

Why Do Girls Opt Out of Leadership Opportunities?

A Study Conducted by College of Saint Mary
Business Leadership Students



For Girls' Summit and
Women's Fund of Greater Omaha

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Introduction to the Study

Girls' Summit through the Women's Fund of Greater Omaha proposed to explore leadership opportunities for girls ages eight through thirteen in early 2008. A research team from the College of Saint Mary Business Leadership Program was asked to develop a list of the existing programs available to girls in the Omaha area. In addition, the request included a survey of girls and adults to identify what is needed or desired in the area of local girls' leadership resources and programs. The information gathered was intended to help answer the question of why girls tend to opt out of leadership opportunities.

Context

Historically, leadership skills for girls have been learned informally in family, sports, and community settings and formally through traditional programs such as Girl Scouts, Campfire, 4-H, and Girls Inc. Attracting young girls to these opportunities has become increasingly complex. Competition for young girls' time is fierce and a high percentage of parents are unavailable for transportation and support. Yet many opportunities currently exist in all types of settings including schools, churches, and the broader community (see Appendix A).

Two contrasting geographical areas were explored. Some data were collected from participants in the Omaha area and some from Wahoo, a small rural city located 25 miles west of Omaha. The urban area encompassed the city of Omaha, which is in Douglas County, Nebraska. The estimated population in 2007 was 424,482. Per capita income was \$23,759 and the median family income was \$55,953. Twenty-nine percent of Omaha residents, age 25 and older, had a bachelor's or advanced college degree (www.factfinder.com).

The small city of Wahoo, Nebraska, is located in Saunders County. As of 2007, the population was 3,994, down very slightly from the 2003 estimate of 4,010. In the 2000 census, the per-capita income was \$16,765 compared with the national average of \$21,787. Here, the

median income for families was \$46,094. In Wahoo, 20% of residents, age 25 and older, had a bachelor's or advanced college degree (www.epodunk.com).

Approximately 16,000 girls ages eight to thirteen live in Omaha and nearly 200 girls ages eight to thirteen live in Wahoo (www.factfinder.com). If a greater number of these girls can be encouraged to opt "in to" instead of "out of" leadership positions, the positive ripple effect could be astounding. Given tools and experience, these girl leaders could grow into adolescent leaders, who could develop into adult leaders. Research has shown that relationships make or break leaders (Women's Fund of Greater Omaha, 1996), so experience in relationship-building can be fundamental. Because women's progress in permeating leadership ranks continues to be slow (Women's Fund of Greater Omaha, 2006), a solid foundation of skills, strategies, and leadership experience is critical.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the reasons that girls ages eight to thirteen opt out of leadership roles. The first step was to conduct secondary research supplemented by telephone interviews to identify a framework of existing programs and resources available to girls ages eight to thirteen. The primary focus of the study was to identify barriers and facilitators regarding girls' participation in these leadership opportunities. A final step (which could be conducted by the Women's Fund Research Committee along with Girls' Summit) could be to cross-reference available opportunities with barriers and facilitators identified by the girls, then to recommend restructure or support of existing programs and/or design new ones.

Innovation

Surveys were constructed and distributed to girls within the specified age group, as well as to adults, parents, and program directors. The survey statements were tailored toward underlying themes regarding why girls opt out of leadership opportunities. This study was

intended to determine whether these themes, discovered through a review of existing literature, could illuminate the barriers and facilitators to girls opting in or out of leadership opportunities:

- Anxiety
- Bossiness/Aggression
- Assertiveness/Lack of Assertiveness
- Lack of Support/Positive Influence
- Socioeconomically Disadvantaged
- Minority Status
- Programs that are only an Extension of School
- Low Confidence and/or Self-Efficacy Levels
- Fear of Joining Programs Alone
- Lack of Awareness Regarding Available Programming

A major concern was to uncover reasons why some girls may not participate in program opportunities since existing programs that are offered in traditional formats usually focus on current participants, rather than nonparticipants. Understanding the reasons for nonparticipation (i.e. barriers to participation) could be a key factor, as the impact of extracurricular activities is greater for young people who are at risk... (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997 in Search Institute, 1999). “...Highly competent children—as judged by social-academic performance in school—are already firmly embedded in the system and the values that it represents. For these students, extracurricular activities may be redundant in terms of school involvement” (p. 242). Armed with this information, program designers and youth recruiters could better connect with all girls.

Significance

Identifying reasons why young girls opt out of leadership opportunities can help illuminate discussions about adolescent girls and leadership, as well as women and leadership. It is hoped that this study helps to establish missing dimensions that can be addressed in ongoing leadership training not only for the existing participants, but also for those girls who have not been able to participate in leadership activities because of the underlying barriers that exist as outlined in the review of the literature.

It must be remembered that leadership skills do not provide a panacea. Any discussion of girls and leadership must examine the intricacies of how leadership is socially constructed, and how it is related to strength, confidence, popularity, and other factors. Researchers generally agree that leadership skills result from strength; but how does society identify and perceive strong girls? According to Pipher (1994, p. 265), “Strong girls manage to hold on to some sense of themselves in the high winds. Often they have a strong sense of place that gives them roots. They may identify with an ethnic group in a way that gives them pride and focus, or they may see themselves as being an integral part of a community. Their sense of belonging preserves their identity when it is battered by the winds of adolescence... Strong girls know who they are and value themselves as multifaceted people.”

For nearly two decades, Search Institute (searchinstitute.org, 2008) has studied what it takes for kids to succeed. They have postulated forty developmental assets, which, if possessed by young people, correlate with specific levels of self-promoting or self-destructing behaviors. Although leadership per se is not one of the assets, two categories of external assets (empowerment and constructive use of time) and two categories of internal assets (social competencies and positive identity) have been found to relate to leadership skills (Lerner, 2004).

In the area of “constructive use of time,” youth programs and youth groups are a primary focus (searchinstitute.org, 2008).

Action Research Questions

Primary Questions

1. Why do girls ages eight to thirteen opt out of leadership opportunities?
(See survey content areas below survey instruments in Appendices B & C)
2. What leadership resources and programs are available for girls ages eight to thirteen? *(See full matrix in Appendix A)*

Guiding Questions:

1. Do girls and/or adults perceive that the amount of money a family has makes a difference in how they are treated?
2. Do girls and/or adults perceive that speaking comfortably in front of others impacts their leadership abilities?
3. Do girls and/or adults perceive that when girls are in charge, people think they are bossy?
4. Do girls and/or adults perceive that girls feel more comfortable joining programs with a friend or alone?
5. Do girls and/or adults perceive that girls feel nervous around other girls that are in charge?
6. Do girls and/or adults perceive that being a leader makes a girl more popular or less popular?
7. Do girls and/or adults perceive that girls worry about what people think of them?

8. Do girls and/or adults perceive that fear keeps girls from getting involved in leadership roles?
9. Do girls and/or adults perceive that self-confidence helps girls get involved in leadership roles?
10. Do girls and/or adults perceive that a person's skin color makes a difference in how they are treated?
11. Do girls and/or adults perceive that girls enjoy taking charge of a project?
12. Do girls and/or adults believe that girls make good leaders? Do girls and/or adults believe that boys make good leaders?

Review of the Literature

With the primary research question being “why do girls opt out of leadership opportunities?” attention must be given to each of the potential barriers and facilitators identified in current literature. As long as the concepts of andragogy and pedagogy have been around, discussions about whether youth leadership mirrors adult leadership have taken place. Avolio & Gardner (2005) have proposed that the theory of authentic leadership differs substantially from traditional theories of charismatic, spiritual, and transformational leadership. Other researchers have attempted to separate youth leadership from adult leadership by arguing that youth leadership should move “toward a framework that accounts for group processes and collective action” (Roach, 1999 in Conner & Strobel, 2007). In addition, researchers do not agree on how to define youth leadership nor exactly how leadership competencies are developed in youth. Conner and Strobel (2007) suggest that current answers take two directions: individual development processes or contextual supports and practices that facilitate leadership development.

Van Linden and Fertman (1998 in Conner & Strobel, 2007) identified three distinct stages of individual leadership development:

- Awareness – Young person does not actively think about leadership
- Interaction – Young person begins to reflect on and explore his or her leadership potential
- Mastery – Young person concentrates effort on improving his or her leadership capacities

Rickets and Rudd (2002) further linked these three stages to the process of comprehension, analysis, application, synthesis, and evaluation. Although their work is an expansion, they do not link specific practices to these processes.

Kress (2006) suggests that, “The youth development movement represents a broad trend toward promoting opportunity and resilience over preventing delinquency and failure...” She further attempts to summarize concepts relating to youth leaders:

...If we analyze leader development, we will find there is general agreement that successful leaders are defined by knowledge, competency, and character. If we parse those terms even finer, we focus on the tools of leadership, such as reflexive learning, communication, decision making, self-discipline, and other skills that, when combined, make effective action possible. It seems implicit in the term “leader” that abilities that aid in engaging others—motivating, managing conflict, and so forth—would be requirements as well. Few would disagree that leaders also require “character capacity,” or an understanding of the difference between right and wrong, and the courage to do what is right.... A notable and more important focus in youth development is to design programs to meet the developmental needs of youth (Kress, 2006, p. 46).

The subsections that follow will briefly overview some of the major developmental issues that emerged in the existing literature.

Anxiety

Emphasis has been placed on external barriers such as stereotyping and male chauvinism, but, there is also a need to examine and address the internal barriers that exist. Research shows that “a sizeable number of children and adolescents avoid specific activities perhaps due to social anxiety” (Storch, Barlas, Dent, & Masia, 2002, p. 82). Research has demonstrated that anxiety in young students is better managed or reduced when achievement motivation is in place (Hay, 1993). So programs that enhance achievement motivation may, in turn, reduce anxiety, therefore facilitating young students’ decisions to opt in to leadership opportunities.

Bossiness/Aggression

Aggression is typically thought to be a pattern of behaviors that are quite stable over time (e.g. Olweus, 1984 in Search Institute 1999). “Aggression may be affected by various interventions. Such interventions are generally aimed at the development of more effective and acceptable methods of social interaction and conflict resolution” (Search Institute, 1999).

In one study, when asked whether they considered themselves to be a leader, less than a fifth of the girls said “yes.” The most consistent reason for not being a leader for most young girls was “I’m not bossy” (*Girls Work in Teams, Boys Take It On Themselves*, 2005). These girls perceived leaders as exhibiting a negative behavior.

Lease and Kennedy (2002) examined children’s social constructions of popularity and compared perceived popular girls to sociometrically popular girls. Sociological research suggests that popular girls are considered cool, socially dominant, and socially savvy, yet not necessarily liked by the peer group as a whole. Perceived popular girls were viewed in this study as prosocial, bright, and in possession of the expressive equipment of popularity (i.e.

attractiveness and spending power). Perceived popular girls who were not well-liked (i.e. sociometrically popular) had these characteristics as well, but also were above average on social aggression and social visibility (i.e. cool and athletic). In fact, both girls and boys who were viewed as aggressive were considered less popular. It becomes important, then, for students to understand the somewhat subtle differences between aggression and assertion.

Assertiveness/Lack of Assertiveness

Research has shown that one's ability to behave assertively, rather than aggressively or passively, is related self-esteem level, self-image, and a variety of emotional factors (Mason, 2005; Stewart & Lewis, 1986). A program called "Full of Ourselves" dealt primarily with eating disorders and the importance of health as it relates to power and leadership, increasing resilience, and changing behaviors that lead to poor body image. "Girls are growing up in a popular culture and economy that sends the message that what they look like is more important than who they are" (Sjostrom & Steiner-Adair, 2002, p. S142). Studies show that "both boys and girls identify high expectations for girls to achieve cultural ideals of beauty, especially to be thin. Media images, as well as family and peer pressure, were reported to play a significant role in this expectation" (Wisdom, Rees, Riley, & Weis, 2007, p. 151).

Psychological risk factors such as low self esteem and perfectionism are stressed, as well as teaching life skills along with nutrition. Mental, physical, and relational health aspects are also incorporated since most girls eight to thirteen years old face these difficult issues. We can conclude that "self-esteem is usually considered a key indicator of psychological health and social life adjustment" (Seidah & Bouffard, 2007, p. 256).

It is frightening to document that findings of the Full of Ourselves program show that other programs were successful in increasing participants' knowledge of eating disorders, but unsuccessful in modifying attitudes, increasing resilience, and changing behaviors that lead to

poor body image. The advantages of this program were that young girls learned to understand themselves at a very critical time in their lives. According to LeCroy (2004), “Girls face a difficult culture as they transition into adulthood” (p. 9). After completing this program, the girls then get to be involved as leaders mentoring younger girls to display what they have learned and how they can bring positive changes to someone else’s life.

