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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The research seek to examine the difference between attending a single sex school and coeducational school, with the aim of finding out how the school that one attends may either promote better scholarly and academic attainment or negatively affects one's academic expectations. Single sex school means boys and girls attending separate schools or settings, while coeducation is a set up where both boys and girls study in the same class room or school. **Aim:** the main aim of the research is to investigate the effect of school type on students' Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy and Academic Expectations. **Method:** the study is a quantitative, cross-sectional design, the variables includes school, Self-esteem, Self-efficacy and academic expectations. A questionnaire combing Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, and Academic Expectation was distributed to 106 participants in their first year in Dublin Business School. Participants reported moderate level of self-esteem, high level of self-efficacy and high level of academic expectations, the analysis of the results and finding showed weak and moderate association between variables. **Conclusion:** single sex school and coeducational school have different impact on the performances and academic expectations of students, the investigation favoured coeducation to provide better environment for both boys and girls.

**Key words:** Single sex, Coeducational school, Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, Academic Expectations.

## CHAPTER: 1 INTRODUCTION

### **Introduction**

School is one of the contexts in Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development, it is a place designed for teaching and learning, it usually under the direction of instructors or teachers. There are formal and in informal school, most countries operate a system of formal education, which always follow a progression from primary school for young children to secondary school for teenagers and to higher institution or university. The informal school could take any form or shape depending on context and reasons for the school. For example, home school and online school which may be at your convenience, does not require you attending classes for lecture in class rooms or lecture halls.

School in this context could either be single-sex education or schooling which is a system where by male and female students study in separate classes, schools or building as the case may be. This type was well practiced before the mid-twentieth century and in many cultural setting it was adopted because of tradition and religion as seen in many countries in the

Middle East where it is predominant. American science (2011). While coeducational school which is the exact opposite of single sex school, it is a system of education which allows both boys and girls in the same classroom, school or building.

Schools, whether single sex or coeducational will either have negative or positive impact on students' self-esteem, self-efficacy and general academic, scholarly expectation and success. It is a matter of context because individual difference may account for different rate or level of achievement in life, therefore it will not be an overstatement that some students will excel more than others in a given circumstance or school type. This issue of single sex school versus coeducational school have been subject of debates and investigations by various study groups and researchers such as Lee & Marks (1990). Single sex secondary schooling provide one temporary way to overcome stereotype which supports social pressure from peers and teachers and most especially disrupt or neutralize the impact of adolescent gender intensification on academic and career choices. This argument was further supported by others studies by Shapka and Keating (2003). Which was carried out at high school level, the result showed that female students in single sex school or classroom were well favoured more than those in coeducational schools. Another investigation this time on boys also indicates that boys from single sex school in the United Kingdom and Australia are very much likely to go into gender neutral courses or subjects than those in coeducational schools (Lawrie and Brown 1992 cited in psychology of women 2007). It is also believed that single sex secondary schooling gives adolescents an "enriched moratorium period with respect to vocational development" (Monaco and Gaier 1992)

It is important to note that social pressure to stick to gender stereotype courses does not end in high school but continues to college level and further still to working world which by implication promote sex based division in workforce and as a matter of fact leads to wage gap between male and females Hyde (2007) and Jacobs (1995 cited), but this gender gap can be

closed through single sex education, according to two recent studies by (Thompson, 2003, Jones and Richards 2003 cited in psychology of women 2007) which shows that both girls and boys who attend single sex high school are very likely to choose gender neutral college courses than their counterparts from coeducational high schools. The main reason is that they feel free to choose any course and not being pressured to stick to gender stereotype as could be the case when there are both sexes in the same school or class, one important thing to consider about both studies is that the sample were from people who were believed to have attended secondary school before 1990, so in that case it could be argued whether the difference they identified can be applied to today's students. Furthermore those who are advocating for single sex education are of the opinion that it will encourage student scholarly excellence and expectation bearing in mind that females and males have different rate of understanding and information processing, what this means is that the same teaching technique may not be effective for both females and males (National association for single sex public education 2006 as cited in American science 2011).

With all the good reasons for single education, there are many who are opposed to it, saying that it does not provide the good learning environment which represent a real life set up, more so in the study with interest on egalitarian attitude is not real clear because it seems that most likely difference between single sex and coeducational secondary school have been behaviour rather than attitudinal Shapka and Keating (2003), considering many studies on the students choices of non-traditional areas in high school, most of them have not been able to find out any difference in girls attitudes towards of perceived competence in mathematics or science. A study however found out that girls in single sex class reported self-effort in mathematics, but also found that effort and two other maths perception variable were correlated to persistence in math courses, therefore ridding on the back of these counterintuitive result, it suggest that overt attitudes about a particular subject are not potent factors in the different

course choice of students in single sex versus coeducational programs Shapka and Keating (2003).

It is interesting to note what Salomme (2003) said, “ there are some indications that single sex classes may develop greater self-confidence and broader interests especially among adolescents girls who reports that they feel more comfortable, interact more with teachers and develop more favourable attitudes towards maths and science, in like manner single sex schooling encourages boys to develop interest in humanities courses example, studying Nursing without feeling much pressure from society as male in that field. With this in mind one can say that single sex schooling would play down on stereotypes. Advocate of single sex school suggests that gender norms of behaviour are more strictly enforce in mixed setting for both sexes, because of this it will be difficult for girls to show interest and ability in maths and science, similarly difficult for boys to show interest and ability in English and modern languages in coeducation than single sex school. British educational research (2009), coeducation peers, and may be teachers also in coeducation schools may have the tendency to punish those who demonstrate gender-atypical interest and ability through expression of social disapproval. If this is the case, then one would expect that girl’s self-concept in masculine subjects and boy’s self-concept in feminine subject will be higher in single-sex school British educational research (2009).

