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Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

School of Psychology

Department of Psychology

UNDERSTANDING THE THOUGHTS AND ATTITUDES OF FEMALE STUDENTS
WHO PARTICIPATE IN SINGLE-GENDER EDUCATION

Alexandra Robinson Gilbert

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of

Psychology

October 2018

COLLEGE OF
OSTEOPATHIC
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the thesis presented to us by **Alexandra Robinson-Gilbert** on the **5th day of April, 2018**, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Psychology, has been examined and is acceptable in both scholarship and literary quality.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURES

Chairperson

Chair, Department of Psychology

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Abstract

The thoughts and perceptions of female students who attend a single-gender education school were investigated in this study. This study used a qualitative approach through one-on-one interviews with ninth- through twelfth-grade students who participated in a suburban single-gender school. Interviews were conducted with 10 students and included open-ended questions intended to elicit personal thoughts regarding their perceptions of the impact attending a single gender school had on their personalities, education, and social lives. Information from the interviews was incorporated with information gathered from a demographic questionnaire. The results were then examined for potential themes and patterns in order to draw relevant and meaningful conclusions. Commonly occurring themes were those of academic preparedness, self-confidence, and a sense of belonging within the school community.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

School psychology exists as a profession partly because society has recognized that all people have different styles of learning. While a popular description of a school psychologist's day is the administration of psychoeducational assessments, the job encompasses much more. School psychologists have to investigate not only the cognitive aspects, but also the educational, social, and cultural implications of a student's life. Once information has been gathered about these realms, the psychologist must sit down with the team working with that child to best determine the setting and tools he or she will need to be successful.

Some students, like those with specific learning disabilities, may need additional support that cannot be offered in a typical classroom setting. Other students who would be able to achieve in the regular classroom environment might wish for a different setting in order to feel most comfortable in the classroom. These settings can be schools with smaller classes, schools that have a religious focus, or schools that educate only students of the same gender. If studies were conducted that gave evidence that a unique setting is a more conducive environment for learning, school psychologists could gain insight into why those environments work more effectively. If research looked at how students view their school environment as helping or hindering their learning, school psychologists might better understand how to intervene with mental-health issues, such as eating disorders, low self-esteem, or other social-emotional stressors, that plague those students.

The majority of single-gender schools currently exist within the private sector; however, such may not be the case for much longer. Recently passed legislation has begun to allow school districts to use funds to begin running pilot programs in which single-gender classrooms are housed inside of traditional coeducational school buildings

(U.S. Department of Education, 2013). This change means that single-gender education might become a realistic education option for a large majority of students, not just those whose parents can afford private-school tuition or those who can win scholarships. The fields of education and psychology need information from students who are already in these settings in order to provide information about why such settings are beneficial, how they help them function not only academically but also socially, and if any downsides or modifications need to be changed in order to make single-gender education more beneficial.

Statement of the Problem

A review of the literature on this topic reveals that although many issues trouble high-school girls, the research linking their school environments to their self-beliefs is lacking. Some research examines specific issues, such as eating disorders or body dysmorphia, but does so in a broad way. This research study has gathered pertinent information from female high school students and produced meaningful data about the academic, social, individual, and emotional components of this specific demographic group.

Despite the leaps and bounds made by women in the last century with the passage of legislation that deals with women's issues (e.g., the right to vote, fair wage laws, and women's health), progress still needs to be made. Educational stereotypes are perpetuated that are based on the false idea that men are more intelligent than women and are better at more challenging subject areas, such as math and science. A teenage girl who has heard these myths may be less willing to take risks or venture to answer questions in school if she has to do so in front of male peers. A social aspect is also

intertwined with this notion. If a female student is concerned about a male classmate's perception of her, she may try to change some of her more dominant personality traits in order to appear more feminine and thus more socially acceptable. (Gender traits will also be explored in the review of the literature.)

Much of the previous research on single-gender education is focused on the experiences of male students. Research topics range from their experiences in the classroom to participation on sports teams. However, research on the same topics is minimal for female students. A paucity in research is a problem for various reasons. Foremost, researchers like Janet Lever (1976), whose work is discussed in greater detail in the following section, indicate that different genders deal with stressors in different ways. Male individuals may show stress with anger or physical reactions whereas female individuals tend to deal with setbacks internally. Owing to the majority of single-gender research pertaining to the male gender, one cannot assume that successful interventions for male individuals would be appropriate for female individuals. In addition to differing reactions to stress, male and female individuals can have different learning styles, differing social expectations, and unique responses to interventions in both academic and social settings.

High-school students face a plethora of stressors in the classroom, as well as in their social lives. Some of these problems are reactions to environmental stressors; some are grounded in internal struggles, such as mental-health diagnoses; and others can be caused by combinations of internal and external difficulties. Research on life stress and social structure by Gore, Aseltine, and Colten (1992) suggested that teenage girls experience an extraordinarily high amount of pressure to be perfect. This stress is thought

to be a combination of parental pressure, societal expectation, and personal standards. Mental-health professionals are bombarded with a variety of issues that affect teenage girls: eating disorders, self-injurious behavior, participation in risk-taking behaviors, and, in extreme cases, - suicide. If mental-health professionals had more insight into the stressors that these students deal with on a daily basis, they may be able to target more specific or appropriate interventions when helping the students in therapy or counseling sessions.

Collaborative work also has been done on students who attend coeducational schools. While the information made available is certainly pertinent to the fields of education and psychology, it still is not as specific as would be work done with just female students from a single-gender high school. The field of school psychology will benefit from getting qualitative information and turning it into meaningful data that could potentially be taken into consideration when future studies are developing theories, techniques, or interventions to use with similar populations.

Purpose of the Study

This study focused specifically on the data collected from teenage girls who attended a private, single-gender high school. Information was gathered in the form of qualitative interviews. The data provided in the interviews helped to answer the research questions and give readers better insight into teenage girls' perceptions of their lives. Owing to the paucity of research based on adolescent high-school girls who attend a single-gender school, qualitatively examining the characteristics may be beneficial. Looking at these students through their perceptions of daily life may help to provide

understanding about this specific population's strengths, weaknesses, and social-emotional development.

This research seeks to expand the available information in order to help dispel stereotypes about adolescent girls, as well as to provide knowledge about the experiences with which single-gender school students are confronted. The questions that the researcher asked were in direct alignment with the goal of the study. The central research question that this study examined was "What does it mean to be a student at an all-girl school?" Some of the sub questions were as follows: "What social emotional and academic impacts does attending a single-gender school have on its students?" "Can comfort in one's school environment foster more positive social and academic experiences?"

It is hope that the data generated from this qualitative research study can be useful in further studies when researchers are examining female students. Theoretically, this research could be used in turn to create interventions or spot trends in behavior or disruptive thinking and then used to create more appropriate sessions from mental-health professionals. The data gathered from this group could also serve as an educational tool for other female students in similar settings to read about commonly shared experiences. The data could help to foster feelings of belonging and unity or to dispel feelings of isolation. In summary, this qualitative study seeks to understand the perceptions and interactions of female high-school students in order to better understand their experiences at a single-gender school.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Background Information

Models of Education and Gender Roles

Education in the United States takes on many different forms. Education below the college level can be provided in a public institution, a private school, a charter school, or even within the home via tutor, teacher, or online. Among these various options are even more choices within these settings. Education can be delivered in a public school, religious environment, a coeducational environment, or a single-gender placement. While single-gender education experienced a decline in the past, current trends suggest such programs are on the rise and are taking psychological research into account when creating their curricula. A single-gender education may be able to foster more beneficial academic and psychological outcomes for attendees (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005).

Gender in the United States

From the moment parents find out the gender of their baby, they begin to make important decisions about their child's future. Often, once the gender is revealed, parents will decorate the baby's room with pink for a girl and blue for a boy. This step is just the first in a gender divide in society. As children grow, they are encouraged to play with gender-specific toys: trucks and sports equipment for boys and dolls and fancy dress-up clothes for girls. Gender roles are reinforced during playtime. As Jean Piaget hypothesized, "children's play is the crucible of social development during the school years" (Piaget, 1948, p. 23). This means that during their unstructured playtime, while no one is directly speaking to them about gender roles, children are still learning about others' views of them, their roles in society, expectations based on gender, and social

norms. These expectations tend to be the basis for the child's eventual view of the world and his or her place in it. If a female child is given only stereotypical girls' toys, such as baby dolls, tea sets, dresses, and makeup, she will begin to associate those objects with being female. If she grows up with access to both male and female toys, according to Piaget's theory, she will feel more freedom later in life to choose to do activities based on her interest level, not based on expectations brought about by her gender.

In 1976, Lever conducted a study in which she observed the organization and structure of children's play in order to discover any noticeable differences. She studied the way the children, and not the adults, structured and organized their play. Her method included watching children in fifth grade during free, undirected play situations. The students were allowed to play with whatever items they wished and were allowed to play with peers from either gender. Her observations led to four major differences: boys play outdoors more often than girls do; boys play in larger groups with many same-gender friends who span a wide age range, while girls play in smaller groups with friends of the same age; boys are more competitive than girls; and the games boys play tend to last longer than the games girls play. Lever was interested in why the boys' games always lasted longer. She examined this phenomenon further and found interesting results. She explained that boys' play lasts longer not because of the nature of the games they play but because of the way they play them. She observed that boys were less likely than girls to fight with each other while playing, whereas "the eruption of disputes among girls tended to end the game" (Lever, 1976). In essence, she found that boys are not more imaginative or creative in the games they play but get along better while playing them, so their interactions last longer than those of their female counterparts. She also noted that boys

tended to play games that encouraged competition among group members while girls preferred to engage in such activities as school and house that involved building their social skills for later life. Lever also mentioned that every girl she observed in at least one of her observation sessions spoke about wanting to be a mother or pretended to be a mother to a baby doll whereas none of the boys spoke about future aspirations to be a father.

Lever's study continued by discussing the implications of the types of games that boys and girls play. Her observations are still relevant in today's society. Boys are taught to be aggressive, play rough, and be dominant. Girls are taught to learn to nurture and pretend to be wives and mothers. Psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982) hypothesized that play time of this nature "suggests that boys and girls arrive at puberty with a different interpersonal orientation and a different range of social experiences" (p. 23). One can logically assume that girls' psychological development is influenced through their social interactions, experiences at home, friends, and experiences at school.

Gender Stereotyping

Stereotyping occurs when a limitation or attribute is generalized to a member of a group based on ethnic background, religious belief, or, in some cases, gender. Gender stereotyping occurs when individuals have societal parameters placed on them that express behavioral expectations based on whether they are male or female. Gender stereotyping is so culturally pervasive that it tends to impose a gender onto everyday objects. For example, people tend to talk about a "masculine" or "feminine" work of art or how "masculine" or "feminine" a piece of furniture is (Fagot, Leinback Hort, &

Strayer, 1997). Society feels the need to label so many aspects of life and then expects people to operate within those expectations, no matter their arbitrariness.

This issue is addressed by Schneider in his book, *The Psychology of Stereotyping* (2004). Schneider lists attributes that are commonly associated with male and female individuals. He mentions women as being thought of as caring, quiet, and introspective, while men are considered aggressive, competitive, and driven. He also discusses the notions that some interests, such as math and science, are thought to be better understood by men and only women enjoy ballet and watching movies, are erroneously attributed to genders based on old cultural pretenses not supported by science. These false attributes are the adult version of saying trucks are only for boys and dolls are only for girls. In his book, Schneider (2004) speaks about six different types of sexism: sex role stereotyping, gender role reinforcement, discrimination, domination, active discrimination, and treatment of the opposite sex as a sexual object.

Research on gender traits seems to have begun in approximately the late 1940s, but the bulk of it began in 1968 with a team of researchers who wanted to determine the traits individuals considered male and the traits considered female. The researchers gave participants a list of 122 traits and asked them to rate whether the traits should be considered male or female. The participants chose 41 of the 122 traits that were more female than male or more male than female. Some of the feminine traits included “being talkative, quiet, and expressing tender feelings while the male traits were being aggressive, logical, and active” (Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, & Broverman, 1968). The researchers then took their work further and asked the same group of college-

aged participants to choose the traits that were more socially desirable. Both male and female participants rated the male traits as more desirable.

Sandra Bem and the Bem Sex Role Inventory

Shortly after, in 1974, Sandra Bem created the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1981), which still remains one of the most widely used and popular instruments relating to gender. The BSRI was the first to provide independent measures of a person's masculinity or femininity. The BSRI lists 60 personality traits and asks individuals filling out the scale to rank themselves on a 7-point Likert scale as to how strongly they exhibit these personality characteristics. The characteristics described by Bem were further classified by the statement "Twenty of the characteristics are stereotypically feminine (gentle, sympathetic) and twenty of the traits are stereotypically masculine (independent, dominant)" (Hoffman & Border p.64). The last set of 20 characteristics are meant to be gender neutral and based only on social desirability. Examples of these traits are sincerity and jealousy. Short and long forms of the BSRI are available. The short form has half the number of characteristics as the long form. Once the individual taking the inventory completes his or her Likert ratings, the examiner can rank the taker's traits as masculine or feminine and socially desirable or socially undesirable.

Bem's inventory is so highly regarded because it "redefined the relationship between psychological health and gender" (Hoffman & Border, 2001). Her work led to the realization that men and women could have any combination of masculine or feminine traits and still be psychologically healthy. Bem's inventory has helped lead to the acceptance of androgyny, masculine female individuals, and feminine male individuals.

All of the available research that mentions the BSRI appears to compare and contrast male and female individuals from the same settings, such as colleges or workplaces. Apparently, little to no research has compared BSRI scores of coeducational and single-sex school environments to determine whether their environments have any impact on how they rate their gender characteristics. One could hypothesize that a female student who attends a single-gender school and therefore has not had the societal pressure from male peers to conform may be more prone to choosing less stereotypical traits to describe herself. One could also hypothesize that these girls would rate their traits as more socially desirable than would a peer who has attended a traditional coeducational setting for her years in school.

Single Gender Study Findings

Sociologist Jennifer Thompson (2003) studied the effect that attendance at a single-gender high school had on majors female students chose in college. Her study followed groups of graduates from coeducational high schools and single-gender high schools. Throughout her longitudinal study, she found that girls at the coeducational school preferred to take writing and English classes. Girls who attended the single-gender school showed a preference for science and math classes. Her study continued to follow the girls throughout college. Thompson's findings indicated that girls from single-gender high schools chose a variety of majors and career paths and did not shy away from traditionally male-dominated fields. She attributed this finding to their ability to take math and science classes in high school without worrying about the reactions of male peers. She also attributed it to the girls not having to play into traditional gender stereotypes at school because they were the only gender present. She found that female

students from coeducational schools tended to choose majors, such as nursing, that were considered typically feminine. While she expected to find these consequences, another finding was mentioned for which Thompson had not been testing. Her findings indicated that only 30% of the female students from the coeducational setting stayed with the original major they chose when first entering college in comparison to 83% of the female students who came from a single-gender school. Thompson hypothesized that the students from the coeducational setting had been more willing to compromise their desires in order to fit the gender stereotype of female interests (Thompson, 2003).

A similar study at Cornell University (Haise, 2004) found results that aligned with Thompson's research. The majors of 1,700 female students at all-women colleges were compared to the majors of 818 female students at coeducational colleges. The goal of the study was to try to anticipate if the students from the single-gender schools were more likely to choose a male-dominated career than were their peers from coeducational schools. The results were aligned with the researcher's expectations. Students from the single-gender school chose female-dominated fields only 36% of the time compared to students from the single-gender school, who chose male-dominated fields 75% of the time.

The implications of this research study give strong support to single-gender schools as places that provide female students with a sufficiently rigorous education to pursue whatever field they wish but also reinforce the notion that female students from single-gender schools do not feel the need to conform to gender stereotypes when choosing careers. Another finding that came from this study dealt with the percentage of students who decided to stay with their original choice of major. The results were not

influenced by single or coeducational experiences. Both groups experienced similar rates of attrition. The single-gender group stayed with their majors 80% of the time, and the group that attended a coeducational school stayed with their majors 79% of the time. A limitation of this study is that it was completed at small liberal-arts institutions, and the dynamics may differ at larger colleges.

