

ABSTRACT

Creating Female Torah Scholar Leaders:

The Need for Mentorship and Role Models for High School Students

In Modern-Orthodox communities, there is much focus on children's growth in religiosity and Torah study and how to help guide them to lead lives devoted to Torah learning and religious commitment. This study was designed to understand how exposure to female Torah-scholar role models can aid in these goals for both male and female students, and to uncover whether having a male or female Torah role model will correlate with having higher levels of religiosity and aspirations in learning for both gender students. Data was collected from 767 students in 14 Modern-Orthodox high schools in the United States using the measure of Jewish Beliefs, Actions and Living Evaluation (JewBALE 3.0), an anonymous online survey consisting of 80 questions. The results revealed that exposure to female Torah-scholar role models predicted higher levels of religious commitment, desire to continue learning Torah after high school, and aspirations to become a Torah scholar, especially for female students. Furthermore, having a Torah role model of either or both genders increased students' desire to continue learning Torah and become a Torah scholar.

Specific differences based on the gender of the students and of the role model were also found, remaining consistent with the literature's preference for same-gender role models. This study validates the criticality of all students having a role model of either gender and the importance for female students particularly to be exposed to female Torah-scholar role models. Specifically, the finding that having exposure to a female Torah scholar has a significant impact on the religious growth and desire to learn Torah of female high school students should encourage the Modern-Orthodox communities to invest in the growth of female Torah scholarship and provide female Torah scholars with opportunities to teach and influence both the females and males of the Jewish community.

**Creating Female Torah Scholar Leaders:
The Need for Mentorship and Role Models for High School Students**

A Dissertation

by Nechama Price

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By

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Acknowledgment

Over the last twenty years, I have spent countless hours reflecting on the role of female Torah scholars based on my own experiences and those of my colleagues, students, and children. I am incredibly blessed to have had a unique opportunity to study intensely in a Beit Midrash setting for many years. Two years of Israel, three years of undergrad studies at SCW (Stern College for Women), three years in GPATS (Graduate Program in Advanced Talmud and Tanach Studies), followed by an additional four years of learning in the SCW Beit Midrash while also teaching Torah courses. Only a few years after becoming a full-time Torah faculty member at SCW, I was granted another opportunity to spend two more years involved in intense Torah study as part of my training to be certified as a Yoetzet Halacha, a Halachic Advisor in the area of the family purity. I have been blessed to teach Torah to thousands of students at SCW, GPATS, as a community Yoetzet Halacha, and other treasured venues. Specifically, as Director of GPATS and educator at SCW, I have had the privilege and responsibility to guide students in their own journeys of Torah study. Cumulatively, these experiences have provided me a front row seat to the challenges that women face when choosing the path of Torah scholarship and leadership. However, I have also witnessed the tremendous impact and influence these female Torah scholars have on their students (adults and children of all ages) as well as the intense satisfaction that comes from learning and teaching Torah.

Thankfully, the Modern Orthodox community recognizes the religious value of having learned women teach Torah within our communities, opening the door to many learning and teaching opportunities for women. I, for one, am the beneficiary of this religious worldview. However, it was insufficient for me to anecdotally sense the value these women are having on the spiritual growth of our community. Therefore, the goal of my research herein is to validate these observations through empirical evidence about the value of female Torah scholarship, focusing on the impact on high school students.

As a mother of teenagers, my immediate interest is to understand what influences high school students to love Torah and aspire to a life of Torah study. Additionally, by observing my children, I have come to realize that many experiences granted to my son as part of his religious growth, specifically his exposure to Torah role models, are lacking for my daughters. This paper is an outgrowth of all my experiences and observations, leading to my strong contention that our community needs female Torah role models to impact not only the females of the community but the males as well.

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DEDICATION

*To my mother, Marsha Friedman,
The most central female role model of my life.*

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Women's Torah leadership¹ is a crucial factor contributing to the vibrancy and continued growth of Torah learning and living of the future. Having female Torah role models from whom to aspire is imperative, particularly, but not exclusively for the religious inspiration of young females in order for them to be able to envision a future for themselves in Torah scholarship and leadership. Given the importance of the continued religious growth of our youth, it is critical to shape a society in which female Torah leadership is cultivated.

Leadership has perpetually been viewed as a masculine role, creating many obstacles for females when climbing the professional ladder (Brown-Johnson & Scandura, 2007; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Kroll, Blake-Beard, & O'Neil, 2021). Although, in the last fifty years, women have begun to be welcomed into leadership roles, they face many barriers because of gender-role stereotypes, family responsibilities and expectations, and a lack of female role models and mentors (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Shalka, 2017). The barriers discussed in the general literature on gender roles and leadership are analogous to obstacles found in the Orthodox Jewish world. Gender-role stereotypes are exemplified in Jewish books on leadership, which focus solely on male leaders (Aranoff-Tuchman & Rapoport, 2004;

¹ Although many forms of leadership exist within the Jewish world, this paper will exclusively focus on leadership positions that revolve around Torah scholarship, those who impart their Torah wisdom to the greater community.

Hochbaum, 2019; Sacks, 2015). Challenges including balancing family responsibilities and the expected role of family caretaker as well as a shortage of female Torah-scholar role models and mentors impede Jewish women from attaining positions of leadership (Rosenberg, 2012).

The importance of role models and mentors is recognized in the literature (Gerk, Campos, Naus, Faria, Buda, Moura, Graner, Cazumba, Pierre, Pompermaier, Truche, Pendleton, Bowder, & Ferreira, 2022; Kroll et al., 2021; Noe, 1988; Vierstraete, 2005), which has led to the establishment of official mentorship programs in workplaces. Similarly, in the educational field, mentors are essential for new faculty and administrators' success and ability to acclimate quickly to their new positions. However, the research demonstrates a clear disadvantage for women in this vein, as the limited number of women in leadership positions makes it challenging for women to find female mentors, and cross-gender mentorships are less successful (Brown-Johnson & Scandura, 2007; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Kroll et al., 2021).

The positive effects of role models, coaches, and mentors have also been vital in the growth and development of children and young adults (Eisenberg, 2010; Leventer-Betesh, 2023; Tannenbaum, 2007; Weinstein, 2020). In the Jewish population, where there is a tremendous focus on the religious and spiritual growth of children, it would be crucial to understand the impact of female Torah-scholar role models on high school students, male or female. Past research has revealed that Torah role models, including Judaic Studies teachers play a central role in the religious development of teenagers (Leventer-Betesh 2023; Strulowitz, 2023; Weinstein 2020). During the high school years, a time of development of religious commitment and career aspirations, having strong, religious Torah role models is especially critical. This paper will explore the specific effect of exposure to female Torah

scholars, defined as women who are knowledgeable in Torah and have dedicated years to learning, on high school students in terms of their religious commitment and growth as well as their convictions about their future of learning and teaching Torah.

Significance of the Problem

This paper will explore the general literature on leadership and uncover multiple factors that contribute to the fact that leadership positions are still dominated by men, despite findings that female leaders are either equally or more effective than males. The disparities in leadership positions have posed multiple challenges to women who do attain leadership roles, which will be examined. After suggesting recommendations for how females can overcome barriers to achieving leadership, we will explore the literature on female leadership through the lens of Modern Orthodoxy, similarly exploring what factors have contributed to the dearth of female Torah leaders. This comprehensive analysis of the existing research on female leadership both in the religious and general literature makes evident the lack of research on the benefits of female leadership for the Modern-Orthodox world, serving as the basis for the current study on the effect of having female Torah-scholar role models on the religious growth and aspirations of Torah leadership for high school students. Given both the findings on the positive impact of role models on high school students and the dearth of research on the advantages of female Torah-scholar role models in the Modern-Orthodox world, it would be helpful to explore whether female Torah-scholar role models can positively affect the religious levels of teenagers in Modern-Orthodox high schools and their desire to learn Torah after high school with a hope to become a Torah scholar, and hence a leader in Jewish learning. This study will unearth the correlation between those students who have exposure to

female Torah scholars and their religious practices as well as their attitudes about the significance of Torah study in their future. In this paper, we intend to further the ongoing discussion of why it is essential to support the growth of women Torah scholars to serve as role models for the next generation.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to analyze the correlation between the exposure of high school students to female Torah scholars and their religious growth and aspirations for Torah learning, we must review the research on gender and leadership, mentorship and its impact on generating leaders, and the barriers preventing women from leadership positions and successful mentorship. Subsequently, this paper will compare the findings of the general research to the realities of women in the Modern-Orthodox community, who experience similar gender-related impediments to leadership and mentorship.

The central issue is that leadership is characteristically considered as a masculine role defined by power and authority (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Ferguson, 2018; Johansen, 2007). Even in today's world where women are educated and fully integrated into the work force, we find a shortage of women in leadership positions, and therefore a shortage of female mentors for the next generation (Brown-Johnson & Scandura, 2007; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Kroll et al., 2021). This review of the literature will analyze the differences between female and male leadership and the challenges that women face in being promoted to upper management positions, multiplied by the fact that they have struggles finding mentors of their own gender. By reviewing the research, we hope to understand the stereotype of leaders and mentors being predominantly masculine and uncover solutions to the challenges that female leaders face. These same patterns emerge in the literature about female

leadership in the Modern-Orthodox Jewish world, with a similar lack of exploration as to what the Jewish community would gain from having more women in communal leadership positions, despite the fact that there has been an increase in the number of women occupying these positions over the last twenty years (Henkin, 2021; Rosenberg, 2012). It is of particular interest and need to explore the benefits of having these women be the role models and mentors of the next generation.

Gender and Leadership

Leadership, such as senior and upper management positions, has historically been associated with men (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Ferguson, 2018; Johansen, 2007). This has created a glass ceiling for women in upper leadership (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995). Viewing leadership roles as male creates a perception that women are unfit to lead, even when they are as qualified as men (Crawford, 2021). This is true in corporate and political realms (Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, & Burke, 2017), public relations (Place & Vardeman-Winter, 2018), clergy (Ferguson, 2018), and educational fields (Maranto, Carroll, Cheng, & Teodoro, 2018). In corporations, men hold most senior and upper management positions (Gipson et al., 2017; Sandberg, 2013). Bart & McQueen (2013) observe that only 20-25% of corporate executive board positions are filled by women. The same holds true in politics (Gipson et al., 2017), where only 24 out of 100 elected officials serving in the United States Senate (24%) are women, and 123 out of 435 (28.3%) representatives sitting in the House of Representatives are female (Center for American Women and Politics, 2022). Furthermore, out of the 195 independent countries in the world, only 17 are led by women (Sandberg,

2013). Similarly, in public relations, women occupy 75% of the jobs, but only 20% hold senior leadership positions (Place & Vardeman-Winter, 2018).

The absence of women in leadership extends to the non-profit sector as well. Clergy roles, traditionally dominated by men, saw little change even after women began receiving ordination. Even though American Protestant denominations began to allow female ordination in the mid-20th century, today only 15% of congregations in the United States are led by women (Ferguson, 2018). In education, most principals and superintendents in the 20th century have been male. Maranto et al. (2018) assert that 99% of teachers are female but only 66% of elementary school principals and 63% of high school principals are female, reflecting the notion that women teach and men lead. Additionally, men's promotions occur faster, after only 10.7 years of teaching, whereas women teach for at least 13.2 years before being considered for promotion.

The fact that males dominate leadership positions might be taken to suggest that male leadership is more effective than female leadership (Johansen, 2007). In the following section, we will explore the research on female versus male leadership efficacy.

Gender Leadership Effectiveness

In considering effective leaders, Bass (1999) differentiates between transactional leaders and transformational leaders. A transactional leader leads from the top. He organizes the work, and distributes it to his employees, rewarding those who excel, and disciplining those who fall behind. The transactional leader stays out of sight unless there is a need for him to get involved. A transformational leader, in contrast, creates a vision for the organization

where all employees go beyond their individual self-interest and work for the betterment of the organization. The transformational leader inspires everyone to work together and gains their trust and confidence without reward and punishment. Researchers conclude that organizations with transformational leaders produce higher performance and job satisfaction (Bass, 1999; Bogler, 2001). Similarly, Stone et al. (2004) are critical of the bureaucratic authority of the transactional leader and praise the transformational leader for inspiring and motivating his workers to be innovative, through their shared vision and feeling valued within the organization. Senge (2006) supports the notion that all leaders must build a shared vision to allow their employees to commit and connect to their common aspiration. Reeves (2006) adds that a successful leader must also be a learning leader, who studies past experiences, positive or negative, when creating the vision for the future of the company.

Contrary to what one may hypothesize based on the disproportionate numbers of males in leadership positions, research suggests that female leadership is either equally or more effective than male leadership. Eagly et al. (1995) studied 125 female and 181 male leaders, including managers, supervisors, officers, department heads, and coaches, concluding that there is no difference in the effectiveness in leadership between males and females. Similarly, Mandell and Pherwani's (2003) quantitative study of 32 male and female managers from mid-to-large-sized organizations in northeast US found that female transformational leaders exhibited equal levels of effectiveness compared to their male counterparts. Female senior leaders in public relations firms also had the same level of effectiveness and ability as their male counterparts (Place & Verdeman-Winter, 2018).

