 17.3%). Combination Funds are assumed to be equally invested in stocks and bonds (which earn 6%). Fund variances and covariances are calculated for each objective classification group as in Tables 1 and 2. “Stock” refers to funds with Aggressive Growth or Long-Term Growth objectives; “Combination” refers to Total Return, Growth and Income, Balanced, or Income. The sample period covers 1998 through 2002, and the return and objective data are taken from the CRSP mutual fund database.

**Table 5**  
**Determinants of the difference in fund return correlations inside and outside fund families**

| Panel A: Two-factor model             | Obs | Return      |            | Systematic<br>Comp. | Idiosyncratic<br>Comp. | Ratio |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-------------|------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------|
|                                       |     | Correlation | Difference |                     |                        |       |
| Stock – Stock                         | 77  | 0.040       |            | -0.004              | 0.044                  | 1.10  |
| Aggressive Growth – Aggressive Growth | 41  | 0.042       |            | 0.001               | 0.041                  | 0.98  |
| Aggressive Growth – Long-term Growth  | 62  | 0.039       |            | 0.005               | 0.034                  | 0.87  |
| Long-term Growth – Long-term Growth   | 42  | 0.032       |            | 0.000               | 0.032                  | 1.00  |
| Stock – Combination                   | 78  | 0.048       |            | 0.000               | 0.048                  | 1.00  |
| Aggressive Growth – Growth and Income | 48  | 0.035       |            | 0.012               | 0.023                  | 0.66  |
| Aggressive Growth – Balanced          | 39  | 0.038       |            | -0.001              | 0.039                  | 1.03  |
| Long-term Growth – Total Return       | 28  | 0.037       |            | 0.007               | 0.029                  | 0.78  |
| Long-term Growth – Growth and Income  | 52  | 0.036       |            | 0.009               | 0.027                  | 0.75  |
| Long-term Growth – Balanced           | 44  | 0.075       |            | 0.000               | 0.075                  | 1.00  |
| Combination – Combination             | 55  | 0.068       |            | -0.004              | 0.072                  | 1.06  |
| Total Return – Total Return           | 10  | 0.108       |            | 0.006               | 0.102                  | 0.94  |
| Total Return – Income                 | 16  | 0.050       |            | 0.000               | 0.050                  | 1.00  |
| Growth and Income – Growth and Income | 30  | 0.052       |            | 0.010               | 0.042                  | 0.81  |
| Growth and Income – Balanced          | 34  | 0.069       |            | 0.003               | 0.066                  | 0.96  |
| Growth and Income – Income            | 20  | 0.036       |            | 0.008               | 0.028                  | 0.78  |
| Balanced – Balanced                   | 12  | 0.089       |            | 0.046               | 0.043                  | 0.48  |
| <b>Panel B: Six-factor model</b>      |     |             |            |                     |                        |       |
| Stock – Stock                         | 73  | 0.036       |            | 0.008               | 0.028                  | 0.78  |
| Aggressive Growth – Aggressive Growth | 36  | 0.037       |            | 0.007               | 0.030                  | 0.81  |
| Aggressive Growth – Long-term Growth  | 61  | 0.038       |            | 0.018               | 0.020                  | 0.53  |
| Long-term Growth – Long-term Growth   | 40  | 0.036       |            | 0.016               | 0.020                  | 0.56  |
| Stock – Combination                   | 75  | 0.058       |            | 0.030               | 0.028                  | 0.48  |
| Aggressive Growth – Growth and Income | 44  | 0.033       |            | 0.022               | 0.012                  | 0.36  |
| Aggressive Growth – Balanced          | 36  | 0.034       |            | 0.015               | 0.019                  | 0.56  |
| Long-term Growth – Total Return       | 26  | 0.043       |            | 0.023               | 0.020                  | 0.47  |
| Long-term Growth – Growth and Income  | 50  | 0.036       |            | 0.020               | 0.016                  | 0.44  |
| Long-term Growth – Balanced           | 42  | 0.079       |            | 0.043               | 0.036                  | 0.46  |
| Combination – Combination             | 52  | 0.075       |            | 0.031               | 0.044                  | 0.59  |
| Total Return – Total Return           | 8   | 0.127       |            | 0.053               | 0.075                  | 0.59  |
| Total Return – Income                 | 12  | 0.040       |            | 0.017               | 0.023                  | 0.58  |
| Growth and Income – Growth and Income | 28  | 0.050       |            | 0.025               | 0.025                  | 0.50  |
| Growth and Income – Balanced          | 33  | 0.078       |            | 0.044               | 0.034                  | 0.44  |
| Growth and Income – Income            | 17  | 0.047       |            | 0.024               | 0.023                  | 0.49  |
| Balanced – Balanced                   | 10  | 0.103       |            | 0.070               | 0.034                  | 0.33  |

