
AP[®] Research Academic Paper

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

Inside:

Sample C

- Scoring Guideline**
- Student Samples**
- Scoring Commentary**

AP® Research — Academic Paper 2021 Scoring Guidelines

The Response...				
Score of 1 Report on Existing Knowledge	Score of 2 Report on Existing Knowledge with Simplistic Use of a Research Method	Score of 3 Ineffectual Argument for a New Understanding	Score of 4 Well-Supported, Articulate Argument Conveying a New Understanding	Score of 5 Rich Analysis of a New Understanding Addressing a Gap in the Research Base
Presents an overly broad topic of inquiry.	Presents a topic of inquiry with narrowing scope or focus, that is NOT carried through either in the method or in the overall line of reasoning.	Carries the focus or scope of a topic of inquiry through the method AND overall line of reasoning, even though the focus or scope might still be narrowing.	Focuses a topic of inquiry with clear and narrow parameters, which are addressed through the method and the conclusion.	Focuses a topic of inquiry with clear and narrow parameters, which are addressed through the method and the conclusion.
Situates a topic of inquiry within a single perspective derived from scholarly works OR through a variety of perspectives derived from mostly non-scholarly works.	Situates a topic of inquiry within a single perspective derived from scholarly works OR through a variety of perspectives derived from mostly non-scholarly works.	Situates a topic of inquiry within relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives, although connections to some works may be unclear.	Explicitly connects a topic of inquiry to relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives AND logically explains how the topic of inquiry addresses a gap.	Explicitly connects a topic of inquiry to relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives AND logically explains how the topic of inquiry addresses a gap.
Describes a search and report process.	Describes a nonreplicable research method OR provides an oversimplified description of a method, with questionable alignment to the purpose of the inquiry.	Describes a reasonably replicable research method, with questionable alignment to the purpose of the inquiry.	Logically defends the alignment of a detailed, replicable research method to the purpose of the inquiry.	Logically defends the alignment of a detailed, replicable research method to the purpose of the inquiry.
Summarizes or reports existing knowledge in the field of understanding pertaining to the topic of inquiry.	Summarizes or reports existing knowledge in the field of understanding pertaining to the topic of inquiry.	Conveys a new understanding or conclusion, with an underdeveloped line of reasoning OR insufficient evidence.	Supports a new understanding or conclusion through a logically organized line of reasoning AND sufficient evidence. The limitations and/or implications, if present, of the new understanding or conclusion are oversimplified.	Justifies a new understanding or conclusion through a logical progression of inquiry choices, sufficient evidence, explanation of the limitations of the conclusion, and an explanation of the implications to the community of practice.
Generally communicates the student’s ideas, although errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization distract or confuse the reader.	Generally communicates the student’s ideas, although errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization distract or confuse the reader.	Competently communicates the student’s ideas, although there may be some errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization.	Competently communicates the student’s ideas, although there may be some errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization.	Enhances the communication of the student’s ideas through organization, use of design elements, conventions of grammar, style, mechanics, and word precision, with few to no errors.
Cites AND/OR attributes sources (in bibliography/ works cited and/or in-text), with multiple errors and/or an inconsistent use of a discipline-specific style.	Cites AND/OR attributes sources (in bibliography/ works cited and/or in-text), with multiple errors and/or an inconsistent use of a discipline-specific style.	Cites AND attributes sources, using a discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND in-text), with few errors or inconsistencies.	Cites AND attributes sources, with a consistent use of an appropriate discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND in-text), with few to no errors.	Cites AND attributes sources, with a consistent use of an appropriate discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND in-text), with few to no errors.

Academic Paper

Overview

This performance task was intended to assess students' ability to conduct scholarly and responsible research and articulate an evidence-based argument that clearly communicates the conclusion, solution, or answer to their stated research question. More specifically, this performance task was intended to assess students' ability to:

- Generate a focused research question that is situated within or connected to a larger scholarly context or community;
- Explore relationships between and among multiple works representing multiple perspectives within the scholarly literature related to the topic of inquiry;
Articulate what approach, method, or process they have chosen to use to address their research question, why they have chosen that approach to answering their question, and how they employed it;
- Develop and present their own argument, conclusion, or new understanding while acknowledging its limitations and discussing implications;
- Support their conclusion through the compilation, use, and synthesis of relevant and significant evidence generated by their research;
- Use organizational and design elements to effectively convey the paper's message;
- Consistently and accurately cite, attribute, and integrate the knowledge and work of others, while distinguishing between the student's voice and that of others;
- Generate a paper in which word choice and syntax enhance communication by adhering to established conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Views of Sex and Gender in the Northwest Florida Area

