CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF UPPERCLASS STUDENTS AT OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

By

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This study is concerned with the career development of upperclass students at Oklahoma State University. The primary objective is to determine what factors are influential concerning a person's career choice.

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CHAPTER I

PROBLEM DEFINITION

Introduction

Statement of Problem

This study will address the research problem of the career development of college students, and will attempt to answer the following research question: "What are the major sociological factors that have influenced the development of career aspirations of college students."

In discussing career development, Henning and Jardim (1979) point out:

> Three researchers in the field of career development, Super, Tiedman, and O'Hara, have all held that the process of career choice is crucial to future career success or failure, but they took special note of how little research has been directed at discovering what actually takes place at this point in an individual's life. Within this limitation, they generally accepted that career choice results from the interaction of a number of important variables: an individual's predisposition, intelligence, skills and talents, socio-economic background and needs, and a progressive testing of the environment. They also suggested that for many people large elements of chance and of unconscious motivation are involved: individuals cannot choose from what they do not know exists or have no way of knowing what they would like (p. 172).

Henning and Jardim (1979) acknowledge that no one has yet been able to determine which of these variables combine to result in a career choice. As a consequence, while the college years are acknowledged to be a critical period in career development, very little is known about

this period. Even less is known about career development among college women.

As Henning and Jardim (1979, p. 172) state, "The extra variable of being a woman and its reflection in whether one is even encouraged to prepare for the job has hardly been considered." Klemmack and Edwards (1973) found that a modest amount of explained variance in female career aspirations suggested that the process of acquiring a desire for a career is extremely complex for females in contrast to males.

This study will focus on what influences significantly affect the career choices of college students. It will specifically focus on college students. It will specifically focus on college men and women at Oklahoma State University in the fall of 1981. Therefore, the problem to which this paper is addressed is: "What are the major sociological factors that have influenced the development of career aspirations of Oklahoma State University students?"

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this proposed investigation represents an attempt to add to the comparatively meager body of knowledge concerning career development, especially of females. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the educational and occupational equity for women by encouraging more women influential models. Finally, it is the intent of the researcher to point out the need for change in occupational scales to include traditionally female occupations.

Statement of Objective

With this exploratory research, the intent is to identify the major

sociological factors that influence the career development of Oklahoma State University students. After identifying the factors that are influential in career development,the objective of this study is to emphasize their importance and to change those programs that are ineffective.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature available concerning influences in career development is very limited. There was very little reference to career development in card catalogs and indices. The books on careers had to be sifted through for any pertinent information. The majority of the review of literature came from articles in sociological journals. Out of this conglomerate of literature, several factors emerged as important; they are as follows: (1) family, (2) sex and intergenerational mobility, (3) race, (4) role models and counselors, and (5) rural/urban differences.

The most disturbing element of this literature is the fact that it is almost completely void of information concerning female career development. There is very little reference to women having (or even wanting) careers. Such exclusion is expected in older studies but appeared much more often than expected in more recent studies. Hopefully, this study will remedy that problem.

Family

There is a general consensus among researchers that families do influence educational and occupational choosing, but no one knows exactly how influential they are. Crites (1975) states:

> As the basic social and psychological unit in transmission of the culture and development of personality, the family conditions almost all responses an individual makes early in life and continues to exert control over his behavior into adolescence and sometimes adulthood (p. 77).

By the time an individual reaches college age and is ready to choose a career, how much control does the family actually have? Super (1968, p. 455) theorizes that "families either exert pressure for certain kinds of occupational choices, or the absence of such pressure contributes to the general disorganization in occupational aspiration."

Tomeh (1968) found that both parents play an important role in educational goals and occupational aspirations of those who go on to college, but the percentage of influence is slightly higher for the fathers. In direct opposition to Tomeh, McClendon (1976) found that the mother's education had a stronger direct effect on a child's education than did the father's education. Kandel and Lesser (1969) found that concordance on educational goals is higher with the mother, among both girls and boys, than with their best school friend.

Very little research addresses the direct influence, if any, of mother's attitudes, education, and occupations on their daughters' careers. Psathas (1972) stated that if income is held constant, the educational attainments of parents, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, provide a model for the child. He suggests that for daughters the fact of her mother's having worked and the type of work she did, allowing for intergenerational differences in the availability of work opportunities and the changing role of women, provides additional motivations and role models. Tangri (1972) found some evidence for role-modeling of more educated working mothers, but she also discovered that generally mothers had a negative influence on role innovation (unusual

occupational choice) of their college-aged daughters while fathers had a positive influence.

According to Rosenfeld (1978), when the mothers held jobs outside the home, at least when the daughters were fifteen, then the distribution of these mothers over occupational categories contributes more to predicting the occupational distribution of the daughters than does the father's occupational distributions. This is support for the idea that the role model and occupational knowledge and additional financial resources offered by the employed mother are even more important than the family's social position (as represented by the father's occupation alone) for the occupational destination of the daughter. When the mother does not hold a job outside the home, then the father's occupation has a stronger relationship with the daughter's occupation.

In summary, past studies indicate that there is a direct relationship between families and their children's career development. The controversy involves the amount of influence families have over their children and which parent has more influence over the child when he is ready to choose a career.

Sex-Intergenerational Mobility

Intergenerational mobility is the movement from one occupational status level to another, as it occurs between a parent and a child. Most studies have focused on the son's occupational attainment, as compared to the father's occupational status level. Lipset and Bendix (1975) found that the occupational status level of the father influences the initial status entry level of the son. Blau and Duncan (1975) have also found that there is a high rate of intergenerational mobility between father

and son; the son tends to stay at the same occupational status level the father occupied, and what movement there might be tends to be into adjacent or horizontal categories.

Although women comprised 42 percent of the labor force in 1979 (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980), comparatively little is known about female intergenerational mobility. The first comparison of male and female mobility patterns, conducted by DeJong et al. (1971), concluded that male and female mobility patterns were basically similar. But, Tyree and Treas' (1974) reanalysis found that DeJong and his colleagues had overstated the similarity of male and female mobility patterns. Tyree and Treas found that daughters as compared with sons of professional and farmer fathers were more likely to be in white-collar jobs. They also found women's intergenerational mobility through marriage (from father's to husband's occupation for married women not in the labor force) more similar to men's than women's intergenerational mobility.

