

Introduction

The aim of my research was to find out whether the commonly held view that 'Girls do better than boys' is valid. There are many reasons for this. Some have argued that girls are cleverer and more mature. Others have argued that changes in schools have benefited girls such as coursework. Others argue that their friends who encourage a laddish and anti education culture hold boys back. Finally some have argued that women's lives have changed over the past 30 years and they are more independent and career minded. This means that they have to do better in schools to succeed. These are five separate views and I intend to examine each in this coursework:

1. Boys swayed by anti-social behaviour
2. Girls are more independent
3. Girls work harder at course work than boys
4. Girls are more mature
5. Girls have more ability to concentrate than boys.

I have chosen this topic because in my school, girls do better than boys and I want to find out why!

Methodology

Sociologists use a variety of methods to gather information. There are three main ways:

1. Asking questions such as face to face interviews and postal questionnaires
2. Observing people such as direct or participant observation
3. Examining secondary sources such as official statistics or studying existing books and research.

I intend to ask questions and my sample will include adults in my school, pupils in my school and members of my family. I also intend to use secondary sources. I will concentrate on official statistics concerning examination results. I will look at government figures on GCSE and A-level passes.

My questionnaire will concentrate on the five possible reasons why girls do better in school. This questionnaire will allow my sample to express their views. I am not going to do face-to-face interviews as it takes too much time, so I am going to do a questionnaire and I am going to get my results from a quick answer from students aged from 11-17 in my school.

The advantages of a face-to-face interview are

- Gives us chance to get to know the person.
- Learn about background information.
- To understand the person and their views.
- Able to explain question if they don't understand.

The disadvantages of face-to-face interviews are

- They may not be entirely truthful.
- They might hesitate to answer the questions.

The advantages to a quick answer questionnaire are

- Quick brief answers
- Doesn't take long
- One worded answers

The disadvantages to a quick answer questionnaire are

- Not an accurate answer
- May not be able to explain their answers to back up their answers
- Could lose the paper and lose results.

Ethics

I am aware that when I was doing my questionnaires I had to consider the privacy of everybody's details, whether it was the address or the age of the person who is answering, but either way I made sure their details remains anonymous. When doing the open questionnaire I made sure that there was straightforward question's to keep the amount of personal information to a minimum.

My questionnaire on its own will only provide some information on why girls do better than boys in schools. So I will examine the huge amounts of government information on this subject. I will look at GCSE and A level results and sees if there any subjects where boys do better than girls or are nearly as good. I will give my views about this.

"Exam officials released figures to show that 10 years ago, 32 per cent of girls achieved A-C grades in GCSE maths compared with 36 per cent of boys. Last year, 46 per cent of girls notched up A-C grades compared with 44 per cent of boys. In English, girls last year led by a massive 61 to 45 per cent. A-level results for around 250,000 students are also expected to show that girls are getting a slightly higher overall score than boys. However, the gender gap is expected to vary in different subjects"*

Content

As already mentioned my questionnaire looked at four possible reasons why girls do better than boys in schools:

- Boys are swayed by anti social behaviour.
- Girls are more independent.
- Girls work harder than boys.
- Girls are more mature.
- Girls have more ability to concentrate than boys.
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- My questionnaire looked at the views of teachers, students and people from my family.

Boys are swayed by anti social behaviour

71% of students believed that boys are swayed by anti social behaviour.

22% of teachers believed that boys are swayed by anti social behaviour.

89% of people in my family believed boys are swayed by anti social behaviour.

Girls are more independent

68% of students believed that Girls are more independent.

54% of teachers believed girls are more independent.

67% of people in my family believed that girls are more independent.

Girls work harder than boys

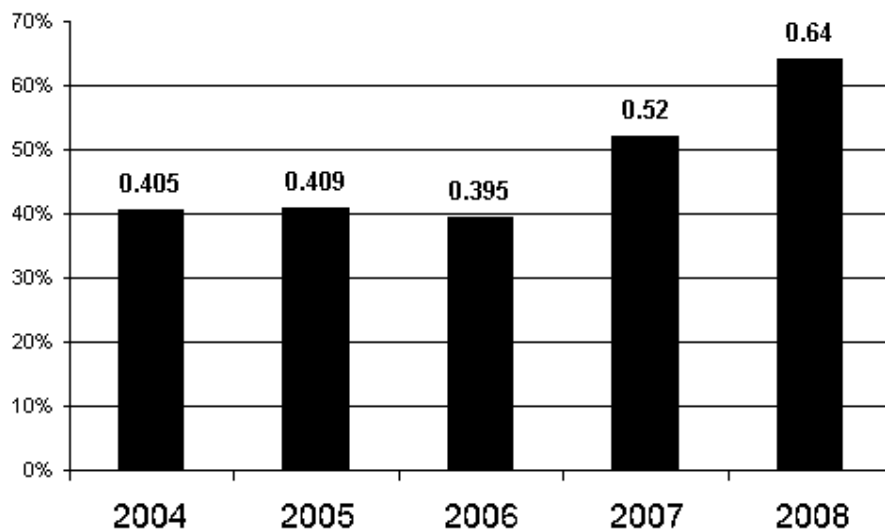
63% of students believed that girls work harder than boys

79% of teachers believed that girls work harder than boys

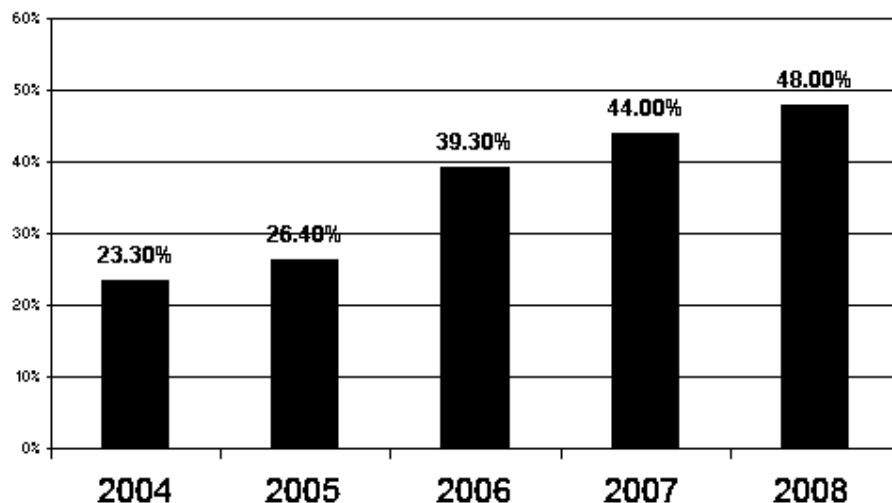
61% of people in my family believed girls work harder than boys

From looking the evidence from observing Mr Stead's maths lesson, it shows that boys are swayed by anti-social behaviour. I.e. messing about with their friends during the lesson, so this suggests that girls are more mature than boys, due to knowing they need to stay on task, and are more capable of staying on task. Also from looking at the evidence of the lesson, I could see that girls were more prepared for the lesson i.e. fully equipt, boys were not as prepared as girls, so this suggests that 'girls are more independent' and have the ability to make sure they are prepared for the lesson. Both girls and boys successfully achieved making progress during lesson. Although girls were making more progress at a higher level, also more girls handed in their homework, where as where hardly any boys who handed in their homework. This suggests that girls are more independent and can achieve more independent study as the others.

Females Gaining 5 GCSE A* - C

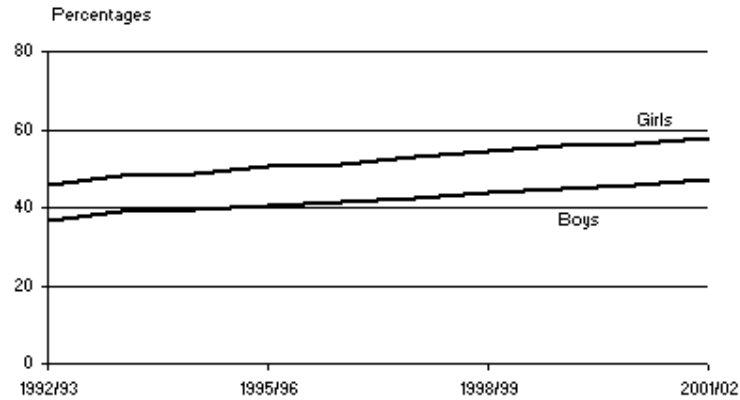


Males Gaining 5 GCSE A* - C



These bar charts show the GCSE results from 2007, in Bebington High Sports College.

Gcse



Girls generally perform better than boys at GCSE. In 2001/02, 58 per cent of girls in their last year of compulsory education achieved five or more GCSE grades A*-C, compared with 47 per cent of boys. Forty three per cent of young women gained two or more A levels or equivalent compared with 34 per cent of young men.

A-Level



Over recent years there has been an increase in the proportion of both young women and young men in the UK who gain two or more GCE A levels (or equivalent). This increase has been more marked among women. Between 1992/93 and 2001/02 the proportion of women gaining this result more than doubled from 20 per cent to 43 per cent. Over the same period the proportion of men increased from 18 per cent to 34 per cent.

At A level, women outperformed men in virtually all subject groups in 2000/01. With the exception of

only General Studies, English Literature and some languages, a greater proportion of women than men achieved grades A-C.

Analysis

My research does not produce definite reasons for why girls do better than boys in schools. Much more detailed research is required before definite answers can be given.

Analysis of questionnaire

From looking at the results of the questionnaires it is quite clear, that teachers don't strongly agree to the statement as much as parents and students do. Parents and students agree with at least one of the reasons, which I have said. But not all teachers agreed with one of my reasons. This may be due to teachers having a first hand account of Girls and Boys working in the class, and has more experience of work and coursework from either sex.

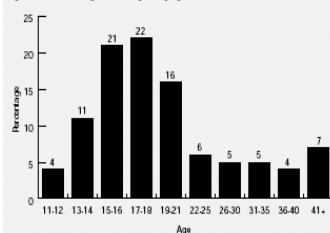
Boys swayed by anti-social behaviour, had the highest percentage from the pupils results. I think that Pupils believe that this is the reason due to them seeing boys in their 'groups of mates', and they don't see one another revising, or working independently.

Members of my family seem to concentrate on the view that Girls are more independent, I think this is due to them seeing a first hand account of girls revising and males revising. In my family, there is 5 girls and 3 boys. And the majority of the boys revised, and all the girls bar one revised. This shows the independency of the Girls and the Boys.

Boys swayed by anti-social behaviour

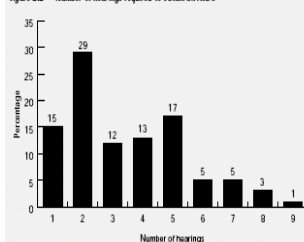
Of the 343 successfully granted ASBOs for which there is data. It can be seen that the majority of ASBOs are given to men (84%). There are slightly more juveniles given ASBOs than adults. This backs up my primary source the groups in their classes sway evidence that shows that boys inside the lesson. E.g. talk during explanations also mess about with their friends during lessons. I have seen for myself that boys would prefer to go out with friends than do coursework, whereas girls would stay in until their coursework was completed.

Figure 2.1 Percentage of ASBOs given by age



Note: n=322
Figures do not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Figure 2.2 Number of hearings required to obtain an ASBO



Note: n=157

Table 2.3 Age of respondent by sex

	Female	Male	Ratio
Under 21	15 (7%)	204 (93%)	1 : 14
Over 21	25 (31%)	56 (69%)	1 : 2

Table 2.2 Breakdown of ASBOs by sex and age

	Number	Percent
Males	298	84
Female	55	16
Under 18	186	58
Over 18	136	42

Girls are more independent

There is no evidence of girls are more independent from secondary sources but I do have primary sources of my own accounts, to back up that Girls are more independent. I have my own personal experiences 'Girls are more independent'. Also the questionnaire I gave to the teachers agreed girls are more independent due to Girl's staying behind when possible and boys tend to only stay behind if they have a friend there.

Girls work harder at course work than boys

I have evidence of 'girls work harder at course work than boys' from primary sources; I gave out an open questionnaire, to the teachers in my school and 72% of teachers of Maths English and Science, and 84% of teachers from other subject agreed. I personally think that Girls put more effort into their course work, as Girls generally tend to feel that presentation is key part to their coursework. I have personally seen it for myself in lessons and also at home. The girls in my lesson's as well as at home tend to work harder in the sense of taking longer on their work than boys.

Girls are more mature

There is no solid evidence from secondary sources that girls are more mature, but when I watched over Mr Stead's lesson, from the things I picked up in the lesson; it showed that girls are generally more mature in the aspect that they were better behaved, well equipped, working as a member of a group, asking relevant questions and just generally being prepared for a lesson. I personally think that girls are more mature from my own experience. The girls in my house are more mature than the girls, in the views of schoolwork and also the Girl's in my school from the years 10 and above realise that they are very crucial where as Boy's don't.

Girls have more ability to concentrate than boys.

From the evidence I collected when looking over Mr Stead's lesson, it was clear that Girl's had the ability to concentrate more than Boys. The entire girls bar one was completely on task, where as the majority of boys were not on task. I personally think that girls do have the ability to concentrate more than boys from my own experience, during lessons and from the quality of coursework. I also see the concentration difference in lessons, which I attend.

Evaluation

The aim of my research was to find out whether the commonly held view that 'Girls do better than boys' is valid. So I looked up Secondary sources and also primary sources. I found from my primary sources, that they thought that my aim is correct. Teachers had evidence and own experiences to say why they thought Girls do better than boys. People from home only had personal experience to say why they agreed with 'Girls do better than boys'. It was the same with the pupils, which participated. My secondary sources back up and provide me with information to show that girls do better than boys. With the 5 bullet points I realise there will be more reasons for why girls do better than boys.

I have enough information and enough research to show that 'Girls do better than boys in school'. But I could extend my research if I were to have more time. E.g. if I were to have another year to complete this, I could have travelled to other parts of Europe and found out whether it's just Britain who seem to fit this predicament, which is known fact. Also I could go and look at other schools and also look at the surroundings of each area, and see whether it is the surrounding/environment or whether it is the school's or whether it's just the pupils themselves, to make it apparent that girls do better than boys in school.

If I were to have more time I would research whether it is just the five bullet points that I have included or whether there is something bigger to make girls outperform boys in school, to see whether it were to do with the school, the students, the teachers, the environment or whether it is due to the quality of the education in the country.

Also I would investigate whether, during Mr Stead's lesson, was the outcome of the lesson due to the teacher or was it because of the children. I would also look at whether the outcome of the lesson i.e. the behaviour and the concentration of the students, would be the same in any other lesson. I would look at a variety of lessons e.g. English, maths, and science. And also non-compulsory lessons, e.g. Btec sport and art etc... I would see whether it was the quality of the teacher, or whether it is the behaviour of the children, or whether it is the lesson plan, which made the outcome of the lesson, how it was.

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