Riordan (1998, 2002), has modified his position and view about school type after reviewing his studies and that of other researchers. He has taken the view that single-sex schools work for some pupils in some circumstances and most likely for reasons less to do with separating the sexes than with what that separation says about the school. In his more recent research he has found that while “the academic and developmental consequences of attending one type of school versus another are typically insignificant for middle-class or otherwise advantaged

students”, effects are detectable for students who are historically or traditionally disadvantaged.

Coeducational school is a system that gives a very good opportunity to acquire and highlight skills that will enable students interact with peer of all genders, even in the larger society. It also encourages better mental and emotional situation Mael (1998). Coeducational high school provides a more natural social environment to prepare adolescents to take their place in a society of men and women than do single-sex schools. Dale,(1969,1971,1974). This view affected public single-sex schools negatively, Coleman, (1961), ( Goodlad, 1984 cited in journal of education 1989), coeducation may be detrimental to the academic or social development of girls. (Horner 1968, 1970 cited in journal of education psychology 1974) increased cross sex competition for academic and professional achievement as seen in coeducation increases fear of success in females than in single-sex school. A good point to note here is that academic success and expectations mostly for females are attributed to effort and ability and failure to lack of ability (Wolleat, Pedro, Becker and Fennema, 1980, Meece, Eccles-Parson, Kaczala, Goff and Futterman, 1982, Rychman and Peckham, 1987 cited in social psychology of education 2003), while those who are opposed to single-sex education says that it does not provide the good learning environment which represent a real life set up

Another widely held belief is that co-educational schooling is more like real life so adjustment is easier to the mixed environment of university. This received some support from an early study by Harris (1986) who carried out a survey of first-year Australian university students. She found that most, especially those who had attended one themselves, believed that co-educational schools lead to a more natural attitude towards the opposite sex.

In a study which was conducted among first-year university students in England Smithers and Robinson, (1997), shows that both young men and young women tended to report somewhat

more difficulty in adjusting socially to a university if they were from a single-sex school, but the differences were not statistically significant. In the same study (Robinson and Smithers, 1999) also explored who were more satisfied with their school experience. They were asked to think ahead to when they would have children and asked which type of schooling they would prefer for them. It was recorded that nearly all those from co-educational schools wanted the same type for their children, but those from single-sex schools were much less likely to opt for single-sex education. By implication it could be interpreted that co-educated students were more satisfied with their school experience.

Consequently, Parents can hold strong views on whether single-sex or co-education would be better for their children. The merging of the girls' school and boys' school which was studied by the Australian team (Marsh et al, 1989, Smith, 1996) was prompted by pressure from parents who were convinced that a co-educational school would provide a better social and academic environment for their children. But other parents in other parts of the world due to variety of reasons such as personal, social, cultural and religious would strongly opt for single-sex education.

Early research was reviewed in Smithers and Robinson (1995). They reported that West and Hunter (1993) found that parents' views differed markedly according to whether their own sons and daughters were at single-sex or mixed schools. Those with children at co-educational schools tended to take the view that they were a better preparation for life and there was no reason to separate the sexes; those choosing a single-sex school believed that girls and boys developed at different rates and girls-only schools allowed girls to acquire more self-confidence.

These findings are consistent with other research (West and Varlaam, 1991; Robinson and Smithers, 1999) suggesting that parents' choice of school is made mainly on whether it is

perceived to be a good school. But Jackson and Bisset also detected among some of the parents' choices which as a matter of fact supported Dale's findings that while co-education may have benefits for boys, single-sex education can be perceived to have advantages for girls. However there is an argument that it may be a matter of impression than fact, since Smith (1996) contends that his results, which show social advantages for both sexes, "undermine the myth that co-educational schools are good for boys and bad for girls."

Some studies carried to know the views of pupils and teachers who have experienced both single-sex and co-educational schools, and a ten-year follow up in Australia of schools that had changed from single-sex to mixed (Smith, 1996) found that teachers believed that both boys and girls preferred co-education. They reported that behaviour was worse for girls, but not boys, in co-educational schools, and girls in girls' schools were more competitive. But the attitudes of the teachers who had worked in the single-sex schools remained ambivalent. In particular, they thought that girls suffered in maths and sciences. When it was pointed out that an analysis of the results showed that this was not the case, it became clear that they were not reporting their actual experience but had bought into what they thought was a widely accepted belief.

Gender, socio-economic status and race interacted. He found that the impact of attending a single-sex school was greatest for African-American and Hispanic females from low-income homes, somewhat less for their male counterparts, less still for white middle-class females, with no differences found for white males or affluent students regardless of gender or race. He suggests that the important thing about single-sex education in the American context is what it tells you about the parents' and pupils' concern for and support for education: "in selecting a single-sex school ... students reject the anti-academic norms that permeate most public schools

## Self-Esteem

Self-Esteem is related to the way an individual feel about their abilities and inner thought (Powell 2004). It is the product of two internal assessment or judgements, the global judgment and one's self-worth, the key to self-esteem is that the amount of discrepancy between what a person desires and what that person believes he / she has achieved and the overall sense of support that person feels from people around him or her Rosenberg, (1965). The findings for self-esteem (pride in oneself) are similarly mixed. Of the six studies listed by Mael et al (2005), one found it to be higher in single-sex schools, two in co-educational schools, and three found no difference. Brutsaert and Bracke (1994) in Belgium found higher self-esteem for boys in single-sex junior schools compared with their contemporaries in co-educational junior schools, but no difference for girls. They suggested that the higher self-esteem of boys was due to the presence of more male teachers. Sanders (1992) also studied elementary schools (in Milwaukee), but in contrast to Brutsaert and Bracke found that self-reported self-esteem was higher in a co-educational environment, in this case for African-American males. Riordan (1994) also found that black and Hispanic males developed higher self-esteem in co-educational than in single-sex settings, but no difference was found for girls.

Furthermore it has been argued by the supporters of single sex schooling, that coeducational schooling damages boys' self-esteem, partly because female teachers cannot act as adequate role models or authority figure for boys. Considering this, it would be expected that boy's academic self-concept and expectation will be increased in single-sex schooling British educational research (2009). On the other hand single-sex schooling for girls provide conducive environment for girls better self-esteem more than mixed educational one, where boys tend to dominate especially when it comes to maths and sciences.

