Survey finds daughters can thrive in tech even without tech savvy parents

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As part Computer Science Education Week and the Hour of Code activities planned for this week, TechGirlz shared findings from a new survey of its program participants and their parents. Conducted in

partnership with Drexel University's LeBow College of Business, this marks the first time a survey has matched responses from girls and their parents in order to gain a deeper understanding of the role parents play in female engagement in technology.

Key learnings from the report include:

- Parents' affinity for technology only marginally impacts girls' excitement about using tech.
- Girls from black and Hispanic families report the highest degree of encouragement for tech learning.
- Daughters and parents report widely varying reasons for interest in tech instruction.
- Girls report being more encouraged to learn about technology by their fathers.
- Interest in tech peaks with girls in 6th and 7th grade and declines thereafter.

"We must dig beyond the headlines about girls in STEM to understand what factors and influences truly inspire and sustain their interest in technology," said TechGirlz founder and CEO Tracey Welson-Rossman. "This survey shows that, contrary to popular belief, girls are interested in tech, and that they will seek out instruction regardless of their parents' affinity with technology. It should reassure parents they can set their daughters on the path to a rewarding, empowering career in tech with support and encouragement, even if they do not understand the subject matter themselves."

This fourth annual survey of girls and their parents polled more than 1,000 participants to record experience with and outcomes from the TechGirlz program. It also explored the influences and relationships with technology overall for both parents and their daughters. Specific findings include:

- 86 percent of girls felt encouraged in their interest in technology by their parents.
- Girls felt slightly more supported by their fathers (94 percent) than their mothers (85 percent).
- 100 percent of girls from Hispanic families felt encouraged by their parents to learn about tech, compared to 92 percent from black families, 87 percent from white families, and 85 percent from Asian families.
- Of families where parents report a low affinity with tech, 86 percent of girls are excited about the subject.
- Of families where parents report a high affinity with tech, 88 percent of girls are excited about the subject.
- 47 percent of girls say friendship drives their interest in tech compared to only 10 percent for career potential.
- 33 percent of parents point to career potential as the primary motivator for tech learning.
- 100 percent of girls in sixth grade expressed interest in tech compared to 88 percent of girls in eighth grade.

"Most of the information available about relationships among parents, children and STEM is based on anecdotal evidence," said Murugan Anandarajan, Ph.D., professor of management information systems at Drexel University's LeBow College of Business. "Using past research models, we designed one of the first empirical studies to bring validity to this important topic. The results represent an initial step toward understanding how girls' perceptions of technology can be influenced and shaped within their home environments. Our findings begin a powerful conversation for parents, showing that, regardless of their relationship with technology, they can develop strategies to promote and encourage girls' technology interests at a young age."

More information: To learn more about TechGirlz, a nonprofit that fosters a love for technology in middle school girls, visit

Provided by Drexel University

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