

### **2.01 Introduction**

The review of literature is an indispensable component of the research process, serving as the foundation upon which every study is built. It is a meticulous and systematic examination of existing scholarly works, research, and theories related to a particular topic or research question. This critical exploration of prior knowledge provides researchers with essential insights, contextual understanding, and a platform for identifying gaps in the existing literature that their research aims to address. It being an integral part of the research process, assumes a paramount role in laying the groundwork for any study. It entails a comprehensive analysis of existing academic works, research endeavors, and theoretical frameworks pertinent to a specific research topic or inquiry. This meticulous examination of prior scholarship equips researchers with invaluable insights, contextual comprehension, and the ability to pinpoint gaps in the existing literature that their research endeavors seek to fill.

We will delve into the significance of the review of literature within the research framework, emphasising its role in guiding and informing the research process. The review of literature is the conduit through which we connect with this wealth of knowledge, enabling us to build upon it, challenge it, or extend it in our pursuit of answering compelling research questions.

In this chapter, we explore the methodologies and strategies for conducting an effective review of literature. This involves identifying relevant sources, critically evaluating their credibility and contributions, and synthesizing the findings to provide a thorough examination of the present condition of knowledge in the field. While conducting the review of literature, it is essential to recognise that this process is not a passive survey of past works but an active engagement with the community.

### **2.02 The Need and Significance of a Review of Literature**

The need and significance of a review of literature in any research endeavor are paramount for several reasons. Firstly, it serves as a foundational step that helps to establish the context and rationale for the research. By exploring and analyzing existing academic works, research studies, and theoretical frameworks related to the topic, researchers can gain a complete grasp of the current state of information and recognition of the deficiencies that their research aims to tackle.

Additionally, a review of literature aids in the identification of key concepts, theories, and methodologies that have been used in previous research. This allows researchers

to expand on established insights and contribute to the progress of the discipline. Moreover, it allows them to evaluate the strengths and limitations of past studies, thereby informing the design and approach of their own research.

Furthermore, a comprehensive review of literature helps to provide a theoretical framework for the research, guiding the formulation of research questions and hypotheses. It can also assist in the development of a coherent and logical structure for the research, ensuring that the study is grounded in a solid theoretical and conceptual foundation.

A review of literature also plays a crucial role in the identification of research gaps and unanswered questions within the field. By highlighting areas that require further investigation or clarification, it can guide researchers towards meaningful and relevant research inquiries, thereby contributing to the expansion of knowledge in the area of study.

A review of literature being an integral part of any research endeavour, providing a strong foundation for the study and serving several essential purposes:

1. **Contextualisation:** It places the research within the broader context of existing knowledge. By reviewing prior works, researchers can understand what has already been studied, what gaps exist, and how their research fits into the larger academic landscape.
2. **Identification of Gaps:** It helps identify gaps, inconsistencies, or contradictions in the existing literature. Recognising these gaps is crucial because it informs the research question and justifies the need for the study.
3. **Theory Development:** For theoretical research, a literature review is essential for constructing or refining theoretical frameworks. Researchers can build on or challenge existing theories to advance their field.
4. **Methodological Guidance:** It offers insights into research methodologies and methods that have been successful or problematic in similar studies. Researchers can learn from others' experiences and make informed decisions about their own methods.
5. **Avoiding Duplication:** It prevents duplication of efforts by ensuring that the proposed research has not already been conducted or published in a similar form. This saves time and resources.

6. **Quality Control:** It helps in assessing the quality of research sources. Researchers can distinguish between credible, peer-reviewed sources and less reliable information, ensuring the integrity of their study.
7. **Supporting Arguments:** A comprehensive review of literature provides evidence and support for the arguments and hypotheses proposed in the research. It strengthens the rationale for the study's objectives.
8. **Enhancing Credibility:** It adds credibility to the research by demonstrating the researcher's knowledge of the subject and the careful consideration of previous work. This enhances the research's overall trustworthiness.
9. **Breadth and Depth:** It offers both breadth and depth. Researchers get a broad overview of the topic from various angles while also diving deep into key studies that inform their work.
10. **Contributing to Knowledge:** A well conducted review of literature contributes to the advancement of knowledge in a particular field. It provides a synthesis of existing ideas, which can inspire future research.

### 2.03 Historical Evolution

The early nineteenth century saw a scarcity of published books, while the foundations of contemporary career development theory can be traced back to 1909. Parsons introduced the first structure for making career decisions, later termed the trait-and-factor theory. Williamson, in 1939, identified a dearth of literature addressing students' issues, emphasizing the importance of gathering valid and reliable data for effective counseling. Ginzberg, in 1972, delineated the stages of career decision making: fantasy choices, tentative choices, and realistic choices, stressing the significance of his theory for human resources research. However, these theories had limited practical impact until the 1950s when sociologically-based theories emerged, incorporating psychological and sociological perspectives on career decision making. Brown (2002) underscored the complexities of combining different theories due to varying definitions of key terms. Similarly, Osipow (1990) highlighted the discrepancies among different theorists in defining personality and congruence, posing a challenge to achieving a unified framework. Patton and Creed (2007) conceptualized occupational aspirations as a crucial developmental task for adolescents, influenced by their vocational self-concept and the interplay between personal and environmental factors. Self-concept, as emphasized by the social

cognitive theory, was linked to future career projections and early aspirations as predictors of later occupational choices. Adolescent vocational development, as described by Gottfredson (2005), becomes apparent during the phase of conscious awareness. However, many adolescents encounter challenges in understanding their interests and capabilities, often making choices without a comprehensive understanding of available options. Rowan-Kenyon, Perna, and Swan (2011) discovered a significant portion of students who were uncertain about their career aspirations, suggesting that their future-focused thoughts fluctuated due to influences from social, familial, economic, and school-related factors. As adolescents recognize the barriers impeding their aspirations, they progress from initial idealistic ambitions to tentative and eventual expectations (Patton & Creed, 2007). Various elements, such as gender, socio-economic status, academic achievements, parental occupation and educational background, and parental expectations, can shape career aspirations (Adragna, 2009; Berzin, 2010; Domenico & Jones, 2006). These factors establish a structure through which adolescents evaluate their ambitions and navigate their pursuit of objectives. Differences in career aspirations between males and females can be linked Based on contextual elements (Massey, Gebhardt, & Garnefski, 2008). Perceptions within a cultural context of gender can impact how individuals view their capabilities in different career-related responsibilities, potentially affecting their career choices (Correll, 2001). Studies suggest that women generally have higher career aspirations than men, with a heightened interest in diverse career paths and greater flexibility regarding gender roles (Blackhurst & Auger, 2008; Nadeem & Khalid, 2018; Mendez & Crawford, 2002). Moreover, females demonstrate a propensity for high-status occupations, even in traditionally male-dominated fields, while males lean towards realistic careers over social ones (Adragna, 2009; Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2005; Kang, Hense, Scheerso, & Keinonen, 2019; Migunde, Agak, & Odiwuor, 2012). Males often prioritize external rewards and prestige, whereas females are more drawn to internal rewards (Tang, Pan, & Newmeyer, 2008).

Scholastic success or academic achievement has been associated with the educational and professional ambitions of high school students, as those with notable achievements often exhibit elevated aspirations (Salami, 2008; Watson, Quatman, & Edler, 2002). Adolescents from less privileged backgrounds and with a history of lower academic performance typically harbor uncertainties about their career goals

(Gutman & Schoon, 2012). Individuals who perceive their abilities positively and attribute their success to hard work are inclined to have higher aspirations (Gutman & Akerman, 2008). Women's career aspirations towards male-dominated professions are influenced by their own perceived drive for accomplishment, whereas for men, their career aspirations appear to be largely unaffected by their perceived drive for accomplishment (Mendez & Crawford, 2002).

Parental aspirations strongly influence adolescents' own aspirations, with higher parental aspirations often corresponding to higher aspirations in teenagers (Schoon & Parsons, 2002). Additionally, vocational aspirations during adolescence differ between genders and are associated with parental education levels and mathematics test scores (Schoon, 2001).

Parental engagement in academics and their dedication to their children's education have a positive influence on student career aspirations (Ma & Wang, 2001). Furthermore, the educational histories and socio-economic positions of parents are linked to their children's professional ambitions, with the socio-economic status of the family being especially influential on the educational aspirations of boys (Guo, Marsh, Parker, Morin, & Yeung, 2015). Teenagers or adolescents from more affluent families tend to aspire to professional occupations, whereas those from less affluent families may have a wider range of potential career options (Ashby & Schoon, 2010; Gutman & Schoon, 2012). Nevertheless, among families where parents have lower educational attainment, active parental participation in education is directly linked to increased ambitions indicating that parental participation can influence adolescents' future prospects (Hill et al., 2004).

Although the level of prestige aspired to by children's reported real jobs may slightly exceed that of their parents, this discrepancy could be driven by career obstacles motivating students to aim for higher achievements, reflecting the desire for upward mobility (Creed et al., 2007).

The most significant determinants of persistence in science and engineering career aspirations were identified as academic proficiency and self-confidence in mathematics (Mau, 2003). Mathematics seemed to function as a decisive factor, limiting students' future choices. Those who received lower grades in math not only began with lower career expectations but also experienced a more pronounced decline in aspirations during their mid high school years (Shapka, Domene, & Keating, 2008).

Ma and Wang (2001) highlighted the significance of math education in fostering students' professional ambitions, indicating that those who perform well in math are inclined to establish higher career goals.

Understanding the career ambitions of young individuals holds great significance in the Arab world, where uncertainty about future career paths is widespread (AlMunajjed, Sabbagh, & Insight, 2011; Heggli, Haukanes, & Tjomsland, 2013). Furthermore, differences in academic performance between boys and girls in Oman have led educators and parents to propose higher expectations for male students (World Bank, 2013). Research shows that girls not only outperform boys in primary and secondary schools but also that the percentage of boys without access to education is at least 20 percentage points higher than that of females (AlMunajjed et al., 2011; Steer, Ghanem, & Jalbout, 2014).

