



Linking Leadership to Academics: The Girl Scout Difference¹

The mission of Girl Scouting is to develop girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. An exciting new study shows that Girl Scouting also contributes to academic success. This national study by the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) found that the leadership skills and experiences girls gain through Girl Scouting also help them succeed in school.

“Without Girl Scouts I would not be where I am today. I think I would not get good grades, I don't think I would do well in school, and I don't think I would get along with others as well as I do.”

- 12 year old Girl Scout

Key Findings

The study of nearly 3,000 geographically-diverse fourth through eighth grade Girl Scouts found that:

1. Girl Scout participation has a positive impact on girls' leadership.
 - ✓ On a 1-10 scale, one-third of girls rated the impact of Girl Scouting on their leadership a 10 (highest score possible).
 - ✓ Eighty percent rated it a 7 or higher.
2. Girl Scouting influences academic success as much as or more than positive relationships with teachers and weekly participation in out-of-school-time (OST) activities— non-Girl Scout factors that are known to boost success in school.
3. Lower socioeconomic status (SES) girls, those whose moms have less than a college education, report greater benefits from Girl Scouting.
 - ✓ They report greater leadership impact.
 - ✓ Those who have gained problem solving skills indicate much higher scholastic competence.

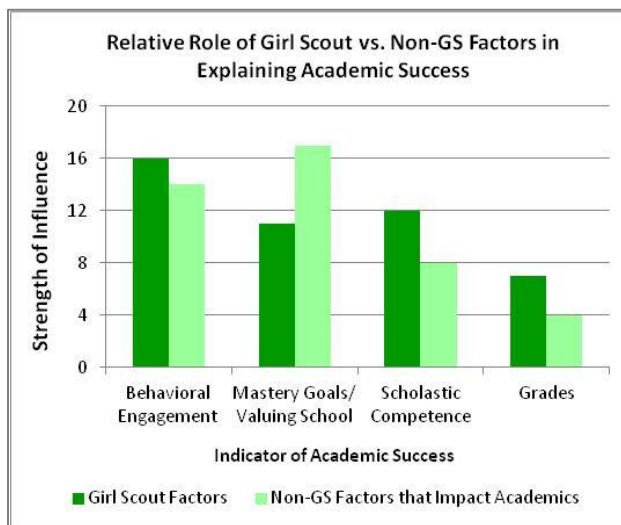
What Makes Girl Scouting Different

Girl Scout experiences are characterized by three processes: Cooperative Learning, Learning by Doing, and Girl-Led activities. The Cooperative Learning aspect of Girl Scouting (in which girls work with, learn from and teach each other) is particularly important in supporting girls to take on challenges and solve personal, interpersonal and community problems. When girls learn to seek challenges and solve problems



in Girl Scouting, it helps them do the same in school, thereby supporting their academic growth.

Additionally, Girl Scouting offers a variety of different experiences, in which girls get to try new things, develop their skills, and take on leadership roles. When girls plan and lead projects, whether related to community service, outdoor expeditions, cookie sales, robotics or any number of other Girl Scout themes, they gain skills and confidence that also help them do well in school.



Directions for Future Research & Programming

Additional research is recommended to compare Girl Scouts and non-Girl Scouts on both leadership and academic outcomes and to explore how leadership development experiences impact academics for lower-SES girls. Programming to help adult volunteers better facilitate the three Girl Scout Processes may also yield very positive results for girls' leadership and academics.

“I get to face my fears and try new things. Girl Scouts teaches lots of important life lessons.”

- 10 year old Girl Scout

¹ This document is an overview of *Linking Leadership to Academic Success: The Girl Scout Difference*, by Kallen Tsikalas and Sabrica Barnett (Girl Scout Research Institute, 2012). Full report available online at www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gscoutcomes/