Proponents of single gender education believe that removing the opposite gender from the school environment removes much of the potential for gender stereotyping and creates a more comfortable and fair learning environment. Several studies have been conducted based on the idea that students at single gender schools have increased academic success. Some of the current literature related to this topic also discusses the important psychological impact SS schools can have by creating safer and more tailored learning environments. The educational and psychological impacts of single gender education are discussed further in the section entitled, “Social-Emotional/Psychological Benefit of Single Gender Education for Female Students.”

Participation in All-Girls Education

The United States Department of Education Statistics reports that currently more women than men are attending college, at a rate of about 60 to 40%, respectively (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). This number is encouraging, yet studies still report that women struggle in terms of thoughts and attitudes as they relate to their education and achievement ability. A recent study at Dartmouth College found that female students who were surveyed and had grade point averages (GPAs) higher than those of their male classmates still rated themselves as less intelligent. This same group of girls also rated themselves as less ambitious and likely to make less money than their male counterparts

(Sturgis, 2013). If girls can out achieve their male peers, why do they still perceive themselves as less successful? Are they playing into a gender stereotype that makes them feel as though they need to be less dominant?

The U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2013) reported that, as of October 2012, the population of young female youth was approximately 21,000,000. The Census Bureau categorized these girls as between the ages of 10 and 19 years. Recent studies have shown a downward trend in private education as a result of economic hardship, meaning that the majority of these girls are educated in coeducational traditional public-school settings. While private-school enrollment is down overall, research does support that the past 2 decades have seen growth in the popularity of female single-gender education within the private sector. For the estimated 3 million girls who attend private school, a private co-education is no longer the only single-gender option. Some single-gender education takes place at all-girls schools, and some takes place in progressive public schools that are trying a new pattern of education in which male and female students attend the same school but have separate classes and intermingle only during nonacademic times, such as lunch and special assemblies (Sturgis, 2013). Little research can speak to the contributing psychological factors that are contingent on successful single-gender school experiences. The paucity in research on solely all-girls schools is so large that finding statistics about attendance, success, benefits, risks, or influencing factors is difficult.

History of All-Girls Schools

When the field of education began to be governed by federal regulations, public education was concerned with the education of only male students. Female individuals

were taught at home or, most of the time, were not given any kind of formal education. One-room schoolhouses created an environment where male and female students of all ages were able to learn together. Eventually, this led to the creation of the modern public-school system. Current research (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005) on the topic notes that while single-gender education is gaining popularity because of its proven educational and emotional benefits, as well as of changes in funding, the majority of single-gender schools are private, and almost every public school still follows the coeducational model.

Some of the more recent research (DeBare, 2004; Hubbard & Datnow) mentions that a small number of public schools are running pilot programs in which classrooms are separated by gender. “The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 authorized school districts to use local or innovative program funds to offer single-sex schools and classrooms consistent with applicable laws” (U.S. Department of Education Statistics, 2013), thereby making these pilot trials possible. Some of these programs have begun to refer to their schools as “dual academies,” meaning that they offer education to both male and female students, but all classes are separated by the gender of the students.

Author Ilana DeBare (2004) wrote *Where Girls Come First*, which provides insight into the history of all-female, single-gender education. She explains that while several decades ago single-gender schools for female students were on the verge of extinction, a recent resurgence in popularity has occurred. She writes that more than 30 all-girls schools opened between 1991 and 2001, and those numbers have continued to grow. She also mentions that while all-girls schools used to be more commonplace in the northeastern section of the United States, since their resurgence, they are now opening in smaller towns, as well as on the West coast. She states that “by the 1980’s there were

only two public girls high schools left in the United States, Western High School in Baltimore and The Philadelphia High School For Girls in Philadelphia” (DeBare, pg. 12).

DeBare (2004) contributed a large part of the renewed success of all-girl schools to psychologist Carol Gilligan, who conducted her most notable research at the Emma Willard School for Girls. DeBare shared that because of Gilligan’s research, schools were better able to tailor their curricula to meet the needs of modern girls. Curricula were changed to include all subjects, not just literature and languages. *Where Girls Come First* speaks to the history of all-girls education and explains that while most people equate an all-girls school with the image of a finishing school, most all-girls schools in the United States came about from a more progressive school of thought. Many of the all-girls schools in this country were some of the “first institutions to take women’s minds seriously and to insist that girls could learn anything that boys could” (DeBare, pg.32). A paramount feature of all-girls schools is to remain academically rigorous in order to keep their alumnae competitive when applying for scholarships and college admittance. Historically, many well-known colleges, such as Yale, Princeton, and West Point, have been single-gender schools, excluding female students. In the 1970s, the numbers of women enrolling in college started to grow, and traditionally male schools began to consider allowing female applicants. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2008), this number has continued to steadily increase since the 1970s. In fact, the National Center for Education Statistics reports that women currently outnumber men in terms of college enrollment. However, the change to allow female students was not widely accepted. Several infamous legal battles have emerged in reference to allowing female students to

attend traditionally all-male schools. While some of these cases were in the 1970s, others are current and have been resolved only recently.

Legal Rulings

Vorchheimer v. School District

In the 1970s, a student named Susan Vorchheimer wanted to attend Central High School in Philadelphia, which at the time admitted only male students. She was a gifted student who did not believe the local all-girls schools could offer academics as rigorous as those offered by their all-male counterparts. When she applied and was denied admittance, she took the case to court. Local courts found that Vorchheimer's local all-girls schools were equal to Central High. The case was eventually presented before the Supreme Court. After the case was presented, the Supreme Court decision was evenly divided. One of the judges compared this case to that of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in that it "reminds us that the separate but equal doctrine can and will be invoked to support sexual discrimination in the same manner that it supported racial discrimination" (Corcoran, 1997). Seven years after this case was presented to the Supreme Court, Central High was ordered by a local court to begin allowing girls to attend (Corcoran, 1997).

Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan

A male nurse by the name of Joe Hogan applied for admittance to the Mississippi University for Women. The University allowed men to audit classes but did not give course credit to the men who chose this option. This case was argued before local state courts and then went before the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court decided that the University's policy was in violation of the Equal Protection Clause. Men were allowed to audit classes, implying that the University regarded them as able to understand the

information being taught. The Court decided that if members of the opposite sex were allowed to attend classes, they had to be allowed to receive credit and not be discriminated against based on gender (Corcoran, 1997).

United States v. Virginia

One of the more recent gender education cases deals with the United States v. Virginia. The Virginia Military Institute is an all-male school run by the state. The school not only is rigorous, but also has a long, well-known history of producing graduates who are leaders in business and politics. The state of Virginia does not offer a comparable institute for female students. In 1990, a female student applied and was rejected. When the case was brought before a judge, the court ruled that not allowing women to attend was constitutionally justifiable because they may not be able to meet all of the physical requirements that male attendees had to meet. When the case went further, another court decided that while the Virginia Military Institute could remain all male, the state would have to provide a similar and equal place for female students. From this decision, the Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership was founded. Even after the Women's Institute opened, debated continued that a degree from the Virginia Military Institute was more prestigious and, therefore, the schools were still not equal (Corcoran, 1997).

Title IX Ruling

The federal law, Title IX, was created in 1972 as part of the educational Amendments to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This law states that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (Women's Sports Foundation, 2007). Title IX provides

guidelines for treating male and female students equally (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 1972.)

While these cases are just a sample of historically single-gender schools trying to turn coeducational, they can be used to provide a brief glimpse of the debate about benefits of a single-gender education. Several schools of thought pertain to the idea of single-gender education. One of the most predominant is that single-gender education is undeniably beneficial, both academically and socially. A second opinion is that it is not beneficial because of lack of social exposure to the opposite sex.

Impact of Participation in All-Girls Education

Gilligan Study

Carol Gilligan is one of the preeminent authors in the field of attitudes of female adolescents. In the early 1980s, she noticed the paucity of research pertaining to female adolescents and their attitudes and observations of the world around them. She conducted research from 1981 to 1984 that was focused on the psychological development of girls who attended the Emma Willard School in Massachusetts. Gilligan conducted interviews with her participants and asked them a wide range of questions. The questions dealt with such topics as morality, body image, racial identity, sexuality, and relationships with their mothers. Gilligan found that adolescent girls experience a dilemma in which they are confronted with their own personal beliefs about who they are. This personal belief is usually in contrast to the person whom they believe society wants them to be. Gilligan and her team compiled interviews for a book entitled, *Making Connections*. In this book, Gilligan explores the notion that adolescent girls feel as though they live in more than one world (Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1990). Her interviews supported the notion that

girls have beliefs about their own abilities and how they would like to be regarded, but they struggle to feel adequate enough to live up to society's idea of whom a girl should be. Gilligan concluded that in adolescence, girls experience a crisis of connection wherein they lose confidence in what they know about themselves because they are trying to rationalize their feelings with societal expectations. (Gilligan et al., 1990).

While Gilligan's work is often regarded as the most groundbreaking on this topic, it has received slight criticism for its lack of diversity (Gerson, 1994). Gilligan's study was completed with a group of predominantly upper-middle-class white female students. The only African American to participate in the Gilligan studies was a student by the name of Janie Ward. A researcher from the University of North Dakota spoke to her about her participation and her feelings on the lack of diversity. Ward stood behind the study, explaining that "in general, minorities can best be helped by supporting their ventures toward racial-identity development and by acknowledging social inequities and sexism in our culture" (Twohey, 1991). Ward appeared to be more concerned with the gender stereotyping and sexism that take place in society than with worrying about the racial make-up of Gilligan's sample of convenience because she knew that the work Gilligan and her team were trying to complete went beyond that of culture and race and was going to benefit women as a whole.

Educational Benefits of All-Girls Schools

A conclusion widely drawn upon when reading about single-gender education is that girls benefit from single-gender education simply because boys are not present to serve as a distraction. This idea implies that girls are as capable to achieve as their male counterparts but are unable to do so when in the same school because they get

preoccupied with social interactions and peer acceptance. However, research has shown that girls benefit from a single-gender education because of the empowering nature of the environment, as well as the rigorous instruction.

“Shady Acres Girls”

In 2001, a research study was completed at a school in England, referred to by the researcher as “The Shady Acres School.” The school was coeducational and culturally diverse, with a population of mostly middle-class students. The school split its seventh-grade math classes into different groups based on gender. This split took place for the duration of seventh and eighth grade. At the end of eighth grade, the students were given an inventory of questions to answer based on their experiences. As a whole, the single-gender classes appeared to be more beneficial for the girls than for the boys. The girls reported that they enjoyed the math class more than any of their other classes, and 80% of them reported gaining confidence in the subject. When asked whether they would continue single-gender education if they had a choice, the majority said yes. However, the answers the male students gave were vastly different. Reports revealed that “59% of the male students felt neutral about the single gender class and 33% of the boys reported feeling less confident” (Jackson, 2002). The author attributed this loss in confidence to the notion that when boys are together in a group, either all male or male and female, they still feel the need to act dominant over one another.

Jackson (2002) mentioned that before she completed the study, she thought the boys could remain neutral in terms of classroom confidence. She believes that an all-boys classroom may actually encourage the more dominant boys to tease the less dominant boys because girls are not there to serve as a distraction.

Askew and Ross (1990) noted similar findings in their research: “Boys take every opportunity to demonstrate their own masculinity and did so by pouncing on other boys’ weakness. It became dangerous to express vulnerability in front of one another” (p.36). In this case, single-gender education proved to be beneficial for the female students because they gained the confidence to explore the presented topics without the judgment of their male peers.

While some research on single-gender education for male students suggests that it is detrimental, research on the female side is overwhelmingly positive. In 2008, The U.S. Department of Education created a report on the potential impact of public single-sex schools. The research discussed the potential for positive social interactions, more classroom control by the teacher, and girls forming more secure bonds (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

The National Coalition of Girls Schools (NCGS), with the help of Linda Sax and the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, conducted research on the advantages gained by female graduates from single-gender schools. The researchers compiled data from surveys and questionnaires given to more than 6,000 graduates from all-girls schools and more than 14,000 graduates from single-sex high schools. The participants were from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and differing levels of family income. The study concluded that in comparison to their female coeducated peers, the graduates from all-girls schools were more confident in math, rated themselves to have higher writing and public-speaking abilities, were more likely to consider graduate school in the future, were more likely to enter a math- or science-related field, and scored higher on standardized tests, such as the SAT. Sax and her research team concluded that

attending a single-gender school was undeniably beneficial for girls. This was based on the fact that the students rated themselves as having a high self-perception and the potential to succeed in their fields (Sax, Arms, Woodruff, Riggers, & Eagan, 2009).

Another longitudinal study was completed in 2003. This study examined the effects of a girls-only curriculum and its impact on performance and engagement in science and math. The researchers had 786 participants at an all-girls school and 319 girls and 382 boys at a coeducational school. Both schools were public. The students were followed from the beginning of ninth grade through the completion of high school. The groups were examined with pre- and posttest measures. The goal of the study was to focus on five main areas: girls' achievement in single-gender math and science classes, likelihood to enroll in harder courses, possession of positive or negative feelings of self-worth, the ability of positive or negative feelings to predict school performance, and the ability of prior attitude toward math to predict performance.

During the implementation, all of the students received lessons from the same curriculum to ensure standardization. After the duration of the research, math and science achievements were calculated by averaging the grades received in all 4 years of math and all 4 years of science courses. The results indicated that girls from the single-gender schools not only performed at a higher academic level than their peers but also were more willing to participate in harder classes, put in more effort by turning in additional assignments, and more likely to choose majors that required math and science classes. Even though the researchers found evidence for the argument they were trying to make, the study did have limitations. No observations or qualitative data were collected, the

level of instruction provided by the teacher was not regulated, and no information was provided about the classroom climate in any of the settings (Shapka & Keating, 2003).

Social-Emotional/Psychological Benefit of Single-Gender Education for Female Students

While having a positive academic experience is important, it is not the only factor that leads to the support for single-gender schools. Giving girls a strong social emotional grounding provides them with a positive outlook on their abilities, helps them form healthy friendships, and helps to foster good mental health. Researchers have produced work that speaks to the positive impact that single-gender education can have for female students in the social realm. Kristin Caplice (1994) discussed the nature of positive emotional benefits in her work. She has found that “many women who attend single-sex schools feel a sense of empowerment and freedom to excel beyond traditional stereotypes” (p. 4). The nature of research in this particular area logically has more to do with the impact of single-gender education than with the differences between single-gender and coeducational education. For example, one should understand the way girls are empowered in a specific environment rather than the way they are taught a specific skill in that environment.

Additional Factors That Lead to Single-Gender Education Success

Some researchers hold the perspective that students who attend single-gender schools experience success because of biological factors for which the schools make adjustments. Those who adhere to this mindset believe that girls and boys learn differently. *Boys and Girls Learn Differently*, by Gurian, Henley, and Trueman (2001), explains the idea that boys learn best in competitive environments and can handle louder

noise levels when working. It states that girls work best in a collaborative fashion and enjoy quieter work places. Based on the information presented in this book, those in single-gender schools would need to tailor their teaching styles to cater to the learning profiles of the gender that their schools serve.

An additional factor that has gone unmentioned in the majority of the literature on all-girls schools is the aspect of appearance. While, ideally, appearance should have nothing to do with making friends or achieving academically, appearance is important to teenagers. Researchers at a high school in Australia conducted a study to determine the importance of appearance in day-to-day school experiences. Structured interviews were conducted with girls who attended a private all-girls school. The results indicated that almost every girl was concerned about her appearance on a daily basis and how her appearance influenced aspects of school. The female students shared that they felt judged if they were not skinny enough, that weight and feminine appearance dictated who would be their friends, and indicated that their level of self-worth depended on how pretty their classmates thought they were (Carey, Donaghue, & Broderick, 2010). This information is pertinent when discussing trends in American all-girls schools because the obsession with appearance is just as prevalent here as in Australia.

Barriers to Single-Gender Education

Two researchers from the University of Nebraska set out to investigate the role gender perception played for students who attended an all-male high school. The researchers, Thompson and Austin (2010), pointed out that a large amount of data supports the academic and social development benefits of single-gender education. Their objective was to determine the level of awareness of women's issues held by male

students in a school environment without female peers. The study was done with a group of 701 male students ranging in age from 14 to 18 years. The group was predominantly white. They were given a survey of 15 items that pertained to women's issues.

