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## **Influence Of Socio-Cultural Factors On Girls' Educational And Career Aspirations In Public Secondary Schools In Samburu County, Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

Under-representation of women in the education, formal employment and administrative positions is very conspicuous. The gender disparities are prominently exhibited among communities adhering to traditional cultural values, beliefs, customs, practices and harboring negative attitudes and perceptions among women and girls. These cultural attributes are likely to negatively influence the girls' career aspirations. This study therefore sought to determine the influence of social and cultural attributes on girls' educational and career aspirations in public secondary schools in Samburu County which is predominantly occupied by nomadic communities. Equal opportunities theory was adopted. A descriptive survey was employed. Data was collected from a sample of 132 girls using a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages were used to analyze and present the data. The following were the findings and conclusions: girls exhibited high educational and career aspirations; direct relationships existed between girls' higher educational and career aspirations and high socio-economic status, liberated attitudinal ideology, knowledge of role models, urban and rural-urban residence. Sex-role ideology, socio-economic status, role models, and residential location influenced the girls educational and career aspirations more than their religious affiliation. The following recommendations were made: researchers and educationists should investigate the subterranean factors that suppress girls' and career aspirations and recommend remedial measures to reduce or eradicate the negative influence of these factors; affirmative policies should be formulated aimed at creating a level playing ground for the disadvantaged groups of the society especially the girl child; and girls should emancipate themselves from the andro-centrally biased socio-cultural web and challenge themselves by pursuing high status professional careers since given favorable educational and training opportunities and conditions, they can achieve equally better as their male counterparts.

**Key Words:** Socio-cultural factors, androcentric bias, male hegemony, role model, rural-urban fringe, socio-economic status, religion.

### **I. Introduction**

#### **Background of the Study**

Education is a social, economic, cultural, civil & political right. The Kenyan government spends a large portion of its resources on education. Despite this effort, however, participation and retention of girls in education is low (Ochieng, 2015). In Africa, Kenya is one of the

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countries where school enrolment for girls at primary school level is 50% of the total enrolment but this decreases to below 40% as they ascend the academic ladder to secondary school level and further below 30% in tertiary level (Ochieng, 2015). This declining enrolment and retention levels of girls as they ascend the academic ladder is worrying considering that these are the career choice and training points respectively. The Kenya government notes that education is broadly esteemed over the world as a social factor in monetary, political and social improvement of any nation (Republic of Kenya, 2012). The Constitution of Kenya (2010) and different demonstrations of parliament distinguish education as a crucial human right and perceive it as basic to people accomplishing self-satisfaction and national improvement which is envisioned in vision 2030 (Constitution of Kenya, 2010; Kenya Vision 2030, 2007). The realization of the social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights may not be optimized in view of the gender disparities in education and employment (Ochieng, 2015; Mbugua, 2016).

Gender disparities continue to persist in certain areas and there are persistent constraints that continue to hinder girls from completing education at all levels (Tawanda & Gordon, 2004). This implies that concerted efforts should be put in place to help in promoting girls' education to enhance gender parity (Ochieng, 2015). According to Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005, in spite of the introduction of free primary education by the government, regional and gender disparities exist in Kenya. However, the greatest challenge remains in bridging the gap between male and female (Rok, 2005; Duba, 2014) in education and employment. Moreover, in Africa there are major differences in attainment and participation in education, relative to specific countries, regions and different disciplines (Mbugua, 2016). Mugenda (2010) confirmed that women are also seriously under-represented in rural areas and females from low income groups and arid and semi-arid lands (ASALS) are even less represented when compared to their urban and middle-class peers at different levels of education. This under-representation is against UNESCO'S (2009) assertion and declaration that education is universal and should embrace the idea of equality of education opportunity without regard to race, sex, economic, social or any other distinction (Peterson, 2010 in Duba, 2014). This under-representation of girls in education at all levels is also reflected in formal employment. In Kenya for instance, only about a third of Kenyans in the formal employment are women highlighting the continued underrepresentation in the job market. Women in wage employment in wholesale sector, for instance, stand at 54000 as compared to 186000 men (<http://www.businessdailyafrica.com>).