With this in mind, it is then not improper to say that the type of school either single sex or coeducational may affect self-esteem which will in turn affect the expectation, this is because as it were, high self-esteem will affect students positively, they will feel good about themselves, feel happier, more sociable and also tend to do well academically while in same vein low self-esteem leads to many negative outcome, most of all poor academic achievement Rosenberg (1965).

### **Self-Efficacy**

Self-Efficacy refers to an individual belief about their capabilities to carry out a particular course of action successfully Bandura (1995). Student Self-efficacy is the belief that one is capable of exercising personal control over his behaviour, thinking and emotions. In addition, the student believes in his ability, that he can excel and attain whatever academic expectations or goals he set for his / her self. According to Trentham et al. (1985) people with strong and high self-efficacy belief tend to be more satisfied with their job and demonstrate more commitment and have lower absenteeism.

Bandura (1977, 1986 and 1989). Self-efficacy is defined in “of one’s skills in given domain” it is therefore domain specific. It is one’s ability to achieve in certain domains and consequently leads to a person’s heightened self-esteem, a further observation might question if self-efficacy is affected, and how this might reflect on person self-esteem. Bandura (1997), Wigfield and Eccles (2000) noted that directed experience is a prime contributor to self-efficacy or achievement choice applied to academic self-efficacy. This suggests that earlier negative academic performance is likely to lessen students’ belief in their ability to achieve academically. Bandura (1997). A sense of power and over one’s environment affects a person’s self-efficacy. This may be negative or positive such as the risk factor at home and school. In one study children reported safety and other student’s behaviour problem as the

major barriers to academic expectation. In addition adult who serve as role model may increase self-efficacy by way of providing encouragement to students. Zimmerman (2000).perceived support from parents, teacher, school and peers has been linked to higher academic self-efficacy Bandura et al. (2001) another important factor that affect one's self-efficacy and academic expectation and doing well in school, is the reward system which may be intrinsic or extrinsic in nature Ryan & Deci (2000).

### **Academic Expectations**

Success in any meaningful endeavour is marked by a history of high expectations that provide the challenge and inspiration necessary to press the individual to his or her highest level of performance. Though there are supportive components of success such as environment, general and special abilities, personal work habits and attitudes, and even chance Tannenbaum, (1997). Expectations of individuals are also critical, since people tend to strive to accomplish what is expected of them. In both cases, without high expectations, individuals invariably drift toward mediocrity or even failure. Here for the purpose of this study, academic expectations among other variable like self-esteem and self-efficacy will be investigated.

The strong relationship between expectations and academic achievement has been well established both theoretically and empirically Johnson, et al. (2000), Marzano,( 2003). Schools with exceptional levels of academic achievement consistently demonstrate high expectations and goals supported by data-driven collaboration and on-going assessments Schmoker, (2001). Within the individual classroom and school, there is a clear correlation between teacher expectations and student achievement. “

Good school environment and effective teaching encourages student academic expectations and achievement, it also provide an enabling situations that will help students to strive to meet those expectations Stronge, (2002). Parents' expectations have been shown to be a

significant predictor of student success across age groups, races, and nationalities Seginer, (1983); Kaplan et al.( 2001). For this reason, the relationship between expectations and achievement has remained a recurring theme in education reform discussions since Ronald Edmonds spawned the effective schools movement (Thomas and Bainbridge, 2001).

Certainly, there are other factors that augment high expectations, but the linchpin of academic achievement is high expectations. Even if educators could straighten out all of the supporting factors such as school type, finance, teacher quality, equity issues, and so on.

According to Fan & Wolter (2000) the idea that school characteristics have different effects on different students is important. One thing it does is make a strong case for school choice that has nothing to do with competition or market incentives. Imagine a family that has one good school option suddenly gets a second option of equivalent quality. Just because the schools have the same average performance it doesn't mean the schools will be the same for their child. Perhaps one school uses more technology, has a better basketball court, or assigns more homework. Perhaps it has a stronger culture of high expectations. None of these things are inherently good or bad, nor do they automatically raise the average performance of all students, but they will be good or bad for individual students. And so even though a random student wouldn't be better off at one school or the other, individual students will be better off at one school rather than the other.

Riordan and his colleagues (Baker et al, 1995) have also made the very interesting discovery that higher achievement in single-sex schools tends to be found only in national educational systems where such schools are relatively rare. They compared single-sex schools in four countries with different single-sex enrolments: Belgium (68 per cent), New Zealand (48 per cent), Thailand (19 per cent) and Japan (14 per cent). They observed that the smaller the proportion of single-sex schools, the more there would be an achievement differential. This is

supported by results from Ireland, both north and south, where pupils are more evenly spread between single-sex and co-educational schools, and academic achievement appeared unaffected by which was attended (Daly, 1996; Hannan et al 1996; McEwen et al, 1997). Riordan (1998) suggests that when single-sex schools are rare, “the pro-academic choice made by parents and students will result in a more select student body, which will bring with it heightened academic demands.”

There is thus little decisive evidence for either girls or boys achieving more in single-sex or co-educational schools. But it is still believed that there are effects. Smith (1996) in Australia studied the changes in a boys’ school and a girls’ school that were brought together to form two co-educational schools. He found that there were no academic disadvantages for either sex in the change, but rather there were social advantages. Nevertheless, the teachers believed that girls did less well in the „male“ subjects, but when the actual analysis of the results was shown they were surprised, and their explanation showed that their perceptions had been “influenced by the community belief that co-educational schools are „bad“ for girls” achievement, especially in male-dominated subjects.”