The idiosyncratic component of return correlation is measured by the average covariance of fund return residuals, scaled by the standard deviation of each fund's returns; the systematic correlation is the correlation related to common exposure to return factors. Residual returns are obtained by regressing excess fund returns on the excess return of several index factors. The last column shows the ratio of the idiosyncratic component over the return correlation difference. Panel A shows the results for a two factor model, which includes the Value weighted CRSP Index (from Ken French) and the excess return on the Merrill Lynch aggregate U.S. Corp/Gov/Mortgage bond index. The six-factor model in Panel B adds equity size and value factors (SMB And HML), as well as mortgage and high yield indexes. The number of observations is the number of families with at least one pair of funds that matches the objectives being considered. Stock refers to Aggressive Growth and Long-Term Growth; Combination refers to Total Return, Growth and Income, Balanced, and Income; Bond refers to Ginnie Mae funds, High Quality Bond, High Quality Municipal Bond, and Government Securities. The sample period covers 1998 through 2002, and the return and objective data are taken from the CRSP mutual fund database.

**Table 6**  
**Common stock holdings for funds within and outside fund families**

| Objectives                                     | Obs. | Common Holdings |                | t-stat |
|------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------|----------------|--------|
|                                                |      | Within Family   | Outside Family |        |
| <b>Panel A: Percentage of total net assets</b> |      |                 |                |        |
| Stock – Stock                                  | 47   | 0.133           | 0.056          | 3.51   |
| Aggressive Growth – Aggressive Growth          | 25   | 0.139           | 0.029          | 2.72   |
| Aggressive Growth – Long-term Growth           | 41   | 0.095           | 0.038          | 2.93   |
| Long-term Growth – Long-term Growth            | 25   | 0.169           | 0.104          | 2.13   |
| Stock – Combination                            | 49   | 0.149           | 0.071          | 4.28   |
| Aggressive Growth – Growth and Income          | 25   | 0.040           | 0.029          | 1.46   |
| Aggressive Growth – Balanced                   | 18   | 0.059           | 0.024          | 1.76   |
| Long-term Growth – Total Return                | 15   | 0.157           | 0.079          | 1.79   |
| Long-term Growth – Growth and Income           | 29   | 0.222           | 0.129          | 3.66   |
| Long-term Growth – Balanced                    | 18   | 0.214           | 0.084          | 3.77   |
| Combination – Combination                      | 30   | 0.274           | 0.128          | 4.77   |
| Total Return – Income                          | 5    | 0.176           | 0.081          | 1.96   |
| Growth and Income – Growth and Income          | 14   | 0.236           | 0.174          | 2.69   |
| Growth and Income – Balanced                   | 14   | 0.340           | 0.119          | 4.55   |
| Growth and Income – Income                     | 6    | 0.272           | 0.150          | 2.01   |
| <b>Panel A: Percentage of stock holdings</b>   |      |                 |                |        |
| Stock – Stock                                  | 47   | 0.144           | 0.060          | 3.50   |
| Aggressive Growth – Aggressive Growth          | 25   | 0.145           | 0.030          | 2.79   |
| Aggressive Growth – Long-term Growth           | 41   | 0.101           | 0.040          | 2.93   |
| Long-term Growth – Long-term Growth            | 25   | 0.184           | 0.110          | 2.14   |
| Stock – Combination                            | 49   | 0.184           | 0.083          | 4.29   |
| Aggressive Growth – Growth and Income          | 25   | 0.042           | 0.030          | 1.47   |
| Aggressive Growth – Balanced                   | 18   | 0.092           | 0.034          | 1.87   |
| Long-term Growth – Total Return                | 15   | 0.253           | 0.121          | 1.95   |
| Long-term Growth – Growth and Income           | 29   | 0.236           | 0.136          | 3.58   |
| Long-term Growth – Balanced                    | 18   | 0.326           | 0.119          | 3.56   |
| Combination – Combination                      | 30   | 0.404           | 0.163          | 4.50   |
| Total Return – Income                          | 5    | 0.251           | 0.121          | 1.74   |
| Growth and Income – Growth and Income          | 14   | 0.250           | 0.184          | 2.71   |
| Growth and Income – Balanced                   | 14   | 0.546           | 0.167          | 4.31   |
| Growth and Income – Income                     | 6    | 0.328           | 0.169          | 2.02   |