Various factors have contributed to the low participation and retention of girls in school. According to Taban (2010), the bottlenecks that impede girls' academic progress are regressive

practices which demean women in social life, poor economic background, and low family income placing priority in boys in total disregard of their female counterparts. In addition, socio-cultural factors and practices have contributed negatively towards girls', education and employment in Kenya. This range from not putting value to girls' education, early marriages and initiation rites (Ochieng, 2015). In relation to this, it has been reported that socio-cultural norms and practices such as value attached to bride wealth make parents to marry off their daughters before maturity. In many communities in Kenya, girls are seen as sources of wealth in the custom of charging fines for adultery and pregnancies to unmarried girls denying them opportunities for education (Onyango, 2003). Girls are also withdrawn from schooling during initiation period and betrothal ceremonies and marriage-oriented socialization (Abagi, 2001; United Nations, 2004).

In Kenya, underrepresentation of the female in the management and leadership positions also has had adverse effects on government processes. The girl child has also trailed behind from lack of role models (RoK, 2007). A number of factors contribute to restricting women to access formal employment. These include traditional roles, occupational segregation by gender, lack of access to technology, productive assets and credit among others (<http://editorialexpress.com>). According to Nyanchoka (2013), women participation in formal businesses was still influenced by socio-cultural factors, legal environment, sources of finance and level of networking. Mbugua (2016) has identified the factors that limit women from acquiring leadership and administrative positions. These include inadequate support and poor networking, presumed incompetence, gender stereotypes and lack of support services to advance professionally. The nomadic communities believe that formal schooling leads to alienation from their lifestyle and threatens their basic survival. It is because of this embedded fear that girls are kept out of school. Schooling has deskilled this female population and introduced aspirations that are not congruent to pastoral life (Duba, 2014). These are deep-rooted attitudes towards education and perceptions of education among the nomadic communities that are likely to influence girls' educational and career aspirations. This study therefore sought to establish the factors that influenced girls' educational and career aspirations in Samburu County of Kenya.

### **Literature Review: State of Art**

#### **Socio-Economic Status and Girls' Educational and Career Aspirations**

The influence of socio-economic status on career aspirations has been documented (Marini, 1978; Glaze, 1979; Baker, 1985). Baker (1985) found that girls in Canada who chose traditional “female” careers tended to come from poorer and larger families than those who chose professional work. In addition, daughters of less educated mothers modeled a work role of their mothers, whereas daughters of less educated non-working mothers were raised in a very convectional mould both in terms of value and autonomy. In addition, influential siblings are thought to play a key role in career development of adolescents from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Ali, McWhirter & Chronister, 2005). Mung'ara (2012) found that socio-economic and cultural practices to some extent had a negative influence on girls' career aspirations. Mwara (2016) also found out that parental educational level and occupation, which are significant indicators of socio-economic status, influenced career choices of students. This study sought to establish if socio-economic status influenced girls' career aspirations in Samburu County which is predominantly rural and arid and occupied by nomadic pastoralists whose livelihoods are frequently impoverished by drought.

According to Idowu & Dere (1983), persons of higher socio-economic class provide useful information about professional occupations. However, commercial occupations are chosen by students of low socio-economic status who rarely expect university education (Machyo, 1995). Khallad (2006) also found that socio-economic status of the family is among the factors that influence career aspirations. According to Brown and Barbosa (2001), career aspirations of young females who came from low income families were confined to experiences of their relatives and friends. This study sought to establish if socio-economic status influenced educational and career aspirations of girls in Samburu County?

#### **Sex-role Ideology and Girls' Educational and Career Aspirations**

Teachers have been socialized in a society where gender discrimination is prevalent and culturally accepted (Gachukia, 1994). This socialization encourages boys and girls to accept culturally “male and female” roles respectively. In this context, boys become husbands, engineers, pilots, professors and doctors while girls become wives, nurses, copy typist and receptionists (Machyo, 1995). It has been noted that even when girls pursue science, they specialize in “domestic” courses such as home science (Obura, 1994). A research by Mendez

& Crawford (2002) revealed that girls showed greater gender role flexibility in their career aspirations than their male counterparts. Boys on the other hand aspired to pursue careers that were significantly higher in education required and prestige level than girls. In their study, it was noted that the strength and direction of the relationship between career aspirations and gender-related personality attributes and achievement motivation varied by gender. In another study, males seem to perceive themselves more self-efficient in military, scientific technological and agrarian professions than females according to Ramaci, et al (2017). It was found imperative to find out whether sex-role stereotyping embedded in the traditional nomadic societies influenced girls' educational and career aspirations.

