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# Is the English academic performance of the students influenced by the single-sex model of schooling? 

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"Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance." -Will Durant

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#### Abstract

The aim of this study is to discover if the English academic performance of the students is influenced by a single-sex schooling model. Examine the state of the art of the singlesex schooling model as well as the one of the coeducational model, exploring the perceptions of educative agents about both types of education, and research the English academic performance of the students were further objectives of the project. In order to achieve the latter two objectives, a mixed methodological approach was followed, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The research was developed taking into account three different schools, that belonged to the two different types of schooling. Different educative agents were considered and different tools were used to gather information. Said research was planned to be conducted in three phases: data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The project concluded that despite there is a bare consensus among authors like Emer Smyth (2010) that confirm that single-sex schooling has a significant impact in the academic success of the students, a considerable percentage of educative agents who were participants of the research, believes the student's academic performance is not influenced by the single-sex model of schooling.


Keywords: single-sex education, mixed methodological research, qualitative methodology, academic performance, English


#### Abstract

El objetivo de este estudio es descubrir si el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes en inglés se ve influenciado por un modelo de educación diferenciada. Examinar la literatura existente acerca del modelo de educación diferenciada, así como del modelo coeducacional, explorar las percepciones de los agentes educativos sobre ambos tipos de educación e investigar el rendimiento académico en inglés de los estudiantes fueron otros objetivos del proyecto. Para lograr los dos últimos, se realizó una investigación metodológica mixta mediante la combinación de metodologías cuantitativa y cualitativa. La investigación se desarrolló teniendo en cuenta tres escuelas diferentes, que pertenecían a los dos tipos de escolarización. Se consideraron diferentes agentes educativos y se utilizaron diferentes herramientas para recopilar información. Se planificó que dicha investigación se llevara a cabo en tres fases: recolección de datos, análisis e interpretación. El proyecto concluyó que a pesar de que existe un consenso claro entre autores como Emer Smyth (2010) que confirman que la escolarización diferenciada tiene un impacto significativo en el éxito académico de los estudiantes, un porcentaje considerable de agentes educativos que participaron en el estudio cree que el rendimiento académico del estudiante no está influenciado por el modelo de educación diferenciada.

Palabras clave: educación diferenciada, investigación metodológica mixta, metodología cualitativa, rendimiento académico, inglés


## Resum

L'objectiu d'aquest estudi és descobrir si el rendiment acadèmic dels estudiants en anglès es veu influenciat per un model d'educació diferenciat. Examinar la literatura existent del model d'educació diferenciada, així com del model coeducacional, explorar les percepcions dels agents educatius sobre els dos tipus d'educació i investigar el rendiment acadèmic en anglès dels l'estudiants van ser altres objectius de el projecte. Per aconseguir els dos últims, es va realitzar una investigació metodològica mixta mitjançant la combinació de metodologies quantitativa i qualitativa. La investigació es va desenvolupar tenint en compte tres escoles diferents, que pertanyien als dos tipus d'escolarització. Es van considerar diferents agents educatius i es van utilitzar diferents eines per recopilar informació. Es va planificar que aquesta investigació es dugués a terme en tres fases: recollida de dades, anàlisi i interpretació. El projecte va concloure que tot i que hi ha un consens clar entre autors com Emer Smyth (2010) que confirmen que l'escolarització diferenciada té un impacte significatiu en l'èxit acadèmic dels estudiants, un percentatge considerable d'agents educatius que van participar en l'estudi creu que el rendiment acadèmic de l'estudiant no està influenciat pel model d'educació diferenciada.

Paraules clau: educació diferenciada, investigació metodològica mixta, metodologia qualitativa, rendiment acadèmic, anglès

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## 1. Introduction

Deciding how to carry out this dissertation was not an easy task. Many different questions and topics about education arouse in my mind. Following my tutor's advice, I based my research question upon something I was interested in because it has a personal meaning to me. Researching on single-sex education versus coeducational schooling is a personal topic because I studied in three single-sex only girls schools until I graduated. In addition to this, it was appealing for me to identify if there were considerable differences between the two schooling models according to the perspectives of various educative agents. When doing my Bachelor's Degree and this Master's, I discussed with my peers how they were brought up in their schools, and I couldn't help but notice differences, regarding values, structure, and organization.

The Spanish educational system is wide and there are many different types of schools. However, the existence of some particular ones is a subject that holds significant controversy. For instance, the presence of single-sex semi-private and private schools. Although there is literature about whether to promote or maintain single-sex schools in English-speaking countries or not, there are no such studies in Spain (Camps \& Vierheller, 2018). Within this context and in the framework of my studies on teaching English, my purpose for this dissertation is to discover if the students' English academic achievement is influenced by the single-sex schooling model. I must stress, though, I intend to carry out a rigorous investigation to reach the objectives of this study and avoid basing it upon any ideologies. My initial position on the subject will only be shared in the hypothesis. The title of my project research is: Is the English academic performance of the students influenced by the single-sex model of schooling?

The reason why I have chosen this topic is due to two reasons. The first one is my own belief on how students learn, more specifically, their learning environment. I believe that it is important for their academic improvement as well as for their motivation. Authors like Hornstra, Mansfield, Van der Veen, Peetsma \& Volman (2015) agree on this idea: "the learning environment is increasing as a more important factor for the students' motivation". The idea behind how students learn it is also linked to group dynamics, methodology, and some other aspects, which will be addressed later on in the
methodology section. Further to this, I consider the focus of the study to have a lot of importance in the current state of the Spanish educational system, not only because of the political controversy behind it but also because of the relevance to the educational policies and laws that might be created in the future.

This dissertation is divided into three main blocks: Theoretical framework, methodology, discussion and results. In the theoretical framework section, I will explain in detail three major points. Firstly, I will contextualize how the Spanish system of education is structured; secondly, how it came to be; and, thirdly, I will establish the arguments the different educative typologies are based on. In the methodology section, I will present my fieldwork and I will discuss the mixed methodological approach of my research which is based on qualitative and quantitative data. Finally, I will expose the conclusions I reached based on the whole process of the study.