Thompson and Austin hypothesized that the male students would be sensitive to women's issues but would overestimate their level of awareness of issues that pertain to women. However, analysis of the data showed that gender role perceptions of adolescent boys were skewed. The boys reported that they believed in traditional gender roles, such as men being the family breadwinners, wives staying home to raise children, supporting white male presidential candidates, and believing that women do not have control of their emotions. This information is pertinent to the argument for single-gender education, because in order for single-gender education, either all male or all female, to continue to be considered a positive experience, administrators in those schools must work to consciously teach their students about issues that affect the opposite gender (Thompson & Austin, 2010). The authors suggested that single-gender schools must work on becoming antisexist while still managing to empower the gender of students they are teaching.

Recently, a study on single-gender education was completed in Montreal at Concordia University. The researchers found that girls at single-gender schools actually reported feeling greater pressure to conform to social norms imposed by other girls than did their counterparts at traditional coeducational schools. One of the researchers, William Bukowski, shared results that indicated that girls tended to place more value on their social status than on grades or academic achievements. During his study Bukowski created the term, *social-dosage*, which refers to girls in social settings with other girls

getting a strong dose of the meaning of being considered a female in society. In this instance, attending a single-gender school apparently could be socially stressful, not empowering (as cited in Dockterman, 2013).

Another interesting argument in opposition to single-gender education is the notion that while students may flourish in a single-gender environment, the world is coed. The students who get used to a single-gender environment could potentially be placed at a disadvantage in college or the workforce if they are not used to the societal expectations for interaction with the opposite gender. However, one could argue that students who attend single-gender schools could be more self-assured and have more confidence than their coeducational-school peers, therefore making easier the later navigation of the world outside of school.

A final barrier to the success of single-gender education is the lack of access to single-gender schools for a variety of students. As previously mentioned, all-girls schools are almost exclusively private schools. The few exceptions are the public schools using Title IX funding to run single-gender pilot programs. The private nature of the majority of single-gender schools immediately restricts access to low-income students who cannot afford tuition or to students living in parts of the country far from a private school. This issue can be overcome if the results of the pilot single-gender schools go well and more public schools are willing to follow that model.

Conclusion

Taking into account information about gender stereotyping, genetic learning differences, positive social and emotional experiences, and tailored academics, the case for female single-gender education is strong but not without doubt from researchers. As

previously mentioned, some researchers have concluded that single-gender schools do not make a difference. Their argument is that achievement is all the result of internal motivation.

However, nothing can make a stronger case, for or against, than information provided straight from the source. The most comprehensive qualitative research completed on this topic is still Carol Gilligan's research from 3 decades ago. Having more current information on adolescent girls attending a single-gender school would be beneficial to the field. New research in this area could help tailor new studies on adolescent girls' perceptions of their place in the world, causes of their stress, and what helps them achieve.

Chapter 3: Method

Participants

The participants in this study were 10 high-school-aged female students who were currently enrolled at a single-gender high school in Delaware. Participants were limited to a single-gender school in Delaware. No exclusionary criteria regarding race, ethnicity, religion, type of school the girls previously attended, state of residence, or socioeconomic status were included. State of residence is important to note because the school in Delaware currently has students from Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland.

Participants volunteered for this study. The sample size was determined to be a sample of convenience, determined by saturation of the potential pool. Saturation occurs when the researcher is no longer hearing new or novel information. Using participants who volunteer is typically an efficient way to collect information because those participants are often willing to disclose the level of personal information needed in order to provide meaningful insight into the research questions.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited through a flyer sent home by the school. This flyer was also hung in approved places throughout the school building. The flyer encouraged prospective volunteers to e-mail or call the researcher to express interest. When participants contacted the researcher, a brief screening interview was conducted to ensure that the students meet inclusionary criteria. When the volunteer met the criteria, that individual, along with a parent, was asked to meet with the researcher to sign an informed parental-consent document.

Consent

Because the majority of high-school students are younger than the age of 18 years, the researcher also obtained parental consent in order for that student to be eligible to participate. In contrast, when a parent responded to the flyer that was mailed home instead of the student, the researcher also obtained permission from the student to ensure that she was comfortable with participating. Once the volunteer met the criteria and the informed consent forms were signed, more information, such as specific dates of interviews, was then provided.

The interviews were conducted in person, were audio recorded, and all took place on the school grounds. Throughout the interviews, the investigator maintained a preinterview questionnaire in order to gather notes about comfort levels of the interviewees, potential reoccurring themes, and other information that could be helpful in the qualitative process.

The participants in this study were 10 high-school-aged female students. They ranged in age from 14 to 17 years old. The group of participants included students from freshmen to seniors. This population of volunteers belonged to a larger population of 223 ninth- through 12th-grade students at a private school located in Delaware. The ninth grade had 57 students enrolled, 10th grade had 60, 11th grade had 54, and 12th grade had 52.

Materials

The materials used for this study included the flyer that was sent home to families and hung on walls throughout the school (see Appendix A), an adult consent form for the parent to sign in order for the child to participate in the research (see Appendix B), a set

of preinterview questions to help the researcher gather demographic data (see Appendix C), and a set of standard questions to be asked during each interview with the students (see Appendix D).

Design and Procedure

Prior to the researcher sending home and hanging the flyers, approval to conduct this study was provided by the school's headmistress. This was done before the application was made with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and approval was given by the IRB for this study to begin. Upon IRB approval, the flyer (Appendix A) was given to school staff to send home with the school's monthly newsletter. The flyer was also given to the school's press secretary, who had to stamp the flyers with a seal stating that they were allowed to be hung in the school's hallways. Once they were determined appropriate to hang, school staff placed them on bulletin boards and in stairwells. The examiner did not have a say in where the flyers were hung. A total of 18 responses were garnered from the flyers. Fourteen of the responses were from students, and four were from parents. Through the initial screening process, four students were deemed not eligible to participate or were not able to commit to the time requirements necessary to complete the interview. The students who were not eligible to participate were currently enrolled in the Middle School and had inquired about the study when they saw the flyers at home.

When conducting qualitative research, the stories and life experiences shared by the participants are examined and incorporated so that a research topic can be explained in a more meaningful way. The purpose of this study was to gain meaningful insight into the single-gender high-school experience of female students. This information is

meaningful because it could potentially provide insight into more effective coping skills, could direct mental-health providers toward more effective interventions, and could give direct understanding of the daily issues with which girls are coping.

This qualitative study is based on systematic grounded theory. In his book, researcher John Creswell (2009) discussed the various ways to conduct qualitative studies. He explained that grounded theory is a specific strategy employed when the researcher has an abstract theory about a process and then uses data collection methods to compare themes and similarities that emerge as a result of the data collection. In other words, in the grounded-theory approach, the researcher identifies the perceptions of the volunteers and codes the responses into data points in order to construct a theory. Two of the main characteristics that are germane to this theory are the samples collected from different group members that help maximize trends and dissimilar thoughts, as well as frequent data comparisons to emerging categories (Cresswell, 2009).

This research design was the most appropriate strategy for this study because it not only allowed the researcher to ask questions to gather data but also looked at the information gathered in a meaningful way. The intent of this study was to use the information provided by the students to uncover commonalities the students shared. Trends were identified and further conclusions were drawn about the implications of attending a single-gender high school. Thus, the research design needed to go beyond that of a case study or narrative research. In both case studies and narrative research, the researcher reports on stories of the interviewees' lives in a similar fashion to the semistructured interview. However, grounded theory takes the information gathered and tries to make sense of and apply it to the real world.

Measure

The measure used was a structured interview designed by the researcher. The interview was composed of nine open-ended questions. Probes were not used to clarify answers. Please refer to Appendix D for a full list of interview questions.

Procedures

Interviews were planned to last between 90 and 120 minutes, with participants being allowed to leave or stop for a break at any time. However, the interviews did not run as long as the researcher expected. The shortest interview was 31 minutes in length, and the longest was 62 minutes. The interviews were conducted at the chosen school in Delaware, in a quiet room, away from distraction and view from peers. A validation team was used in order to review the data and confirm or modify the conclusions about the interview content. The members of the validation team were suitably qualified and experienced to review the data. The data were examined in order to find reoccurring themes and content relevant to the conclusion of the study.

The interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder. Participants, as well as parents of participants, were notified that the interviewees would be recorded with an audio recorder and that their interviews would later be transcribed. The participants were not identified in the audio recording, and content was not linked to any identifying information.

Data Analysis

After collected, the data were reviewed. The first step included reviewing all of the demographic information provided from the surveys. These demographic data were reviewed with the interview data in order to get a sense of overall tone and meaning.

Notes were taken on general themes and ideas that were presented in the interviews. After the initial review, the data were categorized into themes. The demographic data provided descriptive statistics about age, GPA, and ethnicity relevant to this study. Data were collected until saturation was reached. Prominent themes and an analysis of the data were then written in a narrative format, which is in the Results section of this study.

Reliability and Validity

Owing to the qualitative nature of this study, reliability plays a minor role. Examining the stability of participants' responses is difficult when each response is based on individual beliefs and personal experiences. Each student interpreted the questions in her own way and provided meaningful answers that were relevant to individual experiences.

In terms of validity, qualitative research allows the researcher to determine whether the findings are considered accurate. Information obtained in this study used only newly collected data until saturation occurred. In the area of qualitative research, a method called triangulation is used. Triangulation is a method by which researchers can establish validity through the use of multiple perspectives to find consistency in responses. Students used rich descriptions to convey their personal experiences. The results of this qualitative study are valid.

Chapter 4: Results

Student Questionnaire Analysis

The demographics data collected from the 10 respondents for this study are included in Figure 1 and Table 1. The respondents all identified their gender as female. The mean age of the respondents was 15.9 years. The students had a mean GPA of 3.5. The students were represented as follows: two from ninth grade, one from 10th grade, four from 11th grade, and three from 12th grade. On average, the students had attended a single-gender school for 5.7 years. The student who had attended a single-gender school for the shortest amount of time had been matriculating at this school in Delaware for only 1 year. The student who had spent the most time in a single-gender school had attended one from kindergarten through 12th grade. Of the students surveyed, 100% indicated they had plans to attend college after graduating high school, and 70% reported that they already had a particular major in mind that they would like to study. The potential fields of study they mentioned were biomedical, pharmaceutical sales, nursing, law, political science, architecture, and premedical.

All 10 subjects reported the marital status of their parents. Nine sets of parents were married, and one was divorced. Two of the students reported that they did not have any siblings. Five respondents reported that they had one sibling. Of these five, three had younger brothers and two had younger sisters. Two students reported having two siblings at home. Of the two, one reported having two younger sisters, and the other student reported having one younger brother and one younger sister. One student reported having three sisters, two of whom were younger and one of whom was older. This information

shows that of all 10 respondents to the interviews, nine were the oldest or only child in the home.

The respondents for these interviews were 100% Caucasian. When asked what religion, if any, the students identified with, seven said Catholicism and three said Protestantism. The students also were asked to share the types of events that made up their typical social life. Answers varied slightly, but many shared the common thread of service to the community or volunteerism. The activities listed by the students included playing sports, hanging out with friends and family, exercising, going to the movies, shopping, volunteering with animals, going out to eat, babysitting, playing an instrument, having a weekend job, and youth group. Membership in school clubs was an apparent common factor among the respondents as well. They represented membership in a variety of groups, such as Theatre, French, Dance, Debate, Mock Trial, Photography, Environment, Tennis, Field Hockey, Basketball, Lacrosse, Track, Model UN, and Entrepreneur Club. All respondents listed at least three social activities they enjoyed. Of the students, 70% listed at least one activity that was school based.

When asked to identify the social make-up of their peer group, answers were again similar. All the students first responded by stating an exact number, ranging from two to 12 friends, but then 60% of the respondents continued to add a statement that they were also “friendly with everyone in the school,” were “close with everyone else,” were “friends with everyone,” or were “friendly with everyone in my class.”

Interview Question Analysis

An analysis of each answer to the presented questions revealed many similarities among the student responses. The following interview questions explored the thoughts and attitudes of female students who attended a single-gender school:

Question #1: How would you describe your experience at your single-gender school?

The words that the students used to describe their single-gender experience were largely positive. Nine of 10 students used words like “great,” “love,” “drama free,” “exactly where I need to be,” and “really neat.” The only student who used a neutral word, “OK,” was the student who had just started her first year at the school during the time of the interview. Several students brought up the notion of feeling like a family because of the close relationships they had formed with their classmates. Some students spoke candidly about their apprehension before committing to a single-gender environment. One student shared that she purposely turned her application in late in hopes that she would not be accepted. This same student shared that she enjoys the school so much that she now knows “This is exactly where I need to be.”

Another theme that was noted across several students’ answers was the idea of support. Having supportive staff is a characteristic that the students shared as unique to their school. They did not appear to think that all high-school staff members were as supportive as their teachers are. Many students mentioned the rigorous academic demands at their school. Student 6 shared, “The biggest worry here is what your GPA is.” Several students shared the sentiment that everyone is more focused on getting good grades and helping each other achieve than worrying about the typical concerns that go along with coeducational schools, such as dating, boys, and popularity.

Overall, 90% of the students shared positive experiences associated with attending a single-gender school. No student reported a negative experience associated with single-gender education. The descriptive words the students used were classified as positive, negative, or neutral. They are represented in Table 2.

Question #2- How did you decide to attend school here?

While many of the answers in this series of interviews were repetitive, this answer provided a broader range of responses. The first reason, mentioned by two students, was family legacy. Another two students said their decision was based on a visitation day experience. One student decided to attend this single-gender school based on the amount of scholarship she was offered. One student shared that she wanted to attend a faith-based school. Two students had enrolled in prekindergarten and continued on to high school and therefore were not involved in the decision. The parents of an additional two students made the decision for them when they were getting ready to enter high school. Even though these students enrolled in this particular single-gender school for a variety of reasons, they all spoke fondly of it.

In addition to being a single-gender school, another way that education in this school is different from the norm is the application process. While the typical public-school process for moving on to high school just involves moving on to the next school in a district's feeder pattern, the application process for this school is similar to that of most private schools. The application process closely mimics the college application process. The students fill out an application, tour the campus, take part in interviews with administration, and take a placement test. None of the students interviewed talked about the application process at length, but several of them did mention having very positive

experiences during the campus tour. One student stated, “When I shadowed for the day, I just felt like this school was home.” One of the seniors who was interviewed explained that on her campus visit she had a feeling that “This is where I was supposed to be.”

Question #3- Tell me about your social life in and out of school.

The initial observed reaction from the students answering this question was happiness. Students appeared at ease, happy, and fulfilled when talking about their friends and social lives. In one way or another, every student acknowledged having friends in the school setting, as well as participating in activities that took place outside of the school. One student mentioned having a boyfriend. Several students made the distinction between “school friends” and “friends who do not go to my school.” Eight of the 10 students interviewed made clear statements about having to make sure they had a good balance of academic work and a social life.

Several students mentioned that in order to have a social life, schoolwork had to be involved. Seven of the 10 students interviewed specifically mentioned that their social groups plan times to get together at local coffee shops to work on homework and school assignments. Another channel for completing work that two students mentioned by name was the “Senior Lounge.” The lounge is a room on the first floor of the school to which only 12th graders have access. It has couches, arm chairs, tables, study nooks, bean bag chairs, a television, and computers. The seniors are allowed to be in the lounge before school, during free periods and lunch time, and after school.

Another notion present in many of the responses to this question was the idea that taking part in clubs and sports teams depends on academic success. Three students

specifically mentioned that they expressed interest in having a job, but their parents did not allow them to do so for fear that their academics would suffer.

Students' lists of activities were varied. They included sports, volunteering, shopping, eating at restaurants, and multiple school clubs.

The most common answer focused on the small class sizes, regarded by students as a positive contributing factor to the closeness of their classes.. Phrases like “just like family” and “we are all so close” were frequently mentioned. The students' answers were directly related to class size, rather than focused on gender.

Question #4- Where do you see your life going in the future?

When asked to describe where the students saw their lives going in the future, all 10 respondents replied in an almost identical fashion. While all of the responses varied slightly in specific detail, all 10 students indicated that the next step for each of them was college. Some students in most public schools might think about entering the job force, a trade school, or another alternative. However, at a school that is categorized as “college preparatory,” all graduates commonly move on to a 4-year college setting.

