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School Climate, Developmental Assets, and Academic Success in KIPP Hispanic Students

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Walden University
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Abstract

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by

Rebecca Elaine Lopez

MA, Oblate School of Theology, 2012

MA, Walden University, 2011

BS, Western Governors University, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

General Educational Psychology

Walden University

August 2015

Abstract

Hispanic students residing in the United States have historically been the lowest-achieving ethnic group in public schools and have a high dropout rate. A stark comparison to those statistics can be found within the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) charter schools in San Antonio, Texas, which have a majority Hispanic student population that is thriving academically and advancing to college. Using the Search Institute's positive youth development theory, the purpose of this study was to (a) quantitatively explore how school climate moderates the relationship between Hispanic student acquisition of developmental assets and academic success at KIPP charter schools from the perspective of both students and staff members and (b) identify the catalysts for growth and academic success. The Search Institute surveys, *Creating a Great Place to Learn and the Developmental Assets Profile,* were used to collect data from 78 students (Grades 6–8) and 45 staff members at KIPP Aspire and Camino. A series of multiple regression analyses were conducted using Andrew F. Hayes's PROCESS, a tool within SPSS, to explore moderation effects. School climate's organizational attributes dimension had a significant moderation interaction between developmental assets (empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, positive values, and social competencies) and academic success (GPA). School climate's relationships dimension significantly moderated (a) academic success and (b) social competencies, a developmental asset. Implications for positive social change include shaping future intervention programs and school initiatives to build positive school climates, increase academic and social well-being, and help Hispanic students achieve success in school.

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Dedication

In the words of Ralph Waldo Emmerson, "The characteristic of a genuine heroism is its persistency. All men have wandering impulses, fits and starts of generosity. But when you have resolved to be great, abide by yourself, and do not weakly try to reconcile yourself with the world. The heroic cannot be the common, nor the common the heroic." This work is dedicated to all who have resolved to be heroes, despite challenges presented along their path towards greatness.

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I would like to thank all of those who stood by me during this long endeavor of completing my dissertation including my husband, Oscar Ismael Lopez, and my three children, Katelyn Rose-Marie Lopez, Kimberly Elaine Lopez, and Bryan Oscar Lopez. I recognize the amount of strength, tolerance, humility, compassion, endurance, and love it took to carry the weight of the burden with me. Thank you for your companionship and illumination during the times of uncertainty. May I serve to light your way as you have mine. I love you all, always and forever.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

This study involved determining the relationship between school climate and academic success among Hispanic students. I explored how a positive school climate may equip Hispanic students, traditionally labeled *at risk*, with developmental assets and increase their academic success. For the purposes of this study, I used the term *Hispanic* to refer to (a) a person or people from a wide variety of ethnicities wit heritage originating in South American countries or (b) people of Spanish descent (Plotts, Sable, & National Center for Education Statistics, 2010, p. C-2). The terms *Latino* and *Chicano* also fall under the umbrella term *Hispanic* as specified in this study. At times, I used the term *Latino* in the literature review section to maintain the authenticity of the researchers' perspectives, findings, and language used in their respective studies. I used the term *Hispanic*, which was a good fit for the current study, because it is used most frequently in the southern region of the United States, including Texas, as opposed to *Latino* or *Chicano*.

The study was grounded in PYD theory and focused on what is working in schools to increase academic success versus what is not working. It is essential to investigate further how to catalyze academic success, particularly among Hispanic students, because although the Hispanic student population is increasing in size, now 50.2% in Texas as reported by the Texas Education Agency (2011), Hispanic students hold an attrition rate of 42%, the highest in Texas (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010).

It is important to identify programs and schools that are successful in helping Hispanic students excel in school to avoid a significant increase of student dropouts, now and in the near future. For example, Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) charter schools serve a 98% minority population that consists primarily of Hispanic students; yet, they are successful learners who continuously outperform their peers in reading and math on state assessments (KIPP San Antonio, n.d.). Researching how KIPP charter schools have achieved success among their Hispanic students is vital for all schools and students throughout the United States. Positive social change may result in creating intervention programs modeling KIPP culture in U.S. schools to increase academic success and decrease student dropout rates among Hispanic and other at-risk student populations (Maranto & Shuls, 2011).

Background

High student dropout rates continue to be a challenge throughout the United States. In a recent report completed by Chapman, Laird, Kewal, Ramani, and the National Center for Education Statistics (2011) on trends in high-school dropout and completion rates between 1972 and 2009, race, ethnicity, income, and region continued to be strong indicators of students who are most at risk of dropping out. In 2007 and 2008, the overall dropout rates were comparatively higher for Black (6.4%) and Hispanic (5.3%) students than for White (2.3%) students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Students who came from low-income families were dropping out at a rate of 8.7%, whereas high-income families showed dropout rates of 2.0% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Low socioeconomic status continues to influence student success in schools.

The southern United States had the highest percentage of dropouts at 4.3% compared with the northeast (2.3%), midwest (2.7%), and northwest regions (4.1%) (National Center for Education Statistics (2010). In Texas, the attrition rate gap between Black and Hispanic students compared with White students has actually increased from 7% in 1986 to 18% in 2010 (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010). Moreover, both Black and Hispanic students are twice as likely than White students to drop out of school (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010). Texas has lost more than 3 million students to the dropout trend since 1986 and stands to lose an estimated 1.9 to 3.5 million more students by 2040 if the trend continues (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010; Felix Montes & Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010).

In San Antonio, Texas (Bexar County) the attrition rate for Hispanic students in particular continues to be well above the rate for White students, at 42% (8,045 Hispanic students) compared with 22% (1,246 White students) in the 2009–2010 school year (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010). During the 2010–2011 school year, the Texas Educational Agency (2011) found the minority Hispanic population was the new majority, with Hispanic students accounting for 50.2% (2,480,000) of the total number of students (4,933,617) enrolled in Texas public schools. Due to the growing numbers of the Hispanic student population in schools throughout the nation and, more specifically, in Texas, the current challenge will be finding ways to motivate them to be successful in school and avoid dropping out in substantially increasing numbers.

If schools are unable to positively influence both the high achievement gap and student dropout rates among Hispanic students, more than one-half of the student body may begin to disappear from the school system, leading to increased negative outcomes in all levels of society. Lake, Hernandez, and the University of Washington (2011); Macey, Decker, and Eckes (2009); and Browne (2009) suggested that charter schools such as KIPP are successfully closing the academic achievement gap and may inform public school systems how to increase success for all students. For example, KIPP charter schools in San Antonio, Texas, serve a student population in which 98% are minority (mainly Hispanic), 86% are economically disadvantaged, and 20% are English language learners (KIPP San Antonio, n.d.).

Typically, students begin their KIPP education with an added disadvantage of being two to three grade levels behind in core academic areas including math and reading (KIPP San Antonio, n.d.). Despite their challenges, the same students were found to perform at the 27th to 65th percentile in reading and 35th to 90th percentile in math (KIPP San Antonio, n.d.). Moreover, their commitment to learning is evidenced by their high attendance rate averaging between 96% and 97% (KIPP San Antonio, n.d.).

Brooks (2011) suggested that school climate may positively influence academic achievement for all students, including at-risk groups. *School climate*, as used in this study, refers to the perceptions of actions and behaviors brought forth through school culture (Scales et al., 2004; Benson, 2006; Scales et al., 2006). *School culture*, as used in this study, refers to the set of norms or values members that the school community (staff and students) both agree on and work together to uphold (Scales et al., 2004; Benson,

2006; Scales et al., 2006). Brooks (2006); Tiet, Huizinga, and Byrnes (2010); Knesting (2008); Downey (2008); Murray and Naranjo (2008); and Rockwell (2006) all concluded that the school environment may serve to strengthen resilience in students through healthy, supportive relationships between students and teachers, staff, families, and community.

To the contrary, Meeker, Edmonson, and Fisher (2009); Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison (2006); and Suh and Suh (2007) noted a lack of quality student-teacher and student-peer relationships in the school context may contribute to low academic achievement and high dropout rates. Using Cohen's, Underwood's, and Gottlieb's (2000) understanding of the social constructionist perspective, the act of labeling *at-risk* students in the school environment may contribute to the number of students who dropout by its narrow focus on needs and deficits (Brown & Rodríguez, 2009). Benson, Scales, Hamilton, and Sesma (2006) emphasized the need for a shift in focus from the deficit perspective to an asset perspective, showing a shift in a more positive perspective in current research studies. Jackson (2010) and Scales, Benson, Roehlkepartain, Sesma, and van Dulmen (2006) illustrated how increasing positive attributes, also referred to as developmental assets, in students may actually increase academic success.

Much is known about individual developmental factors that relate to student academic success. For example academic success increases when there is greater social support from family members (Gutman, Sameroff, & Eccles, 2002; Petit, Bates, & Dodge, 1997; Steinberg, 2001), support from adult nonfamily members (Fletcher, Newsome, Nickerson, & Bazley, 2001; Wenz-Gross, Siperstein, Untch, & Widaman,

1997), and access to positive peer relationships (Bagwell, Schmidt, Newcomb, & Bukowski, 2001; Mounts & Steinberg, 1995). Positive outcomes of academic success result from student participation in programs with expectations that are high (Schmidt & Padilla, 2003), when the school environment or climate is caring (Roeser, Midgely, & Urdan, 1996), where rules and discipline are fair (Catterall, 1998), when students feel useful (Araque, 2002; Billig, 2004), and where students are motivated and engaged in the learning process (Jessor, VanDen Bos, Vanderryn, Costa, & Turbin, 1995; Shiner, 2000). However, less is known about the role that developmental assets play in this process with school climate serving as a moderator. Therefore, the focus of this study will be on examining how school climate may moderate the relationship between building developmental assets (40 assets altogether, both internal and external) and achieving academic success among Hispanic students to fill the current gap in research.

The school environment may enhance or inhibit resilience in students, emphasizing the importance of creating a nurturing environment for student academic success and overall well-being (Condly, 2006; Fallon, 2007; Morrison & Allen, 2007). A gap in research exists in determining how the school environment or climate influences the building of developmental assets and academic success (Scales & Leffert, 2004). School climate and developmental assets have been found to increase academic success. More research is needed to understand the relationship between all three variables (school climate, developmental assets, and academic success) to facilitate an increase in student academic achievement in all schools and especially with at-risk student populations.

Currently, no study has been conducted to understand how KIPP's school climate may be contributing to their largely at-risk student population's academic success. In the same vein, no research has been completed on KIPP students' level of developmental assets, which may also be contributing to their academic success. There is a need for increased understanding about how school climate influences the at-risk student population's acquisition of developmental assets and academic success to fill the current gap in literature.

Problem Statement

A gap in research exists in determining how school climate influences the building of developmental assets and academic success in students (Scales et al., 2004). School climate and developmental assets may increase academic success. Therefore more research is needed to understand their relationship in facilitating an increase in school success, especially with Hispanic student populations who are at high risk for school failure. The influence of charter school climates on increasing academic success of Hispanic students is still largely unexplored. I focused on KIPP Aspire and Camino charter schools, located in San Antonio, Texas as both schools were representative of the KIPP model of education. Their school environments were used to determine the extent to which the KIPP model's approach may be moderating the acquisition of developmental assets and academic success by creating a positive school climate for their Hispanic students. KIPP charter schools were specifically chosen because of their successes with at risk student populations in a time when high Hispanic attrition rates are

being reported in Texas and across the United States (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010).

The Search Institute (2003) emphasized the need to analyze a wide variety of ethnicities to reflect on how developmental assets are represented and influence youth, including their ability to avoid risky behaviors and manifest positive outcomes in their lives. There is a common experience among youth where the greater number of developmental assets does correlate with lower high-risk behaviors and vice versa. However, the way in which assets are experienced and defined may vary within different cultures, racial, or ethnic groups (Search Institute, 2003). It is important to research a wide variety of youth, including the Hispanic population, to determine how strengths are experienced and help to "fill significant knowledge gaps in our understanding of healthy development among minority youth" (Search Institute, 2003, p. 12).

Currently no researcher has determined how KIPP's majority Hispanic student population is succeeding in school. Others have studied KIPP's consistent success at increasing student performance (Educational Policy Institute, 2005; Aaron, McDonald, Ross, Abney, Zoblotsky, Center for Research in Educational Policy, & University of Memphis, 2008; Anderson & DeCesare, 2006; Musher, Musher, Graviss, & Strudler, 2005; Gallagher, Ross, & Memphis University, 2005), particularly in special populations, including limited English proficient (LEP) students, Special Education students, and students entering into the program with low or below grade level academic skills (Angrist, Dynarski, Kane, Pathak, & Walters, 2012). Research has also been conducted to evaluate the academic performance of KIPP students, with an emphasis on how they

academically outperform peers in other schools and school districts (Woodworth, David, Guha, Lopez-Torkos & Wang, 2008; Mac Iver, Farley-Ripple, & Johns Hopkins University, 2007; David, Woodworth, Grant, Guha, Lopez-Tokos, & Young, 2006; Ross, McDonald, Gallagher, & Memphis University, 2004; Doran, Drury, & Education Performance Network, 2002).

A 3-year program evaluation of KIPP Diamond Academy was performed by Thompson, Sterbinsky, and Memphis University (2005) through a mixed-methods design, longitudinal study show perceptions of student achievement, school climate, and progress made within the program implementation at KIPP. School climate was assessed through teacher completion of the School Climate Inventory (SCI©) and separate teacher and student focus groups (Thompson, Sterbinsky, & Memphis University 2005). Although school climate showed a small decline, perceptions were overall positive at KIPP Diamond over a 3-year period (Thompson, Sterbinsky, & Memphis University 2005).

Currently, no researcher has examined in-depth how school climate may serve as a moderator in the process of building developmental assets and attaining academic success. Moreover, this will be the first time the Search Institute surveys for both developmental assets and school climate will be used with KIPP charter school Hispanic students. The proposed research will allow for a comprehensive assessment of KIPP student developmental assets and a greater understanding of how 40 developmental assets (26 internal and 32 external) are being forged by KIPP climate through the use of the "Developmental Assets Profile" (DAP) survey while creating academic success. A

greater understanding of KIPP school climate from the perspectives of both staff members and students will be made available through the administration of the "Creating a Great Place to Learn" (CGPL) survey. Both surveys are comprehensive and will allow for increased inquiry into the interdynamics of KIPP's academically successful program with special and at-risk student populations (Angrist, Dynarski, Kane, Pathak, & Walters, 2012).

I inquired as to how the charter school climate influences developmental asset acquisition and academic success from the perspective of both students and staff members at KIPP Aspire charter school, gaining a holistic understanding of school climate and its moderating influence on the relationship between developmental assets and academic success among Hispanic students attending KIPP. By taking a closer look at KIPP charter schools and their noted success with a largely Hispanic student population, a revelation of what works and does not work to promote positive growth among Hispanic youth, building developmental assets, reducing high-risk behavior, and increasing academic achievement may become more apparent and applicable to other school settings in the United States.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative, cross-sectional study was to explore how school climate, as perceived by KIPP Aspire and Camino students and staff, moderates the relationship of developmental asset acquisition and academic success among Hispanic students who are at high risk for academic failure. The study includes students (grades 6–8) and staff at KIPP Aspire charter School in San Antonio, Texas. I investigated how the

variable of the KIPP model's approach to school climate serves in a moderating capacity, to regulate the independent variable of student developmental assets and the dependent variable of student academic success.

School climate was assessed by administration of the Search Institute's (CGPL) surveys for staff and students to measure perceptions of KIPP school climate. The CGPL Surveys will measure school climate for both students and staff members in the areas of relationships, organizational attributes, and personal development (Search Institute, 2006). Developmental assets will be measured using the Search Institute's DAP survey for students to identify 40 perceived assets, 32 internal and 26 external assets more specifically (Search Institute, 2005). Academic success was measured in three outlets: (a) a snapshot of participating students' overall grade point average (GPA) in core subject classes (i.e., math, science, and English language arts), (b) released Texas state assessments in core subjects, and (c) student attendance records.

Few researchers have specifically focused on the Hispanic student population. Moreover, study populations have disproportionately included large numbers of White students which may not generalize to the Hispanic student population. Minority student populations have historically been underrepresented in research studies and if included were viewed from a deficit perspective (Bruton & Robles-Piña, 2009). I propose to remedy the unequal distribution and representation of the Hispanic student by including a large number of Hispanic students and shifting the perspective to an asset view of their progress in the educational system.

The Hispanic student faces many educational challenges. Although an estimated 1 million students drop out of school each year, the majority of those students come from at-risk populations, including minority and low-income backgrounds (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). Hispanic students have shown to make up the greatest percentage of students dropping out of schools in Texas and across the United States (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010). More research is needed to determine which programs are successful in preventing dropouts so efforts may be replicated to remedy the current educational crisis experienced in the United States (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). In Texas, there is an increased momentum to close the educational achievement gap by the year 2015 among the existing Hispanic and African American student populations who have performed continuously below expectations statewide (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2010). I attempted to respond to current initiatives on the state and national level that gear towards helping all students succeed academically and graduate high school with the hope of attaining better college and career opportunities thereafter.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

I collected data using Search Institute surveys CGPL and DAP to attempt to answer three main research questions and related hypotheses:

1. Does school climate as perceived by Hispanic students moderate the relationship between perceived developmental assets and academic success?

*H*o$_1$*:* There is no significant moderating relationship between school climate as perceived by Hispanic students and the perceived developmental assets on academic success.

*H*a$_1$: There is a significant moderating relationship between school climate as perceived by Hispanic students and the perceived developmental assets on academic success.

2. Does school climate as perceived by school staff moderate the relationship between students' perceived developmental assets and academic success among Hispanic students?

*H*o$_2$: There is no significant moderating relationship between school climate as perceived by school staff members and the students' perceived developmental assets on academic success among Hispanic students.

*H*a$_2$: There is a significant moderating relationship between school climate as perceived by school staff members and the students' perceived developmental assets on academic success among Hispanic students.

3. Does the strength of the moderating relationship of perceived school climate on perceived developmental assets and academic success differ for male and female Hispanic students?

*H*o$_3$: There is no statistically significant difference in the strength of the moderating relationship of perceived developmental assets and academic success for male and female Hispanic students.

*H*a$_3$: There is a statistically significant difference in the strength of the moderating relationship of perceived developmental assets and academic success for male and female Hispanic students.

Theoretical Framework

I used the PYD theory, which suggests the school community (among other social systems including family and community) may positively or negatively influence a student's perspective and acquisition of developmental assets (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006). I focused on how school climate as perceived by students and staff members, may positively or negatively influence student academic success. Both student and staff perceptions of support were reviewed to determine their relationship to both developmental assets and student academic success. The more positive the school climate is perceived, the more likely academic success will result. On the contrary, the more negative a school climate is perceived, the greater likelihood a poor academic result will follow (Benson et al, 2006). Apart from influencing student ability to be successful in school, a student's perspective on school climate and resulting number of developmental assets attained may positively or negatively influence their ability to thrive in other areas of their lives, including relationships, health, and avoiding risky behaviors.

I will administer the surveys created by the Search Institute, CGPL, to help determine how teachers and students perceive their school climate, so as to show strengths and weaknesses that may influence academic success and development of assets in students. In combination with administering the Search Institute's student survey DAP, a clearer picture of how school climate moderates the building of assets in students may

be observed to determine perceived strengths in personal, social, family, school, and community relationships.

Nature of the Study

I investigated how the variable of the KIPP model's approach to school climate serves in a moderating capacity, to regulate the independent variable of student developmental assets and the dependent variable of student academic success. Academic success was measured in three outlets: a snapshot of participating students' overall GPA in core subject classes (i.e., math, science, English language arts, and social studies), released Texas state assessments in core subjects, and student attendance records.

The rationale for the design selection is to efficiently answer the question of how school climate influences the relationship between developmental assets acquired by Hispanic students and academic success in light of high dropout rates and school failure. A gap in research exists in determining how school climate influences the building of developmental assets and academic success in students (Scales, & Leffert, 2004). While both school climate and developmental assets may increase academic success, more significant research is needed to understand their relationship in facilitating an increase in school success, especially with Hispanic student populations who are at high risk for school failure.

The influence of charter school climates on increasing academic success of Hispanic students is still largely unexplored. KIPP charter schools were specifically chosen because of their successes with Hispanic students, in contrast with high Hispanic attrition rates reported in Texas and across the United States (Intercultural Development

Research Association, 2010; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010). The hope

would lie in replicating what is working at KIPP charter schools in other schools that are

struggling to help Hispanic students, and other minority students, stay in school and

achieve academic success.

The methodology included data collection from both students and staff members

at KIPP Aspire charter school in San Antonio, Texas. Students and staff members at

KIPP Aspire will be invited to participate in the research study. Quantitative self-report

surveys were completed by all participating students and staff at KIPP Aspire (grades 6–

8) in San Antonio, Texas. An estimated 45 staff members, including teachers, enrichment

staff, and administration were to complete the Search Institute's School Climate survey,

CGPL. An estimated 78 students (grades 6–8) will complete both the Search Institute's

DAP and CGPL.

A review of academic records, including GPA in core classes including math,

science, and English language arts along with Texas state assessment scores will be

conducted. Student demographics will be collected and reviewed. A multiple regression

analysis will be conducted to determine how perceived school climate moderates the

relationship between statistically significant developmental assets and academic success.

I provide a more detailed explanation of data analysis in Chapter 3.

Definitions of Terms

I used the following terms throughout my dissertation:

Achievement gap: The difference in academic performance when comparing

white and non-White students on standardized tests. A disparity in performance is also

revealed between in students who are considered socioeconomically challenged and minority when compared to their higher performing peers who are not minority or socioeconomically challenged (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010).

American Indian/Native: Individuals who are from North, South, or Central America and have tribal connections to the original ones indigenous to the areas (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.).

Asian: Individuals who are connected with the indigenous groups located in South East Asia, the Far East, or the Indian Subcontinent (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.).

Black or African American: Individuals who are related to the black racial peoples located in Africa (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.).

Charter school: An alternative to traditional public schools, supported through private and state funds, and authorized to teach students who qualify free of charge (Plotts, Sable, & National Center for Education Statistics, 2010, p. C-1).

School climate: The perception of the actions or behaviors elicited by the school culture (Scales et al., 2004; Benson, 2006; Scales et al., 2006).

School culture: This is a set of norms or values accepted and upheld by members of the school community, including staff and students (Scales et al., 2004; Benson, 2006; Scales et al., 2006).

Developmental assets: Perceived support systems, both internal and external, that are important to children and young adults and influence their success in life (Scales et al., 2004).

Dropout: Students who are not attending school or fail to enroll altogether for an extended period of time or indefinitely, not including transfers, attendance in public or charter schools, suspensions, absences due to health issues, or death (Plotts, Sable, & National Center for Education Statistics, 2010, p. C-1).

Hispanic or Latino: A wide variety of ethnicities with originating heritage from South American countries or of Spanish descent. (Plotts, Sable, & National Center for Education Statistics, 2010, p. C-2)

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: Individuals who are related to the original groups of people located in the Pacific Islands (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.).

Positive youth development theory: Social systems perspective that highlights an interconnected and mutually influencing relationship among the student, family, peers, school, and surrounding community where interactions influence multiple levels of development for the student (i.e., social, emotional, physical, cognitive, moral, and spiritual).

White: Individuals who are related to native groups of people from Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.).

Assumptions

I assumed a relationship existed among the perceived KIPP model's school climate, acquisition of developmental assets, and school academic success among Hispanic students and seeks to define the relationship through the research questions

posed. I assumed that school staff and student participants will be truthful in their

responses on the survey assessment tools completed. I assumed that the results of the

study will inform KIPP Aspire and other schools' initiatives to increase academic success

in the Hispanic student population and to decrease dropout rates. I assumed that the

measurements collected through the use of the proposed assessment tools will be

accurate.

1. The staff survey CGPL will be accurate in measuring perceived school
   climate in the areas of relationships, organizational attributes, and personal
   development.

2. The student survey CGPL will be accurate in measuring perceived school
   climate in the areas of relationships, organizational attributes, and personal
   development.

3. The student survey DAP will be accurate in measuring perceived assets in
   the areas of personal, social, family, school and community.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study included input from staff and Hispanic students at KIPP

Aspire charter school in San Antonio, Texas. The participating population was to include

45 staff members, such as teachers, administrators, and supporting staff, and 78 students

in grades sixth through eighth on campus. Sample numbers for each group will include a

5% attrition rate adjustment.

Quantitative self-report surveys were completed by all participating students and

staff at KIPP Aspire charter school (grades 6–8) in San Antonio, Texas. An estimate of

45 staff members, including teachers, enrichment staff, and administration were to complete the Search Institute's School Climate survey, CGPL. An estimated 78 students (grades 6–8) will complete both the Search Institute's DAP and CGPL. A review of academic records, including GPA in core classes including math, science, and reading language arts along with Texas state assessment scores will be conducted. Finally student demographics will be collected and reviewed.

Student and staff responses to the CGPL provided insight as to how school climate has a moderating relationship on student acquisition of developmental assets and academic success. Both students and staff members will be participating to further define the complex nature of school climate and perceptions of interrelationships between students and staff members within the school. The DAP will help to identify areas of strength among the student body that is influenced by school climate and influencing academic success in class and on state assessments.

The study was delimited by the fact that only Hispanic students will participate in the study. The study is further delimited by the small scope of participants attending one charter school in south Texas. Finally, the study consisted of a snapshot of a select number of participants in an attempt to understand relationships existing between perceptions of school climate, existing developmental assets, and academic success that may accurately portray all outcomes and interrelations among variables presented.

Limitations

Due to the self-reporting nature of the study, there may have been personal bias when completing the surveys, which may enhance or inhibit the accuracy of data. All

effort will be made to clearly define ethical expectations and explain procedures to participants of the study, both staff and students at KIPP Aspire, before surveys are completed. Participants may copy answers from another survey if they feel pressure to answer correctly. A reasonable effort was made to monitor participants while surveys are being completed and emphasize that there are no correct or incorrect responses.

The study was limited to a specific population of Hispanic students attending a KIPP Aspire charter school in San Antonio, Texas. Specific findings of the study may not generalize to other school populations in other parts of Texas or the United States. The individual traits of subpopulations within the Hispanic group were not effectively accounted for and were beyond the scope of this investigation. Various subpopulations existing within the Hispanic population of students include English language learners, native born participants, individuals born outside of the United States, first generation Americans, second generation Americans, and so on. More research is merited in the future to determine the variances in achievement, perceptions of school climate, and developmental assets existing among the groups specifically and in relation to one another. Finally, participation in the study is on a voluntary basis and some students and staff members may choose not to participate in the study.

<div align="center">**Significance**</div>

More research is needed to determine how the school environment in the KIPP charter school model, culture, and climate influence student academic achievement, especially in students who are considered at risk for school failure (Wang, 2008). Current research will allow for a greater exploration of contributing factors to student academic

success from an asset-based model as opposed to a deficit-based model in populations who are at risk for school failure. Findings from the study may provide a framework for professional applications, including creating new or modifying existing interventions to meet the needs of all students, but especially for student populations who are most likely to fail or drop out of school. The resulting positive social change may include developing a prospective positive school climate model that supports academic success for all students, decreasing the amount of Hispanic students who are dropping out of school and closing the educational achievement gap between ethnic groups of students.

Summary

More research is needed to determine how school climate may moderate the relationship between developmental asset acquisition and academic success among Hispanic students. Further, more research is needed to determine how KIPP's school climate is influencing developmental asset acquisition and academic success in the largely Hispanic student population they serve. The current study will (a) introduce a positive, asset-based research paradigm (contrasting existing deficit-based paradigms) in connection with Hispanic students, (b) provide for a viewing of school climate from a multiple perspectives of staff and students via the administration of the CGPL surveys, (c) collectively identify 40 developmental assets and their degrees of strength among KIPP Hispanic students for the first time via administration of the DAP survey, and (d) explore how gender may influence perceptions of school climate and its moderating influence on developmental assets and academic success.

This study was a quantitative cross sectional exploration of how school climate, as perceived by KIPP Aspire students and staff, moderates the relationship of developmental asset acquisition and academic success among Hispanic students. The study included students (grades 6–8) and staff at KIPP Aspire charter school in San Antonio, Texas. I investigated how the variable of the KIPP model's approach to school climate serves in a moderating capacity, to regulate the independent variable of student developmental assets and the dependent variable of student academic success. In Chapter 2, I review of the related literature. In Chapter 3, I explain the methodology relating to the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to better understand how school climate, as perceived by students and staff, influences the relationship between developmental asset acquisition and academic success among Hispanic students. Understanding how student achievement may be increased, especially among historically lower-performing student groups, is needed. A gap in the research exists on addressing the problem of low academic performance among students in schools throughout the United States, particularly minority and socioeconomically challenged students. More specifically, identifying schools that have successfully increased student achievement among largely Hispanic populations, such as KIPP charter schools, is needed to guide greater reform among schools to successfully address the high dropout rate crisis of that population currently plaguing U.S. schools.

The Hispanic population is increasing in size at four times rate of the overall U.S. population (U.S. Hispanic Population Is Booming, 2011). By the year 2050, the proportion of Hispanic children in the United States will increase to one-third, which adds to the urgency of preventing school failure for Hispanic students (Passel, 2011). The Hispanic minority population is predicted to outnumber African American minority populations, largely due to the increased number of births and immigration to the United States (Hispanics overtake Blacks, 1994; Johnson & Lichter, 2008). The number of Hispanics increases to at least 1 million more individuals when children of intermarriages are considered among the numbers (Lee & Edmonston, 2006).

According to the 2010 census, 50.5 million Hispanics reside in the United States ("Why Census 2010 Counts," 2011). The highest numbers reside in the following states: Texas, New York, New Jersey, New Mexico, Illinois, Florida, Colorado, California, and Arizona ("Why Census 2010 Counts," 2011, p. 6). New trends in Hispanic migration show the population is now filling in the areas of the south and midwest regions, increasing the need for all states to learn how to improve academic success among Hispanic students in public educational institutions (Haverluk & Trautman, 2008; Johnson, & Lichter, 2008). A school model must be identified that is successful in reaching Hispanic students and improving their likelihood of graduating high school and advancing to college or finding careers thereafter. It is important to determine how Hispanic student success may be replicated in all U.S. schools to decrease school failure and dropouts.

I begin the following literature review with the main categories of problems schools are currently facing, including the student dropout crisis, the achievement gap, and educational challenges in Texas. I then introduce the driving research theory of positive youth development, the vital shift from deficit-based to an asset-based understanding of the educational challenges, a more in-depth view of developmental assets, and perspectives of school climate. Finally, I discuss current research on what charter schools such as KIPP are doing to help students become successful in school. I use the literature review to set the stage for discussing the urgency for more research on positively influencing positively student academic performance with a focus on developmental assets and school climate.

I conducted a literature review via the Laureate International Universities'
multiple search database, Thoreau. I used an estimated 86 databases to find relevant peer-
reviewed research studies and scholarly articles related to the proposed study. The key
terms that were searched to identify potential studies for this literature review included
achievement gap, *dropout rate*, *Texas education*, *developmental assets*, *school climate
and moderator*, *Hispanic student population*, *English language learners*, *positive youth
development*, *resiliency*, *academic resilience*, *academic success*, *KIPP charter schools*,
perceived social support, *teacher and student perspective*, *retention*, *attendance*,
disruptive behavior, *state assessment*, and *high-stakes testing*.

The scope of the literature review included peer-reviewed articles, journals, and
books from the years 1985 to 2013. I conducted the literature review to gain a deeper
understanding of the movement from a deficit-based perspective to an asset-based
approach in the educational system in the last three decades. I also conducted a review of
published dissertations using Walden University's dissertation database and ProQuest's
database for dissertations and theses to determine whether a research study, such as the
one currently proposed, had been attempted before. I found no published research
dissertations either database specifically focusing on reviewing school climate as a
moderator of developmental assets and academic performance among Hispanic students.
In the literature review, I established steps to flesh out specific areas of importance,
including school climate, developmental assets, PYD theory, and academic performance
at charter schools, to combine the significant categories in the proposed study.

Student Dropout Crisis

The Cost

The student dropout rates negatively affect society on multiple levels. Individual students lose out on the opportunity to become self-sustainable and empowered through educational and career opportunities afforded to those who hold at least a high school diploma. Society loses out on increased innovation and other positive contributions, because students who drop out struggle with becoming productive members of society (Nieto, 2007). Increased threats of illegal activities, family violence, drug abuse, and teen pregnancy (among other risk factors) burden students who have dropped out, further increasing the likelihood of multigenerational poverty, prison, and the instability within the family unit (Nieto, 2007).

Hispanic males in particular who drop out are more likely to be in prison, unemployed, or employed in an underpaid and unskilled labor position with limited access for higher education and higher wages (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Hispanic students overall may also suffer from behavioral health issues, including family relational conflicts, delinquency, and an overall loss of hope may also result from dropping out of school (Nesman, 2007). In a qualitative, single-point-in-time, retrospective study, Latino students were sorted into three achievement level groups (high achieving, at risk, and youth who have dropped out of school). Nesman identified several significant themes that influenced the latter group of students' decisions to drop out: a lack of support and communication among students and influential adults, lack of support in progressing academically, conflicting culture and language challenges, engaging in unacceptable

behavior, and the need to fulfill adult roles in their family unit. The complexity of challenges that Hispanic students face shows a lack of social support, understanding, and efficient safety nets present catch students who are at risk of dropping out of school.

Dropping out of school does not always lead to outcomes of poverty and a lack of higher education experiences. Hill and Jepsen (2007) conducted a review of 1998 National Educational Longitudinal Survey Data of eighth-grade students and follow up surveys in the years of 1990, 1992, and 1994, to determine if teenage pregnancy and dropping out of school negatively impacted their lives. Most of the individuals who started our poorly ultimately experienced one of three positive outcomes: (a) living above 200% poverty, (b) working full time, or (c) postsecondary attendance. Mexican-American and Black descent increased the chances of experiencing a poor start, either a teen pregnancy or dropping out of school (Hill & Jepsen, 2007), Regardless of the change of a positive outcome in the future, the challenge still remains to reduce the numbers who do drop out and increase their chances for success in future college and career experiences.

Common Predictors

A few common predictors of students who are most likely going to be held back for White and Hispanic students include the amount of time on average they spend completing homework, their gender, and the make-up of their family, including single parent homes and (Carpenter & Ramirez, 2007). Other predictions for White and Black students are linked to their behavior record (i.e., suspensions) and whether they have been retained in their academic career (Carpenter & Ramirez, 2007).

Utilizing data from Grades 1 through 12 in two school districts in the United States, Bowers (2010) completed a longitudinal study focusing on student risk for dropping out of school and found students are most at risk in the 8th, 9th, 11th grade, and when students are legally able to drop out of school. Teacher-assigned grades and retention at any grade level were found to be significant variables in predicting which students are most at risk for dropping out (Bowers, 2010).

Attendance is another common predictor of students who are at risk of dropping out of school. Jones, Toma, and Zimmer (2005) suggested that class, school, and district size affect student attendance. Jones et al. found that increases in class, school, and district size were associated with a decrease in school attendance, which in turn, may increase student dropout rates.

Achievement Gap

Yosso (2006), as cited by Roemer (2011), summed up the current achievement gap and extreme loss of Hispanic students in schools in these words: "Of 100 Chicanas/os who enter elementary school, 44 will graduate from high school, 26 will enroll in college, and only seven will earn a bachelor's degree" (p. 57). The question remains as to what is influencing the negative trend. There are multiple theories that attempt to account for the educational inadequacies Hispanic and Black students are experiencing in schools across the United States. The achievement gap, according to reports of student failure and high school dropout rates, provides an image that accentuates students as the main culprit behind the critical trend. The achievement gap may be better understood through

Hillard's (2003) perspective, as referenced by Williams and Lemons-Smith (2009),

defining the challenge as a quality-of-service gap (p. 25).

Other researchers have suggested the achievement gap exists because of other

inadequacies in education, including a lack of equivalent school funding, lack of quality

teacher preparation, teacher bias and expectations based upon student ethnicity, and even

a lack of cohesion between research findings and application of theory in the classroom

(Cooper, 2007; McKown & Weinstein, 2008; Myers, 2007; Flores, 2007). For example,

Cooper (2007) highlighted the importance of social, cultural, and psychological facets of

the educational experience, and contrasted it with the lack of classroom integration

during planning and instruction. Instead of building a better curriculum to meet the needs

of all students, Cooper (2007) suggests a better approach may be to incorporate a social,

cultural, and psychologically sensitive instructional practice that helps students to

redefine or reinvent themselves as learners to increase academic success. It is important

to work towards effectively closing the research-practice gap along with the achievement

gap to increase student success (Cooper, 2007). The educational achievement gap is part

and parcel to other social gaps experienced in "health, housing, employment, equal

justice under the law" (Jordan, 2010, p. 157).

An attempt to understand achievement gap has led to the promotion of various

myths which seek answer why Hispanic and Black student populations underperform

their white counterparts, stemming from cultural deficit theories. These myths include:

- "The parents just don't care

- These children don't have enough exposure/experiences

- These children just aren't ready for school

- Their families don't value education

- They are coming from a 'culture of poverty'" (Ladson-Billings, 2007, p. 318).

On the contrary, McCallister, Evans, and Illich (2010) conducted a survey of 285 Hispanic parents of Texas urban school students (Grades 4–8) and found that parents cared about higher education, however they did not have knowledge or access to funding sources to support academic endeavors of their children.

The inability to connect with resources in the community and receive guidance on education may also create deeper gaps in achievement. For example, differences in culture, social economic backgrounds, and ethnicity also may encourage or discourage language development in children (Faitar, 2011). Having a highly qualified staff including teachers, administrators, councilors, and supporting staff may lead to better outcomes for students who do not receive developmental stimulation at home from caregivers. In this case, schools then take on a buffer role between environmental resource deficits and positive outcomes for students they serve.

Early experience might also play a role in student dropout rates. Hispanic males in particular, decrease significantly in numbers in secondary and college level academic programs (Saenz, & Ponjuan, 2009). Chapman, Laird, Kewal, Ramani, and the National Center for Education Statistics (2011) further substantiated this finding with a review of dropout rates over the period of 1972 through 2009, showing Hispanic male students were the highest reported percentage of students who dropped out when compared to

White, Black, and Asian/Pacific Islander males and females between the ages of 16

though 24. Their decision to drop out may be influenced by their primary and elementary

grade level experiences, mislabeling as special education, behavioral, or at risk students,

cultural influences at home or within the community, and limited access to higher

education.

On a larger scale, the lack of academic progress (as determined through national

math and reading assessment scores) among Black and Hispanic students has been

attributed to an unsuccessful attempt of racial integration, not a lack of desegregation

(Berends & Penaloza, 2010). Since the *Brown v. the Board of Education* court decision,

there is no question that schools throughout the United States have been racially

desegregated; however, whether schools have been successful at racial integration is

questionable. The educational system is still burdened with "ethnically homogeneous

schools," (Berends & Penaloza, 2010, p. 996) which typically results in minority students

having less access to resources and opportunities than white students attending other

more affluent schools.

Vaquera and Maestas (2008), in attempting to identify precollege factors that

affect Hispanic and White student retention in college, found that students who attended

predominantly minority schools were more likely to be enrolled by factors of 2.07 in the

third semester and 2.36 in the fifth semester. However, their findings are counter to what

trends indicate as Hispanic students are less likely to be enrolled in college and struggle

to continue being enrolled (Saenz, & Ponjuan, 2009; Creighton, 2007; Aguilar &

Keating, 2009). Vaquera and Maestas (2008) results may point to a different conclusion;

school climate, moreover a welcoming school climate, may have been a moderating variable in the success of Hispanic students in their study.

The key to academic success in the Hispanic student population may be to meet them in terms of their academic levels and needs. In other words, schools should accommodate their specific learning needs in order to increase student retention and graduation (Aguilar & Keating, 2009). Satellite outreach intervention programs and utilization of student service centers have proven to be successful in New Mexico with the Native American, African American, and Hispanic minority college student populations. Providing extra assistance and mentoring opportunities has allowed for greater academic success and access to essential resources for minority students (Aguilar & Keating, 2009). Integrating a multicultural student service focus, providing for one-to-one opportunities for tutoring and assistance on class assignments or research, and facilitating the services in places frequented by minority students allowed for greater success of the outreach program and participating students as their specific learning needs were met adequately (Aguilar & Keating, 2009). Much like Cooper (2007) highlighted, again the importance of a learning experience that incorporates the social and cultural aspect of learning may serve to increase academic success in minority student populations.

Other programs have had similar successes with incorporating a sociocultural-based approach to meet the needs of their learners. Reyes (2007) reports how a College Assistance Migrant Program assisted "situationally marginalized" Hispanic students who were able to overcome their negative life circumstances and redefine themselves as

successful learners and academic achievers (p. 620). Connecting students in a

collaborative community of learners allowed them to build positive identities as learners

and offset life deficits connected with school failure (Reyes, 2007).

In the same vein, Freng, Freng, and Moore (2006) speak to the importance of

incorporating into instruction elements of culture, native language, and a strong

connection between family, community, and the school system to increase student

success. The qualitative exploratory study focused on how American Indian students

attending Nebraska public schools perceived their educational experiences in the context

of culture and language integration and the relationship between school, family, and

community (Freng et al., 2006). Interviews with 16 American Indian students showed a

trend of deculturalization, or lack of American Indian culture and language integration

into the educational experience and disconnectedness among the schools, families, and

community, which may be linked to student academic failure (Freng et al., 2006). Again

an emphasis on the sociocultural context of learning in relation to student academic

success is noted in research.

Retention may be increased through an increase in programs which "build on or

develop [a] positive self-concept with regard to education" on the national, regional and

state, institutional and local levels (Oseguera, Locks, & Vega, 2009, p. 41). Orienting

school climate to include a welcoming and accommodating atmosphere for ethnic

minority students via extra assistance and mentoring opportunities may increase their

academic success at the college and formative K–12 levels. A change in perspective and

school culture, including creating a professional learning community which includes

teachers as learners along with the students they teach has led to positive academic results

in the classroom (Waddell & Lee, 2008, p. 19). Similarly, the quality of the classroom

environment, including interactions between teachers and students, were shown to be

statistically significant in a study comparing resilient and nonresilient Hispanic students

who were considered at risk for school failure (Waxman, Padrón, Jee-Young, & Rivera,

2008). Through classroom observations, the importance of quantity and quality

interactions between teachers and students was reiterated in catalyzing student resilience

and supporting academic success.

　　The achievement gap and academic failure among Hispanic and minority students

is not due to a lack of ability as much as it is due to the lack of equal opportunity to excel

(Carter, 2009; Conger, Long, & Iatarola, 2009; Mayer, 2008; Riegle-Crumb & Grodsky,

2010; Solórzano, 2008; Williams & Lemons-Smith, 2009). While the means with which

to identify students who are at risk for school failure has been discovered, minimal

research is available to provide viable interventions and prevent or address such

deficiencies (Waxman, Padrón, Jee-Young, & Rivera, 2008). Much of the current

research available on the achievement gap has focused on high school and middle school.

Wang (2008) concluded, through a review of the U.S. Department of Education early

childhood data on 8750 children, the academic achievement gap is present before

kindergarten. The most significant gap existed between Hispanic and White children,

followed by Black and White children.

　　Hickman and Heinrich (2011) found a consistent academic performance gap

between graduating students and students who eventually drop out of school beginning as

early as kindergarten, based upon the academic performance in core subjects, as measured in subject grades, overall GPA, proficiency test scores, grade retention, and absenteeism, among other variables. Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2011) completed a 3-year longitudinal case study involving an "underperforming urban school district" that displayed low morale and a poor school climate (p. 434). This strengths-based approach study attempted to measure improvements in the school climate via surveys after utilizing an appreciative inquiry (AI) approach that focuses on positively increasing three themed areas: (a) student achievement and success, (b) trust and respect, and (c) community pride and involvement. The results of pre and post Faculty Trust Scales surveys of 147 and 124 district teachers in the years of 2005 and 2007, respectively, showed positive perceptions were improved overall. Trust and respect increased and the overall school climate improved (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2011).

Having a positive school climate may be the key to increasing student performance and decreasing behavioral disruptions experienced in the classroom. Koth, Bradshaw, and Leaf (2008) reviewed the first year data of a large-scale study including thirty-seven Maryland public schools that focused on the behavior intervention program entitled "Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports" to determine if school climate had improved based on a "school development program school climate survey". Multiple levels of school climate were examined including individual, school, and classroom levels. Both individual and classroom levels were shown to be more significant when influencing student perceptions than school levels on influencing school climate, showing

the importance of interpersonal relationships between students and peers and students and

teachers (Koth et al., 2008).

Hispanic Student Population

The expectations teachers have for students may influence their overall

achievement. In the case of the Hispanic student, teachers may not expect as much from

them, especially in the areas of math and science (Brown-Jeffy, 2009; Williams &

Lemons-Smith, 2009). Even at-risk alternative education programs, geared towards

helping the Hispanic student reach school success, may not lead to academic growth and

achievement when expectations are set too low and rigor is absent from assignments

(Fairbrother, 2008). In contrast to a low-expectation paradigm, student success may be

support heightened through a more culturally relevant paradigm which stresses academic

success for all students, positive relationships between students and teachers, and a focus

on the student constructivist curriculum (Williams & Lemons-Smith, 2009).

The National Center for Education Statistics, in the results of the 2009 NAEP

high school transcript study, reported Hispanic students continue to perform below

acceptable standards in the classroom, and below their ethnic counterparts (White, Black,

and Asian/Pacific Islander), although there has been some improvement from the years of

1990 to 2009 (Nord et al., 2009). Moreover, Hispanic and Black students were reported

to have earned the lowest GPAs compared with White and Asian students whose

averages increased significantly between the years of 2005 and 2009 (Nord et al., 2009).

The trend of low academic achievement and school failure continues to be a challenge to

remediate as seen in a more recent publication from the National Center for Education

Statistics, ranking Hispanic student academic success below all other ethnic groups once

again (Aud et al., 2013). In addition, although race or ethnicities are not the cause,

Hummer and Hamilton (2010) pointed out a continued correlation between race and

ethnicity with a state of being socioeconomically disadvantaged. Hispanic families are

more likely to experience socioeconomic hardship, including low wages, limited access

to essential resources such as health care, child care, and safe neighborhoods (Hummer &

Hamilton, 2010). More research is needed to determine how to specifically reach the

Hispanic student population in schools to increase academic success, identifying means

to overcome existing socioeconomic disadvantages.

Dalton and RTI International (2011) stress the importance of reviewing United

States student academic performance via ethnic groups, allowing comparative research to

take place on an international level to improve educational systems; "if researchers could

compare differences in the association between family and school factors and

achievement by ethnicity cross-nationally, they might be able to gauge what aspects of

minority disadvantage are most amenable to policy intervention" (p. 11). Currently,

Dalton and RTI International (2011) report that the United States educational

achievement ranking is consistently divided into two student groups: high performers

who rank high or highest among international scores (Asian and White) and low

performers who fall low or lowest among international scores (Black and Hispanic),

when compared internationally to other developed countries participating in the Program

for International Student Assessment (PISA) under the Organization for Economic Co-

operation and Development (OECD). Given that Hispanic students are in the majority in

many communities across the United States yet are performing lower than other groups in these same communities, it is important to understand how a program such as KIPP is working to increase their academic success. KIPP's model of creating a collaborative learning experience or a community of *one*, as Woodworth, David, Guha, Lopez-Torkos and Wang (2008) observed in San Francisco KIPP schools, may be creating a unique school climate that is moderating the building of developmental assets and academic success among Hispanic students.

English Language Learners and Immigrant Student Populations

In reviewing the 2009 U.S. Bureau of the Census Population Survey on educational levels of immigrant populations, Baum and Flores (2011) found several factors, including parental education levels, secondary academic achievement scores and the age of the student when he or she first immigrated to the United States, that influence immigrant enrollment and achievement in postsecondary education. The higher the education level of parents, the greater a student does on academic grades and standardized tests, and the younger a child was when they first immigrated to the United States all increase their likelihood for success in post secondary education.

Baum and Flores (2011) suggested immigrants and their children have shown to be more successful in postsecondary education than native populations in the United States, indicating a potential advantage over Hispanic and Black native born students. Fry (2007) discovered similar conclusions using a multivariate analysis to disaggregate data on foreign-born immigrants ages 15 to 17 collected in 1990 and 2000 via the Integrated Public Use Micro Samples of the Decennial Census on 31,313 and 46, 718 immigrants

respectively. Fry (2007) found the rate of immigrant youth dropping out is on the decline

and that their English language skills have actually improved over time overall. However,

Mexican Immigrants are "less likely than other immigrant groups to enroll in college, and

experience less continued improvement in education across generations than immigrants

from other countries" (Baum & Flores, 2011, p.180).

      Solórzano (2008) suggested English language learners (ELL) and immigrant

students who are not proficient in the English language are at a disadvantage when taking

high-stakes accountability tests, resulting in a disproportionate number of failures and

retention when compared to other student populations. Inadequacies in school resources,

supplies, and qualified staff members only serve to exasperate existing academic skill

deficiencies in ELL students (Roemer, 2011). Schools located in the southern region of

the United States may increasingly harbor discrimination and an unwelcoming

environment for English Language Learner students in particular (Sox, 2009). Other

scholars have suggested after reviewing current research trends, that discrimination

against Latino students in general is abundant in schools and experienced in limited

academic performance expectations, inadequate staff experience and skill to meet the

needs of students, and disconnectedness between schools and Latino students and

families (Hill & Torres, 2010). A lack of communication and positive relationships

between students, parents, and schools may increase student failure and the likelihood of

dropping out (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Other Minority Student Populations

Equally challenging to account for are multiracial student groups and how they perform academically in school. Herman (2009) suggested when multiracial students self-identify as Black or Hispanic they do not perform academically as well as other multi-racial students who self-identify as White or Asian. More research is needed to determine how multiracial identities influence student achievement in the classroom and on standardized assessments.

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Texas Education Challenges

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In San Antonio, Texas (Bexar County) the attrition rate for the Hispanic students is at 42% (8045 Hispanic students) compared to 22% (1246 white students) for the 2009-2010 school year (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010). In 2010-2011, Texas Educational Agency (2011) found the minority Hispanic population now became the majority, with Hispanic students accounting for 50.2% (2,480,000) of the total number of students (4,933,617) enrolled in Texas public schools. This becomes more significant when one realizes Texas has 15 school districts that are considered among the 100 largest in the nation (Plotts, Sable, & National Center for Education Statistics, 2010).

Balfanz, Legters, and the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (2004) further illuminated the severity of the situation in Texas, stating "more than half of the state's 240 high schools with weak promoting power are located in cities; 91% of these high schools are minority majority and 56% are more than 90% majority" (p. 18). The challenge is to determine how Texas schools will adapt to meet the needs of the now majority Hispanic student population to assist them in achieving academic

success. On a wider scale, as the Hispanic student population continues to rise across the United States, more schools will need determine how to best meet their needs to produce academically successful students and graduates.

Physical Properties of Schools and Low Socioeconomic Status

The condition of a school's physical environment may influence school climate, and in turn influence student achievement. In a mixed-methods study of how physical conditions of school facilities moderate school climate and ultimately student achievement, Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008) found a poor physical environment led to a decrease in student academic achievement and teacher motivation. Nine schools set to go through renovations within the years of 2009 and 2001 were selected for inclusion in the study, which included input from a total of 500 teachers. A combination of interviews, photo interviews, walk-through interviews, and survey data were collected and analyzed through qualitative and quantitative methods. The results showed that there was a moderate to high connection between the physical condition of the school facility and the overall school climate (Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008). While this is beyond the scope of the current focus of study, more research is needed to explore how the physical environment influences school climate in greater depth.

Nonetheless Uline, Wolsey, Tschannen-Moran, and Lin (2010) suggested the quality of staff members employed may counter physical property deficits and still provide for a positive school climate in schools that are underfunded and operating in facilities of poor quality. In a mixed-methods study drawing from a variety of sources for data (i.e., interviews, student photo interviews, school staff walk-through interviews, and

data management and analysis), school building quality and school climate were again showing a moderate to strong relationship (Uline, Wolsey, Tschannen-Moran, & Lin, 2010). However in poorly maintained facilities, the quality of staff was shown to offset the physical property deficits experienced by students, providing a sliver of hope for all schools that are unable to upgrade or relocate facilities (Uline et al., 2010). The present study will examine the quality of KIPP school climate, including students' perceived quality of staff, through the CGPL survey.

Creating an atmosphere where students experience a high sense of belonging despite a lack of resources or quality school facilities may yield successful academic outcomes for students who face such challenges (Nichols, 2008). In an explorative mixed-methods study involving sixth- to eighth-grade students in a charter school regionally located in the Southwestern United States, Nichols found student perceptions of belongingness may equate to greater academic achievement, superseding the tangible physical location and condition of schools attended when there is an effort to build interpersonal relationships between and among teachers and students. A focus on high academic achievement expectations and increasing student-participatory opportunities, which may include sports, academic competitions, and other extracurricular activities, may increase student sense of belonging and ultimately academic achievement (Nichols, 2008).

The closer one gets to the border of Texas and Mexico, the greater the amount of socioeconomically challenged and at risk students become and the higher dropout rates are when compared with other areas of the state of Texas (Sloat, Makkonen, & Koehler,

2007). The physical degradation of school buildings, surrounded by less than pristine neighborhoods and limited resources in urban areas of Texas cities, may be adding an additional obstacle on improving school climate and ultimately student achievement. While modifying the physical appearance of a school is challenging when funding is limited, relocating a school to a different area is nearly impossible (Sloat et al., 2007). The challenge then would be to determine what other factors may be addressed to improve school climate and academic performance, particularly in areas of high poverty, limited resources, low student performance, and high dropout rates.

High-Stakes Testing

High-stakes testing may have contributed to the amount of students dropping out of Texas schools. Heilig and Darling-Hammond (2008) noted that a variety of school tactics were used to misrepresent student academic performance in order to maintain a desired accountability status and the federal funding that accompanied the rating. School practices of retaining students in a specific nontesting grade level and then promoting them at a later date to a higher grade level was found in some schools as a means of excluding student who would test poorly. Students were encouraged to withdraw or dropout and others were refused entrance into the school if they were low performers on state assessments. Students who were least likely to graduate included Blacks, Latinos, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations (Heilig & Darling-Hammond, 2008). McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, and Heilig (2008) found Texas high-stakes accountability system has encouraged high dropout rates of Black and Latino populations; over 60% of

the students they followed in the 7 year longitudinal study left school out of 271,000 students.

Not everyone is convinced Texas high-stakes testing does unequivocally cause an increase in student dropout rates. Wilkins (2008), in a review of McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, and Heilig (2008), cautioned against making generalizations and creating a foundational cause-effect marker out of a casual relationship between high-stakes testing and the number of student dropouts in Texas schools. More research is needed to determine just how much government legislation such as No Child Left Behind, which heightened requirements for high-stakes testing and initiated accountability scores and rankings for schools across the nation, has influenced the achievement gap in Texas and elsewhere (Hong & Yongs, 2008). Latinos are most likely to support high-stakes testing, followed by Blacks and Whites (Lay & Stokes-Brown, 2009). The higher the income level and education, the less likely a person will support standardized testing practices.

The results of high-stakes testing are just at controversial and confusing. Verdugo (2011) suggested that the National Education Association's reported narrowing of the gap between ethnic groups is based upon statistically biased data. After closely reviewing the average math scores for reported ethnic groups (i.e., White, Black, Hispanic, and mixed groups of Black-White and Hispanic-White students) at the ages of 13 and 17, Verdugo suggested that the exclusion of students who dropped out between the Grades 7 and 12 led to selectivity bias and a façade of improved academic performance among ethnic minority groups. Skewed results are detrimental to school policy and current practices as research guides action and activity in the classrooms and on school campuses across the

nation (Verdugo, 2011). Misguided school policy may hamper academic success in student populations that are struggling with attaining academic success, especially the Black and Hispanic student populations.

Reaching the Hispanic Student

Success of the Hispanic student may require a different approach than what is currently being used in classrooms. Increased social support and a focus on building developmental assets to counter internal and external deficits may increase student academic success. Whiting (2009) suggested revamping the image of student identity which includes increasing academic achievement and attitude towards their education may be one place to begin improving student performance.

Creating a climate of social change among Latinos that promotes empowering of the Hispanic youth and focuses on building assets in lieu of focusing on deficits may encourage academic success (Garcia-Reid & Reid, 2009, p. 60). Garcia-Reid and Reid suggested that incorporating social workers within schools to advocate for Hispanic and other minority groups along with encouraging a common effort among families, schools, and communities to provide support to Hispanic students and increase academic success overall.

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Theoretical Foundation: Positive Youth Development Theory

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Positive youth development theory (PYD) stems from Erikson's (1968) understanding of building one's identity throughout life. The co-constructive nature of building identity between the person and their culture introduced by Erikson is reflected with the PYD theory and the interconnectedness of relationships between youth and

friends, family, community, and schools (Erikson, 1980). In Erikson's (1968) theory of psychosocial development, adults in particular were significant in defining an adolescent's identity. Teachers and school staff play a vital role in adolescent development which may help or inhibit healthy identity, as understood in Erikson's time and as currently viewed through PYD theory (Erikson, 1968).

Past researchers of models in psychology and education searched for pathology and various risk factors that could contribute to increased risk of failure. Reflective of many studies focusing on deficits and risk factors that lead to high school dropout, Suh and Suh (2007) identified 16 statistically significant risk factors that were associated with dropouts, with the most notable being "academic failure, low socioeconomic status, and behavioral problems" (p. 7). Utilizing data collected from the National longitudinal Survey Youth by the United States Department of Labor in 1996 that included of 9,000 youth between the ages of 12 and16, Suh and Suh found when multiple risk factors were present (two or more), there was an increase in the likelihood of dropping out. Coming from a deficit perspective, the study did not address the question of what might be done to offset or neutralize the risk factors to increase the likelihood of staying in school. The amount of developmental assets, or lack thereof, was not addressed in the study, which may have provided more insight into why some students were more likely to drop out than others in the sample. Incorporating a more holistic understanding of variables influencing high school dropouts that also includes an asset framework may assist researchers in understanding more clearly what leads to success and failure in school.

A pivotal change has occurred in research that focuses now on positive attributes and protective factors individuals may have to shield them from the negative effects of barriers in their lives. Atkiss, Moyer, Desai, and Roland (2011) completed a qualitative pilot study integrating the socioecological model and developmental assets to explore the relationship between individuals and their environment. The backdrop included the implementation of a youth program and structured interviews were utilized to discuss the impact of the program with eleven of the participants. The added social support and connectedness to positive role models or mentors increased youth assets, particularly in the areas of increased commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity, empowerment, and constructive use of their time (Atkiss et al., 2011). The impact of such research from a microeconomic standpoint could yield a better understanding of how to build resiliency and thriving, particularly in youth who have an array of personal or environmental challenges to overcome (Benson & Scales, 2009; Benson, 2006). In looking at similar research from a macro-economic standpoint, the value lies in the potential to positively shape communities and effectively respond to needs that present themselves within their members to produce better outcomes (Atkiss et al., 2011; Gestsdottir, Urban, Bowers, Lerner, & Lerner, 2011).

Utilizing a structural equation modeling technique, Tiet, Huizinga, and Byrnes (2010) collected longitudinal data from a total of 877 youths who were largely Hispanic and African American that completed the Denver Youth Survey. The survey assessed resilience juxtaposed with life context factors and measured self-reported academic performance to determine the relationships of variables identified. The results of the

study again pointed to the importance of establishing supportive relationships for students among family and teachers, and encouraging a greater involvement in extracurricular activities, among improving other predictors of longitudinal resiliency (Tiet et al., 2010). Students who showed less resilience were detached from family, school and more involved in delinquent behavior among their peers (Tiet et al., 2010). Tiet et al. noted that the importance of prevention and building strengths to offset risk factors presented in the lives of youth to promote resiliency and resulting academic success. Further studies were suggested to explore the positive feedback loop that encouraged resiliency, particularly focusing on how to increase students who are considered high-risk (Tiet et al., 2010).

Scales, Benson, Roelkepartain, Sesma, and van Dulmen (2006) attempted to fill a gap in current research by completing a longitudinal study (between 1998-2001) that measured the 40 developmental assets as individual variables and included objective and tangible grades in lieu of self-reports to measure progress among 370 student participants residing in St. Louis Park, Minnesota . The central focus in the study was to answer two questions: "1) are developmental assets related to higher GPA in the same year? [and] 2) are developmental assets related to higher GPA over time?" (Scales et al., 2006, p. 696). The Search Institute's Attitudes and Behavior Survey was used to measure both assets and risk-taking behavior among students and GPA was assessed via a 12-point scale to calculate grades in core classes, including English, science, math, and social studies (Scales et al., 2006). The results confirmed the more assets reported does contribute to higher GPA with both short and long-term effects over time (Scales et al., 2006). Limitations of the study included an 85% homogenous sample of Caucasian students with

only a handful of Multiracial, Asian, Black, and Hispanic students among those surveyed (Scales et al., 2006). More research is needed that includes a wide variety of youth, specifically at-risk groups, including Hispanic, Black, urban, and single-parent family groups of students to determine if results are transferable to other populations (Scales et al., 2006).

Current trends in research are focusing on building strengths instead of purely focusing on reducing the number of risk factors in adolescent development (Donnelly, 2008). Social support shown through positive relationships with peers and staff members in schools is one way that may decrease the amount of risky behaviors students engage in and increase resiliency and academic success (Burrow, O'Dell, & Hill, n.d.; Grace, 2008; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Scales et al., 2004). The Search Institute has utilized the developmental assets approach, measuring both internal and external assets, to measure how well a student will thrive within their environment. The measures indicate their likelihood to overcome adversity, stay healthy, make good choices that avoid risky behavior, and succeed in school (Scales et al., 2004).

PYD theory in action encompasses providing opportunities for building positive relationships among peers and caring adults to promote healthy outcomes (Bruyere, 2010). The positive relationships in turn provide opportunities for growth and development of skills, or strengths, which encourage positive values, and support a positive self-image (Scales et al., 2004). From a social systems perspective, foundational for the PYD theory, an interconnected and mutually influencing relationship exists among the student, family, peers, school, and surrounding community (Benson, 2006).

Interactions may positively or negatively influence multiple levels of development for the youth including social, emotional, physical, cognitive, moral, and spiritual areas of development (Benson, 2006).

The new movement within the field of developmental psychology consists of research that embraces the theoretical framework of relational developmental systems (Lerner, Lerner, von Eye, Bowers, & Lewin-Bizan, 2011; Lerner & Overton, 2012; Lerner, Von Eye, Lerner, & Lewin-Bizan, 2009). The model "emphasizes that the basic process of human development involves mutually-influential relations between the developing individual and the multiple levels of his/her changing context. These bidirectional relations may be represented as individual $\longleftrightarrow$ context relations" (Lerner et al., 2011, p. 1107).

In the same manner in which adolescents are influenced and affected by their environment, so too is the ability for adolescents to influence their environment emphasized in the PYD approach (Lerner et al., 2010). PYD theory encompasses the five Cs which include confidence, competence, character, connection, and caring and is centered on relationships within social contexts, including family, school, and community (Lerner et al., 2011; Lerner & Overton, 2012). The idea rests on the notion that adolescent development is malleable and may be positively influenced to yield a better outcome and increase an adolescent's ability to thrive in their environment and in life (Lerner et al., 2010). The outcome of an adolescent positively influencing their environment is referred to as the sixth C or contribution (Lerner et al., 2010, p. 711).

Instead of a needs or deficit approach, PYD focuses on strengths or assets adolescents have which may be used to increase their ability to thrive (Lerner et al., 2010). PYD focuses on resources available to the adolescent within the various social constructs, including family, school, and community to promote positive growth and increase resilience (Lerner et al., 2010).

Further rationale behind choosing a focus on PYD theory stems from recent school initiatives trickling down from the United States federal government with a focus on creating safe school environments that support learning and academic success. Comprehensive School Reform initiatives have led to engaging in a more proactive and ecological approach to building student strengths (both internal and external assets) and decreasing at-risk status (Edwards, Mumford, Shillingford, & Serra-Roldan, 2007; Gomez, & Ang, 2007). Caring relationships take center stage to promoting positive youth development. Relationships established must also insist on high expectations and meaningful participation opportunities to catalyze growth (Benard, 2004). Research by the Search institute has indicated the greater amount of developmental assets, utilizing a middle school population, is inversely correlated to a decrease in participation in risk behaviors (Benson & Scales, 2009).Positive, caring relationships help to increase developmental assets, in turn increasing student success and decreasing the likelihood of engaging in risk behavior.

Developmental Assets

The basic premise is that the more assets a student has, the greater likelihood they are going to make positive choices and avoid risky behavior (Benson & Scales, 2009).

Assets serve as protective factors that assist youth in making positive choices as opposed to succumbing to risky behavior that may lead to teen pregnancy, drug or alcohol abuse, criminal activity, and so on. Assets are about building positive relationships to increase youth resiliency to overcome risk factors that may be present in their lives. Instead of focusing on a needs-based or deficit perspective, the developmental assets approach involves building on existing strengths.

Researchers on developmental assets have not always been entirely clear as to whether having a greater amount of assets effectively leads to a positive outcome in all cases. Urban, Lewin-Bizan, and Lerner (2009) found in some cases females who have the benefit of being a part of communities with high assets actually displayed higher risk behaviors, depression, and lower positive PYD behaviors however opposite to be true for boys living under the same conditions. More research is needed to determine if other variables such as gender may influence developmental assets and PYD.

Benefits, including protective factors, of developmental assets may not be visible immediately. Jain, Buka, Subramanian, and Molnar (2012) found positive relationships with family, friends, and other adult mentors, improved emotional resilience over time for youth who had been exposed to violence. Carlisle (2011) found promoting healthy relationships through team building and mentoring experiences build developmental assets among middle school students. The experience positively impacted their relationships with peers and teachers and raised their consciousness of their own role in building positive relationships.

Building Positive Relationships

The quality of relationships may influence an adolescent's ability to thrive in both short-term and long-term outcomes. Lewin-Bizan, Bowers, and Lerner (2010), in a further review of 4-H longitudinal study data, found positive parenting was a significant in determining an adolescent's ability to intentionally self-regulate. In the absence of positive parenting, "intervention programs and youth-serving practitioners could focus on lessening the risks associated with an adverse social environment by helping youths develop intentional self-regulation skills" (Lewin-Bizan et al., 2010, p. 768).

In a subsequent study using the 4-H longitudinal data, Brittian and Lerner (2012) reviewed how Erikson's understanding of fidelity led to positive youth development. In a sample of 1,941 youth in grades ranging from 6th to 10th, participants from across the United States completed self-report surveys concerning their views on fidelity, competence, and identity. The end result found youth who exhibited higher levels of fidelity also showed increased positive behaviors and decreased destructive or delinquent behaviors (Brittian & Lerner, 2012). Female youth were more likely than male youth to exhibit higher levels of fidelity and resulting positive attributes. Although the study was limited by the snapshot analysis that may or may not change overtime for better or worse, the study did identify a need for more research to determine how relationships with adults, peers, and family members are influencing the acquisition of fidelity as an asset (Brittian & Lerner, 2012). The current study will also examine the role of gender among Hispanic students at KIPP Aspire to determine if there are any differences in how school climate moderates the gain of developmental assets and academic success.

Students perform better in schools and are more connected in schools where there are caring adult relationships (Whitlock & Powers, 2008; Whitlock, 2006). A mixed methods study in a 6-month period was completed by Whitlock focusing on how student perceived school connectedness correlated with 4 specific variables including meaningful roles at school, safety, creative engagement, and academic engagement. A total of 350 students in Grades 8, 10, and 12 participated in the study held in the northeastern part of the United States. Focus groups were also held with 109 of the 350 students participating. The results suggested that both the opportunity for students to provide meaningful input and engaging lessons were strongly associated with school connectedness (Whitlock, 2006), further supporting the importance of positive relationships between students and staff members. A limitation of the study was that the population was mostly European American and of moderate to high socio economic status (Whitlock, 2006). Hispanic students were not significantly represented in the study.

Lewis, Huebner, Malone, and Valois (2011) researched the bidirectional relationship between perceived student life satisfaction and student engagement in the areas of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. A total of 779 middle school students located in the southeastern portion of the United States were surveyed twice within a 5 month period. The results showed a significant relationship between life satisfaction and cognitive engagement (Lewis et al., 2011). However, behavioral and emotional engagements were not shown to be significant. The study was again limited by an underrepresentation of Hispanic students with less than 6.7% participating compared to 61.9% White students completing the study (Lewis et al., 2011).

Building Assets Through Mentoring

Interactions between students and authority figures are important. Positive relationships between students and authority figures in schools for example may encourage students to continue their education and continue to make positive choices in their lives (Benson, 2006). Student perceived self-efficacy has shown to positively affect academic success in school. Hsieh, Sullivan, and Guerra (2007) researched goal orientation and self-efficacy among 112 undergraduate college students, juxtaposing those in good standing to those on academic probation and found students who felt capable of attaining success were academically successful. Students who were more positively goal orientated showed greater academic success than students who displayed performance-avoidance tendencies. As a result of their research study findings, Hsieh et al. substantiated the importance of identifying students with performance-avoidance tendencies and establishing a mentoring relationship with teachers and administrators to increase student chances of academic success. Hsieh et al. further suggested that when educational programs and schools assist their students in building self-efficacy through mentorship opportunities, greater academic success may be experienced among their student populations. Similar results were found with a longitudinal mixed methods study from a paradigmatic lens was performed by Torres and Hernandez (2009) to determine the influence of urban Latino/a student retention. The results of surveys completed in 3 consecutive years showed the presence of a mentor or advisor support positively influenced student retention.

Other mentoring programs for specifically Latino Immigrant students have been suggested for implementation to increase coping skills. For example, the Arriba Program, and others like it, may help connect students with the viable resources they need to be successful in school and help to create a sense of belonging among struggling students (Boden, Sherman, Usry, & Cellitti, 2009). Another suggestion to increase student success offered by Gonzalez (2010) is called The Leadership Success Model. The model focuses on the various elements of the student experience, including language and cultural enrichment, understanding social context, responsive teaching and learning, and meaningful parent and community engagement. The idea is to build the relationships between schools, community, and families to support the success of Latino students in their academic endeavors (Gonzalez, 2010).

A lack of support in school may lead to academic failure. Brown and Rodríguez (2009) conducted a qualitative study, under the structure-culture-agency framework, of two Hispanic male students who dropped out of high school to determine influencing variables of their academic failure. Both social and intellectual alienation combined with educational neglect were found to be significant contributing factors in their decision to drop out of school. More intervention and inclusive outreach programs are needed to combat the high dropout rates of Hispanic students and that quickly identify and provide mentoring and support services to struggling students (Legters & Balfanz, 2010; Rodriguez, 2008; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

Consistent negative interactions may motivate students to give up and drop out. Rios (2010) conducted a 2 year ethnographic research study involving 56 Latino

individuals between the ages of 15 and 21 who were affiliated with gangs between the years of 2007 and 2009. The findings were that negative interactions with authority figures adversely affected their decisions and led to dropping out and increased risky behavior, including illegal activities; "at least one-fourth of participating youth had given up on themselves, often as a result of perceiving that the system had given up on them" (Rios, 2010, p. 210).

The lack of positive adult relationship opportunities for youth is a continued concern for U.S. students. Paxton, Valois, Huebner, and Drane (2006) completed a study focusing youth, life satisfaction and the occurrence of meaningful relationships with adults and roles within their community. After surveying 2,987 middle school students (grades 6–8) regionally located in the southern part of the United States, the results showed only 43% of the students reported being satisfied with their life. Only 34% felt they had access to positive relationships with adults and maintained meaningful roles within their community (Paxton et al., 2006). The population sample was nearly equally representative in gender with females making up 49.2% and males 50.8%. The study was limited in that only two races were represented, 43% Black and 57% White (Paxton et al., 2006). No Hispanic students were represented in the study, which shows a need for additional research including greater ethnic diversity.

Gender may influence how students perceive social support. In a study including 141 girls and 310 boys (ages 8 through 12) who were considered socioeconomically challenged, ages 8 through 12, Chapin and Yang (2009) measured self-perceived social support and concluded girls were more likely to benefit from social relationships with

peers and adults than boys. This may indicate a greater challenge to reach and provide male students with social support to encourage resiliency and offset risk factors existing within their lives.

School Climate

School climate is vital for catalyzing student academic success (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009; Starkman, Scales, Scales, & Roberts, 2008). After completing a review of documents and policies related to federal and state evaluative standards for school climate in the United States educational system, Cohen et al. found both federal and state policies do not accurately address school climate. For example, No Child Left Behind does not accurately assess school climate despite the understanding of its importance in promoting academic success. While states hold schools accountable for academic progress of their students, the majority of states do not require accountability for maintaining a positive school climate (Cohen et al., 2009). A gap in research on school climate is highlighted by Cohen et al., particularly in the area of addressing multiple perspectives, including both students and staff members of schools across the United States. More research is needed to understand the effects of school climate, particularly in the areas of relationships and catalyzing a sense of school community (Cohen et al., 2009).

Limited studies have been completed on perceptions of school climate on a grand scale (Koth, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2008). Frey, Ruchkin, Martin, Schwab-Stone, and Mary (2009) completed a 2-year longitudinal research study of student perceptions on school attachment and family involvement using the Social and Health Assessment. Among a

predominantly minority group of 652 students in their eighth and ninth-grade school years, they found a relationship between the levels of perceived school attachment (accounting for 4.2% of the variance) and behavior, perceived school climate, and academic success. Students who perceived higher school attachment displayed lower levels of physical aggression and violent behavior (Frey et al., 2009). Frey et al. also expressed higher levels of positive school climate, and greater academic success. The study was limited by a one-sided perspective focus on student perceptions in lieu of a holistic analysis of school relationships, including teachers and staff (Frey et al., 2009).

School attachment, commitment, and cohesion have been found to be significantly associated with academic success on an individual student level (Stewart, 2008). A secondary analysis of data, retrieved from the National Educational Longitudinal Study database, was completed involving a sample group of 10th-grade students to further explore individual-level and school-level variables in relation to academic success (Stewart, 2008). While school structural characteristics were not found to be statistically significant in impacting academic success, individual-level characteristics were, indicating an importance of positively influencing a building of strengths among students to promote success in school (Stewart, 2008). The study results suggested that a cohesive school environment may buffer existing deficits and risk factors that commonly lead to school failure and instead lead to academic success for all students (Stewart, 2008). More research is needed to define the effects of school climate on increasing academic success among a multitude of student populations, and particularly those most at risk for school failure.

School culture and school climate have been at times used interchangeably, however there are distinct differences between them (Scales et al., 2006). School culture can be defined as a set of norms or values accepted and upheld by members of the school community (Scales et al., 2006). School climate is the perception of the actions or behaviors elicited by the culture (Scales et al., 2006). Both culture and climate have been found to be significant in the school to promote academic success of attending students (Scales et al., 2006).

Several values have been found to be significant to support learning; a sense of belonging among the school community, student self-efficacy, motivation to achieve, and student ability to exhibit self-control (Scales et al., 2006). Belonging and efficacy are consistently shown to be significant in multiple studies for students within the school setting (Cohen & McCabe, 2009; Witherspoon, Schotland, Way, & Hughes, 2009; Scales & Benson, 2007).

Pong and Hao (2007) suggested higher GPA among immigrant children were negatively impacted by poor school climate and large class sizes and positively influenced by the presence of educated adult role models and a positive school climate (p. 225-232). MacNeil, Prater, and Busch (2009) compared 29 schools within a large suburban school district in southeast Texas based upon their Texas Education Ratings of Acceptable, Recognized, and Exemplary status. The study included state assessment results from 24,684 students and Organizational Health Inventory survey results from 1727 teachers. Exemplary schools were found to have higher scores on the Organizational Health Inventory, specifically in the Goal focus and Adaptation areas

when compared to recognized schools and respective student achievement (MacNeil et al., 2009). Although the study was limited by the small population sample of schools, it did suggest the importance and connection between organizational health and student academic performance.

Studies have been conducted to measure a somewhat complex analysis of school climate; however limitations within their methodology and focus continue to exist. Mitchell, Bradshaw, and Leaf (2010), for example, juxtaposed both 1,881 fifth-grade students and 90 teachers in 37 Maryland public schools to explore similarities and differences in their perspectives of school climate. Through a multilevel analysis of snapshot surveys (School Development Program School Climate Survey), they found that students focused more on school-level components of school climate whereas teachers focused more on classroom-level components (Mitchell et al., 2010). Brand, Felner, Seitsinger, Burns, and Bolton (2008) also explored school climate from both the student and teacher perspectives and found that both perspectives were consistent and reliable over a 1-2 year span. Additionally and contrary to Shouppe and Pate (2010), Brand et al. found a significant relationship between teacher perspectives of school climate and student academic success as measured by standardized assessments.

Ripski and Gregory (2009) attempted to explore the multidimensional nature of school climate in relation to student academic achievement and engagement as perceived from an individual and school level (i.e., a collective representation of student perceptions). Utilizing a cross-sectional design, a national sample of 15,000 10th-grade students self-reported survey data, compiled by the United States Department of

Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, was used to determine how poor

school climate may influence academic achievement (Ripski & Gregory, 2009). Student

self-report surveys were juxtaposed with teacher reports of student engagement and

standardized assessment scores in math and reading (Ripski & Gregory, 2009).

