

7-12-1993

# A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Exemplar Selection and Influence on American and English Thirteen-Year-Olds

Sarah-Jane Dodd  
*The College at Brockport*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/pes\\_theses](https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/pes_theses)



Part of the [Health and Physical Education Commons](#)

---

## Repository Citation

Dodd, Sarah-Jane, "A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Exemplar Selection and Influence on American and English Thirteen-Year-Olds" (1993). *Kinesiology, Sport Studies, and Physical Education Master's Theses*. 55.  
[https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/pes\\_theses/55](https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/pes_theses/55)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Kinesiology, Sport Studies and Physical Education at Digital Commons @Brockport. It has been accepted for inclusion in Kinesiology, Sport Studies, and Physical Education Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @Brockport. For more information, please contact [kmyers@brockport.edu](mailto:kmyers@brockport.edu).

**A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Exemplar Selection and Influence on  
American and English Thirteen-Year-Olds**

**A Thesis Presented to the Department of Physical Education and  
Sport**

**State University of New York**

**College at Brockport**

**Brockport, New York**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science in Education (Physical Education)**

**Sarah-Jane Dodd**

**July 12, 1993**

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT

BROCKPORT, NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT

Title of Thesis: A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF  
EXEMPLAR SELECTION AND INFLUENCE  
ON AMERICAN AND ENGLISH THIRTEEN-  
YEAR-OLDS.

Author:

SARAH - JANE DODD

Read and Approved by:

Merrill T. V. [unclear]  
Thomas D. McIntyre

Submitted to the Department of Physical Education and Sport:

Accepted by the Department of Physical Education and Sport, State  
University of New York, College at Brockport, in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree Master of Science in Education  
(Physical Education).

Date:

8/25/93

Francis X. [unclear]  
Chairperson, Department of  
Physical Education and Sport

Completed Research in Health, Physical Education, Recreation and  
Dance  
State University of New York, College at Brockport  
Brockport, New York

---

(Institutional Representative)

DODD, S.J. A cross-cultural comparison of exemplar selection and influence on American and English thirteen-year-olds.  
M.S. in Ed. 1993; 65 pp. (M.J. Melnick).

The problem was to identify the public and private exemplars of American and English 13-year-olds, understand the reasons behind their choices and determine influence levels. 50 subjects were selected from an American junior high school; 50 more from an English comprehensive school of comparable size and location. Socio-economic similarity was tested using the Hollingshead two-factor index of social position (1957). Only subjects falling in class groups II or III ("middle class") were studied. The total sample included 18 English females, 18 English males, 18 American females and 19 American males. Data were gathered using a paper-and-pencil instrument. Results were categorized using Harris' (1987) schemas for exemplar domain and attributes. Finally, exemplar influence was determined using McEvoy and Erickson's (1981) five-point typology. Subjects in both countries more frequently selected male exemplars, and considered more people "admired" than "heroic." American subjects chose more private exemplars than the English.

Entertainment exemplars were selected most often by females, and sports exemplars by males. Influence level averaged 2.4 for English subjects and 2.7 for American subjects on a scale of 1-5 (with one representing least influence). Only male subjects registered the highest level of influence.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to those people who made this study possible, especially:

Dr. M.J. Melnick, whose guidance, support and patience was invaluable.

Dr. T.D. McIntyre, for his enthusiasm and advice.

Dr. J. Jensen, for helping to tie up all the loose ends;

The staff and pupils of Martha Brown Middle School (especially Don Hayden) and Cirencester Deer Park School (especially Finola Demmar) for their cooperation and assistance with my fieldwork;

My family, for their love, support and encouragement throughout my continuous studying and move overseas;

and Karen, for her endless patience with the typing, editing and evolution of this study.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. Introduction . . . . .	1
Hypothesis . . . . .	2
Delimitations . . . . .	3
Limitations . . . . .	4
II. Review of Literature . . . . .	6
Public versus private exemplar selection among adolescents . . . . .	6
Choice of exemplar domain. . . . .	7
Gender differences in exemplar selection . . . . .	9
Cultural differences. . . . .	9
Influence of exemplars . . . . .	11
III. Methodology . . . . .	14
IV. Results . . . . .	19
Private and public exemplars . . . . .	19
Male and female exemplars . . . . .	24
Public exemplar domain . . . . .	28
Admired exemplars' influence . . . . .	34
Admired versus heroic exemplars . . . . .	37
Exemplar attributes. . . . .	39
Attributes by domain. . . . .	41
Discussion of results. . . . .	43

V. Summary and Conclusions . . . . .	48
Summary of results . . . . .	50
Conclusions . . . . .	52
Recommendations for further study . . . . .	53
APPENDIX A . . . . .	54
APPENDIX B . . . . .	59
Bibliography . . . . .	62

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

Sociologists and psychologists have long recognized the turbulent stage of development known as adolescence. Between the ages of eleven and eighteen, young adults are involved in the serious business of self concept development. Renowned psychologist Erick Erickson believes "adolescence to be a time of role confusion in which individuals search for personal identities that fit their families and cultures" (quoted in Roediger, Rushton, Capaldi & Paris, 1984, p.305). To further complicate matters, youth are confronted with a myriad of potential role models, some positive, some negative, who are likely to influence their personality development and behavior. Which role models to imitate and draw inspiration from becomes problematic for impressionable youth.

Rather than merely identify the specific heroes and heroines adolescents prefer, this study sought to discover adolescent exemplars, that is, "people who are admired, considered heroic, or viewed as worthy of emulation" (Harris, 1986, p.96). Whereas a hero is admired for his or her courage, nobility, exploits, qualities or achievements, exemplars are admired for more general characteristics such as skill, success or physical beauty. Thus, while all heroes are exemplars, not all exemplars are heroic. The preference for doing a study on adolescent exemplars was based on the fact that the more recent research on adolescent role modeling has focused on exemplars rather than heroes or heroines (Harris, 1986, 1987). A further justification for studying adolescent

exemplars lies in the fact that some researchers believe that the hero is a disappearing phenomenon (Axhelm, 1979; Smith, 1973).

This study is cross-cultural in nature, which should help expand our understanding of the comparative effects of exemplars on adolescent youth. It is hoped that by examining the influence of exemplars cross-culturally, a better, more comprehensive understanding of adolescent identity formation will be obtained. Specifically, this study will compare and contrast exemplar selection and influence among American and English youth.

It may be argued that American and English youth are too similar for cross-cultural comparison purposes. However, America's development as a nation has been characterized by a continuing effort to separate itself from its English roots (Brown, Fishwick & Marsden, 1972). Furthermore, the two countries are very different in several ways. For example, the English have royalty, while the Americans have Hollywood. Klapp (1971) emphasized this point when he suggested that, "An American forms his identity from a different stock of models than that of a Swede, a Russian, a Mexican or even an Englishman" (p.19). Wecter (1941) also observed that American heroes and heroines differ from those of Europeans in that the former prefer hard work, enterprise and strength in the face of odds, while the latter prefer "originality or eloquence of tongue and pen" (p.485).

This study will also examine exemplars from both the public and private domains because often, those we admire are known only to us.

Harris (1986) explains, "When studying peoples' exemplars, however, it must also be remembered that a substantial number of them may be personal acquaintances" (p.96). The exemplar status of family members also holds the promise of shedding light on the stability of family units within different cultures.

The purpose of this study was threefold, namely, (1) to identify the public and private exemplars of American and English adolescents; (2) to discover the reasons why American and English adolescents choose the exemplars they do; and (3) to determine the level of influence exemplars have on the daily lives of American and English adolescents.

### Hypotheses

The hypotheses tested in the study were as follows:

1. In both England and America, thirteen-year-olds are more likely to name people whom they admire than people whom they find heroic.
2. English and American thirteen-year-olds are more likely to select exemplars from the entertainment domain.
3. Exemplars chosen by American and English thirteen-year-olds will not influence their attitudes and values.
4. Both English and American adolescent males and females are more inclined to select male public exemplars than female public exemplars.
5. English and American thirteen-year-olds will not differ in the gender choice of their private exemplars.
6. English and American thirteen-year-olds will not differ in the domain type, gender and level of influence of their public exemplar choices.

### Delimitations

The following delimitations helped to narrow the scope of the investigation:

1. Only American and English thirteen-year-olds were surveyed.
2. Both samples were drawn from a single school in the two countries.
3. No attempt was made to assign complex psychological interpretations to these data; the research methodology chosen did not allow this.
4. All cross-cultural comparisons were limited to the two countries; no attempt was made to generalize beyond these English and American adolescents.

