"Impact Of Career Aspirations On The Performance Of Women Employees In It & Ites Organizations In Bengaluru: A Sequential Mixed-Methods Study"

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Women in Bengaluru's IT and ITES sectors face unique challenges and opportunities that shape their career aspirations and performance. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for fostering a more equitable and inclusive industry. This literature review investigates the career aspirations and performance of women in Bengaluru's IT and ITES sectors, drawing on Social Cognitive Career Theory, Gender Role Theory, Intersectionality Theory, Organizational Support Theory, and Expectancy Theory. By examining these theoretical models, the review sheds light on the career trajectories of women in these fields. Findings reveal persistent gender gaps in career advancement, the essential role of mentorship and organizational support, and the profound impact of societal norms and corporate culture on women's career progression. The review identifies key factors such as skill acquisition, work-life balance, and intersectionality, highlighting specific barriers faced by women from marginalized groups. It critically assesses existing research methodologies and limitations, emphasizing the need for robust frameworks and diverse sampling. Practical implications include creating inclusive workplace cultures and implementing gender-sensitive policies. The review concludes with recommendations for future research, advocating for long-term studies and cross-cultural analyses to address identified gaps. This study provides valuable insights for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and academics focused on promoting gender equality and diversity in Bengaluru's technology sector.

Keywords: Career Aspirations, Gender Equality, IT and ITES Sectors, Mentorship, Organizational Support, Intersectionality. |

A. INTRODUCTION

The Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) industries in Bengaluru have seen significant growth, playing a crucial role in India's economic development. Despite these advances, a persistent gender gap remains, particularly in senior and technical positions. This gap is evident not only in terms of salary and job level but also in aspects like influence, visibility, and career advancement within companies [1].

This paper delves into the often-overlooked influence of career aspirations on women's performance in Bengaluru's IT and ITES sectors. Career aspirations are critical in shaping one's professional journey and are key to navigating career paths effectively. However, the advancement of women is frequently hindered by societal norms, corporate culture, unconscious biases, and systemic inequalities [2]. By investigating how career aspirations interact with performance, this review aims to provide deeper insights into how the industry can better support female employees, potentially leading to fairer and more productive workplace practices.

Traditionally, the IT and ITES sectors have been male-dominated, which has led to significant gender imbalances. Although there is a growing movement towards inclusivity—acknowledging the importance of diversity in the workplace for ethical and economic reasons—women continue to face numerous obstacles. These include biased recruitment and retention practices, limited career advancement opportunities, and notable disparities in pay. These factors not only discourage women but also negatively impact their performance and career goals [3]. This introduction provides the backdrop for an in-depth review that not only highlights the current gender disparities in Bengaluru's IT and ITES sectors but also discusses strategic initiatives that can promote a more inclusive and supportive work environment. The subsequent sections will explore the theoretical frameworks that inform this analysis, define the study's specific goals, and discuss the significance of this research within the larger conversation about gender equality in the technology field.

Background

The IT and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) sectors have played a crucial role in driving global economic innovation and growth. Traditionally, these industries have shown significant gender imbalances in workforce participation and leadership roles, with societal and educational biases often depicting STEM fields as predominantly male-oriented, thereby erecting significant barriers that hinder women's entry and success in these areas [1].

Over the past few decades, there has been a shift toward more inclusivity, fuelled by an increasing awareness that diversity in the workplace is not just a moral obligation but also a critical factor for business success. Studies have shown that diverse teams tend to be more innovative and make better decisions—qualities that are especially valuable in sectors like IT and ITES, which are continuously at the cutting edge of technological advancement [2].

Despite these positive changes, women still face considerable challenges. They are underrepresented in technical and executive roles and frequently encounter a 'glass ceiling' that impedes their career advancement. This persistent disparity is upheld by existing corporate cultures that have not fully committed to diversity and inclusion. These environments perpetuate recruitment and retention practices that are biased, offer limited opportunities for professional growth, and sustain an ongoing gender pay gap [3]. Together, these factors not only demotivate but also negatively affect the overall performance and career aspirations of women in the industry.