On an individual level, when students felt high levels of victimization, the result

was decreased engagement and achievement in math and reading (Ripski & Gregory,

2009). On a collective level, when students felt high levels of hostility in the school

setting, the result was decreased engagement and achievement in both math and reading

(Ripski & Gregory, 2009). Both individual and collective reports of negative school

climate and the resulting lower achievement and engagement among students point to the

importance of school climate and the need to establish a positive school climate to

improve student performance in more schools across the United States. More research is

needed to map out both teacher and student perceptions of school climate to ensure

nothing is missed in the analysis of interactions and dimensions (Mitchell et al., 2010;

Ripski & Gregory, 2009). I seek to expand the understanding of both student and teacher

perspectives of school climate on multiple realms, not just in the classroom.

Overall, in a literature review of current research regarding social and behavioral

elements that lead to school success, three themes presented themselves as essential to

building what Gürol and Kerimgil (2010) referred to as academic optimism: academic

emphasis, collective efficacy, and trust of the students and parents" (p. 931). Regardless

of socioeconomic status, whether the students were at-risk due to low income or

impoverished conditions, if the three components of academic optimism were present,

students performed well academically (Gürol & Kerimgil, 2010). There may, however, be a gender-specific difference in optimism and self-esteem (Puskar et al., 2010).

If the assumption can be made that students do want to learn, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, then the focus shifts to what does and does not encourage learning (Lewis & Kim, 2008). In a qualitative study that involved interviews with a 72 Black elementary students from two sites in Northern and Southern California, Lewis and Kim (2008) found that the quality of relationships is important to student success; particularly supportive relationships from caring adults, which include student-teacher relationships, are essential to creating a connectedness or we-ness among staff and students that promote learning (Lewis & Kim, 2008). Teachers who exhibit quality teaching practices and genuinely care about what they are doing in the classroom and who they are teaching catalyze a more positive school culture which may lead to higher academic gains among a wide variety of student populations (Lewis & Kim, 2008).

Some researchers have shown the importance of teaming to improve school climate, academic achievement and increase student-centered learning. During a 2-year pilot program at between the school years of 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, Kokolis (2007) found when seventh-grade students were formed into teams created a culture of learning, decreased behavioral referrals, and increased academic success in the classrooms. This may lead to a greater sense of purpose and connection with their learning experience, which may in turn lead to greater achievement and personal development.

Other researchers have focused mainly on student-centered approaches to improve school climate. Creating a person-centered classroom, may be another way to increase student academic success. The approach focuses on improving four different aspects of the educational experience for students, including the socioemotional, school connectedness, positive classroom and school climate, and student self-discipline. A person-centered classroom approach may serve to increase academic achievement and minimize discipline challenges in the classroom which, may negatively impact academic achievement (Freinberg & Lamb, 2009). Hill (2009) investigated how a person-centered approach in three high schools actually led to building developmental assets among 318 students in the areas of increasing purpose, commitment, hope, and well-being. While the findings were promising, a limitation of the study included a homogenous sample of predominately White high school students. Finding methods to improve school climate in conjunction with building developmental assets in the process is sought after based on current research studies being published. Focusing on what works at KIPP charter schools may highlight approaches transferable to other classrooms across the United States to promote positive youth development on a larger scale.

Staff Perspectives

Lynn, Bacon, Totten, and Bridges (2010) suggested teacher perceptions of students influence their ability to perform academically. Their qualitative study which lasted 18 months included interviews with focus groups and ethnographic observations within a suburban school whose population (both teacher and student) mainly consist of African Americans. Lynn et al. suggested that students live up to teacher expectations,

where students achieve higher performance levels with teachers who believe they can and

do not perform as well for those who do not. Moreover, stereotypes and internalized

oppression found within teacher and student perceptions may be negatively impacting the

success of students who are Black. The importance of teaching life lessons, teaching

students how they can make a difference in society, and taking a genuine interesting the

success of students academic success were mentioned as ways in which students may be

encouraged to succeed in school (Lynn et al., 2010).

Shepherd (2011) found many teachers from a variety of ethnic backgrounds held

personal bias towards their students, anticipating low performance from minority students

and possibly contributing to their school failure. Reyna (2008) suggested attribuntional

stereotypes may help or inhibit student progress through positive or negative teacher

expectations of student ability and expected academic progress. It is important for

teachers to recognize their own personal bias and the influence of the dominant culture on

personal viewpoints and expectations of all students, including subpopulations that may

be perceived in a negative or deficient light.

Teacher perceptions of their chosen profession and their ability to influence their

students may make the difference between effective and ineffectiveness in the classroom.

Helterbran (2010) suggested teachers need to feel empowered, sharing in school

leadership and employing ownership of challenges and change within the current

educational system to offset the deficit perspective currently embraced by educators.

Moreover, students may benefit academically from teachers who have increased

opportunities for professional and leadership development.

Teachers may be taught what to teach (content) but there is less direction to prepare how to teach, with an emphasis on who they will be teaching in the classroom (Williams & Lemons-Smith, 2009). Providing teachers with a continued opportunity to grow professionally and building excellence-oriented pedagogy may positively impact overall student success. Teacher-centered intervention approaches may positively influence school climate and in turn increase student success. Rhodes, Camic, Milburn, and Lowe (2009) utilized data from a 5-year project involving five American schools, located regionally in the Midwest states, where three of the five hosted the Teacher Empowerment Project intervention to positively influence school climate through a collaborative effort. A total of 180 teachers and 2673 students participated in the study. After teachers completed the Organizational Health Inventory for Middle Schools survey, it was determined the direct effects of the project were an incremental increase in administrative health and teacher perceptions each year the program was in place. The result of student survey results from the Perceived School Climate Scale indicated an increase in positive student perceptions of school climate when the second year was compared to the fourth year of the program in place (Rhodes et al., 2009). This suggests a collaborative approach, with an emphasis on teachers, may directly improve the school climate on a larger scale.

Roby (2011) completed a study measuring school culture from the perspective of teachers. The study included 195 Ohio Pre K–12 teachers from a variety of regional settings (rural, urban, and suburban) and with varied years of service from 1 to 20 years. While no significant items were linked to school climate, important relational themes

were present including concerns of isolation, trust, informal leadership opportunities, support, and conflict resolution. Communication among members of the learning community was seen as important in addressing existing weaknesses of school culture (Roby, 2011). Limitations of the study included a one-sided perspective on school climate, which may or may not paint a clear picture of what leads to positive school culture and deficiencies in current school systems.

Other researchers have attempted to identify significant variables affecting student academic achievement from the teacher's perspective but have touched only upon fragments of understanding the collective inner workings of school climate. For example, Williams (2009), utilizing an ex post facto survey design, found Georgia elementary student achievement was not related to teacher perceptions of administrative leadership actions. However, a connection was found between student discipline and student achievement, which may be related to the importance of creating a safe school environment that promotes learning (Williams, 2009). A second study completed by Shouppe and Pate (2010) added to the controversy by finding no significant relationships between school climate as perceived by teachers and student academic achievement. Admittedly, the survey (the revised Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Middle Schools) completed by 367 Georgia middle school teachers in the study, may not have measured essential components of school climate from the teacher perspective (Shouppe & Pate, 2010).

Student Perspectives

Gender may influence overall student satisfaction on the physical, social, and learning environment experienced in school. In a study of school climate among eighth-grade students in both rural and urban schools, Pashiardis (2008) found overall girls were more satisfied with their educational experience than boys. Differences between rural and urban student perspectives were noted, with rural students experiencing greater satisfaction in the physical, social, and learning dimensions of the school environment. Results suggested a need to increase diversity of instructional delivery to maintain greater student interest in learning content and build better student-teacher relationships with a focus on a more personalized educational experience.

Plunkett, Henry, Houltberg, Sands, and Abarca-Mortensen (2008) further explored how changes in the ecological context may influence the ability for students to thrive academically in the face of noted deficits and additionally carrying the at-risk label. Plunkett et al. believed if students perceived support from parents, teachers, and peers, a moderation or buffering effect could offset a student's deficits, increasing their ability to thrive academically. A majority Latino subsample of 216 ninth-grade Los Angeles public high school students was utilized to assess academic success, support, and the relationship existing between them. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between academic resilience indicators (academic motivation, satisfaction with academics, and grades) and parent and teacher support (Plunkett et al., 2008).

In the context of peer support, a difference in gender was evident in the results of the study. Peer support was found to have a positive and significant relationship with

academic motivation for female students. Male students displayed a positive and significant link between peer support and two academic resilience indicators: academic motivation and academic satisfaction (Plunkett et al., 2008). The study was limited in that the only students were asked to rate their perspective on sources of support. More research is needed that includes a multifaceted understanding of social support and its influence on academic resilience, particularly the "bi-directional nature of factors associated with teacher academic support and Mexican-origin students' academic outcomes" (Plunkett et al., 2008, p. 349)

In the same vein, gender differences varied on perceptions self-esteem and supportive relationships experienced in schools. In a cross-sectional study including 193 rural western Pennsylvania high school students (ages 14–18), self-report levels of both self-esteem and optimism showed males reported having higher levels of both in comparison with female scores on both the Rosenberg's self-esteem scale and the optimism scale life orientation test (Puskar et al., 2010). One important limitation was the homogenous nature of the sample utilized, mostly rural White students, which begs for further research that includes a wide variety of ethnicities to determine if results are reflective of other student populations. The connection between self-esteem and optimism in relation to outward signs of resilience (for example academic performance) was not linked to the findings in the study, limiting the application of results in real-life scenarios.

Tsereteli, Martskvishvili, Aptarashvili, Darsavelidze, and Sadzaglishvili (2010) completed a similar study to identify school culture factors that contribute to self-

competence among students. The large national sample size of 5,385 ninth-grade public school students were invited to participate to determine what leads to academic success within the school experience. The results showed student self-competence was correlated with micro and macro school related factors, including the style of teaching and perceived fairness, classroom climate, and school culture (Tsereteli et al., 2010). The more positive the school culture was perceived, the higher the level of student self-competence (Tsereteli et al., 2010). Apart from also identifying the importance of parent involvement and support, positive relationships among students, teachers, and their peers have also shown to be important components leading to academic success (Tsereteli et al., 2010).

Apart from individual factors influencing student achievement, the multidimensional nature of student academic success must not be forgotten. A qualitative investigation completed by Murray and Naranjo (2008) explored influential factors and processes via interviews with 11 high-risk, urban, low income, Black students who successfully completed their high school education. They found both "individual and contextual risk and protective factors" (p. 150) influencing their combined experience. Students revealed that their success was due in part to "individual traits, support from families, and support from teachers" (Murray & Naranjo, 2008, p. 155).

While the vocabulary utilized by different researchers may vary slightly, the overall message is the same: student success may be attributed to a variety of internal and external assets and deficits influencing their success along the way. The challenge then is

to explore further how assets may be increased and deficits decreased or at least buffered to improve the likelihood of success for all students.

Charter Schools

There is concern over whether charter schools are worth pursuing on a grand scale across the nation in lieu of attempting to reform existing public schools, especially since not all charter schools have experienced the desired academic success among their student populations (Turnamian, 2011). Not every charter school has outperformed their public school counterparts in the area of student academic achievement. Leschly (2007) as cited by Higgins and Hess (2009) indicated that "only about 250 of the nation's 4,000 charter schools deliver impressive results" (p. 9). Some charter schools have been successful at increasing academic achievement among inner-city students who are largely deprived of essential resources needed due to low socio-economic settings. McDonald, Ross, Bol, and McSparrin-Gallagher (2007) found a largely Black inner-city student population attending elementary, middle, and high charter schools demonstrated a highly positive school climate, and student achievement on standardized assessments when compared to their peers attending traditional public schools in the same area. The success experienced by charter schools (including KIPP) challenges researchers to determine what they are doing right to promote academic success in their student populations which have proven to be above and beyond traditional public schools nearby.

Higgins and Hess (2009) pointed to smaller learning communities, shared commitment, enhanced social networking among peers, and following strategies, policies and procedures that work have all led to enhanced student performance and overall

charter school success. The question still remains as to whether success attained in select charter schools may be transferred to public school systems, yielding similar results in larger student populations. Charter schools offer an advantage over traditional public schools, including operational flexibility (Payne & Knowles, 2009). Charter schools have more leniencies in determining where funds will be spent, allowing them to shift funds to address specific needs present in the learning community. Charter schools have also extended their school year to offer more opportunities for learning whereas public schools follow the traditional school year calendar. Finally, charter schools have more flexibility to hire and fire staff members as needed with minimal red tape that is typically present in public schools.

Charter schools may offer students a more effective means of building non-cognitive skills, including "motivation, self-esteem, and self-discipline" (Imberman, 2011, p. 416) when compared to traditional public schools. In reviewing records from non-charter, start-up charter, and conversion charter schools, Imberman found improvements in both attendance and discipline among students of charter schools, suggesting an increase in noncognitive skills. Charter schools cater to students who are at-risk for dropping out of school, are experiencing academic failure, or are considered deviant, or outside the norm (Cary, 2010). Students who participate in charter schools have reported experiencing a new definition of self and school; students become leaders with purpose and school becomes a place to build relationships within a caring community of teachers and peers. Cary discovered students who attended charter schools had a greater sense of hope, belonging, and empowerment within the school community.

In a study completed by the Institute of Educations Sciences National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (2010), charter schools were not found to outperform surrounding public schools within the vicinity. However charter schools did experience greater success with students who were considered disadvantaged or living within large urban areas. Despite the variance of success among charter schools, satisfaction of students who attend charter schools and their parents are higher than those who attend traditional public schools (Institute of Educations Sciences National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, 2010).

KIPP Charter Schools

On one hand, charters schools are few and far between when compared with the great majority of traditional public schools in the United States. With fewer than 3% of students in the United States attending charter schools, at first glance it may not seem significant to focus on KIPP charter schools or any other charter school (Bennett, 2008). Currently there are around 57 KIPP schools in existence across the United States and more are in the works (Newstead, Saxton, & Colby, 2008). KIPP is a strong candidate for being the center of a research study because of the high academic success they have had with minority student populations that have historically struggled the most in the United States educational system. Where other schools continue to struggle to meet the needs of their Hispanic, African American, and other at-risk student populations, KIPP charter schools have excelled in meeting their needs and substantially increased their academic success in the classroom and on state assessments (KIPP San Antonio, n.d.).

KIPP Academies have been created throughout the United States, since 1994, in an effort to address the achievement gap existing between white and minority students (Hicks, Ohle, & Valant, 2008). Expectations are higher and the commitment expected from teachers and students is as well. School days are longer, beginning earlier and ending later than traditional public schools. KIPP students spend an estimate of 60 percent more time the classroom learning than the public school students (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008). Moreover, teachers are given cell phones so they may be reached by students for questions concerning homework, class assignments, and emergencies anytime after school and on the weekends (Lack, 2009). Both students and teachers are required to commit to an extended school year which may include Saturday school and summer school participation required for all students (Hicks, Ohle, & Valant, 2008).

KIPP focuses on strengths, positivity, and building assets within individual students and as a learning community (Matthews, 2009). KIPP's strengths begin with their leaders who model appropriate expectations and then enlist cooperation among students to follow suit (Matthews, 2009). In alignment with the Search Institute's model of developmental assets, KIPP seeks to build their students assets and positively influence them to perform well academically by providing the social support they need to thrive. KIPP charter schools monitor school climate in classrooms, among their student body, and through the effectiveness of their leaders, adjusting accordingly to best meet their student needs (Matthews, 2009).

The result of the extra effort from teachers and students has resulted in KIPP students faring better than comparable public middle school students in language arts, for

example (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008). Twenty-two KIPP middle schools were evaluated statistically for their academic performance, students scored higher in reading and math, when compared with students attending public middle schools (What Works Clearinghouse, 2010). A mixed-methods study of one inner-city KIPP charter school, concerning school climate and academic achievement, revealed teachers, students, and their parents reported greater social support to reach high levels of success , with KIPP students outperforming students academically on standardized assessments in surrounding public educational settings (Ross, McDonald, & Alberg, 2007).

Marranto and Shuls (2011) believed the academic success seen at KIPP charter schools is mainly due to what they refer to as KIPP culture. Marranto and Shuls believed the culture they have witnessed in KIPP Delta for example is entirely reproducible at other schools. Through reviewing schools such as KIPP Delta in Arkansas, Marranto and Schuls (2011) noted several ways in which student success is significantly and positively affected. KIPP goes through an extensive process of selecting and hiring teachers who are dedicated to the KIPP mission of academic success for all students. There is a consistent effort put forth by staff to model, teach, and maintain a positive school culture among staff and students that is seen throughout the campus and in all classrooms.

There is an effort to build positive relationships between parents, students, and schools, starting in the first few days of the school year and continuing on into the next. Efforts are consistent in building school culture and positive relationships across the board. Leaders, including the school principal, are given the knowledge and power to make essential decisions that affect the learning environment, with less of the red tape

that is typically seen in school districts. Finally, timely feedback on strengths and weaknesses seen in the overall progress of KIPP students is made available to students and teachers for quick corrections and improved performance. Marranto and Shuls (2011) stressed that if more schools followed a KIPP culture approach to education, student academic performance may improve.

Macey, Decker, and Eckes (2009) sought to evaluate KIPP's approach to addressing the achievement gap, including specific strategies used to improve academic performance and achievement. Macey et al. identified five key areas other schools should consider that positively impacted student performance. The five areas included "mission and vision, more time, school-parent-student relationships, staff quality, and consistency" (Macey et al., 2009, p. 236). Their results echo the review completed by Marranto and Schuls (n.d), further emphasizing the significance of further exploring the notable components of the KIPP charter school model.

KIPP's school model has shown to effectively reach at-risk student populations and teach them to meet high academic expectations, as seen through their exceptional progress on standardized tests (Angrist, Dynarski, Kane, Pathak, & Walters, 2010). This in turn allows them to building essential skills and assets equipping them for higher education, careers, and becoming productive members of society. The common goals and mission of both KIPP charter schools and the Search Institute make KIPP an ideal focus for the current research study. Moreover, their majority population of minority students who are succeeding academically despite multiple risk factors highlights the significance of a focus on KIPP charter schools. Taking a closer look at KIPP charter schools in

particular may allow other school to learn how to improve academic performance of special population students including English as a second language (ESL), special education, response to intervention (RTI), and other students at risk for school failure (Angrist et a., 2010).

KIPP charter schools focus on relational aspects of school climate, focusing and fine-tuning the interactions between teachers and students (Matthews, 2009; Newstead, Saxton, & Colby, 2008). Superseding the five pillars of KIPP expectations (i.e., establishing high expectations, pledging personal choice and commitment to succeed, providing more time to learn, empowering KIPP staff to lead, and focus on results via standardized tests, goals and objectives), the essential component of success involves establishing effective leaders each KIPP school. Hence, the need to determine how staff members view their school climate in an effective school model will provide for a unique perspective and insight into what works and how leaders perceive success in action.

The question has been raised as to how accurately KIPP students and public school students may be compared if there are such varying conditions between school experiences and practices. Lack (2009) suggested that the success seen in KIPP schools are mainly attributed to a larger amount of extra instructional time in the school year, the benefit of smaller class sizes not afforded in public schools due to the vast amount of students they serve, and "authoritarian modes of instruction" (p 137). A secondary effect of such high standards, as noted by Lack (2009) may include a narrowing of the student and teacher pools which eventually include only those who are highly motivated and successful under pressure.

While creaming has been suggested by some, Marranto and Shuls (2011) pointed out this is an unfounded assumption as (a) a lottery is used to enroll students, and (b) student attrition levels have shown to be comparable to other schools within surrounding areas of KIPP schools. Macey et al. (2009) pointed out that there has been little independent research on KIPP schools in relation to their success, with a particular focus on "how the model could apply to other school contexts" (p. 223). The proposed research study will fill the continued gap in research, identifying components of the KIPP model that may benefit all schools and increase student achievement.

Summary

The literature review covered large umbrella themes including the current student dropout crisis in the United States, the existing achievement gap among ethnicity groups, the Hispanic student population, Texas education challenges, positive youth development, school climate, and charter schools in the United States, including KIPP charter schools. Hispanic students struggle in school and are more likely to drop out than their respective peers. While public schools have struggled to meet Hispanic student academic needs, KIPP charter schools have had success in providing a school model that increases Hispanic student success in the classroom and on state assessments.

In alignment with the PYD theory, both building developmental assets among youth and creating a positive school climate have shown to increase school success. It is not completely known how school climate influences developmental asset acquisition and academic success, specifically among the Hispanic student population. Hispanic students have been most commonly represented by their deficits in existing studies, in lieu of

focusing on their assets. Finally, a more holistic and comprehensive research is needed concerning school climate that addresses multiple perspectives of the school experience (i.e., from both staff members and students).

I attempted to fill the gap in current research by (a) providing an asset-focused study of Hispanic students, (b) provide a more holistic view of school climate by including both students and staff member perspectives, and (c) research how school climate moderates the relationship between developmental asset acquisition and school success to understand the dynamics of the KIPP school model that has shown to be effective at increasing academic success among Hispanic students. Chapters 3 is an explanation of how the proposed research was completed and includes detail about the methodology, research design, population sample and school setting, Search Institute survey instruments that were used, data collection and analysis, and the ethical procedures that were taken to ensure the safety of all participants.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how school climate in the KIPP model, as perceived by both students and school staff members, may positively influence the building of developmental assets and academic success among Hispanic students. In this chapter, I review the research design and rationale, and I expand on the specific methodology I used, including population, sampling, sampling procedures, recruitment, and data collection procedures. I introduce instrumentation and operationalization of constructs to further explain the types of instruments I used to measure perceived school climate and developmental assets among participants. Finally, I discuss threats to validity of the study, followed by a summary of design and methodology of the method of inquiry.

Research Design and Rationale

In this cross-sectional study, I explored the relationship among the moderating variable KIPP model's approach to school climate, the independent variable of developmental assets as exhibited by students, and the dependent variable of their respective academic success at KIPP Aspire and Camino charter schools. I assessed school climate by administering the Search Institute's CGPL surveys for staff and students to measure perceptions of KIPP school climate. The CGPL surveys measured school climate for both students and staff members in the areas of relationships, organizational attributes, and personal development (Search Institute, 2006). I measured developmental assets using the Search Institute's DAP survey for students to identify 40

perceived assets, specifically 32 internal and 26 external assets (Search Institute, 2005). Academic success was evaluated via reported overall GPA in core academic classes (i.e., math, science, English language arts, and social studies), released Texas state assessments in core subjects available at the time of research, and student attendance records. I conducted a multiple regression analysis using SPSS software to examine how school climate (as perceived by teachers and students) moderates the relationship between student developmental assets (including the amount and type) and academic success among Hispanic students. Using the positive youth development theory to better understand the social constructs and relationships influencing student academic success, I attempted to respond to three specific research questions and subsequent hypotheses:

1.   Does school climate as perceived by Hispanic students moderate the relationship between perceived developmental assets and academic success?

Ho$_1$: There is no statistically significant moderating relationship between school climate as perceived by Hispanic students and the perceived developmental assets on academic success.

Ha$_1$: There is a statistically significant moderating relationship between school climate as perceived by Hispanic students and the perceived developmental assets on academic success.

2. Does school climate as perceived by school staff moderate the relationship between students' perceived developmental assets and academic success among Hispanic students?

Ho$_2$: There is no statistically significant moderating relationship between school climate as perceived by school staff members and the students' perceived developmental assets on academic success among Hispanic students.

Ha$_2$: There is a statistically significant moderating relationship between school climate as perceived by school staff members and the students' perceived developmental assets on academic success among Hispanic students.

3. Does the strength of the moderating relationship of perceived school climate on perceived developmental assets and academic success differ for male and female Hispanic students?

Ho$_3$: There is no statistically significant difference in the strength of the moderating relationship of perceived developmental assets and academic success for male and female Hispanic students.

Ha$_3$: There is a statistically significant difference in the strength of the moderating relationship of perceived developmental assets and academic success for male and female Hispanic students.

The design choice was consistent with research designs needed to advance knowledge in the discipline because it focused on many of the positive attributes consistently found to improve outcomes among youth (Scales et al., 2004). The study was limited to completion within the KIPP school year to allow students and staff members to complete the surveys in an efficient and timely manner. School holidays and extended breaks in the summer, winter, and spring limited the availability of students and staff members to participate in the study. State assessments, benchmarks, and other academic

obligations also superseded participation in the study during the school year for staff

members and students. Completion of surveys was arranged at a feasible nonacademic

time based on the KIPP school academic calendar and at the residing principal's

discretion. Resource constraints included the limited number of staff members and the

smaller population of students attending KIPP charter schools when compared with larger

public school student enrollment and staff members employed.

Methodology

Population

The target population included both students and staff members attending a KIPP

Aspire charter school in Texas. At the outset of the study, I planned to recruit 78 staff

members, including teachers, administrators, and support staff. The target population size

for staff members was reduced to a minimum of 45 due to a limited amount of staff

members available to participate in the study. Both staff members and students were

invited to participate from both KIP Aspire and KIPP Camino middle schools. The target

population size for Hispanic students was 78 participants, currently enrolled in grades 6

through 8. Sample numbers for each group, both students and staff members, included a

5% attrition rate adjustment.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

A convenience sampling strategy of KIPP Academy charter school students was

used to recruit student participation from more than 400 attending students. However, due

to low numbers of employed staff members at the KIPP Academy charter school, all staff

members were invited to participate in the study from two KIPP San Antonio middle

schools, KIPP Aspire and KIPP Camino. Permission to conduct the study, including survey completion and access to academic and attendance data was achieved through collaboration with school administrative personnel, namely the school principal.

The sampling frame for inclusion for students encompassed (a) Hispanic ethnicity, (b) enrolled in KIPP Aspire and Camino charter schools, (c) at least 11 years of age, and (d) attending grades 6 through 8. Students not meeting this set criteria for inclusion in the study were excluded from participation. The sampling frame for inclusion regarding staff members included all current employees on campus at KIPP Aspire and Camino charter schools. All former staff members or individuals not employed by KIPP were excluded.

Power Analysis and Sample Size Using G*Power 3.1

The appropriate sample size was determined through the utilization of the G*Power 3.1 program. A linear multiple regression: fixed model, single regression coefficient *t* test with a specification of an A priori: Compute required sample size was completed to determine the appropriate sample size for both students and staff members, as separate participating groups, in the proposed study. Guiding the analysis was a medium effect size of $f^2 = 0.15$, a power of 0.95, and an alpha value of 0.05 for student participants (See Table 1) and a medium effect size of $f^2 = 0.15$, a power of 0.80, and an alpha value of 0.05 for KIPP staff members. Effect size, alpha level, and power level chosen were considered adequate for the proposed study, based upon the standard size and levels used within the realm of behavioral science research (Cohen, Cohen, West & Aiken, 2003).

Table 1

Power Analysis and Sample size for Students via G*Power 3.1

Input		Output	
Tail	1	Noncentrality parameter δ	3.3316662
Effect size	0.15	Critical t	1.6665997
α err prob	0.05	Denominator *df*	71
Power (1-β err prob)	0.95	Total sample size	74
Number of predictors	2	Actual power	0.9510185

Note. Sample numbers were increased by 5% to account for an attrition rate adjustment in

both staff and student participant groups.

Table 2

Power Analysis and Sample size for Staff via G*Power 3.1

Input		Output	
Tail	1	Noncentrality parameter δ	2.5296850
Effect Size	0.15	Critical t	1.6838510
α err prob	0.05	Denominator df	40
Power (1-β err prob)	0.80	Total sample size	43
Number of Predictors	2	Actual power	0.8027523

Note. Sample numbers were increased by 5% to account for an attrition rate adjustment in

both staff and student participant groups.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Recruitment. Students and staff members were recruited from KIPP Aspire and Camino charter schools located in Texas to participate in the proposed research study. Informed consent and assent letters were distributed to students, their parents, and staff members inviting them to participate in the study. Students completed assent forms for their participation in the study and parents completed appropriate consent forms. Staff members were provided with an informed consent form but participated anonymously. Specific demographic information was collected from participants, including age, ethnicity, grade level, sex, and birth date. Information collected will continue to be kept confidential and only used for the purpose of this study. Information was not collected before consent and assent forms were signed for student participants. Staff members were not asked to provide this information. Age, ethnicity, grade level, and sex, were requested as part of the developmental assets survey.

Participation. Students eligible to participate were required to be enrolled in school grades from sixth grade through eighth grade and be at least 11 years of age. The focus was on the Hispanic student population attending KIPP Aspire and Camino charter schools in San Antonio, Texas. However, the diversity within the Hispanic population is not addressed in this study. KIPP staff members included administration, teachers, and support staff members to gain a holistic understanding of the perceived school climate within the charter school. All staff members were invited to participate in the research study, with no specific concentration on ethnicity, because all KIPP staff are trained on KIPP school model principles which are socioculturally appropriate for Hispanic students

and work together to promote a unified KIPP school culture (Woodworth, David, Guha, Lopez-Torkos, & Wang, 2008).

      Data Collection. Students were invited to complete both the DAP and the student version of CGPL survey before or after school. Both paper surveys took students about 15 minutes to complete separately, and 30 minutes altogether. Students were asked to complete both surveys on the same day; however, the option for the administration of both surveys over the period of two days was made available to accommodate academic instruction and other student activities. Oral administration of both CGPL and DAP surveys was provided for all students, to be respectful to all students and not single students out who have a learning disability or other aspects that cause difficulties with reading independently.

      Staff members were asked to complete only the staff version of the CGPL. An informational presentation of the study was completed during a regularly scheduled staff meeting to inform them about the study. Staff members participated anonymously. Staff members were provided surveys and an anonymous consent form explaining the research study. If they decided to participate, then they returned the completed surveys anonymously into a lock box, kept in a teacher work area, that only the researcher had access to open. Staff members participated anonymously, completing the staff survey on their own time and turning it into a locked box in the teacher work area, at their convenience. The estimated time needed to complete the staff survey was 15 minutes.

      Apart from the surveys used, data measuring student participants' academic success was also collected during the study. Other data collected included student

participant's overall GPA on the most recent report card, attendance for the present school year (2013–2014), and available STAAR assessment scores for math, science, and language arts for the present school year (2013–2014), which were reviewed to determine student success. Extraction of essential data was limited to students who participated in the study. Access and retrieval of password protected data was completed under the supervision of the school principal or appropriate school personnel.

Initially, I attained a signed Letter of Cooperation from KIPP's CEO Mark Larson and permission from the Search Institute to use both DAP Surveys and CGPL (staff and student) surveys in preparation for collecting data and IRB approval. After IRB approval (number 01-24-14-0139963), two days were set aside to present the study to both KIPP staff members and students at KIPP Aspire and Camino schools. Staff members were provided information about the research study in a regularly scheduled staff meeting. Staff members were given Anonymous Consent forms at both KIPP Aspire and Camino middle schools along with the staff survey CGPL attached. Instructions on how to contact the researcher was provided in case they had questions or needed further clarification about the research study. Also included were steps to complete the CGPL staff survey and information on how to turn completed surveys. Staff members were given the opportunity to complete the surveys at their convenience, when and where they chose to, and responses were to remain anonymous. If staff members decided to participate, they were to turn the anonymously completed surveys into a lock box provided in the teacher lounge that only I, the researcher, had access to open.

Students were introduced to the research study in their homerooms/advisory room. Parent consent forms and assent forms, were sent home at the same time with students (grades 6–8) via their noninstructional homeroom/advisory time. Both forms sent home were designed to be self-explanatory, providing parents and students with an opportunity to self-select, in private, if their child was participating in the study. My phone number was listed on the parent consent and assent forms in case there were questions that need to be addressed about the research study by parents or students. A locked drop box was made available in the students' homeroom/advisory class to return signed consent forms. Only I had access to open and retrieve the forms turned in by students.

Two return trips were made to the schools (both Aspire and Camino) to gather consent and assent forms from lock boxes set aside for their collection. Once permission forms were collected, the timeframe for actual data collection for surveys consisted of a small portion of two school days, split between the two respective campuses Camino and Aspire to collect student and staff data. No data was collected before signed consent and assent forms were returned and reviewed for completion. Student surveys were completed in their homeroom/advisory, during non-instructional time. As per IRB expectations, oral administration of both student surveys CGPL and the DAP was provided whole group, to accommodate to a variety of learning disabilities and reading difficulties without singling students out individually during the completion process.

Students and staff members were not asked to provide any form of identification numbers to assure their privacy. Each student was provided with a specific participation

number to link the academic grades, attendance and state assessments with student surveys. Identifying information was removed to protect the privacy of participants. The randomly assigned research participation numbers were shared with the Search Institute lieu of identifying information to protect participant privacy. As previously mentioned, staff members completed the surveys anonymously.

Student attendance information, final report card grades, and state assessment scores were collected after students were officially out of school (late June), after grades were finalized and state assessment scores were received by the participating schools. Data were obtained via the KIPP administrators at Aspire and Camino schools. Requested data was printed out and provided to me in a sealed envelope from each of the two campuses. Specific data collected included report card grades in core classes (i.e., math, science, language arts, social studies), attendance records of absences throughout the school year, and Texas state 2013–2014 school year assessment results for participating students (including math and language arts).

Lock boxes remained at the participating schools until the end of the school year (late June) to allow for staff members to deposit completed staff CGPL surveys. Electronic data was kept safe via password protection and hardcopies of data were kept in a filing cabinet under lock and key for participant privacy and protection. All files will be destroyed after 5 years, as per IRB expectations. Finally, upon acceptance of the final proposal, a one- to two-page summary of research results handout will be made available to be sent home with families and staff members connected with KIPP Aspire and Camino middle schools.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

CGPL surveys. The surveys were created by a variety of Search Institute staff members over several years including writing, revising, piloting and field testing the surveys (Search Institute, 2006). The surveys are designed to measure the psychosocial and environmental experience within the school by both staff members and students (Search Institute, 2006). Student surveys measure 11 dimensions of school climate and staff surveys measure 17 dimensions (Table 2) in the areas of relationships (including a caring and fair staff and parental support and achievement values), organizational attributes (including student voice, safety, classroom order, academic expectations, and peer academic influence), and personal development (sense of belonging, motivation, and academic self-efficacy) as the final category (Search Institute, 2006).

Table 3

Definitions of the Dimensions of Positive School Learning Climate

Categories	School climate dimensions	Definitions
Relationships	Caring and fair staff parental support and achievement values	The intrapersonal dynamics between students and staff, and between students and parents.
Organizational attributes		School policies and practices, and the structural organization of the school.
	Student voice	Students participate as valued contributors to the school community and its decisions
	Safety	Students feel physically safe and report that bullying is both unusual and responded to by staff and students when it occurs.
	Classroom order	The classroom environment is characterized by respect and minimal distractions or interruptions.
	Academic expectations	Doing well academically is an important value of the school culture.
	Peer academic influence	Friends and other students support the importance of academic achievement.
	Active learning	Students are actively engaged in learning. The elements in a school that foster personal connections, competence, and confidence.
Personal development	Sense of belonging (O)	Students feel connection to and membership in the school community.
	Motivation (O)	Students have the desire to succeed academically.
	Academic self-efficacy (O)	Students believe that they are able to succeed academically if they try.

Note. *(O)* indicates that this is an outcome of positive school climate as well as a categorical dimension of it. From *Search Institute's Creating a Great Place to Learn Survey: A Survey of School Climate Technical Manual Staff Survey Student Survey,* by Search Institute, p. 16. Reprinted with permission.

The school learning climate dimensions are aligned with developmental assets categories (Table 3); however, CGPL surveys are not designed to measure developmental assets (Search Institute, 2006).

Table 4

Alignment of Developmental Asset Categories and School Learning Climate Dimensions

Developmental asset categories	School learning climate dimensions
Support	Caring and fair staff
	Classroom order
	Parental support and achievement values
	Sense of belonging
Empowerment	Caring and fair staff
	Safety
	Student voice
	Sense of belonging
Boundaries and expectations	Caring and fair staff
	Classroom order
	Safety
	Peer academic influence
	Parental support and achievement values
	Academic expectations
	Sense of belonging
Constructive use of time	Sense of belonging
Commitment to learning	Active learning
	Motivation
	Sense of belonging
Positive values	Caring and fair staff
	Parental support and achievement values
Social competencies	Safety
	Classroom order
	Sense of belonging
Positive identity	Motivation
	Academic self-efficacy

Note. From Search Institute's Creating a Great Place to Learn Survey: A Survey of School Climate Technical Manual Staff Survey Student Survey. By Search Institute, p. 17. Reprinted with permission.

There are two surveys that complete the CGPL survey of school climate. The first is geared towards the students experience and the second was created to capture staff perceptions within the school. Although the amount of time to complete the surveys are not provided, an estimated amount of time needed to complete the surveys would be approximately 50 minutes, including instruction. Perspectives from both students and staff members was important because it allowed for a better understanding of the school climate experience and how it may serve as moderator between building developmental assets and school success. Moreover, students and staff members both have a bidirectional relationship within the social construct of the school climate and it was important to determine how they perceive the school environment.

A 4-year, four-phase project was competed involving schools in the United States to develop the surveys (Search Institute, 2006). A total of 6,326 students and 4,382 staff members participated from a variety of schools both public and private. Field tests followed revisions to the surveys with a sample size of 2,140 students in grades 6th through 12th and 318 staff members connected to middle and high schools in Alhambra, California (Search Institute, 2006). The results included a majority of high school students (78%) who were mainly of Hispanic or Asian origin of which over 33% were identified as English as a second language students (Search Institute, 2006).

Both surveys have proven to have good reliability and validity values. The student survey's internal consistency reliability was reported as above .70, with a range of .73 to .88 (Search Institute, 2006). The staff survey's internal consistency reliability was reported as above .70, again showing good internal reliability (Search Institute, 2006).

The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the staff survey with regard to race, gender, grade(s) taught, and school role among staff members were reported as .70 or more for the pilot test results (Search Institute, 2006). Finally, the student survey also showed good reliability coefficients, all above .70 in relation to gender, race, and grade level. A few exceptions existed where the reliability coefficient was below .70. For example, the dimension of student voice among 10th-grade students who participated in the pilot study was reported as .69. A low reliability coefficient of .62 was reported in the student voice dimension among Asian and Hispanic students and finally the classroom order dimension was reported as .67 among Black students (Search Institute, 2006). This could be due, in part, to the low participation of Asian and Black students in the pilot study (Search Institute, 2006). Finally, both surveys have acceptable test-retest reliability rates (Search Institute, 2006).

DAP survey. The 58-item self report questionnaire, the DAP survey, was developed by the Search Institute staff to the amount and type of positive attributes a perceived by individuals or groups of individuals (Search Institute, 2005). It accommodates students that are 11 to 18 years and are in 6th to 12th grade (Search Institute, 2006). The DAP is comprehensive in that it measures the existence and intensity of 40 developmental assets (Table 4), 26 external assets, and 32 internal assets, in eight asset categories (i.e., support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity) in the lives of youth and can also identify the context in which they

are connected to (i.e., personal, social, family, school, and community) when scored (Search Institute, 2006).

The DAP is essential to the proposed study to determine which assets are being moderated by school climate and are significant to student academic success. Moreover, it is appropriate for the specific age group attending KIPP Aspire and Camino charter schools, Grades 6 through 8. DAP reliability was tested to determine if scales were in an acceptable range. A field trial including 1,300 students, attending both middle and high school, was used in determining internal consistencies. Cronbach's alpha was reported at an average of .81 and .88 when scales were viewed from the asset and context categories, respectively (Search Institute, 2006). Cronbach's alpha for internal, external, and cumulative assets are reported as .93, .95 and .97, respectively. The lowest scored scale was .59 for constructive use of time (Search Institute, 2006). A second field trial was completed utilizing a middle school sample size of 1,133 students which yielded much the same in Cronbach's alpha levels, between .77 and .94, and again showing a low internal consistency in only one scale, constructive use of time (Search Institute, 2006). Test-retest reliabilities are reported as .86, .84, .87 and .79 for internal assets, external assets, total assets, and eight asset categories (Search Institute, 2006).

DAP validity was measured via a comparison analysis to the Search Institute's established "attitudes and behaviors" survey on four criteria: (a) the number of assets, (b) differences in means for the number of assets reviewed, (c) differences in means among the number of assets reported by groups as low, fair, good, and excellent, and (d) relationships between assets and risk behaviors, academic performance, and thriving, as

reported by participants (Search Institute, 2006). Correlations between both surveys were shown to be significant and from the perspectives of total asset scores, internal assets, external assets, and asset category scales (Search Institute, 2006). Convergent validity of the positive identity scale was also measured and found to be significant in comparison with Harter's "five-item measure of global self worth" (Harter 1988) and Rosenburgs "Ten-item self esteem scale" (Rosenberg, 1965) as reported by Search Institute (2006).

Developmental assets have been explored in multiple research studies by the Search Institute and other researchers to determine strengths among adolescents across the United States. For example, a comprehensive nationwide study including close to 100,000 middle and high school students, Grades 6-12 completed the "attitudes and behaviors" survey for the 1996-1997 school year (Benson, Scales, Leffert, & Roehlkpatain, 1999; Scales et al., 2004). The results showed there was a lack of developmental assets among students, with the majority experiencing only 18 of the known 40 developmental assets and only 4% of the sample population experiencing 31 assets or above (Benson et al., 1999).

In the 1999-2000 school year, over 217,000 students completed the DAP to determine the amount of assets among existing among youth (Scales et al., 2004). On average, students showed less than 20 assets, indicating an overall deficiency among youth in the United States (Scales et al., 2004). Populations for the first mentioned study were majority White, lacking a diverse representation of youth across the United States. The second study mentioned was geared towards a more diverse population, including 462 Hispanic and African American students (Scales et al., 2004). No reliability or

validity information was included in regards to research studies. The Search Institute

identified the following blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up to

be healthy, caring, and responsible.

Table 5

The Framework of 40 Developmental Assets, With Definitions

External Assets

Support

1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. Positive family communication—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

Empowerment

7. Community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

Boundaries and Expectations

11. Family boundaries—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. School Boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. Positive peer influence—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

Constructive Use of Time

17. Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning

21. Achievement Motivation—Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. School Engagement—Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. Homework—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. Bonding to school—Young person cares about her or his school.
25. Reading for Pleasure—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

Positive Values

26. Caring—Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. Equality and social justice—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. Honesty—Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
30. Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. Restraint—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

Social Competencies

32. Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. Interpersonal Competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. Cultural Competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. Resistance skills—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Positive Identity

37. Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
38. Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. Sense of purpose—Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
40. Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Note. From *Developmental Assets: a Synthesis of the Scientific Research on Adolescent Development* (2nd ed.), by P. Scales & N.

Leffert, 2004, p. 2-4. Reprinted with permission.

Data Analysis Plan

A detailed explanation of the data analysis plan will follow in an effort to answer the research questions and determine the validity of matching hypothesis. A stepwise multiple regression analysis, using Hayes's PROCESS, was conducted in SPSS, version 21.0, to determine the relationship between school climate, developmental assets and academic success variables to answer research questions 1, 2, and 3 (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003; Hayes, 2013). PROCESS is an add-on macro to SPSS created by Andrew F. Hayes to process a variety of simple to complex moderation and mediation and also conditional process analyses (Hayes, 2013). The PROCESS macro was available for download at http://www.afhayes.com/spss-sas-and-mplus-macros-and-code.html and was free of charge.

After the PROCESS tool was installed into SPSS, Model number 1 was selected to run a moderation model analysis. The outcome (dependent) variable, independent variable, and moderating variable were inputted. Within the PROCESS options dialogue box, the following was selected to be included as part of the analysis: (a) OLS/ML confidence intervals, (b) Generate data for plotting, (c) Heteroscedasticity-consistent SEs, and (d) Mean center for products. In the PROCESS conditioning dialogue box, under pick-a-point data, the following was selected to be included in the analysis: (a) mean and +/- 1 standard deviation (SD) from mean and (b) the Johnson-Neyman technique, a follow up analysis to assess further conditional moderation significance regions. Using the mean value +/- 1 SD allowed for an analysis of conditional effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable at low, average, and high levels of the moderator. The

steps were repeated for each analysis completed in the study. A separate path analysis was planned, provided there was need, to explore research question three in greater depth.

There are no specific benefits of using mean over median, however utilizing mean score it is an acceptable method utilized frequently when checking for moderation effects on variables, as documented in current literature and as part of the PROCESS analysis (Hayes, 2013; Field, 2013). Mean centring was utilized to help provide meaningful data and ease in interpreting results, as continuous variables were included in the moderation analyses conducted. Mean centering is an acceptable way to attain and interpret data in a meaningful way (Field, 2013). Moreover, mean centering was offered within the PROCESS analysis of moderating variables and was commonly used when analyzing moderation (Hayes, 2013).

The following is the procedure for stepwise multiple regression analysis using Hayes' PROCESS for research questions:

To answer the first research question, if school climate as perceived by Hispanic students moderates the relationship between perceived developmental assets and academic success, Hayes's PROCESS was used in SPSS. First a mean score of each of the three categorical subgroups in the student CGPL survey (i.e., Relationships, Organizational Attributes, and Personal Development) was calculated using their respective survey questions, as dictated by the Search Institute (see table 3). Next, a mean score of DAP survey questions related to subcategories within the asset view (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and personal identity)

were determined. Student GPA was used to measure student success. Separate analyses were conducted, using state assessment pass, fail, and commended ratings for reading language arts and math as a way to measure student success. Each subcategory of the DAP and CGPL surveys (as described above) were examined in separate PROCESS analyses to determine their individual significance as independent and moderating variables.

The steps used in the PROCESS analysis of research question one are listed here. Step one, the proposed independent variable (student developmental assets, as separate subcategories in the asset view and context view) that may have a relationship with the dependent variable (student academic success) was entered. Step two, the suspected independent variable (KIPP model's approach to school climate: student perspective, as separate subcategories including relational, organizational, and personal development) that may be moderating the relationship between the independent variable (student developmental assets) and the dependent variable (student academic success) were entered. If the independent variable (KIPP model's approach to school climate) was significant and accounted for less variance than the independent variable (student developmental assets), then a moderating influence occurred. If the independent variable (KIPP Model's approach to school climate: student perspective) was significant and accounted for more variance than the independent variable (student developmental assets), a mediating influence occurred.

To answer research question two, regarding school climate as perceived by school staff and its moderating effects on the relationship between students' perceived

developmental assets and academic success among Hispanic students, Hayes's

PROCESS was used in SPSS. First a mean score of each of the three categorical

subgroups in the staff CGPL survey (i.e., relationships, organizational attributes, and

personal development) was calculated using their respective survey questions, as dictated

by the Search Institute (see Table 3). Next, a mean score of DAP survey questions related

to subcategories within both the asset view (support, empowerment, boundaries and

expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social

competencies, and personal identity) of student responses were calculated (see table 4).

Student GPA was used to measure student success. Separate analyses was conducted,

using state assessment pass, fail, and commended ratings for reading language arts and

math as a way to measure student success. Each subcategory of the DAP and CGPL

surveys (as described above) were examined in separate PROCESS analyses to determine

their individual significance as independent and moderating variables.

The following is the list of steps used in the PROCESS analysis of research

question two. Step one, the proposed independent variable (student developmental assets,

as separate subcategories in the asset view and context view) that may have a relationship

with the dependent variable (student academic success) was entered. Step two, the

suspected independent variable (KIPP model's approach to school climate: staff

perspective, as separate subcategories including relational, organizational, and personal

development) that may be moderating the relationship between the independent variable

(student developmental assets) and the dependent variable (student academic success)

was entered. If the independent variable (KIPP model's approach to school climate) was

significant and accounted for less variance than the independent variable (student developmental assets), then a moderating influence occurred. If the independent variable (KIPP model's approach to school climate: staff perspective) was significant and accounted for more variance than the independent variable (student developmental assets), a mediating influence occurred.

To answer the third research question to determine if the strength of the moderating relationship of perceived school climate on perceived developmental assets and academic success differed for male and female Hispanic students, students were separated into groups based on gender and analyzed separately using Andrew F. Hayes' PROCESS in SPSS. The same steps outlined to answer research question one were executed in the analysis of research question three:

First a mean score for of each of the three categorical subgroups in the student CGPL survey (i.e., relationships, organizational attributes, and personal development) was calculated using their respective survey questions, as dictated by the Search Institute (see Table 3). Next, a mean score of DAP survey questions related to subcategories within the asset view (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and personal identity) of student responses was calculated (see table 4). Student GPA was used to measure student success. Separate analyses were conducted, using state assessment pass, fail, and commended ratings for reading language arts and math as a way to measure student success. Each subcategory of the DAP and CGPL surveys (as described above)

were examined in separate PROCESS analyses to determine their individual significance as independent and moderating variables.

The PROCESS steps for analysis of research question three are listed below. Step one, the proposed independent variable (student developmental assets, as separate subcategories in the asset view and context view) that may have a relationship with the dependent variable (Student Academic Success) was entered. Step 2, the suspected independent variable (KIPP model's approach to school climate: student perspective, as separate subcategories including relational, organizational, and personal development) that may be moderating the relationship between the independent variable (student developmental assets) and the dependent variable (student academic success) were entered. If the independent variable (KIPP model's approach to school climate) was significant and accounted for less variance than the independent variable (student developmental assets), then a moderating influence occurred. If the independent variable (KIPP Model's approach to school climate: student perspective) was significant and accounted for more variance than the independent variable (student developmental assets), a mediating influence occurred. Finally, for research question three, a path analysis was planned, if needed, to determine moderating effects of the variable (KIPP model's approach to school climate: student perspective) in addition to a stepwise multiple regression analysis, using PROCESS, to determine differences among male and female students' perceptions. Table 6 is adapted from DAP *User Manual* (The Search Institute, 2005, p. 57). Reprinted with permission. Table Copyright 1997 by Search Institute

Table 6

Item Mapping Onto the Category and Context Scales

DAP Items	Asset Scale	Context Scale
13. I seek advice from my parents.	Support	Family
47. I have parent(s) who try to help me succeed.	Support	Family
48. I have good neighbors who care about me.	Support	Community
49. I have a school that cares about kids and encourages them.	Support	School
51. I have support from adults other than my parents.	Support	Social
54. I have a family that gives me love and support.	Support	Family
56. I have parents who are good at talking with me about things.	Support	Family
17. I feel safe and secure at home.	Empowerment	Family
21. I feel valued and appreciated by others.	Empowerment	Social
25. I feel safe at school.	Empowerment	School
29. I am included in family talks and decisions.	Empowerment	Family
36. I am given useful roles and responsibilities.	Empowerment	Community
46. I have a safe neighborhood.	Empowerment	Community
43. I have friends who set good examples for me.	Boundaries & exp.	School
44. I have a school that give students clear rules.	Boundaries & exp.	School
45. I have adults who are good role models for me.	Boundaries & exp.	Social
50. I have teachers who urge me to develop and achieve.	Boundaries & exp.	School
52. I have a family that provides me with clear rules.	Boundaries & exp.	Family
53. I have a parent(s) who urge me to do well in school.	Boundaries & exp.	Family
55. I have neighbors who help watch out for me.	Boundaries & exp.	Community
57. I have a school that enforces rules fairly.	Boundaries & exp.	School
58. I have a family that knows where I am and what I am doing.	Boundaries & exp.	Family
31. I am involved in a religious group or activity.	Const. use of time	Community
34. I am involved in a sport, club, or other group.	Const. use of time	Community
40. I am involved in creative things such as music, theater, or art.	Const. use of time	Community
42. I am spending quality time at home with my parent(s).	Const. use of time	Family
5. I enjoy reading or being read to.	Commit. to learning	Personal
7. I care about school.	Commit. to learning	School
8. I do my homework.	Commit. to learning	School
10. I enjoy learning.	Commit. to learning	School
26. I am actively engaged in learning new things.	Commit. to learning	School
28. I am encouraged to try new things that might be good for me.	Commit. to learning	School
38. I am eager to do well in school and other activities.	Commit. to learning	School
1. I stand up for what I believe in.	Positive values	Personal
9. I stay away from tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.	Positive values	Personal
16. I think it's important to help other people.	Positive values	Social
22. I take responsibility for what I do.	Positive values	Personal
23. I tell the truth even when it is not easy.	Positive values	Personal
30. I am helping to make my community a better place.	Positive values	Community
32. I am developing good health habits.	Positive values	Personal
33. I am encouraged to help others.	Positive values	Social
35. I am trying to help solve social problems.	Positive values	Community
37. I am developing respect for other people.	Positive values	Community
41. I am serving others in my community.	Positive values	Community
4. I avoid things that are dangerous or unhealthy.	Social competencies	Personal
6. I build friendships with other people.	Social competencies	Social
11. I express feelings in proper ways.	Social competencies	Social
18. I plan ahead and make good choices.	Social competencies	Personal
19. I resist bad influences.	Social competencies	Social
20. I resolve conflicts without anyone getting hurt.	Social competencies	Social
24. I accept people who are different from me.	Social competencies	Community
39. I am sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.	Social competencies	Social
2. I feel in control of my life and future.	Personal identity	Personal
3. I feel good about myself.	Personal identity	Personal
12. I feel good about my future.	Personal identity	Personal
14. I deal with frustration in positive ways.	Personal identity	Personal
15. I overcome challenges in positive ways.	Personal identity	Social
27. I am developing a sense of purpose in my life	Personal identity	Personal

Threats to Validity

A threat to internal validity was multicollinearity. When this occurs, the likelihood of misinterpreting results increases. Multicolliniarity is addressed by centering independent variables (IVs) when performing regression analysis or combining them when constructs prove to be very similar (Cohen et al., 2003). When using PROCESS, variables were mean centered (plus/minus one standard deviation from the mean) automatically when the option was checked as part of the analysis (Field, 2013). Moreover, heteroscedasticity was also checked as part of the analysis to assure validity of the analysis (Field, 2013).

A threat to external validity was missing data among the completed surveys. A conscientious effort was made on the part of the researcher to ensure all surveys were completely filled out before collection; however participants were not mandated to complete all sections and some staff and students choose not to answer a survey question or questions, resulting in incomplete data collection. When parts of the data were missing, the suggested and respective guidelines set forth by the Search Institute for each survey was adhered to and scores will were adjusted or omitted accordingly (Search Institute, 2006; 2005). No threats to construction or statistical conclusion validity were detected (Search Institute, 2006; 2005).

Ethical Procedures

Precautions were taken to ensure privacy and confidentiality of staff and students participating in the study. Responses to survey questions and data extracted from school databases under the supervision of appropriate school personnel were and will continue to

be held in strict confidence by the researcher. Data collected were coded and no identifying personal information was connected with survey responses or extracted data regarding student course grades, assessment scores, or attendance records. Coded and collected data were saved on one computer with security ensured through the use of a password and limited accessibility to me and the Search Institute only. Hard copies of files were stored in a locked filing cabinet over the course of the study and once completed will be immediately destroyed thereafter via paper shredding.

Proper approvals from both KIPP charter schools (Camino and Aspire), Walden University's Institutional Review Board, and respective informed assent and consent forms from participants were received. Staff members gave consent and students gave assent to participate. Parental consent was attained prior to the study to ensure ethical considerations were met.

Students were given a brief description of the study during homeroom time and the significance of the parental consent and student assent forms they each were given. assent and consent forms were sent home with students. They were informed of the schedule for handing out the parent consent forms via the homeroom class and also that no instructional time would be lost in the process of collecting the parental consent forms or data for the study. Students were asked to bring back the signed parental consent form and student assent forms and place them in the researcher provided locked box, located on the teacher's desk in their homeroom, if they would like to participate. Only the researcher had access to the forms in the locked box.

For the following approved and designated 3 days, a few minutes was needed during noninstructional homeroom time to ask students to deposit the returned form into an unmarked large envelope located in the back of their homeroom classroom, without revealing who did or did not turn in a signed parental consent form. Participants were reminded that participation was voluntary. They were reminded of their right to refuse participation and withdraw from the study should they have chosen to do so at any point during the study. No conflict of interest existed in part of the researcher in completing the study.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative, cross-sectional study was to explore how school climate, as perceived by KIPP Aspire and Camino students and staff, moderates the relationship of developmental asset acquisition and academic resilience among Hispanic students who are at high risk for academic failure. The study included students (grades 6–8) and staff at KIPP Aspire and Camino charter school in San Antonio, Texas. The proposed study involved determining the moderating relationship of school climate on Hispanic students and their academic success. I will discuss actual data collection experiences and results in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative, cross-sectional study was to explore how school climate, as perceived by KIPP Aspire and Camino students and staff, moderates the relationship of developmental asset acquisition and academic success among Hispanic students who are at high risk for academic failure. The study included students (grades 6–8) and staff at KIPP Aspire and Camino charter schools in San Antonio, Texas. I investigated how the variable of the KIPP model's approach to school climate served in a moderating capacity to regulate the independent variable of student developmental assets and the dependent variable of student academic success.

I assessed school climate by administering the Search Institute's CGPL surveys for staff and students to measure perceptions of KIPP school climate. The CGPL surveys measured school climate for both students and staff members in the areas of relationships, organizational attributes, and personal development (Search Institute, 2006). I measured Developmental assets using the Search Institute's DAP survey for students to identify 40 perceived assets, specifically 32 internal and 26 external assets (Search Institute, 2005). I measured academic success in three outlets: (a) a snapshot of participating students' overall GPA in core subject classes (i.e., math, science, and English language arts), (b) released Texas state assessments in core subjects, and (c) student attendance records.

I collected data using Search Institute surveys CGPL and the DAP to attempt to answer three main research questions and related hypothesis:

1. Does school climate as perceived by Hispanic students moderate the relationship between perceived developmental assets and academic success?

*H*o$_1$*:* There is no significant moderating relationship between school climate as perceived by Hispanic students and the perceived developmental assets on academic success.

*H*a$_1$: There is a significant moderating relationship between school climate as perceived by Hispanic students and the perceived developmental assets on academic success.

2. Does school climate as perceived by school staff moderate the relationship between students' perceived developmental assets and academic success among Hispanic students?

*H*o$_2$ There is no significant moderating relationship between school climate as perceived by school staff members and the students' perceived developmental assets on academic success among Hispanic students.

*H*a$_2$: There is a significant moderating relationship between school climate as perceived by school staff members and the students' perceived developmental assets on academic success among Hispanic students.

3. Does the strength of the moderating relationship of perceived school climate on perceived developmental assets and academic success differ for male and female Hispanic students?

Ho$_3$ There is no statistically significant difference in the strength of the moderating relationship of perceived developmental assets and academic success for male and female Hispanic students.

Ha$_3$: There is a statistically significant difference in the strength of the moderating relationship of perceived developmental assets and academic success for male and female Hispanic students.

In this chapter, I summarize the analysis completed using SPSS software and the resulting acception or rejection of the null and alternative hypotheses. I begin the chapter with the process of collecting data, including the timeframe for data collection, recruitment, and response rates. I then present a review of sample demographics, followed by the results of the analysis for each research question. Multiple tables presenting pertinent information and simple slopes graphs are included for increased readability and easier understanding of results. I conclude by summarizing summarization the results

Data Collection

Initially, I invited a total of 100 students from both Camino and Aspire to participate. A total of 83 completed student assent and parent consent forms were returned from KIPP Camino and Aspire. Overall, the study was focused on Hispanic students; however, I invited all students to participate, regardless of race/ethnicity. Students who did participate included 66 students self-identified as Hispanic or Latino/Latina, 12 as Hispanic and other, four as White, and one as Black or African American. Due to the large majority of the students who participated self-identified as

Hispanic or Latino/Latina, and that the other ethnic/race groups were underrepresented in the sample, only the 78 Hispanic or Latino/Latina student surveys were selected to include in the final analysis, including participants who identified themselves as Hispanic and Hispanic and other. The amount of students needed to achieve the medium effect size of $f^2 = 0.15$, a power of 0.95, and an alpha value of 0.05 for student participants was 74 and the final number of participants met that margin. While the study was open to all students in Grades 6 through 8, only students in Grades 7 and 8 chose to participate.

Of the 100 anonymous staff consent forms and surveys provided to KIPP Camino and Aspire staff members, only 35 altogether were returned. Of the staff CGPL surveys, several were incomplete and had to be omitted. Due to the IRB expectation of having the staff surveys be anonymous, specific student performance in classes and on state assessments could not be directly linked to staff members completing the surveys, which in turn limited the type of analysis that could be performed in SPSS. Moreover, the number of staff surveys returned was below the minimum of 42 participants needed to have a medium effect size of $f^2 = 0.15$, a power of 0.80, and an alpha value of 0.05, as determined by the power analysis completed in the G*Power 3.1 program. Therefore an analysis to attempt to answer research question two could not be performed.

Sample Demographics

The following information concerning student participation characteristics were collected via specific demographic questions included in the student surveys CGPL and DAP (see Table 7). Staff members were not asked to provide demographic information and it is not included in the table due to their anonymous participation in the study.

Table 7

Student Participant Characteristics

Variable	F	M	(SD)	N
Age				83
12	6			
13	45			
14	30			
15	2			
Gender				83
Male	27			
Female	56			
Grade level				83
7th	42			
8th	41			
Race/ethnicity				83
Hispanic or Latino/Latina	66			
Hispanic and Other	12			
White	4			
Black or African American	1			
English is main language used at home				83
Yes	48			
No	35			
School absences		4.19	3.93	83
Overall GPA in core classes (excluding electives and physical education)		2.92	.69	83
Achievement level on math STAAR				83
Level 1, did not meet expectations	4			
Level 2, met expectations	55			
Level 3, exceeded expectations	24			
Achievement level on reading STAAR				83
Level 1, did not meet expectations	5			
Level 2, met expectations	60			
Level 3, exceeded expectations	18			
Highest grade level mother achieved				83
Completed grade school or less	3			
Some high school	11			
Completed high school	12			
Trade/technical/vocational school	1			
Some college	18			
Completed college	12			
Graduate /professional school after college	10			
Don't know, does not apply	16			
	83			
	35			
Highest grade level father achieved				83
Completed grade school or less	8			
Some high school	14			
Completed high school	17			
Trade/technical/vocational school	3			
Some college	10			
Completed college	10			
Graduate /professional school after college	2			
Don't know, does not apply	19			
	83			
	35			

The research participant sample was representative of the population of interest and proportional to the larger population of attending KIPP students at Aspire and Camino in San Antonio, Texas. The Hispanic student population is now 50.2% in Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2011) but Hispanic student attrition rate of 42% is also the highest in Texas (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010). There is a need to identify successful programs for Hispanic students to avoid a significant increase of student dropouts.

Hispanic students, the majority student population served by KIPP schools in San Antonio have shown to be successful academically when attending KIPP school. By the year 2050, the amount of Hispanic children in the United States will increase to one-third, which adds to the urgency of preventing school failure for Hispanic students (Passel, 2011). The achievement gap may be due to the lack of equal opportunity to excel. At KIPP schools, Hispanic students are successful academically, which may be related to the KIPP school model. Creating a climate of social change that promotes empowering of the Hispanic youth and focuses on building assets in lieu of focusing on deficits may lead to academic success, such as KIPP Hispanic student success.

KIPP students were invited to participate so long as they met the criteria of being at least 11 years of age and an active KIPP student in Grades 6 through 8. Diversity within the Hispanic population was not addressed in this study. While the invitations were not given out to students based on their specific ethnicity or race, the focus of the study was on Hispanic student success attending KIPP for two reasons. KIPP has intentionally created a school climate that supports a collectivist culture, in an attempt to

fit with the collectivist culture experienced in the Hispanic community. The intentional climate is targeted to the Hispanic population of students with the idea being to create a place where Hispanic students are successful in school as a result. That intentional school climate and its impact on its target population was the focus of this study. The majority of students at KIPP schools Camino and Aspire in San Antonio, Texas are Hispanic and only a handful of students are of another ethnicity. The sample size of the non-Hispanic group was not large enough to make meaningful comparisons in terms of analyses.

The KIPP Camino breakdown of race/ethnicity for student population in the 2013–2014 school year included 2% African American, 95% Latino/Hispanic, 0% Asian, 3% White, and 1% Other (KIPP San Antonio, n.d.). Total student body for the 2013–2014 school year was 428 Hispanic students and 22 non-Hispanic students at KIPP Camino. At KIPP Aspire, the breakdown of race/ethnicity in the 2013–2014 school year included 5% African American, 93% Latino/Hispanic, 0% Asian, 2% White, and 0% Other. Total student body for the 2013–2014 school year was 379 Hispanic students and 29 non-Hispanic students (KIPP San Antonio, n.d.).

I collected data on non-Hispanic students; however, the research focus of the interactions between school climate, developmental assets, and academic success was specifically on the population of Hispanic students. The issue of not having enough non-Hispanic students to secure an adequate sample size for comparison was a second concern. The number of non-Hispanic students who chose to participate was small, as representative of the KIPP school population sampled from at Aspire and Camino. The focus of the study therefore remained on Hispanic student success. Due to gender also

being a potential influencer in perceptions of school climate and its moderating influence

on developmental assets and academic success, I also sought to identify the variances in

gender and academic success among Hispanic students attending KIPP Camino and

Aspire middle schools. However, an unbalanced number of male and female students

participated (i.e., 56 female students compared to 27 male students). When dividing the

participating students into two separate groups based on gender, the number of

participants did not meet the minimum needed to achieve the medium effect size of $f^2 =$

0.15, a power of 0.95, and an alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, an analysis to attempt to

answer research question three could not be performed.

Results

Before an analysis was completed to answer the following questions, preliminary

analyses were completed to check for linearity, homoscedasticity, and linearity, and to

identify potential outliers within the sample. A visual inspection of a scatter plot

indicated that the assumption of linearity was met. There was no indication of

multicollinearity, as evidenced by tolerance values falling within normal range, greater

than .1 and VIF values less than 10 (Cohen et al., 2003). Normality was verified via a

visual inspection of Q-Q Plots for variables represented in the study. All were found to be

of normal distribution. One potential outlier was identified among the cases when

examining whether studentized deleted residuals were greater than ± 3 standard

deviations (Cohen et al., 2003). Three additional cases were considered potential outliers

with studentized deleted residuals greater than ± 2 standard deviations.

Further analyses were conducted to determine whether to include or exclude the potential outliers. An inspection of Cook's Distance values was completed to determine if any of the cases were influential, as defined by having values greater than 1. No influential cases were found among the sample. Likewise, when reviewing leverage values of potential outliers, none were substantially different from the rest of the sample. Based on the findings, a decision was made to include potential outliers in the analysis in lieu of excluding them.

Finally, the following are the results of skewness and kurtosis analysis utilizing histograms and Q-Q plots for each variable to determine if the variables were normally distributed.

School Absences were not normally distributed with a positive skewness of 1.257 ($SE = 0.272$) and kurtosis of 1.453 ($SE = 0.538$).
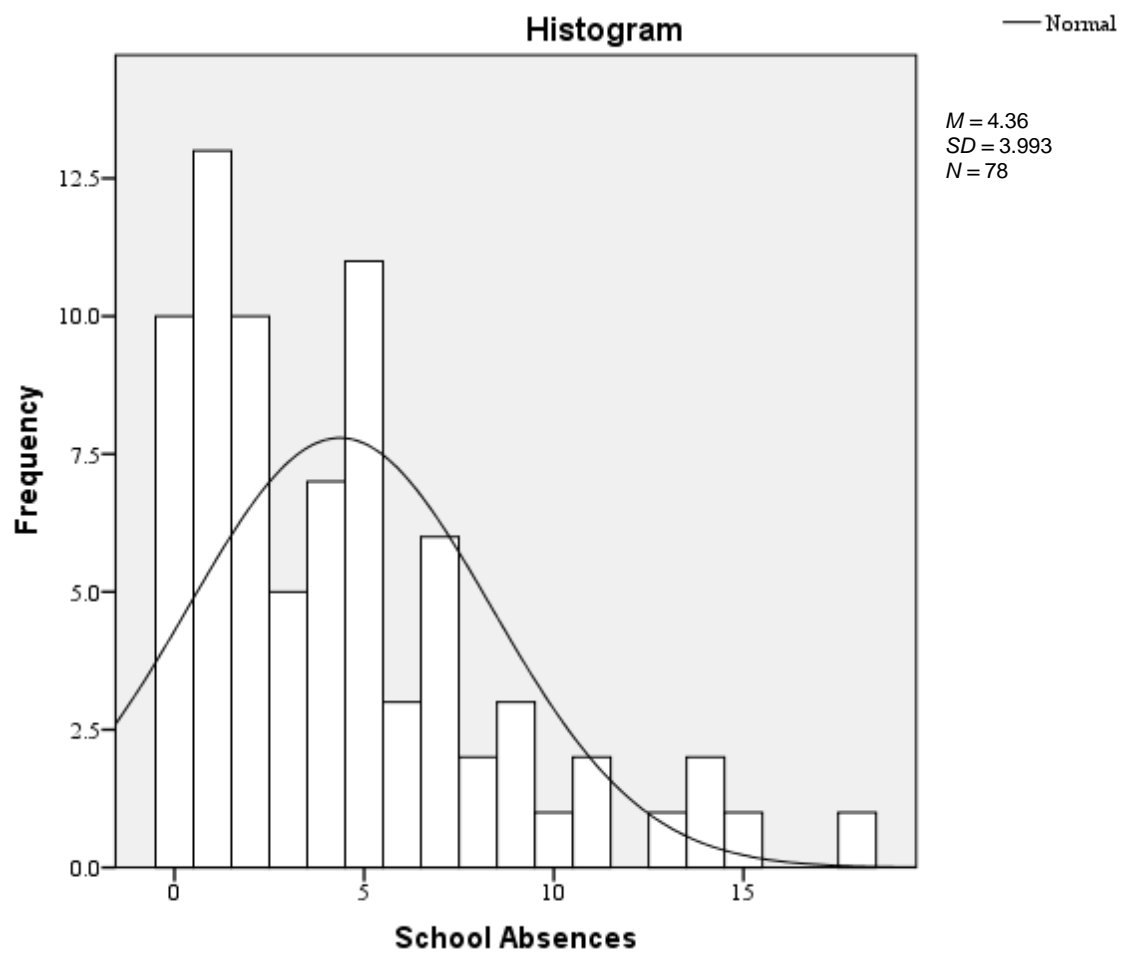
Figure 1. Histogram of School Absences.
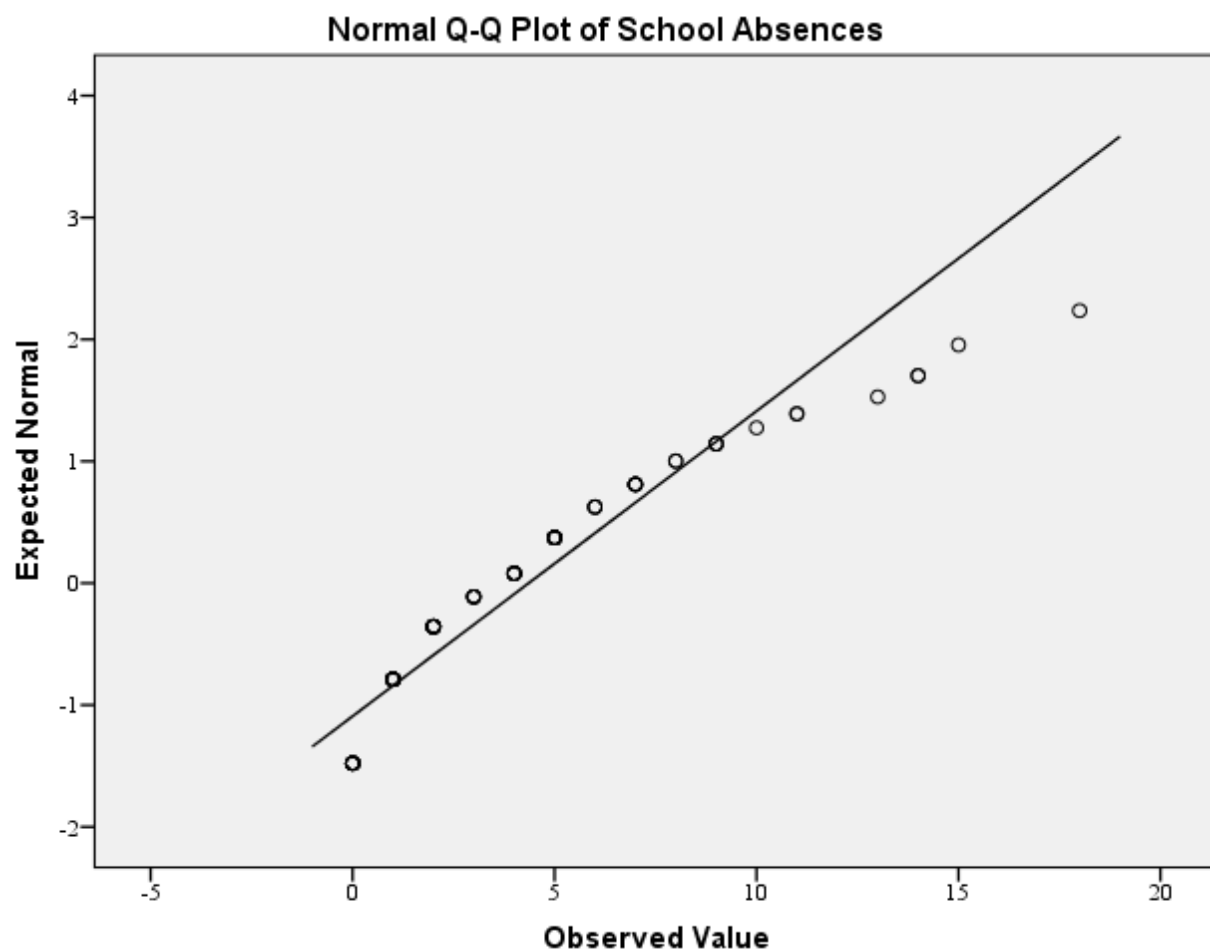
Figure 2. Normal Q-Q Plot of School Absences.