### Limitations

The following limitations or deficiencies of the study are noted by the researcher. While they were of some concern, their magnitude was not great enough to outweigh the potential value of the study.

1. Survey questionnaire methodology only records what subjects are willing to share with the researcher. Despite guaranteeing the subjects' anonymity, there is always the chance that the answers given are either inhibited, false, or merely socially acceptable.
2. The use of the same questionnaire in a cross-cultural study is dangerous because the same word or phrase can be interpreted differently by respondents from different cultures.
3. The time of year that the questionnaires were administered in the two countries may have affected the results. For example, a political election may cause certain politicians to dominate the headlines, while the

Olympic games are likely to make national celebrities out of successful athletes. Likewise, the particular sport in season may influence the selection of athletic exemplars. Also, both surveys were completed in January, 1991, at which time "Operation Desert Storm" against Iraq was taking place. John Major had just succeeded Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister in England; and, American football and English soccer were the sports in season.

4. The researcher would have preferred larger samples than the ones employed, but logistical constraints ruled against including greater numbers.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Review of Literature**

Within the parameters of the study, different areas of literature were considered. However, research specifically related to the topic under investigation is at present limited both in quality and quantity.

This review of literature is organized into five major topics of concern, namely, (1) public versus private exemplar choices among adolescents; (2) choice of exemplar domain; (3) gender differences in exemplar choice; (4) cultural differences in exemplar choice; and (5) influence of exemplars on individuals.

#### Public Versus Private Exemplar Selection Among Adolescents

A major concern of this study was to determine whether adolescents are more inclined to select public over private exemplars. Technological advancements have created a worldwide communications network, making more information available to greater numbers of people. Thus, oral history, the telling and re-telling of heroic tales and deeds, is no longer necessary. In the absence of an heroic folklore, the broader term "exemplar" appears more appropriate in contemporary society. Fishwick illustrates this point when he states, "A generation which is better educated, more sophisticated, more traveled and more media exposed than any in history will demand and expect more than heroes" (quoted in Browne and Fishwick, 1983, p.7).

In her 1986 study, Harris cited numerous studies which have looked at the selection of individuals who are admired and/or heroic. In general,

those studies based on children and adolescents have found that 60 to 80 percent of the respondents chose public figures over personal acquaintances.

Harris also noted that subjects from the Southeastern United States had a greater tendency to choose from their family and community. This suggests that community and family "closeness" may affect exemplar selection, since Southerners have traditionally been characterized by strong kinship networks and close-knit community structures. However, it should be noted that although Southerners selected private exemplars more often than any other geographical group, Southerners, like all groups studied, select more public figures overall.

The research in this area indicates that although close family ties and community bonding affect the types of exemplars chosen, adolescents are still more likely to choose their exemplars from the public arena.

#### Choice of Exemplar Domain

The study was also concerned with the attractiveness of sporting figures as exemplar choices. The notion that exemplars can and do serve as role models has societal implications because as Hiller (1974) and Hearle (1975) point out, sports exemplars can serve as "viable role models who act as instruments of social integration" (quoted in Smith, 1976, p.55).

A possible reason for the choice of sportspersons as role models could have something to do with cultural values. That sportspersons are often considered positive role models is supported by the fact that "Three

out of every five (Americans) agree that often, athletes are the best role models a child can have" (Miller Lite Report, 1983, p.10). This finding has its genesis in the popular belief that sportspersons provide good moral leadership (Loy, McPherson and Kenyon, 1978). Popular wisdom has it that sports participation gives the individual the opportunity to test his or her skill, honesty, gamesmanship, motivation, and ability to learn the rules that are operative in society at large.

Sporting events continue to increase in popularity, benefitting from the extensive economic support provided by the media. Increased media coverage may also increase the number of sportspersons selected as exemplars, since the context of sport is very conducive to displays of courage and personal excellence. As far back as the Greeks, individuals who displayed physical prowess over human or beast were granted considerable status and recognition.

In his 1976 study, Smith concluded that "the younger the person the more likely it is that they will have sports heroes" (quoted in Yiannakis, McIntyre, Melnick and Hart, 1979, p.62). Further, in a study of heroes and heroines among American adolescents, Balswick and Ingoldsby (1982) found that sports heroes were selected more often than any other type of hero.

The literature in this area suggests two things. First, sportspersons are ideally suited to be exemplars, and second, children and adolescents are much more likely to choose sportspersons for their exemplars.

### Gender Differences In Exemplar Choice

An important variable in exemplar choice is gender. Because of the far greater predominance of males in public life, it is not surprising that male sportspersons are frequently the exemplar of choice.

Balswick and Ingoldsby (1982) found that 77 percent of females and 79 percent of males selected male heroes as opposed to female heroines. This finding was supported by Harris and Eitzen (1978), who reported that 89 percent of the general public say that their favorite athlete is male. Further, Blankenbaker and Hook (1988) investigated the relationship between sports hero choice and the age, sex and race of their subjects. They found that not a single male subject named a sportswoman as his favorite public figure.

The only area where gender does not affect choice is with respect to personal idols. Balswick and Ingoldsby (1982) found that when personal or private idols are looked at, the idol chosen is just as likely to be a female. In a review of the literature, Harris (1986) found that females are more likely than males to select personal acquaintances as exemplars. Of the female exemplars chosen, many more were from the personal or private domain.

### Cultural Differences

While the researcher is unaware of any cross-cultural studies of exemplar selection, some researchers have made reference to the subject. Research suggests that cultural differences not only exist, but can provide important insight into cultural values. Allison and Duda

(1990) have recognized the potential value of cross-cultural analysis and urge scholars to consider comparative work. To quote these two researchers, "The potential theoretical and practical benefits of cross-cultural analyses in sport and exercise psychology are innumerable" (p.127).

By identifying societal exemplars and the reasons they are chosen, it may be possible to learn more about a society's normative and value structures. Klapp (1971) makes this point when he writes, "Hero types state positive norms of the ethos ... though some types are universal, the system provides an important key to national character and structural differences among societies" (p.19). Klapp goes on to observe that "Hero worship in America expresses our characteristic values. It reveals not only the traits we admire but also our fields of interest" (p.82).

In Smith's 1976 study of hero worship in Canada, the majority of exemplars chosen were ice hockey players. Males were more likely to select non-Canadians than females. Smith provides two possible explanations for these findings. First, there may well be a lack of male exemplars outside of the ice hockey arena, and second, men are more likely to watch televised sports events which, in turn, expose them to a greater variety of sportspersons outside the Canadian border.

A 1970 study by Jackson found that British teenagers preferred persons from the entertainment world rather than from politics. Balswick and Ingoldsby (1982) duplicated these results with American adolescents.

However, no researcher has attempted to compare exemplar choices from a cross-cultural perspective.

Differences in exemplar selection, both public and private, are evident among different geographical locations within the United States. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that a cross-cultural study of English and American youth might also yield important differences in exemplar selection.

### Influence of Exemplars

A person who is admired has the potential to influence the admirer in a variety of ways including ideas, personality, behavior and dress. The Miller-Lite report (1983) highlighted this potential in a study of fan reaction to negative outcomes. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents said that they sometimes feel disappointed, 66 percent said they feel depressed, and 38 percent said they feel as if "they have experienced a personal loss" (p.139).

Individuals may also live vicariously through the successes of their exemplars. By imitating their exemplars, their personal development and identity formation may also be influenced in the process. According to Smith (1976), "Hero worship is a natural part of the socialization process to the extent that it raises some people's aspiration levels and allows people to experiment with various identities during the formative years" (p.56).

One of the more popular theories offered to explain exemplar influence revolves around the idea of fantasy. It has been proposed that

individuals admire people who have achieved something valuable in a personal sense. As a result, they are provided with the inspiration to aspire for greater things themselves. Browne and Fishwick (1983) emphasize this point when they state, "Heroes serve as models and leaders because they reflect the projection of the consensus of dreams, fantasies, self-evaluations and needs of individuals and of society itself" (p.91).

In trying to further determine the degree of influence that heroes and heroines have, McEvoy and Erickson (1981) developed a five point typology of influence. Their classification system is as follows:

- Level 1 - Simple admiration: Hold in esteem because of one or more perceived qualities.
- Level II - Identification with heroes: Identifies with success and failure but does not emulate their behavior.
- Level III - Positive criterion sources for appraisal and beliefs: Evaluates self and others based on hero or heroine's abilities and beliefs, but does not emulate behavior.
- Level IV - Positive emulation: Individuals expend time and energy in an attempt to act like their heroes and heroines.
- Level V - Advocacy; personal sacrifice: Joins groups and gathers icons related to their heroes and heroines, and is prepared to make personal sacrifices to further their cause.

