Nine Contradictory Observations About Girls' and Boys' Upbringing and Education – The Strength-Based Approach as the Way to Eliminate the Gender Gap

Kaarina Määttä* and Satu Uusiautti

Department of Education, University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland

Several studies in the 1970s and 1980s have showed how girls' courage or willingness to bring out their talents and strengths at school is hindered by many factors. The self-esteem of girls who are known to be talented decreases especially during their adolescence. This phenomenon is connected to girls' ability to notice conflicting expectations in their environment. They realize that they are expected to possess certain traditional female characteristics such as passiveness, adjustment, sensitivity to others' expectations, and altruism. They are not expected to show competitiveness. At the same time, girls are expected to perform well at school. Girls learn to regulate their behaviors and study quietly, but this could also hinder their talents to come forward. Still, they pursue perfect scores that eventually do not bring them satisfaction. Earlier research has showed that teachers treat girls and boys differently, based on stereo-typical assumptions about troublesome boys and compliant girls, and they also interpret reasons for girls' and boys' behaviors differently. The 21st century seems to both repeat and question many of the research results about gender differences. In this article, we analyze gender cap through nine viewpoints by presenting contradictory research results about girls' and boys' upbringing and education. It is crucial that each individual can develop their own strengths for the best of themselves and the society – regardless of their gender. As the conclusion we present the role of strength-based teaching as the means to promote gender equality at school. It is based on the ideology of positive psychological research and on the fundamental idea that strengths belong to everyone. The ability to recognize and use one's strengths has not only personal benefits in terms of increased life satisfaction but also societal benefits as strengths help facing adversities, overcome difficulties, and prevent malaise, and increase wellbeing in general. When people flourish, not only the people but also the society succeeds—and it all starts from school. The strength-based approach can direct teachers' attention away from good-girl-expectations to universal and genderless strengths, and help girls find success in life that is based on well-being and profound understanding of one's potential.

Keywords: human strengths, strength-based teaching, school, teaching, education, gender gap

INTRODUCTION

Girls and boys are being upbrought often differently, which can be also unconscious or involuntary action. However, the outcome is that their self-conceptions and worldviews become different. Girls and boys register clues from various directions: home, daycare, school, youth culture, social media, marketing and information society, entertainment industry, advertising, and culturally adopted behavior models and expectations mold their behaviors (Sax, 2017). The debate whether differences between genders depend on individual, biological, and cultural factors or just different emphases in upbringing and education is still ongoing (Baron-Cohen et al., 2004). Yet, individuals are different regardless of their gender.

In order to renew education, it is important to spot the critical points of education and upbringing. The purpose of this article is to view especially girls' success in education and at work based on earlier – and partly contradictory – research. We will highlight ten themes that bring out and question the differences in how girls and boys are treated, influenced, and socialized. Finally, we will discuss how to promote girls' success by leaning on their own strengths in education and at work. The strength-based approach is considered a way to enhance individual flourishing and how people can utilize their strengths for positive personal and societal positive development (Uusiautti and Määttä, 2014). Everyone has their strengths, but some may not discover them or strengths can be left unused. Schools and teachers differ in their ability to help students flourish in this sense. Therefore, it is not granted that school education would help students recognize their strengths because limited resources can be focused on many other goals that promote societal competitiveness (Määttä and Uusiautti, 2012).

Despite many efforts to increase gender fairness in education in recent years, the issue has not yet become obsolete, and according to some viewpoints, gender discrimination still exists (Kollmayer et al., 2018). What kind of solutions would the strength-based approach bring to individuals' success and well-being in a society that necessitates multiple skills, creativity, different abilities, leadership skills, empathy, encouragement skills, and ability to promote others' potential? To build better and more equal future, we need to carefully elaborate the critical points of current education.

In this article, we present our highlights from reviewing research across the world from 1970s to 2010s. The articles chosen in this review deal with boys' and girls' education, upbringing, and growth, and represent mainly educational psychological viewpoints to the issue. After careful reading, several contradictory observations were found that were evaluated and summarized into nine. The relationship between these observations is based on the way they provide conclusions about girls and boys, their differences and similarities at school, in education and work, as well as how they are educated and raised. Through presenting research results that appear contradictory we want to discuss the multidimensional nature of this phenomenon.

NINE CONTRADICTORY OBSERVATIONS

(1) Girls' and Boys' School Success Is Different in Nature?

According to studies, girls succeed better at school than boys do. Actually, the phenomenon that girls earn better school grades than boys is observed in many countries (Freudenthaler et al., 2008). Gender differences in educational attainment are seen at the foundation stage of primary education and continue through to the secondary education examinations taken at the end of compulsory education at age 16 (Määttä and Turunen, 1991). National statistics that document these trends have consistently shown that girls' attainment in literacy and language tends to be higher than boys' attainment at all stages. Whereas the gender difference in math is smaller than for literacy and language, girls also continue to perform slightly better than boys (Mensah and Kiernan, 2010).

It is no longer girls but boys who seem to be left behind at school (Houtte, 2004; Jones and Myhill, 2004). Differences in school success and the so-called gender gap in educational achievement have been explained by girls' and boys' cognitive abilities, individual characters, personality and motivational variables, parents' education levels, social status, and so on.

Counter-arguments:

The current debate has aroused the question of whether it is merely boys who are underachieving than girls that are succeeding better at school (e.g., Hyde, 2005). Actually, some critique has been addressed to the fact that differences between genders are not that large than, for example, differences between other types of students groups (Mensah and Kiernan, 2010). The country-specific educational systems do have their own role as well (e.g., Van Langen et al., 2006), when it comes to features of the level of inclusion and equality in general (Määttä et al., 2018).

Individual differences within and between girl and boy groups can also be explained by their peer relationships. It is a fact that acceptance by peers is crucial because peers form the main reference group for adolescents. As such, there is a big chance that peers at school will function as a normative reference group. Indeed, the relationship between students is the most influential factor determining how students succeed at school (e.g., Warrington et al., 2000). The meaning of peer culture becomes evident in other studies too. For example, some research shows that the more there are girls in a school the better the boys will succeed (Van Houtte, 2004).

