



MAY 2017

What Matters?

Key findings from a study of New Zealand girls

Introduction

Every year GirlGuiding New Zealand provides leadership and personal development opportunities to thousands of New Zealand girls. Understanding what matters to these girls is imperative for the organisation and others working with or supporting young girls to become young women.

GirlGuiding New Zealand surveyed 4365 New Zealand girls aged 7-17 years old using insights agency Kantar TNS New Zealand, to find out what interested them, concerned them and who they admired most.

Key Findings

- > Mothers were named most frequently as a female role model.
- > Girls admired self-confidence and hard work in their role models.
- > 64% of girls thought doing well in school was important.
- > Participants began to feel pressure to look good at the age of 9.
- > 49% of 16 year olds felt pressure to look good.
- > 39% of girls strongly believed there is a lot of pressure to succeed in school.
- > Participants wanted to be accepting of others, stand up for what they believed in and be happy and hard working.
- > Girls felt they could make a difference by writing a letter to someone who can assist them to make change, but were more likely to talk to parents.

Role Models

Family members such as mothers, sisters, aunts and grandmothers were commonly named as female role models. Mothers were noted most often. Other role models named included teachers and activists, as well as celebrities.

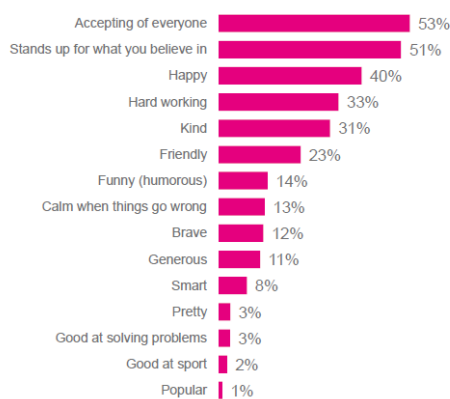
- > The most admired attributes of role models included being self-confident and hardworking.
- > Traits such as being pretty/beautiful, helping those who are sad and being family focussed were considered least important.
- > Mothers were named first by one in four participants and were six times more likely to be cited than Beyoncé.

"My mum is an amazing woman, she always wants me to be happy and gives me lots of advice. She's understanding, honest and easy to talk to. She's not just a Mum but a best friend."

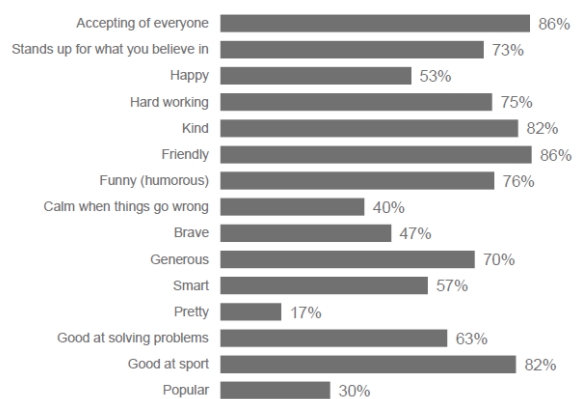
Desired Qualities of Young Women

- > More than half of participants thought it is important to be accepting of everyone and to stand up for what they believe in.
- > 3% or less felt that being pretty, good at sport (2%) or being popular (1%) was important.
- > 86% of participants who thought it was important to be accepting of everyone felt as though they were.
- > Half of those who thought being happy is important felt they were.
- > Half of those who thought being smart was important felt they were.
- > 21% of girls said they know of lots of people who are not accepting of people who are different yet being accepting of others was the number one quality that girls aspired to have.