### **Religion and Girls' Educational and Career Aspirations**

A relationship exists between adolescents' future career planning and religion. A Canadian study revealed equal career aspirations between the Roman Catholic and Protestant school girls (Maxwell & Maxwell, 1995). However, the latter aspired and expected to gain higher status occupations than the former who aspired for traditional "female" occupations. In another study, Muslim girls portrayed lower career aspirations than their Christian counterparts in Pakistan (Smock, 1982). Machyo (1995) on the other hand found no significant relationship between young girls' career aspirations and religion. Given the diversity of religious affiliations in Kenya, it was found imperative to examine this variable among girls in Samburu County whose inhabitants have to date preserved their culture including the traditional African religion. According to Juma (1994), there are some religious guidelines which include mixing of sexes, dress code and movement of girls and women from one place to another that cannot be easily accommodated in modern schools. In this regard, a Muslim girl is not supposed to be in company of any other male apart from her blood relatives. Mixing of boys and girls in modern mixed schools undermine Islamic teachings discouraging parents from enrolling girls in schools (Duba, Ibid). In view of these findings, parents cannot spare time to keep watch over their daughters when they are enrolled in school. Thus, they would rather keep their daughters at home for closer watch (UNICEF, 2007 in Duba, 2014). Duba (Ibid) adds that females among Muslims are not encouraged to pursue formal education beyond the Quran and are placed in seclusion and not allowed to lead public lives since the woman's place is at home. Pursuit of education and employment constitute public life rather than domestic which are discouraged in Islam.

**Role Models and Girls' Educational and Career Aspirations**

Family, friends, relatives, teachers and others significantly exert a lasting influence on lives of young children (Glaze, 1979; Young, 1985; Hoffman et al, 1992). Stevens & Boyd (1980) concluded that mothers who work outside the home are more likely to have daughters with similar careers and that mother's education has an impact on daughter's education than does the fathers. Presence of same sex-role models in a particular career is one factor that appears to be strongly related to boys' and girls' attitude about appropriateness of a career for members of their own sex (Boyd, 1982). Exposure to diverse role models for children reduces the influence of sex stereotyping (Machyo, 1995). According to Kibera (Ibid), marginalization of girls in formal education and training leads to their underrepresentation in formal employment and consequently scarcity of role models to be emulated. Santis (2006) found out that role models had a significant influence on women's career choices. Role models have been defined as people whose lives and activities influence another person in some way (Basoc & Howe, 2009). Individuals tend to seek role models who are similar to them in some easily identifiable way, such as gender or race (Karunanayake & Nauta, 2004). Role models may be especially important to women because lack of female role models in non-traditional careers (such as engineering and science) has been identified as a barrier for women who choose to enter these professions. Indeed, researchers have shown that female students perceive role models to be especially important for women who want to pursue non-traditional careers (Smith & Erb, 2006).

Dyler (2008) asserts that career choices are influenced by role models who are often familiar or educational rather than famous societal figures. Direct forms of parental influence such as extent to which students see their parents choosing technical careers or having contact with technology, are motivators to train for technical jobs. Family members can also motivate career choices indirectly by encouraging girls to pursue careers that are perceived to be masculine. Women entering male dominated fields come from families where members have four-year degrees, mothers are working, both parents are working, both parents are highly educated and success is considered critical (Dyler, Ibid). It was found imperative to find out if the girls in the nomadic communities' occupied county had adequate role models who inspired them to pursue various careers.