(2) Girls and Boys Are Being Raised Differently at Home?

Several research studies end up with the conclusion that parents are the most important socializing agents for children before they go to school. They act as models, share their knowledge and expectations and reward desired behavior (Kollmayer et al., 2018). The moment a child is born the child's gender arouses certain stereotypical expectations in parents (Lytton and Romney, 1991). They treat the child based on these expectations: girls are seen weaker and needing protection

whereas boys are considered strong and active (Tenenbaum and Leaper, 2002). In addition, for example, a children's rooms are decorated using gendered colors and children are dressed in gender-typed clothing (Rheingold and Cook, 1975; Pomerleau et al., 1990).

The difference between girls' and boys' upbringing has been identified as, for example, girls being encouraged to stay close to home and adults and to interact with adults. Girls learn to pay attention to adults' hopes and are sensible to respond to their expectations. This is how girls' development in social and linguistic abilities is emphasized in upbringing. In all, parents talk to girls more than to boys (Määttä and Turunen, 1991).

Boys are being treated more harshly and strictly. They spend more time outside home and with peers, especially with other boys. Boys have been encouraged to physical activity and exercise (Eaton and Enns, 1986). Boys are considered to be able to take care of chores earlier and to be more initiative than girls (Määttä and Turunen, 1991).

Counter-arguments:

The parents' role and significance in upbringing cannot be underestimated. That being said it is also worth remembering that parents are not a homogeneous group and within the family, parents may have different kinds of role in relation to children, school, and other people (LaRocque et al., 2011).

Parents' beliefs about education strongly determine how they participate in their children's schooling (Hornby and Lafaele, 2011). Some parents do not feel adequate to the task of supporting their children because of their own low level of education (Pena, 2000). According to other studies, parents' involvement can be supported by positive reinforcement: positive interaction and contact from the teacher make parents feel capable and willing to participate in education (e.g., Leskisenoja and Uusiautti, 2017).

According to Pena (2000), parents involvement appears as school involvement, cognitive-intellectual involvement, and personal involvement. While school involvement means concrete activities at school and at home, cognitive-intellectual and personal involvement are more intimate activities such as mutual intellectually stimulating activities and interest in children's thoughts and well-being. However, parents' beliefs about their children's abilities partly determine the nature of their involvement (Hornby and Lafaele, 2011). For example, stereotypical beliefs may lead to greater support for girls.

However, there is lack of findings about how differently mothers and fathers raise boys and girls. A good question is whether there are even more similarities than there are differences. For example, Cabrera et al.'s (2012) study among low-income families showed that the way parents' treated girls and boys (e.g., spanked them) was inconsistent when other variables (such as the level of depression or chaos in the home environment) were analyzed. What can be said is that parents' socioeconomic status, parent beliefs and expectations, and parental styles and behaviors vary (Penner, 2018). Eventually, the most important finding probably is that both mother's and father's love predict the child's happiness later in life (see Sillick and Shutte, 2006)—regardless of the child's gender.

(3) Educators Prefer Different Kinds of Plays and Games?

According to earlier research, educators encourage children consciously or unconsciously to different types of plays and games (Blaise, 2005; Chapman, 2016). For example, in Lindsey and Mize's (2001) study fathers preferred more physical activities with boys and reading activities with girls. It is even possible to categorize toys based on whether they are masculine or feminine (Blakemore and Centers, 2005).

In accordance with traditional gender stereotypes, parents perceive science, technology, engineering and mathematics as less suitable for girls and languages as less suitable for boys (Tomasetto et al., 2015). These stereotypical assumptions also direct how parents and educators guide girls and boys to play.

Counter-arguments:

The home culture and children's different personalities, temperaments, activity, and social features guide parental behavior and choice of plays and games regarding individual children. For example, girls and boys tend to differ in overall levels of aggressive behaviors. Girls seem to be less aggressive and socially more capable than boys (Hoglund and Leadbeater, 2004). However, it is also necessary to think about the child's age. Activities and games change according to the child's age but not necessarily to the child's gender (Kennedy et al., 2004; Leavell et al., 2012).

(4) Children Play in Different Ways?

Based on research, it seems that there is no girl who would not have played home (Taylor and Richardson, 2005). Playing home and nurturing baby dolls teach social interaction and empathy skills. Girls also seem to prefer reading and pottering that enhance linguistic abilities and handicraft skills (Lynch, 2015). Boys prefer exercising, mutual competitions, technical and electronic equipment. These activities develop independence, initiative, and active participation (Endendijk et al., 2014).

Counter-arguments:

Research on how children play has focused on describing children's peer relationships, group memberships, and personality traits (such as shyness or withdrawal) (Coplan et al., 2004; Rubin et al., 2009). According to Boyle et al.'s (2003) study, children's play typified four purposes where the child's gender was not the determining factor. Sometimes, activities and games are determined by gender but gender does not always define what is done together. Playing has a central role in children's development because it allows them to practice and try different roles, interaction, and numerous overlays of emotion—joy, anger, frustration, embarrassment, rejection, humiliation, and fear.

(5) Learning Materials and Media Strengthen the Stereotypes

Text books include plenty of stereotypical assumptions of what is suitable behavior to girls and boys (Filipovič, 2018). The following roles have been noticed from text books: boys are sharp, creative, bold, adventurous, independent, and resisting. They do not care about their looks. They compete but do not show their

emotions or fears. Girls are passive and dependent. They pay attention to others and sacrifice, stay at home and admire boys. They are allowed to show their fears but often they are described as lonely who use their time, e.g., taking care of their appearance (Määttä and Turunen, 1991).

In addition to aforementioned roles, girls and boys appear differently in text books: boys are mentioned about three times more often than girls and include expectations about gender-typical behaviors (McCabe et al., 2011). In this way children's literature also tends to strengthen stereotypes (Filipovič, 2018).

