

# Uplift or Undermine?: The Manifestation of Internalized Misogyny in Teenage Girls

Sophia Wilson 2021

## Abstract

Preliminary research was conducted on definitions and perceptions of feminism, internalized misogyny, the experience of a teenage girl in regards to gender dynamics. The following research questions were developed: How do teenage girls internalize and perpetuate misogyny by teaching it to other girls and policing other girls through a misogynistic lens? How does internalized misogyny manifest in their behaviors and interactions with each other? The researcher hypothesized that girls would have internalized misogyny and it would manifest in a refusal to identify oneself as a feminist. A survey was created and distributed in order to answer the research question. The conclusions were reached that teenage girls do have internalized misogyny, however the majority do not allow it to manifest in harmful or dangerous ways.

## I. Introduction and Background Information

The topic of interest for this research project is the manifestation of internalized misogyny in teenage girls. Some relevant research includes definitions of feminism, hostile and benevolent sexism, the internalization of sexism, the silencing of women, and learning misogyny as a teenage girl.

The feminist movement as a whole can be critiqued for being unfocused and split into many types and factions. A 2000 study by Lorin Basden Arnold asked college students to write a description of feminism, write a description of feminists, and indicate whether they consider themselves to be feminists. Though she sorted the definitions by the things they mentioned (such as equality, rights, acting feminine but strong, and celebrating women as well as positive,

negative, and neutral everyone still gave different definitions, showing that the definition of feminism lacks clarity. Arnold also discussed how the negative connotations of the word 'feminist' leads to many people being afraid to self-identify as a feminist. Many feel that acting on feminist beliefs and identifying actively as a feminist has social consequences that they do not want to face (Arnold). The social construction of reality is in part to blame for these negative connotations, and Arnold explains that because we create and sustain the meaning of social phenomena (like 'feminist') through social interaction, when our communication about a word involves negative language, we learn subconsciously that this word has negative connotations.

According to Holly A. Gartler, internalized misogyny can be defined as "a process where an individual or group internalizes into her core identity and self-concept all or part of the negative stereotypes and hatred of women." Misogyny typically presents itself into two types of sexist events: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Gartler observes that hostile sexism (overt and has been dwindling over time) is a blatantly aggressive negative attitude toward women, while benevolent sexism (covert, subtle, and increasingly common) is a seemingly positive attitude toward women, which characterizes them as fragile beings dependent on men. Benevolent sexism may contribute to women's adherence to traditional gender roles and is dangerous because women are less likely to recognize or challenge it (Gartler). The internalization of these attitudes leads to internalized misogyny, which those women then perpetuate (Gartler). Gartler sums it up by saying that internalized misogyny is "passive acceptance of traditional gender roles and unawareness or denial of cultural, institutional, and individual sexism," and that "passive acceptance of traditional gender ideologies or denial of sexism are also indicators of internalized misogyny and these ideas become hegemonic and

unquestioned, which maintain the status quo.” Internalized misogyny becomes incredibly dangerous and harmful when perpetuated.

My research question is: How do teenage girls internalize and perpetuate misogyny by teaching it to other girls and policing other girls through a misogynistic lens? How does internalized misogyny manifest in their behaviors and interactions with each other? I predict that my research will show that a majority if not most teenage girls will have internalized misogyny. I predict that this will be a result of childhood experiences with learning expected gender roles, growing up with social media, media influence, normalization of sexual harassment and assault, and being sexualized from a young age. Lastly, I predict that at least some of the young women’s internalized misogyny will manifest in a refusal to identify oneself as a feminist and judgment of other girls both for their looks and their sexual actions.

## **II. Literature Review**

The sources studied covered a wide range of topics; however, a wide breadth of information was necessary to gain the best understanding of how to survey people in order to answer my research question. Multiple sources discussed the societal expectations of girls and women, internalized misogyny (its relationship to hostile and benevolent sexism), and society’s perception of feminists and the feminist movement. Other topics common throughout many sources are the teenage girl experience, the silencing of women/victim-blaming in the context of sexual assault and harassment, and the hypersexualization of girls from a young age. The synthesis of information on these topics provided a solid foundation of knowledge that allowed me to craft a relevant and worthwhile survey.