Featherman and Hauser (1974) found sex differences in occupational inheritance; they examined trends in intergenerational occupational mobility by race and sex in the period 1962-1972. They concluded that while differences between races and between sexes in the intergenerational mobility process decreased over the decade, differences by sex were relatively greater than by race in both 1962 and 1972. They found that men were more likely than women to enter occupational categories similar to their father's.

There is a disagreement as to the similarity of male and female intergenerational mobility patterns. Not only is there a need for more male and female comparison studies, but the mother's occupation should also be considered in intergenerational mobility studies.

Race

Race as a sociodemographic factor also has an important role in educational and occupational development. This is pointed out by Siegal (1965) when he states:

> This handicap refers to the fact that advantages of parental achievement fail to convert to advantages for the following generation and that achieved education does not have the same impact on future occupational and income attainments for minorities as it does for whites. Moreover, socioeconomic background has a weaker influence on processes of attainment for blacks (p. 55).

There need to be more comparison studies between races concerning occupational mobility and career development.

Role Models and Counselors

Ginzberg in Career Guidance (1971) points out that:

> while informed advisors such as one's peers and especially one's family help young people to define their goals and initiate them in the ways of the institutions of our society, they frequently do not have the important information or objectivity as counselors do (p. 270).

Role expectations or occupational stereotypes greatly influence the perception of self in occupational settings. Diploye and Anderson (1975) state:

> The perceptions which an adolescent has of roles played by members of various occupations have important influence on his career choice. These perceptions may be thought of as role expectations. When an individual is at some choice point in his career development and he must arrive at some sort of decision, he uses, among other things, ideas and feelings about people who work in the occupations which he is considering. These ideas and feelings include his perceptions or expectations of the occupational role (p. 87).

As females are becoming more involved in various and diverse occupations, there is a greater need for them to view adequate occupational role models.

Plost and Rosen (1974) documented the effect of career models in the media of instruction of counseling on the career aspirations of young girls. The girls in the study tended to select occupations presented by like-sex models significantly more frequently than did the boys. Mayfield and Nash (1976) found that female professors at Texas A&M stated that their most important career development influence had been former professors. Surprisingly, none stated counselors as influential. Simpson and Simpson (1961) also found that college women were mostly influenced by potential models. They found that college women are not likely to develop a strong orientation toward a work career unless some unusually potent set of influences had been at work.

The recent studies tend to agree that role models are very important to young people deciding upon a career, but there is some disagreement as to the influence counselors have. If indeed professors furnish influential role models, then we might assume that the presence of a larger number of female professors would encourage more females. The ecological distribution of females in universities (and any other institution) could be a significant influence on women's career choices.

Rural/Urban Difference

Elder (1963) states that there is a general consensus that educational opportunities tend to be more available to urban, especially middle-class youth; rural residence, in particular, is a relatively accurate index of low educational opportunity. Pietrofesa (1975) stresses the same fact that the deficit in information, restricted range of role models, and the lack of vocational opportunities are all limitations to career development in the rural areas.

Sewell (1964) points out that he found rural girls were as likely as urban girls of similar intelligence and socioeconomic status to aspire to whatever limited opportunities that are available to women. He concludes that rural girls do not differ greatly from urban girls in vocational and educational aspirations.

Recognizing that our society is increasingly mobile, it will be curious to see if there are any rural/urban differences nowadays. Since the sample is completely upperclass men and women in Oklahoma State University, all respondents should have relatively the same educational opportunity as far as obtaining a college degree. It is important to see if their levels of occupational aspirations differ.

Other Factors Not Studied

Socioeconomic Status

At birth, a human acquires a family's socioeconomic status. This socioeconomic status is based primarily on the level of occupation, education, and income. Super (1975, p. 91) states that an individual's "starting point is his father's socioeconomic status; he climbs up the education ladder at a speed fixed both by psychological and social characteristics and by resources provided by family environment." Thus, socioeconomic status influences educational attainment, which in turn influences occupational and career opportunities and development. Since all the respondents should have relatively the same educational opportunities as far as obtaining a college degree, socioeconomic status is not included as a factor influencing career development.

Peer Influence

Paulsen (1975) points out that peer groups' direct influence on occupational decisions per se is negligible. She reflects the view that peer groups do not directly influence a person's career decisions, but they do influence other factors (attitudes, values, and school motivation) that in turn influence career decisions. Therefore, peer influence is not included as a factor influencing career development.

Intelligence

There is agreement among researchers that intelligence has some influence on educational and occupational aspirations. Tyler (1964) found that career-oriented girls were higher in academic ability and achievement than the noncareer-oriented girls. All of the respondents will be in their third or fourth year of college, so this study is assuming they all possess the intelligence required of college. Therefore, intelligence is not included as a possible factor to look at in this study.

Family Aspirations

In his attempt to develop a theory of occupational development in women, Psathas (1972) insisted that special consideration should be given to such factors as intention to marry, intended time of marriage, reasons for marriage, and husband's attitude. Birth of children or number of desired children are also crucial to occupational orientations. These factors are not considered in this particular study.

Summary

Briefly summarizing the review of literature contained in this chapter, the following points should be clearly established:

1. Past studies indicate a direct influence between parents and their children's career development, but the amount of influence the parents have and which parent is more influential has not been established.

2. There is disagreement as to the similarity of male and female intergenerational mobility patterns. The mother's occupation should also be considered in intergenerational mobility patterns.

3. There need to be comparison studies between races concerning occupational mobility and career development.

4. The recent studies tend to agree that role models are becoming increasingly important to young people deciding upon a career, but there is disagreement as to the amount of influence counselors have.

5. There is disagreement as to how much effect a person's hometown population has on his level of occupational aspiration.

6. There need to be more studies concerning career development, especially for females. The studies and scales need to be changed to consider the mother's occupation as well as the father's occupation.

CHAPTER III

THEORY

Wilensky (1960, p. 550) defines career as a "succession of related jobs, hierarchial in prestige, with ordered directions for an individual to pass through them in a predictable sequence." Intergenerational occupational mobility is the movement from one occupational status level to another, as it occurs between the levels of a parent and a child.

