Between Restriction and Liberation:

Women's Career Aspirations in Terms of Culture Perspectives in Asia

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Highlights

- Previous studies examined women's career development in Asia.
- Previous studies examined cultural concepts, especially gender stereotypes, and its association with woman's career aspirations.
- This study found women's career aspirations enabler factors.
- This study found women's career aspirations barrier factors.

Abstract

Women in Asia still experiencing difficulties in flourishing their career aspirations optimally due to strong cultural perspectives. This systematic literature review aims to explore the factors that influence Asian women's career aspirations in various cultural settings. PRISMA 2018 was used in this study. Through Scopus, ScienceDirect, Springer, and Ebsco Host databases, we found eight articles that met the inclusion criteria after passing the article selection. This study resulted women's career aspirations in Asia are influenced by internal enabler factors (including self-efficacy, career orientation, abilities and knowledge, need for usefulness, desire for family cohesion, and marriage prospects expectation), external enabler factors (including education, social support, contextual support, and cultural support), internal barrier factors (including fear of marriage prospects, beliefs on choice restrictions, and awareness of domestic roles), and external barrier factors (including social pressure, gender stereotype, peer conformity, financial hardship, and career consequences). Future research to examine women's career aspirations in the wider cultural setting of various countries in Asia is needed.

Keywords: Career Aspirations; Female; Asia; Systematic Literature Review; PRISMA

INTRODUCTION

The career aspirations of women in Asia are still influenced by a patriarchal culture that places gender roles in society. In India, career aspirations and professional success of women are considered as a reflection of family relationships that are not good (Powell & Mainiero, 1992), because women do not prioritize their families. Not only that, social factors such as crime rates also influence. In 2018, sexual harassment occurred in 3.6% of the total female sample in India, which is one of the drivers for women to limit career aspirations (Siddique, 2018).

Nearly half of women entering the workforce leave their jobs, even before reaching the secondary level, due to work or non-work issues. Quite a number of women in Japan and South Korea have decided to postpone marriage and have children for the sake of their career success (Chun et al, 2019). Traditional cultural values of Korea, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Iran place women's role more in household and child-rearing duties. Chun, Lee, Lee, Lee, Leem, and Kim (2019) stated that one of the things that limits the consistency of women's career development is the period of childbirth. Some studies reported that women who stopped working after marriage were lower than women who stopped after giving birth. Women in South Korea and Japan who take maternity leave and give birth experience a greater impact on their careers than after marriage (Chun et al, 2019). Then, gender stereotyped roles directly or indirectly influence work processes, career selection, and work performance of women in the medical field (Chun et al, 2019). Meanwhile, in Qatar, women's career aspirations are influenced by the opinions of future husbands, family, and the internalization of gender dynamics (James-Hawkins et al, 2020), where women decide to limit themselves based on perceptions of what is permissible or not allowed by parents.

However, several internal and external factors that drive Asian women's career aspirations are found in a number of literatures. One of the main factors driving women's career advancement is easy access to education and training (Saadin, 2016). In Qatar, there is a knowledge-based shift, where educational and employment opportunities for women do increase, but there are structural limitations such as job opportunities, salary inequality, or work flexibility (James-Hawkins et al, 2016). Women's education in Malaysia has increased in recent times, but their careers are hampered by several factors, including gender stereotypes, lack of personal ability to balance work and personal life (Saadin, 2016), and family responsibilities (Subramaniam et al, 2014). Although many women have the same educational qualifications and skills as men, they often do not get the same job opportunities. According to Laddha (2020), in 2019, women in India hold only 15% of board seats in the 158 largest companies.

Even though women have certain roles and responsibilities, these factors should not become a barrier for women in the public sector (Saadin, 2016). Contextual support plays an important role in the formation and achievement of individual career goals, especially for women who have multiple roles in their career life and are responsible for their families (Lent et al., 2019). Chawla and Sharma (2016) also empirically established that the support provided by family and partners strengthens women's psychological well-being. However, not all cultural backgrounds have good contextual support and social support. Several countries in Asia that are known to have high contextual support for women's careers are Japan, Singapore, and South Korea (Kang & Kaur, 2018). Even though there are many factors that hinder careers, a handful of women in various countries try to actualize themselves and balance work and life.

However, there is still very little research on women's career aspirations from a cultural perspective, especially in Asia. There is a lot of literature that examines career development, but

so far there has been little research on career aspirations specifically for women. Even though the urgency for research on women's career aspirations is very high, especially nowadays, many women demand that they be able to have a good career life, based on several factors such as economic instability, future uncertainty, and fears of heavy dependence on their husbands. because of the outbreak of divorce cases everywhere. In Asia, more research on women's career aspirations has been conducted in China. While outside Asia, research on women's career aspirations is dominated by the United States and Australia. Most countries in Asia adhere to a collectivism social system, which still prioritizes collective decisions rather than personal decisions (Sawitri & Creed, 2017). Therefore, career decisions for women in Asia are heavily influenced by this collectivism. However, until the time this research was conducted, research exploring the factors driving and inhibiting women's career aspirations in Asia, based on cultural values, was still limited.