Counter-arguments:

It is essential to pay attention to how text books and children's books are being read and discussed. The way in which adults interpret books for children may have even more impact on children's understanding of gender roles than the actual content of the books (Kok and Findlay, 2006). Media and social medial as well as online learning materials bring new viewpoints to children's studying (Krijnen, 2015). Media education is crucial not only for critical analysis of information but on how children learn to read hidden messages about their gender and gender roles presented in various media (e.g., Kelly et al., 2018).

(6) Girls Are More Adjusting and Stay in the Boys' Shadow in the Class?

The written curriculum is the same for boys and girls. Equality is a core objective in Finland and elsewhere (Subrahmanian, 2005). Alongside the official curriculum, the hidden curriculum that refers to what students actually learn and experience at school (Barow, 2004; Fan, 2011), must be taken into account. All activities at school are not always following the objective of legislation and curriculum.

The difference appears in many ways. For instance, teachers have to give directions usually twice: first to everyone and then separately again to boys. Boys are more active, outgoing, and dominate the classroom situation thus receiving more attention from teachers (Younger et al., 1999). This is implicitly accepted, but explicitly teachers tend to report that they treat girls and boys equally but according to observation research, boys get more of their time (Younger et al., 1999; Beaman et al., 2006).

Understandably teachers dominate the speech and use most of the time talking: teachers talk about two thirds and students one third of the time (Harrop and Swinson, 2011). However, of the student time, boys use the most while girls stay quiet and adjust to their role of pleasing the teacher (Swinson and Harrop, 2009). Girls reply when being asked, boys do not ask for their turn but take it without permission. Boys are more active and produce contents to classroom talk in the form of jokes and other activities (Danby, 1998). Teachers also talk to girls and boys differently: boys are treated more negatively. Girls are expected to behave nicely and reach better achievement, and teachers do not yell at girls.

Counter-arguments:

Perhaps girls are not so adjusting after all but better at figuring out the social game. They create their own cultures, they are able to use their voice, bend the rules, and hide their activities from teachers. Tolonen (2001) uses the word "tactics" when describing

girls being able to understand how they can maintain their own activities (e.g., chatting with other girls) without making teachers angry.

Thus, the old-fashioned assumptions of girls achieving better results by just working hard and helping (Foster, 1996; Renold and Allan, 2006) can be contradicted by research that reveal girls' personal experiences of how to level the expectations of being a straight-A student without sacrificing the feminine "beauty" (Renold and Allan, 2006). Girls are aware of these conflicting expectations and have developed skills to cope with the situations in socially clever ways.

(7) Girls Adopt the Role of a Nice Girl?

Due to seemingly (see counter-argument in section "Girls Adopt the Role of a Nice Girl?") calm behavior, girls are given the role of a nice girl in the classroom. They do not make trouble and support the teacher in a restless classroom. They learn that these kinds of characteristics are expected from them—but also to perform well at school (Combs and Luthans, 2007; Hyvärinen et al., 2015).

On the other hand, conflicting expectations may lead to girls hide their talents and lose their potential. They can be afraid of losing their feminine side and social acceptance if they aim at success (Duguid and Thomas-Hunt, 2015; Määttä and Uusiautti, 2018). Likewise, perfectionism can prevent talents to come forward (Adderholt-Elliott, 1989). Combined with over-responsibility and conscientiousness, achievements may never feel satisfying. Need for acceptance, fear of negative feedback, and pursuit of avoiding mistakes may lead to underachievement and other problems (see e.g., Savukoski et al., 2011).

Lacking self-esteem and self-confidence has been presented as one reason for why girls tend to underestimate their educational chances and make less ambitious choices than boys. Nice girls' life-styles represent the problem of adjusting one's own interests with the social responsibility and others' expectations (Walkerdine, 1998). While traditional expectations have guided women to pay attention to others' needs and altruism, the modern challenges are intertwined with individualism and self-fulfillment (Baumeister, 2013). Nice girls have to adjust to male ways of doing things while developing their autonomy and own ways of building close relationships (Rogers et al., 2020).

Counter-arguments:

The nice girl role does not exclude courage and power, strength and resilience. Girls and boys have always had different kinds of roles and tasks. While women have been in the shadow, today the realization of equality has changed this setting. For example, the concept of girl power, which was originally introduced by a punk-type movement Riot Grrrls (Downes, 2007), refers to appreciation of girl culture and wants to redefine it. The idea is to create an image of a successful woman who is creative, ambitions, self-confident, straight-talking, and decides about her own life. She is not afraid of taking the power to herself. The motto was that girls do not need anyone's permission but are free to make their own decisions in whatever situation.

Taft (2004) interprets girl power as individual power or consuming power in which fashion, consuming, and sexual confidence can be seen as the opposite of true empowerment. As

girls were recognized as a group of consumers, they were soon tried to suppress as servers of markets by giving them an arena to interact their power through clothes and accessories (Jackson and Tinkler, 2007; Tolman, 2012). However, this tendency was not working for women or their empowerment but increase comparisons and gnaw their self-confidence (Ward, 2002; Lamb and Brown, 2007). McRobbie (2009) pointed out that, ironically, the girls' empowerment was shaped into the power to conform and perform the new perfect girl.

Through the rise from a good girl to active and aggressive girl power, development from one extreme to other, the modern girls are finding their ways of ignoring the ready molds they are supposed to adjust.

(8) The Teacher Reproduces Gender Differences?

Several research show that teachers are well aware that the way they teach can be considered stereotypical (Gray and Leith, 2004; Skelton et al., 2009). While acknowledging this problem, they find it difficult to change partly because these activities happen unconsciously (Gray and Leith, 2004).

On the other hand, the school culture has been claimed to be based on feminine culture and thus favoring girls (Carrington and McPhee, 2008) because the teacher is more often a woman (Drudy, 2008). In order to support boys' development, it would be necessary to have more men as educators and teachers (Carrington and McPhee, 2008).

Counter-arguments:

According to research, the gender of teachers had little apparent effect on the academic motivation and engagement of either boys or girls and they value teachers of any gender as long as the teacher was teaching consistently and supported the students (e.g., Carrington et al., 2007). The ethos of gender-neutrality has been consciously promoted in many countries such as Sweden and Finland (Mattila, 2005). Although it has its extremes, equality is a principle that needs to be considered—always. However, gender differences have become such a sensitive topic that people may find it even difficult to address.