Some advertisers have begun to address this concern by restructuring their campaigns to focus on internal assets. The Dove for Real Beauty campaign includes a component of “Just for Girls” web-based activities including interactive quizzes and interviews. Unprecedented for an advertising campaign, Dove for Real Beauty has sponsored body image workshops for girls across the country (and has, of course, used video clips from the workshops in subsequent advertising) (<http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.com>).

Lack of Support/Positive Influence

“There are also the obstacles of time-crunched parents, dangerous substances and behaviors, overburdened schools, and a more demanding job market that have fueled the belief that adolescents should no longer fend for themselves after school” (Roth, Brooks-Gunn, 2003, p. 94). Steese, et al. (2006, p. 10), explain that these groups of adolescents must “experience or have the perception that they are being cared for, valued, included, and/or guided by others, especially one’s family, peers, and community members.”

According to Dubas and Snider (1993 in Search Institute, 1999) youth programs and groups are an important means for empowering youth. They note that “if adult leaders are knowledgeable and well trained, they will allow their youth members to make or assist in decisions about activities and establish a partnership of shared responsibility between the youth and adults.” Price, Cioci, Penner, and Trautlein (1990, p. 15 in Search Institute, 1999) suggest that this will “minimize the message that adolescent behavior is inevitably a problem or that

young people cannot make important positive contributions.” Researchers make the connection between youth groups and positive youth-adult relationships. “Youth programs and youth groups are also important components of adolescents’ lives because they provide a sense of belonging, develop skills through real-world experiences, enhance a sense of self-worth, and develop reliable relationships with group members and their adult leaders. Many studies have outlined the importance of these types of relationships, including coaching and mentoring, in developing successful women leaders.

In the YWLA study (2005), girls ages nine to eleven, were encouraged to join groups after their teachers nominated girls with leadership potential. The study was six semesters long, which yielded 18 groups totaling 164 girls. Two adult Caucasian women with Master’s degrees and several years of working one-on-one with group settings were involved in the study. Staff training was provided in areas of skill training and coaching.

The collection of data was obtained through special events and program sessions. It also included a journal that the girls wrote in on a regular basis, as well as interviews with the adult leaders and their journal logs. The girls worked in a partnership with the women who acted as guides and not as instructors. Their job was to provide structure and authority and help the girls accept leadership opportunities in a safe environment. The adults also used a facilitator to draw out the quieter girls through smaller working groups and encouraged the girls to take roles, such as a scribe, to provide some level of leadership experience to all of the girls.

The YWLA (2005) program was deemed to be successful in building the skills the girls needed to be effective leaders; skills such as finding ways of respectful disagreement, practicing assertiveness without risk to relationships, and learning how to share personal challenges in an appropriate way. The program revealed strategies and practices that must be in place to develop leadership styles while promoting peer relationships and the effectiveness of youth-adult

relationships. Essentially, the program was successful in building those relationships which lead to self-confidence and the realization that these girls had the skills to take charge, make decisions and give everyone in the group a chance to be a leader (Denner, Meyer, & Bean, 2005).

Youth development programs are great facilitators in the encouragement of positive outcomes relating to family, school, community, society, and social capital. An article titled, “Emerging Organizational Theory and the Youth Development Organization” (Wheeler, 2000) examines the benefits of such programs. Youth development programs help provide and support opportunities for young people to be able to learn and make a contribution. The youth-adult partnership approach gives youth a chance to help adults in decision-making and ultimately helps in the success of an organization. These programs are based on mutual trust and respect between the adult and the youth. This is reflected in a study (Naylor, Gkolia, & Brundrett, 2006, p. 13) showing that these adult and youth teams appear to promote more confidence, and are able to reflect on their roles more effectively, using their ability to delegate and motivate the members of their team.

Since youth development involves growth for both youth and adults, organizations continue to practice and look for new ways of organizational thinking. The Mi Casa Resource Center for Women in Denver, Colorado, is an example of such a working program. Its youth development program has a large ratio of young people on its staff. Its primary purpose is positive youth involvement in the community. “The key, then, to making the workplace effective for youth development organizations is to create work designs, skills, and reward systems that support the people, the values, the mission, and the vision of the organization” (Wheeler, 2000, p. 51).

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged

Another potential barrier deals with how to reach economically underprivileged groups of girls. It is a common theme that girls from affluent families will most likely have a host of leadership opportunities available to them. However, there is a large population of girls who may be disadvantaged and unable to participate solely because of socioeconomic challenges. Club and organization dues, sports participation fees, uniform costs, cost of appropriate attire, and other monetary requirements can prevent girls from translating interest into action.

The issue of socioeconomic status is often overlooked as a barrier. “Availability, cost, transportation, and interest limit many youths’ choices during the non-school hours” (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

In a study of inner-city youth development programs, Hirsch, Roffman, Deutsch, Flynn, Loder, and Pagano (2000) examined the “club” concept for socioeconomically disadvantaged girls. “The potential of the club to serve as a home-place for urban girls could reflect several important social dynamics,” according to the authors. African Americans and Hispanics, particularly those from impoverished backgrounds, have strong linkages with their extended family (Hirsch, Mickus, & Boerger, in press; Martin & Martin, 1978; Stack, 1996; Taylor, 1996; Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994; Wilson, 1989; in Hirsch et al., 2000). Hirsch, et al. continue:

Ties to kin provide important sources of social support and are a prominent feature of social ecology. It is likely that youth spend significant amounts of time in the residences of strongly linked kin, which can come to be considered second homes. Given this culture and probably personal history, low-income minority youth could be especially open to the idea of the club as a home-place. These processes have the

potential to be even more important for girls than for boys, given the prominent role that females play in maintaining social networks over the life course (p. 215).

Minority Status

At-risk groups can include children from minority groups and leadership programs must acknowledge and address potential cultural and gender-based differences in leadership styles and perceptions. In a study of thirty-five randomly selected groups including three Hispanic and three Anglo elementary students, Moore and Porter (1988) found that Hispanic females used less vertical and horizontal space than Anglo females, and were also less likely to verbally interrupt or physically intrude on other group members. The multi-ethnic trained observers in their study found that Hispanic males differed markedly. “Among males, Hispanics [were] significantly more likely to use vertical or upward movements and physical intrusions, while Anglos use[d] more verbal interruptions” (Moore & Porter, 1988). The authors concluded that nonverbal behaviors appeared to influence a group’s assignment of status and leadership as much as verbal elements of group interaction or attractiveness.

The African-American female culture has long stressed the need to go to work at an early age and to be intentional in career selections. The Omowale School in Pasadena “has designed a program to nurture the intellectual potential of the African-American child” (Morrow, 2005, p. 80.). Through after-school workshops, these girls learn to be assertive, and have the interaction of their families through booster groups. The Bridges To Success (BTS) Program in Omaha, open to both girls and boys of all ethnic backgrounds (but currently geared to a slightly older age group), provides many leadership opportunities from speaking to legislators and other decision-makers on behalf of the program to designing and leading learning opportunities for participants (M. Beasley, personal communication, April 8, 2008). In addition, the African American Achievement Council of Omaha has partnered with local middle schools to offer mentoring and

programming intended to extend the BTS concept to younger ages, resulting in a positive pipeline model (E. Boykin, personal communication, April 22, 2008).

Programs that are only an extension of school

Another primary consideration is that a disinterest for such programs arises if the program seems too much like an extension of school itself. If program activities simply assimilate more school activities, then children are not eager to participate. “Been there, done that—all day.”

Further, research indicates that children are looking for options associated with social activities. As they develop into the adolescent stage, the search then shifts to finding opportunities that will enable them to explore adulthood. Programs should include a variety of leadership skills necessary to build self-confidence. In addition, participants should be able to explore career options, and have the chance to work with community members which ultimately, builds their social capital for future endeavors. “Seeing the students become leaders is usually the culmination of years of effort on the part of parents, teachers, and the student” (McCullough, Ashbridge & Pegg, 1994, p. 4).

A mention of social capital is, in essence, a whole spectrum in itself, which permeates the benefits of being involved in a youth development or leadership program. Involvement in such programs creates the cornerstone for children and adolescents as they continue in the journey through school, college, careers, and, in general, life itself. “Organized youth programs can serve as a context in which youth are connected to resource-bearing adults in the community who promote the development of social capital” (Jarrett, Sullivan, & Watkins, 2005, p. 41).

General youth programs may be at an inherent disadvantage, however. Their strengths may define their weaknesses. Even though they boast continuity and consistency, they may not have the same impact as adventure programs, such as Outward Bound. Researchers who

reviewed 150 studies of adventure programs reported that the positive effects observed—ranging from improved self-concept to improved problem-solving skills, leadership skills, and independence—seemed to last for months without fading, unlike more typical educational intervention programs (Viadero, 1997 in Search Institute, 1999). The challenge, then, becomes how to build excitement into a more traditional design.

Self-Confidence/Self-Efficacy

The Mi Casa program (Wheeler, 2000, p. 51) demonstrates the importance of establishing partnerships between youth and adults. Building these relationships promotes the confidence that youth involvement can make a difference. It gives adults the chance to mentor and promote a positive opportunity for learning and personal advancement.

Another leadership study (Edwards, 1994) focused on Girl Scouts from the same council in the state of North Carolina. Girls ages eight to thirteen years, with a variety of socioeconomic and racial backgrounds were studied. Within this study, leaders were chosen on perceived competence skills of:

- Organization
- Goal Setting
- Generating new ideas
- Emphatic dimension
- Popularity and attractiveness

Edwards (1994) revealed the following: “It seems clear that children in homogeneously female groups recognize management-oriented characteristics and clearly differentiate their leadership choices on the basis of these qualities, with due consideration given to the dimensions of popularity and appearance” (p. 926).

In this study, leadership is perceived as a managerial concept and is task-oriented for the individuals who fill that role. This study demonstrated that once again the more visible girls gain leadership roles and continue to dominate those roles in a social structured program. Therefore, programs must be established to emphasize the strengths and leadership abilities that all young girls have but may be afraid to explore.

“Girls benefit from space in which they can assume leadership and avoid competing with or deferring to boys.” These benefits come “from critical thinking and working together to solve problems” (Mono, Keenan, 2000, p. 119). Stiles and Raney (2004) refer to this as a “drawbridge” issue. They interviewed a psychiatrist and author who had identified two extreme categories of young students: those whose drawbridges were open—so they allowed anyone and everyone to amble into their personal space, stay as long as they liked, and do whatever harm they would; and those whose drawbridges were closed—who prevented everyone and everything from penetrating their isolated solitude (Peck, 1997 in Stiles & Raney, 2004). Having enough space to take risks and experiment with leadership strategies, but little enough space that the context is safe, can be ideal. “A flexible boundary that is appropriately open to some and closed to others is the healthiest...” (Scott, 1993; Scott & Dumas, 2002 in Stiles & Raney, 2004).

A report from the Girl Scout Research Institute (2002) overviews “The Ten Emerging Truths,” which include the importance of girls having a safe place... safe space. The report recommends that organizations “offer a safe environment (emotionally and physically) where girls can express themselves and find their voice.” In addition, the report indicates that girls need empowerment, by girls, for girls. “Provide girls an ongoing opportunity to provide input—and let them know you are listening...” the report notes. “Offer leader training for girls (summits/seminars)...”

In March 2004, the U.S. Department of Education proposed flexibility in Title IX regulations that allows public schools to join private schools in exploring the potential benefits of single-sex classrooms. Youth organizations currently have the freedom to explore this dynamic and need to utilize data collection opportunities to measure effectiveness for a new generation of students.

Fear of Joining Alone

Another guiding question addresses girls' fear of joining programs by themselves. One reason for apprehension of participation in leadership opportunities or programs is the lack of interest by girls in dominant peer groups, i.e. friends and other school acquaintances. If peers say that leadership is not important, that message can resonate with less confident girls. The question remains: what can be offered to a collective group of girls, yet still offer diversity? Recruitment strategies should be examined to eliminate such fear; local youth group leaders indicate that offering a buddy system may be effective.

In fact, to explore this dilemma, a three-year study conducted by The Young Women's Leadership Alliance (YWLA) in central California, invited girls from three public high schools to participate in leadership positions. The findings showed that girls have many concerns about friendships and the acceptance of their peers. These concerns can influence the development of adult-youth relationships. Data show that youth-youth relationships are an essential part of building healthy adult-youth relationships. "In order for girls and women to become active participants in their communities and beyond, they must gain the skills and confidence to question authority and unjust social arrangement, to construct knowledge in deep collaboration with each other, and to refine, test and critique that knowledge" (Denner, Meyer, & Bean, 2005, p. 98). As such, the study proved that empowerment of the girls was the first step in building partnerships with adults that lasted beyond the program.

Lack of Awareness

Sometimes children and adolescents simply opt out of programs because their schedules are already filled with other responsibilities, such as watching younger siblings, household chores, participation in other school activities, and extra-curricular or community events. Therefore, provisions must be made to find a way to include these girls, encourage participation, and accentuate the leadership skills that they may already possess (Lauver & Little, 2005, p. 81).