For this reason, a systematic literature review aimed at exploring the factors driving and inhibiting the career aspirations of women in Asia from a cultural perspective was conducted.

METHOD

Objectives

This systematic literature review was conducted to explore the factors driving and inhibiting women's career aspirations in Asia. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2018 Version were used as research guidelines.

Search strategy

A search for literature published in the last five years, between 2019 and 2023, was conducted through Scopus, Science Direct, and Ebsco Host using a combination of keywords and Boolean logic. The keywords that the researcher uses are “career aspirations” AND (“women” OR “woman” OR “female”) AND “Asia”. This literature search was conducted from March to April 2023.

Inclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria set in this study became the parameters for selecting the literature to be reviewed. These inclusion criteria include a) articles examining the career aspirations of women in Asia; b) original research articles using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method methods; c) articles in English; d) articles published in the last five years, from 2019 to 2023; and e) fully accessible articles with full-text availability. The exclusion criteria include criteria that are the opposite of the inclusion criteria.

Data extraction

The main data extracted from each article are the name of the researcher, the year of publication, the country where the research was conducted, the research methodology which included research participants, the research design, and data collection techniques, as well as the research results showing the career aspirations of women in Asia.

Procedure

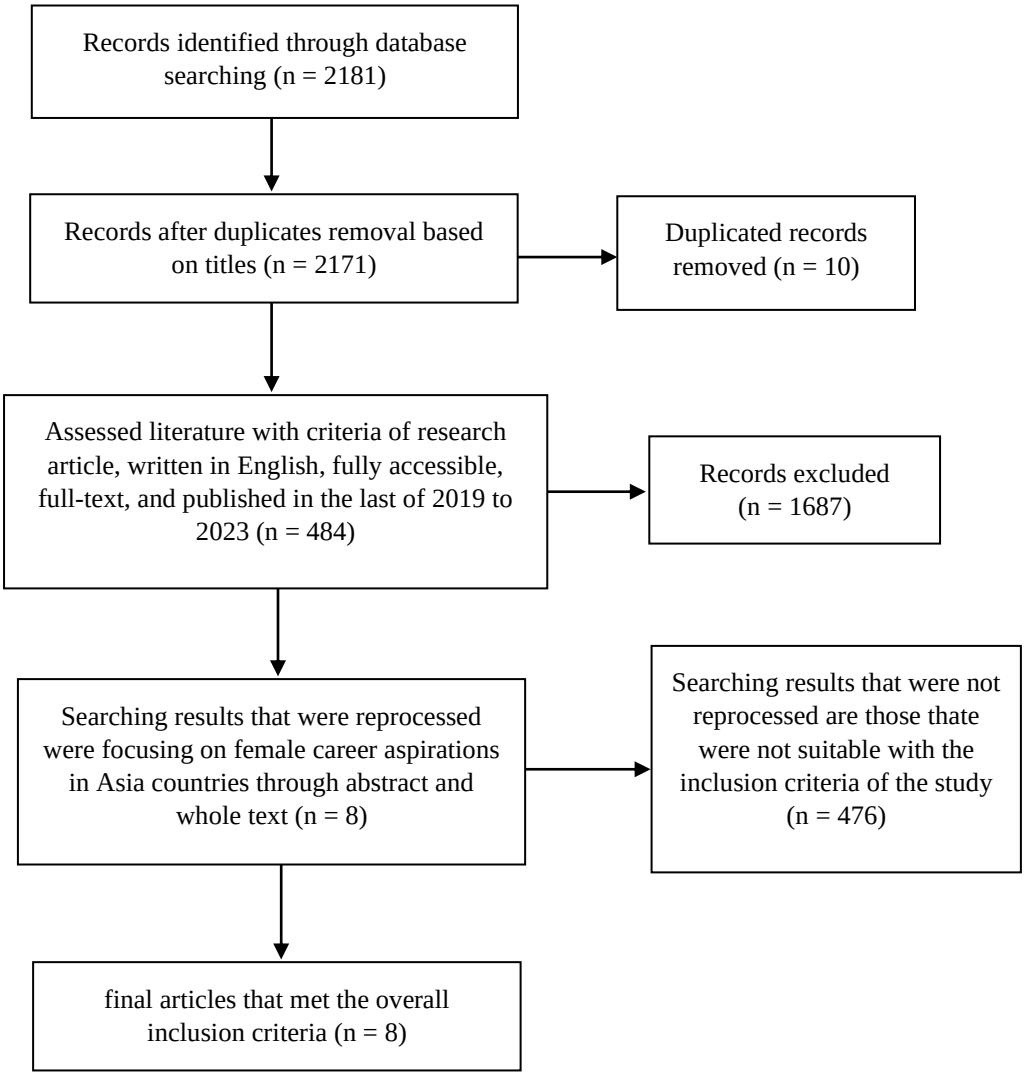

Figure 1. Flowchart in article selection

Based on Figure 1, it is known that the total number of literature obtained through four databases, namely Scopus, Science Direct, Ebsco Host, and Springer is 2181 literature. 10 of these were found to be duplicate literature and were subsequently eliminated. The remaining 2171 literature were then shortlisted. Through this selection process, 484 literature were screened as original research articles, English language articles, fully accessible articles with full-text availability, and articles published from 2019 to 2023. These 484 articles were further filtered and 8 of them can be identified as articles examining the career aspirations of women in Asia, while another 476 examined topics other than what the researchers were looking for. Therefore, these 8 articles can be claimed as articles that meet the inclusion criteria.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out through a process of discussion by researchers. The findings from this study are presented in the form of a descriptive synthesis.

RESULT

Study characteristics review

Table 1.

Data extraction result

Authors	Year	Country	Participants	Method/Data Collection	Results, Adapted to the Purpose of This Study
Raj, A., et al.	2019	India, Ethiopia	207 Indian and Ethiopian girls who received early marriage prevention program, aged 14 to 19 years and subsequent-ly either married before age 18 or canceled or postponed their proposed early marriage; 3 marital decision makers.	Qualitative, using interviews.	Internal enabler factors: 1) self-efficacy; 2) carrier orientation; 3) abilities and knowledge. External enabler factors: 1) education; 2) social support; 3) contextual support. Internal barrier factors: fear of marriage prosepects. External barrier factors: 1) social pressure; 2) financial hardship.