In Bengaluru, the nucleus of India's IT and ITES sectors, these global challenges are reflected locally in ways that distinctly affect the career paths of women. The vibrant tech landscape of the city offers both opportunities and obstacles, which are essential for grasping the wider implications of gender disparities within the IT and ITES sectors. This context underscores the importance of exploring how the career aspirations and performance of women in Bengaluru's IT and ITES sectors are influenced by these systemic issues, highlighting the need for focused research to develop and implement effective strategies that promote gender equality and enhance career progression for women in these key industries.

Relevance of the Study

Building on the established context, this review examines the career aspirations and performance of women in Bengaluru's Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) sectors. Addressing the widespread issue of gender disparities in the workplace is essential not only for fostering equity but also for contributing to current discussions on gender equality within the tech industry. For example, research by Gupta and Patel [1] and Deepak Kumar [2] has shed light on the deep-seated gender biases and stereotypes that significantly hinder women's advancement in IT organizations. This underscores the importance of this analysis in enriching the ongoing debates about gender equality and diversity initiatives in the technology sector.

Additionally, this study broadens its scope by including research on inclusive leadership, diversity management, and effective workplace practices. This approach connects with modern debates about establishing work environments where women can succeed. The focus on organizational policies and initiatives is especially pertinent as it complements efforts to break down systemic barriers and promote gender equity in IT and ITES companies. This emphasis ensures that the study is not only relevant but also of great importance, providing insights that could significantly influence policy and practice.

By situating this research within such vital and current issues, the study seeks to impact practical outcomes, advocating for strategies that could markedly enhance the professional environment for women in the tech sector. The significance of this study is further highlighted by its potential to guide policy adjustments, stimulate organizational transformations, and propel a wider cultural shift toward inclusivity and equity in the workplace.

Theoretical Frameworks

This research into gender disparities within Bengaluru's IT and ITES sectors is underpinned by various theoretical frameworks, each contributing unique insights into the dynamics of career development and advancement.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) argues that career development is shaped by a combination of personal interests, behaviours, and the surrounding social environment. In this study, SCCT is employed to examine how women's self-efficacy, expected outcomes, and personal goals interact with societal barriers or support systems within the IT and ITES sectors, influencing their career aspirations and achievements [1]. This exploration helps to clarify the complex relationship between individual initiative and broader systemic factors.

Gender Role Theory highlights how societal norms and cultural expectations regarding gender roles significantly affect individuals' behaviours and opportunities in professional settings. Using this theory, the study explores how traditional gender roles and societal expectations influence women's career ambitions and their actual career progression in the tech sector [2], shedding light on the social constructs that maintain gender disparities.

Intersectionality Theory emphasizes that various social identities, such as gender, race, and class, intersect to uniquely shape individual experiences. This theory is pivotal for investigating how different elements, including socioeconomic status, familial responsibilities, and cultural backgrounds, intersect with gender to impact women's career opportunities and results in Bengaluru [3]. This approach offers a detailed understanding of the diverse experiences of women in the workforce.

Organizational Support Theory examines the role of organizational support mechanisms, such as training programs, mentorship, and flexible work policies, in influencing employee outcomes. This study evaluates how these support systems affect women's career development and performance [4], pinpointing how organizational practices can be optimized to encourage career progression for women.

Expectancy Theory, which is a motivational theory, investigates how individual expectations regarding the likelihood of achieving success affect decision-making and effort in career pursuits. This theory is used to understand how women's expectations about career advancement in the IT and ITES sectors affect their professional engagement and performance [5]. It also examines the motivational factors that influence women's career choices and efforts within these industries.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, this study aims to deliver a comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of the obstacles and facilitators impacting women's careers in Bengaluru's tech sector. The theoretical foundation not only guides the empirical research but also supports the formulation of strategies for establishing fairer workplace practices.

Specific Objectives

The objectives of this literature review are to:
1. Investigate the impact of career aspirations on women's performance within the IT and ITES sectors in Bengaluru.
2. Explore how societal and organizational barriers affect women's career trajectories and performance outcomes.
3. Analyse the role of organizational support systems in facilitating women's career development in the technology sector.
4. Examine the interplay of personal and contextual factors, including intersectional identities, that influence women's career aspirations and achievements.
5. Provide recommendations based on empirical evidence for fostering a more inclusive and supportive workplace environment that enables women to achieve their career aspirations.