4746V16Z

Word Count: 4594

Introduction

Nonbinary gender identities have been around for centuries. Cultural groups in South America, New Zealand, and dozens of other areas of the world have recognized gender identities outside of male and female for much longer than they have been given recognition in modern culture. Then why does it seem as if there has been a surge in people identifying with genders outside of the two binary ones? Simply put, for as long as humanity has existed, there have been people whose sex does not align with their internal sense of gender. In Western culture, the strict social construct of what it means to be male or female has been ingrained into almost every person that participates in said culture. Somewhat recently, with the legalization of gay marriage in the U.S. in 2015 and other strides made by the LGBTQ+ community regarding acceptance and expanded rights, those with nonbinary gender identities have felt much safer in sharing their identities with the world. However, because of the way that sex and gender identity are taught in schools and treated in society, most people believe that nonbinary genders are a new concept or a fad that they need not understand. As a result, many people ignore those with nonbinary identities because they do not understand them and refuse to be educated on the topic. Because of this miseducation regarding nonbinary gender identities in schools and other sectors, research needs to be done on what students currently know about these identities and where they have learned about them in order to see if school curriculum should include more exposure to this topic.

This paper will discuss the issue of the public's knowledge of the differences between sex and gender and how it has affected mindsets in the Northwest Florida area. The research question I am addressing is, "What do people in the Northwest Florida area ranging from high school seniors to undergraduate students know about the differences between sex and gender identity

and how has their knowledge positively or negatively affected their point of view?" In the context of this research paper, the Northwest Florida area is defined as both Escambia County and Santa Rosa County. According to the Transgender Law Center, the state of Florida has little to no policies recognizing the validity of nonbinary identities, especially regarding gender-nonconforming youth in the school system ("National Equality Map," n.d.). Many people in the Northwest Florida area are unaware of the innate differences between biological sex and gender identity because the demographic is mostly conservative, meaning that few people are accepting of new terms and ideas of gender. Mainly, I will address the problem of the lack of education in the area of gender identity which has led to a great deal of discrimination and misinformation regarding this topic. Although it is true by definition that sex and gender are two separate constructs, many younger people believe they are synonymous due to a lack of exposure in this subject matter. Unless someone personally identifies outside of the gender binary or knows someone that does, very few people understand the terminology and information associated with transgender and nonbinary gender identities. I will be explaining these differences and their importance to the overall acceptance of gender-nonconforming individuals in the Northwest Florida area. I expect that the results of my survey will show that many people in this area do not understand the differences between biological sex and gender identity, which will prove that high schools and other educational institutions should include lessons in their curriculum that discuss the wide spectrum of gender identity so that young adults are exposed to gender identities outside of the binary.

Literature Review

For thousands of years, people believed that gender identity was determined by the sex characteristics that someone is assigned at birth. From religious and traditional perspectives,

fluid gender identities have long been faced with scrutiny and ridicule because they do not fit inside the preconstructed, Western societal binary. For example, during the seventeenth century, there was a person named Thomasine Hall, who identified as male or female at different points in time (Norton, 2000, p. 41). Hall was a servant for a planter named John Atkins, and while Hall worked for him, he was under the impression that Hall was biologically a woman. However, after some Virginia women discovered that Hall possessed male genitalia, they prematurely decided that Hall was a man dressed in women's clothing. This instance regarding Hall demonstrates the discrimination that nonbinary and gender-nonconforming people have faced for centuries. The life of Thomasine Hall also illustrates how people during Hall's time fully believed that the only defining feature of one's gender was the characteristics someone has at birth.