Grace, K., & Eng, S.	2020	Cambodia	15 female graduates between the ages of 19 to 23 years old.	Qualitative, using interviews.	Internal enabler factors: abilities and knowledge. External enabler factors: 1) social support; 2) contextual support. Internal barrier factors: beliefs on women's choice restrictions. External barrier factors: 1) social pressure; 2) financial hardship.
Somaiah, B. C., et al.	2020	Indonesia	8 women, aged 18 to 20 years.	Qualitative, using interviews.	Internal enabler factors: 1) carrier orientation; 2) desire for family cohesion. External enabler factors: education. Internal barrier factors: awareness of domestic roles. External barrier factors: gender of stereotype.
Cairns, D. & Dickson, M.	2021	United Arab Emirates	5158 students aged 15 years.	Quantitative, using questionnaires.	Internal enabler factors: 1) self-efficacy; 2) carrier orientation; 3) abilities and knowledge. External enabler factors: contextual support.

Husain, S.	2021	India	26 girls.	Qualitative, using interviews.	Internal enabler factors: quality marriage prospects expectations. External enabler factors: cultural concept.
Martins, R. S., et al.	2022	Pakistan	1219 students.	Quantitative, using questionnaires.	Internal enabler factors: 1) carrier orientation; 2) need to be useful; 3) quality marriage prospects expectations. External barrier factors: 1) gender stereotype; 2) peer conformity. 3) career consequences.
Almuk-hambetova, A., et al.	2023	Kazakhstan	14 students.	Qualitative, using interviews.	Internal enabler factors: 1) need to be useful. External enabler factors: contextual support. External barrier factors: gender stereotype.
Sellami, A., et al.	2023	Qatar	1492 students.	Quantitative, using Survey of STEM Interests.	Internal enabler factors: career orientation. External enabler factors: social support. External barrier factors: gender stereotype.

Eight articles published from 2019 to 2023 are explored in this study. One article published in 2019, two articles published in 2020, two articles published in 2021, one article published in 2022, and two articles published in 2023. The research on the two articles to be reviewed was conducted in India, while one for each in Cambodia, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Kazakhstan and Qatar. The research subjects in these eight inclusion articles were teenage to adult women.

The eight inclusion articles elaborate on the factors supporting and hindering women's career aspirations in Asia, which the researcher divides into four types of factors, namely internal enabler factors, external enabler factors, internal barrier factors, and external barrier factors. There are eight articles that mention internal enabler factors, which consist of self-efficacy (Raj et al, 2019; Cairns & Dickson, 2021), career orientation (Raj et al, 2019; Somaiah et al, 2020; Cairns & Dickson, 2021; Martins et al, 2022, Sellami et al, 2023), ability and knowledge (Raj et al, 2019; Grace & Eng, 2020; Cairns & Dickson, 2021), the need to be useful (Martins et al, 2022; Almukhambetova et al, 2023), the desire for family cohesion (Somaiah et al, 2020), and quality marriage prospects expectations (Husain, 2021; Martins et al, 2022).

Furthermore, seven articles mention external barrier factors, which consist of education (Raj et al, 2019; Somaiah et al, 2020), social support (Raj et al, 2019; Grace & Eng, 2020;

Sellami et al, 2023), contextual support (Raj et al, 2019; Grace & Eng, 2020; Cairns & Dickson, 2021; Almukhambetova et al, 2023), and cultural support (Husain, 2021).