Critique of Theoretical Frameworks

This literature review aims to thoroughly analyze the factors that affect the career aspirations and performance of women in Bengaluru's IT and ITES sectors. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) provides important insights into how interactions with the environment and role models influence women's career choices. For example, research by Gupta and Patel (2019)[1] shows that exposure to successful female leaders can positively affect women's aspirations and outcomes, even in the face of prevalent biases.

Moreover, Gender Role Theory and Intersectionality Theory offer insights into how societal norms and individual identity factors shape career paths, highlighting the necessity for focused initiatives to tackle these intricate influences. Organizational Support Theory and Expectancy Theory emphasize the impact of organizational culture and personal motivational dynamics on shaping career trajectories. The effectiveness

of mentorship programs in boosting women's career experiences, as highlighted in research by Khanna and Singh (2018)[2], demonstrates the value of supportive practices in the workplace.

Integration and Synthesis

The deployment of Social Cognitive Career Theory, Gender Role Theory, Intersectionality Theory, Organizational Support Theory, and Expectancy Theory offers a holistic framework for understanding the obstacles and enablers affecting women's careers in the IT and ITES sectors. SCCT underlines the critical role of role models and supportive work environments in enhancing women's career confidence and ambitions. In Bengaluru's IT industry, the presence of female leaders is linked to increased career aspirations among women, pointing to the importance of improving visibility and access to female mentors.

Intersectionality Theory brings attention to the diverse experiences of women in IT, influenced by their socio-economic status, ethnicity, and other identity factors. This diversity indicates that initiatives to promote inclusivity need to be detailed and flexible, tailored to meet the needs of various groups rather than applying a uniform approach. Nonetheless, these theories also need further development to adequately tackle the unique challenges present in Bengaluru's vibrant tech landscape, such as combining insights from Organizational Support Theory with empirical research on workplace practices to create more specific and effective support mechanisms.

Conclusion of Theoretical Critique

This synthesis of theoretical perspectives provides a comprehensive foundation for the empirical investigation detailed later in this review. A thorough understanding of the capabilities and limitations of each theory allows for a nuanced review of new data or a reevaluation of existing research. This approach aims to deepen our understanding of the obstacles and enablers that shape the career trajectories of women in the IT and ITES sectors.

In addition, this theoretical base informs the creation of practical measures intended to promote gender equality within these industries. For instance, insights from Organizational Support Theory could guide the formulation of more detailed diversity policies and initiatives that cater specifically to the needs of women in various roles and at different stages of their careers. This method ensures that the strategies not only align with empirical findings but also remain adaptive to the evolving demands of the sector, making the interventions both relevant and effective.

Thus, the insights derived from this review of theoretical frameworks shape the methodological approaches of subsequent sections and inform practical applications, ensuring that the literature review drives meaningful and applicable changes in the industry.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW ON GENDER DISPARITIES IN IT AND ITES

The search strategy for this literature review involved a systematic search across multiple academic databases including PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Key phrases such as "career aspirations," "women in IT," "performance outcomes," and "ITES sector" were utilized to locate relevant articles. The selection criteria included peer-reviewed articles published in the last ten years and written in English, specifically focusing on the dynamics of career advancement for women in Bengaluru's IT industry. Studies that did not directly relate to the central themes of career aspirations and performance within the IT and ITES sectors were omitted to keep the review focused.

Exploring Career Progression Barriers and Workplace Dynamics

Research like McGrath and Lynch's (2016) study on "Glass Ceilings and Sticky Floors" [1] and Gupta's (2019) exploration of societal influences [2] shed light on the structural and cultural barriers that impact women's career aspirations. These studies are fundamental in understanding their effects on performance and identifying ways to overcome them within the context of Bengaluru.

Sharma's (2021) analysis of how workplace culture affects gender disparities [3] offers crucial insights into how organizational environments in Bengaluru might shape women's performance and career ambitions. Such environments are key to promoting gender equality and improving performance outcomes, highlighting the importance of supportive workplace cultures.

Mentorship and Educational Influence on Career Aspirations

The impact of mentorship and support systems, as demonstrated in Khanna's (2022) study [4], shows positive effects on women's career progression. Investigating similar initiatives in Bengaluru could provide insights into their influence on women's career aspirations and performance within IT and ITES organizations.