However, Thomasine Hall was not the first nor will they be the last person to have a nonbinary gender identity. For centuries, many Native American among other cultures have recognized third, fourth, or even fifth genders. In Native culture, the term Two-Spirit is used to describe someone who identifies with both male and female spirit (Garrett & Barret, 2003). Two-Spirit people have been accepted and understood in Native culture for years, but Western culture has always been accustomed to having two options for gender identity. Many other cultures have terms for a third gender, but many are not as accepting of these people as most Native American tribes. For instance, in some parts of South America, they have people called travestis, who are people born male with feminine gender identities (2015). Sadly, many travestis face severe violence and mistreatment in Brazil and other South American countries because of their gender identity (2015). These examples of cultures with identities outside of the Western binary show

that even though these cultures have words for these experiences of gender, discrimination and prejudice still occur.

In the mid-twentieth century, many people still had issues with understanding identities that didn't fit within the binary. For instance, in 1967, a young boy's genitalia was severely damaged during a failed circumcision, and rather than attempt to heal him healthily, psychologist John Money recommended that the boy go through sex reassignment surgery and be raised as a girl (Murphy, 2014, p. 1249). The boy's surgery proved successful; however, his gender remained the same. As he grew older, he adopted more masculine habits and rejected the feminine identity that was forced upon him. This boy's situation shows how harmful peoples' views regarding the gender binary can be for children who don't fit within their view. A similar practice occurs frequently when someone is born intersex. Intersex is a term used for someone who is born with a set of sexual characteristics that do not fit fully under male or female (2008). When someone is born intersex, they are often raised as either male or female, regardless of whether they identify as such. According to Elizabeth Reis (2007), many parents do not want to admit that their intersex child is anything but male or female. In her article, she claims, "To them, intersex meant a third gender, something in-between male and female. They wanted to see their newborn babies as girls or boys, not as intersex," (Reis, 2007). Because of this preconceived notion of male or female being normal, many parents have and continue to discriminate against their intersex children.

Surprisingly, the mid-twentieth century also recognized some of the most prominent performers that fell outside of the gender binary. During this time, glam rock rose in popularity, and artists such as David Bowie and Prince entered the mainstream (Frentner, 2013, p. 99). These artists exhibited characteristics that can be described as androgynous, or a combination of

both male and female. The popularity of artists such as Bowie shows a slight increase in the acceptance of nonbinary identities during the 1970s. Albeit many people did not understand why these artists dressed and behaved as they did, they were able to set that aside and enjoy their music, which was a launching point toward widespread acceptance.

During a similar period, the Stonewall Riots also led to increased visibility and activism in the transgender community. In the late 1960s, there were many instances of resistance and opposition to the discrimination faced by gender-nonconforming individuals. In Genny Beemyn's article, it is said that, "The effects of the Stonewall Riots were both immediate and far-reaching," (Beemyn, 2013) because members of the LGBT community, including the transgender and nonbinary communities, no longer felt they had to tolerate the mistreatment they had gone through for decades. Despite this, in the aftermath of the Stonewall Riots, many of the original organizers turned their backs on gender-nonconforming people in order to gain more widespread acceptance from the rest of society (Beemyn, 2013). Many exclusively gay alliances were formed, which made the transgender community feel unwelcomed to participate in their activities. As a result, this caused a great deal of stigma regarding the transgender and gender-nonconforming communities, because many people in gay and lesbian groups talked negatively about the transgender members of these organizations. Specifically, many cisgender lesbians viewed transgender women that identified as lesbians "not as 'real women' but as 'male infiltrators,'" (Beemyn, 2013). Cisgender is a term used for someone that identifies with their sex assigned at birth. Because of these negative connotations surrounding transgender individuals coming from other LGBT organizations, this makes transgender identities seem less valid to those outside of the LGBT community.

Even in more recent history, the word “gender” has been a controversial one. During a United Nations World Conference on Women in 1995, speakers at the conference claimed that some people believed there were five genders, including bisexuals and homosexuals in the category of gender (Scott, 1999). Based on the lack of knowledge among attendees at this conference, it is clear that the public’s understanding of what gender truly means was not accurate by today’s standards. Although many people have become more open-minded in terms of sex and gender identity, there is still a long way to go before people can understand those who fall outside of the two binary genders.

In more modern discussions during the late 1990s and early 2000s, many gender theorists began sharing their ideas on gender identity. Many feminists and philosophers wrote about the fragility of the gender binary. Judith Butler is one of these philosophers, and she shared many of her theories on gender in her book titled *Gender Trouble*. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler discusses her theory that gender is nothing more than a social construct and that it is a fluid concept (2006). Butler also goes on to point out that it is possible that gender doesn't exist since it is formed from learned behavior to help people better understand themselves (2002). Her theories of gender help show that many of the public's views regarding gender identity are based on learned behavior and have no real biological support. Another source that elaborates on Butler's ideas of gender claims, "Butler views gender as a performance in which we repeatedly engage and which creates the illusion of binary sex," (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018). Theories of gender identity like Butler's can help people understand the differences between sex and gender, but until these discussions become more common people will remain unaware.