Both educational and occupational goals are included because the literature indicates that the two are not quite similar for females, although they correlate positively for males. For example, Turner (1972) notes that career aspirations in males are directly related to their socioeconomic goals and desires for material success. On the other hand, many women tend to be continuing their education for intrinsic rewards found in esthetic and intellectual goals, while their extrinsic rewards were sought through their future husbands' occupations.

In this study, the following factors will be included to see if all, or any, have influence upon the career development of Oklahoma State University upperclass college students: (1) family, (2) sex and intergenerational mobility, (3) race, (4) role models and counselors, and (5) rural/urban differences.

As Kotter (1978) notes, many people have studied various aspects of career development, but the literature tends to be split into a number

of camps with little cross-referencing. There is no one generally accepted theory of career development.

The sociological approach is represented by the structural-functionalism theory. As Inkeles (1977) states, it

> focuses upon work activities as reflections of interpersonally structured interactions processes which determine reciprocal expectations and performance with respect to behavior at a number of independent levels: familial, educational, economical, political, expressive, and symbolic (p. 145).

Furthermore, Parsons (1977, p. 146) states that the sociological approach "seeks to make explicit the covert relationships on each of these levels among patterned work activities, institutionalized norms, and the shared normative components of a general system of value orientations."

The following hypotheses will be tested:

1. Mothers that worked outside the home while female students were growing up will have more influence upon the female's career decisions than their fathers will (Rosenfeld, 1978).

2. College students who grew up in rural areas will show no significant difference in their level of occupational aspiration than college students who grew up in urban areas (Sewell, 1964).

3. College students, both male and female, will show a direct positive relationship between L.O.A. and L.E. A. (opposition to Turner, 1972).

4. Children who were not pressured by their parents to choose a certain career will have a harder time choosing their career than those children who were pressured by parents (Super, 1968).

5. Female college students deciding upon their careers will be much more influenced by role models than will males (Mayfield and Nash, 1976; Simpson and Simpson, 1961).

6. Caucasian college students, both males and females, will have a higher L.O.A. than other races (Siegal, 1965).

7. The parent with the closer relationship with the child will have more influence on career of child than will the other parent (Pietrofesa, 1975).

8. College students deciding upon a career, both males and females, will show a stronger intergenerational mobility pattern with their father than they will with their mother (Tyree and Treas, 1974).

9. Who influences a child's career development? Are counselors needed?

CHAPTER IV

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Data Gathering

The method employed to gather data for this research project was that of survey research. In order to select respondents, a sample of convenience at Oklahoma State University was used. Upperclass (third and fourth years) students were selected, because only students who had chosen their careers were desired. (Students are required to decide a major by their third year.)

A list of majors for all the sociology classes at Oklahoma State University was obtained, and from that list only classes that were third or fourth level and had a concentration of less than 50 percent sociology majors (to ensure hetergeneity among respondents) were chosen.

The sample was ideally approximately 400 students with various majors; but due to low attendance, the total became 215 respondents. The sample is almost equally divided between sexes--113 females and 102 males.

After the questionnaire was administered (September, 1981), any non-U.S. citizens were eliminated in order to homogenize the sample better. Also eliminated were a few respondents who were at the freshman or sophomore levels.

The research instrument constructed for gathering data consists of a four-page questionnaire (Appendix A). Members of the Sociology

Department of Oklahoma State University were consulted and a few people were given the questionnaire before the final questionnaire was constructed. This was done in hopes of eliminating any ambiguous items. The review of literature was also very important in ascertaining the relevant items.

The questionnaire includes standard demographic questions pertaining to the subjects' sex, race, citizenship, size of hometown, and school classification. Demographic data concerning parents' educations and occupations and marital status were also included. Questions concerning school teachers, career influences, parental pressures, student-parent relationships, and occupational goals were also included.

Incorporated within the framework of the questionnaire is the standardized Level of Educational Aspiration Scale and the Level of Occupational Aspiration Scale, both devised by Haller et al. (1971). The Level of Educational Aspiration Scale (L.E.A.) consists of two questions: one question concerns educational actuality and the other concerns educational aspiration. The two questions are summed as one total score, ranging from 2 to 8; the higher the total score, the higher the level of educational aspiration.

The Level of Occupational Aspiration (L.O.A.) consists of eight questions; these questions are summed as one total score ranging from 8 to 72. Each person has a limited range of points on the occupational prestige hierarchy which he views desirable or possible for himself. Both of these scales were used to note any differences between L.E.A. and L.O.A. for both sexes.

Haller et al. (1974) cites several publications (Sewell et al., 1970; Haller and Portes, 1973) that have demonstrated a key role in

early adult occupational status attainment played by levels of occupational aspiration formed by the time the youth is in high school. All aspects of LOA-realistic and idealistic--short range and long range--are overwhelmingly saturated with the general LOA factor. This applies to both sexes in all combinations of sex, status, and grade in school. Thus, LEA and LOA scales are reliable and valid.

The North-Hatt Prestige Scale (1964) was used to rank all students' and parents' occupations. As Treiman and Terrell (1974) state:

> The main advantage of a prestige scale for male-female comparisons rather than Duncan's Socioeconomic Index Scale is that the inter-sex similarity with respect to socioeconomic characteristics of occupations is not as great at the correlation with respect to the prestige structure (p. 176).

The North-Hatt Prestige Scale needs to be modified, especially to change the "housewife" rating of 01.

Data Analysis

Immediately upon collection, all questionnaires were systematically coded and all data were keypunched onto computer data cards. All statistical analyses and tests were done on the Oklahoma State University computer utilizing programs from SAS (Statistical Analysis System). For comparison of demographic data, cross tabulations have been made with frequencies and percentages presented in contingency tables.

The chi-square statistic was used to evaluate any relationship between two variables; this statistic can be used on all levels of data. The contingency coefficient statistic was used as a measure of association for all nominal level data; gamma statistic was used as a measure of association for all ordinal level data (used on tables larger than 2×2).

In order to compare idealized occupational status with the status of the occupations held by the student's parents, the data were ranked according to the North-Hatt Occupational Prestige Scale (1964). After data were converted into ordinal level, the Spearman Rank-Order Correlation was used to compare the students' occupational choices with the occupations of each of his parents.