Young people are considered a crucial resource for development, serving as a driving force for economic progress. Despite facing significant challenges, especially in terms of employment and livelihoods, they represent the present and future potential as educators, innovators, entrepreneurs, healthcare professionals, scientists, politicians, and peacemakers (Dar, 2019). However, gaps in existing research regarding populations, career concepts, and family factors have hindered counseling psychologists from fully understanding the impact of families on career development (Gutman & Schoon, 2012; Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000). Exploring the concept of career aspirations could help counselors and policymakers design interventions and provide diverse resources to enhance children's educational and career expectations (e.g., AlMunajjed et al., 2011; Gutman & Schoon, 2012; Schoon & Polek, 2011).

The significance of investigating career aspirations lies in the discovery that the career ambitions of adolescents are linked to the social status they attain as adults (see Ashby & Schoon, 2010; Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2005; Mello, 2008). Therefore, it is crucial to prepare students from various racial, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds for post-secondary options that cater to their individual needs and meet the demands of the job market and the national economy (Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000). Encouraging parental involvement by providing them with information about available career resources and emphasizing the importance of showing interest, trust, confidence, and pride in their children is another essential aspect of nurturing aspiring children (Keller & Whiston, 2008).

### **Occupational Aspirations in Career Development**

Within the domain of career development theories, aspirations pertaining to careers hold particular significance, especially for adolescents aiming to harmonize their career paths with their self-perceptions (Patton & Creed, 2007). Super's theory of vocational development, encompassing the concept of vocational self-perception, emphasizes the significance of one's self-perception in career choice. The formation of the vocational self-perception occurs through the interaction between an individual and their surroundings, playing a crucial part in selecting careers that align with their self-concept. Social cognitive theory underscores the impact of environmental elements such as opportunities, resources, obstacles, financial support, parental conduct, and education on career development. The self-concept is closely connected to projecting one's future career, career-related goals, and career choices. Early aspirations can serve as predictors of future aspirations and, ultimately, the choice of profession (Rojewski, 2005).

Research has shown that adolescents' career aspirations and expectations can predict their educational achievements in adulthood, even eight years later (Beal & Crockett, 2010). The awakening of vocational development typically occurs in adolescence, around the age of 14 or older (Gottfredson, 2005). Nevertheless, several teenagers encounter difficulties in pinpointing their particular interests, capabilities, and objectives, partly due to the ongoing evolution of many attributes pertinent to their careers. This developmental phase poses the danger of adolescents committing to a specific career trajectory before fully understanding the array of options open to them. Significantly, numerous students lack awareness of the educational and professional prospects within their reach. For example, some students base their career decisions more on emotions rather than on an appraisal of the potential career opportunities available to them (Holcomb-McCoy & Young, 2012).

As indicated by research conducted by Rowan-Kenyon, Perna, and Swan (2011), a significant proportion of students (10.2%) were undecided about a specific occupation and had difficulty pinpointing their areas of interest. Moreover, a greater percentage of eleventh-grade students, in comparison to ninth graders (13.5% versus 7.6%), expressed uncertainty regarding their occupational aspirations. In a more recent investigation by Dar (2019), it was found that 17.83% of teenagers displayed low aspirations for their careers, while 58.33% fell into a moderately ambitious category.

This suggests that while some young individuals maintain clear aspirations and expectations for their future occupations, others experience fluctuations in their forward-thinking, influenced by various factors such as societal pressures, family backgrounds, socio-economic status, access to opportunities, and school-related aspects (Akos, Lambie, Milsom, & Gilbert, 2007; Gutman & Schoon, 2012; Sadolikar, 2016; Schoon, 2001).

Patton and Creed (2007) proposed that adolescents may need to adjust their occupational aspirations over time, transitioning from initial fantasy aspirations to tentative ones and ultimately solidified expectations, as they become increasingly aware of personal and contextual barriers that may impede the realization of their aspirations.

Several factors, such as gender, socio-economic status, academic performance, parental occupation and education levels, and parental expectations, play a significant role in shaping career aspirations (Adragna, 2009; Berzin, 2010; Domenico & Jones, 2006). These factors establish the benchmarks against which adolescents assess themselves and form the context in which they pursue their goals. Gender differences in career aspirations are influenced by contextual factors (Massey, Gebhardt, & Garnefski, 2008), with cultural beliefs about gender contributing to the formation of individuals' perceptions of their competency in various career-related tasks, ultimately influencing their chosen career paths, sometimes independently of their actual capabilities (Correll, 2001).

Research on career aspirations indicates that, generally, females tend to hold higher career aspirations than males (Blackhurst & Auger, 2008; Nadeem & Khalid, 2018). Moreover, females tend to exhibit a wider interest in diverse careers and greater flexibility in terms of gender roles within their career aspirations compared to their male counterparts (Mendez & Crawford, 2002). For instance, females often strive for and achieve high-status occupations, including those traditionally dominated by males (Adragna, 2009; Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2005). Additionally, females commonly lean towards biological subjects, while males demonstrate a preference for physics and chemistry (Kang, Hense, Scheersoi, & Keinonen, 2019). Males often favor pragmatic career choices, while social professions are more appealing to females than males (Migunde, Agak, & Odiwuor, 2012). Males often prioritize prestige and external rewards, while females are more attracted to internal rewards (Tang, Pan, &



Newmeyer, 2008). However, some studies suggest a trend toward increased gender equality, with no significant disparities between the career aspirations and expectations of males and females (Creed, Conlon, & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007).

Furthermore, academic achievement plays a role in shaping the educational aspirations of high school students (Salami, 2008). It is likely that high-achieving students tend to have higher career aspirations compared to their lower-achieving peers (Adragna, 2009). High-achieving females often surpass the aspirations of both average-achieving females and males, matching the aspirations of high-achieving males (Watson, Quatman, & Edler, 2002). Conversely, adolescents with lower academic achievement and socio-economic backgrounds are more prone to experiencing uncertainty in their career aspirations (Gutman & Schoon, 2012). Individuals who believe in their ability to succeed and attribute their accomplishments to hard work, rather than luck or fate, tend to have higher aspirations than their peers (Gutman & Akerman, 2008). Additionally, females who perceive themselves as hardworking and internally motivated are more likely to aspire to careers traditionally dominated by males, whereas male career aspirations appear to have little correlation with self-perceived motivation and achievement. Among females, it is often the most hardworking individuals who aspire to non-traditional careers for women (Mendez & Crawford, 2002).

Generally, personal achievements are positively linked to self-perception in academics across 52 nations and to professional ambitions in individuals from 42 countries. The favorable impact on career aspirations is mediated by self-perception across 54 countries. These results highlight apprehensions regarding career goals. Students equipped with the requisite skills for pursuing careers in fields such as science and technology, yet surrounded by high-achieving peers, are more likely to experience reduced confidence in their abilities and may be dissuaded from pursuing further education in these areas (Nagengast & Marsh, 2012).

It is clear that parental aspirations significantly impact the career aspirations of adolescents. When parental aspirations are high, teenagers also tend to hold elevated aspirations (Schoon & Parsons, 2002). Moreover, vocational aspirations of adolescents differ between females and males and are tied to parental education and math test scores (Schoon, 2001). Parental dedication to their children's education, as demonstrated by academic encouragement, has a positive effect on students' career

aspirations. Students are more inclined to internalize their parents' academic expectations, resulting in increased career ambitions (Ma & Wang, 2001). Moreover, the educational level and socio-economic status of parents are linked to the career aspirations of their children. Particularly, the family's socio-economic status significantly impacts the educational goals of boys (Guo, Marsh, Parker, Morin, & Yeung, 2015). For instance, teenagers with employed mothers tend to consider a wider array of professions compared to those whose mothers are unemployed (Gutman & Schoon, 2012). Adolescents from more affluent families are more inclined to aspire to professional vocations than those from less affluent households (Ashby & Schoon, 2010). While socio-economic status may represent the educational resources accessible at home, parental encouragement for academic success ensures that these resources are dedicated to the student's education (Wang & Staver, 2001).

Interestingly, in families where parental education levels are lower, parental engagement in academics is directly linked to heightened career ambitions. Hence, parents with limited socio-economic means may not actively participate in their children's education in ways that directly influence their academic behavior or performance. Nonetheless, their involvement may communicate their expectations for their teenagers' future success and social advancement (Hill et al., 2004). Furthermore, even though there was no notable contrast in the perceived status of parents' and students' professions, the tendency indicated that youngsters aimed for marginally more prestigious vocations compared to those reported by their parents. This inclination might be attributed to the challenges related to careers in the lives of students, serving as motivation to surpass their parents rather than limiting their aspirations (Creed et al., 2007).

Success in academics and confidence in mathematical skills were strong indicators for the endurance of aspirations toward careers in the fields of science and engineering (Mau, 2003). Mathematics often acts as a determinant, narrowing the scope of future options for students. Students with lower math grades not only initially displayed lower career expectations but also experienced a more rapid decline in aspirations during the latter half of high school (Shapka, Domene, & Keating, 2008). Ma and Wang (2001) highlighted the critical role of mathematics education in elevating students' career aspirations. Studies suggest that students excelling in mathematics education are more inclined to set ambitious career goals.

The exploration of adolescent career ambitions is essential, especially in the Arab region, considering the prevailing uncertainty that complicates predictions about future career paths (AlMunajjed, Sabbagh, & Insight, 2011; Heggli, Haukanes, & Tjomsland, 2013). Additionally, in the Omani context, there exists a discrepancy in academic achievements between genders, prompting suggestions for educators and parents to cultivate higher expectations for male students (World Bank, 2013). Girls consistently surpass boys in academic performance, with a significantly higher percentage of boys encountering academic challenges in both primary and secondary education (AlMunajjed et al., 2011; Steer, Ghanem, & Jalbout, 2014).

Youth represent a valuable asset for development, capable of contributing to economic progress as educators, innovators, entrepreneurs, health professionals, scientists, politicians, and peacemakers, despite confronting significant obstacles, particularly concerning employment and livelihoods (Dar, 2019).

Additionally, significant gaps in current research concerning populations, aspects of career development, and family-related variables have hindered counseling psychologists from gaining a thorough grasp of how the family impacts career growth (Gutman & Schoon, 2012; Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000). Exploring the idea of career ambition can provide valuable understanding for counselors and policymakers to create measures and offer resources that aim to improve the educational and career outlook for children (e.g., AlMunajjed et al., 2011; Gutman & Schoon, 2012; Schoon & Polek, 2011).

Comprehending career ambitions holds significant value as studies have revealed a connection between the career goals of adolescents and their future social status and accomplishments in adulthood (refer to Ashby & Schoon, 2010; Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2005; Mello, 2008). Hence, it is crucial to equip students from various racial, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds with suitable post-secondary options that cater to their specific requirements and the needs of the job market and the national economy (Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000). Cultivating the aspirations of children involves equipping parents with knowledge about accessible career resources and highlighting the significance of expressing interest, trust, confidence, and pride in their children (Keller & Whiston, 2008).

#### **2.04 Evolution of Modern career Decision Making and Occupational Aspiration Theories**

In the aftermath of the 1950s, a wave of newly developed psychological theories emerged and gained widespread acceptance in the realm of career decision-making research. Bordin, Nachmann, & Segal (1963) detected a psychological gap, as the major approaches at the time focused on comparing occupational problems in relation to personality theories, their structural attributes, and the assumptions governing the decision-making process. They introduced a novel framework with the aim of establishing a set of dimensions connected to infantile physiological functions that encompass all the job satisfactions work could offer. This framework illustrated that any occupation could be described based on the relative strengths of these component dimensions and their relationship to a series of modifying characteristics. Lofquist and Dawis (1969) introduced their first edition of work adjustment theory, providing insights into the psychological perspective of individual challenges in a work-oriented society. Krumboltz, Mitchell, & Brian Jones (1976) conducted a study involving 255 community college students, using their Decision-Making Questionnaire (DMQ) to evaluate actions and thoughts representing five distinct decision-making styles: rational, impulsive, intuitive, dependent, and fatalistic. They found that decision-making behavior was most strongly linked to ratings of decision outcome satisfaction, decision importance, and decision confidence.

Career ambitions encompass "declared objectives or selections related to one's profession" that substantially drive career-related conduct and eventual educational and professional achievements (Rojewski, 2005, p. 132). These aspirations can yield enduring impacts, influencing an individual's career and residential choices, as well as the level of prosperity they attain. Despite extensive exploration of occupational aspirations in Western settings, they have not been directly scrutinized in China, despite the growing interest in career research within the country (Granrose, 2007). This study specifically delved into the career ambitions of a notable cohort of Chinese adolescents approaching the conclusion of their formal secondary education and contemplating their prospects after graduation.

Occupational ambitions hold a key position in multiple theories of career development. They commonly progress from envisioned future ideals to well-considered evaluations based on abilities, interests, values, and opportunities

(Gottfredson, 2002). These aspirations can be categorized as either idealized or realistic. Idealized aspirations involve professions one would prefer if there were no limitations on opportunity, financial resources, or capability when choosing a career. Conversely, realistic aspirations, or expectations, represent the occupations one foresees considering perceived or actual constraints (Rojewski, 2005). Both aspirations and expectations reflect attitudes and beliefs, making them cognitive constructs presumed to influence current behavior as well as future planning. In Gottfredson's terms, disparities between aspirations and expectations arise from compromises and limitations in what one would like to do occupationally and what one is realistically able to achieve. When such disparities occur, they typically indicate a decline in aspirations relative to real or perceived career barriers (Rojewski).

Occupational aspirations and expectations have been found to be associated with a wide range of individual and situational variables, including gender (Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000), race, socio-economic status (Hellenga, Aber, & Rhodes, 2002), educational aspirations and achievements (Marjoribanks, 2002), self-esteem and self-efficacy (Fouad & Smith, 1996), family and school environments (Bo, 1994), social support (Wall, Covell, & McIntyre, 1999), parental aspirations and expectations (Wilson & Wilson, 1992), and parenting style (Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbush, & Darling, 1992).

In terms of concept, Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) proposed significant roles for self-assurance in career matters and expected results in shaping aspirations. However, only a limited number of studies have directly investigated these connections. In an Australian study (Patton & Creed, 2007), adolescents aiming for esteemed careers displayed heightened confidence in making career decisions and less uncertainty, while those facing discrepancies between their aspirations and expectations exhibited reduced confidence in career decision-making, increased indecisiveness, and lower levels of career advancement.

The process of career decision-making is crucial for career advancement (Betz, 1992), closely intertwined with aspirations, especially occupational expectations. Dating back to 1909, Parsons described the process of career decision-making as one, involving self-awareness and comprehension of the work environment, leading to the capacity to combine these elements and choose a career path. More recently, Gati, Kraus, and Osipow (1996) conceptualized career decision-making as comprising a

preparatory stage, where challenges such as lack of motivation, indecisiveness, and dysfunctional beliefs can surface, and a decision-making phase, where access to reliable information about the decision-making process, self-awareness, and the career landscape is pivotal. Disruptions in either phase can distort the decision-making process, leading to less favorable outcomes, particularly during the decision-making phase when individuals are assimilating information about themselves and potential career paths.

Career impediments, defined as "events or circumstances, either internal or external, that hinder career advancement" (Swanson & Woitke, 1997), significantly influence the career decision-making process. These hindrances may be actual or perceived, with individuals perceiving them as influential (Swanson & Gore, 2000). Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2000) argued that "individuals are less likely to translate their career interests into goals and their goals into actions when they perceive their efforts to be obstructed by insurmountable barriers or inadequate support systems" (p. 38). Consequently, career obstacles are also likely to be associated with vocational aspirations and expectations. Gottfredson (2002) and Lent et al. depicted career obstacles as the primary factor prompting individuals to adjust their career objectives, aligning their aspirations with their expectations.

For a considerable duration, the hospitality industry has been predominantly male-dominated. Although more women have recently joined the sector, they encounter challenges hindering their career progress. Consequently, Schreiber (1998) suggested that in this environment, female employees often adopt masculine qualities to succeed in their careers.

A study conducted by Meyerson (2001) uncovered that historically, men were typically perceived as the primary earners while women were primarily responsible for domestic tasks and caregiving. Women, possessing some degree of masculine traits, often need to emulate male models and conform to male cultural norms to succeed in the hospitality industry (Bierema & Cseh). For instance, the trait of emotional restraint is exemplified, as women in managerial positions are sometimes labeled as excessively emotional. Furthermore, Bierema & Opengart (2002) have identified various obstacles to women's career advancement, including gender roles and societal pressures, the traditional caregiving role of women, increasing opportunities in alternative fields, the lack of female role models, career trends that

diverge from those of men, and the implicit knowledge essential for thriving in environments dominated by males.

The "double-bind theory," proposed by some business leaders, argues that women are perceived as overly sensitive and insufficiently strong to handle clients and challenges. Simultaneously, these women may be labeled as "difficult" if they display strength and assertiveness (Carroll, 1989). Several studies indicate that modern successful companies prioritize collaboration, adaptability, and comprehensive perspectives and approaches (Appelbaum et al., 2003).

Consequently, effective leaders in organizations are expected to exhibit inclusive thinking, foster collaborative teams, and prioritize harmonious work relationships, traits commonly associated with women's management styles (Fletcher 1998, Colwill and Townsend 1999).

Gilligan (1982) attributes the development of women to the maturity and understanding that occurs in both men and women during the years following their graduation from college. She suggests that women's career progression should be viewed as interconnected rather than independent. According to Gilligan, principles such as caring, avoiding harm, generosity, and building relationships are essential in the adult development of women. "As women construct the adult world, the realm of relationships emerges and becomes the central point of attention and concern."

In her research, Michele Howe (2012) maintains that the hospitality industry's traditionally male-dominated nature is influenced partly by its culture and characteristics. She also highlights that senior-level woman employees in the industry face the dilemma of balancing family and career due to the dynamic and mobile nature of the field. Theoretical discussions on women's career advancement underscore the social and theoretical underrepresentation of women in comparison to men (Bierema & Opengart, 2002). The authors suggest that explaining women's career advancement is more intricate than that of men, presenting a challenge in deciding whether to adapt existing theories or develop new ones (Swanson & Fouad, 1999). Some theories on women's career development emphasize their capacity to manage various work schedules owing to their societal roles as homemakers and caregivers (Bierema, 1998).

An investigation by Eagley and Johnson (1990) into gender disparities in leadership styles revealed that women possess both interpersonal relationship skills and task-oriented capabilities, whereas their male counterparts prioritize task completion to a greater extent. Chawla (2009) notes the increasing visibility of women in management and key positions. With the surge in business growth, opportunities for women in India have expanded. He further suggests that women are naturally adept at networking and communication, excelling at multitasking, as evidenced by those who efficiently manage both businesses and families.

Babaria and Chedda (2010) highlighted that educated women in India advocate for equal opportunities and increased societal recognition. They are venturing beyond the confines of their homes with the determined goal of achieving significant positions in business through hard work, determination, perseverance, and competence. Evangelia Marinakou's (2014) study indicates that women exhibit talents equal to those of their male counterparts, displaying skills considered more effective and crucial in the hospitality industry. They are recognized as caregivers, possessing superior communication abilities, adaptable to supportive behaviors, and more adept at managing intense competition and adapting to changes efficiently.

### **2.05 Theory of Occupational Aspirations**

Gottfredson (1981) is a prominent figure in the development of the theory of occupational aspirations. In her work titled "Circumscription and Compromise: A Developmental Theory of Occupational Aspirations," she identified six key observations that served as the foundation for her theory:

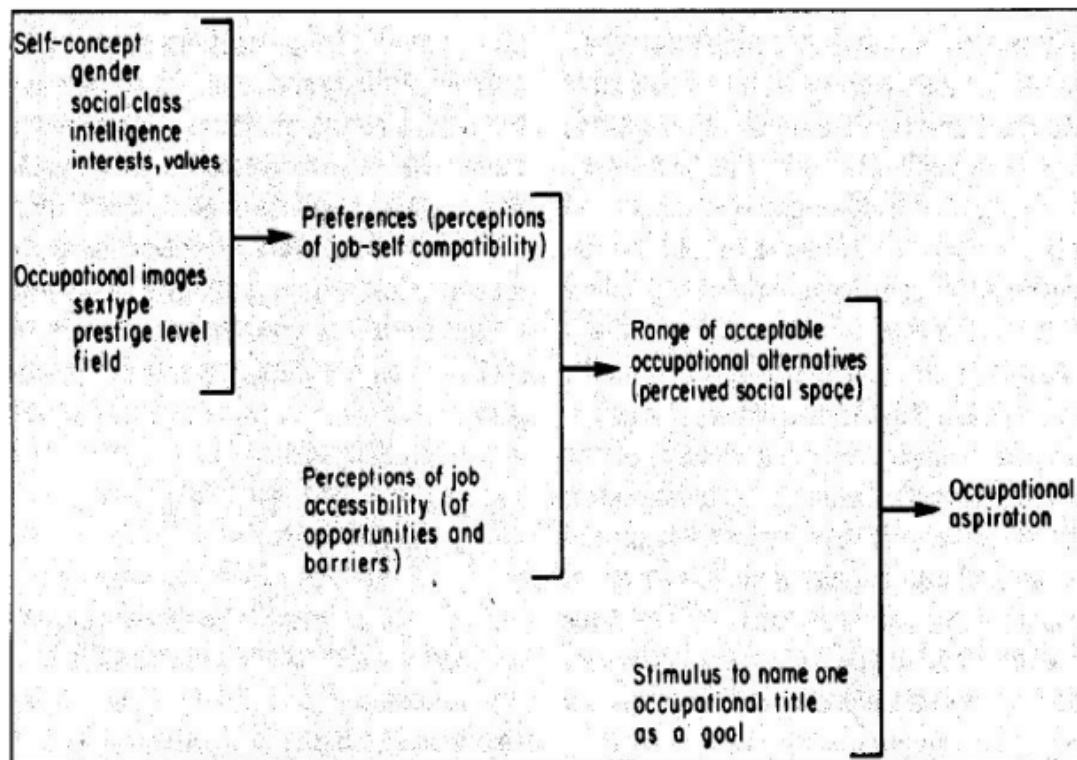
1. Prevailing psychological theories on vocational choices primarily focus on either the developmental process or the content of these choices. While some address how individuals make career decisions, others concern themselves with which professions are selected.
2. Despite the general acknowledgment of the significance of socioeconomic background and intelligence as critical predictors of occupational aspirations, these variables are often overlooked or downplayed in favor of weaker predictors, such as the values and interests of young individuals and their parents. The importance of elements like social class, intelligence, and gender is frequently assumed and not systematically explained.



3. Mainstream psychological theories of vocational choices are built on the fundamental premise that people aim to align their self-knowledge with the type of work they pursue. Consequently, vocational adjustment and satisfaction depend on the degree to which a job aligns with an individual's self-concept. Integrating aspects like social class and intelligence into a self-concept theory of career choice would be a logical step.
4. While the importance of self-concept might be evident to most psychologists, non-psychological perspectives on career choices tend to focus on environmental factors that steer individuals into professions regardless of their personal preferences. Psychological theories, on the other hand, pay little attention to the environmental contingencies, some of which are likely connected to social class, intelligence, and gender. Creating connections between these psychological and non-psychological perspectives can result in a more holistic comprehension of the evolution of career aspirations.
5. Research and theory have predominantly centered on vocational development during high school and college, despite the acknowledgment that self-concept begins developing earlier. Furthermore, aspects of vocational selection, such as preferences for the level of masculinity or femininity in jobs, appear to be well-established during adolescence.
6. While some major theorists have recognized the importance of compromise in career decisions, vocational theories have generally overlooked the specific compromises individuals encounter in their professional journeys and how they manage them. This is a complex area with limited available evidence, but exploring this theoretical terrain may yield valuable insights.

Gottfredson employed a social system perspective alongside psychological approaches in her research. She established a connection between self-concept and occupational perceptions, leading to the perception of compatibility between oneself and certain professions (preferences) and the perception of access to job opportunities and barriers. These factors contribute to the range of viable career options (perceived social space), which, coupled with the stimulus to identify a specific job title as a goal, ultimately leads to occupational aspirations (as shown in Figure 2.1). She defined occupational aspiration as "the single occupation identified as the best choice at any given time. As perceptions of compatibility and accessibility change, an

individual's assessment of the best alternative may also shift, even if the social space remains stable." In later modifications to her theory in 1996, Gottfredson suggested that individuals make slight compromises concerning their interests, prestige, and gender roles, with greater compromises related to prestige and significant compromises related to interests. Gender roles were usually the last aspect to be compromised.



**Fig. 2.1: Relations among theoretical constructs;**

Source: (Gottfredson, 1981)

Watson and Stead (2006) argued that "career theories are a reflection of the era in which they were developed" and highlighted the necessity for continuous refinement to align with the evolving macro environment. While the fundamental concepts of "theories of content" and "theories of processes" have evolved over time, researchers have recognized the need for theories to consider both content (characteristics and context) and process (development and interaction). Several preceding theories, such as trait and factor theory, personality theory, developmental theory, work adjustment theory, theory of circumscription and compromise, social learning career theory, and social cognitive career theory, have encountered censure for their failure to sufficiently consider matters concerning socio-economic status, women, and various ethnic groups. In reaction, fresh theories have emerged to confront career development issues for individuals from these diverse contexts (Patton & McMahon,

2014). These new theories have also integrated specific career advancement issues related to women and have emerged over the last two decades (Minor, 1992).

The objective here is not to delve into the details of any specific theory but to provide context for understanding the position of women in management.

### **Theory of Work Adjustment:**

The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) was originally formulated in two phases during the 1960s and 1970s by Lofquist and Davis, and it was subsequently refined by Dawis (2002). TWA presents a developmental model that describes the ongoing interaction between individuals and their work environment. It is commonly known as the theory of the correspondence between individuals and their work environment, treating career development as an ongoing process of adaptation and adjustment. TWA primarily emphasizes the match between the individual's needs and the demands of the work setting in relation to satisfaction (Leung, 2008). This theory encompasses two crucial components: "satisfaction" and "satisfactoriness." The theory posits that an individual's tenure in a specific work environment is jointly predicted by their level of satisfaction and the environment's satisfactoriness.

The robustness or strength of TWA is evident in the diverse set of assessments created to evaluate the factors linked to the theory, such as requirements, preferences, competencies, capabilities, fulfillment, and matching indicators. Collectively, TWA aims to elucidate career development and satisfaction by considering the correspondence between individuals and their environments. The theory maintains that differences between men and women on the achievement scale are minimal and, in many cases, represent unreliable and inaccurate bases for assessments.

### **Gottfredson's Theory of Career Aspirations:**

One of the initial and notable frameworks addressing the role of gender in career aspirations is Gottfredson's (1981) developmental model. This model is particularly relevant for women due to its concepts of circumscription and compromise, which are tied to socialization and gender roles. It elucidates how women determine a range of acceptable occupational alternatives. The theory underscores the influence of early-life socialization and cultural training, which shape an individual's perceptions of power and the type of work typically associated with men and women. Gender-specific socialization is believed to manifest in the hospitality industry (Nzioka, 2013).

The model also outlines the impact of feedback from the environment on women's self-perceptions and occupational choices, as well as the barriers and opportunities present in the environment (Minor, 1992 as cited by Thomas, 2005). In a later update of the theory, Gottfredson (2005) examines the interactive relationship between inherent genetic tendencies and external influences. Beyond mere limitation, the career development process for women incorporates a necessary "compromise" in reaction to external circumstances and restrictions. Due to their multiple roles, women often need to adjust their occupational preferences to align with what is achievable in the real world.

### **Gender Role Congruence Theory**

This theory underscores the persistent belief, held by both men and women, that women should take on a larger share of household chores. Understanding the concept of gender role congruity is crucial for comprehending biases against female leaders and the phenomenon of the glass ceiling (Thomas, 2005). In people's perceptions, there are inconsistencies between the qualities they associate with women and the requirements they see for leadership roles. Typically, communal traits are linked to women, while agentic qualities are attributed to men (Eagly & Karau, 2002). While it's commonly assumed that women's underrepresentation in higher-level positions is due to their lack of commitment, in reality, it often results from women seeking a balance between work and personal life (Thomas, 2005). Stereotypical views that women are better suited for non-leadership roles (Oakley, 2000) have a negative impact on their career progression and performance.

Another perspective suggests that women's attitudes and behaviors are influenced by the uneven distribution of men and women in various job roles, along with the impact of structural factors and opportunities. Mayer's (2001) research delves into the organizational environment to understand how women operate, concluding that their career success is contingent on organizational conditions and access to challenges that allow them to enhance their skills and reap rewards. Successful managers are often associated more with male figures than female figures because of perceived traits such as self-reliance, emotional stability, a desire for responsibility, leadership capabilities, straightforwardness, and knowledge (Rajan & Krishnan, 2002). In today's rapidly evolving global economic landscape, workplace culture may no longer necessitate the emulation of traditionally masculine skills. Instead, there may be a shift towards more team-oriented work environments, where women have increased opportunities to thrive.

**Protean and Boundaryless Career Models**

Over the past decade, two fresh outlooks on careers have emerged and gained popularity in the realm of organizational literature. The protean career, advocated by Hall (2002), is driven by the individual's self-directed vocational actions, aiming for subjective career success. Those embracing this model are committed to continuous learning and actively seek out challenges. On the other hand, the boundaryless career, introduced by Arthur (1994), characterizes a career that is not reliant on traditional structures but instead emphasizes "physical mobility," involving actual job, organization, and occupation changes, and "psychological mobility," signifying the willingness to forge work-related relationships across various organizations. This theory centers on multi-level analyses of both objective and subjective career dimensions, encompassing aspects like flexibility, mobility, opportunity structure, organizational position, and the work environment while downplaying the dependence on organizational promotions and predefined career paths (Briscoe et al., 2005).