Today, many young individuals questioning and coming to terms with their gender identity face severe internal and external scrutiny for their identities. Although many people have

become more accepting of transgender identities, most older generations cannot grasp the idea of nonbinary genders. One example of this is seen in the experience of Salem, a nonbinary young adult in North Carolina (Bergner, 2019). According to Bergner, because of the public's ingrained view of the gender binary, Salem could never envision a world without the gender binary. Salem is just one instance of nonbinary people wishing their identity could be easier for themselves and others to understand. Bergner also discusses the view of Laura A. Jacobs, who says, "Trying to evoke nonbinary experience for binary people, in a world where nearly everyone is raised with an either-or concept of gender, can feel liberating, but also futile: wearying, dispiriting, sometimes devastating," (Bergner, 2019). Jacobs paints a clear picture of how isolating nonbinary experience is for so many people because the rest of the world wants to categorize them into either male or female. Even though more people are identifying with nonbinary labels, those that are unexposed to these identities continue to ignore them as if they do not exist because they've always been taught that gender is linked to anatomy, and based on this assumption, there would be only two genders. A way to address the problem of the ignorance and lack of exposure to nonbinary gender identities is teaching about them in the high school curriculum. If more people are aware that there are options for gender outside of the binary, there would be more widespread acceptance and less discrimination towards nonbinary individuals.

Methods

In many of the sources I read, researchers used surveys and other forms of personal questioning to learn more about how people view gender identity. Only in medical research regarding intersex individuals are scientific methods used. Census data has also been used to observe what percentages of the population understand or identify with certain gender identity labels. In a few circumstances, historical data is gathered to help understand people's views and

perspectives on gender identity in the past. My research is more focused on the psychological and social implications of the public's opinions on sex and gender identity, so the use of a survey was more useful than other methods. Thus, I conducted a survey to gather data for my research, as this method fits most with the perspective I have researched.

Subsequently, I used a survey to gather my data. I created a survey with 13 questions asking high school seniors and undergraduate students in the Northwest Florida area about their views on sex and gender identity. The reason I have used a survey is that I want to reach a wider audience and be able to analyze a wide variety of opinions on local perspectives on sex and gender identity. The research question I have addressed is, "What do people in the Northwest Florida area ranging from high school seniors to undergraduate students know about the differences between sex and gender identity and how has their knowledge positively or negatively affected their point of view?" Because of the scope of my research question, it makes the most sense for me to create a survey, so I can have an accurate gauge of the varying perspectives on the differences between sex and gender identity in the Northwest Florida area.

The first two questions of my survey asked participants about their age and gender identity. The age range I included consisted of high school seniors and undergraduate students, so the age options I included were under 18, 18, 19, 20, 21, and over 21. The second question I asked was "What is your gender identity?" The options I included for this question were male, female, nonbinary, gender fluid, and agender, plus an "other" option so that participants could disclose a different gender identity than the ones I provided.

The next question in my survey was "How would you personally define 'sex' in the context of human anatomy?" After this, I asked participants, "How would you define the word 'gender'?" I thought it was important to make these questions open-ended so that I could get a

wide range of responses that were not limited by multiple-choice answers. These questions allowed me to gain more qualitative data that added to the scope of my research.

In the next set of questions, I asked participants about their views on the differences between sex and gender. One question I asked participants was “Are you aware that there is a difference between sex and gender?” The answer options for this question were yes, no, and unsure. The next question that I asked was “Do you agree that sex is different from gender?” This question had options of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Another question asked was “Do you agree that sex and gender are the same?” The previous question had the same aforementioned options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The last question I included in this section was “In your opinion, what is the difference between sex and gender?” I elected to format this question with a short response option rather than multiple choices. These questions were instrumental in helping gauge my population's current knowledge of the differences between sex and gender identity.

