

UPEI Students' Identification:
Psychology versus Women's Studies Students

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the extent to which upper level UPEI students identify with their university as well as their major. Participants are either psychology or women's studies majors, and the study compares the responses of these two groups. The study employs a survey that uses a combination of Crocker and Luhtanen's collective self-esteem scale and Gurin and Townsend's properties of gender identity. Results show that there are no group differences in identifying with either UPEI or with their major. The study measures gender identification as well; women's studies students feel their gender is more central to their identity than psychology students do. These results show that a student's major does not affect how important their university or their major is to their identity. It also reveals that women's studies as a field can affect a student's understanding of their gender identity.

UPEI Students' Identification: Psychology vs. Women's Studies Students

In the span of our lives, we come across various groups and institutions that become a part of who we are and that we feel we are a part of. As Voelkl (1997) describes it, we “identify with a place or activity with certain expectations, values, beliefs, and practices.” We are more likely to feel we belong in a group of people who have similar values and beliefs as us than we are to feel this way alone. Identifying with a group leads to more positive feelings and thoughts towards said group (Zhang & Fung, 2009). Our group memberships have many significant effects on how we see ourselves. They become part of the definitions we give to our individual selves, they provide a source of meaning making for our lives, and they predict levels of self-esteem and psychological adjustment. As we move through life, our group memberships are likely to change, therefore what values and beliefs we have are likely to change in accordance with our groups (Iyer, Jetten, Tsivrikos, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009; Cameron, 1999).

With life transitions, we gain new experiences or benefits, which can have positive outcomes for us. However, if these transitions require discarding previous memberships, especially ones that are important to us, they can have negative consequences. The uncertainty we have about new identities--including a lack of information or lack of mastery of skills--can also have negative consequences. In fact, if we feel strongly enough about our old identities, the implementation of new identities can be nearly impossible, which can in turn make the transition itself more challenging (Iyer et al., 2009).

Although transitions between roles or identities can be difficult or frightening, the existence of multiple group memberships can help, acting as a shield against any possible

negative outcomes that may arise. The awareness of an identity itself can help prevent against those negatives as well. When going through a change in membership, the existence of other memberships helps with the process. The support of other groups works to maintain higher levels of well-being than would otherwise occur (Iyer et al., 2009). Support can also come from identifying with others who are experiencing the same transition as you. This sharing of a new identity minimizes the difficulties associated with an adjustment. For example, Iyer et al. (2009) found that for first year university students, a person's level of identification with other incoming students as a group predicted their attitudes in that the more a student identified with this group, the more they would see attending university as a positive and as something that would help them become successful in the future.

Institutional Identification

The extent to which a student identifies with school in general as a learning environment has been shown to be a predictor of the attitude they will have towards academic success. While a weak relationship doesn't necessarily mean that a student has low levels of goal pursuit, it is more likely that those who don't identify with school will withdraw from it in ways such as having lower levels of motivation or interest in learning (Voelkl, 1997; Mendoza-Denton, Pietrzak, & Downey, 2008). A healthy relationship on the other hand, results in students who strive for academic achievement. In fact, there appears to be a positive correlation between the value one places on school and one's academic performance (Voelkl, 1997). Other factors that influence a student's performance are how they perceive their learning experiences, in that those who felt they had positive schooling are more likely to have higher GPAs (Fischer & Good, 1994).

University is one of the biggest transitions in a person's life (McMillan, 2014). Moving from high school to a more independent way of life with new experiences and more required work is a combination that is challenging for many people. However, this transition is one with more control than other transitions we may come across in our lifetimes because this is one that comes with more choice. We are allowed to decide on which school we will attend and which courses to enroll in. This may make it easier for students to successfully adjust to the new environment. This adjustment consists of being able to manage both the academic and social aspects of university life and may be easier to transition to, as long as an identity as a student fits with one's preexisting network of identities (Iyer et al., 2009). Because going to university has become somewhat of a ritual in our society, being a new student unsure of their new identity is likely to be a common feeling, making other students seem similar to you and therefore compatible with your life. In fact, seeing one's peers as compatible with other identities one already has makes a student more likely to identify as a university student (Iyer et al., 2009; Freeman, Andermen, & Jensen, 2007).

Identifying as a university student has other positive implications as well. Believing you have more in common with the other students leads to a higher level of global self-esteem, and seeing yourself as a part of the group of university students encourages harder work to reach your goals, which leads to more satisfaction with your life (Cameron, 1999). Not only does identifying with other students help with well being, there appears to be a correlational relationship in that students with stronger sense of identity with university students have more positive levels of well being. On top of that, feeling like part of a community of students can minimize the chance of burning out.

Understanding that other students feel the same way you do can make you feel like you're not alone and can lead to a stronger identification with them as a group. If this group becomes a part of your self-concept it can lead to a more positive view of one's own social identity (Iyer, 2009). Regardless, identifying with university students as a group is likely to lead to a more positive outlook on university (Cameron, 1999).

Positive outlooks on school are also associated with a sense of belonging, which are most likely to happen when a student feels they are being socially accepted, both of which are factors in having a higher global self-esteem (Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007; Cameron, 1999). Another factor contributing to global self-esteem is a sense of self-efficacy for succeeding, in this case in school. While one's personal sense of efficacy might depend on how her or his goals and identities fit with each other and with the rest of one's life, in general this sense can lead to a stronger identification with specific courses that one takes. This identification happens when the student sees the course work as valuable and something they can succeed at. While identifying with a specific course doesn't necessarily mean that one identifies with their university as a whole, doing so leads to academic success (Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007; Witkow, Gillen-O'Neel, & Fuligni, 2012).

Choosing which university we attend is often contingent on how a university presents itself to the outside world. The image a university puts forward can be aimed at different groups, but overall it is usually designed to relate to the experiences of those who attended. This is often done with the interest of the university in mind because as an organization it is likely to benefit, mostly financially, when its members, current or past, identify with it on an institutional level (MacDonald, 2013). While universities have an

obligation to things like appropriate academia for the sake of their reputation, the visual identity they adopt is also related to reputation, although this relation is mostly in the eyes of students. Whether it be a social aspect or an academic one, if a future student sees something about a specific university that they deem as valuable to their identity or as something that might make their self-image better, they are more likely to choose that university as their own (Alessandri, Yang, & Kinsey, 2006; Kogan, 2000; MacDonald, 2013). Therefore while a university's image is important to its identity for retaining members, it also helps in the recruitment of new students.

