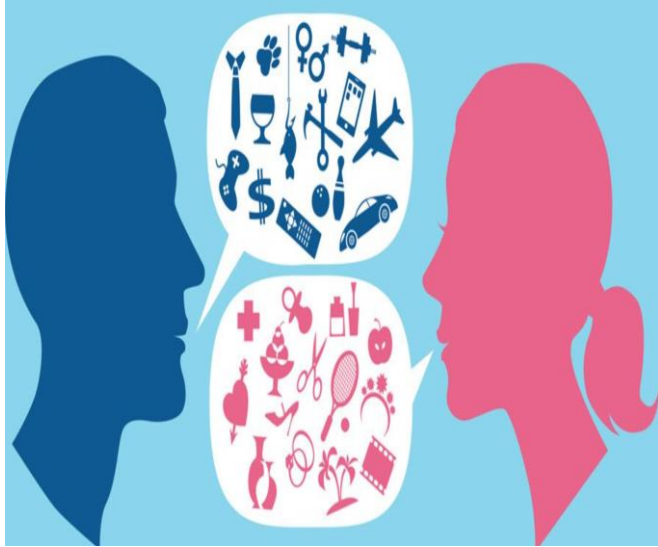




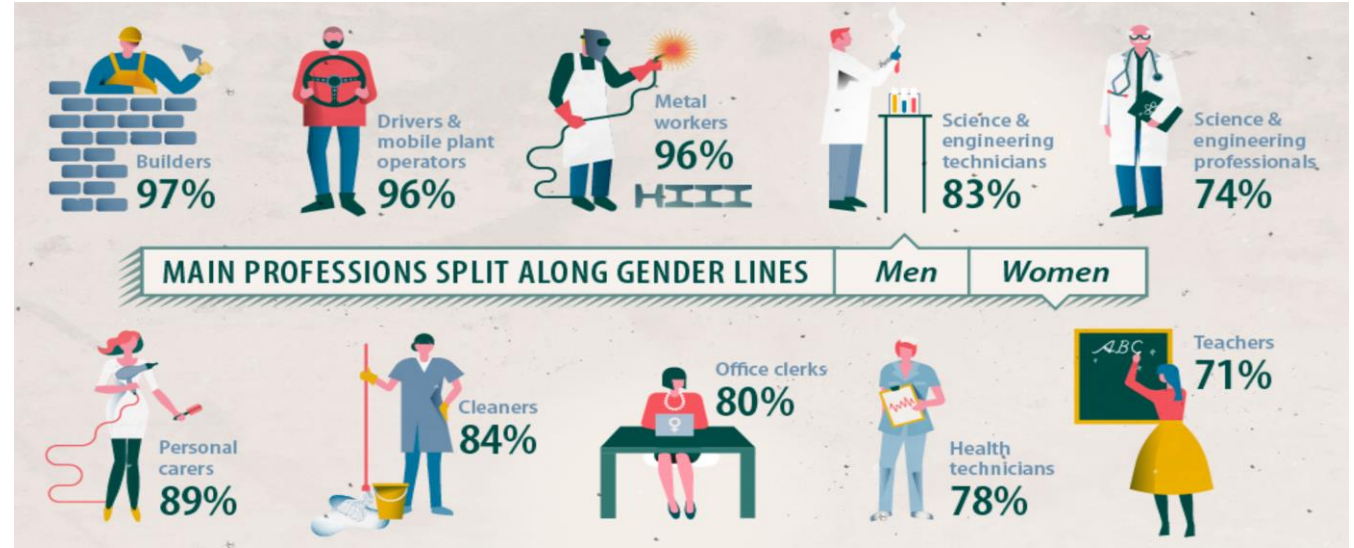
# Gender Stereotypes and Their Effects on Career Choices: A Study Carried Out in Coquitlam College