Additionally, Kapoor's (2024) focus on STEM education and career advancement [5] sheds light on the role of education and skill development in shaping women's performance in the IT and ITES sectors. Assessing access to these educational resources in Bengaluru is crucial for understanding their impact on women's career aspirations and performance.

Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives
Singh's (2021) review of diversity and inclusion programs [6] outlines a framework for evaluating their impact on women's perceptions of career opportunities and performance in the workplace. Reviewing such initiatives in the Bengaluru context could reveal their effectiveness in mitigating gender disparities in the IT and ITES sectors.

Broader Implications of Career Aspirations and Job Satisfaction
The interplay between career aspirations, job satisfaction, and performance is directly explored in Smith and Johnson's (2021) study [7]. Their findings underline the significance of aligning career aspirations with job roles, particularly for enhancing job satisfaction and performance among women in the IT and ITES sectors.

Kumar and Sharma's (2020) research [8] provides insights into gender differences in career aspirations and job satisfaction, offering valuable data for designing gender-specific strategies to enhance job satisfaction and performance among female IT professionals.

Organizational Support and Longitudinal Dynamics
Kapoor's (2021) emphasis on the role of organizational support [9] in shaping career aspirations and job satisfaction is vital for understanding how supportive work environments influence women's career aspirations and performance in the IT and ITES sectors.

Additionally, the longitudinal analysis by Williams and Davis (2019) [10] offers insights into how career aspirations and job satisfaction evolve over time, aiding in the development of long-term strategies to support women's careers in these sectors.

Local Cultural and Organizational Context in Bengaluru
Das Gupta's (2021) study on IT and ITES professionals in India [11] provides contextually rich data that can inform how cultural and organizational factors in Bengaluru might influence career aspirations and job satisfaction among women. This localized perspective is crucial for grasping the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women in the region.

Concluding the Literature Review
This review has illuminated key factors that influence women's career aspirations and performance in Bengaluru's IT and ITES sectors. It has highlighted barriers like glass ceilings and societal expectations, as well as enablers such as mentorship programs and diversity initiatives. These insights underscore the need for a detailed understanding of how both organizational and societal structures affect women in the tech industry, setting the stage for further theoretical exploration.

Theoretical Integration
Integrating empirical evidence with theoretical frameworks is crucial to substantiate research findings and refine theories to better suit the specific conditions of Bengaluru. This approach helps pinpoint theoretical deficiencies and suggests improvements to better tackle the challenges and opportunities unearthed through the literature review. For instance, proposing adjustments to Social Cognitive Career Theory to explicitly address the impact of pervasive gender norms and biases is a reflection of the necessity for theories to evolve with the changing realities of the tech sector.

Framework Integration Highlights
Social Cognitive Career Theory elucidates how personal competencies and external barriers shape career interests and actions. The review recommends amending this theory to more accurately reflect the subtle influences of gender norms in the tech industry.

Gender Role Theory and Intersectionality Theory are pivotal in analyzing how societal expectations and intersecting identities impact career paths, signaling the need for wider cultural changes and more inclusive policies.

Organizational Support Theory and Expectancy Theory provide insights into the interplay between organizational policies and individual motivations, highlighting the importance of tailoring support mechanisms to fit the varied workplace cultures in Bengaluru.

Conclusion of Theoretical Integration

Merging these theoretical frameworks with empirical data deepens our understanding of the complex challenges faced by women in Bengaluru's tech industry. This synthesis lays a solid foundation for crafting targeted interventions that are theoretically sound and empirically supported.

Empirical Findings and Local vs. Global Context

Key empirical findings highlight the role of mentorship and structural barriers in influencing women's career advancement. Moreover, contrasting the local experiences in Bengaluru with global trends reveals distinct challenges that differ markedly from those seen in other international tech hubs. This comparative analysis stresses the importance of tailoring diversity strategies to align with local cultural norms and organizational practices.

Concluding Remarks

This literature review meticulously examines the elements influencing women's career aspirations and performance in Bengaluru's IT and ITES sectors. By blending theoretical frameworks with empirical research, it sheds light on notable disparities and outlines effective methods to promote a more inclusive and equitable work environment. The insights provided not only enrich the academic debate surrounding gender disparities but also shape practical approaches to enhance workplace inclusivity. Future studies should continue to explore these issues, focusing on longitudinal research and a finer analysis of intersectional effects, to enhance our comprehension of the forces at play and foster the creation of strategies that effectively mitigate gender disparities in the tech industry.

C. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Methodological Analysis and Critical Evaluation

The implementation of mixed-methods approaches in select studies has greatly enhanced our comprehension of the research topic. Qualitative techniques such as interviews and focus groups have been instrumental in obtaining detailed information on the barriers, enablers, and aspirations that shape women's career paths. These methods are particularly effective for probing complex issues that quantitative techniques alone might not fully capture.

On the other hand, quantitative methods provide solid empirical evidence and measurable results that facilitate the identification of patterns and trends across broader groups. By integrating these methods in a sequential mixed-methods design, researchers can conduct a thorough analysis that melds detailed qualitative insights with extensive quantitative data, offering a comprehensive view of the underlying dynamics.

The efficacy of these methodologies in tackling complex research questions is apparent; they enable a detailed understanding of how various factors—such as personal motivations, organizational dynamics, and societal norms—affect women's career trajectories. This approach not only directly addresses the initial research questions but is also flexible enough to adapt to new findings, which is vital for dealing with the multifaceted nature of gender dynamics in professional environments.

The critical evaluation of these methodological strategies has yielded significant insights into the career aspirations and performances of women in Bengaluru's IT and ITES sectors. However, some limitations have been identified, particularly regarding the generalizability of the results and the depth of intersectional analysis. These shortcomings point to areas that require further exploration. Broadening the geographic and demographic scope of the studies, utilizing diverse methodological frameworks, and increasing the rigor of data collection and analysis would enhance our understanding of this crucial area. Future research should strive to include these enhancements to expand upon existing findings and offer more detailed insights into the challenges and opportunities for women in the tech industry.

Critiquing Methodological Approaches

In examining career aspirations and performance among women in IT companies in Bengaluru, researchers have employed diverse methodological approaches. For example, Gupta and Khan (2018) [1] used a quantitative research design that, while effective for statistical analysis, might not capture the nuanced qualitative insights that can offer a deeper understanding of the subject. This approach could potentially miss the subtle details that qualitative data can reveal about the experiences and motivations of women in IT.

The choice of sampling methods is also critical in determining the robustness of research findings. Singh and Sharma (2019) [2] opted for convenience sampling by selecting participants from just one IT company. While this method is efficient, it raises questions about the representativeness of the sample and whether the findings can be generalized to other companies within the sector.

The methods used to collect data also significantly impact the quality of research. Malhotra & Verma (2020) [3] gathered data through self-reported surveys distributed electronically, which, despite being efficient, are prone to response biases and do not provide the depth of data that might be obtained from more immersive methods like in-depth interviews or observational studies.

Additionally, Kapoor and Das (2021) [4] utilized regression analysis to examine the relationships between various variables. While this is useful for identifying the strength and direction of relationships, it can oversimplify the complex interactions between career aspirations, job satisfaction, and performance, possibly ignoring crucial mediating or moderating factors.

The reliability and validity of the instruments used also influence the credibility of the research. Sharma & Gupta (2017) [5] employed validated scales to measure career aspirations, job satisfaction, and performance but did not tailor these scales specifically to the unique context of Bengaluru's IT and ITES sectors, which could call into question the applicability of their findings.

Ethical considerations are equally important. Gupta and Khan (2018) [6] ensured informed consent and confidentiality in their study, but they did not address the potential power dynamics within the workplace that could affect participants' willingness to openly share sensitive information.

Integration and Synthesis of Methodological Approaches
Complementary Insights:
The studies by Gupta and Khan (2018) [1] and Kapoor and Das (2021) [4] provide a compelling look at how qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups reveal deep-seated factors influencing women's career aspirations like workplace culture and mentorship availability. These qualitative insights enhance the understanding of statistical relationships found in Kapoor and Das's regression analyses, which suggest a significant influence of perceived organizational support on job satisfaction and performance. Additionally, personal narratives from Singh and Sharma (2019) [2] about challenges in balancing work and life enrich the quantitative data from Malhotra & Verma (2020) [3], which links high domestic responsibilities to lower performance ratings. This evidence points to the critical role of supportive measures like flexible working hours in enhancing performance.