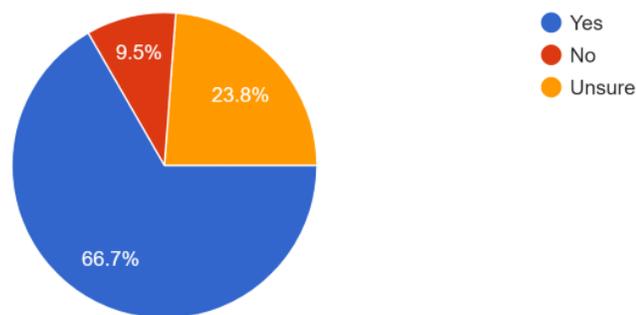
My next set of questions asked participants about their familiarity with nonbinary gender identities. The first question I asked was “Have you heard of nonbinary gender identities?” The options included for this question were yes, no, and unsure. As a follow-up question, I then asked, “If yes, how familiar are you with nonbinary gender identities?” These options included extremely familiar, very familiar, somewhat familiar, not so familiar, not at all familiar, or I have not heard of nonbinary gender identities. Another related question I asked was “If you have heard about nonbinary genders, where did you hear about them?” This question had a wide range of choices that included work, school, a friend/family member, social media, television/entertainment, news outlets, an article, and an “other” option so people could share other ways they have learned about gender identity.

The last two questions that I asked participants related to environmental factors that could affect people's views on sex and gender identity. One question that I asked was "Have you ever discussed/learned about nonbinary genders in an educational setting?" This question had choices of yes, no, and unsure. The last question of my survey asked, "Do you believe that nonbinary gender identities are real?" This final question had the same options of yes, no, and unsure.

Results

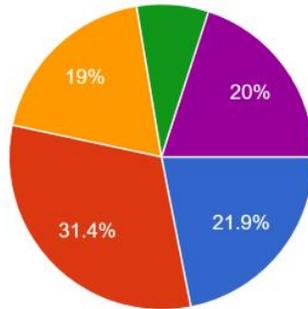
As has already been mentioned, the survey consisted of 13 questions, 3 of which were free-response questions, and the remaining 10 which were multiple choice. The following 6 graphs are being included here because they are the most relevant to the initial research question and hypothesis. The questions not included were worded in a similar way to the ones seen in the graphs, and thus had almost identical responses, so they did not add anything to the research goal. Overall, the survey gained 105 responses, which is a large enough number to gauge the opinion of the demographic and area being researched.

Are you aware that there is a difference between sex and gender?
105 responses



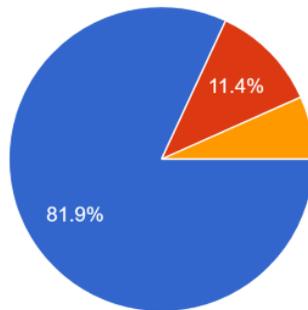
SEX AND GENDER IN NORTHWEST FLORIDA

Do you agree that sex is different from gender?
105 responses



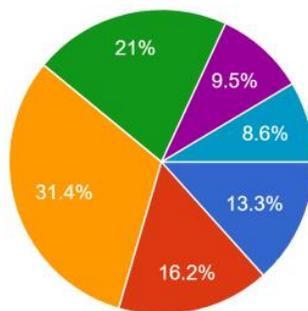
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Have you heard of nonbinary gender identities?
105 responses



- Yes
- No
- Unsure

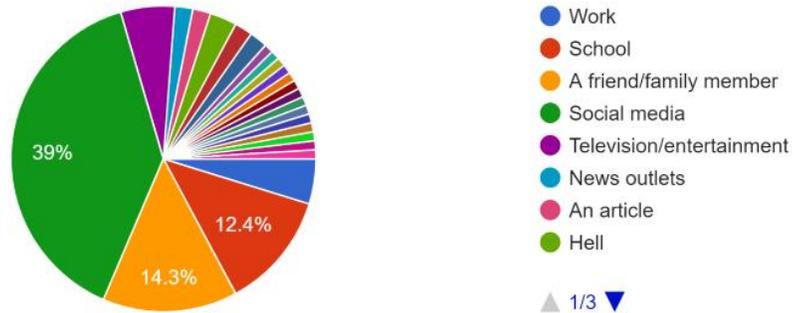
If yes, how familiar are you with nonbinary gender identities?
105 responses