# Our Research Issue

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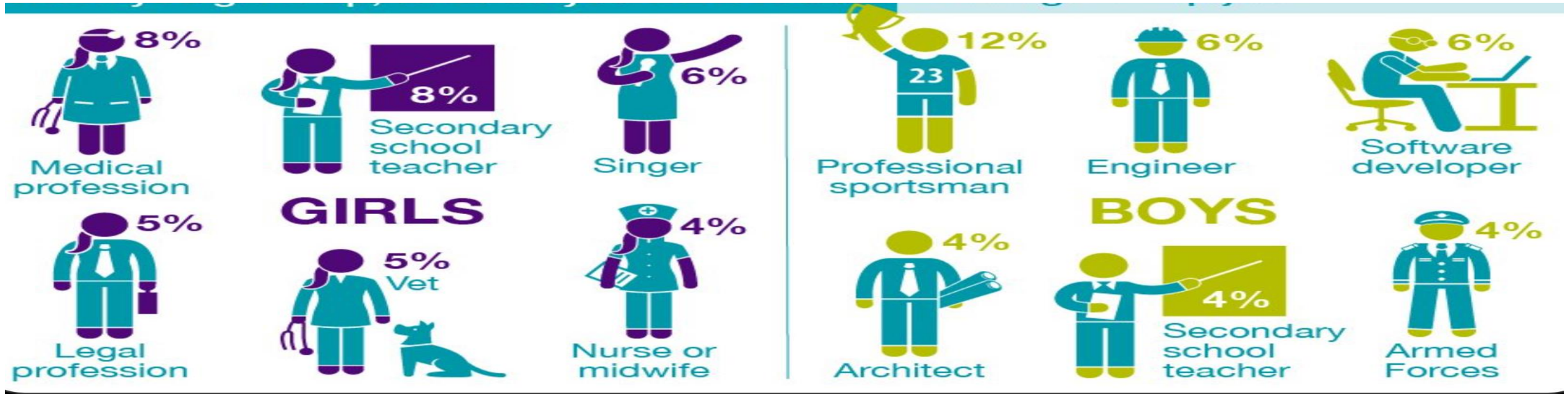
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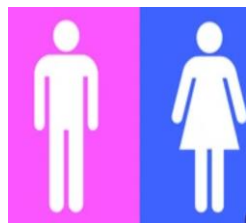
## Gender Stereotypes in Institutions

- Gender stereotypes are ideas on what boys and girls are expected to do (Gender Equality Network, n. d)
- Such ideas have impacts on student's selection of subjects and careers
- A large number of students are confronted by pressure to take up careers that suit their gender as expected in the society
- This creates problems in workplace equality

# Why This Issue Matters



- Women continue to be fewer workers in STEM fields (Verdugo-Castro et al, 2022)
- Nursing and teaching have fewer men workers (Gender Equality Network, n. d)
- Students can end up not doing what they like
- Society loses talented people in different fields
- Schools play important role in shaping these choices



# Gender Stereotypes in Schools

- Boys are better at math and science
- Girls are naturally caring and should help people
- Engineering is for boys (Gender Equality Network, n. d)
- Teaching is for girls

These kinds of messages often come from teachers, books, the media and peers



# Research Evidence

- According to the Self-Concept Theory established based on the work of Igbo and Obiyo (2015), gender refers to the actions that are now firmly related to masculinity and femininity, and the ways individuals interpret their roles as men or women.
- Therefore, it is related with how individuals perceive themselves in such a way that most people of the same sex identify themselves with certain attributes (Igbo and Obiyo, 2015).
- These attributes affect children as they develop.
- As such, the perception students have on themselves influences their choice (Verdugo-Castro et al, 2022)
- Gender stereotyping may reduce the confidence of students
- By believing in stereotypes, students tend to avoid taking up certain subjects
- Overall, the gender ideology affects choices of education (Van der Vleuten et al., 2016)



# Who We Studied and the Method We Used

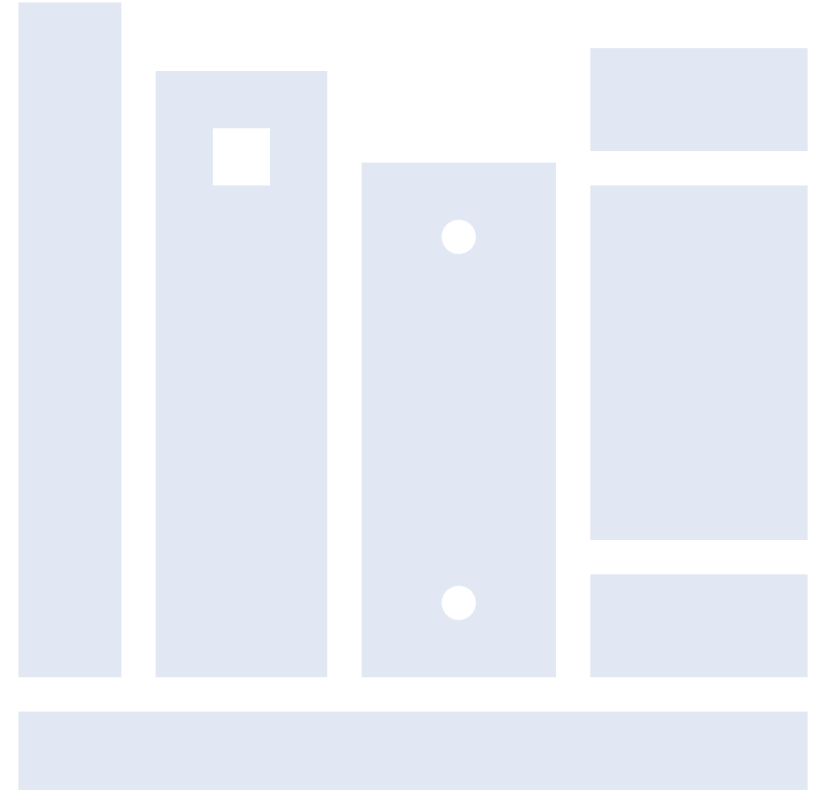
- Coquitlam College students
- 20 students with minimum requirement
- Mixed gender representation
- Students in ENG, CMNS, INST, ECON, Film and Associate of Arts
- Survey questionnaire with 11 questions