In reaction to earlier studies which claimed that women are not as effective as men at serving as leaders, Eagly et al. (1995) posit that they are biased and outdated. Additionally,

they suggest that the evaluations of these female leaders are completed by male supervisors who rated them lower because of feeling threatened. Gipson et al. (2017) suggest that another factor to consider is that women leaders were normally chosen by companies in crisis to signify a major change within the company's management and trajectory. Therefore, if men are selected as leaders when the company is succeeding and women are chosen when the company is in crisis, one would expect a bias in the outcomes.

Some suggest there should be a preference for female leadership (Bart & McQueen, 2013; Grissom Nicholson-Crotty & Keiser, 2012). Compared with men, who are often transactional leaders with an autocratic style, women are transformational, interactive, and encourage participation (Johansen, 2007; Rosener, 1990). Brahnam et al. (2005) conclude that women are more collaborative and flexible, giving them better conflict resolution skills than men. In education, Johansen (2007) found that women leaders increased performance in their schools. Maranto et al. (2018) added that female principals tend to be more focused than males on developing curriculum, which should lead to improved academic performance. Bart and McQueen's (2013) research studying 625 board directors (75% male and 25% female) demonstrated that female directors on corporate boards scored significantly higher scores in making fair and effective decisions for the company when having to balance multiple interests.

Even though studies show that there are comparable or exceptional levels of effectiveness when adopting female leaders, leadership positions still seem to be dominated by men. The following sections explore a number of factors that may help to illuminate this fact, including the importance of mentorship for future leaders and the perceived lack of

mentorship opportunities available to women (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Shalka, 2017), gender bias, and other external and internal factors.

Importance of Mentorship

One of the most successful ways for a person to grow into a leadership position is through the usage of the traditional model of hierarchical mentors, where the experienced and older mentor guides, teaches, and serves as an advisor, coach, and role model to enable the mentee to achieve success and growth by speeding up the process of learning a new job, reducing stress, and improving performance (Gerk et al., 2022; Kroll et al., 2021; Noe, 1988; Vierstraete, 2005). The mentor also acts as a sponsor to nominate their protégés for promotion and give them opportunities to display their abilities (Noe, 1988). Although the traditional, hierarchical form of mentorship is common today, other forms of mentorship have developed over time. The constructivist model of mentorship has more collaboration, allowing both the mentor and mentee to grow and learn from each other (Kroll et al., 2021). This collaborative approach can also be achieved through peer group mentoring, where colleagues act as both the mentor and mentee (Kroll et al., 2021). Numerous studies show that there are positive effects of mentorship in all different careers, including education (Vierstraete, 2005), executive positions (Kroll et al., 2021), medical school students (Gerk et al., 2022), and accountants (Brown-Johnson & Scandura, 2007). Similarly, in a study of 6,076 graduates comparing the leadership development of domestic and international students, Shalka (2017) demonstrated that the gap between them was closed when the international students were given mentorship opportunities.

Mentorship and role models are not only crucial for adults who desire aid in growing in their careers and young adults who want coaching in the beginning of their professions, but also to high school students, whose path in life is still unknown. There are many advantages for high school students to have mentorship experiences. In the academic realm, having a mentor who is knowledgeable in one content/knowledge area can help students improve on a specific skill, engage their interest in a particular area of study, and improve their overall attitudes towards academic studies (Kim, 2021). In a study of a mentorship program for STEM students, where 37 students and 34 mentors participated, both mentors and mentees reported benefiting greatly from the experience. The mentors reported the privilege they felt being a positive role-model for the students and enjoyed the opportunity to help guide the students. The students appreciated seeing their mentor at work firsthand and having a relationship with an adult who was an expert in their field of interest (Kim, 2021).

Mentorship is also beneficial for high school students in the emotional realm, for guidance on improving relationships and the provision of overall emotional support (Kim, 2021). Having a mentor has been shown to lower the risk of suicidality due to cyberbullying in high school students; in a study of 25,527 students, the odds of suicidal ideation and number of suicidal attempts were significantly lower among the 875 students who had a mentor relationship (Aguayo et al., 2022). Demonstrating the power of mentoring, simply reading stories about role models can improve the growth mindset of students. When 89 high school students, 90 undergraduates, and 81 graduates were assessed for their growth mindset before and after reading stories about role models, student mindsets were slightly improved after reading two stories and increased tremendously after reading five stories (Du et al., 2021).

Mentorship does not only have value within the realms of education and the workforce. A study of 150 women of various backgrounds and faiths found that females who had a female spiritual role model reported a higher sense of self-esteem, and that the female role models aided them in furthering their spiritual development (Kettle, 2008). However, in many religions including Judaism, Christianity and Islam, men are exclusively given the role of authority in the spiritual realm. Women are restricted in forms of leadership, leaving women with a lack of female role models for spiritual guidance (Kettle, 2008).

It would seem to follow that if mentorship is significant for every area of life and at all ages, it should be equally important for males and females, and possibly more crucial for women who face more obstacles and discrimination in advancement in the workplace (Noe, 1988; Ragins & Cotton, 1991).

Gender Roles in Mentorship

Studies assert that women lack the mentoring and collegial support that is vital to becoming successful leaders (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Shalka, 2017), as compared to men who are groomed and mentored by senior management when viewed as potential future leaders (Gipson et al., 2017; Place & Vardeman-Winter, 2018; Sandberg; 2013). One of the most significant reasons for this gap is the dearth of female leaders (Gipson et al., 2017; Sandberg, 2013). Studies show that men and women prefer to have mentors of the same gender, and that mentors prefer having a protégé of the same gender (Noe, 1988). However, for females, finding a female mentor is rare because of the shortage of females in high positions in the workplace, forcing women to work with male mentors (Brown-Johnson &

Scandura, 2007; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Kroll et al., 2021). Yet, male leaders typically prefer to coach other men simply because they want to mentor those who are most similar to them (Brown-Johnson & Scandura, 2007; Noe, 1988), and because when a mentor and mentee can create a closer bond based on common experience and similar social networks, it results in a more successful mentorship (Dreher & Ash, 1990). Similarly, male mentors want to mentor a man to be their successor when they retire, who will provide a sense of continuity to their work (Epstein, 1970; Noe, 1988). Men may be less likely to view women as successors, as they may perceive them to be less committed to their jobs (Epstein, 1970).

Male leaders may also purposely avoid choosing a female protégé because cross-mentorship relationships can lead to complexities of gender dynamics, including fear that it will appear as a sexual advance (Clawson & Kram, 1984; Kroll et al., 2021). Furthermore, as many women who attain higher roles within a company may be viewed as the “token” woman, they have more visibility and therefore it is riskier for a mentor to accept them as a protégé (Noe, 1988).

Despite these arguments describing the barriers for women to receive mentorship, Ragins & Cotton (1991) admit that there is no comprehensive study to validate these concerns. They surveyed 880 employees of three research and development organizations in the United States, asking 229 women and 281 men about mentorship. Their research found that 55% of the men and 49.5% of the women had mentorship opportunities, providing evidence that even if women perceive a barrier in attaining mentorship, it is not definitive. The only significant finding was that women were more likely to have cross-gender mentors than men, as 77 women had cross-gender mentors and 40 had mentors of the same gender, but 114 men had mentors of the same gender and only 19 had cross-gender mentors. A similar

finding occurred in the study by Gerik et al. (2012) of 953 medical students (748 female, 194 male, and 11 nonbinary), where 56% of the women reported having male mentors and only 42% had female mentors. Additionally, this same study found that more women than men had mentors, supporting the view that there are no true barriers for females to acquire a mentor. However, the results of this study may have been skewed because many more females responded to the survey, and only 20% of all of those in the study had access to a mentor at all. Considering the phenomenon with accountants, Brown-Johnson & Scandura (2007) studied 571 male and 293 female accountants and discovered that there was no difference in access to mentorship based on gender, but women reported having more cross-gender mentors. However, the number of men greatly outweighed the number of women in the study.

Based on the research showing that women are more likely to be mentored by men, it would seem important to understand the effectiveness of cross-gender mentorship. Women do not have an equal opportunity to develop a relationship with their male mentor for several reasons. First, women are often not present at men's clubs or gender-specific sports events, limiting their ability to engage with their mentors in a casual forum (Noe, 1988; Ragins & Cotton, 1991). Additionally, when the mentorship relationship is incongruent and filled with fear of misinterpretation, it is not as effective (Brown-Johnson & Scandura, 2007). The risk of a mentorship turning into an intimate relationship is high and can cause damage to a mentor's reputation in the workplace and affect his marriage (Fitt & Newton, 1981). Boundaries are required to be placed between a male mentor and female protégé, which limits the success of the mentorship (Clawson & Kram, 1984).

It seems clear that although women today are given mentorship opportunities, most are mentored by men. However, the research on effective leadership, displaying that women have

a different leadership style than men would strongly suggest that it is vital for women to be mentored by both men and women to gain the skills to succeed as leaders (Gipson et al., 2017; Sandberg, 2013). Although lacking mentorship entirely does not seem to be a factor affecting women's access to positions of leadership, lacking female mentorship could be viewed as a major obstacle to achieving female leadership. Perhaps more women would apply for leadership positions if they had mentors who prepared them for the unique challenges of female leadership and helped them overcome the obstacles.

In addition to the lack of same-gender mentorship, there are other external and internal barriers to female leadership.

Gender Bias

There is a predominant belief that leaders must have certain traits, including competency, strength, determination, and power, all congruent with the male stereotype of leadership (Gipson et al., 2017; Maranto et al., 2018). Scholars conclude that the greatest restraint against female leadership is the role congruity theory (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly et al., 1995; Ferguson, 2018), which posits that there is an expectation for a person's actions and personality to be consistent with society's cultural definitions of gender. Therefore, leadership, which is culturally viewed as agentic, strong, and powerful, all masculine traits, must be reserved for men. If a woman steps up for leadership, it represents a violation of gender expectation. Women who self-promote are viewed negatively, as boastful, and immodest (Gipson et al., 2017; Sandberg, 2013). Sandberg (2013) points out the irony that to be chosen for promotion, one must be ambitious, aggressive, and self-promoting, but when a woman acts in this way, she is viewed as controlling and power hungry. She writes, "it is like trying to cross a minefield backwards in high heels!" (p. 48).

There are two findings consistent with the notion that role incongruity between women and leadership is a barrier to female leadership: fewer leadership positions available to women (Brown-Johnson & Scandura, 2007; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Kroll et al., 2021), and female leaders receiving less favorable evaluations based on a belief that they are not suited for the position (Crawford, 2021; Ferguson, 2018). A study of 34,000 teachers in 6,500 educational organizations found that females were equally satisfied with a male or female leader, but males were dissatisfied when the principal or superintendent was female (Grissom et al., 2012). This study posits that males, more than females, tend to believe that women are not deserving of leadership positions.

Lack of Qualification

In a world with gender bias against female leadership, there is less opportunity for women to develop the skills needed to be promoted to upper management positions. Women are often employed in supportive roles in middle management, which do not allow for promotion (Gipson et al., 2017). Furthermore, because women do not view themselves as having leadership potential, they are less likely to seek higher degrees that are needed for promotion to senior positions (Maranto et al., 2018). All of this leads to a pipeline issue: even when top level positions are available for women, there is a shortage of women with the appropriate level of education, work experience and skills, and mentoring to fill them (Gipson et al., 2017).

Family Responsibilities

Many women struggle with balancing family responsibilities and career and tend to have more career interruption (Gipson et al., 2017) or had neither husbands nor children

(Bowles, 2012). Not only does the need to balance restrict companies from offering top positions to women, but it may even prevent women from choosing full-time careers and leadership roles. Maranto et al. (2018) suggest that women prefer jobs where the work hours correspond to that of their children's schedule. Often, women pull back from choosing careers that will conflict with their family life and role as mother (Sandberg, 2013).

Imposter Syndrome and Fear

The term *Imposter Syndrome* was coined in 1978 by Dr. Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes to describe successful, highly-educated people who feel that they have fooled their colleagues into overestimating their achievements, attribute their success to another cause, and fear being exposed as a fraud (Rakestraw, 2017). Already in 1978, the assumption was that this syndrome largely affected females, but studies showed that it affects both genders, and that 70% percent of the population will experience imposter syndrome at least one time in their lives (Rakestraw, 2017).

Sandberg (2013) suggests that noteworthy barriers preventing female leadership are the imposter syndrome, self-doubt, and feelings of unworthiness for higher positions that men tend to hold. Women hold themselves back from leading based on a lack of self-confidence and fear of failure, being unliked, criticism, and making mistakes. These feelings are experienced by both sexes but are more intensely felt by women (Sandberg, 2013). Crawford (2021) explains that imposter syndrome is the feeling that one is unfit and undeserving for her position and achievements. Women suffering from imposter syndrome believe that they have conned those around them and are unworthy of praise and success. Such women tend to believe that men with similar achievements are more deserving. These feelings can lead to anxiety, depression, lowered self-esteem, and behaviors that prevent growth in the workplace

(Crawford, 2021). A possible reason for imposter syndrome being found more frequently in women than men is that men have role models who are like them, and do not question their leadership abilities. Women have fewer such role models to look up to and feel like an imposter in a world dominated by male leaders (Tulyshayan & Burey, 2021a). Salib (2021), quoting this article, agrees that women in medicine face these same feelings of fear of exposure as a fraud. She argues that while some of these feelings come from an internal lack of confidence, they also stem from external gender bias of the workplace, and the assumption that leaders should be male. A solution that is suggested for women to overcome imposter syndrome in the workplace is to have female mentors who share their stories of how they overcame feelings of being unfit and undeserving in a male-dominated world (Rakestraw, 2017; Tulyshayan & Burey, 2021b).