## 2. Objectives and Research Question

General objective: discover if the students' English academic performance is influenced by the single-sex schooling model.

Specific objectives:

1. Examine the state of the art of the Spanish students' academic performance when learning English in single-sex schools.
2. Explore the different perspectives of various educational agents about the different schooling models.
3. Analyze the English academic performance of students in single-sex and coeducational schools.

Research question: Is the English academic performance of the students influenced by the single-sex model of schooling?

## 3. Theoretical framework

Spanish schools can be categorized in a wide range of typologies, according to criteria regarding different aspects, such as, religion, education, and methodology, amongst others. This study will propose a classification that focuses only on the characteristics that are relevant to the investigation. This typology presents the following dichotomy:

1. School funding
2. Model of schooling

### 3.1. Spanish education according to their funding

According to data from the OECD (2011)1, there are three different types of schools in Spain: state, semi-private and private schools. In numbers, $69 \%$ of the schools are stateschools, while the other $31 \%$ are private. Out of this $31 \%, 28 \%$ are semi-private and only $3 \%$ are private. State schools are funded entirely by the government, semi-private schools are partly funded publicly and privately, and private schools are funded privately.

Unlike countries like England or Australia, in Spain, there are no single-sex state schools. Therefore, if we were to focus primarily on semi-private schools, according to art. 64,3 of the law LOCE2, these are private schools financed with public funds. The concept of semi-private schools could be summarized as follows: firstly, it collaborates with the State by providing a public service, teaching in this case, secondly, they provide a public service that doesn't exempt them from being a private organization, and, finally, this model of schooling does not have the same autonomy as a private one (Martinez Blanco, 2004).

The idea of semi-private schools was born in 1985 when Felipe González was President of Spain. At that time, as it is now, education was considered something everybody should be entitled to. However, there were not enough schools or money to build schools, and

[^0]for that reason, the government decided to support private initiatives by paying the teachers' salaries plus the school's general expenses. That is how semi-private schools began and have increased in number since then (Llera \& Pérez, 2012).

Additionally, Martinez Blanco (2004) states that "a semi-private school is the approach LODE3 $_{3}$ has chosen to fund private education" which implies that it is both a doctrinal and legal foundation. It is fair to say that the doctrinal aspect of it has fostered a debate on whether this subvention should even take place. The two parts of this debate allude to different ideologies. However, this study will not be focusing on it.

### 3.2. Spanish education according to the model of schooling

The second category of the for said dichotomy focuses on the school modeling according to a separation, or not, of students by their gender. These two models are called singlesex schools and non-single-sex schools. The last model is also identified as coeducational schooling (Subirats, 1994), which will be the term used onwards.

To define each model of schooling, this study will explain in first place what their main objective is, and through what ways and means they wish to accomplish them. In this section, this research will present and contrast the different theories, arguments, and ideas that conceptualize the schooling models, as well as quoting and referencing other research and studies that address this topic too.

### 3.2.1. Single-sex schooling model

The term single-sex school refers to a space dedicated only to one sex in an educative environment that can be either a school or a class. This type of schooling is not considerably extended in Spain as it is in other countries. There are 150 single-sex schools in Spain, according to María Calvo Charro, president of the European Association of Single-Sex Education. There are more in English-speaking countries such as the UK, the U.S or Australia (Hornstra et al., 2015).

[^1]The objective of single-sex schooling is to provide a personalized education. According to EASSE (2013), this model wants to enhance education while adapting the teacher's educative action to the gender of the student, boy or girl. It can also be applied in mixedsex environments. This schooling model is based on the anthropological conception that understands each person as different due to having different natures and conceiving the human being as dual. Authors like Polo (2004) state that we are dual in terms of essence, intelligence, and will and in terms of sexuality, man and woman (Polo, 1991). Furthermore, the single-sex model understands education as help for personal growth. Not only their main focus is for students to be academically successful, but also to help them improve as human beings. This includes perfecting their nature, also understood as acquiring the needed intellectual and moral habits as a way to perfect their intelligence and will, and overall becoming a better person (Ahedo, 2015).

Furthermore, the premise of the topic of single-sex education seems to be based mainly upon two grounds: they defend that boys and girls are different in various levels, socially, physically, biologically, culturally, and cognitively, which leads to different rhythms in the maturing and learning process. Further arguments have been found to support this statement, such as the difference between the male brain and the female brain. With no intention to get into the very specific field of neurobiology, it is pertinent to mention that the data gathered in the Norfleet study (2007), strongly suggests that gender leads to different learning rhythms and also "natural predispositions to have different cognitive strengths", as mentioned previously. Therefore, taking into account these differences between boys and girls, a single-sex driven pedagogy could be created to adapt the teaching method and make it more suitable depending on the gender, so the teacher can make the most of the class (Sax, 2005). Following this neurobiological angle, Teisa Dalmau (2007) agrees and says that in the development of the four capacities there are significant brain differences to be considered throughout the educational process of both boys and girls, which should be taken into account when wishing to create a pedagogical method as efficient and equal as possible for all students.

According to EASSE (2013) the advantages of the single-sex schooling are the following: they provide the same opportunities for boys and girls, there is an improvement of the
school environment, it facilitates the school success, they work towards academic excellence, there are wider career choices presented, it promotes social cohesion, they have the support of international agencies, they enrich the educational options, and they help overcome stereotypes.