Students shared specific plans, such as their likely major and where they would like to attend college. Some of the younger students indicated that they were not sure what they will study but realized they needed to maintain “good grades” and “a high GPA” in order to be accepted to the colleges they want in the future. Some of the students who admitted to not being decided on a future major said their choice in club activities was helping to narrow their potential options. One respondent shared that she was considering becoming a future judge after participating in a Mock Trial club.

Question #5- How would you describe yourself?

When asked to describe themselves, the students presented lists of characteristics that were either interpersonal or intrapersonal. Interpersonal characteristics are those that take place between multiple people. Intrapersonal characteristics are those that exist within the person. Of the 10 participating students, the majority of students listed traits that could be interpreted as positive or neutral. Few students listed traits that could be interpreted as negative. The characteristics the students chose described many areas, including behavior, personality, intelligence, and emotions (see Table 2).

Positive interpersonal terms used by the students to describe themselves included “loyal,” “funny,” “caring,” “good friend,” “athletic,” “expressive,” “honest,” “good personality,” and “friendly.” The only negative interpersonal term used was “shy.” Many positive intrapersonal characteristics were shared, including “smart,” “animal lover,” “good at writing,” “creative,” “courageous,” “pretty,” “curious,” “dedicated,” “passionate,” “independent,” “religious,” “adventurous,” “hard worker,” “good dancer,” and “open minded.” The negative intrapersonal characteristics named by the students were “daring,” “too quiet,” “dramatic,” “serious,” “crazy,” and “hyper.” The longest list of characteristics was that of positive intrapersonal traits, lending thought to the idea that perhaps the group of students as a whole viewed themselves positively.

Question #6- Do you see any differences in your school experiences compared to those of your friends who attend coed schools?

When asked about the differences in the interviewees’ school experiences compared to those of a traditional coeducational experience, the overall student response included a description of their perceptions of a coeducational setting versus their experiences at their school. Some of the respondents had briefly attended a coeducational

school in the past, so they had background knowledge from which to draw. Other students had attended only single-gender schools and did not have friends who attended coeducational schools, so they admitted that their knowledge of coeducational schools was only from television and movies. Students presented anecdotes that portrayed key differences between the two types of schools. The interviews revealed that the students viewed their school experiences as more positive than those of a coeducational experience because of “less drama,” “not having to worry about fashion due to uniforms,” “no fights, no teen pregnancies, no scandals,” “small class size,” and “peer pressure being taken away because there are no boys to start it.” One student explained that she understands the notion of “drama” to mean something different in a single-gender school. She stated that “drama in a co-ed school is about boys, and who likes those boys, but the biggest drama here is about whether the physics final is going to be curved.” Overall, the students appeared to have favorable opinions of their school experience versus what they thought traditional coeducational experiences would be like.

Question #7- How does attending school here prepare you for life after high school, academically and socially?

When asked to describe how attending their single-gender school prepared the students both academically and socially, the student answers focused mainly on academics. Students appeared confident as they shared their answers. One student chose to describe the school’s three levels of classes: Advanced Placement, which allows the students to earn college credits while still in high school; Honors; and College Preparatory. Students are placed into their class levels based on their performance on the entrance exam. The most common word that arose from this discussion was *competitive*.

Many of the students spoke about the school being competitive in nature, competing with classmates to do well on exams, and teachers fostering a healthy but competitive environment in order to push the students to achieve to the best of their abilities. The notion of being well prepared for college and a career was also mentioned several times across the 10 respondents.

Student 6 gave more detail about the rigorous academic expectations. She said, "If your GPA falls below a certain level, you could be asked to leave." Her sentiment was shared by other students who said that they were placed on academic notice when they received a C for a marking period. They were given a warning that if the grade did not rise, they could be asked to leave. Student 8 talked about how the staff reminds students that attending a private school is considered "a privilege to be allowed," and therefore, they must follow school policies regarding behavior and grades to remain in good standing. The seriousness with which the students spoke about the academic rigor preparing them for life after high school seemed to make them feel confident in the education they were receiving.

Student 9 spoke about her belief that the methods of teaching were different at this school than at other schools. She shared a personal story about the difficulty a family member was having in a traditional school setting "because she didn't know how to ask for help. She was used to the 'teacher stands up front and teaches, student sits in the seat and learns' model. She didn't realize education is a conversation." This statement shows that Student 9 realizes that her teachers' methods have had a positive impact on the way she learns and that perhaps not all students learn the same way.

The interviewees did not provide as much detail about their schooling preparing them socially for life after high school. Two students explained that they feel more prepared socially because they know they have more value than just how they look. Student 10 brought up the aspect of networking between schools. As this school in particular has several other locations in the United States, as well as in other countries, such as Italy and Japan, she thought that possible connections to future jobs or opportunities were greater for her than for a typical high-school student. Student 4 spoke in her interview about the concept of “Cultural Days,” which the school has instead of field trips to prepare the students socially for life after high school. The students are taken to a different city and follow a schedule to experience different foods, religions, arts, and people that they may not find in their hometown. Two students used humor to address the lack of exposure they have with male students their own age. Both students made jokes about not being prepared to know how to date or how to acquire dating skills once they leave high school. Apparently, the students were light hearted and joking during this answer and were not concerned.

Question #8- What role do you feel that single-gender education has had on the formation of your personality?

When asked to describe the role single-gender education had on the formation of their personalities, the students presented ideas that they considered formative. The intention of this question was for the students to speak about specific personality traits and how they are either fostered or discouraged by their school experiences; however, the students did not interpret the question that way. The respondents appeared to understand the question in a more general sense. While some students noted specific traits, such as

having “strong time management skills,” “self-confidence,” and “being good at prioritizing,” more students responded to the question by stating how their specific school helped foster their growth.

Several students noted that they did not have to change their personalities to attract attention from the opposite sex. One interviewee said that she did not have to worry about “not acting shy around guys.” Student 4 shared that she had noticed a difference in the attitudes toward single-gender schools between students who had attended since preschool and those who started later. She did not speak specifically about those differences but said, “I don’t know what my personality would have been like outside of these walls. You see the adjustment period in some of the girls that only come here for Upper School. They have to get used to what it is like here.” Similarly, one participant shared that “it takes a certain personality type to go here. Not all my friends could deal with it.” Several students mentioned the notion of not having to compete academically in typically male-driven disciplines, such as math and science.

Student 7 explained that she thinks her personality has always been the same but that she has been encouraged to succeed by the strong female leadership at school. She said that watching them has caused her to “not be worried to speak my mind.” During one interview, a student explained that this school has been a safe place that has helped her “grow her big personality in a way that allowed me to become who I was supposed to be.” A common belief among the respondents seemed to be that their school experiences were influenced only positively by where they were attending school..

Question #9- Do you feel that girls at your school are more or less likely to conform to traditional gender roles?

Student responses to this question suggested that the majority of students perceive girls who attend this single-gender school to be less likely to conform to traditional gender roles. Nine of the 10 students interviewed strongly agreed that they were taught skills and instilled with beliefs that will make them feel comfortable enough to express themselves however they see fit and to not be concerned with following society's expectations for what a woman should do. One student, the youngest who participated, was the only student to give a neutral answer and say that she was unsure of the school's influence on traditional gender roles. The students who perceived themselves and their peer group to be less likely to conform to traditional gender roles provided answers that varied greatly when considering the cause for fewer traditional gender roles. The students answered this question with more perceived emotion than they did for other interview questions. This question elicited responses that provided a personal glimpse into the personal beliefs of the respondents. Insight regarding conforming to gender roles was made evident by the thoughts the students chose to share.

Information provided by the students regarding gender roles suggests that these students feel as though their school has impacted them in such a positive way that they will be able to overcome society's labeling of traditional gender roles in order to achieve whatever they want. Many of the students spoke about how the message the school sends to students is one of "bravery," "free thinking," "becoming your own person," and being able to "answer whatever our calling in life is." When asked the likelihood of students from this school conforming to traditional gender roles, one respondent stated that "being a good person and being confident is all that is expected of us," implying that students are

not directly told not to conform to stereotypical gender roles, but rather are given the tools needed to make their own decisions.

One student noted the relationship between traditional religious beliefs and gender roles. While this single-gender school is considered Catholic, students are not required to be Catholic to attend. All students take one theology class a year, which not only focuses on Catholic teachings, but also discusses other religions. Student 7 shared that in theology class, the students are taught about historical “traditional religious beliefs that men were the head of the household” but continued by explaining that “the same message isn’t taught” to the students in the present day.

A dichotomy between societal expectations and not conforming to gender roles was communicated by Student 4. She explained that because of rigorous academics and high standards held by staff she has been taught the lesson that “there is no ‘male dominated’ field that we couldn’t take part in” but went on to speak about the more traditional side of the school’s curriculum. Student 4 said that “lady-like behaviors are still very instilled in us. We have cotillion, we have etiquette classes. In certain semesters in gym, we learn formal dances, like the waltz.” The student continued by analyzing the meaning behind the teaching of traditional female skills and said, “I think that isn’t necessarily to teach us what is expected of how to behave as a girl. I think it has more to do with making sure we know how to act in all social situations, especially as graduates when we go out into the real world and represent the school.” She was not the only student to speak about what graduates do after leaving the school. Student 2 spoke about the wide range of professions that graduates from this school chose. She said, “If you look at our graduates, we have everything from business owners to the number-one

player in the WNBA. I think it makes you a stronger person so you feel more comfortable doing whatever it is that you want to do in life.” This sentiment was echoed in many of the other students’ responses.

The 2016 presidential election was mentioned by Student 6. She discussed a conversation that had recently taken place in her sociology class. She explained that the results of the presidential election were brought up because some students were not happy with the outcome. Student 6 acknowledged the existence of a “glass ceiling,” but her class’s debate became “heated” and “a lot of people felt that being a woman is no reason to be held back. There is no job you can’t or shouldn’t do just because you are a woman. I like how strong and powerful we are made to feel here.” The same student also spoke about wanting to have a job that allows her to “make an imprint on this world” and how her love for her school is so strong that she would like her future daughters to attend as well.

Another student shared her belief that personality traits play a large factor in the way students understand and display gender roles. She explained that in her thought process, she has observed that “certain types of girls go here and those girls would probably just do what they wanted anyway.” The same student also noted that “it goes against everything we believe in to not do something because you are a girl.” The interviewer noted that many of the students being interviewed answered questions using a collective “we” when providing answers.

The only outlier in the group for this question was Student 8. When asked this question, she stated that she believes genetics plays a larger role in determining gender roles than education does. She also appeared to be the only student who was unsure of

her answer and asked for reassurance that she was answering the question correctly.

Student 8 said, “I think if you are born to be a doctor, you will find a way to be a doctor.

If you are born to be a mom, you will be a mom. I don’t think going to school here changes that. It might make things easier academically. Maybe I’m not understanding what you are asking.” This student appeared to be the most unsure about her answers.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study focused on gathering information regarding the thoughts and perceptions of female students who attended a single-gender high school through the use of one-on-one interviews. The central research question that this study examined is “What does it mean to be a student at an all-girls school?” Some of the subquestions that this research considered were as follows: What social emotional and academic impacts does attending a single-gender school have on its students, and can comfort in one’s school environment foster more positive social and academic experiences?

According to Caplice (1994), single-gender education helps female students become confident and engaged learners who exceed in all realms and do not feel confined to traditional gender roles and occupations. Several other longitudinal studies have come to the same conclusion. While the research on the topic of single-gender education as a whole is slight, the majority of it speaks to positive outcomes for attendees. Caplice’s research does not explain why single-gender schools are so well equipped to teach young girls or why they have such positive outcomes. The purpose of this study is to hear firsthand accounts of the experience of attending a single-gender school and to determine whether the students could provide experiences or explanations of the impact those school experiences have had on them in a positive way.

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative methodology was used in order to provide a thorough examination of personality traits, experiences, and beliefs. This method was chosen to provide a forum in which the participants could speak openly about real-world experiences rather than being bound to the confines of a traditional survey with set answers.

Student Perception of Single-Gender Education

The overall response from the students in this study indicated an overwhelmingly positive response to single-gender education. Interviewees expressed feelings of comfort and a strong sense of belongingness within their school community. The students explained that they felt their school had few incidences of “drama,” was more inclusive than most coeducational schools, and prepared them academically for moving forward with their education and careers.

Students equated their school’s rigorous academic program with being prepared for college and giving them the tools to succeed later in life. Strong value was placed on getting good grades because the students equated high grades with success and preparedness. While all of the respondents mentioned the stressful school- grading policy, they also explained that it motivates them to continue to do well. Many of the social interactions that occur on a daily and weekly basis involved schoolwork in some way. The students gathered together to work on group projects but also organized study groups outside of school to help each other prepare for exams. When examining the data for trends, one could consider that the students report no incidences of “teen drama” because their social-group functions are vastly different from those at a coeducational school. If these students’ main source of social interaction on weekends is a study group, the opportunities for “drama” to arise are far fewer.

While the interviewees feel confident in their academic preparedness, some indicated that they do not feel prepared socially to interact with male individuals once they graduate. None of the students verbally indicated having anxiety about future interactions with male individuals, but several of them did indicate that they do not know

what to expect because they do not have brothers, do not have male students in class, and do not have male friends outside of school. While some anxiousness about this was perceived, it was not overwhelming. All of the students interviewed mentioned that not having male students in class with them was a positive. The reasoning differed, but the overall consensus was consistent. Some students provided insightful answers indicating that they see themselves in a more positive light than do peers at a coeducational school. They explained ideals of higher self-worth, understanding that they have more value than just their physical appearance, and having a stronger overall sense of the important elements of social interactions. As a result, the students in this study appeared to agree that they have all benefited positively from attending a single-gender school. While the slight nervousness about future interactions with male individuals was present, the students did not seem to interpret this as a deterrent from single-gender education.

Evolution of Themes

The overall feeling from the students throughout the interview process was observed to be positive. The researcher was given a glimpse into the lives of female students who attended a single-gender high school, thereby allowing for the interpretation of student perceptions. The students appeared to view the interview process as something exciting and positive, thus providing validation for the belief that this portrayal of their thoughts and experiences is accurate.

All of the students who participated in this study acknowledged their academic strengths. While none of them spoke about their strengths or weaknesses in individual subject areas, they referred to being “academically strong” as a whole. As previously stated, all of the students attributed this to the high academic demands of the school, but

they also recognized additional reasons. The students recognized that they had highly reduced “distractions.” These distractions were referred to socially and academically. In terms of distractions, multiple comments were made about not having to worry about appearances; not having to worry about girls stealing a boyfriend; not having male students present in class because they may not take academics as seriously as their female counterparts; not having to compete with male students for the teachers’ attention; and not having to place as much emphasis on social activities, such as dances or parties, so that academic concerns could come first.

When speaking about their school experience, students chose to discuss their overwhelmingly strong connection to their peers. All respondents, in some form or another, shared the notion of “school family.” Many of the students who had attended this particular school since preschool noted that “breaking in” to the social groups in high school may be slightly harder for new students because classes were so small and everyone had been together for years. While exclusion or peers not being accepting was not mentioned, students implied that grade groups were very close and viewed each other as family. Some of the students who were relatively new to the school indicated that at first they felt overwhelmed by the closeness of their classmates but were eventually able to find their own groups through a variety of activities, such as sports teams or after-school clubs. Students also discussed situations in which they may not be as close with every person in their grade, but they all considered themselves friends and did not treat anyone unkindly. One student mentioned a case of cyber bullying that she knew took place in another grade level, but that incident appeared to be an outlier for the typical behavior.

Student belief about coeducational schools was a significant theme in the interviews. The students, both those who had attended only single-gender schools and those who had previous experience at coeducational schools, shared the same belief that coeducational schools are not as supportive of empowering female students. When asked about traditional gender roles, the students explained that in their single-gender school they are explicitly taught that they are capable of holding any job they want, that they are considered equal to their male counterparts, and that gender cannot hold them back. Students did not imply that they think coeducational schools are teaching the reverse or reinforcing gender stereotypes. However, they did imply that they believed that coeducational schools were not going out of their way to empower young girls as much as their school experience had done for them.