Identifying with one's school also impacts the perception of graduating. In a study done on the poignancy of graduation (i.e., the combination of happy and sad feelings that come with graduating) Zhang and Fung (2009) found that the level of poignancy depends on how much one identifies with their university so that those who have a stronger identification will perceive graduating as more meaningful. Following the work of Voelkl (1997), who found that identifying with school becomes stronger over time, we could assume that the longer one attends their university, the more graduation will be filled with feelings of poignancy. Also, Witkow, Gillen-O'Neel, and Fuligni (2008) found that the rates of identifying with one's school are much higher in four-year universities compared to those that are only two years, showing that by choosing a school, we are inadvertently choosing approximately how much we will identify with it and how we might feel at graduation.

Discipline Identification

University-level students have the capability of identifying with their major or discipline however, before a student can identify with their major, they have to choose

one and choose to stay in it throughout their education. There appears to be a wide variety of factors that influence a student's choice in university major. These can include information from peers and family members, its match with the individual's interests, characteristics of possible related jobs, psychological or sociological benefits such as positive emotions arising from the major, and the reputation of the major itself (Beggs, Bantham, & Taylor, 2008). Factors such as level of political awareness, level of academic achievement in high school, and outlook on prospective careers after graduating can have an impact as well (McCray, King, & Bailly, 2005).

Adams and Fitch (1983) found that different departments attract students based on their level of identity formation and that different aspects may attract one gender over the other. Faculties that are more academic and scholastic than practical or community oriented tend to appeal more to prospective male students, while females are drawn to programs that emphasize faculty encouragement and an emphasis on academia. They propose that this is because the programs preferable to females are also the programs that emphasize traditional, gender-dependent career choices (Adams & Fitch, 1983).

Based on these gender differences in attraction to a field of study, certain majors become more female populated while others become male populated. An example of a gender disparity within a major is the field of psychology, as 75% of psychology students in both undergraduate and graduate programs are women (McCray, King, & Bailly, 2005). Although there does seem to be a preference for women to major in psychology, it is difficult to establish what exactly it is about psychology that attracts them. Psychology majors are more likely to be interested in a helping profession than other majors, but women across all majors seem to share this interest. McCray, King, and Bailly (2005)

tried to differentiate between factors that lead anyone to major in psychology from those that lead women specifically to do so. They proposed that family environment and personality disorder traits could be a factor to help understand these differences, but they found that a student's choice of major is not related to either of these factors. Psychology students' profiles according to the Coolidge Axis II Inventory and the Family Environment Scale were not significantly different from those of students from other disciplines. The only significant interaction effect was that men who are majoring in psychology tend to have higher levels of self-assurance than men of any other program. This may suggest that men who are more self-assured are more comfortable engaging in stereotypical female activities like talking about people's personal problems (McCray, King, & Bailly, 2005).

While one's family environment doesn't directly influence choice of major, there are aspects of a student's upbringing that impact where they direct their studies (Yingyi, 2009). Parents can implicitly pass on values and interests to their children in various ways. Parents with a high socioeconomic status may encourage their children to take advantage of their economic position in terms of high quality education, perhaps in an attempt to protect their children from downward mobility. Parental involvement in itself is also influential. This involvement tends to be domain specific in that parents will help their children with things they themselves are good at and may influence what types of activities the child participates in outside of school. This domain-specific involvement appears to have a significant impact on what major children will choose (Yingyi, 2009).

As we have seen, students have varying levels of how they identify with their school, and this applies to their major as well. However, it is somewhat necessary for a

student to have an identity related to their self-concept, an idea of who they are as a person, before they can really commit to and identify with a particular major (Adamek & Goudy, 1966). While there is a lack in research on the process of identifying with one's chosen major, there has been work done on how such an identity might be influenced. When students incorporate their academic major into their self-concept, they often show more interest in learning and appear more dedicated to learning about their major specifically. Identifying as, for example, a psychology student, leads to a sort of self-stereotyping where the student constructs his or her own idea of what values, interests, and attitudes psychology students share and incorporate these into his or her personality (Platow, Mavor, & Grace, 2013).

This self-constructed and personally meaningful identity can be influenced by a student's academic performance, depending on how much they associate this performance with their value as a person. For people who rely on grades to determine their worth, getting bad grades lowered their self-esteem and weakened their connection to their major. This process of disconnecting from their identity and from their major would seem to reduce the negativity associated with receiving a bad grade. The decrease in identification that comes from bad grades is stronger than the increase in identity that comes with good grades, especially for those students whose self-esteem is more contingent on their academic performance. This is likely because students who rely on good grades to determine self-worth are especially vigilant for failure. Getting good grades reinforces their perceived value, but even a single bad grade can be understood as a sign of one's worthlessness (Crocker, Karpinski, Quinn, & Chase, 2003).

What about instances where a student's major does not fit into his or her identity? Choosing a major that doesn't fit with one's self-concept may result in switching programs. People who have a strong understanding of who they are may be more likely to strongly identify with something, but this doesn't necessarily affect their likelihood of switching. Regardless of the strength of one's self-concept, about half of all students, both male and female, switch from their initial major at least once in their academic career, where identifying with the major itself is the only factor that decreases the likelihood of switching (Adamek & Goudy, 1966; Yingyi, 2009).

I now turn my attention to women's studies specifically, as there is an abundance of research done on the effects of this field. Students most often come across this field once they have already arrived at university, and become enrolled in it as a major after taking a small number of women's studies courses or after hearing guest lectures in other classes that relate to women's studies topics (Griffin, 2005).

Effects of Women's Studies Courses

Women's studies began in the 1970s in an attempt to bring the women's movement onto campus as women were starting to realize the possibility that they could take on roles normally assigned to men (Brush, Gold, & White 1978; Zuckerman, 1983). The number of women's studies courses offered in the United States went from two in 1970 to 432 in 1982, a number that has been increasing ever since (Zuckerman, 1983). These courses were brought about because of the unsatisfactory college curriculum that ignored information about women. They were designed to be a supportive place where open discussion was encouraged (Stake & Gerner, 1987), as was challenging ideas about traditional gender roles (Zuckerman, 1983). While the largest steps toward egalitarianism

happened between 1961 and 1972, there have still been changes among students in how they see and feel about women to this day (Bryant, 2003).

Women's studies as a field strives for social change, as well as personal change such as the development of more positive attitudes about women, and for self-discovery within its students, particularly its women students (Thomsen & Basu, 1995; Brush, Gold, & White, 1978). It promotes self-esteem, personal growth (Bargad & Hyde, 1991), and an improvement in the status of women as it stands in our current society (Stake & Gerner, 1987). Women's studies tries to change the world to one without oppression (Bargad & Hyde, 1991) by encouraging a more active role in feminist activism (Stake, Roades, Rose, Ellis, & West 1994), while teaching about the misrepresentation of information about women and other marginalized groups within our society (Bargad & Hyde, 1991; Harris & Melaas, 1999).

