Impact of Career Ambitions on College Girls

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ABSTRACT

This review paper examines the multifaceted impact of career ambitions on college girls, considering various psychological, social, and economic factors that shape their career aspirations and experiences. Drawing upon existing literature, empirical studies, and theoretical frameworks, the paper explores the challenges and opportunities faced by college girls in pursuing their career ambitions. It delves into the psychological implications of career ambitions, including self-efficacy, identity development, and mental health outcomes. Furthermore, the paper examines the socioeconomic implications of career ambitions, including income disparities, occupational segregation, and wealth accumulation. Additionally, it highlights the challenges and barriers faced by college girls in pursuing ambitious career goals, such as gender bias, lack of role models, discrimination in the workplace, and balancing family responsibilities. By providing a comprehensive overview of the topic, this review paper aims to inform policymakers, educators, researchers, and practitioners about the importance of supporting college girls in achieving their career aspirations and promoting gender equity and diversity in the workforce.

Keywords: Career Ambitions, College Girls, Psychological Implications, Socioeconomic Implications, Gender Bias.

1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding the career ambitions of college girls is a multifaceted endeavor that requires exploration of various factors influencing their aspirations, choices, and experiences. This includes examining the socio-cultural context in which girls develop their career goals, considering the influence of family, peers, educators, media, and societal norms [1]. Psychological factors such as self-efficacy, confidence, and identity development also play a significant role in shaping career ambitions [2]. Additionally, exploring the intersectionality of gender with other identities such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation is crucial for understanding the unique challenges and opportunities faced by different groups of college girls. Research on career development theories, gender role socialization, and educational experiences can provide insights into the factors that contribute to college girls' career aspirations and decision-making processes [3]. By gaining a deeper understanding of these dynamics, educators, policymakers, and practitioners can develop strategies to support and empower college girls in pursuing their career ambitions and navigating the challenges they may encounter along the way.

1.1. Theoretical Frameworks for Analyzing Career Ambitions
1.1.1. Social Cognitive Career Theory
Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) posits that career development is influenced by the interaction of personal characteristics, environmental factors, and behavior. Developed by Robert W. Lent and his colleagues, SCCT integrates principles from social cognitive theory and career development theory to

provide a comprehensive framework for understanding career choice and development. According to SCCT, individuals' career-related behaviors, such as career exploration and decision-making, are influenced by their self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, interests, and goals. Environmental factors, including family background, socioeconomic status, educational opportunities, and societal norms, provide contextual influences that shape individuals' career choices and opportunities. SCCT emphasizes the dynamic interplay between personal characteristics, environmental influences, and behavior in shaping individuals' career trajectories and outcomes over time. By understanding these interactions, career counselors and educators can design interventions and programs to support individuals in making informed career decisions, enhancing their self-efficacy beliefs, and achieving their career goals. [4].

1.1.2.Expectancy-Value Theory

Expectancy-Value Theory is a psychological framework that explores individuals' motivation and decision-making processes, particularly in educational and career contexts. Developed by Jacquelynne S. Eccles and Allan Wigfield, this theory posits that motivation is influenced by two key factors: expectancy beliefs and task values. Expectancy beliefs refer to individuals' perceptions of their ability to succeed in a given task or domain, often termed self-efficacy beliefs. Task values encompass individuals' perceptions of the importance, interest, and utility of a task or domain. According to Expectancy-Value Theory, individuals are more likely to engage in activities or pursue goals when they believe they have the ability to succeed (high expectancy) and perceive the task or domain as personally meaningful and valuable (high task value). This theory has been widely applied in educational settings to understand students' academic motivation and achievement, as well as in career development to explore individuals' career choices and persistence [5]. By considering both expectancy beliefs and task values, Expectancy-Value Theory provides insights into the complex interplay of cognitive, affective, and motivational factors that shape individuals' decisions and behaviors. [6]