A recent study by Julia C. Becker looked at the effect of female subtypes on women's endorsement of sexist beliefs – especially as sexist beliefs serve to solidify the role of women as the oppressed group in our patriarchal society. The three subtypes identified were traditional, non-traditional, and sexual (Becker). The traditional subtype is typically rewarded with benevolence from men while the non-traditional subtype is often met with hostility (Becker). Non-traditional women threaten men's societal status, eliciting that hostile reaction (Becker). Becker explains that women see men reacting in this way, internalize it, and then treat other women with this same hostility. Importantly, she also mentioned how many women fear being perceived as radical (non-traditional) and therefore do not want to be labeled as a feminist. Becker concluded that female subtypes do influence the level to which women endorse hostile or benevolent sexism. She also concluded that the endorsement of hostile sexism came from thinking about non-traditional subtypes and that women who endorse hostile beliefs are not hostile towards their own subtype but norm-deviant ones. One other key idea that Becker discussed was how these subtypes “serve to reinforce and maintain existing status differences between groups,” and “by distinguishing and categorizing female subtypes into “good” (who support status differences) and “bad” (who threaten status differences), those who identify with the “good” subtypes can distance themselves from non-traditional subtypes and engage in sexism against these norm-violating women, thus contributing to the maintenance of gender stereotypes and power differences between women and men.”

Laura Bates' book *Everyday Sexism* discusses the ignorance of sexism, the silencing of women, and most relevant to my project, the teenage girl experience in relation to sexism and misogyny. People want to ignore sexism and not talk about it, so they pretend and claim that it simply doesn't exist when in reality, sexism is alive and thriving - a fact supported by statistics

on just about every area of life (Bates). Bates says, "I started wondering whether there might not be a connection between ours being a society in which so many women become so accustomed to experiencing gender-based prejudice that they almost fail to even register it anymore," (6). The silencing of women, specifically victims of sexual assault, harassment, and abuse contributes to the denial of sexism's existence. She says that from a young age, girls receive messaging to keep quiet and distrust themselves - "As girls grow up, these responses start to skew their own judgment of situations - they learn not to trust themselves and not to make a fuss," (Bates 17). The combination of victim-blaming media, dismissive responses of family and friends, and the normalization of assault in general, converge to create a society where girls and women learn to fear being silenced by others if they don't silence themselves first. Around rape and sexual assault, there is a focus on instructing women to behave "properly" and giving women ways to "take responsibility to stop themselves from being raped" (Bates 27), when the focus should be on holding men accountable or programs that prevent rape in the first place (Bates). There is a "theme of young girls learning early, and even from their parents, that responsibility for sexual harassment falls on their own shoulders...it is significant that the silencing starts early... how the impact of learning such 'truths' from the people you trust the most can cause them to become deeply ingrained--making it much harder for women to realize that what is happening to them is wrong, or to speak up about it later on," (Bates 30-31).

Laura Bates also writes about the experience of being a girl and the sexist encounters that start literally from infancy. The manifestation of childhood sexism begins with segregated toys: pink, soft, cuddly, and domestic for girls, versus blue, hard, sporty, energetic, scientific, and explorative for boys. The stereotypical female duties are shoved down girls' throats before age 5. Media for boys contains options, as a wide variety of interests and activities are represented,

providing boys “a platform on which they can build their own identities,” (Bates 86). Girls (children) media is a bombardment of two main things: beauty and domesticity - giving girls none of that room to explore different things that boys receive (Bates). The priorities of teen media rarely differ, focusing on fashion, beauty, celebrities, and love life. Bates writes that “the way that the obsessive focus on girls' looks plays into the dialogue around what they can and can't do is particularly poisonous. It inserts the self-consciousness of the watched, objectified women into girls' internal narratives before they would ever have noticed it themselves... And it teaches them lessons about their own value being measured by their bodies and faces-- lessons that will stay with them for the rest of their lives,” (93-94).

