

Analyzing the impact of culture on career aspiration

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Roadmap



- Context
- Research Question
- Methods
- Findings
- Next Steps

Why Utah?



- **Women in Utah:**
 - Large pay gap: 71 cents per dollar despite Utah having some of the fastest growing incomes in the US
 - 2013 study ranked Utah last in terms of women's equality
- **Utah's unique culture**
 - 60% of Utahans identify as LDS (Mormon). About 80% in Logan, Utah.
 - Predominant religion emphasizes marriage and motherhood
 - Second highest fertility rate

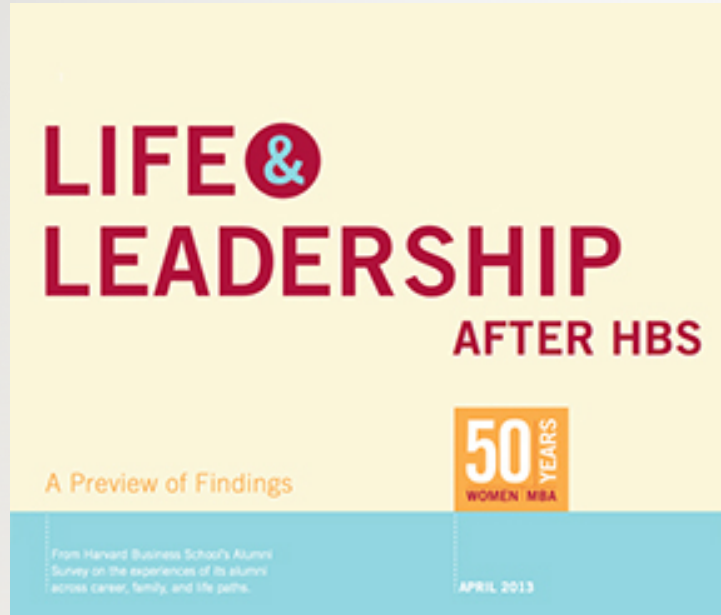
Research Question

Does living in a culturally conservative context influence gendered career aspirations?

Are there gendered differences in career aspirations between USU students that may contribute to career outcomes?

Literature Review/Theory

Life and Leadership After Harvard Business School



- Women and men have similar aspirations at time of graduation for HBS graduates
- Women are often disappointed with their career outcome – their expectations aren't being met.
- Gap = cultural influence on career aspirations

Methods



Thank you for taking this survey. Your responses will enhance understanding of the life and career aspirations for USU honor students and how these aspirations compare with realities.

Your responses are confidential and your participation is voluntary.

The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete.



- Survey: Replication of HBS study
- Collected: through online survey
- Analyzed: Data organized by gender, then comparisons were made.
- Follow-up Interviews: Participants were asked to do a follow-up interview that dived deeper into experiences and expectations.

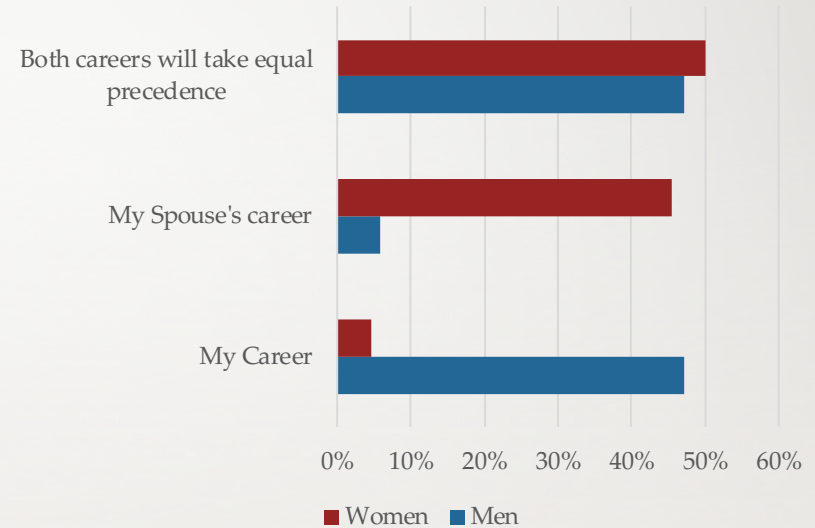
Demographics

- USU Honors Students
- Graduating Seniors
- Most participants were from Utah or Idaho
- 17 Men
- 22 Women
- Ages 21-30

Expectations of Egalitarian Relationships

- “My husband’s (career) takes precedence...**if one of us had to assume a caretaker role it will probably be me.** And if one of us had to support the other through grad school it would probably be me supporting him through grad school.” -Karen