### **Residential Location (Rural-Urban) and Girls' Educational and Career Aspirations**

Educational and career aspirations of girls are influenced by their family's residence and school location (Baker, 1985; Odell, 1986). Rural girls have lower educational and career expectations because they experience greater gender stereotyping in occupational models than urban girls do (Saltiel, 1982). Baker's (1985) study revealed that rural girls in Canada had lower educational and career aspirations and expected to be married at the age of 30 years than their urban counterparts. University bound students in the USA were more often from urban areas while those who planned to enter the workforce, enroll in community colleges or attend nursing or trade schools, or without any plans were more likely from rural areas (Odell, 1986).

Another study conducted in Nigeria by Akande (1987) revealed that 63% of urban students and 26.3% of rural students aspired to have a first degree, a difference attributed to the quality of teachers found in urban schools who motivated their students to aim higher in education than their rural counterparts. Moreover, Machyo's (1995) study in Kenya revealed that urban school girls had higher career aspirations than their rural counterparts. This variable of (residence) is significant if explored in relation to its influence on girls' educational and career aspirations in Samburu County schools.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Underrepresentation of women in education and in formal employment and administrative positions is very conspicuous. These gender disparities are prominently exhibited among the nomadic communities occupying Samburu County that continue to observe the traditional cultural traditions, beliefs, values, customs, attitudes and perceptions among others (Duba, 2014). Most studies have focused on the factors that have led to this underrepresentation and on educational and career aspirations of girls in general in schools situated in middle or high economic regions of Kenya. This study however examined the socio-cultural factors that influenced school girls' educational and career aspirations in the predominantly rural and arid Samburu County of Kenya. This county is mostly inhabited by nomadic pastoralists with a rudimentary economy dependent on weather and thus subjected to frequent droughts and resultant poverty.

### **Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the socio-cultural factors influencing educational and career aspirations of girls. The study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- i) Examine the influence of socio-cultural factors on educational and career aspirations of girls in Samburu County public secondary schools.
- ii) To determine the extent of influence of the socio-cultural factors on girls' educational and career aspirations.
- iii) Establish if there was any significant relationship between:
  - a. Socio-economic status
  - b. Sex-role ideology
  - c. Religion
  - d. Role models
  - e. Residential location (urban or rural)

and girls' educational and career aspirations.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research was based on theory of equal opportunities postulated by Cunningham (1992). This theory recognizes the provision of equal opportunities to all people regardless of race, sex, disability although action with respect to race and disability is less advanced. Rather, policies guiding inclusion/ representation of women/female in education and careers do exist. This theory recognizes that unless equality of opportunity is recognized as a primary right, then the policies followed will never go far enough to ensure optimum representation of girls and women in education and employment respectively. This study recognizes that affirmative gender policies exist for instance, in the Kenya 2010 constitution, which stipulates that at least one-third of each gender should occupy public positions (Republic of Kenya, 2010). However, irrespective of these policies, gender imbalance persists mainly due to the prevailing influence of social and cultural factors on girls' educational and career aspirations.

## **II. Research Methodology**

A descriptive survey was adopted in this research. A sample of 132 girls were selected from a population of 683 girls in 5 girls and 6 mixed schools using proportionate stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques. This constituted 21% of the total population of girls which was more than 20% for a small population of less than 1000 recommended by Gay, Mills & Airasian (2009). Twelve (12) girls from each of the 5 girls' schools and twelve (12)

girls from each of the 6 mixed schools were selected through the equal allocation method acceptable in stratified random sampling technique. The 12 girls from each school were selected using simple random sampling technique. Hence, the 5 girls schools contributed 60 (5x12) girls and the 6 mixed schools contributed 72 (6x12) girls totaling to 132 girls who constituted the study sample.

The major data collection instrument was the Girls' Educational and Career Aspirations Questionnaire (GECQAQ) which was developed by the researcher and administered to collect girls' demographic data and other information regarding the socio-cultural factors that influenced their educational and career aspirations. The questionnaire was validated by a team of experienced researchers and educationists from reputable universities in Kenya. The instrument was subsequently subjected to split-half reliability method with a reliability of 0.87 which was adequate to declare the GECQAQ suitable for data collection. The resultant data generated from questionnaires with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer package were analyzed descriptively in the form of frequencies and percentages. The hypotheses were subjected to inferential statistics in the form of chi square tests. From the hypotheses test results, the hypotheses were either accepted or rejected.