Individuals who adopt a protean career attitude rely on their personal values to navigate their career path, taking a self-directed approach to professional development. Conversely, those who don't adopt this attitude are more likely to seek external guidance. These two interconnected but distinct constructs are expected to have a mutual influence in an individual's career journey. When applied to the lives of contemporary women managers, referred to as "solid citizens" by Briscoe and Hall (2006), who manage their careers based on personal values and exhibit psychological mobility but not physical mobility (boundaryless), this combination helps meet societal expectations regarding career advancement, marketability, or work-life balance (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). Boundaryless careers are more about learning than adhering to traditional age-related career paths and are applicable to a broader range of employees (Broadbridge, 2008). Women managers today, the researcher argues, exhibit a protean attitude, driven by growth and achievement rather than job security. They are adaptable and progress through their career cycle while expecting fulfilling personal relationships, as well as organizational commitment and support. Although the initial research didn't uncover variations between genders, a study conducted by Inceoglu, Segers, Bartram, and Vloeberghs (2008) indicates that women are more inclined toward values and are guided by personal ethics compared to men. Moreover, Sullivan and Arthur (2006) suggest that women might be more adaptable on a

psychological level, while men could be more adaptable on a physical level, possibly due to psychological and social differences.

### **Kaleidoscope Career Model**

Mainiero and Sullivan developed the Kaleidoscope Career model in 2005 to illustrate how men and women conceptualize and navigate their careers today. Like a kaleidoscope, one's career is dynamic and adaptable to life's changes, allowing individuals to modify their careers to fit evolving circumstances instead of letting organizations dictate their lives. The model highlights three fundamental elements—authenticity, balance, and challenge—and underscores that the emphasis on these elements shifts throughout an individual's life (Broadbridge, 2010). Men generally follow a linear career pattern, focusing on challenges first, followed by self-concerns, and ultimately aiming for balance and interpersonal relationships. Women, on the other hand, make career choices from a relational perspective, considering how their work impacts the people in their lives. Consequently, their career paths tend to be more intricate than those of men, potentially involving career breaks or transitions driven by family-related reasons as they seek a satisfying equilibrium between work and family life. Cabrera's (2009) findings support this model, emphasizing that women, particularly in mid-career, adjust their career aspirations to achieve more flexible schedules (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2007).

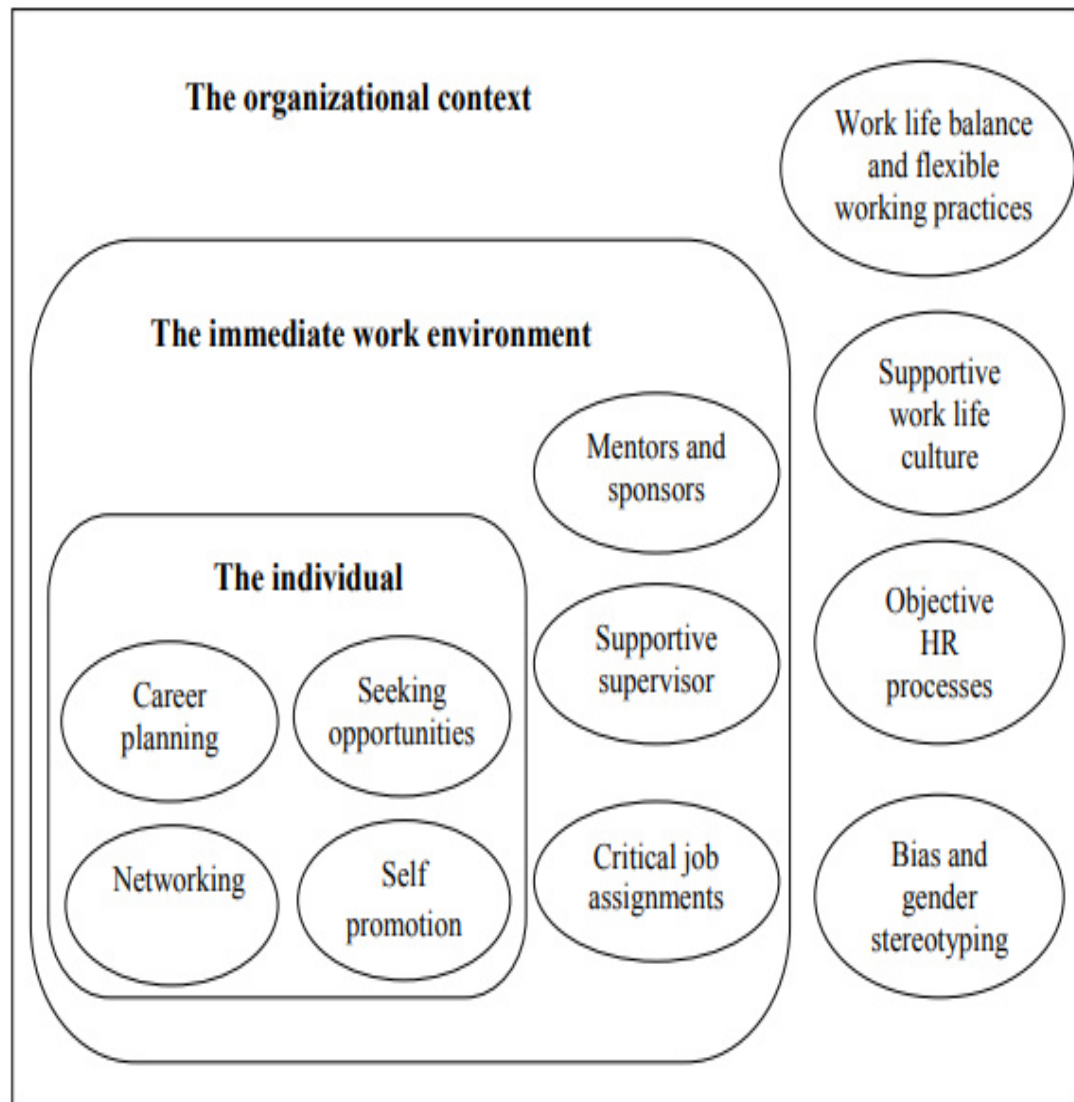
### **Career Development Phase Model**

O'Neil and Bilimora (2005) introduced a model that outlines the development of women's careers across different life stages. They identified three key factors - women's family responsibilities, their positions in higher organizational levels, and the significance of relationships in women's growth and development - that justify focusing on women's career trajectories. The model identifies three age-related phases in women's careers. In the first phase (ages 24-35), women are driven by a desire to achieve, self-motivated to succeed, and seek opportunities to make a meaningful impact. They exhibit an internal locus of control, believing in themselves and their ability to overcome challenges within the organization. Phase two (ages 36-45) sees women's careers taking on various forms, such as structured or emergent, and they tend to have an external locus of control. Their career paths are influenced by external factors, and they become more aware of organizational issues. This is the life stage where women often need to make definitive choices regarding their commitment to

their careers and family responsibilities (O'Neil & Bilimora, 2005). In the third phase (ages 46-60), women often shift their focus towards contributing to organizations, families, and broader communities, aiming to make a positive impact on others (Broadbridge, 2010). This model illustrates how women's career priorities shift from an internal to an external locus of control as they progress through different stages of life and proves valuable for understanding the realities of women's career paths.

### **Career Progression for Women (Women's Career Development) Model - Contest and Sponsorship Pathways**

Ines Wichert (2013) from the Kenexa High-Performance Institute (KHPI), a subsidiary of IBM, presented a women's career development model that emphasizes three primary dimensions: the individual, the immediate work environment, and the organizational context. Within this framework, there are four essential behaviors that individuals should demonstrate to enhance their prospects for career advancement: career planning, career development (including networking and mentoring), seeking opportunities, and effective self-promotion. Two pathways for career advancement are based on measuring promotions and progress within the organizational hierarchy. The "contest pathway" is primarily individual-based, while the "sponsorship pathway" is organizational-based and is instrumental in career progression. This model comprises three levels and eleven critical components that significantly influence the career advancement of women professionals. The middle level involves access to three vital career resources: supportive supervisors, crucial job assignments, and mentors and sponsors. The third level addresses the work-life culture and objective HR practices, which are essential in addressing gender stereotypes and biases that often hinder women's progress into senior roles.