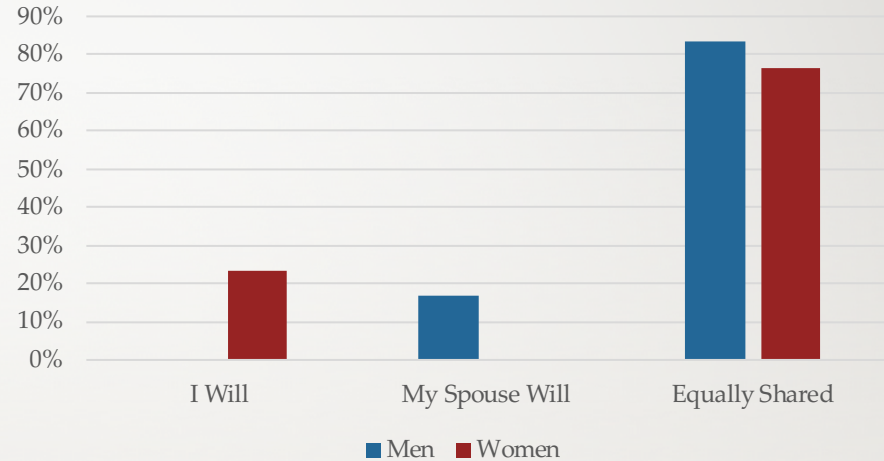
Whose career will take precedence in the household?



Expectations of Egalitarian Relationships

- “I would want my wife to, I think she will be able to manage most of the things and responsibilities at home. **I guess my role is a provider**” –David
- “**Having a family should be just as much of a commitment for a male as it should be for a female**, that their job choices or not, or how they spend their time should be just as affected by the choice to have a family. That it’s not a bigger commitment for either party, it should be an equal commitment and if they can navigate that, I can too.” -Jen

Who will manage your children's schedule and activities?



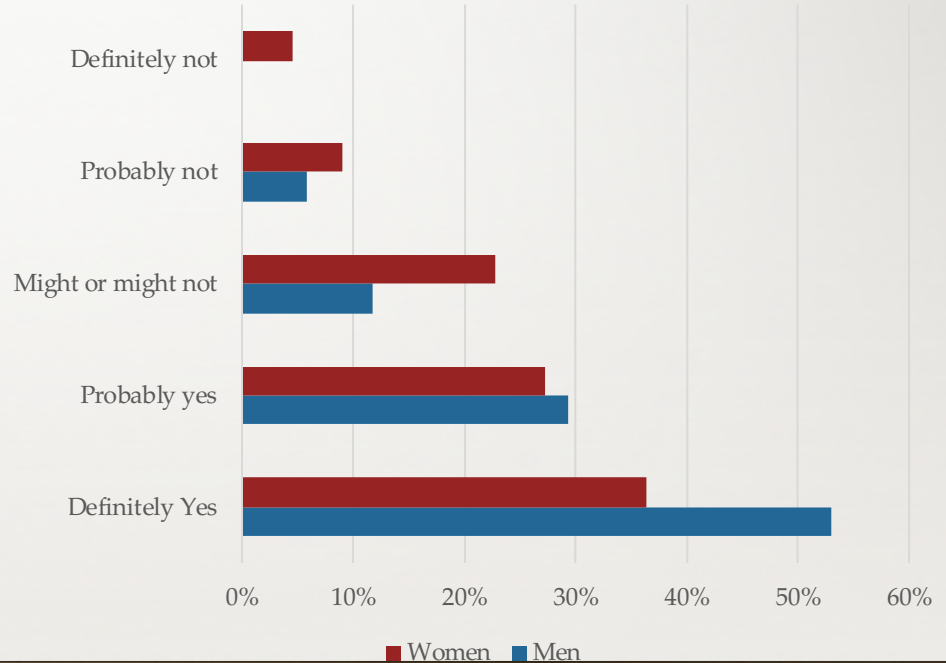
Work not just economic

- It's pretty important to me. I've always had a strong work ethic and drive. Like regardless of when I have kids I still want to work, maybe not full time maybe just part time. So it's pretty important to me. It's important for me to... be successful.... **I want to have a meaningful job.**

-Cindy

- Money is cool in as much as I can live on it, **but not my top reason to work.** -Jen

If your spouse were to achieve your household income goals, would you still choose to work?