The researcher is unaware of any attempt to apply this typology in an empirical sense. McEvoy and Erickson suggest that "The reference idol

may help us individually and collectively to clarify our values and give direction to our actions and interactions, as well as help us to promote social change and social integration" (p.120).

Most studies to date have recognized the influence of exemplars and have even offered possible explanations for their influence. However, no studies have attempted to quantify the extent of exemplar influence on the admirer.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methodology**

The major purpose of this study was to compare and contrast the degree of influence of exemplars on American and English thirteen-year-olds. Survey methodology was used to test the hypotheses under consideration. Using paper-and-pencil instruments developed by Smith (1976) and Harris (1987) as starting points, a survey questionnaire was developed.

A pilot study was first conducted at a suburban junior high school located in the Northeastern United States. The survey instrument was administered to 18 thirteen-year-olds (nine boys and nine girls). These questionnaire results were then analyzed, and the instrument revised where appropriate. For example, the pilot study indicated that more explicit language and clearer wording were needed for several items. In addition, the open-ended narrative used to determine exemplars' influence on the subject proved to be very difficult to interpret. Therefore, major changes were made in this particular section of the instrument.

Section I of the survey questionnaire dealt with demographics. It included questions about the subject's age, sex, nationality, parents' occupations and formal education. No changes were made because the questions were well understood. These data were used to quantify the subject's socioeconomic status according to the Hollingshead Two-Factor Index of Social Position (1957).

Only minor changes were necessary in Section II, which sought to identify the subject's private and public exemplars - people the subject admired or considered heroic - and the reasons for the subject's choice. Subjects were asked to name two persons they admired in the public realm and two they admired in the private realm. The pilot study asked why the person named was a hero or heroine and what it was that made the exemplar admirable. Since the answers given overlapped, the second question was omitted.

Section III was where the greatest number of changes were required. Subjects were asked to identify their most important hero or heroine. The pilot study then asked the subject to describe the person's influence. However, the responses given were vague and poorly written. It was not possible to use these data to accurately identify the influence level using the McEvoy and Erickson 5-point typology (1981).

It was decided that the question should remain, but that it should be preceded by seven "yes" or "no" choices in order to more accurately assess the level of exemplar influence. See Appendix A for the final, revised version of the questionnaire.

Having constructed and successfully pilot-tested the survey instrument, it was now necessary to select student samples for the study. Convenience sampling was used to select the two schools; both were comparable in terms of size, location and socioeconomic status. Random samples of 50 thirteen-year-olds, stratified by gender, were selected from each school. To choose these subjects, the researcher identified a

survey population at each school by number and then drew 25 male and female students at random. The questionnaire was ultimately administered to 50 British children (25 male and 25 female) and 50 American children (25 male and 25 female).

The American school chosen was a junior high school, grades six, seven and eight; the total school population was approximately 850. It was located in a small community on the east side of Rochester, a city of 375,000 inhabitants.

The English school chosen was a comprehensive school (approximately 1,200 students), with students ranging in age from eleven to eighteen. It is located about 20 miles from Cheltenham, a city similar in size to Rochester.

The questionnaires were handed out during home room or tutorial. The instructions were read aloud by the teacher in charge. The purpose of the study was explained and the confidentiality of the results assured. The subjects were then instructed to answer the questions at their own speed. In an effort to ensure individual work, the subjects were seated apart and asked to remain silent throughout the session. Once completed, the students were asked to re-read their answers and make whatever changes they deemed appropriate.

The Hollingshead Two-Factor Index of Social Position was used in order to quantify the subject's social class. The Index assumes that occupation and formal education best reflect the skill, power, knowledge and cultural tastes of an individual. The Index differentiates occupations

into seven categories, with Category I representing the most prestige and requiring the most training and Category 7 requiring the least training and having the least prestige. Education is similarly divided into seven categories, with Category 1 representing graduate, professional training and Category 7 representing less than seven years of formal schooling. The two factors are then weighted, the weights determined by multiple correlation techniques (Hollingshead, 1957). Education is given a weight of four and occupation a weight of seven. The category or scale score for education is multiplied by four; the category or scale score for occupation multiplied by seven; the two products are summed. The resulting index of social position score is then assigned to one of five social class groups. For the purposes of the study, social class groups II (social position score = 18-27) and III (social position score = 28-43) were considered "middle class."

The analysis described above resulted in the elimination of some subjects because of insufficient or incomplete data. A total of 18 English males, 18 English females, 18 American females, and 19 American males were retained for the study. All subjects were categorized "middle class."

The exemplars selected were then categorized according to profession: sport, entertainment, political, military and other (Harris 1987). Attributes of chosen exemplars were also categorized using Harris' (1987) five-category schema: prosocial, personal competence, celebrity, negative and miscellaneous characteristics. Personal and public

exemplar choices were also noted, as well as gender-exemplar choice interactions.

Finally, exemplar influence was determined using McEvoy and Erickson's 5-point typology. The exemplars' influence ranged from simple admiration (level 1) to self-sacrifice (level 5).

The statistical analysis of the data was descriptive in nature. Means and percentages were calculated. Graphs and tables were constructed to better illustrate the findings. Specifically, the data were analyzed in the following sequential manner.

1. Private and public exemplars.
2. Male and female exemplars.
3. Public exemplar domain.
4. Exemplar influence.
5. Exemplars versus heroes/heroines.
6. Exemplar attributes.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Results**

Chapter IV presents the results of the study. Interpretations and implications of the findings will be considered in the discussion section and conclusions will follow in CHAPTER V, Summary and Conclusions.

Having eliminated those subjects who did not fall into either class II or III ("the middle classes") of the Hollingshead Two-Factor Index of Social Position, the final number of subjects totaled 73. They were distributed as follows: 19 American males, 18 American females, 18 English males and 18 English females.

For the presentation of the findings, the data have been organized into six sub-sections. The findings will be presented in the following sequence: (1) American results, (2) English results and (3) comparison of American and English results.

#### **Private and Public Exemplars**

The raw data were analyzed to determine the selection frequency of heroic and admired exemplars from the private and public domains.

#### **American Findings**

Table 1 shows the number of public and private exemplars named as admired and heroic. Data are presented as a percentage of possible responses, i.e., the number of possible responses for the male and female sub-groups were 38 and 36, respectively (based on the number of choices per subject).

Table 1. Public and Private Exemplars Named as Admired or Heroic by the American Subjects

**Exemplar Choice**

Sex	Public admired	Public heroic	Private admired	Private heroic
Female (%)	22.2	2.8	55.6	22.2
(N)	8	1	20	8
Male (%)	81.6	18.4	44.7	2.6
(N)	31	7	17	1
Total (%)	52.7	10.8	50	12.2
Sample (N)	39	8	37	9

**Note:**

% = number of exemplars chosen by category divided by total number of all exemplars possible (36, 38, and 74, respectively).

N = number of exemplars chosen.

Public and private exemplars do not add up to 100 percent in all columns, as some subjects did not select an exemplar for a particular category.

For female subjects, the most frequently chosen exemplar was private admired; 20 or 55.6% of all their choices fell into this category.

Public admired and private heroic exemplars were equally represented among their choices (8 chosen in each category). Of the four categories, public heroic exemplars were chosen least often.

The American males clearly favored public admired exemplars (31, or 81.6% of all their choices). Private admired was the second most popular choice with 17 (44.7%) of the selections. Private heroic was least often chosen (1 selection, or 2.6%).

It is clear that exemplar selections varied according to gender. The females favored private admired, while the males preferred public admired. In terms of the total American sample, Public and private admired exemplars accounted for 52.7% and 50% of the choices, respectively. Public and private heroic selections accounted for 12.2% and 10.8% of the choices, respectively.

### English Findings

The results from the English subjects are presented in Table 2. The table shows the number of public and private exemplars named as admired or heroic as a percent of possible responses (a total of 36 each for female and male subjects).

The English females selected more than twice as many exemplars from public admired (26 or 72.2%) than from any other category. The private admired category was next with 11 selections (30.6%), followed by public heroic (8 or 22.2%). They did not choose any exemplars from the private heroic category.

Table 2. Public and Private Exemplars Named as Admired or Heroic by the English Subjects

Sex	Exemplar choice			
	Public admired	Public heroic	Private admired	Private heroic
Female (%)	72.2	22.2	30.6	0
(N)	26	8	11	0
Male (%)	72.2	30.6	47.2	8.3
(N)	26	11	17	3
Total (%)	72.2	26.4	38.9	4.2
Sample (N)	52	19	28	3

Note:

% = number of exemplars chosen by category divided by total number of all exemplars possible (36, 36, and 72, respectively).