*Everyday Sexism* additionally discusses the normalization of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and objectification in teenage girls' lives. Nearly all girls reported sexual harassment to be common and a part of life, especially sexual name-calling (slut, whore, hoe, slag) (Bates). Most girls do not call it out when it's happening or report it after the fact because they do not want to cause a scene/be seen as dramatic, or they simply have no faith that anyone will believe them (Bates). Schools fail to handle accusations properly, most commonly just dismissing them and saying that “boys will be boys,” (Bates). Bates writes, “Girls have been socialized into submission and into acceptance of others' behavior - even when it invades their personal space,” (101). The constant silencing and dismissal of these experiences contributes largely to the internalization of misogyny and sexism. Bates then brought up the disaster of school dress codes and how “when such dress codes start so young, there begins to be a very valid argument that schools are not policing “sexy” attire worn by students attempting to be provocative but are in fact sexualizing students themselves by suggesting that their natural body parts are somehow titillating or scandalous,” (105). Dress codes are not working to create the positive learning

environment that they claim to - they are forcing and reinforcing strict social gender norms. They tell girls that their bodies are sexual objects, boys cannot be expected to control their behavior, and that a boy's education is more important than a girl's, and most importantly, that girls are somehow responsible for provoking harassment from boys. The response of schools further normalizes girls' silence, and "then they grow up into young women and adults who don't feel able to speak up either," (Bates 106-107). Additionally, Bates noted a 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' type of situation: girls are taught that they are sexual objects but slammed when they grow up and dress 'sexy' or embrace that sexuality.

The internet also has great effects on the experience of a teenage girl and her internalization of misogyny. From social media to anonymous Q&A sites to scarily-accessible pornography, the internet is a whole new and massive channel for more messaging about both girls' and boys' societal expectations/roles. Pornography and its availability should be a much bigger concern, as it is clearly influencing what both boys and girls expect sex and relationships to be like (Bates cited many stories of both boys and girls believing generally that women are extremely submissive and men are extremely dominant in sex and relationships) (Bates). We won't be able to get rid of pornography on the internet, but Bates says that we should at least be combatting it as much as possible with true and correct information like sex and relationships education in school that teaches consent, domestic violence, and healthy relationships. In all, *Everyday Sexism* discussed how from childhood to teenagehood, girls learn about being judged on their looks, the importance of weight loss, that only certain life paths are available to them, and that sexual assault and harassment are normal parts of life. Bates writes, "the earliest lesson they learn is that they will be judged not just more harshly than their male peers but on a different scale altogether," (120).

### **III. Project Description**

I created a survey that has a mix of qualitative and quantitative questions. The survey covers the topics of feminist identity, perceptions of feminism, body shaming, hypersexualization and objectification, sexual assault and sexual harassment, and lastly, victim-blaming or silencing. The second part of the project is an analysis of the survey responses in order to reach a conclusion about my research question.

I have chosen the method of a survey because it is the most efficient method of gathering data and allowing people to express themselves free of judgment or identity. It also gives the participants time to think about their responses and put them into words rather than being put on the spot and possibly less able to clearly get all their thoughts across. Another benefit of a survey is that the questions presented in the survey force the reader to think about these ideas, and maybe they are not ideas that the participant often thinks about or has ever thought about.

This project will be illuminating to those who see it because we often do not realize that we have internalized misogyny, and if my hypothesis is correct, this will show that we are all subject to it even when we think we are not. I chose teenage girls to focus on because the teenage years are such a formative time of life, and I want to bring awareness to how internalized misogyny, feminism, and gender dynamics play a role in it. This project will also build on the research others have done by providing evidence and data about the topics presented in the survey in a specific group of people that I personally have not seen any research on yet. It also reacts to the preliminary research I have done because I had to synthesize and combine all of that research and all of the different ideas in order to determine what to evaluate and include in the survey.

The intended audience is teenage girls. This project aims to show them that they may be doing things they do not even realize or have unconscious beliefs. I feel that they are the right audience because if they can see the results and the meaning of the results, then it could cause them to change their behavior or their thinking. And if they do not change, they will at least be more aware of these ideas functioning in real life, and even that can make a difference. If they can have this realization now, in these formative years, then it could really change their thinking and they could become different women than they would have been, and treat other people in a different way than they may have before.