Stake & Hoffman (2001) discuss basic teaching principles for women's studies courses, which they claim are: participatory learning, where students are expected to participate in class discussion; validation of personal experience and development of confidence; development of political and social understanding and activism, where students learn to relate course material to political and social contexts; and the development of critical thinking and open-mindedness. These are uniquely important for women's studies because as a field it acknowledges the historical exclusion of women from university and classroom settings. Women's studies courses teach about varying forces that affect men and women in an attempt to create more egalitarian relationships, that is relationships that do not rely on traditional gender roles (Stake et al., 1994). Women's studies courses have the power to create actual changes in students' lives in

terms of both academia and personal experiences through a “forum to explore new ways of conceptualizing established knowledge in various academic disciplines” (Harris & Melaas, 1999); women’s studies courses epitomize the notion that the personal is political.

Women’s studies courses have an influence on students’ perceptions of feminism. Many women who take these courses feel that while they may not consider themselves to be a feminist, they begin to see the idea of feminism in a more positive light (Bargad & Hyde, 1991). This is especially the case for those who had the least feminist views at the beginning of the course (Thomsen & Basu, 1995) and those who didn’t often consider nontraditional gender roles as a realistic option in their life (Brush, Gold, & White, 1978). This is conceivably because those who already had feminist views or thought about nontraditional gender roles had a positive view of feminism before enrolling in the course. An additional impact of this is that women who endorse more feminist values tend to have a higher level of identity achievement, meaning that they have a clearer self-concept (Stein & Weston, 1982).

Because women’s studies can lead students’ to a more feminist ideology, Bargad and Hyde (1991) used Downing & Roush’s five-stage model of feminist identity development to see the extent of this change in attitude. Downing & Roush’s stages are: passive acceptance, where one either overlooks or is unaware of sexism; revelation, where one begins to understand the oppression of women through conscious-raising activities; embeddedness-emancipation, where one gets more involved in women’s culture and becomes wary when interacting with men; synthesis, where one begins to see the positive aspects of being a women and stops being wary of men by judging each man

individually; and finally active commitment, where one is dedicated to creating a social change. Bargad and Hyde (1991) found that students taking courses that discussed feminist ideology had significant attitude changes such as a stronger disagreement with the passive acceptance stage and a stronger agreement with revelation and embeddedness-emancipation stages.

Women's studies courses also influence student's expectations about their futures. They are more likely to be certain about their plans for graduate training and tend to have higher career aspirations than those not in women's studies courses (Brush, Gold, & White, 1978). They are also more certain about their career path and they tend to have more motivation to get a good job or to succeed in the job they have (Bargad & Hyde, 1991).

There have been mixed results on the possibility of changes in self-esteem due to women's studies. Some report that these courses have no direct effect on self-esteem (Harris & Melaas, 1999), while others claim that self-esteem increases because of the support given by their classmates with similar interests (Zuckerman, 1983) and because the validation of personal experiences with sexism can lead to a higher level of confidence (Stake & Hoffman, 2001). Self-esteem is difficult to measure because it is a complex topic and because much research uses a sense of global self-esteem, instead of acknowledging differences between communal self-esteem and agentic self-esteem (Stake & Gerner, 1987). Agentic self-esteem focuses on achievements and potentials of the individual, which Stake & Gerner (1987) argue is more appropriate for studying the change in self-esteem arising from women's studies courses. Taking this into

consideration, they find that women's studies students do seem to have an increase in self-esteem in terms of what one believes he or she is capable of.

The most common change that women's studies produces is the reduction of sexist and traditionalist views with an increase in egalitarian views (Zuckerman, 1983). Students in any field tend to develop more egalitarian attitudes throughout college (Bryant, 2003), those who take women's studies courses develop even stronger egalitarian attitudes, especially those who take more than one women's studies course (Stake & Hoffman, 2001). Women's studies students come to have less traditional, more liberal expectations when it comes to gender roles (Harris & Melaas, 1999) and they become more aware of the discrimination that happens to women and other marginalized groups (Stake & Hoffman, 2001). While there appears to be no sex differences in the degree of changes as a result of women's studies, women tend to be more egalitarian than men (Bryant, 2003).

Women's studies courses encourage students to be tolerant of others, to take the time to understand and accept other people's views, and to recognize the social and political forms of discrimination against women and other marginalized groups. The combination of the course material and this recognition of discrimination encourages students to strive for social change. Women's studies students report more activist work and a greater dedication to social activism (Stake & Hoffman, 2001). Compared to peers, students who are in women's studies report participating in activist activities such as keeping informed of current women's rights issues, signing petitions, and talking to other people about their attitudes (Stake et al., 1994).

Women's studies courses result in changes in students' attitudes toward women. Scott and Richards (1977) gave Spence and Helmreich's Attitudes Toward Women Scale to both women's studies students and non-women's studies students. This scale is a list of statements that "reflect frequently held attitudes toward women's intellectual, vocation, marital, and sexual roles". The women's studies students scored higher meaning that they have more positive attitudes toward women and what they should and can do.

Women's studies courses not only influence students' attitudes towards women, they also influence how women see themselves as women. These courses make the identity of woman more salient in women, which can help women feel more confident negotiating in a male-dominated society. When given a twenty statements test where participants are asked to answer the question "who am I?" in twenty different ways, those who recently completed a women's studies course were more likely to include women at all and were more likely to include it higher up than comparison students (Brush, Gold, & White, 1978).

Finally, women's studies students see a change in the way they interact with other people. The increase in awareness of sex discrimination leads to a recognition of the special treatment that women can get from others, both positive and negative. These students also find they have more intense reactions in the face of male chauvinistic comments (Brush, Gold, & White, 1978). They report changes in their everyday interactions such as an enhanced self-confidence, an ability to educate others, an adoption of nontraditional behaviors, and a desire to learn more (Stake et al., 1994). Additionally, women students find that their relationships with women have changed. They become aware of deficient friendships with females in the past, they find themselves gaining more

female friends, and they find themselves having an increase in the quality of relationships with women (Brush, Gold, & White, 1978).

Collective Self-Esteem

Women's studies courses have been shown to change the relationships students have with women and with their identity as a woman. We will now explore these changes in relationships from the perspective of collective self-esteem. Whereas personal self-esteem is about one's belief about what they are capable of, social or collective self-esteem is more about the understanding that belonging to a certain group is considered valuable (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990); it is "the extent to which individuals evaluate their social groups positively" (Bettencourt, Charlton, Eubanks, Kernahan, & Fuller, 1999). While collective self-esteem appears to be theoretically different from personal self-esteem, Crocker and Luhtanen (1990) suggest that they might work in a somewhat similar fashion on an individual level. They suggest that the moderating effect of personal self-esteem on one's reaction to personal failure is comparable to the moderating effect of collective self-esteem on one's reaction to a group failure.