In other cases, girls are not aware that resources and programs exist. Shoenberg, Doyle, Bynum, Mosatche, Conn, and Pryor (2002) found that the number one type of group or club that girls 11-13 belonged to was a sports league. Number two was a religious group. Their *Ten Emerging Truths*, included the fact that girls perceive some elements of girl scouting are “not for them.” Related recommendations from the authors include:

- Develop outreach and marketing initiatives to inform and educate—show contemporary image of Girl Scouts as a smart, exciting, and fun opportunity for girls to connect with other girls—segment by age and reflect range of diversity.
- Promote name, image, products as having been created by girls, for girls

It is critical to continue examining the areas of recruitment and retention for leadership opportunities and refining approaches. “If out-of-school programs are to achieve success in promoting positive youth development and learning, they must attract young people and maintain their consistent participation and long-term attendance” (Lauver & Little, 2005, p. 71).

In Conclusion

As we look ahead to research girls from past generations who have gone on to build careers for themselves, we uncover interesting information about the choices they have made. This research can give us insight into how we can improve, encourage, and teach girls forward

thinking through leadership, self-esteem, and confidence. In *Smart Girls, Gifted Women*, Kerr (1985) explored the commonalities of girls who grew into strong women. She studied the adolescent years of such historic female icons Marie Curie, Gertrude Stein, Eleanor Roosevelt, Margaret Mead, Georgia O'Keefe, Maya Angelou, and Beverly Sills; and she found that they all had time by themselves, the chance to fall in love with an idea, and a "protective coating" which allowed them to ignore gender limitations. Each experienced some social isolation; none was considered "popular." Pipher (1994) suggests that "many strong girls have found protected space in which they could grow." She continues:

There are various ways to find that space. For example, athletics can be protective. Girls in sports are often emotionally healthy. They see their bodies as functional, not decorative. They have developed discipline in the pursuit of excellence. They have learned to win and lose, to cooperate, to handle stress and pressure. They are in a peer group that defines itself by athletic ability rather than popularity, drug or alcohol use, wealth, or appearance... Protective space can be created by books, interests, families, churches, and physical or social isolation. It's a blessing. Girls who grow up unprotected, adrift in mass culture with little protective coating and no private territory are vulnerable to many kinds of problems (pp. 266-267).

Traditionally, women have chosen non-gender specific careers when they have been influenced by those around them at an early age (Whitmarsh, L., Brown, D., Cooper, J., Hawkins-Rodgers, Y., & Wentworth, D., 2007). This concept is explored in a study called "Choices and Challenges: A Qualitative Exploration of Professional Women's Career Patterns." This project discussed the roles that work plays in a woman's life. It examined the work history in female and gender-neutral careers, as well as the decisions of planning and making a career decision that fits into their family dynamics.

An interview guide was designed to examine women's career paths, the current influences, and factors that initially affected their choices (Whitmarsh et al., 2007). Interviews were conducted and six themes were identified through the interviews:

- Variations of career/family patterns
- Career Encouragers
- Career Obstacles
- Personal Compromise
- Career Changes
- Career Decision Making

There were three life patterns discovered in the participants' careers and family lives that included having a career without the role of motherhood (unitrack), an initial career followed by time away for motherhood and then a return to work (sequential), and full-time employment with motherhood responsibilities (multitrack).

Women who had chosen a female-dominated career noted that in their early educational years, their parents sent strong messages that teaching and social work were excellent careers for women. In addition, these "Girls were rated as more understanding of other children's positions, more sympathetic, and more helpful than boys" (Keenan & Hipwell, 2005, p. 94).

"Women who ventured outside of gender-circumscribed roles indicated that they received support and mentoring from outside of their families, including from educational professionals such as teachers, professors, and guidance counselors" (Whitmarsh, Brown, Cooper, Rodgers, & Wentworth, 2007, p. 230). Both the gender-dominated and neutral-career groups stressed the importance of receiving support from their spouses, which indicates dual-career marriages rely on mutual support when they must share the responsibilities.

The women in the gender-neutral career group noted more obstacles than the female-dominated career group, but these women stated they often had to adjust their schedules in order to keep family and marriage responsibilities in balance. Most women that had initial female-dominated careers after college transitioned to gender-neutral careers after realizing that they had the skills and abilities to take a different career path. This could be due to continued education opportunities and continued support from family and friends. The women who chose female-dominated careers based this choice on early developmental experiences in comparison to those in gender-dominated careers. This decision may have been due to the influences of female figures, such as mothers or relatives (Whitmarsh, Brown, Cooper, Rodgers, & Wentworth, 2007).

Women tend to choose both career and motherhood as life patterns. In doing so, they make compromises to accommodate home and the family responsibilities of child care and homemaking chores. As such, most women in these groups later stress the importance of following their dreams and taking the time to learn one's strengths and interests before making career choices.

Because of this, it is important to establish programs that can motivate girls into pursuing careers that are traditionally seen as male-dominated, such as science, math, or technology. The motivation and mentoring can come from peers, teachers, spouses, and coworkers. This influence can give individuals the confidence to advance into their careers and to be more productive in the workplace. In a study of gender in schools, Andrews and Ridenour (2006, p. 35) determined that, "themes emerged showing that students (a) grew more aware of gender stereotyping and its limited effects, (b) sometimes changed their practice toward gender fairness, (c) became aware of gender discrimination and power differences, (d) developed heightened sensitivities to gender-biased language."

In summary, the foundation for this study addresses two primary questions of “what resources are available to girls ages eight to thirteen years?” and “why do girls opt out of leadership opportunities?” The underlying factors are many, which result in a complicated basis for marketing leadership resources and programs to girls; and once the audience is captured, challenges remain in identifying what significant steps can be taken to maintain interest and maximize positive impact of such opportunities.

Research Design

This action research study was primarily conducted using quantitative methods. Qualitative elements included collecting a final survey item from girls ages eight to thirteen, adults, parents, and existing program directors, as well as making anecdotal notes. The survey demographics included a small rural city (Wahoo, Nebraska) and a large city (Omaha, Nebraska.) Researchers’ anecdotal notes were included in the research process. The quantitative elements included development of a detailed list of existing programs, as well as a number of survey items. This study was careful to respect confidentiality and ethical considerations, while trying to uncover the barriers of why young girls opt out of leadership roles. An initial research proposal was approved by the College of Saint Mary Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to data collection on this project (see Appendix E).

From the beginning, it was apparent that the data collection process would not be an easy one. The original selected participants, including convenience samples from specific girls’ programs and established program directors from the designated demographic areas, were non-responsive after continuous attempts to include them in the research. E-mail surveys and surveys with postage- paid return envelopes generated a low return rate. Methods such as going door to door, doing telephone interviews, and conducting intercept interviews in front of a local theatre provided demographics that reflected the research universe.

Once researchers connected with a group of potential respondents, each participant was given a full explanation and introduction to the study. It was explained that statements relative to the study would be asked of participants, but no influence would be given on our part, nor should influence be given by other adults to girl participants. Appropriate permission slips were obtained from parents for each of the girl participants. All participants were informed that confidentiality measures would be in place to ensure that their individual information would only be reviewed by the student research team, professor, and possibly Women's Fund of Greater Omaha representatives.

Some participants, even after confidentiality measures were explained, remained apprehensive about divulging personal information—especially name and address. Innocently, the research team wanted addresses in order to ensure representation from all areas of the city. But, to address this concern, participants were allowed the option of completing the survey by providing answers only to the statements and omitting information such as name and address.

Proposed Timeline

Proposal Due: 03.25.08

IRB Application Due: 3.30.08

Development of Sampling Relationships Due: 04.14.08

IRB Expedited Review: 04.25.08

Data Collection Completion: 5.03.08

Data Analysis (findings / discussion / summary / conclusion) Due: 05.16.08

Final Presentation Due: 06.03.08

Ethical and Confidentiality Considerations

Several ethical and confidentiality considerations were addressed in this study. First of all, the College of Saint Mary Internal Review Board (IRB) required a proposal for expedited review. This proposal included the completed survey instruments, as well as a parental permission form. Although the questions were not considered personally invasive, researchers were sensitive to the nature of the questions included in both the student and adult surveys. Students were first instructed about their rights, then were allowed to respond freely to the questions on an individual basis, and were assured of confidentiality outside the research group. Even so, many of the parents and students were uncomfortable including any identifying information (i.e. address). No attempt was made to gather socioeconomic information from either the student or adult survey respondents.

Knowing that efforts to match ethnic diversity to Omaha demographics would be challenging, the research team enlisted the assistance of two CSM Business Leadership faculty members who are well connected in the community. With their assistance, an accurate depiction was achieved. Original surveys will be archived and kept in a locked cabinet for seven years, after which they will be destroyed.

Data Collection

The research included surveys of girls ages eight to thirteen; a group of parents, teachers, and counselors; and directors of local girls' programs in the Omaha and Wahoo areas. Due to the somewhat sensitive nature of the questions, researchers relied upon convenience sampling strategies. Each group was asked a set of guiding questions that helped focus on the primary question: Why do girls ages eight to thirteen opt out of leadership opportunities? Telephone interviews and secondary research were used to answer the second primary question: What leadership opportunities already exist in this area for girls ages eight to thirteen?

Primary Questions:

1. Why do girls ages eight to thirteen opt out of leadership opportunities?
2. What leadership resources and programs are available for girls ages eight to thirteen?

Guiding Questions:

1. Do girls and/or adults perceive that the amount of money a family has makes a difference in how they are treated?
2. Do girls and/or adults perceive that speaking comfortably in front of others impacts their leadership abilities?
3. Do girls and/or adults perceive that when girls are in charge, people think they are bossy?
4. Do girls and/or adults perceive that girls feel more comfortable joining programs with a friend or alone?
5. Do girls and/or adults perceive that girls feel nervous around other girls that are in charge?
6. Do girls and/or adults perceive that being a leader makes a girl more popular or less popular?
7. Do girls and/or adults perceive that girls worry about what people think of them?
8. Do girls and/or adults perceive that fear keeps girls from getting involved in leadership roles?
9. Do girls and/or adults perceive that self-confidence helps girls get involved in leadership roles?

10. Do girls and/or adults perceive that a person's skin color makes a difference in how they are treated?
11. Do girls and/or adults perceive that girls enjoy taking charge of a project?
12. Do girls and/or adults believe that girls make good leaders? Do girls and/or adults believe that boys make good leaders?

The triangulation matrix which follows (Table 1) delineates content areas surrounding each guiding question and depicts survey items that address them. Additional items were included to explore such issues as decision-making (item #5), future goals (items #10 and #11), and parental encouragement/support (item #16) for involvement in extra clubs and activities.

Table 1

Triangulation Matrix

Primary Question: Why do girls opt out of leadership opportunities?

	Data Source #1	Data Source #2	Data Source #3
GQ#1: Money	Written Student Survey Item #27	Written Adult Survey Item #27	Anecdotal Notes
GQ#2: Speaking	Written Student Survey Item #2	Written Adult Survey Item #2	Anecdotal Notes
GQ#3: Bossy	Written Student Survey Items #3, #4	Written Adult Survey Items #3, #4	Anecdotal Notes
GQ#4: Alone/ Friend/Format	Written Student Survey Items #11, #12, #19, #21, #22	Written Adult Survey Items #11, #12, #19, #21, 22	Anecdotal Notes
GQ#5: Nervous	Written Student Survey Item #20	Written Adult Survey Item #20	Anecdotal Notes
GQ#6: Popular	Written Student Survey Items #23, #24	Written Adult Survey Items #23, #24	Anecdotal Notes
GQ#7: What people think	Written Student Survey Items #17, #18	Written Adult Survey Items #17, #18	Anecdotal Notes
GQ#8: Fear	Written Student Survey Item #25	Written Adult Survey Item #25	Anecdotal Notes
GQ#9: Self- Confidence	Written Student Survey Item #26	Written Adult Survey Item #26	Anecdotal Notes
GQ#10: Skin Color	Written Student Survey Item #28	Written Adult Survey Item #28	Anecdotal Notes
GQ#11: Taking Charge/Leading	Written Student Survey Items #1, #4, #6, #7, #8, #9	Written Adult Survey Items #1,#4, #6, #7, #8, #9	Anecdotal Notes
GQ#12: Girls/Boys Good Leaders	Written Student Survey Items #14, #15	Written Adult Survey Items #14, #15	Anecdotal Notes

Guiding Questions #2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11: refer to articles by the following authors (see bibliography):

Keenan & Hipwell (2005)

LeCroy (2004)

McCullough & Ashbridge (1994)

Mono & Keenan (2000)

Moore & Porter (1988)

Seidah & Bouffard (2007)

Sjostrom & Steiner-Adair (2005)

Steese et al. (2006)

Storch et al. (2002)

Whitmarsh et al. (2007)

Wisdom et al. (2007)

Written Adult and Girls Surveys - See Appendices A & B

Guiding Questions #1, 9: Refer to articles by the following authors (see bibliography):

Keenan & Hipwell (2005)

LeCroy (2004)

McCullough & Ashbridge (1994)

Morrow-Adenika (1996)

Seidah & Bouffard (2007)

Steese et al. (2006)

Written Adult and Girls Surveys – See Appendices A & B

Guiding Question #12: Refers to articles by the following authors (see bibliography):

Naylor et al. (2006)

Roth & Brooks-Gunn (2003)

Wheeler (2000)

Whitmarsh et al. (2007)

Written Adult and Girls Surveys – See Appendices A & B

The triangulation matrix with guiding questions for the surveys was developed to research the primary question of “Why do girls ages eight to thirteen opt out of leadership

opportunities?” Three data sources were utilized to explore possible underlying barriers and facilitators. Source #1 and Source #2 were girl and adult surveys. The third source was anecdotal notes that included the researchers’ observations and comments from study participants.