#### **IV. Methods and Tools**

The first step was to formulate the survey questions. In order to do that, I looked to my preliminary research and decided that the survey should include the following topics: feminist identity, perceptions of feminism, body shaming, hyper-sexualization and objectification, sexual assault and sexual harassment, and lastly, victim-blaming or silencing. My research informed me that all of these were fixtures of a teenage girls' experience or important gender dynamics that could potentially be manifestations of internalized misogyny or contributors to the internalization of misogyny. I designed the survey for only girls to be able to fill it out. The survey was a mixture of qualitative and quantitative, including both open-ended questions ("please elaborate", "why or why not", etc.) and close-ended questions (yes/no, rating scale). I then created a Google Form and inputted all of the questions (See Appendix A for the full survey). I ensured that the survey was completely anonymous and let participants know that their identity would be unknown, so they could share anything they wanted without worrying. I also added the following trigger warning: "This survey contains questions about personal history with sexual

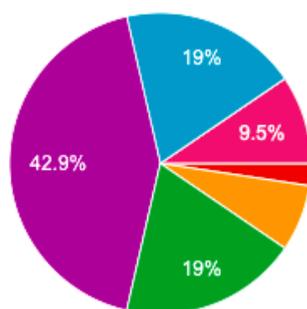
assault and sexual harassment. If you are not ready to answer or are uncomfortable answering questions regarding those topics, please skip the last two questions and write in 'NA' instead.”

The next step was distribution. The first method of distribution was via “Tolog Message”. I sent out the link to all the members of the senior class and asked them to fill out the survey. Then, since I am not able to message entire other grades, I asked Ms. Murphy to share the link with the freshman, sophomore, and junior classes. Ms. Murphy asked for a short blurb about my project to include in her message, and I wrote: “My SRP is about the manifestations of internalized misogyny in teenage girls. This survey will help me gather data to determine these manifestations as well as understand the perspectives of teenage girls on feminism and other gender studies-related topics.” Thus, the 9th, 10th, and 11th graders had an idea about what the survey was about whereas the 12th graders did not. Lastly, I employed my Instagram story and Snapchat story to distribute the survey and ask girls and female-aligning people to fill it out.

Seven days after the first distribution, I received 42 total responses. The final step was to analyze the results, which I did with the help of Google Forms. (See Appendix B for the complete record of survey responses).

## V. Findings/Results

I received responses from a variety of ages (see Figure 1) and many more all-girls school students than coed school students (see Figure 2). 38 respondents attend/attended all-girls school while only 4 respondents attend/attended coed school.



**Figure 1:**  
 13 - 0 respondents  
 14 - 1 respondent  
 15 - 3 respondents  
 16 - 7 respondents  
 17 - 18 respondents  
 18 - 7 respondents  
 19 - 0 respondents

16 - 8 respondents  
 17 - 18 respondents  
 18 - 8 respondents  
 19 - 4 respondents

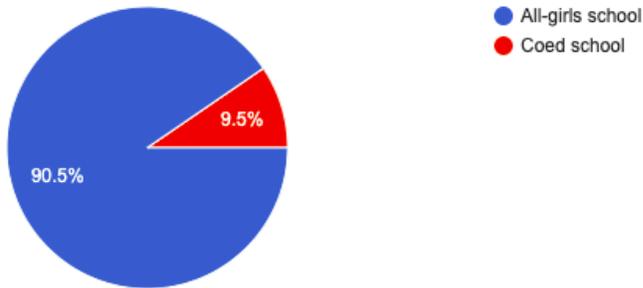


Figure 2:

All girls - 38 respondents

COED - 4 respondents

38 respondents said that they do identify themselves as feminists, and 4 said they do not. The 4 that said “no” attend all-girls school, and of those 4, two were 18 years old, one was 17 years old, and one was 15 years old. When asked to explain why or why not, the responses from those who answered “yes” focused on the fact that they believe women and men should be equal and that women should have the same rights as men. Other reasonings for identifying oneself as a feminist included being pro-choice, believing in gender equity, believing that it is important for women to support other women, wanting to dismantle misogyny and the patriarchy, and believing that women should no longer have to stay within the societal expectation of gender roles. Reasoning from those who do not identify as a feminist included not wanting to be labeled as a feminist, believing that the movement is too dramatic, and believing that the feminist movement actually leads to more separation among the genders.