De Cremer and Oosterwegel (1999) claim that the groups one belongs to shape an individual's self-concept. This is the basis of Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory, which claims that people create self-definitions based on their own memberships in social groups. Social identity can contribute to a person's self-conception as well as how they evaluate themselves (Sato & Cameron, 1999). A positive social identity arises out of comparisons made between one's ingroup and any related outgroups, particularly when that comparison places the ingroup in a more positive image (De Cremer and Oosterwegel, 1999).

In order to learn about collective self-esteem among individuals, Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) developed the Collective Self-Esteem Scale. This scale, which consists of four subscales, was designed in order to look at how much individuals tend to evaluate their social groups positively. The private subscale measures one's private evaluations of their social group. It assesses how much an individual values the group itself and what the group means to them. Membership collective self-esteem is the evaluation of oneself as a good member of the group, or how well one believes they function as a member of that group. Public collective self-esteem assesses the beliefs of how other people evaluate one's social group, specifically if other people consider the group valuable or respectable. And finally, the identity subscale evaluates how important one's membership to a specific group is to the overall identity and self-concept of that individual (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Katz, Swindell, & Farrow, 2004).

Crocker and Luhtanen argued that this social identity or collective self-esteem should be used, as opposed to personal self-esteem, when measuring levels of ingroup favoritism (De Cremer & Oosterwegel, 1999). Ingroup favoritism can be driven by the event that one's social identity is threatened (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990) and is done in the comparison of one's ingroup and any outgroups, wherein the ingroup is seen more positively (Long & Spears, 1998). It's assumed that people will engage in some sort of protecting behavior (De Cremer & Oosterwegel, 1999) and will almost always evaluate their ingroup more positively than outgroup, even if it doesn't directly benefit the individual (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990). The practice of self-protective behaviors comes from the desire for an individual's groups to align with her or his self-concept (Long & Spears, 1998).

Belonging to a group that has importance to one's self-concept or self-esteem leads to engaging in activities or behaviors that result in ingroup favoritism which in turn could increase self-esteem (De Cremer & Oosterwegel, 1999), for example exaggerating an ingroup's positive attributes (Long & Spears, 1998). De Cremer and Oosterwegel (1999) have shown that this ingroup favoritism does lead to increased self-esteem, meaning that people with lower self-esteem will be likely to engage in such practices if they desire a higher level. They also show that those with higher levels of collective self-esteem are more likely to engage in ingroup favoritism than people with low collective self-esteem (De Cremer & Oosterwegel, 1999), likely in order to maintain their positive self-images (Long & Spears, 1998). There exist different types of motivation to reach or maintain higher collective self-esteem levels. Individuals with low collective self-esteem are motivated by self-protection, meaning they will attempt to increase self-esteem by rating one's outgroup negatively, thereby leaving the ingroup in the positive position. Individuals with high collective self-esteem on the other hand are driven by self-enhancement, wherein they rate their own ingroup favorably in comparison to any outgroups (De Cremer & Oosterwegel, 1999).

Belonging to a group and having a relatively high level of collective self-esteem can have influential benefits in terms of psychological adjustment and general subjective well-being, because "collective identities buffer the individual from many threats to self worth" (Bettencourt et al., 1999). For example, being involved in one's university campus has been shown to help with academic success. When a student's level of collective self-esteem increases because of a group like that, they are more likely to adjust to university-level expectations regarding their school work, as well as to have a

higher GPA at the end of the semester. Additionally, the process of developing a positive collective self-esteem leads to a stronger likelihood of social adjustment to the university environment (Bettencourt et al., 1999).

Women's studies courses can influence a student's level of collective self-esteem, specifically when that collective group is one's gender. This gender specific collective self-esteem has been associated with women's hostile sexism, sexism that is explicit and antagonistic. Using the CSE Scale, anti-feminists have a higher public regard for gender, while feminists have a higher private regard for it. This means that the feminists personally valued their gender while the anti-feminists believed that others valued their gender. When comparing students enrolled in a psychology of women course to students in a non-gender-related course, none of whom had previous experience with women's studies courses, those in psychology of women had a decrease in public collective self-esteem and an increase in identity collective self-esteem. This means that a student's first encounter with a women's studies-related course generates an understanding that women are not necessarily valued by society in general, as well as to a more salient identity of "woman" (Katz, Swindell, & Farrow, 2004).

Developing or enhancing self-esteem through social memberships depends on how important the group is to a person's identity. Gender, for example, is more important to women than it is to men, meaning that women are likely to experience changes in self-esteem from their gender group more often than men are (Foels & Tomcho, 2005).

Carpenter and Johnson (2001) found that a woman's level of self-esteem could be affected by her membership in her collective gender group as well as her degree of feminist identity. Using Downing and Roush's Feminist Identity Development Scale,

women who are in the second stage, revelation, of the scale tend to have lower gender collective self-esteem, while women in the final three stages are likely to have higher gender collective self-esteem. Essentially this means that when women realize the negative treatment of women in society, they have a lower self-esteem in terms of their gender group. Once they begin to become involved in women's groups and see the positive aspects of being a woman, they begin to like their gender group better, which is reflected in their higher level of collective self-esteem (Carpenter & Johnson, 2001).

Related to collective self-esteem is the idea of independence or interdependence. These self-construals tend to have a cultural pattern, where for the most part Western countries are more independent while Eastern countries are more interdependent, although there are of course variations and exceptions to this pattern. People with independent self-construals tend to be more individualistic; they value autonomy, personal achievement, and they enjoy being unique. People with interdependent self-construals on the other hand emphasize collectivism; they consider having a connection to others and maintaining harmony within their ingroup to be more important (Sato & Cameron, 1999).

Independence and Interdependence

Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) collective self-esteem subscales appear to be related to individuals' levels of independence or interdependence. Overall, collective self-esteem has a positive association with both types of self-construal. The membership, private regard, and public regard subscales are positively correlated with independence, while the identity subscale is positively correlated with interdependence. Therefore, individuals who rate higher on interdependence scales are more likely to define

themselves in terms of the memberships they have to certain social groups, while those who have higher levels of independence tend to feel that they are worthy members of their group, that outsiders evaluate their groups positively, and that they themselves evaluate their own groups positively (Sato & Cameron, 1999).

Independent and interdependent self-construals were first created in the comparison of Western and Eastern cultures, specifically the United States and East Asia. By looking at these self-construals in terms of relationships we have with other individuals rather than groups we are members of, we can see that within our Western society there appear to be gender differences. Independent self-construals seem descriptive of men, while interdependence seems to represent women (Cross & Madson, 1997). Women tend to rate themselves as more relational and in terms of connectedness, while men rate themselves more agentic and in terms of being separated from others (Cross & Madson, 1997; Guimond, Martinot, Chatard, Crisp, & Redersdorff, 2006).