School Absences scores were not normally distributed for males with a slight positive skewness of 1.397 (SE = 0.464) and kurtosis of 2.106 (SE = 0.902) and for females with a slight positive skewness of 1.173 (SE = 0.327) and kurtosis of 1.030 (SE = 0.644).
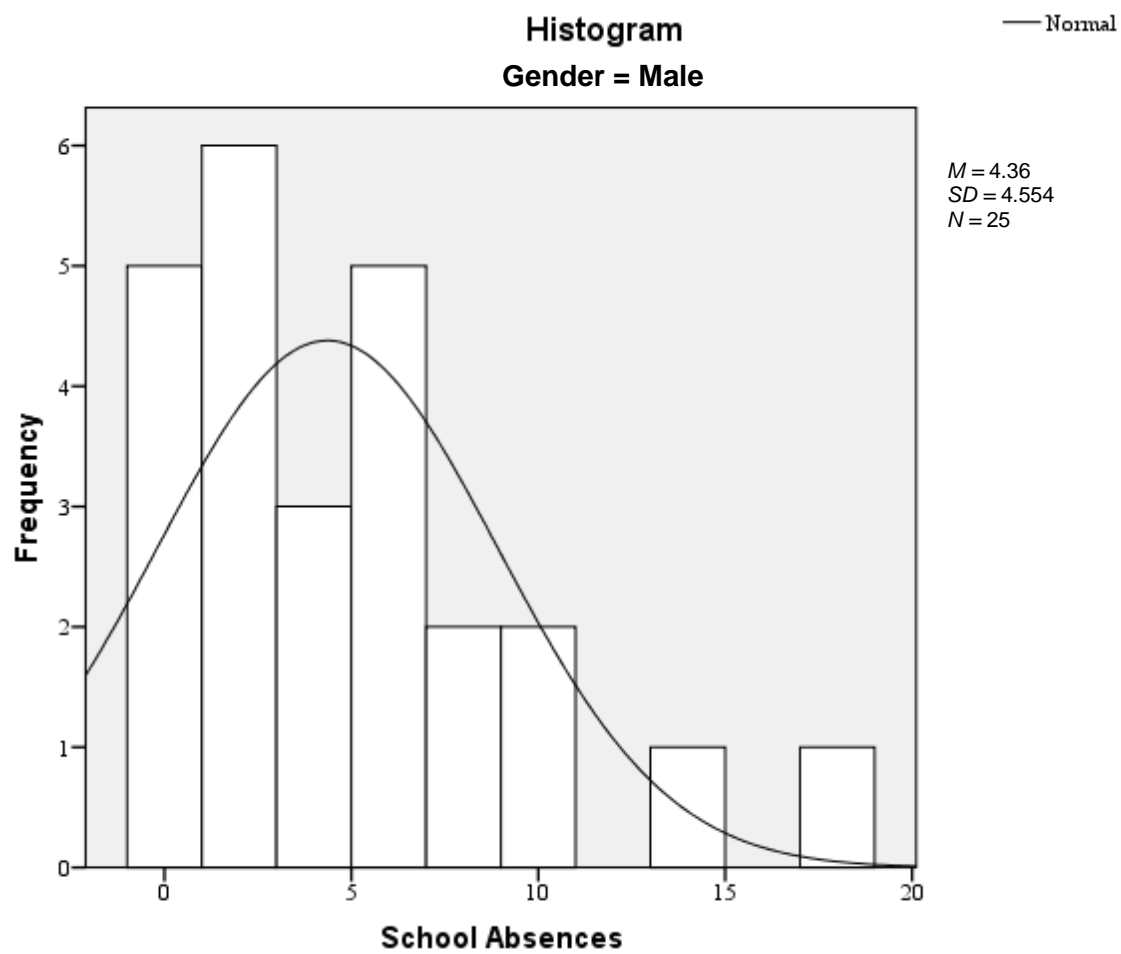
Figure 3. Histogram of School Absences for Male Students.
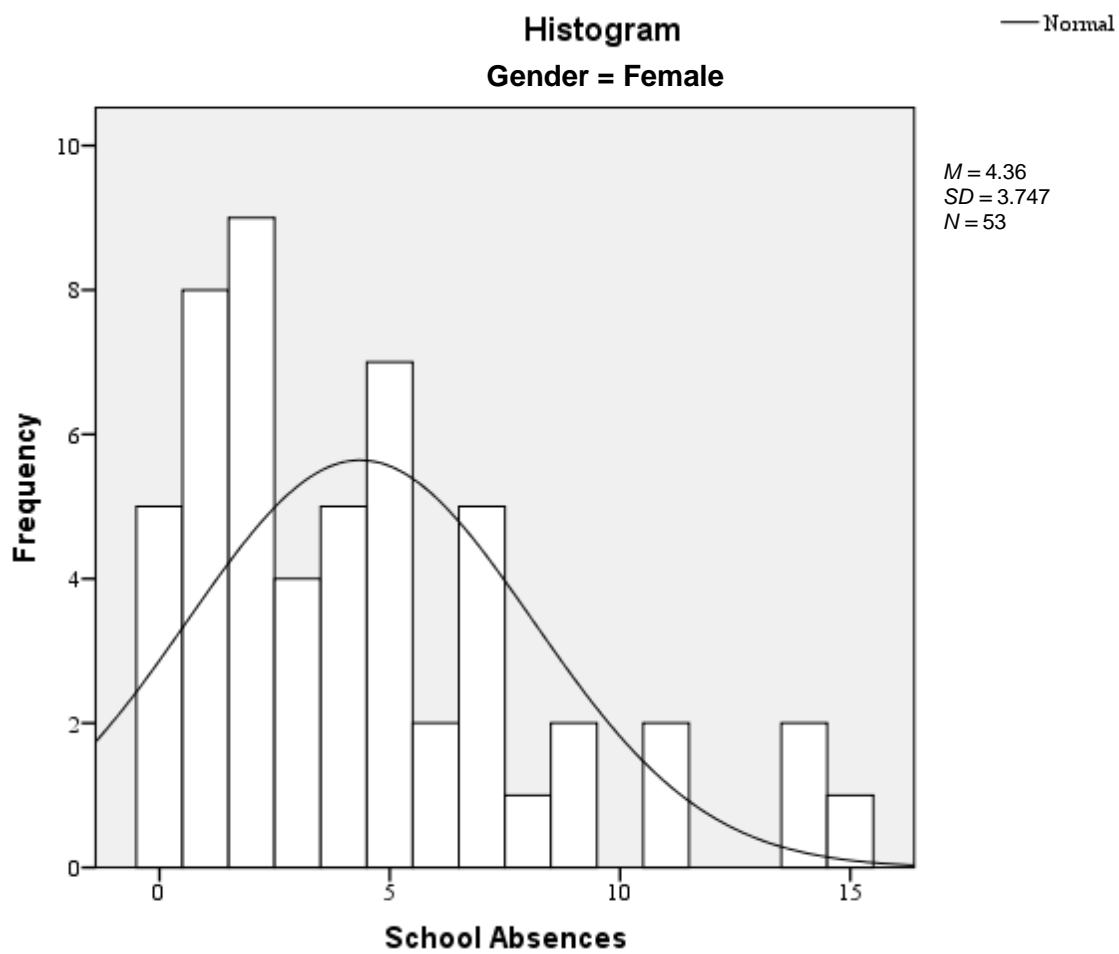
Figure 4. Histogram of School Absences for Female Students.
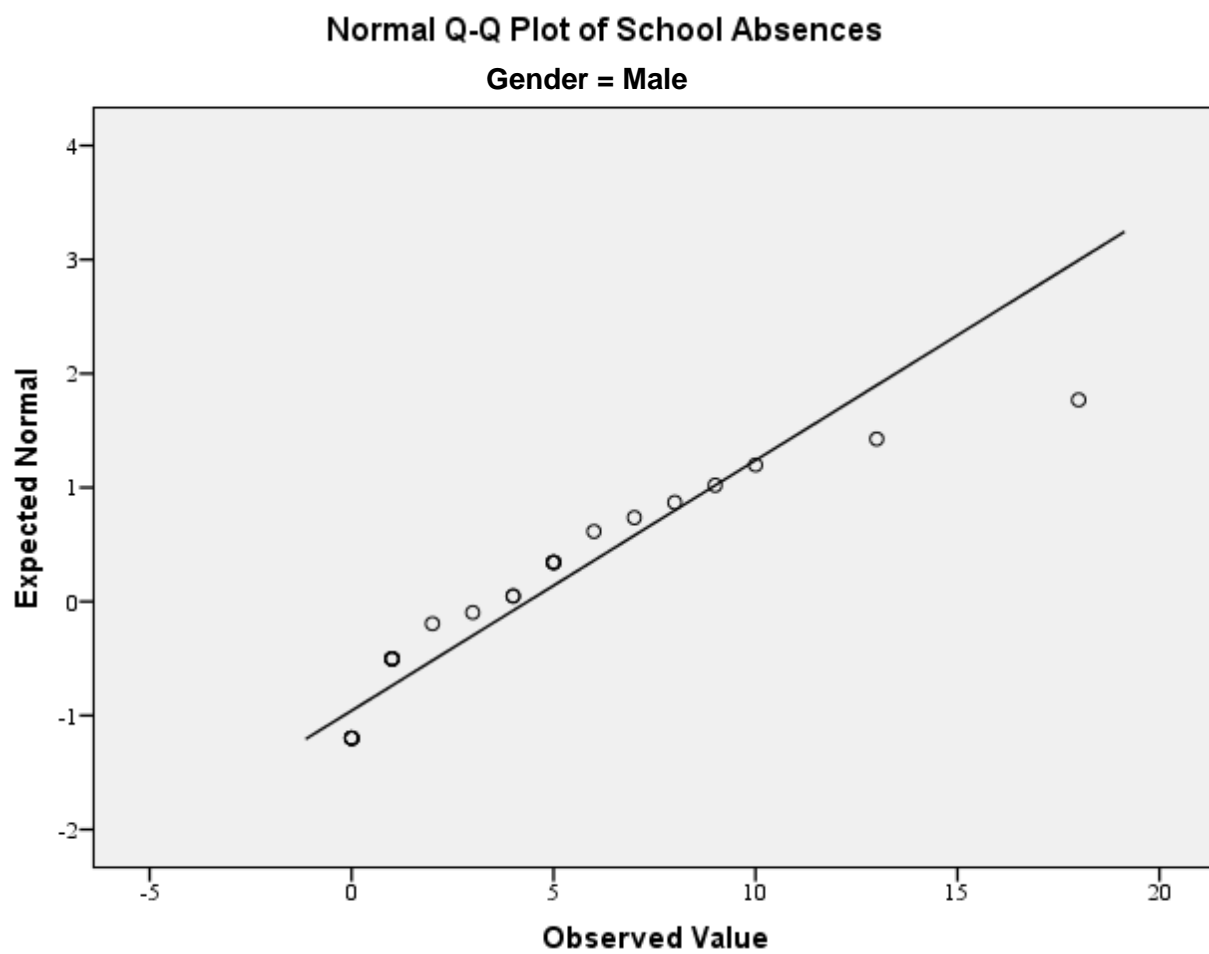
Figure 5. Normal Q-Q Plot of School Absences for Male Students.
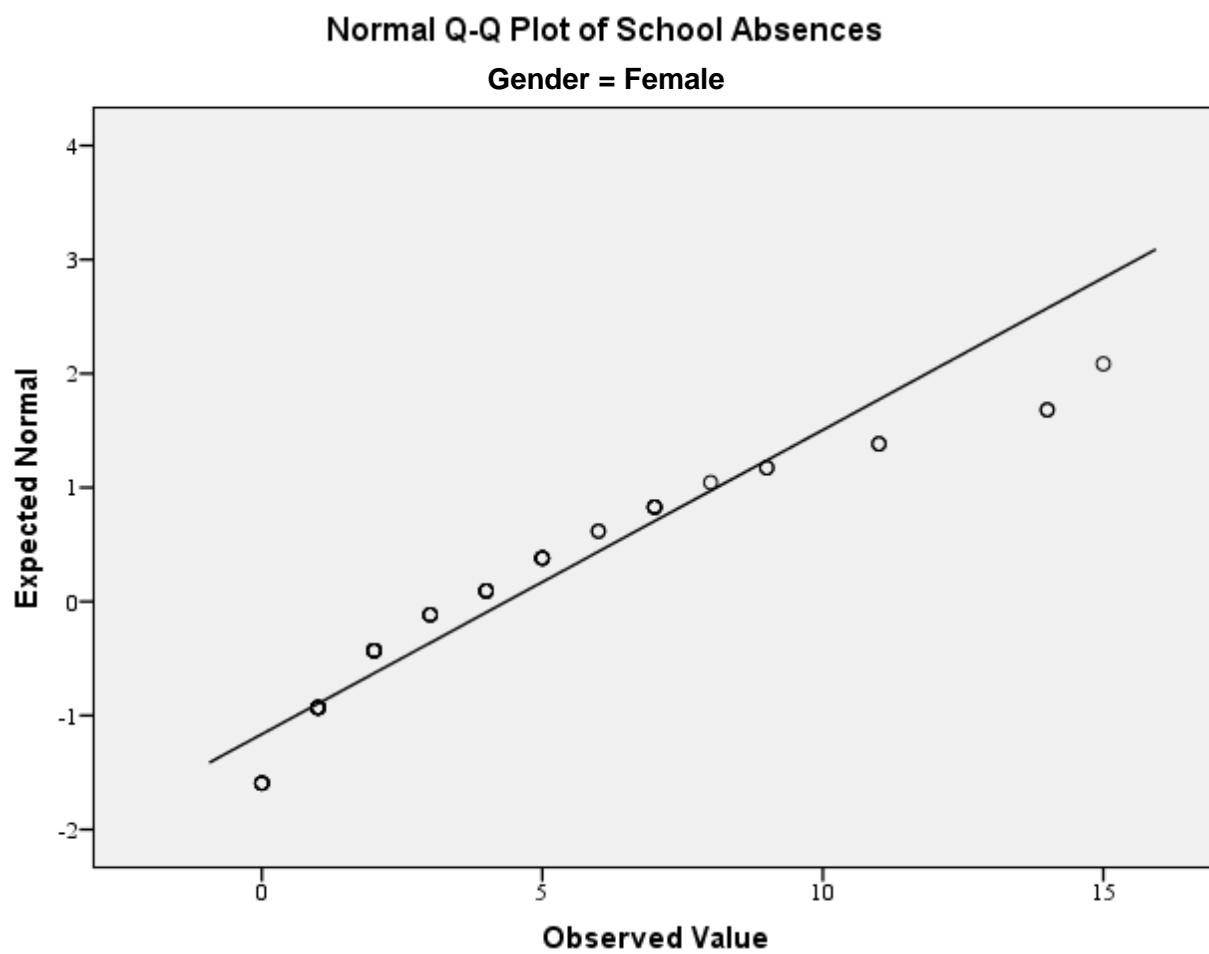
Figure 6. Normal Q-Q Plot of School Absences for Female Students.

Overall GPA scores were normally distributed with a skewness of -0.440 (*SE* = 0.272) and kurtosis of 0.629 (*SE* = 0.538).
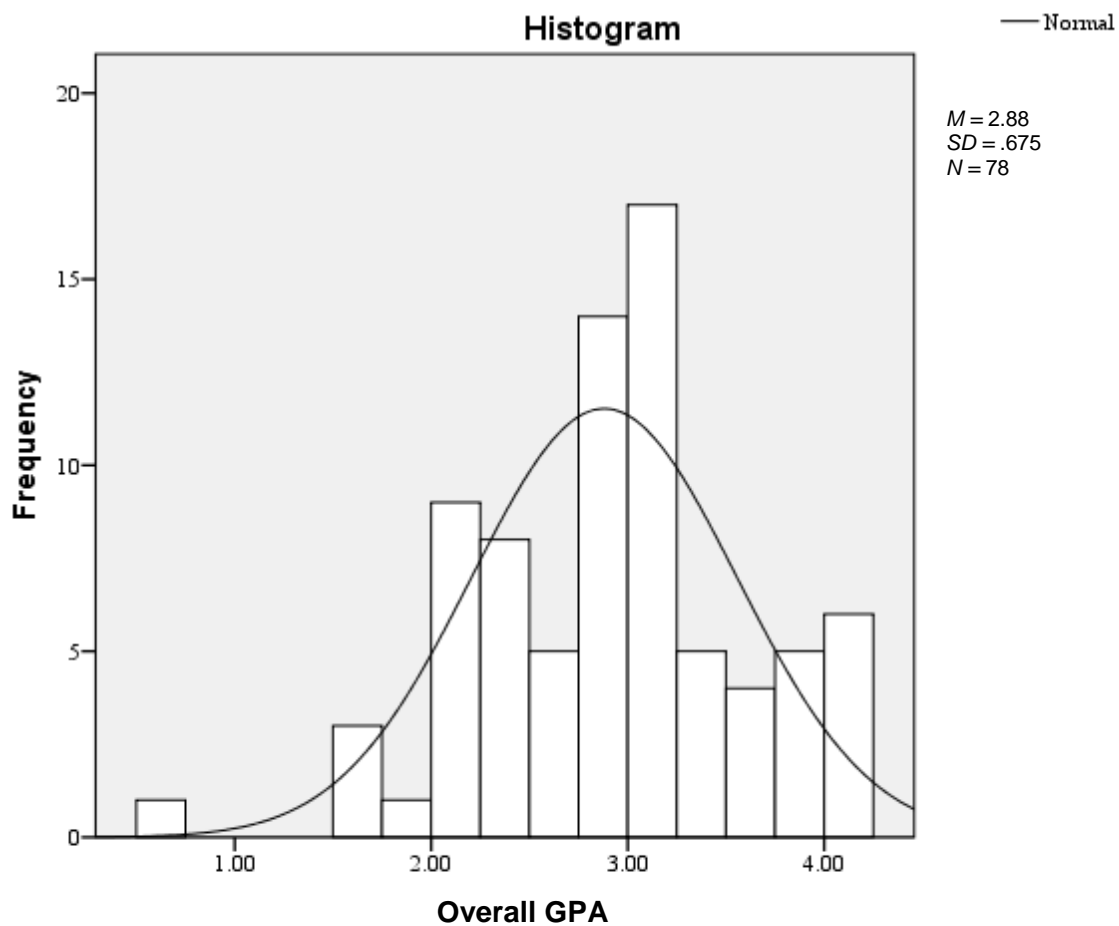
Figure 7. Histogram of Overall GPA.
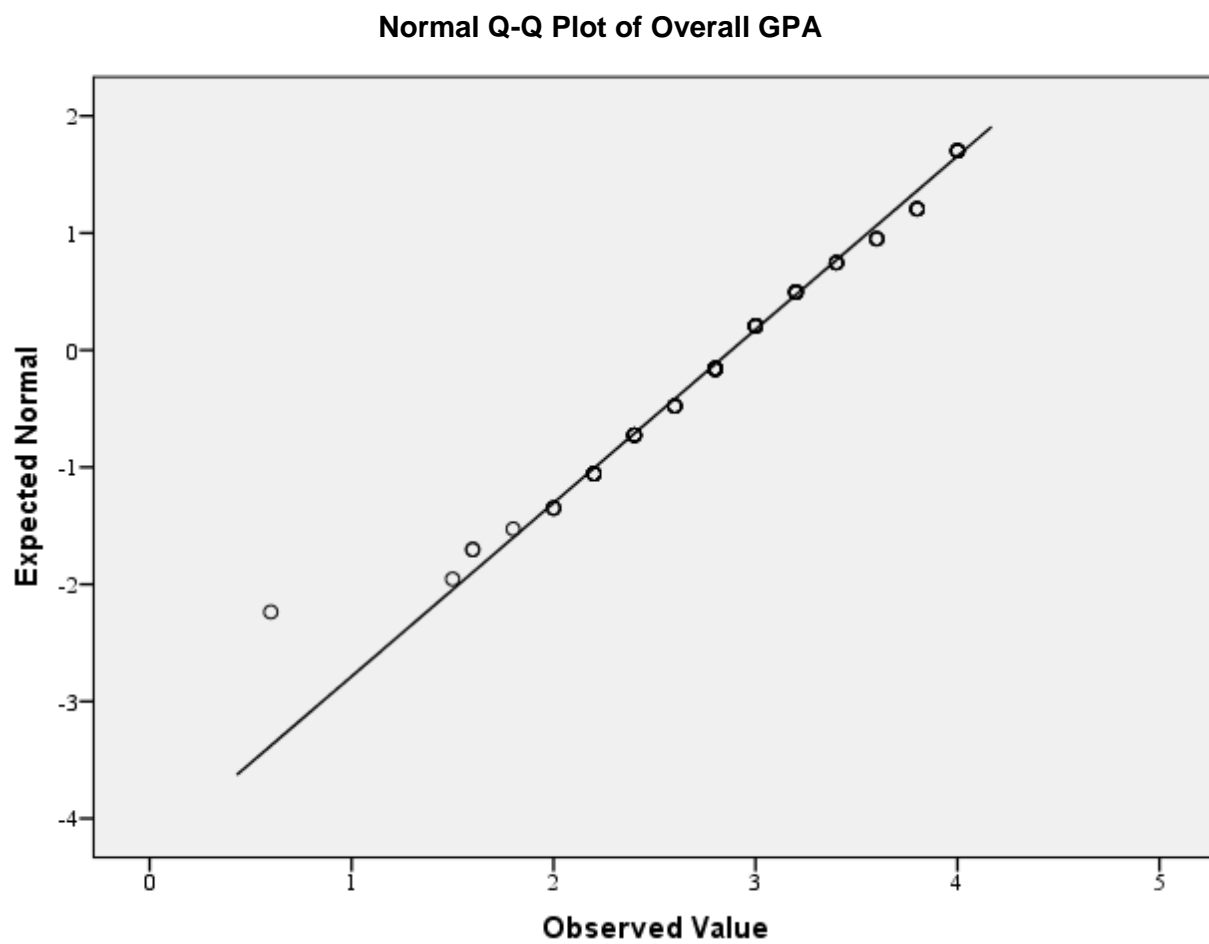
Figure 8. Normal Q-Q Plot of Overall GPA.

Overall GPA scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of -0.255 ($SE = 0.464$) and kurtosis of -1.002 ($SE = 0.902$). However, females Overall GPA scores were not normally distributed with a skewness of -0.522 ($SE = 0.327$) and a slightly positive kurtosis of 1.942 ($SE = 0.644$).
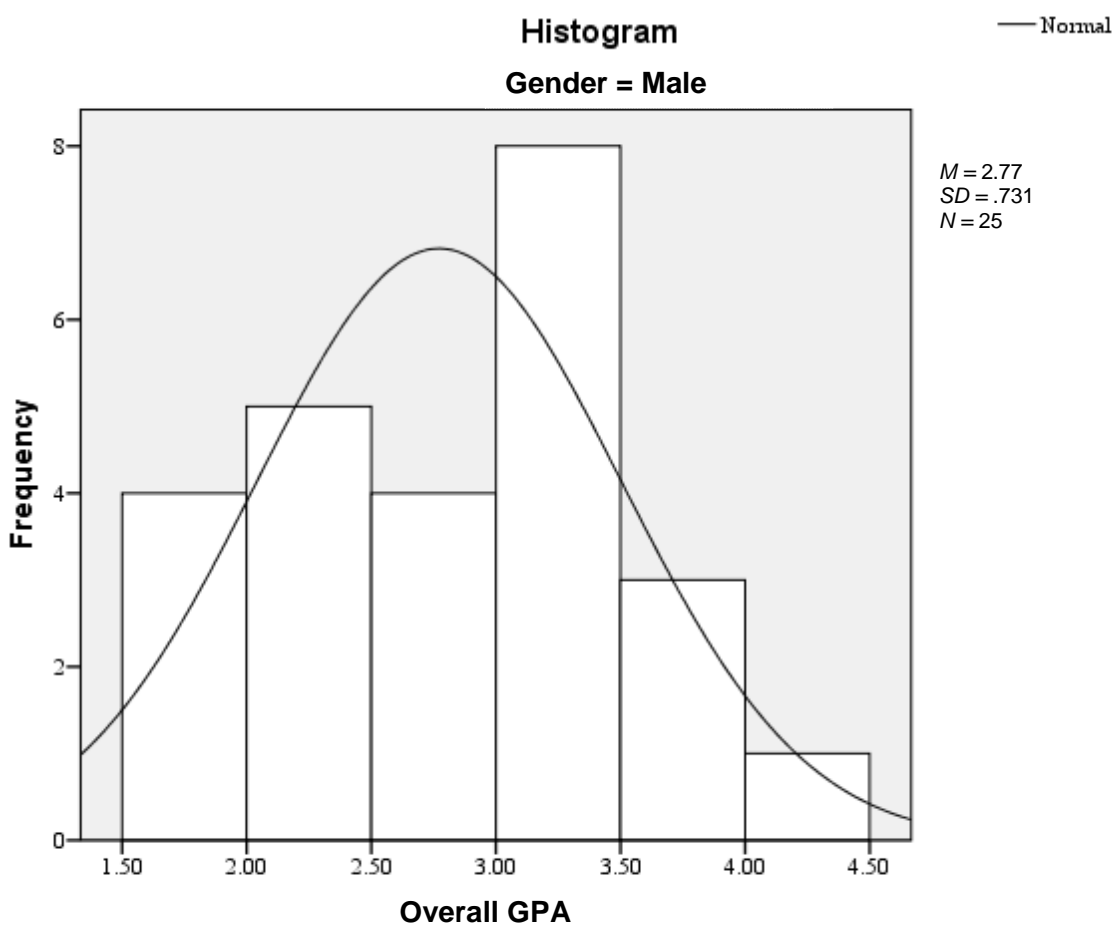
Figure 9. Histogram of Overall GPA for Male Students.
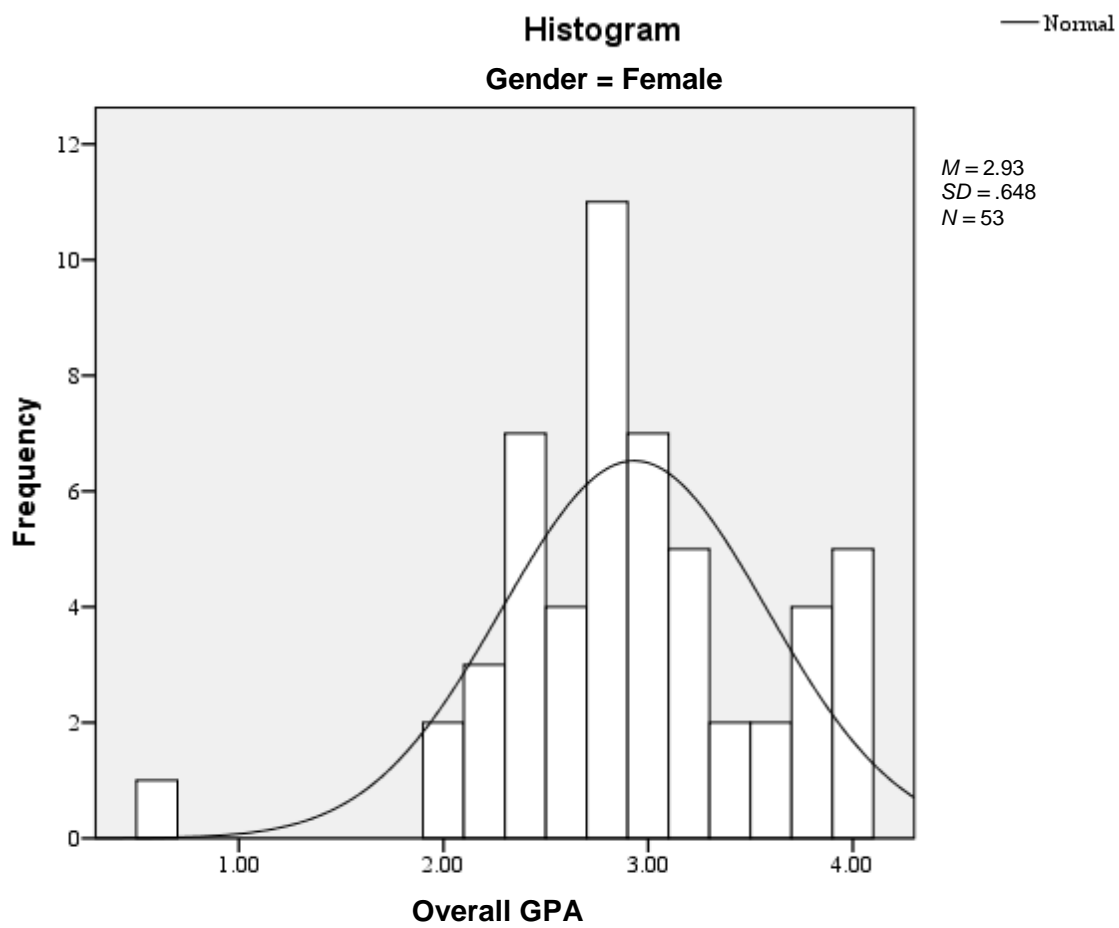
Figure 10. Histogram of Overall GPA for Female Students.

Normal Q-Q Plot of Overall GPA

Gender = Male
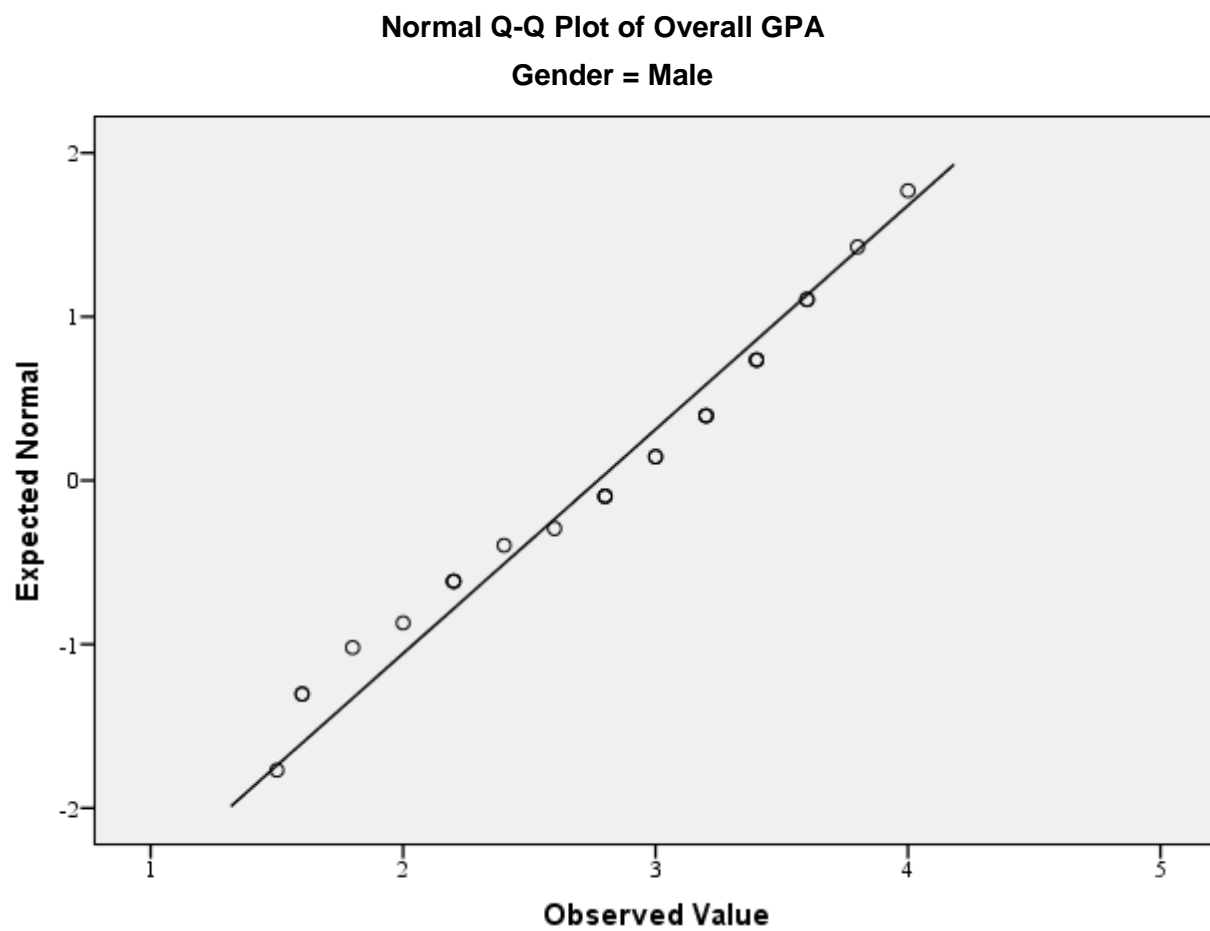
Figure 11. Normal Q-Q Plot of Overall GPA for Male Students.

Normal Q-Q Plot of Overall GPA

Gender = Female
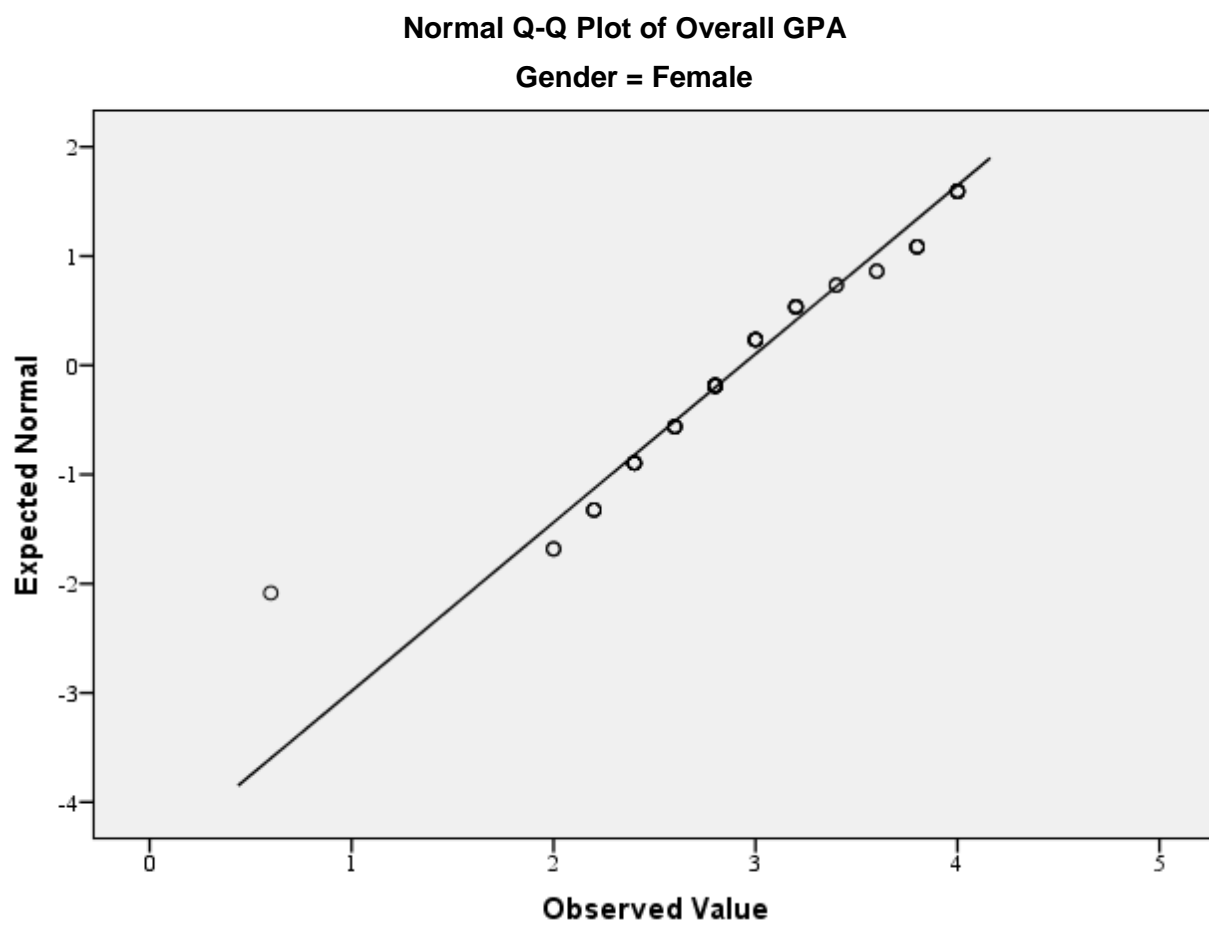
Figure 12. Normal Q-Q Plot of Overall GPA for Female Students.

Achievement Level on STAAR Reading scores were normally distributed with a skewness of 0.169 ($SE = 0.272$) and kurtosis of -0.150 ($SE = 0.538$).
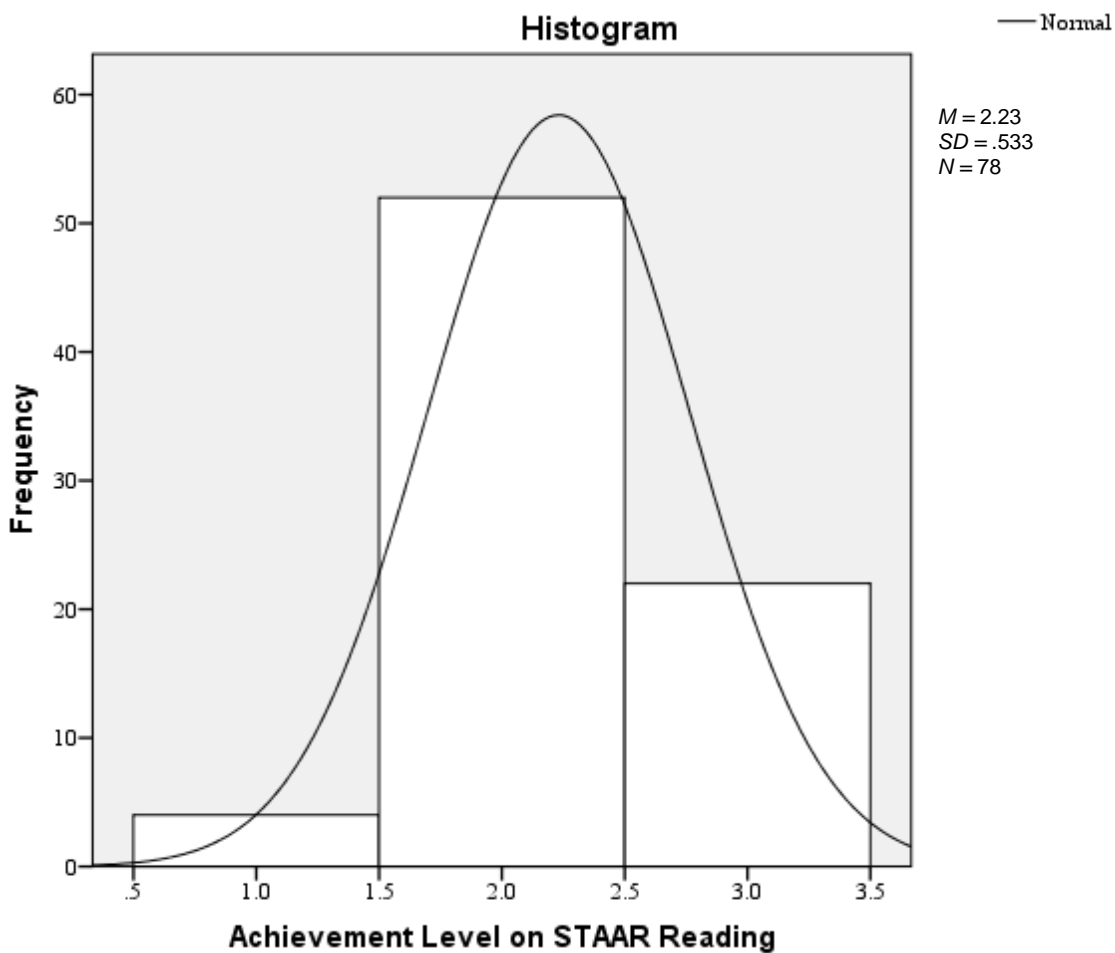
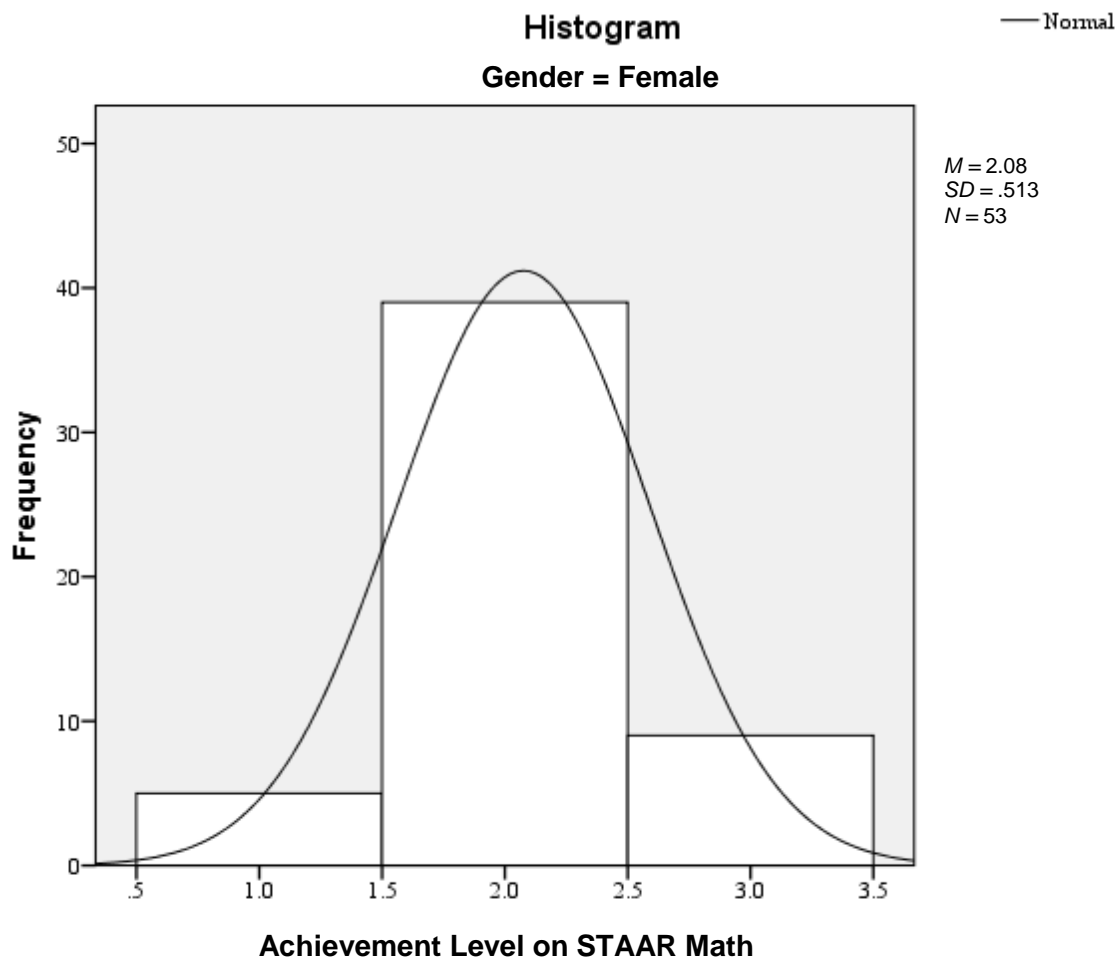Figure 13. Histogram of Achievement Level on STAAR Reading.
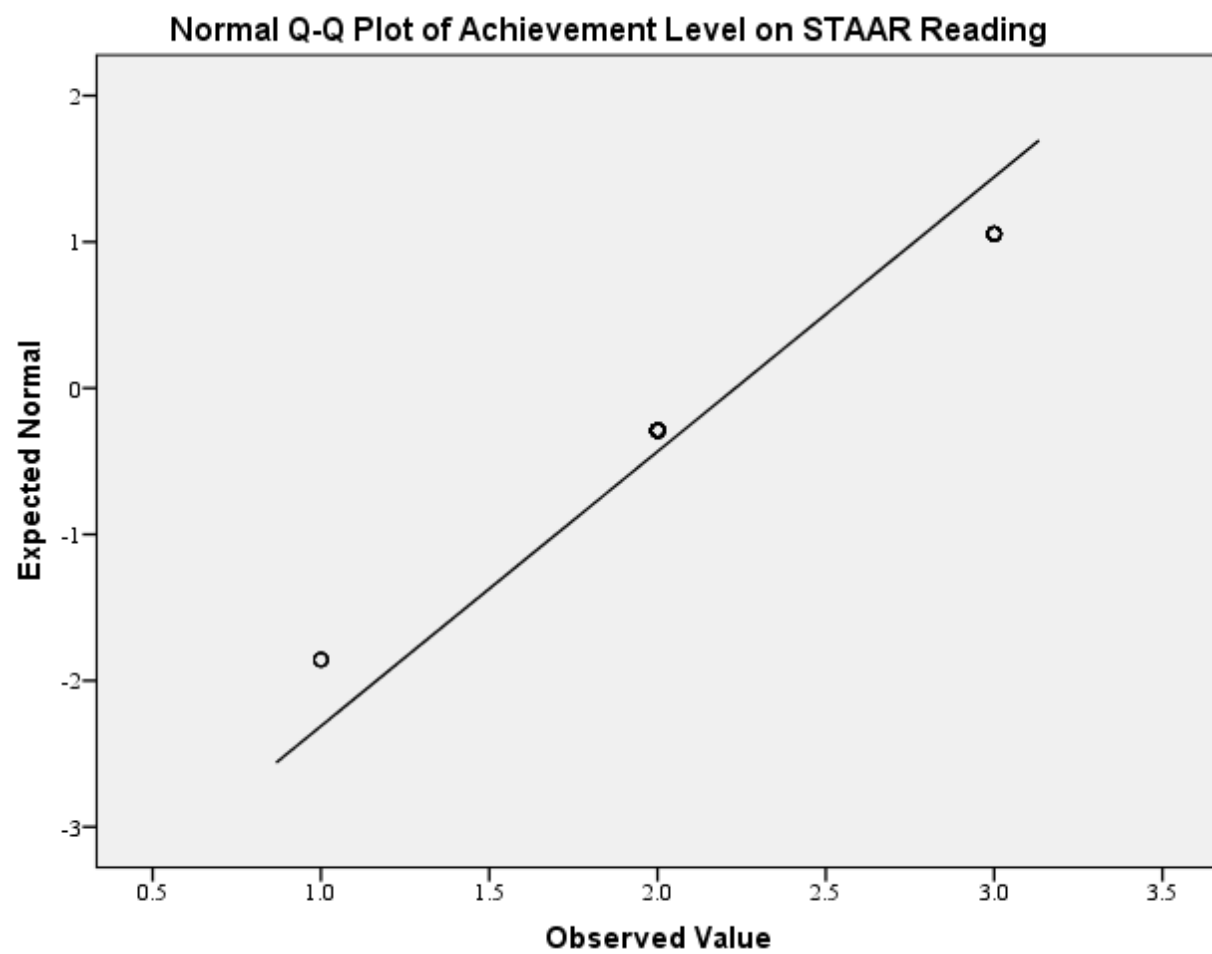
Figure 14. Normal Q-Q Plot of Achievement Level on STAAR Reading.

Achievement Level on STAAR Reading scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of 0.153 (SE = 0.464) and kurtosis of -0.347 (SE = 0.902) and for females with a skewness of 0.181 (SE = 0.327) and kurtosis of 0.043 (SE = 0.644).
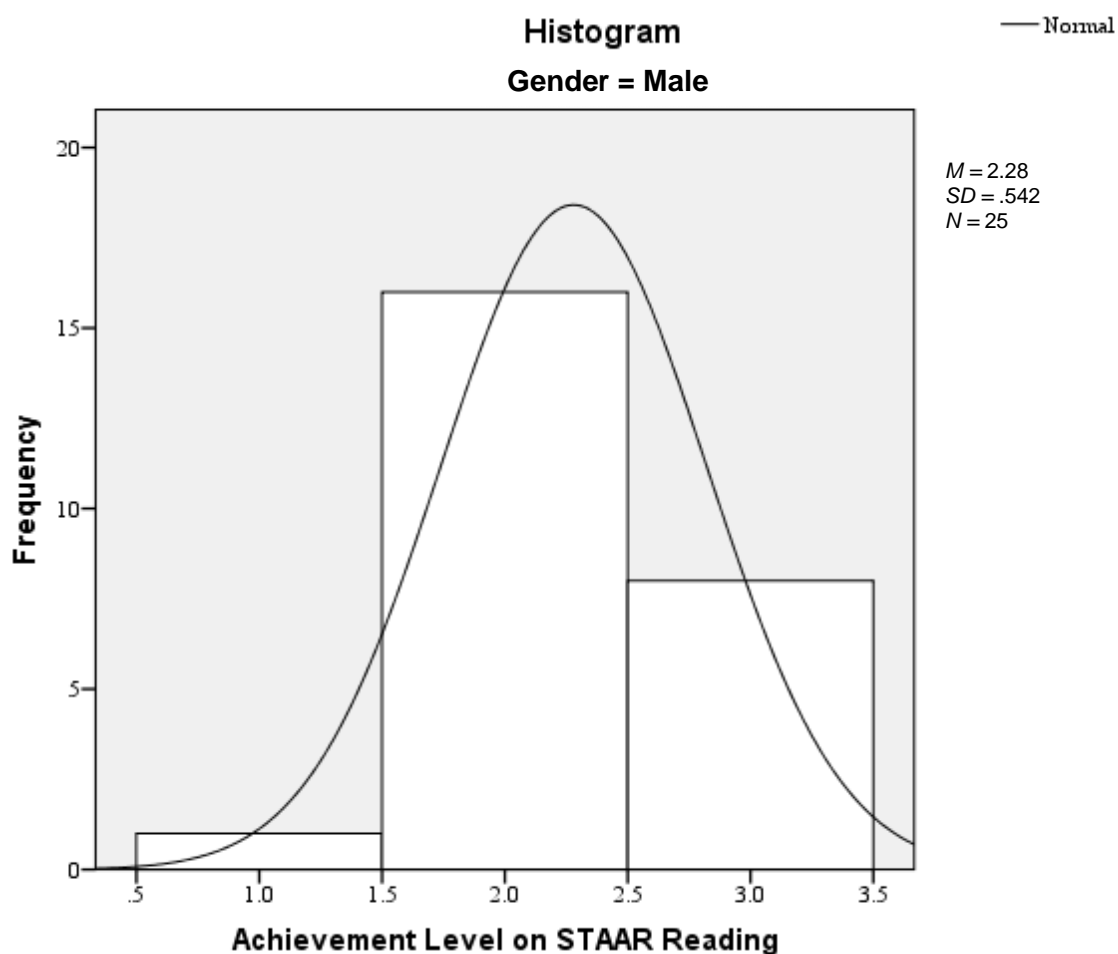
Figure 15. Histogram of Achievement Level on STAAR Reading for Male Students.
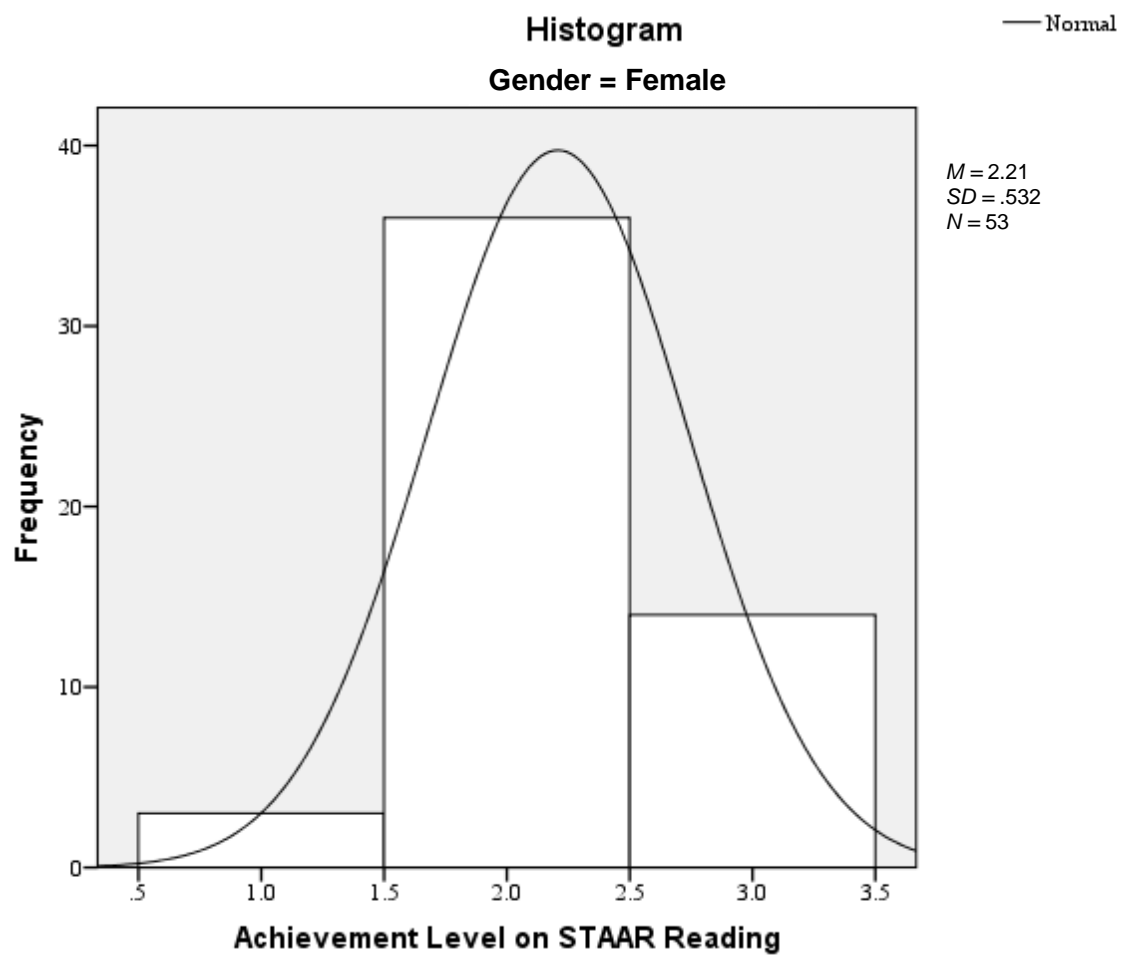
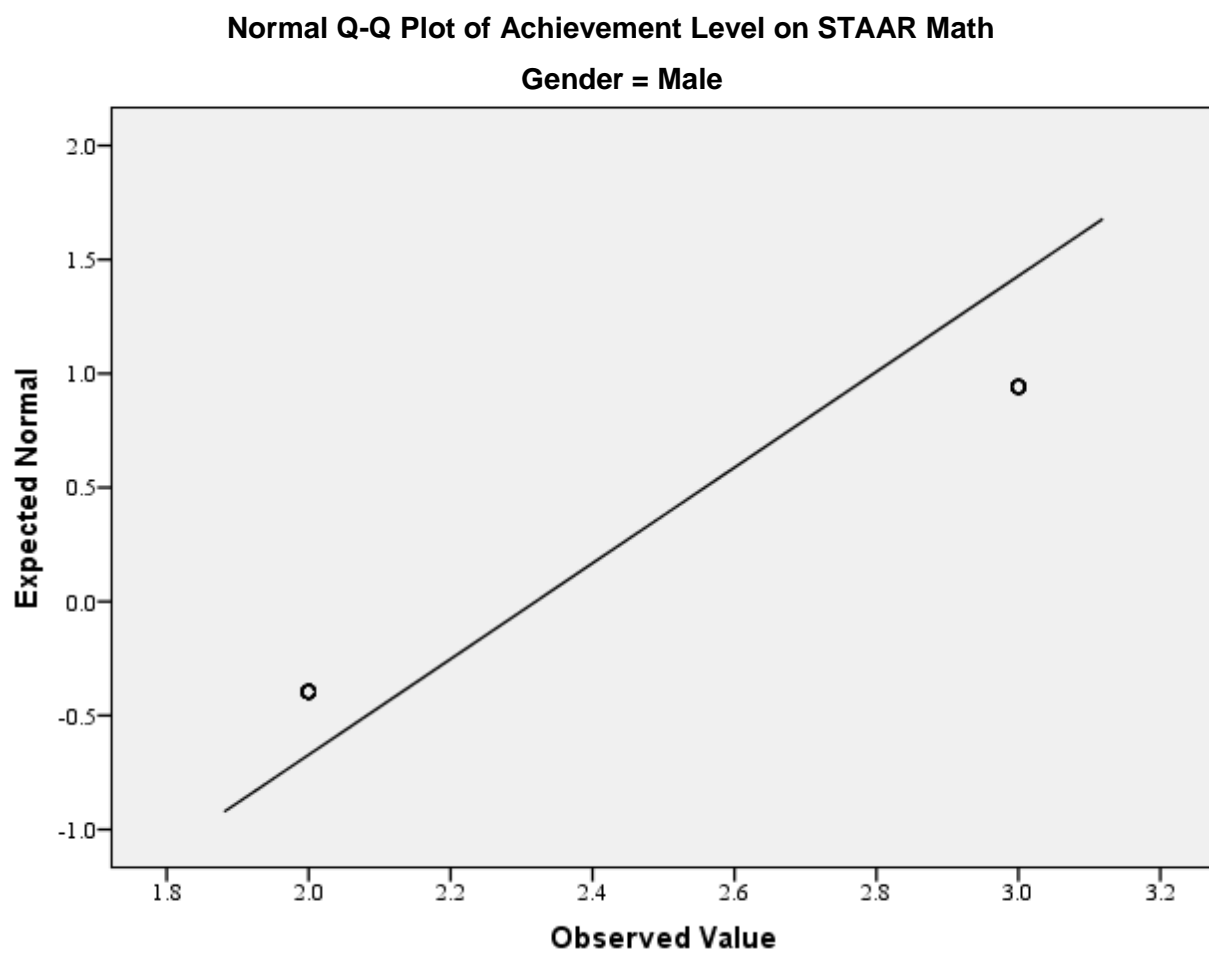Figure 16. Histogram of Achievement Level on STAAR Reading for Female Students.
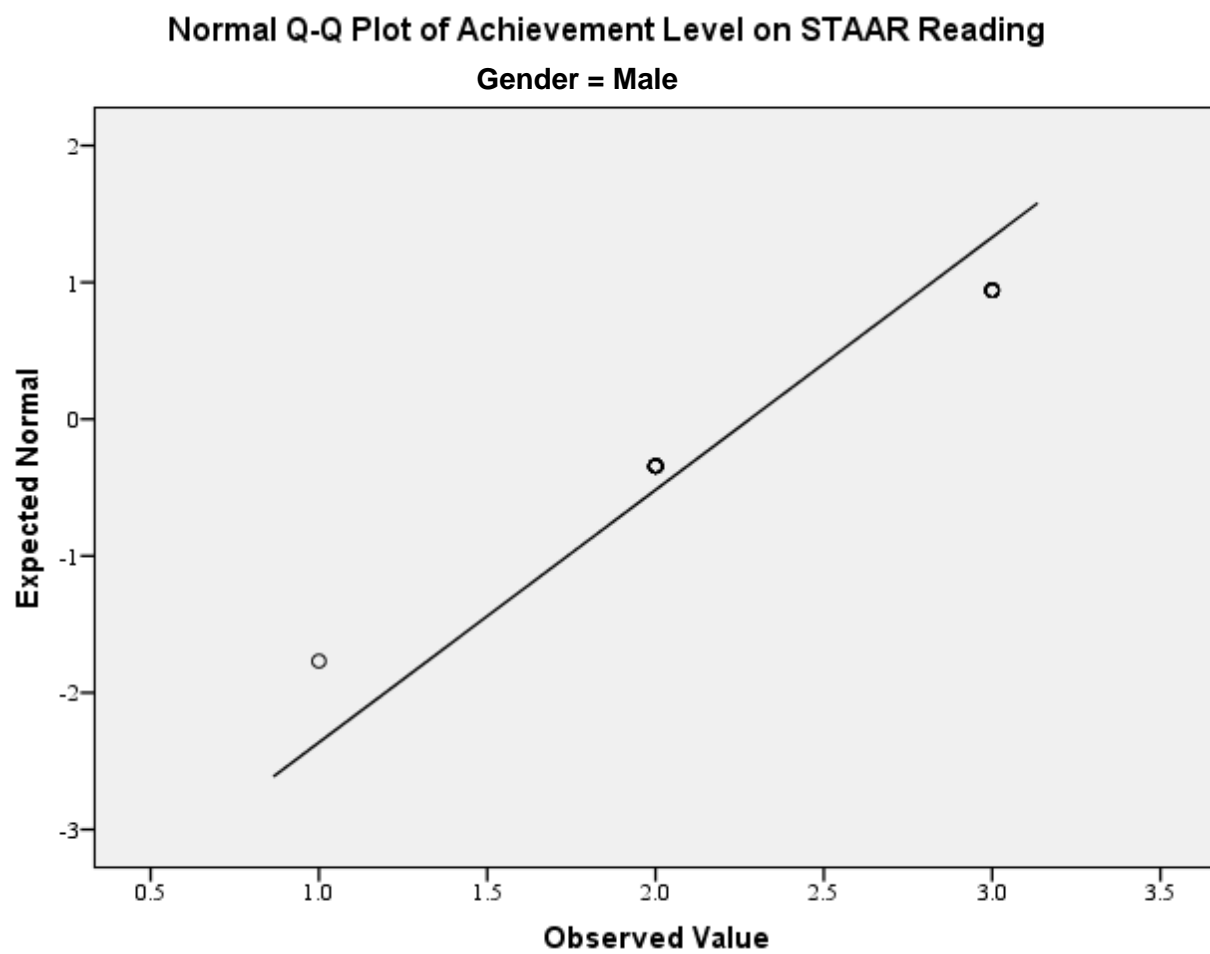
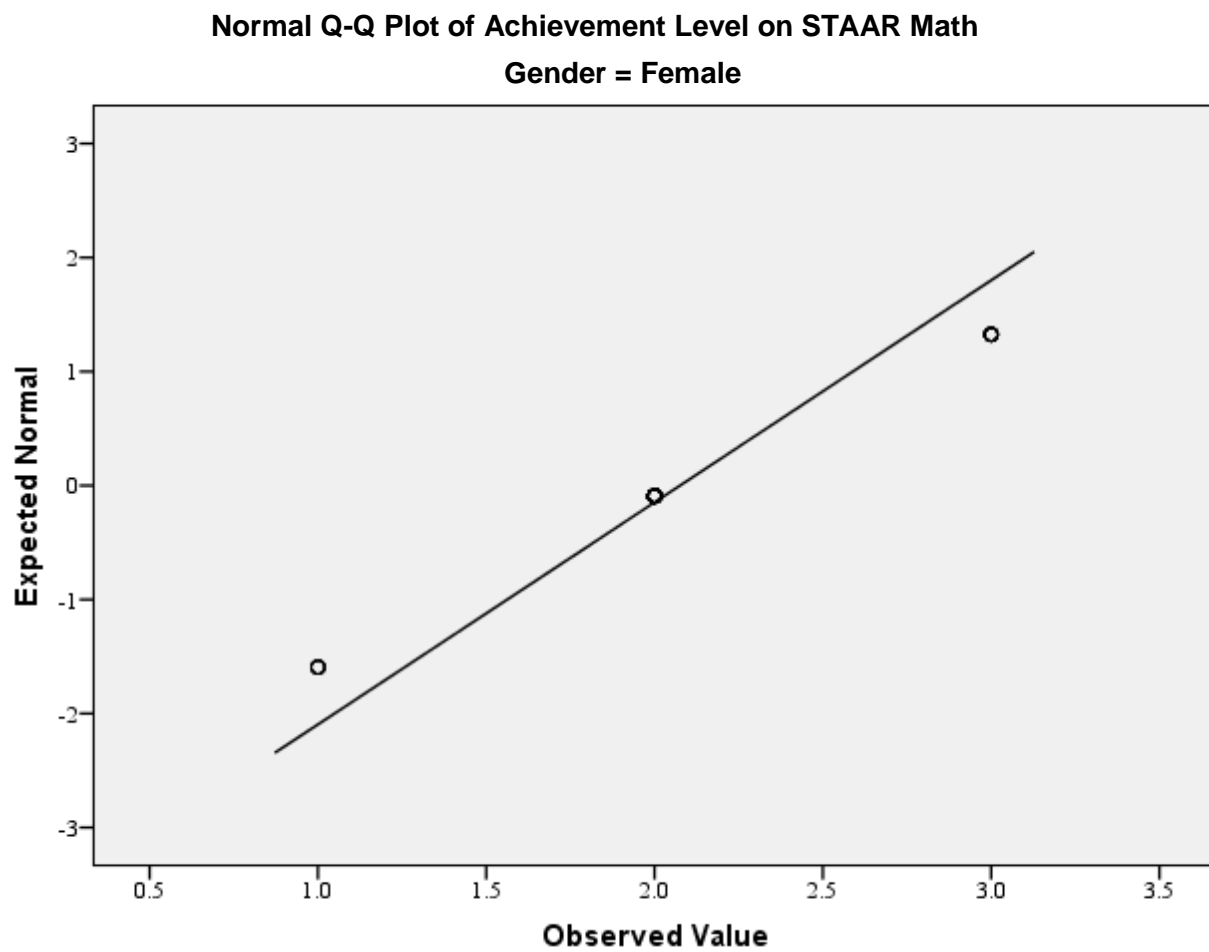Figure 17. Normal Q-Q Plot of Achievement Level on STAAR Reading for Male
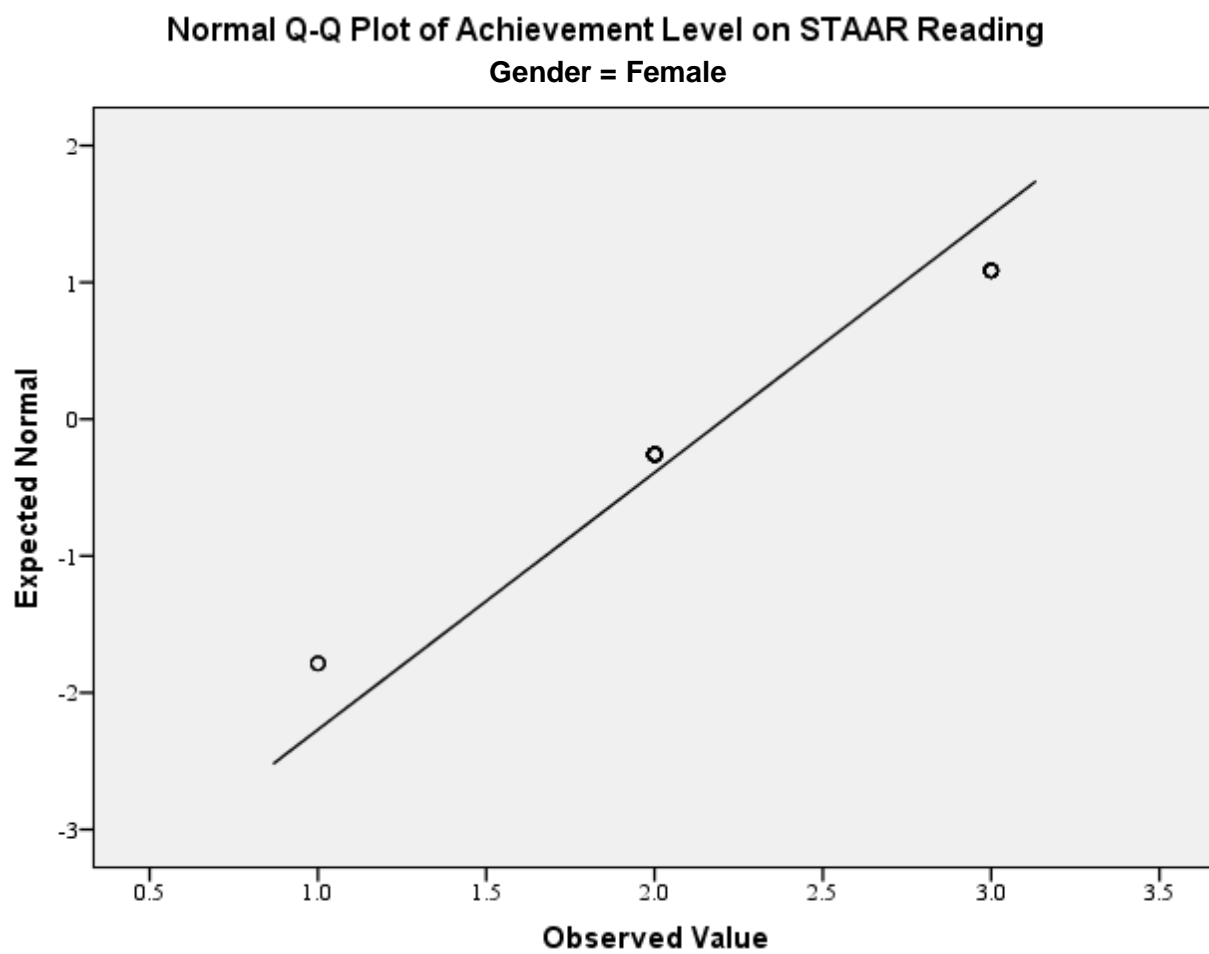
Students.

Figure 18. Normal Q-Q Plot of Achievement Level on STAAR Reading for Female

Students.

Achievement Level on STAAR Math scores were normally distributed with a

skewness of 0.240 (*SE* = 0.272) and kurtosis of 0.488 (*SE* = 0.538).
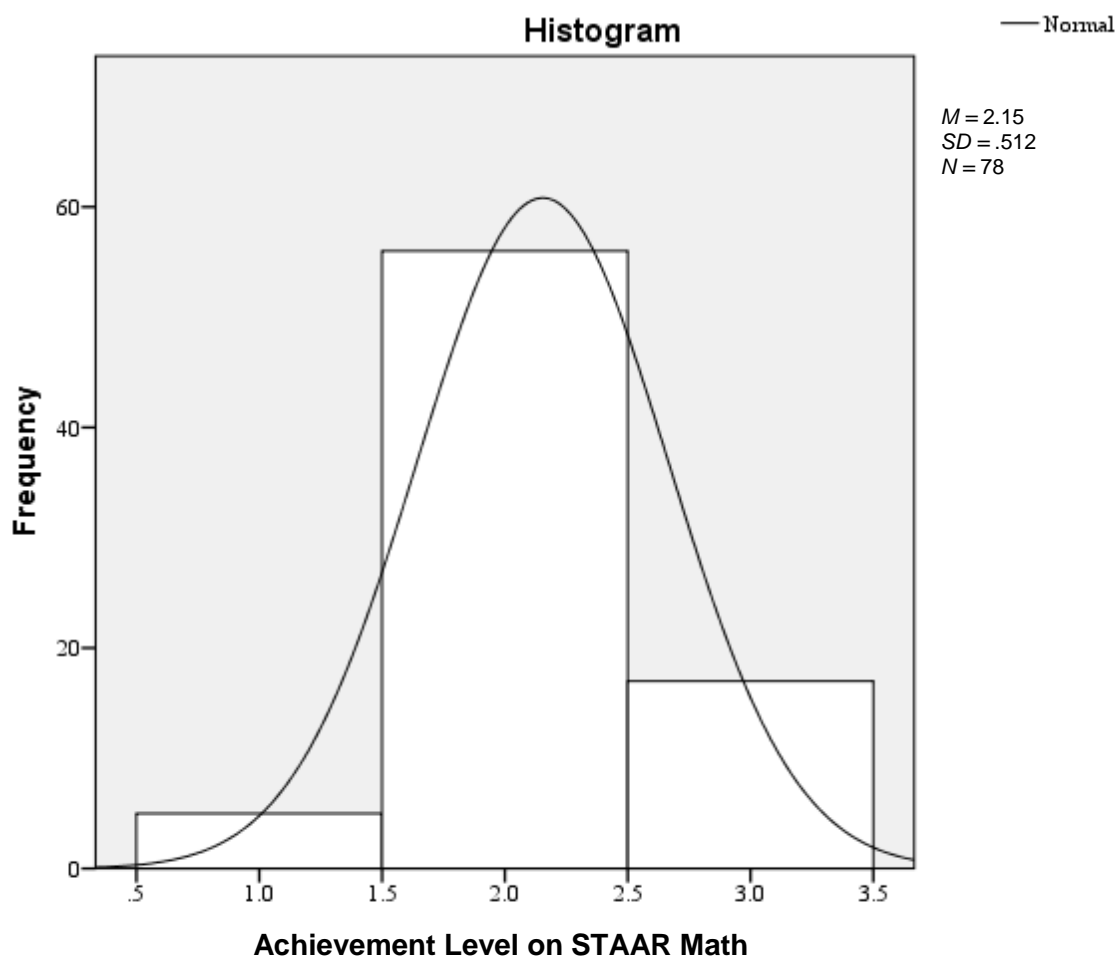
Figure 19. Histogram of Achievement Level on STAAR Math.
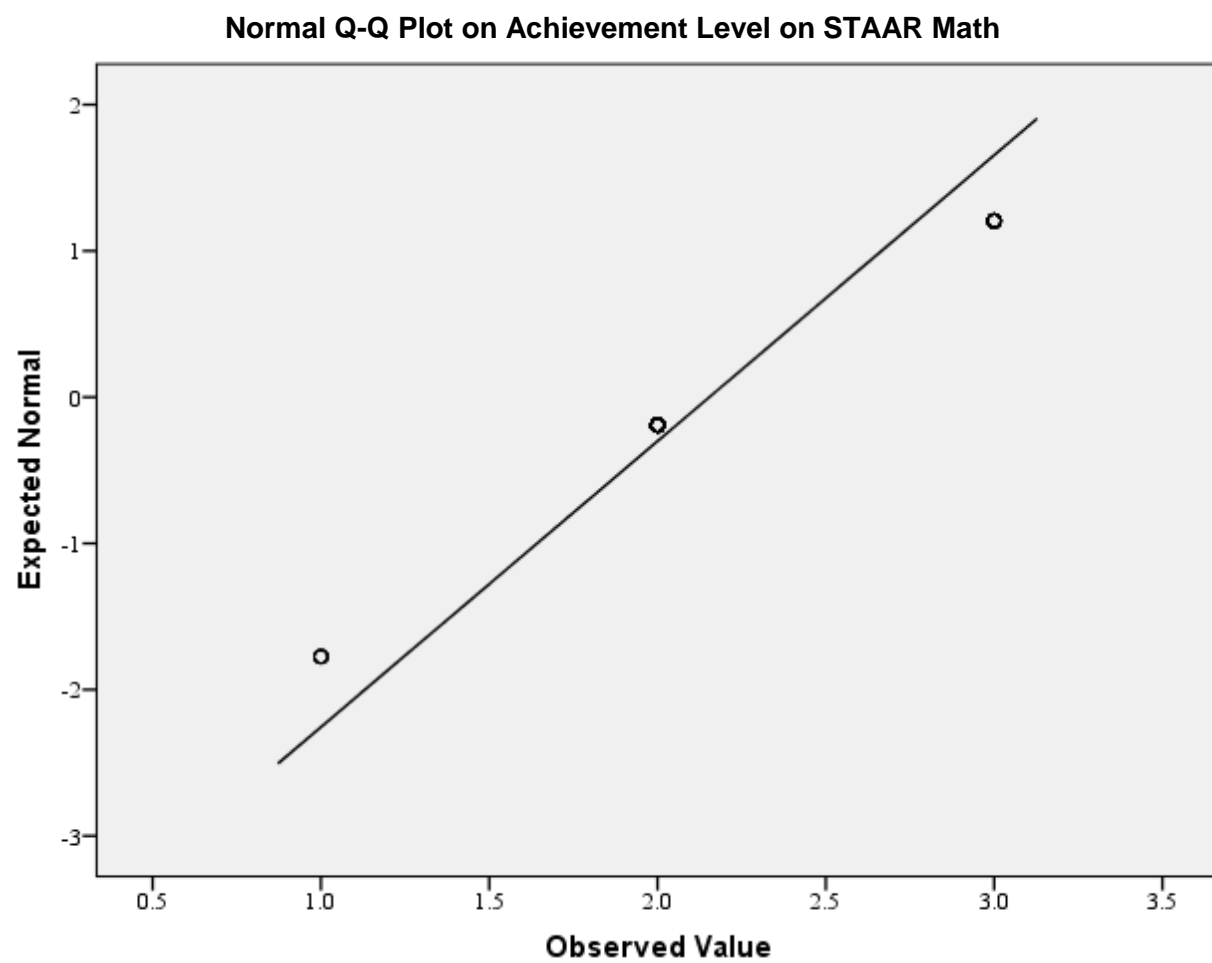
Figure 20. Normal Q-Q Plot of Achievement Level on STAAR Math.

Achievement Level on STAAR Math scores were normally distributed for males

with a skewness of 0.822 (*SE* = 0.464) and kurtosis of -1.447 (*SE* = 0.902) and for

females with a skewness of 0.129 (*SE* = 0.327) and kurtosis of 0.945 (*SE* = 0.644).
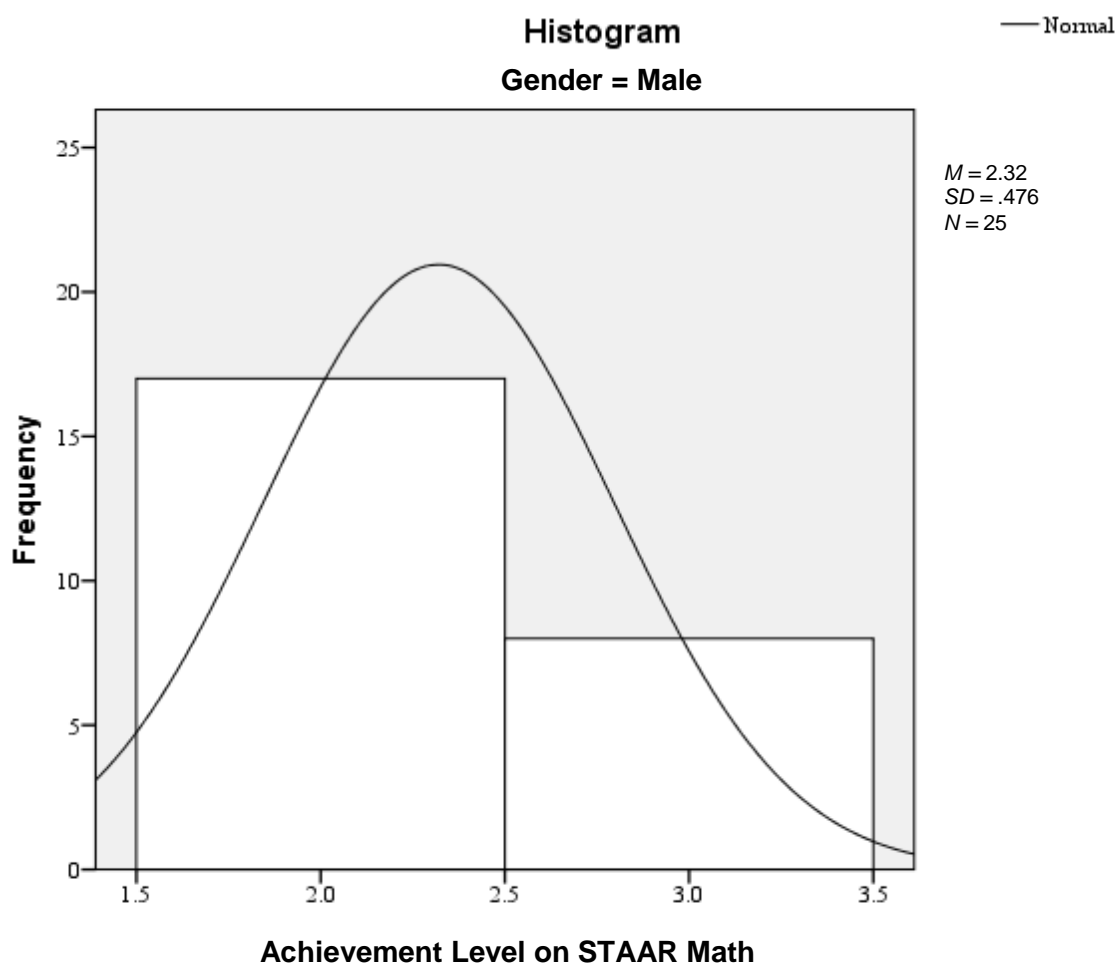
Figure 21. Histogram of Achievement Level on STAAR Math for Male Students.