As part of the interview, students described themselves using self-generated lists of personality traits. The traits they listed were both interpersonal and intrapersonal. The traits listed were both positive and negative; however, the positive traits heavily outweighed the negative. The students did not explain why they felt these words described them best; they simply listed traits. One could presume that they listed so many more positive than negative traits because they had more positive self-concepts and viewed themselves more favorably than typical female teenagers. However, with no coeducational peers to compare the traits to, that assumption cannot be made without further research.

The supportive teaching style of the staff at this particular school may be a reason for the overwhelmingly positive student responses when asked about their school experience. As mentioned earlier in the Results section, when asked to describe their

school experience, students usually discussed the positive role of their teachers. Students shared that the teachers have high expectations but also pair them with support, understanding, and additional help when students are in need. The classroom structure was briefly mentioned by one respondent. She explained that her classroom setting did not follow the traditional “teacher at the front of the room” model but was more of a “conversation” in which the students were expected to take part. This teaching modality may help students become more engaged participants in the learning process, thus inspiring students to place more emphasis on academics.

The overall social and emotional impact of attending a single-gender school has been positive and beneficial for the students who participated in this study. The reported benefits of self-confidence, high academic achievement, and sense of belonging in a community appear to supersede the perceived anxiety about learning how to socially interact with male individuals after graduation. Additionally, the lists of positive character traits may reflect the manner by which the students’ attitudes and beliefs have been influenced by their supportive school environment and the way the school functions as a whole.

Validation Team Analysis

As previously mentioned in the Method section of this study, a validation team was used by the researcher to further analyze the information provided by the students. The analysis by the validation team concurred with the majority of the findings of the researcher; however, the team also provided additional insight and pointed out different themes and trends.

Overall, the validation team agreed with the researcher that all of the respondents had a positive view of single-gender education. All students were also found to believe that their single-gender education has helped prepare them academically more so than would have a coeducational school. Additionally, the team found that confidence appeared to be a common positive theme that was evident across all student interviews. Interestingly, *confident* was not a term that any of the students used when asked to describe themselves. The validation team explained that while none of the students used that term specifically, confidence was evident in the way they answered questions.

The validation team analysis supported the consistently evident themes found by the research, such as the importance of the feeling of belonging, the importance of continuing education, the importance of focusing on academics, and the perceived benefits of having small class sizes and attentive teachers.

When the students were asked why they chose to attend their specific school, most students stated their decision was made to continue a family legacy or because it was encouraged by parents. The same students stated that they did not feel pressure to attend just to please their families; however, the validation team had additional thoughts. The team hypothesized that the students reported not feeling pressure because they subconsciously perceived that they did not have another choice. Therefore, meeting their parents' expectation was the easiest choice.

Students were asked to talk about their social lives, both in and out of school. The researcher interpreted their answers as consistent across interviews; however, the analysis made by the validation team provided further insight. The team noted that a common theme for social lives both in and out of school was staying with the same group of

friends from preschool onward. The validation team did not believe that was a typical experience for students who attended large coeducational schools. The team hypothesized that the female students at this school were forced to fix any potential social issues and learn how to work through disagreements more so than students at a large coeducational school because they did not have the option to find a new group of friends since the general population was so small. The team theorized that this skill may be crucial in learning to work with others and may serve the interviewees well when moving on to college and eventually the workforce.

The validation analysis revealed further insight to Question 4 – “Where do you see your life going in the future?” All 10 students shared that the next step for them would be college. The validation team noted the trend that each student voiced the same plan for the future: college, then marriage, and then having children. Even the students who identified themselves as “free spirits” indicated that they wanted to follow this plan.

Question 5, “How would you describe yourself?” was a question to which the validation team also provided additional analysis. The researcher shared that the intention of the question was to have students speak about their self-view in detail, using real-life examples. However, the students all answered the question in a similar fashion, by simply listing interpersonal and intrapersonal characteristics. The validation team attributed this to the notion that teenagers are thought to be narcissistic, potentially explaining why as a whole they listed so many intrapersonal positives. The team also suggested that the students answered in list form because listing traits rather than explaining particular instances during which one displayed a particular trait is considered more socially appropriate. The latter could potentially be interpreted as bragging.

The opinion of the validation team was that the message portrayed by the female students was one of a positive school experience with undercurrents of strict adherence to social norms. For instance, a discussion occurred about how the price of attending this school and its stringent academic guidelines must tend to attract a certain type of student who comes from a particular socioeconomic group. One validation team member discussed the notion that even if a student were to attend by scholarship, she would need monetary means to participate socially with peers and keep up with similar activities. The discussion about similar personalities led the validation team to theorize that since the school may attract such similar types of students, the students consistently refer to their school as “drama free.” If the student population is homogeneous, a large number of dissenting options that would lead to social unrest may not exist. In other words, a small group of girls with similar interests and backgrounds who attend school together may get along better than a large group of girls with different interests and backgrounds.

When the validation team discussed Question 7, “How does attending school here prepare you for life after high school, academically and socially?,” the panel noted that all 10 respondents spoke about their academic preparedness. However, they noted some potential traces of anxiety regarding eventually being in college with male students. One student noted that she had no dating skills and another joked that “the male brain” should be taught in health class. The overall thought from this question was that the girls see themselves prepared academically but not fully prepared socially, even though they believe they know to value themselves for more than their appearances alone. Also, the overarching theme of confidence was noted again.

The question that had the most varying degree of interpretation was Question 9, “Do you feel that girls at your school are more or less likely to conform to traditional gender roles?” The researcher interpreted this question at face value. Nine of the 10 student responses indicated that they did not believe girls from their school were more likely to conform to gender roles. However, the validation team discussed how the girls answered the question one way, yet provided contradictory examples, such as attending etiquette classes and wanting to become wives and mothers at some point in their lives. The potential naiveté of the students was also mentioned by the validation team. While all of the students spoke about how encouraged and supported they are at home and at school, the validation team brought up the notion that they may be disappointed when they graduate and have to deal with real-world issues.

The validation team agreed that the methodology used for this study was appropriate because students were able to discuss their experiences in an open manner and were not restricted to choosing multiple-choice answers. Using another methodology would have potentially put constraints on the amount of personal information and number of experiences that the students were able to share.

An analysis of the student demographic questionnaire did not reveal new information. The questions (see Appendix D) gathered basic information about the students, including age, ethnicity, religion, GPA, number of siblings, marriage status of their parents, social events, ideas of a potential major, and career goals. The information that the students provided corroborated the information they shared in their interviews.

Summary of Results

The results of this study suggest that predominant themes were noted by both the researcher and the validation team. These themes support the positive effects of a single-gender education on high-school-aged female students. The prevalent themes identified by both the researcher and validation team included high academic achievement, self-confidence, overall positive view of personality traits, and positive social interactions with peers and staff leading to feelings of belongingness in the school community. In addition, this study supported previous findings that described the common positive impacts of single-gender education. Similar to the findings of Hubbard and Datnow (2005), this study supports conclusions that attending a single-gender school can provide benefits both academically and psychologically, but those outcomes may not be tied to gender alone. Other factors, such as staffing, class size, and available resources, may also contribute to positive single-gender-school experience. This is further discussed in the Future Directions section of this study.

Academic readiness and personal strength in achieving high grades were predominant themes within these interviews. It is also supported by research (Sax et al., 2009) commissioned by the National Coalition of Girls' Schools (NCGS). Their research showed that girls who attended single-gender schools had higher levels of academic achievement, higher self-confidence, higher SAT scores, higher interest in attending graduate school, and higher interest in mathematical and science job fields than did girls who attended coeducational schools. High value on academic achievement was the predominant theme throughout these interviews and presented itself as the paramount concern of the students who participated in this study.

The students interviewed reported that they used varying forms of social interactions with their peers. They spoke about wanting jobs but not being allowed to have them because of familial concern about academics; meeting with peers outside of school to study and prepare for exams; taking part in typical activities, such as going out to eat or watching a movie; as well as about how the majority of their friend group was composed of students from their school. While some of the students reported slight variations in their everyday social routines, the one commonality among all respondents was the strong sense of “family” present in their school community. The students spoke about their feelings of closeness to their peers and the way some of them regarded their peers as sisters. This trend does not appear in the majority of research on single-gender schools. Research by Shapka and Keating (2003) included a longitudinal study of single-gender education and the positive outcomes for its participants. While the study mentioned that small classes were seen as beneficial, it did not draw the further conclusion that small class sizes equated to the student population fostering a sense of belonging or sameness. The students who participated in this study did not mention that direct correlation themselves; however, they did allude to it on several occasions. They spoke about how small class sizes allow one to get to know one’s peers very well, allow teachers to provide direct instruction, and allow attention to academic tasks because not nearly as many distractions occur in a classroom of seven students as in a larger classroom. The relationships reported by the interviewees suggest that they have all been successful in forming healthy and lasting peer relationships with other girls who share similar interests.

Perhaps more importantly, the small class sizes forces one to maintain initial bonds with friends, rather than to search for a new friend group each year when class schedules are changed. This notion was also mentioned by the validation team, who believed that if one has a falling out with a friend in a larger school setting, one is not forced to work out the problem. Instead, one can just move to a new social group. Doing so would not be possible in a smaller setting. While most agree that small class size is beneficial academically (Jackson, 2002), research on the social benefits of small class size for girls is lacking.

Significant Contributory Results

This study provided valuable insights into the world of single-gender education as experienced by female students in Grades 9 through 12. The perceptions of the students presented in this study suggest that they acknowledge an extremely positive high-school experience. As a result, the female students who attend this single-gender school apparently have high senses of self, high levels of motivation and achievement, are driven to succeed, and view their school community as inclusive and supportive. As a result, these students seem to be motivated to achieve at a high level because of their internal as well as external motivation.

None of the students who took part in this study had significantly different views from one another. The students tended to answer questions in similar ways, indicating that they had many positive shared experiences. All the students indicated that they enjoyed attending their school because of supportive staff, small classroom environments, lack of peer pressure, closeness with classmates, the large variety of extracurricular activities offered, and high expectations for achievement. The theme of a strong sense of

community was evident in every student interview. This study supports the notion that single-gender education may provide a more beneficial learning environment than traditional coeducational schools.

This study contributed to the field of school psychology by suggesting that the attitudes and thoughts of female students who attend a single-gender high school are impacted by their learning environment. All of the participants in this study agreed that attending a single-gender school had impacted them positively. They spoke about the traits that their educational experience had instilled in them, how their school made them who they were at present, as well as explained the differences they see between single-gender and coeducational schools.

While all of the students spoke about the positive impact that attending a single-gender school had on their education, the students also mentioned several other factors, such as supportive staff and rigorous academic expectations, they believed contributed to their positive school experience. Owing to the paucity in research about female single-gender education, these traits may not be unique to this school in particular or may not occur at the majority of single-gender schools for female students more often than at coeducational schools. A comprehensive list of traits may be the best way to determine the impact of a school on a student's thoughts and attitudes instead of considering gender alone.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study included the methodology of the study itself because of the possibility of subjective interpretation by the researcher. The sample population for this study was defined only by the criterion of being currently enrolled in the designated

single-gender high school. The study was open to any high-school grade level. Additionally, because of the nature of the study, students were asked open-ended questions. Therefore, the strength of the response varied among students, depending on their interpretations of the questions, as well as on the level of self-reflection provided in each answer. The students provided meaningful insight into their experiences at a single-gender high school. Some students interpreted questions differently from the way they had been designed, and some students interpreted questions differently from each other. Because the questions were standardized, the examiner was not allowed to restate questions or ask clarifying statements in order to obtain more information. Owing to the varying length and nature of all the students' responses, not all responses could be easily categorized for interpretation purposes. Some students answered questions in great length, providing examples and clarifying statements, whereas other students answered in short phrases and provided little to no elaboration.

Subjective interpretation of questions could not be avoided in the qualitative study because of the varying personal experiences that each student shared. The thoughts and perceptions of the students were the foundation of this study, and the answers they provided were open to the subjectivity of the researcher when the responses were examined for themes and trends. However, qualitative methodology was not the only limitation of this study.

While scheduling interviews, the researcher realized that this study was culturally biased because of the demographic makeup of the school. The school's website reports that 84.4% of the student population is White, 9.8% is African American, 4.6% is Asian, 1% is Multiracial, and 0.2% is Hispanic (See Figure 2). All participants who volunteered

for this study identified themselves as White. The homogeneity of the students who chose to respond may have influenced the responses given and been responsible for the high degree of similarity between answers and experiences. Research in the area of other cultures' perceptions of single-gender education is lacking, and unfortunately, this study cannot add to the small number of studies that address this topic. This issue does suggest an area of study for future research. Another limitation to using a small homogeneous group of students to pull from is that the saturation point was reached after only 10 students. With a larger or more diverse population, the saturation may have been much larger.

The prevalence of single-gender schools is not abundant, so this study was limited to a small number of schools inside a specific geographic area. A further limitation of this study was the potential for researcher bias. The researcher conducting the interviews was a graduate of the school where the interviews took place. Since the researcher was an alumnus, data could have been interpreted in a more positive light. Yet, part of the purpose of a validation team is to ensure that all trends and themes are appropriately explored. In this study, all data were additionally reviewed by the validation team and appeared to suggest that researcher bias did not influence the way the student answers were interpreted.

Future Directions

Future directions in the research on single-gender education among female students may necessitate further investigation of the thoughts and attitudes of female students who attend coeducational schools as well. Perspectives from students who attend both types of schools may allow for themes to be identified across settings. It could

potentially give more insight into the overall self-concept of female individuals of this age and provide more evidence for or against the impact of gender make-up on a school. In this study, the participants were asked to talk about the ways they feel their school differs from a coeducational school; however, many of the participants had attended only single-gender schools, so their replies were based on guesses.

Additionally, more information may be gathered if future studies look to compare several single-gender schools to each other to find commonalities among their students. Because this study was conducted with such a small homogeneous population, additional meaningful information may be able to be gathered from larger and more diverse schools.

The theme of involved and supportive staff members was evident across the responses in this study. Future studies might examine the teaching methods used in single-gender and coeducational schools to determine whether the methods or approaches vary. Additionally, qualitative research may be paired with quantifiable data to support the findings of this study in order to continue to validate that girls from a single-gender environment are self-confident and regard themselves as more academically prepared than girls from a coeducational environment for continuing education.

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Appendix A: Flyer

**Are you an Upper School student between the
ages of 14-18?**

**Would you be willing to participate in a
research interview?**

**The interview will focus on understanding
what it means to be a student at an all-girls
school.**



**If you are interested in participating in this study or need
more information, please contact:**

Alix Robinson '04

610-368-0861

alexandraro@pcom.edu

Appendix B

Assent and Consent Form

Assent & Consent Document
for Minors Ages 14 - 17

You are being asked to be in a research study about what it is like to attend an all-girls school. This study is being conducted by Alexandra Robinson, who is a student at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM). She is doing the study to earn a doctoral degree in School Psychology.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire as well as answer questions in a semi structured interview setting. The questionnaire will take about 20-30 minutes. Your name will NOT be on the forms, but you will be asked to write your age, grade, and sex (gender) on the form. Please do NOT write your name anywhere on the forms. Ms. Robinson will not be able to link your name with your forms.

Your grades will not be affected in any way if you decide to be or not be in the study. You will not benefit from being in this study. However, this study may provide information on what effects attending an all-girls school has on its students.

You may skip any questions you are not comfortable answering. You can say no or stop at any time with no penalty or loss of benefits. All forms and other study records will be kept in a locked file. Only the researcher(s) and members of the PCOM Institutional Review Board will be able to look at these records. If the results of this study are published, no names or other identifying information will be used.

One or both of your parents have already given written permission for you to be in the study. They have a phone number for Ms. Robinson, in case you or your parents have any questions about the research. They also have a phone number for the chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at PCOM, in case there are any questions about your rights as a research subject. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

I was given enough time to read this form and ask questions. I understand the study.

I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

I agree to be in this research study.

Student signature _____ Date _____

Student name (printed) _____ Date _____

Investigator signature _____ Date _____

Witness signature _____ Date _____

The person being asked to be in this study cannot give legal consent because he/she is under the age of 18. _____ has my permission to be in this research.