# Our Survey Questions Overview

- Asked students about their basic information and current studies.
- Wanted to know whether they would recount having ever been told by someone that particular work or subjects are reserved only to boys or girls.
- Asked them whether they felt less confident in certain school subjects due to gender stereotype.
- Also wanted to know how confident they are about pursuing their true interests and what can be improved at schools in order to have all students pursue career paths on their own free will.





# Key Survey Results

## Gender stereotyping Exposure

- 8 were not sure if they heard gender-based career advice
- 8 said no, they never heard such advice
- 4 said yes, they heard such advice
- Source of stereotypes: Books and media (for those who said yes)





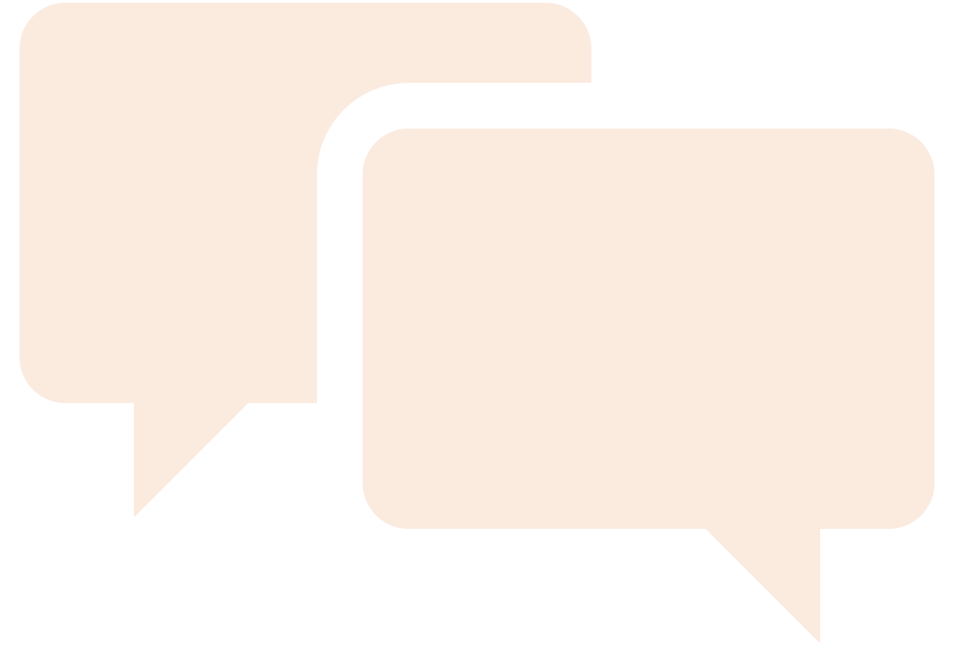


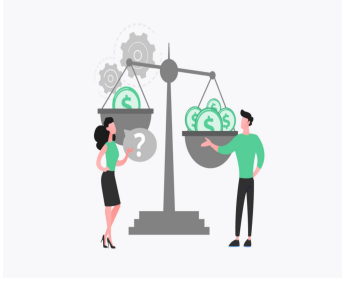
# Impact on Subject Confidence

- 8 consented to the fact that their confidence was influenced by gender stereotypes
- 12 students were neutral with this impact
- None was strongly against the influence of stereotypes