These gender differences in self evaluations may reflect self-stereotyping. Guimond et al. (2006) found that women tend to define themselves as more relational, which is often associated with interdependence, because they stereotype women as a group as more relational, because the typical woman is deemed more relational than the typical man. The same can be said about men, although they tend to self-stereotype less than women: they evaluate themselves as agentic because they believe a typical man is more agentic, which is more often associated with independence. These differences become more obvious when someone compares her/himself to the opposite sex. A woman who compares herself to a man is going to consider herself more relational than a woman who is comparing herself to another woman. This is because we tend to take on

attributes that one might perceive to be distinctive of their in-group, in this case their gender (Guimond et al., 2006).

Levels of interdependence and independence may be related to one's levels of self-esteem. People higher in interdependence may experience an increase in self-esteem by being in close relationships and belonging to social groups because it increases their sense of relatedness and connectedness, values that are important to interdependent self-construals. Additionally, maintaining a level of harmony in close relationships and feeling that those in said close relationships validate one's concern and affection also work to enhance self-esteem (Cross & Madson, 1997). Josephs, Markus, and Tafarodi (1992) found that this relationship works in reverse when we consider gender: women with high self-esteem tend to be more sensitive to others and more attuned to what relationship partners need than women with low self-esteem.

While those higher in independence do participate in relationships, they tend to do so with individualistic intentions. Such people may use relationships and memberships to compare themselves to others, and tend to view relationships as a threat to their independence and autonomy. Social relationships and memberships may also be the best source to exhibit certain attributes deemed as worthy, such as an ability to lead others. Demonstrating their superior quality is likely to enhance one's self-esteem if being superior is important to their self-concept (Cross & Madson, 1997). Considering gender here, men with high self-esteem are more autonomous and tend to have more separation from others than men with low self-esteem, showing that men who already have high self-esteem might not need a relationship to make them feel superior (Josephs, Markus, & Tafarodi, 1992).

Method

For this study, I consider the difference between psychology majors and women's studies majors. I hypothesize that there will be no differences between the two groups in terms of their level of identification with UPEI as an institution, but am still interested in how the participants identify with it overall. However, I anticipate group differences in regards to levels of discipline identification, in that women's studies students will identify with their major more than psychology students because women's studies has been shown to have numerous impacts which I believe will result in a higher level of identification. Additionally, I hypothesize that women's studies participants will have higher levels of gender identification, will think more about their gender group, feel more strongly that what happens to their gender group directly affects them, and that they will feel more influenced by the women's movement than the psychology students.

Participants

UPEI students were recruited from select upper-level women's studies and psychology courses. The total sample consisted of 33 participants, 14 from women's studies courses and 19 from psychology courses.¹ There were 29 females and 4 males. The psychology participants consisted of 16 females and 3 males while women's studies participants were 13 females and 1 male. Although there were only 4 male participants, they were still included in the analysis as excluding them would not have changed the results. Ages ranged from 19-57, with a mean age of 23. Ethnicity information was not gathered, as previous literature gave no indication that it would effect the results.

¹ Although time would have allowed for recruiting more participants for the women's studies group, in the middle of this research UPEI's women's studies department changed its name to diversity and social justice studies. To maintain consistency throughout the survey and the literature, no students were invited to participate after the name change.

Participants were compensated in one of two ways: participants who were enrolled Psychology 342: Intimate Relationships were given one extra credit mark towards their final grade; for participants not enrolled in this class, their names were entered into a draw for \$50.

Procedure

Once permission was obtained from professors, the researcher went to selected classes to give an explanation of the study and leave flyers that contained information about the study including the website where students could find the questionnaires, one for psychology students and one for women's studies students (see Appendix A). Information was also posted on Facebook groups for both the women's studies department and for the Psychology of Arts and Science Society. The first page of the survey contained information about the research project and acted as a consent form; by proceeding to the second page the participant indicated consent to participate. Following consent, participants were presented with a series of survey items as described below.

Measures

Participants completed an online questionnaire that was broken down into five subsections. The first section measured participants' identification with UPEI as an institution. First were survey items from Properties of Gender Identity by Gurin and Townsend (1986). Participants were asked how often they think about themselves as UPEI students on a scale of 1-5 where 1 was 'hardly ever' and 5 was 'a lot', as well as how much they have in common with other UPEI students again on a 5-point scale where 1 was 'very little' and 5 was 'a great deal'. This had relatively low reliabilities, Cronbach's $\alpha = .59$. Participants were then given survey items from Luhtanen and

Crocker's Collective Self-Esteem Scale (1992), from both the private regard and the identity subscales. They were given statements such as "I often regret that I am a UPEI student" (reverse scored) and "being a UPEI student is an important reflection of who I am." These statements were put on a Likert scale ranging from disagree at 1 to agree at 5. Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$.

The following section measured participants' identification with their major, either psychology or women's studies. These survey items were the same as the first section, but "UPEI" was changed to either "psychology" or "women's studies" depending on the survey, as different versions were created consistent with the participants' major. They were again given the gender identity items, asking how often they think about themselves as a psychology/women's studies student as well as how much they felt they had in common with other students in the same program. The scale items are the same as above. Cronbach's $\alpha = .635$. They were then given statements from the Collective Self-Esteem Subscales, statements such as "I feel good about being a psychology/women's studies student" and "overall, being a psychology/women's studies student has very little to do with how I feel about myself" (reverse scored). These statements also used a 5-point scale going from disagree at 1 to agree at 5. These had high reliabilites, Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$.

The third section addressed participants' levels of independence and interdependence. Lu and Gilmour's Independent and Interdependent Views of the Self (2007) survey items were place on a 5-point scale with 1 as disagree to 5 as agree. Statements such as "I believe that people should have their own ideals and try hard to

achieve them” and “belonging to a group is important to my self-identity or sense of myself” were given. Reliabilities were very low, Cronbach's $\alpha = .40$.

The proceeding section assessed participants' gender identification. This section followed the set up of both the UPEI and major identification. Again, participants were given questions from the Properties of Gender Identity survey, however this section included two additional questions from the survey, which were “to what extent does what happens to other members of your gender generally in this country have something to do with what happens in your life” and “to what extent do you think that the movement for women's rights has affected you personally.” Cronbach's $\alpha = .62$. Participants were then given the private regard and identity subscales from the Collective Self-Esteem Scale, the same as the first two sections. These had relatively high reliabilities, Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$.

The final section of the survey asked short answer questions that allowed participants' to expand on their experience as a UPEI student in their field of study. Questions such as “did you choose your current major before you got to university? If so, why?” and “have your studies changed the way you see the world?” were asked.

Finally, participants were given demographic questions. They were asked their age, gender, and year of study.