% think it is important⁽¹⁾



% think they usually are this⁽²⁾

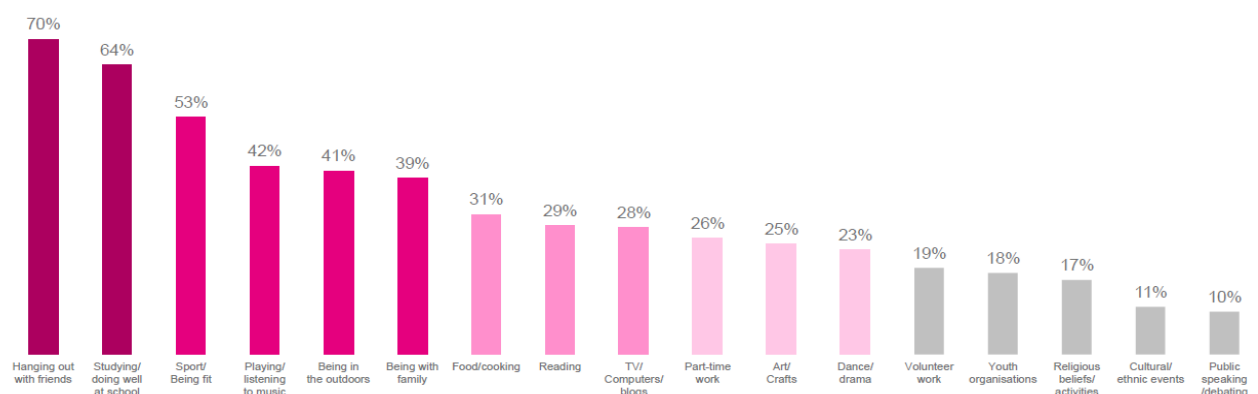


- 1) Selected it as one of three most important qualities from list
- 2) If chosen as important, the % who gave it a 4 or 5 on the 5-point scale rating themselves (5 = I am always this)

Activities Important in Life

Hanging out with friends and doing well at school were the most important activities in participants lives. Religious beliefs/activities, cultural/ethnic events and public speaking were selected least as most important activities in girls lives.

Activities important in life⁽¹⁾



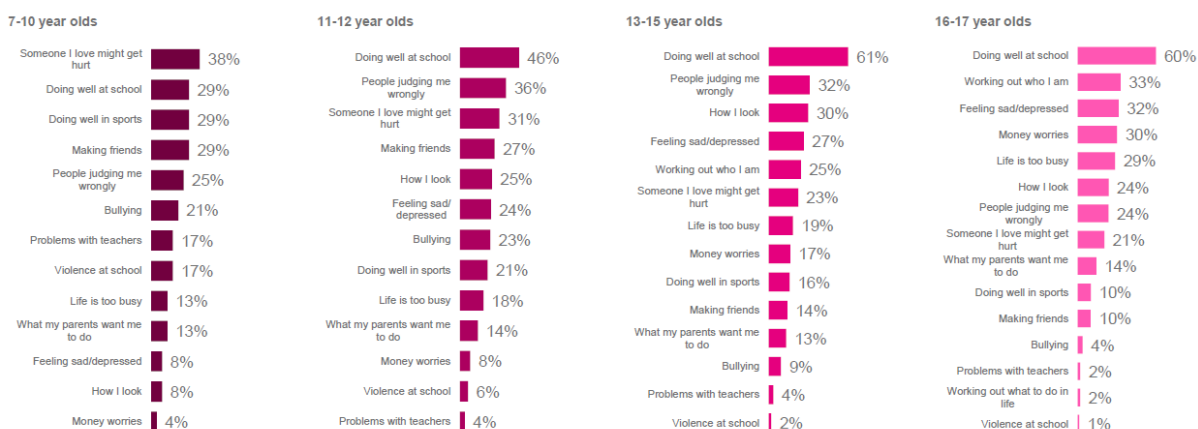
Concerns

As young women grow, different personal issues concern them – doing well in school remains key with 60% of participants saying this was one of their top three concerns.

The matters of least concern in the 7-10 age group become the matters of most concern in the 16-17 age group. This included money matters, looks and feeling sad/depressed, which are all heightened in later teens.