When it comes to teachers, they have become more capable than ever to analyze and interpret their own methods and activities. In Finland, this has been ensured by research-based teacher education (e.g., Uusiautti and Määttä, 2015). They are open to perceive traits that otherwise would have been ignored or unquestioned. Teachers also have become able to make solutions in situations in which students themselves reproduce gender differences.

(9) Men Are More Successful Than Women?

Although women are more likely than men to graduate with advanced degrees, this type of success does not mean that they would be more successful in the world of work. Women's salaries are still lower than men's and careers still seem to face the glass ceiling (Koch et al., 2015). According to Leslie et al. (2017), med do reach better positions and negotiate pay increases better than women. Women also bear more responsibilities at home and

child care, despite the ideal of equal opportunities to combine work and family. The difference between men's and women's success has been explained by numerous ways ending with finding that girls are successful at school but the features needed in this type of success is not what are needed in the world of work (Joshi et al., 2015; Steinmayr and Kessels, 2017).

Counter-arguments:

Women have progressed in their career development so that the proportions of employees working under female supervisors have increased in almost every EU country since 1995 (Määttä and Uusiautti, 2018). Although the change has been powerful, women still have less leadership positions than men and find it more difficult to combine work and family than men (Van Steenbergen et al., 2007). On the other hand, the interplay between these two areas of life has positive consequences (Colbert et al., 2016), and men have started to use more and more time with housework and childcare during the past few decades (Uusiautti and Määttä, 2018). Having a family does not prevent one from having a successful career, too. It seems, that it is more important to be ready to make compromises and to take both spouses' hopes in the consideration (Uusiautti and Määttä, 2018). Furthermore, success is not only defined as an opportunity to advance to a leadership position. True success is merely found when one feels that one can flourish at work and have a sense of self-fulfillment (Uusiautti, 2016).

According to research, gender has an influence when seeking employment if the persons recruiting are aware of the applicant's gender. When the decision maker has enough other information about the applicant, the decision will be made based on e.g., skills and relevant experience, but if lacking important information, the applicant's gender is likely to influence the outcome (Landy, 2008).

Success can be viewed also more widely than just career development. Now also girls have the choice of choosing between education, family, and work, and it is the matter of merely doing the right choices for one's own well-being and happiness (Aapola et al., 2005; Uusiautti and Määttä, 2015).

CONCLUSION: THE STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH AS A SOLUTION?

The different research results that are sometimes quite contradictory as well reveal that girls and boys can be analyzed and viewed in many ways in educational contexts. The clear need is for approaches that support all kinds of learners, and their gender is not the determining factor of how they should be taught. It is also evident that different education and upbringing between girls and boys produce self-fulfilling prophecies of stereotypical assumptions and practices, which limit children's opportunities (Wingrave, 2018). Teaching can also focus on children's strengths and talent, and promote their flourishing. The strength-based approach (Carman, 2005; Linkins et al., 2015; Salmela and Määttä, 2015; Salmela and Uusiautti, 2015; Seligman, 2015) aims this kind of flourishing and is based on research conducted within the field of positive psychology

(Peterson and Seligman, 2004; Seligman et al., 2009; Bernard and Walton, 2011). Strength-based education thus leans on the idea that every human being has their signature strengths (e.g., perspective, perseverance, humanity, fairness, etc.) and that by focusing on the strengths, recognizing them and applying them in various areas of life, one's development is more balanced, shows well-being, and enhances coping with adversities in life.

Every individual has their own strengths and resources (Yeager et al., 2011). The strength-based approach gives emphasis on the recognition and development of characteristic strengths so that people learn to trust in their abilities and become able to make favorable choices and thus represent positive agency (Carman, 2005). The positive self-conception promotes positive and active citizenship and wish to contribute not only to one's own but also others' well-being. When it comes to teaching, the strength-based approach explicitly names the goal to help individuals develop and flourish (Norrish et al., 2013).

Strength-based teaching contributes to students' learning and success by providing them with positive learning experiences, initial excitement, and perceived successes, which also foster optimism, hope, perseverance, and creativity in students (Määttä and Uusiautti, 2013). A salient question concerning the strength-based approach is: What makes students seize new challenges, act actively for their own learning, and not back away from the challenges (Määttä and Uusiautti, 2013)? Therefore, strength-based teaching aims to discover students' strengths and interests that are not bound to the society's, peers' expectations or anyone else's expectations.

Teachers who adopt the strength-based approach in teaching try to find a balance between pupils' skills and expectations and between opportunities and challenges. The assumption is that it will lead to higher motivation and personal satisfaction. The strength-based teaching is also gender-inclusive because it has emphasis on the various strengths (Rios et al., 2010).

In addition to teaching, the strength-based approach can be applied in all areas of life, in parenting, leisure, and at work. In this review, we wanted to highlight it especially from the educational point of view but it is worthwhile to notice that the approach covers all aspects of life. It can be seen as the foundation that provides resources to positive development. What is not strength-based is, for example, teaching or upbringing that shows no interest in the child's personal features and interests, does not aim to positive learning experiences but merely measurable top performances (see e.g., Määttä and Uusiautti, 2012). The strength-based approach focuses on positive learning and achievements too but pursues them through finding one's signature strengths and leaning on them in a healthy way.

HAPPINESS OF ALL GENDERS AS THE GOAL

The fundamental thought is that happy students perform better at school, use their inner resources in a more versatile manner, and are more open, courageous, trusting, and helpful than inhibited, distressed, or depressed pupils (Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2004; Gilpin, 2008; Seligman et al., 2009). People's happiness and well-being are also societally important: "a happier society overall will be beneficial to the greater good" (Gilpin, 2008, p. 3). Happy people are friendlier, less materialistic and show higher levels of self-regulation (see e.g., Otake et al., 2006; Polak and McCullough, 2006; Fishbach and Labroo, 2007) and are more co-operative, prosocial, benevolent, and "other-centered" (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Therefore, happiness is also connected with altruism and goodness (Gilpin, 2008) but, most importantly, "institutional settings, social practices and policies more broadly might be designed to reinforce altruism within society as a whole" (Folbre and Goodin, 2004, p. 21).