Since guiding statements closely reflected some of the barriers revealed in the literature review, the surveys incorporated these as tools to uncover these barriers. This well-supported information could then be used in the research as identifying factors.

The proposed list of girl survey participants included: Wahoo 10U Softball Team, daughters of CSM Business Leadership students and social network (coworkers, friends, etc.), Wahoo Girl Scout Troop, Mildred Collins Dance Studio students, Clair Community Center participants, Boys and Girls Clubs of Omaha, Bright Horizons Program, AWANA and Youth Programs from Chandler Acres Baptist Church, Evangelical Bible Church Youth Group, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Life Youth Group, Valley Kids Club, Carl Washington Youth Recreation Center, Girl Scout Troops in the 84th Street area of Omaha, Girl Scout Troops in Bellevue, Saint Columbkille Home and School Association, and Cimarron Woods Neighborhood Association. The proposed list of adult survey participants included: Teachers and Guidance Counselors in the Omaha and Wahoo areas; Program Directors at College of Saint Mary; local youth group Program Directors, Program Staff Members, and Counselors at Middle Schools and Elementary Schools in the Omaha and Wahoo areas; Saint Columbkille Home and School Association, and Cimarron Woods Neighborhood Association.

As noted in the Research Design section, many of the initial invitees were unable or unwilling to participate, so additional groups were contacted. With the assistance of Stacy Henry, Master in Organizational Leadership (MOL), and Orlanda Whitfield, MOL, both CSM Business Leadership faculty; as well as Ernestine Boykin, from the African American

Achievement Council and active middle school mentor and volunteer; and Monica Beasley, from the African American Achievement Council and Director of the Bridges to Success Program, (both of whom were also in the CSM Business Leadership class), additional groups were identified and members participated in the study.

Data Analysis

Validity was ensured by following Anderson's criteria as outlined in Mills (2007):

- *Democratic Validity* – Perspectives were obtained from girls eight- to thirteen-years-old, parents, other adults, and existing program directors.
- *Outcome Validity* – Information was examined to uncover barriers that prohibit leadership involvement and what facilitative measures could be put into place to increase participation.
- *Process Validity* – The study was conducted after College of Saint Mary Internal Review Board approval. In addition, a member of the Research Committee from the Women's Fund of Greater Omaha reviewed the initial proposal. The process included participant confidentiality, parent survey, permission forms, and initial and emergent ethical considerations.
- *Catalytic Validity* – Answers to the primary research questions provide information that can be used in making necessary changes in promoting and/or designing local leadership opportunities for girls.
- *Dialogic Validity* - The initial approach to participants included a reference to involvement in a research project associated with The Women's Fund of Greater Omaha. It was discovered that some parents of potential participants were apprehensive, whereas others were eager to participate and wanted to be informed of survey findings. Results may be posted for public access on the College of Saint Mary website, as well as the

Women's Fund of Greater Omaha website. Researchers and their professor will be available (on a limited basis) to present an overview of findings to interested groups

The data sources were collected and separated according to categories. Surveys were broken down into the demographic areas of Omaha and Wahoo, Nebraska. Girls' surveys were separated from the adults' surveys and several subcategories were established to differentiate specific information. The survey information was then coded and illustrated in visual format. The literature review revealed the underlying themes as to "Why do girls opt out of leadership Opportunities?" Therefore, each statement connected to at least one of the underlying themes and was coded accordingly in the data analysis process. This information was organized in a spreadsheet for analysis purposes and the data were displayed using bar graphs and pie charts for the comparison of girls' and adults' responses.

The initial strategy was to survey individuals within groups in the following settings (see Figure 1). After repeated attempts to obtain permission from some of the initially invited groups, data sources were revised.

Figure 1

Groups Initially Invited to Participate in the Survey vs. Groups that Participated

<u>Groups Initially Invited:</u>	
Group #1: Girls from Rural Area, Ages 8, 9, and 10	
Group #2: Girls from Rural Area, Ages 11, 12, and 13	
Group #3: Teachers / Guidance Counselors / Parents from Rural Area	
Group #4: Girls from Omaha Area, Ages 8, 9, and 10	
Group #5: Girls from Omaha Area, Ages 11, 12, and 13	
Group #6: Teachers / Guidance Counselors / Parents / Program Directors Omaha Area	
<u>Participating Groups:</u>	
Group #1: Bellevue – Girls Ages 8-13	Group #6: Wahoo Parents
Group #2: Wahoo – Girls Ages 8-13	Group #7: Omaha Parents
Group #3: Omaha – Girls 8-13	Group #8: Papillion/LaVista Parent
Group #4: Papillion/LaVista Girls 8-13	Group #9: CSM Program Directors
Group #5: Bellevue Parents	Group #10: CSM Adult Students

While researching existing programs which facilitate current leadership opportunities, the focus was why girls don't take advantage of these opportunities. Since some generalized barriers were discovered in the literature review, the plan was to build a survey to better define the underlying barriers that prevent participation. This information could then be passed on to interest groups who could develop or enhance programs inclusive to these groups of girls.

In order to examine general agreement, *Strongly Agree (SA)* ratings were combined with *Agree (A)* ratings and items were rank-ordered. On Table 2, the second and third ranked items appear to be a tie, but the second item had a higher overall SA total, so was given the higher ranking.

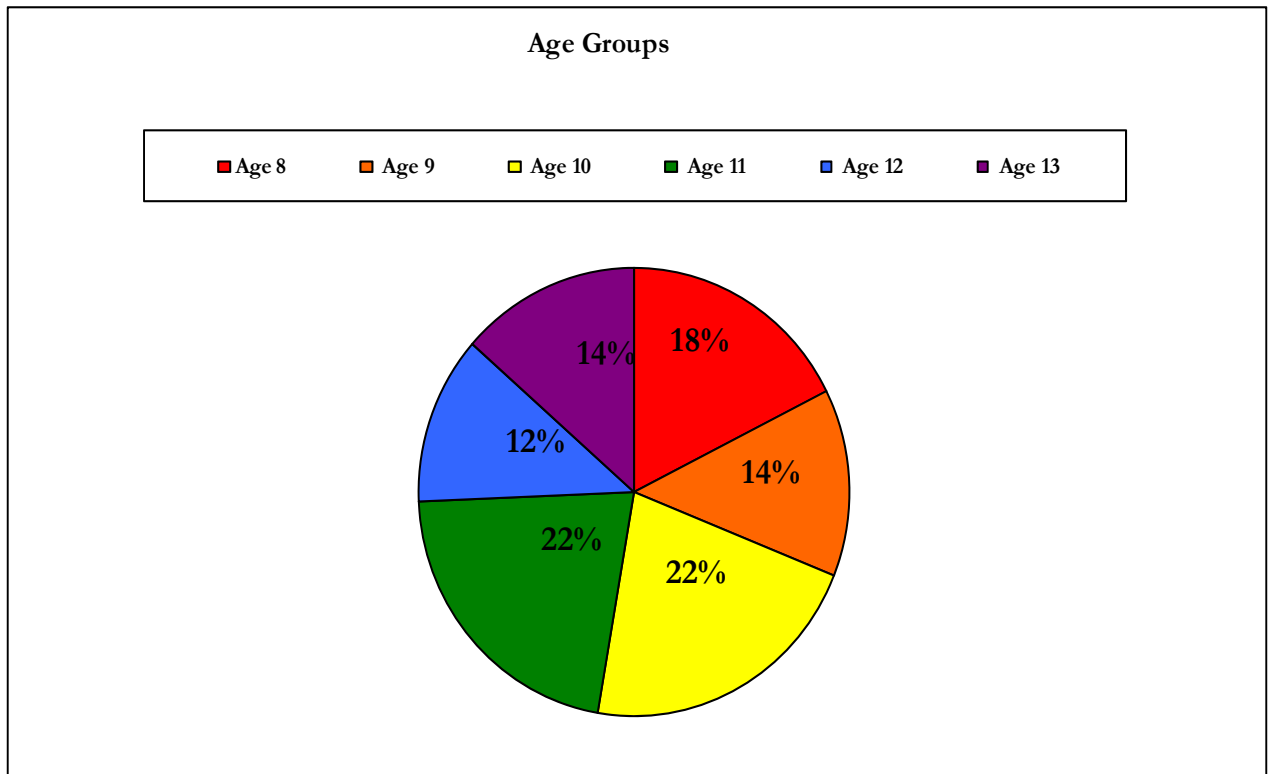
Findings and Discussion

After gathering and summarizing the data, the research team developed a matrix of types of established programs that offer leadership opportunities to girls (Appendix E). In addition, the survey data uncovered specific barriers that may assist in answering the question of "Why Do Girls Opt Out of Leadership Opportunities?"

The girls in the survey sample ranged in age from eight to thirteen, in order to match the primary research questions. In total, 74 girls were surveyed for this project. Eighteen percent were age eight, 14% were age nine, 22% were age 10, 22% were age 11, 12% were age 12, and 14% were age 13 (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2

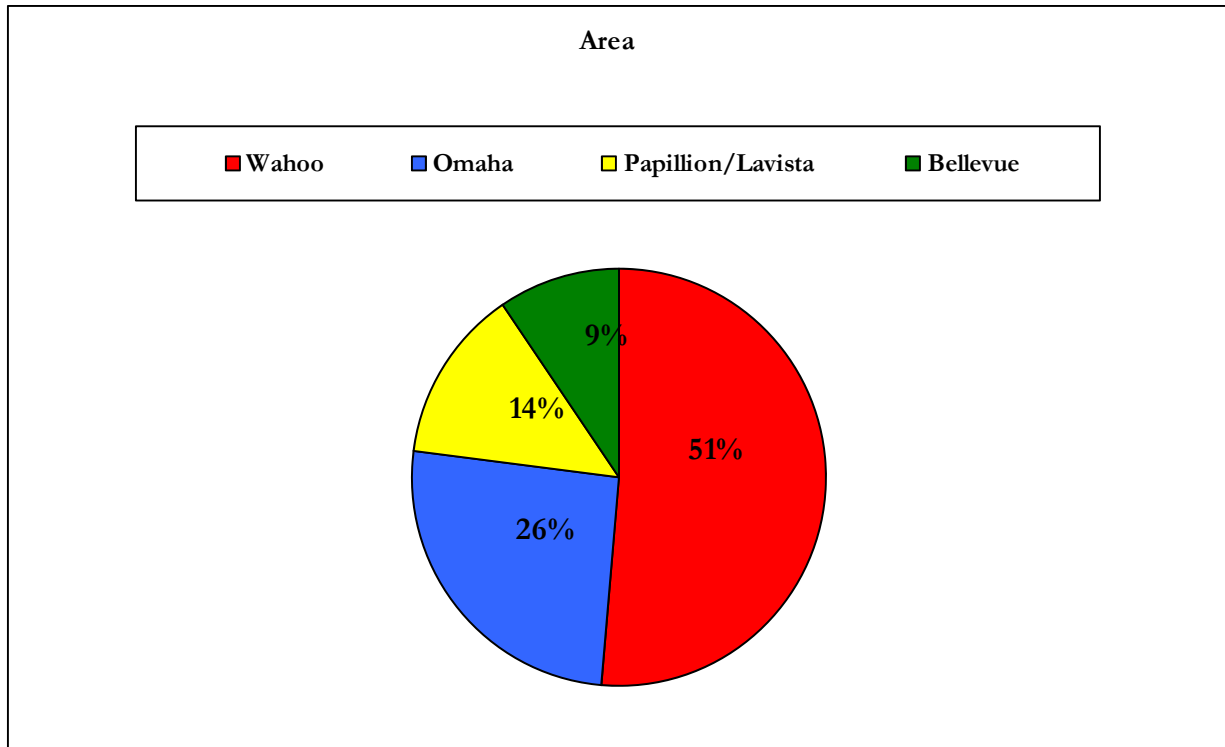
Ages of Girls in Sample



Both girl and adult survey respondents came from three communities in the metro Omaha area, as well as the small rural city of Wahoo. Approximately half of the respondents came from Omaha (26%), Papillion-LaVista (14%), or Bellevue (9%); the others (51%) came from Wahoo (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Residences of Survey Respondents



As noted earlier, many girl respondents and their parents were wary of providing their actual address, so they were simply asked to identify in which general area they resided. This issue was not anticipated by the researchers, and it crossed all cultures and residence areas. Asking for a more general demographic would be a good plan for future research.