### **III. Research Findings and Discussions**

#### **Demographic and Other Characteristics**

All the 132 (100%) girls took part in the study. Table 1 shows a summary of distribution of girls by age.

<b>Age in years</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
11 – 15	59	44.7%
16 – 20	68	51.5%

21 – 25	5	3.8%
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Total	132	100%
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Table 1: Distribution of Girls by Age

Table 1 shows that most (51.5%) girls fell within the 16 – 20 of age. Very few (3.8%) girls fell within the 21 – 25 age range. The few girls from this latter category may be explained from a cultural perspective. Girls in this age bracket may have been gradually forced out of school by such culturally accepted practices such as female circumcision and early marriages. Girls in this age bracket may also have completed the secondary cycle of schooling and proceeded to colleges or universities to pursue various courses. The fact that 96.2% of girls fell within the broad 11-20 age bracket can be explained from the fact that this the optimal age for secondary schooling.

### **Socio-Economic Status (SES)**

The study also intended to find out the socio-economic status of the girls. Most (60.4%) of the girls were from middle class background (SES), 20.4% of them were from low (poor) background while the remaining 19.2% of the girls were from high socio-economic backgrounds. This shows some relationship between girls' participation in secondary schooling and socio-economic statuses of their parents. Girls from middle and high socio-economic backgrounds may have had parents who could easily afford to pay school fees and other educational costs for their daughters. These parents may also have acquired their middle-class or high-class status/employment as a result of educational and professional qualifications they had attained and therefore knew the value of educating their daughters. These findings concur with Idowu & Dere's (1983) study that show that persons of high SES provide useful information regarding professional occupations. The findings are also in line with the finding that commercial occupations were chosen by students of low SES who rarely expected university education (Machyo, 1995). Similarly, Brown & Barbosa (2001) found

that career aspirations of young females who came from low income families were confined to experiences of their relatives and friends.

### **Girls' Religious Affiliation**

A summary of the distribution of girls by their religious affiliations is shown in Table 2.

<b>Religious Affiliation</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Christianity	104	79.1%
Islam	17	12.8%
Others e.g. Hinduism, Buddhism, African traditional etc.	11	8.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 2: Distribution of Girls as Categorized by Their Religious Affiliation

Table 2 shows that most (79.9%) girls were Christians, 17 (12.8%) were Muslims while the remaining 11 (8.1%) girls were affiliated to other religions probably Hinduism, Buddhism, African traditional religion or did not have any religious affiliation. The dominance of Christianity can be explained from the "colonization" perspective where competing Christian missions at dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century converted many Kenyan Africans into Christianity. Most Christians harbour more liberal attitudes towards education and may explain why most girls were Christians. These findings concur with Smock's (1982) findings that Muslim girls

portrayed lower educational and career aspirations than their Christian counterparts. Supporting these findings, Duba (2014) notes that Muslim girls are not encouraged to pursue formal schooling beyond the Quran.

### **Girls and Sex-Role Stereotyping**

The study also sought to determine the influence of sex-role stereotyping (ideology) on girls' educational and career aspirations. The findings show that 23 (17.4%) aspired for high professional careers such as law and medicine reflecting liberated attitudinal ideology. Thirty-seven (28%) girls preferred traditional female careers such as nursing, catering and housekeeping. Seventy-two (54.5%) girls who formed the majority fell within the moderate attitudinal category and aspired for middle status careers. The fact that 28% of the girls preferred traditional careers compares favorably with Obura's (1994) finding that even when girls pursue sciences, they specialize in domestic sciences such as home science. These findings are further supported by Mendez and Crawford (2002) findings that girls show greater gender role flexibility in their career aspirations than their male counterparts exemplified by the diverse career categories they aspired to pursue. The smaller proportion of girls in liberal attitudinal category is confirmed by Ramaci's et al (2017) study that males seem to perceive themselves more self-efficient in military, scientific, technological and agrarian professions than their female counterparts. This is a reflection of sex-role ideology.