(Please print child's name)

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian _____

Date _____

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your experience at your single gender school?
2. How did you decide to attend school here?
3. Tell me about your social life in and out of school.
4. Where do you see your life going in the future?
5. How would you describe yourself?
6. Do you see any differences in your school experience compared to your friends who attend co-ed schools?
7. How does attending school here prepare you for life after high school, academically and socially?
8. What role do you feel that single gender education has had on the formation of your personality?
9. Do you feel that girls at your school are more or less likely to conform to traditional gender roles?

Appendix D

Demographic Survey

1. What is your age?
2. With what gender do you self-identify?
3. Please specify your ethnicity:
4. With what religion do you identify, if any?
5. What grade are you currently in?
6. What is your GPA?
7. How many years have you attended any single gender school?
8. How long have you gone to the school you are currently attending?
9. Do you have any siblings? If so, what are their ages and gender?
10. Are your parents married or divorced?
11. What events make up your typical social life?
12. Please describe the make-up of your social group.

Appendix E

All Subject Responses

QUESTION- 1

Researcher: “How would you describe your experience at your single-gender school?”

Subject 1: “Great. It’s been really good. I’m actually pretty sad that this is my last year here. I’ve been here since ninth grade, but it feels like so much longer. It’s like a second family to me. Like I have 40 sisters. Sometimes it sucked, like not having guys to ask to dances or whatever, but I got over that. I wouldn’t have wanted to go anywhere else.”

Subject 2: “Pretty great. It’s nice not having guys in class because it gets rid of that drama element that you see on TV shows and stuff. Everyone here is basically good friends, and I don’t think it is always true of other kinds of high schools. But I do take chorus, and the guys come over on the bus from their school for that in the morning. It’s during first block, and then they leave right after. One of my friends takes chorus just so she can be in class with the guys. I’m not that boy crazy, though. I do it because I really like singing. And we have an option to go to their school for law class or Latin. I don’t do those.”

Subject 3: “Um, it’s pretty good. This is my first year here, and it’s only November, so I don’t know. But so far, it has been good.”

Subject 4: “I love it here. It’s drama free. Occasionally there is some minimal girl drama, but without guys, there isn’t too much for us to fight over. It’s like one giant family.”

Subject 5: “Well, right now I know this is exactly where I need to be. But if you asked me in eighth grade when I found out this is where my parents were sending me? I was

miserable. I thought this was going to be a nasty clique-y school with mean girls and no boys. I even tried to sabotage coming here. I didn't mail in my application on time. I hid it under my mattress and turned it in late. Thank God it was still considered. It all worked out the way it was supposed to."

Subject 6: "I was in a coed school until I started here in ninth grade, so I have a few years to compare it to. I can say that it is a lot less social pressure here. In middle school, it was all about getting a boyfriend and worrying about the popular crowd. There wasn't as big a focus on the academics either. The classes were bigger. Here, you know everyone. And the teachers know everyone, even if you don't have them. Here, the biggest worry is what your GPA is. It's stressful but in a totally different way. I would say that each year the work gets progressively harder, but you can handle it better because you know what works for you and how to prioritize."

Subject 7: "It has been really good. I like it here so much. I have a solid group of friends, and I'm on the honor roll. I don't think about this not being a co-ed school every day. I mean, it is obvious that there are no boys here, but I don't get hung up thinking about what I might be missing out on if I went to a co-ed school."

Subject 8: "Ok. I've been here since kindergarten, so I don't know any different."

Subject 9: "It's very neat. It's more, um, there is a lot of attention on you. Which is interesting. You get to really grow from that. Everyone is there to support you, which is kind of big."

Subject 10: "I am one of the only people in the Upper School that has anything to compare it to. I am one of two people that has been allowed to start here in the high school after starting freshman year somewhere else. Usually, once you make the decision

to leave the Middle School and start at another high school, you aren't allowed back in. But we moved at the end of eighth grade to Nebraska for my dad's job, so even though I had already been accepted here for ninth, I had to move. I went to a coed school for 1 year in Nebraska, and then when my dad got transferred back to Delaware, I was allowed back here. I think only one other girl has a similar story of leaving and being allowed back. They don't usually do that. Anyway, so I was like, out in it. I lived the coed school experience, and I have to say I wasn't a fan. I don't know if that is because it was a coed school or because it was a public school or both. But the changes were too much. There was like, no structure, no rules. The boys acted ridiculous, like always trying to be "cool," always trying to get girls to like them. They mostly just came across like idiots."

QUESTION – 2**Researcher: “How did you decide to attend school here?”**

Student 1: “I, well, I guess it wasn’t just my decision. My mom, all my aunts, and my older sisters went here. It was, like, almost basically expected. I did apply to a few other high schools, like Padua and Archmere. But I knew I didn’t really want to go to them. I just applied as, like, back-ups. It’s not like I was forced to go here, though. My mom never put that pressure on me. It’s just all I knew growing up, so I never thought about other schools. But I think my mom would have been cool if I wanted to go somewhere else. She never mentioned being disappointed when I applied to other schools. But she did say how proud she was when I got in here.”

Student 2: “Um. I applied to a few schools in the area, but this was always my Number 1. I don’t know, when I shadowed for the day, I just felt like this school was home. It’s a little smaller than the other schools I applied to, but I like that. I like that I know the names and faces of everyone in the Upper School here. The visit is, basically, I guess that made me decide. The teachers seemed really nice, and they offer cool classes here like photography, psychology, mythology, you know. Stuff that isn’t at every school. We also have a good reputation of being really prepared for college. I’m not sure if there was one thing that made me think I had to go here. I guess it was a whole bunch of little things that made me feel like it was a good fit.”

Student 3: “I got offered a scholarship. I applied to some other schools, but this is where I got the biggest scholarship. I wanted to go here the most though, so I’m glad it worked out the way it did.”

Student 4: “I didn’t decide. I was just signed up. My mom and grandma went here. And so do all of my cousins and sisters. It wasn’t really a choice; it was just life. That is what you did. I’ve been here since kindergarten, so I couldn’t even imagine not staying for high school. Some girls leave when it comes time for Upper School, but I think that might have more to do with cost than anything. A lot of my friends from other schools tease me that our tuition is more than a lot of colleges. But, I’m glad I’m here. I don’t know anything else, but I don’t know that I would be happy in a place that I didn’t know every single person. I like how small it is here, too.”

Student 5: “I didn’t decide anything. I was told by my parents that this is where I was going. They did let me apply to some other schools as a back-up, but they have always had their hearts set on me going here. Going here was my mom’s dream when she was in high school, but her family couldn’t afford it, so she went somewhere else. But since I was little, my parents always talked about how this was the best school around and how I was going to go here. I asked them why they were trying to ruin my life by making me go here. And I hate having to admit to them that they were right, and this really is the place where I belong.”

Student 6: “I visited a couple schools in the area during middle school. I didn’t know anyone who went here, but I did know a few other girls from my school who were applying. I was looking to keep my options open and not just go directly to the feeder school where everyone else from my middle school was going. I applied here and, like, four other schools. Once I visited and spent the day shadowing, I was pretty sure this is where I was supposed to be. It seemed almost like a college to me. A campus with classes in different buildings, teachers who gave you freedom to do your own thing. It didn’t

seem like any of the other schools I visited. When my parents came for an Information Night, they were really impressed with the total of scholarship money that the graduating class had gotten that year. It was millions, just divided between those 35 girls. They explained the emphasis that the counselors here put on getting scholarships.”

Student 7: “My parents let me decide where I wanted to apply. The only thing that was important to them was that I go to a high school that was faith based and offered religious and theology classes. I came from a really small Catholic school a few blocks away, so this just seemed like the most obvious choice to me, I guess.”

Student 8: “I didn’t get to pick. My parents sent me here starting in kindergarten. All my sisters go here, too. And now my dad is on the Board, so we come here for free.”

Student 9: “It started out in Pre K when I was 4, so my parents kind of decided for me. It’s not really, uh, a decision for me because I was 4. So, and then I kind of grew into the school and love the aspects we have. Elementary school was good. The no-boys thing is kind of crazy. Then we went to Middle School, and I really started to enjoy that environment. It’s not really competition, but it’s more like we push each other to reach our biggest goals, which is interesting. And I really like the aspect of, it’s not like, we are just open. You get to feel like you are yourself. You don’t have to change who you are to be with friends because everyone supports you.”

Student 10: “I came here in the beginning of Middle School, when we moved here for my dad’s job. He gets transferred around a lot, so I think he and my mom just picked this school pretty quickly because they didn’t have a lot of warning. One of my dad’s coworkers recommended it here. So my parents filled out the application, and I actually took the test online. I ended up loving it and was so sad when we moved. I made so many

close friends, and I was so excited when I heard that they were going to let me back in after I left. So, I guess you could say it wasn't my choice to come here in the first place, but it was my choice to come back."

QUESTION- 3

Researcher: “Tell me about your social life in and out of school.”

Subject 1: “Ummm. Well, in school is like a giant family. A huge support system. Our class has 41 girls this year, and, like, of course, you have your best friends, the girls you have all yours classes with, the girls you eat lunch with, the girls you have your inside jokes with, but honestly, there isn’t a girl that I’m not friends with. Like, of course, there are people I am closer to than others, but there is no genuine dislike of anyone in our group. We all get along. Like, in the Senior Lounge, we all just hang out together whenever we have a free block. Your friends might not have that block, but you just go to the Lounge to hang out, and there could be, like, 15 other people in there on the couches or beanbags or whatever, and you all just chill. Someone might want you to flat iron their hair or do their make up or watch TV with them. It’s kind of what I imagine a big sorority being like. Out of school? I guess I just do the regular things. Of course, since it is Ursuline, I have to focus on getting my service hours in. I don’t have a paying job because my parents say that school is my job. But I do volunteer at a dog rescue a few weekends a month to get my service hours. Other than that, I guess, I just do the typical teenager things. Go to the mall, go out to eat, shop, watch movies, hang out with my friends. I think it’s pretty regular. I’m not a big partier. My whole friend group really isn’t, so, like, on weekends we might sleep over each other’s houses, but that’s it. Pretty boring, I guess.”

Student 2: “In school, I don’t know that there is much time for a social life. We have so many SAT prep meetings and trainings and service hour classes; it really doesn’t leave a

lot of time for hanging out. But I have a big group of friends that I do all my in-school activities with. So that counts. All my best friends and I do that play every year, we are taking drivers ed together now, all that regular stuff. And we do a lot of after-school activities together too, like field hockey and soccer. Outside of school, my social life is pretty regular. I do sports. A different one each season. And hang out with friends. We like to walk to Brew Ha Ha after practice and get coffee and, like, listen to music and talk and just hang out. But we have so much homework that isn't even something we can do every day. I would say I have a pretty good balance of work and school, though."

Student 3: "In school, I'm making some new friends. I think it is easier to try and make friends with the other girls who are new too. Some of my classmates have been going here since preschool, so I think it might be hard to break into those groups. They aren't mean or anything; they just are like family. But I play basketball and made friends with a lot of my teammates. Out of school, I hang out with my family, play with my dogs, go to the movies with my friends. I don't do too anything out of the ordinary. I wanted to get a job when I turn 15 but my mom said no."

Student 4: "Out of school, I have a pretty normal life. I have a boyfriend, and he just got a car, so we are pretty busy, like, going to dinner and movies and the mall. I love to shop. And he hates it, but he has a car, so I make him take me. But we balance it out because I go to all the concerts he likes, even though we don't really like the same kind of music. I hang out with my sisters a lot, too. We rarely fight, so I lucked out there. I don't do sports or anything, which, at this school, I feel is rare. And my social life in school is basically hanging out with the same people I see on the weekends. We've all been friends since we were, like, 5. And a lot of our moms are friends. So, we are, like, together all the time.

We do a lot of stuff in big groups. We just all went to Shady Maple and shopping at the outlets last weekend. We had a group of, like, 20 people! In school, my social life is, like, just seeing the same people but in class instead of at home. The school is so small, you basically have at least one class with almost everyone.”

Student 5: “In school, I have a small group of friends I am super close with, but I am close with my whole class. When your class is only 41 people, it is hard not to be. We all get along. But my core group of friends and I always make sure we schedule our classes together and pick the same intramurals and clubs. There isn’t a lot of down time here because the focus on academics is so strong, so it really helps when you can make sure you have all your close friends in your class. As for out of school, my social life is regular. I work at the tanning salon up the street on the weekends. That was the compromise with my parents. I had to wait until senior year, and I am not allowed to work on school nights because homework and projects have to be my first priority. But when I offered to start paying for my own gas, my parents suddenly were OK with me getting a weekend job. I like to go to the mall, Starbucks, all the regular high-school stuff. I go to parties on some Friday nights but only if my parents know the other parents. They can be pretty strict. I don’t have a boyfriend anymore, which honestly, I’m glad about. It gives me more time to work and to hang out with my friends before we all split up before college next year.”

Student 6: “I would say that in and out of school my life is pretty busy. In school, I’m in a lot of clubs: honor society, student council, debate, Mock Trial, and I play intramural sports. It’s a hard balance doing all of that and trying to keep my grades up, but that is my Number 1 focus. I, um, do a lot outside of school, too. I play on a travel soccer team, I

play the French horn, and I am in the youth group at my church. We do a lot of, like, trips and mission trips and stuff, but I don't always get to go, depending on what else I have that weekend. My mom and dad always say that as long as I keep my grades up, that is fine, but if they start to slip, I have to let go of some activities. But I've made it to senior year, so I guess I've done OK!"

Student 7: "I think I have a pretty average social life. I have a group of best friends that I do basically everything with. Some of them were new freshman year, and some of them have gone here since Lower School. We schedule our classes together and work together on projects and stuff. Out of school, we do the usual stuff like hang out at each other's houses, go to Charcoal Pit, the movies, Barnes and Noble. I really like to read, so I spend a lot of free blocks in the library here. Our group sits in the big arm chairs in the back and just hangs out. We can't wait until we get the Senior Lounge! They have a TV in there! And their own bathroom!"

Student 8: "I basically hang out with my three sisters a lot at home. In school, there isn't a lot of down time to hang out, so you really only get to socialize with your friends during free blocks or lunch. A lot of my friends and I don't have the same lunch block either, so we don't get to hang out every day. Sometimes I use my free block to go see my math teacher for extra help."

Subject 9: "Um, in school social life? We all just talk. It's kind of like a big thing to just sit and hang out. And out of school? We see each other every single day, which is fun, but out of school we hang out, too. We come down to Brew Ha Ha and get coffee, do homework, work on projects, and just hang out more. On Fridays, we try and get to the football game at the all-boys school up the street. And Saturday/Sunday? The majority of

us get together on Sundays to get our homework done. Because sometimes we wait until the last day to do it. And we all just like to take that time to chill together.”

Subject 10: “Well, my social life in school is basically the same as everyone else here. We hang out and talk during free periods. Each group has their own little area. Like seniors, of course, have the Senior Lounge, freshmen spend frees in the cafeteria, sophomores have the library lounge, and juniors have the quad area outside. We basically all just hang out and talk. We don’t get a choice what period we have lunch or anything, so unless you have classes with your best friends, you might not get to see them all day. That is why a lot of us spend so much time together outside of school together, too. That and because we are all best friends. We hang out at Brew Ha Ha after school to get homework done; a lot of people from this school go there. We basically take it over in the afternoon. Outside of school, I don’t play sports or anything, but I do babysit to make money.”

QUESTION – 4

Researcher: “Where do you see your life going in the future?”

Subject 1: “College! That is what is at the front of my mind right now. I’m waiting to hear back from my schools, like any day now. I mean, long long term? I see myself, like, with a husband and kids and a happy life. But all I can think about right now is college and scholarships. I’m nervous to leave home, but I feel ready, you know? Yeah, college is the next step. And then a job and all that. But college for now.”

Subject 2: “Well, I’ve gone back and forth about what I want my major to be in college. I used to always say my major would be political science. But lately, I’ve been thinking about maybe just minoring in that. I really am interested in international studies. I think I’d like to ideally work at the UN. I don’t know. I go back and forth. But I still have some time to decide.”