The sampling goal was the mean difference in percentages for each ethnic group when considering the Omaha and Wahoo areas. Generally, that goal was achieved (see Table 2). The goal for White/European American representation was 88%, while 85% was achieved; the goal for Black/African American representation was 6.575%, while 8% was achieved; the goal for Hispanic/Latina representation was 4.17%, while 3% was achieved; the goal for Asian representation was 1.03%, while 1% was achieved; the goal for American Indian/Alaska Native representation was .835, while 1% was achieved; and the goal for Native Hawaiian/Pacific

Islander was .03%, while 1% was achieved. White/European Americans and Hispanic/Latinas were slightly underrepresented, while all other ethnic groups were slightly overrepresented.

Table 2

Demographics – Girls’ Survey – Comparisons to Sampling Goal

	Omaha Area	Sampling Goal	Sample Achieved	Wahoo Area
Total Population	382,776	70 girls	74 girls	4,010
White/ European American	78.00%	88.00%	85.00%	98.00%
Black/ African American	13.00%	6.57%	8.00%	.15%
Hispanic/Latina	7.50%	4.17%	3.00%	.84%
Asian	1.70%	1.03%	1.00%	.36%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	.67%	.84%	1.00%	.30%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	.06%	.03%	1.00%	0.00%

Girls’ responses to the survey statements affirmed the researchers’ initial underlying themes regarding why girls ages eight to thirteen opt out of leadership opportunities. The results are shown in Figure 4 and summarized in Table 3:

Figure 4

Girls' Responses to Survey Statements

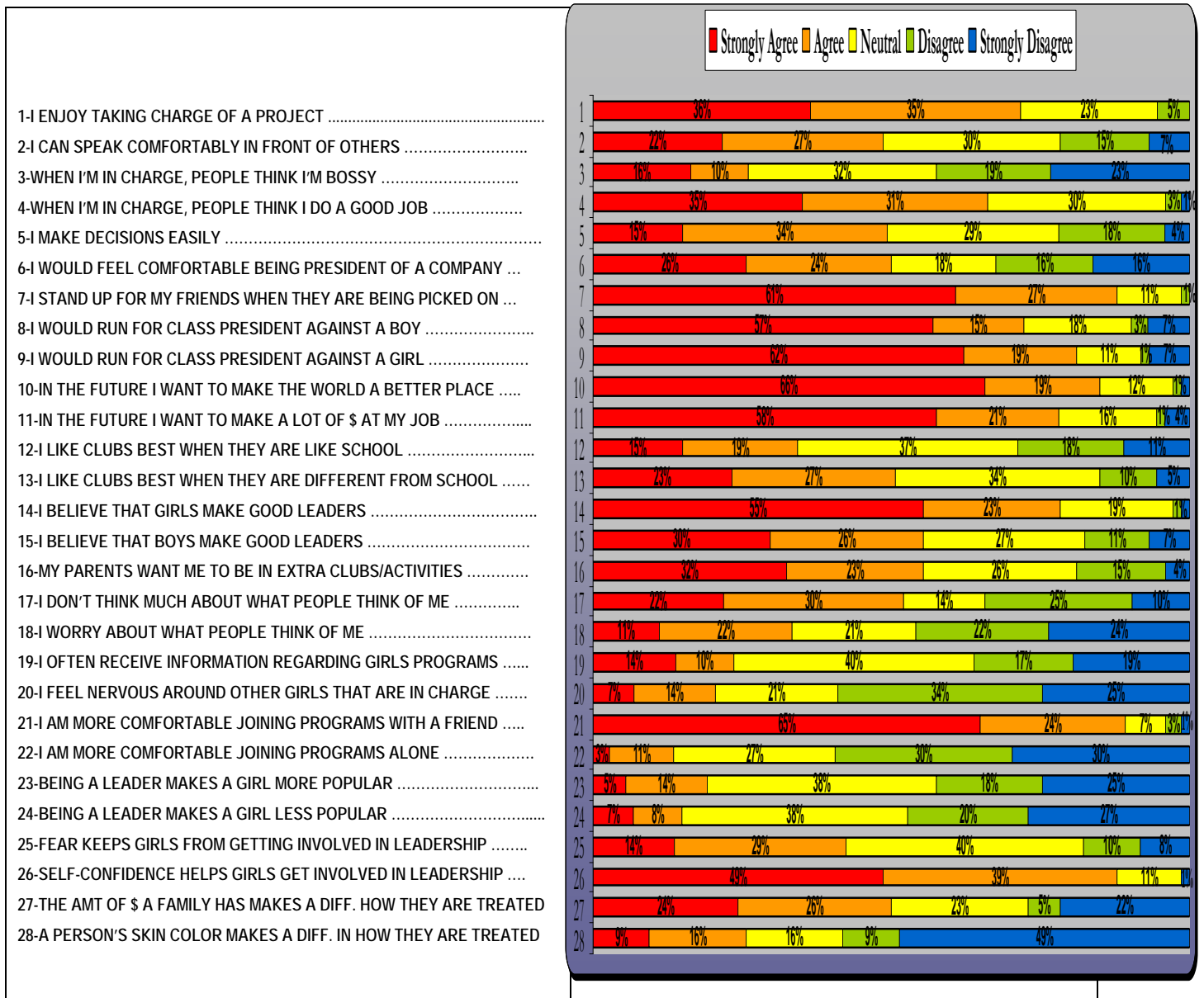


Table 3 summarizes each response with the percentage of combined “Strongly Agree” and “Agree,” as well as the percentage of “Neutral” responses for each statement. Strongly Agree and Agree summaries are ranked from greatest to least agreement. It is easy to see that

most of the girls' responses are consistent with previous research findings. Those that are not merit further exploration.

Table 3

Ranked Summary of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" Responses on Girls' Survey.

RANK	SURVEY STATEMENT (ITEM #)	% SA & A	% N
1.	I am more comfortable joining programs with a friend. (#21)	89%	7%
2.	I stand up for my friends when they are being picked on. (#7)	88%	11%
3.	Self-confidence helps girls get involved in leadership roles. (#26)	88%	11%
4.	In the future, I want to make the world a better place. (#10)	85%	12%
5.	I would run for Class President against a girl. (#9)	81%	11%
6.	In the future, I want to make a lot of money at my job. (#11)	79%	16%
7.	I believe that girls make good leaders. (#14)	78%	19%
8.	I would run for Class President against a boy. (#8)	72%	18%
9.	I enjoy taking charge of a project. (#1)	71%	23%
10.	When I'm in charge, people think I do a good job. (#4)	66%	30%
11.	I believe that boys make good leaders. (#15)	56%	27%
12.	My parents want me to be in extra clubs and activities. (#16)	55%	25%
13.	I don't think much about what people think of me. (#17)	52%	14%
14.	I like clubs and activities best if... different from school. (#13)	50%	34%
15.	The amount of money a family has makes a difference in how kids are treated. (#27)	50%	23%
16.	I would feel comfortable being the President of a company. (#6)	50%	18%
17.	I can speak comfortably in front of others. (#2)	49%	30%
18.	I make decisions easily. (#5)	49%	29%
19.	Fear keeps girls from getting involved in leadership roles. (#25)	43%	40%
20.	I like clubs and activities best if they are like school. (#12)	34%	37%
21.	I worry about what people think of me. (#18)	33%	21%
22.	When I'm in charge, people think I'm bossy. (#3)	26%	32%
23.	A person's skin color makes a difference in how they are treated. (#28)	25%	16%
24.	I often receive information regarding girls' programs. (#19)	24%	40%
25.	I feel nervous around other girls that are in charge. (#20)	21%	21%

26. Being a leader makes a girl more popular. (#23)	19%	38%
27. Being a leader makes a girl less popular. (#24)	15%	38%
28. I am more comfortable joining programs alone. (#22)	14%	27%

Not surprisingly, the statement receiving most agreement from the girls, 89% of the combined *Strongly Agree (SA)* and *Agree (A)* responses, was “I am more comfortable joining programs with a friend.” The secondary research had said it, the directors of local youth programs had said it, and the children of the researchers had said it. This item also ranked second (by one percentage point) when comparing only *SA* responses, with 65% of the girls giving it the highest rating. (It was narrowly eclipsed by “In the future I want to make the world a better place” at 66% *SA*, ranking fourth in combined *SA* and *A* response at 85%.) The companion item “I am more comfortable joining programs alone,” ranked last, with only 14% combined agreement 60% combined disagreement from the girls. Adults’ ratings on this item were even more extreme with a mere 8% combined agreement and 66% combined disagreement.

“I stand up for my friends when they are being picked on” ranked second in combined *SA* and *A* responses at 88%. Interestingly, only 1% of the girls rated this item *Disagree (D)* and 0% rated it *Strongly Disagree (SD)*. Adults rated the parallel item “Girls tend to stick up for their friends when being picked on” slightly differently, with combined agreement of 70% and disagreement of 12%. Like the girls, no adults *Strongly Disagreed* with this item. Generation Y (currently aged 14-26) is known for being highly relational and collaborative (Zemke, Raines, Filipczak, 2000; Tulgan, 2006); but it appears that these girls aged eight to thirteen representing the oldest end of the Generation Z spectrum, may be very similar.

The statement ranking third in combined *SA* and *A* responses was “Self-confidence helps girls get involved in leadership roles,” reflecting an 88% combined agreement response for the girls. Adults felt even more strongly giving it 95% combined agreement. Although this study did not specifically examine whether girls want to be leaders, this finding helps illuminate the

pathway. Youth programs that effectively develop self-confidence in participants are providing a critical foundation component and may need to realize that they have at least two options:

- 1) Rather than focus on teaching leadership strategies, continue current offerings and partner with other programs that specialize in teaching leadership skills
- 2) Continue current offerings aimed at building self-confidence and add programming that focuses on leadership skills

The media have criticized programs that simply build self-confidence, but these girls see it as a definite link to leadership roles.

“I would run for class President against a girl” ranked fifth, with 81% of girls rating it either *SA* or *A*. In comparison, “I would run for class President against a boy” ranked eighth, with 72% of girls rating it either *SA* or *A*. Although this finding is not a resounding mandate for same-sex classrooms, there is some indication that gender already makes a difference to this age group. Perhaps a young girls’ version of the well-respected *Ready to Run* workshops is in order. The Women’s Fund of Greater Omaha and Friends of the Lincoln-Lancaster Women’s Commission have teamed up to offer this resource to women who are considering running for office (Nygren, 2007).

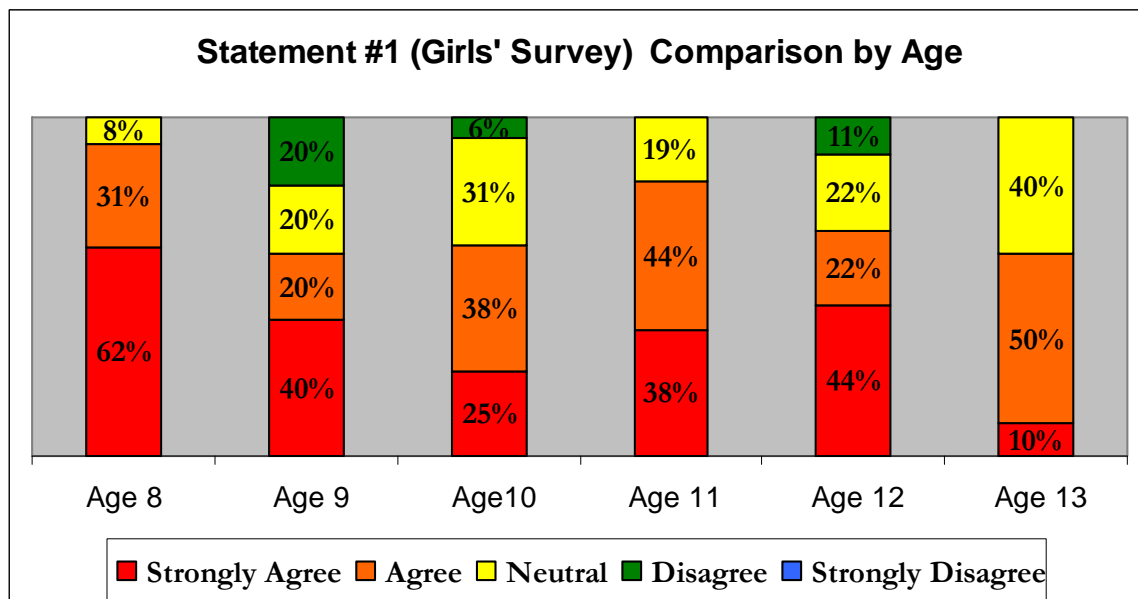
Research indicates that pay is the second most important motivational factor for both Generations X and Y, but little research has been done on what motivates Generation Z (Montana & Petit, 2008). In this sample of eight to thirteen-year-old girls, making a lot of money at their job in the future was definitely important (79% of respondents rated it *SA* or *A*), but it ranked slightly lower (sixth) than “In the future, I want to make the world a better place,” which ranked fourth at 85%. That prioritization may be important if it holds true as these girls develop into adults.