The pioneering research in the field was conducted by Dale (1969, 1971, and 1974) over a 26-year period when the norm was single-sex education, and co-education was struggling for a hearing. He summarized his findings on grammar schools in England as demonstrating that, “the average co-educational grammar school is a happier community for both staff and pupils than the average single-sex school, it has been equally demonstrated that this happiness is not at the expense of academic progress” (p 273). This advantage of co-educational schooling emerged more strongly for boys leading Dale to offer a cautious summing up that the progress of boys is probably improved by co-education while that of girls is not harmed (p 269). His theme that co-education provides a more realistic and socially authentic environment has entered popular consciousness

The aim of this present study is to investigate what impact attending a single -sex school or coeducational school will have on the student's self-esteem, self -efficacy and academic expectations among university students. This research is being conducted with the hope that it will bring more light on the effect of single-sex and coeducational school not only to the students, but also to the society with the hope that education planners will find it helpful in shaping education curriculum and policies that will take into account various contexts.

The few research studies on this area had been mostly internationally done for example in the United States of America, Australia, England, New Zealand, and Belgium with just a few in Ireland. It is aim of the research to examine how our school system affects the Self-esteem, Self-efficacy and Academic expectations of the students in Ireland. Interestingly the population is growing rapidly and very multicultural with many people from different ethnic, cultural and racial origin now in Ireland. Consequently the educational system should expand and policies should incorporate the changes the Irish population is experiencing. It also important to note, that there has not been much research in the area of academic expectation with reference to the school type either single sex or coeducational. Therefore the purpose of this study is investigate what type of effect or impact the school one attends may have on his general performances with regards to his / her Self-esteem, Self-efficacy and Academic expectations.

**The main hypotheses for the research are:**

There will be higher academic expectations in single schools sex school than in coeducational schools.

Academic expectation for girls will be higher than boys both in single-sex school and coeducational school.

There will be no significant difference between self-esteem in both single sex school and coeducational schools.

There will be a positive relationship between self-esteem and academic expectations in both single-sex schools and coeducational schools.

There will be a relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem in both single sex school and coeducational school.

It was hypothesised that there will be significant relationship between self-esteem and academic expectations for both girls and boys

## **CHAPTER 2: METHOD**

### **PARTICIPANTS**

There were 106 participants (m=48, f=58) with a mean age of 26.81 years for males and a mean age 27.37 years for females, 23 of them attended single sex schools and 80 of the participants attended coeducational schools taken across a wide range of first year university students of Dublin business school Ireland, which included those who are coming fresh from secondary schools and some mature students who have some years of work experience but are in their first year in university. Convenience sample was employed, it was voluntary without any incentive or reward and it was administered to them in their various classes during lecture time with the permission of the lecturer in the class.

### **DESIGN**

A Cross-section, between participants, quantitative questionnaire design was used and the predictor variables are school type and gender. The criterion variables are self-esteem, self-efficacy and academic expectation, it was a convenient sample, survey and self-report type

## **MATERIALS / APPARATUS**

### Self-esteem

Rosenberg M. (1989) self-administered Self-Esteem questionnaire was used, which is designed to measure self-esteem or perceived self-worth. (RSE) scale is 10 questions and is the most widely used measure of self-esteem using a four-point Likert scale from 0, meaning SA or strongly disagree, 1, meaning disagree, 2, meaning agree, 3 meaning strongly agree. (A cronbach's alpha co-efficient internal consistency for self-esteem, Rosenberg self-esteem score has excellent reliability and validity and provides a good indicator of general rather than specific views of the self Ciarrochi, (2008). The total score one could get is between (score 8-20) with the higher the score the higher their level of self-esteem, it has some questions like No.1- On the whole, I am satisfied with myself, No.2- At times I think I am no good at all, No.3- I feel that I have a number of good qualities, No.7- I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others, No. 10- I take a positive attitude towards myself.

### Self-Efficacy

Another is Schwarzer R. (1995) Generalized Self-Efficacy scale which assesses the strength of an individual belief in their own ability to respond to novel or difficult situations and deal with associated obstacles. The question is 10 items using a Likert point-scale, 1= not at all true to No.2= Hardly true, No3= moderately true, No. 4= exactly true. The score ranges from (18-60), the higher the score the greater the participants sense and belief of their self-efficacy. The scale strength in consistency, validity and reliability have been supported by a number of multi-cultural and international studies (Luszczynska et al (2005), it has also been apply to test parenting behaviour and stress (Hasting & Brown, 2002). Some the questions as follows, No.1 I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough, No.2 If someone

opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want, No.3 It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals, No 8 when I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions, No. 10 I can usually handle whatever comes my way. Each participants was to pick one that best reflect their description of themselves

#### Academic Stress Expectations (ASEI)

Lastly Ang. R. P. Academic stress expectations inventory (2006) self-report scale measures perceived stress of students as it relate to academic work and concerns, sources of stress could come from two domains: expectations of teachers /parents and expectations of self. Academic expectations (AESI) consist of 9 items and two scales, items 4,5,6,9 is about teachers / parents expectations (5 items) while items 1,2,3,8 is on self-expectations. It is 5 point likert scale No. 1 –Never true to No.2 seldom true, No.3 sometimes true, No. 4 often true, and No. 5-Almost always true. The scale is calculated by summing up scores on all the items related to that particular subscale, the scores range is (10-44), the sample items on self is No. 1 I feel stressed when I do not up to my standard, No. 2 when I fail to live up to my own expectations, I feel I am not good, and the sample items on parents / teachers No. 4 I blame myself when I cannot live up to my parents“ expectations, No.5 I feel I have disappointed my teacher when I do poorly in school. It has used to measure expectations as a source of academic stress in middle and high school Asian students. "At present, no instruments exist to adequately measure expectations as a source of academic stress in middle and high school Asian students." "It was therefore necessary to develop an empirically validated academic stress inventory specifically measuring expectations, for use with middle and high school Asian students."(Ang. & Huan 2006).

Other materials used include hundred and six questionnaire, pen or pencil a computer and SPSS was used for the analysis of the data. An introduction a letter which contained written instruction and a debrief sheet which included contact details of the researcher.