In regards to the school environment, EASSE (2013) also states that single-sex education offers a learning environment free of social pressures and conventionalism, in which boys and girls can explore their strengths without social pressure and address any academic areas they might be interested in. EASSE (2013) states that some of the advantages they believe benefit girls are the following:


#### Abstract

Single-sex environments defy the culture of gender that often surrounds the subjects of coeducational schools: in a girls school, for example, there are no subjects "for boys", and girls can experiment with subjects traditionally considered "for boys" with more freedom, realize that they can and gain in self-esteem and academic excellence. Besides, girls can learn in an alternative climate that diminishes the social and media obsession with stereotypes of femininity and corporal perfection.


And the advantages for the boys are as they describe:

In single-sex schools, boys learn in an environment that filters many of anti-academic attitudes of masculinity. They can study in a safe and motivating atmosphere that allows them to enjoy, demonstrate, and combine sporting and academic success. Boys benefit particularly from the range of positive masculine role models that male teachers provide. They learn in an environment that minimizes undesired effects of sexual polarization, helps them discover and develop their personality, and stimulates them to examine their future with a broader vision.

Besides, concerning academic performance, organizations such as EASSE have collected and published reports (e.g. EASSE, 2013) that state that single-sex education does not only improve the academic performance of the students but also helps reducing school failure and dropout rate. Nevertheless, the conclusion drawn from this report is based on data gathered in countries like England, not in Spain. Therefore, this argument could not be used to support single-sex education in Spain because there is not enough data and information about it.

The statements, studies, and articles used to support the single-sex schooling model have been studied and observed by several authors and investigators such as Smyth (2010). This author concludes that although it might vary considerably depending on the country, there is a bare consensus that confirms that single-sex schooling has a significant impact in the academic success of the students. In contrast, authors such as Pahlke, Hyde y Allison (2014), investigated it as well and they concluded that "the difference between both educative models is empirically trivial".

Further authors, like Datnow et al. (2001) consider single-sex education as a strategy to improve the class's behavior. They also express that this model could also be used to eliminate distraction and pressure among peers as well. This latest research corroborates the view that the difference between both genders is real and instead of using this difference to compare them, it can be acknowledged and used in favor of the students.

In the same line, it is a fair argument to discuss whether separating both sexes would cause a lack of diversity. However, if this paper were to reference the anthropological grounds which single-sex schooling is based on, they consider all students as different people due to their distinct natures. Consequently, even if a class was only boys or only girls there would still be diversity, although not as much as in a coeducational environment.

Additionally, single-sex schooling has a strong and grounded religious base that must be mentioned and cannot be ignored, because it takes part of the educative reality of Spain. All single-sex schools in Spain are religious. According to data from Enguita (2008), there are 2,654 religious schools in Spain, most of them catholic, out of which 2,375 are semi-state, and 279 are private. Several schools include catholic values and formation into their teaching and some of them are part of different catholic organizations such as Opus Dei or Regnum Christi, for instance. In short, this indicates that for many singlesex schools it is not only crucial to function as an institution that transfers and transmits knowledge, but also gives importance to acquire values. Their goal is to transcend how teaching is commonly understood, go beyond that and give their students a more personalized and transcendental education. Another manner to provide equal opportunities to the students is a stricter discipline and sometimes the use of a uniform,
which may provide a more horizontal and fair education to all students, avoiding any conflicts or discrimination that might come from outside of the academic field (Riordan, 2007).

### 3.2.2. Coeducational schooling model

The main objective of the coeducational model is to advocate for equality. Sampere (2004) explains that: "it is not necessary to separate the sexes if what we want through education is to achieve the same values and transmit the same knowledge for them to form their personality and to be able to be free and responsible people".

However, the previous statement is problematic for various reasons, primarily because equality cannot be guaranteed. The only way to do so is to make the same curricula for everyone, but even so, teachers could still teach and assess the content of the curricula in different ways. Secondly, this schooling model also assumes that all students are the same, and therefore they should be treated and taught the same in the same manner. But, if one reflects on this statement in-depth, it would reach to the conclusion that this is not possible considering there are not students that learn or are the same, everyone is different and it is undeniably circumstantial. Nevertheless, this can take place in any school, regardless of their schooling model. However, it is of crucial importance to say that coeducational schooling uses it as a strong argument to support their model, whereas the single-sex one does not.

Furthermore, Polo (2006) explains it in the following way:

No es que todos sean iguales en el sentido de que el número 2 sea igual a otro número 2, sino que la especie está en todos, pero matizada de tal manera que algo de la especie está más desarrollado en un ser humano que en otro; y eso ocurre con todos, de tal manera que así se establece la igualdad, que no es igualdad numérica, sino igualdad de los que se deben mutuamente respeto, honor (p. 80).

This statement is similar to the anthropological conception upon which the single-sex school model is based on but with a different approach. Sampere (2004) clarifies that
considering no person is identical and no one has the exact absorptive capacity, that is not a valid justification to separate them by gender. The way to address this, according to the author, is to have as little amount of pupils in the classroom as possible. Therefore, the teacher can attend to every one of the pupils, cater to their needs and interests so they can be provided with a more individualized education.

In coeducational schooling, unlike single-sex, it is believed that separating students by gender does not facilitate eliminating or dissolving sexists behaviors and attitudes. However, several times, said attitudes can be found in various educative agents, such as teachers, directors, and even students. The schools that have active equality gender policies are the ones who can reduce sexism, regardless of their pedagogical or educational model or criteria (Lee, Marks, y Byrd, 1994).

A further matter discussed by both schooling models is the socialization and coexistence of both sexes in the same space. Subirats (1994) states as the main goal of coeducation advocating for the socialization of both sexes, defending that the coexistence of boys and girls in the same school or the same class will contribute to the benefit of both. There is not deny that the coexistence of both sexes does represent how society functions in most western cultures. Ultimately, both sexes exist side by side. For that reason, it displays a true-to-life reality of today's society. Nonetheless, authors like Enkvist (2004) agree it would be sensible to remember that the school should not be a place for socialization primarily, and it should not prioritize socialization on top of the learning process.