Results and Discussion

University and Major Identification

When it comes to identifying with UPEI as an institution, I expected no difference between the psychology majors and the women's studies majors. Consistent with this prediction, the average identification with UPEI on a 5-point scale was 3.48 with a standard deviation of 0.88. The mean for psychology students was 3.38 with a standard

deviation of .938, while the mean for women's studies was 3.63 with a standard deviation of .808. Both the private regard and identity subscales were not significant $t(31) = -1.50$, $p = .14$ and $t(30) = -.23$, $p = .82$. These results supported my hypothesis that there would be no difference between psychology and women's studies students.

Looking at participants' identification with their major, I expected to see a difference between the psychology group and women's studies group. The average for identifying with one's major was 4.13 on a 5-point scale, with a standard deviation of .96. The mean score for psychology students was 4.06, $SD = .95$, and for women's studies $M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.01$. T-tests revealed that there was no difference between groups in their identification with their major; $t(28) = -.34$, $p = .74$ for private regard and $t(29) = -.47$, $p = .64$ for the identity subscale. There were no group differences in terms of identifying with one's major, a finding in opposition to what had expected. I expected women's studies students to identify with their major more because this subject deals with issues that are likely to be seen in the day-to-day life of students such as social injustices. The fact that there was no significant difference suggests that perhaps women's studies students do not feel as connected to their majors as anticipated or that psychology students identify with psychology to a higher extent than expected. It could also suggest, contrary to my reasoning, that there is nothing unique about women's studies and the importance it has in students' lives and that perhaps university students in general identify relatively similar to their major.

Gender Identification

The levels of gender group identification showed mixed results. On average, participants rated their gender identification 3.98 with a standard deviation of .67. There

was no significant difference for the private regard subscale $t(31) = .02, p = .99$, but the identity subscale was significant $t(31) = -2.33, p = .03$. When comparing gender identity levels between the groups, I expected that the women's studies participants would think more about their gender group than the psychology group. Results indicate support for this hypothesis, $t(30) = -2.15, p < .040$. The mean for psychology students was 2.94, $SD = 1.26$, while the mean for women's studies students was 3.86, $SD = 1.10$. I also anticipated that women's studies students would feel that what happens to other members of one's gender group affects them (women's studies $M = 3.07, SD = .92$; psychology $M = 3.35, SD = .86$) and that what happens in the women's movement personally affects them (women's studies $M = 3.7, SD = 1.38$; psychology $M = 3.56, SD = 1.25$.), both of which showed no significant difference, $t(29) = .88, p = .39$, and $t(30) = -.34, p = .74$.

The private subscale, which measures how good one thinks their social groups are, showed no significant differences between the two groups. This may be because women's studies students learn that their gender group may be problematic or that psychology students simply don't think about what their gender group means to them. The lack of difference may also be because students learn about their gender and development an understanding of it outside of the classroom, allowing differences among groups but not necessarily between them. The identity subscale, however, showed a significant difference, which matched my expectations. This subscale measures how important social groups are to one's self-concept. Because women's studies students arguably focus on gender issues in more detail, individuals may connect to their gender groups because of the injustices directed at it. In fact, there was a significant relationship

between the private and identity subscales for gender, $r = .40$, $p = .02$. (For a full correlation table, see Appendix B.)

The results for the properties of gender identity scales indicated that there was a difference between how often participants think about their gender group, which makes sense in that women's studies courses often look directly at gender issues. However the results indicate that there is no difference in whether participants feel that what happens to other people of their gender group in this country and whether they felt that the women's movement affected them personally. Possible suggestions for this lack of difference is that psychology students are more concerned about gender issues than expected, and feel that the women's movement does influence them. Psychology students may learn about the women's movement more than expected and therefore feel its impact on their lives. Perhaps there is also a level of knowledge developed outside the classroom where women's studies students are not the only ones thinking about women's movements.

Additionally, it is important to note that the questions asked here do not investigate how the participants define gender, meaning that perhaps the psychology students and women's studies students have different ways of constructing their gender. When asking students to think about their identification with their gender or how the women's movement affects them, there is an assumption that all participants understand what gender means in the same way and that they all think of the same things when they see the term 'women's movement.' These different understandings of what it means to be a woman was not assessed and could contribute to the difference in responses.

Short Answer Responses

When analyzing responses to the short answer questions, some common responses arose. I chose these responses as well as any others that seemed unique or interesting as the themes for these questions. Each participant was coded for each theme, where a 1 indicated if a participant had mentioned that theme. Nine themes were established. In response to how their major changed the way they see themselves, the themes found were: applying what they learn to real life (27% discussed this), learning to think critically (6%), becoming conscious of oneself and their decisions (12%), and feeling like part of a community (3%). When asked how one's studies changed the way they see the world, the themes that emerged were: learning to see various perspectives (15%), questioning information presented to you (3%), understanding how the world works (27%), becoming aware of and accepting cultural differences (3%), and seeing social justice issues as important (6%).

Fisher's exact tests were run on select themes. Applying course work to real life was predicted to differentiate between women's studies and psychology participants, which it did significantly, with a 2-sided value of .05. 42% of psychology students reported this process of application, compared to 7% of women's studies majors. One reason for this could be that women's studies students choose that major based on issues they are aware of, so when they learn them in coursework, they have already thought about applying them to their lives. There is also the possibility that because psychology is such a broad field, many students begin to see what they learn in the classroom in the real world.

There was no significant relationship between the theme of application and the participants' identification with either UPEI ($r = -.12$, $p = .52$) or with their gender ($r = -$

.05, $p = .78$). When it came to learning to think critically because of one's chosen major, I expected to see no group differences, as critical thinking is a skill many university instructors in various programs promote; Fisher's exact test was not significant with a 2-sided value of 1.00. A similar number of psychology and women's studies majors reported this change, 5% and 7% respectively. There was also no significant relationship between this theme of thinking critically and the participants' identification with either UPEI ($r = .25$, $p = .17$) or with their gender ($r = .29$, $p = .10$). Whether one's major would change the way they see the world was expected to differ between the groups, and in fact it was not significant, with a 1-sided value of .26. 68% of psychology students mentioned seeing a change in themselves, as did 50% of women's studies students. Again, there were no significant relationships between this theme and the participants' identification with UPEI ($r = -.11$, $p = .58$) or with their gender ($r = .25$, $p = .19$). Because of the small sample number, Fisher's exact test had to be used to analyze the probability that any specific answer would be given. Applying course work to real life met expectations that it would demonstrate a difference, likely because women's studies courses are often based on real life situations. There was no significant difference between groups in terms of learning to think critically because I believe university in general teaches this skill, so there will be little difference in which major is chosen.

Participants were asked if they had plans for after they graduate and if those plans were related to their field of study, which was expected to be similar between both groups. Overall, 85% of the participants had plans for after they graduate, and 67% of had plans related to their fields of study. However, there was no significant difference between groups in having plans, 2-sided value of .61, and there was a significant

difference in having field-related plans, with a value of .06. The lack of difference for having plans indicates that most students who participated in this study have thought about their future plans, regardless of which program they are in. The difference in field-related plans must be taken with reservation however, as my own interpretation decided which plans were related to the individual's field of study or not.

