

**THE EFFECT OF GENDER STEREOTYPING ON CAREER CHOICES AMONG  
GIRLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN UGANDA: A CASE OF ST. JOHN'S HIGH  
SCHOOL MUKONO**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL  
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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN  
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## DECLARATION

I, Nambi Ivy Stacy, hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and that it has never been submitted in any institution for any award. I have read the regulations of the university with regard to plagiarism and here declare that I abided by all of them.

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## APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted with the approval of the supervisor.

Signature.....

Date .....

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## **DEDICATION**

With special regard, I wish to dedicate this piece of work to my parents who have always been there to support me in my education. May the Almighty God richly bless you.

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I would like to thank the Almighty God for the gift of life and guiding me throughout my education; it has not being easy but it was possible.

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## ABSTRACT

The study examined the effect of gender stereotyping on career choices among girls in secondary schools in Uganda: a case of St John's High School Mukono. It specifically focused on; assessing the influence of family influence on career choice among girls, establishing the influence of occupational stereotypes on career choice among girls and examining the influence of exposure to mass media on career choice among girls at St Johns high school.

The study was carried out using a cross sectional survey research design where both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were also used. The data was collected using questionnaires and interviews during the data collection, both purposive and simple random sampling methods were used. A sample size of 136 respondents who are S.4, S.5 & S.6 from St Johns High School-Mukono was selected although 120 of them responded to the study. The key informants included the head teacher, teachers, school counselor and senior woman.

The study revealed that on average, 70% of the respondents agreed that gender stereotyping, including family influence, occupational stereotypes, and exposure to mass media, significantly affects career choices among girls at St. John's High School. Pearson's correlation analysis shows strong positive relationships between family influence ( $r = .744, p < .05$ ), occupational stereotypes ( $r = .639, p < .05$ ), and exposure to mass media ( $r = .711, p < .05$ ) with career choices. Regression analysis reveals that these factors explain 63.1% of the variations in career choices with family influence ( $\beta = .412$ ), occupational stereotypes ( $\beta = .322$ ), and mass media exposure ( $\beta = .225$ ) all contributing significantly to improving career choices among girls.

Lastly, the study recommended the need for families to promote open discussions about diverse career paths for girls, free from traditional gender expectations. The study also recommended the need for schools to actively challenge occupational stereotypes by incorporating gender-sensitive career guidance programs. Finally, the study recommended the need for critical media literacy programs in secondary schools to help female students critically assess media portrayals of gender roles and careers.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

The study looked at the impact of gender stereotyping on career choice among girls. Secondary schools in Uganda: a case of St John's High School Mukono. This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, and conceptual framework.

#### 1.1 Background of the study

This section considered historical background, theoretical background, conceptual background and contextual background.

##### *1.1.1 Historical background*

Stereotypes of gender traditionally shaped girls' choices of future careers and passed through all historical periods and geographical locations. In the USA and Europe, social norms and gender roles also often encourage girls to pursue traditionally feminine jobs that limit girls' options in the sphere of STEM. Over time, these stereotypes have been contested by movements for gender equality and educational reform that encourage a wider range of career options. In Africa, colonial legacies and cultural norms further solidified gender roles where girls are more often drawn to domestic and caring roles. These patterns have persisted in Uganda due to cultural belief systems that are ingrained and a limited access to a variety of educational opportunities.

These myths continue to persist, and at present, gender equality in career choices is yet not a reality despite the efforts of MGLSD 2019 and other organizations in dispelling such myths. Traditionally, career options were circumscribed by gender stereotypes based on the role expectations from society. Tabassum & Nayak 2021. Although equality movements have gradually questioned such conventions, gender roles have traditionally reserved women for domestic and caring roles in both the USA and Europe. According

to Cherry (2022), Africa's cultural pressures and colonial history furthered the stereotypes, which kept women from career options and drove them to head towards specific roles. These stereotypes have been perpetuated through ingrained cultural beliefs and a lack of educational opportunities in Uganda, which greatly impacts the career choices girls make. However, though there are still numerous barriers in the way of attaining gender equality in career choices, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and other organizations are working to combat such stereotypes..

### ***1.1.2 Theoretical background***

This research was guided by the Gender Schema Theory. In 1981, Sandra Bem developed a theory known as the Gender Schema Theory. The theory explains how individuals learn about gender roles within a society and how the characteristics of a given sex are maintained and passed on to other members of a given community. The theory postulates that social norms and expectations cause male and female roles to be perpetuated in children through observation from culture. According to (Canevello, 2020), the theory's core premise states that individuals process information and organize it using the gender schema as organizing frameworks of thought, which is a cognitive approach. Such cognitive representations impact how humans process information, decision-making, and behave in a manner that conveys socially fabricated gender roles. Some of the assumptions underlying this theory are that since very young age, individuals get socialized to act according to their gender roles, and gender is the significant organizing principle in society.

The Gender Schema Theory provides a framework for how cultural and societal expectations shape girls' perception of appropriate occupations, and has been applied to study gender stereotyping and career choices among girls in Ugandan secondary schools. The theory postulates that girls at St. John's High School, Mukono, might internalize gender norms and stereotypes from their surroundings, choosing professions that fit into traditional gender roles. According to Davis and Wilson (2016) this internalization may narrow their aspirations and choices, hence perpetuating the cycle of gender-based occupational segregation. Education professionals and legislators can

also design plans that help in eliminating gender stereotypes and encourage girls to pursue a wider array of career options by acknowledging the role of gender schemas (Canevello, 2020). It encourages gender equality in career options.

### ***1.1.3 Conceptual background***

The study uses gender stereotyping as its independent variable. According to Thomasson (2019) the term gender stereotyping describes the expectations and conventions of society that specify acceptable roles behaviors and pursuits for men and women according to their gender. Hentsch et al. (2019) to elaborate define gender stereotyping as the complex descriptions and presumptions about peoples characteristics and skills based on their gender. For the purposes of this study gender stereotyping was defined as how family education and media exposure shape secondary school girls career choices. The study classified family influence occupational stereotypes and exposure to mass media as dimensions of gender stereotyping. Each of these dimensions included sub-dimensions that captured the subtle ways in which these influences manifested in influencing girls decisions and aspirations for their careers (Muweesi et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the dependent variable in this study is the career choices made by high school girls. The definition of career choices, according to Jaoul-Grammare, 2024, are the decisions individuals make on their professional way due to several factors which include their expectations, those set by society and their educational background. Meanwhile, Tandrayen-Ragoobur and Gokulsing, 2022 define career choices further as, The selection of occupations which fits the ability, objectives, and chance present in the environment. According to this study, for classification purposes, the professional routes that girls in secondary schools chose to follow due to their interests, abilities, opportunities, personalities, and economic status were considered career choices. Career choice was categorized under dimensions of opportunities, personality, interests and skills, and economic status.

#### ***1.1.4 Contextual background***

The two major challenges the education system of Uganda faces are the students' career choice and gender stereotype. Though efforts towards gender equality are being made, stereotypes still persist, affecting the students' choice for future careers (Ampaire et al. 2021). According to the Ministry of Gender Labor and Social Development, beliefs of this culture, which restrict girls' potentials, must be encountered. MGLSD 2019. Farago et al. (2021) highlight the influence of gender stereotypes associated with various occupations on the desired professions amongst Ugandan youth. Similar findings were reported by Napp and Breda (2022), who stated that perpetuation of such stereotypes leads to gender inequality in the choices of STEM education and occupations.

This paper uses St. John's High School as a miniature model of larger settings - the nation - to outline these challenges in a municipal government school in Mukono. Like many other schools in Uganda this one finds it difficult to give male and female students equal opportunities to pursue their career goals (Asad, 2021). The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (2020) states that at schools like St. Johns, students' career choices are still influenced by both traditional and modern gender values. As a result of uneven attempts to incorporate gender-sensitive teaching techniques gender biases in career counseling and instructional materials have persisted (Muweesi et al., 2024). In order to overcome these obstacles specific interventions are needed to destroy stereotypes and create welcoming environments where all students can pursue their career goals (Ampaire et al., 2021).

#### **1.2 Problem statement**

Thanks to progressive policies and cultural changes gender stereotyping has been greatly reduced in developed nations enabling girls to consider a wide variety of career options based on their interests and abilities (Ottavia 2022). Nonetheless gender stereotypes are still prevalent in developing nations like Uganda having a big impact on secondary school girls career choices (Ampaire et al., 2021). In contrast to developed countries where 46% of girls show interest in STEM careers just 27% of Ugandan girls do so (Muweesi et al., 2024). A decline in the variety of career options accessible to girls

is the result of this disparity being exacerbated by social expectations financial limitations and opportunity gaps (Ampaire et al. (2021). Girls' personal and professional development is hampered by the perpetuation of these stereotypes which confine them to traditional roles (MGLSD 2019).

According to Asad (2021) the majority of research conducted on gender stereotyping in Uganda has concentrated on general attitudes and primary education. Especially with regard to their interests, opportunities, personalities, and socioeconomic status, little is known about how these stereotypes affect girls' career choices in secondary schools (Lamoureaux 2021; Hentschel et al. 2019). Current research has failed to address precisely how gender stereotypes limit girls' aspirations for their careers or to explore practical strategies through which such stereotypes can be challenged in the secondary education setting (Janaki, 2024). The present study, therefore, sought to fill this knowledge gap through the provision of detailed analysis in regard to implications of gender stereotyping on career choice among girls at St. John's High School Mukono.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The study examines gender stereotyping and its impact on the career choice of girls in Uganda secondary schools, with special attention given to St John's High School Mukono.

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

- i. To assess the influence of family influence on career choice among girls at St Johns high school.
- ii. To establish the influence of occupational stereotypes on career choice among girls at St Johns high school.
- iii. To examine the influence of exposure to mass media on career choice among girls at St Johns high school.

### **1.5 Research questions**

- i. What is the influence of family influence on career choice among girls at St Johns high school?

- ii. What is the influence of occupational stereotypes on career choice among girls at St Johns high school?
- iii. What is the influence of exposure to mass media on career choice among girls at St Johns high school?

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

### **1.6.1 Content Scope**

The study specifically focused on assessing the influence of family influence on career choice among girls, establishing the influence of occupational stereotypes on career choice among girls and examining the influence of exposure to mass media on career choice among girls at St Johns high school.

### **1.6.2 Geographical scope**

Geographically, the study was conducted at St Johns high School-Mukono located in the central region, Kauga Sub- County, Mukono District, Uganda. St Johns high School-Mukono was chosen as the case study due to its significant community involvement, historical development, and current challenges in academic performance highlighting its relevance for examining the impact of gender stereotyping on career choices among girls.

### **1.6.3 Time scope**

The study focused on scholarly material from the period 2019 to 2024. It was also carried out for a period of four months from June to September, 2024.