Understanding that happiness and goodness are not only important because they feel good but also because they have beneficial consequences to various students, make well-being-centered education necessary in schools (see Diener and Seligman, 2004; Äärelä et al., 2016). The idea in the strength-based approach is that the experiences of success will lead through teacherhood into teaching and learning of goodness and happiness (Gilpin, 2008; Otake et al., 2006). In order to do that students need to experience goodness, caring, and appreciation, and they have to learn to recognize the good in themselves and others without wearing the stereotypical glasses. In addition, the strength-based approach in teaching helps students to analyze and tolerate feelings of weakness or insecurity without becoming discouraged or accepting stereotypical assumptions of their characteristics. Instead, the strength-based approach provides children with a realistic view of themselves and teaches about their positive features and resources on which to lean at times of difficulties or hardships. But most of all, the strength-based approach guide the way to positive development and flourishing to all children and adults as well.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

KM and SU drafting and writing the manuscript, and conceptualization. Both authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

REFERENCES

Aapola, S., Gonick, M., and Harris, A. (2005). *Young Femininity: Girlhood, Power and Social Change*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Äärelä, T., Määttä, K., and Uusiautti, S. (2016). Caring teachers' ten dos. *Int. Forum Teach. Stud.* 12, 10–20.

Adderholt-Elliott, M. (1989). Perfectionism and underachievement. *Gift. Child Today Magaz.* 12, 19–21. doi: 10.1177/107621758901200108

Baron-Cohen, S., Lutchmaya, S., and Knickmeyer, R. (2004). *Prenatal Testosterone in Mind: Amniotic Fluid Studies*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Barow, S. (2004). "The hidden curriculum: gender in the classroom," in *Praeger Guide To the Psychology of Gender*, ed. M. A. Paludi (Westport, CT: Praeger), 117–131.

Baumeister, R. F. (2013). *Self-esteem: The Puzzle of Low Self-Regard*. New York: Plenum.

Beaman, R., Wheldall, K., and Kemp, C. (2006). Differential teacher attention to boys and girls in the classroom. *Educ. Rev.* 58, 339–366. doi: 10.1080/00131910600748406

Bernard, M. E., and Walton, K. (2011). The effect of You Can Do It! Education in six schools on student perceptions of well-being, teaching-learning

and relationships. *J. Stud. Wellbeing* 5, 22–37. doi: 10.21913/JSW.v 5i1.679

Blaise, M. (2005). *Playing it Straight!: Uncovering Gender Discourses in the Early Childhood Classroom*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Blakemore, J. E. O., and Centers, R. E. (2005). Characteristics of boys' and girls' toys. *Sex Roles* 53, 619–633. doi: 10.1007/s11199-005-7729-0

Boyle, D. E., Marshall, N. L., and Robeson, W. W. (2003). Gender at play: fourth-grade girls and boys on the playground. *Am. Behav. Sci.* 46, 1326–1345. doi: 10.1177/0002764203046010004

Cabrera, N. J., Tamis-LeMonda, C. S., Bradley, R. H., Shannon, J. D., and Hancock, G. R. (2012). Parenting during early childhood in low-income families: variation by child gender. *Fam. Sci.* 3, 201–214. doi: 10.1080/19424620.2012.783428

Carman, T. (2005). *Strength-Based Teaching: The Affective Teacher, No Child Left Behind*. Oxford: Scarecrow Education.

Carrington, B., Francis, B., Hutchings, M., Skelton, C., Read, B., and Hall, I. (2007). Does the gender of the teacher really matter? Seven-to eight-year-olds' accounts of their interactions with their teachers. *Educ. Stud.* 33, 397–413. doi: 10.1080/03055690701423580

Carrington, B., and McPhee, A. (2008). Boys' 'underachievement' and the feminization of teaching. *J. Educ. Teach.* 34, 109–120. doi: 10.1080/02607470801979558

Chapman, R. (2016). A case study of gendered play in preschools: how early childhood educators' perceptions of gender influence children's play. *Early Child Dev. Care* 186, 1271–1284. doi: 10.1080/03004430.2015.1089435

Colbert, A. E., Bono, J. E., and Purvanova, R. K. (2016). Flourishing via workplace relationships: moving beyond instrumental support. *Acad. Manag. J.* 59, 1199–1223. doi: 10.5465/amj.2014.0506

Combs, G. M., and Luthans, F. (2007). Diversity training: analysis of the impact of self-efficacy. *Hum. Resour. Dev. Q.* 18, 91–120. doi: 10.1002/hrdq.1193

Coplan, R. J., Prakash, K., O'Neil, K., and Armer, M. (2004). Do you "want" to play? Distinguishing between conflicted shyness and social disinterest in early childhood. *Dev. Psychol.* 40, 244–258. doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.40.2.244

Danby, S. (1998). "The serious and playful work of gender: talk and social order in a preschool classroom," in *Gender in Early Childhood*, ed. N. Yealland (London: Routledge), 175–205.

Diener, E., and Seligman, M. E. (2004). Beyond money: toward an economy of well-being. *Psychol. Sci. Public Interest* 5, 1–31. doi: 10.1111/j.0963-7214.2004.00501001.x

Downes, J. (2007). "Riot grrrl: the legacy and contemporary landscape of diy feminist cultural activism," in *Riot Grrrl: Revolution Girl Style Now!*, ed. N. Monem (London: Black Dog Publishing), 12–49.