Contradictory Findings:
While qualitative findings often paint a picture of women being motivated and supported, quantitative surveys sometimes show a trend of low career progression in similar roles. This mismatch may stem from varying interpretations of 'support' and 'progression,' suggesting a need for more precise definitions in research methodologies. Furthermore, Gupta and Khan (2018) [1] report high career satisfaction among women in senior roles, contrasting with Sharma & Gupta (2017) [5], who observe generally moderate satisfaction levels across the sector. This inconsistency could be attributed to different sampling methods or a potential bias in self-reporting among senior professionals due to social desirability.

Methodological Gaps:
The majority of the studies reviewed employ cross-sectional designs, which limit the ability to draw causal inferences or track changes over time. There is a notable deficiency in longitudinal research that could provide insights into how career aspirations evolve and affect performance through various career stages and life events.

Future Research Directions:
It is recommended that future research adopts longitudinal mixed-methods designs, combining qualitative depth with quantitative breadth over time. This approach would allow for an examination of how shifts in corporate policies, economic conditions, or personal life changes influence career aspirations and performance. Conducting comparative studies across different IT centers in India, like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Pune, could reveal regional variances that impact women's career experiences, potentially guiding more region-specific policies.

Theoretical and Practical Implications:
The integration of these findings indicates the need for theoretical models that encompass individual, organizational, and societal dimensions simultaneously. For example, blending social cognitive career theory with organizational behaviour models could provide a more comprehensive perspective on the dynamics involved. Practically, IT companies could use these insights to craft policies that tackle specific challenges and leverage facilitators identified through these methodological lenses, such as improving mentorship initiatives, offering more flexible working conditions, and promoting an inclusive culture that actively supports women's career advancement.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Expanded Analysis of Current Trends
Technological Advancements:
The landscape of the IT and ITES sectors is undergoing significant transformation with the introduction of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML). These advancements are changing the availability of jobs and the nature of work itself. While these technologies lead to the automation of routine tasks, they also create high-value roles in areas such as data science, AI ethics, and the mitigation of algorithmic bias. However, despite these growing opportunities, there remains a notable gender disparity, with women being markedly underrepresented in these emerging fields. A study conducted by Rao and Kaul (2020) [1] in Bengaluru found that while AI roles are increasing, only a small proportion are held by women, often due to a lack of technical training and persistent gender stereotypes that doubt women's capabilities in high-tech domains. As AI technology continues to develop, roles centered around human-machine interaction and the ethical implications of AI deployment could offer new opportunities for women to engage and excel within the IT sector. Future investigations should focus on how specialized educational initiatives and inclusive recruitment practices can close this gap and improve women's career prospects in these cutting-edge technology fields.

Global Comparisons:
Comparative Analysis Between Global IT Hubs:
When comparing Bengaluru with other major global IT centers like Silicon Valley and Tel Aviv, both similarities and differences emerge. Research conducted by Levin et al. (2021) [2] in Silicon Valley, despite its reputation for being a progressive tech hub, reveals that women there face significant obstacles in advancing within tech roles, a situation that mirrors the challenges found in Bengaluru. These obstacles include insufficient mentorship, widespread gender biases within team environments, and unequal opportunities for professional growth. Conversely, a study from Tel Aviv by Cohen and Sarid (2019) [3] illustrates a different picture, where proactive government policies and strong community support networks have mitigated some of these issues, leading to a higher presence of women in tech startups than the global average. This contrast underscores the profound influence that cultural and policy frameworks can have on the gender dynamics within the tech industry. By understanding these global variances and commonalities, we can better grasp the influence of local cultural factors as opposed to the universal challenges that women face in the tech sector. Such insights are crucial for fostering an international dialogue aimed at collaborative efforts in developing policies and practices that support gender equality in tech industries across the world.

Findings and Discussions
Impact of Career Aspirations on Women's Performance
The analysis indicates that career aspirations significantly affect women's performance in the IT and ITES sectors in Bengaluru. High aspirations are typically associated with greater job satisfaction and performance outcomes, particularly when supported by empowering environments. For example, data from the tech industry in Bengaluru show that women who have access to mentorship and leadership training often experience improvements in job performance and more rapid career progression.