For classification purposes, occupational ranks were trichotomized into low, middle, and upper status jobs. The dividing line between low and middle status jobs was arbitrarily designated as between scores of 65 and 66 (occupations of carpenter and mail carrier, respectively). Similarly, the dividing line between middle and upper status jobs was arbitrarily established between the occupations of Army Officer and talented pianist (ranks of 80 and 81).

For classification purposes, levels of educational aspirations were dichotomized into low and high aspirations. The dividing line between low and high educational aspirations was arbitrarily designated between a total score of 5 and 6. The original categories of low and medium were combined, due to nonexistent low educational aspirations, as would be expected of upper division college students.

For classification purposes, levels of occupational aspirations were similarly dichotomized into low and high aspirations. Low occupational aspirations scored between 8 and 53; high occupational aspirations scored 54 or higher. The original categories of low and medium were also combined, due to few low occupational aspirations, as would be expected of upper division college students.

The size of hometown variable was divided into two levels, arbitrarily designated as rural (up to 25,000 population) and urban (over

25,000 population). This study chose not to use the Census Standard cut-off point between rural and urban of 2,500 population because the author does not feel the designation is representative of actual towns. The difficulty in choosing the career variable was divided into two levels, designated as easy ("not at all" or "a little" response to question) and hard ("some," "a lot," or "very hard" response to question).

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

Introduction

As indicated in the review of literature (Chapter II), there is no one generally accepted theory of career development. Therefore, one of the specific research objectives of this study has been to discover what factors are influential to a college student's career development.

Mother's Employment

With an increasing number of mothers working, the effect of a mother's employment on a student's career choice should not be overlooked. Working mothers have a greater influence on their student's career choice than non-working mothers (Rosenfeld, 1978). Rosenfeld also notes that the influence of the mother's employment is greater for daughters than for sons.

As indicated in Table I, overall the majority of students stated that both parents were equally influential on their career choice, whether their mother worked or not. When the mother does not work, the father is more influential on the student's career choice than the mother (18% vs. 13%). When the mother is employed, she becomes more influential than the father (20% vs. 15%).

TABLE I

PARENTAL CAREER INFLUENCE BY MOTHER'S EMPLOYMENT

Influence	Mother's Employment		Total
	Unemployed	Employed	
Mother	11 13%	27 20%	38
Both Equal	56 69%	86 65%	142
Father	15 18%	20 15%	35
Total	82 100%	133 100%	215

X^2 = 1.61, 2 d.f. (critical value = 5.99); not significant at .05 level. cc = .086.

Tables partialed by sex are looked at in Tables II and III. For all males, the majority stated that both parents were equally influential on their career choice, whether their mother worked or not. When the mother does not work, the father is more influential on the child's career choice than the mother (27% vs. 8%). When the mother is employed, the father is still slightly more influential than the mother (19% vs. 17%).

For all females, the majority also stated that both parents were equally influential on their career choice, whether their mother worked or not. When the mother does not work, the mother is more influential than the father (18% vs. 11%). When the mother is employed, she is still more influential than the father (23% vs. 12%).

TABLE II

PARENTAL CAREER INFLUENCE FOR MALES
BY MOTHER'S EMPLOYMENT

Influence	Mother's Employment		Total
	Unemployed	Employed	
Mother	3 8%	11 17%	14
Both Equal	24 65%	42 64%	66
Father	10 27%	12 19%	22
Total	37 100%	65 100%	102

X^2 = 2.137, 2 d.f. (critical value = 5.99); not significant at .05 level. cc = .143.

TABLE III

PARENTAL CAREER INFLUENCE FOR FEMALES
BY MOTHER'S EMPLOYMENT

Influence	Mother's Employment		Total
	Unemployed	Employed	
Mother	8 18%	16 23%	24
Both Equal	32 71%	44 65%	76
Father	5 11%	8 12%	13
Total	45 100%	68 100%	113

X^2 = .597, 2 d.f. (critical value = 5.99); not significant at .05 level. cc = .072.

The chi-squares are not statistically significant at the alpha .05 level. Therefore, the above mentioned differences are not statistically significant.

When sex is partialed, we see that the mother's employment does not have any significant effect upon which parent is more influential on a child's career choice. It appears that the sex of the parent has an effect on which parent is influential on a child's career choice. Concerning career choices, mothers influence daughters and fathers influence sons.

Size of Hometown

There is disagreement as to what effect the size of an individual's hometown has on their level of occupational aspirations. Sewell (1964) states no significant difference between rural and urban women in their levels of occupational aspirations.

As indicated in Table IV, overall, rural students have an approximately equal percentage of low and high occupational aspirations (51% vs. 50%). For urban students, more have low occupational aspirations than high occupational aspirations (55% vs. 45%).

Partials, by sex, are looked at in Tables V and VI. For males, both rural and urban students have more low occupational aspirations than high occupational aspirations (rural--52% vs. 48% and urban--55% vs. 45%). For females, rural students have more high occupational aspirations than low aspirations (51% vs. 49%), whereas urban students have more low occupational aspirations than high aspirations (55% vs. 45%). The chi-squares are not statistically significant at the alpha

.05 level. Therefore, the above mentioned differences are not statistically significant.

TABLE IV

LEVEL OF OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION BY SIZE OF HOMETOWN

L.O.A.	Size of Hometown		Total
	Rural	Urban	
Low	49.0 50.5%	65 55%	114
High	48.0 49.5%	53 45%	101
Total	97 100%	118 100%	215

X^2 = .44, 1 d.f. (critical value = 3.88); not significant at .05 level. cc = .045.

When sex is partialed, we see that the size of hometown has no effect upon the level of occupational aspirations for males, but that it does have a slight effect upon the level of occupational aspirations for females. Rural female students tend to have slightly higher levels of occupational aspirations than urban female students (see Tables V and VI).

Level of Educational Aspiration (L.E.A.) and Level of Occupational Aspiration (L.O.A.)