Drudy, S. (2008). Gender balance/gender bias: the teaching profession and the impact of feminisation. *Gender Educ.* 20, 309–323. doi: 10.1080/09540250802190156

Duguid, M. M., and Thomas-Hunt, M. C. (2015). Condoning stereotyping? How awareness of stereotyping prevalence impacts expression of stereotypes. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 100, 343–359. doi: 10.1037/a0037908

Eaton, W. O., and Enns, L. R. (1986). Sex differences in human motor activity level. *Psychol. Bull.* 100, 19–28. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.100.1.19

Endendijk, J. J., Groeneveld, M. G., Van der Pol, L. D., Van Berkel, S. R., Hallers-Haalboom, E. T., Mesman, J., et al. (2014). Boys don't play with dolls: mothers' and fathers' gender talk during picture book reading. *Parenting* 14, 141–161. doi: 10.1080/15295192.2014.972753

Fan, W. (2011). Social influences, school motivation and gender differences: an application of the expectancy-value theory. *Educ. Psychol.* 31, 157–175. doi: 10.1080/01443410.2010.536525

Filipovič, K. (2018). Gender representation in children's books: case of an early childhood setting. *J. Res. Childhood Educ.* 32, 310–325. doi: 10.1080/02568543.2018.1464086

Fishbach, A., and Labroo, A. A. (2007). Be better or be merry: how mood affects self-control. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* 93, 158–173. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.93.2.158

Folbre, N., and Goodin, R. E. (2004). Revealing altruism. *Rev. Soc. Econ.* 62, 1–25. doi: 10.1080/0034676042000183808

Foster, V. (1996). Space invaders: desire and threat in the schooling of girls. *Discourse* 17, 43–63. doi: 10.1080/0159630960170104

Freudenthaler, H. H., Spinath, B., and Neubauer, A. C. (2008). Predicting school achievement in boys and girls. *Eur. J. Pers.* 22, 231–245. doi: 10.1002/per.678

Gilpin, J. M. (2008). Teaching happiness: the role of positive psychology in the classroom. *Pell Schol. Senior Theses* 12, 1–23.

Gray, C., and Leith, H. (2004). Perpetuating gender stereotypes in the classroom: a teacher perspective. *Educ. Stud.* 30, 3–17. doi: 10.1080/0305569032000159705

Harrop, A., and Swinson, J. (2011). Comparison of teacher talk directed to boys and girls and its relationship to their behaviour in secondary and primary schools. *Educ. Stud.* 37, 115–125. doi: 10.1080/03055691003729260

Hoglund, W. L., and Leadbeater, B. J. (2004). The effects of family, school, and classroom ecologies on changes in children's social competence and emotional and behavioral problems in first grade. *Dev. Psychol.* 40, 533–544. doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.40.4.533

Hornby, G., and Lafaele, R. (2011). Barriers to parental involvement in education: an explanatory model. *Educ. Rev.* 63, 37–52. doi: 10.1080/00131911.2010.488049

Houtte, M. V. (2004). Why boys achieve less at school than girls: the difference between boys' and girls' academic culture. *Educ. Stud.* 30, 159–173. doi: 10.1080/0305569032000159804

Hyde, J. (2005). The gender similarities hypothesis. *Am. Psychol.* 60, 581–592. doi: 10.1037/0003-066x.60.6.581

Hyvärinen, S., Uusiautti, S., and Määttä, K. (2015). "I do not let setbacks discourage me much" The composition of a Finnish female leader. *J. Educ. Dev. Psychol.* 5, 14–27. doi: 10.5539/jedp.v5n2p14

Jackson, C., and Tinkler, P. (2007). 'Ladettes' and 'modern girls':'Troublesome'young femininities. *Sociol. Rev.* 55, 251–272. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-954X.2007.00704.x

Jones, S., and Myhill, D. (2004). 'Troublesome boys' and 'compliant girls': gender identity and perceptions of achievement and underachievement. *Br. J. Sociol. Educ.* 25, 547–561. doi: 10.1080/0142569042000252044

Joshi, A., Son, J., and Roh, H. (2015). When can women close the gap? A meta-analytic test of sex differences in performance and rewards. *Acad. Manag. J.* 58, 1516–1545. doi: 10.5465/amj.2013.0721

Kelly, Y., Zilanawala, A., Booker, C., and Sackera, A. (2018). Social media use and adolescent mental health: findings from the UK millennium cohort study. *Lancet* 6, 59–68. doi: 10.1016/j.eclinm.2018.12.005

Kennedy, A. E., Rubin, K. H., Hastings, D. P., and Maisel, B. (2004). Longitudinal relations between child vagal tone and parenting behavior: 2 to 4 years. *Dev. Psychobiol.* 45, 10–21. doi: 10.1002/dev.20013

Koch, A. J., D'Mello, S. D., and Sackett, P. R. (2015). A meta-analysis of gender stereotypes and bias in experimental simulations of employment decision making. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 100:128. doi: 10.1037/a0036734

Kok, J. L., and Findlay, B. (2006). An exploration of sex-role stereotyping in Australian award-winning children's picture books. *Austral. Library J.* 55, 248–261. doi: 10.1080/00049670.2006.10721857

Kollmayer, M., Schober, B., and Spiel, C. (2018). Gender stereotypes in education: development, consequences, and interventions. *Eur. J. Dev. Psychol.* 15, 361–377. doi: 10.1080/17405629.2016.1193483

Krijnen, T. (2015). Gender and media. *Int. Encyclop. Gend. Media Commun.* 1–9. doi: 10.1002/9781119429128.iegmc016

Lamb, S., and Brown, L. M. (2007). *Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters from Marketers' Schemes*. New York, NY: St Martin's Publishing Group

Landy, F. (2008). Stereotypes, bias, and personnel decisions: strange and stranger. *Ind. Organ. Psychol.* 1, 379–392. doi: 10.1111/j.1754-9434.2008.00071.x

LaRocque, M., Kleiman, I., and Darling, S. M. (2011). Parental involvement: the missing link in school achievement. *Prevent. Sch. Fail.* 55, 115–122. doi: 10.1080/10459880903472876

Leavell, A. S., Tamis-LeMonda, C. S., Ruble, D. N., Zosuls, K. M., and Cabrera, N. J. (2012). African American, White and Latino fathers' activities with their sons and daughters in early childhood. *Sex Roles* 66, 53–65. doi: 10.1007/s11199-011-0080-8

Leskisenoja, E., and Uusiautti, S. (2017). How to increase joy at school? Findings from a positive-psychological intervention at a Northern-Finnish school. *Educ. North* 24, 36–55.