Societal and Organizational Barriers
Societal norms and organizational cultures in Bangalore pose significant obstacles to women's career advancement. The enduring presence of gender stereotypes and the predominantly male tech environment contribute to a workplace atmosphere that may impede women's professional growth. Research, such as the studies by Gupta and Patel (2019) [4], points out that implicit biases and the absence of supportive policies significantly restrict women's progression to leadership roles, despite having qualifications comparable to or surpassing those of their male colleagues.

Role of Organizational Support Systems
Organizational support systems, including mentorship programs, flexible working arrangements, and specific professional development initiatives, are critical in facilitating women's career advancement. The review identifies that companies in Bengaluru with comprehensive support systems generally see higher retention rates of women and better career progression outcomes, suggesting a strong link between effective support systems and women's career success in the IT and ITES sectors.

Interplay of Personal and Contextual Factors
The interaction between personal goals and contextual factors like family responsibilities, societal expectations, and workplace culture significantly influences women's career aspirations and achievements. Intersectionality theory has been crucial in understanding how overlapping identities—such as socioeconomic status, marital status, and parenthood—affect career trajectories differently, indicating that customized interventions are essential for addressing these diverse needs effectively.

Recommendations for Inclusive Workplace Environments

Empirical data have led to several recommendations for creating more inclusive and supportive workplace environments. These include establishing clear pathways for promotion, enhancing female representation in leadership through targeted recruitment and retention efforts, and expanding mentorship opportunities. Implementing these strategies could help alleviate some of the challenges faced by women and promote gender equity in Bengaluru's tech industry.

Deepened Theoretical Engagement
Critique of Theoretical Frameworks:

Traditional gender role theory has long been used to explain the underrepresentation and career paths of women in the IT and ITES sectors. This theory posits that societal and cultural expectations shape individuals' behaviors and career choices, reinforcing traditional roles that may deter women from pursuing careers in technology. However, this framework might not fully capture the complexities of modern work environments, where hybrid roles and technological advancements are reshaping career paths. For instance, recent research by Sharma and Patel (2021) [5] in Bengaluru shows that factors like digital literacy and access to remote work technologies also significantly influence women's career decisions, highlighting the need for more dynamic models that reflect contemporary technological and social changes in the workplace.

Incorporation of Contemporary Theories:

To address the limitations of traditional theories, integrating newer theoretical perspectives such as digital feminism and theories of remote work dynamics can offer more profound insights. Digital feminism explores how digital technologies can empower women, providing a relevant perspective for examining the IT and ITES sectors. This approach can reveal how online platforms and networking tools help women overcome traditional barriers, build supportive networks, and increase visibility in the tech field. For example, a study by Lee (2020) in Silicon Valley demonstrates how women have utilized professional networking sites to establish mentorship circles, significantly impacting their career advancement in tech roles.

Additionally, theories related to remote work dynamics are increasingly pertinent, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift towards remote working. These theories examine how such changes can benefit women by providing flexibility to manage work-life balance, or conversely, how they might lead to career stagnation due to decreased workplace visibility. A comparative study by Gupta and Das (2022) on women's career progression in remote versus traditional office settings within Bengaluru's IT sector found that remote work can lead to favourable career outcomes when supported by proactive communication and inclusive team dynamics.

Methodological Reflections
Potential for Meta-Analysis:

The wealth of quantitative research exploring the factors influencing women's career progression in the IT and ITES sectors lays a strong foundation for a meta-analysis. Such an analysis could systematically combine and assess results from various studies to derive more conclusive insights about the effectiveness of interventions like mentorship programs, flexible work hours, and diversity training. For instance, synthesizing data from studies examining the impact of mentorship could clarify the overall influence of these programs on women's promotional rates and job satisfaction. A meta-analysis would enhance the statistical robustness of the findings and help pinpoint which strategies are most successful across diverse contexts and research designs.

Innovative Methodological Approaches:

Exploring the complex dynamics of women's career paths in the tech sector calls for innovative methodologies such as agent-based modelling (ABM) and social network analysis (SNA). ABM can simulate individual decision-making within a structured set of interactions and rules, enabling researchers to see how shifts in policies or societal attitudes might affect women's career choices and progress over time. This method is useful for assessing long-term effects of gender equality initiatives.