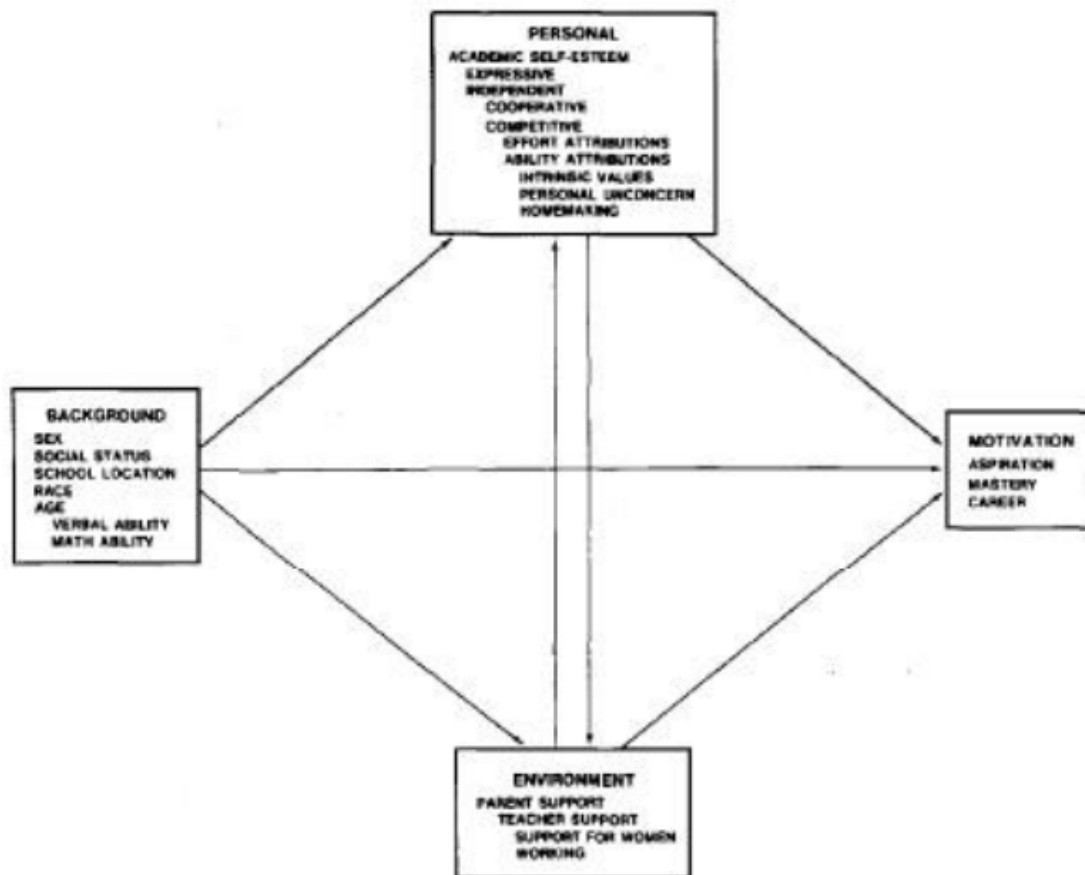


**Fig. 2.2 : Kenexa model of career advancement**

### **2.06 Farmer's Career and Achievement Motivation Model for Women and Men**

Farmer presented an all-encompassing model in 1985 that integrates three separate groups of influences: Background, personal, and environmental. These influences are targeted at three primary aspects of motivation: (a) aspirations, (b) mastery, and (c) career commitment. Notably, Farmer's research revealed a particularly strong impact of Background factors on aspirations when compared to their influence on mastery and career commitment. Subsequently, in 1997, Farmer recommended the application of self-efficacy theory as a guiding framework for addressing women's career development (Farmer, 1997).





**Fig. 2.3: Farmer's Conceptual model for testing the contribution of Background, Personal, and Environment factors to three dimensions of motivation: aspiration, mastery, and career.**

Source: Farmer, H. S. (1985)

### 2.07 Social Cognitive Theory

The foundations of the theory of social cognitive behavior can be traced back to the book "Animal Drive and Learning Process," authored by Edwin B. Holt and Harold Chapman Brown in 1931. They postulated that all animal behaviors are driven by the fulfillment of their psychological needs related to emotions and desires (Holt, 1933). In 1941, Miller and Dollard revised Holt's social learning and imitation theory, introducing four key elements: cues, drives, responses, and rewards. They also included social motivation as a driving force, which incorporated the concept of imitiveness (Miller & Dollard, 1941).

Albert Bandura, one of the most cited and influential psychologists of all time, made significant contributions to the development of the social cognitive behavior theory

throughout his career. He proposed that "psychological procedures, in any form, can impact self-efficacy levels and strengths." He suggested that "expectations of personal efficacy stem from four primary sources of information: performance achievements, observational experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states." Bandura explored the relationship between different modes of learning (enactive, vicarious, and emotive), perceived self-efficacy, and changes in behavior (Bandura, 1977). In 1981, Hackett and Betz examined the application of Bandura's self-efficacy theory to the career decision-making process. They conducted a study with male and female undergraduate students, discovering that women generally had higher self-efficacy expectations for careers traditionally associated with women and lower self-efficacy expectations for male-dominated occupations (Hackett & Betz, 1981). In 1989, they realized that their theory couldn't fully explain career behaviors (Hackett & Betz, 1989). Following this, Romac (1990) introduced the social cognitive theory of career decision-making.

### **2.08 Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)**

While SCCT is rooted in Albert Bandura's general social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), it closely aligns with the perspectives of Hackett and Betz. Serving as a direct extension of social cognitive theory, SCCT highlights cognitive, self-regulatory, and motivational processes that go beyond fundamental learning and conditioning. It integrates three essential factors from the broader social cognitive theory: (1) self-efficacy, (2) outcome expectations, and (3) personal goals. These elements play pivotal roles in career development, enabling individuals to exert personal control. Among these, self-efficacy has been extensively examined in literature concerning career development (Hackett & Lent, 1992; Lent et al., 1994; Locke & Latham, 1990; Swanson & Gore, 2000). In this context, self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability "to organize and execute actions required to achieve specific performance outcomes" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Lent et al. (2000) proposed that SCCT could offer valuable insights for research focusing on the career progression of women and minority groups.

The previous "Self-Efficacy Model" developed by Hackett and Betz (1981) sought to elucidate the elements influencing the formation of self-efficacy expectations in women. They expanded upon Farmer's (1997) concept of internal and external barriers, developing their own model encompassing internal barriers (low self-

efficacy expectations) and external barriers (discrimination and sexual harassment). They concluded that internal barriers are modifiable, while external barriers can be managed. Their work was driven by the observation that differences in access to learning experiences could help understand the continued underrepresentation of women in traditionally male-dominated career fields (Betz, 2007). While investigating women's career obstacles, Swanson (1997) advocated the application of SCCT to study these barriers, stating it was the most promising model for establishing connections between barriers and other vital career-related factors outlined in SCCT (Raif, 2004).

### **2.09 Post 2000 Developments in Career Aspiration**

Following the year 2000, many authors conducted studies to examine the connection between career aspirations and various related variables. These variables included work-role significance (McClintock-Comeaux, 2007), career orientation in relation to women's educational aspirations and vocational attitudes (Battle & Wigfield, 2003). Research indicated that career-oriented attitudes might help reduce the rate of women leaving the workforce after having young children, as women's career aspirations assisted them in managing their responsibilities in both work and personal life (O'Brien et al., 2000; Marks & Houston, 2002). The studies also looked into factors such as family responsibilities (O'Brien et al., 2000), expectations regarding women's roles as mothers (Marks & Houston, 2002), and expectations associated with different occupations, encompassing educational prerequisites and career rewards (Beal & Crockett, 2013).

In their research, Tang, Pan, and Newmeyer (2008) explored elements impacting the vocational ambitions of secondary school students. Their study, based on the social cognitive career theory, demonstrated that girls displayed greater interest in occupations that involved working with people, creativity, helping others, and self-expression. They illustrated the intricate interplay between self-efficacy, learning experiences, interests, and outcome expectations in students' career development processes.

Nevertheless, researchers like Fassinger (1990) argued that using single-item measures to gauge career orientation failed to capture the extent of women's aspirations regarding their chosen careers. She recommended that "future models should differentiate more clearly between women entering traditional fields

committed to excelling and those entering nontraditional fields without aspiring to high levels of achievement in those areas" (p. 457). To address Fassinger's concerns about the measurement of career orientation, O'Brien (1999) devised a measure of career aspiration, addressing the gap in existing literature. His scale became widely adopted for measuring women's career aspirations. The model has been used to measure women's career aspirations multiple times (O'Brien & Fassinger, 1993, O'Brien, 1996, and Gray & O'Brien, 2007). In 2007, the model expanded to include leadership aspirations and educational aspirations as sub-scales, which were subsequently utilized in various research studies (Thompson & Dahling, 2010; Fisher, Gushue, & Cerrone, 2011; Strauss, Griffin, & Parker, 2012; Laschinger et al., 2013). All these studies and their outcomes underscored the need for a multidimensional assessment of career aspirations in the research literature.

### **2.10 Career Choice / Career Aspiration Studies in India**

In India, Agarwala (2008) delved into the factors influencing career choices among management students. The research indicated that "capabilities, skills, and competencies" were the most critical element, and the role of "fathers" significantly affected the career decisions of Indian management students. Although collectivism was the dominant cultural value, there were instances where students demonstrated individualistic tendencies in specific contexts, guided by a protean perspective. Diwan, Minj, Chhari, and DeCosta (2013) carried out a survey that spanned 792 first-year medical students from both public and private medical schools in Madhya Pradesh using a cross-sectional approach. Central India. Their study compared the motivations and career aspirations of rural and urban medical students, utilizing variables such as financial incentives, prestige, security, altruism, parental influence, and personal ambition to measure motivation and aspiration. Results indicated statistically similar motivations and career aspirations between students from public and private schools.

According to Wang and Staver (2010), career aspiration emerged as the most influential factor shaping students' future work experiences. Bindu and Padmanabhan (2016) assessed the degree of career aspiration among 250 higher secondary school students in Kerala, using Grewal's (2011) Career Aspiration Scale. Findings revealed that, on average, higher secondary school students had a moderate level of career

aspiration. Gender, locality, and socio-economic status were identified as factors influencing the level of career aspiration.

In another investigation by Dudovitz, Chung, Nelson, and Wong (2017). Concentrating on disadvantaged minority teenagers in Los Angeles from 9th to 12th grade, the study explored career ambitions in connection with feelings of hopelessness, self-confidence, substance usage, violence, and risky sexual behavior. Results suggested that adolescents with high career aspirations were less likely to experience hopelessness and exhibited higher self-efficacy. Career aspirations linked to professions with advanced educational requirements were associated with reduced alcohol and substance use, as well as decreased engagement in risky sexual activity.

Mtemeri (2017) explored the factors influencing career choices among high school students in Zimbabwe's Midlands Province, involving 1010 students and 20 teachers. Findings highlighted the substantial influence of family members, immediate and extended, schools, school locations, and peers on students' career choices. The OECD (2013) also reported that, in general, girls tended to have more ambitious aspirations than boys, often aiming for high-status careers. However, career choices were sometimes affected by stereotypes, with certain fields perceived as more masculine or feminine.

### **2.11 Women's Career Aspirations in Hospitality and Tourism industry in Mumbai**

Numerous studies in the literature have explored women-friendly workplace policies that often overlap with family-friendly working policies. These measures are crafted to extend specific advantages to female employees, promoting a harmonious integration of their professional and personal lives (Bardoel et al., 1999). These initiatives encompass several elements, including the accommodation of extended work hours, flexible scheduling, part-time opportunities, contract-based employment, and remote work arrangements (Bryson et al., 1998). They also address issues such as leaves, maternity benefits, paternity leave, and the provision of amenities such as childcare centers or assistance programs (Scheibl and Dex, 1998; Bryson et al., 1998). Furthermore, some policies focus on assisting women in advancing their careers by providing training and development programs that help them attain leadership roles.