N = number of exemplars chosen.

Public and private exemplars do not add up to 100 percent in all columns, as some subjects did not select an exemplar for a particular category.

The English males agreed with the English females, and selected the same number of exemplars from the public admired category (26 or 72.2%). But, they were more likely than their female counterparts to

select from the private admired (17 or 47.2%), public heroic (11 or 30.6%) and private heroic (3 or 8.3%) categories.

### Comparison of American and English Subjects

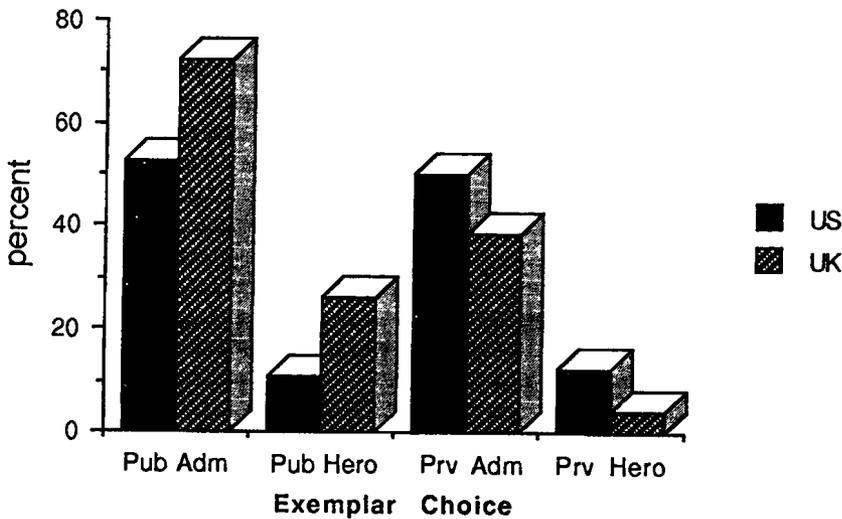


Figure 1: A comparison of the percent of public and private exemplars named as admired or heroic by the American and English samples.

Figure 1 shows that English thirteen year-olds were more likely to name exemplars and heroes from the public realm than American thirteen year-olds. American subjects were more likely to select exemplars and heroes from the private realm than their English counterparts. However, further analysis by gender revealed that it was the American females who selected many more from the private realm; the choices made by the American males were very similar to the English choices with respect to the public realm.

### Male and Female Exemplars

The second major analysis focused on the gender of the exemplar chosen.

#### American Findings

Table 3 shows the American results by exemplar's gender.

Table 3. Exemplar Selection by Gender for the American Subjects.

Sex	male admired	female admired	male heroic	female heroic
Female (%)	39.3	60.7	55.6	44.4
Male (%)	83.3	16.7	100	0
Total Sample (%)	67.1	32.9	76.5	23.5

American females selected more female (60.7%) than male (39.3%) admired exemplars but more heroes (55.6%) than heroines (44.4%).

American males clearly favored males for their admired exemplars and heroes. They selected 83.3% male admired exemplars and 100% male heroes.

For gender selection in the public and private realms, Table 4 indicates that American females selected more males than females as both admired (75% versus 25%) and heroic (100%) in the public realm. But, American females chose more females than males for private

admired (75% versus 25%), and selected an equal number of males and females for private heroic (50% versus 50%).

The American males selected more males than females for each category. For American males, 35.3% of their private admired were females, but only 6.4% of their public admired were females. They named no heroines in the public or private realms.

Table 4. Public and Private Selections by Gender for the American Subjects.

**Exemplar Choice**

Sex	Public Male	Public Female	Private Male	Private Female
<b>Females</b>				
admired	75.0	25.0	25.0	75.0
heroic	100.0	0.0	50.0	50.0
<b>Males</b>				
admired	93.5	6.4	64.7	35.3
heroic	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
<b>Total Sample</b>				
admired	89.7	10.2	43.2	56.8
heroic	100.0	0.0	55.6	44.4

### English Findings

The English results for exemplar selection by gender are presented in Table 5. For English females, 64.9% of their admired exemplars and 75% of their heroes were males. For English males, 79.1% of their admired exemplars were males and 78.6% of their heroes were also males.

When the English data are analyzed by gender for the public and private domains, we find that the females picked more males in the public arena (76.9% exemplars and 75% heroes). In the private realm, they favored female exemplars and named an equal number of heroes and heroines. See Table 6.

The males selected more males than females for each category. 76.9% of their admired exemplars and 81.8% of their heroes were males from the public sector. 82.4% of their admired choices were males and 66.7% of their heroes were males from the private sector.

Table 5. Exemplar Selection by Gender for the English Subjects.

Sex	Exemplar Choice			
	Male admired	Female admired	Male heroic	Female heroic
Female (%)	64.9	35.1	75.0	25.0
Male (%)	79.1	20.9	78.6	21.4
Total				
Sample (%)	72.5	27.5	77.3	22.7

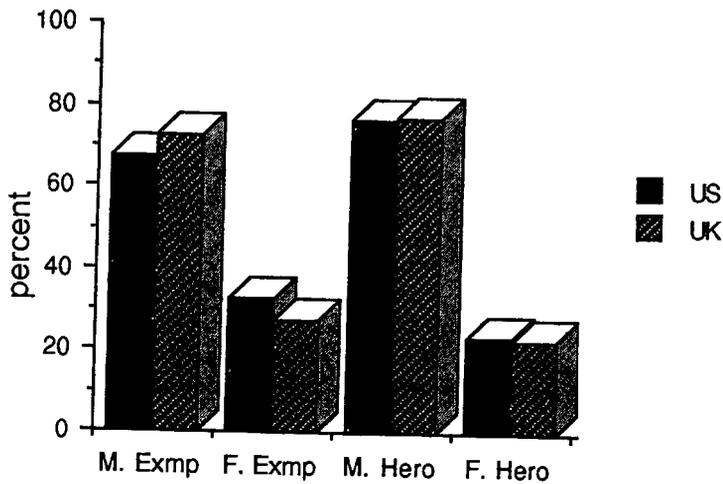
Table 6. Public and Private Selections by Gender for the English Subjects.

Sex	Exemplar Choice			
	Public Male	Public Female	Private Male	Private Female
<b>Females</b>				
admired	76.9	23.1	36.4	63.6
heroic	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Males</b>				
admired	76.9	23.1	82.4	17.6
heroic	81.8	18.2	66.7	33.3
<b>Total</b>				
admired	76.9	23.1	52.9	47.1
heroic	78.9	21.1	66.7	33.3

### Comparison of American and English Subjects

While the two sets of data are very similar, some differences are apparent. American females were more likely to select female exemplars than English females. English males were more likely to select female exemplars and heroines than American males.

The gender selection data in the public and private realms were very similar. The males selected more males for every category, while the females selected more males in the public sector. For the private realm, females selected more same sex admired exemplars than the males. The results for both the English and American samples are compared in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Comparison of Exemplar's Gender by American and English Subjects.

### Public Exemplar Domain

The data were then analyzed according to the exemplar's domain.

Special attention was given to the selection of sportspersons as exemplars.

### American Findings

Table 7 shows the domains of the exemplars selected by the American subjects. Table 8 presents the domains of those exemplars selected as heroic.

Table 7. Admired Exemplar choice by Domain for the American Subjects

<b>Admired Exemplars Domain</b>					
Subject	Military (%)	Political (%)	Entertainment (%)	Sport (%)	Other (%)
Female	12.5	0.0	75.0	12.5	0.0
Male	6.5	3.2	25.8	64.5	0.0
Total Sample	7.7	2.6	35.9	53.8	0.0

Table 8. Heroic Choice by Domain for the American Subjects

<b>Heroic Exemplars Domain</b>					
Subject	Military (%)	Political (%)	Entertainment (%)	Sport (%)	Other (%)
Female	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
Male	12.5	0.0	25.0	62.5	0.0
Total Sample	20.0	0.0	30.0	50.0	0.0

Although admired and heroic choices from sport were clearly favored by the American male subjects (64.5% and 62.5%), exemplars from the entertainment world were the clear favorites among American females (75%). Also, American females selected the same number of sport and military exemplars (12.5%). For heroic exemplars, females selected 50% from the military and 50% from the entertainment world. Interestingly,

none of the female heroic choices came from the sport domain. Finally, no exemplars, either admired or heroic, were chosen from the political domain.