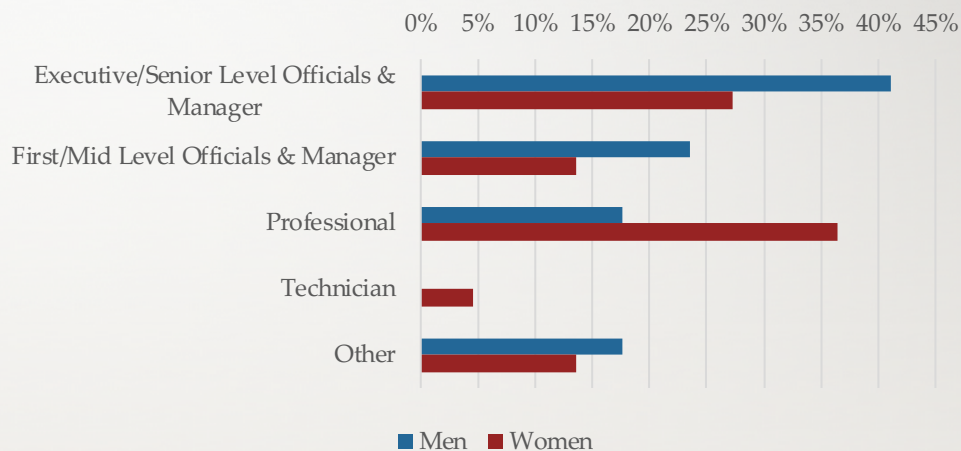
Aspirations and Confidence

•“I mean my end aspiration is to be successful in my career, which for me that’s not C-suite, but it’s still higher up in an organization. **So we’ll see if I’m able to handle a career and a family.** I’d like to be able to and still advance.” -Beth

•“I think eventually **my ideal would be kind of leading a team**, some sort of leadership management type position in which you kind of get to be a leader of a group” -David

•“I would purposely shut out ideas that I liked, because **I didn’t think they would ‘work’ with the life I was ‘supposed to lead.’**” -Jen

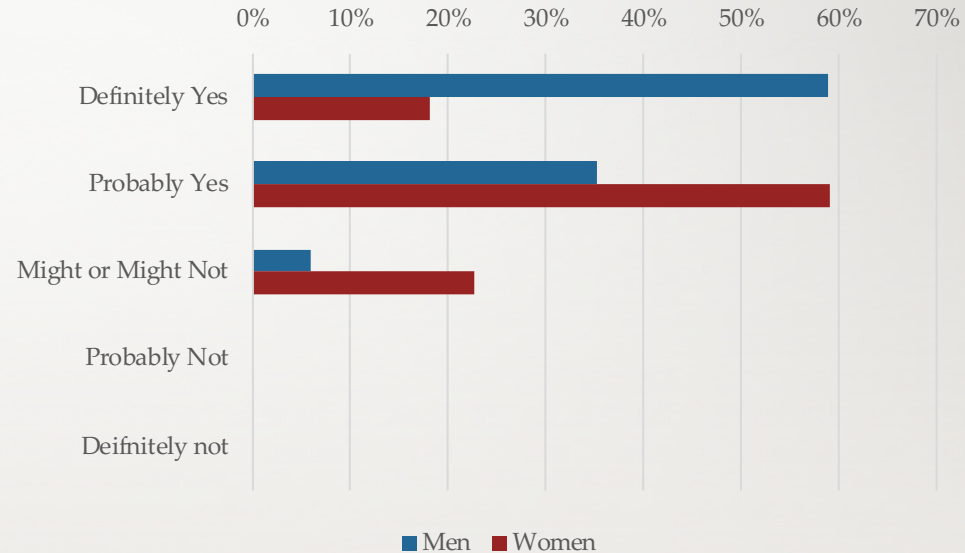
What would be your ideal position in a company?



Aspirations and Confidence

- “Very confident in it (career goal). Yeah, I don’t really see it being an issue.” –David
- “I mean it is a highly competitive field, there are a lot of obstacles and yeah, **there’s definitely a high probability that I won’t be in that position.**” -Jen