Figure 22. Histogram of Achievement Level on STAAR Math for Female Students.

Figure 23. Normal Q-Q Plot of Achievement Level on STAAR Math for Male Students.

Normal Q-Q Plot of Achievement Level on STAAR Math

Gender = Female

Figure 24. Normal Q-Q Plot of Achievement Level on STAAR Math for Female

Students.

DAP Complete survey scores were normally distributed with a skewness of -

0.385 (*SE* = 0.272) and kurtosis of -0.059 (*SE* = 0.538).
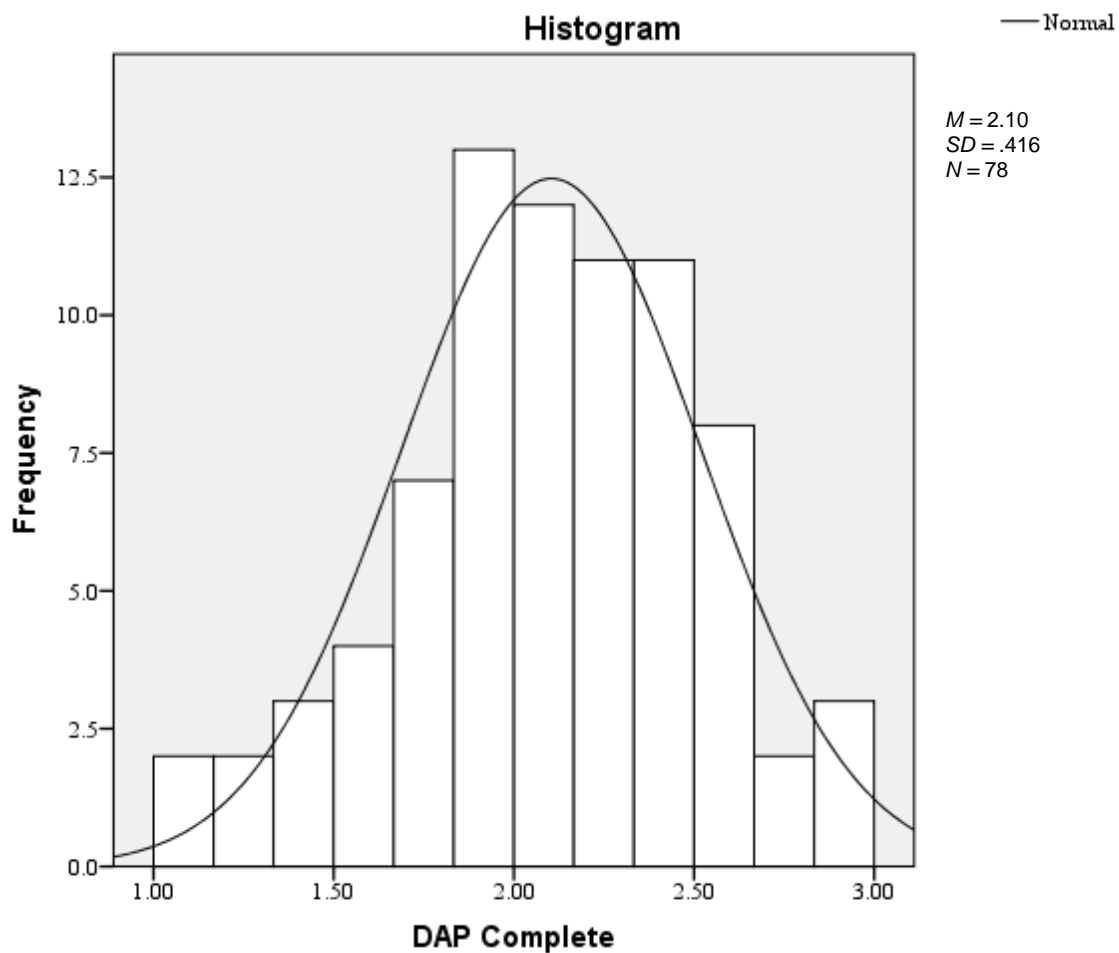
Figure 25. Histogram of DAP Complete.
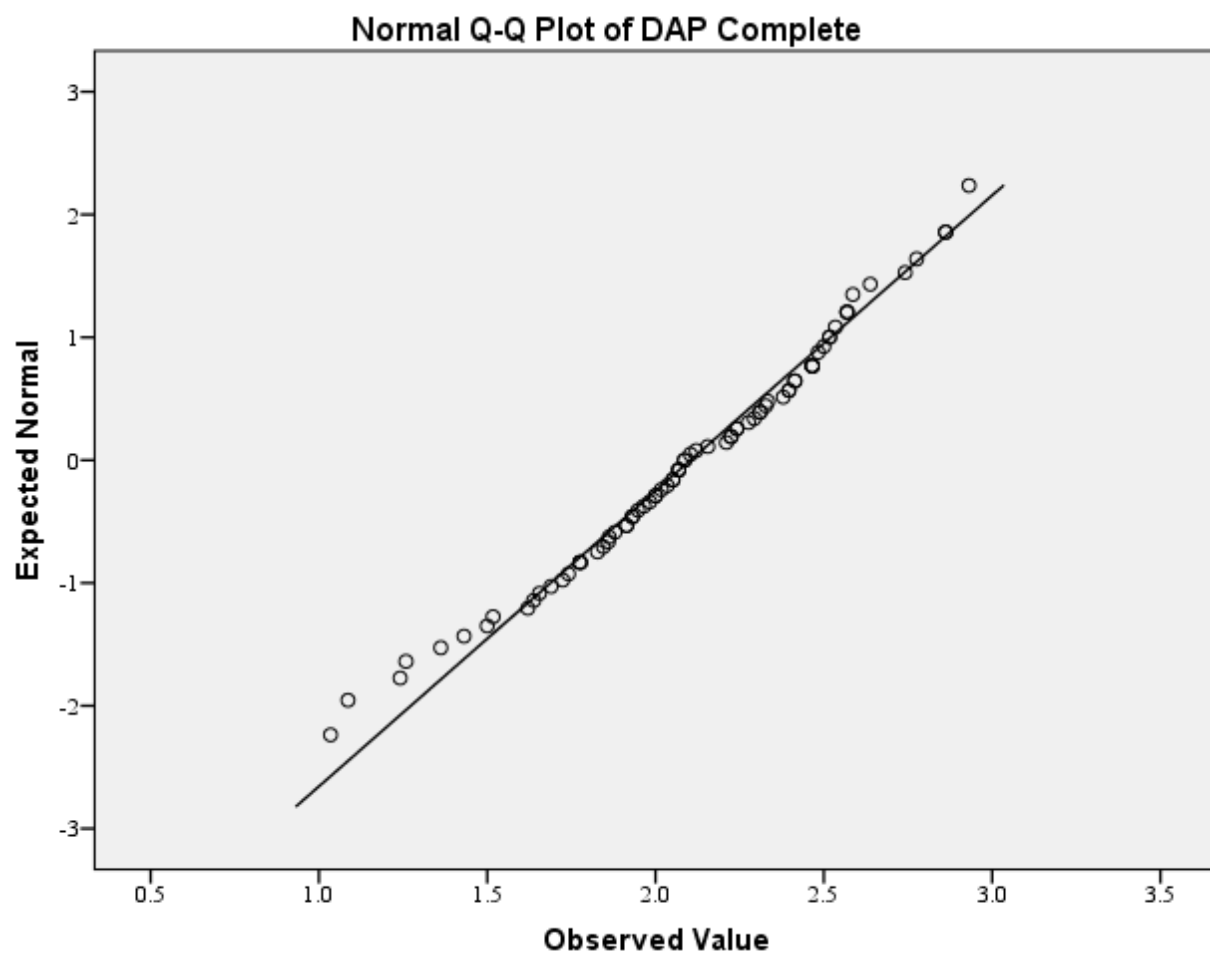
Figure 26. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Complete.

DAP Complete scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of -0.603 (*SE* = 0.464) and kurtosis of -0.177 (*SE* = 0.902) and for females with a skewness of -0.297 (*SE* = 0.327) and kurtosis of 0.034 (*SE* = 0.644).
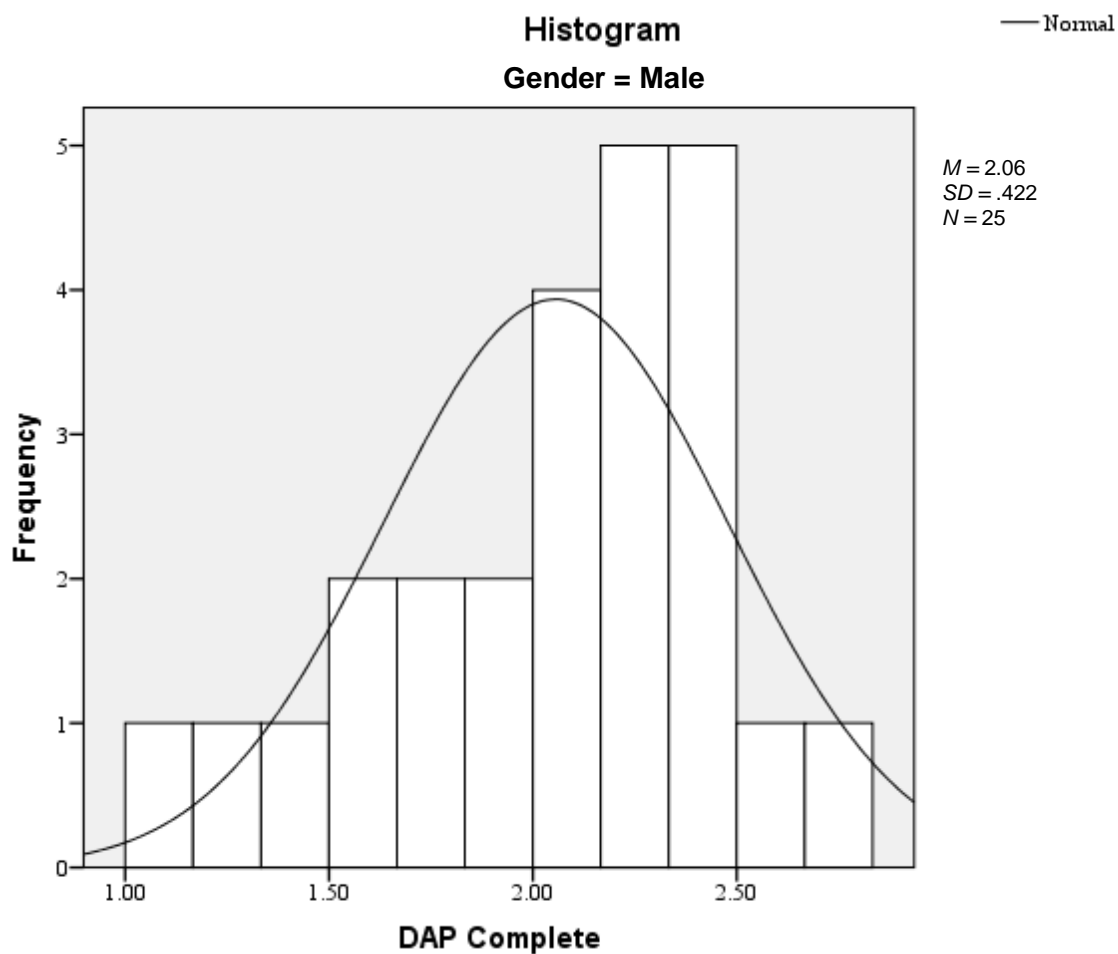
Figure 27. Histogram of DAP Complete for Male Students.
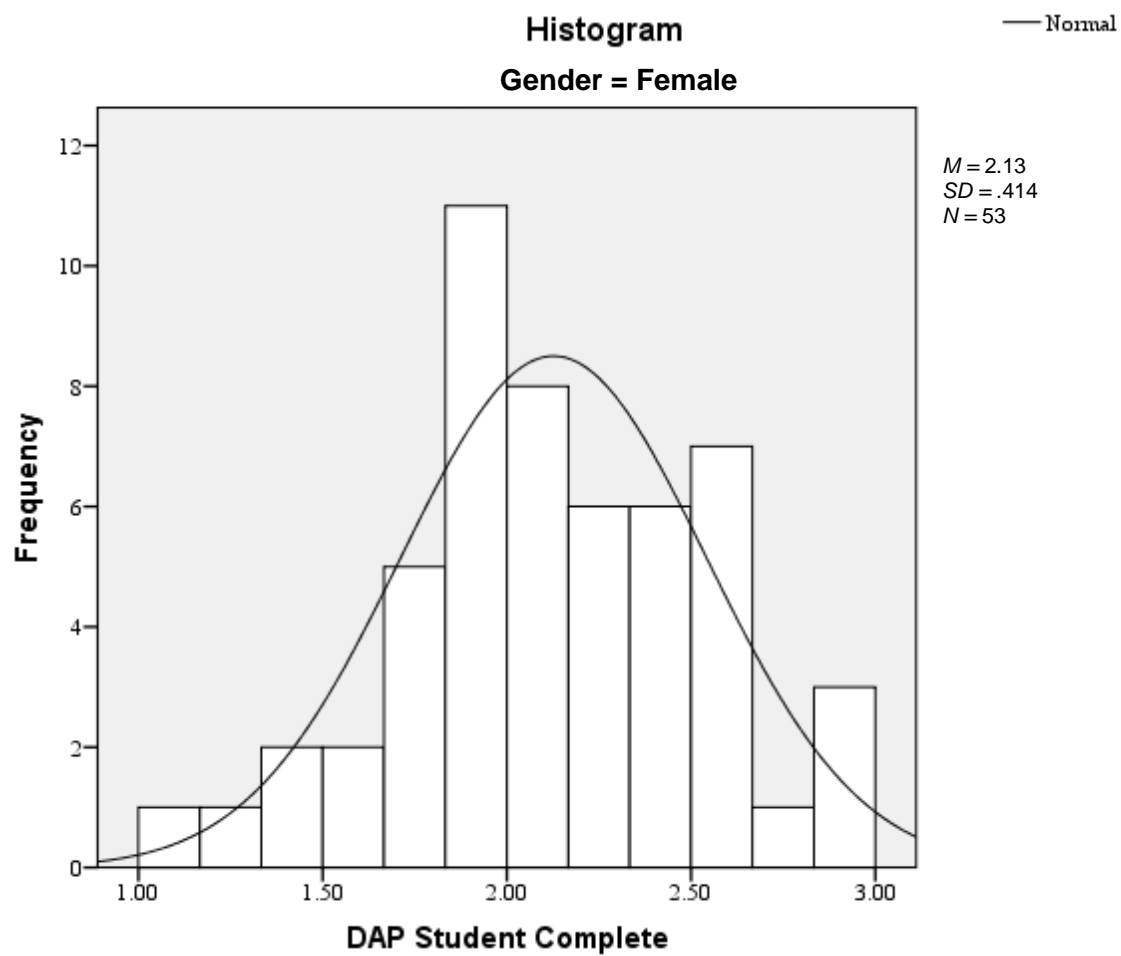
Figure 28. Histogram of DAP Complete for Female Students
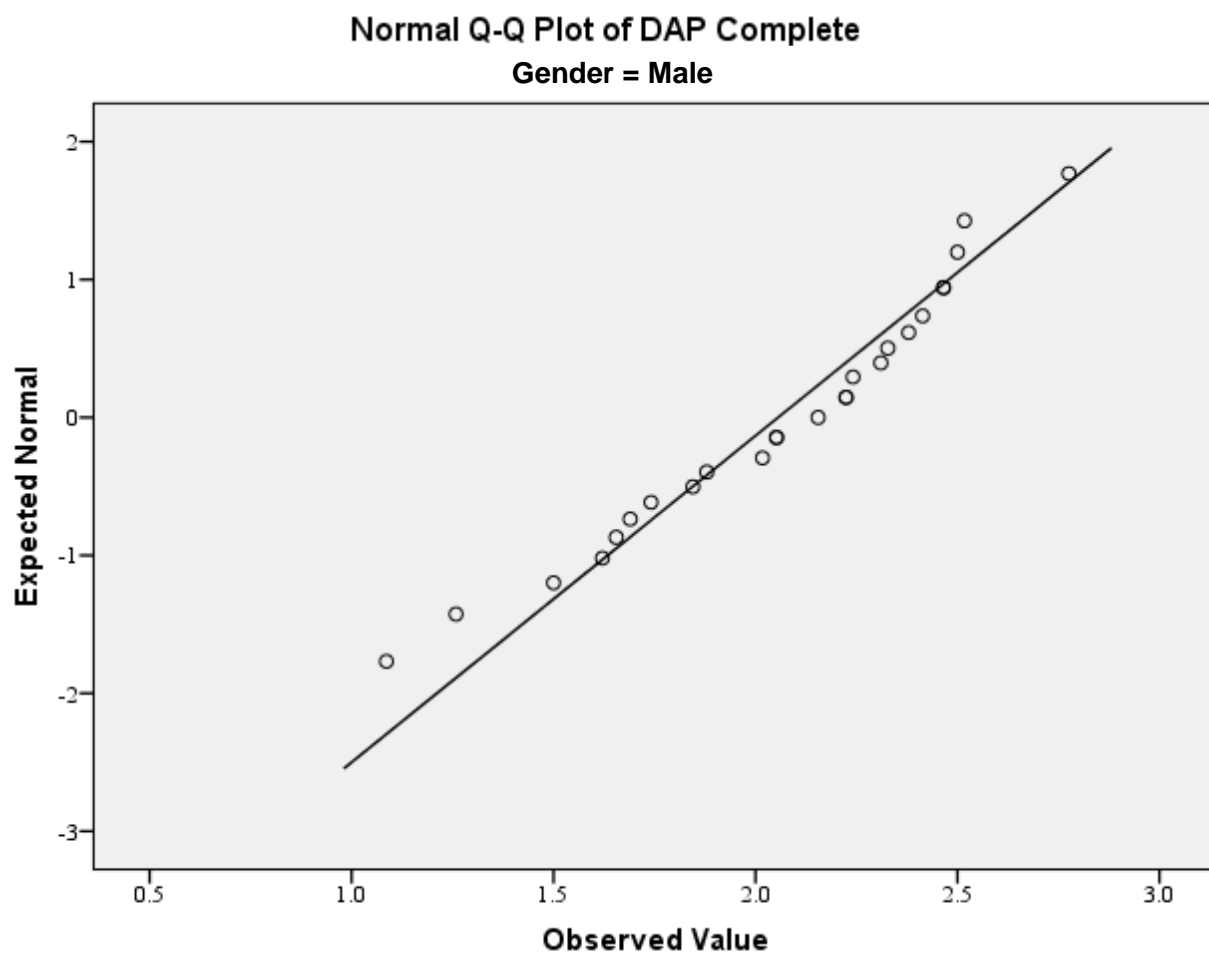
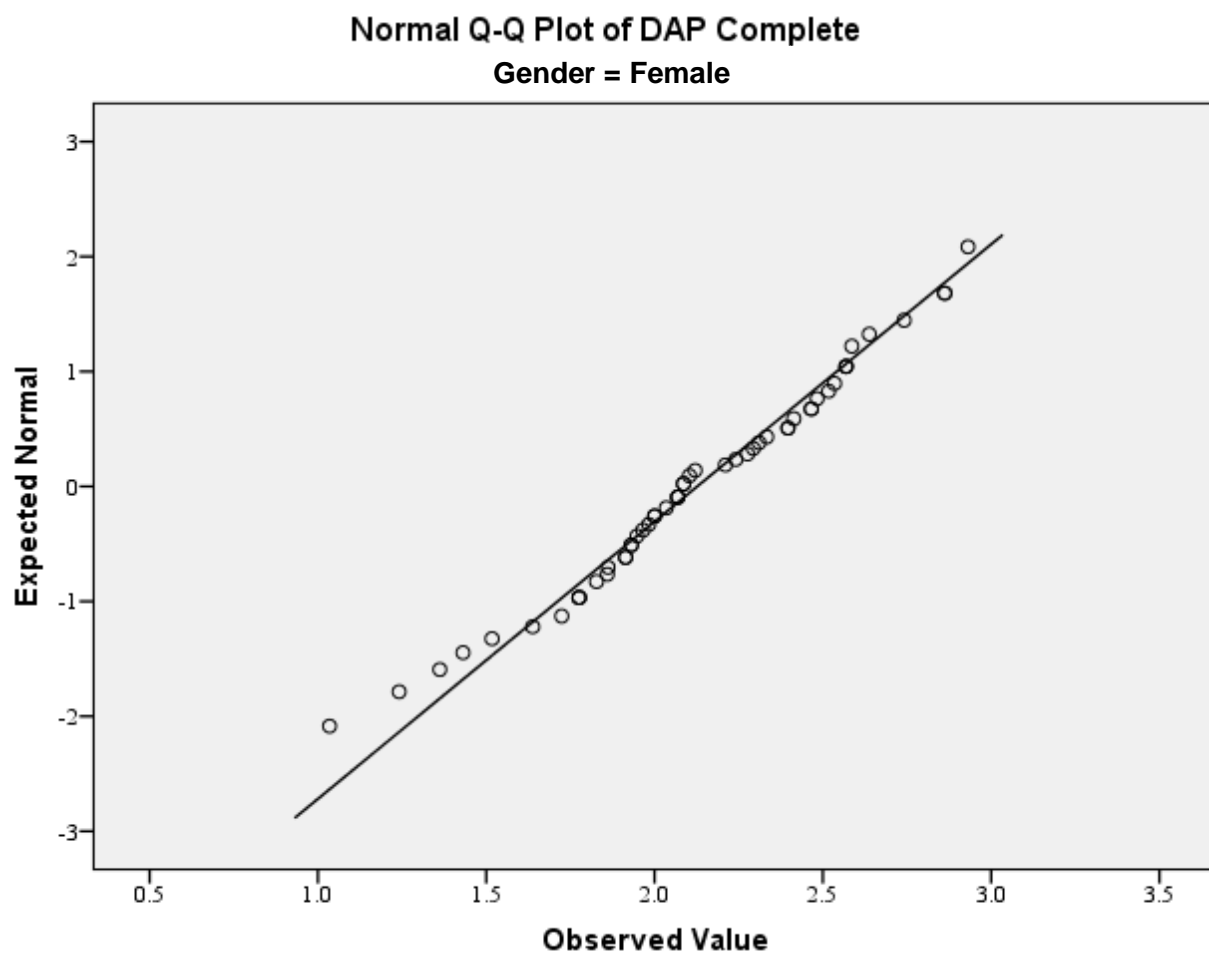Figure 29. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Complete for Male Students.

Figure 30. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Complete for Female Students.

CGPL Complete survey scores were normally distributed with a skewness of -0.377 (*SE* = 0.272) and kurtosis of -0.543 (*SE* = 0.538)
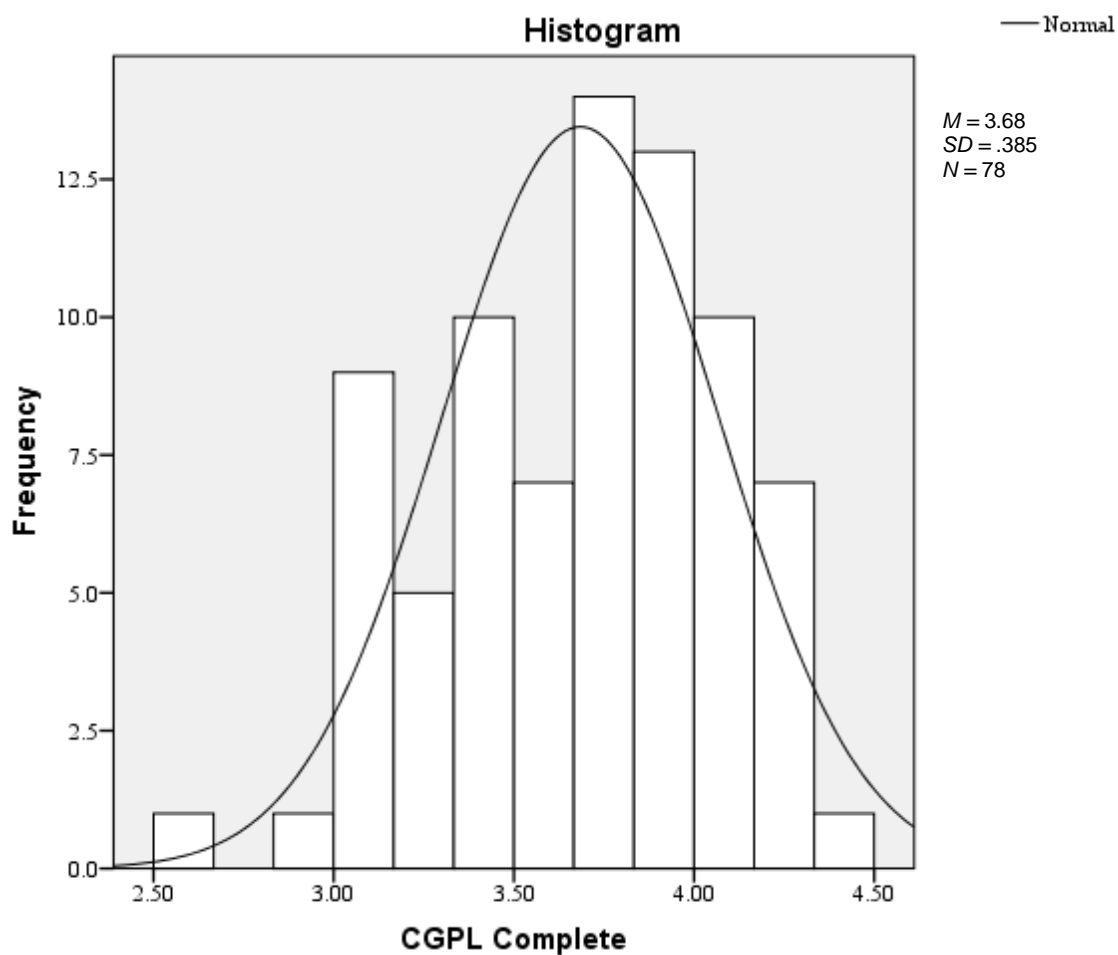

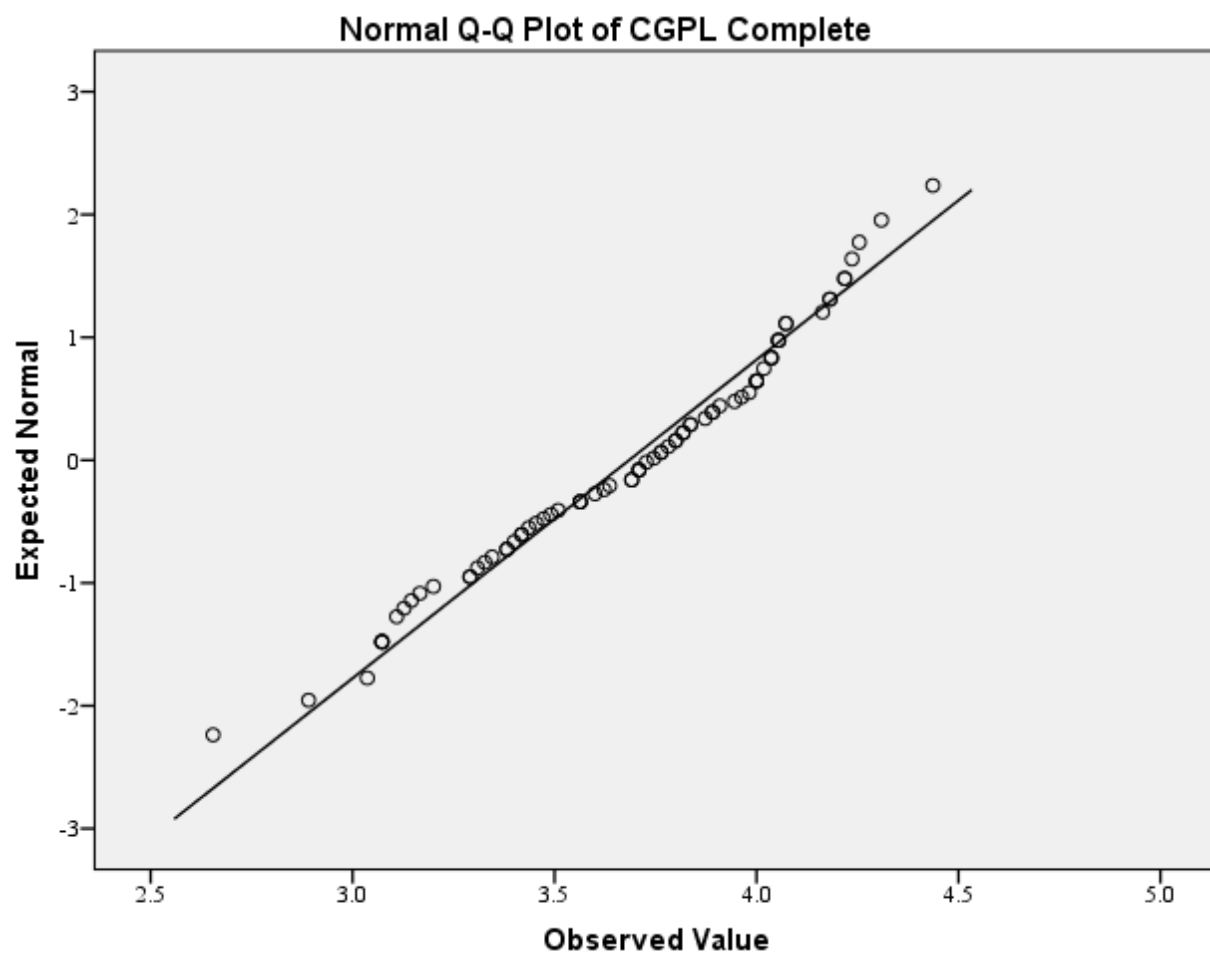Figure 31. Histogram of CGPL Complete.

Figure 32. Normal Q-Q Plot of CGPL Complete.

CGPL Complete scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of -0.473 (*SE* = 0.464) and kurtosis of 0.523 (*SE* = 0.902) and for females with a skewness of -0.232 (*SE* = 0.327) and kurtosis of -0.833 (*SE* = 0.644).
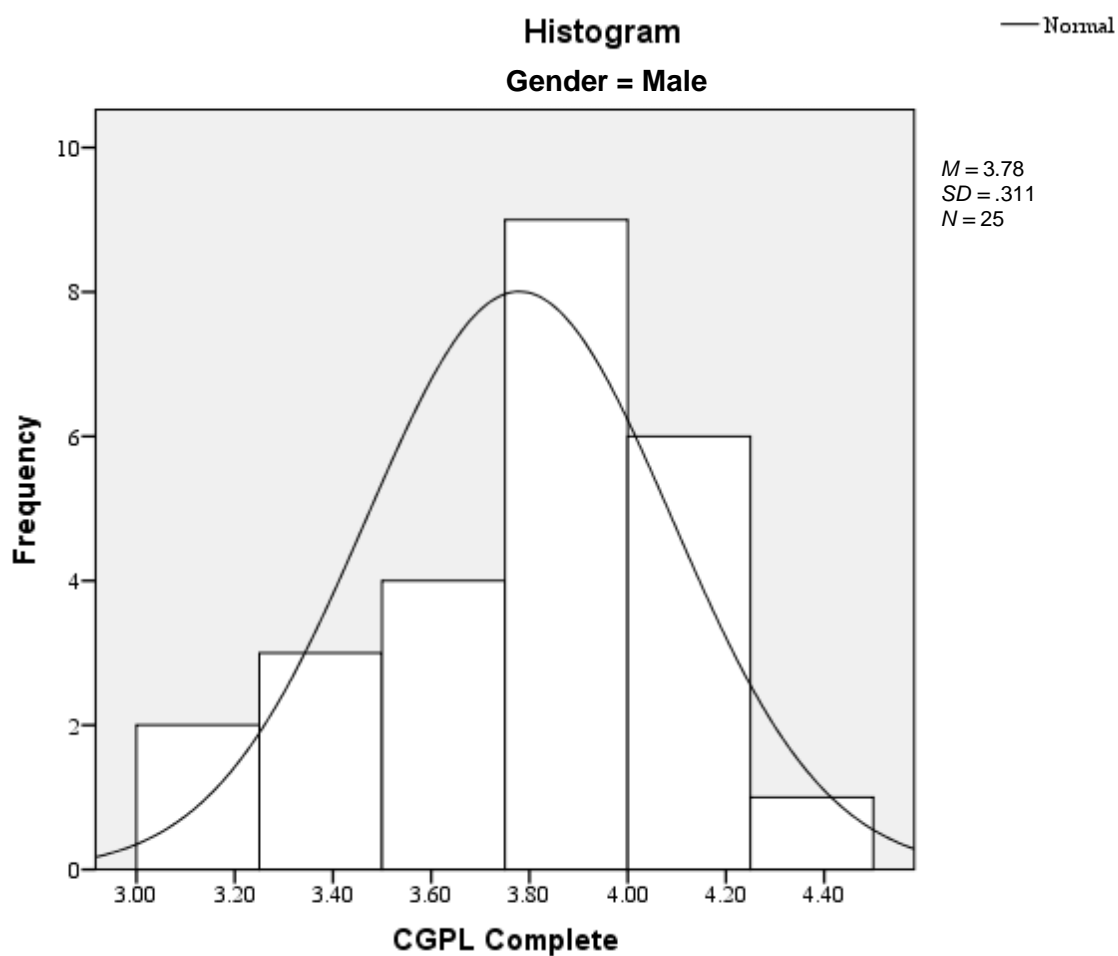

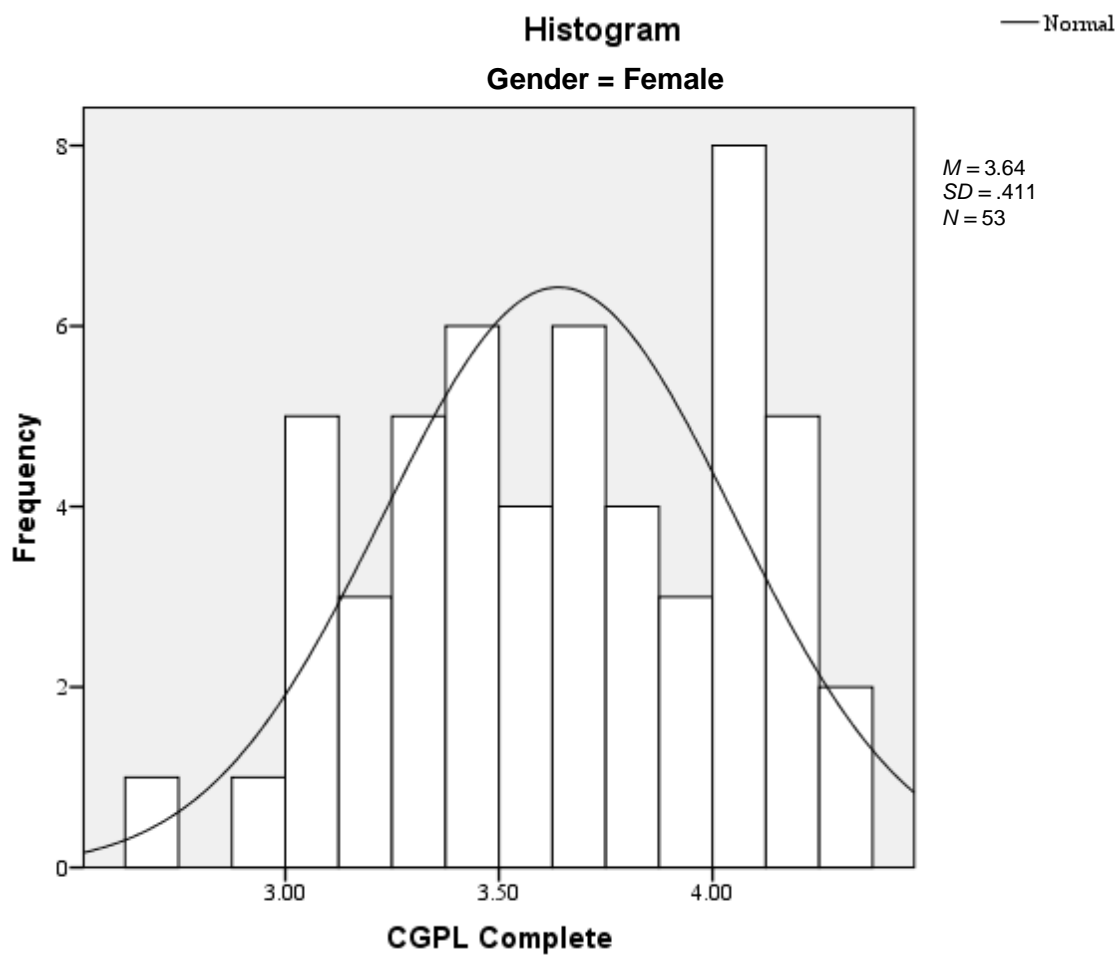Figure 33. Histogram of CGPL Complete for Male Students.

Figure 34. Histogram of CGPL Complete for Female Students.
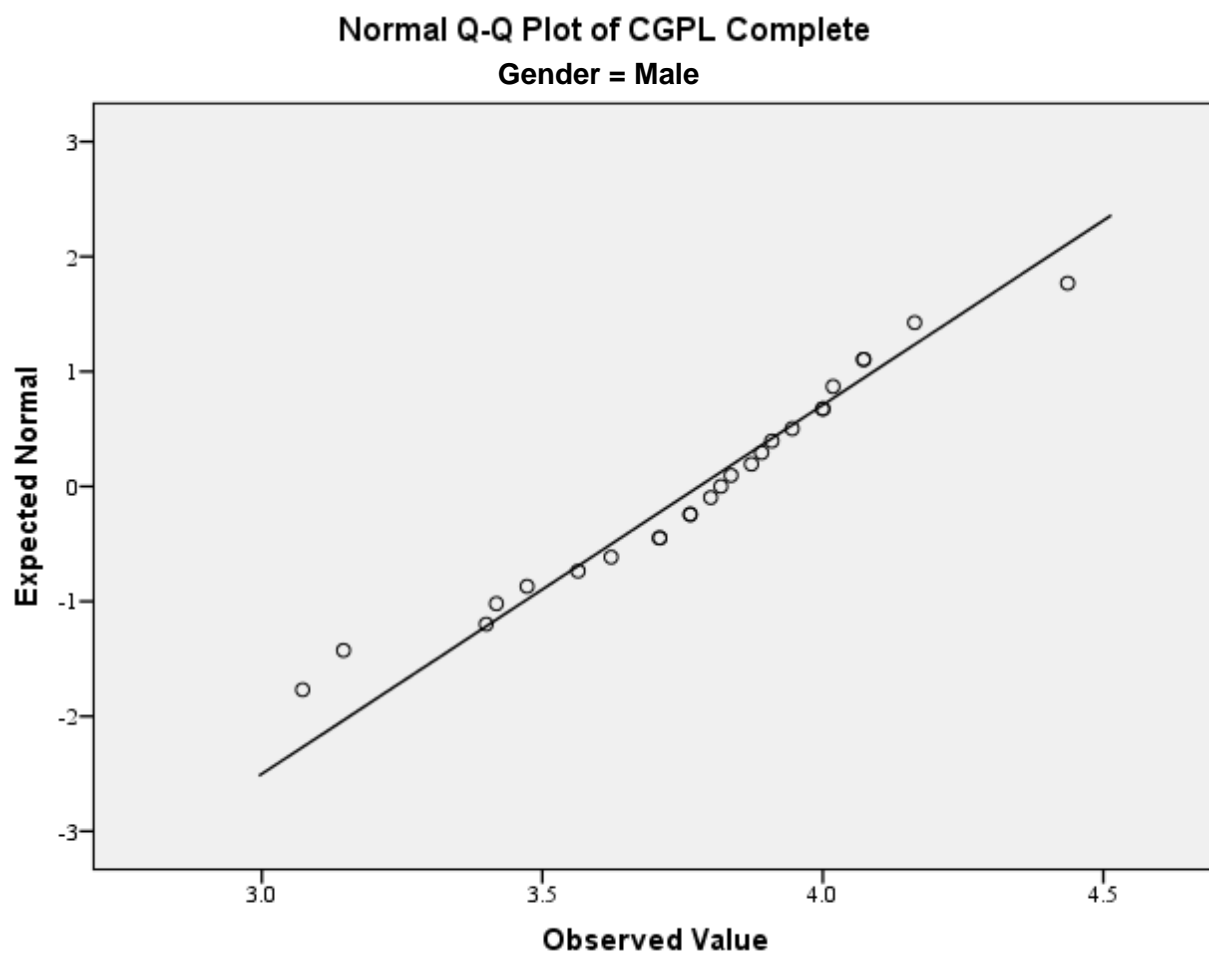
Figure 35. Normal Q-Q Plot of CGPL Complete for Male Students.
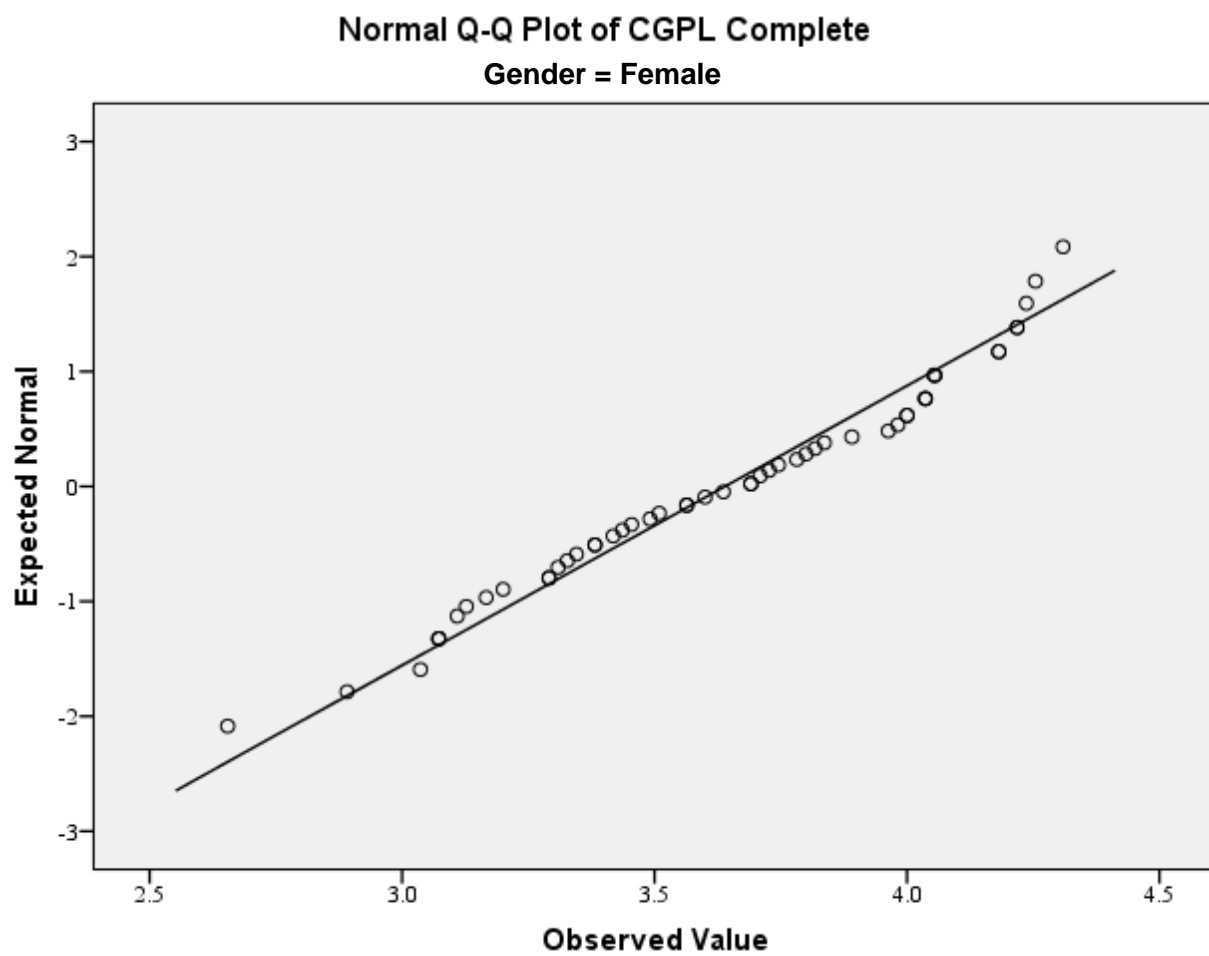
Figure 36. Normal Q-Q Plot of CGPL Complete for Female Students.

The three dimensions of CGPL survey included Relationships, Organizational
Attributes, and Personal Development. Each dimension was analyzes separately for
skewness and kurtosis.

CGPL Relationships scores were not normally distributed with a slightly negative
skewness of -0.718 ($SE = 0.272$) and kurtosis of -0.313 ($SE = 0.538$).

Figure 37. Histogram of CGPL Relationships.

Figure 38. Normal Q-Q Plot of CGPL Relationships.

CGPL Relationships scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of -0.804 (*SE* = 0.464) and kurtosis of 0.055 (*SE* = 0.902) and for females with a skewness of 0.595 (*SE* = 0.327) and kurtosis of 0.610 (*SE* = 0.644).
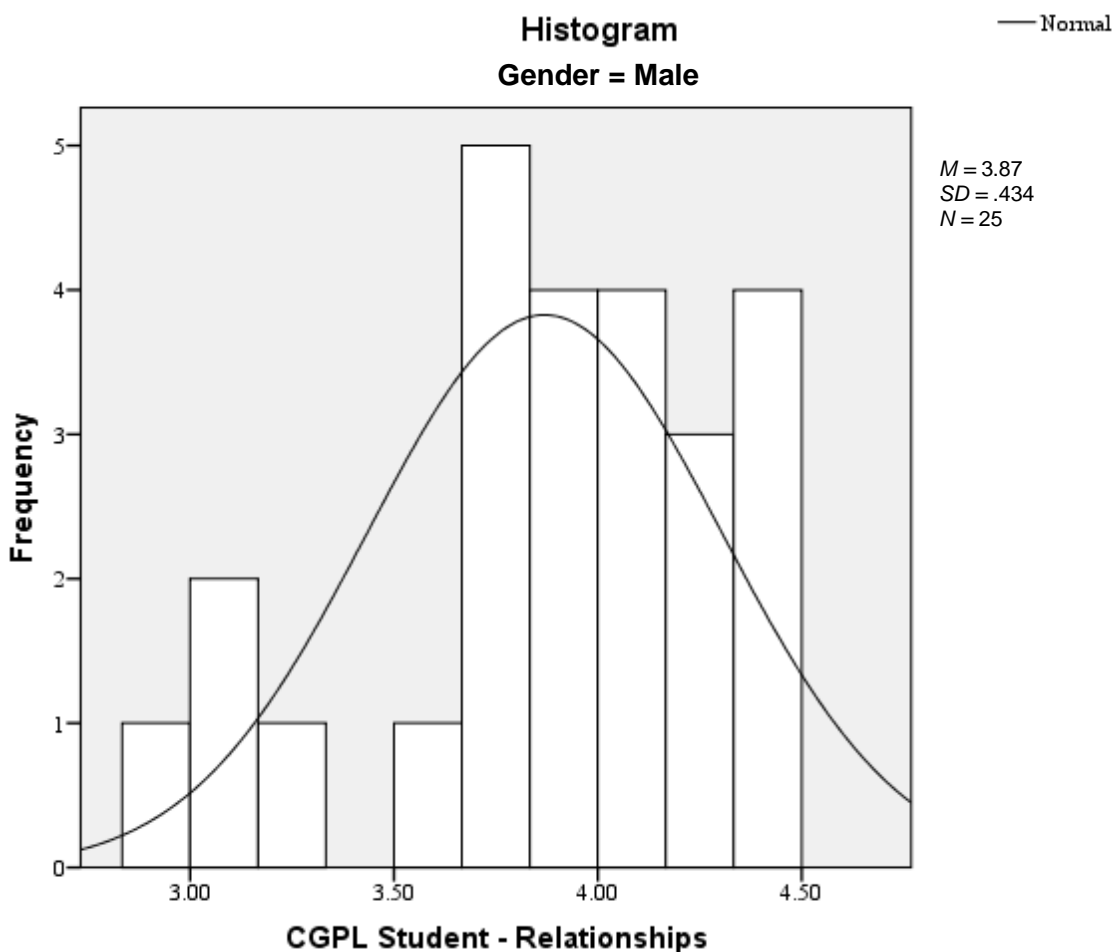
Figure 39. Histogram of CGPL Relationships for Male Students.
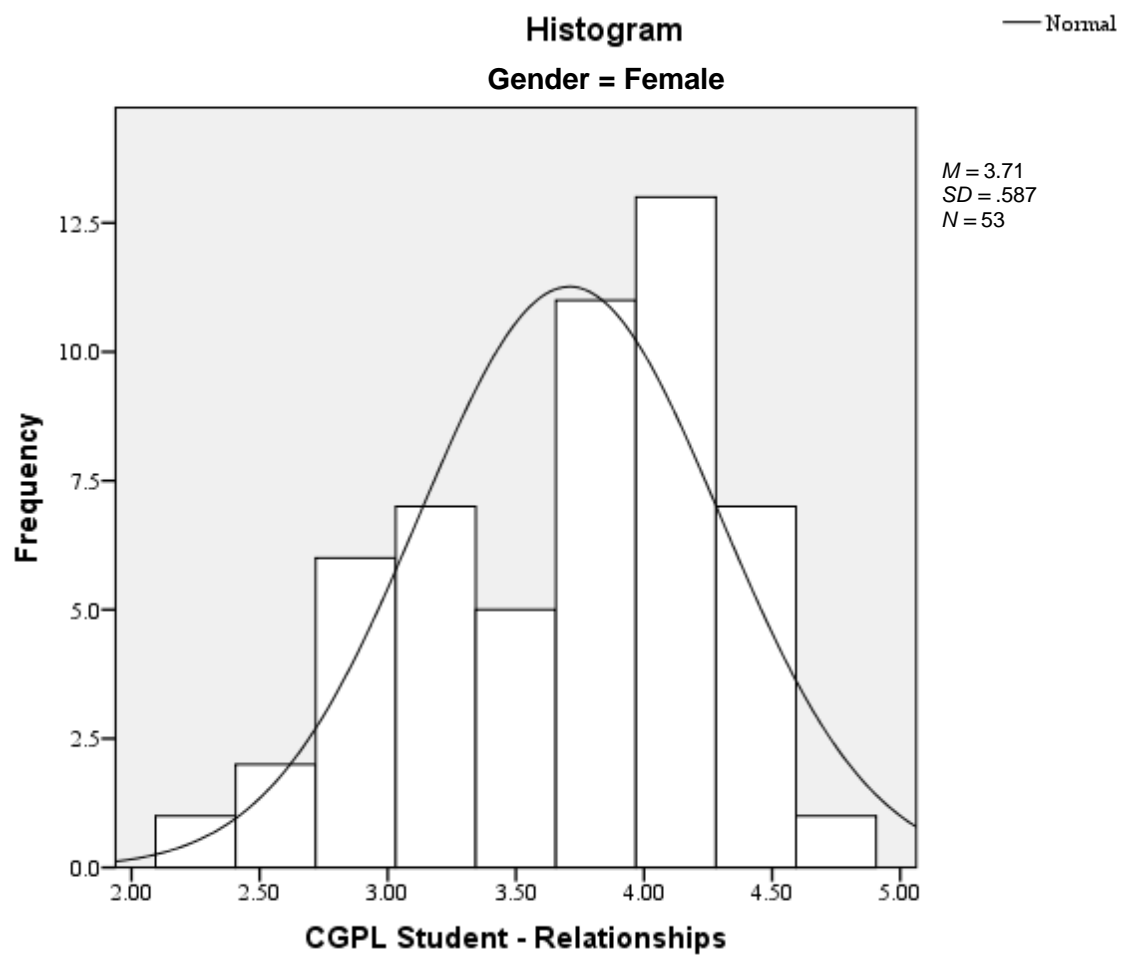
Figure 40. Histogram of CGPL Relationships for Female Students.
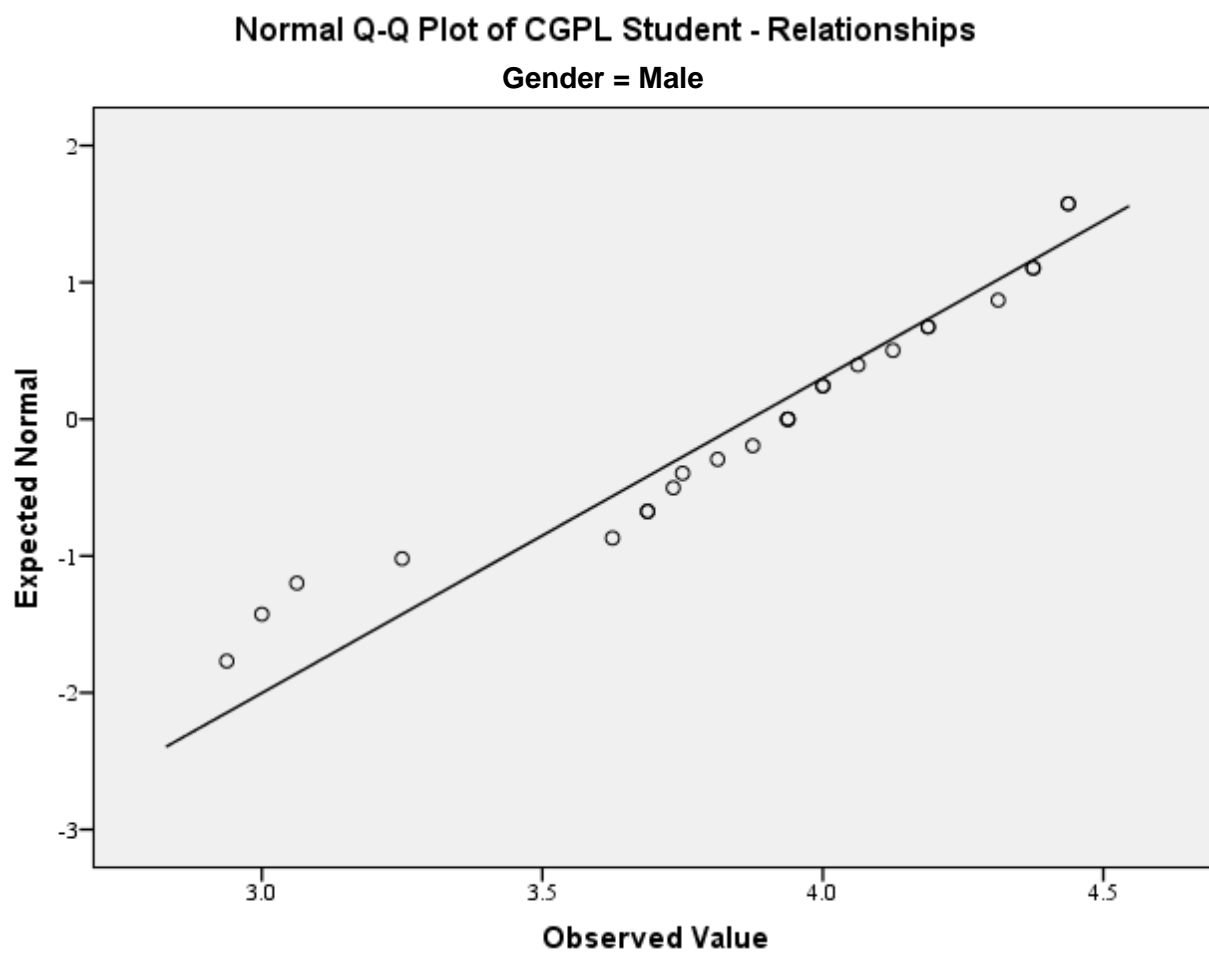
Figure 41. Normal Q-Q Plot of CGPL Relationships for Male Students.
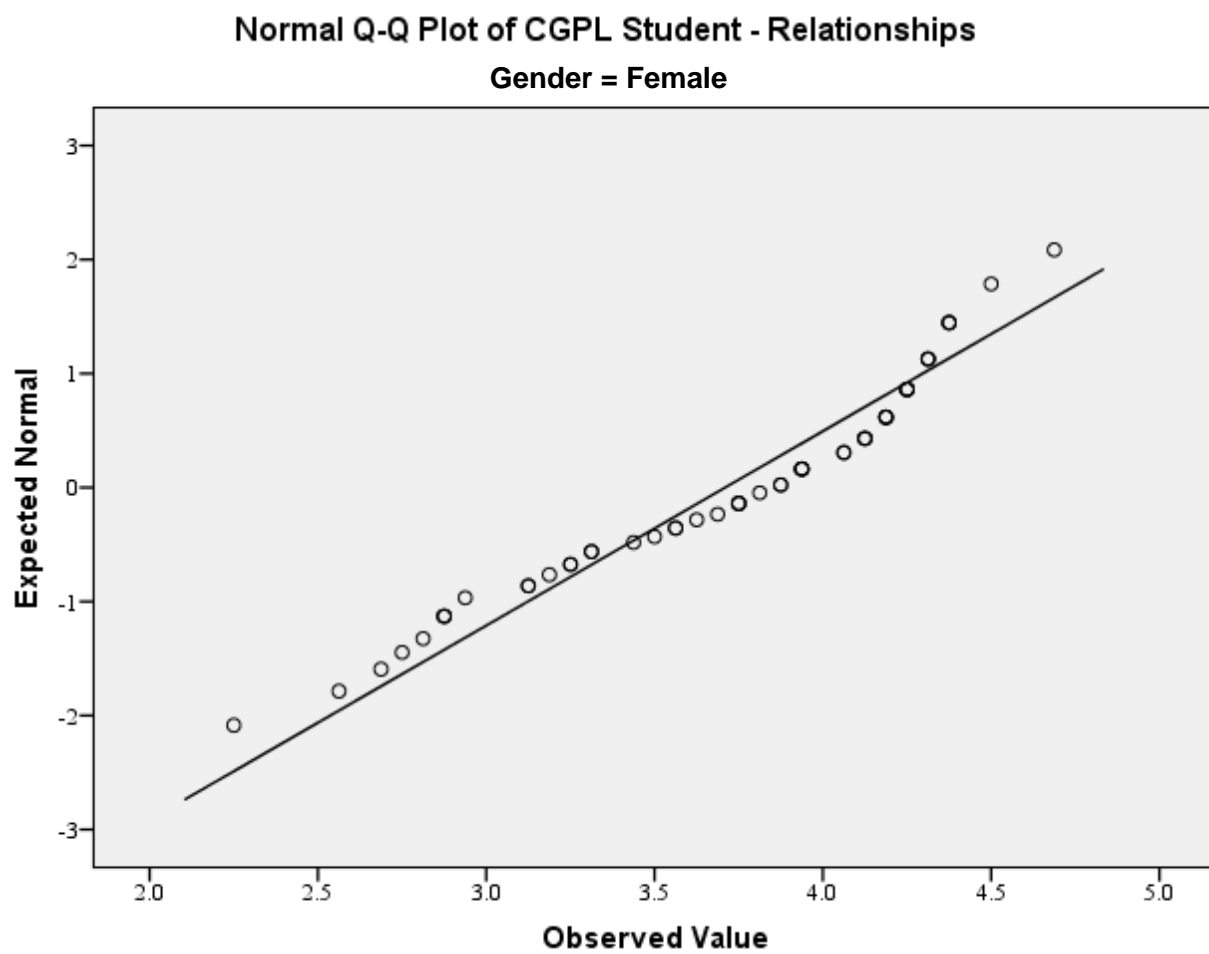
Figure 42. Normal Q-Q Plot of CGPL Relationships for Female Students.

CGPL Personal Development scores were not normally distributed with a slightly

negative skewness of -0.825 ($SE = 0.272$) and kurtosis of 1.647 ($SE = 0.538$).

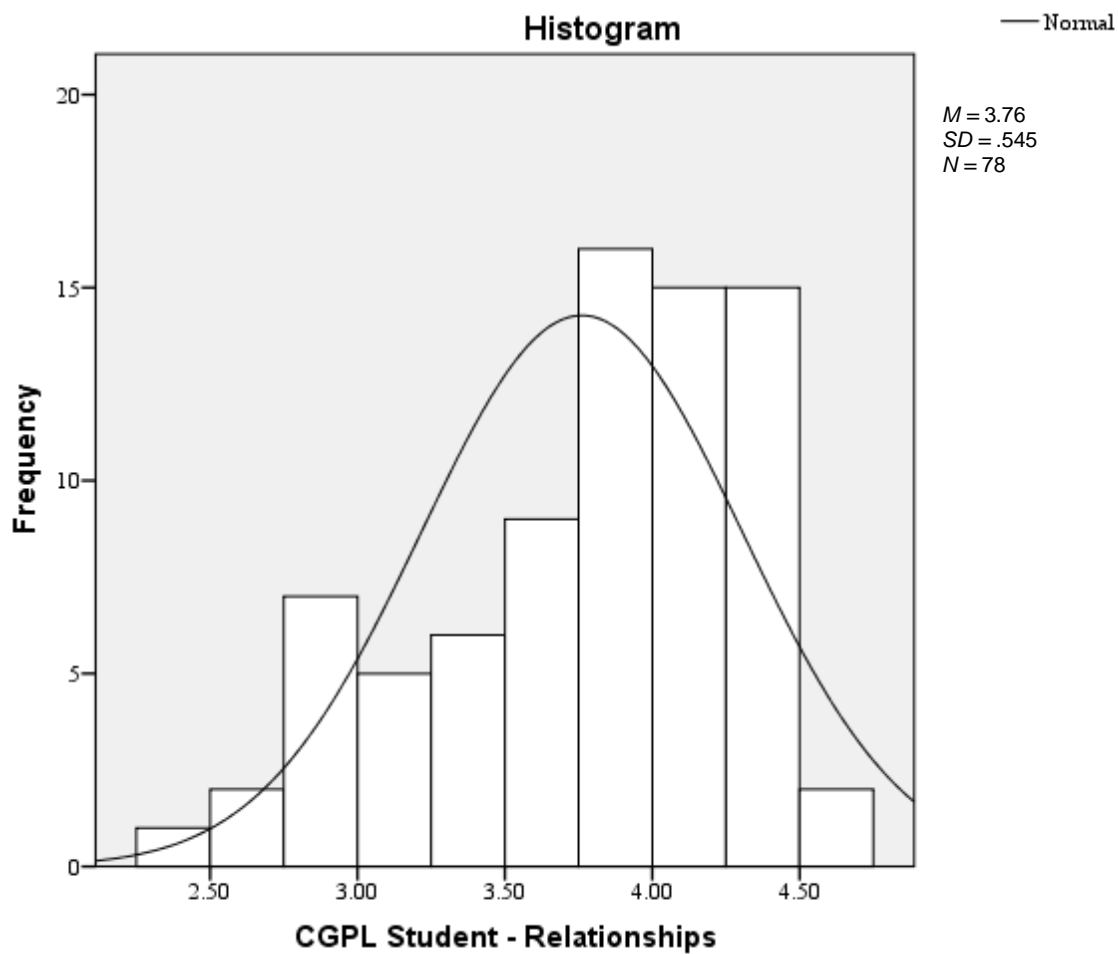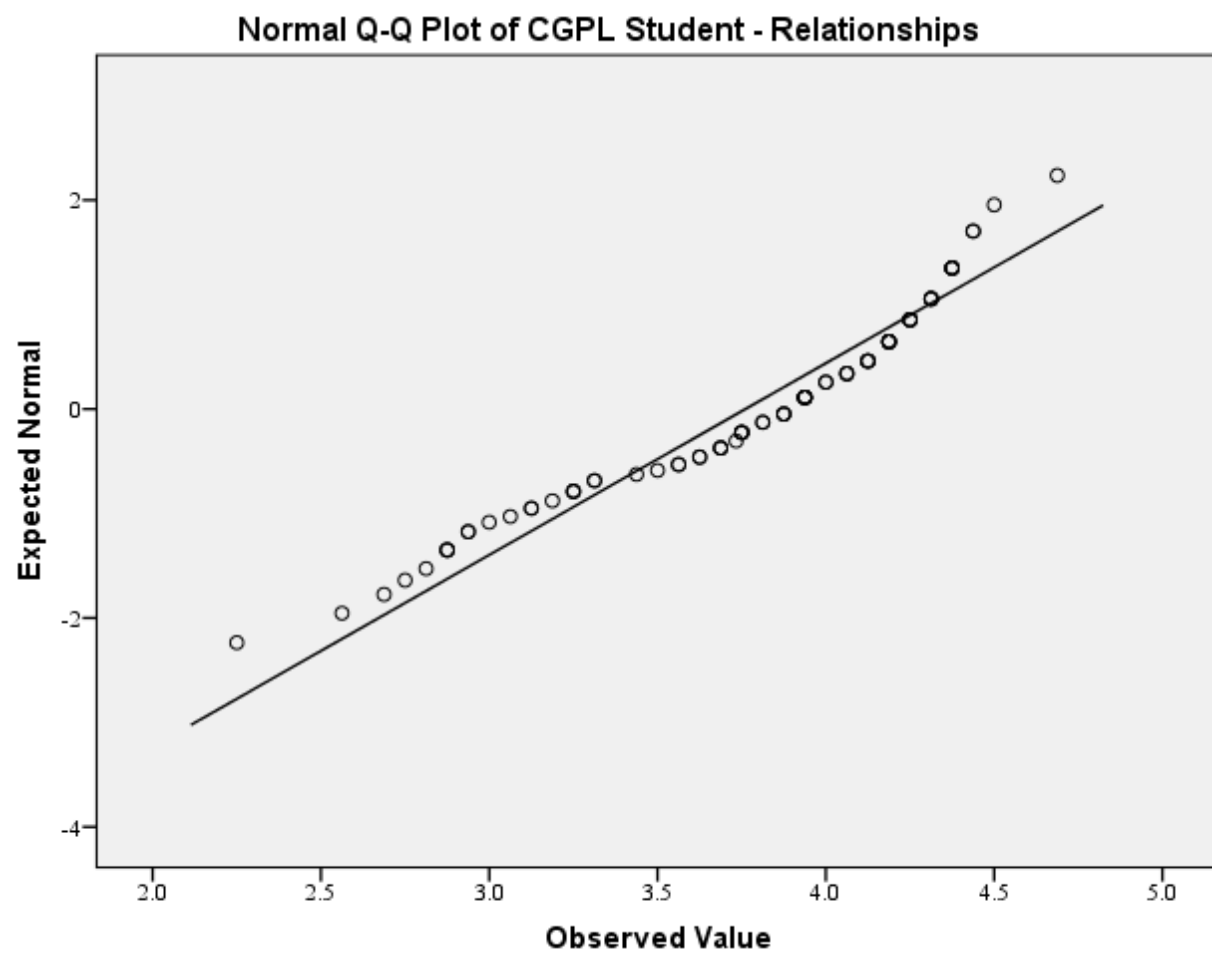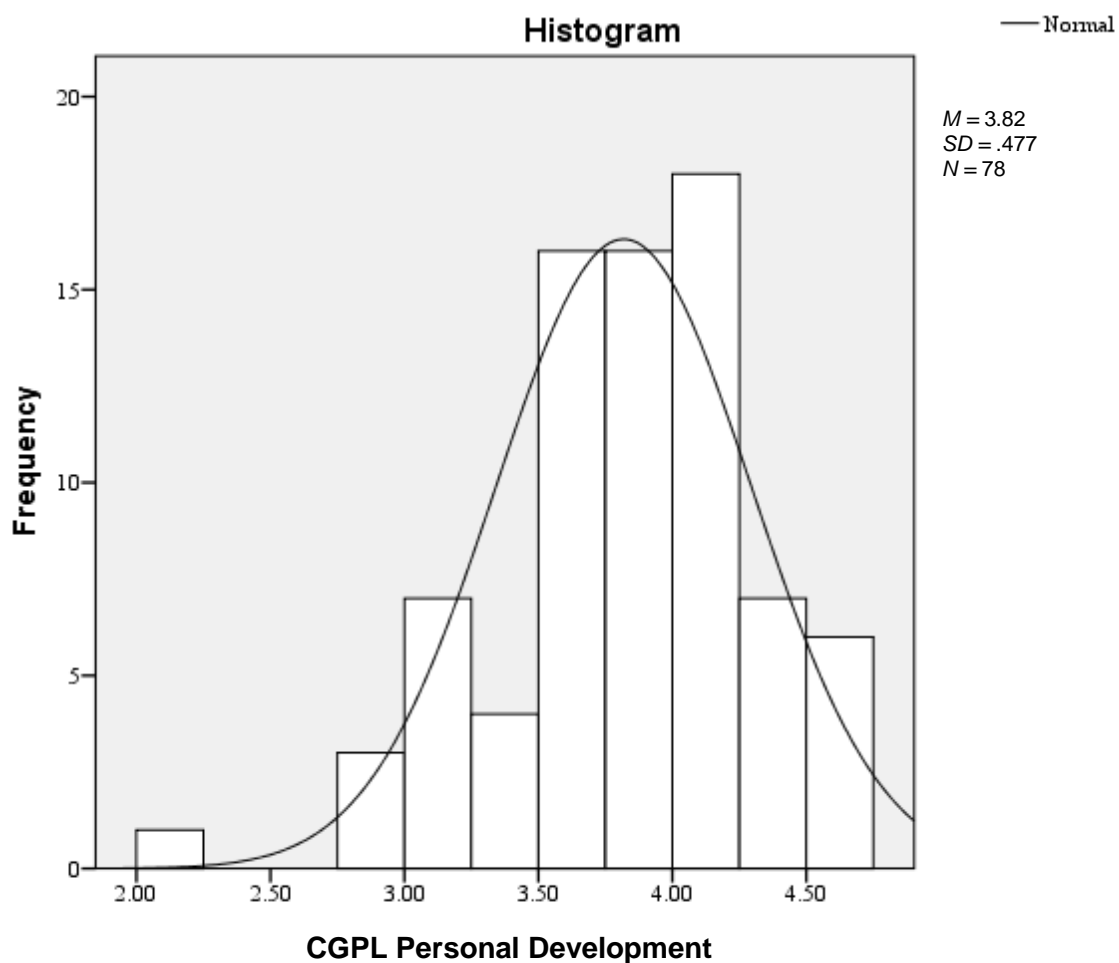Figure 43. Histogram of CGPL Personal Development.
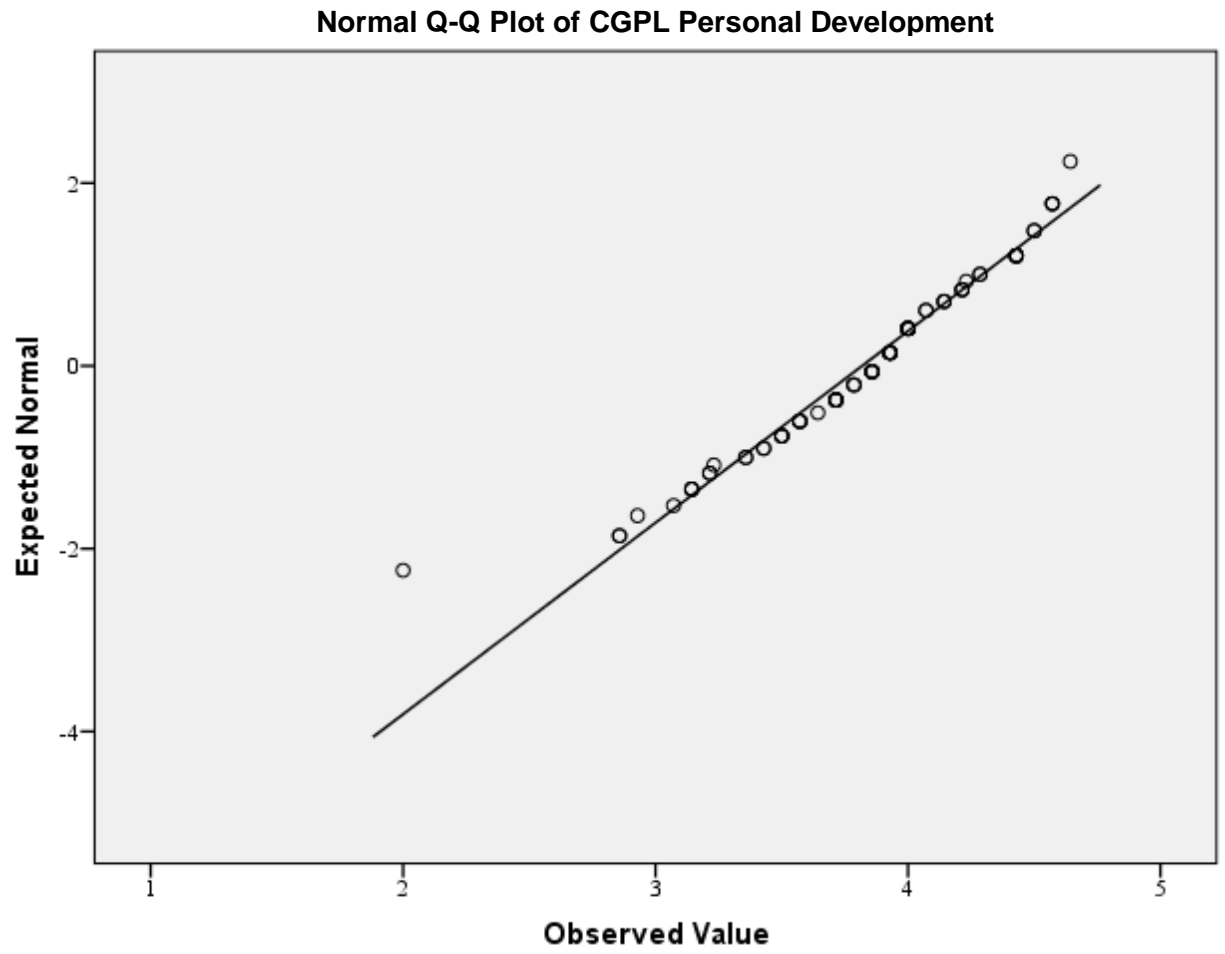
Figure 44. Normal Q-Q Plot of CGPL Personal Development.