Subject 3: “I’m not really sure. I’ve always wanted to be a doctor. I’m not sure what kind. I used to think a pediatrician, but lately I’ve been thinking about sports medicine. I don’t know, but I have time to think. I just started high school. But everyone is warning me that it will go by so fast. All I know is I need to worry about getting good grades now so I can get into a good college.”

Subject 4: “Well, I know I’m going to college. But other than that? I’m not sure. I imagine I will be an undeclared major and just try out a bunch of things to see what I like the best. I am the ‘free spirit’ in my family. My sisters have all known what they want to do since they were in elementary school. I change my mind all the time. It varies from

photographer to judge, so I don't know that I can give a certain answer now. I hadn't even thought about the judge thing until I did Mock Trial as an elective last year. I go back and forth, so even if I gave an answer now, I think it would probably change. The only thing I can say for certain is that I want to get married and have a family once I am done school. And college is a certainty."

Subject 5: "Honestly, I'm not a person with a 5-year plan or anything. Maybe I will get like that when I am older, but right now I am happy just thinking about finishing up senior year, getting to move out next year and start college. I plan on becoming an architect, so I'm trying to figure out right now which college I'll be going to. I've gotten two acceptances to my safety schools so far, but I'm still waiting to hear back from my top choices. Ideally, once I'm an architect, I'd love to design my own house and my own office building. I see myself staying on the East Coast so I'm close to my family, but I don't necessarily have to stay in Delaware. I'll probably end up in New York. I also think that I'd like to get married. Kids? They might not be for me. I don't babysit or anything like that now because I'm not good with kids. And babies freak me out."

Subject 6: "The next obvious step, I mean, is college. I'm going to go into pharmaceutical sales. With all the big pharmaceutical companies here in Delaware, it is really easy to get an internship. My plan is to try and get an internship with one of them as soon as possible and then potentially get a job with them after I graduate college. I'd like to stay close, mainly in Delaware. I will probably go to college at University of Pennsylvania, if I get it. But I don't plan on going too far. This is where all my family and friends are."

Subject 7: “Like after high school? College. I have always kind of wanted to go to University of Hawaii but only so I can live in Hawaii. It has nothing to do with a major or anything. I just want to go there. Maybe I could learn to surf. But my parents would never let me go that far. Unless I got a full scholarship. Then they would make me! I also want a big family. My mom and dad both come from big families, but it is just me and my one brother at home. Once I get married, I can see myself wanting a lot of kids. I babysit sometimes for my mom’s friend, and her kids are so cute. They are easy to babysit.”

Subject 8: “I’ll probably go to University of Delaware. My mom works there, so again, we can go for free. And it’s close to my house. I’m the oldest of my sisters, and I don’t think I will want to go too far from them.”

Subject 9: “Well, I want to be a nurse, so I kind of see myself moving around. I want to stay close-ish to home, but not that close. I want to use my leadership skills that I’ve gained from going here. We have a leadership class here that we all take sophomore year. That teaches us to be leaders. It teaches us to be comfortable speaking in front of a group, and actually, we have an interview class too where we learn how to create resumes and then do mock interviews. They spend a lot of time trying to prepare us for all those big things in life. I see myself as doing it all. I want to be a mom, have a husband, and work. I want to be a leader in my job, do my job well, and be able to teach others. But I also want to have that aspect of having children and teaching them to be like that.”

Subject 10: “I don’t know. I know I’ll go to college, but I also really want to travel around a little before I, like, settle and get married. I think I got used to traveling for my dad’s job, so I’d like to see more places before I get married. I think. I don’t really know

what I want to do for a job yet either. Something with science. I went to a biomed camp this summer, so I will probably do that again this year.”

QUESTION – 5

Researcher: “How would you describe yourself?”

Student 1: “Hmmm. I hate questions like that. I guess loyal? Smart? Animal lover, definitely.”

Student 2: “Funny, caring, smart, athletic, and a good friend.”

Student 3: “I don’t know. Shy, I guess. Sometimes people think I’m quiet until they really get to know me. Good at writing, athletic, smart?”

Student 4: “Oh wow. Funny, smart, caring, daring, creative, expressive, courageous, pretty, and curious.”

Student 5: “Creative, dramatic, smart, a little adventurous, and a hard worker.”

Student 6: “Dedicated, intelligent, quiet, passionate, and independent.”

Student 7: “Isn’t this someone else should be answering about me? I don’t want to brag about how great I am. I guess I would say funny, smart, religious, and honest. Honest is a good one, right? I mean it, like, I always tell the truth. Not like I’m rude and blurt things out. Although I guess sometimes I do that. But it is never in a mean way. I sometimes just say whatever I am thinking.”

Student 8: “Shy. A dancer. Quiet. Open minded.”

Student 9: “Um. Fun. I like to have fun. I enjoy school, but I try not to push myself too hard because it is not all about grades. You also want to make sure you have a good personality. I enjoy my friends. And I enjoy working with little kids. That is the thing about becoming a nurse. You have to enjoy working with kids and adults and all that.”

Student 10: “Ah, that is the hardest question so far. I think it depends who you ask. Like, in school, I’m pretty serious in class. I get my work done. I do extra credit. I am on

student council and am in a bunch of clubs. I think teachers see me as serious, but my friends see that I can be kind of crazy and fun when we are outside of school. I'm a little hyper and always the one that is trying to get everyone together to do something on the weekends so we don't just have to sit home."

QUESTION – 6

Researcher: “Do you see any differences in your school experiences compared to your friends who attend coed schools?”

Student 1: “Oh, God. Yeah. Like, no one believes me when I tell them about my school. You know, we have this reputation for being ‘the rich kid’ school, and with that, a lot of people expect there to be cliques and drama and snobby girls, but really, everyone is so accepting. It isn’t like that at all. I have friends who go to different public high schools in Delaware, and they all talk about how if you don’t have the right shoes, or you don’t wear the right clothes or drive the right cars, it is ‘social suicide.’ I guess having uniforms is something I am thankful for. It takes all the guesswork out of getting ready in the morning. And makeup? No. Like, hardly anyone ever wears makeup to school. Some girls are lucky if they even brush their hair. There is so little value put on that here. And we don’t have guys to try and look good for. So, it is all about your personality and what you have to offer as a friend. Not what you can buy. Overall, it just seems like so much less drama than co-ed schools.”

Student 2: “Yeah, huge. All I hear from my friends at other schools is stuff like how there is constant drama, over guys, over Snap Chats, over all that kind of stuff. And here the biggest drama is ‘I wonder if the physics final will be curved?’ I think at coed schools you have to worry about the stuff that makes you cool, like boyfriends and clothes. And here you worry about grades. I don’t know that I have ever worn makeup to school. But I have friends at coed schools that get up, like, 2 hours early to contour their makeup and do their hair. No way. I roll out of bed, throw on a uniform, and go.”

Student 3: “Yeah. I went to coed school from kindergarten through last year. It was very different. Even though we just started school in September here, I can pretty much already see a difference. The teachers here are really nice, and they do a lot to support you and make you feel like you can do anything, even if their class isn’t your best subject. And girls act a lot different when boys aren’t around. I think they are nicer to each other because there isn’t competition.”

Student 4: “Truthfully, I don’t have a ton of friends who go to coed schools. I’ve been here my whole life. And so has all of my family. Most of my knowledge of coed schools comes from my boyfriend and what I see on TV on *Riverdale* and stuff. But from what I can tell, we are very low drama here. No fights, no teen pregnancies, no scandals. We all wear the same thing every day, so there isn’t even drama about that.”

Student 5: “Yep. In a lot of ways. First of all, because we are such a small school, everyone knows you. You can’t get away with slacking off in a project or not studying for a test because that will be an immediate phone call home. My friends who go to coed schools are in classes with 30 people. My biggest class here is 11. And I mean, the whole boy thing, of course. That is the most drastic difference. There is no reason to have any girl drama when there are no boys to fight over and no chance for the teachers to prefer the boys over the girls. In one of our classes, we read about a study where in some coed schools, teachers subconsciously picked boys more in math and science because they thought they would be better at it.”

Student 6: “I think that the high-school experience is pretty similar anywhere you go, but I think we are the exception to the rule, if that makes sense. Like, I think anywhere you go, you have the popular kids, you have to worry about grades, you have to worry about

friend stuff and boyfriend stuff. Like that is just the drama of growing up. But I think here, you are actually protected a lot from that normal experience. Yes, the work here is a lot. Way more than most schools, I think. But all the problems most schools have with bullying, dating drama, and all that? We don't have that at all. I've heard of a few times, like in my older sister's grade, when a few girls got in trouble for cyber bullying another girl on Facebook. But all in all? Everyone here is really accepting. I actually talked with my friend who did this interview with you a few weeks ago, and we were talking about why we don't really have that drama here, and I think at least a piece of it is, I don't know how to explain this. So, yes, we are all different and all have different talents and likes and dislikes, but overall? We are all girls who are strong academically, come from nice families, want to be friends with everyone. I think that makes all the difference. Maybe it isn't that our school makes us all alike, but maybe the same type of person is attracted to go here. Do you know what I mean? I hope that answered that question."

Student 7: "Yeah, no one here has boyfriends! Seriously, like our Fall Fling dance? I don't think anyone from my grade had a date. Some of the seniors and stuff have boyfriends, so they had dates. But the whole dance was basically just a bunch of girls dancing together because there were no boys. I complained about it, but it was actually kind of fun. No drama, no worrying about dressing hot. You got to wear a dress that you wanted, not one that you thought a boy would like."

Student 8: "I've only ever gone here, so I don't really know a difference."

Student 9: "Um, I do. A lot. It's kind of big. I see them as more intimidated of the whole coed aspect. The girls I knew were coming from middle school here, with no boys. It was a big change having boys in the classroom, especially if you like one of the boys. You

always want to be on the top of your game, and if you mess up or say the wrong answer or wear the wrong thing, they get really down on themselves. I enjoy the all-girls aspect because we can all laugh at each other. We all make mistakes, but there is no pressure to look cute when you do it, so we can be silly about it. That helps you be a better person when you aren't taking it so seriously."

Student 10: "Oh, God. Yes. I mean, coed schools really seem just like they are in the movies. It's a bunch of cliques and stuff. It's all about who is popular and who has the best car and the best party. I don't have too many friends here that go to coed schools, but I still talk to some of my friends from Nebraska, and they have such drama at school, but it never has to actually do with schoolwork. Their drama is like someone's boyfriend cheated on them, and here the biggest drama is, like, not getting an 'A' in your AP class."

QUESTION -7

Researcher: “How does attending school here prepare you for life after high school, academically and socially?”

Student 1: “Well, academics are our thing. That is what this school is all about. The only three levels of classes we have are AP, Honors, and College Prep. At other schools I have heard of, like, College Prep is the highest they go. And they have remedial classes. But you have to do really well on your entrance exam to even be considered for a spot here, so the academic game is really strong. And it can get kind of competitive. Which just makes you want to be stronger. So I feel really confident that I am academically prepared for college. That isn’t a question for me. Socially, it will be weird to be back in class with guys for the first time since middle school. But I think here I have learned how to form really strong bonds with other girls and know that my value is a lot stronger than just my looks or what a boy tells me I’m worth. So socially, I feel really prepared, too. Maybe not for finding a boyfriend, but that is not just me, right? A lot of people struggle with that I hear!”

Student 2: “Oh God, the academics. I complain when I’m drowning in homework and projects and labs, but deep down I know it is all preparing me for college and a career. One of my best friends doesn’t have a writing lab class at her school, and when she had to write her college entrance essay, she was lost. I proofread it for her, and it was so bad! I might complain about our workload here, but I am really grateful for everything I have learned here. I think we are being prepared socially in a different way than most people would think of. I think we don’t necessarily get those ‘dating skills’ and first boyfriend experiences that a lot of other high schoolers get, but we get so much more. We are

taught that our self-worth isn't tied up in what you look like. You have more to offer than to just be someone's wife. We are taught to think for ourselves, problem solve, be strong, fight for what we believe in, and to support other women. And that isn't to say that no one here has boyfriends. A decent amount of girls do, for it being an all-girls school. Where do they find them? No clue. I guess a lot are from the all-boys school. Or maybe, like, friends? I don't know."

Student 3: "I hadn't really thought about how it prepares you socially. I guess, because it makes you realize that being all wrapped up in boy drama isn't important? Academically, everyone knows it is really hard here. I think they expect a lot of you but not in a bad way. Just, they know what you can do, and they help you do it. Then you are ready for the SATs and college. My friend's sister went here, and she said college was actually easier than her senior year here."

Student 4: "Well, they make you realize here not only do you have to have a strong academic game, but you have to be a decent person. That is why instead of field trips, we have cultural days where we go learn or do something we may not have been exposed to before. It is crazy to me that that is not stressed everywhere. Even though our school is really small and our state is really small, we are taught that your impact is so much bigger than just Delaware."

Student 5: "Academically, it's really challenging here. They recommended that everyone attempt at least one AP course, if not more. Some of my friends from other schools don't even take one AP ever or even Honors. It's not overly competitive with each other but really more supportive, like, I'm going to try this really hard math class. Try it with me! We push each other to be better. Socially, I think it just makes you really confident in

who you are and what you want to do later in life. I think it makes you realize what is important in life and what isn't. And learning that by the time you are 17 is a lot more useful than having to wait and learn that after college.”

Student 6: “I’m sure I have the same answers as everyone else, but the academics are really strong here, and teachers expect a lot from you. Our school doesn’t have the retake policies that other schools have. And if your GPA falls below a certain level, you could be asked to leave. So, I think they prepare us for college by not going easy on us in that sense. And socially, I mean, it makes you pretty mentally tough to have to compete to stay here, especially if you do outside activities. You have to learn time management pretty quick. The teachers here are awesome and will help you with anything you need, but they won’t go out of their way to hold your hand or treat you like a baby. They expect you to do a lot yourself.”

Student 7: “I think the pressure we put on ourselves and on each other to do well academically prepares us for a really competitive college and eventually a competitive work place. Socially, I think it makes us really mentally strong. You can’t have a breakdown because you have eight midterms and three projects, and four essays due. You have to learn to prioritize and get the job done. And get it done well. Or else you get tossed. I remember the most scared I have ever been was when I got an interim in the mail for having a C- in biology. The letter said if I didn’t bring it up, I could be at risk for being asked to leave due to poor academic performance. My parents got me a tutor, and I studied every single night, even when I didn’t even have a test. I eventually ended bio with a B+, which I worked hard for.”

Student 8: “We are taught from the first day here that it is our privilege to be allowed to go here. They prepare us for college with really hard academics. Socially, I don’t know how prepared we get because to be honest, I think after high school, I might be really nervous to be in class with boys after all these years. And I don’t have any brothers. So, I don’t think I’ll understand how the male mind works. Maybe that should be taught in health class here!”

Student 9: “Academically? Well, we offer so many AP classes, which lets us collect college credits early. And taking an AP class prepares you more for college because it shows you the work you will have to do, the work you have to put in outside of the classroom. So, the fact that they offer APs is really helpful. They also push you to ask for help. They make things really challenging on purpose, so you are forced to collaborate and ask teachers to give you attention. I have a cousin who started college this year. She came from a public school and was having a really hard time because she didn’t know how to ask for help. She was used to the ‘teacher stands up front and teaches, student sits in the seat and learns’ model. She didn’t realize education is a conversation. The teachers here push you to do well. Grades here are a really big thing because they want you to get into a good college and do well when you get there. Socially, wait, I forget the question. Right, prepare us for life socially. Okay, we are a small grade, so we are all friends. I see us all staying in touch after. I see that going to school here makes us learn to put ourselves out there. Not being afraid to make your voice heard.”

Student 10: “Socially, it helps you network! I see that with people that come back and talk to our leadership class. They will work for a big company or their boss will be a graduate from here. There are like, 25, I think, of our schools across the world. Did you

know Bill Gate's wife went to one of our schools? That is how the laptop program got started here. I think the networking thing is huge. Academically, they are really challenging. After looking at my friend's senior thesis project, I can't imagine anything in college being tougher than that. One of our school mottos is excellence. They demand it, but not in a tough way. They just let you know that if you are accepted here, they are saying you are capable of great things, and they will not just let you sit back and coast and get C's. Two C's, and you are on academic notice! One time, I got two B's, and I was so worried during finals week that I wasn't going to pull them up. That was when I pulled my first all-nighter. Hey, that helps for college, right? You have to learn to do that sometime, I guess!"