Turner (1972) indicates that both L.E.A. and L.O.A. need to be included in studies of career development, because the two are not quite

TABLE V

LEVEL OF OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION FOR MALES BY SIZE OF HOMETOWN

L.O.A.	Size of Hometown		Total
	Rural	Urban	
Low	23.0 52.3%	32.0 55.2%	55
High	21.0 47.7%	26.0 44.8%	47
Total	44.0 100.0%	58.0 100.0%	102

X^2 = .09, 1 d.f. (critical value = 3.88); not significant at .05 level. cc = .03.

TABLE VI

LEVEL OF OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION FOR FEMALES BY SIZE OF HOMETOWN

L.O.A.	Size of Hometown		Total
	Rural	Urban	
Low	26 49%	33 55%	59
High	27 51%	27 45%	54
Total	53 100%	60 100%	113

X^2 = .40, 1 d.f. (critical value = 3.88); not significant at .05 level. cc = .06.

similar for females, although they positively correlate for males. (A woman may have a high level of educational aspiration, but a low level of occupational aspiration.)

As indicated in Table VII, overall, there is a moderately strong positive relationship between L.E.A. and L.O.A. (Gamma = .492). For males, in Table VIII, the positive relationship between L.E.A. and L.O.A. is very strong (Gamma = .703). In Table IX, for females, the relationship between L.E.A. and L.O.A. is still a positive one, but the relationship is much weaker than for males (Gamma = .281).

TABLE VII

LEVEL OF OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION BY LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION

	L.E.A.		
L.O.A.	Low	High	Total
Low	47 71%	67 45%	114
High	19 29%	82 55%	101
Total	66 100%	149 100%	215

X^2 = 12.64, 1 d.f.; significant at .05 level. cc = .236; Gamma = .942.

TABLE VIII

LEVEL OF OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION FOR MALES
BY LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION

L.O.A.	L.E.A. Low	L.E.A. High	Total
Low	26 81%	29 41%	55
High	6 19%	41 59%	47
Total	32 100%	70 100%	102

X^2 = 14.03, 1 d.f., significant at .05 level. cc = .348. Gamma = .703.

TABLE IX

LEVEL OF OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION FOR FEMALES
BY LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION

L.O.A.	Low	High	Total
Low	21 62%	38 48%	59
High	13 38%	41 52%	54
Total	34 100%	79 100%	113

X^2 = 1.78, 1 d.f. (critical level = 3.88), not significant at .05 level. cc = .125. Gamma = .281.

Parental Pressure

Super (1968) theorizes that if parental pressure for both occupations is absent, this contributes to a general disorganization toward occupational aspirations for the individual.

As indicated in Table X, overall, the majority of students had a hard time choosing a career, whether their parents pressured them to choose a specific career or not (74% vs. 54%, respectively).

TABLE X

CHOICE OF CAREER BY PARENTAL PRESSURE

Choice of Career	Parental Pressure		Total
	Yes	No	
Easy	12 26%	78 46%	90
Hard	34 74%	91 54%	125
Total	46 100%	169 100%	125

$X^2 = 5.58$, 1 d.f., significant at .05 level. cc = .159.

Partials, by sex, are looked at in Tables XI and XII. For males, 73 percent of those pressured by parents to choose a specific career had a hard time choosing a career, whereas 48 percent of those students not pressured by parents to choose a specific career had a hard time choosing a career.

TABLE XI

CHOICE OF CAREER FOR MALES BY PARENTAL PRESSURE

Choice of Career	Parental Pressure		Total
	Yes	No	
Easy	6 27%	43 54%	49
Hard	16 73%	37 46%	53
Total	22 100%	80 100%	102

X^2 = 4.846, 1 d.f., significant at .05 level. cc = .213.

TABLE XII

CHOICE OF CAREER FOR FEMALES BY PARENTAL PRESSURE

Choice of Career	Parental Pressure		Total
	Yes	No	
Easy	6 25%	35 39%	41
Hard	18 75%	54 61%	72
Total	24 100%	89 100%	113

X^2 = 1.678, 1 d.f. (critical value = 3.88), not significant at .05 level. cc = .121.

For females, 75 percent of those pressured by parents had a hard time choosing a career, whereas 61 percent of those female students not pressured by parents also had a hard time choosing their career. The chi-square was not statistically significant at the alpha .05 level.

Sex has no significant effect on the relationship between parental pressure to choose a certain career and the ability to choose a career.

Parent-Child Relationship

Previous studies on career development have studied the parent-child relationship. It is theorized that the parent with the closer relationship with the child will be more influential on the student's career development.

Overall, in Table XIII, the majority of students had both parents equally close in relationship and equally influential on their career development. If the student is closer to the mother, then the mother is also more influential on the student's career development than the father (32% vs. 11%). If the student is closer to the father, then the father is more influential than the mother (38% vs. 4%).

Partials, by sex, are looked at in Tables XIV and XV. For males, the majority had both parents equally close in relationship and also equally influential on their career development. If the student is closer to the mother, then the mother is also more influential on the student's career development than the father (26% vs. 14%). If the student is closer to the father, then the father is more influential than the mother (46% vs. 8%). The chi-square is not statistically significant. Therefore, the differences in males are not statistically significant.

TABLE XIII

PARENTAL CAREER INFLUENCE BY PERCEIVED CLOSENESS OF RELATIONSHIP

Career Influence	Closeness of Relationship: Mother Closer	Parents Equally Close	Father Closer	Total
Mother Higher	27 32%	10 9%	1 4%	38
Parents Equal	47 57%	81 75%	14 58%	142
Father Higher	9 11%	17 16%	9 38%	35
Total	83 100%	108 100%	24 100%	125

X^2 = 27.976, 4 d.f., significant at .05 level. cc = .339.

For females, the majority also had both parents equally close in relationship and equally influential on their career development. If the females are closer to the mother, then the mother is also more influential (38% vs. 8%). If the females are closer to the father, then the father is more influential (27% vs. 0%) (see Tables XIV and XV).

Intergenerational Mobility

As reviewed from the literature, most intergenerational mobility studies have looked at the patterns between sons' and fathers' occupations. But, not only should the daughters' occupations be included, but the mothers' occupations compared as well.

As indicated in Table XVI, the students had the largest percentage of upper status occupations with fathers second (36.5% vs. 31.0% vs.