Conclusion

Overall, students at UPEI were somewhat neutral on their identification with the university, regardless of their major. Although this study only looked at two majors, we can see that the field a student chooses to study doesn't necessarily relate to their feelings about their institution. There is a large percentage of UPEI students who are originally from PEI and may still live in their hometowns. Living in your childhood home as opposed to a dorm residence doesn't allow for the expected university experience that incorporates moving to a new town and living independently from your parents. This lack of stereotypical experience may affect the feelings you have towards the institution. Additionally, where other universities have big, popular events on campus that may bring out students' pride in that school, UPEI is lacking in such events. I believe this is because of the amount of students who don't live on campus and therefore don't often attend on campus events. This lack of identification with UPEI could impact the university as a whole, because as MacDonald (2013) claims, universities find economic success when their alumni identify with their university, because they are more likely to continue to donate to the institution.

UPEI students felt slightly more identified with their major than their university, and there were no differences between the groups here either. This was unexpected

because women's studies courses have been shown to impact many aspects of a student's life, including their self-identity (Griffin & Hamner, 2005), a topic that has not been extensively researched with psychology students. Perhaps these results didn't support the original hypothesis because psychology has a bigger impact on a student than the literature indicates. Because it is such a broad field and one that is so popular, I thought psychology students wouldn't connect to their major as much as women's studies students. Women's studies students tend to be interested in social justice issues and therefore feel like their major is important to their identity because these are the topics often covered in women's studies courses. While psychology students could have identified with their major more than the literature indicates, women's studies students could have identified less with their major than indicated.

These students also identified fairly high with their gender identity. Women's studies students reported that they thought more about their gender than psychology students did, and that their gender was important to their identity more so than psychology students did. Whether this the effect of the courses or not is difficult to determine as students who feel this way may be more likely to choose women's studies as a field. However, the courses could also be accountable as well. It was unexpected that both groups reported similar feelings of how good they think their gender group is, but perhaps the participants like their gender group regardless of their involvement in thinking about it. Additionally, the fact that both psychology and women's studies students felt similarly in how they feel the women's movement affects their lives was a surprise. Because there are often negative ideas about feminism and the women's movement from the outside, I expected psychology students to report lower levels here.

These results either tell us that all participants, men and women, feel the women's movement has positively influenced their lives and that psychology students think about this more than anticipated, or it tells us that both groups feel the movement hasn't influenced their lives, meaning that women's studies students are not seeing the value and work of the women's movement.

The short answer questions did not reveal as diverse opinions as anticipated. Many of the themes were mentioned only by a few people, making it difficult to understand the personal experiences of being in a certain field of study. Many of the themes found for the question "has your major changed the way you see yourself" could arguably be mentioned by any university student, not necessarily one from either psychology or women's studies. Application and learning to think critically are general outcomes of a university experience. Most of the themes for the question "how has your major changed the way you see the world," such as learning to see various perspectives and questioning information that is presented to you could also be developed from any major. However, the themes that talked about seeing social justice issues as important and accepting cultural differences seem to be more relevant to women's studies courses, and in fact only women's studies students reported these (see Appendix C).

Future Research & Limitations

This is a field that is lacking in research and one that I believe would develop a deeper understanding of the university student experience. There needs to be research into what factors influence the process of identifying with a student's university or major. Additionally, it would be interesting to see how levels of identification influence the

students' future: does a higher level of satisfaction lead to future schooling or a more desirable job?

This same study could be completed at another university to compare the levels of identification with UPEI as an institution. Completing this at a larger university that has more traditional events such as sporting events or more symbolic ceremonies such as receiving the X ring at St. Francis Xavier University would be best for revealing a difference. The study could also be completed using different majors at UPEI, specifically ones that are smaller and result in all the students taking the majority of their classes together, such as computer science. Perhaps the broadness of psychology and the wide variety of courses for both psychology and women's studies hinders the development of a stronger identification.

A future approach could focus more on the kinds of questions asked in the open-ended questions. A qualitative study might work better to more accurately understand what influences a student's major has on them. Because the questions were so broad, there was a wide variety of responses, making it difficult to see any generalizations among students. This could be a result of the way the questions were posed. Perhaps a future study could use the themes I discovered as a Likert scale with the option to add other effects. This would reveal if these themes were widely applicable or only with this population. The option to add more would give the participants examples of what the question was looking for, as the way I asked the question may have been too broad.

While this research attempted to incorporate a person's independent and/or interdependent values, the responses could not tie these concepts to ideas of identification. The intention to compare a student's level of independence to their level of

collective self-esteem may not have revealed anything because there may be no relationship. Or perhaps the participants didn't see the connection and if they had been given a brief explanation of why those questions were there, they may have answered differently.

The small sample size limits the ability to generalize the findings beyond the sample. It also limited the commonalities found between participants' responses. Additionally, there were very few males involved, making it difficult to see any gender differences in terms of levels of identification. A future study could gather a larger sample, along with a more evenly distributed number of a gender other than female.

The scales used in this survey make assumptions about what certain concepts mean. For example, in Gurin and Townsend's Properties of Gender Identity, there's an assumed singular definition of what the women's movement is. As any historical reading of women's movement demonstrates, there was and is no singular movement, but rather a variety of movements created by and for various subgroups of the category 'woman.' Asking participants how much they feel the women's movement has impacted their lives assumes that there was only one movement and that it either did or did not affect the individual, rather than acknowledging that certain movements or part of a movement may have impacted the individual. Regardless of this presumption, the scales are important for developing a basic understanding of how gender issues affects the participants. I raise this point not in an attempt to dismantle the scales, but simply to acknowledge the issues the scales may have. However, the framework that guides this research is one lacking in intersectionality, one that perhaps simplifies complex topics in order to collect a wider range of information.

Students at University of Prince Edward Island only somewhat identify with the university as an institution, regardless of gender and of the majors analyzed here. The process of identifying with one's major and university seem to be separate processes, perhaps to do with the sense of community that may or may not develop out of each category. This research suggests that perhaps a student's level of identification is not about what they are studying, but about the closeness of the group. As I suggested above, one of the reasons why UPEI students don't identify with UPEI as an institution could be because of the lack of events that strengthen school pride. Whereas other universities may create an environment of bonding among all students, a lack of that at UPEI may be to blame for a lack of UPEI identification. Also mentioned earlier, there were no group differences in terms of identifying with one's major, but a few participants did report feeling a sense of community within their major. Conceivably, a student's identification with their school or their field of study may not be about the academic portion of their university experience; feeling a sense of community with other students may be the key to understanding a student's level of identification with their institution and discipline.

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Appendix A

Below are questions regarding how UPEI fits into your identity.