QUESTION – 8

Researcher: “What role do you feel that single-gender education has had on the formation of your personality?”

Student 1: “Oh, huge. If I hadn’t gone to school here, I for sure would not be who I am today. Going to school here really let me focus on my strengths, like math, and learn that I have so much to contribute to the world. Not just in a learning sense, but our whole motto of ‘Serviam’ has really let me see that I am so fortunate to have what I have, and really made me want to help others who aren’t as fortunate. I definitely see that going to school here has made me stronger in so many ways. Even little things like time management, prioritizing, working with deadlines? All that stuff. I feel like I am way better at than friends who go to other schools. A lot, a whole lot, is expected from you if you go here, but, like, it all is worth it in the end. It makes you so strong and so sure that you can go on to do awesome things. I don’t know that the message of strength is as strong in coed schools. I think they are so big sometimes, you are just a number in a classroom. Here, everyone knows you and what you are about. And you don’t have boy drama to get in the way of everything else.”

Student 2: “I think it has made me much more self-confident. I don’t have to question, ‘Should I ask this in class? What will a guy think of me if I say what is on my mind?’ I just say what I want and think what I want to think. If I went to a coed school, I can totally see myself acting more shy around guys. Here, I just do what I want.”

Student 3: “I don’t think it has changed my personality going here. But I think you have to have a certain kind of personality to go here. Not all of my friends could deal with the lack of boys and all the work.”

Student 4: “Well, since I’m a ‘lifer’ I don’t know what my personality would have been like outside of these walls. You see the adjustment period in some of the girls that only come here for Upper School. They have to get used to what it is like here. But for me, I don’t know what it’s like anywhere else. I feel like going to school with just girls has really made me thankful. We learn about how in other countries girls aren’t even allowed to go to school, and yet here we are, with this beautiful school, with great teachers, and it’s all for girls. I think if I had ever gone to a coed school, I would have the potential to become a little boy crazy. So, smart move on my parent’s part. There are no distractions here; it is just go to class, learn, have fun, work hard, and do your best.”

Student 5: “Going here has made me realize that I can do anything with the tools I am given. I want to be an architect, but with the math, science, and all the academics I have learned here, I could actually be OK really going into any job. There are some things I am better at than others, but if I persevere, I can do whatever I put my mind to. It sounds weird to say it this way, but there is nothing else to focus on here except your work and making honor roll. You don’t have to worry about looking cute, or whether a boy likes you, or any of that. Truthfully, during the day we are so busy that I don’t even think about this being an all-girls school. In the beginning, of course, I missed the boys, but you can find them wherever. I think coming here made me see that I’m stronger and smarter than I thought I was before. Coming here also gave me some of the best friends I will ever have. I know we won’t drift apart when we go to different colleges because we have had this unique experience together. Unless you go here, you don’t understand what it is like. Some people talk about how much they hated high school and how it was a bad experience or whatever, but I have loved it so much that I would relive it again. Not to go

back and change anything, because it was perfect. Just to get to redo some of my most favorite memories.”

Student 6: “I have always thought I had a pretty good idea about who I was before I went here, but going here has helped me confirm that. I have a really good group of friends who are pretty similar to me. We cheer each other on and help each other when we need it. I think having so many girls doing such awesome things makes me want to be better. It’s like the best version of a friendly competition or something.”

Student 7: “My personality has always been the same. But I think being here with so many strong female teachers, it has taught me to not worry about being afraid to speak my mind. Even if people don’t like it, it is still OK to feel however you want. It is just your actions that need to be in control. One of my teachers has a poster in her classroom that says, ‘You could be the world’s sweetest peach and you will still meet someone who hates peaches.’ I like that. It means I get to love being me, even if everyone else doesn’t love me. I think if we had boys in our school, a lot more girls would be worried about what the boys think of them.”

Student 8: “I don’t know. I think I’m naturally pretty shy, and I think that is how I would be no matter where I went to school. But, I mean, after I said that out loud, I realized, I mean, I think that I would probably be way more shy if I had to worry about boys being in my class. And if I was in class with a boy that I liked, I probably wouldn’t be able to concentrate or talk. I still don’t like talking in class now, even without boys. I just don’t like talking that much. I keep giving you short answers to your questions, but...I don’t know what else to say.”

Student 9: “I feel that I have a strong personality. It’s all about me being able to share that personality without being scared. That is a big thing. I feel like this school has let me grow my personality in a way that I became who I was supposed to be, without being scared to share my thoughts.”

Student 10: “I feel like my personality was probably helped by all the teachers who have made me become a strong student. They don’t take no for an answer. When you go to them and say, like, ‘I just need to get a B on this test’ or whatever, they are like, ‘If you can get a B, you can get an A.’ I have always wanted to do well at school because I like doing well. But I feel almost like I owe it to my teachers to do well, too, because they are so invested in us. I didn’t feel like that at my old school. The classes there were huge, and they just taught, and then the next class would come in, and they would teach the same thing again. It was all scripted. Not having boys here sucks sometimes, like when it is impossible to find a prom date and stuff, but overall, taking them out of the classroom really lets you concentrate and find what you are good at. No distractions.”

QUESTION – 9

Researcher: “Do you feel that girls at your school are more or less likely to conform to traditional gender roles?”

Subject 1: “Traditional gender roles? Like wives and mothers and stuff? I think that is something most of us want at some point in our lives, but that isn’t, like, the focus of what we talk about when we talk about the future. We talk about what our jobs will be like, the companies we will run, and the jobs we want to have. In my class, we have girls who want to be doctors and lawyers and business owners. And you have girls who want to be writers and artists and photographers. There is no one that is like, ‘I wish I could do that, but I’m not a man.’ We are all about girl power here.”

Subject 2: “I don’t think we are more likely to conform to traditional gender roles. I think very few of the girls go boy crazy and just worry about finding a husband in college. I think we have had ‘grades, grades, grades drilled into our heads for so long here that we are really likely to keep that up once we graduate. I mean, if you look at our graduates, we have everything from business owners to the Number 1 player in the WNBA. I don’t think going here will make you either for or against traditional gender roles, though. I think it just makes you a stronger person, so you feel more comfortable doing whatever it is that you want to do in life.”

Subject 3: “Um, I’m not sure. I think maybe like I said about your personality, certain types of girls go here, and those girls would probably just do what they wanted anyway. But going here, like, gives them a boost? I don’t think anyone here would say that they can’t do something just because they are a girl. That goes against everything we believe in.”

Subject 4: “Traditional gender roles. Like girls have to be quiet and polite and ladylike? I mean, on one hand we are told we can be whatever we want. We can be inventors or scientists or athletes. There is no ‘male dominated’ field that we couldn’t take part in. On the other hand, those ladylike behaviors are still very instilled in us. We have cotillion, we have etiquette classes. In certain semesters in gym we learn formal dances like the waltz. I think that isn’t necessarily to teach us what is expected of how to behave as a girl. I think it has more to do with making sure we know how to act in all social situations, especially as graduates when we go out into the real world and represent the school.”

Subject 5: “I’ve definitely heard of people going to college to get a ‘Mrs. Degree,’ but I really don’t think that will be a single person from here. We all have such strong personalities and are so determined, I don’t think we would allow ourselves to not achieve whatever it is we dream of being. When you talk about gender roles, like being subservient to your husband? I don’t see anyone really buying into that. We are strong, smart, educated women. We are equal to any man, and that makes me proud.”

Student 6: “We actually had a pretty interesting conversation in sociology class the other day. Some girls were talking about how after the election, they felt upset that Hillary didn’t win and the whole idea of a glass ceiling and stuff. We were saying, yes, it is obvious there is a glass ceiling in this country still, but was that the real reason Hillary didn’t win? Like maybe being a woman had nothing to do with why she lost. That debate got pretty heated. But a lot of people felt that being a woman is no reason to be held back. There is no job you can’t or shouldn’t do just because you are a woman. I like how strong and powerful we are made to feel here. I have never felt like I couldn’t do whatever I put

my mind to. I don't think girls that go here feel the need to conform to a traditional gender role. Why work this hard and stress this much about academics to not go to college or not eventually have a job and make an imprint on this world? I love going to school here, and I definitely want my future daughters to go here too. It has been the best 4 years of my life."

Student 7: "I don't think that going to an all-girls school will make someone more or less. Wait. No, can I change my answer? I think I just repeated it to myself and misunderstood what you are asking. I think that going to an all-girls school will make you less likely to conform to gender roles. I think because we are taught here to be free thinkers and that we aren't held down by anyone, I think it could help some of the more quiet girls become more brave. We have talked in theology class about how in a lot of religions, women are treated less than men. And kind of like the men are in charge and are the head of the house and stuff. But even though this is a Catholic school, that isn't the message we are taught. We are taught that we are all the same in God's eyes, and everyone has the same potential for helping out those in need."

Student 8: "I think a lot of that is like your genetics, right? Or no? I think you are probably just going to be what you are going to be? Well, maybe not. I'm not sure. Hold on. Let me think of what to say. I need to think about how to say it. Okay, I think if you are born to be a doctor, you will find a way to be a doctor. If you are born to be a mom, you will be a mom. I don't think going to school here changes that. It might make things easier academically, but I don't think it will change the outcome of your life. But maybe it will. Maybe I'm not understanding what you are asking."

Student 9: “Oh, less likely. This school has taught us all to become our own person. They don’t tell you that you are going to grow up to be a mom, or a wife, or stay at home. They want you to push yourself to become a bigger person. And maybe for some people, they will decide to stay home and not work or just be a mom, but they want everyone to know that they have a bigger purpose in life and we should all answer whatever our calling is. They want us all to keep pushing forward.”

Subject 10: “I don’t know. I feel like we are taught to just be whatever we want to be. So, if you want to be president, like, go, do. But if you want to be something more traditional, that is cool too. As long as you are a good person and confident in yourself, I think that is all that really expected of us.”

Figure1

Age of Student Respondents

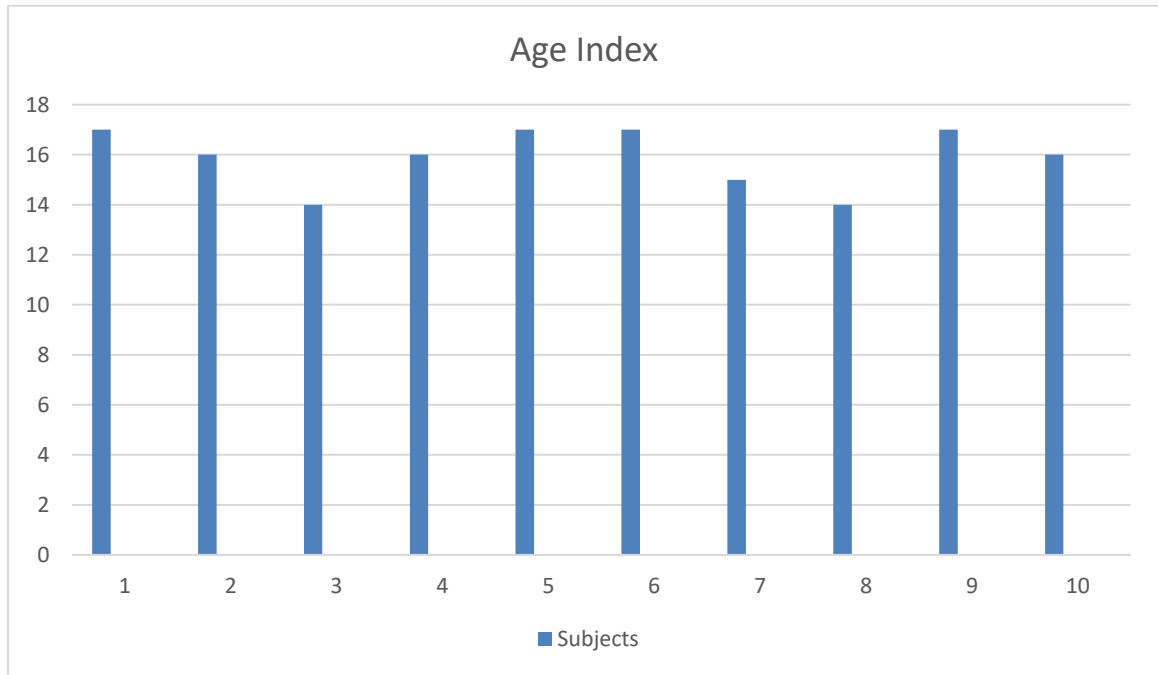


Table 1

Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Characteristics

Interpersonal characteristics		Intrapersonal characteristics	
Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Loyal	Shy	Smart	Daring
Funny		Animal lover	Too quiet
Caring		Good at writing	Dramatic
Good friend		Creative	Serious
Athletic		Courageous	Crazy
Expressive		Pretty	Hyper
Honest		Curious	
Good personality		Dedicated	
Friendly		Passionate	
		Independent	
		Religious	
		Adventurous	
		Hard worker	
		Good dancer	
		Open minded	

Figure 2

Ethnic Makeup of School Population

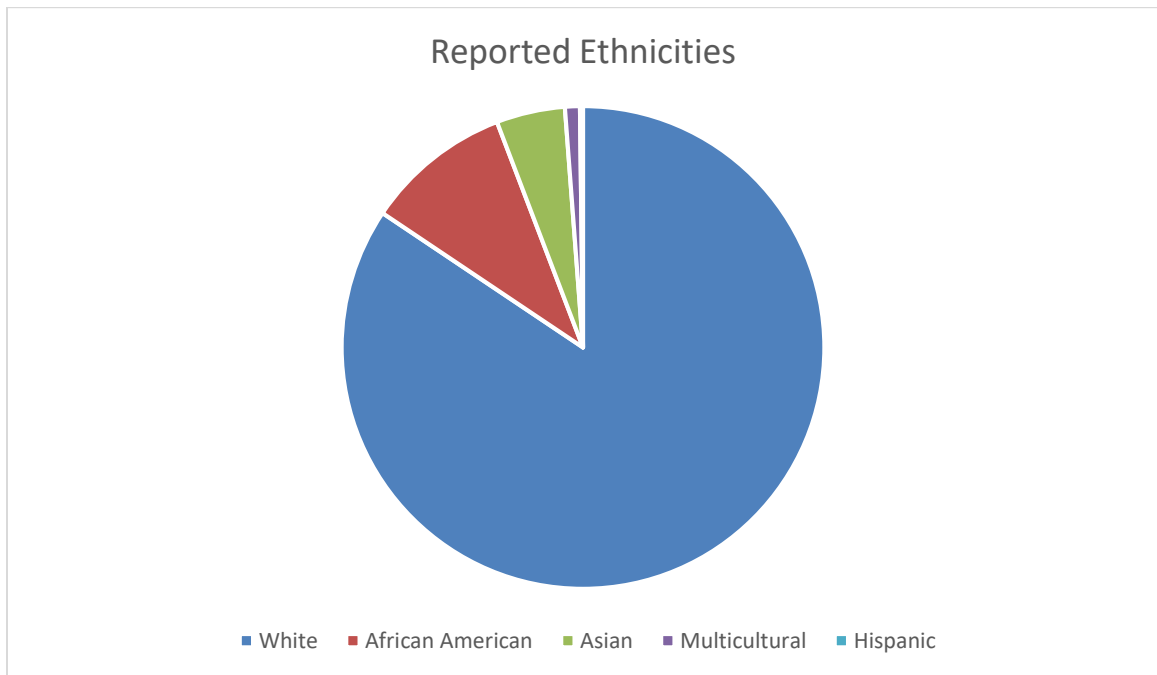


Table 2
Demographic Survey Information

Variables	Categories	\bar{x}	f	%
Age		15.9		
Ethnicity	White		10	100
Religion	Protestant		3	30
	Catholic		7	70
Grade	9 th		2	20
	10 th		1	10
	11 th		4	40
	12 th		3	30
GPA		3.5		
Siblings	Brother(s)		3	30
	Sister(s)		4	40
	Both Brothers & Sisters		1	10
	None		2	20
Birth order	Oldest		7	70
	Middle		1	10
	Youngest		0	0
	Only		2	20
Plans to attend college	Yes		10	100
	No		0	0