## Feeling Discouraged by Gender

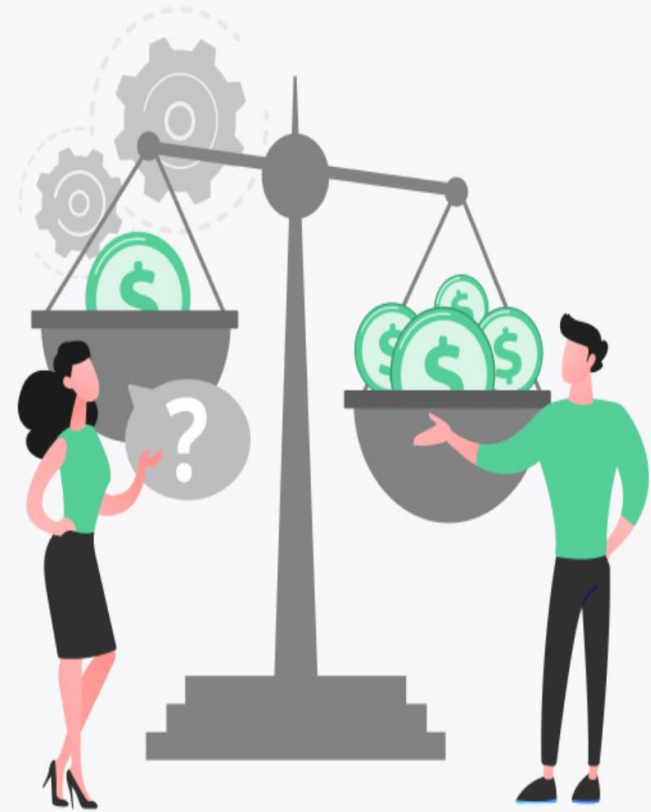
- 4 felt discouraged from choosing subjects because of gender
- 16 of them reported that they were never discouraged





# Stereotyping messages that are common

- 4 had heard boys are supposed to do courses, such as engineering, or mechanics
- 12 heard that girls are naturally caring and ought to be teachers or nurses
- 4 students heard none of these messages
- No one got any school-based staff career recommendation based on gender



# Career Confidence

- 16 were very sure that they are pursuing their actual interests
- 4 were somewhat confident
- No one felt not confident about their career path

Would Careers Be Different Without Stereotypes?

- 4 believed that their career aspirations would be different
- 16 indicated that they would have same career goals



# Discussion of Results

## Analysis of Direct Experience

- Most students may not recognize subtle gender messages they receive
- There is confusion about what counts as gender stereotype advice
- Students may just be dealing with indirect instead of direct messages
- Stereotypes affect the confidence of students even when they are not clearly aware of them
- This is in agreement with studies that reveal unconscious gender stereotype influence (Verdugo-Castro et al, 2022).



# Confidence and Barriers

- Direct discouragement is not as common but applies to some students
- Staff in schools do not seem to make obvious gender-related career recommendations
- Traditional gender role messages still exist especially regarding girls in caring professions (Verdugo-Castro et al, 2022)
- Even in contemporary learning institutions, students are exposed to such messages
- The "caring" stereotype for girls remains very strong in society

# Independence and Awareness

- Students assume they are making independent decisions, which might not explain non conscious influences
- High levels of confidence may be an indication that an individual has no knowledge on minor stereotype effects
- The independence in self-perception is not necessarily equivalent with the social influence in reality
- Majority of the students are not aware about how stereotypes may have affected their choices
- This shows the hidden nature of gender stereotype influence



# Key Insights

- Most students do not clearly recognize gender stereotype messages
- Students can be influenced in ways they never notice
- The impact happens at unconscious level
- Some felt the effect on confidence even when they were not aware that they are victims of stereotypes
- 8 admitted to stereotypical affects on their subject confidence
- This attests to the study by Igbo et al. (2015) regarding the effect of gender stereotypes on self-concept



# Traditional Gender Messages Continue

- Twelve students were exposed to messages girls are naturally caring
- Such messages correspond to traditional stereotypes of gender roles
- The students continue to be directed to gender-specific occupations
- This indicates that stereotypes are alive in learning institutions
- The schools should be more enlightened and trained on how to deal with these issues



# Conclusion and Main Findings

- Students at Coquitlam college continue to be affected by gender stereotypes
- The students are not always aware of such influences
- Traditional gender-role messages still remain evident
- The majority of the students are confident with their decisions though there is some form of influence present
- People should be more aware of unconscious bias in the educational environment

# Implications and Recommendations

- Provide training of the teachers about unconscious bias
- Educate people on gender stereotypes
- Motivate students to pursue all career prospects
- Encourage students to choose careers that are of interest or strength to them and not their gender roles
- Students suggested "good teaching so students can achieve goals and desired score"

# K-W-L Chart

| What I Know   | What I Want to Know   | What I Learned   |
|---|---|--|
| Gender stereotypes exist in educational settings from early childhood | What role do guidance counselors play in perpetuating or challenging stereotypes? | Most students do not clearly recognize gender stereotype messages they receive |
| Women are underrepresented in STEM fields                             | How do gender stereotypes affect academic performance in different subjects?      | 40% of students admitted stereotypes affected their subject confidence         |
| Parents' career expectations may differ by child's gender             | How do students themselves perceive and respond to gender expectations?           | Traditional messages about gender roles still reach 60% of students            |
| Peer pressure affects academic choices                                | What interventions have been successful in reducing stereotype influence?         | Students may experience influences at unconscious level                        |
| Traditional gender roles still influence career guidance              | How do teachers unconsciously reinforce gender stereotypes in classrooms?         | Schools need better awareness and training programs                            |

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