CGPL Personal Development scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of 0.658 (*SE* = 0.464) and kurtosis of 0.736 (*SE* = 0.902). Female scores for CGPL Personal Development were approximately normally distributed with a skewness of -0.841 (*SE* = 0.327) and a slight positive kurtosis of 1.861 (*SE* = 0.644).
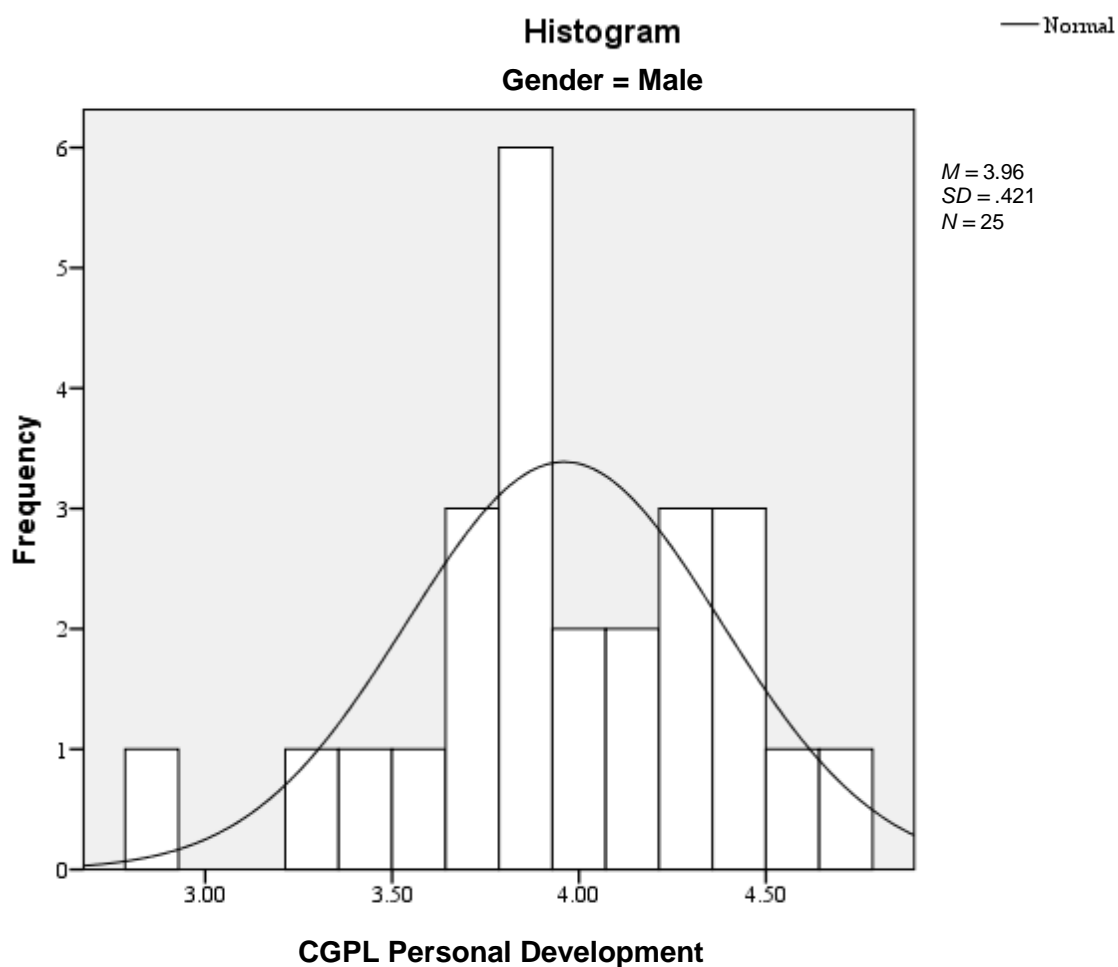
Figure 45. Histogram of CGPL Personal Development for Male Students.
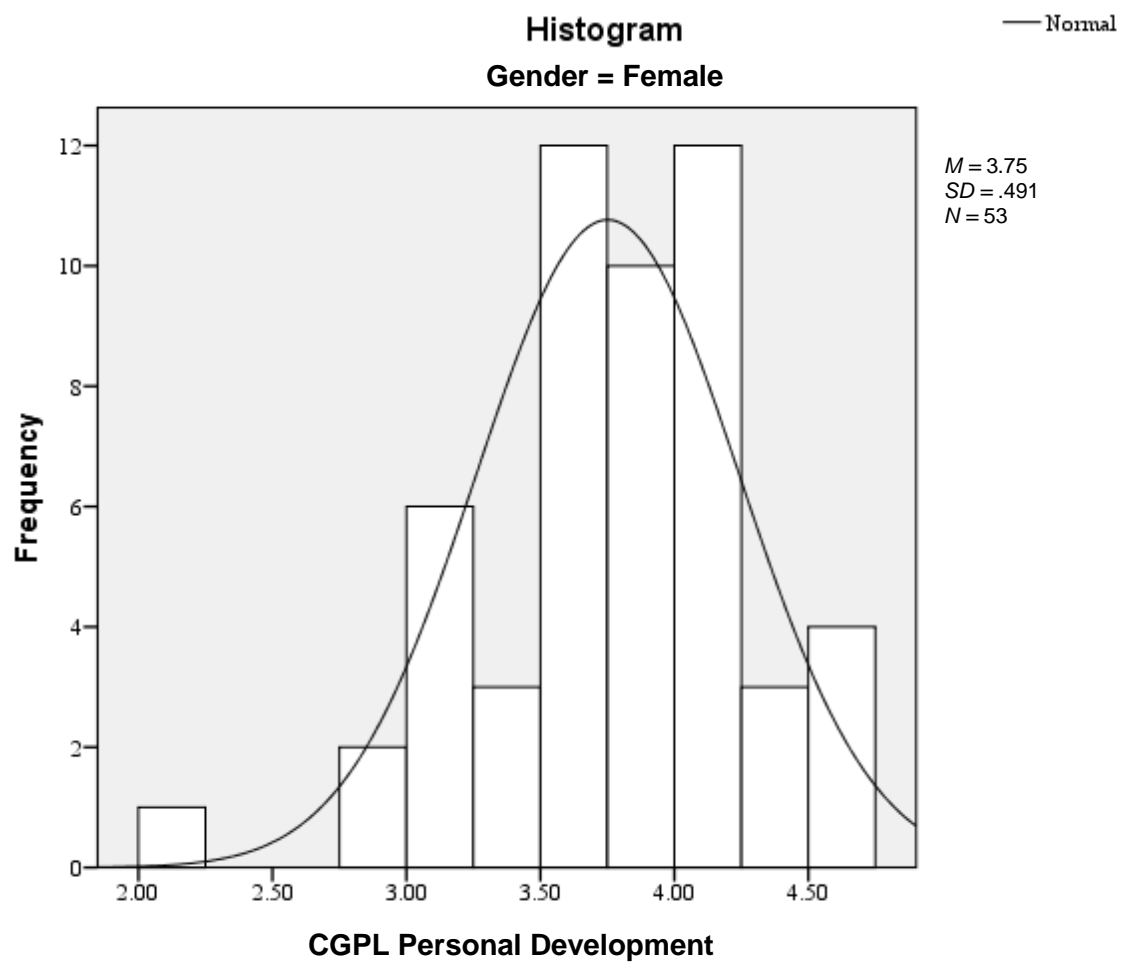
Figure 46. Histogram of CGPL Personal Development for Female Students.

Normal Q-Q Plot of CGPL Personal Development
Gender = Male
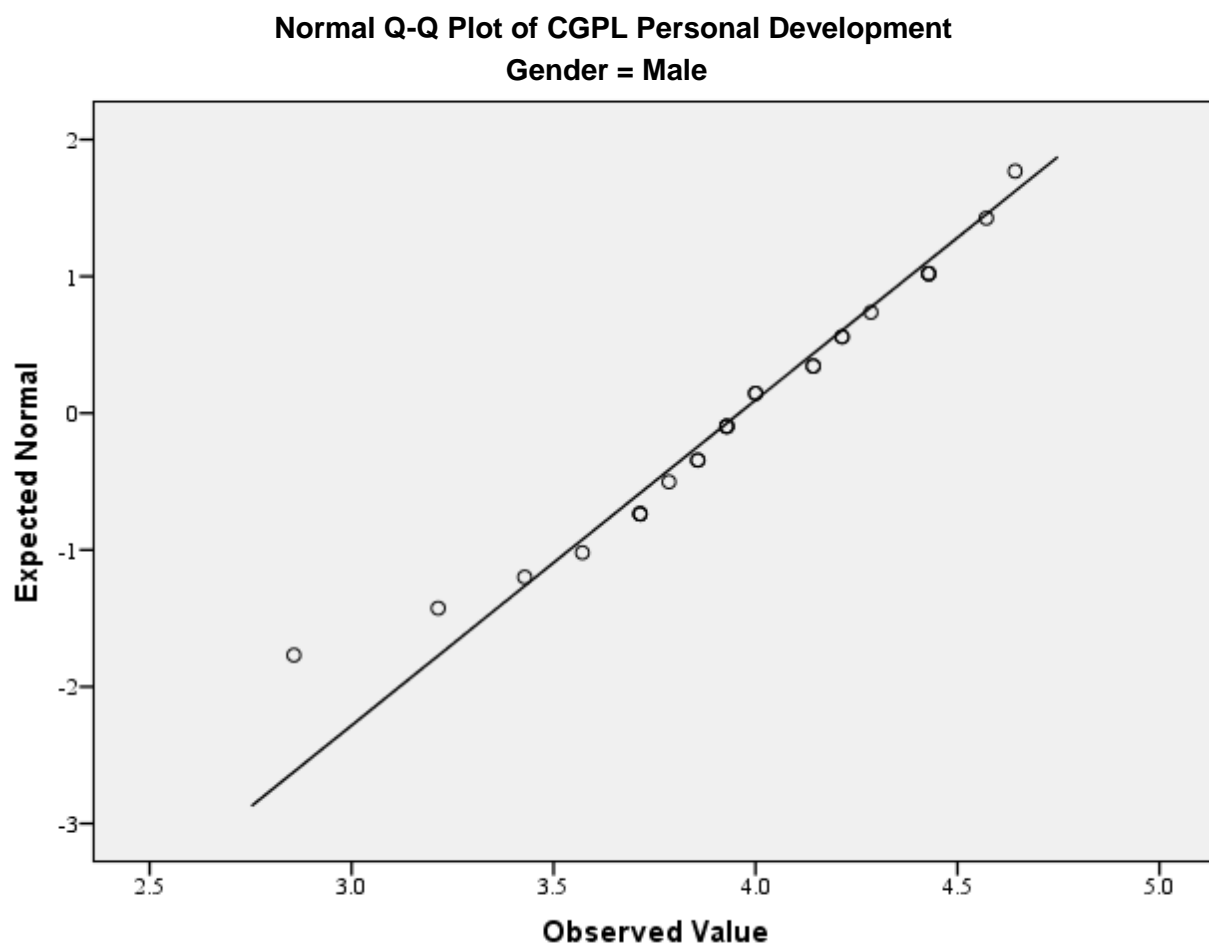
Figure 47. Normal Q-Q Plot of CGPL Personal Development for Male Students.
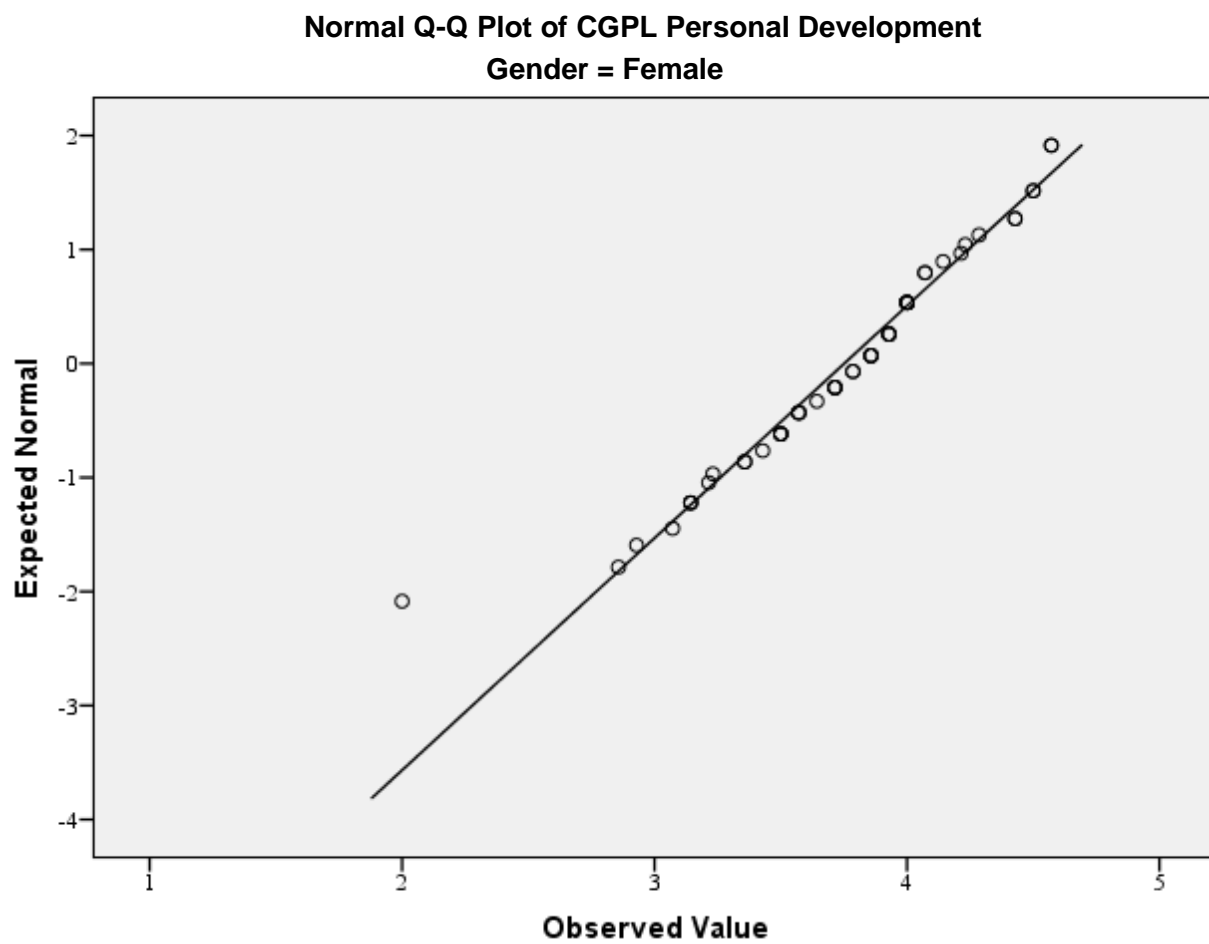
Figure 48. Normal Q-Q Plot of CGPL Personal Development for Female Students.

CGPL Organizational Attributes scores were normally distributed with a skewness of 0.051 (*SE* = 0.272) and kurtosis of 0.200 (*SE* = 0.538)
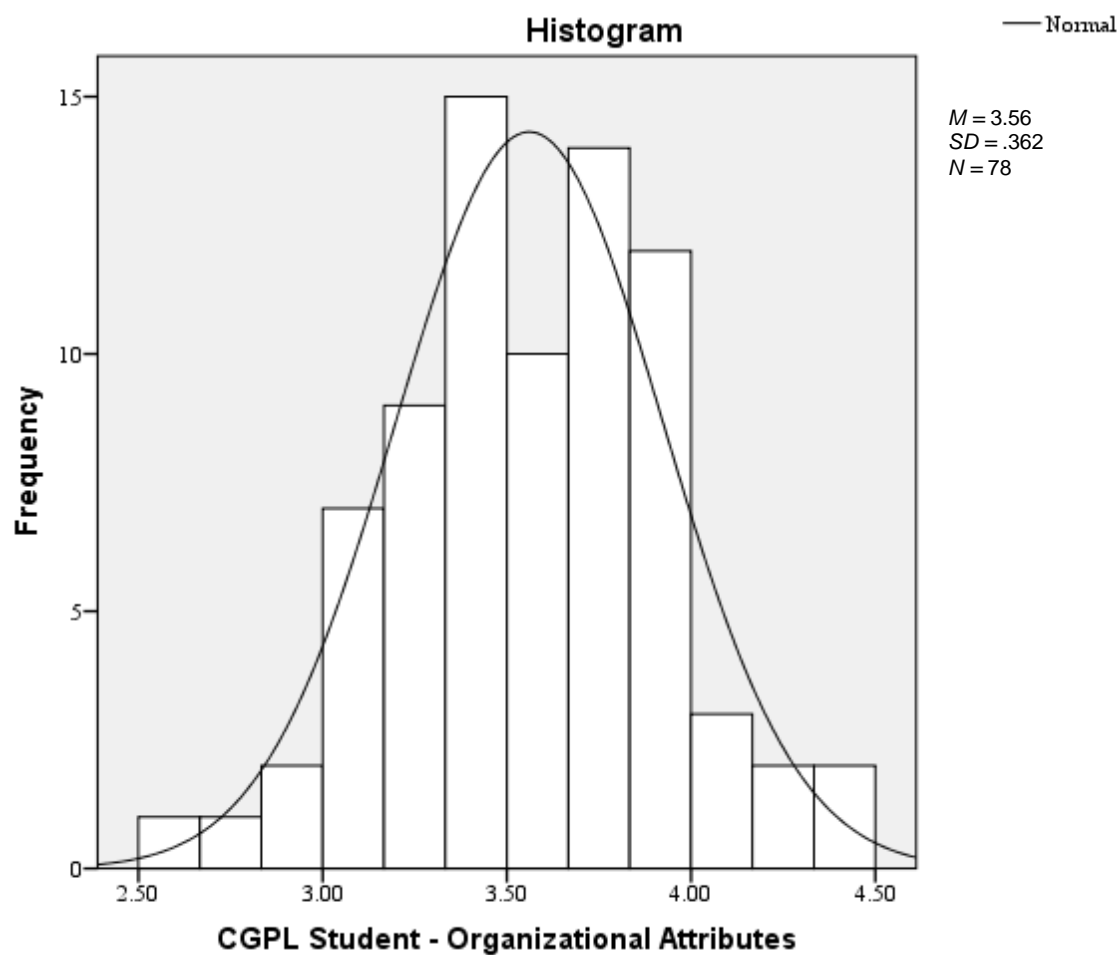
Figure 49. Histogram of CGPL Organizational Attributes.
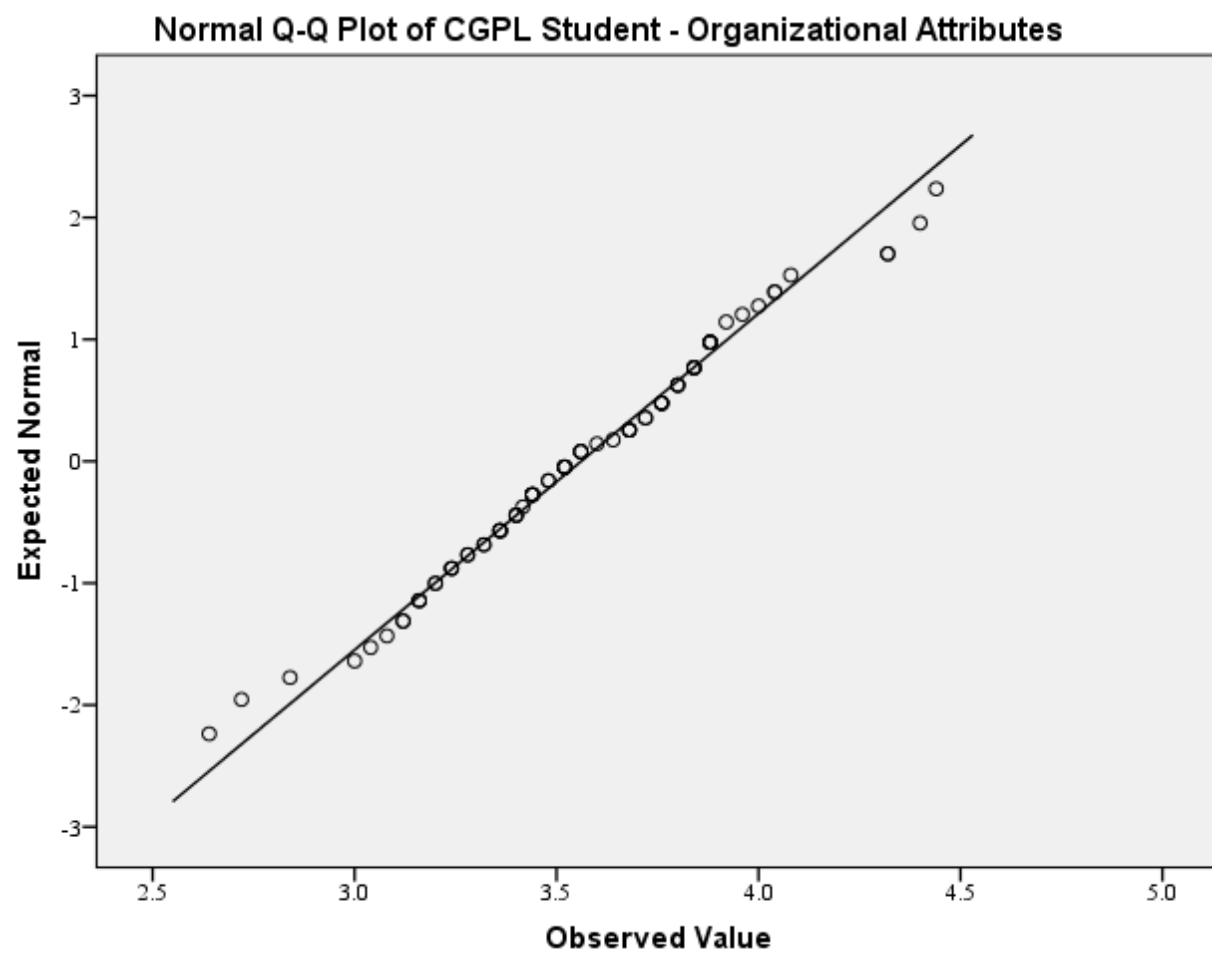
Figure 50. Normal Q-Q Plot of CGPL Organizational Attributes.

CGPL Organizational Attributes scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of 0.093 (*SE* = 0.464) and kurtosis of 0.125 (*SE* = 0.902) and for females with a skewness of 0.128 (*SE* = 0.327) and kurtosis of .179 (*SE* = 0.644).
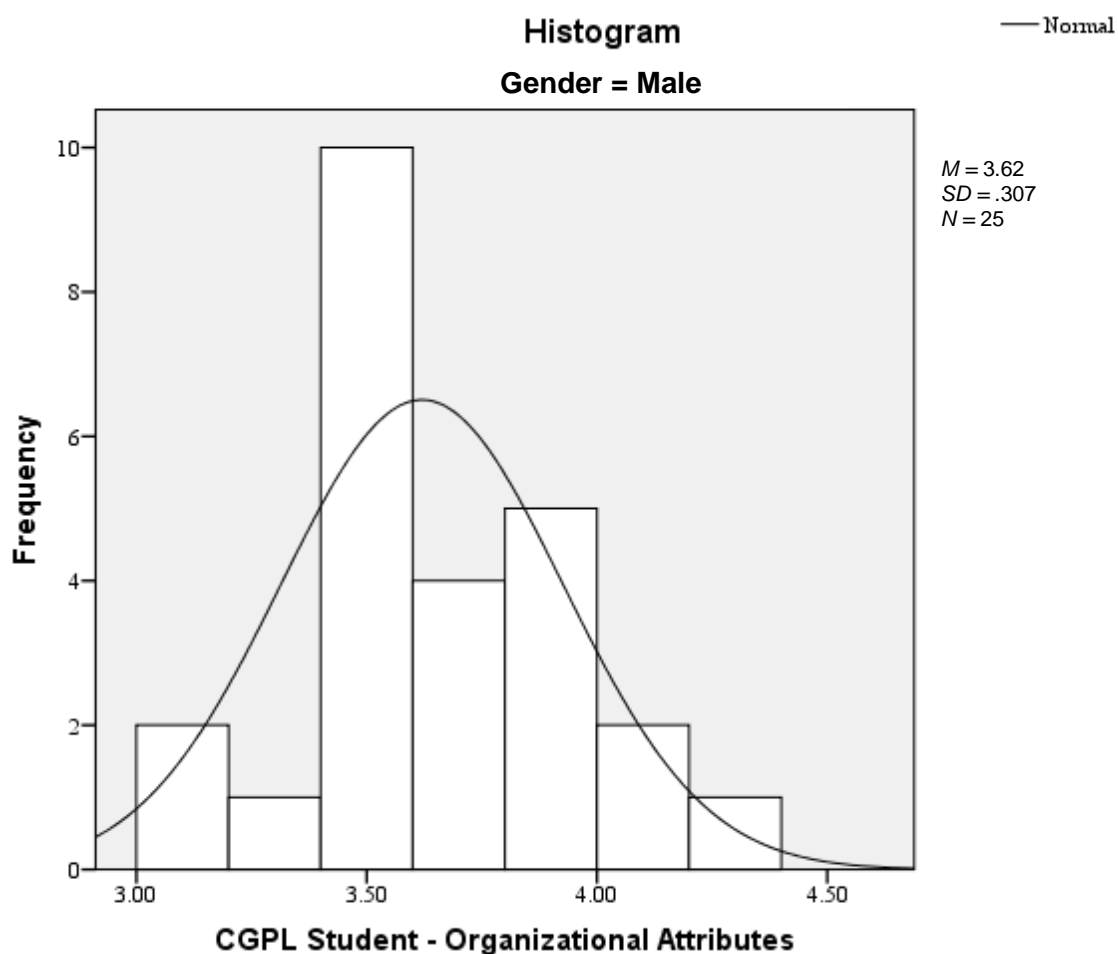
Figure 51. Histogram of CGPL Organizational Attributes for Male Students.
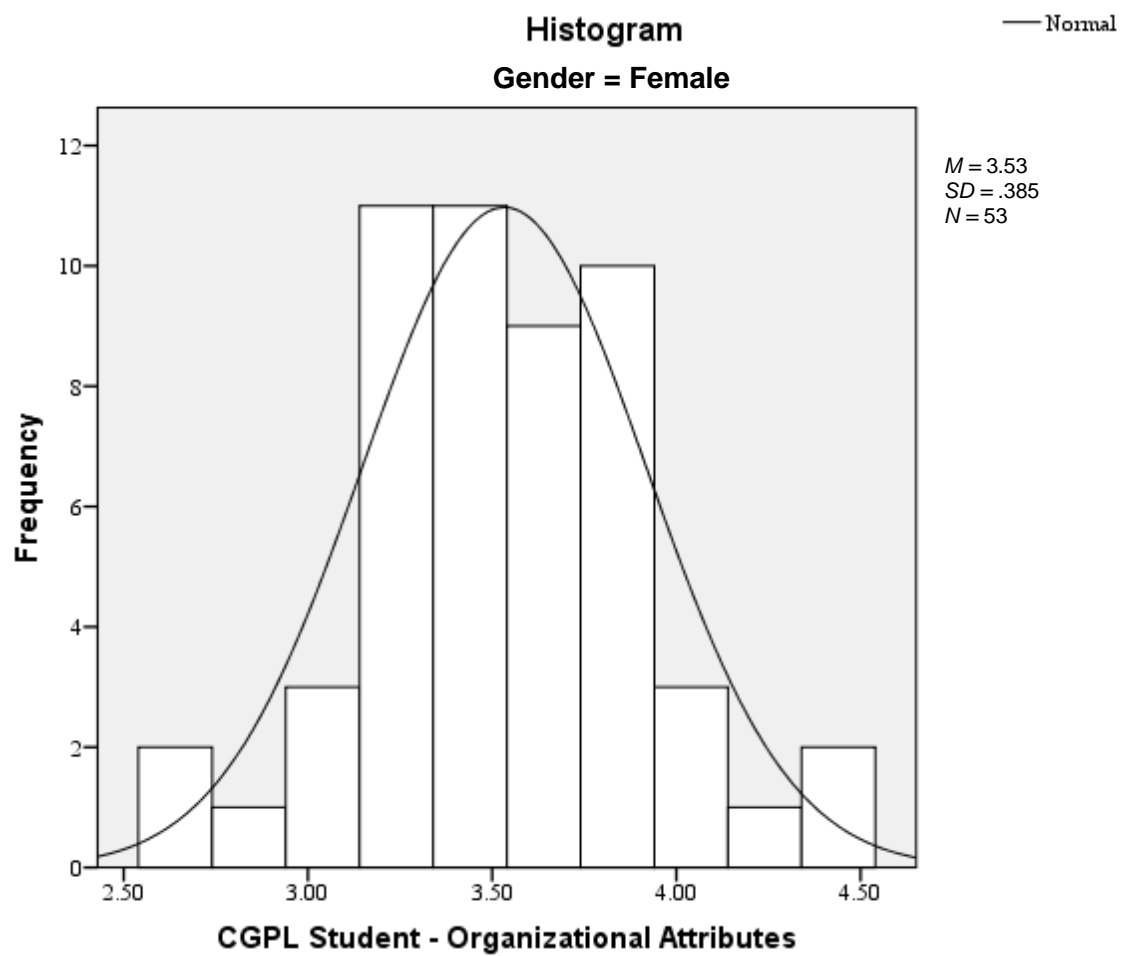
Figure 52. Histogram of CGPL Organizational Attributes for Female Students.
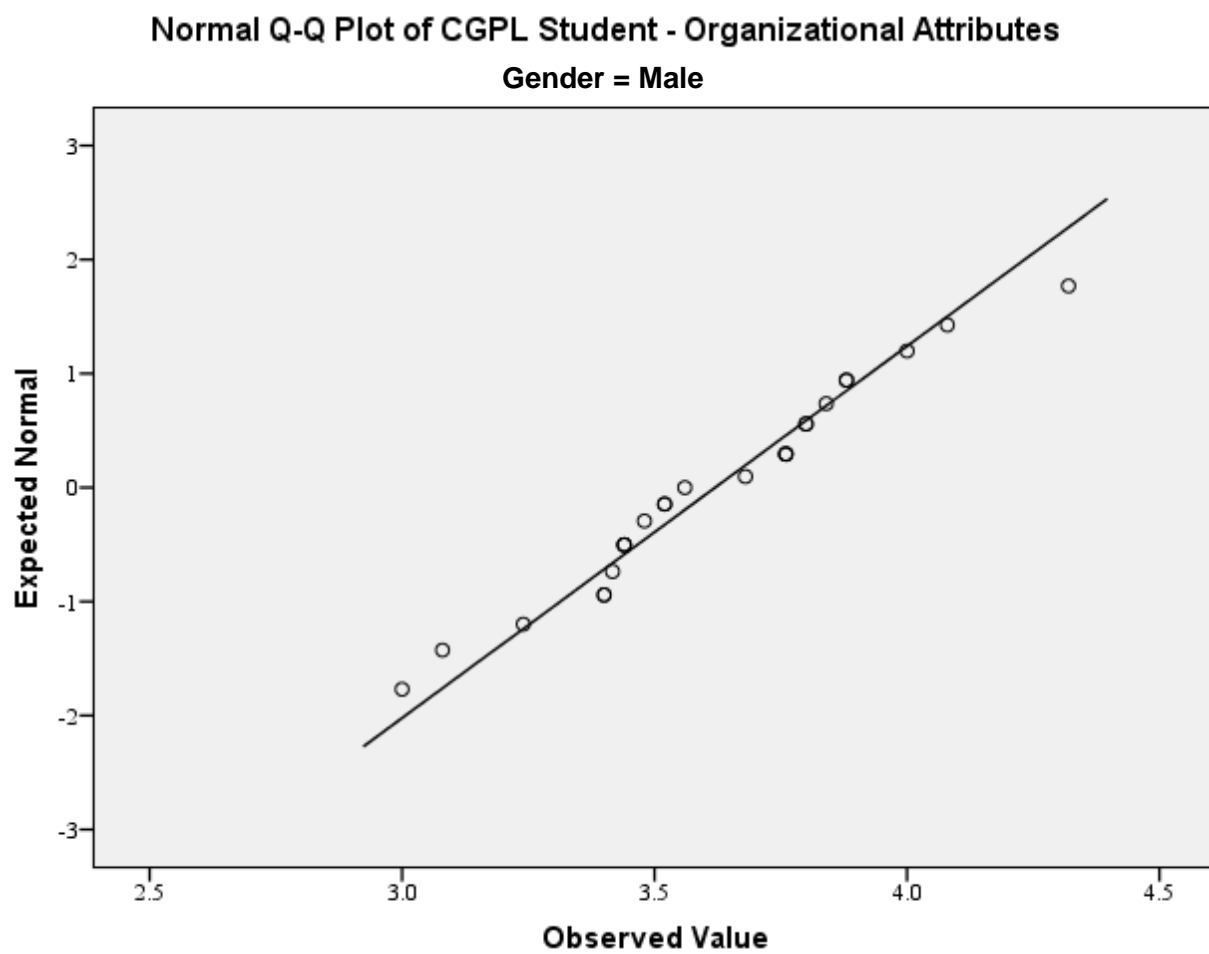
Figure 53. Normal Q-Q Plot of CGPL Organizational Attributes for Male Students.
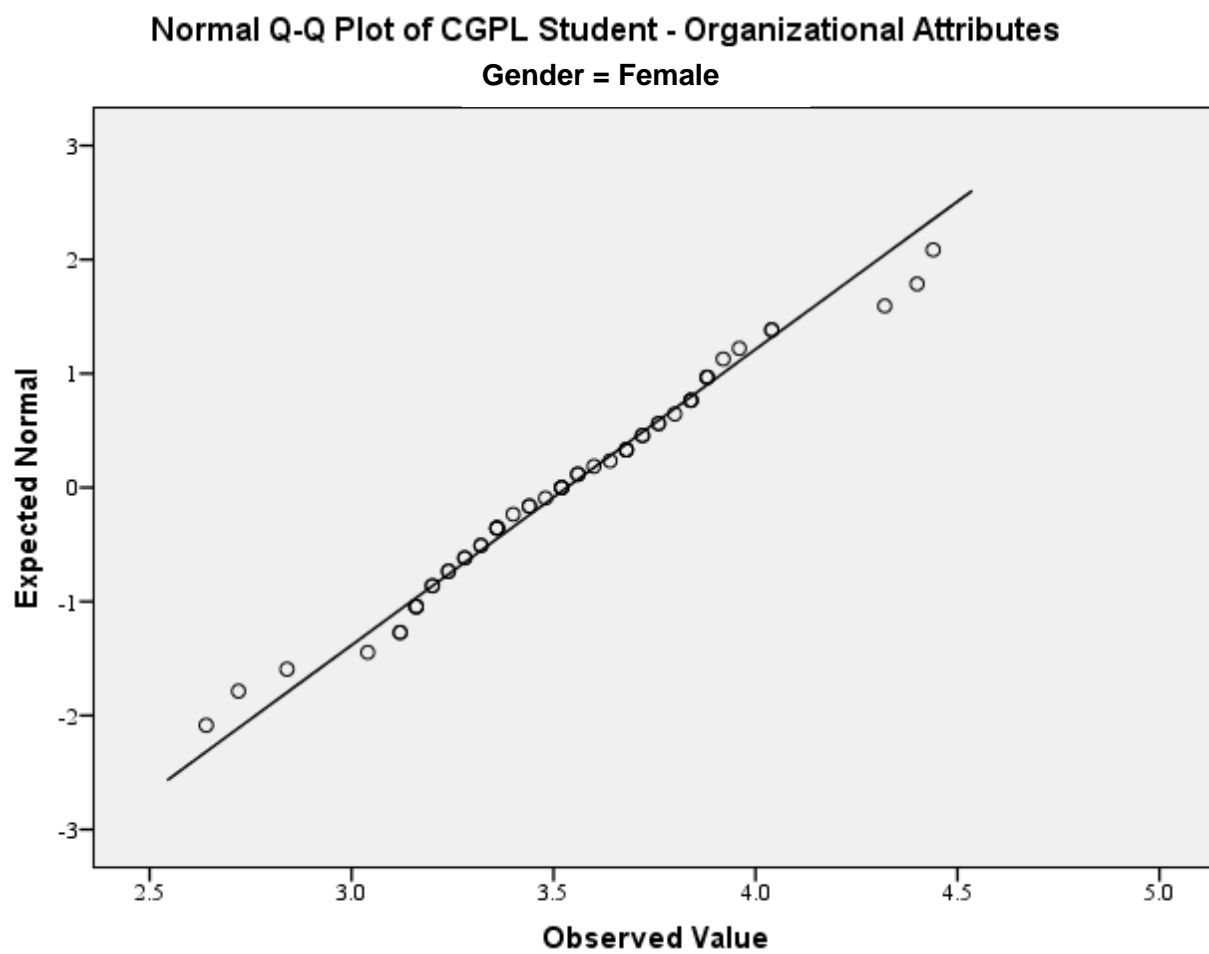
Figure 54. Normal Q-Q Plot of CGPL Organizational Attributes for Female Students.

The eight dimensions of the DAP survey included Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations, Constructive use of Time, Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies, and Positive Identity.

DAP Support scores were not normally distributed with a negative skewness of - 1.078 (*SE* = 0.272) and kurtosis of 0.821 (*SE* = 0.538).
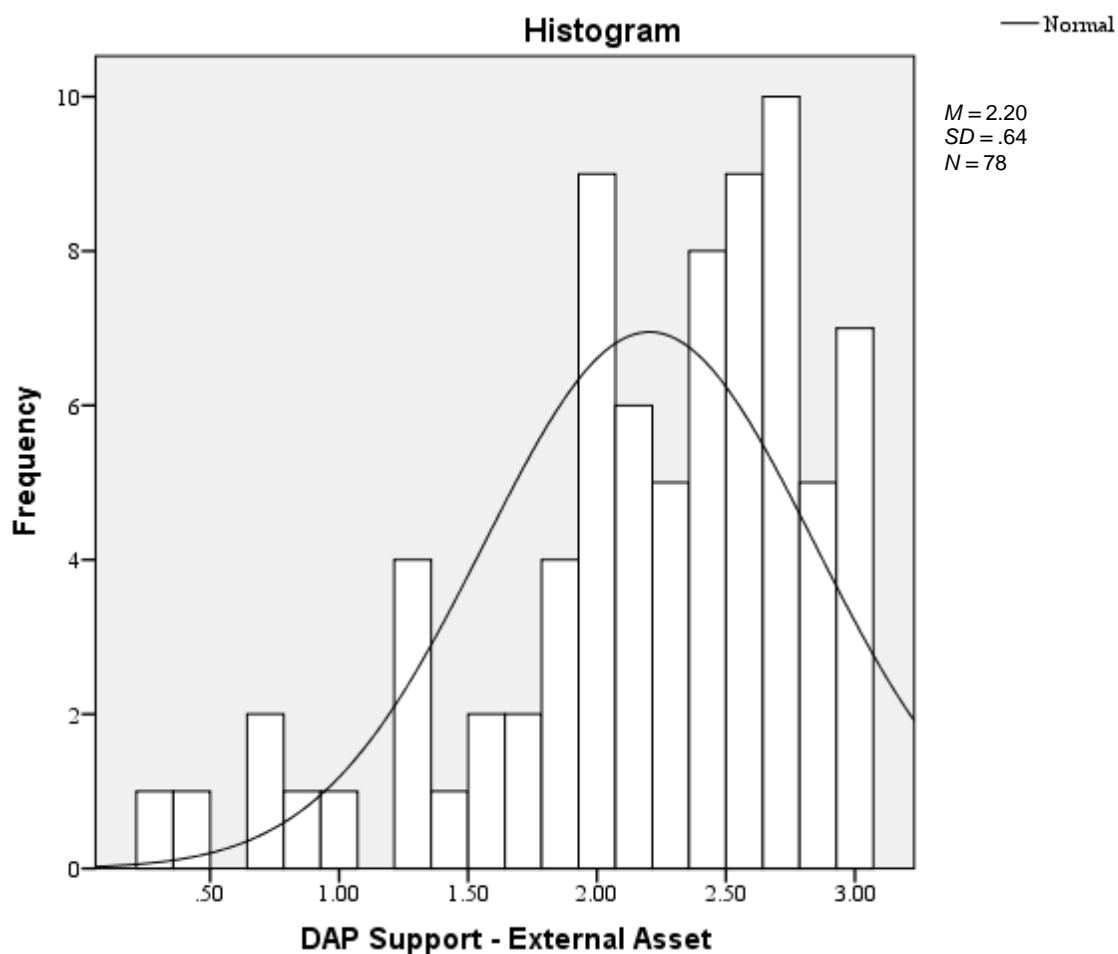
Figure 55. Histogram of DAP External Asset Support.
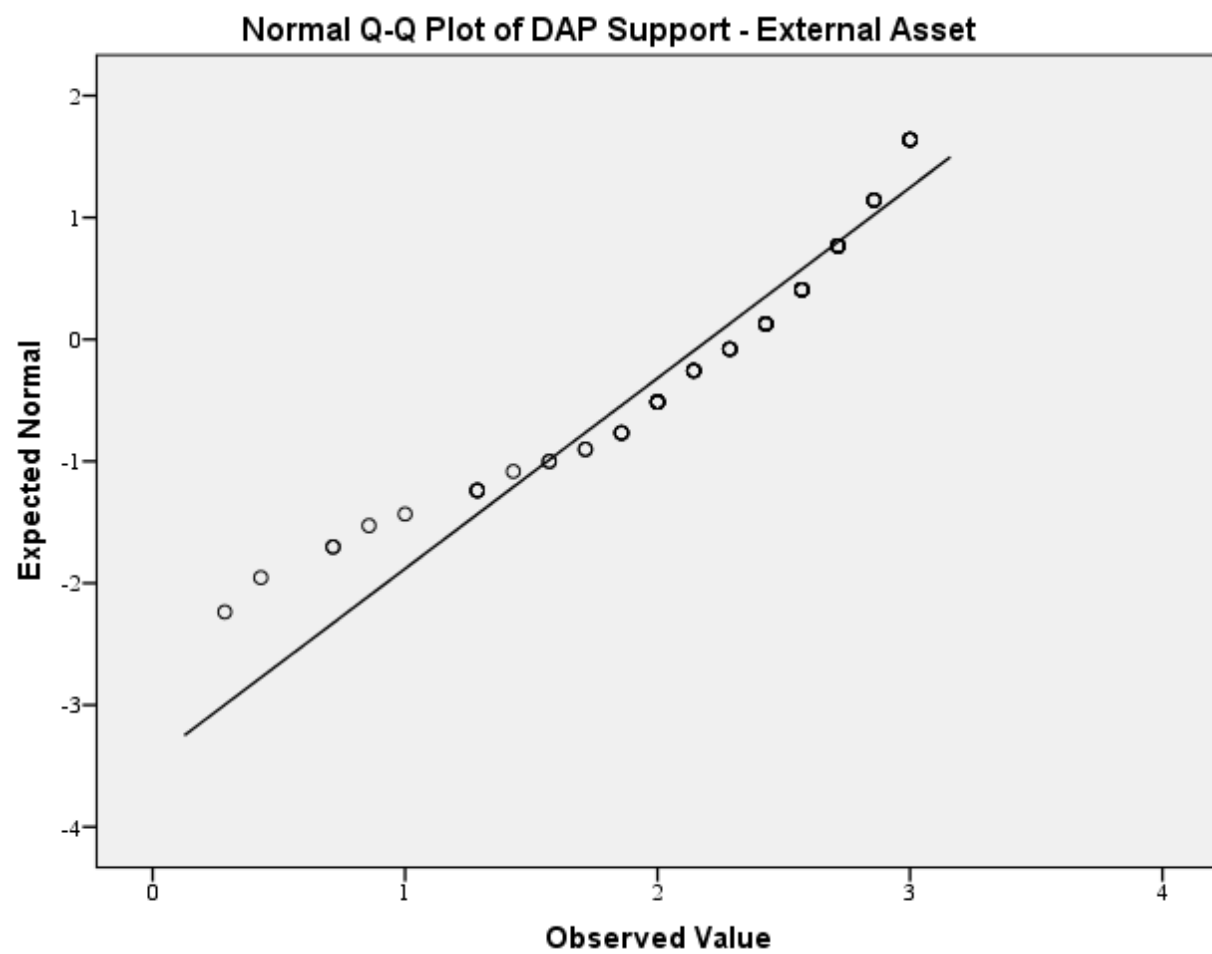
Figure 56. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP External Asset Support.

DAP Support scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of -0.861 (*SE* = 0.464) and kurtosis of 1.228 (*SE* = 0.902). Female DAP Support Scores showed a positive skewness of -1.249 (*SE* = 0.327) and kurtosis of 1.075 (*SE* = 0.644).
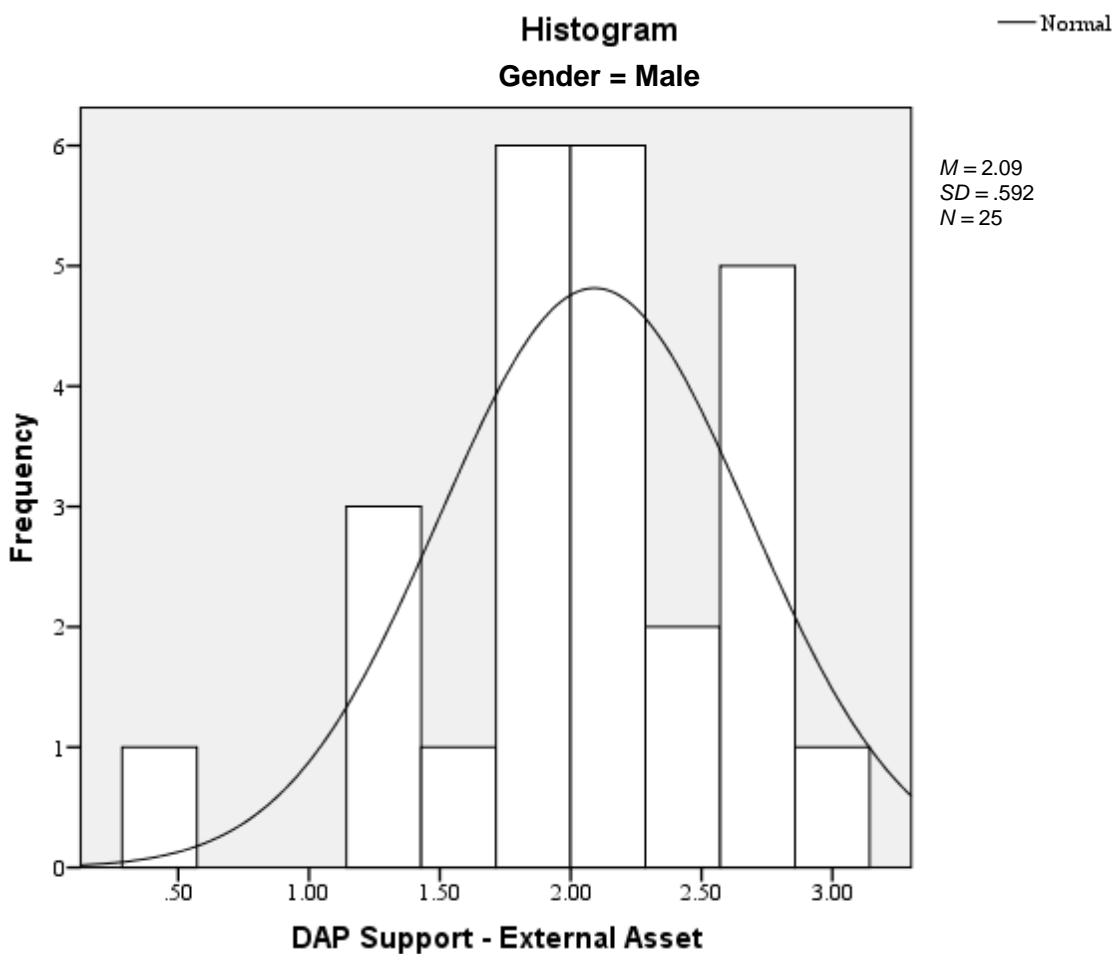
Figure 57. Histogram of DAP External Asset Support for Male Students.
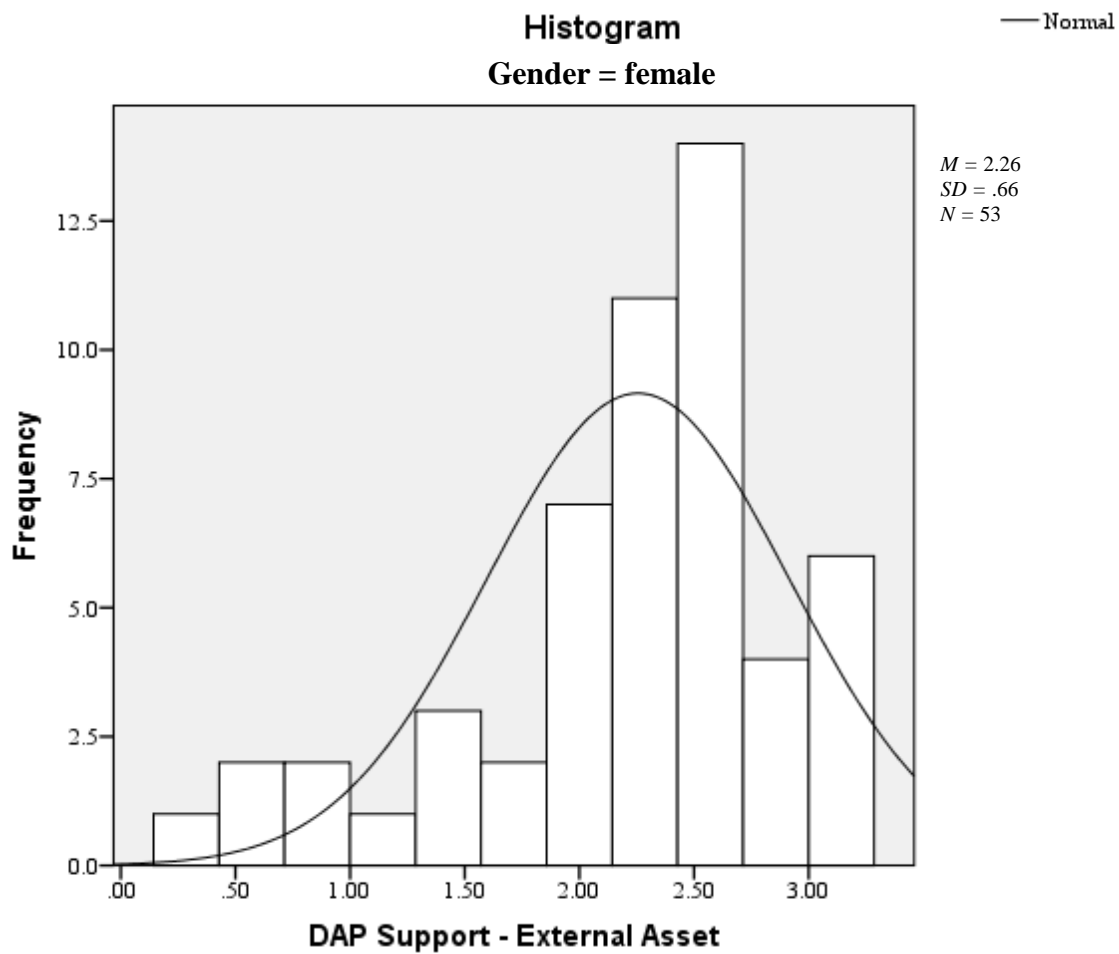
Figure 58. Histogram of DAP External Asset Support for Female Students.
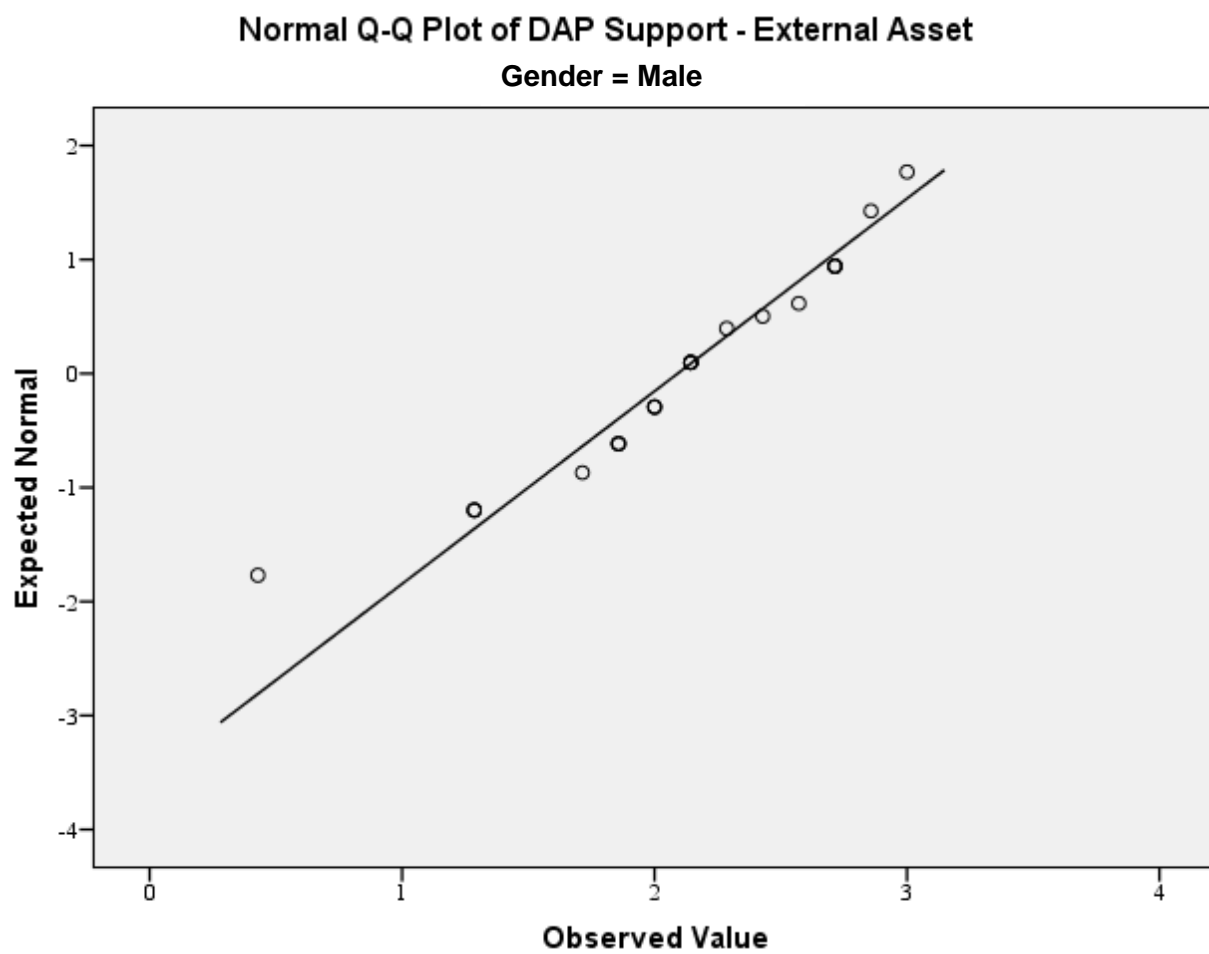
Figure 59. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP External Asset Support for Male Students.
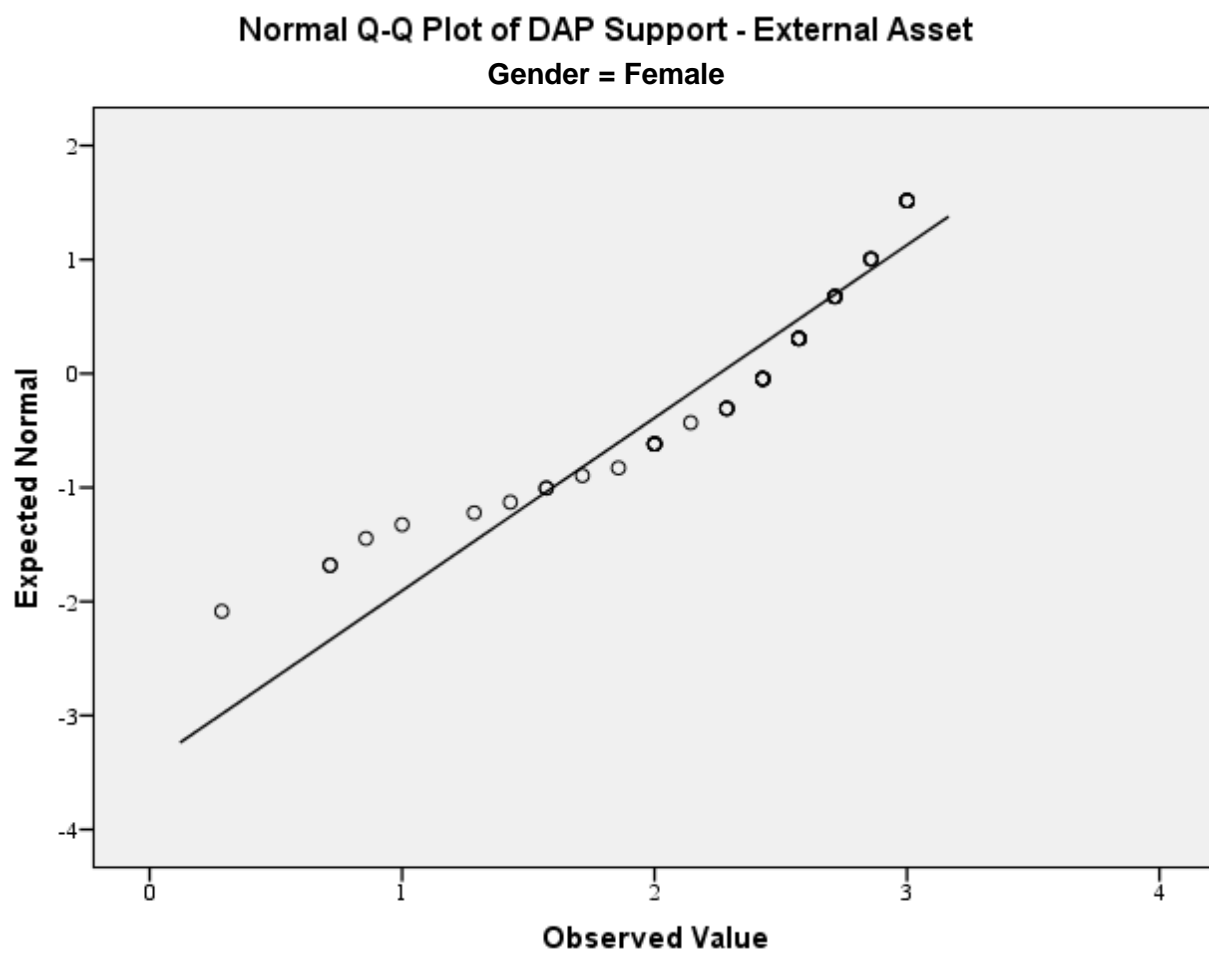
Figure 60. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP External Asset Support for Female Students.

DAP Empowerment scores were normally distributed with a skewness of -0.647 (*SE* = 0.272) and kurtosis of 0.058 (*SE* = 0.538)
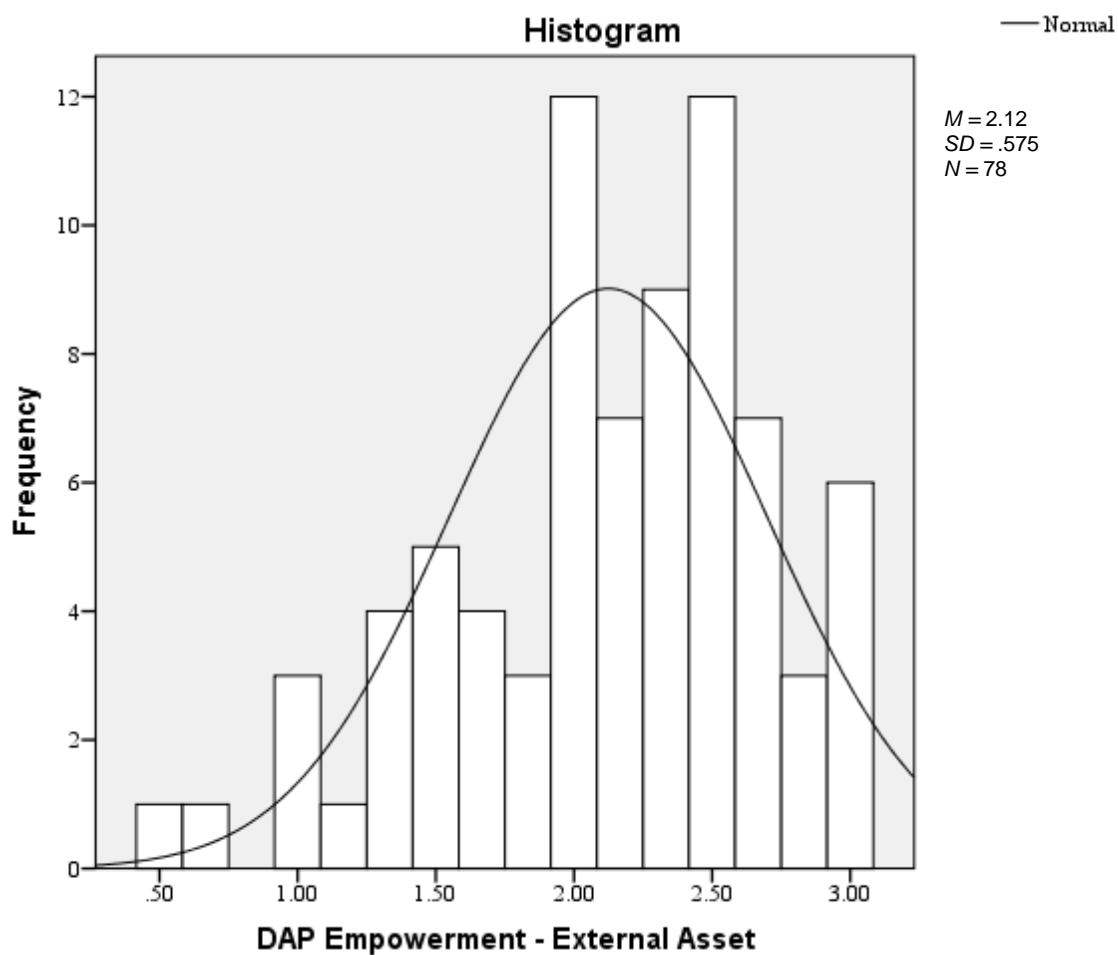
Figure 61. Histogram of DAP External Asset Empowerment.
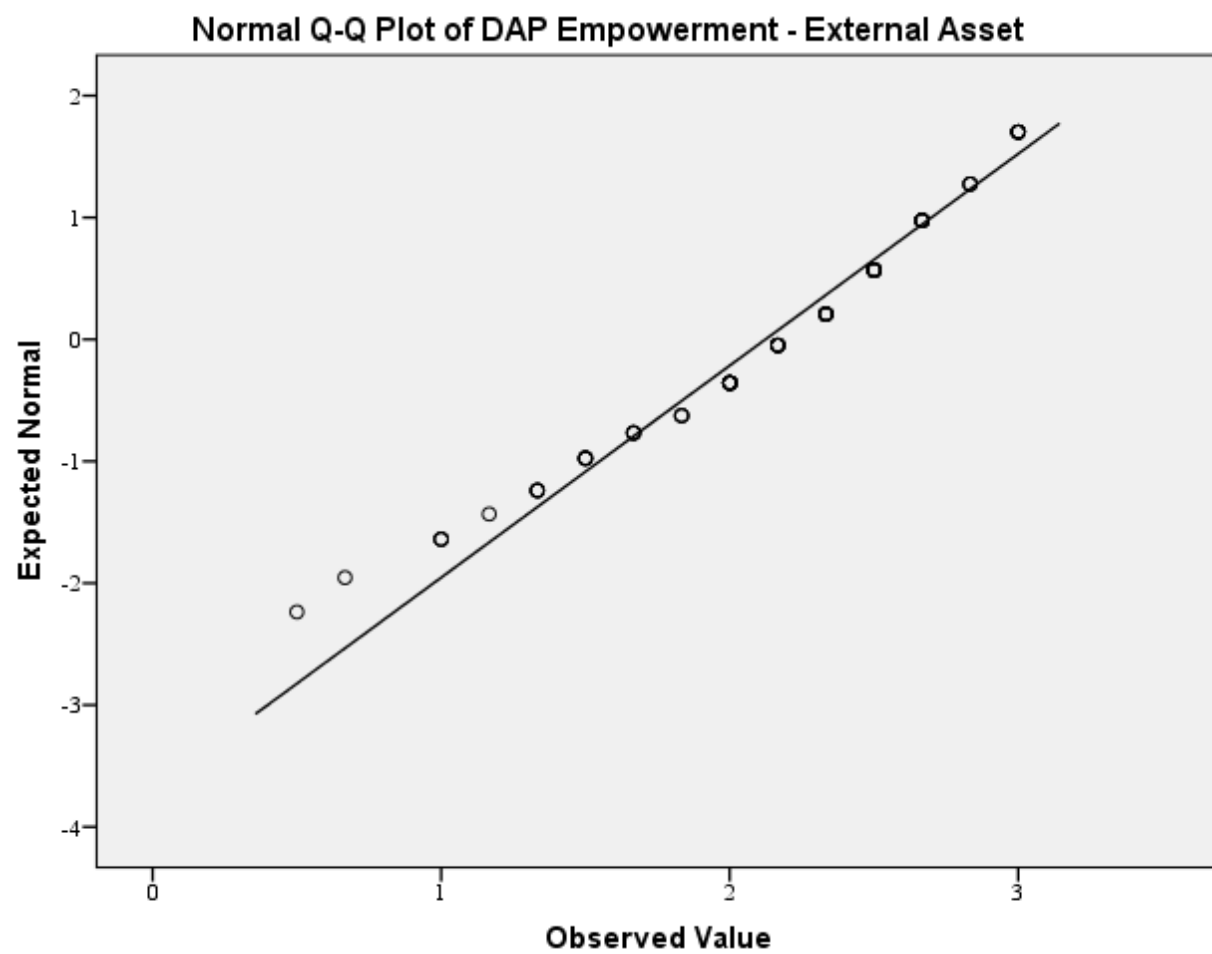
Figure 62. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP External Asset Empowerment.

DAP Empowerment scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of -0.963 ($SE = 0.464$) and kurtosis of 0.802 ($SE = 0.902$) and for females with a skewness of -0.421 ($SE = 0.327$) and kurtosis of -0.526 ($SE = 0.644$).

Figure 63. Histogram of DAP External Asset Empowerment for Male Students.
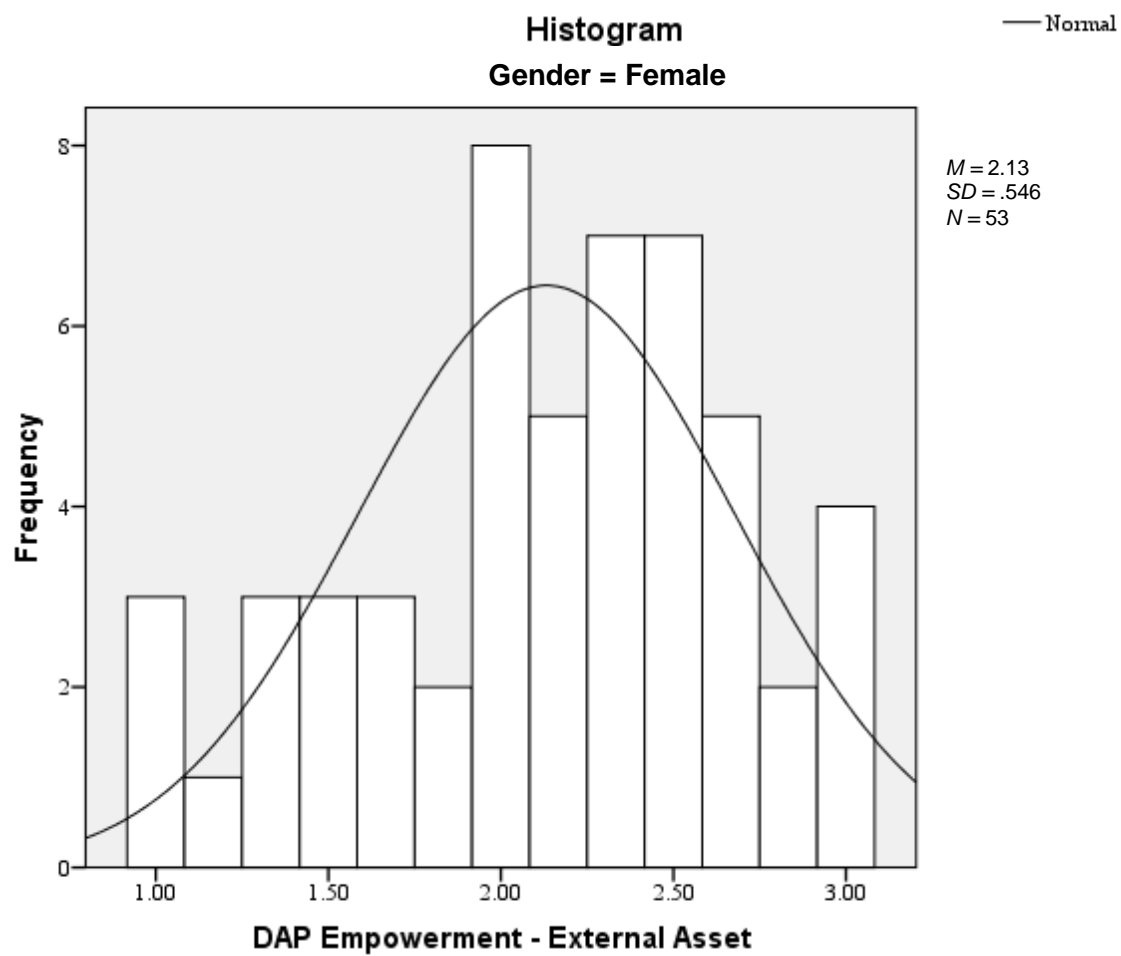
Figure 64. Histogram of DAP External Asset Empowerment for Female Students.
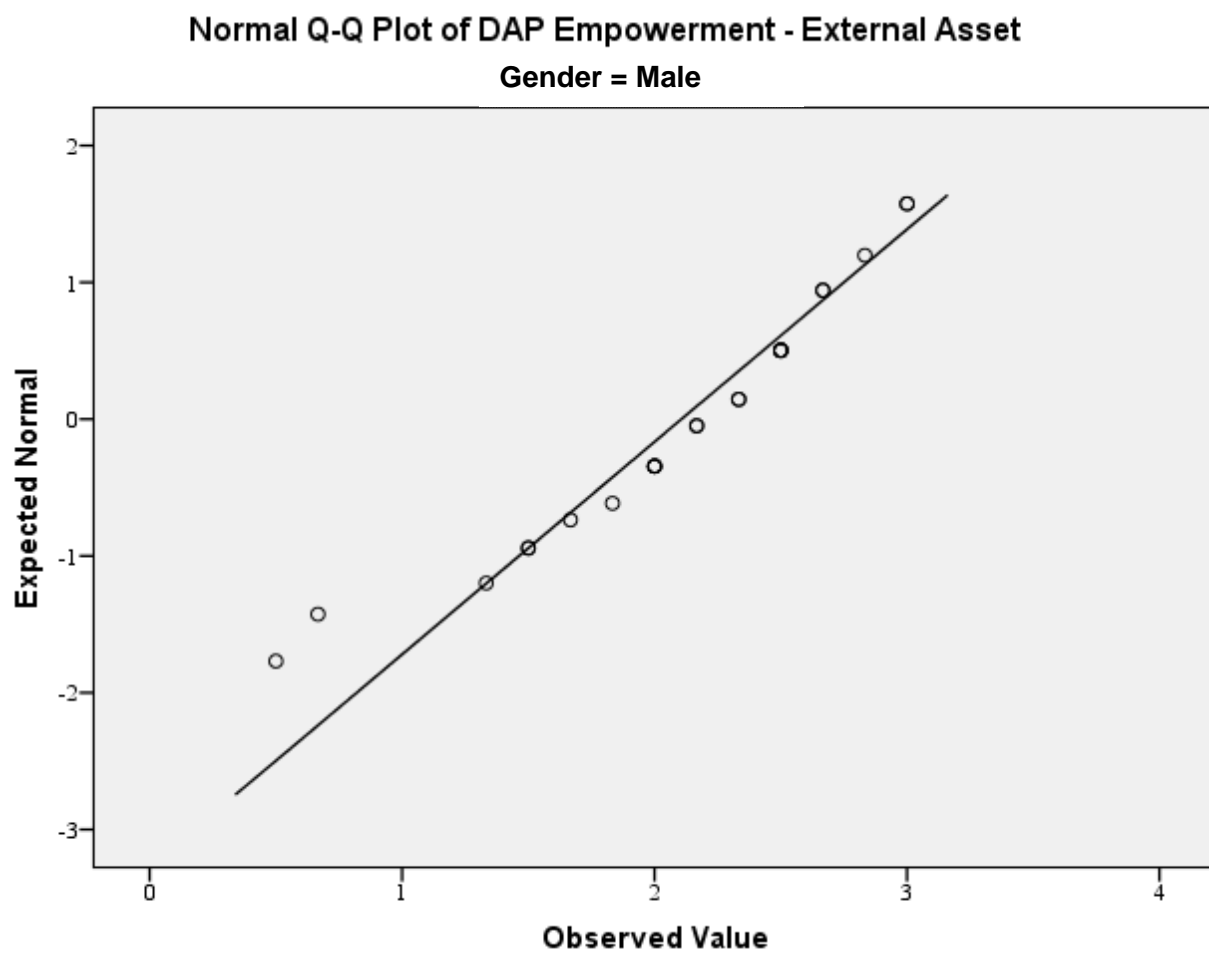
Figure 65. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP External Asset Empowerment for Male Students.
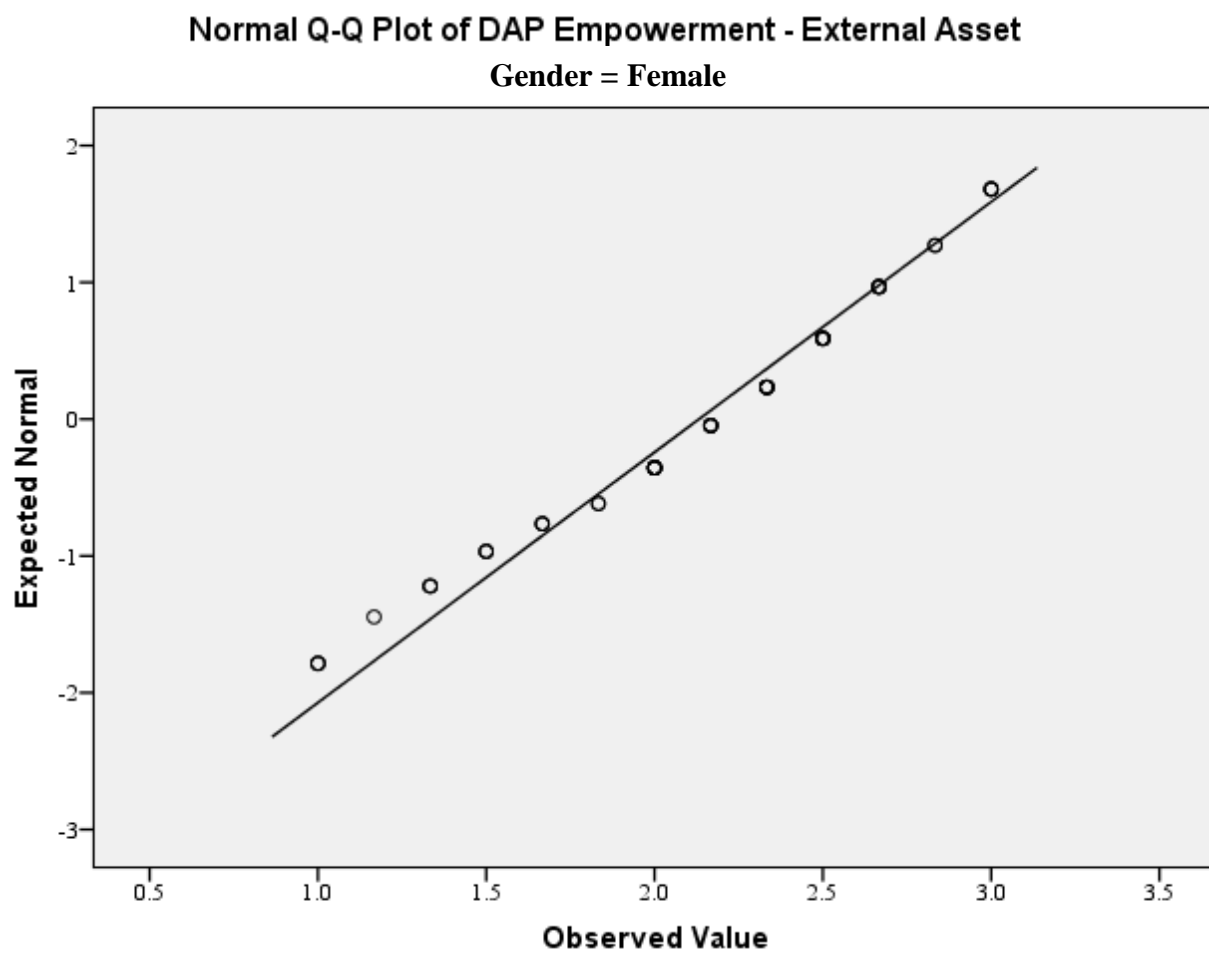
Figure 66. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP External Asset Empowerment for Female Students.