American males selected 64.5% of their exemplars from sport, 25.8% from entertainment, 6.5% from military and 3.2% from politics. For their heroic choices, 62.5% came from sport, 25% from entertainment and 12.5% from military. No male selected a hero from the political domain.

### English Findings

The English exemplar and heroic choices by domain are presented in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9. Admired exemplar choice by Domain for the English Subjects

Admired Domain	Military (%)	Political (%)	Entertainment (%)	Sport (%)	Other (%)
Female	0.0	7.7	84.6	3.8	3.8
Male	0.0	19.2	19.2	53.8	7.7
Total Sample	0.0	13.5	51.9	28.8	5.8

Table 10. Heroic Exemplar Choice by Domain for the English Subjects

Heroic Domain	Military (%)	Political (%)	Entertainment (%)	Sport (%)	Other (%)
Female	0.0	0.0	87.5	12.5	0.0
Male	0.0	0.0	27.3	63.6	9.1
Total Sample	0.0	0.0	52.6	42.1	5.3

Tables 9 and 10 show that entertainment was the most popular exemplar category for the total English sample, accounting for 51.9% of the admired selections and 52.6% of the heroic selections. Approximately 85% of the exemplars admired by English females came from this category, as well as 87.5% of the exemplars deemed heroic. For the admired selections, the political domain was second in popularity with 7.7%, although no political figures were considered heroic. Sport and miscellaneous produced the same percentage of admired exemplars (3.8%), but sport was the only other category in which heroic choices were made (21.5%).

English males selected more admired and heroic exemplars from the sport domain (53.8% and 63.6%, respectively). For heroes, entertainment was second (27.3%), but for admired exemplars, it tied with political (each had 19.2%). Miscellaneous was last, with just 7.7% admired choices and

9.1 % heroic choices. The military domain was not selected for admired or heroic, and no political heroes were named.

### Comparison of American and English Subjects

Male subjects from both countries were more likely to select their admired and heroic exemplars from the sport domain, while females were more likely to choose from the entertainment domain. Although some admired exemplars from the political domain were selected, not a single subject from either country selected a political hero. Despite the similarities, some obvious differences were also evident.

First, while some American subjects chose exemplars from the military domain, English subjects did not choose a single military exemplar. Second, combined male and female responses for each country showed that American subjects were more likely to select from the sport domain and English subjects from the entertainment domain. See Figure 3.

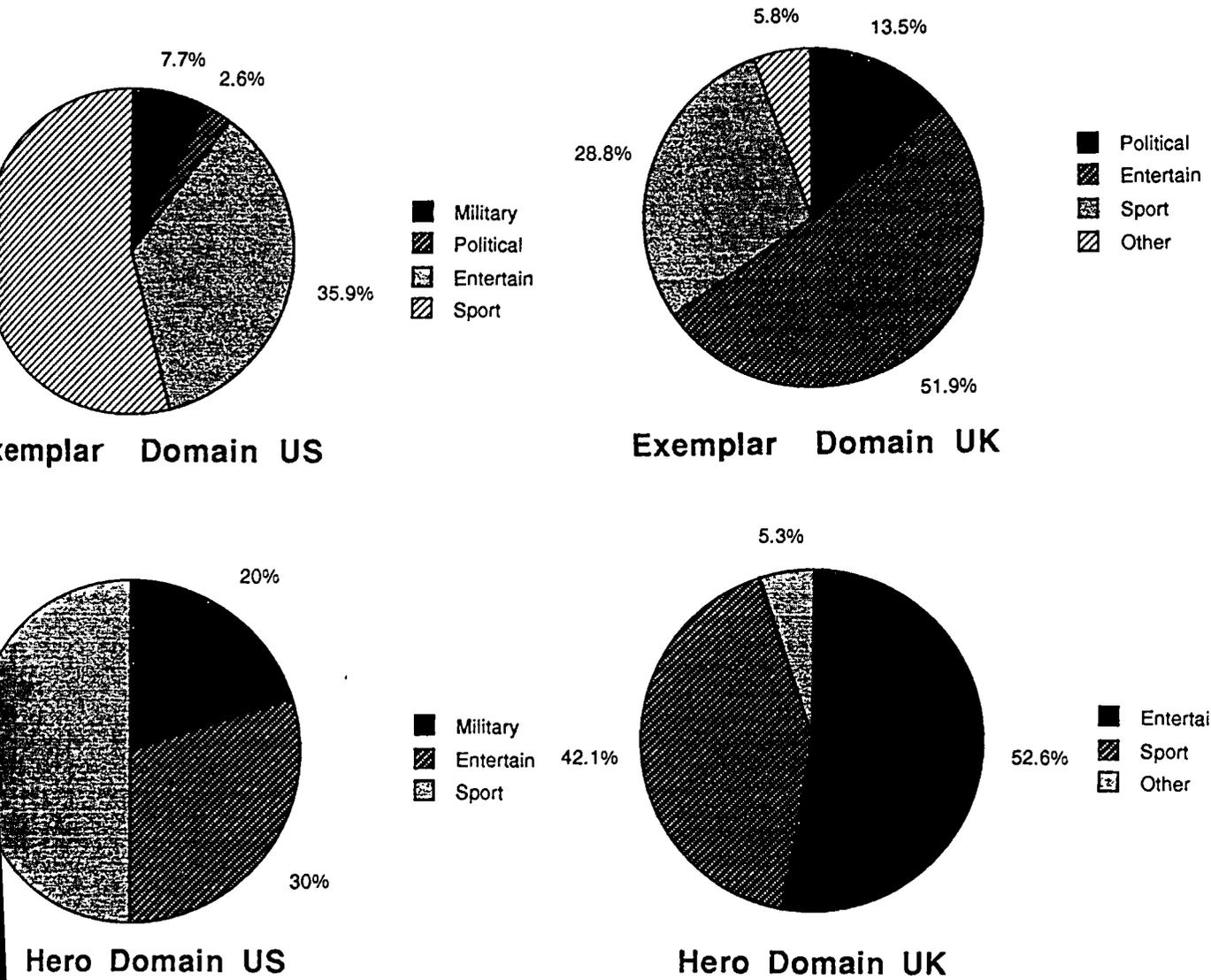


Figure 3: Admired and heroic exemplar choices by domain for American and English Subjects

### Admired Exemplar's Influence

The data were analyzed for exemplar influence using McEvoy and Erickson's (1981) typology. Recall that level I represents the lowest level of influence (simple admiration) and level V represents the highest level of influence (advocacy; personal sacrifice). Levels II, III and IV represent identification, source for appraisal and beliefs, and positive emulation, respectively.

#### American Findings

Table 11. Influence of Exemplars chosen by the American Subjects

Influence level	I (%)	II (%)	III (%)	IV (%)	V (%)
Females	10.0	70.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
Males	0.0	27.3	36.4	18.2	18.2
Total Sample	4.8	47.6	28.6	9.5	9.5

Note: The levels for Table 11 are labeled as follows:

Level I - Simple admiration

Level II - Identification

Level III - Positive criterion sources for appraisal and beliefs

Level IV - Positive emulation

Level V - Advocacy; personal sacrifice

Table 11 presents the influence data for the admired exemplar selections by the American subjects. American female choices did not extend beyond level III, i.e., 10% from level I, 70% from level II and 20% from level III. In contrast, the admired exemplars chosen by American males had more influence. For the males, 36.4% of their exemplars exerted level III influence, and 27.3% exerted level II influence. 18.2% of their choices were influential at both levels IV and V.

### English Findings

Table 12. Influence of Exemplars Chosen by the English Subjects

Influence Level	I (%)	II (%)	III (%)	IV (%)	V (%)
Female	12.5	0.0	75.0	12.5	0.0
Male	11.8	64.7	17.6	0.0	5.9
Total Sample	12.0	44.0	36.0	4.0	4.0

Note: The levels for Table 12 are labeled as follows:

Level I - Simple admiration

Level II - Identification

Level III - Positive criterion sources for appraisal and beliefs

Level IV - Positive emulation

Level V - Advocacy; personal sacrifice

The influence of the exemplar choices made by the English subjects are shown in Table 12.

For the English females, 75% of their choices were influential at level III. 12.5% of their choices were influential at both levels I and IV. No English female's exemplar choice was influential at levels II or V. For English males, 64.7% of their choices were influential at level II. Just 5.9% of their choices were influential at level V. Of the remaining choices, 17.6% were influential at level III and 11.8% at level I.