At this point, it is appropriate to highlight the debate that has taken place in Spain about what educational model is the one to be. Authors like Calvo (2005) and Ahedo (2015) agree that this is a rather ideological debate. Ahedo (2015) listed the main matters that cause differences between the two schooling models, which are the following: first, there is a reference to single-sex schools being discriminatory, because they separate students by sex in their schools and their classes, which is not representative of the "natural world". Secondly, coeducational education has been accepted as contributive for the woman and any other that opposes to that model has been identified as contrary to the women's benefit. Thirdly, it has been considered that single-sex schooling does not respect equal opportunities because it does not provide an equal education. However, single-sex does
seek for equality but not egalitarianism (Calvo, 2005). It is crucial to stress that both educational models have different educational objectives, they are based upon a similar anthropological perception of the pupil but with a different approach. For that reason, it would not be right to compare them just to highlight the negatives of one another, and also try to engage in a debate that is ideology-focused rather than educationally.

## 4. Methodology

In this section, it will be explained the different steps followed to achieve the planned objectives of this study and to answer the research question, which is: Is the English academic performance of the students influenced by the single-sex model of schooling? To do so, a mixed methodological approach was used, combining quantitative and qualitative research.

To conduct the research, three phases were planned: a) data collection; b) analysis; and, c) interpretation. In the data collection phase, it was crucial to remain clear about what information needed to be collected and how it must be aligned with the objectives of the investigation. The first step was to gather the data from the schools on Competències Bàsiques. Said that it is key to point out that due to the confidentiality of the documents, it was potentially challenging to acquire them. The second step was to collect data from educative agents, more specifically, qualitative information such as the perceptions on the topic of the study through a survey and some interviews.

Unfortunately, the current situation of the global pandemic limited the possibility of collecting the data needed to carry out this project. It was not possible to do the fieldwork as planned. For that reason, this investigation gathered fewer data than what was expected. Although it was difficult to collect quantitative data, fortunately, this study could still collect some useful information and carry out the qualitative aspect of this research.

After finishing the data collection, that information was registered online and then transcribed for its later analysis. As for the analysis, a constant comparison method (Glaser \& Strauss, 1967) was used.

In the final phase, once the results of the aforementioned phase were analyzed, they were interpreted.

### 4.1. Participants

This investigation aimed to collect the 2018-2019 English academic results of the 4th of ESO students from three different schools. Those three schools were chosen considering the schooling models: an only boys school, an only girls school, and a coeducational school. Another important factor taken into account when choosing the schools was their location because the social, economical and cultural variables were relevant. Due to privacy reasons, this research would not reveal the names of the schools nor where they are located. However, it should be stressed that all schools are on the same site.

Regarding the qualitative research, 126 participants (students, parents, and teachers) were surveyed, and two teachers were interviewed. Initially, 4 educative agents were planned to be interviewed, unfortunately, only two interviews took place. The first interviewee will be referred to as A.G, head of the English department of a single-sex school in Barcelona. She has experience studying and working for schools of both schooling models and she has been an active teacher for 20 years. In addition to this, I also interviewed a teacher who works in a coeducational environment: who will be referred to as D.S, an English teacher at another school also located in Barcelona. He has experience working and studying in the coeducational schooling model and had been an active teacher for 21 years. The reason why these 2 people were interviewed was that although the surveys are a great source of information, this investigation also needed a different perspective on the different schooling models and the impact they could have when learning English. These two people were chosen and interviewed with the same questions to assure the reliability of this study.

### 4.2. Instruments

Within the framework of this investigation, different instruments were used to gather data. Regarding the quantitative research, data was going to be collected by means of document review: the reports on Competenciès Basiques.

The project planned to compare the English Competències Bàsiques' results on oral comprehension, written comprehension, and written expression of the three schools. The objective was to observe if the single-sex schools students had a better or worse performance than the ones in the coeducational school by observing if the results were higher or lower. The Competències Bàsiques examination was chosen as the source for the quantitative aspect of the research because this study wanted to be as reliable as possible. This test is a government applied examination that every student in Spain must undergo at the age of 11 and at the age of 16 . In the English linguistic competence examination, in particular, the students' capacity to understand different types of texts, oral and written in a foreign language is being assessed. This examination also assesses if the students can express themselves in a written way. However, although the study minimized variables when choosing the schools, there are other variables that should be taken into consideration. Those are the school's methodology, the English teacher's teaching style, and the school resources. Unfortunately, as data could not be collected, there are no quantitative results to interpret.

With reference to the qualitative research two tools were used: interviews and a survey. Two semi-structured interviews took place and they lasted for about 30 minutes. The questions formulated in both instruments were similar because both had the same objective. An online survey was designed after having reviewed some existing ones. It was sent to a total of 126 participants and the data gathered was registered online too. (For the full version of both interviews and the survey, see Appendix I \& II, respectively).

The survey was set to be responded anonymously to respect the privacy of the participants. It had 10 questions and one additional space to add any information or clarify any previous response if the participant wished to do so. Because the survey was addressed to educative agents that participate or have participated in the Spanish educative system, it was written in Spanish and not in English to ensure that every participant understood the survey questions. Regarding the content of the questions, the first couple collected data about the participant's demographic, what schooling model they had had more contact with, and what type of educative agent they identified themselves with, among others.

Then, the survey continued to ask more specific questions about the arguments upon which both schooling models are based on and about whether a better academic performance of the students is due to a certain schooling model.

### 4.3 Analysis

This study will follow a mixed methodological approach combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Cooper \& Niu, 2010). In reference to the qualitative data gathered, the information was analyzed following the constant comparison method (Glaser \& Strauss, 1967), which is commonly used in qualitative studies. Many authors consider it to be a convenient method if the researcher wishes to answer a general question, like in this particular study. Further authors use the term "codification" to refer to this technique (Miles \& Huberman, 1994; Ryan \& Bernard, 2000). The constant comparative analysis can be deductive, inductive, and subtractive. In this case, it will be inductive because codes arouse from data.