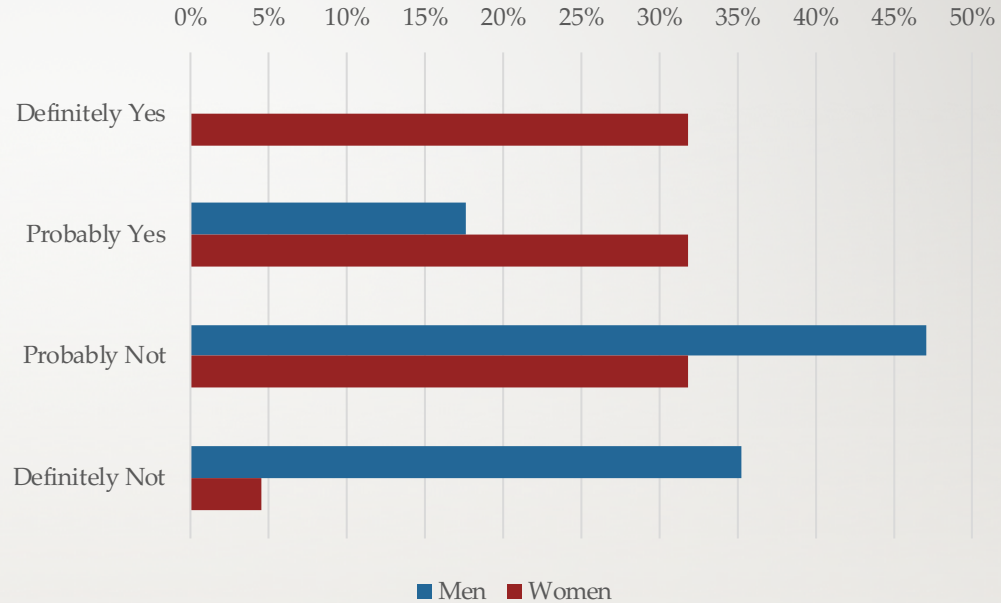
Do you expect to achieve your ideal position in a company?



Awareness of Barriers

• “For me it’s really tough because my whole life I’ve been really driven, and I just am go-go-go, so a break for me is pretty difficult, however **I know family is supposed to be one of your greatest joys in life**, so I would like to experience that at some point. So it’s hard for me because I don’t want to take a break, but I will have to at some point **and it kind of scares me that I might get a little left behind**” –Beth

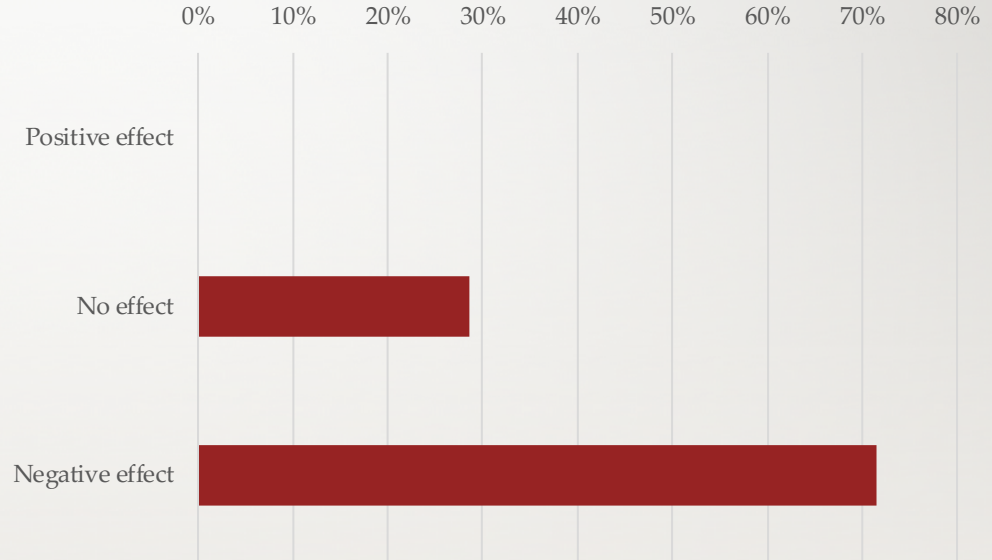
Do you plan to take a break from the workforce?



Awareness of Barriers

• “I’m sure that I could return to what I was doing, but it would be difficult, especially because...things change a lot, so taking a 5-year break and then coming back, or **even taking a year off would probably significantly set me back in my career path.**” –Karen

Women: What effect do you think a reduction in hours will have on your career?



Desire success, but define success differently because of the culture

- I want to be there for my kids and my spouse, so if I find that work is taking too much of my time, then I would need to tone-down the hours or possibly find a different job that would be flexible enough for that. Family is really important and **if they need me they need me.** -Brooke
- “Whenever I think about not having a family, or delaying a family or not being at home with my family 24/7 **I feel really guilty** because that has been drilled into my head that ***it’s my responsibility make sure my kids are taken care of and okay.***” –Beth
- “The biggest thing, maybe just realizing that some of your values are at odds, that your desires in life, your desire to have a career and a family might not mesh well, and you need to plan ahead for it and be realistic about both and decide. **And sometimes you have to decide what you want more.**” –David

Conclusion



Next Steps

- Compare to USU alumni
- How are expectations similar and different from outcomes?
- Look for changes in aspirations over time

Thanks



- Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology
- Dr. Christy Glass
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- College of Humanities and Social Sciences