- > 39% of participants said it was really true that there is a lot of pressure on them to succeed at school. The sense of pressure increased with age and 47% in the 16-17 age group feel there is a lot of pressure.
- > 4% of 7-10 year olds listed money worries as a concern. This increased to 30% in the 16-17 age group.
- > Doing well at school was cited most commonly by 11-17 year olds.
- > The most common concern of the 7-10 age group was someone they love getting hurt.
- > *Working out who I am* became a greater concern in later years with 33% of 16-17 year olds listing it as a concern vs. 25% of 13-15 year olds.

The personal concerns of young women by age⁽¹⁾



Making a Difference

- > Letters and use of social media featured highly as ways for girls to make a difference.
- > 38% of participants thought the best way to make a difference is to write a letter to someone who will follow it up or can assist them in making the change.
- > 27% of participants said the best way to make a difference would be to create a video about the issue for use on social media and 25% said they would share something about the issue on social media.
- > Protesting or starting a petition received the lowest number of references.

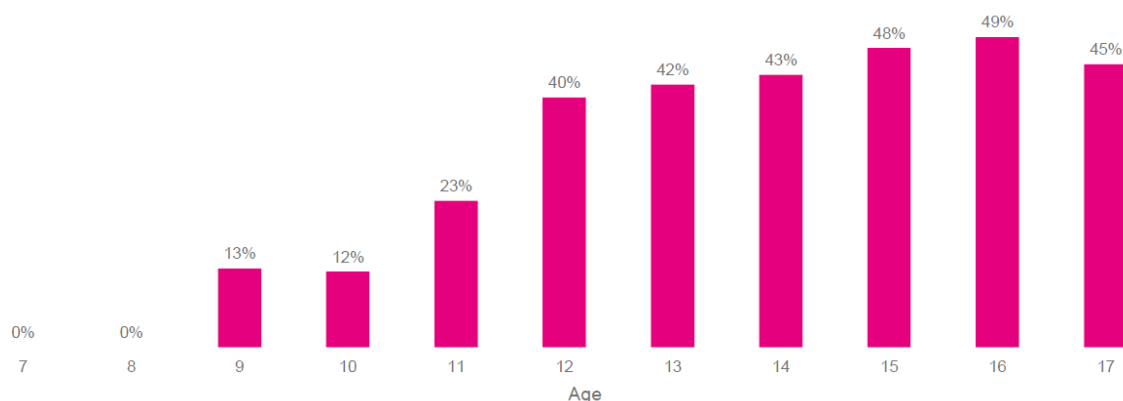
Although girls rated other methods of instigating change ahead of talking to their friends or parents, they were more likely to have done this than write a letter or use social media.

Looks and Likes

- > Pressure about 'Body Image' was something many participants had experienced.
- > Pressure on looking good increased from age 12-16.
- > 61% of girls felt there should be a better mixture of different body types in the media.
- > 52% of girls felt that people try to make themselves look too perfect on social media.

"I really think there should be more love for skinny girls. A lot of girls I know try to put on weight to avoid being picked on."

% of age group who believe it is 'really true' that there is a lot of pressure on girls to look good



Mental Health

Feeling depressed becomes more relevant as girls age with a third of 16 – 17 year old participants listing it as a key concern.

28% of participants said feeling sad or depressed was one of the key personal things they care or worry about. Many girls also worried about friends who are feeling sad and depressed.

About GirlGuiding New Zealand

GirlGuiding NZ believes the needs of girls and young women are best met through an organisation that caters specifically for them. It is also important for girls to see women as role models in leadership and decision making.

GirlGuiding NZ is New Zealand's largest female-only youth organisation with approximately 9,000 members.

All girls regardless of race, faith or other circumstances may become enrolled members of GirlGuiding New Zealand.

There are different sections within GirlGuiding NZ: Pippins (aged 5-6 years), Brownies (aged 7–9 ½ years), Guides (aged from 9 - 12½) and Rangers (aged 12½ – 17).

Find out more at www.girlguidingnz.org.nz.