The quantitative analysis of this study was supposed to be based on the Competències Bàsiques. As it was impossible to be conducted, the quantitative aspect of the study was generated by turning the qualitative data provided by the survey into numbers.

Following (Glaser \& Strauss, 1967), we perused the theoretical framework concepts on single-sex as well as on coeducational education. Then, that information was divided into small fragments. Each fragment was given a descriptive title or a code in order to categorize the information. Next, the qualitative data obtained was also labeled under the same codes or titles. Once all information was coded, we were able to interpret the results. The objective was to see how similar the educative agents' perceptions of both schooling models are to the concepts they are based upon.

## 5. Results \& Discussion

In this segment, the data results were interpreted. It must be mentioned that in this study the analysis of the results from the Competències Bàsiques were of key importance. However, due to the lack of information it was not carried out. So we based the results'
interpretation on the qualitative aspect of the research. However, it should be mentioned that part of the qualitative data gathered (survey) was transformed into numbers, in consequence the study would be provided with a quantitative component that would, in due time, support the findings.

The qualitative data was collected through two instruments: a survey and two interviews.

Now, a contextualisation of the surveyed participants will be presented. In the following figures, we can observe the age, gender, and agent the participants identified themselves with (see Appendix II for the full survey):

## 1. ¿Con qué género se identifica?

126 respuestas


Figure 1. Gender graphic.
2. ¿Qué edad tiene? (Respuesta numérica)

126 respuestas


Figure 2. Age graphic.

## 3. ¿Con qué tipo de agente educativo se identifica?

126 respuestas


Figure 3. Educative agent identification graphic.

On the other hand, in order to discover what similarities and differences there are between the data obtained and the existent literature, and therefore correlate the theory to the evidence, this study created two correlation tables, one for each educative model. In each table, we can find the theoretical information and the qualitative data classified according to three codes: objectives, basis, and benefits.

Regarding figure 4, 29,4\% of the surveyed participants agreed that the objective of this educational model, as EASSE (2013) states, is to provide a personalized education. One of the interviewees (A.G), does not mention it but adds other objectives such as ending gender stereotypes, promoting gender equality, and trying to educate people according to their cognitive capacities. Further to this, $57,1 \%$ of the participants agree with Datnow et al. (2001) saying that it reduces distractions and pressure among students. Another objective was the importance this model gives to acquiring values to grow as a person, which $27 \%$ of the surveyed participants agreed with. Concerning the basis which this model is based on, A.G agrees with the Norfleet study (2007) about how boys and girls are different, as well as $4 \%$ of the participants. Additionally, the other interviewee (D.S) and $61,1 \%$ of the participants believe the model was created because of religious reasons. $48,4 \%$ thought they were ideological, $11,9 \%$ political (along with D.S), and only $8,2 \%$ believe those reasons were educative or academic. D.S also adds that some single-sex
schools seem to be elitist. In regards to this model's benefits, A.G says that not only it has been supported by many studies, but also that it has shown successful documented results. This last statement concurs with EASSE (2013). In addition to this, she added that it helps to educate in equal conditions and provides the students with the same opportunities. However, $0,8 \%$ of the participants said that this model has no benefits.

In figure 5, 56,3\% of the surveyed participants agree with Sampere (2004) in relation to the objective of this model, which is advocating for equality and avoiding discrimination. More than a half, specifically $57,1 \%$, also believed another objective was promoting socialization, and a $44,4 \%$ said their goal was to avoid sexists attitudes and promote stereotypes. Concerning this model's basis, D.S defines it as a more plural, more competitive, and less elitist, which relates to the diversity discussed in the theoretical framework that comes from the socialization and coexistence of both sexes (Subirats, 1994). Finally, both interviewees and $93,7 \%$ of the participants agreed that the socialization and coexistence of both sexes are beneficial.

Next, we can observe both correlation tables:

| CODE | Theoretical Framework | Interviews | Surveys |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Objective | Personalized education (EASSE, 2013). | - | Proporcionar una educación personalizada $(29,4 \%)$. |
|  | - | "(...) el objetivo principal de la educación diferenciada es acabar con los estereotipos de género". <br> (A.G) |  |
|  |  | "La educación diferenciada intenta que las personas reciban una formación de acuerdo a sus posibilidades cognitivas". (A.G) |  |
|  |  | "Para fomentar la igualdad de género". (A.G) |  |
|  | To improve the class's behavior. This model could also be used to eliminate distraction and pressure among peers as well (Datnow et al., (2001). | - | Reducir distracciones y presión entre estudiantes (57,1\%). |



|  | (...)single-sex schooling has a strong and grounded religious base (OECD, 2013). | "Modelos diferenciados pueden ser más elitistas, no reflejan la realidad y suelen ser escuelas más religiosas". (D.S) | Por razones religiosas (61,1\%). |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | "Las escuelas diferenciadas existen por razones políticas". (D.S) | Por razones políticas (11,9\%). |
|  |  |  | Por razones educativas $\mathbf{o}$ académicas $(8,2 \%)$. |
| Benefits | (...) same opportunities for boys and girls, improvement of the school environment, it facilitates the school success, they work towards academic excellence, there are wider career choices presented, it promotes social cohesion, they have the support of international agencies, they enrich the educational options, and they help overcome stereotypes. This paper later will discuss some of the aforementioned advantages (EASSE, 2013). | "(...) estadísticamente hablando hay más chicas que estudian carreras ciéntificotecnológicas si han estudiado en un colegio diferenciado porque han tenido más oportunidad de trabajar en un laboratorio, construir los robots en tecnología, etc. Al revés, en un colegio diferenciado masculino, podemos encontrar grandes poetas, que en un mixto quizás no porque no tenemos en el aula la rivalidad masculinofemenino y los estereotipos de la sociedad... "(A.G) <br> "Igualdad de oportunidades $\mathbf{y}$ condiciones". (A.G) |  |
|  |  | "Existen muchos estudios a nivel mundial que la avalan". (A.G) |  |
|  | It helps reducing school failure and dropout rates (EASSE, 2013). | "(...) buenos resultados documentados, número de éxitos de los estudiantes de dichas escuelas". (A.G) |  |


|  | (...) a single-sex <br> driven pedagogy <br> could be created to <br> adapt the teaching <br> method and make it <br> more suitable <br> depending on the <br> gender (Sax, 2005). |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  |  |  | Ningún beneficio <br> $(0,8 \%)$ |