Failing in leadership becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy (Eagly et al., 1995). In other words, a woman's own insecurities coupled with being exposed to gender bias in the workplace can further shake her confidence and lower her self-esteem, which ends up negatively affecting her performance.

Female Leadership in Modern Orthodoxy

Gender Roles in Leadership and Gender Stereotypes

The ideas about gender roles in leadership discussed above exist in the Jewish Modern-Orthodox world as well. In Jewish day schools, children learn about leadership through stories of male role models who changed the course of Jewish history. Leadership is portrayed through the Biblical stories of Avraham, Moshe, Aharon, Yehoshua, David, and

Shlomo: strong, courageous, successful leaders, and role models of taking responsibility, strength to stand up to challenges, and learning from their mistakes (Sacks, 2015). When discussing the females of the Bible, there is an emphasis on women in caretaker or supportive roles, like Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, Leah, Esther, and Ruth. There may be an introduction to formal female leadership in the story of Devorah (Judges 4), the mentioning of the seven prophetesses listed in the Talmud (Megillah 14a), the characters of Bruria (Eruvin 53b, Pesachim 62b) and Ima Shalom (Bava Metzia 59b, Eruvin 63a, Nedarim 20a, Shabbat 116a), and even more modern female leaders like Sara Schenirer, Nehama Leibowitz, and Prime Minister Golda Meir (Sacks, 2015). However, there is limited focus on teaching our children about women's ability to lead, especially based on the paucity of female leaders found in the Bible and Jewish history.

This preponderant focus on male leadership is reflected in Jewish books written on Biblical leadership, where extraordinarily little is written about females. Hochbaum (2019), other than one comment about Moshe's sister, Miriam, and her form of leadership, spends his entire book on Jewish leadership exclusively discussing male leadership. He describes Moshe as the ultimate leader who must commit fully to his leadership role, nullifying his personal life and family. In contrast, Miriam must balance family life and leadership. Similarly, Sacks (2015), in his book on leadership, focuses on strong leaders like Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, and describes Moshe as a visionary leader, resembling the description of a transformational leader. Only one chapter discusses female leadership, where he analyzes the six women (Miriam, Yocheved, Daughter of Pharaoh, Tzipora, Shifra, and Puah) whom he describes as the women behind the story of Moshe. These women fit the feminine stereotype of behind-the-scenes influencers, supporting and aiding Moshe. This is the same attribution of

two female authors when discussing the same six women (Aranoff-Tuchman & Rapoport, 2004). Similarly, Rabbi Soloveitchik (2000) and Rabbi Meiselman (1978) describe the archetypal Biblical woman with feminine traits, involved in building her home, humble, modest, and remaining in the background. Parallel to the literature cited above, they both write that the Biblical woman's moment of leadership and greatness is during a time of crisis. Rabbi Soloveitchik (2000) writes, "The woman is a crisis personality... In times of upheaval and transition... it is then that the mother steps to the fore and takes command" (pg. 116).

Throughout the Jewish people's history, there have been individual females in Torah leadership positions² who have had tremendous impact, creating a precedence for the existence and importance of a female Torah personality role-model. For example, biblical personalities in Torah-leadership positions include Devorah, a prophetess, judge, and leader of the Jewish people during the time of the Judges (Judges 4:4), and Miriam, a prophetess and leader of women (Ex. 15:20) defined by the sages as being the Torah teacher of the women of Am Yisrael (Devarim Rabbah 7; Targum Michah 6:4; Targum Yonatan 6:4), as well as the Daughters of Tzelufchad, who are described by the Talmud (Bava Batra 119b) as wise, interpreters of the Torah, and righteous. Furthermore, there are Talmudic figures known for their Torah scholarship, like Bruria who taught three hundred Jewish laws in a single day from three hundred Rabbis (Talmud Pesachim 62b). Additionally, in the 1500's, Rabbi Yehoshua Falk³ quotes his learned mother on halachic topics, calling her, "*my mother, my teacher, the Rabbanit,*" and stating how she was more knowledgeable in the laws of women

² For this paper, we are defining this as Torah scholar females who become leaders of teaching Torah to the masses, often exclusively to females, but at times to men as well.

³ Rabbi Yehoshua Falk is the author of the *Perisha* and *Derisha*, commentaries on the Tur.

and family purity than most Rabbis in her generation.⁴ So too, in the 1900's, Nehama Leibowitz was well known for her teaching of the bible and its commentators to both men and women. However, throughout history and still today, most visible leadership roles in the Jewish world are dominated by men: Rabbis and Assistant Rabbis of synagogues, directors of Jewish institutions, judges of the Jewish courts, and Deciders of Jewish Law (*Poskim*).

Jewish Legal Barriers to Female Leadership

It is not only Bible stories that cast Jewish women in a supportive role, but actual Jewish legal doctrines do as well. There is a legal limitation based on the Biblical law forbidding a woman to be anointed as king (Midrash Sifrei on Deut. 17:15). The Rambam expands this restriction to include all positions of authoritative leadership (Rambam, Mishnah Torah, Hilkhoh Melachim, 1:5). This legal distinction is formulated by Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein (2016) when differentiating between two types of leadership positions. The ability to serve as a leader who has formal power and influence is exclusive to men who have received ordination. On the other hand, the form of leadership that is informal and unlegislated is available for women. So too, Sacks (2015) differentiates between authority and leadership. Authority is power given to a leader based on their office or position with the ability to force others to act a certain way and demand obedience, which he attributes to male leaders like Moshe. He contrasts this to leadership based on the ability to influence and inspire others to act without authority, which he attributes to Miriam, and believes is attainable for all women.

⁴ See the Hakdama ben HaMechaber Perisha v'Drisha

Which forms of leadership fit into the categories of formal and informal has been strongly debated by Rabbinic scholars with no clear consensus (Adlerstein, 2016; Auman, 2016; Henkin, 2021; Lichtenstein, 2016; RCA, 2017; Rosenberg, 2012; Sperber, 2020; Wolowelsky, 2016). This ambiguity is further complicated by the debate over which titles should be given to designate a woman for a specific clergy role (Adlerstein, 2016; RCA, 2017; Sperber, 2020; Wolowelsky, 2016) and the uncertainty of the female leaders' intentions, differentiating between women who want leadership positions out of genuine religious passion as opposed to feminist or egalitarian reasons (Auman, 2016; Henkin, 2021; Lichtenstein, 2016; Rosenberg, 2012).

The lack of official title for a female Torah scholar creates a challenge for members of the community, especially the youth, to identify them. Without a universally respected title that represents Torah scholarship for females, it is difficult to distinguish between women who have learned Torah for many years and those who have not. Men, after years learning in the *Beit Midrash*, study halls, can earn the title "Rabbi," clearly classifying them to the world as Torah scholars, opening the portal of leadership to them. Rabbis are able to teach Torah as well as lead services, congregations, schools, and courts of Jewish law. However, females who learn for many years will still not be provided with any identifiable title to distinguish them from women who have not learned Torah formally since their years in seminary or college. Additionally, there is a limit to the types of positions that are acceptable for them outside of formal teaching in schools and synagogues.

Cultural Restrictions: Tradition

There is another, more ambiguous layer of restriction to female leadership: that of *Mesorah*, tradition, and the accepted gender roles in Jewish culture (RCA, 2017; Rosenberg,

2012; Tannenbaum, 2003; Wolowelsky, 2016). *Mesorah* is viewed as the bridge between the past and the future, which serves as the cornerstone of the preservation and development of religious and spiritual innovation. As the world continues to change and develop, there is constantly a question of how the Jewish community should advance forward while still respecting, cherishing, and continuing our traditions from the past (RCA, 2017).

As a result, not only is there a challenge to women assuming a traditionally male role, but there is the concern about where allowing women a specific leadership role now may lead in the future. The slippery slope argument claims that women going beyond their traditional roles may lead to women taking on more problematic roles and involving significant challenges to Jewish law in the future (Meiselman, 1978; RCA, 2017; Rosenberg, 2012).

Lastly, there is the social and religious value of *tzniut*, modesty, a cornerstone ideal in Jewish life. Because the role of *tzniut* has limited formal definitions, it leaves open questions about the ability of a women to assume any specific task or role. Does modesty preclude some of the very activities leadership generally demands – public speaking, self-advancement, and advocacy, being in the public eye? Therefore, the value of *tzniut* becomes part of the overall question of defining acceptable leadership roles for women in Modern Orthodoxy (Rosenberg, 2012).

Acceptable Female Leadership

Similar to the general literature, Jewish scholars agree that women taking on informal roles and unlegislated leadership fitting a feminine, communal style of leadership is acceptable and advisable (Lichtenstein, 2016). For example, teaching Torah, visiting the sick, comforting those who are grieving, and giving pastoral advice should be acceptable and avoid

all the legal restrictions (Wolowelsky, 2016). The Rabbinical Council of America (2017) concluded that women role models are critical for our community's spiritual growth and listed several acceptable leadership roles that women can play within the community, including teachers of Torah, community educators, spiritual guides, and senior managers and administrators. However, they conclude that all official roles could be weighed differently based on a communities' needs and approval of their rabbinic leadership.

Orthodox Female Leaders

There is little scholarly literature about the challenges faced by Modern-Orthodox female leaders, but based on anecdotal evidence, it would appear that women leaders in the Modern-Orthodox community experience similar challenges to those of women in the general society. This includes limited time for study (Rosenberg, 2012) and inability to devote extensive hours when also serving as family caretaker. The fact that there are very few female communal leaders in the Jewish Modern-Orthodox world echoes the general findings and may also reflect the shortage of women qualified to fill these types of positions. As is true for their secular counterparts, Jewish women lack mentorship by other female leaders, as there are few, and often must be mentored by male leaders. Furthermore, women do not have a universally accepted framework to be trained for religious leadership roles in a way that parallels men's rabbinical training.

Women who do have advanced religious training and intense Torah scholarship are still challenged. Frequently, such women scholars are the token woman, the only female on a panel of men, or only lecture by a female in a series of lectures presented by men. These situations can lead to feelings of inadequacy and imposter syndrome, believing that one is undeserving of these opportunities. It stands to reason that having more female Torah-scholars

to serve as role models and mentors to young orthodox girls would have a tremendous impact on improving these issues for future generations.

High School Students' Need for Role Models

There have been many studies in the recent years showing the significant effects that Judaic-Studies teachers have on high school students. In a study of 355 post high school yeshiva students (167 males and 188 females), aged 18-19, who were currently studying in Israel and asked to reflect on their high school years, Tannenbaum (2007) found that 63.5% viewed their Judaic-Studies teachers or Rabbis as good role models who positively impacted their religious growth. Similarly, Eisenberg (2010), in a study of 424 Jewish adolescents in their gap year in Israel, showed that a positive relationship with high school Judaic teachers and Rabbis led to stronger religious beliefs. Additionally, Tannenbaum's study showed that those students who reported having personal meetings with teachers outside of the classroom found those experiences substantial for their spiritual development. Her study concluded that having a personal relationship with a teacher, creating a role model/mentor relationship, has a powerful impact on students (Tannenbaum, 2007).

Unlike the studies above that asked students in Israel to reflect on their high school years, JewBALE 2.0 surveyed students currently in high school. Weinstein (2020), using JewBALE 2.0, studied the effect of role models on high school students' religious growth in relation to their self-esteem. In her study of 1,341 high school students from 18 different Modern-Orthodox high schools in America, (39% male and 58% female), she found that higher levels of self-esteem correlated with students having higher levels of religiosity and

spirituality. Additionally, her study showed that positive relationships with Judaic-studies teachers positively correlated to the students' positive attitudes towards religiosity and spirituality. It would be imperative to further her study to show that having a positive relationship with a Judaic-studies teacher, where the teacher shows individual care to the student, would result in raising a student's self-esteem; thereby the combination of a relationship with a Judaic-studies teacher and raised self-esteem could be the cause of the raised levels of religiosity and spirituality.

Similarly, Leventer-Betesh (2023) used the same JewBALE 2.0 to compare the influence of parents, teachers, and peers on high school students' religious commitment. She found that the relationship with Judaic-Studies teachers was the most impactful on the students' spirituality and religious observance. Furthermore, Strulowitz (2023), who had clearly showed that a positive relationship with a Judaic-studies teacher predicted a higher level of religious observance and spiritual connection, suggested that it is imperative for schools to invest in teachers who are positive role models and set aside time in school for teachers to foster positive relationships with their students.

In many of these studies, the researchers also analyzed if the results were different when considering gender. Tannenbaum's study (2007) found that there was a greater significance to the influence of the Rabbi or Judaic-studies teacher for the male students. On the other hand, she also found that 72.6% of females and only 58.6% of males stated that their teachers were good role models and that interactions with them outside of the classroom led them to religious growth. Weinstein (2023) noted that her study revealed that the female students scored lower in their connection towards Rabbinic authority and related it to women's limited role in synagogue service and religious leadership, perhaps suggesting that if

a woman's role in leadership was less limited, it would raise the level of connection female students would feel towards Rabbinic or Torah scholar authority. It is important to note that none of the studies distinguished between female Judaic-studies teachers and female Torah scholars, women who have spent years learning Torah. Therefore, there is currently no existing research on the effects of female Torah scholars on high school students.

A Critical Need

What is lacking in the religious literature is research studying the advantages of female Torah leadership. There is much focus in the general research on the effectiveness and success of female leadership in comparison to their male counterparts, as well as the differences in the style of male and female leadership, including the challenges that female leaders face. However, in religious studies, there is a complete lack of research about how female leaders of Modern-Orthodox Jewish Institutions are specifically advantageous for the religious world, which may be a reflection, in part, of the fact that there is limited female leadership to study. However, today, there are opportunities for women to develop extensive knowledge of Torah and they can become leaders as Torah scholars.

Scholars suggest that women in leadership positions who are religiously focused will have a large positive impact on religious growth and observance of Jewish law for women in their communities (Auman, 2016; Henkin, 2021; Lichtenstein, 2016; Rosenberg, 2012; Wolowelsky, 2016). Female leaders will enhance the spiritual growth of young girls in need of female role models and spiritual guides (Henkin, 2021; Rosenberg, 2012). Rosenberg (2012) even asserts that women leaders can have a positive impact on the spiritual growth of

men and boys within their communities. This paper will continue the analysis of the importance of female Torah scholars and their impact. It will measure if having a female Torah scholar as a role model for high school students impacts students' commitment to Torah and mitzvot, their desire to continue learning Torah after high school, and aspirations to become a Torah scholar.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

This study will consider the impact of female Torah-scholar role models on high school students. In this study, a female Torah scholar is defined as a female who has dedicated years to the study of Torah and is known to be knowledgeable in Torah through her teachings in the classroom, public lectures, online classes, or published works.

Using a quantitative study, we will examine the relationship between exposure to female Torah scholars and high school students' level of religious practice, desire to continue learning Torah after high school, and aspirations to become a Torah scholar. We will also determine if there is a difference based on the gender of the mentor and gender of the student.

Research Question 1: Using a regression model, what impact does exposure to female Torah-scholar role models have on predicting students' level of religiosity, when controlling for academic achievement, self-esteem, mental health, and religious homogeneity with parents? Do students who are exposed to female Torah scholars have a higher level of religious practice?

Hypothesis #1: High exposure to female Torah-scholar role models will predict high levels of religious commitment when controlling for academic achievement, self-esteem, mental health, and religious homogeneity with parents.

Hypothesis #2: The positive relationship between exposure to female Torah scholars and religiosity will be more significant for female students than male students.

Hypothesis #3: There will be many more female students than male students who have been exposed to female Torah-scholar role models.

Hypothesis 4: There will be more exposure to female Torah-scholar role models for male students in a co-ed school than those in a single-gender school.

Research Question 2: Does having a male or female Torah-scholar role model predict that a student will desire to continue learning Torah after high school?

Hypothesis #1: Having a male or female Torah-scholar role model will predict higher levels of desire to continue learning Torah after high school.

Hypothesis #2: Having a same-gender role model will be a stronger predictor of a desire to continue learning Torah after high school.

Hypothesis #3: The positive correlation between exposure to female Torah scholars and desire to learn Torah will be more significant for female students than male students.

Research Question 3: Does having a male or female Torah-scholar role model predict that a student will aspire to become Torah scholar?

Hypothesis #1: Having a male or female Torah-scholar role model will predict high levels of high school students desiring to become Torah scholars.

Hypothesis #2: The positive correlation between exposure to female Torah scholars and desire to be a Torah scholar will be more significant for female students than male students.

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Rationale

The study used a quasi-experimental correlational research design using the data collected from a survey to test causal relationships. The goal was to determine the effect of exposure to female Torah scholars on high school students in relation to their religiosity as well as their desire to continue learning Torah after high school and hopes to become a Torah scholar. In this study, a female Torah scholar was defined as a female who has dedicated years to the study of Torah and is known to be knowledgeable in Torah, through her teachings in the classroom, public lectures, online classes, or published works. Religiosity was defined as the level of outward commitment the students have to Jewish practices and was measured by the average score on the 59 items of the “action” subscale of the JewBALE. Desire to continue learning Torah after high school was defined by the students’ self-reporting desire to continue Torah learning in life as measured by their desire to learn in Yeshiva post-high school and throughout their lives. The hope to become a Torah scholar was defined as the students’ current desire to dedicate years to Torah study and to become proficient in Torah learning which was measured by several questions asking about their desire to work in the Torah world in the future and their aspirations to become a Torah scholar.

Measures

The measure used for data collection and analysis was The Jewish Beliefs Actions and Living Evaluation 3.0 (JewBALE 3.0; Goldberg, 2023), a self-administered anonymous scale consisting of 224 questions intending to provide a better understanding of what students believe (BELIEFS) and do (ACTIONS) in relation to their Judaism. The survey consisted of 36 items concerning belief (e.g., I recognize and appreciate the greatness of God) and 59 items concerning actions related to Orthodox Jewish practice (e.g., I make brachot throughout my day), though some items were gender specific so no one individual would see all 59 items. The measure was broken down into separate subscales for beliefs and actions. For beliefs, the sub-scales were: divine providence with relation to the world, divine providence with relation to the individual, fear/love/awe of God, joyful/meaningful life (positive spiritual connection to the divine), divinity/truth of Torah, rabbinic authority, relationship to Israel, and outlook on secular studies. For actions, the subscales were: Jewish tradition including community service, tefilla, Shabbat, holidays, kashrut, study of Torah, and modesty. In addition to the belief and action scales, the measure included the DUKE profile for mental health and the Socio-Religious Scale of Personal Beliefs. Additionally, there were demographic questions to understand more about the student and their family's religious background as well as questions about role models, at-risk behaviors, connection to Torah scholars and enjoyment of learning, and desire to continue learning/being involved in the Jewish community in the long term.

In 2006, Dr. Scott Goldberg founded a measure named JewBALE, the Jewish Beliefs Actions and Living Evaluation, to measure religiosity and spirituality in students (Goldberg, 2006). Religiosity was identified through evaluating students' involvement in

religious practices, rules, and rituals. Levels of spirituality were defined as an engagement in a belief system about God and truths of life (Barry et al., 2010; Benson et al., 2012).

JewBALE 1.0 began as a 175-item questionnaire containing 66 belief questions and 109 questions on religious actions. These questions were constructed based on interviewing 10 Orthodox Rabbis and three women in leadership positions in the Jewish community. Hundreds of students completed this questionnaire, and many dissertations were written based on the data. In 2008, JewBALE was further updated and developed to simplify ambiguous statements and remove repetitive questions (Goldberg, 2008). In 2016, JewBALE 2.0 was developed which tightened the belief and actions questions and included the DUKE Health Profile and a Socio-Religious Scale of Personal Beliefs to incorporate questions about health and feelings. JewBALE 2.0 consisted of 167 questions. The JewBALE measure has been administered to high school students, middle-school students, and emerging adults who studied for one year in Israel (Weinstein, 2020).

In 2023, JewBALE was updated again by a group of Azrieli students, all administrators and Torah leaders in the Jewish community, who revised and adapted the language to incorporate contemporary issues faced by Modern-Orthodox teenagers. The new and improved JewBALE 3.0 (Goldberg, 2023) will be used to study peer influence, at-risk predictors, and the influences of Torah teachers on their students, among other constructs. For the current study, in addition to the questions regarding belief and practices, the JewBALE 3.0 was expanded to explore the effects of having female Torah-scholar role models. Several questions were added to the JewBALE measure relating to Torah role models, women leadership, and Talmud Torah. This study focuses on the results from the questions regarding beliefs and actions as well as the newly added questions about female

Torah scholars, male and female Torah role models, desire to learn Torah, and aspirations to become a Torah scholar. The variable “female Torah scholars” which was defined as women who are knowledgeable in Torah and have dedicated years to learning, was measured by taking the average response to the following statements, each measured on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree):

- I have interacted with female Torah scholars in my school.
- I have interacted with female Torah scholars in my community.
- I read books and articles of female Torah scholars.
- I listen to female Torah scholars’ classes/shiurim in person or online.
- I have a role model that is a female Torah scholar.

Additionally, questions were added to the JewBALE 3.0 (Goldberg, 2023) in order to assess the students’ current desire to learn Torah. This subscale measured the amount of enjoyment students currently have studying Torah while in high school and was calculated by taking the mean of the following statements, which were measured on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree):

- I set aside time to study Torah not required by my school.
- I enjoy studying Torah.
- I enjoy learning Torah inside from sefarim/traditional texts.

A desire to continue learning Torah after high school was defined by asking students to self-report their intention to continue studying Torah. It was measured by taking the average answer on these two questions which were measured on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree):

- I intend to study Torah in Israel after high school.
- I would like to continue to learn Torah throughout my life.

In order to evaluate the students' desire to become a Torah scholar, the following questions were added to the JewBALE 3.0 (Goldberg, 2023). Again, these questions were measured on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) and the subscale was calculated by taking the mean score of the following statements:

- I want to get involved in teaching Torah in my community.
- I want to be a Torah teacher in a school.
- I envision myself becoming a Torah scholar.

In order to compare the effects of students having male or female Torah-scholar role models, the following questions were added to JewBALE 3.0 (Goldberg, 2023). Again, these questions were measured on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Having a role model will be calculated by agreeing to either or both of the statements (scoring 5 or above). If they rate both 4 or below they are deemed as not having a Torah scholar role model.

- I have a role model that is a Female Torah scholar.
- I have a role model that is a Male Torah scholar.

Finally, the variables which were controlled for were: academic achievement, mental health, self-esteem, and religious homogeneity with parents. Academic achievement was measured by asking the students about which track they are in in school as well as their academic grade; mental health was measured by the DUKE mental health profile, and religious homogeneity with parents, which was defined as having the same level of observance with their parents,

was measured based on the students self-reporting their religious observance in relation to their parents ("I am stricter in my religious practices than my parents" and "My belief in God is stronger than my parents' belief").

Sampling

There was a total of 974 students from 14 Modern-Orthodox schools who agreed to participate in the study. Not all of the students completed the survey. Out of the 974 who began the survey, a total of 767 completed the survey. For this study, the sample size varied for each research question based on the total number of participants who answered the corresponding questions. The sample consisted of both male and female high school students between 9th and 12th grade. Six schools were single-gender schools and eight were co-ed schools. Of the entire sample, there were proportionately fewer 12th graders (16%), whereas there were nearly equal 9-11th graders who responded; 31% were in 9th grade, 26% were in 10th grade, and 27% were in 11th grade. Most of the participants went to single gender schools (66%), with 53% of the sample going to a single-gender female school, and 12% going to a single-gender male school, while 34% went to a coeducational school. Most of the participants were of Ashkenazi decent (81%), 14% were Sefardi and the remaining 5% were other, which was either a Mix, Chabad, Yemenite, etc. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of the sample was female, 25% of the sample was male, and 2% stated other.

Procedure

In May and June 2023, researchers sent emails to principals of Modern-Orthodox schools to request their participation in administering the JewBALE 3.0 to their students. Participating schools were offered a summary of their school's individual data compared to

other similar schools. Researchers reached out to 37 Modern-Orthodox schools, 17 of which have participated in previous iterations. A total of 14 agreed to participate in varying capacities. Some schools allocated class time and allowed students to take it during school hours and others sent links directly to their students and requested that they complete the survey on their own time. Unique links were set up on the online platform for each grade in each participating school to help monitor responses. The students took the survey voluntarily, and parents and students had the option to opt out of participating in the questionnaire. The students took the survey anonymously via the online link that their school provided. The survey took about 30 minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

The responses were studied and analyzed to determine the differences in the responses of male and female students, comparing religious commitment based on exposure to religious leaders and role models. In addition, the relationship between the desire to continue learning Torah after high school and aspirations to become a Torah scholar based on exposure to Torah-scholar role models were analyzed. In order to evaluate research question one, regression analyses were conducted with the predictor being exposure to female Torah scholars and the dependent variable being students' level of beliefs and actions, while controlling for academic achievement, self-esteem, mental health, and religious homogeneity with parents. A multiple regression was also conducted inputting gender as a second predictor to determine whether the relationship is influenced by gender of the student.

Research questions two and three were also evaluated using regression analysis, looking at whether exposure to any Torah scholar predicts continued learning of Torah for

research question two or predicts the desire to become a Torah scholar for research question three.

Power Analysis

Power analysis was conducted to determine the optimal sample size for this study. Based on the quasi-experimental study design, multiple regressions were conducted to determine whether two factors predict greater religiosity in students. In this study there were two predictors. Cohen (1988) suggested that the desired power level should be a minimum of .8, meaning the corresponding Beta value (type II error) would be set at .2. Additionally, Cohen (1988) defines a small effect size as 2%, and a medium effect size as 15%. The accepted level of effect size is 10%. Therefore, in calculation of the optimal sample size, the effect size was set to 0.1, the type II error will be set to .2, and alpha (the significance level) will be set to 0.05. In order to achieve the optimal power, there should be a minimum of 90 participants. Our sample had 767 participants, so there was optimal power.

Reliability and Validity

Content and construct validity was confirmed by sending a draft of the JewBALE 3.0 to experts in the field. More than 10 educators reviewed the survey questions carefully as well as three educational consultants. Each reviewer made edits based on the content and wording of the survey to ensure that all aspects of each subscale were complete. When they felt that they were not, they suggested additional content to fully measure the area. The comments were carefully reviewed and incorporated into the final version.

Reliability of the measures that were used in this study was tested through Chronbach's alpha reliability analysis. All subscales were found to be above .7 which is considered a sufficient reliability level.

Total Religiosity: alpha= .95

Desire to continue learning Torah: alpha= .79

Desire to become a Torah Scholar: alpha= .87

Chapter 5

RESULTS

Research Question 1: Using a regression model, what impact does exposure to female Torah-scholar role models have on predicting students' level of religiosity, when controlling for academic achievement, self-esteem, mental health, and religious homogeneity with parents? Do students who are exposed to female Torah scholars have a higher level of religious practice?

Hypothesis #1: High exposure to female Torah-scholar role models will predict high levels of religious commitment when controlling for academic achievement, self-esteem, mental health, and religious homogeneity with parents.

A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to determine whether exposure to female Torah scholars predicted students' level of religiosity while controlling for academic achievement, self-esteem, mental health, and religious homogeneity with parents. Academic achievement, self-esteem, mental health, and religious homogeneity with parents were entered as the first step and exposure to female Torah scholars, as measured by averaging together questions about the amount they've interacted with and listen to female Torah scholars, were entered as the second step. The overall model was significant; $F(5, 709)=41.78, p<.001$. The ΔR^2 while controlling the variables was .03, $F(1,709)=28.15, p<.001$.

That implies that 3% of the variance of the religiosity score was accounted for by exposure to female Torah-scholar role models while controlling for academic achievement, self-esteem, mental health, and religious homogeneity with parents.

Exposure to female Torah-scholar role models was a significant predictor in the model, $Beta=.181$, $t=5.31$, $p<.001$.

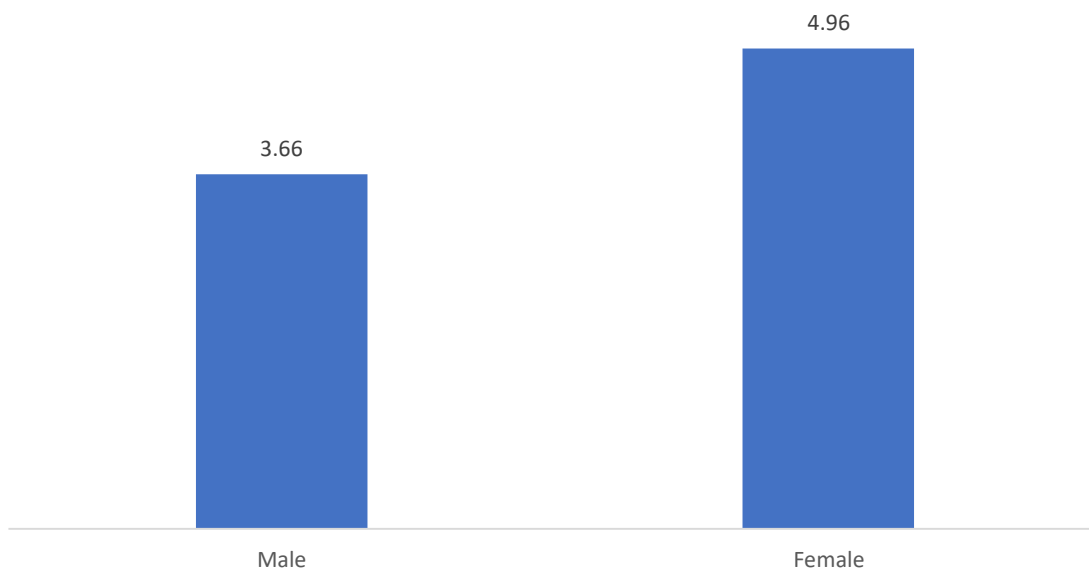
Hypothesis #2: The positive relationship between exposure to female Torah scholars and religiosity will be more significant for female students than male students.

To determine whether there was a difference in the level of prediction of exposure to female Torah scholars on overall religiosity between males and females, the data was split by gender and then the same hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted. The overall model was significant for both males, $F(5,163)=16.47$, $p<.001$ and females, $F(5,527)=44.19$, $p<.001$. The ΔR^2 for females was .14, $F(1,527)=103.58$, $p<.001$ whereas the ΔR^2 for males was .04, $F(1,163)=9.62$, $p<.01$, implying that exposure to female Torah scholars predicted religiosity more significantly for females than for males. For females, 14% of the variance of overall religiosity could be explained by their exposure to female Torah scholars, whereas for males, only 4% of the variance of overall religiosity could be explained by their exposure to female Torah scholars. Looking at the Beta values, exposure to female Torah scholars negatively predicted actions for males, $Beta=-.20$, $t=-3.10$, $p<.01$, and exposure to female Torah scholars positively predicted actions for females, $Beta=.40$, $t=10.18$, $p<.001$.

Hypothesis #3: There will be many more female students than male students who have been exposed to female Torah-scholar role models.

Exposure to female Torah-scholar models was measured by taking the average of several questions such as: “I have interacted with female Torah scholars in my school” and “I have interacted with female Torah scholars in my community.” Each question was rated on a scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The average score for females was 4.96 (SD=1.38) and for males was 3.66 (SD=1.67). An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the noted gender difference was significant. The difference was significant, $t(727)=-10.30$, $p<.001$, such that women were more likely to have exposure to female Torah scholars than males.

Figure 1: *Gender Differences on Exposure to Female Torah Scholars*

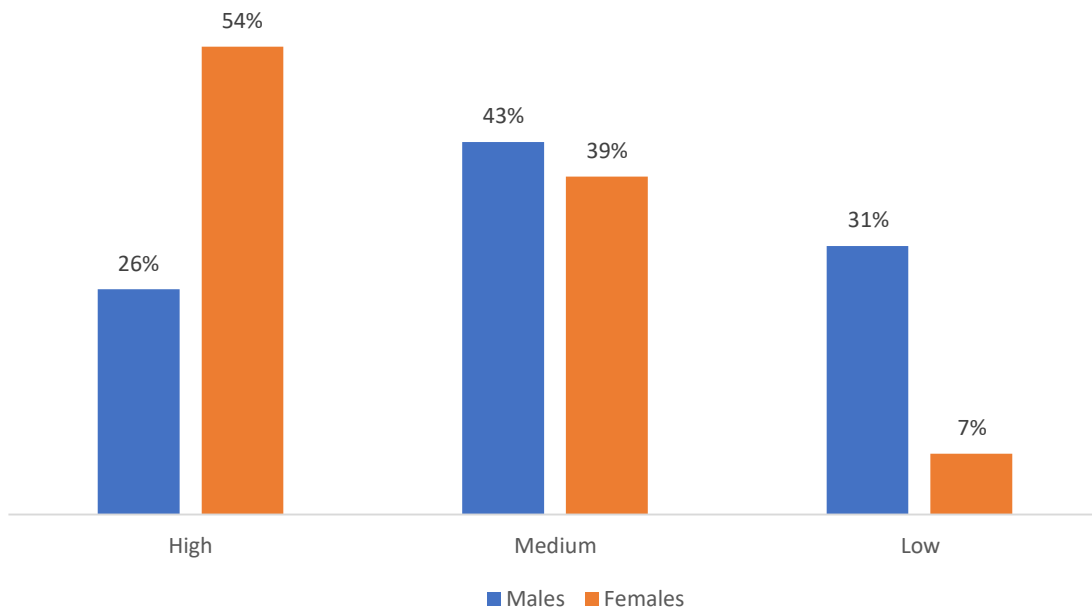


Additionally, the score was broken up by high, medium, and low levels of exposure to female Torah scholars. A high score on the exposure to female Torah scholars was

someone who got at least a 5, a medium score was between 3 and 5, and a low score was under 3.

The percentage of females who had a high score was 54% whereas the percentage of males who had a high score was 26%, indicating that many more females had a high score than males. A chi-square test was conducted to ascertain whether the distribution of highs, mediums, and lows were similar for males and females. The model was significant, $\chi^2(4)=83.90, p<.001$, indicating that females were more likely to have higher exposure to female Torah scholars than males.

Figure 2: *Gender Differences on the Level of Exposure to Female Torah Scholars*

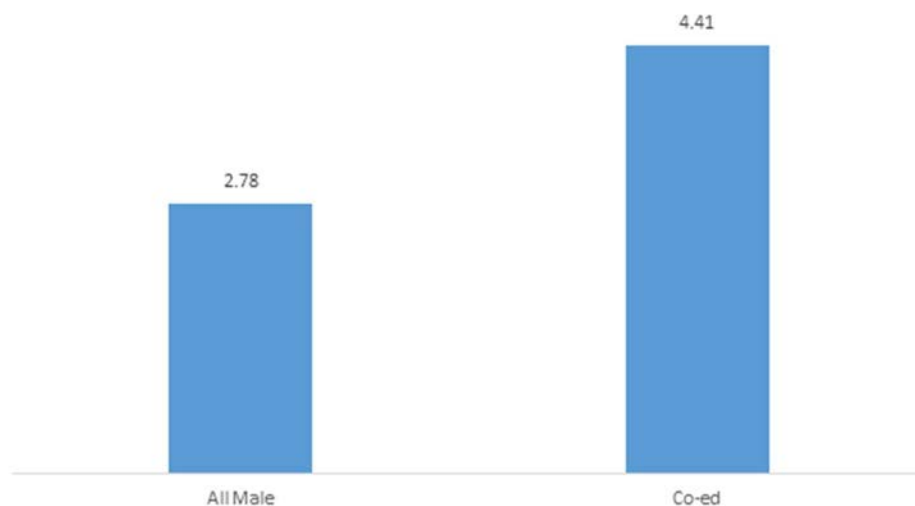


Hypothesis #4: There will be more exposure to female Torah-scholar role models for male students in a co-ed school than those in a single-gender school.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a difference between the amount of exposure to female Torah scholars between males in

single-gender and co-ed schools. The overall model was significant, $t(175)=-7.39, p<.001$, such that males in co-ed schools had much more exposure to female role models ($M=4.41, SD=1.46$) than males in single-gender schools ($M=2.78, SD=1.47$).

Figure 3: *Male Differences in Exposure to Female Role Models Depending on School Type*

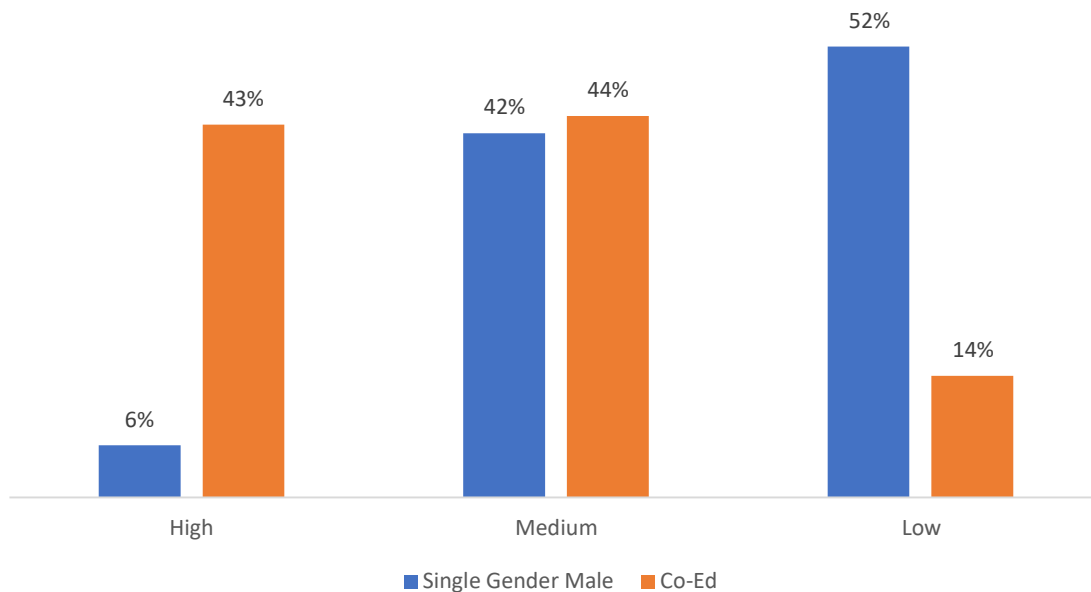


Additionally, a chi-square analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a difference in the breakdown of males in the high, medium, and low exposure groups to female Torah scholars depending on type of school they attend, co-ed or single-gender.

There was a significant difference; $\chi^2(2)=43.35, p<.001$. Males in co-ed schools had much higher exposure to female Torah scholars than males in single gender schools.

Below is the breakdown:

Figure 4: *Differences in Exposure to Female Torah Scholars for Males in Single Gender versus Co-ed Schools*



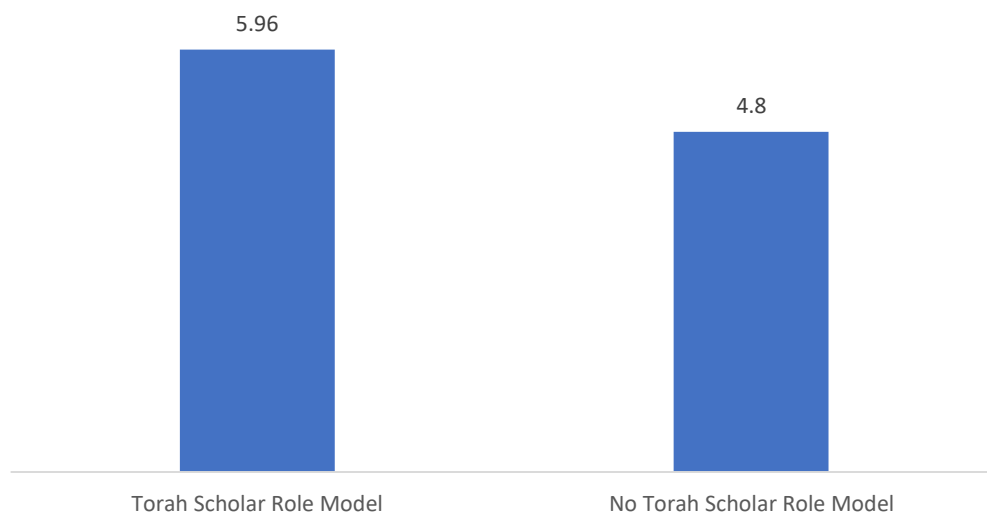
Research Question 2: Does having a male or female Torah-scholar role model predict that a student will desire to continue learning Torah after high school, when controlling for academic achievement, self-esteem, mental health, and religious homogeneity with parents?

Hypothesis #1: Having a male or female Torah-scholar role model will predict higher levels of desire to continue learning Torah after high school.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a difference in the amount of desire the students have to continue learning Torah after high school based on whether or not they have either a male or female role model. Having a male or female Torah-scholar role model was calculated based off whether they at least agreed to the statement “I have a role model that is a female Torah scholar” or “I have a role model that is a male Torah scholar.” There was a significant difference between the groups such that those who said they had either a female or male Torah-scholar role model had higher levels of desire to continue learning Torah after high school, $t(851)=-11.06, p<.001$. Those who had

either a male or female Torah-scholar role model had much more of a desire to continue learning Torah post-high school ($M=5.96$, $SD=1.32$) than those who did not have a male or female Torah-scholar role model ($M=4.80$, $SD=1.75$).

Figure 5: *Differences in the Desire to Continue Learning Torah Between Students with and without Torah-Scholar Role Models*



In addition, a simple regression was conducted to determine whether the extent of having a Torah-scholar role model predicted the desire to continue learning Torah after high school. In this model, the extent to which they had a Torah-scholar role model was the predictor variable and the desire to continue learning Torah after high school was the criterion (dependent) variable. The model was significant, $R^2=.13$, $F(1,851)=1.22$, $p<.001$. Thirteen percent of the variance of desire to learn Torah after high school could be accounted for by the degree to which they have a Torah-scholar role model, meaning the more they report having a role model (stronger connection), the more likely they are to want to continue learning Torah after high school.

Hypothesis #2: Having a same-gender role model will be a stronger predictor of a desire to continue learning Torah after high school.

To determine whether the same-gender Torah-scholar role model plays a difference in their desire to continue learning Torah after high school, a two-way ANOVA was conducted. The independent variables were gender (male and female) and the type of Torah-scholar role model they had, which was divided into a female, male, both, or neither. Each of the main effects were significant. The gender main effect, $F(1,7)=29.97, p<.001$, was significant such that overall, females had higher level of desire to continue learning Torah ($M=5.60, SD=1.54$) than males ($M=5.13, SD=1.79$). The type of Torah-scholar role model was significant; $F(3,7)=13.76, p<.001$. Those students who had both male and female Torah-scholar role models had a significantly higher desire to continue learning Torah ($M=6.17, SD=1.19$) than those who had no Torah-scholar role model ($M=4.99, SD=1.70$) and those who had a male Torah-scholar role model ($M=5.70, SD=1.57$). Those who had only male ($M=5.70, SD=1.57$) or only female Torah-scholar role models ($M=5.80, SD=1.34$) had a significantly higher desire to continue learning Torah than those who had no Torah-scholar role model ($M=4.99, SD=1.70$).

There was a significant interaction effect, $F(3,7)=3.14, p<.05$, such that female students who had a female Torah-scholar role model had a higher desire to continue learning Torah than female students who had a male role model. Male students who had a male Torah-scholar role model had more desire to continue learning Torah after high school than

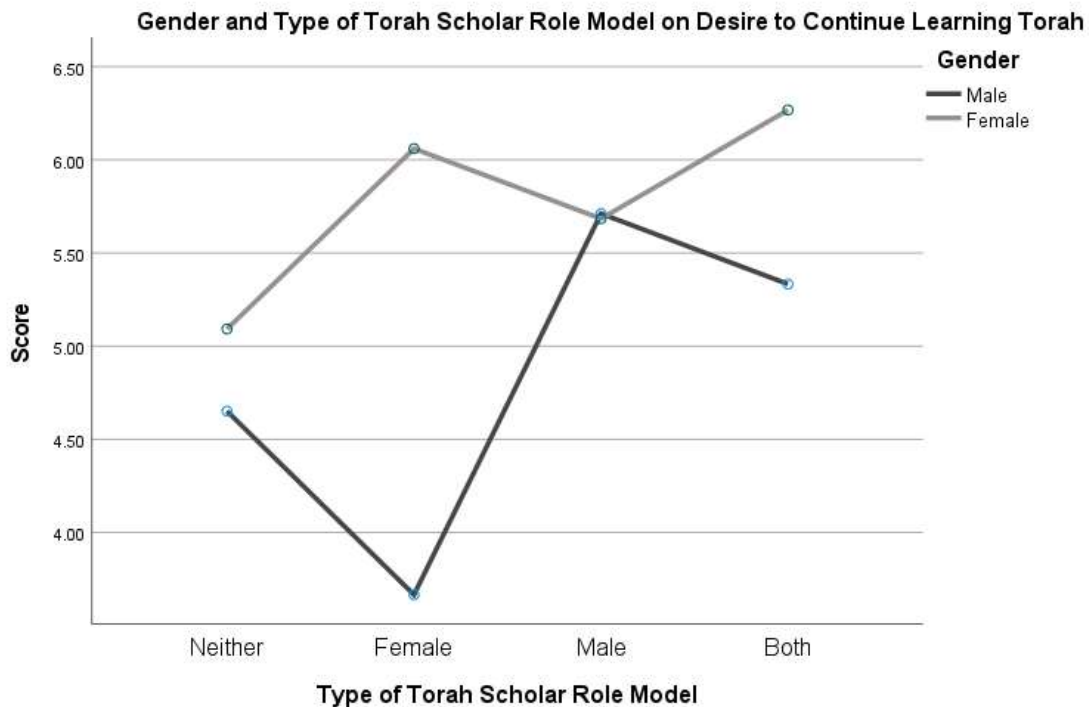
male students who had a female Torah-scholar role model. Table 1 and figure 6 below display the means for each group and the interaction effect.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Desire to Continue Learning after High School based on Gender and Type of Torah-Scholar Role Model

Type of Torah-Scholar Role Model	Gender	N	M	SD
Neither	Female	336	4.64	1.88
	Male	98	5.10	1.63
Female	Female	25	6.06	1.07
	Male	3	3.67	1.61
Male	Female	38	5.68	1.65
	Male	78	5.71	1.54
Both	Female	232	6.27	1.09
	Male	27	5.33	1.67

Figure 6: *Interaction Effect between the Gender of the Student, the Gender of the Torah-scholar Role Model and the Desire to Continue Learning Torah after High School*



Hypothesis #3: *The positive correlation between exposure to female Torah scholars and desire to continue learning Torah will be more significant for female students than male students.*

In order to determine whether exposure to a female Torah scholar predicted whether a student will continue learning Torah after high school, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted. The independent variable was exposure to female Torah scholars and the dependent variable (the criterion) was the desire to continue learning Torah after high school. The first step controlled for self-esteem, mental health, academic achievement, and religious

homogeneity with parents. The model was significant; $\Delta R^2=.06$, $F(1,707)=57.12$, $p<.001$. Six percent of the variance of the desire to continue to learn Torah after high school could be explained by their exposure to female Torah scholars while controlling for self-esteem, mental health, academic achievement, and religious homogeneity with parents.

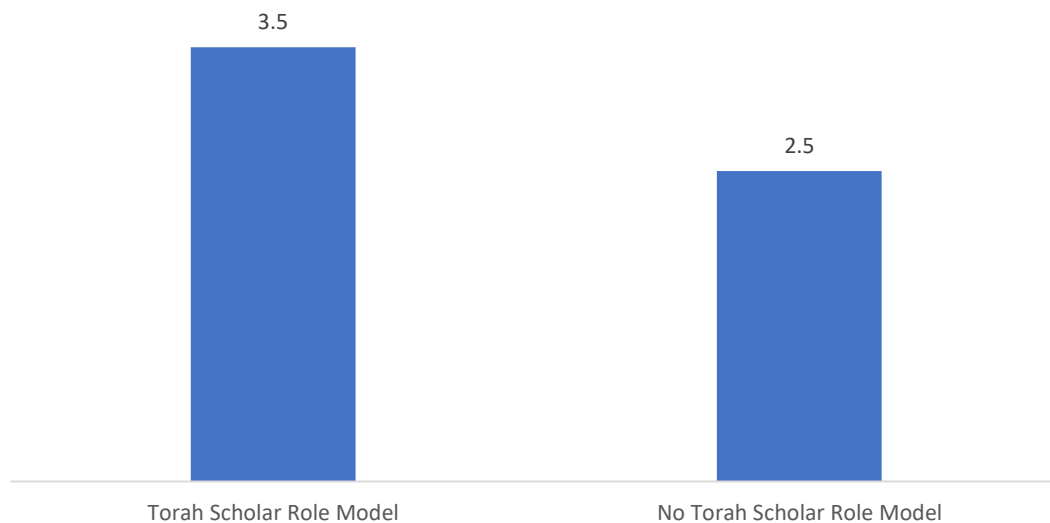
In order to determine whether there were differences in the gender of the participant on the predictive value of the exposure to a female Torah scholar on continuing to learn Torah after high school, hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted for males and females separately. The independent variable was exposure to female Torah scholars and the dependent variable (the criterion) was the desire to continue learning Torah after high school. The first step controlled for self-esteem, academic achievement, and religious homogeneity with parents. For females, the model was significant; $\Delta R^2=.17$, $F(1,527)=129.27$, $p<.001$. Seventeen percent of the variance of the desire to continue to learn Torah after high school could be explained by their exposure to female Torah scholars while controlling for self-esteem, academic achievement, and religious homogeneity with parents. The beta value=.442, $t=11.37$, $p<.001$, which implies that females having exposure to female Torah scholars have a stronger desire to continue learning Torah after high school. For males, the model was significant, $\Delta R^2=.03$, $F(1,161)=5.83$, $p<.05$. Three percent of the variance of the desire to continue to learning Torah can be explained by their exposure to female Torah scholars while controlling for mental health, self-esteem, academic achievement, and religious homogeneity with parents. The beta value =-.163, $t=-2.41$, $p<.05$, which implies that males having exposure to female Torah scholars have less desire to continue learning Torah after high school.

Research Question 3: Does having a male or female Torah-scholar role model predict that a student will aspire to become a Torah scholar?

*Hypothesis #1: Having a male or female Torah-scholar role model **will predict** high levels of high school students desiring to become Torah scholars.*

An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether having a Torah-scholar role model is associated with a higher desire to becoming a Torah scholar. The model was significant, $t(741)=-.933$, $p<.001$, such that those students who agreed to having a Torah-scholar role model had a higher desire to become a Torah scholar ($M=3.50$, $SD=1.48$) than those who did not have a Torah-scholar role model ($M=2.50$, $SD=1.22$).

Figure 7: *Differences in the Desire to Become a Torah Scholar Between Students with and without Torah-scholar Role Models*



In addition, a simple regression was conducted to determine whether having a Torah-scholar role model predicted the desire to become a Torah scholar. The predictor variable was having a Torah-scholar role model and the dependent variable was the desire to become a Torah scholar. The model was significant, $R^2=.11$, $F(1,741)=87.13$, $p<.001$. Eleven percent of the variance of the desire to become a Torah scholar can be attributed to having a Torah scholar role model.

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there was a difference in the desire to become a Torah scholar based on gender, type of Torah-scholar role model that they had and the interaction between the two. There was a significant difference based on the type of role model that they had, $F(3,7)=10.11$, $p<.001$, such that the students who had both male and female Torah-scholar role models had a significantly higher desire to become a Torah scholar ($M=3.68$, $SD=1.43$) than those who had a female Torah-scholar role model ($M=2.68$, $SD=1.27$) and no Torah-scholar role model ($M=2.91$, $SD=1.19$).

Figure 8: *Differences in the Desire to Become a Torah Scholar Based on the type of Torah-Scholar Role Model the Students had*

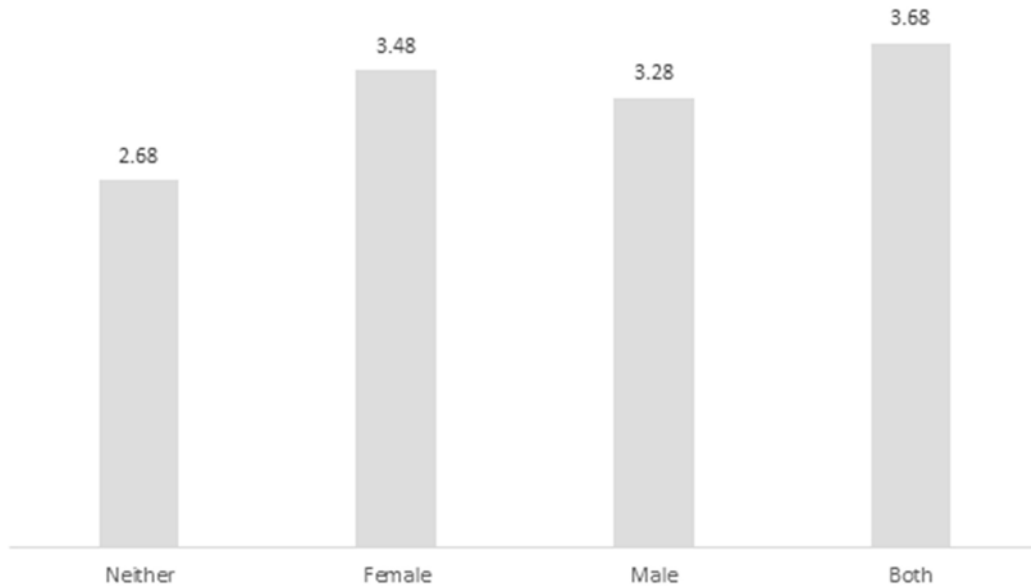


Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for each type of Torah Scholar and their Desire to Become a Torah Scholar

Type of Torah Scholar Role Model	N	M	SD
Neither	324	2.68	1.27
Female	28	2.90	1.19
Male	117	3.28	1.67
Both	259	3.68	1.43

Figure 9: Gender Differences in the Desire to Become a Torah Scholar based on the type of Torah Scholar Role Model the Students had

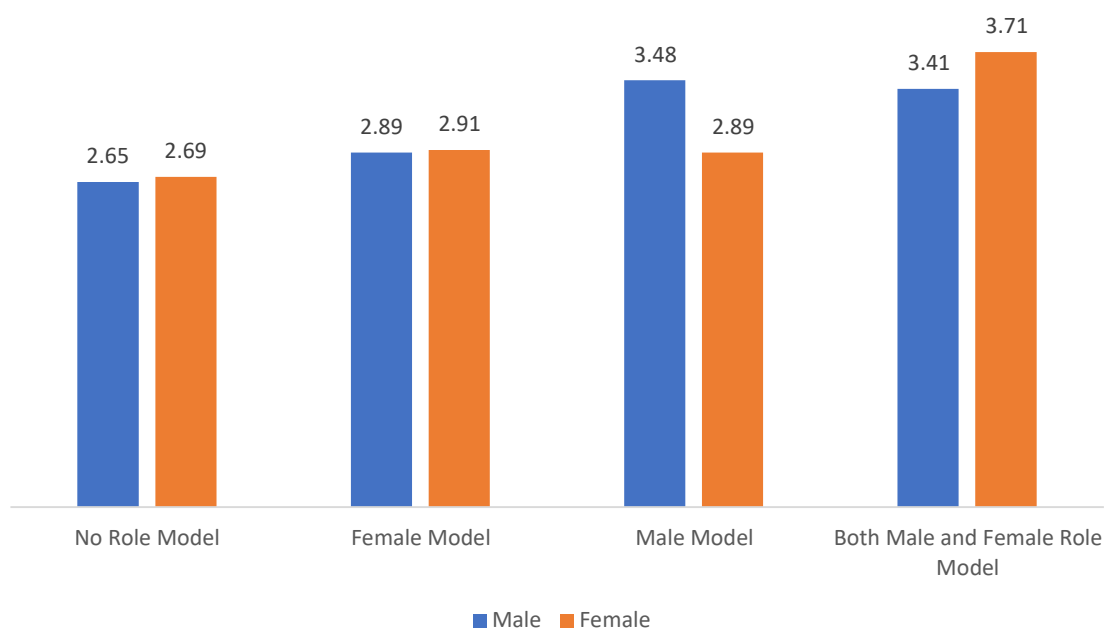


Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for each type of Torah Scholar and their Desire to Become a Torah Scholar based on the Student Gender

Type of Torah Scholar Role Model	Gender	N	M	SD
Neither	Female	257	2.69	1.25
	Male	67	2.65	1.37
Female	Female	25	2.91	1.24

	Male	3	2.89	.84
Male	Female	38	2.89	1.40
	Male	79	3.48	1.76
Both	Female	232	3.72	1.37
	Male	27	3.41	1.88

Hypothesis #2: The positive correlation between exposure to female Torah scholars and desire to be a Torah scholar will be more significant for female students than male students.

A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted for male and female students separately to determine whether exposure to female Torah scholars predicts the desire to become a Torah scholar more significantly for female than male students while controlling for self-esteem, academic achievement, mental health, and religious homogeneity. Exposure to female Torah scholars significantly predicts the desire to become a Torah scholar for females; $\Delta R^2=.12$, $F(1,525)=79.90$, $p<.001$. Exposure to female Torah scholars does not significantly predict the desire to become a Torah scholar for males, $\Delta R^2=0$, $F(1,161)=0$, *ns*. Thereby the positive correlation between exposure to female Torah scholars and a desire to be a Torah scholar is more significant for female than male students.

Chapter 6

DISCUSSION

This study explored the relationship between effects of high school students' exposure to female Torah-scholars: both the general relationship of that exposure to the current religious commitment of the students as well as the specific connection to their future aspiration towards Torah study and becoming a Torah scholar. The overall findings, when looking at the combined results of all the students in the study, showed that exposure to female Torah scholars predicted a higher level of religious commitment, a desire to continue learning Torah, and aspirations to become a Torah scholar for high-school students. However, when dividing by gender, female students not only had a higher level of exposure to female Torah scholars, but the relationship between that exposure and these three factors was significantly stronger than for the male students. Additionally, when comparing the relationship between having either gender Torah-scholar role model and aspirations to continue learning Torah and become a Torah scholar, the study found that male Torah-scholar role models had a stronger impact on male students and female Torah-scholar role models had a greater influence on female students. However, acquiring both a female and male Torah role model has the strongest impact.

Religious Commitment

In analyzing the relationship between exposure to female Torah-scholar role models and the religiosity levels of high school students, when controlling for academic achievement, self-esteem, mental health, and religious homogeneity with parents, the study not only showed correlation but also predictability. These results are consistent with the general literature that suggests that role models and mentors have a significant effect on people in all stages of life (Gerk et al., 2022; Kroll et al., 2021; Noe, 1988; Vierstraete, 2005). Moreover, studies that have participants from the Modern-Orthodox community have confirmed significant correlation between high levels of religiosity in adolescents and interaction with role models (Eisenberg, 2010; Leventer-Betesh, 2023; Tannenbaum, 2007; Weinstein, 2020). Some of these studies focused specifically on the correlation between Judaic role models, including Torah role models and Judaic studies teachers, and high levels of religiosity in high school students (Leventer-Betesh 2023; Strulowitz, 2023; Weinstein 2020). Furthering these earlier studies, this study concentrated on one specific type of Torah role model, namely a female Torah-scholar role model found either inside or outside of the classroom. By using a hierarchical multiple regression, we found that the direction of influence in these correlations stemmed from exposure to female Torah-scholar role models. In a world where there is much focus placed on the religious growth of our children, it is noteworthy to show that exposure to a female Torah-scholar role model explained 3% of the variance of overall religiosity in Modern Orthodox student for both boys and girls. Especially if we want our children to be engaged in religious life, it is important to see how exposure to female Torah-scholars can help inspire their religious practice.

Desire to Learn Torah/Aspirations to be a Torah Scholar

The hypothesis that exposure to a female Torah-scholar role model will predict higher levels of students' desire to learn Torah and become Torah scholars was supported by the findings of this study. Furthermore, similar results were found by the overall sample of students who reported having both a male and female role model. These findings are consistent with research that suggests that having a mentor enables the mentee to achieve success and growth (Gerk et al., 2022). This is especially true in education, in which the mentor cultivates his students' growth regarding their studies (Vierstraete, 2005). Moreover, having a mentor who is knowledgeable and an expert in one specific area of study increases the interest of his/her students in that same area of study (Kim, 2021).

This study, which focused specifically on having a mentor who is a Torah scholar, showed a strong predictability between exposure to female Torah scholars and a desire to continue learning Torah and become a Torah scholar. By experiencing a relationship with a Torah scholar, providing students with the ability to envision themselves in the shoes of their mentor, students can dream of a similar future of learning and teaching Torah. Furthermore, based on research which describes female leaders as transformational, interactive, and collaborative (Brahnam et al., 2005; Johansen, 2007; Rosener, 1990), it should follow that a *female* Torah scholar role model specifically would encourage her students to grow in religious practice and devotion to Torah study.

Differentiating by Gender of Role Model

After establishing the impact of specifically female role models, our study also wanted to determine if having either gender of Torah role models can be a strong predictor for students' desire to continue learning Torah after high school and aspirations to become a Torah scholar. A regression determined that having a Torah role model accounts for 13% of the variance of desire to learn Torah after high school. In an independent t-test, it was determined that students without any Torah scholar role model reported a lower desire to continue to learn Torah. On the Likert scale of 1-7 (where 7 indicates complete agreement, 6 indicates strong agreement, 5 denotes agreement, 4 is ambivalence, and 3 infers that the students disagrees, 2 suggests strong disagreement, and 1 means they completely disagree), students without a Torah role model only scored 4.8 out of 7 on the Likert scale, implying slightly less than agreement, as opposed to those with exposure who scored 5.96, implying almost strong agreement. Similarly, an independent sample t-test showed that students who had a Torah role model, of either gender, reported more desire to become a Torah scholar in the future. The average of those with a role model was 3.5, meaning they slightly disagreed, as opposed to those without a role model who scored only a 2.5, implying strong disagreement. Moreover, a regression determined that the more students of either gender express that they have a Torah role model, whether male or female, accounts for 11% of the variance in students' aspirations to become a Torah role model.

These findings are in line with the abundance of research pertaining to the value of students having a role model to achieve success (Gerk et al., 2022; Vierstraete, 2005). Similarly, studies that have participants from the Modern-Orthodox community verify the strong relationship between Jewish role models and religious and spiritual growth of

students. Tannenbaum (2011) when describing a role model as a person who is respected and whom one wants to emulate, explains how a Jewish teacher can be the ultimate role model for inspiring religious growth. Studies using JewBALE 2.0, showed correlation between having a relationship with a Jewish studies teacher and higher levels of spirituality (Leventer-Betesh, 2023; Weinstein, 2020) and levels of religious observance (Strulowitz, 2023). The current research comes to build upon what was already established about students being inspired religiously by Torah role models but goes one step further; finding correlation between students who have a Torah role model and their desire to continue learning Torah and dream of Torah leadership and scholarship. This fits the general research that suggests that having a mentor who is an expert in a specific field of study increases the interest of their students in that same area of study (Kim, 2021). Thus, it follows that a student who has a Torah scholar as a role model would strive to emulate him or her by becoming a Torah scholar as well.

Differentiating by Gender of Students

In all three research questions: the level of religiosity, the desire to continue learning Torah, and the aspiration to be a Torah scholar, exposure to a female Torah-scholars had a greater effect on the female students than on the male students. More specifically, regarding the level of religiosity, 14% of the variance of religiosity for females was explained by the level of exposure to a female Torah scholar whereas only 4% of the variance of religiosity for males was explained by the level of exposure to female Torah scholars. In addition, the level of exposure to female Torah scholars significantly predicted the desire to continue learning Torah and the aspirations to become a Torah scholar for female students but not for male

students. A possible explanation for the lower impact of exposure to female Torah scholars on males could be that male students who reported exposure to female Torah scholars were generally also exposed to male Torah scholars. For female students who may have had no previous exposure to a Torah role model, the effect of being exposed to a female Torah scholar may reflect the duality of their only exposure to a role model as well as one that matches their gender.