1.1.3.Gender Role Socialization

Gender Role Socialization is a sociological concept that refers to the process through which individuals learn and internalize societal expectations, norms, and roles associated with their gender identity. Rooted in social learning theory and socialization processes, gender role socialization begins early in life and occurs through various socialization agents such as family, peers, media, and educational institutions. These agents transmit gender norms, stereotypes, and behaviors, shaping individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors related to gender roles. Gender role socialization perpetuates traditional gender stereotypes and expectations, prescribing distinct roles and behaviors for males and females in society. This socialization process influences individuals' career aspirations, choices, and experiences, contributing to occupational segregation, gender pay gaps, and disparities in career advancement between men and women. By understanding the role of gender role socialization in shaping individuals' perceptions and behaviors related to work and career, researchers and practitioners can develop interventions and policies aimed at promoting gender equity and diversity in the workplace. [7]

1.1.4.Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality Theory is a framework developed by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw that examines how various social categories, such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability, intersect and interact to shape individuals' experiences of privilege, oppression, and discrimination. Intersectionality recognizes

that individuals hold multiple social identities that intersect and influence each other, resulting in unique experiences of advantage and disadvantage. This theoretical perspective highlights the interconnected nature of social systems and emphasizes the need to consider the intersecting dimensions of identity when analyzing social phenomena, including career development and outcomes. In the context of career aspirations and opportunities, Intersectionality Theory acknowledges that individuals' experiences and opportunities are shaped not only by their gender but also by other intersecting identities such as race, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. By recognizing and addressing the intersecting systems of privilege and oppression, Intersectionality Theory informs efforts to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity in educational and workplace settings. [8]

1.2. Factors Influencing Career Ambitions of College Girls

1. **Personal Characteristics**:
- Interests: College girls' career ambitions are often influenced by their personal interests, passions, and talents. They may gravitate towards career paths that align with their hobbies or areas of expertise.
- Values: Individual values, such as the importance of work-life balance, social impact, or financial stability, can shape career aspirations and priorities.
- Self-Efficacy: Girls' beliefs in their ability to succeed in certain careers, known as self-efficacy, strongly influence their career ambitions. High self-efficacy can lead to more ambitious career goals and persistence in the face of challenges.

2. **Family Background and Parental Influences**:
- Parental Expectations: College girls may be influenced by their parents' expectations and aspirations for them, which can impact their career choices and goals.
- Role Modeling: Parental role modeling, particularly if parents hold careers in certain fields or provide encouragement and support, can inspire girls to pursue similar career paths.
- Support and Resources: The level of support and resources provided by parents, including financial support, educational guidance, and mentorship, can influence girls' confidence and ability to pursue their desired career paths.

3. **Peer Influence and Social Networks**:
- Peer Encouragement: Positive interactions with peers who support and encourage career ambitions can bolster girls' confidence and motivation to pursue their goals.
- Role Models: Having peers who serve as role models or mentors in certain career fields can provide valuable guidance and inspiration for college girls.
- Societal Norms: Peer pressure and societal norms regarding gender roles and career expectations may influence girls' perceptions of suitable career paths and their confidence in pursuing non-traditional fields.

4. **Educational Environment**:
- Access to Resources: College girls' access to resources such as career counseling, internships, networking opportunities, and academic support can significantly impact their career ambitions.
- Mentorship: The availability of mentorship programs or supportive relationships with faculty members and professionals in their field of interest can provide guidance and encouragement for girls pursuing their career goals.

- Institutional Support: Supportive institutional policies and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equity, diversity, and inclusion can create a more conducive environment for girls to pursue their career ambitions.

5. **Cultural and Societal Norms**:
- Gender Expectations: Societal expectations regarding gender roles and stereotypes may influence girls' perceptions of suitable career paths and their confidence in pursuing male-dominated fields.
- Cultural Factors: Cultural norms and values regarding education, career, and family roles may impact girls' career aspirations and choices, particularly in multicultural or immigrant communities.
- Representation in Media: Positive representation of women in various career fields and leadership positions can challenge stereotypes and inspire college girls to pursue ambitious career goals.