- Extremely familiar
- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Not so familiar
- Not at all familiar
- I have not heard of nonbinary gender identities

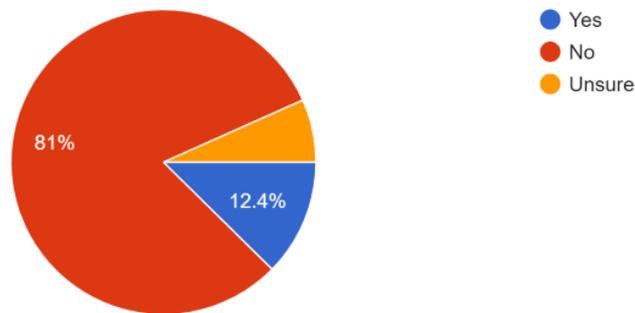
If you have heard about nonbinary genders, where did you hear about them?

105 responses



Have you ever discussed/learned about nonbinary genders in an educational setting?

105 responses



Discussion

The research question this study began with was, “What do people in the Northwest Florida area ranging from high school seniors to undergraduate students know about the differences between sex and gender identity and how has their knowledge positively or negatively affected their point of view?” Originally, it was predicted that many people in the Northwest Florida area would be unaware of the differences between sex and gender identity and that the people in this area would have a lack of education regarding this subject matter.

While the first half of this hypothesis has been partially disproved, the latter has proven accurate.

One of the first questions that participants were asked was, “Are you aware that there is a difference between sex and gender?” A surprising majority of 66.7% of respondents said yes in that they were aware that there is a difference between sex and gender. 23.8% said they were unsure if there is a difference between sex and gender, and 9.5% said no, as in they were unaware that there is a difference between sex and gender. These results ultimately disproved the original hypothesis, because it is clear that most respondents were aware that there is a difference between sex and gender, however, many respondents did not know much more beyond this fact.

The next question that participants were asked was, “Do you agree that sex is different from gender?” Surprisingly, 21.9% of respondents said they strongly agreed and 31.4% said they agreed that sex is different from gender. 20% of respondents said they strongly disagreed and 7.6% said that they disagreed that sex and gender are different. 19% said they neither agreed nor disagreed that there is a difference between sex and gender. These results were not what was expected since the researcher originally believed that respondents would not think that sex and gender are different.

Participants were then asked the question, “Have you heard of nonbinary gender identities?” Before the study began, the researcher did not know how the participants would respond to this question, so the results neither support nor reject the hypothesis. A staggering 81.9% of participants said that they had heard of nonbinary gender identities, while 11.4% had not heard of nonbinary identities. A small fraction of 6.7% of participants were unsure if they had heard of nonbinary gender identities. This question ended up showing that a large majority

of people have heard of nonbinary genders, but it does not show whether people view them positively or negatively.

A follow-up question to the one previously mentioned was then posed to participants. This question asked, “If yes, how familiar are you with nonbinary gender identities?” The results illustrated that 13.3% of respondents were extremely familiar and 16.2% were very familiar with nonbinary gender identities. The majority of respondents, at 31.4%, said they were somewhat familiar with nonbinary identities. 21% of respondents said they were not so familiar and 9.5% said they were not at all familiar with nonbinary gender identities, while 8.6% were not at all familiar with these identities. Although this question shows that the majority of participants have some degree of familiarity with nonbinary gender identities, it also proves that most people are not as familiar with nonbinary identities as they could be.

Another question that participants were asked was, “If you have heard about nonbinary genders, where did you hear about them?” The reason this question was asked was to see where people’s knowledge about nonbinary genders had been gathered. This question included a write-in option, and a few people did include answers such as hearing about nonbinary genders from a spouse or classmate, and a small percentage said they had not heard of nonbinary genders. The largest percentage of respondents said they had heard about nonbinary genders from social media, at 39%. The next largest category, at 14.3%, said they heard about nonbinary genders from a friend or family member. Similarly, 12.4% said they heard about them from school. Some of the smallest categories were television and entertainment and work at 5.7% and 4.8%, respectively. These results ultimately show that students primarily know about nonbinary gender identities because of social media, entertainment, and their peers, rather than learning about them in an educational setting.