Next, three articles mention internal barrier factors, which consist of fear of marriage prospects (Raj et al, 2019), belief on women's choice restrictions (Grace & Eng, 2020), and awareness of domestic roles (Somaiah et al, 2020).

Finally, six articles mention external barrier factors, which consist of social pressure (Raj et al, 2019; Grace & Eng, 2020), gender stereotypes (Somaiah et al, 2020; Martins et al, 2022, Almukhambetova et al, 2023; Sellami et al, 2023), peer conformity (Martins et al, 2022), financial hardship (Raj et al, 2019; Grace & Eng, 2020), and career consequences (Martins et al, 2022).

Internal enabler factors

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is one of the internal factors that influence women in their career aspirations, whether to continue their education or work. According to Raj, Salazar, Jackson, Wyss, McClendon, Khanna, Belayneh, and McDougal (2019), self-efficacy will enable a person to assess himself, develop and actualize their goals for the future, and manage their lives well. This self-efficacy also allows women to feel and judge themselves capable of achieving their goals first and delaying marriage despite resistance or rejection from their families. Likewise, according to Cairns and Dickson (2021), self-efficacy will increase one's interest and expectations in a particular field, which will then result in the choice of goals for a career in that field.

Carrier orientation

Research by Raj et al (2019) showed that women in India discussed more about types of careers that are traditionally oriented towards women's roles, such as teaching or being a teacher, cooking, or embroidering, because other types of careers require a higher level of education. Meanwhile, the research results of Sellami, Santhosh, Bhadra, and Ahmad (2019) showed that the STEM field that is applied to a scientific discipline in Qatar then becomes the career orientation of most students there. This is because the learning curriculum encourages them to explore STEM, so that interest in STEM grows and is internalized into a career orientation.

Then, Cairns & Dickson (2021), which examined career aspirations in the STEM field, also reports that students who excel in science tend to enjoy studying science and are more likely to choose science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) as an option. his career. In addition, students with higher instrumental motivation in studying science are 16% more likely to have career aspirations in STEM fields. Not only that, women also show higher career aspirations in the STEM field than men, even though these fields still tend to be considered more appropriate for men. The proportion of female students who reported STEM career aspirations was 1330 students, while there were 1140 male students. Women tend to take careers in STEM fields because they have an interest in the field.

The results of research by Somaiah, Yeoh, and Arlini (2019) on eight women in Indonesia showed that women's career orientation focuses on their ability to carry out domestic roles as well as public roles as career women. The participants still wanted to be able to look

after and take care of their family's needs, such as taking care of their parents, children and husband, while carrying out their careers.

In line with the results of the research above, Martins, Fatimi, Ladak, Jehanzeb, Saleh, Kumar, Kaleem, Saad, Akbar, Abbas, Nadeem, and Malik (2022) also proved that career orientation supports strong career aspirations. This is shown by the results of their research on 1219 medical students in Pakistan in deciding whether they will take specialist surgical education or not. It turns out that female students' decisions to become surgeons are based on their interest in becoming surgeons, the tendency to cooperate with others, intellectual satisfaction, guaranteed job security, and opportunities for research.

Abilities and knowledge

Ability is also an internal factor that supports the choice of women in India to continue their education and pursue a career. The ability possessed can encourage a person to give the best performance and performance in academics or career, and other people can assess these abilities. Women who are judged to have abilities, skills, or competencies tend to be supported, especially by their parents, to continue their education. However, women who do not show good performance or performance, and are not academically inclined, will be advised to leave school and marry (Raj et al, 2019).

Furthermore, according to Grace and Eng (2020), knowledge about careers and career planning, including choosing further education and majors that are in line with career aspirations, are several things that influence individual career success. The results show that graduates who have little knowledge of their intended career tend to have few choices in their careers, working for low wages, or taking jobs that do not require special skills, such as selling fish, selling in the family shop, or being money exchangers.

In addition, accomplishments and achievements that prove one's abilities will increase one's interest and aspirations in related career fields. The results of Cairns & Dickson's research (2021) showed that career aspirations in the STEM field are positively related to achievement in science. This defines that the higher a person's achievement in a certain field, the higher his career aspirations in that field, and vice versa.

Need to be useful

Martins et al (2022), in their research results stated that the most common factor motivating medical students to take up surgery is a personal desire to help others and because surgeons are considered to be a career that is beneficial to society.

Almukhambetova, Torrano, and Nam (2023) stated that women's success in achieving education and careers is also based on the value of wanting to be useful in a social environment, self-actualization, and altruistic motivation, namely motivation to prioritize serving, helping, or helping others. sincerely, without expecting anything in return.

Desire for family cohesion

Somaiah et al (2020) state that the desire to get closer to family is a factor driving the career aspirations of young women in Tulungagung, Indonesia, to work in the country. The experience of being left behind by their parents migrating to work abroad as a workforce that occurred when they were young made these women not want to be separated for the second time from their families and wanted to get the warmth of the family that was not felt before.