The next question asked if they identified themselves as feminists around other boys or men. 32 said they do, and 9 said they do not. Out of the respondents who said no, 6 previously

identified themselves as feminists and 3 previously identified themselves not as feminists. Reasoning for those who responded yes to this question included believing that they should not hide or change their beliefs based on their audience or who they are around, not caring what boys/men think of them, being very proud of their feminist identity, and believing that it is part of their job as a feminist to help boys/men understand the true definition of feminism. One girl wrote that she “is not afraid of their judgement or vocalizing my beliefs and I want them to know I believe in equality. I think anyone who views feminism negatively does not understand its true mission, or has an incorrect picture of it in their heads,” (Anonymous). Another wrote the following: “I think they need to hear it the most. Many guys I know have little to no access to feminist ideology (women who will talk with them/media bias in algorithms) and won't seek it out. They are important discussions that need to happen & I have no shame in identifying as a feminist with men, I want equal rights for all, I'm not trying to put women above men. I try to stay respectful to their point of view in these discussions and share mine in a way they might be more inclined to be moved by,” (Anonymous). Respondents who said they do not identify themselves as feminists around other boys or men stated that boys would think they were annoying, it would attract too much attention, or that it would turn into a whole discussion and they “don't always feel like defending [their] rights constantly,” (Anonymous).

The next question asked if they identified themselves as feminist around other girls or women. 38 said yes, and 4 said no. “Yes” respondents explained that this is because being around other girls makes them feel empowered, there is much less risk of getting into an argument (compared to doing so with boys/men), and that they feel a sense of community due to the shared experiences of many women. “No” respondents explained that they simply are not passionate about the topic, or that they are not feminists in the first place.

The next question asks, “To you, what connotation does the word or idea “feminist” have?” Some responded very literally to this question and thought about their own feelings in regards to the term; however, others considered the general societal connotations instead. See Figure 3 for the data and reasonings. One thing important to note is that some respondents who selected options on the positive end were quick to point out that they did not want to associate themselves with radical feminists who “take things too far.”

**Figure 3**

<b>Option</b>	<b># of selections</b>	<b># of feminists vs. non-feminists</b>	<b>Reasonings</b>
Extremely negative	0	-	-
Negative	3	2 feminists 1 non-feminist	People think that it means that women want to be better than men Being called a feminist is an insult from some people The word “feminist” feels angry and dramatic
Slightly negative	12	9 feminists 3 non-feminists	Seems like anti-men Generally seen as a negative thing in society The word implies fighting/outrage/the angry feminist stereotype Feminists are a corrupt group who are not working towards their goal in an effective way. They only post on social media to be trendy and are not actually accomplishing anything Some feminists are too dramatic and take things too far The modern feminist movement is extreme and disrespectful Feminists are seen as aggressive, annoying, stubborn, pushy, know-it-alls, and victimize themselves People will always find something negative about the movement to excuse themselves from supporting it
Moderate (no connotation)	3	3 feminists	-
Slightly positive	5	5 feminists	Feminism is a good thing for society as it is creating progress Being a feminist is something to be proud of

Positive	11	11 feminists	People who think feminism is bad do not truly understand what the goal is and what it is about
Extremely Positive	8	8 feminists	Being a feminist is extremely empowering Surroundings have influenced their views of feminism (growing up around empowered women and people who identify themselves as feminists)