The table reports the average percentage of holdings in common for funds within and outside fund families. For each fund pair, the common percentage holdings are calculated as  $\sum_s \min(X_{si}, X_{sj})$  where  $X_{si}$  represents the percentage of fund  $j$ 's holdings in stock  $s$ . Panel A calculates holdings as a percentage of total net assets, and Panel B reports holdings as a percentage of total stock holdings. The number of observations is the number of families with at least one pair of funds that matches the objectives being considered. Stock refers to Aggressive Growth and Long-Term Growth; Combination refers to Total Return, Growth and Income, Balanced, and Income. Fund holdings are taken from Thomson Financial and are measured in December of 2000.

**Table 7**  
**Percentage of the difference in return correlation inside and outside fund families due to common holdings**

| Panel A: Percentage of stock holdings | Obs | Difference in Correlation |          | Portion due to Common Holdings |          |
|---------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|----------|
|                                       |     | Return                    | Residual | Return                         | Residual |
| Stock – Stock                         | 47  | 0.039                     | 0.036    | 0.44                           | 0.48     |
| Aggressive Growth – Aggressive Growth | 25  | 0.041                     | 0.042    | 0.27                           | 0.27     |
| Aggressive Growth – Long-term Growth  | 41  | 0.035                     | 0.032    | 0.35                           | 0.38     |
| Long-term Growth – Long-term Growth   | 25  | 0.014                     | 0.014    | 1.37                           | 1.44     |
| Stock – Combination                   | 49  | 0.051                     | 0.053    | 0.43                           | 0.42     |
| Aggressive Growth – Growth and Income | 25  | 0.010                     | 0.014    | 0.58                           | 0.44     |
| Aggressive Growth – Balanced          | 18  | 0.058                     | 0.049    | 0.33                           | 0.39     |
| Long-term Growth – Total Return       | 15  | 0.040                     | 0.033    | 0.62                           | 0.75     |
| Long-term Growth – Growth and Income  | 29  | 0.040                     | 0.030    | 0.47                           | 0.62     |
| Long-term Growth – Balanced           | 18  | 0.092                     | 0.100    | 0.67                           | 0.61     |
| Combination – Combination             | 30  | 0.074                     | 0.066    | 0.89                           | 0.99     |
| Total Return – Income                 | 5   | 0.056                     | 0.040    | 2.11                           | 2.96     |
| Growth and Income – Growth and Income | 14  | 0.018                     | 0.015    | 1.15                           | 1.38     |
| Growth and Income – Balanced          | 14  | 0.126                     | 0.135    | 0.94                           | 0.88     |
| Growth and Income – Income            | 6   | 0.038                     | 0.036    | 0.66                           | 0.69     |

The table shows the influence of common stock holdings on the difference between fund return correlations within and across fund families. The influence of common holdings is measured by increased correlation over a benchmark portfolio with different stocks. The number of observations is the number of families with at least one pair of funds that matches the objectives being considered. Stock refers to Aggressive Growth and Long-Term Growth; Combination refers to Total Return, Growth and Income, Balanced, and Income; Bond refers to Ginnie Mae funds, High Quality Bond, High Quality Municipal Bond, and Government Securities. The sample period covers 1998 through 2002, and the return and objective data are taken from the CRSP mutual fund database. Fund holdings are taken from Thomson Financial and are measured in December of 2000.