DAP Boundaries and Expectations scores were normally distributed with a skewness of -0.500 (*SE* = 0.272) and kurtosis of -0.253 (*SE* = 0.538).
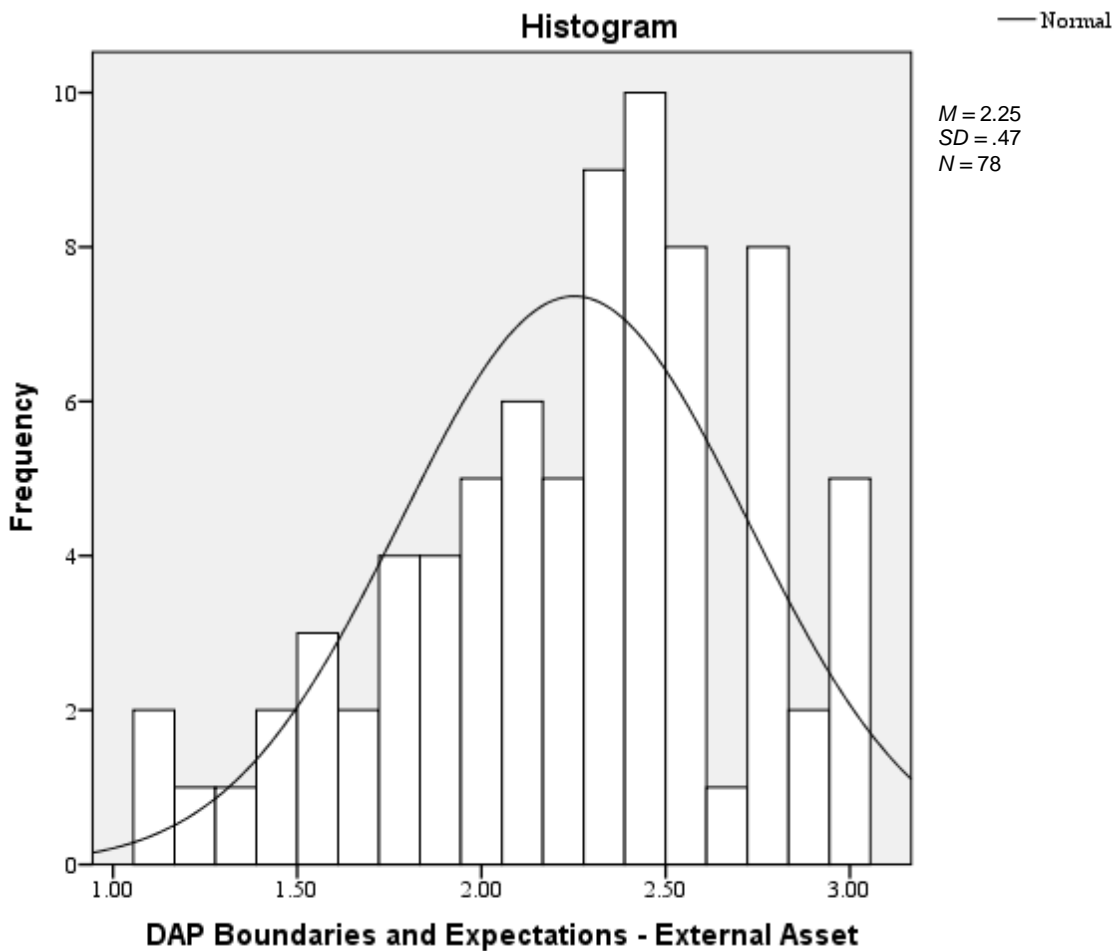
Figure 67. Histogram of DAP External Asset Boundaries and Expectations.
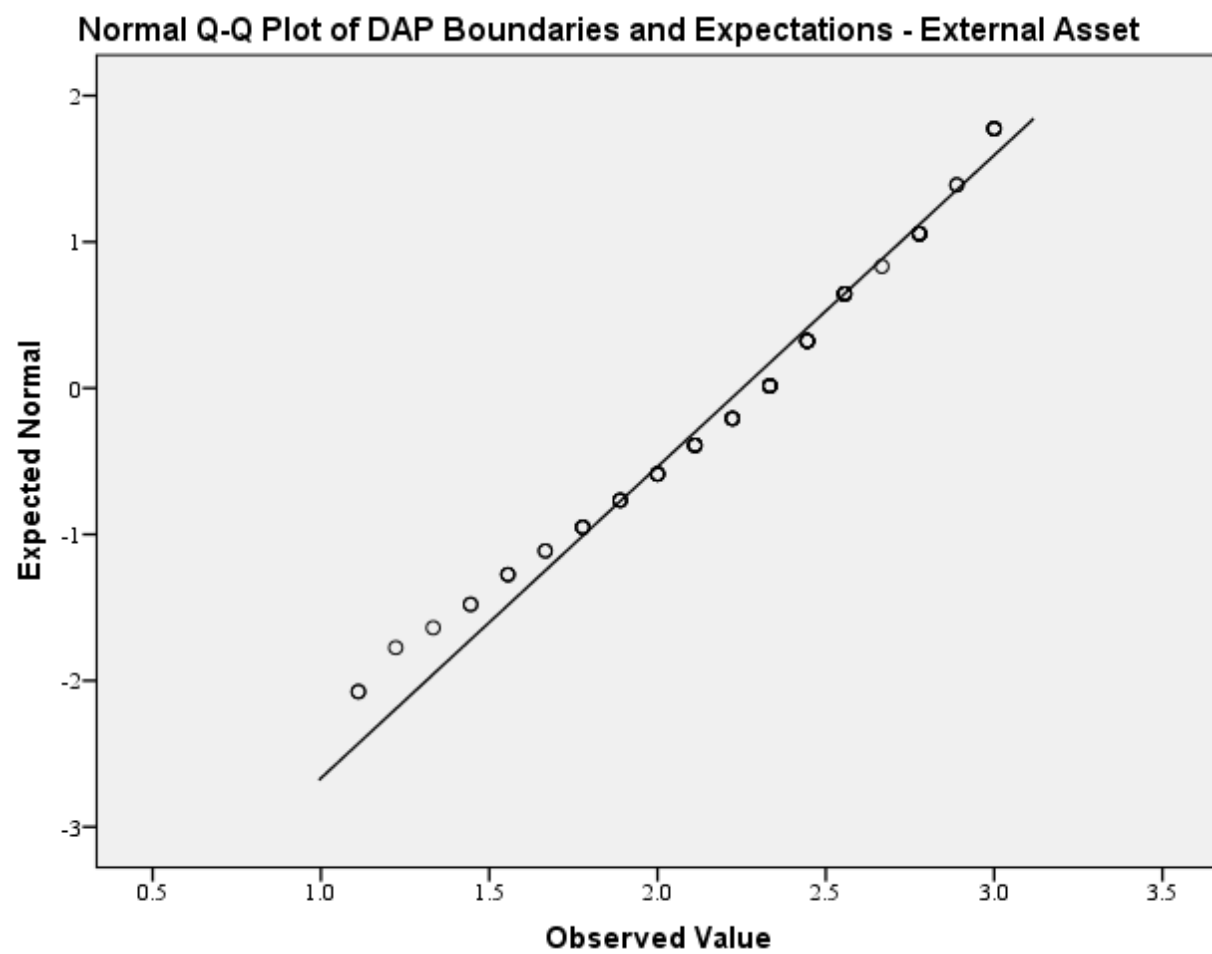
Figure 68. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP External Asset Boundaries and Expectations.

DAP Boundaries and Expectations scores were normally distributed for males

with a skewness of -0.517 (*SE* = 0.464) and kurtosis of -0.302 (*SE* = 0.902) and for

females with a skewness of -0.504 (*SE* = 0.327) and kurtosis of -0.146 (*SE* = 0.644).
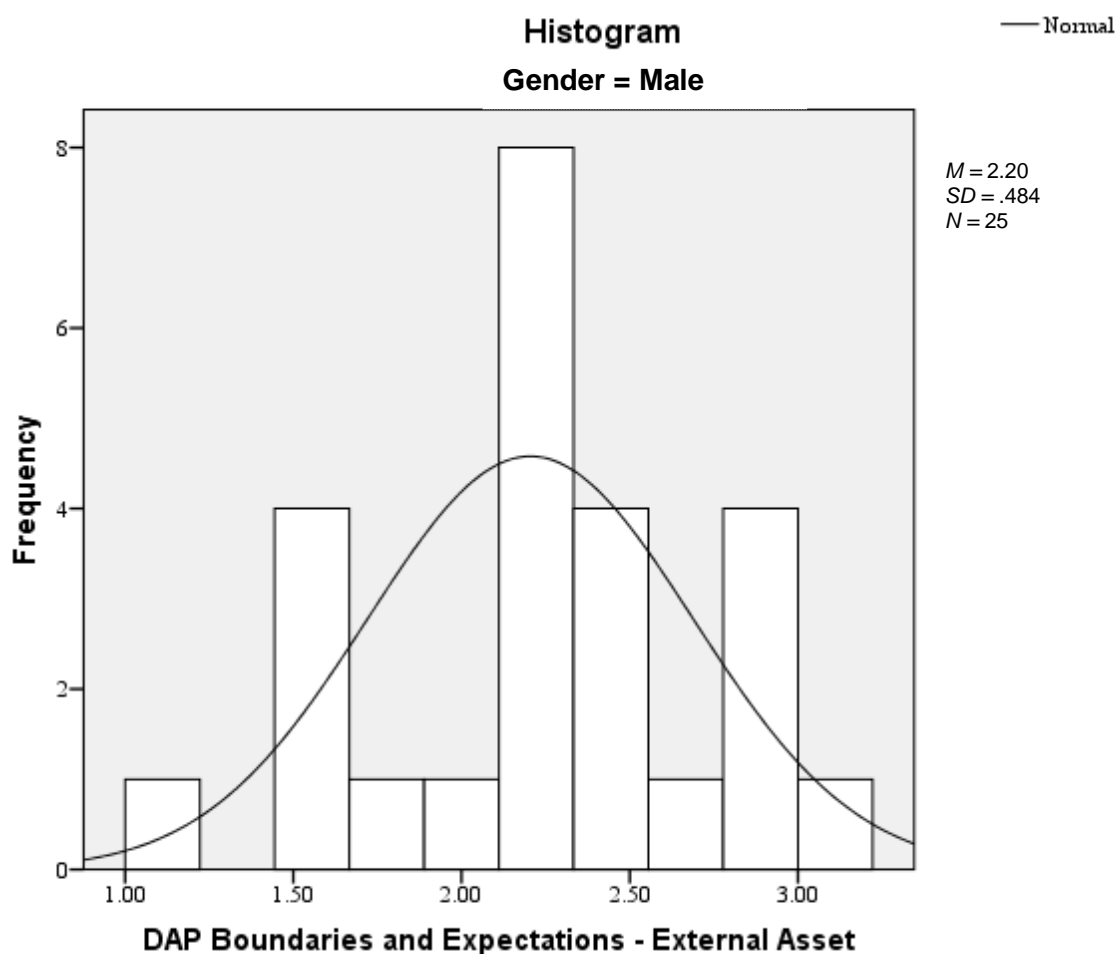
Figure 69. Histogram of DAP External Asset Boundaries and Expectations for Male
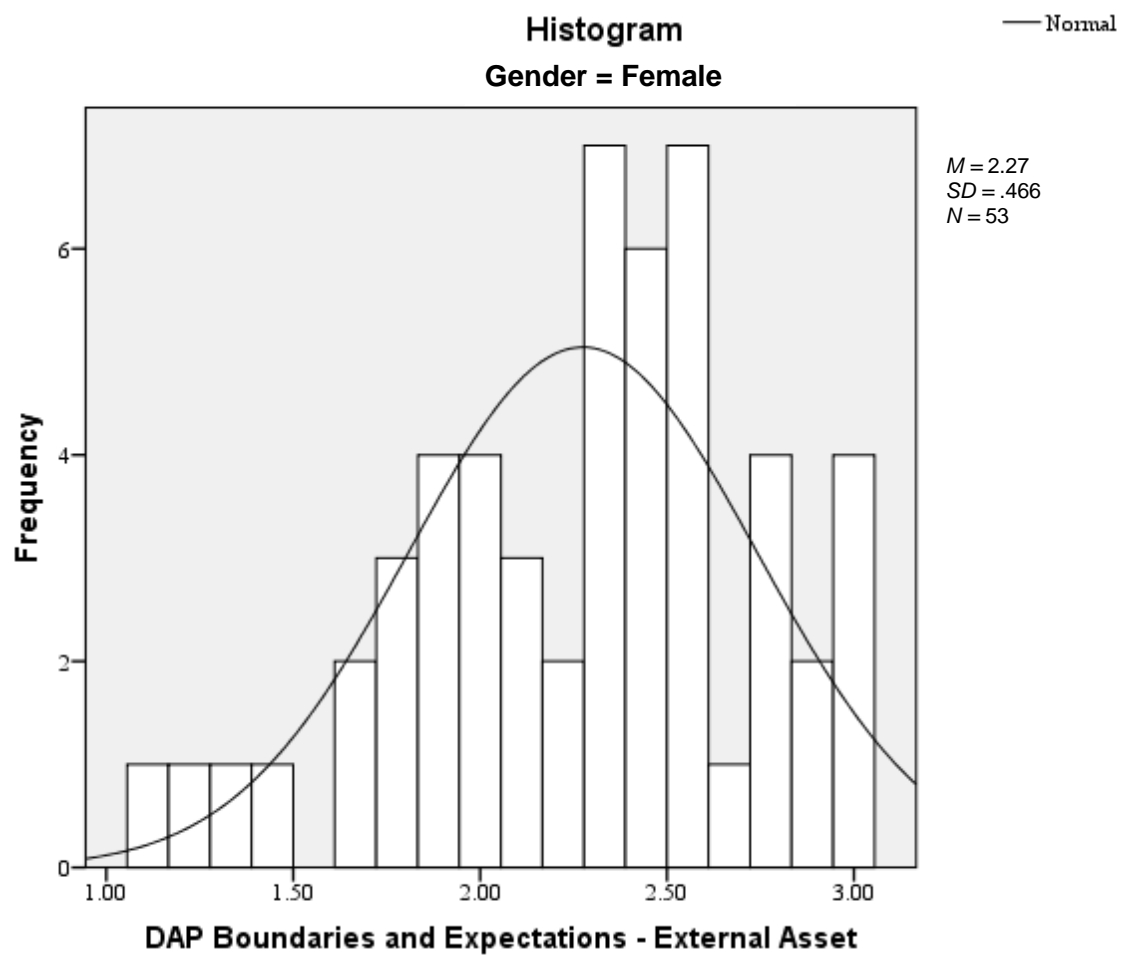
Students.

Figure 70. Histogram of DAP External Asset Boundaries and Expectations for Female
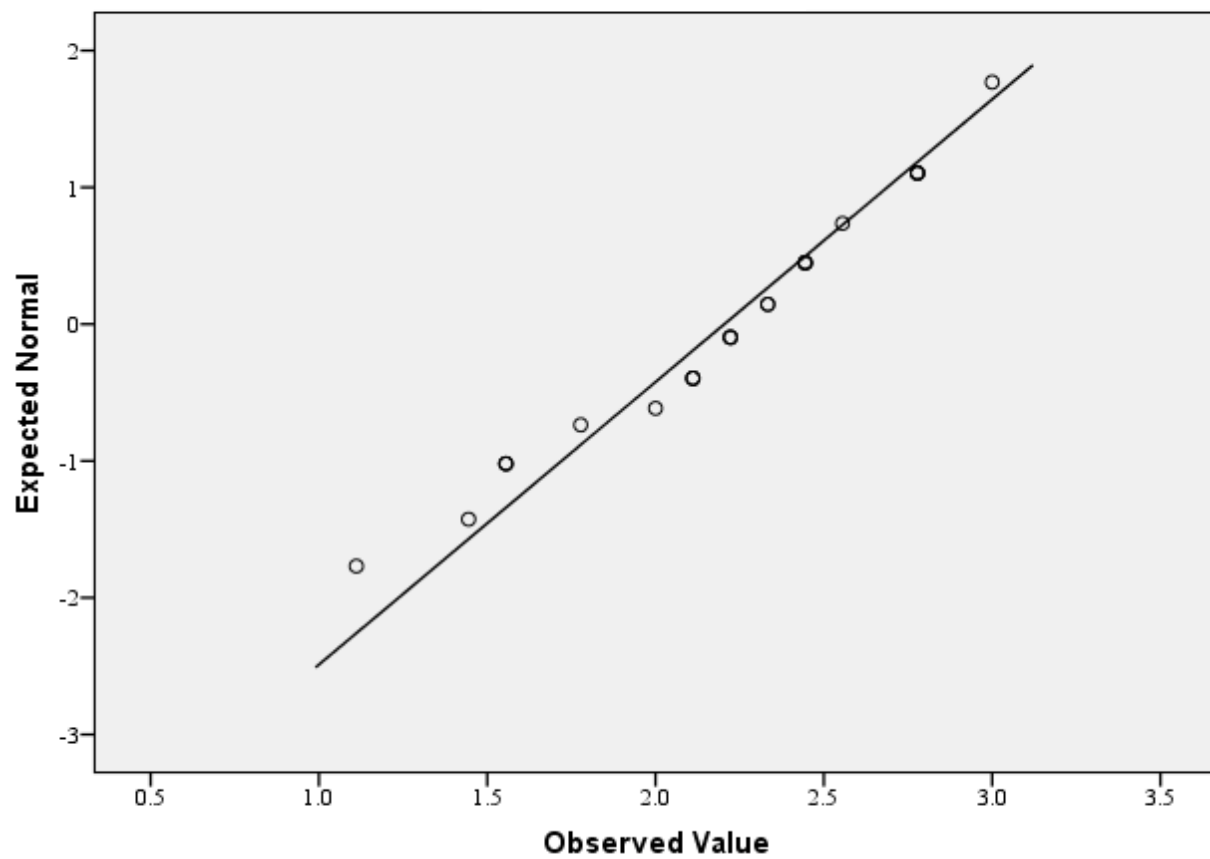
Students.

Figure 71. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP External Asset Boundaries and Expectations for
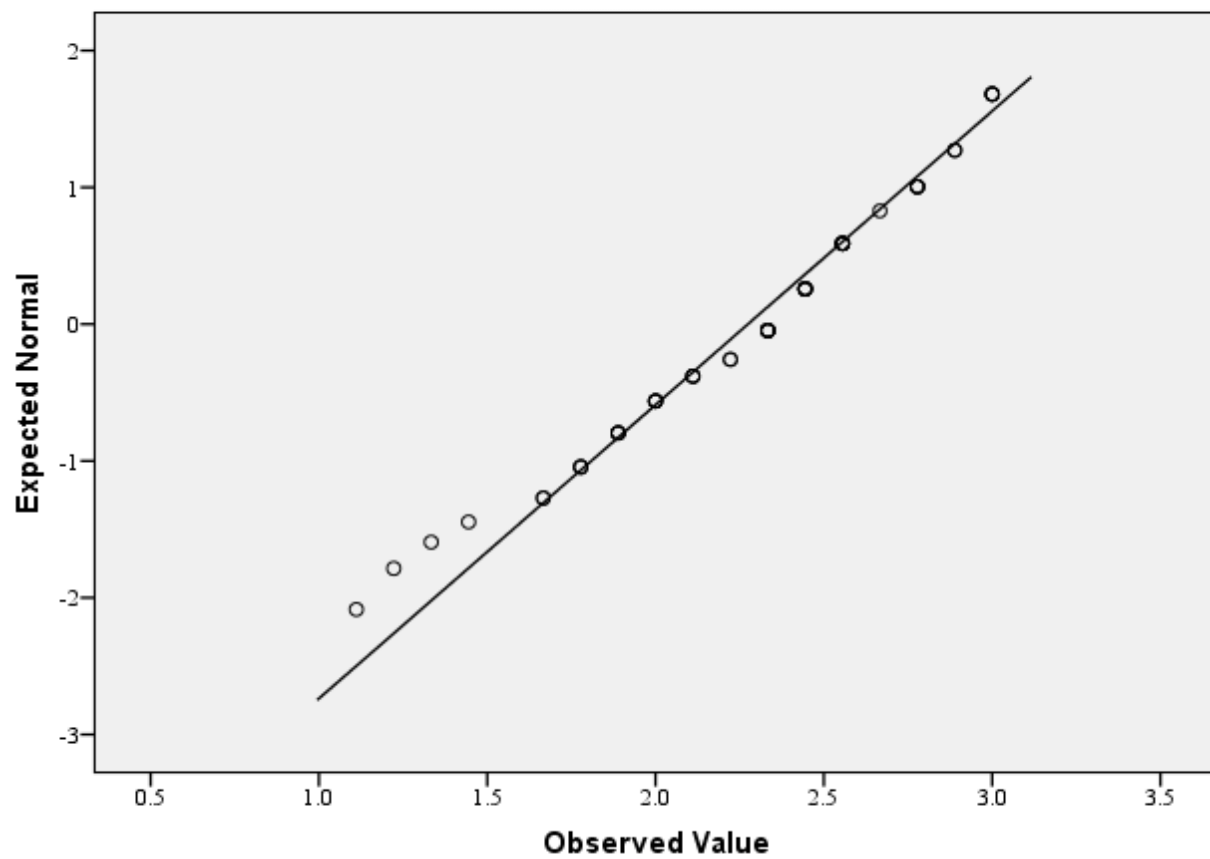
Male Students.

Figure 72. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP External Asset Boundaries and Expectations for Female Students.

DAP Constructive use of Time scores were normally distributed with a skewness of -0.091 ($SE = 0.272$) and kurtosis of -0.800 ($SE = 0.538$).
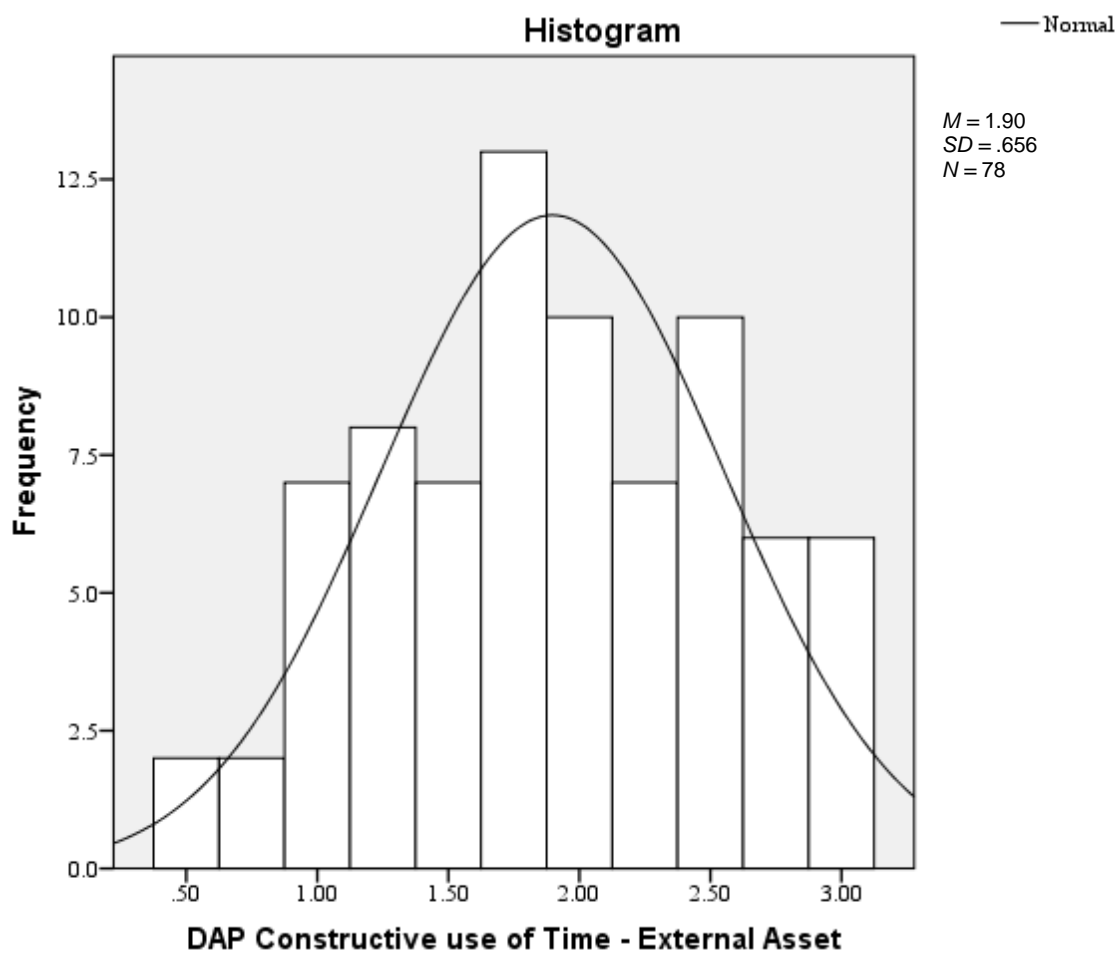
Figure 73. Histogram of DAP External Asset Constructive Use of Time.
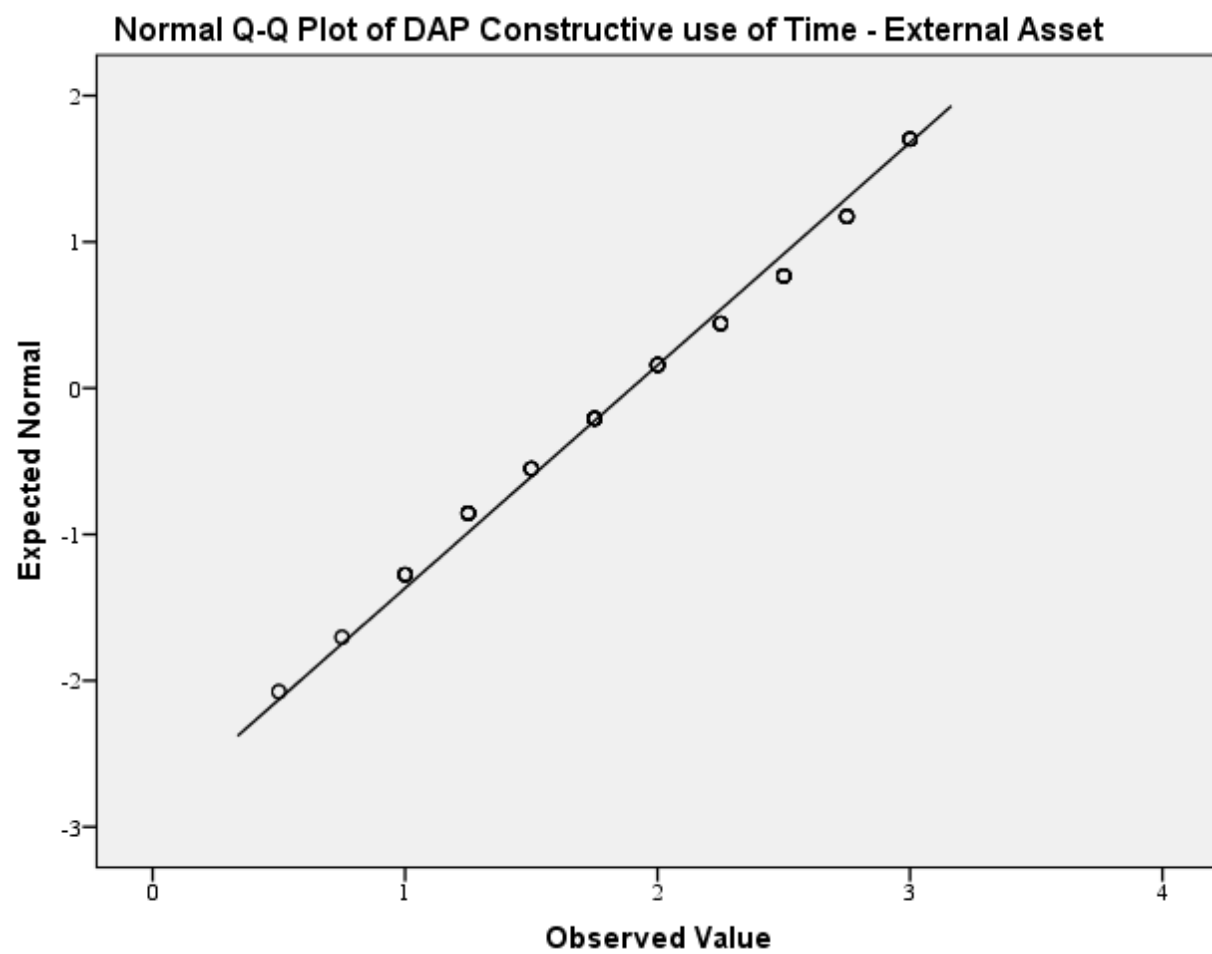
Figure 74. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP External Asset Constructive Use of Time.

DAP Constructive use of Time scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of 0.41 (*SE* = 0.464) and kurtosis of -1.167 (*SE* = 0.902) and for females with a skewness of -0.160 (*SE* = 0.327) and kurtosis of -0.648 (*SE* = 0.644).
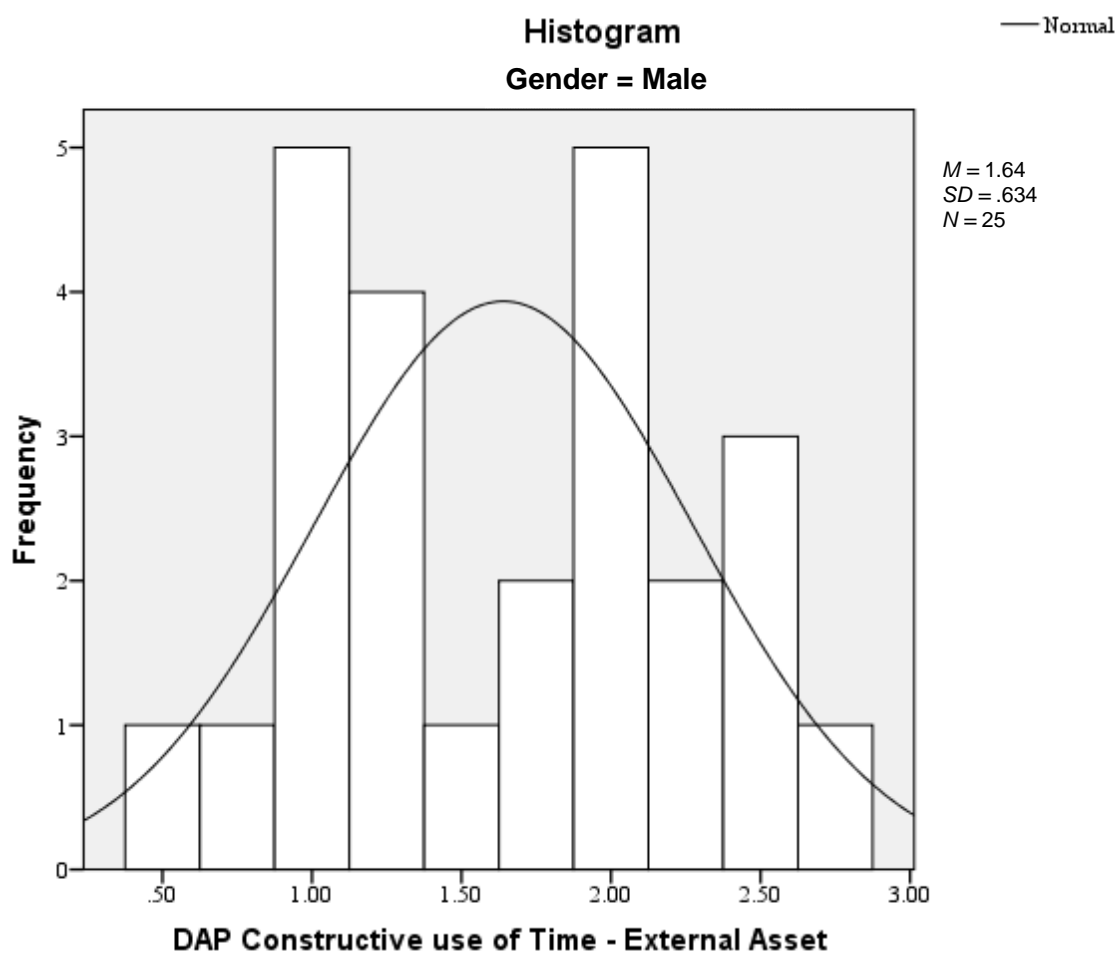
Figure 75. Histogram of DAP External Asset Constructive Use of Time for Male Students
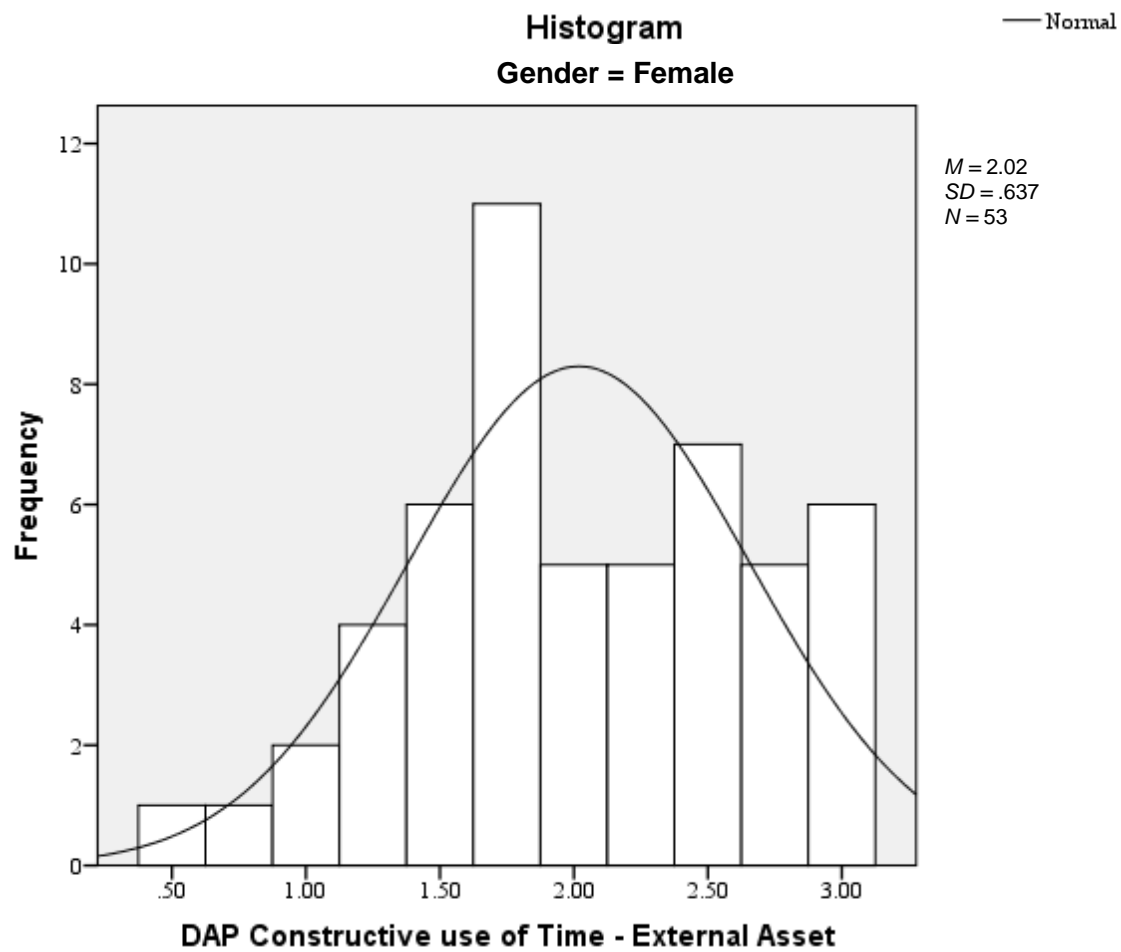
Figure 76. Histogram of DAP External Asset Constructive Use of Time for Female
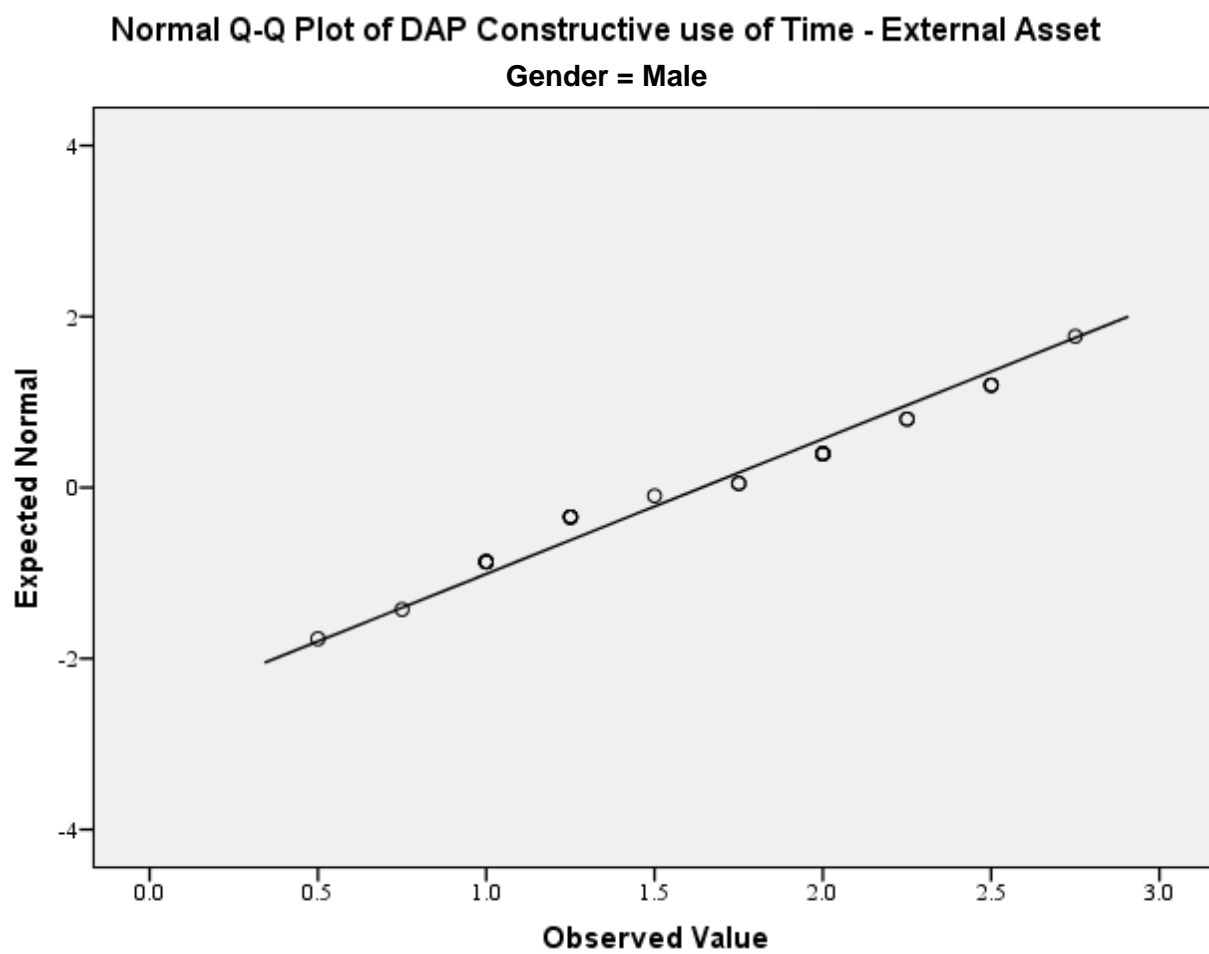
Students.

Figure 77. Normal Q-Q plot of DAP External Asset Constructive Use of Time for Male
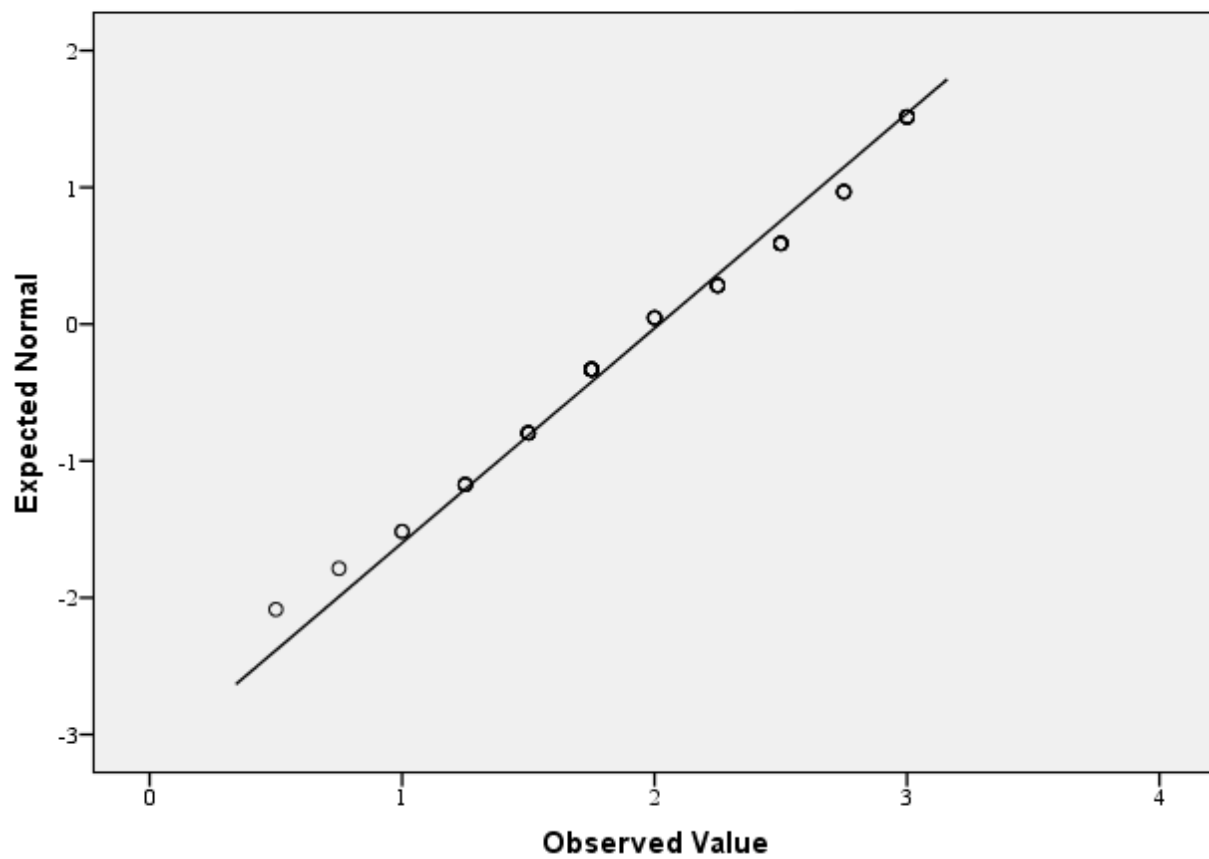
Students.

Figure 78. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP External Asset Constructive Use of Time for Female

Students.

DAP Commitment to Learning scores were normally distributed with a skewness of -0.383 (*SE* = 0.272) and kurtosis of -0.557 (*SE* = 0.538).
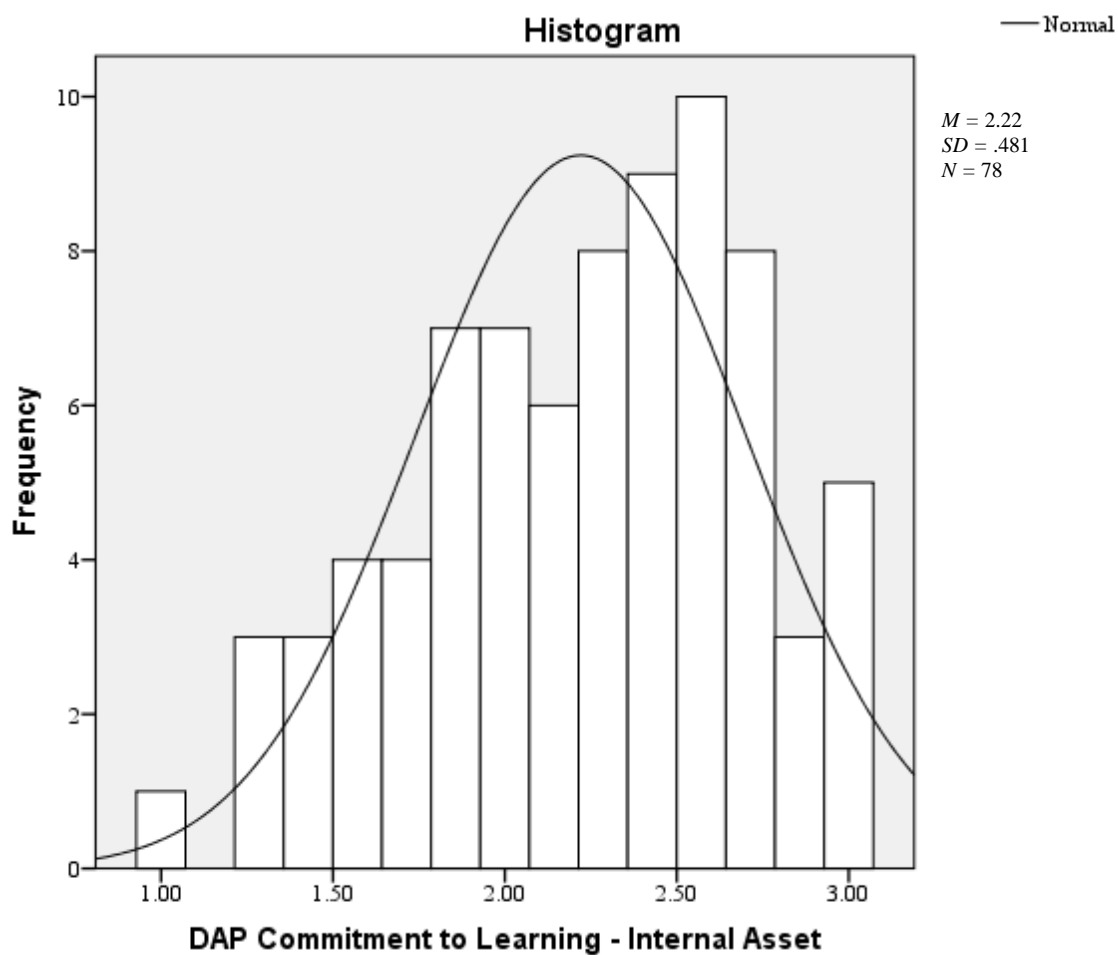
Figure 79. Histogram of DAP Internal Asset Commitment to Learning.
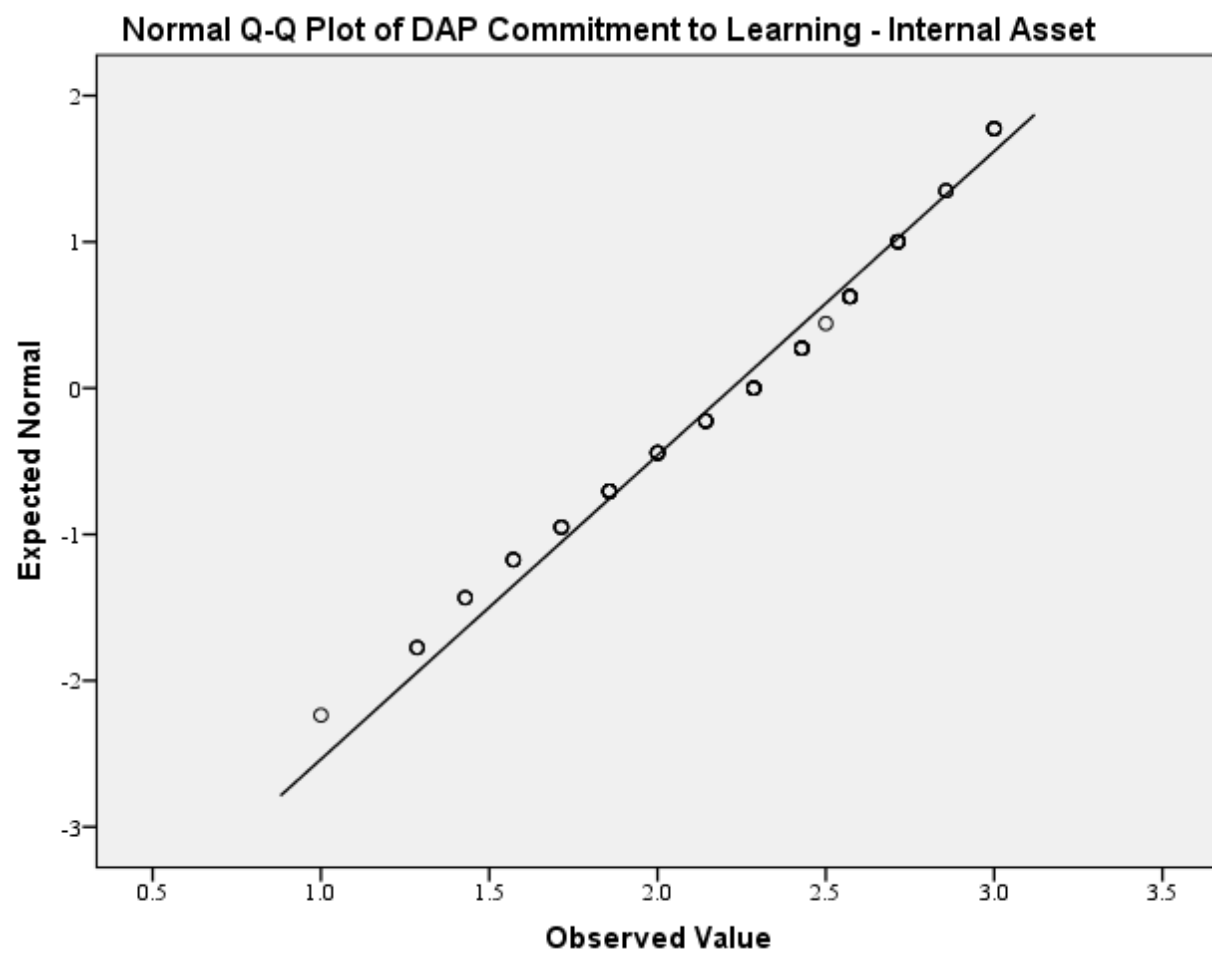
Figure 80. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Internal Asset Commitment to Learning.

DAP Commitment to Learning scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of -0.297 (*SE* = 0.464) and kurtosis of -0.960 (*SE* = 0.902) and for females with a skewness of -0.477 (*SE* = 0.327) and kurtosis of -0.380 (*SE* = 0.644).
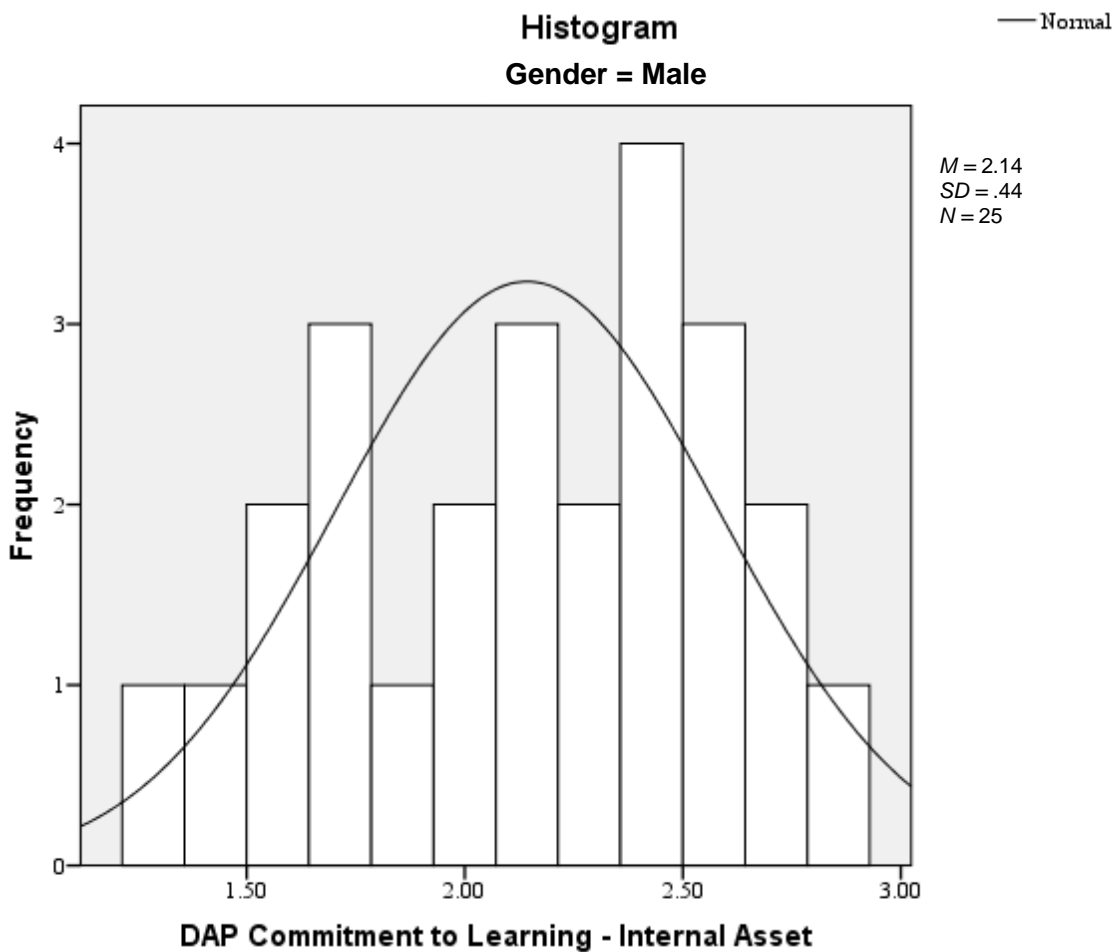
Figure 81. Histogram of DAP Internal Asset Commitment to Learning for Male Students.
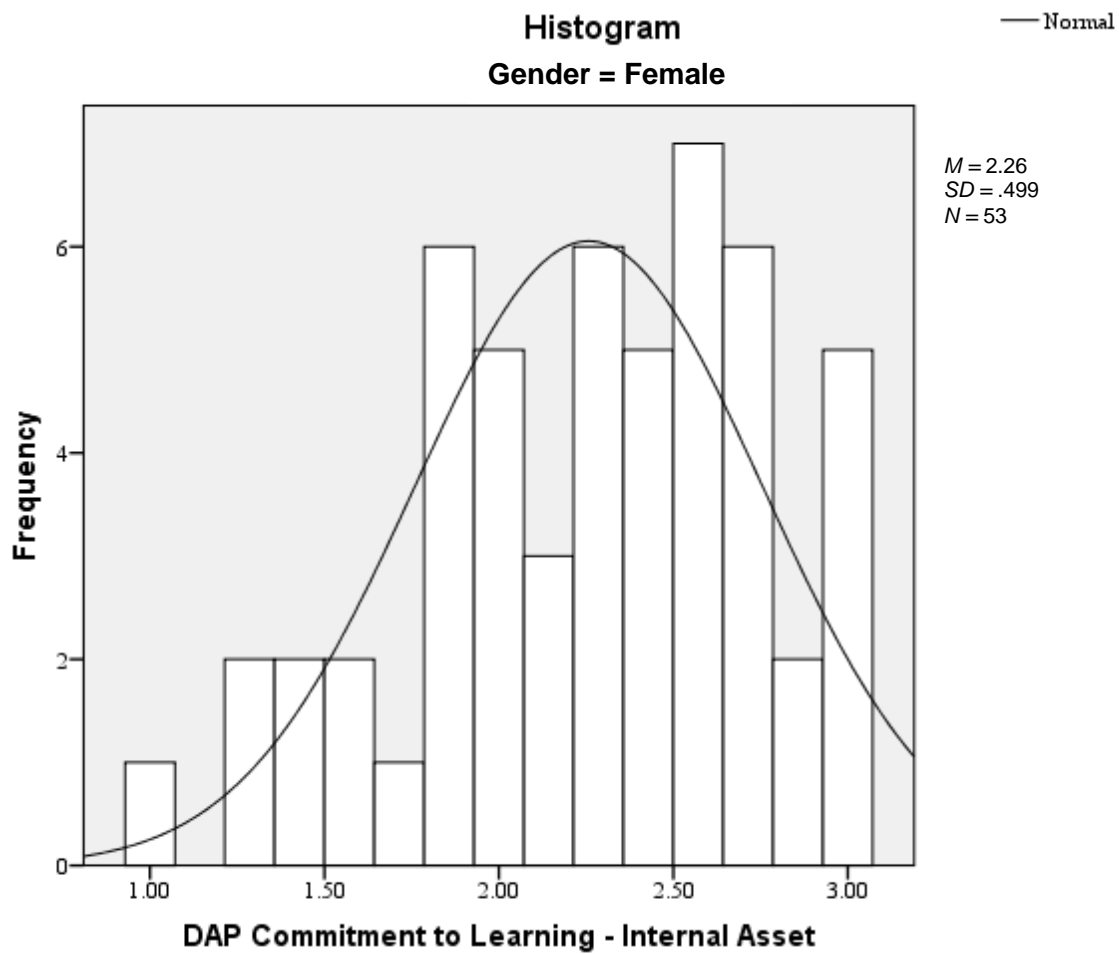
Figure 82. Histogram of DAP Internal Asset Commitment to Learning for Female
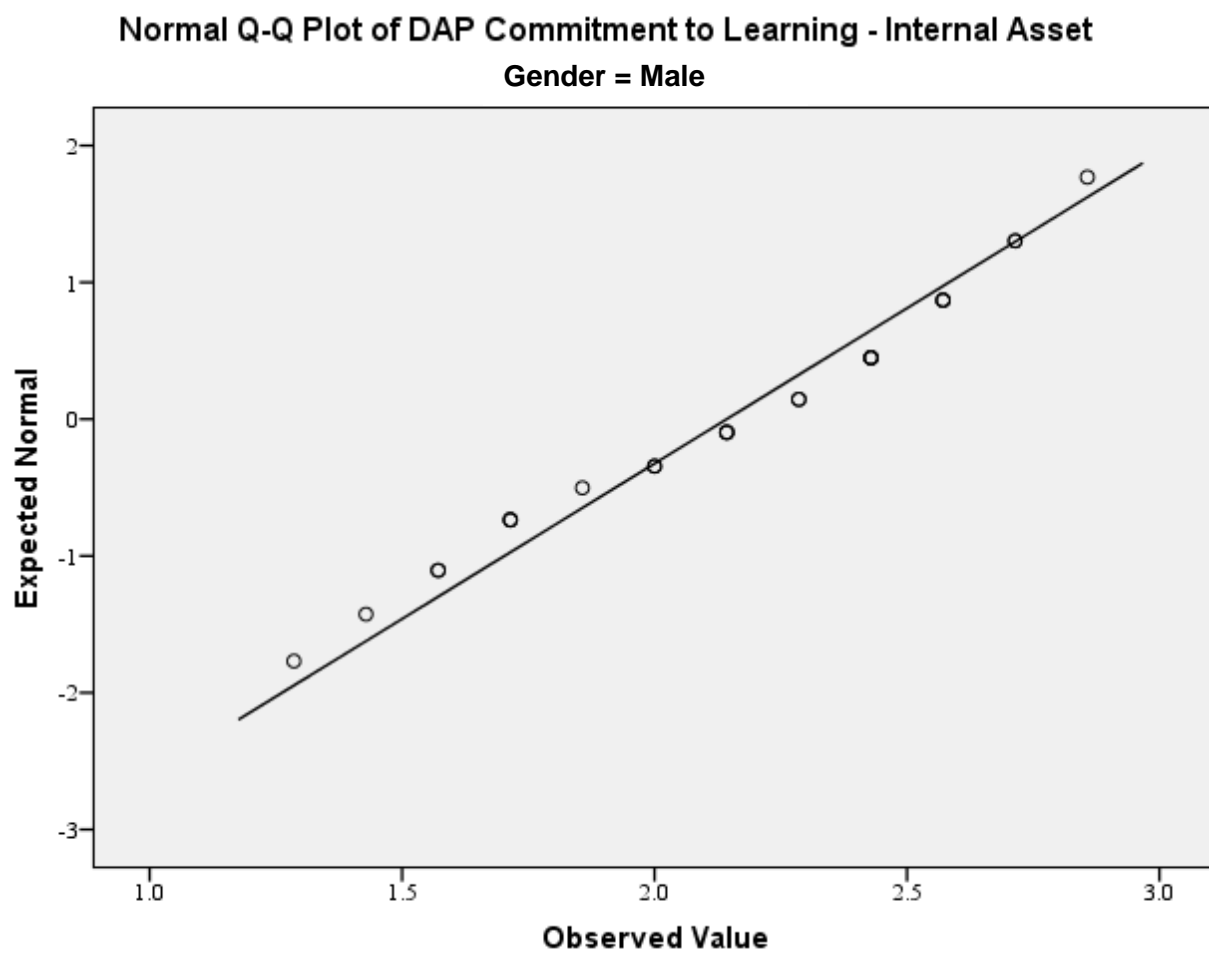
Students.

Figure 83. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Internal Asset Commitment to Learning for Male
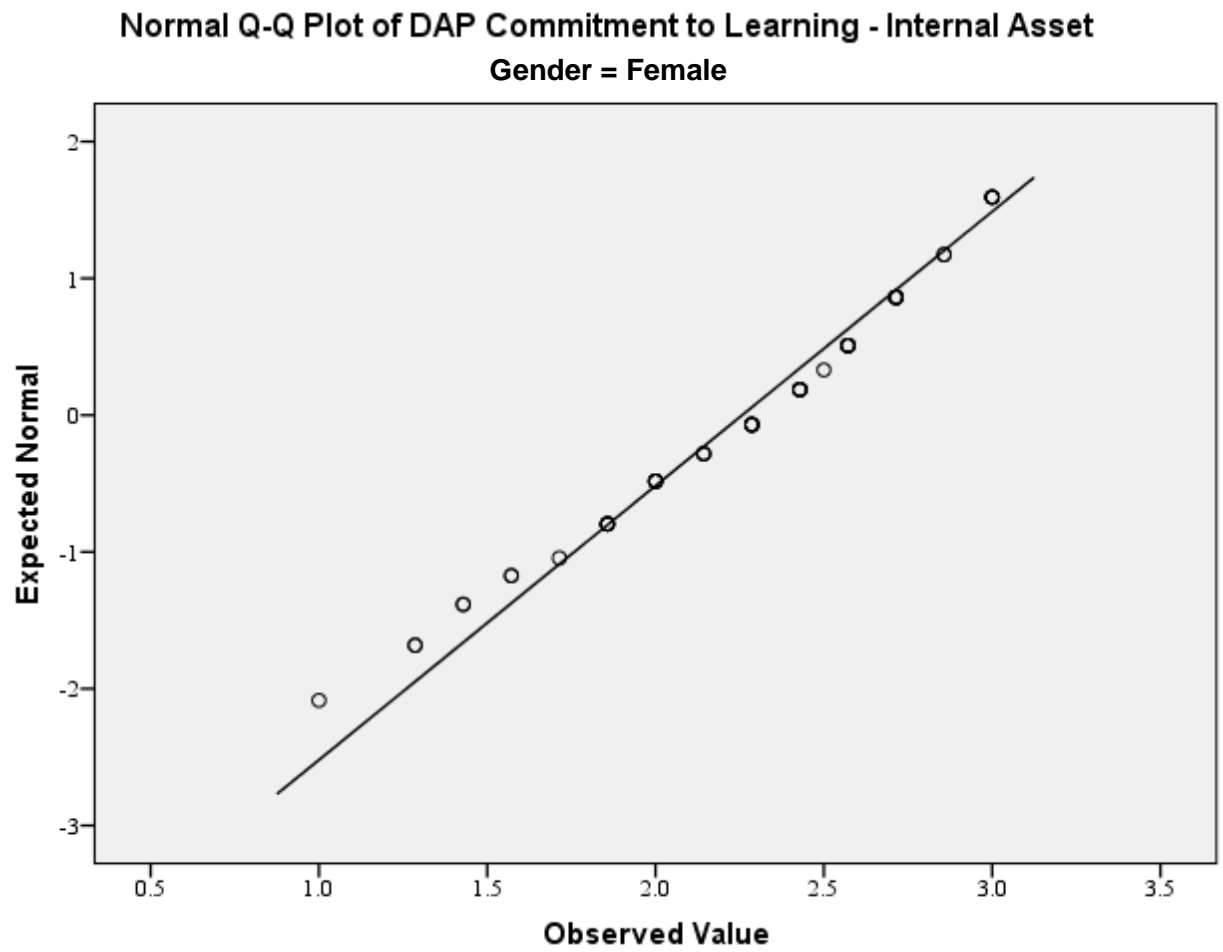
Students.

Figure 84. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Internal Asset Commitment to Learning for Female

Students.

DAP Positive Values scores were normally distributed with a skewness of -0.185 (*SE* = 0.272) and kurtosis of 0.066 (*SE* = 0.538).
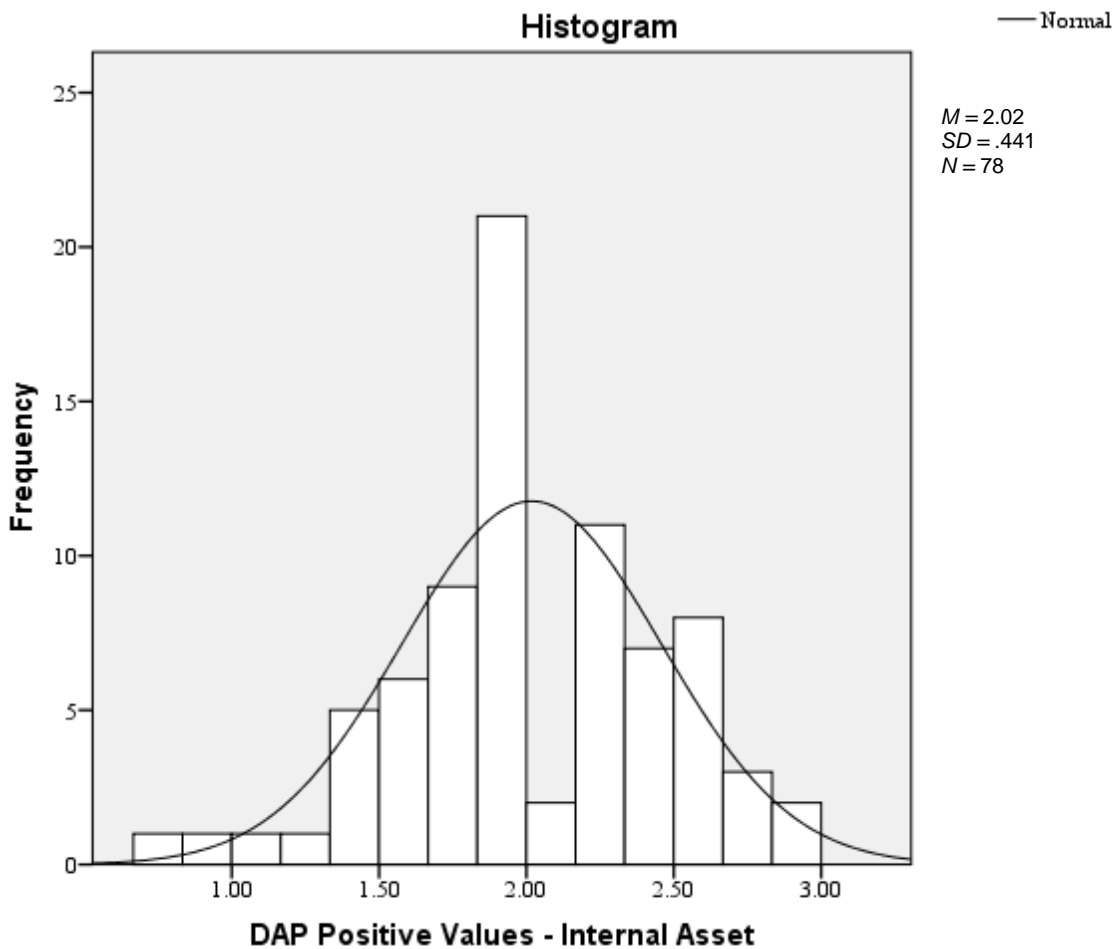
Figure 85. Histogram of DAP Internal Asset Positive Values.
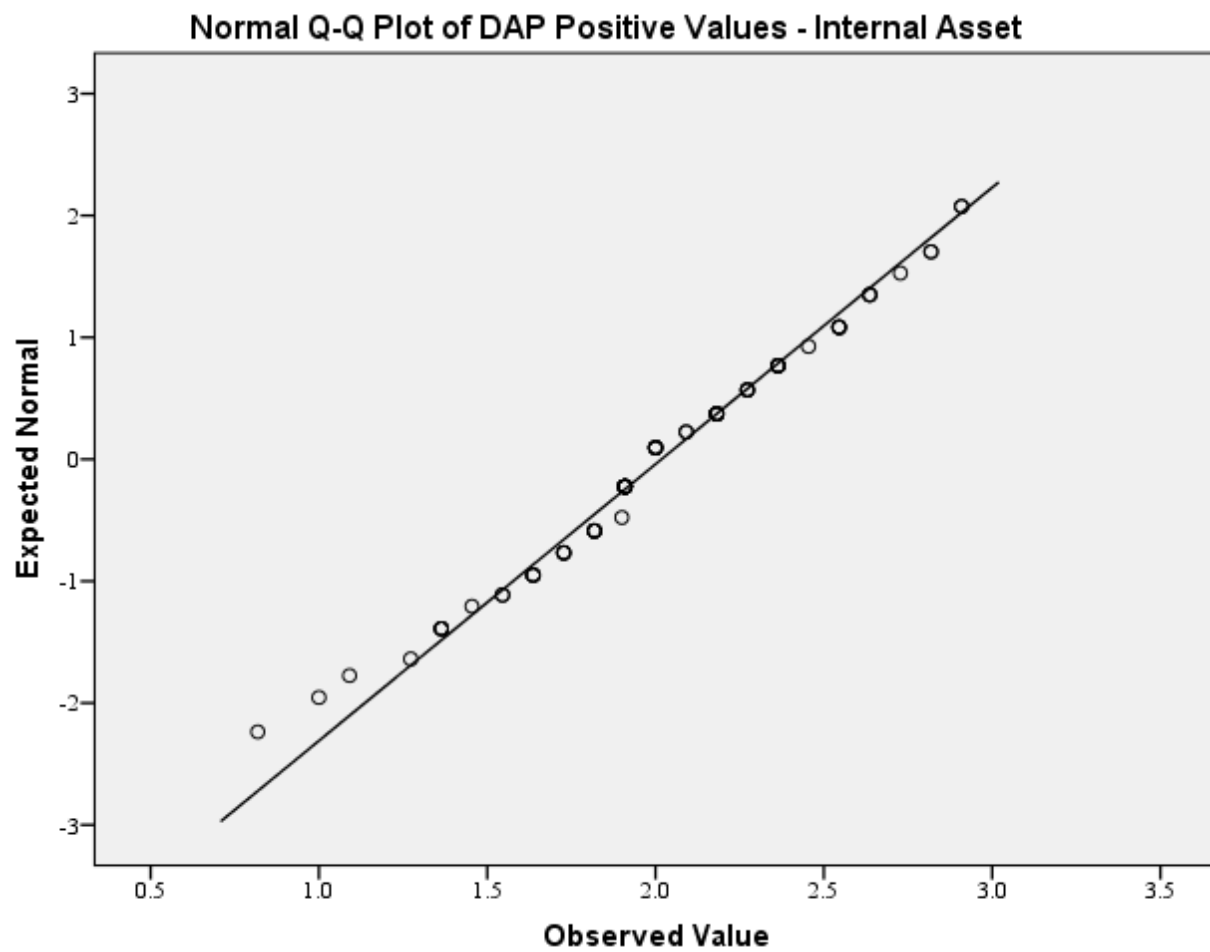
Figure 86. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Internal Asset Positive Values.

DAP Positive Values scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of -0.207 ($SE = 0.464$) and kurtosis of -0.499 ($SE = 0.902$) and for females with a skewness of -0.362 ($SE = 0.327$) and kurtosis of 0.384 ($SE = 0.644$).
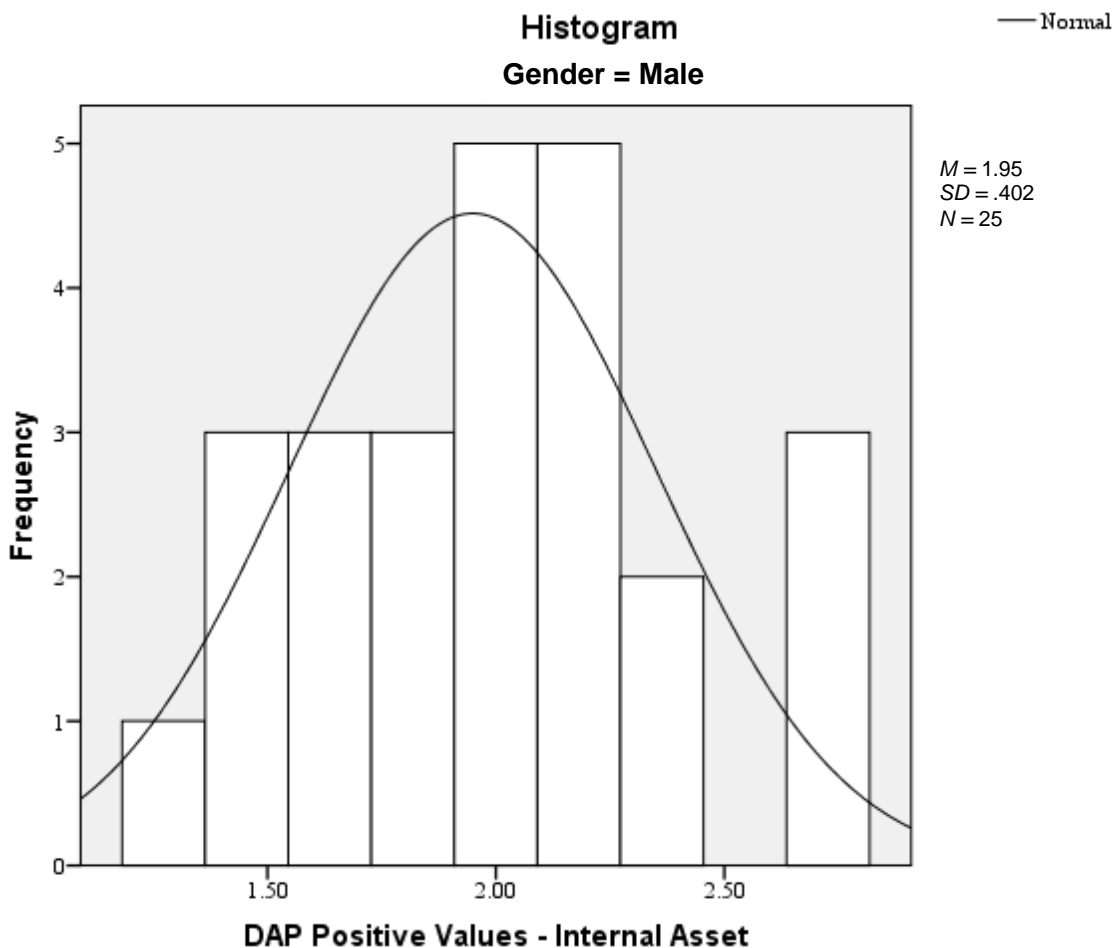
Figure 87. Histogram of DAP Internal Asset Positive Values for Male Students.
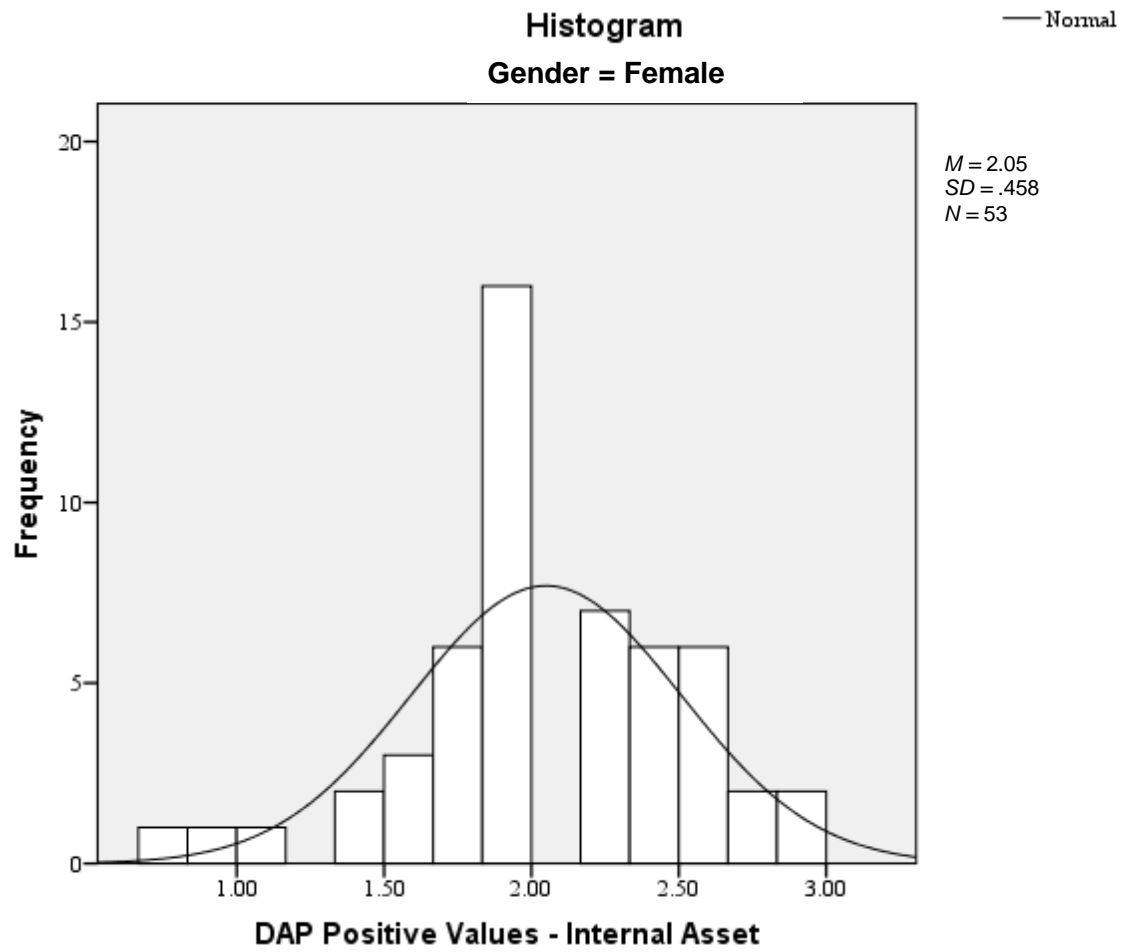
Figure 88. Histogram of DAP Internal Asset Positive Values for Female Students.
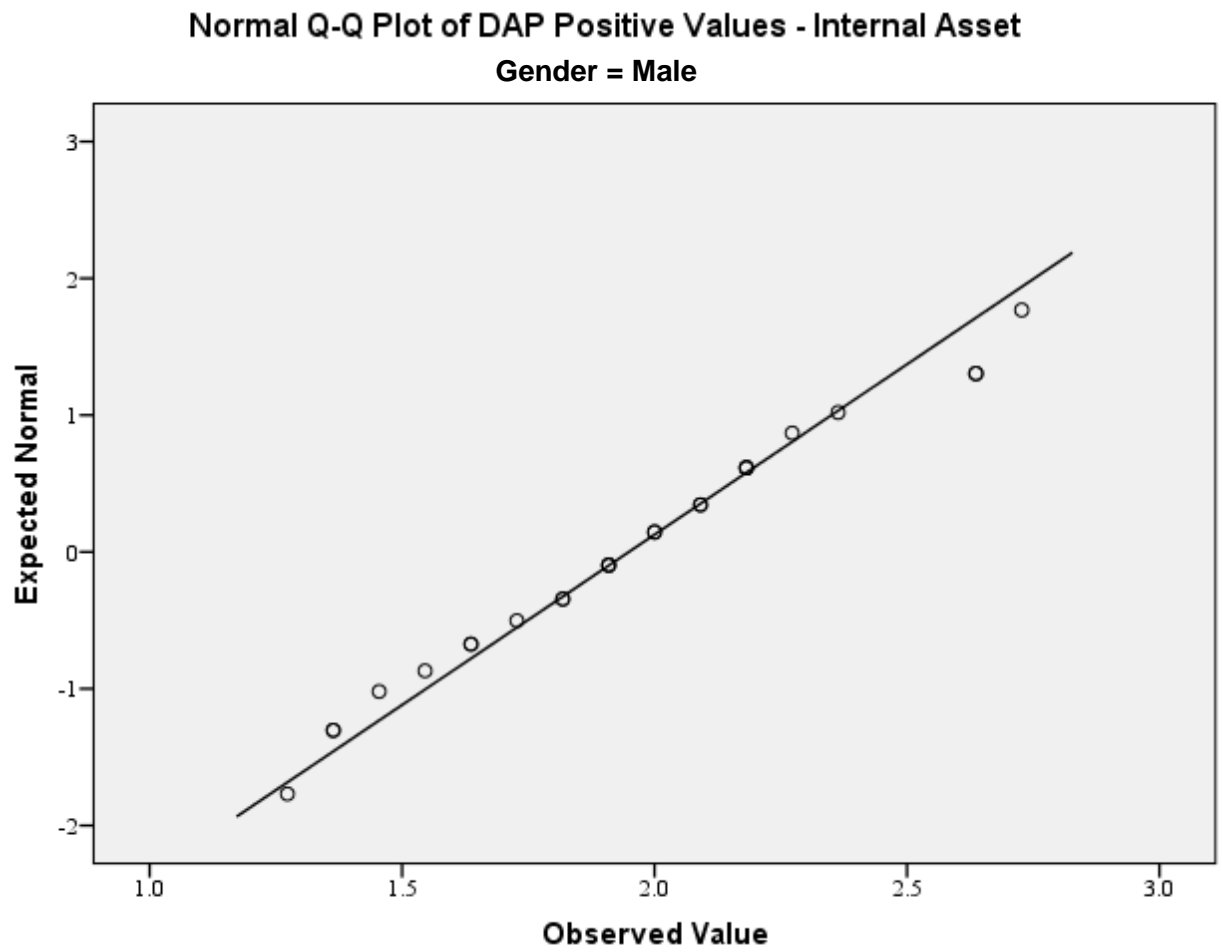
Figure 89. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Internal Asset Positive Values for Male Students.
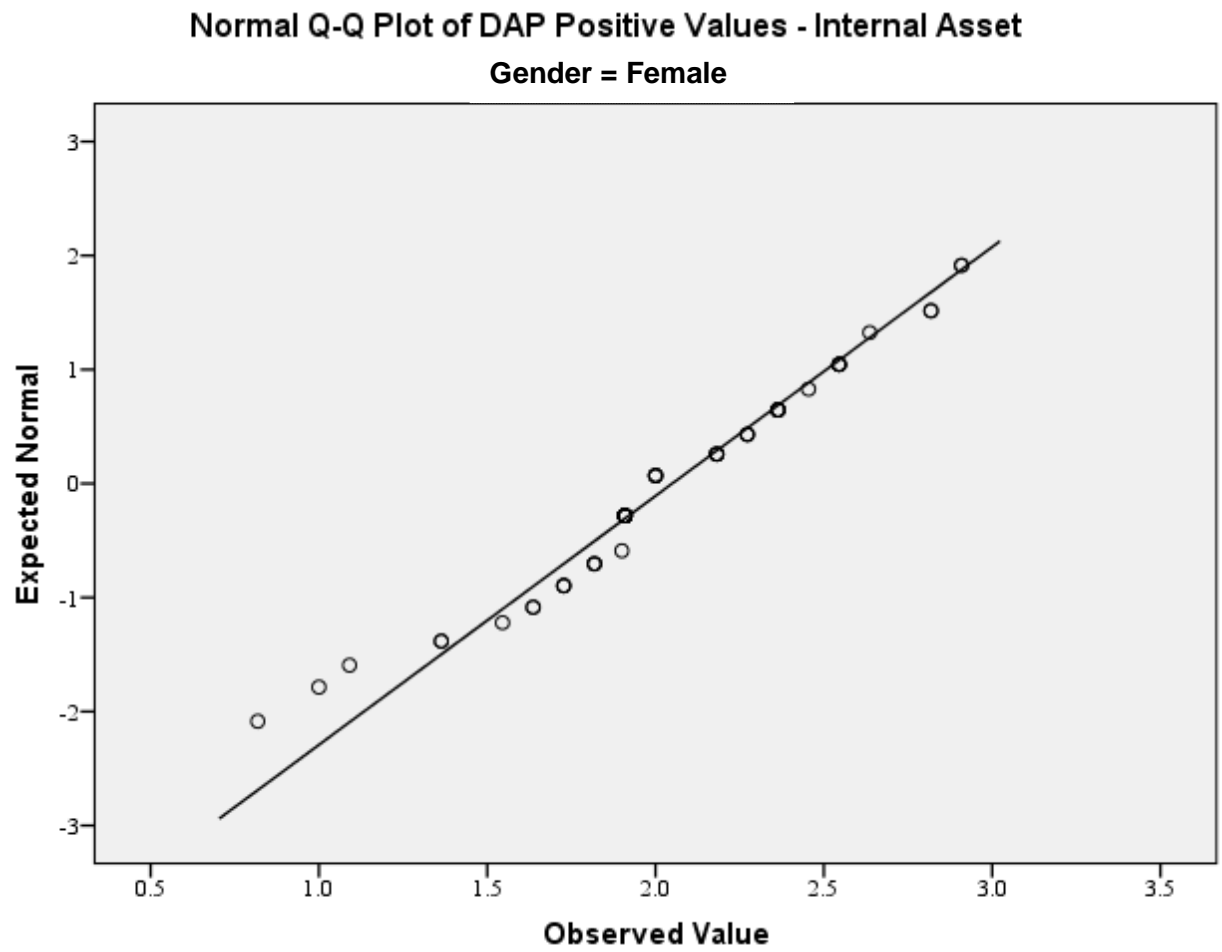
Figure 90. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Internal Asset Positive Values for Female Students.