Leslie, L. M., Manchester, C. F., and Dahm, P. C. (2017). Why and when does the gender gap reverse? Diversity goals and the pay premium for high potential women. *Acad. Manag. J.* 60, 402–432. doi: 10.5465/amj.2015.0195

Lindsey, E. W., and Mize, J. (2001). Contextual differences in parent-child play: implications for children's gender role development. *Sex Roles* 44, 155–176. doi: 10.1023/A:1010950919451

Linkins, M., Niemiec, R. M., Gillham, J., and Mayerson, D. (2015). Through the lens of strength: a framework for educating the heart. *J. Posit. Psychol.* 10, 64–68. doi: 10.1080/17439760.2014.888581

Lynch, M. (2015). Guys and dolls: a qualitative study of teachers' views of gendered play in kindergarten. *Early Child Dev. Care* 185, 679–693. doi: 10.1080/03004430.2014.950260

Lytton, H., and Romney, D. M. (1991). Parents' differential socialization of boys and girls: a meta-analysis. *Psychol. Bull.* 109:267. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.109.2.267

Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K. M., and Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: the architecture of sustainable change. *Rev. Gen. Psychol.* 9, 111–131. doi: 10.1037/1089-2680.9.2.111

Määttä, K., Äärelä, T., and Uusiautti, S. (2018). "Challenges of special education," in *New Methods of Special Education*, eds S. Uusiautti, and K. Määttä (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang), 13–29.

Määttä, K., and Turunen, A. L. (1991). *Tasa-Arvokasvatuksen Didaktiikan Perusteet [The Basics of Pedagogy of Gender Education]*. Helsinki: FinnLectura.

Määttä, K., and Uusiautti, S. (2012). Pedagogical authority and pedagogical love - connected or incompatible? *Int. J. Whole Sch.* 8, 21–39.

Määttä, K., and Uusiautti, S. (2013). "Pedagogical love and good teacherhood," in *Many Faces of Love*, eds K. Määttä, and S. Uusiautti (Rotterdam: Sense), 93–101. doi: 10.1007/978-94-6209-206-8_7

Määttä, K., and Uusiautti, S. (2018). Beyond the glass ceiling–finnish women's path to the top leadership positions. *Glob. J. Hum. Soc. Sci.* 17, 8–15.

Mattila, K. (2005). *Tyttökulttuuria, Luonnollisesti [Girl Culture, naturally]*. Master theses, University of Tampere, Tampere.

McCabe, J., Fairchild, E., Grauerholz, L., Pescosolido, B. A., and Tope, D. (2011). Gender in twentieth-century children's books: patterns of disparity in titles and central characters. *Gend. Soc.* 25, 197–226. doi: 10.1177/0891243211398358

McRobbie, A. (2009). *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture, and Social Change*. London: Sage.

Mensah, F. K., and Kiernan, K. E. (2010). Gender differences in educational attainment: influences of the family environment. *Br. Educ. Res. J.* 36, 239–260. doi: 10.1080/01411920902802198

Norrish, J. M., Williams, P., O'Connor, M., and Robinson, J. (2013). An applied framework for positive education. *Int. J. Wellbeing* 3, 147–161. doi: 10.5502/ijw.v3i2.2

Otake, K., Shimai, S., Tanaka-Matsumi, J., Otsui, K., and Fredrickson, B. L. (2006). Happy people become happier through kindness: a counting kindnesses intervention. *J. Happin. Stud.* 7, 361–375. doi: 10.1007/s10902-005-3650-z

Pena, D. C. (2000). Parent involvement: influencing factors and implications. *J. Educ. Res.* 94, 42–54. doi: 10.1080/00220670009598741

Penner, E. K. (2018). Early parenting and the reduction of educational inequality in childhood and adolescence. *J. Educ. Res.* 111, 213–231. doi: 10.1080/00220671.2016.1246407

Peterson, C., and Seligman, M. E. (2004). *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Polak, E. L., and McCullough, M. E. (2006). Is gratitude an alternative to materialism? *J. Happin. Stud.* 7, 343–360. doi: 10.1007/s10902-005-3649-5

Pomerleau, A., Bolduc, D., Malcuit, G., and Cossette, L. (1990). Pink or blue: environmental gender stereotypes in the first two years of life. *Sex Roles* 22, 359–367. doi: 10.1007/BF00288339

Renold, E., and Allan, A. (2006). Bright and beautiful: high achieving girls, ambivalent femininities, and the feminization of success in the primary school. *Discourse Stud. Cult. Polit. Educ.* 27, 457–473. doi: 10.1080/01596300600988606

Rheingold, H. L., and Cook, K. V. (1975). The contents of boys' and girls' rooms as an index of parents' behavior. *Child Dev.* 46, 459–463. doi: 10.2307/1128142

Rios, D., Stewart, A. J., and Winter, D. G. (2010). "Thinking she could be the next president": why identifying with the curriculum matters. *Psychol. Women Q.* 34, 328–338. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-6402.2010.01578.x

Rogers, L. O., Yang, R., Way, N., Weinberg, S. L., and Bennet, A. (2020). "We're Supposed to look like girls, but act like boys": adolescent girls' adherence to masculinity norms. *J. Res. Adolesc.* 30, 270–285. doi: 10.1111/jora.12475

Rubin, K. H., Coplan, R. J., and Bowker, J. C. (2009). Social withdrawal in childhood. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.* 60, 141–171. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.60.11077.163642

Salmela, M., and Määttä, K. (2015). Even the best have difficulties: a study of Finnish straight-A graduates' resource-oriented solutions. *Gift. Child Q.* 59, 124–135. doi: 10.1177/0016986214568720

Salmela, M., and Uusiautti, S. (2015). A positive psychological viewpoint for success at school–10 characteristic strengths of the Finnish high-achieving students. *High Abil. Stud.* 26, 117–137. doi: 10.1080/13598139.2015.1019607

Savukoski, M., Määttä, K., and Uusiautti, S. (2011). The other side of well-being-what makes a young woman become an anorectic? *Int. J. Psychol. Stud.* 3, 76–86. doi: 10.5539/ijps.v3n2p76

Sax, L. (2017). *Why Gender Matters: What Parents and Teachers Need to Know About The Emerging Science of Sex Differences*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.