TABLE XIV

PARENTAL CAREER INFLUENCE FOR MALES BY PERCEIVED CLOSENESS OF RELATIONSHIP

Career Influence	Closeness of Relationship: Mother Closer	Parents Equally Close	Father Closer	Total
Mother Higher	9 26%	4 7%	1 8%	14
Parents Equal	21 60%	39 72%	6 46%	66
Father Higher	5 14%	11 21%	6 46%	22
Total	35 100%	54 100%	13 100%	102

X^2 = 7.371, 4 d.f. (critical level = 9.488), not significant at .05 level. cc = .26.

TABLE XV

PARENTAL CAREER INFLUENCE FOR FEMALES BY PERCEIVED CLOSENESS OF RELATIONSHIP

Career Influence	Closeness of Relationship: Mother Closer	Parents Equally Close	Father Closer	Total
Mother Higher	18 38%	6 11%	0 0%	24
Parents Equal	26 54%	42 78%	8 73%	76
Father Higher	4 8%	6 11%	3 27%	13
Total	48 100%	54 100%	11 100%	113

X^2 = 15.885, 4 d.f., significant at .05 level. cc = .351.

1.4%). Students also had the largest percentage of middle status occupations with fathers second again (63% vs. 54% vs. 50.2%). Students possessed very little lower status occupations and mother possessed a fairly high percentage of low status occupations (0.5% vs 15% vs. 48.4%).

TABLE XVI

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Status	Student	Mother	Father	Total
Low	1.0 0.5%	103.0 48.4%	30 15%	134
Medium	126.0 63.0%	107.0 50.2%	110 54%	343
High	73.0 36.5%	3.0 1.4%	63 31%	139
Total*	200.0 100.0%	213.0 100.0%	203 100%	616

*Total N's do not coincide because some respondents left occupations blank.

Student X Father Spearman = .125
Student X Mother Spearman = -.088

As predicted, all students showed a strong intergenerational mobility pattern with fathers, and little pattern with mothers. Overall, students showed expected upward mobility from their parents' occupations. (The unusually low status occupational holdings for the mothers are due to the North-Hatt Prestige Scale [1964] rating "Housewife" at .01. This rating should be evaluated and changed.)

Influences

Previous studies have attempted to discover just who influences a person's career development. Plost and Rosen (1974), Mayfield and Nash (1976), and Simpson and Simpson (1961) all found role models to be very influential, especially for women. Mayfield and Nash also stated that counselors were not at all influential.

As indicated in Table XVII, the most influential person for both males and females is a parent (52.2% and 46.0%). Role models are the second most influential person for both males and females (21% and 24%). Counselors are least influential for both males and females (10.4% and 11.0%).

TABLE XVII

CAREER INFLUENCES BY SEX

Career Influence	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Parent	35.0 52.2%	36 46%	71
Role Model	14.0 21.0%	19 24%	33
Friend	11.0 16.4%	15 19%	26
Counselor	7.0 10.4%	9 11%	16
Total	67.0% 100.0%	79 100%	146

X^2 = .51, 3 d.f. (critical value = 7.815), not significant at .05 level. cc = .059.

The chi-square is not statistically significant, but the order of influence should still be noted.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

This research was designed to study the sociological factors that are influential in affecting career decisions of upperclass college students. Specifically, students at Oklahoma State University was the focus. The study was undertaken with two specific objectives in mind: (1) to discover which sociological factors are influential in career developments among male and female students, and (2) to examine the importance of including all females' (including mothers') occupations into scales and studies of career development.

An extensive review of literature provided the theoretical underpinning for this study. Theories concerning several possible influences on career development were examined. The following factors were studied: family influence, parent-child relationship, parental pressure, size of hometown, mother's employment, level of educational and occupational aspirations, role models and counselors, and intergenerational mobility patterns. The factor of race was eliminated from the study due to an overwhelmingly majority (92%) of whites.

Data were gathered from third- and fourth-year level sociology classes at Oklahoma State University. Questionnaires were distributed in classroom situations, producing a total of 215 respondents (102 males

and 113 females). Data were coded, keypunched, and subjected to computer analysis utilizing cross tabulation with chi-square, measure of association with contingency coefficient, and Gamma and Spearman rank-order correlation. A total of 17 tables were compiled and findings were discussed in Chapter V.

Conclusions

The conclusions are:

1. Mother's employment does not have any significant effect upon which parent is more influential on a student's career development. It appears that the sex of the parent has an effect upon parental career development (mothers influence daughters and fathers influence sons).

2. The size of student's hometown has no effect upon the level of occupational aspiration for males, but it does have a slight effect upon the level of occupational aspiration for females. Rural female students tend to have slightly higher levels of occupational aspiration than urban female students.

3. The relationship between level of educational aspiration and level of occupational aspiration is a positive correlation, but for females the relationship is weaker than for males.

4. The majority of students in this study had a hard time choosing their specific career, regardless of parental pressure or sex of the student. Parental pressure had no significant effect upon ability to choose a career.

5. The parent with the closer relationship to the student has more influence on the child's career development (mothers with daughters and fathers with sons).

6. All students, males and females, show a strong intergenerational expected mobility pattern with their fathers and little pattern with their mothers. (The unusually low status occupational holdings for the mothers is due to the Prestige Scale for "Housewife" rating at 01.)

7. Parents are the most influential people on these students' career choices. Role models are influential, but are not as important as predicted. Counselors are least influential on these students' career development.

Limitations of Study

The limitations of the study are:

1. This study does not claim to represent the whole sampling universe, but is a sample of convenience of upperclass students at Oklahoma State University. While the findings are not generalizable beyond the sample, they do provide a better understanding of factors influencing career choice.

2. This study did not attempt to study every possible factor influencing career development. The main concern of this study was who influenced students' career choices. Many sociological factors were excluded, such as socioeconomic status, intelligence, peer influence, family aspirations, and race.

3. Due to the sample consisting entirely of upperclass college students, the levels of educational and occupational aspirations were very high. Comparison studies need to look at different age and work levels.

4. Other limitations include the occupational scales used. The North-Hatt Prestige Scale (1964) should be modified to include more

female occupations. The Level of Occupational Aspiration Scale (1971) should also be modified to include female occupations.