Figure 4. Single-sex correlation table.

| CODES | Theoretical Framework | Interviews | Survey |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Objective | Advocate for equality, no discrimination, and the end of the women's subordination in society through the stimulation of coeducational education (Sampere, 2004). |  | Garantizar la igualdad entre los estudiantes (56,3\%). <br> Evitar actitudes sexistas $o$ fomentar estereotipos (44,4\%). |
|  |  |  | Fomentar la socialización (57,1\%). |
| Basis | Socialization and coexistence of both sexes in the same space (Subirats, 1994). More diversity | Describiría la escuela coeducativa como más plural, con más atención educativa, menos elitista, donde se premia la excelencia académica y la competitividad". (D.S) |  |
| Benefits |  | "Convivir con personas diferentes a nosotros nos enriquece en todos los ámbitos de la vida". (A.G) | Convivencia de ambos sexos ( $93,7 \%$ ). |
|  |  | "La convivencia de ambos sexos en un mismo espacio contribuye al beneficio de ambos, sobre todo en temas de derechos de la mujer". <br> (D.S) |  |
|  | Reduce stereotypes, social norms. Sampere (2004) |  |  |


|  | Represent how society <br> functions in most western <br> cultures (Subirats, 1994) |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

Figure 5. Coeducational correlation table.

## 6. Conclusions

This study was carried out following a mixed methodological approach which combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies with the objective of discovering if the English academic performance of the students is influenced by a single-sex schooling model. The present investigation was developed taking into account three different schools, that belonged to two different types of schooling, the single-sex and the coeducational. Different educative agents were considered and different tools, quantitative and qualitative, were used to gather information.

In this research, there were three specific objectives: examine the existing literature of the Spanish students' academic performance when learning English in single-sex schools, explore the different perspectives of various educational agents about the different schooling models, and analyze the English academic performance of students in singlesex and coeducational schools. The two first two were achieved but the third was not accomplished due to the pandemic situation. Because of it, the general objective planned for the investigation was not fully achieved. This study implied three different phases that led us to some results that were interpreted and based on that interpretation we got to the following conclusions. When the interviewees and the surveyed participants were asked if they believed if the English academic performance of the students was influenced by the single-sex model of schooling, the results were the following: one interviewee (A.G) believed there was an impact, the other interviewee (D.S) said there could be an impact but on a social perspective. However, $63,5 \%$ of the surveyed participants thought that the single-sex schooling model does not contribute to better performance.

Despite the fact that the quantitative aspect of the research could not be conducted, I would like to humbly encourage any future study or project with the same focus of investigation to apply my methodological design.

I will also like to take the opportunity and state that after reading, researching and analyzing the two schooling models, it has become clear that both types are very different and are based on different anthropological approaches. For that reason, I find myself unable to decide which model is best because I do not believe that it is appropriate to compare them in order to accentuate the negatives of one another and also engage in a debate that is more politically or ideology-focused than educationally.

I would like to finish with a quote by Galmarini (2015): "we cannot judge schooling systems as good or bad, or as true or false, they can be better or worse for the person or kid in certain circumstances and under certain conditions."

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## 8. Appendix

### 8.1. Interviews

### 8.1.1 Appendix I: A. G. interview

1. La primera pregunta que me gustaría realizarle es acerca de su experiencia laboral en el ámbito educativo. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva en activo como profesor? ¿Podría decirme en qué tipo de centros ha trabajado? ¿Eran públicos, concertados o privados?

Llevo cerca de 20 como profesora, los primeros 10, trabajaba en una entidad sin ánimo de lucro dando clases a adultos y recién llegados que necesitaban aprender el idioma. En la actualidad, trabajo en un colegio concertado de educación diferenciada, en la etapa de secundaria y bachillerato, aunque también he dado clase en la etapa de primaria e infantil, como profesora de inglés.
2. Con respecto al modelo de escuela, diferenciada (separación por razón de sexo) y coeducativa, ¿con cuál ha tenido más contacto? ¿Cómo describiría dicho modelo? ¿Cuáles son sus objetivos?

Por mi experiencia laboral he tenido más contacto con la escuela diferenciada, aunque como experiencia personal, siempre estudié en colegio, instituto y universidad públicas de educación mixta.

El modelo de la escuela diferenciada es un modelo alternativo al mixto, ni mejor, ni peor, el objetivo principal de la educación diferenciada es acabar con los estereotipos de género. No es diferente de la mixta, es formar a hombres y mujeres del siglo XXI. Para fomentar la igualdad de género tan en boga en la actualidad, primero tenemos que ser capaces de reconocer las diferencias que existen, neurológicamente hablando, entre un hombre y una mujer. La educación diferenciada intenta que las personas reciban una formación de acuerdo a sus posibilidades cognitivas. Está científicamente probado que los hombres y las mujeres aprendemos de manera diferente.
3. ¿Podría decirme cuál es su visión sobre el modelo contrario?

Como he dicho en la pregunta anterior, el hecho de trabajar o defender un modelo de educación no implica la crítica o menosprecio de otro modelo. Los dos son modelos efectivos bajo mi punto de vista. Los dos tienen sus pros y sus contras...
4. ¿Por qué razones cree que existen escuelas diferenciadas?