Quality marriage prospects expectations

The people of Assam, India, hold a cultural value that girls who are highly educated and successful in their careers will improve the image and dignity of the family, which will also increase girls' hopes for quality marriage prospects (Husain, 2021). In addition, research by Martins et al (2022) also shows something similar, that one of the factors motivating students in Pakistan to pursue a career in medicine is the prospect of a better marriage (Martins et al, 2022).

External enabler factors

Education

Education is a factor driving career aspirations that can expand opportunities for self-development for women (Raj et al, 2019). In addition, according to Somaiah, et al (2019), higher education owned by women will increase career aspirations. Education is a provision for them to start the career they want.

Social support

Social support in this synthesis of results includes family support, peer support, even support from prospective grooms and prospective in-laws (Raj et al, 2019; Grace and Eng, 2020). The results of Raj et al's research (2019) proved that women who have self-efficacy to continue their education or develop their careers even need family support, especially their parents. Family support can be shown in various ways, including providing or presenting assistance to their daughters in doing schoolwork. For women who are already planning a marriage, the support of future husbands and future in-laws remains a significant factor even if the woman, who is encouraged by her parents, chooses to postpone marriage first in order to pursue her dreams. Sellami et al (2023) also stated the same thing, that support and encouragement from family are important factors that increase women's career aspirations.

Contextual support

Contextual support refers to the support provided to create a contributive learning and career environment, such as an effective curriculum, adequate facilities, and supportive programs. Raj et al (2019) and Grace and Eng (2020) revealed that programs that facilitate women's desire to continue or complete education are needed. The program in question, for example, is a program that provides tutoring, self-development classes, mentors, even funds for continuing education and accommodation needed.

The same thing was stated by Almukhambetova et al (2023), that women's success in education and careers is influenced by the existence of career guidance and a supportive learning environment. The results of Cairns & Dickson's research (2021) reinforced the influence of contextual support on women's career aspirations. Cairns & Dickson (2021), in their research on career aspirations in the STEM field conducted in the United Arab Emirates, revealed that contextual support such as government policies in developing the STEM field had a positive influence on the development of women's career aspirations for STEM. In addition, effective teacher teaching methods in schools also support women's career aspirations.

Cultural concept

Husain (2021), in the results of his research on 26 women, stated that the parents of participants from various economic backgrounds in Assam, India, where the research was conducted, were committed to supporting their daughter's education and career to maintain respectable family values. This shows that cultural concepts that support a certain cultural background can encourage women's career aspirations.

Internal barrier factors

Fear of marriage prospects

Some women in India are worried about their marriage prospects if they choose to develop a career, one of which is by continuing their education (Raj et al, 2019). This is because of the notion that if they continue their education, they will get older, and women who are old in age no longer look attractive and desirable to marry. In addition, fears of being trapped in romantic relationships and pre-marital sex which will impact their marriage chances and tarnish the honor of their families also influence the decisions of women in India to pursue education that can support their career goals.

Beliefs on women's choice restrictions

Grace and Eng's research (2020) proved that women in Cambodia tend to rely on advice and direction from their parents in choosing a career, which shows that women are still subject to the cultural belief that women's choices are limited. As a result, women in Cambodia more often choose and pursue the type of career their parents chose, rather than their own.

Awareness of domestic Roles

Somaiah et al (2019) in the results of their research on women in Tulungagung, Indonesia, stated that women view domestic roles such as taking care of the household, parents, children, and husband as equal to career roles. According to them, getting permission from a partner is important to decide to take a particular career. Women will also always consider their domestic role in deciding career choices. Worries about not being able to carry out their domestic roles optimally because they have to work have made a number of women choose to give up their desire to have a career.

External barrier factors

Social pressure

Raj et al (2019) stated that women in India are vulnerable to pressure from their social environment to hasten marriage. Not infrequently, the family also puts the same pressure on women to get married soon, so that women discourage them from continuing their education or pursuing a career. Then, women who are educated and pursue their careers are considered to be difficult to marry. Not only that, opportunities for continuing education for women after marriage tend to be limited by norms, social policies, and husband's control.

Meanwhile, in Cambodia, according to the research results of Grace and Eng (2020), although women's desire to continue their education and careers is supported by self-capacity and adequate programs, values in social society view women as only having to focus on taking

care of the household and parenting influences family support in giving permission for women to continue their education or pursue a career.

Gender stereotypes

Almukhambetova et al (2023) and Sellami et al (2023) in their research on STEM careers in students in Kazakhstan and Qatar revealed that public comments were based on stereotypes of intellectual ability in the STEM field—that men are more intellectually capable in the STEM field than girls—can inhibit female students' interest in STEM. In addition, the presence of this gender stereotype can lead to self-doubt and fear of failure, as well as reduce female students' self-efficacy for careers in the STEM field.