“I believe that girls make good leaders” ranked seventh overall, with a combined agreement rating of 78% for the girls. Important to note is the fact that 55% of the respondents rated this item as SA, with an additional 23% rating is as A. In comparison, ranking for “I believe that boys make good leaders” was eleventh, with a combined agreement rating of only 56%. Just over half as many girl respondents (30%) rated this item SA. Only 3% of the respondents said they *Disagreed* or *Strongly Disagreed* that girls made good leaders, but 18% indicated that they *Disagreed* or *Strongly Disagreed* that boys made good leaders. Adults’ responses were far more resounding, with 96% combined agreement that girls make good leaders and 92% combined agreement that boys make good leaders. Gender seems to make more difference to girls than to adults, which suggests some opportunities for leadership education and discovery.

Seventy-one percent of the girls said “I enjoy taking charge of a project,” ranking this item at ninth. Responses varied widely by age, and researchers were unable to identify a particular pattern (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Comparison of Girls’ Responses to Item #1 “I enjoy taking charge of a project” by Age



An area to explore further would be what happened between ages eight and nine to cause the girls' combined agreement to drop by 35% and disagreement to emerge at 20%. Also worth noting, by age 13, only 10% of the girls *Strongly Agreed* that they enjoyed taking charge of a project. This dimension could certainly impact girls' willingness to gain leadership experience, as well as their interest in participating in formalized leadership opportunities. Overall adult responses to the parallel item were slightly more positive with 77% combined agreement. Related to this item was the next-ranked item at tenth: "When I'm in charge, people think I do a good job." Girls' responses were nearly split in thirds, with 35% rating this item *SA*, 31% rating it *A*, and 30% rating it *N*. Although combined *D* and *SD* ratings were very low (4%), the thirteen-year-olds certainly reflected reduced interest, self-confidence, and/or self-efficacy. Adults' ratings were generally more positive, but only 24% *Strongly Agreed* that "Girls in charge are perceived as doing a good job," while 47% *Agreed* with this statement. This area could be examined more closely with a larger sample of girls to identify touchpoints on this leadership dimension.

Ranking twelfth overall was the statement "My parents want me to be in extra clubs and activities." Although combined agreement totaled 55%, combined disagreement on this item totaled 19%. In addition, 26% felt neutral about this matter. These percentages may suggest that only about a third of the girls (*SA* = 32%) receive or perceive strong parental support for their involvement in extracurricular activities. This finding, too, may illustrate the need for youth programs to market to parents and consider providing such ancillary services as transportation, after school snacks, and homework help.

Fifty-two percent of the girls indicated that "I don't think much about what people think of me" compared to 35% who rated this statement *D* or *SD*. This item reflected the third

smallest *Neutral (N)* rating, with only 14% of the girls not having feelings in either direction.

The companion item, “I worry about what people think of me,” ranked twenty-first with combined agreement at only 33% and combined disagreement at 46%. It would be interesting to explore this same dimension with older girls.

Half of the respondents said, “I like clubs and activities best if they are different from school.” Only 16% disagreed and 34% felt neutral. The companion item, “I like clubs and activities best if they are like school,” received 34% combined agreement, 37% neutral, and 29% combined disagreement from the girls. These large *Neutral* ratings suggest that the jury is still out. Girls may be willing to consider a wide range of formats and “being like school” isn’t necessarily a deal-breaker. Adult scores on parallel items were more extreme. Only 23% of adults rated “Clubs and activities are most interesting if they are like school” *SA* or *A*, while 43% rated this item *D* or *SD*. In addition, 60% of adults expressed combined agreement that “Clubs and activities are most interesting if they are different than school.” These findings are important to dissect further, as they may suggest that format is not as important as other factors to girls, but marketing through adults may require adult-girl communication in this area.

“The amount of money a family has makes a difference in how kids are treated” was rated *SA* or *A* by 50% of the girls. More parents viewed this as important with 66% rating this statement *SA* or *A*. Notably, a full 22% of the girls *Strongly Disagreed* with this statement, while only 4% of the adults *Strongly Disagreed*.

One area the researchers were particularly interested in was whether “Fear keeps girls from getting involved in leadership roles.” Combined agreement ratings totaled 43%, landing this statement at nineteenth. But combined disagreement ratings were only 18%, leaving a large neutral zone of 40%. On the other hand, a full 70% of adults rated the parallel item as *SA* or *A*, indicating either that they perceive a level of fear that girls are not experiencing/reporting or that

they are projecting their own issues/experiences into this response. (See Appendix F for exact wording of the Adult Survey).

Several additional items hovered around 50% agreement from the girls. Girls and adults generally concurred about “I/girls can speak comfortably in front of others.” Combined agreement totaled 49% for girls and 53% for adults. “I make decisions easily” was rated *SA* or *A* by 49% of the girls, but only 35% adults *Agreed* or *Strongly Agreed* with this item. Anecdotal notes indicate this may reflect adults’ concerns about the number and quality of decisions being made (even though those elements were not included in the question.)

“I would feel comfortable as President of a company” ranked sixteenth in combined agreement (50%) for girls, while adults rated a related item (“Girls feel comfortable in leadership positions”) higher at 68% combined agreement. Interestingly, although 14% of adults *Disagreed* with this statement, no adults *Strongly Disagreed*. Because, after a survey piloting process, researchers determined that the girls’ version of the survey required slightly more concrete language on a few statements for validity purposes, these items do not offer a head-to-head comparison.

Only 16% of the girls rated “When I’m in charge, people think I’m bossy” as *SA* and only another 10% rated it *A*. For this sample of girls, this issue appears not to have been perceived as a critical factor in deciding whether or not to take advantage of a leadership opportunity. A smaller percentage of adults (5%) *Strongly Agreed* with the parallel statement “There is a negative connotation when girls try to utilize their leadership” and 26% *Agreed*. In reviewing the combined disagreement responses, 42% of girls and 40 % of adults provided these ratings, so girls and adults were in general concurrence. In addition, girls simply did not seem to discern a strong connection between leadership and popularity. “Being a leader makes a girl more popular” ranked twenty-sixth out of twenty-eight items, with 19% combined agreement and 43%

combined disagreement. Adult scores were markedly different, with 61% combined agreement and only 11% agreement (no adults rated this item *SD*). Thirty-eight percent of girls rated this item as *Neutral*, while 28% of adults gave it *Neutral* rating. Clearly, adults and girls between eight and thirteen perceive this differently. The companion statement, “Being a leader makes a girl less popular” ranked twenty-seventh out of twenty-eight items, with girls giving it 15% combined agreement, 38% neutral, and 47% combined disagreement. Notably, 27% of girls *Strongly Disagreed*. Again, adult scores differed, with only 8% combined agreement and 61% combined disagreement. (Could these be the exact same adults who agreed that being a leader makes a girl more popular?) These findings could be probed much further, but one essential lesson learned is that marketing youth leadership programs as a chance to gain popularity will apparently not be believed by girls eight to thirteen.

The girls’ survey item garnering the greatest *Strongly Disagree* rating (49%) was “A person’s skin color makes a difference in how they are treated.” Combined disagreement was 58% and combined agreement was 25%, with only 16% of the girls rating this item *Neutral*. Only 12% of adults ranked the parallel item *Strongly Disagree*, with 35% combined disagreement and 44% combined agreement. Twenty percent of adults rated this item *Neutral* (see Figures 6 and 7 below).

Figure 6

Item #28 “...skin color makes a difference”

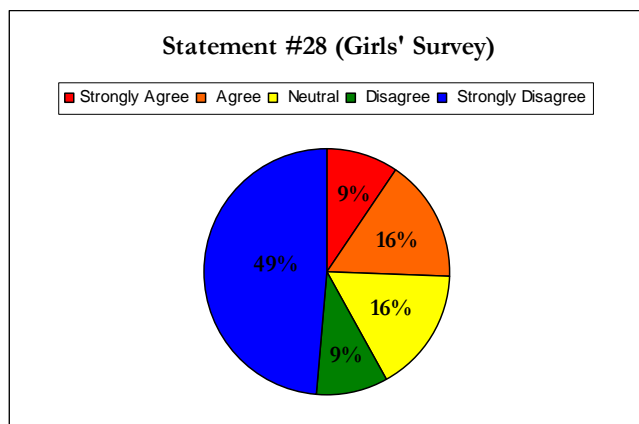
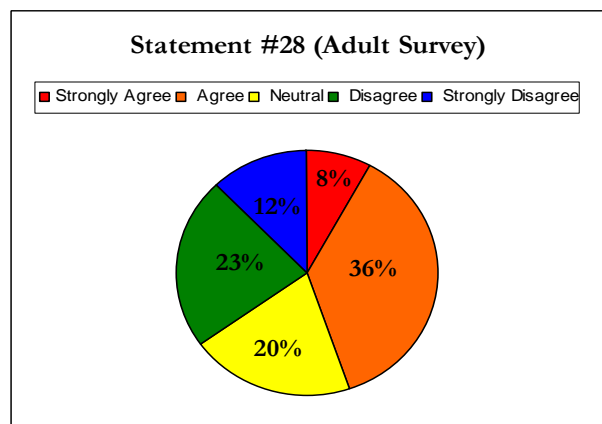


Figure 7

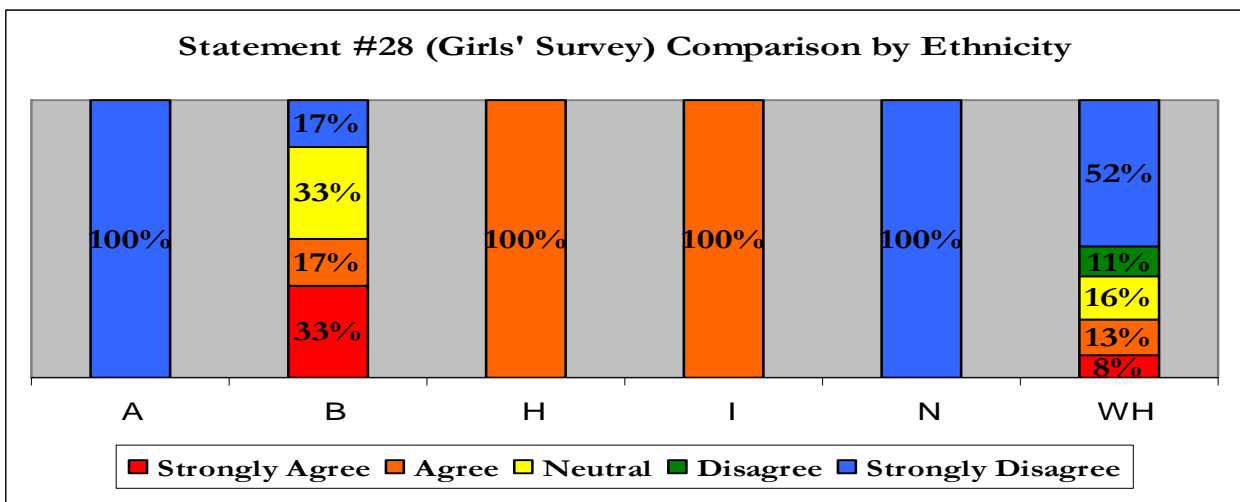
Item #28 “Cultural background affects...”



Looking closer at the girls’ responses to item 28, “A person’s skin color makes a difference in how they are treated,” interesting patterns emerge (see Figure 8). Even though ethnic demographic goals were met in sampling, the sample size was too small to place much credence in these results. Yet, since the girls completed their surveys individually—having no communication with other respondents—the patterns are intriguing and merit further exploration. All of the girls who identified themselves as Asian (A on Figure 8) or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (N on Figure 8) *Strongly Disagreed* that skin color makes a difference. On the other hand, all of the girls who identified themselves as Hispanic/Latina (H on Figure 8) or American Indian/Alaska Native (I on Figure 8) *Agreed* that skin color does make a difference. Thirty-three percent of Black/African American girls (B on Figure 8) *Strongly Agreed* that skin color makes a difference. Combined agreement was 50% and 33% rated this item *Neutral*. No Black/African American girls *Disagreed*, but 17% *Strongly Disagreed*. Among White/European American girls (W on Figure 8), only 8% *Strongly Agreed* that a person’s skin color makes a difference in how they are treated, 13% *Agreed*, 16% were *Neutral*, 11% *Disagreed*, and 52% *Strongly Disagreed*.