While these policies are generally perceived as an advantageous investment by human resources (Blau et al., 2002), there are challenges associated with their gradual

implementation. Monitoring the flexibility offered to employees can be complex, potentially resulting in additional costs for human resource management to adjust work schedules. However, research indicates that investing in these policies is a profitable strategy for organizations seeking to retain female talent. The success of an organization greatly hinges on the caliber of its workforce and how effectively their potential and talent are harnessed to achieve organizational objectives (Nankervis & Debrah, 1995). Therefore, organizations must establish effective human resource management practices and policies that aid in the recruitment, selection, and retention of skilled employees, ultimately contributing to the accomplishment of organizational goals.

Literature emphasizes the significance of women-friendly HR policies and their impact on women's performance within the industry, with one of the most notable benefits being cost reduction. High turnover rates resulting from work-life balance issues can incur substantial costs. For example, According to Abbot et al. (1998), the estimated expense associated with staff turnover concerning work-life balance might reach up to \$75,000 per employee.

Chiu and Ng (2001) conducted a survey of organizations in Hong Kong to assess the prevalence of women-friendly policies and their impact on employees' quality of work life. Their findings indicated that less than 10% of organizations implemented only half of these policies.

Moreover, Freundlich's research (2004), as reported by the Equal Opportunities Commission, revealed that women-friendly policies led to a 20% reduction in the cost of absenteeism associated with stress-related sickness or emergency leave for childcare.

A study by Megha Gupta (2015) suggested that the absence of a supportive work environment and the lack of women-friendly policies in the hospitality industry discouraged parents from encouraging their daughters to pursue careers in this sector.

The implementation of these policies serves as a valuable tool for retaining employees, attracting skilled professionals, and recruiting well-trained and qualified staff. It also fosters employee morale, commitment, and loyalty (Women and Equality Unit, 2003). Other researchers such as Sparrowe and Popielarz (1995) and Kuepper (2005) found that although women possessed essential academic qualifications, a

significant proportion attributed the slow progression of their careers to a lack of relevant training and skills. Thus, deliberate development and training were considered essential for improving intellectual capabilities and communication skills.

Dr. Kathleen Farrell (2015) asserted that the benefits for organizations are not solely about numerical flexibility but are also connected to functional flexibility and work-life balance initiatives. Educational reasons and leisure time were identified as crucial factors in work-life balance issues. Consequently, the study concludes that hotels need to adopt more organizational supports, such as work and care assistance, to help employees achieve a better work-life balance.

To foster gender diversity, various international hotel chains have introduced women-friendly practices. For example, Starwood Hotels & Resorts has introduced more part-time work options for female employees, while Hyatt Hotels provides significant incentives, including days off and complimentary room nights. Marriott India has implemented a 40-hour workweek with hour-long lunch breaks.

However, these policies often face challenges related to parental expectations, especially in a traditional society. Despite these hurdles, the economic advantages of employing more women have become evident, including improved teamwork, emotional intelligence, and communication skills (Kuepper, 2005).

The aspirations of women in peri-urban areas are influenced by their confidence in achieving their career goals. Younger women, in particular, are less inclined to engage in manual labour and aspire to hold white-collar government jobs. These aspirations are further bolstered by a good match between their skills and the labour market, safe transport options, and accessible public spaces. Nevertheless, deep-seated attitudes at home, including those of parents, spouses, and in-laws, play a pivotal role in determining the extent of women's education, employment, and career advancement opportunities.

According to a report by PwC, more women are pursuing career advancement opportunities with 73% actively seeking such opportunities. Yet, concerns about the impact of starting a family on their careers persist, with 48% of new mothers feeling overlooked for promotions upon their return to work.

Jhangiani (2016) underscored the presence of various internal and external challenges that impede women's professional ambitions. To explore these hindrances, a research

investigation was carried out, utilizing the survey panel on the female workforce conducted by the Korean Women's Development Institute. from 2007. The research revealed that educational credentials had a notable impact on the career aspirations of female managers. Policies promoting a balance between work and personal life were identified as crucial in maintaining the motivation of women in managerial roles. Discriminatory practices within personnel management seemed to amplify the career aspirations of women. Furthermore, women with high ambitions appeared to be less swayed by the norms prevalent within organizations.

An article published by Anumeha Chaturvedi & Varuni Khosla (2015) in The Economic Times highlighted several women-supportive measures embraced by international hotel chains. Starwood Hotels & Resorts endeavors to improve gender diversity by introducing more options for part-time work aimed at women. Hyatt Hotels offers incentives such as time off and complimentary room nights. Marriott India maintains a 40-hour workweek with strict adherence to scheduled shifts. Accor, a global hotel group, established an association named WAAG, comprising 2,500 men and women globally. Notably, this association advocates for a mentoring program, communication with role models, career progression, and collaborated with various other groups. Sunjae Sharma, the General Manager of Grand Hyatt Mumbai and the Area Director for West India, shared the implemented policies at Grand Hyatt Mumbai. These policies encompass the provision of a staff recreational area, relaxed grooming standards for female employees, and the empowerment of service associates to independently make decisions to enhance the guest experience. These initiatives are designed to inspire individuals to make a meaningful impact in the industry and achieve their personal objectives.

In the hospitality sector, the implementation of HR policies that support women could attract more women, allowing organizations to leverage their talent and potential for mutual benefit. Such policies have proven effective, as research from the fourth World Women Work Congress in Berlin highlights the economic significance of employing a higher percentage of women. The presence of women in organizations enhances team dynamics, emotional intelligence, and communication skills (Kuepper, 2005).

Women residing in peri-urban areas demonstrate more confidence in achieving their aspirations compared to their rural counterparts. Younger women show a preference



for white-collar jobs in the government sector due to the security they provide. As girls receive more education, it is crucial to align their skills with the demands of the labour market and create safe and accessible public spaces to facilitate the realization of their aspirations. However, societal mindsets, particularly those within households, significantly influence the extent of women's education and career opportunities.

According to Gitanjali Chaturvedi (2019), a considerable percentage of women express confidence in fulfilling their career aspirations and actively seek opportunities for advancement. Nevertheless, concerns about the impact of starting a family on their careers persist, with some new mothers feeling overlooked for promotions and special projects upon returning to work. Additionally, a substantial portion of women believes that enhancing gender diversity requires more effort from their employers.

Jones (2006) observes the growing involvement of women in employment post World War II, transitioning from conventional female-centric positions to unconventional, male-dominated professions. This development has prompted investigations into women's career goals, impacted by diverse elements including gender, economic status, ethnicity, parental job and educational background, and parental anticipations.

Desirae Domenico (2006) highlights the disparity between girls' academic performance and their subsequent success in the labour market, particularly in fields like science, engineering, and technology. External influences such as family and societal perceptions of gender-specific jobs significantly impact the vocational or career decisions made by females.

To address the decline in women's aspirations within the workplace, PwC emphasizes the importance of fostering greater transparency and implementing supportive policies. Jhangiani (2016) underscores the need to identify internal and external obstacles that impede women's managerial aspirations, emphasizing the importance of educational qualifications and work-life balance policies in motivating women managers.

Joohee Lee (2016) observes that while many young Indian women harbor ambitious professional aspirations, the reality of unemployment, particularly in urban areas, poses significant challenges to the realization of their dreams. Despite growing confidence and self-belief, young women in India remain aware of the obstacles they are likely to face in the workplace.

Anita Rajan, the chief operating officer at Tata Strive, acknowledges the demand for skilled women employees in the hospitality industry. She highlights the need for comprehensive training, particularly in soft skills, and emphasizes the role of parental involvement in supporting girls' career development.

Despite the advancements in the 21st century, women still face discouragement from pursuing careers in the tourism industry, primarily due to safety concerns associated with travel and work. Factors such as parental apprehension and societal fears contribute to the perpetuation of these misconceptions.

### **2.12 Factors Influencing Women's Career Aspiration in Hospitality and Tourism industry in Mumbai**

Various factors, including gender, socio-economic status, race, parental occupation and education, and family expectations, have a notable impact on the career aspirations and choices of women in the hospitality and tourism sector (Khallad, 2000; Watson et al., 2002). Scholars have investigated these factors to comprehend their roles in shaping career-related behaviors and influencing professional decisions (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996; Rojewski & Yang, 1997). In recent times, there has been an increasing recognition of the influence of social and economic class, racial background, and gender regarding the decision-making and advancement in careers (Stitt-Gohdes, 1997).

**Influences of Gender:** Previous studies emphasize the powerful impact of gender on vocational behavior, highlighting how women historically faced limited career options due to factors like sexism and discrimination (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). Research from the 1970s showed that girls had more constrained career aspirations compared to boys, with women usually choosing from a more limited selection of professional fields (Looft, 1971a; Mendez & Crawford, 2002; Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000). Additionally, family support was found to favor male children's educational and career goals over female children's (Heins et al., 1982). However, more recent research suggests that women now exhibit a wider array of career interests and greater flexibility in their professional objectives (Francis, 2002; Mendez & Crawford, 2002).

**Parents' Occupation and Educational Level:** The occupation and educational level of a woman's parents significantly impact her career aspirations and choices (Burlin, 1976). Research indicates that children's career goals are closely tied to their parents' professions, particularly the mother's occupation, as daughters often emulate their

mothers' career paths (Burlin, 1976). Similarly, the educational attainment of both parents has been linked to their daughters' career choices (Signer & Saldana, 2001). A mother's employment status and educational achievements tend to strongly influence the career goals of female students (Burlin, 1976).

**Educational Advancements:** Increasing levels of education have been associated with higher rates of female workforce participation (Nieva & Gutek, 1981; Schiffler, 1975). The increasing presence of women in colleges and universities demonstrates changing social norms and greater female interest in career aspirations (Bronstein, Black, Pfenning, & White, 1987; Tinklin et al., 2005). However, despite these advancements, women's earnings still lag behind their male counterparts, particularly in traditionally male-dominated fields (Peter & Horn, 2005).