An additional question that participants were asked was, "Have you ever discussed/learned about nonbinary genders in an educational setting?" The vast majority of respondents, at 81%, said that they had not discussed nonbinary genders in an educational setting, while only 12.4% said they had, which is identical to the statistic from the previous question. A small number of 6.7% of participants said they were unsure if they had discussed nonbinary genders in a school environment, possibly due to a lack of memory of the topic. This question illustrates the lack of education students receive about sex and gender identity, and that most students have gained information about gender identity in areas outside of school.

The survey also included a few short response questions such as, "In your opinion, what is the difference between sex and gender?" Many people responded with some variation of sex is a physical and biological characteristic and gender is more of a mental characteristic. However, a significant portion of responses said there is no difference between sex and gender, proving that many students have not been properly educated in this area. Some respondents also did not properly answer these open-ended questions, and instead decided to make inappropriate comments about transgender and nonbinary individuals. These responses will not be included specifically, because they contain foul language and other obscenities, but it is obvious from these responses that many people have negative feelings regarding the nonbinary community. This data also partially proves the initial prediction that many people in the Northwest Florida area are not very accepting of new ideas regarding gender identity. This information shows that there needs to be more education in the field of sex and gender identity in the school curriculum so that students can be more informed on this topic.

Limitations and Implications

While some of the original hypotheses have been proved, there were some limitations in the results gathered. For example, originally the goal was to have approximately 200 participants in the survey, but due to Covid-19, fewer people were able to participate in the survey at the end of the research process since many of the undergraduate students were leaving campus, so they were unable to participate. Another limitation was that not all respondents were entirely honest and respectful with their answers, which can be expected, especially with a large portion of high-school-age participants. Regardless, the results of the survey still support an answer to the original research question.

One implication of this research is that much of society at large does not fully understand or accept those with nonbinary gender identities. Because of this, in the future, schools in not only Florida, but in all states, should be required to include a curriculum that explains the differences between sex and gender identity and lets students understand the fluidity and large spectrum of gender identity. With so many people never discussing nonbinary identities in an educational environment, it only makes sense that few of them are familiar with said identities. The most obvious way for people to become more educated on nonbinary genders is by starting early in elementary or middle school so that students grow up being more tolerant of gender-nonconforming individuals. This education will not only help people become more tolerant, but it is also essential in teaching the youth that it is safe to explore their own gender identity, even if it falls outside of the binary.

Conclusion

Overall, the population of high school seniors and undergraduate students surveyed were not as educated about nonbinary gender identities as they could be. While the original hypothesis

stated that most students would be unaware of the differences between sex and gender identity, this hypothesis was proven false. Be that as it may, the survey results showed that most people are not very familiar with nonbinary identities. The results of the survey also showed that more than 80% of students had never discussed nonbinary gender identities in an educational setting, meaning that they had only heard about them from outside sources. This information shows that schools should prioritize including lessons teaching the differences between sex and gender identity so students can be informed and understand these differences in order to be more accepting of all identities. The inclusion of gender identity education in the school curriculum is also useful in helping students who may feel that they fall outside of the gender binary because they can more easily understand what they are feeling. In sum, the differences between sex and gender identity should be taught in the high school curriculum and the wide spectrum of gender identity should also be discussed so that students can understand that there are more than just two binary genders. Increased education regarding nonbinary gender identities will ultimately result in increased acceptance and recognition of these identities, which is the key to reducing discrimination and misinformation.

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Academic Paper

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Sample: C

Score: 4

This paper earned a score of 4. The paper has a focused, clear, and narrow topic of inquiry found on pages 2-3: “What do people in Northwest Florida area ranging from high school seniors to undergraduate students know about the differences between sex and gender identity?” Its literature review introduces varying perspectives that are logically presented, critical to developing its clear understanding of the focus of inquiry. Additionally, a detailed, replicable research method found is found at the top of page 9 that defends its selected method by discussing previous methodological approaches to understanding gender: “My research is more focused on the psychological and social implications of the public’s opinions on sex and gender identity, so the use of a survey was more useful than other methods.”

The paper did not earn a score of a 5 because the discussion of the study’s results, found on pages 13 through 16, are not put back into conversation with the studies found in the literature review. The implications section found on page 17 glosses over the study’s implications and, too, fails to discuss how the study’s findings connect back to or better inform the professional conversation. Finally, while charts are provided in the results section, for example, on page 13, the paper fails to reference those charts, preventing enhanced communication, another marker of a paper that did not earn the score of 5.