The following section asked respondents if they had ever received negative feedback from a girl/woman or a boy/man about their feminist identity. The results and reasoning can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Question	Responses	Elaborations/Personal Accounts
Negative Feedback From a Girl/Woman	18 - yes 15 - no 9 - I'm not sure	Participant told that her beliefs go against her religion Participant told her that men should stick with the harder subjects "How do you expect to get a boyfriend if you're this opinionated?" A woman was insistent that the pay gap does not exist Participant told that she is over-exaggerating the difficulties that women face "Why do you need to degrade men to feel better?" "Why can't you just leave the work to the men and create an easy life for yourself?" when the participant stated that she wanted to work in technology Participant told that she was not a real feminist simply because she did not repost feminist content on her social media
Negative Feedback from a Boy/Man	29 - yes 4 - no 9 - I'm not sure	Participant told that feminism is just a way for women to feel better about themselves Boys saying that nothing is actually wrong (there is no inequality) and thus no need for feminism Participant told that because women can vote, things are equal Boys constantly dismiss women for standing up for their beliefs (eye rolling, dismissive comments like "what more do you want") Boys being just generally ignorant to the movement due to the belief that it does not affect them Participants told that feminists over-exaggerate and that they are just trying to degrade men Participant made to feel aggressive and annoying Participant called a "feminazi"

The next two questions were about words and phrases participants have heard from others in regards to "feminism" and "feminist". There were far too many responses to list every

single one, but overall, the words and phrases were negative, insulting, and implied a dislike or distrust of feminism and feminists. For both “feminism” and “feminist”, the following were popular responses: political, female empowerment, radical, dangerous, leftist, aggressive, women’s rights, extreme, and surprisingly (as well as not part of the majority but still popular), important, and necessary. I made them two separate questions as I thought that people might put different responses and some participants did, but many put the same answer for both questions.

The following section was about body shaming, hyper-sexualization, sexual assault and harassment, and victim blaming. Participants had the option to respond NA if they were uncomfortable answering.

The body shaming question responses consisted of 4 NAs, 3 people who had not been body shamed themselves but had witnessed it happen to other people, and everyone else had experienced body shaming. Nearly every respondent shared stories of how they personally had been body shamed, whether it was for being too fat or too skinny, gaining weight or losing weight, eating too much or eating not enough, being “flat-chested” or not having “a butt”, or having too big of a butt. They had even received comments about not having clear skin, having hair on her arms, and “looking gross,” (Anonymous). Many described how their experiences had led to body dysmorphia and eating disorders. They had been shamed and picked apart by friends, family, and strangers. The hyper-sexualization question responses were 11 NAs and everyone else had personal accounts to share. Girls described being sexualized as young as 8, 10, and 11 years old as well as in 4th and 5th grade. Many more accounts talked about things that had happened in middle school. Girls and young women had been cat-called, recorded on a cell phone, solicited for nude photos, ranked “hottest to ugliest” by middle school boys, groped, and discussed sexually behind their backs. One participant shared, “I think I have been sexualized my

entire life, not only by other people, but also by myself. When you are a young girl, it feels like your entire worth is connected to your beauty and sexuality,” (Anonymous). Another wrote, “I’ve been cat-called and it makes me feel like I’m in danger because the people who are doing that feel they have enough power over me that they can comment on my attractiveness,” (Anonymous).

The sexual assault and sexual harassment question received 13 NAs, 9 simple “no”s, and all others contained personal accounts. There were stories of all kinds ranging from inappropriate casual comments to cat-calling to groping to rape. Some girls did not realize that they had been sexually harassed or assaulted at the time of the event, thinking it was a normal occurrence. Some had chosen to tell the people in their lives about what had happened while others felt they had to keep it to themselves. They often feared being seen as overdramatic or ruining a friend or family dynamic (if the abuser was a friend or family member). Just a few mentioned police being involved, and one said that her case was still up in the air - her rapist could walk away completely free. Highly related was the victim blaming question, which received 14 NA responses, 7 “no”s, and everyone else once again depicting their personal experiences. Quite a few people said that they themselves had not experienced victim blaming but had definitely seen it happen to a friend or someone they knew, and if not that, someone on social media.

My hypothesis was partially correct and partially incorrect. I was correct in that a majority of teenage girls likely have internalized misogyny. The personal accounts of the participants throughout the entire survey were mostly misogynistic events, and my preliminary research informed me that repeated misogynistic events in one’s life will cause one to internalize misogyny. Thus, I can surmise that many of the teenage girls at the least have internalized some level of misogyny. The part of my hypothesis that was incorrect was about the manifestations of

their internalized misogyny. Rather than refusing to identify oneself as a feminist, the large majority (38 out of 42) did identify themselves as feminists. The majority actively fight against misogyny and sexism not only by identifying themselves as feminists but by speaking up about the things they believe in to all people and refusing to conceal their beliefs based on their audience or surroundings. The minority, however, did align with my hypothesis by refusing to identify oneself as a feminist as well as looking down upon women who are feminists.