**Influences of Race:** Research examining the influence of race on career aspirations has yielded contradictory findings (Mau & Bikos, 2000). Some studies propose that specific minority communities, particularly those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, encounter greater obstacles in pursuing their career objectives (Farmer, 1985; Gottfredson, 1981). Others indicate no significant racial disparities in career aspirations (Arbona and Novy, 1991).

**Socioeconomic Status:** Socioeconomic status has also been identified as a significant factor in shaping career aspirations, with individuals from higher-income backgrounds tending to pursue more ambitious career paths (Sellers et al., 1999). Notably, lower-income individuals often face more obstacles that constrain their professional aspirations (Gottfredson, 1981; Farmer, 1985).

**Career Theories and Definitions of Success:** Recent career theories acknowledge the contextual and relational factors that influence women's career decisions and development, signaling a shift from traditional linear career paths (Gilligan, 1982; Powell and Mainerio, 1992). Additionally, the definition of career success has evolved to include both subjective and objective dimensions, accounting for personal satisfaction alongside external achievements (Dai and Song, 2016).

**Gender Stereotypes and Career Choices:** Gender biases continue to exert a notable influence on the formation of career aspirations, with men and women often being drawn to occupations perceived as embodying traditional masculine and feminine qualities, respectively (Cejka and Eagly, 1999). Women's expression of emotions in

the workplace has also been observed to be subjected to different standards and expectations compared to men, impacting their leadership roles and career progression (Brescoll, 2016).

Female leaders may face challenges related to the suppression of their emotions, often leading to perceptions of detachment and unresponsiveness. Even small displays of emotions can draw significant criticism, especially when coupled with positions of authority. Authentic emotional expression has been found to alleviate emotional labour for both genders, ultimately enhancing job satisfaction, particularly among women. This situation can create a predicament where women may refrain from openly expressing their feelings due to the fear of reinforcing stereotypes, leading to punishment when they do express themselves. Conversely, suppressing emotions can increase the emotional burden for women, hindering authentic leadership and contributing to a lack of female role models.

Changes in gender-related social norms over the past three decades may have influenced women's career aspirations, aligning them more closely with those of men (Farmer and Chung, 1995; Leung and Harmon, 1990). Despite an increasing number of men and women entering various occupations, evidence suggests that their career trajectories diverge soon after entry. Despite the growing experience and education of working women, concerns persist regarding the presence of an invisible barrier to advancement in the workplace.(Hoobler et al., 2009). India's economic gender gap has been a cause for concern, with the country ranking low in the efforts to reduce gender-based inequality (World Economic Forum, 2014). Recognition of gender diversity and inclusivity has emerged as a crucial factor for businesses aiming to recruit top-tier talent and encourage innovation. There is a growing demand for the utilization of "feminine leadership," highlighting the distinctive qualities that women bring to leadership roles. Contemporary research on gender discrepancies in leadership approaches has reinforced the significance of adopting such an inclusive strategy

Research conducted at the individual level has highlighted gender differences in attitudes and behaviors concerning career development, contributing significantly to overall career achievements. Furthermore, studies have emphasized the importance of support from supervisors and colleagues in enhancing managerial effectiveness, particularly for women in the Indian workforce. From an organizational viewpoint, there is a growing need to identify effective strategies that can foster the advancement

of women's careers. To address this, it is essential to consider the cultural context of different countries, as cultural norms can influence attitudes toward the progression of women in the workplace. Societies vary in terms of gender roles and expectations, with some exhibiting more rigid gender norms and others displaying more flexible gender roles, resulting in different levels of gender equality. In the Indian context, characterized by collectivism and significant power distance, cultural factors are expected to influence gender dynamics in the workplace and the promotion of women into leadership roles.

These multifaceted elements collectively influence the career ambitions of women in the hospitality and tourism sector in Mumbai, emphasizing the significance of tackling societal, cultural, and gender-related obstacles to encourage gender parity and inclusiveness in the professional environment.

### **2.13 Research Gap and Significance of the Present Study**

A research gap denotes an aspect in a specific field of study that lacks substantial or thorough research. It signifies an uninvestigated or insufficiently explored area that has not been adequately addressed or studied in the current body of literature. Identifying a research gap is crucial in understanding the limitations of current knowledge and in recognizing the need for further research to fill the void.

When researchers encounter a research gap, it indicates that there is a particular aspect of the topic that has not been thoroughly examined, leading to unanswered questions or unexplored areas of inquiry. These gaps can manifest in various forms, such as a lack of recent studies, insufficient data on a specific subtopic, or unaddressed issues within a particular context or demographic group.

Recognizing research gaps is essential for advancing the knowledge and understanding of a field. It highlights the need for new studies that can aid in developing a more thorough and intricate comprehension of the topic at hand. Researchers often use identified research gaps as a basis for formulating research questions and designing studies that can address the unanswered or underexplored aspects of a given field, thereby adding to the collective understanding within that field.

In light of the above discussion, it is crucial to review current research efforts and identify knowledge gaps that justify the proposed research task. Specifically,

understanding the career aspirations of women in the hospitality and tourism industry holds immense significance, particularly in the context of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) area.

The statement emphasizes the importance of conducting a thorough examination of the existing research landscape and identifying areas where there is a lack of information. This step is necessary to provide a solid foundation for the proposed research project. The primary focus is on comprehensively understanding the career goals and ambitions of women working in the hospitality and tourism sector. The significance of this investigation is especially pronounced within the specific setting of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) area. By emphasizing the need for this research, the statement highlights the critical role that an in-depth understanding of women's career aspirations can play in addressing any existing gaps and shaping future directions in this field.

**Current Research Efforts:**

The existing research landscape likely encompasses studies related to the hospitality and tourism industry. However, these studies may not exclusively focus on women's career aspirations in the MMRDA area. Some research may delve into broader gender issues, workplace dynamics, or employment trends within the hospitality and tourism sector.

It signifies that the current body of research likely includes various studies related to the broader field of hospitality and tourism. However, these studies may not be solely concentrated on exploring the specific theme of women's career aspirations within the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) area. Some of the existing research works might address broader themes such as gender dynamics, workplace culture, or general employment patterns in the field of hospitality and tourism. In other words, while the existing research may touch upon relevant areas, there might be a gap in the specific investigation of the career goals and ambitions of females employed in the hospitality and tourism field in the MMRDA area. Thus, there is a need to focus on this particular aspect to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by women in this industry within the MMRDA region.

**Knowledge Gaps:**

1. **Geographical Specificity:** A critical gap exists in the lack of research specific to the MMRDA area. While studies on women in tourism and hospitality may be available globally or in other regions of India, understanding the unique challenges and opportunities for women in this particular metropolitan region remains largely uncharted.
2. **Industry Perspective:** Existing research primarily adopts a broad approach, which may not be suitable for the unique industry landscape within the MMRDA area. Identifying the factors that drive or hinder women's career aspirations within this local context is essential.
3. **Career Trajectories:** A gap exists in comprehending the specific career trajectories, growth prospects, and barriers faced by women in hospitality and tourism roles within the Mumbai MMRDA region. This knowledge is instrumental in formulating targeted policies and strategies.
4. **Social and Cultural Factors:** Exploring the role of social and cultural factors unique to the region, such as societal expectations and cultural norms, in shaping women's career aspirations is of utmost importance. These factors may significantly differ from those observed in other parts of the country.

**The research project aims to address these knowledge gaps by:**

- **Geographical Focus:** Concentrating specifically on the MMRDA area, the study offers insights into the challenges and opportunities encountered by women in this urban environment.
- **Industry-Specific Insights:** By engaging with local industry stakeholders and professionals, the research provides industry-specific perspectives on women's career aspirations, shedding light on the nuances that influence their career choices.
- **In-Depth Career Analysis:** The research delves into the career trajectories of women in the hospitality and tourism industry, identifying key milestones, barriers, and facilitators.
- **Cultural Context:** It explores the role of cultural and societal factors unique to the region, allowing for a deeper understanding of how these factors shape women's career decisions.

The planned research presents a notable chance to offer valuable and sector-specific insights that can significantly influence the career paths of women working in the hospitality and tourism industry. Concentrating on the specific framework of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) area, the study aims to illuminate the distinct obstacles and prospects encountered by women in this particular geographical and professional environment.

One of the key strengths of this study lies in its localized approach, which recognizes the importance of understanding the intricacies of the MMRDA area. By honing in on this specific region, the research can capture the nuances of the local culture, societal norms, and economic dynamics that shape the experiences of women in the hospitality and tourism industry. This context-specific analysis is essential in providing targeted and tailored recommendations that can effectively address the challenges faced by women in their career journeys.

Moreover, the industry-specific focus of the study acknowledges the distinct characteristics and demands of the hospitality and tourism sector. This field is known for its unique work culture, customer-centric approach, and dynamic operational challenges. Understanding how these factors intersect with gender dynamics is critical in developing strategies that can foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment for women. By delving into the intricacies of this industry, the study aims to uncover the specific barriers that hinder women's career progressions and identify potential interventions that can promote their professional advancement.

The findings of this study are expected to serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, industry leaders, and other stakeholders invested in promoting gender equality and fostering diversity within the hospitality and tourism sector. By offering an in-depth analysis of the challenges faced by women in the MMRDA area, the research can inform the development of targeted policies and initiatives that cater to the specific needs of women in this industry. These initiatives can encompass a wide range of areas, including mentorship programs, career development opportunities, work-life balance initiatives, and advocacy for gender-inclusive workplace policies.

Furthermore, the insights derived from this study can contribute to the broader discourse on gender equity and empowerment in the professional sphere. By highlighting the experiences of women in the hospitality and tourism industry, the research can draw attention to the systemic issues that contribute to gender disparities



in various sectors. This broader perspective can encourage a more comprehensive dialogue on gender equality, prompting further research and action to address gender-based challenges in the workforce.

In summary, this study's localized and industry-specific approach has the potential to yield meaningful insights that can inform targeted interventions and policy reforms. By focusing on the unique context of the MMRDA area and the distinct challenges faced by women in the hospitality and tourism sector, the research aims to contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and supportive professional landscape for women, fostering their career aspirations and promoting gender equity within the industry.