Social network analysis could provide insights into the informal networks that influence career advancement in IT. By mapping professional networks within companies, SNA can identify key influencers and structural barriers that women may encounter in accessing crucial network ties that facilitate career development and mentorship. A study by Kumar and Singh (2023) [6] used SNA in Bengaluru to demonstrate that women centrally positioned in informal networks tend to access important information about job opportunities and leadership roles more promptly, underscoring the significance of network positioning in career advancement.

Forward-Looking Implications
Policy Recommendations:

Based on the findings, actionable policy recommendations can be formulated for the IT industry and governmental bodies. Corporately, IT companies should develop comprehensive mentorship programs

specifically supporting women, featuring mentors who have successfully navigated similar challenges. Promoting policies that standardize flexible working conditions can address the diverse needs of women employees, particularly those balancing professional and personal duties. Additionally, establishing and enforcing transparent promotion and evaluation criteria can help reduce biases that affect women's career progression, ensuring fairness and meritocracy.

Nationally, advocating for laws that enforce equal pay for equal work and penalize gender discrimination is vital. These laws should be rigorously implemented with clear processes for women to safely report grievances. Proposing financial incentives for startups showing exemplary gender diversity in hiring and leadership could also promote equality.

Educational Implications:
Educational reforms are essential to cultivate a more inclusive and diverse IT sector. Curricula should include case studies and projects that celebrate women's contributions to technology, providing role models and normalizing success for all genders in tech fields. Initiatives to spark girls' interest in technology from an early age, such as coding and digital literacy programs, are crucial in dismantling stereotypes that deter girls from tech careers. Encouraging scholarships and funding for women pursuing IT degrees can reduce economic barriers, while supporting professional development for women in IT can help them keep pace with technological advancements and enhance their career opportunities.

E. CONCLUSION

This detailed literature review has uncovered several significant obstacles that impede women's career progression in the IT and ITES sectors in Bengaluru. These include deep-seated gender biases, organizational cultural hurdles, skill disparities, and a lack of adequate mentorship opportunities. These findings align with the initial goals of examining the impact of career aspirations on women's performance and understanding how societal and organizational barriers shape women's career paths.

The review highlights the urgent need to overcome both structural and cultural challenges to create more inclusive and supportive environments where women can succeed. It stresses the importance of a positive workplace culture, effective mentorship, skills development, and flexible work arrangements in shaping women's career aspirations and improving performance outcomes. Thus, it is crucial for organizations to actively endorse and implement policies that promote diversity, inclusion, and the overall well-being of employees, creating a setting that nurtures women's professional achievements.

Additionally, the discussions around the role of organizational support systems and the interaction of personal and contextual factors, including intersectional identities, have pinpointed critical areas for further research. There is a compelling need for longitudinal studies that follow women's career trajectories over time, intersectional analyses to explore the layered effects of multiple identities on career progression, and assessments of various initiatives aimed at fostering gender equality. These research efforts are essential to enhance our understanding of the multifaceted factors that influence women's career aspirations and performance, and to generate reliable data that can guide effective strategies for positive change within the industry.

Looking forward, fostering partnerships between academic researchers and industry practitioners is vital for cultivating an equitable tech environment. By focusing research efforts on these identified gaps and applying evidence-based policies, the tech sector has the opportunity to set a global benchmark for gender equality and professional inclusivity. The potential for innovation and growth in a setting that values diverse contributions and perspectives is substantial. Realizing this potential is not only advantageous—it is imperative for the tech industry's sustainable future.

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Conflict of Interest
The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to disclose regarding this work.

Author Contributions
Ramya N, as the research scholar, conducted the study under the guidance and with the complete support of Dr. Purna Prasad Arcot, who provided expert advice and oversight throughout the research process.

Ethics Approval
This study was reviewed and received ethics approval from the Ethics Committee at the School of Management, CMR University, located at HRBR Layout, Kalyan Nagar, Bengaluru-560043, Karnataka, India. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institution

Data Availability
The datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Abbreviations
IT: Information Technology
ITES: Information Technology Enabled Services
SCCT: Social Cognitive Career Theory
GDPR: General Data Protection Regulation
AI: Artificial Intelligence
ML: Machine Learning
DORI: Directorate of Research & Innovation
ABM: Agent-based modelling
SNA: Social network analysis

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