How often do you think about yourself as a UPEI student?

Hardly Ever *Once in a While* *Fairly Often* *A Lot*

How much do you have in common with other UPEI students?

Very Little 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *A Great Deal*

I often regret that I am a UPEI student.

Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

In general, I'm glad to be a UPEI student.

Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Overall, I often feel that being a UPEI student is not worthwhile.

Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I feel good about being a UPEI student.

Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Overall, being a UPEI student has very little to do with how I feel about myself.

Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Being a UPEI student is an important reflection of who I am.

Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Being a UPEI student is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.

Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

In general, being a UPEI student is an important part of my self-image.

Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Below are questions regarding how psychology(/women's studies) fits into your identity.

How often do you think about yourself as a psychology(/women's studies) student?
Hardly Ever *Once in a While* *Fairly Often* *A Lot*

How much do you have in common with other psychology(/women's studies) students?
Very Little 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *A Great Deal*

I often regret that I am a psychology(/women's studies) student.
Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

In general, I'm glad to be a psychology(/women's studies) student.
Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Overall, I often feel that being a psychology(/women's studies) student is not worthwhile.
Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I feel good about being a psychology(/women's studies) student.
Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Overall, being a psychology(/women's studies) student has very little to do with how I feel about myself.
Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Being a psychology(/women's studies) student is an important reflection of who I am.
Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Being a psychology(/women's studies) student is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.
Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

In general, being a psychology(/women's studies) student is an important part of my self-image.
Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Disagree Somewhat* *Neutral* *Agree Somewhat* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Below are statements regarding how important independence is to you.

I believe that people should try hard to satisfy their interests.

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Disagree Somewhat 3	Neutral 4	Agree Somewhat 5	Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
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I believe that people should have their own ideals and try hard to achieve them.

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Disagree Somewhat 3	Neutral 4	Agree Somewhat 5	Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
------------------------	---------------	------------------------	--------------	---------------------	------------	---------------------

Once you become a member of the group, you should try hard to adjust to the group's demands.

<i>Strongly Disagree</i> 1	<i>Disagree</i> 2	<i>Disagree Somewhat</i> 3	<i>Neutral</i> 4	<i>Agree Somewhat</i> 5	<i>Agree</i> 6	<i>Strongly Agree</i> 7
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I believe that a happy life is the result of one's own efforts.

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Disagree Somewhat 3	Neutral 4	Agree Somewhat 5	Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
------------------------	---------------	------------------------	--------------	---------------------	------------	---------------------

Belonging to a group is important to my self-identity, or sense of myself.

<i>Strongly Disagree</i> 1	<i>Disagree</i> 2	<i>Disagree Somewhat</i> 3	<i>Neutral</i> 4	<i>Agree Somewhat</i> 5	<i>Agree</i> 6	<i>Strongly Agree</i> 7
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I believe that people should maintain their independence in a group.

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Disagree Somewhat 3	Neutral 4	Agree Somewhat 5	Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
------------------------	---------------	------------------------	--------------	---------------------	------------	---------------------

I believe that people should find their place within a group.

<i>Strongly Disagree</i> 1	<i>Disagree</i> 2	<i>Disagree Somewhat</i> 3	<i>Neutral</i> 4	<i>Agree Somewhat</i> 5	<i>Agree</i> 6	<i>Strongly Agree</i> 7
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I believe that people should be unique and different from others.

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Disagree Somewhat 3	Neutral 4	Agree Somewhat 5	Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
------------------------	---------------	------------------------	--------------	---------------------	------------	---------------------

I have a strong identification with people close to me.

<i>Strongly Disagree</i> 1	<i>Disagree</i> 2	<i>Disagree Somewhat</i> 3	<i>Neutral</i> 4	<i>Agree Somewhat</i> 5	<i>Agree</i> 6	<i>Strongly Agree</i> 7
-------------------------------	----------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------	----------------------------	-------------------	----------------------------

For myself, I believe that others should not influence my self-identity.

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Disagree Somewhat 3	Neutral 4	Agree Somewhat 5	Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
------------------------	---------------	------------------------	--------------	---------------------	------------	---------------------

I believe that family and friends should not influence my important life decisions.

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Disagree Somewhat 3	Neutral 4	Agree Somewhat 5	Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
------------------------	---------------	------------------------	--------------	---------------------	------------	---------------------

My self-identity is the result of my social status.

<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree Somewhat</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree Somewhat</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
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In general, belonging to my gender group is an important part of my self-image.

<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree Somewhat</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree Somewhat</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(Short Answer Questions)

What is your major?

Did you choose your current major before you got to university? If so, why?

Do you feel that your major has changed the way you think about yourself?

Yes It Has

I Haven't Thought About It

No It Hasn't

Explain.

How have your studies changed the way you see the world? (Be specific)

What do you intend to do after you graduate?

Appendix B

Correlations Between Scales

Scale	Pearson Correlation	Private subscale for institutional id	Identity subscale for institutional id	Private subscale for discipline id	Identity subscale for discipline id	Private subscale for gender id	Identity subscale for gender id	Independence
Private subscale for institutional id		1	.608**	.335	-.011	.156	.234	-.237
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.070	.954	.386	.190	.191
	N	33	32	30	31	33	33	32
Identity subscale for institutional id		.608**	1	.169	.223	.122	.360*	-.156
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.382	.382	.236	.507	.043	.401
	N	32	32	29	30	32	32	31
Private subscale for discipline id		.335	.169	1	.616**	.343	.181	-.230
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.070	.382	.000	.000	.064	.340	.230
	N	30	29	30	30	30	30	29
Identity subscale for discipline id		-.011	.223	.616**	1	-.007	.199	-.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.954	.236	.000	.970	.970	.284	.612
	N	31	30	30	31	31	31	30
Private subscale for gender id		.156	.122	.343	-.007	1	.398*	.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.386	.507	.064	.970	.022	.022	.938
	N	33	32	30	31	33	33	32
Identity subscale for gender id		.234	.360*	.181	.199	.398*	1	-.148
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.190	.043	.340	.284	.022	.417	.417
	N	33	32	30	31	33	33	32
Independence		-.237	-.156	-.230	-.097	.014	-.148	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.191	.401	.230	.612	.938	.417	
	N	32	31	29	30	32	32	32

** $p < .01$, two-tailed.

* $p < .05$, two-tailed.

Appendix C

Short Answer Themes and Percentage of Participants' Responses

<u>Themes</u>	<u>Overall %</u>	<u>% of Women's Studies</u>	<u>% of Psychology</u>
Application to life	27	7	42
Think critically	6	7	5
Conscious of oneself	12	14	11
Sense of community	3	7	0
Various perspectives	15	14	16
Question information	3	0	5
World consciousness	27	36	21
Cultural awareness	3	7	0
Social justice as important	6	14	0
Plans after graduation	85	93	84
Field related plans	67	86	53