## **PROCEDURE**

Questionnaire was given out to the participants from Dublin Business school first year students, to find out their opinion concerning how attending either single sex school or coeducational school affected their self-esteem, self-efficacy and academic expectations. Information sheet which stated the purpose of the research and maximum time it will take to complete the survey was specified clearly. They filled out the questionnaire in the class room with the same format and condition and there was no reward provided for the participants, it was voluntary.

## **ETHICS**

There was ethical consideration such as anonymity guaranteed , it was at their convenience, the right to withdraw at any stage during the completion of the survey, also there was provision for debriefing which contained the contact of the researcher in case of any questions. The questionnaires were suitable for the particular participants and it was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Psychology Department of Dublin Business School

## CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

### Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics, including means (M), standard deviation (SD), minimum and maximum for each of the variables investigated in the current study are presented in table 1.

Table: 1

*A descriptive statistics highlighting mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum of the variables.*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>
Self-esteem	13.51	2.37	8	20
Self-efficacy	30.94	5.15	18	60
Academic expectation	25.45	7.01	10	44
Age	27.46	9.19	18	54

Figure: 1.

The above table describe the mean, standard deviation and ranges of the various variables been investigated.

In order to empirically investigate this research hypothesis series of independent sample t test were conducted, and difference between groups would only be considered statistically significant below a p value of .05.

### **Hypothesis: 1**

There will be higher academic expectation in single sex schools than in coeducational schools,

An independent sample t test found higher level of academic expectation in coeducational school (mean 26.28, SD =7.13) than in single sex school (mean = 22.48, SD =6.01). The 95% confidence limit shows that the population mean difference of the variables lies somewhere between -7.04 and -56. An independent sample t test found that there was a statistically significant difference between academic expectation in single sex and coeducational school ( $t(10) = -2.33, p = .022$ ). This did not support the original hypothesis, coeducational schools scored significant higher in academic expectation than single sex schools.

### **Hypothesis: 2**

It was predicted that academic expectation for girls will be higher than boys in both single sex schools and in coeducational schools.

An independent sample t test was conducted to compare the academic expectation for girls and boys in single sex schools. The females (mean=22.27, SD =6.87) and males (mean = 22.67, SD = 5.39). The 95% confidence limit shows that the population mean difference of the variables lies somewhere between -4.94 and 5.73. There was no statistically significant difference between academic expectation for girls and boys in single sex school ( $t(21) =$

.154,  $p = .88$ ). In addition an independent t test conducted to compare the academic expectation for girls and boys in coeducational school. Females (mean = 27.91, SD = 7.10) were found to have a higher academic expectation than males (mean = 23.94, SD = 6.60). The 95% confidence limit shows that the population mean difference of the variables lies somewhere between -7.09 and -86. There was a statistically significant difference between academic expectations for girls and boys in coeducational school ( $t(78) = .254, p = .013$ ), meaning females had a significant higher level of academic expectation than males. This confirmed the original hypothesis.

### Hypothesis 3

It was hypothesized that there will be no different in self-esteem both in single sex schools in coeducational schools.

The 95% confidence limit shows that the population mean difference of the variables lies somewhere between -35 and 1.85. An independent sample t test found that there was no statistically difference between self-esteem in single sex schools (mean=14.17, SD=2.46) and coeducational schools (mean=13.42, SD=2.30). ( $t(10) = 1.35, p = .18$ ). This confirmed the original hypothesis.

Table 2 below summarises this information.

Table: 2

*An independent sample t-test displaying difference in self-esteem, self-efficacy and academic expectation (AESI) in both single sex and coeducation.*

Variables	Groups	mean	SD	t	df	p
Self-esteem	<u>Single sex</u>	14.17	2.46	1.35	101	.18

	<u>Coeducation</u>	13.43	2.30			
AESI	<u>Single sex</u>	22.49	6.01	-2.33	101	.022
	<u>Coeducation</u>	26.28	7.13			
Self-	<u>Single sex</u>	31.09	1.64	.14	101	.89
efficacy	<u>Coeducation</u>	30.91	.47			
AESI						
Single sex	<u>Male</u>	22.67	5.40	.15	21	.88
	<u>Female</u>	22.27	6.87			
Coeducation	<u>Male</u>	23.94	6.60	-2.54		
	<u>Female</u>	27.91	7.10			

Note p significant at .05 levels

Figure: 11.

Table: 3

*Descriptive statistics of single sex and coeducational schools.*

<b>variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NO</b>
<u>Single sex</u>			23
Self-esteem	14.17	2.46	
AESI	22.48	6.01	
Self-efficacy	31.09	7.87	
<u>Coeducation</u>			80
Self-esteem	13.43	2.30	
AESI	26.28	7.13	

Self-efficacy	30.91	4.22
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Figure: 111.

The table 3 above describes the mean and standard deviation of the various variables in relation to single sex schools and coeducational schools.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

The relationship between self-esteem and academic expectation (as measured by AESI) was investigated in both single and coeducational school using Pearson correlational coefficient. The mean scores for self-esteem was 14.17 (SD=2.46) and for academic expectations was 26.27 (SD=6.00). There was no significant relationship between self-esteem and AESI in single sex school ( $r = 0.23$ ,  $p > 0.05$ , 2-tailed.). While in coeducation, the mean scores for self-esteem was 13.42 (SD=2.30) and for academic expectations was 26.27 (SD=7.13). A Pearson correlation coefficient found that .there was a medium negative significant relationship between self-esteem and academic expectation in coeducational schools ( $r = -0.377$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , 2-tailed), meaning the higher the level of self-esteem, the lower the level of academic expectations.

#### **Hypothesis 5**

The relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem was also investigated for single sex schools, and the mean scores for self-esteem was 14.17(SD=2.46) and for self-efficacy was

31.08(SD=7.87). A Pearson correlation coefficient found that there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy ( $r=0.11$ ,  $p>0.05$ , 2-tailed). In addition

A Pearson correlation coefficient found that there was a small positive significant relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy in coeducation ( $r=.245$ ,  $p <0.05$ , 2-tailed). The mean scores for self-esteem was 13.42(SD=2.30) and for self-efficacy was 30.91(SD=4.22). This meant the higher the self-esteem the higher the self-efficacy.