### **Girls' Role Models**

A summary of distribution of girls by their role models in education and careers is depicted in Table 3.

Role model/s	n	Percent (%)
Mother	17	12.9
Relative	37	28.0
Friends	26	19.7
Did not have any role model	52	39.4

Total	132	100.0
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Table 3: Distribution of Girls as Categorized by their Role Models

It is evident from Table 3 that 52(39.4%) girls did not report having any role model in the careers they aspired for. Seventeen (12.9%) girls said they wanted to join careers similar to their mothers while 26 (19.7%) girls and 37(28%) girls aspired to join careers similar to their friends and relatives respectively. These findings concur with the revelation that family, friends and relatives and significant others exert a lasting influence on the lives of young children (Glaze, 1979; Young, 1985; Hoffman, 1992). These findings also concur with Stevens' & Boyd's (1980) conclusion that mothers who work outside the home are more likely to have daughters with similar careers and that mother's education has an impact on daughter's education than does the fathers'. Moreover, Karunanayake & Nauta (2004) argue that individuals tend to seek role models who are similar to them in some easily identifiable ways, such as gender or race. Moreover, Smith & Erb (2006) in supporting these findings note that female students perceive role models to be especially important for women who want to pursue non-traditional careers.

#### Girls' Residential Location (Rural or Urban)

A summary of the distribution of girls by the geographical locations of their homes (residence) is shown in Table 4.

Residential Location	(Home)	n	Percent (%)
Rural		40	30.2
Rural-urban Fringe		38	28.9
Urban		54	40.9
Total		132	100.0

Table 4: Distribution of Girls as Categorized by Residential Location

Table 4 shows that most girls were from urban (40.9%) and rural-urban fringes (28.9%). Forty (30.2%) girls however came from rural environments. This could have been an indication that most urban or rural-urban parents either living or working in these residential areas harbored liberal attitudes or fairly liberal attitudes towards educating their daughters than their rural counterparts. Rural inhabitants could not have been fully liberalized and educated to denounce their cultural beliefs and practices denying their daughters optimal participation in secondary schooling. These findings concur with Saltiel's (1982) and Baker's (1985) studies that girls from urban residences exhibited higher educational and career aspirations than their rural counterparts.

### **Extent of Influence of the Determinants of Girls' Educational and Career Aspirations**

This study also sought to determine the extent of each factor or force in influencing girls' educational and career aspirations. The following scale was used:

Very Influential	(VI) ___5
Influential	(I) ____4
Fairly Influential	(FI) ____3
Least Influential	(LI) ____2
Not Influential	(NT) ____1

Table 5 shows a summary of distribution of girls by the extent to which each factor influenced their educational and career aspirations.

<b>Factors Influencing Girls' Educational and Career Aspirations</b>	<b>Extent of Influence</b>									
	<b>VI</b>		<b>I</b>		<b>FI</b>		<b>LI</b>		<b>NI</b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Sex-Role Ideology	57	43.2%	29	30%	33	25%	6	4.5%	7	5.3%
Socio-economic status	60	45.5%	31	23.4%	29	30%	12	9.1%	0	0%

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Religion	1	0.8%	4	3.0%	7	5.3%	49	37.1%	71	53.8%
Role models	42	31.8%	47	35.6%	19	14.4%	18	13.6%	6	4.5%
Residence (Rural/urban)	51	38.6%	27	20.5%	29	22.0%	17	12.9%	8	6.1%

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Table 5: Distribution of Girls as Categorized by Extent of Each Factors' Influence on their Educational and Career aspirations.

Table 5 shows that 125(94.7%) girls, 132 (100%) girls, 126 (95.5%) girls and 124(93.9%) girls reported that sex-role ideology, socio-economic status, role models and residential location (rural or urban) respectively greatly influenced their educational and career aspirations to various extents. However, 61(46.2%) girls felt that religious affiliation influenced their educational and career aspirations to a lesser extent than the other socio-cultural factors. These findings indicate that most of the social and cultural factors influenced the girls' educational and career aspirations tremendously. It is therefore imperative for gender-sensitive individuals, organizations and governments to promote the factors that positively influence the girls' educational and career aspirations. On the other hand, factors that suppress girls' educational and career aspirations should be subdued.

### **Girls' Educational and Career Aspirations**

This study also sought to establish the educational and career aspiration of the secondary school girls. Table 6 shows a summary of the distribution of the girls by their educational aspirations. Table 6 shows proportions of girls aspiring to complete various levels education successfully.

<b>Education level</b>	<b>Girls Planned to</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Complete</b>			
Secondary		132	100.0%
Post-secondary middle level colleges		81	61.4%

University	63	47.7%
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Table 6: Distribution of girls as categorized by levels of education they aspired to complete

It is clearly evident from Table 6 that 81 (61.4%) girls aspired to advance beyond secondary school education but this proportion constricted to 63 (47.7%) girls with increase in the altitude of the education ladder upwards to university level. It is quite encouraging that at least 61.4% of the girls planned to proceed beyond secondary schooling. Those who did not intend to go beyond secondary school education could have perceived socio-cultural forces beyond their control that could inhibit them from pursuing further education such as lack of college fees or retrogressive culture discouraging training of girls in various careers. In relation to their career aspirations, 78 (59.1%) aspired for middle-class undifferentiated careers and constituted the largest portion. Forty-seven (35.6%) of the girls aspired for high status professional occupations while only 7(5.3%) girls aspired to occupy the low-status (traditional) careers. The girls could therefore be said to be of an average to high career aspirations. However, the girls may or may not actually join these careers due to the prevailing stereotypes, negative attitudes and discrimination based on gender and unemployment.

### **Hypotheses Test Results**

To determine whether significant relationships existed between variables under examination and girls' educational and career aspirations, several null hypotheses were tested:

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and girls; educational and career aspirations.

Test Result:  $X^2 (3, N=132) = 15.59, P < 0.05$

This hypothesis was rejected since girls with parents of high socio-economic status exhibited higher educational and career aspirations than girls with parents of low socio-economic status.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between sex-role ideology and girls' educational and career aspirations.

Test Result:  $X^2 (3, N=132) = 14.03, P < 0.05$

This hypothesis was rejected since girls with liberated attitudinal ideology exhibited high educational and career aspirations than those who exhibited a traditional role perception.

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between girls' religious affiliation and their educational and career aspirations.

Test Result:  $X^2 (3, N=132) = 4.3, P > 0.05$

This hypothesis was accepted since the girls' educational and career aspirations were not affected by their religious affiliation.

HO<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant relationship between role models and girls' educational and career aspirations.

Test Result:  $X^2 (12, N=132) = 23.68, P < 0.05$

This hypothesis was rejected since girls who knew women in higher status jobs exhibited higher educational and career aspirations than those who did not know women in higher status jobs/ careers.

HO<sub>5</sub>: There is no significant relationship between residential location (rural or urban) and girls' educational and career aspirations.

Test Result:  $X^2 (3, N=132) = 23.37, P < 0.05$

This hypothesis was rejected due to the fact that higher educational and career aspirations were recorded among urban and rural-urban girls while rural girls exhibited low education and career aspirations.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Conclusions of the Study**

- i) The girls exhibited high educational and career aspirations.
- ii) Sex-role ideology, socio-economic status, role models, and residential location influenced girls' educational and career aspirations more than religious affiliation.
- iii) A direct relationship existed between girls' educational and career aspirations and high socio-economic status, liberated attitudinal ideology, knowledge of role models, and residence in urban and rural-urban fringes.

**5.4 Recommendations of the Study**

- i) Educationists and researchers should explore the factors that suppress girls' educational and career aspirations and recommend remedial strategies to reduce or eradicate the negative influence of these factors.
- ii) Policy makers should come up with affirmative policies aimed at creating a level playing ground for the disadvantaged groups of the society including school girls.
- iii) Girls should emancipate themselves from the andro-centrally biased socio-cultural web and attempt to pursue high status professional careers since given favourable educational and training conditions; they can achieve as equally good as their male counterparts.

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