DAP Social Competencies scores were normally distributed with a skewness of -0.353 (*SE* = 0.272) and kurtosis of -0.061 (*SE* = 0.538).
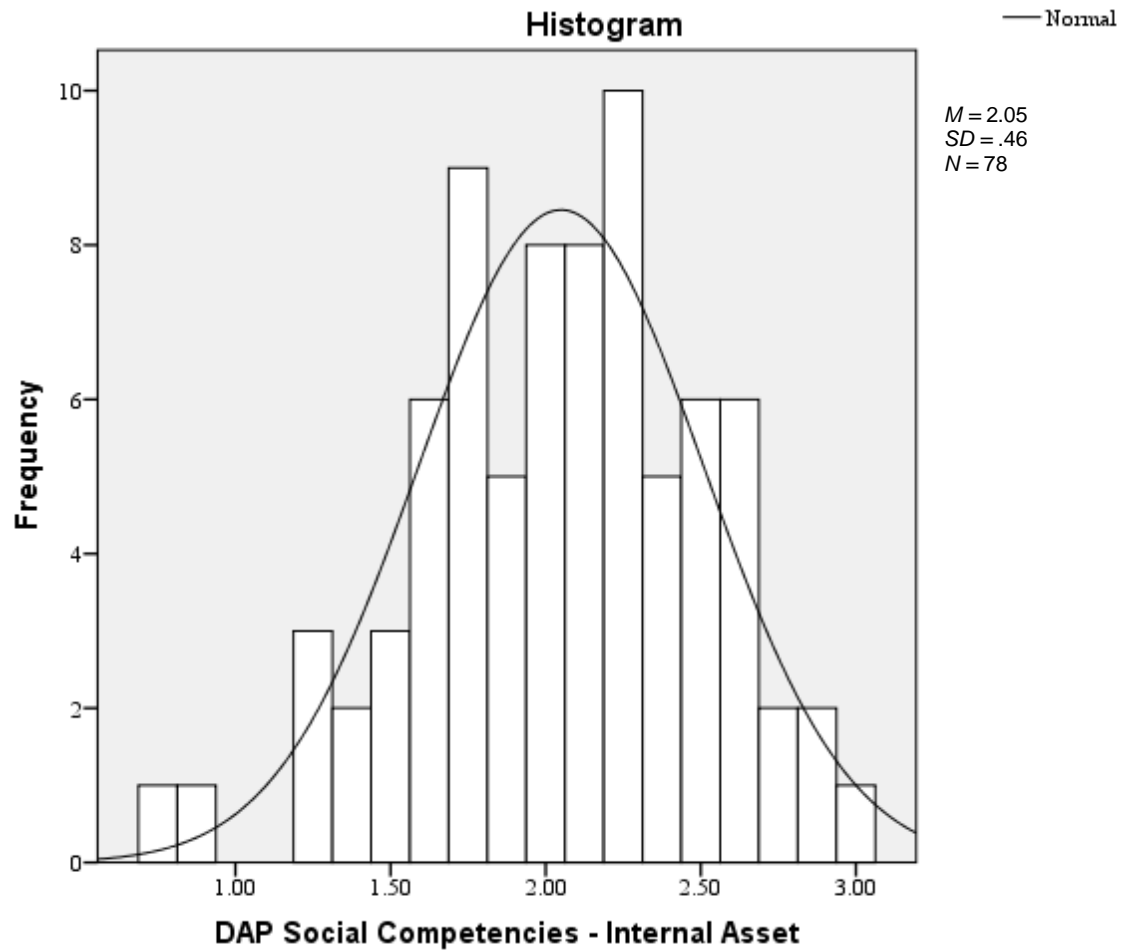

Figure 91. Histogram of DAP Internal Asset Social Competencies.
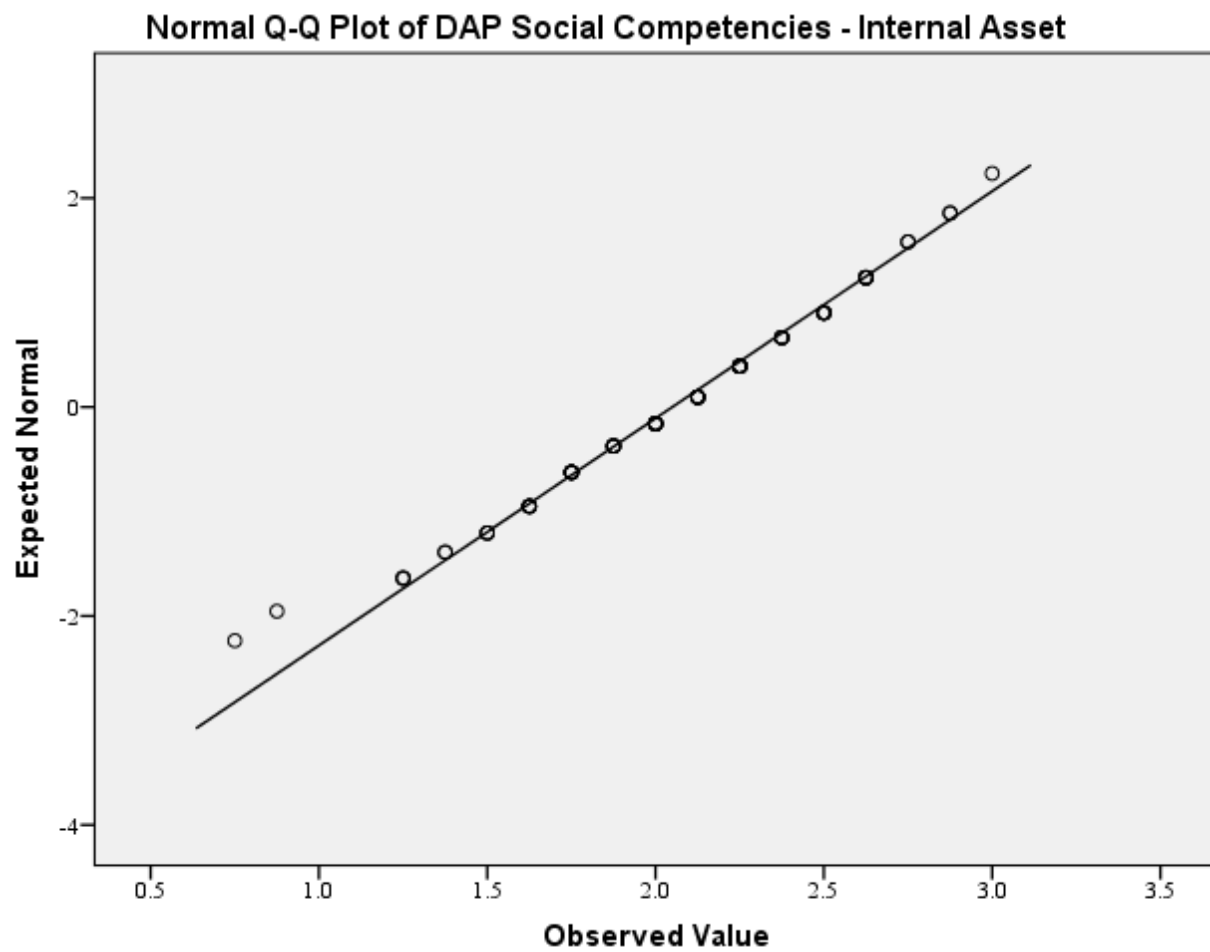
Figure 92. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Internal Asset Social Competencies.

DAP Social Competencies scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of -0.941 ($SE = 0.464$) and kurtosis of 1.330 ($SE = 0.902$) and for females with a skewness of -0.081 ($SE = 0.327$) and kurtosis of -0.247 ($SE = 0.644$).
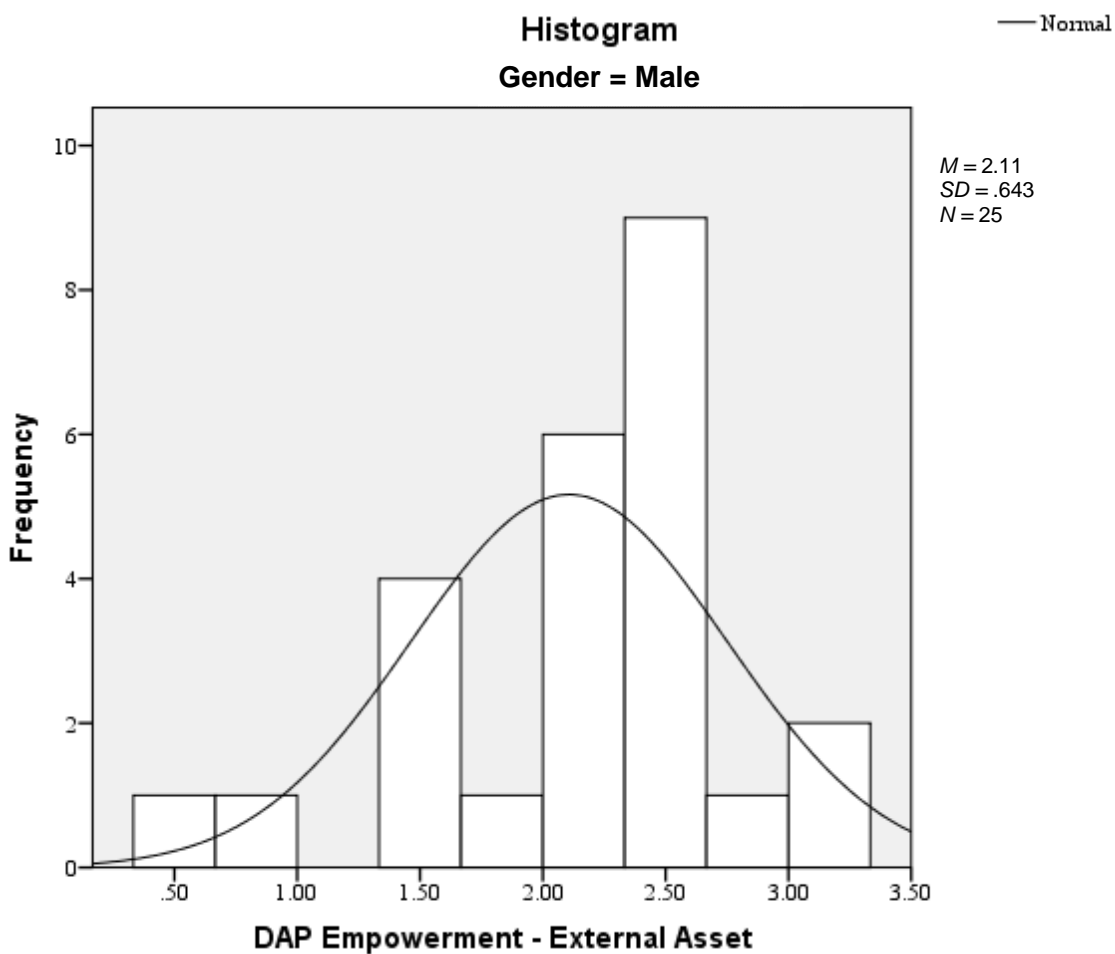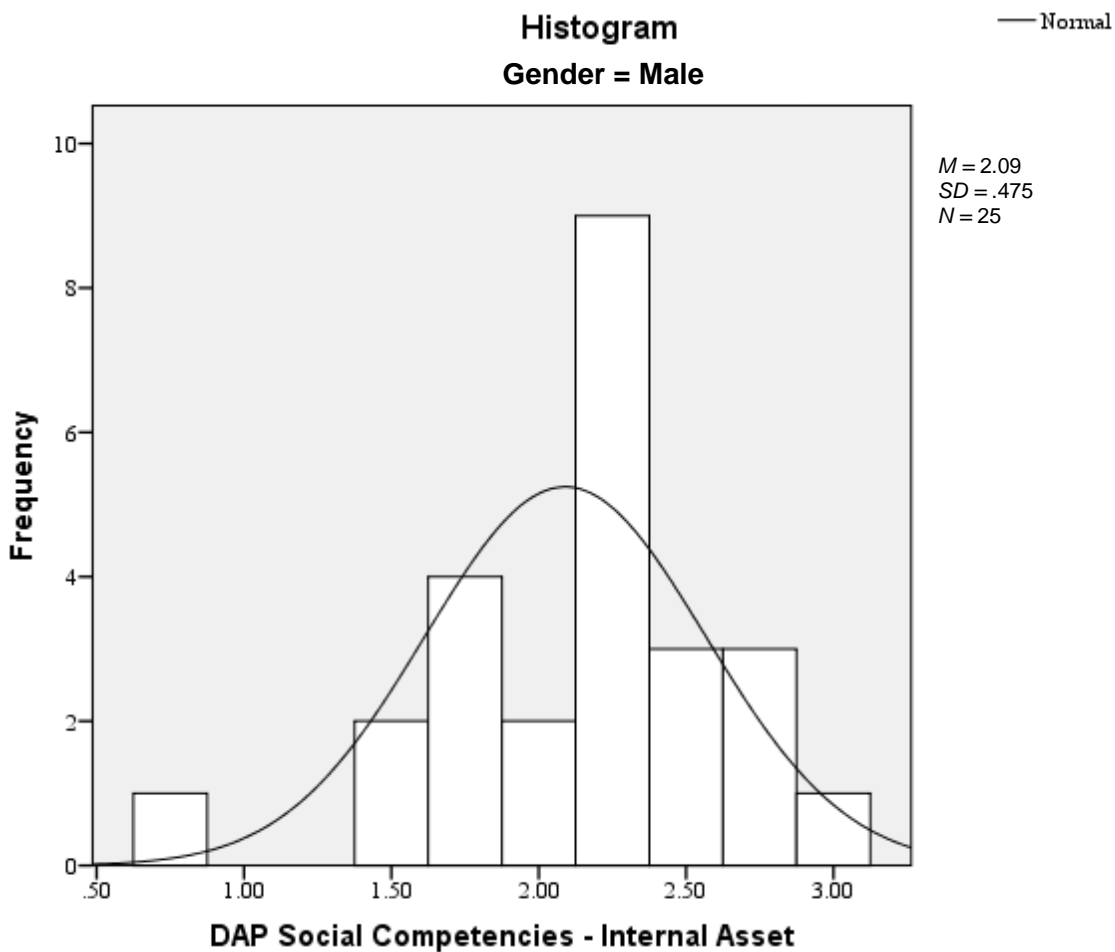

Figure 93. Histogram of DAP Internal Asset Social Competencies for Male Students.
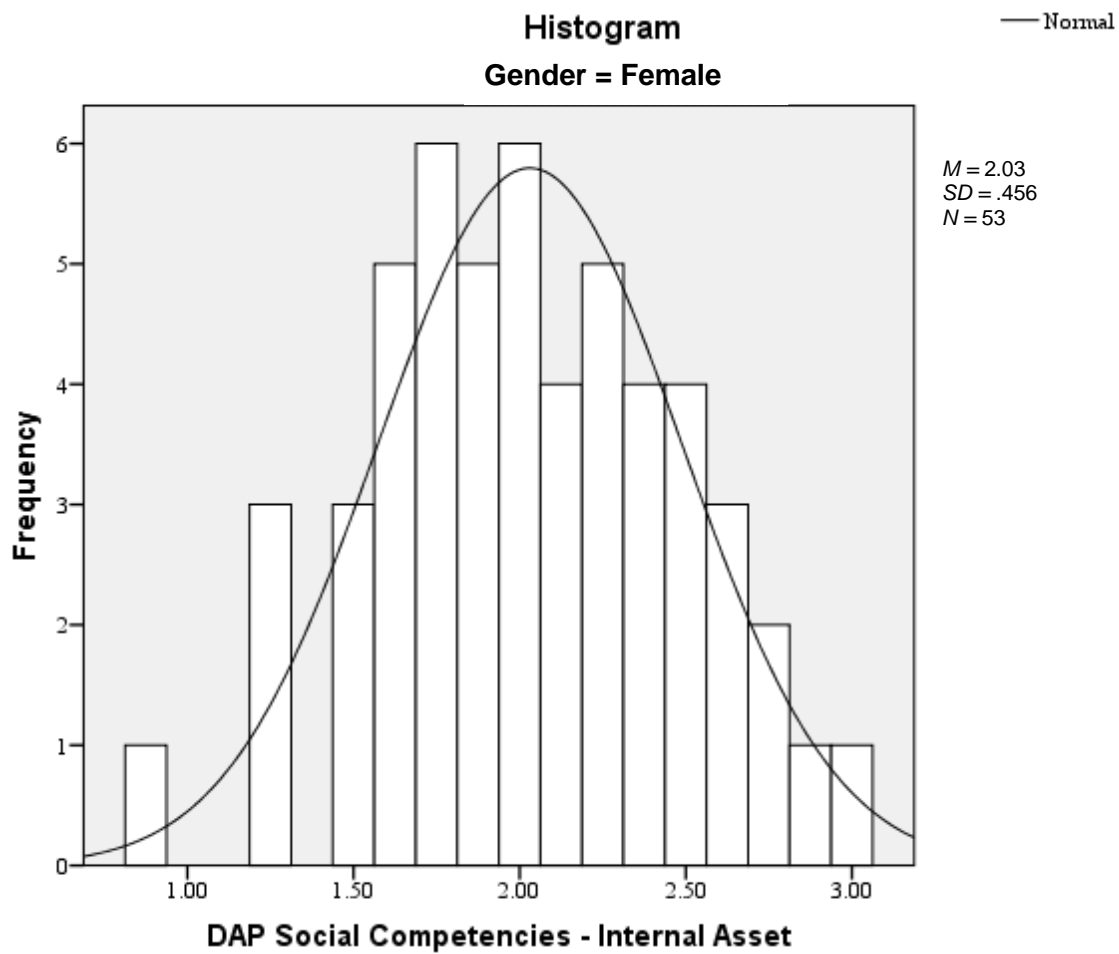
Figure 94. Histogram of DAP Internal Asset Social Competencies for Female Students.
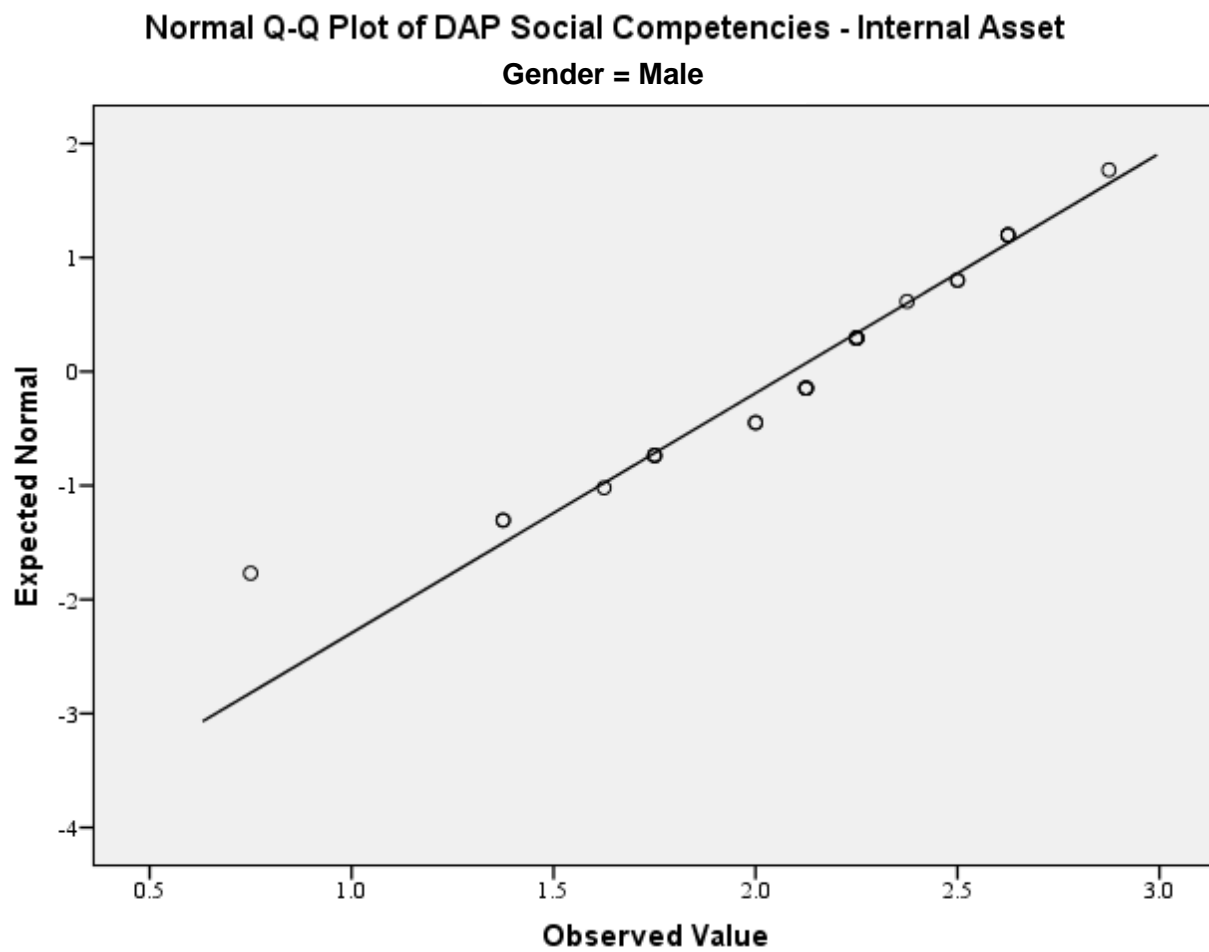
Figure 95. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Internal Asset Social Competencies for Male
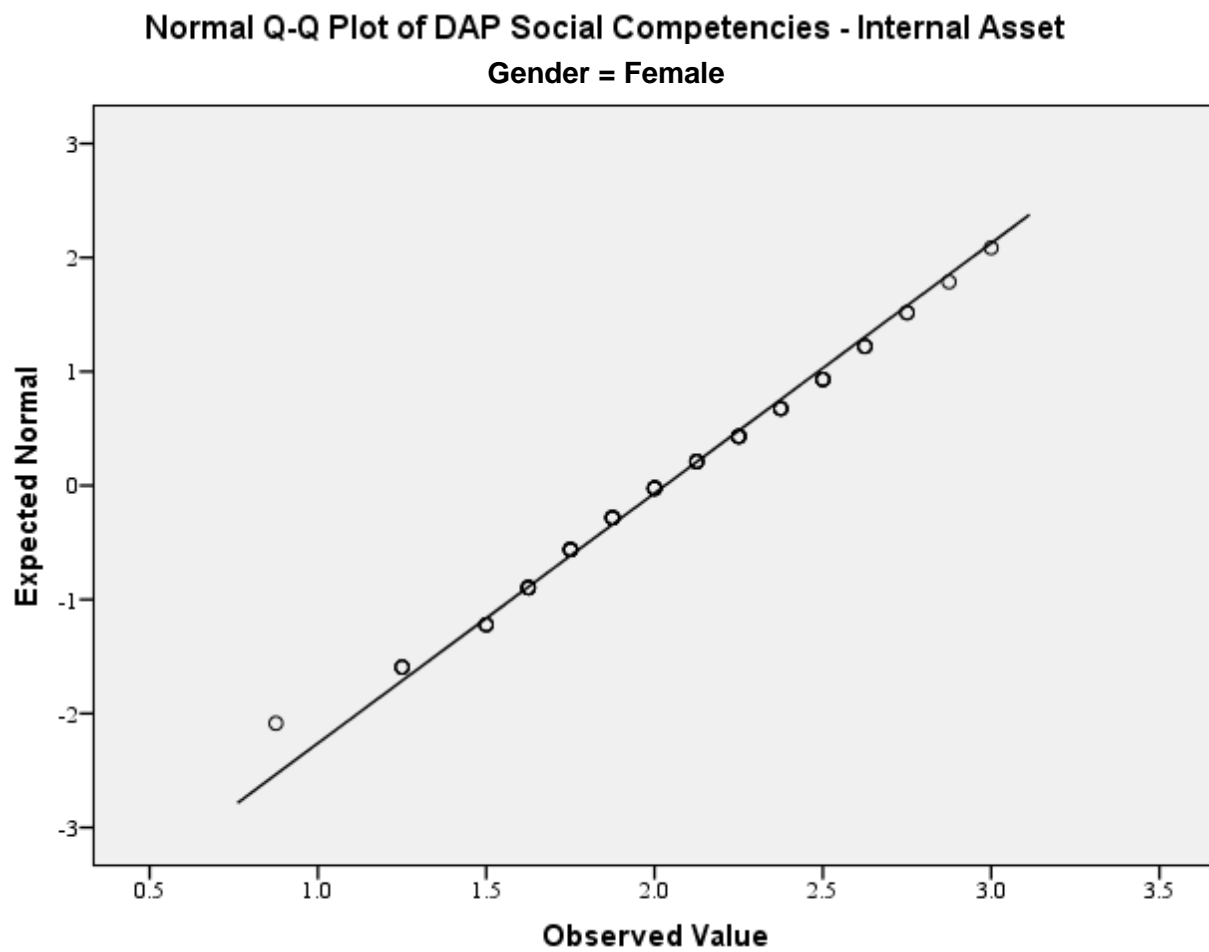
Students.

Figure 96. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Internal Asset Social Competencies for Female

Students.

DAP Positive Identity scores were normally distributed with a skewness of -0.517 ($SE = 0.272$) and kurtosis of 0.109 ($SE = 0.538$).
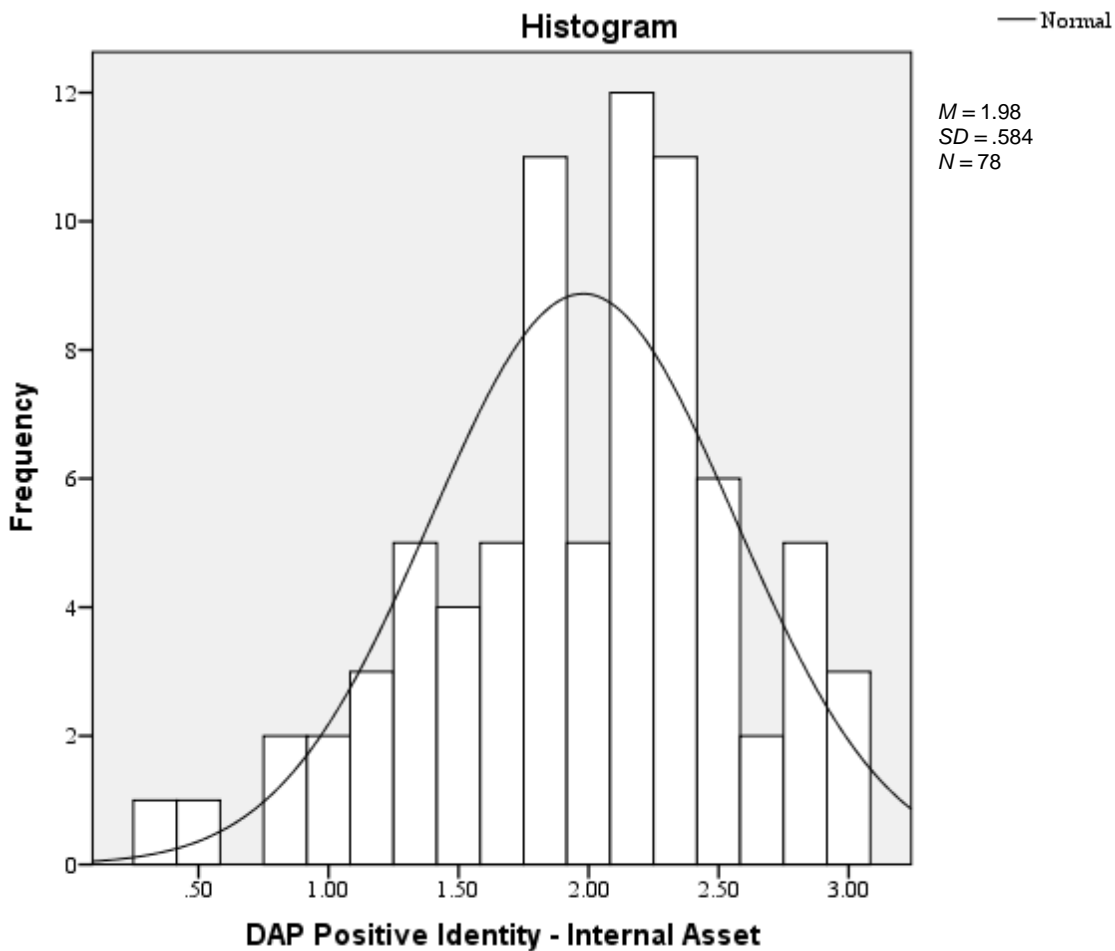
Figure 97. Histogram of DAP Internal Asset Positive Identity.
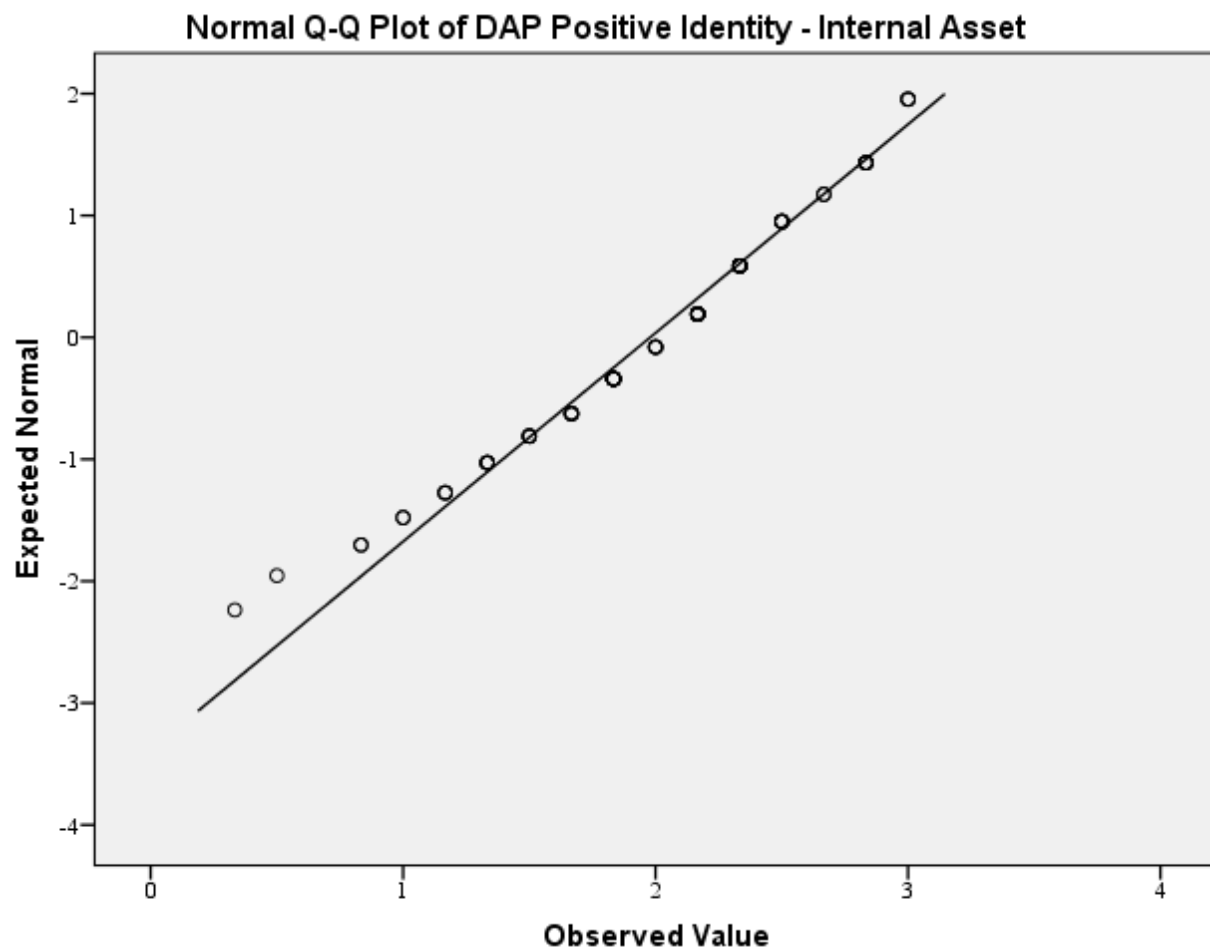
Figure 98. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Internal Asset Positive Identity.

DAP Social Competencies scores were normally distributed for males with a skewness of -1.102 (*SE* = 0.464) and kurtosis of 1.360 (*SE* = 0.902) and for females with a skewness of -0.290 (*SE* = 0.327) and kurtosis of -0.028 (*SE* = 0.644).
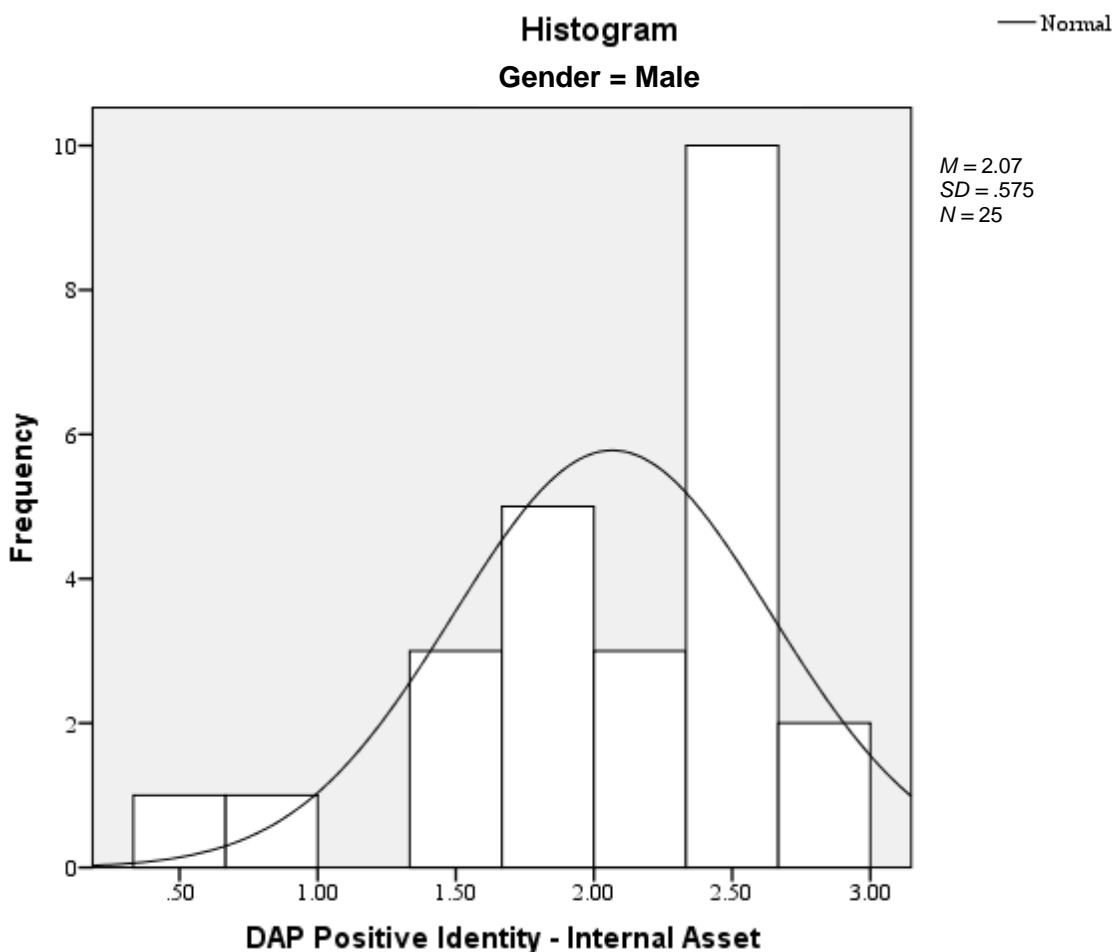
Figure 99. Histogram of DAP Internal Asset Positive Identity for Male Students.
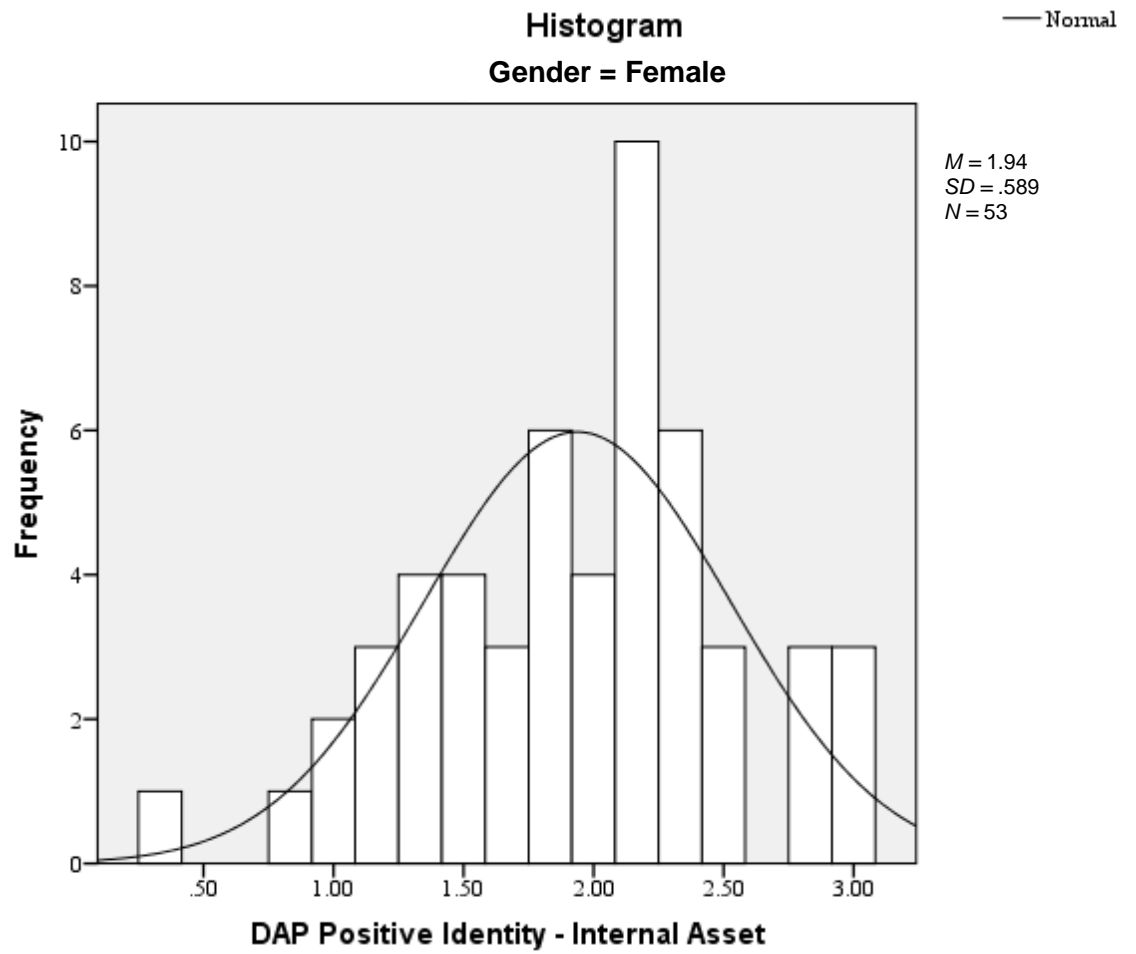
Figure 100. Histogram of DAP Internal Asset Positive Identity for Female Students.
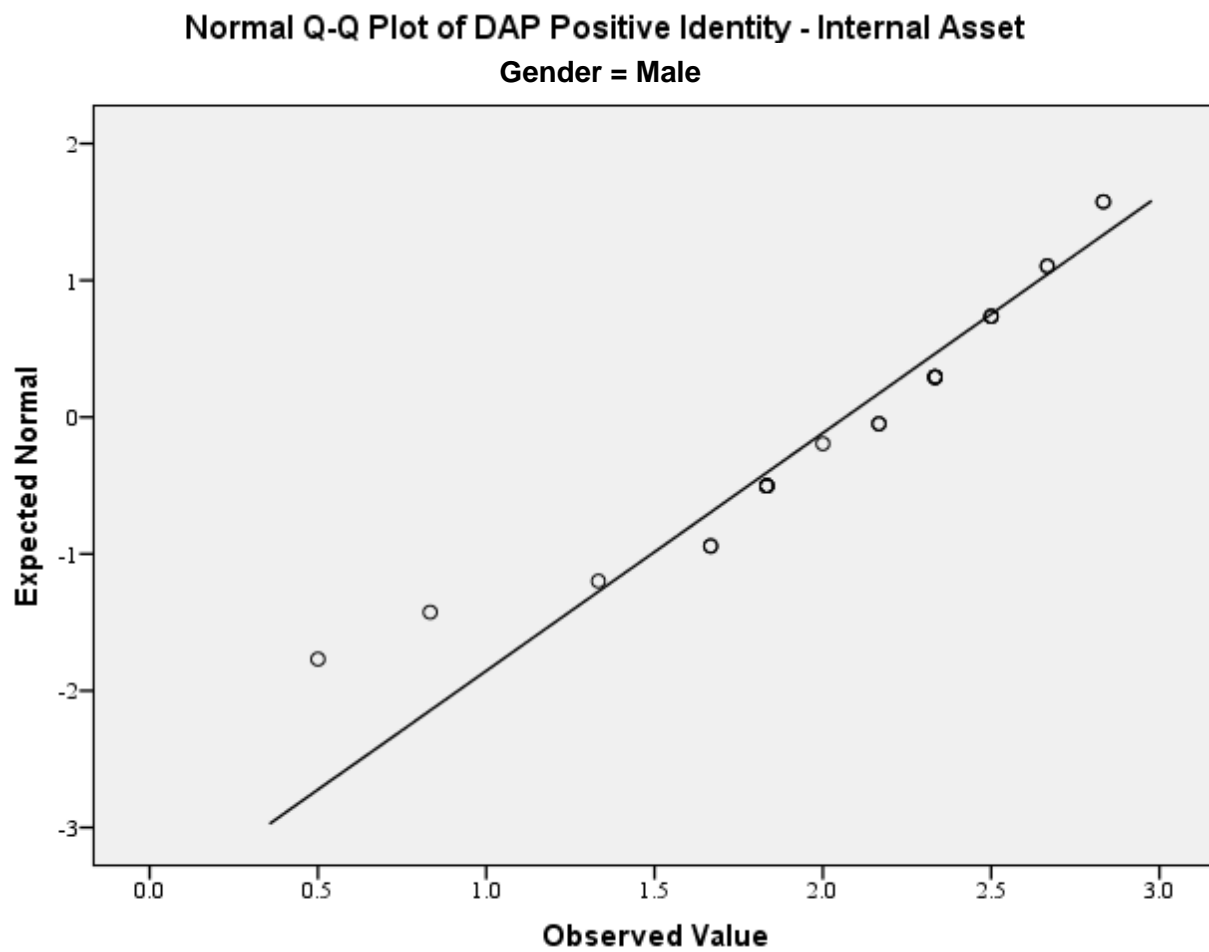
Figure 101. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Internal Asset Positive Identity for Male Students.
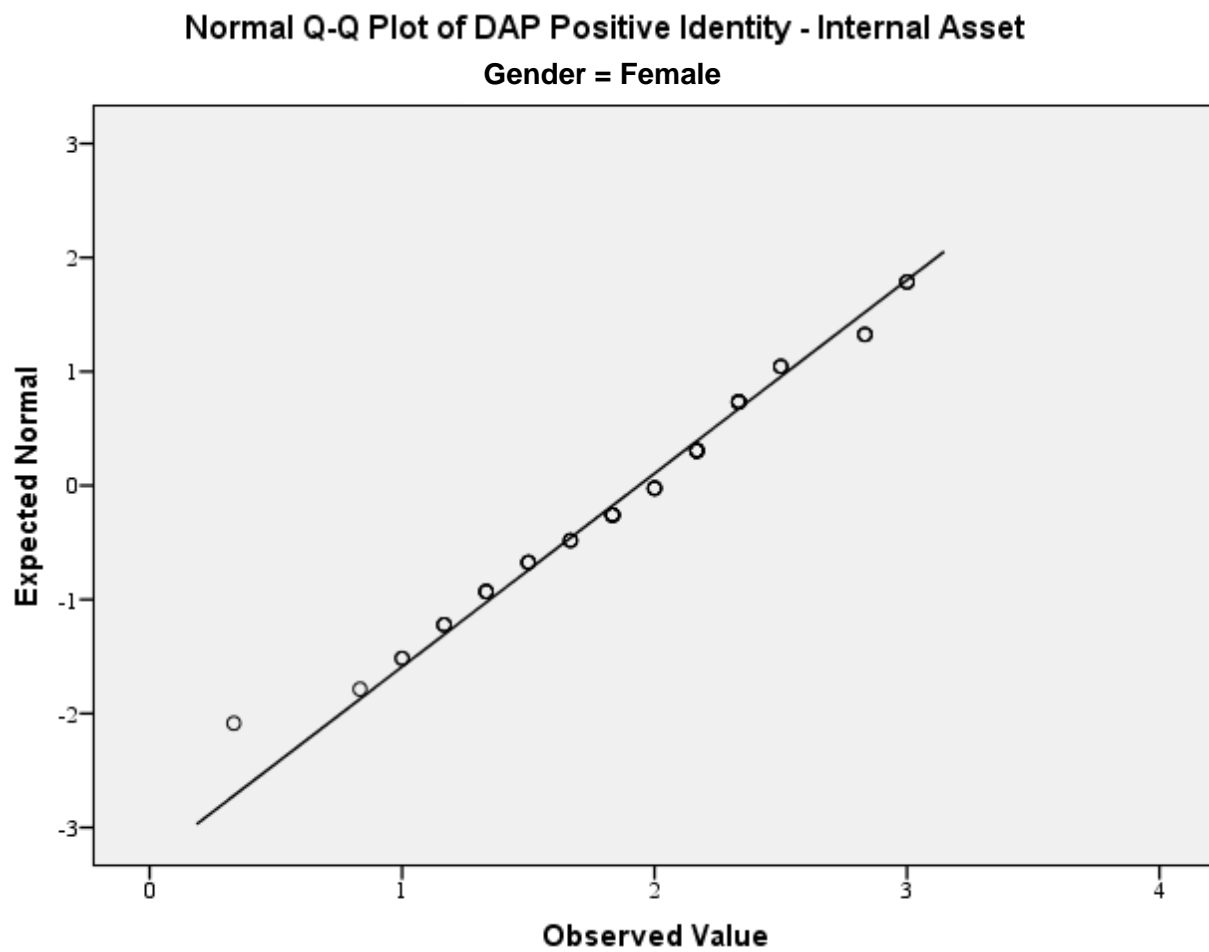
Figure 102. Normal Q-Q Plot of DAP Internal Asset Positive Identity for Female

Students.

The first research question was asked in order to discover if school climate as perceived by Hispanic students moderated the relationship between perceived developmental assets and academic success. To test the hypothesis that school climate as perceived by Hispanic students moderates the relationship between perceived developmental assets and academic success (measured by overall GPA at the end of the school year), a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was initially conducted and then followed up with completing an analysis using Hayes's PROCESS tool in SPSS version 21. DAP internal and external assets included 8 dimensions of well-being: (a) support, (b) empowerment, (c) boundaries and expectations, (d) constructive use of time, (e) commitment to learning, (f) positive values, (g) social competencies, and (h) positive identity. CGPL school climate categorical dimensions included (a) relationships, (b) organizational attributes, and (c) personal development. Academic success was measured by (a) student GPA, (b) level of performance on the reading state assessment, (c) level of performance on the math state assessment, and (d) the number of absences students were reported to have during the school year.

A series of regression analyses were conducted independently to determine if a there was a moderating relationship between developmental assets and school climate categorical dimensions affecting academic success. For example, for the first analysis in block 1, two variables were included: CGPL organizational attributes categorical dimension, and DAP external asset boundaries and expectations. The variables did not account for a significant amount of variance in academic success, $R^2 = .049$, $F(2, 75) = 1.945$, $p = .15$. To avoid potentially problematic high multicollinearity with the

interaction term, the variables were centered and an interaction term between CGPL

categorical dimension organizational attributes, and DAP external asset of boundaries

and expectations was created (Aiken & West, 1991).When the interaction term between

CGPL categorical dimension of organizational attributes, and DAP external asset

boundaries and expectations was added to the regression model in block 2, it accounted

for a significant proportion of the variance in Academic Success (GPA), $\Delta R^2 = .058$,

$\Delta F(1, 74) = 4.785$, $p = .03$, b = -1.13, t(74) = -2.24, $p = .03$. The process was repeated for

each of the variables and their respective dimensions.

Since moderation was found, a post hoc simple slopes analysis was completed ($\pm$

1 standard deviation from the mean) to determine conditional effects of school climate on

developmental assets and academic success. The results showed that when the variable of

school climate in the organizational attributes categorical dimension was low, there was a

significant positive relationship between developmental internal assets of boundaries and

expectations and academic success (GPA) $b = .646$, 95% CI [0.73, 1.22], $t = 2.24$, $p =$

.03. At mean and high levels of school climate, the relationship between developmental

internal assets of boundaries and expectations and academic success (GPA) was not

significant.

Table 8

Linear Model of Predictors of Academic Success Among Hispanic Students With GPA as the Outcome

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*T*	*P*
Constant	2.99 [2.82, 3.15]	0.09	35.09	*p* < .001
CGPL organizational attributes (centered)	-.25 [-.74, .24]	0.25	-1.03	*p* = .3
DAP boundaries and expectations external asset (centered)	.24 [-.16, .64]	0.2	1.19	*p* = .24
CGPL organizational attributes x DAP boundaries and expectations external asset	-1.13 [-2.13, -.12]	0.5	-2.24	*p* = .03

Note. R^2 = .11.
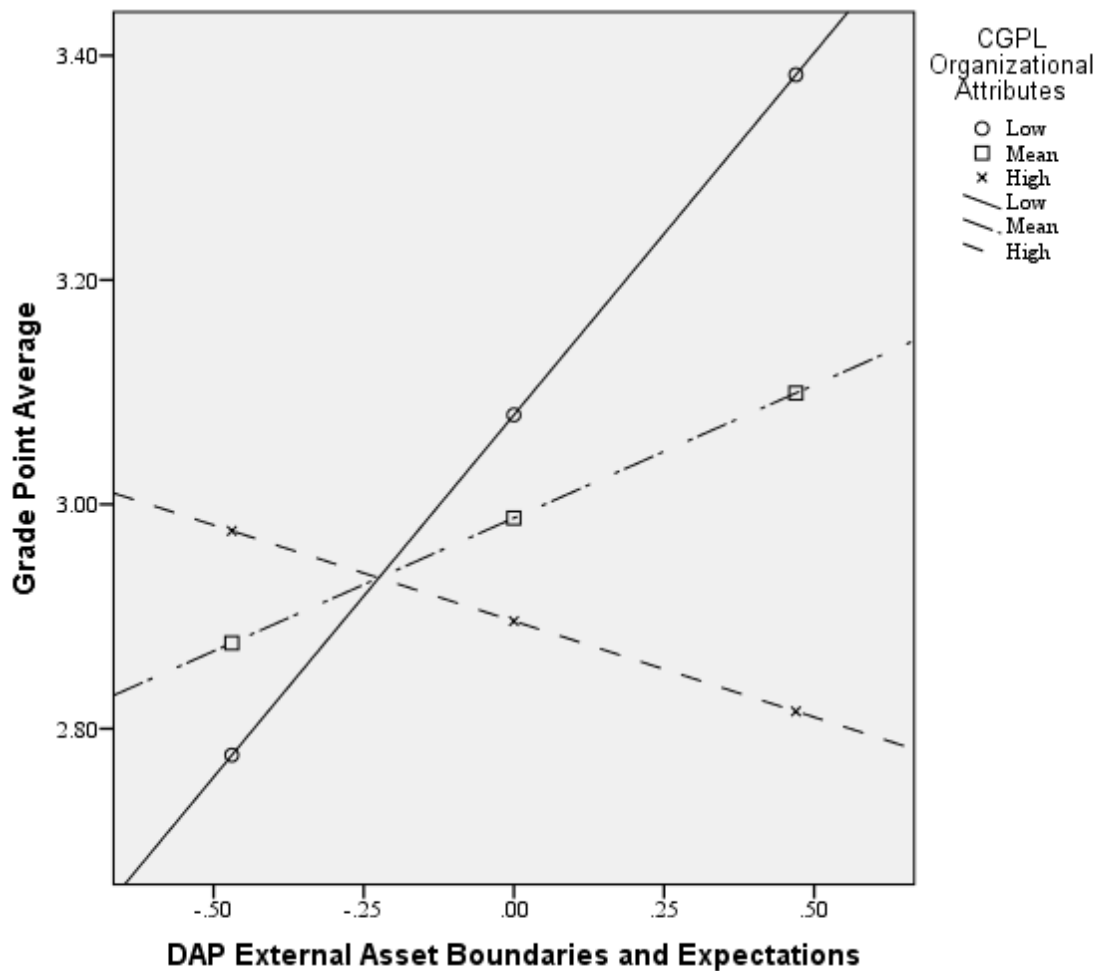
Figure 103. Conditional Interactions Between GPA and DAP Boundaries and

Expectations.

In a second analysis, the two variables CGPL categorical dimension

organizational attributes, and DAP external asset constructive use of time added in block

1 did not account for a significant amount of variance in academic success, $R^2 = .022$,

$F(2, 75) = .857$, $p = .43$. In block 2, the interaction term between CGPL categorical

dimension organizational attributes, and DAP external asset constructive use of time was

added to the regression model, and a significant proportion of the variance in academic

success was accounted for: (GPA), ΔR^2 = .050, $\Delta F(1, 74)$ = 3.97, p = .05, b = -.66, t(74) = -2.96, p = .004.

Given that moderation was established, a post hoc simple slopes analysis was completed (± 1 standard deviation from the mean) to determine conditional effects of school climate on developmental assets and academic success. The results showed that when the variable of school climate in the organizational attributes categorical dimension was low, there was a significant positive relationship between developmental internal asset of constructive use of time and academic success (GPA) b = .387, 95% CI [0.76, .697], t = 2.48, p = .02. At mean and high levels of school climate, the relationship between developmental internal asset of constructive use of time and academic success (GPA) was not significant.

Table 9

Linear Model of predictors of Academic Success Among Hispanic Students with GPA as the Outcome

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*t*	*p*
Constant	2.91 [2.76, 3.07]	0.08	38.2	$p < .001$
CGPL organizational attributes (centered)	-.21 [-.61, .20]	0.2	-1.01	$p = .32$
DAP constructive use of time external asset (centered)	.15 [-.07, .37]	0.11	1.35	$p = .18$
CGPL organizational attributes x DAP constructive use of time external asset	-.66 [-1.1, -.21]	0.22	-2.96	$p = .004$

Note. R^2 = .07.
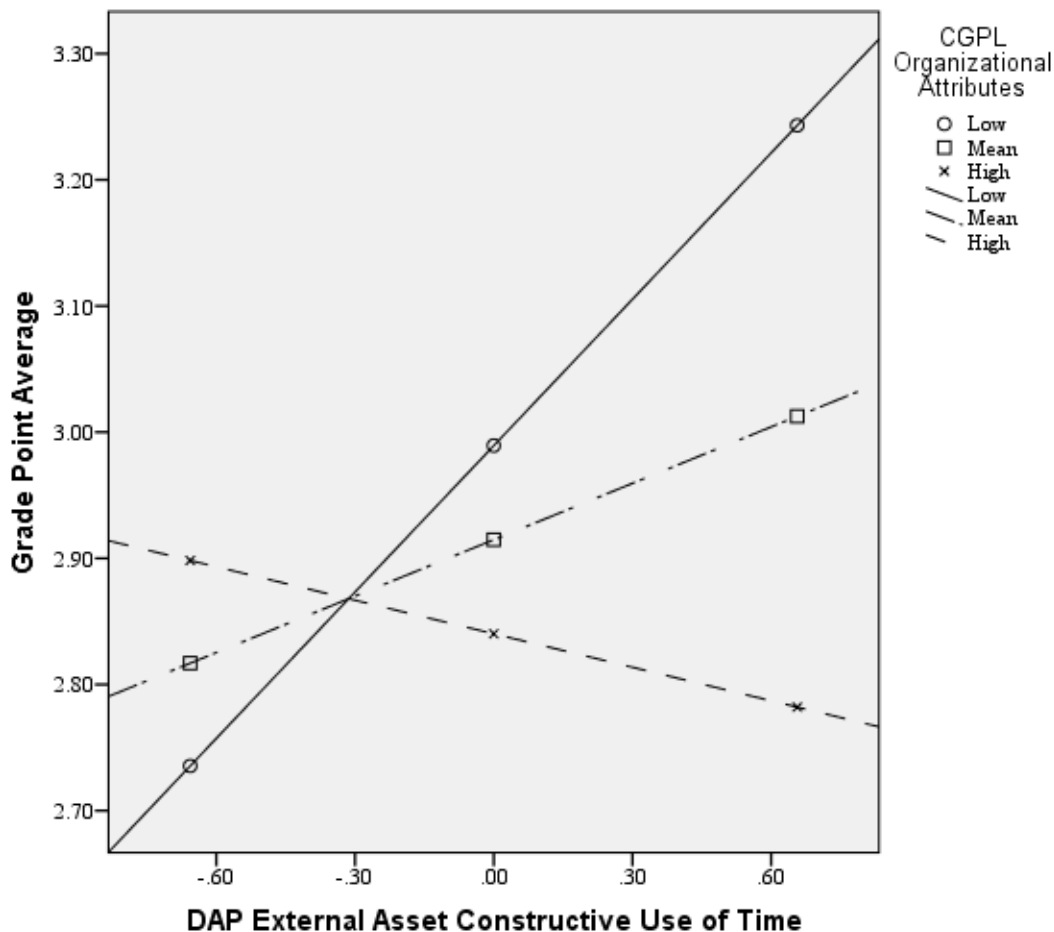
Figure 104. Conditional Interactions Between GPA and DAP Constructive Use of Time.

In block 1 of the third analysis, the variables CGPL organizational attributes categorical dimension, and DAP internal asset positive values were included. They did not account for a significant amount of variance in academic success, $R^2 = .021$, F(2, 75) $= .816$, $p = .45$. Next in block 2, the interaction term between CGPL categorical dimension organizational attributes, and DAP internal asset positive values was added to the regression model. The interaction term did account for a significant proportion of the

variance in academic success (GPA), $\Delta R^2 = .054$, $\Delta F(1, 74) = 4.29$, $p = .04$, b = -.98,

$t(74) = -2.86$, $p = .005$.

Due to moderation being present, a post hoc a simple slopes analysis was

completed ($\pm$ 1 standard deviation from the mean) to determine conditional effects of

school climate on developmental assets and academic success. The results showed that

when the variable of school climate in the organizational attributes categorical dimension

was low, there was a significant positive relationship between developmental internal

asset of positive values and academic success (GPA) $b = .473$, 95% CI [.04, .91], $t =$

2.17, $p = .03$. At mean and high levels of school climate, the relationship between

developmental internal asset of positive values and academic success (GPA) was not

significant.

Table 10

Linear Model of Predictors of Academic Success Among Hispanic Students with GPA as

the Outcome

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*T*	*p*
Constant	2.95 [2.8, 3.11]	0.08	37.7	$p < .001$
CGPL organizational attributes (centered)	-.08 [-.53, .37]	0.23	-,34	$p = .77$
DAP positive values internal asset (centered)	.12 [-.23, .46]	0.17	.68	$p = .5$
CGPL organizational attributes x DAP positive values internal asset	-.98 [-1.66, -.3]	0.34	-2.86	$p = .005$

Note. R² = .07.
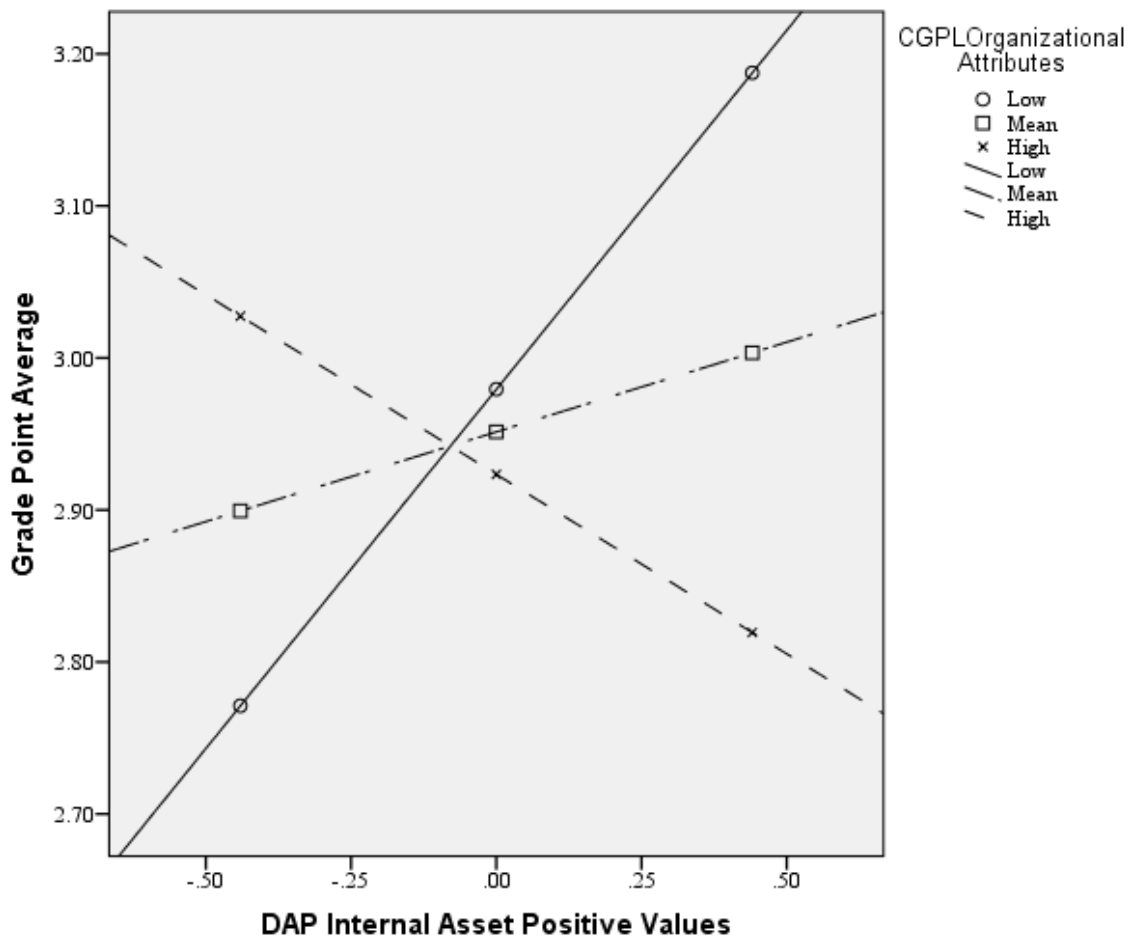
Figure 105. Conditional Interactions Between GPA and DAP Positive Values.

A fourth analysis involved adding the two variables CGPL categorical dimension organizational attributes, and DAP internal asset social competencies in block 1. These variables did not account for a significant amount of variance in academic success, $R^2 =$ .05, $F(2, 75) = 1.96$, $p = .15$. In block 2, the interaction term between CGPL categorical dimension organizational attributes, and DAP internal asset social competencies was added to the regression model. A significant proportion of the variance in academic

success (GPA) was accounted for, $\Delta R^2 = .081$, $\Delta F(1, 74) = 6.904$, $p = .01$, $b = -1.24$,

$t(74) = -2.46$, $p = .02$.

Since moderation was found, a post hoc simple slopes analysis was completed ($\pm$

1 standard deviation from the mean) to determine conditional effects of school climate on

developmental assets and academic success. The results showed that when the variable of

school climate in the organizational attributes categorical dimension was low, there was a

significant positive relationship between developmental internal asset of social

competencies and academic success (GPA) $b = .735$, 95% CI [.16, 1.31], $t = 2.57$, $p =$

.01. At mean and high levels of school climate, the relationship between developmental

internal asset of social competencies and academic success (GPA) was not significant.

Table 11

Linear Model of Predictors of Academic Success Among Hispanic Students with GPA as

the Outcome

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*T*	*p*
Constant	2.9 [2.83, 3.13]	.07	40.81	$p < .001$
CGPL organizational attributes (centered)	-.20 [-.59, .18]	.19	-1.05	$p = .3$
DAP social competencies internal asset (centered)	.28 [-.07, .64]	.18	.1.59	$p = .12$
CGPL organizational attributes x DAP social competencies internal asset	-1.24 [-2.25, -.24]	.50	-2.46	$p = .02$

Note. $R^2 = .13$.
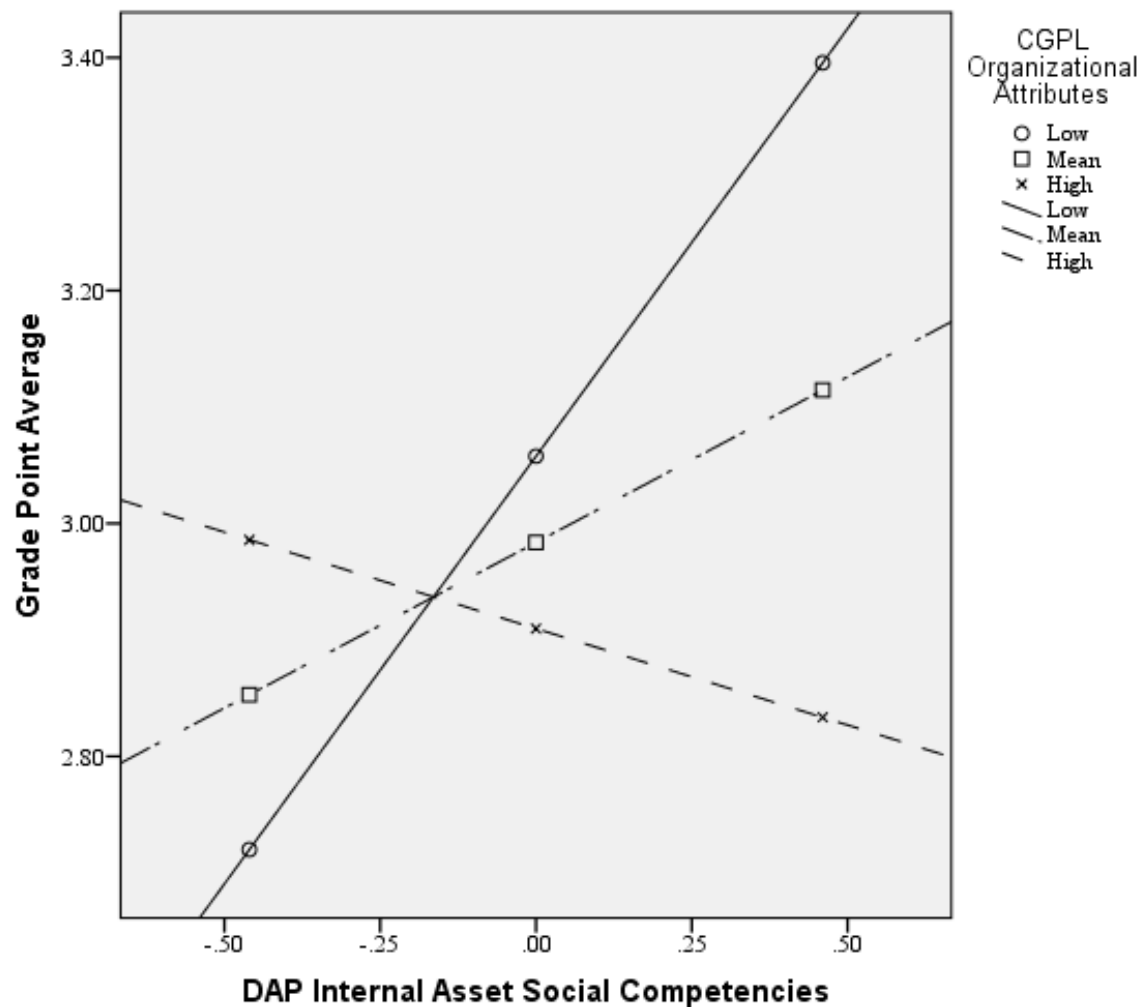
Figure 106. Conditional Interactions Between GPA and DAP Social Competencies.

In the fifth analysis, the variables *CGPL* categorical dimension organizational attributes, and *DAP* complete were added in block 1. These variables did not account for a significant amount of variance in academic success, $R^2 = .035$, $F(2, 75) = 1.37$, $p = .26$. Next in block 2, the interaction term between CGPL categorical dimension organizational attributes, and DAP complete was added to the regression model. The interaction term did for a significant proportion of the variance in academic success (GPA), $\Delta R^2 = .074$, $\Delta F(1, 74) = 6.170$, $p = .02$, $b = -1.24$, $t(74) = -2.84$, $p = .006$.

In view of the fact that moderation was present, a post hoc simple slopes analysis was completed (± 1 standard deviation from the mean) to determine conditional effects of school climate on developmental assets and academic success. The results showed that when the variable of school climate in the organizational attributes categorical dimension was low, there was a significant positive relationship between developmental assets complete and academic success (GPA) $b = .631$, 95% CI [.05, 1.21], $t = 2.16$, $p = .03$. At mean and high levels of school climate, the relationship between developmental assets complete and academic success (GPA) was not significant.