## **1.7 Justification of the study**

This study's rationale stemmed from the urgent need to comprehend how gender stereotypes affect girls' career decisions at St. Johns High School in the Mukono District. The literature currently in publication has frequently emphasized the importance of educational attainment media exposure and career counseling in relation to the professional outcomes of enrolled students. In order to close this gap and improve student achievement by encouraging improved performance in desired subjects that

lead to desired careers the study sought to offer relevant insights and suggestions to improve career guidance.

### **1.8 Significance of the study**

The results of this study attempted to provide relevant information in order to highlight the effect of gender stereotyping on girls career choices. The study has significant implications for the following stakeholder groups:

Policymakers will benefit from the study's insights into practical methods for boosting career counseling in the classroom which will raise student achievement at St. Johns High School Mukono and other comparable Ugandan institutions.

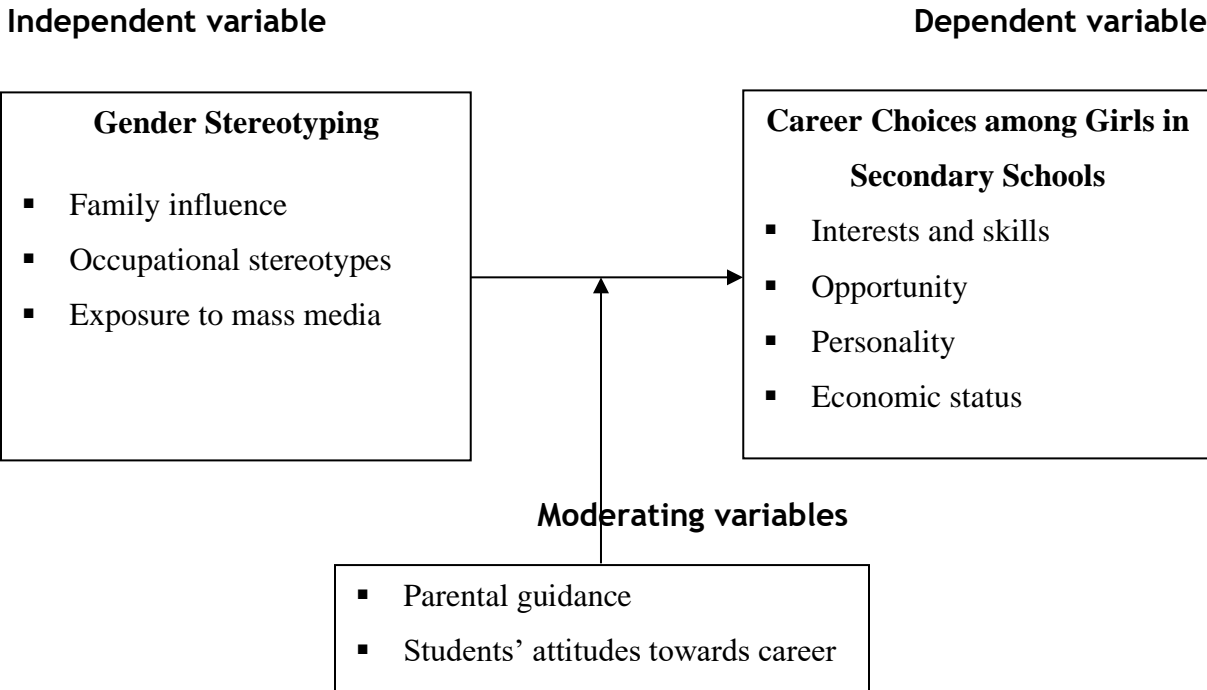
Because it adds to the body of knowledge about gender stereotyping and how it affects career choice in secondary education contexts the study will be important for future researchers and academicians.

This will lay the groundwork for more scholarly inquiry and comparative studies. In addition to helping parents understand the requirements for the specific career paths their children wish to pursue and for their overall development the study will be important because it will highlight the crucial role that parents play in influencing their children's educational outcomes.

The study will be important to school administrators because it provides evidence-based suggestions for improving parent-teacher collaboration and creating a nurturing learning environment at St. Johns High School Mukono that encourages student success and better career choices.

1.9 Conceptual framework

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



Source: Adapted from Pozzo et al. (2023) and modified by the researcher (2024)

The independent variable gender stereotyping is influenced by family influence occupational stereotypes and exposure to mass media according to the conceptual framework for a study on the impact of gender stereotyping on career choices among girls in Ugandan secondary schools. These variables which include interests and skills opportunity personality and economic status influence the dependent variable which is girls' career choices. Parental guidance and students attitudes toward careers moderate the relationship between gender stereotyping and career choices suggesting that girls' career decision-making can be less affected by gender stereotypes when they have supportive parental guidance and positive attitudes toward career options.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter covers other works from other literatures. It is important that a closer look is taken at similar works done on the effect of gender stereotyping on career choices among girls in secondary schools and review some of the literatures pertinent to the study, for comparison, confirmation and differences to be laid bare. Due to this, this chapter is meant to contain the review of various literatures considered to be relevant to the study.

#### 2.1 Theoretical review

This study was guided by the Gender Schema Theory and this was discussed below as follows;

##### 2.1.1 The Gender Schema Theory

The Gender Schema Theory provided direction for this research. Sandra Bem created the Gender Schema Theory back in 1981. The theory explains how individuals learn about their gender roles within the society and how the characteristics attributed to a certain sex are passed and transmitted to others within a given community. The theory postulates that the males and female roles experienced within a person's culture are reinforced by societal norms and expectations. The central contention of the theory is that individuals process and organize information based on gender by using cognitive structures called gender schemas. Such mental models influence ways in which people learn, make decisions, and behave in conjoining manners to socially created gender norms. Some of the basic assumptions of this theory are that since childhood, people get socialized to follow the appropriate gender and that gender serves as the main structural element of any society (Thomasson, 2019).

Gender Schema Theory generates a framework for understanding how cultural and social expectations mold girls' perceptions of suitable careers, which, in turn, gets

applied in the study of gender stereotyping and career choice among girls in Ugandan secondary schools. According to the theory, girls at St. Johns High School, Mukono, may internalize the norms and stereotypes of gender from the surrounding environment and therefore select professions that fit into traditional gender roles. In the process, according to Davis and Wilson (2016), this internalization may limit their aspirations and opportunities, and this is how the cycle of gender-based occupational segregation gets perpetuated. The educationist and legislator can design schemes to dissipate stereotyping of gender and encourage girls to pursue more diverse career goals by acknowledging the influence of gender schemas. This encourages gender equity in career choices.

## **2.2 Concept of Gender Stereotyping**

According to Bem (2019), gender stereotyping refers to the generalized beliefs or assumptions regarding qualities or traits men and women ought or ought not to possess or about the roles they ought or ought not to perform. These stereotypes deeply embed in societal norms and expectations and often lead to prejudicial beliefs and behaviors that limit people's opportunities and potential as pointed out by Hentschel et al., 2019. According to Wigfield, 2002, the Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation hypothesizes that stereotypes can diminish an individual's self-concept and expectations about achieving success. This impacts their decisions on career aspirations and the resultant occupational choices made thereof. In Uganda, for example, girls are highly influenced in career choices by gender stereotyping, which channels them into more traditional professions and often less lucrative ones.

According to Ottavia (2022) cultural norms and values have a big impact on how girls grow up and choose their careers by sustaining gender stereotypes. According to studies societal perceptions that STEM fields are better suited for boys lead to girls disinterest in these fields despite their aptitude (Farago et al., 2021). In addition the Uganda Cross-Cultural Foundation highlights the necessity of harmonizing traditional and contemporary gender norms in order to advance equality and provide girls the

confidence to choose a variety of career paths (Foundation 2019). According to Andrayen-Ragoobur and Gokulsing (2022) the perpetuation of these stereotypes has significant ramifications one of which is the underrepresentation of women in lucrative and prominent professions.

While a large body of research has been done on the effects of gender stereotypes on academic performance little of it has been done expressly to examine how these stereotypes affect girls' career choices in Ugandan secondary schools (Ampaire et al., 2021). The intersection of gender stereotyping and career aspirations among adolescent girls has received little attention in previous research which has examined general attitudes toward gender roles and the difficulties faced by women in leadership positions (Enkhzul 2023; Lamoureaux 2021). In order to close this disparity this research looks at the precise ways that career decisions made by girls at St. Muweesi et al. conducted research at Johns High School Mukono with the goal of creating tactics that can combat these prejudices and advance gender equality in jobs.

### **2.3 Concept of Career Choices**

From personal interests to cultural expectations, and from educational opportunities to viable financial options, everything affects the choice of career path. As mentioned by Enkhzul (2023), cultural lenses form an important part of career goals since norms related to gender and values usually determine whether certain occupations are acceptable for any given group of people. Cultural influences have the potential to restrict the scope of career options that people, especially women, may consider. They are more likely to be counseled against pursuing fields that have traditionally been considered male-dominated, such as those related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. According to the Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation, one's expectations for success in a particular field and the value they attach to these expectations, influenced by societal and cultural contexts, guide individuals in choosing their careers.

Career choices are influenced by both the quality and availability of primary and secondary education, but even this faces myriad obstacles in Uganda. Due to a general

lack of finance and instructional materials that are biased against women, Uganda's educational system has come under fire for not preparing students for a variety of various career paths. This is even worsened by the small number of females in these STEM sectors. It has been suggested that societal perceptions about the capabilities of girls and gender stereotyping persist. Changing perceptions and enabling both boys and girls to make more diverse choices about careers require deeper changes at the social and educational levels. This will offer the environment that will enable people to pursue careers based on their interests and talents, not on the basis of conformation to traditional male/female roles.

Moreover, in a number of cases, the career opportunities for women are limited by barriers to leadership and professional development that they face. A very enlightening integrative review of the challenges facing women in leadership positions pointed out that stereotypes and gender biases at times block women's professional development in certain fields. These stereotypes are affecting career growth for women in that it affects the way they see themselves and their aspirations for their careers, as well as those of employers and colleagues. Thus, promotion of gender equality will have to focus on addressing stereotypes for ensuring nondiscriminatory career opportunities and full potentials of women in diversified professional fields.

#### **2.4 Influence of family influence on career choice among girls**

Priyashantha et al. (2023) studied the impact that family can have on girls' career choices and documented that this is directly related to parents' expectations about their future aspirations. According to them, parents are more inclined to encourage young girls toward traditionally female-dominated careers, which limit them from exposure to many other career fields. This agrees with a study conducted by Rotich et al. (2020) in which an examination of the number of girl students enrolled in technical programs in Kenya was done. It was established that for girls to pursue non-traditional careers, a great deal of family support is needed. The study discovered that girls are most likely to choose a career that challenges traditional gender expectation when their parents encouraged them to explore various fields.