1.3. Psychological and Socioeconomic Implications

Understanding the psychological and socioeconomic implications of career ambitions among college girls is essential for developing interventions and policies aimed at promoting gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workforce. By addressing barriers to career advancement and providing support for girls to pursue ambitious career goals, society can foster greater opportunities for economic empowerment and well-being among college-educated women. [9]

1. **Psychological Implications**:
- **Self-Efficacy and Confidence**: College girls with higher career ambitions may exhibit greater levels of self-efficacy and confidence in their abilities to succeed in their chosen fields. Conversely, those facing barriers or societal stereotypes may experience lower self-esteem and confidence, impacting their career aspirations.
- **Identity Development**: Career ambitions play a significant role in shaping college girls' identities and self-concepts. Pursuing ambitious career goals can enhance feelings of competence, autonomy, and purpose, contributing to positive identity development. [10]
- **Mental Health**: The pursuit of career ambitions can impact college girls' mental health. High levels of stress, anxiety, or depression may arise from academic pressure, societal expectations, or uncertainty about the future. Conversely, achieving career milestones and pursuing meaningful work can promote well-being and satisfaction. [11]

2. **Socioeconomic Implications**:
- **Income Disparities**: Career ambitions can influence future income potential and socioeconomic status. College girls aspiring to high-paying careers may have greater opportunities for financial stability and upward mobility, while those pursuing lower-paying fields may face economic challenges. [12]
- **Occupational Segregation**: Gender disparities in career ambitions contribute to occupational segregation, where certain fields are dominated by one gender. This segregation can perpetuate wage gaps and limit career advancement opportunities for college girls in male-dominated fields. [13]
- **Wealth Accumulation**: Career ambitions impact wealth accumulation and economic security over the lifespan. College girls who achieve their career goals may accumulate more wealth through higher salaries, benefits, and investment opportunities, leading to greater financial security and quality of life.

1.4. Challenges and Barriers Faced by College Girls in Pursuing Career Ambitions

College girls face a myriad of challenges and barriers in pursuing their career ambitions, often stemming

from societal norms, gender biases, and structural inequalities. Gender bias and stereotypes can undermine girls' confidence and limit their opportunities in male-dominated fields or leadership positions [14]. The lack of visible female role models and mentors in certain professions can make it difficult for girls to envision themselves succeeding in those fields. Discrimination and bias in the workplace, including unequal pay and limited advancement opportunities, further hinder their career progression. Additionally, balancing family responsibilities, academic demands, and extracurricular activities presents a significant challenge for college girls, often requiring them to juggle multiple roles and obligations. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive efforts to challenge stereotypes, promote gender equity, provide support networks, and create inclusive environments that empower college girls to pursue their career aspirations without limitations. [15]

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

The purpose of this research was to determine if there was a correlation between high school students' involvement in college and career preparation programs and their subsequent educational and occupational success in the year following high school graduation. Out of 12,217 students enrolled in public schools, 6,046 (or 49.49 percent) were male and 6,171 (or 50.51 percent) were female. The data utilized for this research came from the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:2009). Descriptive statistics and multinomial logistic regression were used in the data analysis. Across the board for post-secondary education and employment outcomes, socioeconomic status emerged as the only significant predictor. Depending on whether outcomes (i.e., education and/or job) were being evaluated, significant predictors of post-high school education/work achievement varied. [16]

The study explores factors influencing career track choices among Grade 11 students in the Philippines under the K to 12 program. It employs descriptive, correlation, and correspondence analyses on data from 3,813 students. Results indicate a strong association between intended college course and senior high school (SHS) track/strand choice, highlighting the importance of future career goals in decision-making. Personal preference and parental influence emerge as significant factors affecting track choice. Socio-demographic variables such as sex, age, birth order, number of siblings, and family income demonstrate a moderate association with track/strand choice. Furthermore, parents' educational attainment, current occupation, and student's academic performance in subjects like Filipino, English, Math, and Science show a moderate linear relationship with track/strand choice. These findings underscore the complexity of career decision-making among students and suggest the need for targeted interventions to support informed choices. [17]

This paper assesses the effectiveness of programs aimed at empowering young women, such as careers education and advice, in raising their goals and guiding their course and career choices for the betterment of their long-term prospects. It finds places of improvement and places of failure in various areas. Various points in their educational and occupational journeys were examined in this small-scale study of girls' and young women's course and job choices. Inspectors paid a total of 25 school visits between June 2009 and December 2010, with 16 elementary schools, 25 secondary schools (including 13 schools for females only), and 10 colleges and universities also receiving visits. In addition, 36 companies associated with 12 schools were contacted by inspectors. The girls interviewed began to consider their post-secondary options as early as third grade, according to the inspectors. Family and friends have a significant impact on the thoughts and beliefs of females of all ages. The norms around what were traditionally considered "girls' occupations" and "boys' jobs" were not lost on these young women. They would also be able to explain,

at the end of secondary school, why they were free to pursue any career path they wanted, regardless of cultural norms. If the job piqued their interest enough, almost all of the young women and girls who took part in the study would be willing to pursue it despite the fact that it defied gender preconceptions. Unfortunately, they weren't always able to put their knowledge of this potential into action. In line with the national picture of course enrollment, the majority of the girls' and young women's profession and course choices at the schools and institutions we visited were stereotyped. [18]

Decisions on future careers and occupations may be difficult for graduating students. Graduates of undergraduate institutions in Kodagu, a tiny district in Karnataka, are the focus of this research, which seeks to identify the variables that influence their professional goals and objectives. Because these goals and expectations are far-off in the future, careful preparation and decisive action are required. The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of the following: the degree to which graduating students have agency over their career decisions; the industries in which they plan to work; the characteristics they hope to see in their future employers; and the clarity with which they approach these questions. Additionally, the effect of certain demographic factors on the intended profession was examined. While the survey did not find any statistically significant differences between the sexes with regard to ambitions for higher education, gender orientations toward entrepreneurship, or employment expectations, it did find significant disparities with regard to the study's subject area. [19]

Following in the footsteps of other studies, this one compared the career expectations of 677 different college students to those of the American workforce and looked for gender and ethnicity-based disparities. This research added to the existing body of knowledge by examining the aspiration-expectation discrepancy, or the gap between desired and actual career outcomes, via the lens of the intricacy and congruence of the Holland code. This research went a step further by looking at potential connections between the aspiration-expectation gap and factors including self-efficacy in making professional decisions, perceptions of hurdles to advancement, and unequal status identity. The results showed that there were substantial gender and racial variations in terms of professional expectations and goals. Moreover, the present job market was not perfectly congruent with the aspirations of college students. The jobs that students wanted to do and the ones that were required of them were different. Finally, more study is needed to confirm that career hurdles, unequal status identification, and career choice self-efficacy are three elements that might be associated with the aspiration-expectation difference. [20]

This research aims to examine the elements that have a major impact on the career goals of females attending public secondary schools. Because of the expected career gaps and difficulties in a rural context, the Nyamira North district instance is picked. Topics included in the research included gender differences, family history, role modeling, and counseling and assistance. Because of their assumed advantage in obtaining job information, the study used a survey research methodology and intentionally targeted females in form 4. From the total of 1251 girls registered in form 4 at the 25 public secondary schools, 125 (four all-girls and twenty-one mixed) will be chosen at random to constitute the research group from which the results will be extrapolated. In addition, we will be recruiting one professional teacher from each school to serve as an informant. A questionnaire and an interview guide, both of which were fine-tuned to increase reliability and validity, were used to gather data for the research. For quantitative data, content analysis was used for processing and analysis, while descriptive statistics were used for qualitative data. [21]

The study investigates the factors affecting career aspirations of girls in Thika West District, Kenya. Based on previous research, it highlights the underrepresentation of girls in prestigious and science-based careers,

indicating potential disparities in career aspirations between genders. Objectives include establishing career aspirations of secondary school girls and identifying socio-economic, cultural, and school-based factors influencing these aspirations. Using a descriptive survey design, data was collected from 320 secondary school girls, 8 principals, and 8 career masters through questionnaires and interviews. Results reveal that girls aspire to pursue higher education, with parental involvement and school-related factors positively influencing their career aspirations. However, socio-economic factors and cultural practices exhibit negative influences. These findings underscore the complex interplay of individual, socio-economic, and cultural factors in shaping girls' career aspirations and suggest the need for targeted interventions to enhance career aspirations among girls in secondary schools. [22]