Las escuelas diferenciadas existen porque son una alternativa muy válida a la escuela mixta. Existen muchos estudios a nivel mundial que la avalan. Sin ir más lejos, una de las escuelas más reconocidas en el mundo es la escuela Eton en Inglaterra, que es diferenciada masculina. Por tanto, si un modelo de educación funciona, es lógico que exista.
5. ¿En su opinión, cuáles cree que son las principales razones por la que los padres prefieren un tipo de escuela a otro para sus hijos?

Bueno, esa decisión es personal y responde muchas veces al nivel socioeconómico o cultural de los padres. Unos padres sin recursos, optarán por una escuela pública por razones económicas. Unos padres sin problemas económicos y ambición cultural, quizás indagarán más sobre las posibles opciones para la educación de sus hijos. Está claro que la imposición política de inscripciones no ayuda mucho en este tema.
6. ¿De qué manera puede impactar el modelo de escuela en los estudiantes?

Creo que el modelo de escuela es una de las decisiones más importantes que pueden tomar los padres porque eso influirá en el futuro de sus hijos, como futuros profesionales, incluso como personas. Por lo tanto el modelo de escuela tendrá un impacto muy importante en la vida de los estudiantes.
7. ¿Considera que la convivencia de ambos sexos en un mismo espacio contribuye al beneficio de ambos? ¿Por qué?

Por supuesto que sí, convivir con personas diferentes a nosotros nos enriquece en todos los ámbitos de la vida, pero la escuela es uno de los ámbitos, luego está el familiar, el profesional, la calle... Estudiar o defender un modelo de escuela diferenciada, no quita
que encuentre beneficio en la convivencia de ambos sexos en el resto de ámbitos de la vida.
8. ¿Considera que la escuela diferenciada no respeta la igualdad de oportunidades porque no imparte una docencia en igualdad de condiciones?

Al contrario, estadísticamente hablando hay más chicas que estudian carreras ciéntificotecnológicas si han estudiado en un colegio diferenciado porque han tenido más oportunidad de trabajar en un laboratorio, construir los robots en tecnología, etc. Al revés, en un colegio diferenciado masculino, podemos encontrar grandes poetas, que en un mixto quizás no porque no tenemos en el aula la rivalidad masculino-femenino y los estereotipos de la sociedad... Esto hace que los estudiantes se sientan más libres. Es un error común en la sociedad pensar que las escuelas diferenciadas no imparten una docencia en igualdad de condiciones, yo creo que es al contrario.
9. ¿Qué impacto en el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes en España considera que puede tener un modelo de escuela diferenciado?

En el resto del mundo hay un auge hacia la educación diferenciada por los buenos resultados documentados. En España hay una memoria histórica reciente que ve a la escuela diferenciada como una escuela heredada de la franquista, por tanto el impacto es menor del que pudiera ser, sin embargo, los padres que optan por este tipo de escuela están muy satisfechos en cuando al rendimiento académico de sus hijos. Los resultados saltan a la vista si hacemos un estudio del número de éxitos de los estudiantes de dichas escuelas.
10. ¿Opina que un mejor rendimiento académico en la clase de inglés se debe a factores externos como tener más recursos o un nivel socioeconómico más alto?

Bueno, esto puede ser discutible, sin lugar a dudas un nivel socioeconómico alto que te permita ir a una academia o viajar al extranjero te va a ayudar. Pero en mi humilde opinión, el aprendizaje de un idioma tiene mucho de voluntad, trabajo personal y decisión, así como de algo de talento innato hacia el aprendizaje de los idiomas. El nivel socioeconómico, bajo mi punto de vista, es circunstancial.

### 8.1.2 Appendix II: D.S (transcribed) Interview

1. La primera pregunta que me gustaría realizarle es acerca de su experiencia laboral en el ámbito educativo. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva en activo como profesor? ¿Podría decirme en qué tipo de centros ha trabajado? ¿Eran públicos, concertados o privados?

Como profesor de inglés en activo llevo 21 años. He trabajado en escuelas públicas, concertadas y privadas. Específicamente en la Escuela Pía de Sarrià llevo 11 años.
2. Con respecto al modelo de escuela, diferenciada (separación por razón de sexo) y coeducativa, ¿con cuál ha tenido más contacto? ¿Cómo describiría dicho modelo? ¿Cuáles son sus objetivos?

Nunca he trabajado en la escuela diferenciada. Describiría la escuela coeducativa como más plural, con más atención educativa, menos elitista, donde se premia la excelencia académica y la competitividad.
3. ¿Podría decirme cuál es su visión sobre el modelo contrario?

En muchas casos, las escuelas que siguen modelos diferenciados pueden ser más elitistas, no reflejan la realidad y suelen ser escuelas más religiosas.
4. ¿Por qué razones cree que existen escuelas diferenciadas?

Por razones políticas y religiosas.
5. ¿En su opinión, cuáles cree que son las principales razones por la que los padres prefieren un tipo de escuela a otro para sus hijos?

Cuando son más pequeños, en edad de preescolar o a principios de primaria, la felicidad del niño o de la niña es el factor más importante para los padres. Otros factores pueden ser la localización, la comodidad y razones económicas. Cuando se hacen más mayores y están cursando ESO o bachillerato, factores como cómo puedan salir más preparados también es importante.
6. ¿De qué manera puede impactar el modelo de escuela en los estudiantes?

Puede tener un impacto social, en el crecimiento humano y en la educación en valores.
7. ¿Considera que la convivencia de ambos sexos en un mismo espacio contribuye al beneficio de ambos? ¿Por qué?

Sí, sobre todo en temas de derechos de la mujer.
8. ¿Considera que la escuela diferenciada no respeta la igualdad de oportunidades porque no imparte una docencia en igualdad de condiciones?

Totalmente, la educación diferenciada es más anticuada.
9. ¿Qué impacto en el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes en España considera que puede tener un modelo de escuela diferenciado?