Seligman, M. E. (2015). *Evidence-Based Approaches in Positive Education: Implementing a Strategic Framework for Well-Being in Schools*. New York, NY: Springer.

Seligman, M. E., Ernst, R. M., Gillham, J., Reivich, K., and Linkins, M. (2009). Positive education: positive psychology and classroom interventions. *Oxford Rev. Educ.* 35, 293–311. doi: 10.1080/03054980902934563

Sillick, T. J., and Shutte, N. S. (2006). Emotional intelligence and self-esteem mediate between perceived early parental love and adult happiness. *E J. Appl. Psychol.* 2, 38–48.

Skelton, C., Carrington, B., Francis, B., Hutchings, M., Read, B., and Hall, I. (2009). Gender 'matters' in the primary classroom: pupils' and teachers' perspectives. *Br. Educ. Res. J.* 35, 187–204. doi: 10.1080/01411920802041905

Steinmayr, R., and Kessels, U. (2017). Good at school = successful on the job? Explaining gender differences in scholastic and vocational success. *Pers. Individ. Diff.* 105, 107–115. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2016.09.032

Subrahmanian, R. (2005). Gender equality in education: definitions and measurements. *Int. J. Educ. Dev.* 25, 395–407. doi: 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2005.04.003

Swinson, J., and Harrop, A. (2009). Teacher talk directed to boys and girls and its relationship to their behaviour. *Educ. Stud.* 35, 515–524. doi: 10.1080/03055690902883913

Taft, J. K. (2004). "Girl power politics: pop-culture barriers and organizational resistance," in *All About the Girl*, ed. A. Harris (London: Routledge), 95–104.

Taylor, A., and Richardson, C. (2005). Queering home corner. *Contemp. Issues Early Childhood* 6, 163–173. doi: 10.2304/ciec.2005.6.2.6

Tenenbaum, H. R., and Leaper, C. (2002). Are parents' gender schemas related to their children's gender-related cognitions? A meta-analysis. *Dev. Psychol.* 38, 615–630.1.

Tolman, D. L. (2012). Female adolescents, sexual empowerment and desire: a missing discourse of gender inequity. *Sex Roles* 66, 746–757. doi: 10.1007/s11199-012-0122-x

Tolonen, T. (2001). *Nuorten kulttuurit koulussa: Ääni, tila ja sukupuolten arkiset järjestykset. [Youth Cultures at School: Voice, Space, and Everyday Orders of Genders]*. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.

Tomasetto, C., Mirisola, A., Galdi, S., and Cadinu, M. (2015). Parents' math-gender stereotypes, children's self-perception of ability, and children's appraisal of parents' evaluations in 6-year-olds. *Contemp. Educ. Psychol.* 42, 186–198.1.

Uusiautti, S. (2016). Success at work requires hope and the ability to engage in an optimistic attitude. *Eur. J. Workplace Innov.* 2, 41–64.

Uusiautti, S., and Määttä, K. (2014). How can teachers as love-based leaders enhance learning? *Int. J. Educ. Organ. Leadersh.* 20, 1–19. doi: 10.18848/2329-1656/CGP/v20i04/48484

Uusiautti, S., and Määttä, K. (2015). *Critical Eye On Education*. Tallinn: United Press Global.

Uusiautti, S., and Määttä, K. (2018). "The successful combination of work and family," in *Love Around Us. The Role of Love in Education, Parenting, and Romantic Relationships*, eds K. Määttä, and S. Uusiautti (Berlin: Peter Lang), 75–91.

Van Houtte, M. (2004). Gender context of the school and study culture, or how the presence of girls affects the achievement of boys. *Educ. Stud.* 30, 409–423. doi: 10.1080/0305569042000310336

Van Langen, A., Bosker, R., and Dekkers, H. (2006). Exploring cross-national differences in gender gaps in education. *Educ. Res. Eval.* 12, 155–177. doi: 10.1080/13803610600587016

Van Steenbergen, E. F., Ellemers, N., and Mooijaart, A. (2007). How work and family can facilitate each other: distinct types of work-family facilitation and

outcomes for women and men. *J. Occup. Health Psychol.* 12, 279–300. doi: 10.1037/1076-8998.12.3.279

Walkerdine, V. (1998). *Daddy's Girl: Young Girls and Popular Culture.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ward, L. M. (2002). Understanding the role of entertainment media in the sexual socialization of american youth; A review of empirical research. *Dev. Rev.* 23, 347–388. doi: 10.1016/S0273-2297(03)00013-3

Warrington, M., Younger, M., and Williams, J. (2000). Student attitudes, image and the gender cap. *Br. Educ. Res. J.* 26, 393–407. doi: 10.1080/014119200500 30914

Webster-Stratton, C., and Reid, M. J. (2004). Strengthening social and emotional competence in young children—The foundation for early school readiness and success: incredible years classroom social skills and problem-solving curriculum. *Infants Young Child.* 17, 96–113. doi: 10.1097/00001163-200404000-00002

Wingrave, M. (2018). Perceptions of gender in early years. *Gend. Educ.* 30, 587–606. doi: 10.1080/09540253.2016.1258457

Yeager, J. M., Fisher, S. W., and Shearon, D. N. (2011). *Smart Strengths: A Parent-Teacher-Coach Guide to Building Character, Resilience, and Relationships in Youth.* New York, NY: Kravis Publishing.

Younger, M., Warrington, M., and Williams, J. (1999). The gender gap and classroom interactions: reality and rhetoric? *Br. J. Sociol. Educ.* 20, 325–341. doi: 10.1080/01425699995290