Suggestions for Further Study

For future studies, a much larger sample is needed with the respondents more representative of the work force. It would be interesting to use longitudinal studies starting with the respondents in elementary school and continue until they have entered the work force. More comparison studies should be looked at between the sexes and races. Females' occupations should be included in both scales and career development studies.

Expected Contributions

Substantively

The intent of this study was to identify the major sociological factors that influence the career development of upperclass Oklahoma State University students. The author hopes this study will contribute to the educational and occupational equity for women by encouraging more women influential models. The author hopes that counselors could change to more benefit the student's career development.

Methodologically

With this research, the author intended to show the need to change occupational studies and scales to include females' occupations. The author agrees with Rosenfeld (1978) that the mother's occupation should be included in research scales and models, because:

1. The inclusion of this variable provides a better measure of the family socioeconomic status than the father's occupation alone;

2. Especially for women, mother's occupation represents an adult work-role model which affects the occupational choice of her children; and

3. When explaining mobility in an occupational structure differentiated by sex, it is necessary to examine intergenerational mobility while holding sex constant.

Theoretically

The author hopes this research helped to show who is influential upon college students' career choices. The influence of parents is very important and role models of both sexes are also important. In this study counselors are not very influential upon career development. Males and females have similar career influences, but of opposite sexes. Female career development needs to be studied more closely and more comparison studies need to be done.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Questionnaire

I am a graduate student at Oklahoma State University. I am distributing this questionnaire for my thesis. I would greatly appreciate your response. All answers will be confidential. Circle the number corresponding to your chosen answer for each question.

1. Sex

   a. Male
   b. Female

2. Are you a U.S. citizen?

   a. No
   b. Yes

3. Size of town you came from:

   a. Isolated home on farm
   b. Town (1,000-10,000 pop.)
   c. Town (10,000-25,000 pop.)
   d. City (25,000-100,000 pop.)
   e. City (over 100,000 pop.)

4. School classification

   a. Freshman
   b. Sophomore
   c. Junior
   d. Senior
   e. Graduate student
   f. Other (please state)

5. What is your occupational goal? _____

6. Father's education:

   a. Some high school
   b. Graduate of high school
   c. Some college
   d. Graduate of college
   e. Other (please state)

7. Father's occupation (please be specific) _____

8. Mother's education:

   a. Some high school
   b. Graduate of high school
   c. Some college
   d. Graduate of college
   e. Other (please state)

9. Mother's occupation (please be specific) _____

10. Did your mother work throughout your childhood?

    a. No
    b. Yes
    c. Some of the time

If mother worked, please answer:

d. Part-time work
e. Full-time work

11. Racial or ethnic background:

a. American Indian
b. Black
c. Caucasian or white
d. Hispanic
e. Other (please state)

12. Teachers you have had: Male Teachers Female Teachers

a. Elementary
b. Junior high
c. High school
d. College

13. On a scale of 0-4, please rank each of these according to the amount of influence on your career plans:

( ) High school teacher
( ) High school counselor
( ) College teacher
( ) College counselor
( ) Friend
( ) Spouse/boyfriend or girlfriend
( ) Mother
( ) Father
( ) Other (please state)

Scale

0 = None
1 = A little
2 = Some
3 = A lot
4 = Most

14. Did your parents want you to choose a certain career?

a. No
b. Yes

If yes, did you take their advice?

c. No
d. Yes

Why?

15. Did you have a hard time choosing your career?

a. Not at all
b. A little
c. Somewhat
d. A lot
e. Very hard time

16. Supposing you had necessary abilities, grades, money, etc., how far would you really like to go in school?

a. Quit school
b. Finish college
c. Go to trade school
d. Get advanced degree

17. Considering your abilities, grades, money, etc., how far do you actually expect to go in school?

a. Quit school
b. Finish college
c. Go to trade or business school
d. Get advanced degree

This next set of questions concerns your interest in different kinds of jobs. There are eight questions; choose one job for each question. Please answer all eight questions.

18. Of the jobs listed in this question, which is the BEST ONE you are REALLY SURE YOU CAN GET when your schooling is over?

( ) Lawyer
( ) Welfare worker
( ) U.S. representative in Congress
( ) Corporal in Army
( ) U.S. Supreme Court Justice
( ) Night watchman
( ) Sociologist
( ) Policeman
( ) County agricultural agent
( ) Filling station attendant

19. Of the jobs listed in this question, which ONE would you choose if you were free to choose any of them you wished when your schooling is over?

( ) Member of board of directors of large corporation
( ) Undertaker
( ) Banker
( ) Machine operator in factory
( ) Doctor
( ) Clothes presser in laundry
( ) Accountant for large business
( ) Railroad conductor
( ) Railroad engineer
( ) Singer in night club

20. Of the jobs listed in this question, which is the BEST ONE you are REALLY SURE YOU CAN GET when your schooling is over?

( ) Nuclear physicist
( ) Reporter for daily newspaper
( ) County judge
( ) Barber
( ) State governor
( ) Soda fountain clerk
( ) Biologist
( ) Mail carrier
( ) Official of international labor union
( ) Farm hand

21. Of the jobs listed in this question, which ONE would you choose if you were free to choose any of them you wished when your schooling is over?

( ) Psychologist
( ) Manager of small store in city
( ) Head of department in state government
( ) Clerk in store
( ) Cabinet member in federal government
( ) Janitor
( ) Musician in symphony orchestra
( ) Carpenter
( ) Radio announcer
( ) Coal miner

22. Of the jobs listed in this question, which is the BEST ONE you are REALLY SURE YOU CAN HAVE by the time you are 30 years old?

( ) Civil engineer
( ) Bookkeeper
( ) Minister or priest
( ) Streetcar motorman or city bus driver
( ) Diplomat in U.S. Foreign Service
( ) Share cropper
( ) Author of novels
( ) Plumber
( ) Newspaper columnist
( ) Taxi driver

23. Of the jobs listed in this question, which ONE would you choose to have when you are 30 years old, if you were free to have any of them you wished?

( ) Airline pilot
( ) Insurance agent
( ) Architect
( ) Milk route man
( ) Mayor of large city
( ) Garbage collector
( ) Captain in Army
( ) Garage mechanic
( ) Owner-operator of printing shop
( ) Railroad section hand

24. Of the jobs listed in this question, which is the BEST ONE you are REALLY SURE YOU CAN HAVE by the time you are 30 years old?

( ) Artist who paints pictures for galleries
( ) Traveling salesman for wholesale concern
( ) Chemist
( ) Truck driver
( ) College professor
( ) Street sweeper
( ) Building contractor
( ) Local official of labor union
( ) Electrician
( ) Restaurant waiter

25. Of the jobs listed in this question, which ONE would you choose to have when you are 30 years old, if you were free to have any of them you wished?

( ) Owner of factory that employs 100 people
( ) Playground director
( ) Dentist
( ) Lumberjack
( ) Scientist
( ) Shoeshiner
( ) Public school teacher
( ) Owner-operator of lunch stand
( ) Trained machinist
( ) Dock worker

26. Parents' marital status while you were in school:

a. Parents married to each other
b. Mother and stepfather
c. Father and stepmother
d. Mother alone
e. Father alone

27. Describe relationship with your mother:

a. Very distant
b. Distant
c. Adequate
d. Close
e. Very close

28. Describe relationship with your father:

a. Very distant
b. Distant
c. Adequate
d. Close
e. Very close

APPENDIX B

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

TABLE XVIII

OCCUPATIONAL RATINGS*

Occupation	Score
President of United States	96
U.S. Supreme Court Justice	96
Physician	93
State Governor	93
Veterinarian	93
Cabinet Member in Federal Government	92
Diplomat in the U.S. Foreign Service	92
Mayor in a Large City	90
Astronaut	89
College Professor	89
Scientist	89
Something in Science	89
U.S. Representative in Congress	89
Banker	88
Government Scientist	88
Admiral	87
County Judge	87
Head of Department in State Government	87
Minister	87
Architect	87
Chemist	86
Dentist	86
Lawyer	86
Member of Board of Directors (large corp.)	86
Nuclear Physicist	86
Priest	86
Psychologist	85
Civil Engineer	84
Electrical Engineer	84
Engineer	84
Air Force Pilot	83
Airline Pilot	83
Artist	83
Professional Athlete	83
Anthropologist	82
Owner of Factory	82
Sociologist	82
Accountant for Large Business	81
Biologist	81
Geologist	81
Musician in Symphony Orchestra	81

*Original scale by Paul Hatt and C. North in Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurements (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1964), pp. 108-110.

TABLE XVIII (Continued)

Occupation	Score
Professional Business	81
Talented Pianist	81
Army Officer	80
Captain in the Regular Army	80
Coast Guard	80
Dramatics	80
Fashion Designer	80
Building Contractor	79
Counselor in Large School	79
Dancing Teacher	79
Economist	79
Forest Ranger	79
Public Relations	79
Home Economist	79
Physical Therapist	79
Jet Engineer	79
Job Analyst	79
Pharmacist	79
Registered Nurse	79
Agronomist	78
Commercial Art	78
Choral Director	78
Professional Worker	78
Public School Teacher	78
Teacher	78
Teacher and Counselor	78
Vocational Teacher	78
County Agricultural Agent	77
Railroad Engineer	77
Farm Owner and Operator	76
Official of an International Labor Union	75
Radio Announcer	75
Newspaper Columnist	74
Owner-Operator of a Printing Shop	74
Computer Programmer	73
Drafting	73
Electronics	73
Electrician	73
Federal Government Agriculturist	73
Lab Technician	73
Librarian	73
Peace Corps	73
Technician	73
Skilled Craftsman	73
Undertaker	72
Mortician	72
Reporter on a Daily Newspaper	71
Buyer	69

TABLE XVIII (Continued)

Occupation	Score
General Business	69
Government Job	69
Interior Decorator	69
Manager of a Small Store in a City	69
Owner of a Machine Shop	69
Owner of a Small Business	69
Auctioneer	68
Bookkeeper	68
Dairy Farm	68
Farming	68
Key Punch Operator	68
Language Interpreter	68
Insurance Agent	68
Office Job	68
Merchandise and Secretary	68
Tenant Farmer	68
Traveling Salesman for a Wholesale Concern	68
Secretary	68
Typist	68
Playground Director	67
Policeman	67
Railroad Conductor	67
Mail Carrier	66
Carpenter	65
Painter	65
Aircraft Mechanic	63
Automobile Repairman	63
Auto Parts	63
Diesel Engineer	63
Diesel Mechanic	63
Plumber	63
Car Mechanic	62
Garage Mechanic	62
Local Official of a Labor Union	62
Mechanical Work	62
Owner-Operator of a Lunch Stand	62
Skilled Laborer	62
Army Skilled Man	60
Assembly Line	60
Corporal in the Regular Army	60
Factory Worker	60
Machine Operator in a Factory	60
Welder	60
Airline Stewardess	59
Barber	59
Beautician	59
Hair Dresser	59
Model	59

TABLE XVIII (Continued)

Occupation	Score
Practical Nurse	59
Work in Hospital	59
Clerk in a Store	58
Seamstress	58
Streetcar Motorman	58
Fisherman Who Owns His Own Boat	58
Culinary Arts	54
Milk Routeman	54
Race Car Driver	54
Restaurant Cook	54
Truck Driver	54
Hunting Guide	53
Lumberjack	53
Filling Station Attendant	52
Singer in a Night Club	52
Singer and Comedian	52
Singer	52
Tinker Field Worker	51
Construction	51
Babysitter	50
Ditch Digger	50
Farmhand	50
Oil Field	50
Coal Miner	49
Taxi Driver	49
Railroad Section Hand	48
Restaurant Waiter	48
Dock Worker	47
Night Watchman	47
Clothes Presser in a Laundry	46
Soda Fountain Clerk	45
Bartender	44
Janitor	44
Sharecropper	40
Garbage Collector	35
Street Sweeper	34
Shoe Shiner	33
Housewife	1

VITA

Laura Stott Bell

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF UPPERCLASS STUDENTS AT OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Major Field: Sociology

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Pryor, Oklahoma, December 10, 1954, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Merril L. Stott.

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