Table: 4

*A Pearson correlation coefficient highlighting the relationship between self-esteem, academic expectation (AESI) and self-efficacy.*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>self-esteem</b>	<b>academic exp.</b>	<b>Self-efficacy</b>
<u>Coeducation</u>			
Self-Esteem	-		
Academic exp.	-377**	-	
Self-Efficacy	.245*	-	-
<u>Male</u>			
Self-Esteem	-		
Academic exp.	-347*	-	
<u>Female</u>			
Self-Esteem	-	-	
Academic exp.	-425**	-	

Note: \*\* correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Figure: 1V.

### **Hypothesis 6**

Further analysis from table 3 above indicated that there was significant negative relationship between self-esteem and academic expectations in male. A Person correlation coefficient found ( $r=-.347$ ,  $p<0.05$ , 2-tailed). The mean scores for self-esteem was  $13.19(SD=2.23)$  and academic expectations was  $23.77(SD=6.26)$ .

The relationship between female self-esteem and academic expectation was equally tested. The mean scores for self-esteem was  $13.78(SD=2.46)$  and academic expectation was  $26.84(SD=7.34)$ . A Pearson correlation coefficient found that there was a strong negative significant relationship between self-esteem and academic expectations ( $r=-.425$ ,  $p<0.01$ , 2-tailed).

Additional findings were made although not identified with the hypotheses, an independent sample t test also tested to see if there was significant difference between the academic expectation and self-efficacy for girls and boys.

The result showed female (mean= $26.84$ ,  $SD=7.34$ ) were found to have higher level of academic expectations than males (mean= $23.77$ ,  $SD=6.26$ ). The 95% confidence limit shows that the population mean difference of the variables lies between  $-5.73$  and  $-41$ . An independent sample t test found that there was a statistically significant difference between academic expectation level of males and females ( $t(104) = -2.29$   $p= .024$ ).

In addition the male (mean= $32.10$ ,  $SD=5.89$ ) were found to have higher level of self-efficacy than females (mean = $29.98$ ,  $SD=4.25$ ). The 95% confidence limit show that the population mean difference of the variables lies between  $.16$  and  $4.08$ . An independent sample t test

found that there was a statistically significant difference between self-efficacy level of males and females ( $t(104) = 2.15, p = .034$ )

## CHAPTER 4: **DISCUSSION**

The main aim of the present research study was to investigate the type of effect or impact attending either a single sex school or coeducational school will have on self-esteem, self-efficacy and academic expectations of university students.

Firstly it was hypothesised that there will be higher academic expectations in single sex school than in coeducational school. The result from the analysis of data gathered did not support the hypothesis rather it indicated that academic expectations was higher in coeducational school. This was in line with previous studies, Mael (1998) coeducation give a very good opportunity to acquire and highlight skills that will enable students interact with peers of all gender, even in the larger society, it also encourages better mental and emotional situation. Coeducational high schools provide a more natural social environment for students Dale (1969), but other people like Coleman (1961) and Goodlad (1984). Coeducational school may be detrimental to the academic or social development of girls. Horner (1968, 1970). Increased cross sex competition for academic and professional achievement as seen in coeducational schools will lead to increased fear of success in females than in single sex schools. Others studies favoured high esteem for girls which lead to high academic expectations in single sex schools. British educational Resources (2009).single sex school provides a very good environment for girls and consequently, enhances academic expectation and success.

Similar research conducted by Elwood and Gipps,(1999),Francis,et al.(2003). Both boys and girls are less likely to pursue sex-atypical subject in coeducational school where the pressure to conform to gender stereotypes may be greater than in single sex schools. Studies focusing on single sex classes within coeducational schools provided mixed results. Marsh and Rowe

(1996) found that an intervention providing single sex classes for 12 to 14 olds in Australian coeducational schools had little effect on maths achievement and attitude. While the present study showed higher academic expectation in coeducational school, the finding of several studies did not confirm this

The research predicted that academic expectations for girls will be higher than boys in both single sex school and coeducational schools. The result found no difference both boys and girls in single sex school, but indicated that females have higher academic expectations than boys in coeducational schools, this supported the original hypothesis with respect to coeducational schools. Previous research in this area found no difference in academic expectations for both boys and girls, which is in line with the first part of this result, Schneider et al. (1982). Found no difference between students from single school and coeducational schools as regards their academic expectations and achievement, but found that coeducational schools were perceived as more pleasant atmosphere and more conducive that will help to develop self-confidence which will in turn enhance academic expectations.

Furthermore, Marsh et al.(1988). In coeducational schools girls performed better than boys in certain areas and as a result have higher academic expectations, whereas boys were better in some areas as well. Coeducation provide better environment for learning Dale (1969, 1971, 1974). The present study confirms that. However, finding of Lee & Bryk (1986, p381).Supported single sex schools to deliver specific advantages especially to female students in the areas of academic aspirations, expectations and achievement. Interestingly those who support single sex schools believed that coeducational schooling damages boys' self-esteem, partly because female teachers cannot act as adequate role models or authority figures for boys. With this in mind, it would be expected that boy's academic self-concept and expectation will be increased by single sex schooling British Educational research (2009). Further research in the area, suggested that academic success and expectations mostly

for girls are attributed to effort and ability while failure, is due to lack of ability and not the type school Wolleat, et al (1980)

It was hypothesised that there will be no difference in Self-esteem in both single sex and coeducational schools. The result obtained from independent sample t test showed that there was no significant difference, therefore it supported the hypothesis. However, Previous studies showed mixed results Cairns (1990) found that 16 years old boys and girls at single-sex Grammar schools in Northern Ireland had higher self-esteem than their counterpart at coeducational secondary modern schools, conversely there was an indication of polarisation of interest in physics and modern language between the 12 to 13 years boys and girls in English comprehensive schools, but was greater in coeducation school than in single sex schools.