Figure 8. “A person’s skin color makes a difference in how they are treated”

Comparison of Girls’ Responses by Ethnicity



These findings suggest that society has made some progress, but has a lot more work to do in this area. They also suggest that there may be more or less diversity in perception as we examine ethnicities on an individual basis. Cultural competence training continues to be important, but systemic changes are critical. Research suggests that African American and Hispanic/Latina girls who have spent significant amounts of time in the residences of strongly linked kin are more likely to respond positively to a “club” atmosphere (Hirsch, Roffman, Deutsch, Flynn, Loder, & Pagado, 2000, p. 215). There are countless other system and format alternatives that need to be explored. Again, with this small sample size, it is impossible to project these findings; yet, they do provide some ideas for further exploration.

The last question on both the girls’ and adults’ survey was open-ended: Please list three things that make students good leaders. Forty-five percent of girls listed Confidence, 40% listed Kindness, and Respect was listed by 15%. Adults more than concurred that Confidence was important, with 65% of them including it on their list. Character, Communication, and Honesty were all represented at 19% on the adult listings; and Initiative was included by 16% of the adults. Although confidence was perceived as an important characteristic of good leaders by the largest percentage of both girls and adults, it should be noted that girls were somewhat more relational in their other choices. Again, this is consistent with recent generational research.

Summary and Conclusions

In today’s society, life presents challenges for girls that can be complex and confusing. Every day can be a struggle when girls are dealing with issues such as peer pressure, body image, self-confidence, academic choices, and self-esteem.

In reviewing the research material, the researchers noted a few revisions that could possibly improve future research. First, the surveys did not explore whether girls ages eight to thirteen really wanted to be leaders. The review of existing literature did not surface an answer to

this question, either. This focus would provide important information in designing and marketing future programs. The survey statements that were built around underlying themes found through literature review, could have been weighted more evenly. Survey items could possibly be written in more parallel fashion, in order to allow for optimal comparisons and contrasts. Another factor that could provide a different dimension would be the inclusion of boys as participants, in order to create a broader based perspective. Also, personal information such as disclosing home addresses and names presented an obstacle to most participants. This could be eliminated without compromising the survey findings. All in all, the results are valuable and can be utilized to illuminate future research areas. Ten primary findings have been summarized:

Figure 9

Summary of Findings

Eight- to Thirteen-Year-Old Girls...

- 1. Are more comfortable joining programs with a friend**
- 2. Are likely to stand up for their friends**
- 3. Believe that self-confidence is a prerequisite to leadership**
- 4. Would run for class president against either a girl or boy**
- 5. Want to make the world a better place**
- 6. Want to make lots of money at their future job**
- 7. Believe that girls make good leaders**
- 8. Enjoy taking charge of a project and believe people think they do a good job**
- 9. Do not worry much about what people think of them**
- 10. Do not link leadership with popularity**

This study helped to uncover some of the perceptions, concerns, and hopes of girls ages eight through thirteen. Being self-confident was cited as the most important prerequisite characteristic when deciding what makes a student a good leader! This is a resounding commercial for providing confidence-building skills and leadership opportunities for these very young girls. In this age group, their self-efficacy is high and this should be affirmed and developed. Girls need the opportunity to discover inner strengths which would enable them to practice leadership in their schools and communities. Having positive role models, who can listen and lead by example, can enable these girls to make good decisions, set boundaries, and play a key role in enhancing the quality of their own lives.

Education is also essential in the development of girls' futures. It can be used as a vehicle for reducing inequality and poverty in their communities. In addition, education can provide opportunities to polish oral and written communication skills, practice critical thinking, and acquire experience at many levels of leadership.

Programs for girls provide a safe environment for self-expression, the comfort of being able to join with trusted friends, the hope that they can make a difference in the world, the opportunity to grow from mentorship and positive adult role-modeling, and the confidence that allows them to be independent thinkers and attain success at living life to their fullest potential.

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APPENDIX A: EXISTING PROGRAMS – NEBRASKA AND METRO OMAHA

Local Programs	Website	Delineated Programs	Overview
Girl Scouts	www.girlsfirst.com	-Daisy Girl Scouts -Brownies -Juniors -Chapter (Ages 11-17) -Adult Section	Dedicated solely to girls - building character, self esteem, and life-long skills. Implement Family literacy projects.
Girls Inc.	www.Girlsinc.org	-Literacy, Economic Literacy -Leadership and Community Action -Operation Smart -Project Bold -Sporting Chance -Friendly PEERsuasion	Literacy programs; skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; self-defense; management money and investments.
College of Saint Mary	www.csm.edu	-CSI -CSM Legal Eagles -Grey's Anatomy -Girls Rock the Campus -Junior Zoologists -Latina Summer Academy -Athletic Camps	Camps offer opportunities for learning science, law, zoology, art, dance, swimming and sports.
YWCA	www.ywca.org	-Entrepreneurial Training for Teens	Logo: Eliminating Racism Empowering Women; represents over two million women, girls, and their families in the U.S.; 25 million worldwide.
Girls For A Change	www.girlsforachange.org	-Love your body -Itch your world -Get real	Realize your voice and power; create a safe and healthy community.
Underwood Hills Focus School	No web page established Physical Address: Near 90 th Street and Western Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska	-Academic School for grades 3-5 both boys and girls. Eventually to serve grades 3-8.	Specifically focused on leadership, technology, and communication.

Campfire USA	www.campfire.org	-Youth leadership -After School Groups -Camping and Environmental Education -Childcare	All-inclusive co-educational program (boys and girls). Building youth and adult partnerships.
FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)	www.fbla-pbl.org	-Promote skills to successful compete in job market -Manage personal skills -Participate in leadership development programs	FBLA – high school FBLA – middle level Phi Beta Lambda- post secondary students Professional Division- business people, alumni, parents
International Baccalaureate Program	www.ibo.org	-Knowledge, critical thinking skills -Achievement with citizenship -Learning through interaction	PYP (primary program) K-5 grades MYP (middle program) 6-10 grades DP (diploma) 11-12 grades
4-H	www.4h.unl.edu	- Arts, communication, leadership, community service, animals and plants, sciences, technology, environmental and communication programs.	Fourth largest youth organization in U.S. ages 5-19 including adults. Impacts all ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds.
Latino Leaders Club (also includes African-American Club and Multicultural Club) Omaha South High School	www.2ops.org	-Community Involvement -Higher Education -Pride	Student organization founded 10 years ago at Omaha South. Now expanded to include Bryan, Central, Burke, Bellevue West & East High Schools.
Hydro-Heroes A Youth Leadership Adventure	www.groundwater.org	-Workshops -Hands on experiments	2 day event to help students learn about water issues in their community. Includes water-treatment tour, Edgerton Explorit Center, water irrigation techniques. Ages 10-15.
Nebraska Beef Youth Leadership	www.custer.unl.edu	-Symposium for those interested in seeking career in the beef industry	Open to High School juniors and seniors. Promotes leadership development and personal interaction with those in the industry.

FBINAA Youth Leadership Program	www.fbinaa.org Nebraska Chapter: www.rfrock906@cox.net	-Leadership program for developing future law enforcement personnel.	Open to all incoming sophomores and juniors. Graduates from this program could be eligible for 3 college credits.
AIM Institute and Creighton University Business Administration (Youth Leadership Omaha)	www.aiminstitute.org Local contact: Kirsten Case (402) 978-7945.	-Leadership program to discuss issues of community. -Includes Omaha development, media and arts, government and the justice system, business and career development	Open to sophomores 22 metro-schools involved 120 applicants chosen with different ethnic, racial, socioeconomic backgrounds, with different leadership levels.
Building Community Capacity (Lincoln)	View at www.educationquest.org	-Self confidence -Leadership skills	Program introduced to help the needs of the Hispanic student.
Wheeler Elementary	www.mpsomaha.org	- Student Council - Destination Imagination	Student Council allows student to become involved in leadership position and decision making. -Destination Imagination encourages creativity, problem solving, team work, critical thinking.
Standard Bear Elementary	www.ops.org	-Character Counts	Building good social and character skills to become positive role models in their community.
Prairie Wind Elementary	www.ops.org	-Character Counts	Building good social and character skills to become positive role models in their community.
Castelar Elementary	www.ops.org	-Dual Language Program	Requires students to speak, understand, write and read two languages.

Edison Elementary	www.ops.org	-Character Counts	Building good social and character skills to become positive role models in their community.
Chandlerview Elementary	www.ops.org	-Gear It Up	Individual Mastery of District Standards.
Bess Streeter Aldrich Elementary	www.millard.esu3.org	-International Baccalaureate	Knowledge, critical thinking skills. Achievement with citizenship. Learning through interaction.
Cody Elementary	www.millard.esu3.org	- Student Council	Student Council allows student to become involved in leadership position and decision making.
Ezra Millard Elementary	www.millard.esu3.org	-Student Council	Student Council allows student to become involved in leadership position and decision making.
Mari Sandoz Elementary	www.millard.esu3.org	-Student Council	Student Council allows student to become involved in leadership position and decision making.
Gretchen Reeder Elementary	www.mpsomaha.org	-Therapy Dog	Allows student to be responsible for dogs that will later be used for the benefits of therapy.
Odle Middle School	www.bsd405.org	-Sister School Exchange Program in Japan	Enables student to participate in school exchange program.

Chinook Middle School	www.bsd405.org	-Leadership Club	Knowledge and social skills for being a leader.
Tillicum Middle School	www.bsd405.org	-Peer Tutoring	Student helping Students
Anderson Middle School	www.bsd405.org	-Ambassador Club -Peer Tutoring -Student Council	These clubs help students with decision making, leadership positions and helping other students.
Byran Middle School	www.ops.org	-African American History Challenge -Future Educators of America -Hispanic Employment Council -Youth Volunteer Corps	Variety of activities to enrich and provide students with leadership opportunities.
Alice Buffett Middle School	www.ops.org	-Student Ambassadors	Students help with outreach programs in their areas.
R.M. Marrs Magnet Center	www.ops.org	-Junior Academy of Information Technology	Assistance for students interested in pursuing computer related careers.
McMillan Middle School	www.ops.org	- Pre-engineering	Curriculum integrated to help those students interested in engineering careers.

Monroe Middle School	www.ops.org	-Focus on Medicine -Mustang TV	Focus on Medicine explores options for careers in medicine – Creighton University sponsors this program. Mustang TV- Students produce a monthly TV program that includes school news and community events.
Morton Magnet Middle School	www.ops.org	-Peer Positive Culture -Student Council	Provides leadership, decision making, and critical thinking skills.
Nathan Hale Middle School	www.ops.org	-Peer Positive Culture	Provides leadership, decision making, and critical thinking skills.
Russell Middle School	www.ops.org	- TeamMates Program	Adult- Youth mentoring.
Wahoo Public School	No Web Site Available	- Student Council	Student Council allows student to become involved in leadership position and decision making.
Bishop Neumann Saint Wencelaus (Wahoo)	No Web Site Available	-FFA -Adult/Youth Mentoring	Future Farmers of America. Volunteer Mentoring

APPENDIX B:

Girls' Survey

**A survey for a College of Saint Mary research team for the Women's Fund of Greater Omaha
College of Saint Mary permission number: CSM 08-15**

Instructions: Please give answers for the statements below using the scale system. Your individual answers to these questions will not be shared by anyone outside the College of Saint Mary research team. We will just group them into a summary that will be shared with the Women's Fund Research Committee.

Parent/Guardian/Teacher Instructions: Please do not answer the statements for your daughter/student or persuade her to answer the statements to your liking. You can help her understand the meaning of a statement.

Today's Date: _____

My Name: _____ Address: _____

My School: _____ My Age: _____

Ethnicity: ___ Hispanic/Latina ___ American Indian/Alaska Native ___ Asian ___ White/European American
___ Black/African American ___ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

Please rate the following statements using the scale below. Circle the number that best describes your feeling.