Somaiah et al (2019) stated that female participants in their research tended to choose careers in the country because they wanted to avoid the negative stigma from society that views women who work far from their families as women who are selfish and immoral.

Likewise in Pakistan, according to Martins et al (2022), Pakistani culture is still attached to the stereotype that women must adapt to the role of 'housewife', and this plays a role in determining career choices for women.

Peer conformity

Research by Martins et al (2020) shows that peer conformity will influence career decisions. This is shown by the decision of medical students not to take surgery as a specialist because their peers do not take this specialty.

Financial hardship

To continue education, a person needs a lot of money. Financial constraints are also an obstacle for youth in India and in Cambodia, including women, to continue their education, even though they may really want to continue their education (Raj et al, 2019; Grace and Eng, 2020). In fact, this financial fragility can lead to their expulsion from school.

Career consequences

Consequences received in carrying out a particular career field are also a consideration for women to determine their career aspirations. In the study of Martins et al (2022), the probability of aggressive patient behavior and a hostile work environment prevented medical students in Pakistan from taking up surgical specialists.

DISCUSSION

This systematic literature review identified eight articles explaining the factors that influence women's career aspirations in Asia. The results of a systematic literature review show that there are four factors that influence women's career aspirations in Asia, namely internal enabler factors, external enabler factors, internal barrier factors, and external barrier factors. The internal enabler factors for women's career aspirations in Asia that were found consisted of self-efficacy, career orientation, abilities and knowledge, the need to be useful, the desire for family cohesion, and quality marriage prospects expectations. Furthermore, the external enabler factors for women's career aspirations in Asia were found to consist of education, social support, contextual support, and cultural support. Next, the internal barrier factors for women's career aspirations were found to consist of fear of marriage prospects. restrictions on women's choices, as well as awareness of domestic roles. Finally, the external barrier factors for women's career

aspirations that were found consisted of social pressure, gender stereotypes, peer conformity, financial difficulties, and career consequences.

Several previous studies suggested that self-efficacy plays a role in predicting career exploration activities, career planning, and career development (Hoppe & Fujishiro, 2015; Jeon, 2019; Lent et al, 2019; Lo, 2022). Self-efficacy is a person's belief in their abilities and capacities to act effectively, carry out or complete a task, overcome problems, and achieve goals (Zammitti et al, 2023). High self-efficacy tends to increase career aspirations. This can be proven through the research of Probst, Gailey, Jiang, and Bohle (2017), which revealed that the higher the self-efficacy, the less potential to experience negative effects of job instability on life satisfaction. This is because self-efficacy fosters an attitude of optimism and motivates a person to better access the labor market and look for a decent job. In addition, individuals with high self-efficacy tend to take responsibility, act innovatively, and understand themselves so that they will choose career aspirations according to their abilities (Pinquart et al, 2004). Career orientation was also found to be associated with career aspirations and to be a reinforcement of one's self-efficacy (Fukada et al, 2019; Argyropoulou et al, 2021; Pshembayeva, 2022; Chatterjee et al, 2023).

However, local cultural values can suppress or reduce a person's self-efficacy or career orientation, one of which is gender stereotypes. For example, in China, although women have as good math abilities as men, traditional gender role values view women as unfit for careers in any of the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, because these fields are 'specialized specifically for men' causes women to have low self-efficacy, thus losing interest and motivation to pursue careers in the STEM field (Chan, 2022). Therefore, gender stereotypes can be concluded to be one of the most common inhibiting factors for most women in determining and fighting for their career aspirations, shown by the results of the systematic literature review described above. Especially in Asia, where the view that women should only take care of the family, do the housework, and raise children is still embedded in the societal paradigm. Many previous studies stated that women's career aspirations were influenced by the internalization of social norms related to gender dynamics, one of which was the research by James-Hawkins, Al-Attar, and Yount (2021) conducted in Qatar. The results of this study state that women in Qatar have considerations for careers based on what they may and may not do according to gender norms such as roles that are suitable for women. In addition, these women, in their academic journey, experienced restrictions on suitable majors. At work, they are also not allowed to have long working hours so they can still take care of the family. In Japan, gender stereotypes also influence the careers of female medical students (Fukuda and Harada, 2010). Meanwhile, supported by the results of research by Park, Minor, Taylor, Vikis, and Poenaru (2005) in Canada, the notion that a surgeon's career orientation contradicts a satisfying family life also hinders many female medical students from pursuing career aspirations.

Not only in Asia, differences in the treatment of women in employment are also found in other continents or countries, for example in Brazil and the United States. Research by Staniscuaski and colleagues (2023) reported that there is discrimination experienced by Brazilian women who have careers in science, who are also mothers at the same time. This discrimination is motivated by gender stereotypes and misunderstandings in the meaning of the mother's role. Scientist women who have become mothers, in the academic field, are considered to have low professional commitment and dedication. Women's awareness of their domestic role also affects the reduced participation rate of women in employment. Mehra, Alspaugh, Dunn Franck, McLemore, Keene, Keshaw, and Ickovics (2023), in the results of their research

conducted in the United States, stated the same thing, even though the gender discrimination and stigmatization that women receive in employment is inseparable from racism—where black women, in pregnancy and child rearing, experience differential treatment in employment.

Interestingly, this gender stereotype even has an impact on STEM job vacancies which increase over time, but inversely proportional to the number of people who want to fill the 'empty seat'. Schelfhout, Wille, Fonteyne, Roels, Derous, Fruyt, and Duyck (2021) stated that industrial areas around the world are experiencing difficulties in filling STEM vacancies due to a decrease in the number of applicants, which is also influenced by the gender gap, shown by the participation of women diminishing returns in the STEM field. In addition, according to McGuire (2021), gender stereotypes related to STEM abilities have important consequences for the involvement and motivation of women to have careers in the STEM field in the future. Research also shows that science ability is seen as innate by gender, and it is men who are 'born' to succeed in the "STEM" field. This is a view that has consequences that can undermine women's self-efficacy and career motivation in the STEM field, which is in line with the opinion of Chan (2022), that traditional gender roles influence women's self-confidence and confidence in determining the career to be pursued.

However, it turns out that for some women, this gender stereotype that conflicts with career aspirations does not make them feel afraid or backward, because they have very strong self-efficacy and career orientation. This supports the results of research by Raj et al (2019) on women in India and Ethiopia which revealed that even though they are surrounded by traditional gender stereotypes, women with self-efficacy and firm career orientation remain determined to fight for their careers. Sendze (2022), who examined the experiences of black women in the United States who have careers in STEM fields, also reported similar research results. It was stated that even though they were also influenced by racial discrimination—not solely because they were women—these black women took and chose to stay in a career in the STEM field, one of which was because of their 'vocation'.

Talking about careers in the STEM field, for which we get quite a lot of research, several countries that focus on STEM advancement actually support and facilitate the achievement of career maturity for students in that field, regardless of gender. For example, the United Arab Emirates, as explained by Cairns and Dickson (2021) in their research results. Support provided by schools, certain institutions, or the government to support personal or collective progress is referred to as contextual support. Cairns and Dickson (2021) stated that curriculum and learning programs that refer to STEM are heavily emphasized on students in the United Arab Emirates. This is done to grow and increase students' interest and career orientation in the STEM field so that the country can excel in this field. Likewise in the United States, which is represented by one related study. Jobs in the STEM field are considered to offer a welcoming work environment and opportunities to grow and innovate in the United States (Sendze, 2023). Conversely, a person's interest or career orientation towards a particular field tends to be lower if they are not conditioned to understand and explore that field. This was recorded in the results of research by Kiernan, Walsh, and White (2022) in Ireland. They stated that nationally, women in Ireland participate in science and health more than men, but not in technology and engineering, because they are not exposed to subject matter related to these fields. Furthermore, Kiernan et al (2022) stated that students' career choices are influenced by the availability of subjects, career guidance, access to employment, and internship experience.

Not only contextual support, social support, especially from family, teachers, mentors, and peers is also very much needed by someone, to pursue and develop a career. Kiernan et al

(2022) state that social persuasion from family, friends, or role models is needed to develop a career. Especially women from several cultural backgrounds, for example India, whose society still believes that women's choices are limited (Raj et al, 2019), including in terms of education and career. Therefore, they tend to follow the choices or decisions of their parents regarding what majors or careers they will take. Meanwhile, if a woman already has a groom, she must also follow the choices of her future husband and future in-laws. Opinions, choices, expectations, and expectations of parents or future husbands and future in-laws are always a consideration for women in deciding their careers. Not a few children who then follow the choice of their parents, even though they do not like their parents' career choices. This will result in career discrepancies between children and parents (Sawitri et al, 2021). Conversely, there are also girls who get inspiration for their career aspirations from home. Previous research stated that women's career orientation is influenced by the family, because the family provides insight regarding future careers (Ennes et al, 2022). This insight can be in the form of a daughter's knowledge about their parents' work or their parents' views regarding a particular job, and can also give meaning to the career choices that parents expect then become the children's expectations as well.

However, there is also a certain cultural background that actually encourages women to achieve higher education and achieve career success, because this will increase the dignity and honor of the family in society. For example, in an area in India called Assam (Husain, 2021). They are of the view that the titles of 'good daughter' and 'good family' can be earned by success in education and career. This is also in line with one of the results of Raj et al's (2019) study, which also shows that family support is very meaningful for women's career development. In fact, a handful of girls who have self-efficacy and strong career orientation can be likened to 'can't do anything' without the support of their parents, both physically and emotionally. As a result, they have to give up their dreams and follow their parents' advice to get married, because for some traditional cultural backgrounds in Asia, getting married, wading through life with a husband, and having children are the highest attainments for women.