In addition, Mael et al. (2005). Out his six listed studies, one found self-esteem to be higher in single sex school, two in coeducational schools, and three found no difference. The last three was in line with the present study which found no difference as well. Furthermore, Brutsaert and Bracke (1994). In Belgium found higher self-esteem for boys in single sex junior school compared with those in coeducation junior school, but no difference was found for girls, although they suggested that the reason for boys higher self-esteem was due to male teachers in that context. Another study by Riordan (1994) found out that the self-esteem of black and Hispanic males were higher in coeducational schools than single sex but there was no difference in girls.

This study also examined the relationship between Self-esteem, Self-efficacy and academic expectations in both single sex and coeducational schools. The result of the analysis found no specific relationship between self-esteem and academic expectations in single sex school, but indicated medium negative significant relationship in coeducational schools, this supported

the hypothesis even though it was negative relationship meaning that the higher the level of self-esteem, the lower the level of academic expectation. Although one could argue that academic expectations and success might be theoretically linked to self-esteem, but we lack data to show that improving self-esteem improves academic performance, even the present study could not show positive relationship between the two variables.

According to Helat (2007). Academic expectations and achievement is influenced by perceived competence, locus of control, autonomy and motivation. Therefore achieving ones academic expectation and desire is a major key to most college students self-esteem, in order words high self-esteem has many positive effects and benefits, for instance students who feel positive about themselves have fewer sleepless nights, are happier and more sociable while on the other hand, students with low self-esteem tend to be unhappy, less sociable, vulnerable to depression which are all correlated with lower academic expectation and achievement Wiggins (1994). This present research found negative relationship between self-esteem and academic expectations which by implication means high self-esteem will lead to low academic expectation and conversely. Recent research by Salomone (2006) suggested that single sex school girls may develop greater self-confidence and more academic expectation, have more favourable attitude towards some difficult subjects such as mathematics and science. It also encourages boys' academic expectation and attitude towards courses which are otherwise dominated by females without feeling odd about it, as males in that area.

Perhaps the best research on expectations came from a recent paper by Weihua Fan and Christopher Wolters of the University of Houston. Using data from the NCES Educational Longitudinal Study, they examined the educational attainment of U.S. students who were in 10th grade in 2002. They found that high expectations decrease dropout through the way they mediate the influence of motivation and perceived academic ability. In other words, students

who are highly motivated or believe in their academic ability still need to have the expectation that they'll finish high school. The effects were strong enough that when expectations were controlled for, neither perceived ability nor academic motivation had a statistically significant relationship with high school completion. Therefore having one's academic achievement meet one's academic expectations and desires is a major key to most college students' self-esteem.

In addition the result for correlation between self-efficacy and self-esteem for both single and coeducational school indicated a small positive significant relationship in coeducation, but showed no relationship in single sex school, which supported the original hypothesis.

Research in this area is not much, but it is important to note that the difference between self-esteem and self-efficacy relate to the conviction that one can perform the behaviour necessary to produce a desired outcome while self-esteem demonstrate how positively one feels about himself Passer & Smith (2008). Bandura (1997) noted that a sense of power and control over one's environment affects a person's self-efficacy, and this may be negative or positive.

Bandura suggested that earlier negative academic performance is likely to lessen a student's belief in their ability to achieve academically, this will in turn affect the self-esteem conversely, Self-efficacy is one's ability to achieve certain domains and consequently lead to a person's increased self-esteem.

This present research indicated small positive relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy meaning when one variable is high the other will be high as well. Powell, (2004). Self-esteem refers to how one thinks and feels about his or her self, his abilities, relationship and hope for the future, people with high self-esteem are reported to be happier, have few interpersonal problems and achieve at higher level. Consequently this leads to higher level of self-efficacy.

It was predicted that there will be significant relationship between Self-esteem and academic expectation in both females and males. The result indicated a significant medium negative correlation, meaning that high self-esteem in males will lead to low academic expectations in them as well. Correspondingly, there was also a moderate negative significant relationship between self-esteem and academic expectations in females. The finding was in support of the hypothesis. Previous research has shown that adolescent with high self-esteem typically report high educational and academic expectations Saunders et al. (2004), whereas those showing problems behaviours and low self-esteem report relatively low academic expectations. This is however, is contrary to this present study. Winchel, et al. (1974). Explained what he called, a lack of motivation to succeed or a “fear of success” in a sample of female student both coeducational school and single sex school. A significant higher number of female displayed this fear of success in a coeducation environment, this, as a matter of fact may affect their academic expectation negatively and conversely their self-esteem. Consequently boys’ and girls’ academic and self-esteem can be influenced by context or environment. For instance, in one study children reported external factors such as safety and other students’ behaviour problem as the major barriers to academic expectation and success Gerdes & Benson (1995).

## **Limitations and Future Research**

There were many limitations within this research such as, the participants were drawn from a private university, the Dublin Business School, and it was a small sample of first year university students. For that reason, it cannot be seen as a full representative and therefore, generalization based on only one university would not be enough to conclude a study of this kind. The participants were not randomly assigned, another important factor that may have influenced the study is that even though it was looking at participants who are in their first year, most of the participants were graduates from other disciplines and some had a good number of years of working experience and as such are not coming fresh from secondary schools, in that circumstance, most of them would have forgotten their experiences in secondary school days. Again the research was looking at participants who are 18 years and above, it was quantitative and cross-sectional in nature.

### **Future Research**

The design of the research should have been longitudinal not cross-sectional, the questionnaire should incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methods, the sample should be larger and the participants should be randomly assigned, different universities should be used because of different backgrounds, major offerings, interests and career goals and settings.