Me da la impresión de que tiene un impacto. Suele haber expectativas de cumplir ciertos estándares académicos y además también está el factor de empresa.
10. ¿Opina que un mejor rendimiento académico en la clase de inglés se debe a factores externos como tener más recursos o un nivel socioeconómico más alto?

Está definitivamente relacionado. Para solucionar este problema, podría considerarse cambiar el sistema de aprendizaje.

### 8.2 Survey

1. ¿Con qué género se identifica?

126 respuestas

2. ¿Qué edad tiene? (Respuesta numérica)

126 respuestas

3. ¿Con qué tipo de agente educativo se identifica?

126 respuestas

4. ¿Con qué tipo de modelo de escuela ha tenido más contacto?

126 respuestas


Escuela diferenciada (separación por razón de sexo)

- Escuela no diferenciada
- Estudié en escuela mixta pero trabajo en una escuela diferenciada.
- Ambas
- Diferenciada pero mixta (y en bachillerato juntos)
- He estudiado en ambas escuelas, aproximadamente el mismo número d...

5. ¿Por qué razones cree que existen escuelas diferenciadas?

126 respuestas

6. ¿Considera que la convivencia de ambos sexos en un mismo espacio contribuye al beneficio de ambos?
126 respuestas

7. ¿Cree que un modelo de escuela diferenciada contribuye a un mejor rendimiento académico? 126 respuestas

8. En la clase de inglés en concreto, ¿cree que hay mejores resultados debido a factores externos como...?
126 respuestas

9. ¿Cuál cree que es el principal objetivo de las escuelas no diferenciadas?

126 respuestas

10. ¿Y el de las escuelas diferenciadas?

126 respuestas

11. ¿Considera posible garantizar a los estudiantes una enseñanza igual y en igualdad de condiciones para todos?
126 respuestas


## En caso de querer aportar alguna información más, puede utilitzar el siguiente espacio

12 respuestas

Mayor poder adquisitivo equivale a mejor educacion

Considero que las escuelas diferenciadas tiene que ver mucho con ideas religiosas, en las que se considera ambos sexos bastante diferentes. Por ejemplo las mujeres a monjas, para que no se distraigan y enseñarle valores como "madre"y "cuidadora". En resumen, pienso que se basa en ideologías más conservadoras.

Considero que ambos son modelos válidos, con sus fortalezas y debilidades. No creo que haya superioridad de uno sobre otro.

Garantizar una enseñanza igual es imposible pero sí garantizar el acceso a la enseñanza de calidad para todos sin importar el nivel económico de estos.

Escuela pública y de calidad para todes!

La respuesta a la ultima pregunta es negative porque creo que el termino igual puede ser confuso, debe ser una ensenyanza que reconozca que laayoria de estudiantes no parten de una igualdad de condiciones. La educación deberia ser equitativa y tener en cuenta de donde viene cada estudiante, cual es su contexto y necesidades concretas. Pero respect la igualdad de condiciones dentro de centro educativos, si, deberia

En caso de querer aportar alguna información más, puede utilitzar el siguiente espacio
12 respuestas
necesidades concretas. Pero respect la igualdad de condiciones dentro de centro educativos, si, deberia existir.

En referencia a la pregunta 11. He respondido no, porque el fin de los colegios de educación diferenciada se remite a unos valores, a una religión... colegios no diferenciados mantienen otros parámetros de actuación, por lo que, no veo posible educar a todos de la misma manera si los objetivos de cada centro, además de la educación, son distintos.

Para garantizar una educación en igualdad solamente hay una vía: educación pública y gratuita. Los conciertos en las escuelas deben acabarse y se debe aumentar el presupuesto destinado a la pública, así como aumentar el profesorado que trabaja allá. Es la única manera de acabar con la brecha entre los alumnos con más recursos y com menos.

Me gustaría puntualizar un aspecto de mi respuesta en la pregunta 6. He estudiado en ambos colegios y tengo que decir que prefiero los colegios diferenciados, además la educación es un tema que me llama la atención y me he informado al respecto, es por eso el motivo de mi preferencia. Sin embargo, que prefiera los colegios diferenciados no quita que esté a favor de que los niños y las niñas interactuen. Es decir, lo veo como un tema estrictamente académico pero estoy totalmente a favor, y me parece beneficioso y necesario, la convivencia entre ambos sexos.

En caso de querer aportar alguna información más, puede utilitzar el siguiente espacio
12 respuestas
conciertos en las escuelas deben acabarse y se debe aumentar el presupuesto destinado a la pública, así como aumentar el profesorado que trabaja allá. Es la única manera de acabar con la brecha entre los alumnos con más recursos y com menos.

Me gustaría puntualizar un aspecto de mi respuesta en la pregunta 6 . He estudiado en ambos colegios y tengo que decir que prefiero los colegios diferenciados, además la educación es un tema que me llama la atención y me he informado al respecto, es por eso el motivo de mi preferencia. Sin embargo, que prefiera los colegios diferenciados no quita que esté a favor de que los niños y las niñas interactuen. Es decir, lo veo como un tema estrictamente académico pero estoy totalmente a favor, y me parece beneficioso y necesario, la convivencia entre ambos sexos.

La escuela diferenciada no es mejor ni peor que la no-diferenciada. Son dos modelos educativos totalmente lícitos. Mi experiencia personal en un colegio con educación diferenciada (colegio mixto pero con separación en las clases) ha sido excelente ya que me he beneficiado de una educación diferenciada que abogaba por el crecimiento personal de chicos y chicas teniendo en cuenta que estos son, por definición, diferentes y a demás, al ser un colegio mixto, nos relacionábamos sin problemas entre chicos y chicas.

He ido a un colegio diferenciado en primario y la ESO, y no considero que me haya dificultado socializarme con personas del sexo opuesto


[^0]:    1 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
    2 Ley Orgánica de Calidad de la Educación

[^1]:    3 Ley Orgánica del Derecho a la Educación