However, actually not a few parents have changed their minds—which then allow their daughters to continue their education and pursue careers because they see their daughter's performance, performance, and expertise. Women who are considered to have good abilities and achievements, especially in the academic field, tend to be more permitted by their parents to continue their education and pursue careers (Grace & Eng, 2020; Chan et al, 2022). Therefore, education is also a factor driving women's career aspirations (Domenico & Jones, 2006; Saadin, 2016). Domenico & Jones (2006) revealed that the more educated a woman is, the greater her tendency to be involved in career activities. In addition, currently education is also a quality career qualification and provides greater opportunities for students to develop their career aspirations.

Social support is the opposite of social pressure. In Pakistan, gender stereotypes, family pressure, and peer conformity are the main barriers for female medical students who initially wish to specialize in surgery (Inam et al, 2020).

Not only thinking about career interests and full support, both in terms of cultural context, social environment, and contextual, career consequences are also a consideration for a woman to choose a particular career. A study by Martins et al (2022) shows that female surgeons in Pakistan are vulnerable to violence and harassment from aggressive patients, so this is a basic consideration for women in medical majors to take specialist surgery programs. This is corroborated by the results of research by Shaikh and colleagues (2020) which reported that

one in three health workers in Pakistan experienced physical violence (6.6%) and verbal violence (33.9%) in the last six months.

Research on women's careers in the STEM and health fields is the research that most researchers find. In addition, researchers have not found other career fields that might produce a unique comparison of findings. The factors driving and hindering women's career aspirations described above are most likely also felt by women outside Asia, given the fire of history and the ins and outs of the struggle for women's rights which has not yet been extinguished, especially in countries that have still consider it reasonable to discriminate against women. It's just that, in Asia which still stands out with its traditional cultural concepts, especially in the context of gender—especially since some cultural backgrounds still uphold patriarchal values—women experience great turmoil in determining their career aspirations and fighting for their dreams, because as we know from In this study, the cultural perspective is very closely related to women's career aspirations. There are not a few women who end up having to 'throw away' and 'forget' their dreams because their parents have pushed them to get married. Perhaps what Asian women face is a little different from countries that prioritize the value of personal freedom, where women can determine their career aspirations quite easily and receive great support, both culturally, socially and contextually. It would be a very interesting finding if further research was conducted on how Asian women, from very strong cultural backgrounds, where most people still judge women based on their traditional gender roles, choose to fight for their dreams, or how an Asian woman who dreams big must accept the fact that he is not supported to realize his dream. Researchers highly recommend these studies for the future.

Researchers, in addressing the dynamics of Asian women's career aspirations that are tied to cultural values, especially gender stereotypes, argue that women are actually endowed with a special role that men don't have—giving birth, breastfeeding, serving their husbands with love and respect at the same time. the same, as well as raising children with the 'maternal skills' full of affection that is indeed gifted to them. Women, in their youth, are indeed filled with dreams about the future, and that is by no means forbidden. Women always have the same rights to aspire, have higher education, and achieve career success as men. However, when women are ready to marry and have a family, marriage and family will often be the number one priority for their own awareness, but that does not mean they cannot continue their education or career. There is nothing wrong with the choice of continuing to have a career outside the home or having a 'career' at home. If you choose a career outside the home, you need to know that working women can increase financial stability and family welfare. Meanwhile, if they choose a 'career' at home, women can focus more on caring for the family and accompanying child development, so that family functioning can be more optimal. Whatever the choice, women must ensure that they are truly ready for that choice, consider the consequences they might face, and seek solutions to at least minimize these consequences. Of course, women also always need warm support from their husbands for their choices. Husbands are of course allowed to have an opinion on these choices, but in making a decision, intensive, assertive and conducive joint discussions must be carried out. The dual roles of career women often lead to confusion and fatigue for them in carrying them out, but precisely because of that, men must be able to carry out the roles of husbands and fathers who are supportive and reliable—not only by always taking the time to be fully present physically and emotionally in family, but also trying to provide the best facilities to reduce the difficulties of family members, especially the wife. Apart from husbands, parents are also advised to be more objective and open in listening to children's wishes, as well as making decisions by involving children in a democratic manner.

Indeed, cultural values will continue to be internalized in the perspectives, perceptions and attitudes of the local community, including in viewing women's career aspirations, and it is quite difficult to free oneself from the entrenched gender stigmatization. Therefore, research on family intervention in deciding the career aspirations of girls in a democratic manner is needed.

It should be noted that research on the career aspirations of women in Asia, as mentioned above, is still very small, so the exploration carried out in this research is not too deep. That's why further research on the career aspirations of women in Asia is highly recommended, especially in exploring the driving and inhibiting factors described above.

CONCLUSION

We found some factors that support and hinder women's career aspirations in Asia which include internal enablers factors, external enablers factors, internal barrier factors, external barrier factors. Career aspiration study of women in Asia is still limited, so we cannot explore the factors further obviously. We recommend the factors exploration to be examined furthermore.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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