#### Comparison of English and American Findings

For both countries, level II influence was most frequently selected followed by level III. The English subjects indicated more level I influence, while the Americans were more influenced at levels IV and V. It is interesting to note that only male subjects chose the highest level of influence, level V. Although it is not clear whether McEvoy and Erickson (1981) are suggesting their typology can be treated as interval data, it is instructive to do so. For example, with both the English and American samples, the average level of influence fell between level II (identification) and level III (positive criterion sources for appraisal and beliefs). A more detailed analysis shows that American subjects were influenced at an average level of 2.7, while English subjects were influenced at an average level of 2.4 (see calculation in appendix B).

### Admired Versus Heroic Exemplars

The data were analyzed to determine whether the subjects were more inclined to name admired or heroic exemplars. Table 13 presents the results for all subjects.

Table 13. Exemplars Named as Admired and Heroic by American and English Subjects

Subject	Admired (%)	Heroic (%)
American Females	75.7	24.3
American Males	85.7	14.3
American Average	80.7	19.3
English Female	82.2	17.8
English Male	75.4	24.6
English Average	78.8	21.2

#### American Findings

American females chose more admired (75.7%) than heroic (24.3%) exemplars. For American males, 85.7% of their exemplar choices were admired exemplars, compared to 14.3% which were heroic.

#### English Findings

Both English females (82.2%) and males (75.4%) selected more admired than heroic exemplars.

### Comparison of English and American Subjects

Figure 4 illustrates the same pattern for both samples - namely, exemplars were more often considered admired than heroic. It is interesting to note that American males named a greater percentage of admired exemplars than American females, while English females chose more admired exemplars than English males.

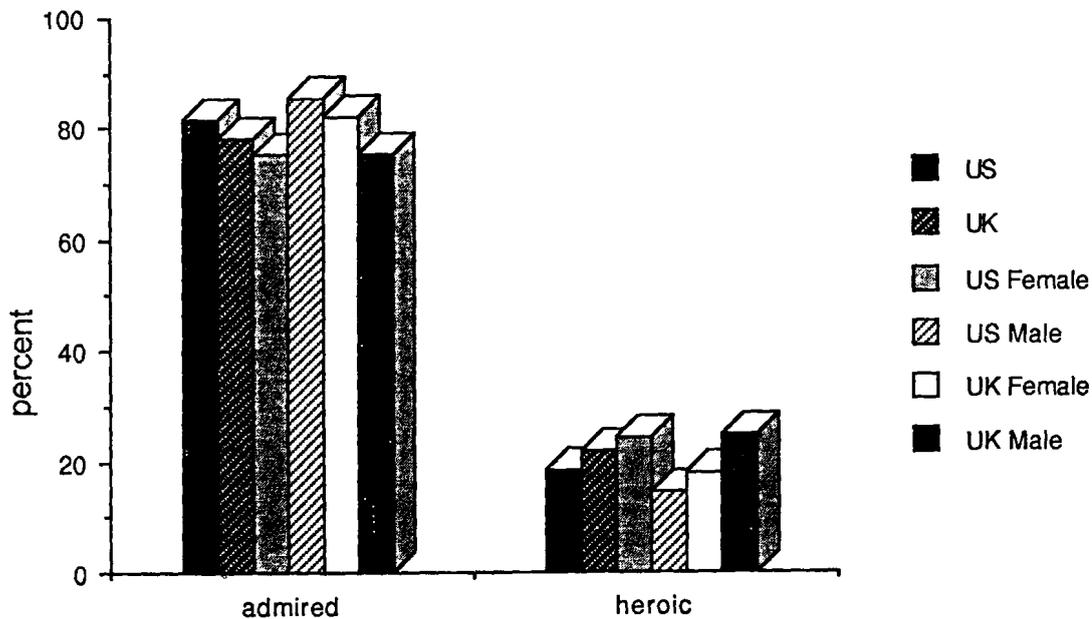


Figure 4. Comparison of admired and heroic exemplars by American and English subjects.

### Exemplar Attributes

The final area of analysis looked at the specific attributes of the exemplars chosen. Harris' (1987) attribute schema was used for analysis.

#### American Findings

Table 14 reveals the attributes of the exemplars chosen. American females divided their selections between two categories: celebrity and personal competence, each of which received 50% of the responses.

American males chose their exemplars for personal competence reasons (62.5%), prosocial qualities (25%) and celebrity characteristics (12.5%).

Table 14. Attributes of Exemplars Chosen by American Subjects

Attributes	Prosocial (%)	Personal Competence (%)	Celebrity (%)	Miscellaneous (%)
Females	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0
Males	25.0	62.5	12.5	0.0
Total Sample	20.0	60.0	20.0	0.0

Note. Attributes are as follows:

Prosocial - Helpful to society and others

Personal Competence - Ability or skill in particular actions

Celebrity - Personal beauty or fame

Miscellaneous - Other

### English Findings

Table 15 presents the same analysis for the English subjects.

Prosocial and celebrity attributes were popular choices for the English females (42.9% each), personal competence received the remaining choices (14.3%). For English males, 63.6% of their selections were made for personal competence reasons. Celebrity traits were cited for 27.3% of their selections, and prosocial characteristics figured in the selection of 9% of their exemplars.

Table 15. Attributes of Exemplars Chosen by English Subjects

Attributes	Prosocial (%)	Personal Competence (%)	Celebrity (%)	Miscellaneous (%)
Female	42.9	14.3	42.9	0.0
Male	9.0	63.6	27.3	0.0
Total sample	22.2	44.4	33.3	0.0

Note. Attributes are as follows:

Prosocial - Helpful to society and others

Personal competence - Ability or skill in particular actions

Celebrity - Personal beauty or fame

Miscellaneous - Other

### Comparison of American and English Findings

Overall, personal competence characteristics were the most popular reason for choosing an exemplar by subjects in both countries. The English subjects cited celebrity reasons next (33.3%), while the Americans selections equally favored both prosocial and celebrity reasons (20% each). Generally speaking, prosocial reasons did not figure prominently in the selection of exemplars in either country. Closer analysis indicated that males from both countries differed only slightly (0.5%) in their preference for personal competence characteristics. The results for the females were quite different: American females showed a far greater preference for personal competence attributes, while English females placed far more emphasis on prosocial attributes. Both samples placed similar importance on celebrity traits.

### Attributes by Domain

Table 16 reveals that 84.6% of the sport exemplars selected by both samples were selected for personal competence reasons. Only 8.3% of the exemplars chosen from the entertainment domain were chosen for the same reason.

In the private realm, family members who were selected as exemplars were chosen for prosocial reasons, while non-family exemplars were chosen for personal competence and celebrity reasons. See Table 17.

Table 16. Attributes of Exemplars Chosen by Domain for the Two Samples Combined

Attribute	Prosocial (%)	Personal Competence (%)	Celebrity (%)	Miscellaneous (%)
Domain:				
Military	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Political	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Entertainment	41.6	8.3	50.0	0.0
Sport	7.7	84.6	7.7	0.0

Table 17. Attributes of Family and Non-Family Exemplars for the Two Samples Combined

Attribute	Prosocial (%)	Personal Competence (%)	Celebrity (%)	Miscellaneous (%)
Family	60.0	26.7	13.3	0.0
Non-Family	0.0	57.1	42.9	0.0

### Discussion of Results

The findings of the study generally support the research literature on the subject. In terms of public versus private exemplar choices, the research suggests that public exemplars are more often named, but that members of close knit communities have a greater tendency to name exemplars from the private domain. These results indicate that while American females more often selected private exemplars, American males and English subjects (both male and female) selected their exemplars more often from the public arena. This finding supports work by Harris (1986) who found that females are more likely to select personal acquaintances than males. Females tend to have fewer friends than males, but are more likely to share their deepest and most private thoughts and feelings with those they feel close to. Thus, they may develop more admiration for individuals in their private lives.

As a result of the predominance of male public role models, it was expected that more male than female exemplars would be selected (Balswick & Ingoldsby, 1982; Harris & Eitzen 1978). The results of the study clearly support this supposition. It was also expected that females would name more female exemplars than males (Blankenbauer & Hook 1988), and, in fact, not one American male chose a female as an heroic exemplar. English males, however, showed a greater tendency to name female exemplars than American males. Balswick and Ingoldsby (1982) have suggested that the only area where the exemplar's gender does not matter is in the selection of personal exemplars. The results of the study

support this notion for females but not males. The males were twice as likely to prefer private male exemplars to female ones.