Even though some of the results were in consistency with findings from previous studies in the area where relevant researches exist, one of the main purposes of the study was to stimulate further scientific investigation on the courses students choose, and the effect of single sex schools and coeducational schools on their academic expectations, parents' attitudes about

gender roles which affect their choice of school and expectations from their children. The role of Government, educational policy makers and curriculum planners must be re-examined with view to expanding the system and make the schools or study environments more conducive and interestingly, to meet the international standard comparatively.

### **Practical implication and Conclusion**

The first research question in the present study was that, there will be higher academic expectations in single sex school than in coeducational schools. The figures presented from the result analysis provided evidence of a significant difference in academic expectations for between single sex schools and coeducational schools, but the result rather showed that academic expectations was higher in coeducational schools than in single sex schools contrary to the original prediction that it will be higher in single sex schools. This was also in line with what Dale (1969, 1971, and 1974), found out in his several studies in this area that coeducational schooling was healthier for both sexes, and allowed for greater opportunities for both girls and boys to study a sex-atypical curriculum. It was also predicted that academic expectation for girls will be higher than boys in both single sex school and coeducational schools, the evidence from the results show no difference in single sex schools, but in coeducational school, there was significant difference between them with girls having higher academic expectations than boys which was in line with our expectations. In addition, the difference between self-esteem for both schools were tested and found no statistically significant difference which supported the prediction of the study.

Furthermore, the research questioned the relationship between Self-esteem and academic expectations in both single and coeducational schools. The figure presented, provided evidence of medium negative relationship which was in support of the study's prediction, looking at the type of association between the two variables, and knowing that high self-

esteem will lead to happy and few interpersonal problems, achieve at a higher and more consistent level which invariably should logically bring about high academic expectations, but in the present study high academic expectations was associated with low self-esteem. This particular outcome challenges the researcher and calls for more investigation, at present, there is not much research done in this area, and therefore it is important to note the limitations of this present research, interestingly, and according to Fan & Wolters (2002) students who are highly motivated or believe in their academic ability still need to have the expectation that they'll finish high school. This is contrary to the present study. The relationship between Self-esteem, Self-efficacy and academic expectation was tested for males and female and for both single sex school and coeducational schools. For Self-esteem and Self-efficacy in coeducational school the result showed a small or weak positive relationship while between self-esteem and academic expectations in male and females indicated moderate relationship for both genders which is in line with the expectations of the research study. It will be advisable for the Ministry of education to take a proper look at the ways in which single sex schools are managed, and compare them with coeducational schools. From all indications the coeducational schools seems to provide better and conducive atmosphere for schooling, which by practical implication was demonstrated from the result and finding of this present research project. Further research in the area is needed.

## Conclusion

The key aim of this research study was to assess or examine the impact the school a student attends may have on his / her Self-esteem, Self-efficacy and academic expectations. The saying that coeducational school has negative effect for girls Coleman (1961), also by some feminist who have argued that girls' interest are sacrificed in coeducational schools, but several researches on this subject did not reach any definite and all conclusive conclusion

because some studies have favoured single sex school while some supported coeducations.

The conclusion reached at, from the analysis of data used for this study indicated that coeducation still provides a more favourable environment for boys' and girls' self-esteem, self-efficacy and academic expectations. However, it is very important to note that it could be due to the fact that most of the participants in this present research attended coeducational schools.

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## APPENDIX

### **Appendix 1: Cover Letter for participants**

Dear Participant,

This study is interested in how student's school type affects his/her self-esteem, self-efficacy and academic expectations.

Please take the time to answer the questions. There is no right or wrong answer and complete anonymity is guaranteed. Your questionnaire answers will be merged with others, your answers cannot be traced back to you, and you don't need to give your name or identification details. You have the right to withdraw at any stage during the completion of the survey.

It may take about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire, just work through the questions and indicate in each case the extent to which you feel about each of the statements.

Thanks for your time and interest in the survey.

**APPENDIX 2: Demographic Form**

No. \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out the following details. Anonymity is guaranteed. Your questionnaire answer will be merged with others and no one will be able to trace your answer back to you, and you will not be asked to give your name or identification details. You have the right to withdraw at any stage during the completion of this survey.

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex (please tick)

Male Female 

Which type of school did you attend (please tick one)

 Single sex school Coeducation Others (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

None

### Appendix 3: Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

Please read the sentences below and select an answer for each statement which indicates how much the statement applies to yourself.

1 = **Not at all true** 2 = **Hardly true** 3 = **Moderately true** 4 = **Exactly true**

1	I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.	
2	If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.	
3	It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	
4	I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.	
5	Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.	
6	I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.	
7	I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.	

<b>8</b>	When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.	
<b>9</b>	If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.	
<b>10</b>	I can usually handle whatever comes my way.	

## APPENDIX 4: Self-Esteem Questionnaire

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself.

If you *strongly agree* with the statement circle **SA**.

If you *agree* with the statement circle **A**.

If you *disagree* with the statement circle **D**.

If you *strongly disagree* with the statement circle **SD**.

<b>1.</b>	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>2.</b>	At times, I think I am no good at all.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>3.</b>	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>4.</b>	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>5.</b>	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>6.</b>	I certainly feel useless at times.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>7.</b>	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>8.</b>	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>9.</b>	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>10.</b>	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>

### APPENDIX 5: Academic Expectations (AESI)

There are no right or wrong answers. Read each statement carefully and decide how well it describes you using the following scale. Circle the number that best describes you.

1	2	3	4	5
Never True	Seldom True	Sometimes True	Often True	Almost Always True

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I feel stressed when I do not live up to my own standards.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. When I fail to live up to my own expectations, I feel I am not good enough.          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I usually cannot sleep and worry when I cannot meet the goals I set for myself.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I blame myself when I cannot live up to my parents' expectations of me.              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I feel I have disappointed my teacher when I do badly in school.                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I feel I have disappointed my parents when I do poorly in school.                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I feel stressed when I know my parents are disappointed in my exam grades.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. When I do not do as well as I could have in an examination or test, I feel stressed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I feel lousy when I cannot live up to my teacher's expectations.                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |