



AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FEMINIST IDEOLOGY AND WOMEN'S WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN LOW-PRESTIGE, MALE- DOMINATED OCCUPATIONS

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Abstract: The present study examines the relationship between feminist ideology and women's willingness to engage in low-prestige, male-dominated occupations. While feminist discourse has largely emphasized women's participation in high-status professions, limited research has explored whether support for gender equality extends to occupations that are socially undervalued yet traditionally dominated by men. The study adopts a quantitative, correlational research design and utilizes a self-constructed questionnaire comprising measures of feminist beliefs, occupational willingness, and perceived barriers. Data were collected from a sample of 120 women aged 18–50 years using convenience sampling. Statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, was conducted to examine the relationship between variables. The findings indicate a strong positive relationship between feminist beliefs and willingness to engage in low-prestige male-dominated occupations, suggesting that women who endorse egalitarian views are more open to non-traditional career roles. However, participants also reported high levels of perceived barriers, including safety concerns, social stigma, and fear of discrimination, highlighting a gap between ideological support and practical engagement. The study contributes to the existing literature by addressing an underexplored area within feminist and occupational psychology and underscores the need for structural and societal interventions to reduce barriers and promote inclusive workforce participation.

Keywords - Feminist ideology, occupational willingness, gender roles, male-dominated occupations, perceived barriers, occupational segregation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, feminist movements have challenged traditional gender roles and advocated for equal opportunities for women across social, political, and economic domains. While significant progress has been made in increasing women's participation in high-prestige, male-dominated fields such as leadership and STEM, relatively little attention has been given to women's engagement in low-prestige occupations that are also predominantly male-dominated. These occupations, including manual and technical labor roles, often remain stigmatized and undervalued despite their importance in the workforce.

Feminist ideology, broadly defined as a belief system supporting gender equality and the dismantling of traditional gender norms, is expected to encourage women to enter all forms of male-dominated work. However, the extent to which such beliefs translate into willingness to engage in low-prestige occupations remains unclear. Existing research suggests that occupational choices are influenced not only by personal beliefs but also by societal expectations, perceived status, and structural barriers such as safety concerns and social stigma.

The present study aims to examine the relationship between feminist beliefs and women's willingness to engage in low-prestige, male-dominated occupations, while also exploring the perceived barriers that may influence such decisions. By addressing this gap, the study seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how feminist ideology operates in real-world career contexts and whether it extends beyond high-status domains to include all forms of labor.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research indicates that gender roles and societal expectations significantly influence women's occupational choices, often directing them toward traditionally acceptable roles. Theories of career development suggest that women may exclude low-prestige male-dominated occupations due to perceived gender inappropriateness and low social status. Additionally, gendered expectations impact confidence and aspirations, reinforcing occupational segregation.

Perceived barriers such as social stigma, discrimination, and lack of support further discourage women from entering non-traditional fields. Although feminist theory advocates equal participation across all occupations, empowerment is often associated with high-status roles, leaving low-prestige occupations underexplored. This highlights a gap between feminist beliefs and actual occupational willingness, which the present study aims to address.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Objectives

The present study aims to examine the relationship between feminist beliefs and women's willingness to engage in low-prestige, male-dominated occupations. It also seeks to identify the perceived barriers influencing such occupational choices. Additionally, the study explores how these factors interact to shape women's career preferences in non-traditional roles.

3.2 Research Design

The present study adopted a quantitative, descriptive, and correlational research design to examine the relationship between feminist beliefs and women's willingness to engage in low-prestige male-dominated occupations. Data were collected using a structured self-report questionnaire consisting of Likert-scale items measuring feminist beliefs, occupational willingness, and perceived barriers. A sample of 120 women aged 18–50 years was selected through convenience sampling, and responses were gathered via an online survey. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were employed to analyze the data and determine the strength and direction of relationships between variables without any experimental manipulation.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample for the present study consisted of 120 women aged between 18 and 50 years. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling technique based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. The sample included women from diverse educational backgrounds to ensure variability in responses and to obtain a broader understanding of feminist beliefs, occupational willingness, and perceived barriers. All participants voluntarily completed the online questionnaire, and their responses were included in the final analysis.

3.3 Tools and Measures

Data were collected using a structured self-report questionnaire comprising three sections: feminist beliefs, occupational willingness, and perceived barriers. The feminist beliefs section included items assessing attitudes toward gender equality and traditional gender roles. The occupational willingness section measured participants' readiness to engage in low-prestige male-dominated occupations, while the perceived barriers section assessed factors that may discourage such choices. All items were measured using five-point Likert scales, with higher scores indicating stronger beliefs, greater willingness, and higher perceived barriers. The questionnaire was designed based on existing literature and ensured clarity and relevance of items.

3.4 Procedure

Data were collected through an online survey using Google Forms. The questionnaire link was distributed via social media platforms and messaging groups to reach potential participants. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent before responding. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw at any stage. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, and no personal identifying information was collected. The data collection process was conducted over a specified period to ensure an adequate number of responses.

3.5 Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation to summarize participants' responses across the study variables. Correlation analysis (Pearson's r) was conducted to examine the relationship between feminist beliefs and occupational willingness. The analysis aimed to determine the strength and direction of the association between variables. All statistical procedures were carried out systematically to ensure accuracy and meaningful interpretation of the findings.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for study Variables

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Feminist beliefs	120	4.23	0.65
Occupational willingness	120	4.29	0.48
Perceived barriers	120	4.11	0.61

Table.1 The descriptive statistics indicate that participants reported high levels of feminist beliefs ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.65$) and occupational willingness ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.48$), suggesting strong support for gender equality and openness toward non-traditional occupations. Perceived barriers were also relatively high ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.61$), indicating the presence of notable challenges influencing occupational choices. The standard deviations for each variable indicated that data were widely spread around their respective means.

Table 2: Correlation Between Feminist Beliefs and Occupational Willingness

Variable	N	R	P
Feminist beliefs & Occupational willingness	120	0.75	< .01

Table.2 The results show a strong positive and statistically significant relationship ($r = 0.75, p < .01$) between feminist beliefs and occupational willingness, indicating that higher feminist beliefs are associated with greater willingness to engage in low-prestige male-dominated occupations.

V. CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that feminist beliefs play a significant role in shaping women's willingness to engage in low-prestige male-dominated occupations. The findings indicate that women who strongly endorse gender equality are more open to exploring non-traditional career paths. However, despite this willingness, perceived barriers such as safety concerns, social stigma, and lack of support continue to influence occupational choices. This highlights a gap between ideological beliefs and practical engagement, suggesting that while attitudes toward gender equality are becoming more progressive, structural and societal challenges still limit full participation. Therefore, efforts to reduce these barriers through supportive policies, safer work environments, and increased awareness are essential to promote inclusive and equitable workforce participation.

VI. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The present study is subject to certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting the findings. First, the sample size was relatively small and selected using convenience sampling, which limits the generalizability of the results to a wider population. The participants were drawn from a specific demographic group, and their responses may not represent women from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, or regional backgrounds. Additionally, the use of a self-report questionnaire may have introduced response biases, such as social desirability, where participants may have provided answers that reflect socially acceptable views rather than their true opinions.

Furthermore, the study adopted a cross-sectional research design, which captures responses at a single point in time and does not account for changes in attitudes or willingness over time. The research focused only on selected variables—feminist beliefs, occupational willingness, and perceived barriers—while other potentially influential factors such as personality traits, prior work experience, cultural influences, and family dynamics were not examined. Future research could address these limitations by using larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and a broader range of variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of women's occupational choices.

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