Exemplar domain was of particular interest in the present study, with special attention given to sport domain choices. Increased global media coverage has greatly increased the availability of sport role models. Balswick and Ingoldsby (1982) found that sport exemplars were selected more often than any other group, and Smith (1976) found that the younger the subject, the greater the likelihood a sports hero would be selected.

Overall, the American subjects selected more exemplars from the sport domain than any other. Interestingly, the English selected more exemplars from the entertainment domain. This finding supports research by Jackson (1970) who found that British teenagers were very much attracted to the entertainment world. With respect to gender differences, we find that both English and American females named entertainment exemplars most often, while males from both countries preferred exemplars from sport. Thus, the observed differences related more to gender than culture.

A possible explanation for the above finding may lie in adolescent development, which typically occurs later in males. In terms of social and emotional maturity, males develop later than females, which may explain the former's preference for sport exemplars. It also may have to do with the fact that male gender role socialization places a much higher value on sport.

Subjects' age may have accounted for the fact that no political heroes were cited, although political exemplars were named by all groups except American females. A grasp of the complexities of politics is not always developed by age 13. Of further interest was the fact that while English subjects did not name anyone from the military domain, American males and females named both admired and heroic military exemplars. However, the American results may have been influenced by the fact that the questionnaire was administered during the 1991 Persian Gulf War between the United States and Iraq. The frequent and dramatic presentation of the war by the American mass media probably influenced the exemplar choices of the American subjects.

The influence level of the exemplars named was also of interest because of its possible impact on attitudes and behaviors. If exemplars have a high degree of influence on adolescents and teenagers, educators can use this information to structure learning situations accordingly. In addition, teaching concepts may be more easily understood if presented in ways which allow subjects to associate the information with preferred exemplar choices.

The cross-cultural comparison yielded few differences; however, American exemplar choices were generally more influential. Subject choices in both countries favored influence level II, which is defined as identification (i.e., the subject empathizes with their success or failure but does not behave like them). This is emphasized by the average influence levels for the two countries, at 2.7 for the American subjects and 2.4 for

the English subjects. This also suggests that exemplars may have a role to play in classroom teaching situations; in that arena, concepts can be explained and demonstrated through the use of gender appropriate exemplars.

Interestingly, only male exemplar choices were influential at level V, the highest level of influence (advocacy and personal sacrifice). This relates back to adolescent development and the possibility that exemplar influence is strongest among boys.

The study also established the fact that exemplars are more often admired than thought heroic. The literature suggests that the hero is becoming extinct because of the global media's preoccupation with exposing the foibles and character flaws of the celebrity icons they help create. The transient exemplar is more the rule than the exception today. Harris (1986, 1987) introduced the term "exemplar" to represent the modern day hero whom she saw as someone more admired than heroic. In order to avoid semantic confusion, a distinction was made in the study between "admired" and "heroic" exemplars. As expected, subjects were much more inclined to name exemplars whom they admired but were generally reluctant to consider them heroic.

A final area of interest was exemplar attributes, i.e., the reasons given for selecting a particular exemplar. Sportspersons were far more likely to be named for reasons of skill and ability, while entertainers were selected for their physical beauty or personal "niceness". Not surprisingly, those selected from the military domain were picked for their competence

and skill. Subjects also distinguished between the attributes of family and non-family exemplars. Family members were selected predominantly for their social qualities and "goodness", but none of the non-family exemplars were selected for this same reason. The latter were most often chosen for their skill and/or beauty.

Of all the exemplars named, only three could not be included within the four major domains of military, political, entertainment and sport. No exemplars were selected from the fine arts (artists, authors, classical musicians, poets, etc.), business or commerce. Most exemplars were selected because of their bodies, beauty or physical abilities, not because of their intelligence or creativity. This lack of domain diversity among the exemplar choices is somewhat disturbing. If students are to develop an appreciation and respect for the fine arts and the humanities, educators face a daunting task. The mass media and popular culture play a very important role in the choice of admired or heroic personalities. As long as both continue to overwhelm adolescents with entertainment and sport celebrity heroes, young people will continue to choose their exemplars from a very limited menu.

Conclusions and recommendations will be presented in CHAPTER V.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Summary and Conclusions**

This study set out to discover the exemplar choices of adolescents in two countries, namely, the United States and England. Of additional interest was: (1) whether the exemplars chosen came from the private or public domains; (2) their fields of endeavor; (3) their most attractive attributes, and, (4) the level of influence they had on the lives of their followers.

The related literature was limited in both quantity and quality. What was available suggested that public exemplars are more popular than private exemplars, mainly because of the influence of the mass media. Harris (1986) found that negative family dynamics adversely affect the selection of private exemplars. Thus, further study of exemplar choice may give us insight into the structural integrity of the family unit as a whole.

The study was also concerned with the choice of sportspersons as exemplars. The world-wide popularity of sport, as a result of increased media coverage, was thought to increase the salience of sport exemplars among adolescent youth. Balswick and Ingoldsby (1982) and Smith (1976) found that adolescents selected more exemplars from sport than any other domain.

It was also hoped that the cross-cultural nature of the study would provide insights into cultural values. Since research shows that exemplar

choice differs from state to state, it was logical to assume that differences in exemplar choice would also manifest themselves across different cultures.

The potential influence of exemplars on the values, beliefs, attitudes, aspirations, and even behaviors of adolescents cannot be underestimated. Exemplars are often adopted by adolescents as powerful role models; by identifying the relevant attributes and influence of their choices, we can gain a better understanding of the role exemplars play within youth culture.

Data were gathered by administering a written questionnaire to convenience samples of suburban high school students in the United States and England. The questionnaire asked the subjects to identify two people whom they admire from the public sector and two whom they admire from the private sector. The exemplars' field of endeavor, whether they were regarded as heroic and their most admirable qualities were also obtained. Finally, the questionnaire assessed the extent of influence the exemplar had on the life of the subject.

Any subject who did not fall into class II or III ("middle class") on the Hollingshead Two-Factor Index of Social Position was disqualified in order to produce two samples similar in socio-economic standing. Harris's schema for categorizing exemplar domains and exemplar attributes were adopted for use in the study. McEvoy and Erickson's typology served to measure the exemplar's influence on the subject. The

statistical analysis of the data was descriptive in nature and included the calculation of percentages and mean scores.

### **Summary of Results**

1. English males and females selected more exemplars from the public realm.
2. American males selected more exemplars from the public realm.
3. American females selected more exemplars from the private realm.
4. Private, admired exemplars were selected more than public heroic exemplars in both countries.
5. Both the Americans and the English were more likely to select from the public realm.
6. Americans were more likely than the English to select from the private realm.
7. Male admired and heroic exemplars were selected most often, with the exception of American females, who selected more female than male admired exemplars.
8. American males were more likely to select male exemplars than English males.
9. Both English and American females selected more exemplars from the entertainment domain than any other area.
10. Both English and American males selected more exemplars from sport than from any other area.

11. Overall, the most popular exemplar domain for American subjects was sport.
12. Overall, the most popular exemplar domain for English subjects was entertainment.
13. The Americans named no political heroes.
14. The English named no political or military heroes, although a few of their admired exemplars did come from politics.
15. The English more often named exemplars from outside the four major domains provided, i.e., military, political, entertainment and sport. All of the American choices fell within these four categories.
16. Exemplars exerted more influence among males than females. This was especially true among American males.
17. A few male subjects chose the highest level of influence (level V).
18. Admired exemplars were selected much more often than heroic exemplars.
19. Most of the exemplars chosen were selected for personal competence reasons. However, English females were the exception; they selected their exemplars more for prosocial and celebrity reasons.
20. The great majority of sports exemplars were selected for their personal competence characteristics.
21. Only a few of the exemplars selected from the entertainment world were chosen because of personal competence characteristics.
22. Family members selected as exemplars were chosen for prosocial reasons.

23. Non-family exemplars were selected for personal competence or celebrity reasons.

24. Female subjects named more female admired exemplars than males and an equal number of heroic exemplars in the private sector. Male subjects showed a strong bias for male exemplars both admired and heroic in the private sector. They also identify more strongly with male role models.

### Conclusions

1. The results of this study suggest that exemplars are part of the worlds of both American and English thirteen year-olds, however, they are more likely to name people whom they admire than people whom they consider heroic.

2. Females are more likely to select exemplars from the entertainment domain which may reflect upon the importance western culture places on female physical beauty and celebrity appeal.

3. The fact that exemplars from sport were most frequently selected by adolescent males from both countries can be accounted for by the emphasis placed upon male physical prowess and sporting ability in both cultures.

4. Exemplars have a modest influence on adolescents. Levels II and III were selected most often.

5. The predominance of male role models in both cultures was reflected in the more frequent selection of male exemplars. Males in the public sector were often chosen by both male and female respondents.

6. Possibly closer American family ties were suggested by the preference on the part of American females to name private exemplars. However, the naming of more exemplars from the public than the private sector was not totally unexpected.
7. Exemplar selection patterns in the United States and England were not similar. English adolescents named twice as many exemplars from the public than the private domain, while American choices were more evenly divided between the two. Americans selected only one more exemplar from the public than the private sector. American females showed a definite bias towards private exemplars.

#### **Recommendations for Further Study**

1. Administer the same questionnaire to thirteen year-olds in other countries to determine the generalizability of these results.
2. Examine exemplar selection among adults in England and the United States and then compare those findings with adolescent choices.
3. Examine the relationship between admired attributes and influence level, i.e., is an exemplar selected for reasons of competence more likely to have a greater influence than an exemplar selected for celebrity qualities?
4. Administer the questionnaire to other socio-economic groups to see whether these findings are generalizable across social class boundaries.

## APPENDIX A

## The "Who is My Hero / Heroine" Questionnaire

Directions: Please read each question very carefully before answering. Try to answer as many questions as you can; if you cannot answer a question, leave it blank. This is not a test. Please answer as honestly as you can.

### Section I

Please answer all of the questions in this section as fully as you can.

Are you Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_? (Place an x by the appropriate answer.)

How old are you in years? \_\_\_.

What country do you live in? England \_\_\_ United States \_\_\_. (Place an x by the appropriate answer.)

How many years have you lived in your home country? \_\_\_\_\_.

Occupation(s) of your parent(s)? Please be as specific as you can.

For example, my mother works as a bank clerk; my father owns a small plumbing business.

Father: \_\_\_\_\_.

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_.

Indicate your parent(s) formal education? Please be as specific as you can.

For example, my mother finished one year of college; my father left school at 15 with no qualifications.

Father: \_\_\_\_\_.

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_.

### Section II

Can you name one or two celebrities (or people in the news) whom you really admire? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_. If "Yes" continue, if "No", go on to question number 4.

2. Name them and identify what they do.

a. Name \_\_\_\_\_ What does the person do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

b. Name \_\_\_\_\_ What does the person do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Do you consider either or both of these celebrities your hero or heroine?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_. (Place an x by the appropriate answer.) If "Yes" continue,  
if "No" go on to question number 4.

a. Which one is your biggest hero or heroine? \_\_\_\_\_.

b. Why is this person your hero or heroine? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

c. What is it about this person that makes him or her your hero or heroine?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

4. Can you name one or two people who are not celebrities (or in the news)  
whom you really admire? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_. (Place an x by the appropriate  
answer.) If "Yes" continue, if "No" go on to Section III.

Name them and identify what they do.

a. Name \_\_\_\_\_ What does the person do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

b. Name \_\_\_\_\_ What does the person do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

If they are related to you, how are they related? For example, the person is my father, aunt, uncle, etc.

How is the person in 5a related to you? \_\_\_\_\_.

How is the person in 5b related to you? \_\_\_\_\_.

Do you consider either or both of these persons to be your hero or heroine? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_. (Place an x by the appropriate answer.) If "Yes" continue, if "No" go on to Section III.

Why is the person in 5a your hero or heroine? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Is the person named in 5b your hero or heroine? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Section III

Please read through the entire questionnaire very carefully and choose the person you consider your biggest hero or heroine.

Who is it? \_\_\_\_\_. If you have not indicated any heroes or heroines, either in or out of the news, you have finished and can turn in the questionnaire.

Using the hero or heroine just named, answer the following questions about that person, by placing an x by the appropriate answer.

- . Do you admire this person? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.
- . Do you relate to his/her feelings? (For example, you are happy when he or she are successful or sad when he or she fails.) Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.
- . Do you judge yourself and your achievements by his/her standards? (For example, you judge yourself a failure because you cannot do something as well as your hero or heroine can.) Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.
- Are some of your beliefs and ideas similar to those of your hero or heroine? (For example, you may believe we must do all we can to protect the environment, because your hero or heroine is very pro environment.)  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.
- Do you try to behave as your hero or heroine does in some way? (For example, You immitate the way your hero or heroine walks or you wear similar clothing.) Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.
- Do you belong to a fan club for your hero or heroine ? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.
- Do you own any posters, ornaments, or memorabilia related to your hero or heroine? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.

Now describe in the space below in what specific ways, if any, this person INFLUENCES you. For example, you may want to say something about your thoughts, feelings, behaviours, values, ambitions, etc.

Use the reverse side if you need more space for your answer.

**Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire**

## **APPENDIX B**

Calculation of Average Influence Level for American Subjects.

Influence Level	N = Number of selections	$\Sigma$ = sum
I (1)	1	1
II (2)	10	20
III (3)	6	18
IV (4)	2	8
V (5)	2	10
TOTAL	21	57.

Note: Where number in parenthesis represents value assigned to that level.

$$\text{AVERAGE LEVEL} = \frac{57}{21} = 2.7$$

Calculation of Average Influence Level for English Subjects.

Influence Level	N = Number of selections	$\Sigma$ = sum
I (1)	3	3
II (2)	11	22
III (3)	9	27
IV (4)	1	4
V (5)	1	5
TOTAL	25	61.

Note: Where number in parenthesis represents value assigned to that level.

$$\text{AVERAGE LEVEL} = \frac{61}{25} = 2.4$$

## REFERENCE LIST

- Allison, M.T. and Duda, J.L. (1990). Cross-cultural analysis in exercise and sports psychology: A void in the field. Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 12, 114-131.
- Axhelm, P. (1979, August 6). Where have all the heroes gone?, Newsweek, pp. 44-51.
- Balswick, J. and Ingoldsby, B. (1982). Heroes and heroines among American adolescents. Sex Roles, 8, 243-249.
- Blankenbaker, J. and Hook, L. (1988). The relation of sport heroes to age, sex and race. Unpublished study.
- Browne, R. Hero with 2,000 faces. In R. Browne and M. Fishwick, (1983). The hero in transition. Bowling Green, OH. Bowling Green University Popular Press.
- Browne, R., Fishwick M., & Marsden, M. (Eds.) (1972). Heroes of popular culture. Bowling Green, OH. Bowling Green University Popular Press.

Cummings, R. The superbowl society. In R. Browne, M. Fishwick, and M. Marsden, (Eds.), (1972). Heroes of popular culture. Bowling Green, OH. Bowling Green University Popular Press.

Freund, P. (Ed.) (1964). The myth of the birth of the hero and other writings by Otto Rank. New York, NY. Vintage Press.

Harris, J. (1986). Athletic exemplars in context: General exemplar selection patterns in relation to sex, race, and age. Quest, 38, 95-115.

Harris, J. (1987). Athletic exemplars compared with the broad array of others: Selection frequencies and salient attributes.  
A paper presented at the annual conference of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport, Edmonton, Alberta, November 1987.

Harris, D. and Eitzen, D. (1978). The consequences of failure in sports. Urban Life, 7, 169-177.

Hollingshead, A. (1957). The two-factor index of social position.  
Copyrighted manuscript, New haven, CT. Yale Station.

- Jackson, R. (1970). Children's politics and identification patterns: A comparative survey. An International Journal, 4,65-72.
- Klapp, O. (1971). Social types: Process, structure and ethos. San Diego, CA. Aegis Pub. Co.
- Loy, J., McPherson, B. and Kenyon, G. (1978). Sport and social systems. A guide to the analysis, problems and literature. Reading, MA. Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.
- McEvoy, A. and Erickson, E. (1981). Heroes and villains: A conceptual strategy for assessing their influence. Sociological Focus, 14 111- 122.
- Miller Lite Report on American attitudes towards sport. (1983). Milwaukee, WI. Miller Brewing Co.
- Roediger, H., Rushton, J., Capaldi, E. and Paris, S. (1984). Psychology. Boston, MA. Little, Brown and Co.

Smith, G., The sport hero: An endangered species. In A. Yiannakis,  
T. McIntyre, M. Melnick, and D. Hart,(Eds.), (1987). Sport  
sociology (3rd ed). Dubuque, IA. Kendall/Hunt Pub. Co.

Smith, G. An examination of the phenomenon of sports hero worship. In  
T. McIntyre, M. Melnick, and D. Hart, (Eds.) (1979). Sport  
Sociology (2nd ed). Dubuque, IA. Kendall/Hunt Pub. Co.

Wecter, D. (1941). The hero in America: A chronicle of hero worship.  
New York, NY. Charles Scribner's Sons.