The study aims to investigate factors influencing career decision-making among STEM student majors in a South African university, recognizing the importance of aligning career decisions with students' experiences, personality, and expectations. Utilizing a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to content analysis, data from 203 participants (response rate: 63%) were qualitatively analyzed. Results reveal three key factors influencing career decision-making: interpersonal, intrapersonal, and career outcomes expectancy. The findings highlight the multifaceted nature of STEM students' career decision-making perceptions in the South African context, providing insights to inform policies addressing skills shortages in STEM fields. Notably, participants cited influences such as family, personality, and expectations in their career decision-making process, underscoring the importance of considering diverse factors in supporting students' career pathways in STEM. [23]

Researchers want to learn how low family income affects their children's opportunities to follow their passions after high school. Students in the Faculty of Education at three South African universities of technology participated in a cross-sectional research. For this research, 141 pupils were selected at random. According to the research, the biggest obstacle that 69.2% of the students cited in relation to achieving their professional goals was an insufficient or nonexistent family income. In addition, among the most popular professions, 34.8% chose teaching, 14.2% chose engineering, and 11.3% chose accounting or finance. Learners should be informed about available financial resources, such bursaries and loans, and introduced to a variety of job options via life-skills courses and programs. [24]

This research looked at how college students who weren't sure about their major fared after taking a two-credit career development course for a semester. Undergraduates from The University of Montana's Career Development (COUN 105) and Introductory Psychology (PSYX 100) and Intimate and Family Relationship (COUN 295) programs served as comparison groups. At the start and finish of the 2010 spring and fall semesters, students were given the following assessments: Decisional Process Inventory, Career Decision Scale, Career Orientation scale, and Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale—Short Form. Undergraduates at The University of Montana participated in this quantitative study to find out how a career development course affected their professional decision-making, self-efficacy, and other factors. The results were categorized as positive, neutral, or negative. Results from the analysis of variance (MANOVA) showed that taking COUN 105 improved students' perceptions of their own career effectiveness. These findings supported the case for making career exploration required coursework for freshmen who were still on the fence about their major. [25]

High school seniors' job decision-making and the impact of family background were the subjects of this research. Researchers used a descriptive cross-sectional survey approach for this assignment. We surveyed 248 seniors in high school using a multiphase stage sampling method. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. A t-test for independent samples and linear multiple regression was used to

analyze the data. The research found that students' job decision-making was most affected by their self-efficacy of home concerns. The study's authors came to the conclusion that kids' professional decision-making might benefit from increased self-efficacy and that parents should take an active interest in their children's educational programs. Additionally, it was shown that students' perceptions of the impact of family considerations on job choice making was unaffected by their sex. Students' self-efficacy should be fostered, and parents should take an interest in their children's program selection. [26]

3. CONCLUSION

This review paper sheds light on the significant impact of career ambitions on college girls, highlighting both the psychological and socioeconomic dimensions of this complex issue. By synthesizing existing literature and empirical evidence, the paper underscores the importance of understanding and addressing the challenges and barriers that college girls face in pursuing their career aspirations. From gender bias and discrimination to the lack of visible role models and the struggle to balance multiple responsibilities, college girls encounter numerous obstacles on their path to career success. However, despite these challenges, the paper also emphasizes the resilience, determination, and potential for empowerment that college girls possess. By providing support networks, challenging stereotypes, promoting gender equity, and creating inclusive environments, stakeholders can empower college girls to overcome barriers and pursue their career ambitions with confidence and determination. Ultimately, by investing in the career development and advancement of college girls, society can foster greater diversity, equity, and innovation in the workforce, leading to a more inclusive and prosperous future for all.

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