Table 12

Linear Model of Predictors of Academic Success Among Hispanic Students with GPA as the Outcome

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*t*	*p*
Constant	2.98 [2.83, 3.13]	0.08	38.85	*p* < .001
CGPL organizational attributes (centered)	-.14 [-.57, .28]	0.21	-.68	*p* = .5
DAP complete (centered)	.18 [-.24, .6]	0.21	.86	*p* = .39
CGPL organizational attributes x DAP complete	-1.24 [-2.11, -.37]	0.44	-2.84	*p* = .006

Note. $R^2 = .11$.
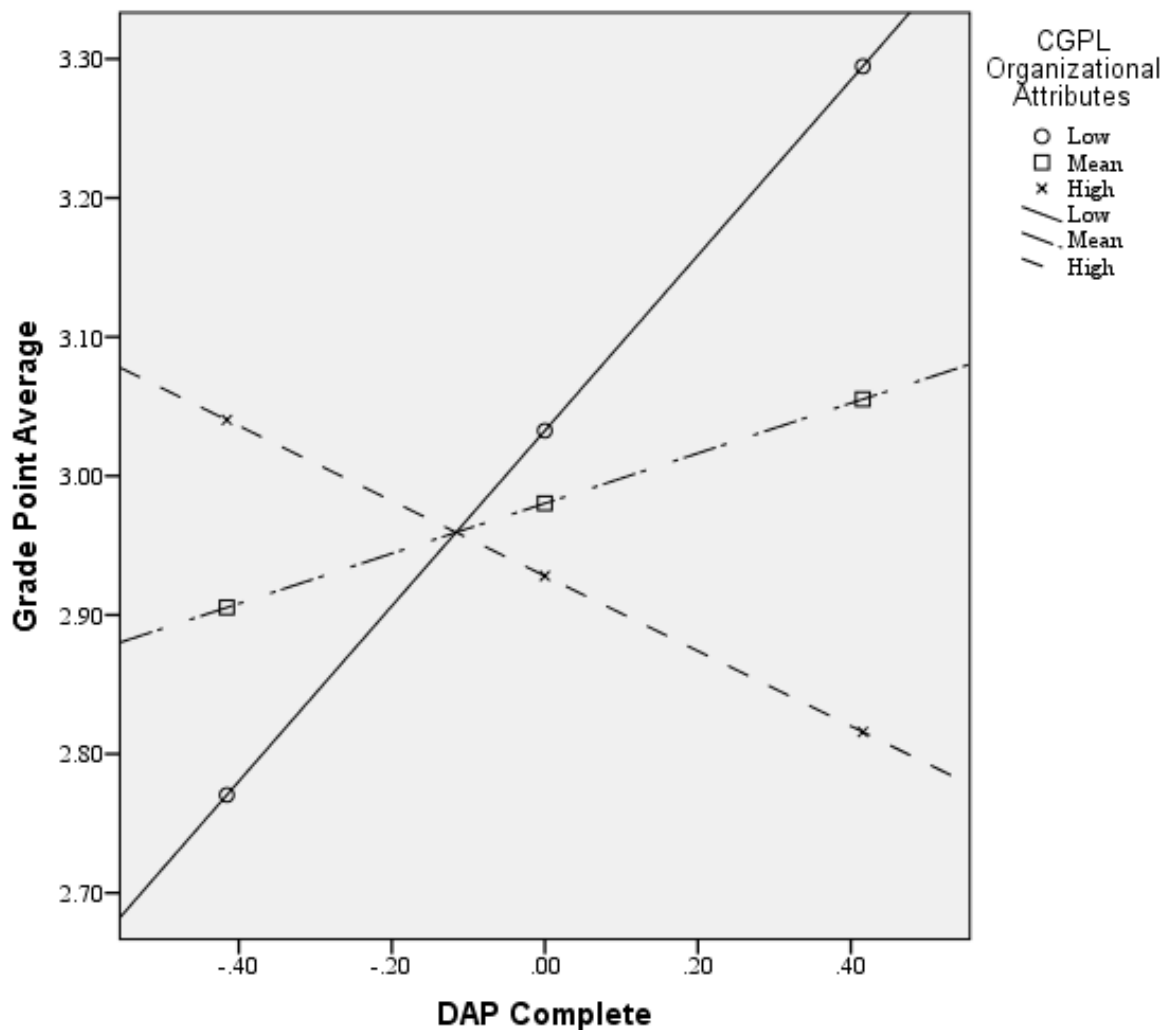
Figure 107. Conditional Interactions Between GPA and DAP Complete.

When running the sixth analysis, two variables were included in the first block: CGPL categorical dimension relationships, and DAP internal asset social competencies. The variables did not account for a significant amount of variance in academic success, $R^2 = .033$, $F(2, 75) = 1.276$, $p = .29$. Next in Block 2, the interaction term between CGPL categorical dimension relationships, and DAP social competencies was added to the regression model, which accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in

academic Success (GPA), $\Delta R^2 = .053$, $\Delta F(1, 74) = 4.292$, $p = .04$, $b = -.62$, $t(74) = -1.99$,

$p = .05$.

A post hoc simple slopes analysis was completed ($\pm$ 1 standard deviation from the

mean) to determine conditional effects of school climate on developmental assets and

academic success because moderation was verified. The results showed that when the

variable of school climate in the relationships categorical dimension was low, there was a

significant positive relationship between developmental asset of social competencies and

academic success (GPA) $b = .592$, 95% CI [.104, 1.08], $t = 2.42$, $p = .02$. At mean and

high levels of school climate, the relationship between developmental internal asset of

social competencies and academic success (GPA) was not significant.

Table 13

Linear Model of Predictors of Academic Success Among Hispanic Students with GPA as

the Outcome

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*t*	*p*
Constant	2.96 [2.79, 3.13]	.08	35.42	$p < .001$
CGPL relationships (centered)	-.24 [-.51, .04]	.14	-1.71	$p = .09$
DAP social competencies (centered)	.25 [-.19, .70]	.22	1.14	$p = .26$
CGPL relationships x DAP social competencies	-.62 [-1.24, .002]	.31	-1.99	$p = .05$

Note. $R^2 = .09$.
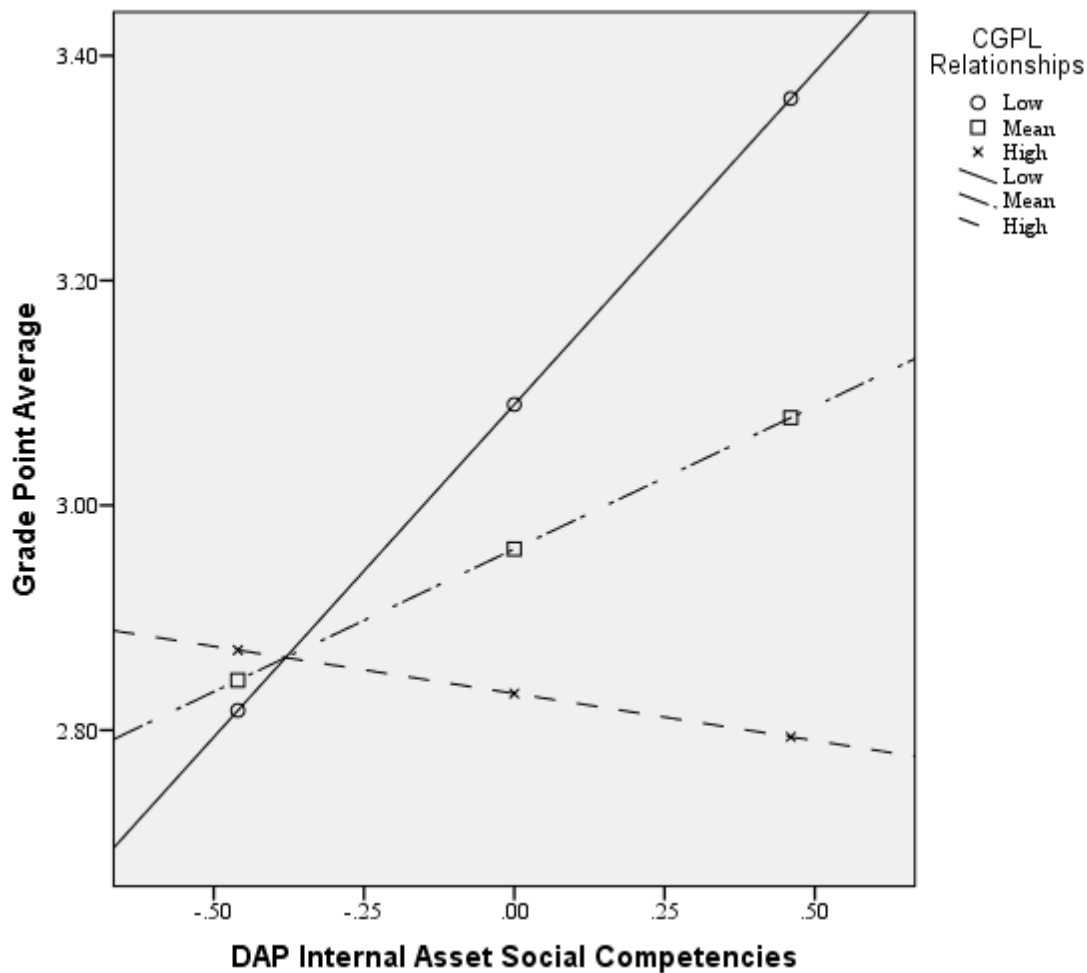
Figure 108. Conditional Interactions Between GPA and DAP Positive Social Competencies.

The second research question was asked in order to find if school climate as perceived by school staff members moderated the relationship between students' perceived developmental assets and academic success among Hispanic students. As was previously stated, the number of staff members who participated was below the amount needed to have a medium effect size of $f^2 = 0.15$, a power of 0.80, and an alpha value of 0.05. Therefore an analysis to answer research question two could not be performed.

Finally, the third research question attempted to answer if the strength of the moderating relationship of perceived school climate on perceived developmental assets and academic success differed for male and female Hispanic students. A disproportionate amount of male versus female participated in the study: 27 males and 56 females. When the sample size just included 78 participants from both Hispanic and Hispanic and other groups, the male/female numbers were reduced even further (25 and 53, respectively). In both gender subgroups the total participants fell below the required amount of participants to achieve a medium effect size of $f^2 = 0.15$, a power of 0.95, and an alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, an analysis to attempt to answer research question three could not be performed.

Summary

In Chapter 4, the results of the research study with a focus on how school climate moderates the relationship between developmental assets and academic success were presented. While research questions 2 and 3 were not able to be explored due to low levels of participation, analysis of research question 1 did yield some insight into the relationship between school climate, developmental assets, and academic success in the Hispanic student population. Based on the findings, student perceptions of KIPP school climate significantly moderated the relationship between developmental assets and academic success among Hispanic students. In Chapter 5, I will go into further detail on the findings and the conclusions that may be made from the analysis results. Study limitations will be addressed, potential implications for social change will be identified and suggestions for future research will be provided.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how school climate in the KIPP model, as perceived by both students and school staff members, may positively influence the building of developmental assets and academic success among Hispanic students. In this cross-sectional study, I explored the relationship among the moderating variable, the KIPP model's approach to school climate, the independent variable of developmental assets as exhibited by students, and the dependent variable of their respective academic success at KIPP Aspire and Camino charter schools. I proposed three research questions:

1. Does school climate as perceived by Hispanic students moderate the relationship between perceived developmental assets and academic success?

2. Does school climate as perceived by school staff moderate the relationship between students' perceived developmental assets and academic success among Hispanic students?

3. Does the strength of the moderating relationship of perceived school climate on perceived developmental assets and academic success differ for male and female Hispanic students?

I could not explore the second and third research questions due to low response participation. However, I explored and analyzed the first research question using SPSS software, version 21.

Through a series of multiple regression analyses, the results indicated that school climate within the categorical dimension of organizational attributes did moderate the relationship between academic success (GPA) and developmental assets when analyzed altogether, complete ($p = .006$). When analyzing the moderating influence school climate within the categorical dimension of organizational attributes on individual developmental assets, there was a significant moderation interaction between multiple assets and academic success (GPA), including external asset empowerment ($p = .05$), external asset boundaries and expectations ($p = .03$), external asset constructive use of time ($p = .004$), internal asset positive values ($p = .005$), and internal asset social competencies ($p = .02$) from the perspective of Hispanic students attending KIPP. In addition, when school climate was measured from the categorical dimension of relationships, a significant moderation relationship was found to be present with internal developmental asset social competencies and academic success as measured by GPA ($p = .05$). A post hoc analysis of simple slopes indicated a conditional moderation occurred at low levels of school climate (in the categorical dimensions of organizational attributes and relationships) on the relationship between each of the developmental assets listed above and academic success (GPA).

In this chapter, I explain the results of the research study. I first interpret the findings, highlighting the chosen theoretical framework and juxtaposing past research findings with the current research study findings. I review limitations of the study, and I then make recommendations for future research. Finally, I discuss implications for the

study, including social, theoretical, and practice implications, before I conclude Chapter 5.

Interpretation of the Findings

Theoretical Framework

  PYD theory. The PYD theory stems from Erikson's (1968) understanding of building one's identity throughout life. The coconstructive nature of building identity between the person and their culture introduced by Erikson is reflected with the PYD theory and the interconnectedness of relationships between youth and friends, family, community, and schools (Erikson, 1980). In Erikson's (1968) theory of psychosocial development, adults in particular were significant in defining an adolescent's identity. Teachers and school staff continue to play a vital role in adolescent development which may help or inhibit healthy identity, as understood in Erikson's (1968) time and as currently viewed through PYD theory.

  Positive youth development in action encompasses providing opportunities for building positive relationships among peers and caring adults to promote healthy outcomes (Bruyere, 2010). The positive relationships, in turn, provide opportunities for growth and development of skills, or strengths, which encourage positive values, and support a positive self-image (Scales et al., 2004). From a social systems perspective, foundational for the PYD theory, an interconnected and mutually influencing relationship exists among the student, family, peers, school, and surrounding community (Benson, 2006). Interactions may positively or negatively influence multiple levels of development for the youth including social, emotional, physical, cognitive, moral, and spiritual areas

of development (Benson, 2006). I attempted to take a closer look the interconnectedness of KIPP's school climate and perceived developmental assets that influence student success in school. Erikson believed that student identity was coconstructed by the individual and social systems, including relationships build within schools between teachers and their students (Erikson, 1980). The coconstructive nature of KIPP's school climate, working with students to forge a positive identity, and the influence on academic success was the focal point for this study.

Theoretical extensions of PYD theory include relational developmental systems (Lerner, Lerner, von Eye, Bowers, & Lewin-Bizan, 2011; Lerner & Overton, 2012; Lerner, Von Eye, Lerner, & Lewin-Bizan, 2009). Relational developmental systems highlight a bidirectional relationship where adolescents are influenced by their environment, and may also influence their environment (Lerner et al., 2010). Adolescent development is malleable and may be positively influenced to yield a better outcome and increase an adolescent's ability to thrive in their environment and (Lerner et al., 2010). Relationships established must also insist on high expectations and meaningful participation opportunities to catalyze growth (Benard, 2004). The current research study may explain further the influence of the school environment (i.e., KIPP's school climate) on building developmental assets and helping Hispanic students increase academic performance.

The supportive relationships experienced within the school environment between students and their teachers, support staff, and their peers have helped students increase their ability to be successful in their classes and perform at a higher level academically.

There was a significant moderating relationship of school climate dimensions found in the current study that positively affected developmental assets and academic success in the predominantly Hispanic student population.

The Search Institute indicated the greater amount of developmental assets, using a middle school population, is inversely correlated to a decrease in participation in risk behaviors (Benson & Scales, 2009). Positive, caring relationships help to increase developmental assets, in turn increasing student success and decreasing the likelihood of engaging in risk behavior. I did not identify specific risk behaviors; however, data on perceptions of positive caring relationships were collected and measured by surveys instruments created by the Search Institute.

The relationships categorical dimension measuring school climate from the student perspectives was shown to be a moderating variable on developmental assets and overall academic success, as measured by student GPA in core classes. This encompasses positive, supportive interactions between students and KIPP staff members and students and their parents (or guardians, depending on the make-up of their respective family unit). There are defined expectations for academic achievement and students feel supported and valued in their progression towards success in school.

The organizational attributes categorical dimension measuring KIPP school climate from student perspectives was shown to be a moderating variable on developmental assets and overall academic success, as measured by student GPA in core classes. This suggests a variety of positive attributes related to KIPP's organizational

structure, internal practices, and established procedures may be assisting in building developmental assets and supporting student success.

Based on student responses, feel they are a valued participating and contributing member of the KIPP learning community. They feel safe on campus and bullying behavior has been minimal and appropriately addressed by staff members at KIPP. Classroom management supports learning, with minimal disruptions, off task behavior that takes away from regular instruction. There is an established academic expectation that KIPP students will value learning and excel in school, in preparation for college. Students feel supported by staff members, their peers, and family as they work towards achieving academic success in KIPP schools. Finally, students are engaged in learning and are active participants in the learning community as they work towards reaching their academic goals.

Student responses showed KIPP's school climate, when assessed through the categorical dimension of relationships and organizational attributes, moderated the internal asset social competencies. This implies KIPP students feel safe in their schools and enjoy being a part of the KIPP learning community. They are motivated to learn and to achieve at the level that KIPP schools have set for them to reach academically. KIPP students have established their value within the context of learning and performing in school, with the mindset that they are preparing to enter and graduate from college. KIPP schools have created a climate that supports students in both building character through an asset rich environment and achieve high academic standards in preparation for college entry and graduation. This supports the idea that positive and caring relationships are

important in both increasing developmental assets and supporting student success, as stated by Benson and Scales (2009).

Developmental assets. The more assets a student has, the greater likelihood they are going to make positive choices and avoid risky behavior (Benson & Scales, 2009). Assets serve as protective factors that assist youth in making positive choices as opposed to succumbing to risky behavior that may lead to teen pregnancy, drug or alcohol abuse, criminal activity, and so on. Assets are about building positive relationships to increase youth resiliency to overcome risk factors that may be present in their lives. Instead of focusing on a needs-based or deficit perspective, the developmental assets approach involves building on existing strengths.

In the current research study, several developmental assets in particular showed to be significantly moderated by the school climate organizational attribute categorical dimension. When all the developmental assets were measured as one unit, a moderating effect occurred. Individually, external assets boundaries and expectations and constructive use of time along with internal assets positive values and social competencies were positively moderated to increase academic success (GPA) among Hispanic students attending KIPP schools. Additionally, moderation occurred through the school climate relationships categorical dimension and internal asset social competencies that positively impacted school success, as measured in GPA for KIPP Hispanic students.

KIPP's school climate promotes character development along with academic success. More specifically, eight character strengths that KIPP focuses on are zest, grit, social intelligence, gratitude, self-control, and optimism, and curiosity (KIPP Foundation,

2015). From the beginning they are taught to work hard and to be nice, emphasizing a focus on both academics and character (Mathews, 2009). KIPP students are not only told they can learn but that they will learn. KIPP schools set limits for behavior and high expectations for academic performance. The results of the current research study, in light of KIPP's school climate and the positive impact on building assets and increasing academic success, again support research completed by Benson and Scales (2009).

Building positive relationships. Current researchers support that relationships built at school between (a) students and their peers, and (b) students and caring adults are important in promoting academic success. Lewin-Bizan, Bowers, and Lerner (2010) identified the connection between positive parenting and an adolescent's ability to intentionally self-regulate. Not all students have positive support systems at their disposal in their family. For students who have limited social support at home, youth intervention/mentoring programs may serve as a surrogate support system in their lives to help them to build self-regulating stills, helping them to increase positive behaviors and decrease destructive or delinquent behaviors (Brittian & Lerner, 2012; Lewin-Bizan et al., 2010). Findings of the current research study suggest that KIPP charter schools may offer the surrogate support system that is positively impacting academic success for their predominantly Hispanic student population.

KIPP schools may provide the social support that is missing or limited in other facets of a child's life. There is a culture within KIPP schools that promotes connectedness and dedication to their Teachers and peers that models a family unit. Teachers serve as positive role models and mentor students through their learning

journey. Student responses showed KIPP's school climate moderated the internal asset positive values. This translates into student beliefs that that they feel supported and cared for by KIPP staff and family members, who have also committed to helping them reach success in their educational endeavors. This suggests that students feel valued by their educational community established at KIPP. The external support provided to them at KIPP through school climate has moderated the building of internal asset of positive values and in turn has led to higher grades in their classes and increased academic success.

There are times when a student's family or community lack the resources needed to build assets, both internal and external. KIPP's school climate may help to provide opportunities to build assets, ultimately increasing student performance academically. This may be completed through the high expectations KIPP holds for their students including the continuous monitoring and support they offer their students, the positive adult role models and modeling of appropriate behavior by KIPP staff, and personal accountability for all members of the KIPP school community (including, administration, teachers, support staff, students, and family).

Students perform better in schools and are more connected in schools where there are caring adult relationships (Whitlock & Powers, 2008; Whitlock, 2006). A limitation of previous studies was that Hispanic students have not been significantly represented in the study. The current research study did include a large number of Hispanic students as part of the sample size, allowing for their voice to be heard. On the down side, other

racial/ethnic groups were poorly represented as the majority of students attending KIPP

schools were of Hispanic dissent.

Building assets through mentoring. Positive relationships between students and

authority figures in schools for example may encourage students to continue their

education and continue to make positive choices in their lives (Benson, 2006). Hsieh,

Sullivan, and Guerra (2007) found students who felt capable of attaining success were

academically successful. Hsieh et al. further suggested that when educational programs

and schools assist their students in building self-efficacy through mentorship

opportunities, greater academic success may be experienced among their student

populations.

Similar results were found when Torres and Hernandez (2009) showed the

presence of a mentor or advisor support positively influenced Latino/a student retention.

Other mentoring programs for specifically Latino Immigrant students have been

suggested for implementation to increase coping skills and create a sense of belonging

among struggling students (Boden, Sherman, Usry, & Cellitti, 2009). Gonzalez (2010)

emphasized building the relationships between schools, community, and families to

support the success of Latino students in their academic endeavors. The organizational

attributes and relationships categorical dimensions of school climate were shown to be

significant in moderating a variety of developmental assets and assisting students in

achieving academic success, as measured via GPA for the school year at KIPP charter

schools in San Antonio, Texas.

Overall, student responses indicated KIPP's school climate moderated the building of developmental assets in their students, which has positively influenced academic achievement. KIPP's school climate promotes and supports academic success for their students, based on the current research findings. The focus of KIPP's school climate is on building students up and providing the support they need to be successful. Interactions between students and teachers are intentional and geared towards creating tangible results. Great effort is spent on building relationships, setting high expectations, and empowering students to reach their academic goals, building character along the way.

Gender may influence how students perceive social support. Chapin and Yang (2009) measured self-perceived social support and concluded girls were more likely to benefit from social relationships with peers and adults than boys. I attempted to add to the conversation of gender and its influence on perceptions of social support, however the analysis could not be performed due to the limited and unbalanced number of male versus female students chose to participate. More research is needed to determine if there are significant differences in perceived social support and mentoring, as prior research suggests, based on gender.

Comparison to Past Findings

Developmental assets vs. deficits. I focused on the positive aspects of the school experience (school climate), developmental assets (in lieu of deficits), and school success, in alignment with the PYD theory. That said, it is important to highlight that negative outcomes have resulted from a lack of social support for students across the United States and in a variety of settings and schools. A lack of support in school may

lead to academic failure and puts students at increased risk of dropping out of school altogether. Brown and Rodríguez (2009) found social and intellectual alienation combined with educational neglect were significant contributing factors leading to dropping out of school.

Rios (2010) suggested that negative interactions with authority figures influenced Hispanic students to drop out of school and engage in increased risky behavior, including illegal activities. Paxton, Valois, Huebner, and Drane (2006) revealed that only 43% of middle school students across the United States reported being satisfied with their life and only 34% felt they had access to positive relationships with adults and maintained meaningful roles within their community. I suggest that students that KIPP school climate may assist students in building their personal value and identity within the context of being a KIPP student and being part of the KIPP learning community. This may provide them with a positive alternative to engaging in destructive behavior, including dropping out of school, as other students have done in the surrounding San Antonio community. KIPP has become a school where students want to go, choose to go each day, and are ultimately successful academically.

Student responses showed KIPP's school climate moderated the external asset Boundaries and Expectations. This suggests that KIPP students feel supported by their teachers, administrators, and other staff members within the learning community at KIPP. Overall students feel staff members are fair and genuinely care for them. Students feel safe at school and acknowledged that classrooms had expectations for behavior, lending to an orderly classroom experience. KIPP students are encouraged by not only staff

members but also their peers. The positive relationships built within KIPP schools help support their academic success. KIPP students value their educational experience and strive to live up to established expectations for increased academic performance. KIPP Students feel they are an important part of KIPP schools, which may help them to achieve at a higher level academically.

Student responses supported that KIPP's school climate moderated the external asset constructive use of time. This again speaks to KIPP's method of teaching students to self-manage their activities and time, every moment of the day. It suggests KIPP students have embraced KIPP's teachings of *assigning* themselves, to increase productivity and learning. Students are motivated to learn and the school climate supports this behavior and the importance of using time constructively to meet high academic performance expectations. Behavior is enforced and reinforced consistently by both KIPP staff members and their peers, making it a significant and influential asset in achieving academic success.

Suh and Suh (2007) identified 16 risk factors associated with students dropping out of school, of which three were highly statistically significant, "academic failure, low socioeconomic status, and behavioral problems" (p. 7). Suh and Suh found when multiple risk factors were present (two or more), there was an increase in the likelihood of dropping out. Suh and Suh did not address the question of what might be done to offset or neutralize the risk factors to increase the likelihood of staying in school. The amount of developmental assets, or lack thereof, was not addressed in the study, which may have

provided more insight into why some students were more likely to drop out than others in the sample.

I sought to extend the knowledge of the discipline by incorporating a more holistic understanding of variables influencing high school dropouts that also includes an asset framework, which may assist researchers in understanding more clearly what leads to success and failure in school. The results of the current research study may help explain further what developmental assets were most influenced (including external assets boundaries and expectations and constructive use of time and internal assets positive values and social competencies) by school climate, from the categorical dimensions of organizational attributes and relationships, to increase academic success for Hispanic students.

The positive paradigm shift recently has led to research topics on positive attributes and protective factors individuals may have to shield them from the negative effects life barriers or deficits. I attempted to add to the conversation begun by the more recent research studies discussed in Chapter 2. For example, Atkiss et al. (2011) integrated the socioecological model and developmental assets to explore the relationship between individuals and their environment. The added social support and connectedness to positive role models or mentors increased youth assets, particularly in the areas of increased commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity, empowerment, and constructive use of their time (Atkiss et al., 2011).

The current research findings highlighted how KIPP's school climate (within the categorical dimensions of organizational attributes and relationships) was significantly

moderating student assets and academic success, as measured by GPA. The current research findings supported that positive values, constructive use of time, and social competencies were significant developmental assets in increasing academic success and were most affected by social support, as previously found in research completed by Atkiss et al. (2011). Tiet, Huizinga, and Byrnes (2010) again pointed to the importance of establishing supportive relationships for students among family and teachers, and encouraging a greater involvement in extracurricular activities, among improving other predictors of longitudinal resiliency. Following suggestions for research by researchers Tiet et al., I explored social support and developmental assets that play a role in increasing resiliency (in the context of academic success) for students who are traditionally considered high-risk populations. The study continued the conversation and extending the knowledge of positive youth development for the Hispanic student population.

The more assets reported does contribute to higher GPA with both short and long-term effects over time (Scales et al., 2006). Limitations of the study included an 85% homogenous sample of Caucasian students with only a handful of Multiracial, Asian, Black, and Hispanic students among those surveyed (Scales et al., 2006). The current research study was successful in providing the Hispanic student population an opportunity to convey their perspectives, on school climate, developmental assets, and their influence on academic success at KIPP charter schools in San Antonio, Texas. More research is merited to continue to determine if research results are transferable to other at-risk populations, as suggested by Scales et al., 2006. Social support experienced through

positive relationships with peers and staff members in schools is one way that may decrease the amount of risky behaviors students engage in and increase resiliency and academic success (Burrow, O'Dell, & Hill, n.d.; Grace, 2008; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Scales et al., 2004).

The current research study included at-risk Hispanic students who have shown to be successful academically, while attending KIPP charter schools in San Antonio, Texas. Current research findings are in alignment with past researchers who suggested school climate is vital for catalyzing student academic success (Cohen et al., 2009; Starkman et al., 2008). I attempted to fill a gap in research on both student and staff perspectives of school climate within the United States and the effects of school climate on relationships and creating a sense of school community (Cohen et al., 2009). Limited studies have been completed on perceptions of school climate on a grand scale (Koth, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2008). The number of staff members who participated in the research study was less that the number needed to complete the analysis, resulting in a limited study of student perceptions of school climate. More research is still needed to map out both teacher and student perceptions of school climate to ensure nothing is missed in the analysis of interactions and dimensions (Mitchell et al., 2010; Ripski & Gregory, 2009).

From the student perspective, Frey, Ruchkin, Martin, Schwab-Stone, and Mary (2009) found a relationship between the levels of perceived school attachment (accounting for 4.2% of the variance) and behavior, perceived school climate, and academic success. Students who perceived higher school attachment displayed lower

levels of physical aggression and violent behavior; students also had higher levels of positive school climate and greater academic success (Frey et al., 2009). School attachment, commitment, and cohesion have been found to be significantly associated with academic success on an individual student level (Stewart, 2008).

KIPP schools believe that student academic success stems from having great leadership from principals and dedicated teachers in the classrooms, enhancing the school climate and increasing social support for attending students. Administrative leaders and teachers work together with parents and the surrounding community to fulfill KIPP's mission of getting their students to and through college, providing high expectations for student academic performance. KIPP schools may increase student support by their partnership with student families and the surrounding community, creating a positive school climate that supports learning and academic performance. This may lead to a more cohesive school environment, which prior research has suggested buffers existing deficits and risk factors commonly associated with school failure (Stewart, 2008).

Another difference that may help set the stage for success is that students choose to be at KIPP and commit to meeting KIPP expectations for character and academic performance by signing a contract. Likewise, families are asked to sign a contract to support their child while they attend KIPP. Participation in KIPP school programs stems from a conscious choice, not a right or an obligation. Both students and families are dedicated to meeting the goal of succeeding in school and attending college.

The current study supports the notion that KIPP's school climate, particularly student perceptions of organizational attributes and relationships categorical dimensions

have supported a cohesive school environment that may serve as a buffer, as Stewart (2008) suggested, to assist their at risk student population in succeeding academically.

Several values have been found to be significant to support learning; a sense of belonging among the school community, student self-efficacy, motivation to achieve, and student ability to exhibit self-control (Scales et al., 2006). Belonging and efficacy are consistently shown to be significant in multiple studies for students within the school setting (Cohen & McCabe, 2009; Witherspoon, Schotland, Way, & Hughes, 2009; Scales & Benson, 2007). I did not find these specific assets to be statistically significant in relation to school climate and academic success, but this does not mean that the results are in contrast to past research findings. The current results have added to the conversation and identified which assets are significantly impacted by school climate from the perspective of Hispanic students attending KIPP schools in San Antonio, Texas. Both current and past researchers have highlighted the importance of developmental assets in creating better outcomes for students (Cohen & McCabe, 2009; Scales & Benson, 2007; Scales et al., 2008; Witherspoon et al., 2009).

Conjointly, the impact of school climate has been noted in prior research, for the positive and negative impacts on school success. Ripski and Gregory (2009) found both individual and collective reports of negative school climate and the resulting lower achievement and engagement among students point to the importance of school climate and the need to establish a positive school climate to improve student performance in more schools across the United States. Alternatively. Pong and Hao (2007) suggested

higher GPA among immigrant children were positively influenced by the presence of educated adult role models and a positive school climate (p. 225-232).

Gürol and Kerimgil (2010) introduced the importance of academic optimism which entails three important elements: "academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and trust of the students and parents" (p. 931). Regardless of socioeconomic status, whether the students were at-risk due to low income or impoverished conditions, if the three components of academic optimism were present, students performed well academically (Gürol & Kerimgil, 2010). KIPP school climate was shown to be statistically significant in moderating academic success for Hispanic students, based on the current study results. This suggests that KIPP schools have created an environment where academic optimism may be found, as Gürol and Kerimgil (2010) pointed out in their study.

Kokolis (2007) showed the importance of teaming to improve school climate, academic achievement and increase student-centered learning and create a culture of learning. Other researchers have mainly focused on student-centered approaches to improve school climate, increase academic achievement, and minimize discipline challenges in the classroom which, may negatively impact academic achievement (Freinberg & Lamb, 2009; Hill, 2009). While the focus of researchers may vary, the underpinnings of the research studies, including the current research study, are to build quality relationships in an effort to support students in achieving academic success. The quality of relationships is important to student success, particularly supportive relationships from caring adults, which include student-teacher relationships, are essential

to creating a connectedness or we-ness among staff and students that promote learning
(Lewis & Kim, 2008).

Staff Perspectives

Past researchers have indicated the importance of teachers recognizing their own
personal bias and the influence of the dominant culture on personal viewpoints and
expectations of all students, including subpopulations that may be perceived in a negative
or deficient light. Shepherd (2011) found many teachers from a variety of ethnic
backgrounds held personal bias towards their students, anticipating low performance
from minority students and possibly contributing to their school failure. Reyna (2008)
suggested attribuntional stereotypes may help or inhibit student progress through positive
or negative teacher expectations of student ability and expected academic progress.
Lynn et al. (2010) suggested teacher perceptions of students influence their ability to
perform academically. The bottom line is that students live up to teacher expectations and
students achieve higher performance levels with teachers who believe they can succeed
(Lynn et al., 2010).

Teacher perceptions of their chosen profession and their ability to influence their
students may make the difference between effective and ineffectiveness in the classroom.
Helterbran (2010) suggested teachers need to feel empowered, sharing in school
leadership and employing ownership of challenges and change within the current
educational system to offset the deficit perspective currently embraced by educators.
Students may benefit academically from teachers who have increased opportunities for
professional and leadership development (Helterbran, 2010).

Teachers may be taught what to teach (content); but, there is less direction to prepare how to teach, with an emphasis on who they will be teaching in the classroom (Williams & Lemons-Smith, 2009). Previous researchers have suggested a collaborative approach, with an emphasis on teachers, may directly improve the school climate on a larger scale (Rhodes et al., 2009). Roby (2011) completed a study measuring school culture from the perspective of teachers. While no significant items were linked to school climate, important relational themes were present including concerns of isolation, trust, informal leadership opportunities, support, and conflict resolution. Communication among members of the learning community was seen as important in addressing existing weaknesses of school culture (Roby, 2011).

Williams (2009) found a connection between student discipline and student achievement, which may be related to the importance of creating a safe school environment that promotes learning (Williams, 2009). Shouppe and Pate (2010) added to the controversy did not find a significant relationship between school climate as perceived by teachers and student academic achievement. However, the study may not have measured essential components of school climate from the teacher perspective (Shouppe & Pate, 2010). More research is needed as the influence of staff perceptions on school climate and student academic success is largely unexplored at this point ant time. The current research study was not able to confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge in the discipline from the perspective of staff members as the number of anonymous participants did not reach the amount needed to reach a medium effect size of $f^2 = 0.15$, a power of 0.80, and an alpha value of 0.05

Student Perspectives

Student success may be attributed to a variety of internal and external assets and deficits influencing their success along the way. I attempted to explore further how assets may be increased and deficits decreased, or at least buffered, to improve the likelihood of success in school, with a focus on Hispanic students. As mentioned previously, the current study found the most significant aspects of school climate that positively affected developmental assets and led to academic success were the organizational attributes and relationships categorical dimensions. The Relationships dimension categorical includes having a caring and fair staff, experiencing parental support, and achievement values. The organizational attributes categorical dimension includes students having a voice, feeling safe at school, having classroom order, academic expectations, peer academic influence, and active learning experiences (see Table 3). The current findings are in alignment with previous research on school related factors and their influence on resiliency and academic success. Plunkett et al. (2008) showed a positive and significant relationship between academic resilience indicators (academic motivation, satisfaction with academics, and grades) and parent and teacher support. Murray and Naranjo (2008) found academic success for at risk students was due in part to "individual traits, support from families, and support from teachers" (p. 155).

Tsereteli et al. (2010) found student self-competence was correlated with micro and macro school related factors, including the style of teaching and perceived fairness, classroom climate, and school culture. The more positive the school culture was perceived, the higher the level of student self-competence (Tsereteli et al., 2010). Apart

from also identifying the importance of parent involvement and support, positive relationships among students, teachers, and their peers have also shown to be important components leading to academic success (Tsereteli et al., 2010).

Prior researchers have highlighted the significance on gender-specific differences and the overall impact on academic success in school. For example, peer support was found to have a positive and significant relationship with academic motivation for female students. Male students displayed a positive and significant link between peer support and two academic resilience indicators: academic motivation and academic satisfaction (Plunkett et al., 2008). Pashiardis (2008) found overall girls were more satisfied with their educational experience than boys. Results suggested a need to increase diversity of instructional delivery to maintain greater student interest in learning content and build better student-teacher relationships with a focus on a more personalized educational experience.

Similarly, gender differences varied on perceptions self-esteem and supportive relationships experienced in schools. Male students reported having higher levels of both self-esteem and optimism in comparison with female students (Puskar et al., 2010). The current research study attempted to compare male and female student perspectives on school climate to determine if there were gender differences, but the limited number of student participants did not permit an analysis to be completed. More research is needed in the future to define gender differences that may influence perspectives on school climate, social support systems, and academic success.

Charter Schools

Not all charter schools have experienced the desired academic success among their student populations (Higgins & Hess, 2009; Turnamian, 2011). The success experienced by charter schools (including KIPP) challenges researchers to determine what they are doing right to promote academic success in their student populations which have proven to be above and beyond traditional public schools nearby. I focused on what KIPP schools were doing right in assisting the Hispanic student population to succeed in school.

Smaller learning communities, shared commitment, enhanced social networking among peers, and following strategies, policies and procedures that work have all led to enhanced student performance and overall charter school success (Higgins & Hess, 2009). Charter schools have more operational flexibility including leniencies in determining where funds will be spent, may extend their school year, and flexibility to hire and fire staff members as needed (Payne & Knowles, 2009). Charter schools may offer students a more effective means of building non-cognitive skills, including "motivation, self-esteem, and self-discipline" (Imberman, 2011, p. 416), as seen through improvements in both attendance and discipline. Assessing specific policies, procedures, funding expenditures, and the like were not assessed currently as it was beyond the scope of the study. However, student perceptions of school climate were assessed based on organizational attributes, relationships, and personal development categorical dimensions (see Table 3), where organizational attributes and relationships were found to statistically significant in moderating academic success for KIPP's Hispanic student population.

Charter schools cater to students who are at-risk for dropping out of school, are experiencing academic failure, or are considered deviant, or outside the norm (Cary, 2010). Charter school students are redefined in both self and school context; students who attended charter schools had a greater sense of hope, belonging, and empowerment within the school community (Carly, 2010). Charter schools experienced greater success with students who were considered disadvantaged or living within large urban areas (Institute of Educations Sciences National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, 2010).

KIPP schools have shown to be successful in reaching the Hispanic student population and assist them in being successful academically, which may be through a redefining of self within the context student and expected behavior within an educational setting. For example, KIPP students are taught to assign themselves, and take ownership for their academic success, utilizing every minute of the day to learn and grow (Mathews, 2009). In addition, students are taught that there are no excuses and no shortcuts.

The current research supports that KIPP's school climate did help Hispanic student participants in building the developmental assets to increase academic success, particularly the assets of boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, positive values, and social competencies. This may very well be catalyzed by a redefining of self and school in context, with KIPP's school climate creating a more positive perspective and greater sense of social support, but more research is needed to fully understand how this occurs. The current research study has added to the conversation of supporting school success among at risk students, particularly Hispanic students; however, more research is

needed to define the interconnectedness of social support, school climate, developmental

assets, and academic success in at-risk student populations.

KIPP Charter Schools

I focused on two KIPP charter middle schools, Camino and Aspire, located in San

Antonio, Texas. Currently there are around 57 KIPP schools in existence across the

United States (Newstead, Saxton, & Colby, 2008). KIPP continues to catalyze high

academic success with minority student populations that have historically struggled the

most in the United States educational system (KIPP San Antonio, n.d.). Where other

schools continue to struggle to meet the needs of their Hispanic, African American, and

other at-risk student populations, KIPP charter schools have excelled in meeting their

needs and substantially increased their academic success in the classroom and on state

assessments (KIPP San Antonio, n.d.). KIPP's school model has shown to effectively

reach at-risk student populations and teach them to meet high academic expectations, as

seen through their exceptional progress on standardized tests (Angrist, Dynarski, Kane,

Pathak, & Walters, 2010). I was not able to link perceptions of KIPP's school climate as

moderating student performance on State assessments and attendance. Only GPA was

found to be moderated by KIPP's school climate. However, KIPP students, overall, have

been noted for their successful performance on state assessments and low absenteeism

rates when compared to surrounding area schools (KIPP San Antonio, n.d.).

KIPP was specifically created to address the achievement gap existing between

white and minority students (Hicks, Ohle, & Valant, 2008). Expectations are higher and

the commitment expected from teachers and students is as well. KIPP focuses on

strengths, positivity, and building assets within individual students and as a learning community (Matthews, 2009). KIPP's strengths begin with their leaders who model appropriate expectations and then enlist cooperation among students to follow suit (Matthews, 2009). In alignment with the Search Institute's model of developmental assets, KIPP seeks to build their students assets and positively influence them to perform well academically by providing the social support they need to thrive. KIPP charter schools focus on relational aspects of school climate, fine-tuning the interactions between teachers and students (Matthews, 2009; Newstead, Saxton, & Colby, 2008).

KIPP students may feel more support from their teachers due to the dynamics and expectations of the role of and communication with their Teachers. KIPP Teachers sign a contract to always be available for their students throughout the school year. Teachers are provided a mobile phone by the school to encourage students to call them anytime they need help with their homework. Likewise, parents have the same access to reach teachers when they have questions or concerns about their child's progress in their class. Teachers are continuously available to their students and their families, and are just a phone call away.

Apart from increased teacher availability, there are many other opportunities KIPP uses to connect with students and build in social support. For example, students attend school for longer hours than the traditional school day, of which every moment is utilized productively to build student strengths in character and academics. Students attend Saturday classes and summer school to build the KIPP culture and improve academic performance. Traditional schools do not require all of their students to Saturday

school and summer school and teachers are not usually available outside of school hours to address student or family concerns.

The result of the extra effort from teachers and students has resulted in KIPP students faring better than comparable public middle school students in language arts, for example (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008). Twenty-two KIPP middle schools were evaluated statistically for their academic performance, students scored higher in reading and math, when compared with students attending public middle schools (What Works Clearinghouse, 2010). Ross et al. (2007) studied one KIPP charter school revealed teachers, students, and their parents reported greater social support to reach high levels of success. KIPP students outperformed students academically on standardized assessments in surrounding public educational settings.

Marranto and Shuls (2011) believed the academic success seen at KIPP charter schools is mainly due to what they refer to as KIPP culture, which may be reproducible in public schools across the nation to improve school performance among at risk student populations. The five areas included "mission and vision, more time, school-parent-student relationships, staff quality, and consistency" (Macey et al., 2009, p. 236).

Parents envision a better life for their children than they had, including more opportunities available to them, that is, a better education and career. In many ways this is foundational to what is called the American Dream. The culture built by KIPP's school climate emphasizes a strong commitment to succeed internally within their students and dedication from teachers, family, and community to support their students along the way to college to achieve that dream.

I showed that KIPP's school climate did moderate the relationship between developmental assets and school success among Hispanic students, as defined by GPA. While the other assets (i.e., support, empowerment, commitment to learning, and positive identity) individually did not show to be moderated by school climate, collectively the developmental assets were statistically significant in helping Hispanic students achieve academic success (GPA). Individually, assets shown to be significantly influenced by KIPP's school climate were boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, positive values, and social competencies. This supports the notion that KIPP schools are successful in building assets and increasing academic performance in school, as suggested by previous research.

Limitations of the Study

I sought to gain a deeper understanding of school climate and the moderating influence on the building of developmental assets and academic success among Hispanic students from the perspective of both KIPP staff members and students. There were several limitations to the current study. All students, regardless of race/ethnicity were invited to participate; however, the majority of students who chose to participate were of Hispanic origin. Non-Hispanic racial/ethnic groups did not meet an adequate sample size for comparison and were not included in the analysis. An unbalanced number of male and female students participated (i.e., 56 female students compared to 27 male students) in the study. Dividing the representative Hispanic student participants based on gender would have brought the numbers below the sample size needed to meet the medium effect size of achieve the medium effect size of $f^2 = 0.15$, a power of 0.95, and an alpha

value of 0.05. A gender comparison could not be made. Finally, the number of staff

members who chose to participate did not meet the sample size needed to achieve the

medium effect size of $f^2 = 0.15$, a power of 0.80, and an alpha value of 0.05. An analysis

on staff member perceptions could not be performed.

Due to the self-reporting nature of the study, personal bias could not be ruled out

when participants were completing the surveys. The effect would have enhanced or

inhibited the accuracy of data. Before surveys were completed, ethical expectations were

clearly defined and procedures were thoroughly explained to participants of the study for

both staff and students at KIPP Schools. Another potential limitation was that participants

may copy answers from another survey if they felt pressure to answer correctly. A

reasonable effort was made to monitor participants while surveys were being completed.

It was emphasized that there were no correct or incorrect responses to alleviate any

anxiety for participants to provide the best or correct answer.

The study was limited to a specific population of Hispanic students attending a

KIPP Aspire charter school in San Antonio, Texas. Specific findings of the study may not

generalize to other school populations in other parts of Texas or the United States. The

individual traits of subpopulations within the Hispanic group were not effectively

accounted for and were beyond the scope of this investigation. Various subpopulations

existing within the Hispanic population of students include English language learners,

native born participants, individuals born outside of the United States, first generation

Americans, second generation Americans, and Hispanic students who were of two or

more races/ethnicities. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis and some

students and staff members who were invited to participate did not choose to be part of the study.

A holistic understanding of school climate was the focus for the study. A lack of staff perspectives led to a limited analysis of the KIPP school climate. KIPP schools emphasize the importance of principals and teachers, particularly in creating and enforcing the KIPP school climate that supports student academic success. In future studies, it would be beneficial to include staff perspectives to fully understand how KIPP school climate is building developmental assets and supporting Hispanic student academic success.

Recommendations for Future Research

The current study added to what prior researchers have shown about school climate, developmental assets, and the influence on academic success in student populations, particularly the Hispanic student population. The conversation should continue with more research to determine the variances in achievement, perceptions of school climate, and developmental assets existing among the groups specifically and in relation to one another. Future research endeavors are needed to determine if other variables, such as gender, may influence developmental assets and positive youth development, including academic success. I attempted to do so; but, due to a limited number of male versus female student participants, the comparison could not be performed.

The current study was merely a snapshot, whereas a longitudinal study could potentially reveal more insight into the relationship between school climate,

developmental assets, and academic success among Hispanic students. Further research

is needed to determine how student perspectives and the interconnectedness of academic

performance change or shift over time. The factors that may affect the change or shift

student perspectives of school climate, positively or negatively, require more definition

through longitudinal research. In the same vein, the discipline may benefit from research

with a focus on the long-term effects of a positive school climate on building and

maintaining developmental assets and supporting student academic success.

Since the current research study was not able to provide a multidimensional look

into the interworking of school climate (i.e., from the perspective of both students and

staff members) more research is needed accomplish this goal in the future. Community

and family members are other components of external relationships with schools that may

help to build a positive school climate. Future studies may add to the conversation by

researching school climate from the perspective of other contributing members, including

family and community members, and their influence on student success.

Implications

Social Change

Implications for positive social change revolve around helping to shape future

intervention programs and school initiatives to build positive school climates that respond

appropriately to academic and social well-being for Hispanic students to promote

academic success. The potential to build resiliency and thriving, particularly in youth

who have life challenges may be organized within schools and youth programs (Benson

& Scales, 2009; Benson, 2006). There is also an opportunity to positively shape

communities and produce better outcomes for students who are considered at risk for school failure (Atkiss et al., 2011; Gestsdottir et al., 2011). While the outcome involves academic success for Hispanic and other at risk student populations, the positive social change realm includes a combination of schools, family, and community, as they work together to provide social support and promote success for students.

The resulting positive social change may include developing a prospective positive school climate model that supports academic success for all students, decreasing the amount of Hispanic students who are dropping out of school and closing the educational achievement gap between ethnic groups of students. Creating a climate of social change among Latinos that promotes empowering of the Hispanic youth and focuses on building assets may encourage academic success (Garcia-Reid & Reid, 2009, p. 60). From the current research study, it was noted that the organizational attributes and relationships built within KIPP's school model was significant in moderating the building of developmental assets and helping students achieve academically. I was not able to establish a link between school climate, developmental assets, and academic success when measured as performance on STAAR state assessments or number of absences. However, it is reasonable to believe that students who perform better in their classes are likely to perform better on end of year state assessments and have a lower absence rate overall; both high state assessment performance and low absence rates for student attending KIPP schools in San Antonio have been documented (KIPP San Antonio, n.d.).

I was successful in providing the Hispanic student population an opportunity to convey their perspectives, on school climate, developmental assets, and their influence on

academic success at KIPP charter schools in San Antonio, Texas. Past research studies have not utilized the perspective of the Hispanic student (Lewis et al., 2011; Scales et al., 2006; Whitlock, 2006). I attempted to break the pattern of focusing on Hispanic, minority, and at-risk students from a deficit model. Instead, the focus of the study stemmed from an asset model to highlight existing strengths in the Hispanic student population who are considered at risk for school failure.

More research is needed to continue to provide Hispanic and other at risk students an opportunity to tell about their experiences in school, from a positive, asset rich perspective. Hispanic students have shown to be successful academically and more research is needed to note what works to assist other at risk students to do the same.

Theoretical Implications

For the current study, I used the PYD theory as the foundation for the research, which suggests the school community (among other social systems including family and community) may positively or negatively influence a student's perspective and acquisition of developmental assets (Benson et al., 2006). The focus was on how school climate as perceived by students and staff members, may positively or negatively influence student academic success. Initially an attempt was made to study student and staff perceptions on school climate and determine their relationship to both developmental assets and student academic success. A limited number of staff participants resulted in the study focusing on student perceptions of school climate as an analysis could not be performed.

I highlighted the importance of school climate and was in alignment with past research related to PYD theory and the notion that a positively perceived the school climate will more likely lead to student academic success (Benson et al., 2006). Apart from influencing student ability to be successful in school, a student's perspective on school climate and resulting number of developmental assets attained may positively or negatively influence their ability to thrive in other areas of their lives, including relationships, health, and avoiding risky behaviors.

The current research study results are in alignment with previous research, where adolescent development was believed to be malleable and may be positively influenced to produce a better outcome, including, increasing an adolescent's ability to thrive in their environment (Lerner et al., 2010). The current research study supports the PYD theory, both building developmental assets among youth and creating a positive school climate may serve to increase school success. It is not completely known how school climate influences developmental asset acquisition and academic success, specifically among the Hispanic student population. The current research study added to the discussion of how school climate moderates developmental assets to increase academic success; however, more research is needed to advance out understanding of school climate, developmental assets, and academic success in students who are at risk for school failure.

Caring relationships take center stage to promoting positive youth development. Relationships established must also insist on high expectations and meaningful participation opportunities to catalyze growth (Benard, 2004). The Search Institute indicated the greater amount of developmental assets, utilizing a middle school

population, is inversely correlated to a decrease in participation in risk behaviors (Benson & Scales, 2009). Positive, caring relationships help to increase developmental assets, in turn increasing student success and decreasing the likelihood of engaging in risk behavior. Hispanic students have been most commonly represented by their deficits in past research studies. I focused on their assets, supporting the PYD theory.

I attempted to provide a holistic and comprehensive research to fill a gap in the research concerning school climate, addressing multiple perspectives of the school experience (i.e., from both staff members and students). I was unable to assess the staff perspective due to low participant turnout. More research is needed in the future to provide a comprehensive understanding of school climate perspectives and its influence on developmental assets and in an effort to promote academic success among Hispanic students and other at risk student populations across the United States.

Recommendations for Practice

The United States federal government has continued to focus on creating safe, positive school environments where students are successful academically. Comprehensive school reform initiatives have led to engaging in a more proactive and ecological approach to building student strengths (both internal and external assets) and decreasing at-risk status (Edwards et al., 2007; Gomez & Ang, 2007). That said, I highlighted the importance of building a positive school climate, that focuses on organizational attributes and building positive relationships. More specifically, a focus on building organizational attributes (including policies, practices, and structure) that values student input in making school decisions, increasing safety and reducing bulling

behavior, encouraging respect and reducing disruptive behavior in the learning environment, creating a school culture that embraces and encourages academic success, peer support, and student engagement. Building positive relationships between students, their peers, and teachers/staff members, and parents will work towards increasing positive relationships and academic success in school. The relationships established should focus on emphasizing high expectations and meaningful participation opportunities to assist students in increasing academic performance (Benard, 2004).

Both organizational attributes and relational components of school climate have shown to be statistically significant in moderating developmental asset acquisition and promoting academic success in the Hispanic student population, based on current research study results. This would suggest that reviewing current organizational attributes and methods of building relationships at KIPP schools that have shown to be successful with increasing academic performance among Hispanic, at-risk student populations may assist other schools do the same. Schools may assist their students through building mentoring and/or intervention programs to provide an alternative social support system for students who lack support within the family, community, or other area of their lives. Youth intervention programs have helped build intentional self-regulation skills when other support systems such as the family unit does not provide a positive presence in the lives of students. Within the school setting, it is important to identify struggling students and ones who would benefit from positive adult role models, support systems, and mentoring along their educational journey (Lewin-Bizan et al., 2010, p.768).

Increased intervention and youth development programs geared towards building student developmental assets and creating supportive student to peer and student to teacher relationships may help increase a positive school climate and help students ultimately perform better academically, as was suggested by past research and supported by the current research study (Bernard, 2004; Benson & Scales, 2009; Carlisle, 2011; Edwards et al., 2007; Gomez & Ang, 2007). Consistent negative interactions may motivate students to give up and drop out. The lack of positive adult relationship opportunities for youth is a continued concern for students in the United States. More intervention and inclusive outreach programs are needed to combat the high dropout rates of Hispanic students and that quickly identify and provide mentoring and support services to struggling students (Legters & Balfanz, 2010; Rodriguez, 2008; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

Knowing what works is helpful in shaping mentoring and intervention programs offered to students to help them increase academic performance and assets. It is important to provide Hispanic students with an opportunity to voice their opinions and needs concerning their academic experience. As the Hispanic population continues to increase, it is important that they are successful in school. Positive experiences in school set the stage for growing into successful, productive contributing members of society as they reach adulthood. Providing them with a voice early on may help positively shape their educational experience and allow schools, community, and family support systems with an opportunity to adapt to their needs and encourage their continued developmental and academic growth.

Schools should assess school climate and provide a means for accountability and remediation as needed to assure a positive school climate continues to be nurtured, which in turn will nurture student success. School climate is vital for catalyzing student academic success (Cohen et al., 2009; Starkman et al., 2008). While states hold schools accountable for academic progress of their students, the majority of states do not require accountability for maintaining a positive school climate (Cohen et al., 2009). The process of school system accountability would be beneficial to include a holistic understanding of perceived social support to assure the school system is healthy and not toxic, particularly because school climate has shown to moderate the relationship between developmental assets and academic success in the current study.

Focusing on what works at KIPP charter schools, particularly in their organizational approach and relationship building strategies that have assisted at risk Hispanic students in building developmental assets and becoming academically successful may highlight approaches that are transferable to other classrooms across the United States to promote positive youth development on a larger scale.

The question still remains as to whether success attained in select charter schools may be transferred to public school systems, yielding similar results in larger student populations. It is important to identify programs and schools that are successful at helping Hispanic students excel in school to avoid a significant increase of student dropouts, now and in the near future. For example, KIPP charter schools serve a 98% minority population that mainly consists of Hispanic students; yet, they are successful learners who continuously outperform their peers in reading and math on state assessments (KIPP

San Antonio, n.d.). Researching how KIPP charter schools have achieved success among their Hispanic students is vital for all schools and students across the United States. Positive social change may result in creating intervention programs modeling KIPP culture in schools across the United States to increase academic success and decrease student dropout rates among Hispanic and other at risk student populations (Maranto & Shuls, 2011).

Conclusion

The purpose of this quantitative, cross-sectional study was to explore how school climate, as perceived by KIPP Aspire and Camino students and staff, moderates the relationship of developmental asset acquisition and academic resilience among Hispanic students who are at high risk for academic failure. The study included students (grades 6–8) and staff at KIPP Aspire and Camino charter school in San Antonio, Texas. The study involved determining the moderating relationship of school climate on Hispanic students and their academic success and three research questions. While research questions two and three were not able to be explored due to low levels of participation, analysis of research question one did yield some insight into the relationship between school climate, developmental assets, and academic success in the Hispanic student population.

Based on the findings, student perceptions of KIPP school climate significantly moderated the relationship between developmental assets and academic success among Hispanic students. The current research study added to the conversation about how Hispanic student can be successful in school, with a focus on school climate and the importance of developmental assets to promote academic success. If the assumption can

be made that students do want to learn, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, then the focus shifts to what does and does not encourage learning (Lewis & Kim, 2008). The pressing task in future research is to flesh out the response and continue to search for ways to assist at risk student populations to become more successful academically and ultimately productive members of society. The work continues.

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Appendix A: Student Assent Form

Assent Form for Research

Hello, my name is Rebecca Lopez and I am doing a research project to see how school climate has helped build student strengths and increased their school success.

I am inviting you to join my project. I am inviting all Aspire and Camino students enrolled in grades 6, 7, or 8 to be in the study.

The surveys will be completed by students on _____
at_____ in room _____ during advisory time.

I am going to read this form with you. I want you to learn about the project before you choose to be in it.

Who I am:

I am a college student at Walden. I am working on my doctoral degree.

About the Project:

The study will focus on student and staff views of school climate, including
- Relationships between staff and students
- School rules and practices
- Feeling safe at school and in the classroom
- Academic expectations
- Student and staff support
- Engagement in school
- Student connection in the school community
- Student motivation to succeed in school
- Student belief that they can succeed if they try

The study will also focus on student strengths, including:
- Relationship support from family, staff, students, and community
- Feeling empowered and valued by the community
- Having clear boundaries and expectations
- Using of time wisely
- Commitment to learning
- Positive values
- Ability to make good decisions
- Positive identity

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this project, you will be asked to:

- Complete a one-time 15 minute survey, *Developmental Assets Profile*, to measure student strengths, during advisory time.
- Complete a one-time 15 minute survey *Creating a Great Place to Learn,* to measure student views of KIPP school climate, during advisory time.

It will take about 50 minutes to complete both surveys. It will most likely be completed on one day, but extra time on a different day will be made available to complete the surveys, as needed.

Other data that will be collected to note student academic success include:

- *Student participant's overall grade point average on the most recent report card*
- *Attendance for the present school year (2013–2014),*
- *Available STAAR assessment scores for Math, Science, and Language Arts for the present school year (2013–2014) or prior school year (2012–2013)*

Sample Survey Items:

Developmental Assets Profile survey:

- 43. I have friends who set good examples for me.
- 10. I enjoy learning.
- 21. I feel valued and appreciated by others.

Creating a Great Place to Learn survey*:*

- 32. I think that doing well in school is important for my future.
- 17. At school I try as hard as I can to do my best work.
- 40. Students treat each other with respect.

It's Your Choice:

You do not have to be in this project if you don't want to. If you decide now that you want to join the project, you can still change your mind later. If you want to stop, you can.

Being in this project might make you tired or stressed, just like you when you are doing a learning activity in class. We are hoping this project might help others by showing student strengths.

The study may be beneficial by identifying strengths in KIPP students and in their relationships at school, in their family, and community.

The study may be beneficial by showing strengths in school climate. It may also show how school climate might relate to helping students be successful in school.

Privacy:

Everything you tell me during this project will be kept private. That means that no one else will know your name or what answers you gave. The only time I have to tell someone is if I learn about something that could hurt you or someone else.

Asking Questions:

You can ask me any questions you want now. If you think of a question later, you or your parents can reach me by email at rebecca.lopez@waldenu.edu and phone at 210 607-0245. *Se habla Español*.

If you or your parents would like to ask my college a question, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 01-24-14-0139963 and it expires on December 25, 2014.

I will give you a copy of this form.

Please sign your name below if you want to join this project.

Name of Child	
Child Signature	
Date	

Please return this form and the "Parent Consent Form" to your advisory class before _____.

Appendix B: Student Assent Form in Spanish

Formulario de Asentimiento para Investigación

Hola, mi nombre es Rebecca Lopez y estoy haciendo un proyecto de investigación para ver cómo clima escolar ha ayudado a construir las fortalezas del estudiante y aumentó su éxito en la escuela.

Te invito a unirse a mi proyecto. Estoy invitando a todos Aspire y Camino estudiantes matriculados en los grados 6, 7 o 8 para participar en el estudio.

Las encuestas de los estudiantes se completarán en la fecha de_____a la hora _____ en sala _____ durante el tiempo de clase de Advisory.

Voy a leer este formulario con usted. Quiero que aprendan sobre el proyecto antes de que usted decida participar.

Quién soy:
Soy un estudiante universitario en Walden. Estoy trabajando en mi doctorado.

Sobre el proyecto:
El estudio se centrará de examinar las percepciónes del estudiante y del personal sobre el clima escolar, incluyendo:
- Las relaciones entre personal y alumnos
- Reglas y prácticas de la escuela
- Sentirse seguro en la escuela y en clases
- Expectativas académicas
- Apoyo para el estudiante y el personal
- Conexión de los estudiantes en la comunidad escolar
- Motivación escolar del estudiante para triunfar
- Creencia que los estudiantes pueden tener éxito si tratan

El estudio también se centrará en las fortalezas del estudiante, incluyendo:
- Apoyo en relación de familia, personal, estudiantes y comunidad
- Sentirse empoderado y valorado por la comunidad
- Tener límites claros y las expectativas
- Uso del tiempo sabiamente
- Compromiso para aprender
- Valores positivos
- Capacidad para tomar buenas decisiones
- Identidad positiva

Procedimientos:
Si usted acepta estar en este proyecto, se le pedirá:
- Completar una encuesta de 15 minutos una sola vez, *Developmental Assets Profile*, para medir sus fortalezas, durante el tiempo de clase de Advisory.

- Completar una encuesta de 15 minutos una sola vez, *Creating a Great Place to Learn* para aprender acerca del clima de la escuela KIPP durante el tiempo de clase de Advisory.

Se tarda unos 50 minutos para completar ambas encuestas. Es muy probable que se complete en un día, pero abrá tiempo disponible en un día diferente para completar las encuestas, según sea necesario.

Otros datos que se recogerán a notar el éxito académico de los estudiantes incluyen:
- GPA (el promedio de calificaciones) del estudiante participante en el reporte más reciente
- Asistencia para el presente año escolar (2013–2014),
- Evaluaciónes disponibles del STAAR de Matemáticas, Ciencias y Artes del Lenguaje para el presente año escolar (2013–2014) o el año escolar previo (2012-2013)

Muestra de Artículos en la Encuesta :
Developmental Assets Profile encuesta:
- 43. Tengo amigos que dan un buen ejemplo para mí.
- 10. Me gusta aprender.
- 21. Me siento valorado y apreciado por los demás.

Creating a Great Place to Learn encuesta:
- 32. Creo que ír bien en la escuela es importante para mi futuro.
- 17. En la escuela trato lo mas que puedo para hacer mi mejor trabajo.
- 40. Los estudiantes se tratan uno al otro con respeto.

Es su decisión:
Usted no tiene que estar en este proyecto, si no quiere. Si decide ahora que quiere unirse al proyecto, aún puede cambiar de opinión más tarde. Si desea parar, usted puede.

Estar en este proyecto puede hacer sentirle cansado o estresado, al igual que cuando usted está haciendo una actividad de aprendizaje en clase. Estamos esperando este proyecto podra ayudarnos, mostrar las fortalezas de los estudiantes.

El estudio puede ser beneficioso mediante la identificación de fortalezas entre los estudiantes de KIPP y en sus relaciones en la escuela, su familia y la comunidad.

El estudio puede ser beneficioso al mostrar fortalezas en el clima escolar. También puede mostrar cómo el clima escolar podría estar relacionado con ayudar a los estudiantes a tener éxito en la escuela.

Privacidad:

Todo lo que se mencione durante este proyecto se mantendrá en privado. Eso significa que nadie más sabrá su nombre o qué respuestas que usted dio. La única vez que tengo que decirle a alguien es si se descubre sobre algo que podría hacerle daño a usted o a otra persona.

Hacer preguntas:
Puede preguntarme cualquier pregunta que quiera ahora. Si usted piensa en una pregunta posterior, usted o sus padres pueden ponerse en contacto conmigo por correo electrónico rebecca.lopez@waldenu.edu o mi teléfono 210-607-0245. *Se habla Español.*

Si usted o sus padres le gustaría hacer una pregunta de mi universidad, usted puede llamar a la Dra. Leilani Endicott. Su número de teléfono es 612-312-1210. Número de aprobación de Walden University para este estudio es 01-24-14-0139963 y caduca el 25 de diciembre de 2014.

Le daré una copia de este formulario.

Por favor, firme su nombre a continuación si quieres unirte a este proyecto.

Nombre del Hijo	
Firma del Hijo	
Fecha	

Por favor devuelva este formulario y el "<u>Formulario de Consentimiento de los Padres para la Investigación</u>" a su clase de advisory antes de _____.

Appendix C: Parent Consent Form

Parent Consent Form for Research

Your child is invited to take part in a research study. The study will investigate how school climate has helped build the student's strengths and increase their success in school.The researcher is inviting all Aspire and Camino Academy students enrolled in grade 6, 7, or 8 to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent." It will help you understand this study before deciding to allow your child to be in the study.

A researcher named Rebecca Lopez will conduct this study. She is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:
The study's purpose is to understand how school climate helps influence building student strengths and school success.

The surveys will be completed by students on _____ at _____ in room _____ during advisory time.

The study will focus on student and staff views of school climate, including:
- Relationships between staff and students
- School rules and practices
- Feeling safe at school and in the classroom
- Academic expectations
- Student and staff support
- Engagement in school
- Student connection in the school community
- Student motivation to succeed in school
- Student belief that they can succeed if they try

The study will also focus on student strengths, including:
- Relationship support from family, staff, students, and community
- Feeling empowered and valued by the community
- Having clear boundaries and expectations
- Using of time wisely
- Commitment to learning
- Positive values
- Ability to make good decisions
- Positive identity

Procedures:
If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, your child will be asked to:
- Complete a one-time 15 minute survey, *Developmental Assets Profile*, to measure student strengths, during advisory time.
- Complete a one-time 15 minute survey *Creating a Great Place to Learn,* to measure student views of KIPP school climate, during advisory time.

It will take about 50 minutes to complete both surveys. It will most likely be completed on one day, but extra time on a different day will be made available to complete the surveys, as needed.

Other data that will be collected to note student academic success include:
- *Student participant's overall grade point average on the most recent report card*
- *Attendance for the present school year (2013–2014),*
- *available STAAR assessment scores for Math, Science, and Language Arts for the present school year (2013–2014) or prior school year (2012-2013).*

Sample Survey Items:
Developmental Assets Profile survey:
- 43. I have friends who set good examples for me.
- 10. I enjoy learning.
- 21. I feel valued and appreciated by others.

Creating a Great Place to Learn survey*:*
- 32. I think that doing well in school is important for my future.
- 17. At school I try as hard as I can to do my best work.
- 40. Students treat each other with respect.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision on whether or not your child will participate in the study. Your child's decision is also important. After obtaining parent consent, the researcher will explain the study to your child. Your child will decide on volunteering in the study. No one at Aspire or Camino Academy will treat you or your child differently if you choose not to take part in the study. If you decide to consent now, you or your child can still change your mind later. If your child feels stressed during the study, they may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this type of study involves some risk of minor discomforts. For example, your child may become tired or stressed while completing the surveys. Being in this study would not pose risk to your child's safety or well-being.

The study may be beneficial by identifying strengths in KIPP students and in their relationships at school, in their family, and community.

The study may be beneficial by showing strengths in school climate. It may also show how school climate might relate to helping students be successful in school.

Privacy:
Any information your child provides will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your child's information for any purposes beyond the research project. The researcher will not include your child's name or anything else that could identify your child in any study reports. The only time I have to tell someone is if I learn about something that could hurt your child or someone else. Data will be kept secure by coding, password protecting electronic data. Paper data copies will be kept under lock and key. Data will be kept for a period of 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher by email at rebecca.lopez@waldenu.edu and phone at 210 607-0245. *Se habla Español*.

If you want to talk privately about your child's rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University staff member who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 01-24-14-0139963 and it expires on December 25, 2014.

The researcher will provide an extra copy of this form for you to keep.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my child's participation in this optional research project. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Parent	
Printed Name of Child	
Date of Consent	
Parent's Signature	

Please return this form and the "Child Assent Form" to your child's homeroom class before _____.

Appendix D: Parent Consent Form in Spanish

Formulario de Consentimiento de los Padres para la Investigación

Se invita a su hijo a participar en un estudio de investigación. El estudio investigará cómo el clima escolar ha ayudado a construir las fortalezas del estudiante y aumentar su éxito en la escuela. El investigador está invitando a todos los estudiantes de la Academia Aspire y Camino Academy en el grado 6, 7, o 8 para participar en el estudio. Esta forma es parte de un proceso llamado "consentimiento informado." Le ayudara entender este estudio antes de decidirse a permitir que su hijo esté en el estudio.

La investigadora llamada Rebecca Lopez llevará a cabo este estudio. Ella es estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad de Walden.

Información de antecedentes:
El propósito de la investigación es comprender cómo el clima escolar ayuda a influir la fortaleza de los estudiantes y el éxito escolar.

**Las encuestas de los estudiantes se completarán en la fecha de_____a la hora _____
en sala _____ durante el tiempo de clase de Advisory.**

El estudio se centrará de examinar las percepciónes del estudiante y del personal sobre el clima escolar, incluyendo:
- Las relaciones entre personal y alumnos
- Reglas y prácticas de la escuela
- Sentirse seguro en la escuela y en clases
- Expectativas académicas
- Apoyo para el estudiante y el personal
- Conexión de los estudiantes en la comunidad escolar
- Motivación escolar del estudiante para triunfar
- Creencia que los estudiantes pueden tener éxito si tratan

El estudio también se centrará en las fortalezas del estudiante, incluyendo:
- Apoyo en relación de familia, personal, estudiantes y comunidad
- Sentirse empoderado y valorado por la comunidad
- Tener límites claros y las expectativas
- Uso del tiempo sabiamente
- Compromiso para aprender
- Valores positivos
- Capacidad para tomar buenas decisiones
- Identidad positiva

Procedimientos:
Si está de acuerdo con permitir que su hijo participe en este estudio, a su hijo se le pedirá que:
- Completar una encuesta de 15 minutos una sola vez, *Developmental Assets Profile*, para medir sus fortalezas, durante el tiempo de clase de Advisory.
- Completar una encuesta de 15 minutos una sola vez, *Creating a Great Place to Learn* para aprender acerca del clima de la escuela KIPP durante el tiempo de clase de Advisory.

Se tarda unos 50 minutos para completar ambas encuestas. Es muy probable que se complete en un día, pero abrá tiempo disponible en un día diferente para completar las encuestas, según sea necesario.

Otros datos que se recogerán a notar el éxito académico de los estudiantes incluyen:
- GPA (el promedio de calificaciones) del estudiante participante en el reporte más reciente
- Las asistencias del presente año escolar (2013–2014),
- Evaluaciónesresultados disponibles del STAAR de Matemáticas, Ciencias y Artes del Lenguaje para el presente año escolar (2013–2014) o el año escolar previo (2012-2013)

Muestra de Artículos en la Encuesta:
Developmental Assets Profile encuesta:
- 43. Tengo amigos que dan un buen ejemplo para mí.
- 10. Me gusta aprender.
- 21. Me siento valorado y apreciado por los demás.

Creating a Great Place to Learn encuesta:
- 32. Creo que ír bien en la escuela es importante para mi futuro.
- 17. En la escuela trato lo mas que puedo para hacer mi mejor trabajo.
- 40. Los estudiantes se tratan uno al otro con respeto.

Estudio Voluntario:
Este estudio es voluntario. Todo el mundo respetará su decisión en que participe o no su hijo en el estudio. La decisión de su hijo también es importante. Después de obtener el consentimiento de los padres, el investigador le explicará el estudio para su hijo. Su hijo decidirá participar en el estudio. Nadie en Aspire o Camino Academy tratará usted o su niño de manera diferente si decide no participar en el estudio. Si decide consentir ahora, usted o su niño todavía puede cambiar de opinión más tarde. Si su hijo se siente estresado durante el estudio, pueden parar en cualquier momento.

Riesgos y beneficios de participar en el estudio:
Estar en este tipo de estudio involucra cierto riesgo de molestias menores. Por ejemplo, su hijo puede llegar cansado o estresado al completar las encuestas. Estar en este estudio no plantearía riesgos para la seguridad o el bienestar de su hijo.

El estudio puede ser beneficioso mediante la identificación de fortalezas en los estudiantes de KIPP y en sus relaciones en la escuela, en su familia y comunidad.

El estudio puede ser beneficioso al mostrar fortalezas en el ambiente escolar. También puede mostrar cómo el clima escolar podría estar relacionado con ayudar a los estudiantes a tener éxito en la escuela.

Privacidad:
Cualquier información que su hijo proporcione será mantenida confidencial. El investigador no utilizará la información de su hijo para fines más allá del proyecto de investigación. El investigador no incluirá el nombre o cualquier otra cosa que pudiera identificar a su hijo en todos los informes de estudio de su hijo. La única vez que tengo que decirle a alguien es si se descubre sobre algo que podría hacerle daño a su hijo o a otra persona. Los datos se guardan de forma segura mediante la codificación, la contraseña que protege los datos electrónicos. Copias de datos del papel se mantendrán bajo llave. Los datos se conservarán durante un periodo de 5 años, como es requerido por la universidad.

Contactos y Preguntas:
Puede hacer cualquier pregunta que usted tenga ahora. Si tiene alguna pregunta más adelante, puede comunicarse con el investigador por correo electrónico rebecca.lopez@waldenu.edu y teléfono al 210-607-0245. *Se habla Español.*

Si quiere hablar en privado acerca de los derechos del niño como participante, puede llamar a la Dra. Leilani Endicott. Ella es el miembro del personal de la Universidad de Walden que puede discutir esto con usted. Su número de teléfono es 612-312-1210. Número de aprobación de Walden University para este estudio es **01-24-14-0139963** y termina el **25 de diciembre 2014**.

Le daré una copia de este formulario.

Declaración de consentimiento:

He leído la información anterior. Siento que entiendo el estudio lo suficientemente bien como para tomar una decisión sobre la participación de mi hijo en este proyecto de investigación opcional. Al firmar abajo, entiendo que estoy de acuerdo con los términos descritos anteriormente.

Nombre impreso del Padre	
Nombre impreso del Niño	
Fecha de Consentimiento	
Firma del Padre	

Por favor devuelva este formulario y el "Formulario de Asentimiento para Investigación" a la clase de advisory de su hijo antes de _____.

Appendix E: Staff Informed Consent Form

Anonymous Informed Consent Form

You are invited anonymously to take part in a research study. The study will measure student strengths and school climate to investigate how both may be helping students be successful in school. The researcher is inviting all employees of Aspire and Camino schools to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent." It will help you understand this study before deciding to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Rebecca Lopez. She is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to better understand how school climate has helped build student strengths and academic success.

The study will focus on student and staff views of school climate, including
- Relationships between staff and students
- School rules and practices
- Feeling safe at school and in the classroom
- Academic expectations
- Student and staff support
- Engagement in school
- Student connection in the school community
- Student motivation to succeed in school
- Student belief that they can succeed if they try

The study will also focus on student strengths, including:
- Relationship support from family, staff, students, and community
- Feeling empowered and valued by the community
- Having clear boundaries and expectations
- Using of time wisely
- Commitment to learning
- Positive values
- Ability to make good decisions

- Positive identity

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete a 15-minute one-time staff survey, *Creating a Great Place to Learn,* at a time of your choosing and turn it in to the lock box located in the staff lounge by _____. This survey measures staff perceptions of school climate.

Sample Survey Items:
Creating a Great Place to Learn staff survey*:*

- 16. Our school staff work together to improve instruction.
- 8. Teachers and other staff really care about students in this school.
- 10. This school has effective partnerships with community organizations.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision to take part in the study. No one at Aspire or Camino Academy will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts. This includes becoming tired or stressed while completing the survey. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or well-

being.

The study may be beneficial by identifying strengths in KIPP students and in their relationships at school, in their family, and community.

The study may be beneficial by showing strengths in school climate. It may also show how school climate might relate to helping students be successful in school.

Privacy:
The staff survey is anonymous. Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes beyond the research project. The researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by coding, password protecting electronic data. Paper data copies will be kept under lock and key. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email at rebecca.lopez@waldenu.edu and phone at 210 607-0245. *Se habla Español*.

If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **01-24-14-0139963** and it expires on **December 25, 2014.**

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement.

By completing the survey and turning it into the lock box in the staff lounge by _____, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above. Completion and return of the anonymous survey constitutes my consent to participate in the study.