The amount of misogyny that the majority have experienced compared to the amount that they allow it to affect them is rather surprising and uplifting. Despite the media and others painting feminism and feminists in a negative light, and despite being body shamed, hyper-sexualized, and sexually assaulted and harassed, these teenage girls were incredibly resilient. Women in the past seem to have allowed their internalized misogyny to manifest in ways that oppressed other women and continued the cycle, but the majority of these teenage girls have done the opposite. They allow their internalized misogyny to fuel their desire and passion for social change, leading them to become feminists.

One final observation that stands out to me is that those participants who identify as feminists constantly talked about how people who hate feminists or do not support feminism most likely do not truly understand what it is and what its goals actually are. Therefore, I conclude that more clear, easily understandable, and accurate information and messaging about the feminist movement is absolutely necessary in order to improve the way it is perceived by society as a whole.

## **VI. Conclusion/Reflection/Recommendations**

Overall, I feel that my project was successful and I came to fairly solid conclusions. However, I may have tried to take on too broad a range of topics in my survey. This led to a survey that was over two times the recommended length, which also led to an unexpected amount of response analysis. I could have gone deeper into the responses and gotten more information with the responses I received, but this project simply was not meant for that. (For example, I could have extracted a conclusion about people's ages in relation to their beliefs, but that would have required a much more detailed and involved data analysis and I do not think I am prepared to do that). Someone in the future could use the data that I collected and do that very specific analysis and could draw conclusions from it that I was unable to.

Additionally, I was concerned about the number of responses I received being low, and I think it really was low, but it ended up working out because receiving more responses would have once again led to a much lengthier data analysis and conclusion drawing. I would have liked to draw a conclusion about the relationship between going to an all-girls school vs. a coed school and one's beliefs about feminism, but the number of all-girls school respondents I received was much higher than coed school respondents, so I simply could not accurately conclude anything from that. In the future, someone could do a similar survey but get the same number of all-girls school teenagers and coed school teenagers. I think the conclusions I came to were highly affected by the fact that 38 out of 42 respondents attend all-girls school. I would hypothesize that teenage girls at coed school might act closer to the way the minority in my study did - a majority within that group might allow their internalized misogyny to manifest as the refusal to identify as a feminist and putting down other girls behind their backs.

I, as a researcher, was truly surprised by the conclusions I drew in the end. My hypothesis about the girls' behavior was the opposite of what they did. Perhaps I allowed my own

internalized misogyny to influence the way I hypothesized, in that I looked down on other teenage girls and almost subconsciously tried to assert my superiority because I am a feminist aware of my internalized misogyny but the participants are ignorant towards feminism and unaware of the misogyny they are perpetuating (of course, this was not at all the case).

I, as a feminist and not as a researcher, was so inspired by the results and responses that came from this project. I wish I could have included everything the respondents wrote because they were truly insightful and changed the way I think about feminism. About the definition of feminism, one participant wrote, “It truly is just a way for [women] to express how they support other [women],” (Anonymous). I thought she put it in such a beautiful and simple way that captures what feminism is about for so many women. I as a fellow feminist was so proud of the conclusions that I as a researcher was able to draw. They give me hope that we truly can make progress and we can do it in small steps, starting with the simple refusal to allow our internalized misogyny to dictate the way we treat other girls. We can change the pattern, we can change our behavior, and we can break the cycle of oppression that women have faced for thousands of years.

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#### Appendix A

Full survey that was distributed to participants: <https://forms.gle/jYvsoxeXxdkX3zL28>

#### Appendix B

Raw survey data/responses:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rrZrmoB7lbFPb01HNpvgVRwRpPsLEM\\_e1XsTmey8Snk/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rrZrmoB7lbFPb01HNpvgVRwRpPsLEM_e1XsTmey8Snk/edit?usp=sharing)