Jaoul-Grammare (2024) explored how stereotypes influenced the choice of career amongst individuals and noted that influences from the family sphere often feed back into gendered career expectations. Thus, girls from families with strict sex role socialization are less likely to choose professions in industries where men are predominant. Indeed, such a finding was further motivated by a study about postcolonial gender by Lamoureaux and Sanders (2021) which evidence, that gender stereotyping, propagated with the help of family burdens acts as a deterrent to career development in women. Such a focus on the family serving as an instrument for encouragement or dissuasion of society's perception about one's career is the connecting link between these two studies.

Hentsch et al. (2019) discussed all aspects of gender stereotyping and their effects on the girls' choices of careers. They came to realize that families, although they encourage girls to have careers, often subtly reinforce stereotypes in how they encourage girls to have stereotypically female jobs. Bem (2019) agreed with this statement because she mentioned how family influences the children's early ideas on what will be appropriate careers for their gender. She explained this through the theory of Gender Schema Theory. Both pieces of research emphasized the fact that, if the family is ever going to expand the girl child's career choices, it has to go out of its way to recognize and overcome such stereotypes. Tabassum & Nayak stated that overcoming gender biases in the workplace requires family support, while looking into how family influences women's professional progress. They found out that more likely than not, women who have a much supportive upbringing will engage into and excel in traditionally male-dominated professions. Similarly, Enkhzul extended the challenges that face women in leadership positions and looked upon family support as something very instrumental in helping women surmount challenges at workplaces. These studies really depict how family support influences and improves girls' career outcomes.

Tandrayen-Ragoobur & Gokulsing 2022 evaluated the gender gap in STEM education and occupational choice. They observed that one of the contributing factors was family influences, which very much contradicted the present belief in that girls growing up in homes with a value attached to STEM education have fewer chances of entering these

professions. This finding is supported by the work of Tam et al. who showed that encouragement from parents significantly enhances girls' confidence and interest in pursuing a career in STEM. Both studies highlight the role of supportive familial environments in eliminating gender norms, thus inspiring young females to venture out into various career options.

Napp & Breda carried out a study all over the world on stereotype variation that girls are untalented. According to the result, family view is one of the important factors in sustaining and challenging this stereotype. According to their result, daughters are influenced positively by career aspiration when family has faith in their abilities. Delzell gave evidence to that when he researched stereotyping of gender roles in high school teaching positions and found out that family attitudes about gender roles can limit or even expand girls' career choices. It means the mentioned above studies family factor greatly influences the professional development of a girl.

In a related study about gender stereotypes and career choice, Ampaire et al. (2021) found out that "careers are often chosen based on the expectations of the family." These authors have established that girls are very likely to pursue jobs in several fields if their families have liberal views about gender roles. Farago et al. (2021) have investigated Ugandan adolescents' knowledge of gender stereotypes; the results showed that family influence seems to have a great impact on how well they understand and accept different career options. Both studies pinpoint how important family support is in regard to girls' career development, and also with regard to challenging the more conventional gender norms.

Muweesi et al. (2024), on the other hand, researched Ugandan public secondary schools to study the influence of the family in terms of career choices concerning gender bias in instructional materials and methods. Their findings indicated that families that have been more seriously involved in their daughters' education in addition to fostering a range of career goals for daughters have managed to reduce the gender biases prevalent in schools. This finding is further supported by the fact that, as argued by Ottavia 2022, gender stereotyping in education requires policies and procedures aimed at addressing

the same. Such findings have pointed to the relevance of family influence in providing girls with the self-confidence and motivation they need to pursue a plethora of career opportunities.

## **2.5 Influence of occupational stereotypes on career choice among girls**

Rotich et al. (2020) conducted an investigation into the influence of occupational stereotypes on female enrolment in technical courses in Kenya. Their findings proved that due to expectations within societal circles about certain technical fields being considered male domains, traditional gender roles often discourage girls from entering them. Similarly, Jaoul-Grammare (2024) noted that girls' career choices are significantly influenced by gendered prestige associated with certain professions, which ultimately cause them to shy away from those perceived as less prestigious or unsuitable for their gender. Through these studies, one can note that the choices girls make are guided by society and their professional aspirations determined through deep-rooted stereotypes.

Tandrayen-Ragoobur and Gokulsing studied the gender gap in STEM education and its impact on career choices. In this study, the authors reported that girls, though interested in and skilled for STEM careers, are influenced to stereotypical perceptions about gender roles. Similarly, Tam et al. reiterated that despite societal attitude remaining a major barrier, good training in ICT helped dispel these stereotypical perceptions. These studies reveal how occupational stereotypes affect girls' long-term career paths other than just the immediate career choices that girls make.

The misconception in the world over regarding girls as being less gifted in the fields of science and technology was presented by Napp and Breda 2022. The stereotype has been observed to have a negative effect on the self-confidence of girls in these fields and their desired career aspirants. Further research by Tabassum and Nayak, 2021, on how those stereotypes affect the possibilities of women's career development, it was shown that such biases impede the opportunities for women-managerial professions' further advances in this direction. Both studies show that widespread stereotypes

undermine girls' perceived potential and abilities, which makes it hard for them to choose careers.

Farago et al. (2021) explored the awareness of gender stereotyping regarding different occupations among Ugandan adolescents. Their study also indicated just how deeply set gender stereotypes are within adolescents' perceptions of their careers, which are mostly based on societal expectations and not based on aptitude or personal interest. Ampaire et al. (2021) discussed related issues and also established that gender stereotyping significantly influences the choice of careers that secondary school students make in Uganda. As indicated in their work, such a stereotypical perception limits girls' aspirations to traditionally feminine occupations, negatively affecting the general professional development of girls.

A systematic review on how gender stereotype influences career outcomes, particularly for women in male-dominated fields, conducted by Priyasankartha et al. (2023), found occupational stereotype to be of considerable influence on career choice and advancement. Enkhzul (2023) further supported the results of the previous study when she accounted for difficulties women experience in the leadership role for there being embedded gender stereotypes. Both studies therefore depict how stereotypes detrimentally impact women's career advancement and opportunities; hence, the need for an intervention to change these biases. Muweesi et al., 2024, investigates gender bias in instructional strategies and curriculum in Ugandan Secondary Schools. Their findings showed that biased instructional strategies and content fuel stereotypes that limit exposure of girls to a range of career options and thus affect girls' career decisions. Building on this, Bem (2019) discussed how gender schema theory can explain how gender stereotypes influence people's choices of careers, and how schools can favor such biases. Aggregately these researches explain how gender influences in the design of school environments design girls' career aspirations.

The impact of various dimensions of stereotype on career perception and choices were studied by Hentschel and M (2019). They also found that gender stereotypes influence people's perception of their competence in many different areas, including career

interest. Based on this, Lauer (2019) studied other aspects of the development of sex differences in spatial reasoning and applied these findings to professional choices, finding that preconceptions about different aptitudes among girls and boys can shape their choices of professional direction. These studies, while demonstrating how stereotypes impinge upon self-perception and external choices of career, serve to underscore the need for a more comprehensive approach to intervention in such problems.

## **2.6 Influence of exposure to mass media on career choice among girls**

Bem (2019), and Ottavia (2022) investigated the impact that mass media has on females' decisions about career choices. Bem's Gender Schema Theory suggested that the reinforcement of gender stereotypes is done through the media, thereby influencing girls' wishes in relation to their possible future careers. Girls may have a limited perception with regard to career opportunities since in many cases the media report on women in traditional roles. Ottavia 2022, on the other hand, believed that to expand girls' career options, such stereotypes should be tackled by education practices and policies in all OECD nations. This study brought to light the widespread prevalence of media stereotypes and how they affect girls' aspirations for careers.

Asad (2021) and Wigfield (2002) investigated the impact of media exposure on the educational and professional goals of girls. Asad (2021) discovered that a number of issues confront Ugandan primary and secondary education such as the influence of the media on students views of their options for careers. According to Wigfields (2002) Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation girls perceptions of their own abilities and the value they attach to various careers are shaped by media portrayals. Programs for media literacy are essential for assisting girls in analyzing media messages critically as both studies have highlighted.

Cherry (2022) and Enkhzul (2023) concentrated on how social learning affects a person's career decision. According to Cherrys (2022) explanation of the operation of the Social Learning Theory girls pick up knowledge about gender roles and potential career paths by watching media figures. The difficulties women encounter in leadership roles were

examined by Enkhzul (2023) who hypothesized that girls might be motivated to follow similar careers by seeing strong women in the media. It appears from these studies that girl's career aspirations can be expanded when they see positive media portrayals of women in diverse careers.

Hentsch et al. (2019) and Janaki (2024) investigated the various facets of gender stereotypes in the media. Hentsch et al. (2019) established that the habitual reinforcement of traditional gender roles in media influences girls' self-perception and their choice of careers. Janaki (2024) discussed how the stereotyping of gender in media increases the limitation of girls' aspirations for their future careers by instilling a narrow view of what is suitable for their gender. Both studies called for more diverse and balanced media representations that will help girls envision a wider range of career possibilities.

Lauer 2019 and Lamoureaux 2021 conducted research on the issue of media and postcolonial gender perspectives on the development of spatial reasoning. In contrast, according to Lamoureaux 2021, to the contrary conventional gender norms, the media should support the rights, opportunities, and acknowledgement of women in a variety of professions. Media, according to Lauer 2019, shows that gender differences in spatial reasoning-a critical skill for jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics-are developed differently. These studies address the importance of the portrayal of media with women in non-traditional roles to be more active in encouraging girls in careers.

Moahi 2023 and Rotich et al. 2020 investigated the stereotypes of some jobs and the changing status of women in African culture. According to Moahi 2023, media has a great impact on culture, either empowering or limiting girls in their career choices. Rotich et al. 2020 observed that stereotyping of some jobs through media influences the enrolment of girls for technical courses. Both studies highlighted the role of media as particularly important for challenging conventional ideas and for furthering gender equality in professional choices.

Such two studies that researched this issue of gender disparity in their STEM education and careers advancement are those by Tandrayen-Ragoobur and Gokulsing 2022 and Tabassum and Nayak 2021. As revealed by Tandrayen-Ragoobur and Gokulsing 2022, girls' interest in their STEM careers is shaped by media representations of themselves. Conversely, Tabassum and Nayak 2021 argue from a managerial perspective, the gender stereotype in the media influences the career advancement of women. These studies, therefore, recommend that the media highlight successful women in STEM and management professions as a means of encouraging girls to choose these careers.

Tam et al. (2020) and Napp and Breda (2022) talked about the issue of research regarding the impact of ICT training and talent stereotypes on girls' empowerment in mass media. Tam et al. (2020) found professional training in ICT, combined with a positive role model in media, can motivate girls in a STEM career. In the international study conducted by Napp and Breda regarding the stereotype that girls lack talent, media was found to be one of the major determinants for upholding or differing against the notion. Indeed, from the observation in these studies, it is highly determined by the media in relation to the perceptions which girls have in regard to their skill and potential to pursue a career.

## **2.7 Summary and literature gap**

Although positive media portrayals can inspire broader aspirations the literature review found that gender stereotypes reinforced by the media have a significant impact on girls career choices (Bem 2019; Ottavia 2022). Research emphasizes that in order to reduce adverse effects media literacy and balanced representation are essential (Asad 2021; Cherry 2022). These realizations notwithstanding there were a dearth of long-term studies investigating the long-term effects of media exposure on career decisions and the efficacy of particular media interventions in various cultural contexts.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methods. It addresses the area of study, demographic and sampling methodologies, measurement levels, data collection procedures, tools, processing and analysis of the data, ethical considerations, and methodological limitations.

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional survey research design for its investigation. Because it takes less time to complete the design was chosen (Barley, 2017). Additionally it was employed because it allowed the researcher to document information related to data collected at a specific point in time. Furthermore by using a cross-sectional research design the study's conclusions replaced hypothetical data on the particular variables assessed over the course of the time period taken into consideration and helped dispel preconceptions.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were included in the research plan. The systematic empirical investigation of observable events using statistical mathematical or numerical data or computational techniques is referred to as quantitative research in the social and natural sciences (Trochim 2006). A quantitative research approach was used because it is more objective and reliable and helps the researcher use statistics to help generalize the findings reduce and restructure complex problems to a limited number of variables test theories and hypotheses and ultimately determine the relationship between the two variables. On the other hand a qualitative research methodology was used to learn more about the personality's emotions and behaviors of the respondents as well as the impact of gender stereotyping on the career choices of female students in secondary schools at St. Johns High School Mukono.

### **3.2 Area of study**

This study was conducted at St Johns high School-Mukono located in the central region, Kauga Sub- County, Mukono District, Uganda. St Johns high School-Mukono was chosen as the case study due to its significant community involvement, historical development, and current challenges in academic performance highlighting its relevance for examining the impact of gender stereotyping on career choices among girls.

### **3.3 Study Population**

According to statistics from the DOSA of St Johns High School-Mukono (2024), there are a total of 210 registered girls in the school from senior four up to senior six and these were included in the study as the target population. The girls from S.4, S.5 and S.6 were considered because they are completing their studies and so making career choices is top of their priorities. The study also included the school administrators like the Head teacher, teachers, the senior woman and school counselor that took part as key informants totaling to 6.

### **3.4 Sample Size Determination**

Singh, (2007) defined sample size as finite part of a statistical population whose properties are used to make estimates about a population as a whole. The sample size was gotten using on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table as shown below;

**Table 1: Table for determining sample size of a known population**

**Table 3.1**  
*Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population*

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	100000	384

*Note: N is Population Size; S is Sample Size* *Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970*

**Source: Krejcie & Morgan (1970)**

Therefore from the table above, the sample size was 136 respondents got from a total population of 210 girls/ female students in S.4, S.5 & S.6 from St Johns High School-Mukono. The sample size for girls/ female students in S.4, S.5 & S.6 from St Johns High School-Mukono and the key informants were further divided in the table below.

**Table 2: Sample size and sampling methods**

Category of Respondents	Population Size	Sample size	Sampling Techniques
Female students from S.4, S.5 & S.6	210	136	Simple random sampling
Head teacher	1	1	Purposive sampling
Teachers	3	3	Purposive sampling
Senior woman	1	1	Purposive sampling
School counselor	1	1	Purposive sampling
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>142</b>	

**Source: St. John's High School-Mukono (2024)**

### **3.5 Sampling Techniques**

Both simple random sampling techniques and purposive sampling were used by the researcher. The key informants were chosen by means of purposive sampling. These key informants for the study include; the Head teacher, teachers, the senior woman and school counselor. Because these respondents have a special qualification and have a responsibility of dealing with gender stereotyping among these female students, purposive sampling was used for this category of respondents. As a result, these respondents are expected to provide detailed information about the impact of gender stereotyping on career choices among girls.

Furthermore, simple random sampling was used to select a total of 136 girls/ female students in S.4, S.5 & S.6 from St Johns High School-Mukono where samples were randomly selected from these respondents in their respective departments. These were determined and selected randomly by use of the records from the school register and later contacted for their consent. Simple random sampling was used because it ensures fairness and minimizes bias in the selection process, allowing for a representative sample of the teenagers to participate in the study (Noor et al., 2022)

### **3.6 Sources of data**

The researcher employed primary and secondary data when conducting the research project.

#### **3.6.1 Primary source**

For all fields of study primary data are essential because they offer accurate information about the results of an experiment or observation. Primary data from the field and respondents perspectives were gathered through in-person interviews and questionnaires given to a pre-selected sample of respondents. Primarily primary data helped the researcher collect information relevant to the specific objectives of their research. Using interview protocols and questionnaires the investigator herself collected the data.

### **3.6.2 Secondary source**

Information collected handled and possibly processed by parties other than the particular researcher is referred to as secondary data. Academic literature including books and articles is usually regarded as secondary when doing research for a historical assignment. Information from previously released literary works including e-books journals papers that have been published and periodicals was acquired from this source. Documentary resources are organized according to categories to facilitate data collection and textual analysis (Mubazi 2008). Secondary data on career choices made by students was gathered from journals papers and annual reports to supplement the main data results.

## **3.7 Data collection methods and instruments**

### **3.7.1 Questionnaire**

Amin (2005) defines a survey as a self-report study intended to gather additional information about pertinent factors. The questionnaires would include closed-ended questions with a list of possible answers according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2005). Answers that best reflected the respondents opinions on the scenario and issue under investigation were requested to be selected. A structured questionnaire with sections for every study variable was made in order to collect data on the subject. They administered it to the respondents. A five-point Likert scale was used with the following five response options: (1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) not sure (4) agree and (5) strongly agree. Because it offers respondents a variety of options for responses and makes tabulating the data gathered for comparative analysis easy the Likert style was chosen. Questionnaires were distributed to the 136 girls and female students in S.4, S.5 and S.6 with their consent from St. John's High School in Mukono.

### **3.7.2 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**

Ahuja (2009) defines an interview as a two-person conversation that is initiated by the interviewer and concentrates on the subject indicated by the research objectives of description and explanation in order to specifically obtain information relevant to the

study. The instrument used to gather the data in this instance was an interview guide which consists of a series of prewritten questions with recorded interviewer responses (Ahuja 2009). Using it saved time because it gives the researcher control over the investigations methodology. In the study five key informants took part (KIs). During these interviews there was silence and a calm atmosphere. The interviews started after defining the goals and going over any confidentiality agreements. The interviewer asked questions and recorded the interviewees' responses in an informal conversational manner.

### **3.8 Data Quality Control**

#### **3.8.1 Validity**

To determine whether the questions can capture the desired data, validation was carried out. The supervisor of the researcher went over the questions to make sure the anticipated response was captured. To determine the validity of the study instrument, a Content Validity Index (CVI) was computed. To establish the validity of the study instruments, the researcher applied the formula shown below (Cohen, Manion, and Keith 2007).

$$\text{Content validity Index (CVI)} = \frac{\text{Relevant items by all judges as suitable}}{\text{Total number of items judged.}}$$

The CVI of the questionnaire for data collection was 0.81 which was higher than the advised 0.70 (Kent, 2001).

#### **3.8.2 Reliability**

The degree to which a research tool yields consistent data or outcomes after several trials is known as reliability (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed with the Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to compute the reliability results in a pilot study including ten participants. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha can be calculated using the following formula:

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{K-1} \left( 1 - \frac{\sum SDi^2}{\sum SDt^2} \right)$$

Where  $\alpha$  = coefficient alpha

$\sum SDi^2$  = sum variance of items

$\sum SDt^2$  = sum variance of scale

A value of .70 or higher indicated that the questionnaire was deemed appropriate for data collection (Amin, 2005).

### 3.9 Procedure of Data Collection

Upon acceptance of the research proposal and data collection tools, the researcher acquired an introduction letter from the School of Social Sciences at Uganda Christian University to facilitate participant access. The researcher next delivered the letter, together with a consent letter that was given to the respondents, to the management of St. John's High School-Mukono, requesting permission to conduct the study with their female students. Without using research assistance, the researcher physically and personally conducted the data collection exercise. To prevent consultation and hence skewed results, no questionnaire was left unanswered.

### 3.10 Data Analysis

**Quantitative data analysis:** Numbers were applied to responses in order to code the data. Data was entered into an SPSS editor, and the study made use of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). It was double-entered and modified. There was a guarantee that the first and second entries are identical. For each of the different responses, this produced a frequency code sheet. This was utilized in descriptive analysis in order to compute measures of central tendency such as mean, standard deviation, and percentages. The relationship between the predictor independent variables and the dependent variable was established by testing the hypothesis using inferential statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficient. To determine the strength

of the association, a simple regression or coefficient of determination analysis was conducted. The regression formula is as follows;  $Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + e$

**Qualitative data analysis:** This made advantage of the use of narrative analysis. A range of sources, including surveys, field observations, and respondent interviews, were employed in this technique. Using firsthand tales and experiences to address research challenges is the main focus. As a result, descriptive text was edited and reorganized into meaningful sentences. Stated differently, the purpose of content analysis is to look for themes, categories, and patterns in qualitative data. The recurrent themes that emerged in answer to each interview leading question were shown in the results, with selected participant quotes used as examples.

### 3.11 Ethical Considerations

The study of ethics involves identifying what is right and wrong through standards or laws of conduct. They facilitate the differentiation of appropriate from inappropriate behavior. The integrity of the research findings is significantly impacted by how these moral conundrums are handled.

Honesty objectivity respect for private property social responsibility and a host of other qualities. Voluntary participation and informed consent were taken into account. The participants were duly informed of the purpose of the survey and politely asked to participate in the research. The organization maintained sensitive data and respondents safety was ensured.

Cohen and Crabtree emphasize how important it is for participants to be given the option to refuse participating in the study and how the researcher must give them that option. This was discussed in the introduction section of the consent form and questionnaire. An additional problem was anonymity.

The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were ensured their identities were not sought and it was made clear that the data would only be used in aggregate form for research purposes. Following their involvement the respondents received appreciation for their ethical thinking. The researcher gave the respondents access to

the study's results because the organization that sponsored the investigation thought the results were valuable.

### **3.12 Limitations and delimitations of the study**

Some respondents were reluctant to divulge information as they had concerns about the intended use of the data. This was resolved by means of the university's excellent and notable reputation as a learning institution and by acquiring an introductory letter from the institution.

Funds that was required to support the research, such as paying for printing costs, encouraging responders, and even daily transportation to the organization for data collection, placed restrictions on the researcher. Nonetheless, the researcher generated family financial support through self-initiatives and tactics.

Some respondents took longer than expected to return the surveys, which impacted the researcher's intended analysis time. This was resolved by sending out more questionnaires than the intended number, which enabled her to fill in the blanks for any respondents who did not return the surveys.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the results of analysis that has been done to look at the specific objectives of the study and in relation to the reviewed literature. The study was carried out using questionnaires with girls/ female students in S.4, S.5 & S.6 from St Johns High School-Mukono and interviews with key informants who are the Head teacher, teachers, the senior woman and school counselor. The findings are presented with the help of tables for purposes of clarity and interpretation.

#### 4.1 Response rate

**Table 3: Response rate for questionnaires**

Response Rate	Sample Size	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Received	120	88.2%
Non Response	16	11.8%
Expected Response	136	100.0%

**Source:** *Primary data*

According to table 3 above a total of 133 (100%) respondents who are girls/ female students in S.4, S.5 & S.6 from St Johns High School-Mukono were expected to respond to the questionnaires, however, 120 (88.2%) responded to the questionnaires leaving out 16 (11.8%). The reason as to why the researcher was unable to collect from the one of the respondents was because there was limited time to collect data since the researcher had to beat the deadline of dissertation submission yet some of these respondents were delaying to give response.

## 4.2 Findings on demographic characteristics of respondents

The background information of respondents solicited data on the samples and this has been presented below categorized into; age, class and religion of the girls/ female students in S.4, S.5 & S.6 from St Johns High School-Mukono.

**Table 4: Descriptive statistics on the bio data of respondents**

Item	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	15-16 years	41	34.2
	17-18 years	58	48.3
	Above 18 years	21	17.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Class	Senior Four	37	30.8
	Senior Five	49	40.8
	Senior Six	34	28.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Religion	Protestant/ Anglican	42	35.0
	Catholic	31	25.8
	Muslim	20	16.7
	Pentecostal	27	22.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** *Primary data*

From table 4 above, the largest group of respondents is aged 17-18 years, accounting for 48.3%. This is followed by those aged 15-16 years at 34.2%, and those above 18 years make up 17.5%. This implies that the majority of students are in the conventional age range for their classes, with fewer students being older or younger than typical for their year groups.

The findings also revealed that senior five students represent the highest proportion at 40.8%, followed by senior four at 30.8%, and senior six at 28.4%. This distribution

indicates that Senior Five has the most students among the surveyed classes, suggesting it may be a pivotal year for the respondents.

Lastly, the findings revealed that majority of the female students represented by 35.0% are from the Protestant/Anglican religion, followed by 25.8% who are from the Catholic religion, followed by 22.5% who are from the Pentecostal religion, whereas 16.7% of the students are from the Muslim religion. This suggests that Protestant/Anglican students dominate the religious composition of the student body, reflecting the predominant religious affiliation among the respondents.

#### 4.3 Influence of family influence on career choice among girls at St. Johns high school

Table 5 summarizes respondents' responses on the influence of family influence on career choice among girls at St. Johns high school by using a Likert scale where SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), NS (Not Sure), D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree).

**Table 5: Influence of family influence on career choice among girls**

Statements	Extent of agreement & disagreement					Mean	Std. Dev.
	SA	A	NS	D	SD		
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)		
My parents encourage me to choose a career that aligns with traditional gender roles.	32 26.7%	55 45.8%	22 18.3%	11 9.2%	00	4.11	0.996
Family discussions about careers influence my choice of future profession.	33 27.5%	33 27.5%	21 17.5%	22 18.3%	11 9.2%	3.99	1.085
My career aspirations are shaped by the career paths of female relatives in my family.	44 36.7%	55 45.8%	00	21 17.5%	00	4.24	0.589

I feel pressured by my family to pursue a career that they consider appropriate for girls.	44 36.7%	33 27.5%	22 18.3%	21 17.5%	00	4.37	0.510
My parents' level of education affects my career choices.	44 36.7%	44 36.7%	00	32 26.7%	00	3.79	1.033
My family supports my interest in non-traditional careers for women.	33 27.5%	54 45.0%	22 18.3%	11 9.2%	00	4.05	0.933

**Source:** *Primary data, 2024*

Table 5 above shows analysis concerning the influence of family influence on career choice among girls at St. Johns high school using means and standard deviations which was gotten from use of a Likert scale which was represented as: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Not sure (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). The scores of Strongly Disagree and Disagree have been taken to present a variable which mattered to a Small Extent (equivalent to mean score of 0 to 2.4 on the continuous Likert scale). The score of Not sure has been taken to represent a variable that mattered to a moderate extent (equivalent to a mean score of 2.5 to 3.4 on the continuous Likert scale). The score of Strongly agree and Agree have been taken to represent a variable that mattered to a Large Extent (equivalent to a mean score of 3.5 to 5.0 and on a continuous Likert scale). A standard deviation of  $>1.5$  implies a significant difference concerning the influence of family influence on career choice among girls at St. Johns high school.

The findings presented in table 5 revealed that on average, the majority of respondents agreed that they feel pressured by their family to pursue a career that they consider appropriate for girls, with (Mean = 4.37; Std. Dev. = 0.510). This high level of agreement shows that the choices of careers are highly Family-oriented, which again pushes girls toward traditionally accepted roles rather than allowing them to explore diverse career options.

Secondly, it is established from the data that, on average, the respondents agreed with the statement that the career aspirations of female relatives in the family affect their career aspirations (Mean = 4.24; Std. Dev. = 0.589). This shows a strong influence of

the career choices of female relatives upon the career aspirations of the respondents, which furthers the effect of family legacy upon choice of career.

Results also showed that respondents agree to the statement that their parents encourage them to choose a career which is appropriate for their gender roles, with a mean of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 0.996. This means that traditional gender roles significantly influence the students' choices of career, streamlining their aspirations to convention.

The study again showed that, on average, the family does support the respondents' interest in non-traditional careers for women, as depicted by the mean and standard deviation of (Mean = 4.05; Std. Dev. = 0.933). This evidences that although traditional views may exist, there is substantial support within families for pursuing a non-traditional career path and, therefore, helping in diversifying career choices.

Results also indicated that, on average, the respondents perceived family discussions about careers influence their choice of future profession, as expressed by (Mean = 3.99; Std. Dev. = 1.085). This means that family discussions about careers significantly but relatively moderately influence the choice of careers by students.

Finally, it can be deduced from the data that the level of education of parents somehow has an influence in the decisions made about their careers, as indicated by the responses with a mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 1.033. It is clear that the educational background of the parents must have something to do with setting the perspective towards career options for their children's career decisions.

Overall, the findings indicate that an average of 70% agreed that family influence, including traditional gender roles, family discussions, and parents' educational background, plays an important role in shaping career choices among girls at St. John's High School. The findings of the study concerning the influence of family influence on career choice among girls at St. Johns high school were further determined using Pearson's correlation that was conducted as shown below;

**Table 6: Pearson's correlation on family influence and career choice among girls**

### Correlations

		Family influence	Career choice
Family influence	Pearson Correlation	1	.744**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Career choice	Pearson Correlation	.744**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** *Primary data*

The findings indicated in table above shows that there is a significant positive relationship between family influence and career choice among girls at St. Johns high school affirmed by ( $r = .744^{**}$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This implies that positive family influences where parents encourage and guide their children (girls) about their career choices greatly improves on the ability of the girls to make their right career choices.

#### 4.3.1 Influence of family expectations and values on career choices of female students

From the interviews conducted with the key informants who are the head teacher, teachers, the senior woman and school counselor, they were asked for their views on how they think family expectations and values influence the career choices of female students at St John's High School and their responses were as follows;

The key informants at St. John's High School pointed out that a lot of students follow the traditional beliefs of their families which frequently highlight particular professions as being better suited for girls. This factor is influential such that careers deemed to be related to traditional gender activities, such as teaching or nursing for instance, are

preferred to engineering or technological fields. Because of this, female students may be limited by this expectation and decide to abide by the approval of their families regarding the career field they will enter instead of pursuing their passions and aspirations. Another factor that affects the career that students decide to pursue is the values that have been inculcated to them by their families.

As the head teacher and other key informants mentioned, highly educated families would typically be more expectant of their daughters' academic and professional success. On the contrary, less valorized families would not necessarily provide support or facilitation in professional development. This difference in support may affect the confidence and ambitions of the students, which eventually can influence their career choice. Family discussions and advice on career options also often reflect these values either through the encouragement of more forward-looking career aspirations or through the reiteration of more conservative roles. Some of the respondents selected explained that;

"...Most of the female students are compelled by their family members to undertake courses which are considered to be appropriate for the female gender, like nursing and teaching, limiting exposure to other career fields....." Head teacher

"...Family discussions about career choices often reflect deeply held values, which broaden or narrow the options of career paths students contemplate based on the level of support they receive...." School Counselor

#### **4.4 Influence of occupational stereotypes on career choice among girls**

Table 7 summarizes respondents' responses on the influence of occupational stereotypes on career choice among girls at St Johns high school by using a Likert scale where SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), NS (Not Sure), D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree).

**Table 7: Influence of occupational stereotypes on career choice among girls**

Statements	Extent of agreement & disagreement					Mean	Std. Dev.
	SA	A	NS	D	SD		
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)		
I believe that certain careers are more suitable for girls than others.	54 45.0%	44 36.7%	00	22 18.3%	00	4.07	0.967
Gender stereotypes in society influence my choice of career.	60 50.0%	36 30%	00	24 20.0%	00	3.93	1.050
I feel that societal expectations about 'appropriate' careers for girls limit my career options.	33 27.5%	44 36.7%	00	22 18.3%	21 17.5%	3.98	1.187
I often hear comments that suggest some careers are not suitable for girls.	22 18.3%	54 45.0%	00	33 27.5%	11 9.2%	3.87	1.208
I think that stereotypes about gender roles in professions affect how I view potential careers.	44 36.7%	54 45.0%	00	22 18.3%	00	4.23	0.406
Occupational stereotypes make me hesitant to pursue careers traditionally dominated by men.	32 26.7%	55 45.8%	00	22 18.3%	11 9.2%	4.15	0.555

**Source:** Primary data, 2024

Table 7 above shows analysis concerning the influence of occupational stereotypes on career choice among girls at St Johns high school using means and standard deviations which was gotten from use of a Likert scale which was represented as: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Not sure (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). The scores of Strongly Disagree and Disagree have been taken to present a variable which mattered to a Small Extent (equivalent to mean score of 0 to 2.4 on the continuous Likert scale). The score of Not sure has been taken to represent a variable that mattered to a moderate extent (equivalent to a mean score of 2.5 to 3.4 on the continuous Likert scale). The score of Strongly agree and Agree have been taken to represent a variable that mattered to a

Large Extent (equivalent to a mean score of 3.5 to 5.0 and on a continuous Likert scale). A standard deviation of  $>1.5$  implies a significant difference concerning the influence of occupational stereotypes on career choice among girls at St Johns high school.

The study findings in Table 7 reveal that, on average, the majority of respondents agreed that certain careers are perceived as more suitable for girls than others, with (Mean = 4.07; Std. Dev. = 0.967). This high level of agreement indicates that occupational stereotypes are strong in shaping career intentions among girl students at St. John's High School. Beliefs that some careers inherently suit girls reinforce stereotypical gender roles and may limit the ambitions of students by narrowing their view of the range of occupation possibilities.

The findings also showed that on average, most of the respondents agreed that gender stereotypes in society greatly influence students' choices of careers, with (Mean = 3.93; Std. Dev. = 1.050). This shows that societal perception about gender roles has a great deal of influence on the way students make their career choices. The pressure to meet the expectations of society often restricts the kinds of careers girls would even consider, further entrenching stereotypical gender roles.

The study also established an overwhelming majority agreement by the respondents that society's expectations of what 'appropriate' careers are actually discourage career choice options available for girls, with a mean of 3.98 and a standard deviation of 1.187. This high level of agreement is indicative of the suppressive role played by societal expectations, which limit girls' aspirations and make them less likely to pursue careers outside traditional gender norms. It does this by discouraging girls from exploring various professional opportunities.

More so, the study pointed out that most of the respondents agreed, on average, that comments suggesting some careers are not suitable for girls are commonly heard with (Mean = 3.87; Std. Dev. = 1.208). This finding has pointed out that girls are often exposed to discouraging comments concerning the pursuit of careers that are dominated by men, which can lower their interest in making any form of career choices and self-confidence to pursue such fields.

The results also show that most of the respondents agreed on average that gender role stereotypes in professions affect students' perceptions of a future career, with a mean of 4.23 and a standard deviation of 0.406. The high mean score signifies that gender role stereotypes play an important role in shaping students' career perception, most of the time aligning their career aspiration to adjust to traditional gender roles.

Last but not least, the majority of the respondents agreed in good number that occupational stereotype makes students shying away from careers traditionally taken over by men, with (Mean = 4.15; Std. Dev. = 0.555). This indicates that stereotyping has a considerable effect on the career choices which students make and thus leads them to avoid certain fields considered unsuitable for women. This perpetuates gender-laden career choices.

Overall, these findings suggest that on average 74% of the respondents agreed that occupational stereotypes have a profound impact on the career choices of female students at St. John's High School. The pervasive nature of these stereotypes limits career options, reinforces traditional gender roles, and affects students' willingness to pursue non-traditional career paths. The findings of the study concerning the influence of occupational stereotypes on career choice among girls at St. Johns high school were further determined using Pearson's correlation that was conducted as shown below;

**Table 8: Pearson's correlation on occupational stereotypes and career choice among girls**

		Correlations	
		Occupational stereotypes	Career choice
Occupational stereotypes	Pearson Correlation	1	.639**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120

Career choice	Pearson Correlation	.639**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

The findings indicated in table above shows that there is a significant positive relationship between occupational stereotypes and career choice among girls at St. Johns High School affirmed by ( $r = .639^{**}$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This implies that positive occupational stereotypes where girls are told that all jobs in the market are suitable for all genders greatly improves the career choices among girls at St. Johns High School.

#### 4.4.1 Impact of occupational stereotypes on career choices of female students

From the interviews conducted with the key informants who are the head teacher, teachers, the senior woman and school counselor, they were asked for their views on how they think occupational stereotypes impact the career choices of female students at St. John’s High School and their responses were as follows;

The key informants at St. John's High School indicated that occupational stereotypes significantly influence the career choices of female students. The researcher found that a lot of students internalize gender norms from a young age which has an impact on their desired careers. Even when female students have other interests the widespread perception that certain careers like teaching or nursing are better suited for women often pushes them to pursue these careers. This effect is further enhanced with the lack of strong female role models in non-traditional fields of work, thereby further decreasing perceived accessibility and suitability for girls.

The informants also reported that the stereotypes and remarks against particular genders by peers, family, and society at large tend to limit the occupational choices available for a female student. It is disheartening for students to explore and decide on some occupational courses because they are led to believe that certain jobs are suitable

for men. Such social pressure supports traditional gender roles and discourages girls from pursuing jobs in STEM or other traditionally male-dominated areas. As a result, female students may end up following stereotypes rather than choosing a career that suits their own interests or skills.

The respondents also pointed out that the negative preconceptions of certain occupations affect students' confidence and goals, apart from impacting career decisions. Girls may feel less confident in pursuing such roles if exposed to stereotypes implying that the careers are out of their reach. This self-doubt will limit their choices in career options and prevent them from achieving their full potential because it is fueled by societal expectations and a lack of encouragement to counter traditional gender norms.

Some of the selected respondents reported that;

*“.....Many of our female students are drawn to careers that are traditionally considered 'feminine,' such as nursing or teaching, because these are the roles they see as more acceptable or achievable, largely due to societal stereotypes.....”* **Teacher**

*“.....The frequent remarks that some careers are 'not for girls' often discourage our students from pursuing those fields, reinforcing outdated gender roles and limiting their career aspirations.....”* **Senior woman**

*“.....Occupational stereotypes can undermine a girl's confidence in exploring careers traditionally dominated by men, leading them to stick with roles that align with these stereotypes rather than their personal interests.....”* **School Counselor**

#### **4.5 Influence of exposure to mass media on career choice among girls**

Table 9 summarizes respondents' responses on the influence of exposure to mass media on career choice among girls at St. Johns high school by using a Likert scale where SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), NS (Not Sure), D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree).

**Table 9: Influence of exposure to mass media on career choice among girls**

Statements	Extent of agreement & disagreement					Mean	Std. Dev.
	SA	A	NS	D	SD		
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)		
Television programs influence my perception of suitable careers for girls.	32 26.7%	55 45.8%	00	22 18.3%	11 9.2%	4.54	0.352
Social media content shapes my ideas about career possibilities.	33 27.5%	33 27.5%	21 17.5%	22 18.3%	11 9.2%	4.33	0.525
Advertisements and media portrayals of women affect my career aspirations.	44 36.7%	55 45.8%	00	21 17.5%	00	4.25	0.601
I am inspired by female role models in the media when choosing a career.	44 36.7%	33 27.5%	00	22 18.3%	21 17.5%	4.46	0.475
I often consider careers that are popularized by mass media.	44 36.7%	44 36.7%	00	32 26.7%	00	4.38	0.496
The portrayal of women in the media influences my interest in specific careers.	33 27.5%	54 45.0%	00	22 18.3%	11 9.2%	4.22	0.607

**Source:** *Primary data, 2024*

Table 9 above shows analysis concerning the influence of exposure to mass media on career choice among girls at St. Johns high school using means and standard deviations which was gotten from use of a Likert scale which was represented as: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Not sure (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). The scores of Strongly Disagree and Disagree have been taken to present a variable which mattered to a Small Extent (equivalent to mean score of 0 to 2.4 on the continuous Likert scale). The score of Not sure has been taken to represent a variable that mattered to a moderate extent (equivalent to a mean score of 2.5 to 3.4 on the continuous Likert scale). The score of Strongly agree and Agree have been taken to represent a variable that mattered to a Large Extent (equivalent to a mean score of 3.5 to 5.0 and on a continuous Likert scale). A standard deviation of >1.5 implies a significant difference concerning the influence of exposure to mass media on career choice among girls at St. Johns high school.

The findings presented in Table 9 reveal that, on average, the majority of respondents strongly agreed that television programs influence their perception of suitable careers for girls, with (Mean = 4.54; Std. Dev. = 0.352). This high level of agreement suggests that television plays a significant role in shaping the career aspirations of female students.

The findings also revealed that on average, most of the respondents agreed that social media content shapes their ideas about career possibilities, as shown by (Mean = 4.33; Std. Dev. = 0.525). This finding highlights the substantial influence of social media on career choices, where platforms provide a wealth of information, role models, and trends that can inspire or limit students' career aspirations based on the content they engage with.

Furthermore, the findings established that on average, the respondents agreed that advertisements and media portrayals of women affect career aspirations, represented by (Mean = 4.25; Std. Dev. = 0.601). This suggests that how women are depicted in media advertisements whether in leadership roles, traditional roles, or other professions can significantly influence how female students envision their own career paths.

More so, the findings indicated that on average, a big number of respondents agreed that they are inspired by female role models in the media when choosing a career, with (Mean = 4.46; Std. Dev. = 0.475). This high level of agreement indicates that seeing successful women in various fields on media platforms can serve as a strong motivator for students to pursue similar career goals and aspire to high achievements.

In addition, the study found that on average, majority of the respondents agreed that they often consider careers that are popularized by mass media, reflected in (Mean = 4.38; Std. Dev. = 0.496). This suggests that careers frequently highlighted in media are likely to be more appealing or seem more attainable to students, thus influencing their career choices.

Lastly, the study revealed that on average, the respondents agreed that the portrayal of women in the media influences interest in specific careers, with (Mean = 4.22; Std. Dev. = 0.607). This implies that the way women are represented in various professions across media channels can affect students' interest and enthusiasm for those careers, either by reinforcing existing interests or introducing new possibilities.

Overall, these findings suggest that on average 70% of the respondents agreed that exposure to mass media plays a significant role in shaping the career choices of girls at St. John's High School. Media content, including television, social media, advertisements, and role models, influences perceptions, aspirations, and interests in various professions. The findings of the study concerning the influence of exposure to mass media on career choice among girls at St. Johns H/S were further determined using Pearson's correlation that was conducted as shown below;

**Table 10: Pearson's correlation on exposure to mass media and career choice among girls**

		Exposure to mass media	Career choice
Exposure to mass media	Pearson Correlation	1	.711**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Career choice	Pearson Correlation	.711**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

The findings indicated in table above shows that there is a significant positive relationship between exposure to mass media and career choice among girls at St. Johns High School affirmed by ( $r = .711^{**}$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This implies that positive exposure to mass media where girls are able to listen and watch their role models give inspirational speeches and listening and watching educative programs on media greatly improves the career choices among girls at St. Johns High School.

#### **4.5.1 Impact of mass media on career choices of female students**

From the interviews conducted with the key informants who are the head teacher, teachers, the senior woman and school counselor, they were asked for their views on how they perceive the impact of mass media on the career choices of female students at St John's High School and their responses were as follows;

The key informants at St. John's High School perceive that mass media has a significant and multifaceted impact on the career choices of female students. It is observed that social media platforms and television shows are important sources of information and inspiration for career advancement. These media outlets usually feature a variety of careers including ones that have historically been held by men which can help female students see the world in new ways. Students who are exposed to a wide range of career options through media are able to see themselves in roles that they may not have otherwise considered. The media is perceived as having a particularly strong influence because it challenges conventional gender roles and stereotypes by normalizing a variety of professions and showcasing successful women.

Additionally the informants point out that by portraying particular careers as more suited for men or women media portrayals can occasionally reinforce gender stereotypes. For instance media portrayals that primarily feature men in leadership roles or women in nurturing roles can have a subtle effect on students' perceptions of the kinds of jobs that would be best for them. Despite this the overall effect is viewed as favorable because the media offers forums for female role models to discuss their accomplishments and professional trajectories.

These representations can encourage female students to pursue their own career goals by giving them real-world examples of accomplished women in a variety of fields. Nonetheless it is acknowledged that exaggerated or implausible depictions in the media could impose unreachable benchmarks or induce students to follow specific industry trends. According to the informants although the media can be an effective source of inspiration and career guidance it is crucial that students assess the facts and representations they come across with a critical eye. Some of the selected respondents reported that;

*“.....Television and social media have a profound impact on our students’ career aspirations. They frequently come to school excited about new career ideas they’ve seen in media, which opens up a range of possibilities for them.....”* **Head teacher**

*“.....Female role models in the media are incredibly influential. When students see women succeeding in diverse fields, it helps them believe that they too can pursue those careers, which is a positive development.....”* **Teacher**

*“.....While media can inspire students, it sometimes reinforces outdated gender stereotypes. It’s crucial for us as educators to help students critically assess these portrayals and understand that many professions are accessible regardless of gender.....”* **School Counselor**

#### **4.6 Regression analysis on gender stereotyping and career choices among girls**

The overall model made a significant contribution, accounting for 62.2% of the variability in business performance (Total  $\Delta R^2 = .622$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Table 11 below importantly shows the R-Square ( $R^2$ ) and R-Square Change ( $\Delta R^2$ ) for each model, showing its contribution to the overall model. These values are interpreted alongside the ANOVA Table 12 providing the F values for each model together with the levels of significance.

**Table 11: Model Summary results**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.795 <sup>a</sup>	.631	.622	.20945
<b>a. Predictors:</b> (Constant), Family influence, Occupational stereotypes, Exposure to mass media				
<b>b. Dependent Variable:</b> Career choices among girls in St. John's High School				

Source: *Primary data*

According to the results in the table 11, it is revealed that the combined effect of the predictor variables of gender stereotyping (family influence, occupational stereotypes, and exposure to mass media) explains 63.1% of the variations in career choices among girls in St. John's High School. This implies that the model is satisfactory as much of the variation is accounted for by the dependent variables identified in the model.

**Table 12: Goodness of Fit of Regression (ANOVA<sup>a</sup>)**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	11.947	3	2.987	68.081	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	6.975	116	.044		
Total	18.922	119			
<b>a. Dependent Variable:</b> Career choices among girls in St. John's High School					
<b>b. Predictors:</b> (Constant), Family influence, Occupational stereotypes, Exposure to mass media					

Source: *Primary data*

As shown in table 12 above, it is revealed that the model fit tested in the table 11 (model summary) is significant at 99% confidence level ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). This implies that all the three predictor variables of gender stereotyping (family influence, occupational stereotypes, and exposure to mass media) were statistically significant in explaining changes in career choices among girls in St. John's High School as demonstrated by a p value of 0.000 which is less than the acceptance critical value of 0.05. This is further proved by the regression coefficients table 13 below;

**Table 13: Regression Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig. (p-value)
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.544	.269		2.025	.045
Family influence	.307	.035	.412	8.869	.000
Occupational stereotypes	.488	.059	.322	8.264	.000
Exposure to mass media	.120	.047	.225	2.423	.000

Source: *Primary data*

Table 13 above displays the regression coefficients of the independent variables. The results show that gender stereotyping (family influence, occupational stereotypes, and exposure to mass media) affect career choices among girls in St. John’s High School positively and significantly. Regression results indicate that family influence and career choices among girls in St. John’s High School had a positively and significant relationship (beta= .412,  $p < 0.05$ ). The findings imply that as family influence increases, career choices among girls in St. John’s High School increases. Specifically, for every unit increase in family influence, there is a corresponding increase in career choices among girls by 0.512 units.

In addition, results indicate that occupational stereotypes and career choices among girls in St. John’s High School had a positively and significant relationship (beta= .322,  $p < 0.05$ ). The findings imply that with an increase in the level of occupational stereotypes, there is a consequent increase in career choices among girls at St. John’s High School. More specifically, a unit increase in occupational stereotypes will result in a 0.322-unit increase in the career choices among girls.

Lastly, results indicate that exposure to mass media and career choices among girls in St. John’s High School are positively and significantly related, beta= .225,  $p < 0.05$ . This finding implies that as exposure to mass media increase, the career choices among girls in St. John’s High school also increases. More precisely, for every unit increase in

exposure to mass media, there is a corresponding increase in career choices among girls by 0.225 units.

From the above results, the researcher therefore extracts the regression equation (line of best fit) Y on X as shown below;

The researcher adopted the following regression equation:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where; Y = Career choices among girls in St. John's High School,

$\beta$  = Beta

$\beta_0$  = Constant

$x_1$  = Family influence

$x_2$  = Occupational stereotypes

$x_3$  = Exposure to mass media

$\varepsilon$  = The standard error

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \varepsilon$$

**By substituting from the above equation**

$$Y = .544 + .412x_1 + .322x_2 + .225x_3 + .261$$

These results imply that if 0.544 is held constant, a unit consideration for family influence will result in a 0.412 increase in career choices among girls in St. John's High School, furthermore it was established by the study that a unit consideration of occupational stereotypes will increase career choices among girls in St. John's High School by 0.322, and finally a unit consideration of exposure to mass media will increase career choices among girls in St. John's High School by 0.225.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses all findings reported in chapter four according to the research questions of the study as shown below.

#### 5.1 The influence of family influence on career choice among girls at St. Johns high school

The results showed that there was high pressure to conform to gender norms among the respondents, with families often promoting those careers perceived to be associated with them. This agrees with Ampaire et al., 2021, who established that gender stereotyping in the family has a very strong influence on the individual's aspirations to join the workforce and thus allow for the perpetuation of traditional career roles at the expense of non-traditional career exposures. Gendered expectations in the choice of careers are evident from the fact that family expectations have been very influential in the choice of traditional careers.

The findings also showed that students' goals are influenced by professional choices made by their female relatives, reflecting family traditions. To this regard, this finding corroborates the gender schema theory by Bem (2019) since such a theory postulates that one's career preference is acquired from the gender role learned within the family and society. Students are often influenced by the career choices that their relatives make and enjoy; such influences point out how family experiences and expectations enhance the shaping of decisions involving careers. This influence is termed intergenerational transmission of career preferences.

It has also been established that parents' educational backgrounds affect students' perceptions about careers, as those families that stress more on education provide more encouragement and guidance. This supports Cherrys's Social Learning Theory in 2022, where the perceptions developed by parents about education and the workforce relate

significantly to desires for careers of their children. The more the understanding of the significance of education among the families, the more guidance and support they will provide in times to come. This, in turn, will increase the career options and scope for the students. Educated parents can provide better support for children to pursue options for careers other than traditional occupations.

These findings cumulatively reveal how family expectations and values prevail in influencing girls' and women's career choices. This affirmation is in agreement with the argument by Farago et al. (2021), who noted that typically cultural and family background shapes career choices to often maintain gender stereotypes and traditional careers. While families are very supportive and guiding, their influence also perpetuates gender norms, showing the need for increased awareness and action in helping students explore a variety of options.

## **5.2 The influence of occupational stereotypes on career choice among girls at St Johns high school**

The study's findings indicated that, among female students at St. John's High School, respondents generally agreed that there are certain professions which are believed to be better suited for girls, hence limiting options for them in employment and perpetuating traditional gender norms. These findings agree with Ampaire et al. (2021), who established that in Uganda, there is always socialization of students' perceptions towards careers by gender stereotypes to traditionally feminine roles. Further, Farago et al. (2021) have demonstrated how Ugandan teenagers' perceptions of gendered job roles influence career decisions; it is always hard for them to perceive themselves in non-traditional fields such as technology and engineering. The presence of gendered career pathways inscribes the professional choices for female students through entrenched cultural stereotypes emanating from the educational system.

Furthermore, the research results showed that gender-oriented comments and societal expectations even further limit women students in achieving their career aspirations. This confirms the observations of Muweesi et al., who argue that gender biases are often perpetuated through instructional approaches and learning materials adopted

within Ugandan schools, hence limiting the scope of career opportunities available to students. As Tabassum and Nayak explain, the cultural norms that indicate which jobs suit women best reinforce such gender stereotypes. Such conventions discourage aspiration among girls toward careers and entrench segregation of occupation by making an environment uncondusive to pursuit by girls of high-status, male-dominated professions.

Moreover, the results of the research showed that gender stereotypes not only narrow the field taken by female students but also dent their motivation and self-esteem to pursue jobs typically dominated by men. This output was supported Neber (2018) in demonstrating how gender schema theory explains how gender role messages in society are taken in, processed and interpreted to affect people's beliefs about self and one's capabilities. These gender norms are then internalized by students, influencing how they decide on their choice of career. In addition, preconceived notions about what constitutes a gender-appropriate career might be influential in the decisions made by women in pursuing prestigious careers in traditionally male-dominated fields like leadership or STEM. This therefore creates a self-fulfilling prophecy, in which female students think that they have less chance of succeeding in traditionally male-held fields.

Lastly, the conclusions of the study revealed that stereotypes affect career choices as well as decrease female students openness to considering a number of career options. This agrees with Priyashantha et al. s findings. (2023) who underline that gender stereotypes affect career outcomes over the long term especially for women. Girls who are exposed to these constrictive stereotypes are less likely to question the status quo which furthers the underrepresentation of women in some professions. Bem (2019) posits that gender schema theory which emphasizes how children are conditioned from an early age to adhere to traditional gender norms ultimately limits their professional aspirations. Therefore occupational stereotypes have an effect on students' confidence and willingness to consider a wider range of professional opportunities in addition to influencing their career preferences.

### **5.3 The influence of exposure to mass media on career choice among girls at St Johns high school**

The study's findings showed that female students at St. John's High School. Students views of appropriate careers and aspirations are shaped by television show social media and media representations. This is consistent with literature by Ampaire et al. (2021) who discovered that media exposure solidifies knowledge of gender roles and affects professional choices. As per Tam et al. (2020), stereotypes that link particular careers to particular genders media has the power to either expand or constrict career horizons. Because of this female students might be inspired to pursue vocations that are portrayed favorably in the media but they might also steer clear of fields that are typically associated with men.

The results also imply that media role models encourage female students to think about pursuing careers in the media especially through commercials and well-liked television programs. This observation aligns with Cherrys (2022) discussion of the role models in the media and their impact on career motivation based on social learning theory. Individuals especially young people are said to imitate the attitudes and behaviors they see in the media according to social learning theory. Furthermore Farago et al. (2021) found that media portrayals of jobs have a significant impact on Ugandan youth's conception of job roles which in turn shapes their knowledge of gender stereotypes and career preferences. The media, therefore, is a powerful tool in shaping their career choices by exposing them to occupations that are not traditional and which they might have otherwise not been aware of.

This study establishes that, while the media expand the pool of possible careers, they concurrently promote archaic gender stereotypes. These results relate to literature by Priyashantha et al. (2023), who argued that media portrayals of careers often present jobs in a way which suggests particular fields of employment are fitting for men, while others are fitting for women. This also agrees with Tabassum and Nayak (2021), who discussed how stereotyping in media reinforces career development in women. The perpetuation of workforce gender inequality arises when these portrayals are

internalized into the student's psyche and opt to be associated with a given career, which society deems fit for them rather than based on interest or capability.

It finally outlines how necessary it is to critically judge the ways in which media representations are presented so as not to support gender stereotypes and inflated career expectations. This is related to the work of Jaoul-Grammare (2024), who identified that stereotypes might have the effect of making girls moderate their aspirations and condition their choice of career. As explained by Bem, gender schema theory describes how one internalizes media messages regarding what is expected of their gender and subsequently modifies aspirations for careers. Educators and legislators would thereby help to counteract these effects through the promotion of media literacy by equipping students with the ability to critically evaluate media material and make more informed decisions regarding their careers.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter includes the summary of all the findings reported in chapter four according to questions of the study, draws conclusions, suggests recommendations and also proposes some areas for further study.

#### 6.1 Summary of findings

The findings revealed that family influence plays a significant role in shaping the career choices of female students at St. John's High School. The respondents feel the pressure to adhere to traditional gender roles, as many feel their families actually encourage them toward careers typical for a girl. The career paths of girls and women within the family also affect the students' aspirations in terms of reinforcing family legacies. However, while some support is provided to students in their pursuit of non-traditional careers, the dominant effect of traditional views and family conversations on career choices is a factor that largely affects the career choices that students make. In addition, parents' educational background is an influential factor in setting students' perceptions about their career paths, as those families that place an emphasis on the importance of education encourage and offer advice to students more than others, thus having an impact on students' career paths. In essence, these findings depict clearly the strong influence of family expectations and values on female students in making their choice of career path.

It also meant that there exist stereotypes of occupations, which play a major role in the career choices by girl students attending St. John's High School. Strongly agreed points indicated that stereotypical views of gender roles keep some occupations as more fitting for girls and thus become influential in the limitation of options. Additionally, these become compulsions from social expectations and, as such, further reduce their aspirations about careers since they will always be out of reach from girls. Because of the prevalence of stereotypical views on gender roles in professions,

students begin to develop perceptions of potential careers, thus being discouraged from choosing those that are dominated by males. The influence brought about by these stereotypes diminishes the extent of career choices while making them a little less confident and willing to explore other career paths. Generally, these stereotypes play a vital role in developing the career aspirations of female students.

Last but not least, mass media exposure was the most influential factor in female students' career choices in St. John's High School. Media programs on television, social media, and representation of specific careers in media reorganize students' thinking of what types of careers can be pursued and shape aspirations about the type of profession students want to enter. The response strongly agreed that the motivation and opening up of career options due to media content, which includes advertising and role models, make one more interested in the pursuit of careers featured in media. However, media portrayal can also prop traditional gender stereotypes by portraying certain careers as more suitable for one gender, which might insidiously dictate the career choice of students. Overall, though mass media is an imminent source for both career inspiration and information, it needs critical judgment at the same time to avoid unrealistic expectations that may further reinforce gender stereotypes.

## **6.2 Conclusions**

In conclusion, the findings indicate that family influence, occupational stereotypes, and mass media are the strong factors that shape the career choices of female students in St. John's High School. Family expectations, especially about traditional gender roles, are a great influence on the guidance of students toward careers that are acceptable to societal traditions, whereas parental educational background will provide support to a varying extent. Occupational stereotypes further confine students' aspirations for their future careers as a means of reinforcing societal expectations of gender-appropriate roles. On the other hand, mass media acts both as a booster and a delimitter in widening career prospects for all while continuously breeding gender bias. Combined, these give a glimpse into the complex interaction of familial and societal influences through media in the choice of career options of female students..

### 6.3 Recommendations

These are some of the recommendations which were found necessary in light of the study findings, in regard to the effect of gender stereotyping on career choice among girls in secondary schools in Uganda, with particular focus on St. John's High School Mukono.

First and foremost, the study recommends for the need to have the family ensure that there is open discussion on different career opportunities available for girls, free from traditional gender roles. The study advises parents or guardians to encourage and advise female students on the availability of career options in both traditional and non-traditional careers. Schools and community programs should make career counseling sessions involving parents, educating them on how very important it is to take a break from the gendered career expectations and encourage daughters to get involved in careers of their interests and capabilities.

Secondly, the study recommends that schools challenge occupational stereotypes positively by incorporating into the curriculum gender-sensitive career guidance programs. Such programs should help girls consider a wider range of career opportunities by exposing them to successful women from a variety of fields, especially those with male-dominated careers. Teachers should equally be trained not to subconsciously perpetuate gender stereotypes in teaching practices or when offering career guidance to their students. In that respect, the schools will have opened a venue for girls to pursue any career without cultural constraint.

Thirdly, the study recommends the need for critical media literacy programs at the secondary school level that would help the female students to think more critically and analyze the way the media portray gender roles and careers. The programs should target training the students on how the media content can both inspire and mislead students in regards to suitable career paths. Schools can aid in making this present gender stereotype in the media known and questioned by enhancing the critical thinking skills of the students so that students can choose professions based on interest and capability rather than media-driven gender norms.

#### **6.4 Areas for further research**

Since this study tries to establish the impact that gender stereotyping has on career choice among girl child students in Ugandan secondary schools, with St. John's High School Mukono forming the focus of interest, the study recommends that other research similar to this one regarding areas of interest on this subject be continued and encompass the following:

Further studies are needed to establish how, in the long run, gender stereotyping affects career development among females who moved from high school into higher education and the workplace in Uganda.

Additionally, further studies should also investigate the effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing gender stereotypes in schools, such as mentorship programs or gender-sensitive curricula, and their influence on students' career aspirations.

Finally, further studies should focus on examining the role of male students in perpetuating or challenging gender stereotypes in mixed-gender environments would also provide a more comprehensive understanding of how stereotypes are reinforced or dismantled within the school system.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Questionnaire

For selected girls/ female students in S.4, S.5 & S.6 from St Johns High School-  
Mukono

Dear sir/madam

I am Nambi Ivy Stacy a bachelor's student of Governance and International Relations from Uganda Christian University-Mukono conducting a research on "the effect of gender stereotyping on career choices among girls in secondary schools in Uganda: a case of St John's High School Mukono". You have been selected to participate in this study because the contribution you make to your organization is central to the kind of information required. The information you provide is solely for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please kindly spare some few minutes to respond to the following questions.

#### Section A. Bio Data

Please tick the most appropriate answer

##### 1. Age

a) 15-16 years

b) 17-18 year

c) Above 18 year

##### 2. Class

a) Senior Four

b) Senior Five

c) Senior Six

##### 3. Religion

a) Catholic

b) Anglican

c) Muslim

d) Pentecostal

e) Others specify.....

**Section A: Gender Stereotyping**

**Note:** *In this subsequent section, use the scale provided to tick in the box of the relevant answer that describes your opinion. Use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement with each statement:*

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Not sure

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

No.	Statements	5 Strongly agree	4 Agree	3 Not sure	2 Disagree	1 Strongly
No.	Family influence	5	4	3	2	1
1	My parents encourage me to choose a career that aligns with traditional gender roles.					
2	Family discussions about careers influence my choice of future profession.					
3	My career aspirations are shaped by the career paths of female relatives in my family.					
4	I feel pressured by my family to pursue a career that they consider appropriate for girls.					
5	My parents' level of education affects my career choices.					
6	My family supports my interest in non-traditional careers for women.					

No.	Occupational stereotypes	5	4	3	2	1
1	I believe that certain careers are more suitable for girls than others.					
2	Gender stereotypes in society influence my choice of career.					
3	I feel that societal expectations about 'appropriate' careers for girls limit my career options.					
4	I often hear comments that suggest some careers are not suitable for girls.					
5	I think that stereotypes about gender roles in professions affect how I view potential careers.					
6	Occupational stereotypes make me hesitant to pursue careers traditionally dominated by men.					
No.	Exposure to mass media	5	4	3	2	1
1	Television programs influence my perception of suitable careers for girls.					
2	Social media content shapes my ideas about career possibilities.					
3	Advertisements and media portrayals of women affect my career aspirations.					
4	I am inspired by female role models in the media when choosing a career.					
5	I often consider careers that are popularized by mass media.					
6	The portrayal of women in the media influences my interest in specific careers.					

## Section B: Career choices among girls in secondary schools in Uganda

**Note:** *In this subsequent section, use the scale provided to tick in the box of the relevant answer that describes your opinion. Use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement with each statement:*

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Not sure

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

No.	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly
No.	Career choices among girls in secondary schools	5	4	3	2	1
1	I feel confident in the career path I have chosen.					
2	My career choice reflects my personal interests and passions.					
3	I believe that my chosen career will be fulfilling and rewarding.					
4	My career choice aligns with my long-term life goals.					
5	I have considered multiple career options before making my decision.					
6	My career choice is influenced by the opportunities I believe are available to women.					

**Thank you for your cooperation**

## Appendix 2: Interview Guide

### For Key Informants (Head teacher, teachers, the senior woman and school counselor)

Dear sir/madam

I am Nambi Ivy Stacy a bachelor's student of Governance and International Relations from Uganda Christian University-Mukono conducting a research on "the effect of gender stereotyping on career choices among girls in secondary schools in Uganda: a case of St John's High School Mukono". You have been selected to participate in this study because the contribution you make to your organization is central to the kind of information required. The information you provide is solely for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please kindly spare some few minutes to respond to the following questions.

#### Section A: Introductions

1. Tell me about yourself (*age and level of education*)
2. What position do you hold in St John's High School Mukono?
3. How long have you worked with St John's High School Mukono?

#### Section B: Questions on the Objectives

4. How do you think family expectations and values influence the career choices of female students at St John's High School?
5. In your experience, how much impact does parental guidance have on the students' decisions about their future careers?
6. How do you think occupational stereotypes impact the career choices of female students at St. John's High School?
7. What evidence have you observed regarding the influence of gender stereotypes on the types of careers female students are interested in?
8. How do you perceive the impact of mass media on the career choices of female students at St John's High School?
9. In what ways do you think media portrayals of women influence the career decisions of girls in this school?

**Thank you for your cooperation**



# UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR RESEARCH

This is to introduce to you **NAMBI Ivy Stacy** Registration number **J22B56/013**, a student of Uganda Christian University, pursuing Bachelor's degree in Governance and International Relations. She is expected to carry out research in the final year under the guidance of a university supervisor in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the above mentioned award.

Topic: "The Effect of Gender Stereotyping on Career Choices among Girls in Secondary Schools in Uganda: A Case of St. John's High School Mukono."

The purpose of this communication is to request your office to allow her collect data from your organization. Any assistance rendered to her will be highly appreciated.



Doreen Kukugiza  
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