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

1. I enjoy taking charge of a project.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I can speak comfortably in front of others.	1	2	3	4	5
3. When I'm in charge, people think I'm bossy.	1	2	3	4	5
4. When I'm in charge, people think I do a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I make decisions easily.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I would feel comfortable being the President of a company.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I stand up for my friends when they are being picked on.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I would run for Class President against a boy.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I would run for Class President against a girl.	1	2	3	4	5
10. In the future, I want to make the world a better place.	1	2	3	4	5
11. In the future, I want to make a lot of money at my job.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I like clubs and activities best if they are like school.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I like clubs and activities best if they are different from school.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I believe that girls make good leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I believe that boys make good leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
16. My parents want me to be in extra clubs and activities.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I don't think much about what people think of me.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I worry about what people think of me.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I often receive information regarding girls' programs.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I feel nervous around other girls that are in charge.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I am more comfortable joining programs with a friend.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I am more comfortable joining programs alone.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Being a leader makes a girl more popular.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Being a leader makes a girl less popular.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Fear keeps girls from getting involved in leadership roles.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Self-confidence helps girls get involved in leadership roles.	1	2	3	4	5
27. The amount of money a family has makes a difference in how kids are treated.	1	2	3	4	5
28. A person's skin color makes a difference in how they are treated.	1	2	3	4	5

29. Please list three things that make students good leaders:

1.

2.

3.

APPENDIX C:

Adult Survey

A survey for a College of Saint Mary research team for the Women's Fund of Greater Omaha
College of Saint Mary permission number: CSM 08-15

Instructions: Please give answers for the statements below using the scale system. Your individual answers to these questions will not be shared by anyone outside the College of Saint Mary research team. We will just group them into a summary that will be shared with the Women's Fund Research Committee.

Today's Date: _____

Name: _____ Address: _____

Occupation: _____

Ethnicity: ___ Hispanic/Latina ___ American Indian/Alaska Native ___ Asian ___ White/European American
___ Black/African American ___ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

Please rate the following statements using the scale below. Circle the number that best describes your feeling.

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

1. Girls feel comfortable taking charge of a project.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Most girls speak comfortably in front of others.	1	2	3	4	5
3. There is a negative connotation when girls try to utilize their leadership	1	2	3	4	5
4. Girls in charge are perceived as doing a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Most girls make decisions easily.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Girls feel comfortable in leadership positions.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Girls tend to stick up for their friends when they are being picked on.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Girls feel comfortable running for Class President against a boy.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Girls feel comfortable running for Class President against a girl.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Girls value making the world a better place.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Girls value making a lot of money.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Clubs and activities are most interesting if they are like school.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Clubs and activities are most interesting if they are not like school.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I believe that girls make good leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I believe that boys make good leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Girls feel comfortable in clubs and activities.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Girls don't think much of what people think of them.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Girls worry about what people think of them.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I often receive information regarding girls' programs.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Girls feel insecure around other girls that are assertive.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Girls are more comfortable joining programs with a friend.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Girls are more comfortable joining programs alone.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Being a leader makes a girl more popular.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Being a leader makes a girl less popular.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Fear keeps girls from getting involved in leadership roles.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Self-confidence helps girls get involved in leadership roles.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Socio-economic situations affect girls' goals.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Cultural background affects girls' goals.	1	2	3	4	5

29. Please list three things that make students good leaders:

1.

2.

3.

APPENDIX D:



THE RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS*

AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT ASSOCIATED WITH COLLEGE OF SAINT MARY, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT:

1. TO BE TOLD EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE RESEARCH BEFORE YOU ARE ASKED TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO TAKE PART IN THE RESEARCH STUDY. The research will be explained to you in a way that assures you understand enough to decide whether or not to take part.
2. TO FREELY DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO TAKE PART IN THE RESEARCH.
3. TO DECIDE NOT TO BE IN THE RESEARCH, OR TO STOP PARTICIPATING IN THE RESEARCH AT ANY TIME. This will not affect your relationship with the investigator or College of Saint Mary.
4. TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH AT ANY TIME. The investigator will answer your questions honestly and completely.
5. TO KNOW THAT YOUR SAFETY AND WELFARE WILL ALWAYS COME FIRST. The investigator will display the highest possible degree of skill and care throughout this research. Any risks or discomforts will be minimized as much as possible.
6. TO PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY. The investigator will treat information about you carefully and will respect your privacy.
7. TO KEEP ALL THE LEGAL RIGHTS THAT YOU HAVE NOW. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by taking part in this research study.
8. TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT AT ALL TIMES.

THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSURING THAT YOUR RIGHTS AND WELFARE ARE PROTECTED. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS, CONTACT THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD CHAIR AT (402) 399-2400.

*ADAPTED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER, IRB WITH PERMISSION

7000 Mercy Road • Omaha, NE 68106-2606 • 402.399.2400 • FAX 402.399.2341 • www.csm.edu

Parent/Guardian Survey Permission Form

I hereby give my daughter permission to participate in a study about girls and leadership conducted by a College of Saint Mary Business Leadership research team for the Women's Fund of Greater Omaha.

I understand that my daughter has been given a set of survey statements to be answered. I understand that I cannot answer the statements for my daughter or persuade her to answer the statements to my liking. I can, however, help her understand the meaning of a statement.

I further understand that the individual answers to these statements will not be shared by others outside the College of Saint Mary research team or the Women's Fund of Greater Omaha Research Committee. All responses will be grouped and summarized for reporting purposes.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Address: _____

Parent/Guardian Occupation: _____

Child's Name(s): _____

Date: _____ Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Thank you for allowing your daughter to participate in this study!
-the College of Saint Mary Business Leadership research team

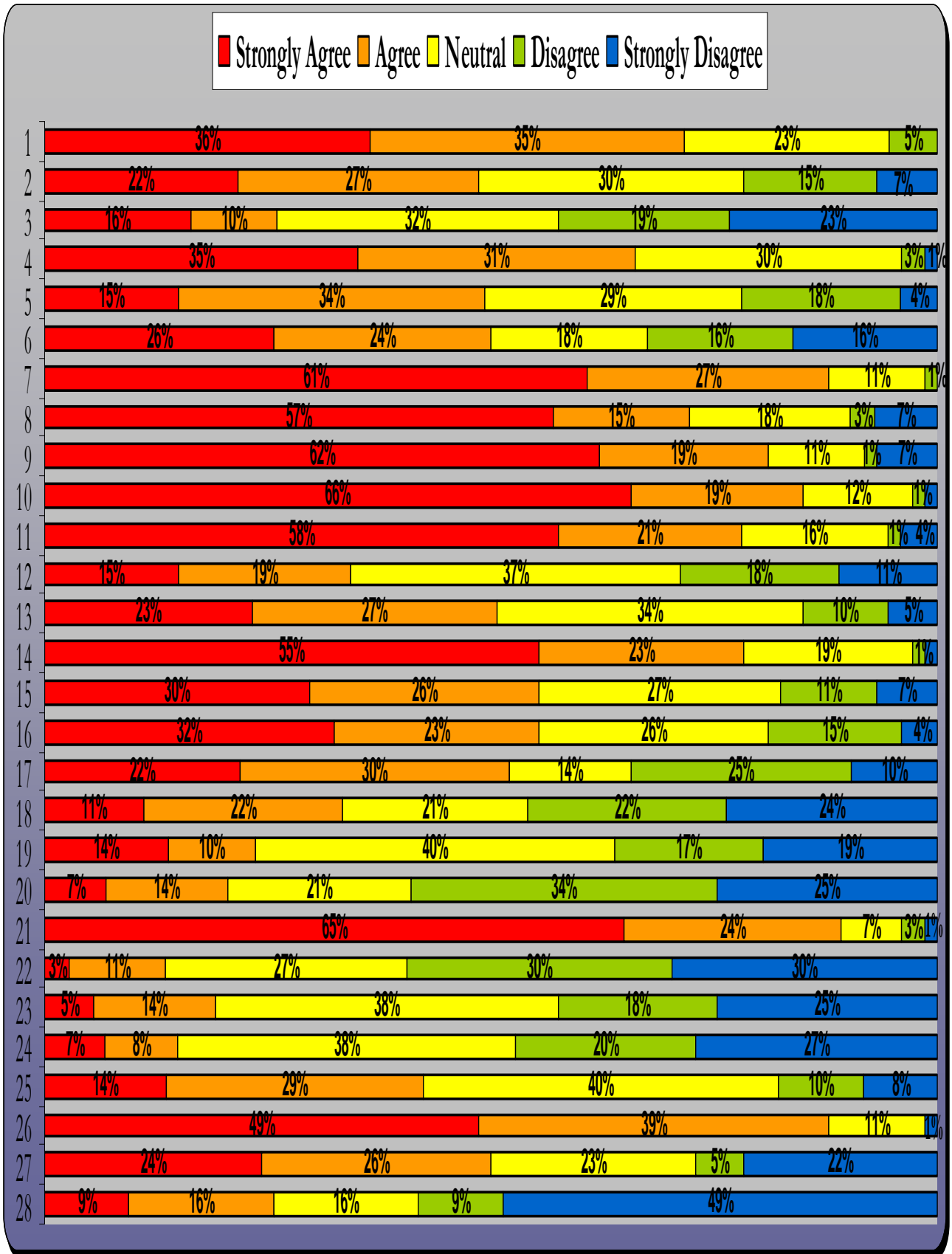
College of Saint Mary Permission Number:

IRB # CSM 08-15

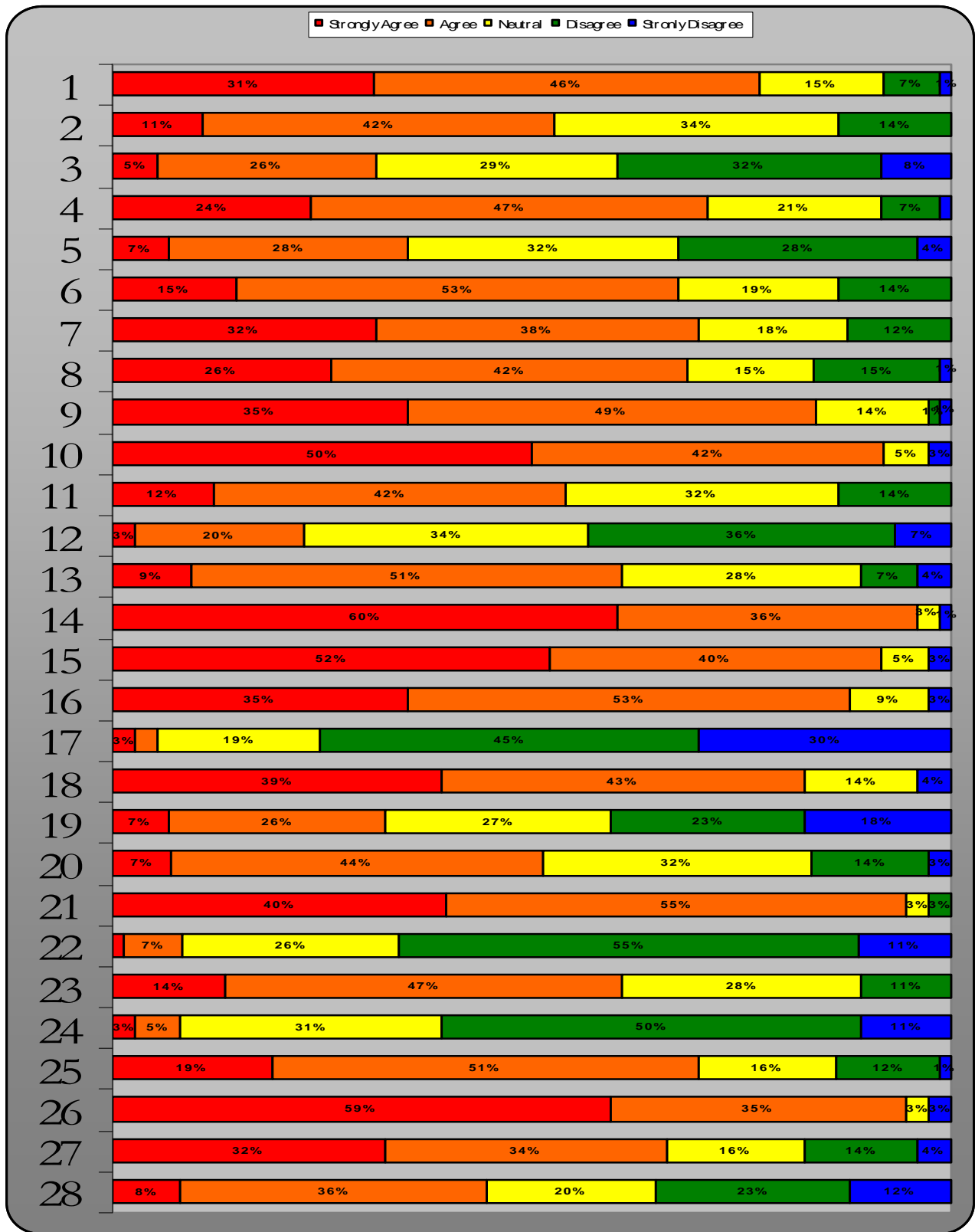
Date Approved April 25, 2008

Valid Until: April 25, 2009

APPENDIX E: GIRLS' SURVEY RESPONSES



APPENDIX F: ADULTS' SURVEY RESPONSES



Appendix G: Comparison of Girls' (left) and Adults' (right) Survey Results