For female students, there was also a positive correlation between exposure to female role models and desire to continue learning Torah and aspirations to become a Torah scholar. These findings regarding the positive effects of exposure to female role models on female students follows from the literature that asserts that when women who have already taken on leadership positions share their stories and experiences of overcoming challenges, it helps other women view themselves in those same positions (Rakestraw, 2017; Tulyshayan & Burey, 2021b). Exposure to female leadership allows the younger generations to dream of becoming leaders (Sandberg, 2017).

Furthermore, male students' exposure to female Torah-scholar role models was notably lower than female students; on a Likert scale from 1 to 7, female students averaged 4.96 when reporting exposure to female Torah-scholar role models, indicating agreement, whereas males ranked only 3.66, suggesting ambivalence. Additionally, the study showed a dissimilarity in the *degree* of exposure to a female Torah-scholar role model between male and female students. When focusing on just the students who reported exposure, 54% of females but only 26% of the male students reported a high level of exposure to a female Torah scholar. Most male students who reported having exposure only had medium (43%) or low amounts (31%) of contact with the female Torah scholar, while the number of female

students who reported medium (39%) or low (7%) exposure was lower. Furthermore, when differentiating between male students in co-ed schools and single-gender schools, those in co-ed schools had more exposure to female Torah scholars, ranking 4.41 out of 7, implying general agreement, than male students in single-gender schools who ranked only 2.78, indicating disagreement.

There are many reasons to account for the lack of exposure of high school boys to female Torah scholars. As research shows, same gender mentors are more successful than cross gendered (Noe, 1988), which may explain why it is more effective to have male teachers for male students. Additionally, having female mentors and role models could be viewed as improper or lead to complexities of gender dynamics (Clawson & Kram, 1984; Kroll et al., 2021), making it reasonable to avoid these situations for high school boys. Moreover, female leadership positions may be viewed as immodest (Sandberg, 2013), especially in an environment populated mostly by males. Thus, in a religious setting where modesty and separation of genders are valued principles, women may hold back from leadership positions (Rosenberg, 2012), and restricting male students in their exposure to female Torah scholars may be understandable.

In addition, the lack of actual female Torah role models in existence may account for their lack of exposure to male students, paralleling the findings of general research, where the dearth of female leaders and opportunities for women to acquire and develop the necessary skills for leadership lead to a lack of female leadership positions (Brown-Johnson & Scandura, 2007; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Kroll et al., 2021). Additionally, women are not taught to view themselves as leaders and therefore do not seek the degrees needed to be promoted to leadership positions (Maranto et al., 2018). This can be further explained by women's

tendency to have imposter syndrome, feelings of unworthiness to be considered a leader (Sandberg, 2013). Furthermore, women tend to turn down leadership roles to balance their family responsibilities (Maranto et al., 2018). The combination of having fewer female leaders and a lack of female role models causes the next generation of potential female leaders to feel like imposters in a world dominated by male leadership (Tulyshayan & Burey, 2021a).

This general research seems to parallel the realities of the Modern-Orthodox world, where there are less female Torah-scholar leaders than male Torah-scholar leaders. Traditionally, leadership has always been attributed to men (Hochbaum, 2019; Sacks, 2015), with legal limitations put on women's ability to reach certain leadership positions (Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Melachim, 1:5). Additionally, the conflict between balancing family and career aspirations is commonly found in the Orthodox Jewish world, where family is a core value, possibly preventing the acquisition of leadership positions. Furthermore, females' Torah education and opportunities for learning pale in comparison to their male peers (Rosenberg, 2012). While it has not been empirically proven, one could suggest that all these factors may account for why women may feel unconfident and ill-equipped to lead in the Torah world. It may follow that based on low numbers of existing female Torah scholars, they may choose to focus their efforts on teaching a female population, desiring to improve the educational experience of their own gender.

Impact on Male Students

For male students, having a male role model correlated with higher levels of desire to continue learning and aspirations to become a Torah scholar than those who had both male and female role models. Strangely, for desire to learn Torah, those students who reported having only a female Torah-scholar role model or no role model, neither male nor female, were found to have the least desire to continue learning Torah. However, when considering their desire to become a Torah scholar, those who reported having neither gender role model were those with the least desire.

This data is mostly congruent with the findings that same-gender role models have a greater effect on their protégé (Noe, 1988), as well as a more successful mentorship relationship (Dreher & Ash, 1990). Thus, it follows that male students are more inclined to want to be a Torah scholar from their interactions with a male Torah scholar than a female Torah scholar. Moreover, a male Torah scholar often wants his students to become his understudy, training them to become a Torah scholar with his style of learning and teaching, further influencing them to go into this profession. This fits the findings in general research that men often want male protégés to be their successors and continue their work (Epstein, 1970; Noe, 1988).

However, there may be additional external factors to explain why those who reported having both gender role models scored slightly below male students who only had male role models, and why those who only reported having a female role model had low scores. For example, there was a divide between co-ed schools and single-gender schools in their exposures to female Torah-scholar role models, where many more boys who reported being exposed to a female Torah scholar attended co-ed schools (averaging 4.41 on a Likert scale out of 7 reporting agreement in their exposure to female Torah scholars) and those who

reported no exposure went to single-gender schools (scoring 2.78 out of 7, indicating disagreement). Thus, the type of school and possibly other external factors may partially account for the lower scores of males with both gender role models and only female role models.

To explore this further, we ran a one-way ANOVA to check for differences in overall religiosity (actions), desire to continue learning Torah after high school, and desire to be a Torah scholar based on type of school, single gender versus co-ed. The findings were significant for two factors: religiosity and desire to continue learning after high school. For religiosity, those in single gender schools had higher levels of religiosity than those in a co-ed school (on a Likert scale where 7 indicates complete agreement, 5 connotes agreement and 1 implies complete disagreement; single-gender females scored 5.72, single-gender males scored 5.35, and students in co-ed schools scores 5.04). For desire to learn Torah after high school, again those in single-gender schools had a higher level of desire to continue learning Torah after high school than those students in a co-ed school (single-gender females scored 5.18, single-gender males scored 5.28, and students in co-ed schools scored 4.74). However, there was no significant difference between students in single-gender schools and co-ed schools for aspiring to become a Torah scholar.

When comparing only *male* students in single-gender schools and those in co-ed schools, using a one-way ANOVA, the study showed significant differences for all three factors: religiosity, desire to continue learning Torah, and aspirations to become a Torah scholar. Not only did males in single-gender schools have higher levels of religious commitment than males in co-ed schools (males in single-gender schools scored 5.34 and males in co-ed schools scored only a 4.81 out of 7), they also had a higher desire to continue

to learn Torah after high school (males in single gender schools scored 5.43 and those in co-ed schools scored 4.87 out of 7), and a higher aspiration to become Torah scholars (males in single-gender schools scored 3.43, implying slight disagreement, and those in co-ed schools only scored 2.89, implying more disagreement). These studies confirm that the negative results of our study about effects of exposure to female Torah scholars on male students may really be reflecting the low scores of male students in co-ed schools in general, since most males with exposure to female Torah scholars attend a co-ed school.

Impact on Female Students

In line with past studies that found that same-gender role models and mentorship is most productive and impactful (Noe, 1988), the results of the present study suggest that exposure to a female Torah-scholar role model significantly predicts female students' desire to learn Torah and become Torah scholars. Furthermore, female students who had only a female Torah-scholar role model or both female and male Torah-scholar role models had higher levels of desire to learn Torah after high school than those who only interacted with a male Torah scholar. However, those who only reported having a male Torah-scholar role model had a higher desire than those with no Torah role models.

This follows from the research of Gipson et al. (2017) and Sandberg (2013) that found that based on the lack of female mentors, females often have male mentors, even when it is more ideal to be mentored by a female or both a male and female. Additionally, cross mentorship can lead to complex gender dynamics, forcing a natural distance to form between the male mentor and female mentee (Clawson & Kram, 1984; Kroll et al., 2021). In the Modern-Orthodox world where there are strict guidelines of separation between genders, a

male Torah scholar would be obligated to create distance between himself and his female students. Furthermore, male mentors are less likely to view women as their successors and may not give them equal training to what they would usually provide to their male mentees (Epstein, 1970; Noe, 1988). In many religions, the men are solely granted roles of authority in the spiritual realm, whereas women are restricted in certain forms of leadership (Kettle, 2008). This is very fitting in Modern Orthodoxy, where male Torah-scholar role models may teach differently to female students based on the preconceived notion that women cannot assume many of their rabbinic roles.

Therefore, consistent with the findings that having a female spiritual role model aids other women in their spiritual development (Kettle, 2008), the Modern-Orthodox world has a genuine demand for female leaders who teach Torah and are role models of Torah for our communities (Auman, 2016). Henkin (2021) describes how female Torah scholars, specifically Yoatzot, whose focus is to impact the religious practice of women through their learning and teaching, influence thousands of lives through spreading knowledge and increasing Torah observance. Rosenberg (2012) charges the community to create more learning opportunities for women to produce more female Torah scholars. This study broadens these claims by demonstrating that female Torah-scholar role models could support the continued growth and religious inspiration of female high school students. In addition to establishing more learning opportunities to enable women to become Torah scholars, it might be impactful to find further methods of contact between them and the younger generation.⁵

⁵ JewBALE 3.0 also asked the students to rate which leadership roles they believe to be appropriate for women to occupy within the community. Giving a shiur to an all-female crowd had 81% approval and to a mixed crowd had 71% approval. Being a Yoetzet Halacha scored 64% approval. Being hired as a scholar in residence had 57% approval. Giving a drasha/sermon from the pulpit scored only 37% approval. The role with the lowest level of approval, only 24%, was for women to earn Orthodox Rabbinic Semicha. When breaking it down by

Implications for Schools and Communities

According to the analysis presented above, based on the 14 Modern-Orthodox high schools that participated in this study, there is a strong relationship between having a Torah-scholar role model and high school students' level of religiosity, desire to continue learning, and desire to become a Torah scholar. Male Torah-scholar role models have a greater impact on male students than female Torah scholars, perhaps because male students generally have less exposure to female Torah-scholar role models. However, our study showed that female students who are exposed to female Torah-scholar role models will more likely develop a stronger commitment to their religious practice, an increased desire to learn Torah, and higher aspirations to become a Torah scholar. Given these findings it would seem vital for us to find more ways for female students to be exposed to female Torah scholars.

For All-Female High Schools

Based on the correlation found in the research between exposure to female Torah scholars and levels of religiosity, it seems that there would be a strong benefit for administrators of all-girl high schools to allow their students to have increased exposure to

gender, female students were only slightly more supportive than male students for their approval of female Torah scholars giving shiurim to an all-female or mixed crowd and giving the drasha from the pulpit. Giving a shiur to an all-female crowd was approved by 82% of female students and 79% of male students, and giving a lecture to a mixed crowd was approved by 73% of female students and 71% of male students. Giving a drasha from the pulpit was approved by 37% of female students and 34% of male students. However, for being a Yoetzet Halacha, the female vote was significantly higher (female 67% and male 51%). Fascinatingly, the male vote was higher for scholar in residence (58%) than female students (55%). Understanding these results and the reasons behind these results would be an important future study. Specifically, how to understand the male students' overwhelming approval for females to be scholars in residence, when a scholar in residence typically gives the drasha from the pulpit, a role that did not earn their approval. Moreover, it is important to analyze further the positive outlook of the younger generation on women becoming Yoatzot Halacha, advisors in Jewish Law in the area of Family Purity, earning 64% approval.

female Torah scholars. This can be accomplished in numerous ways: When hiring Torah faculty, administrators can ensure that some, if not all, of their Judaic-Studies faculty, whether male or female, fit the criteria of being a Torah scholar. Additionally, throughout the year, schools can bring in visiting female Torah scholars to teach Torah classes and lead discussions. Also, current faculty should be encouraged to speak to their students about their personal relationships with female Torah scholars and how their influence affected their decision to become teachers of Torah.

Furthermore, based on the findings that students who have a Torah role model will be more committed to religious practice and have higher aspirations to continue learning Torah, it would seem important for administrators to create an atmosphere conducive to having their Judaic studies faculty build relationships with their students; encouraging them to have students over for Shabbos, have class time set aside for conversations, and initiate programs that allow small groups of students to meet with Torah faculty regularly to foster these vital relationships.

For All-Male High Schools

It is clear from the research that male students in all-male high schools have minimal exposure to female Torah scholars. This may be explained by a combination of many factors: First and foremost, the challenges of cross-gender relationships and the potential for females in these roles to be viewed as immodest (Clawson & Kram, 1984; Gipson et al., 2017; Kroll et al., 2021; Sandberg, 2013). Additionally, this study predicts the positive influences of specifically *male* Torah role models on the religious growth of male students and the lack of evidence of positive correlations when exposed to female Torah role models. However, fitting with the general findings of our study of the positive influences of exposure to female

Torah scholars on religious growth, it would seem important for administrators of all-male schools to endeavor to find acceptable ways to raise exposure of male students to female Torah scholars. This is especially relevant considering that many high school boys will ultimately have daughters; having exposure to female Torah role models may contribute to these future fathers' support of their daughters' Torah study.

The challenge is finding the right way to expose high school boys to the female Torah scholar. In certain all-male schools it may be perfectly acceptable to have a female faculty member teaching Torah, and administrators should be encouraged to hire them. Even in the all-male schools where having a full-time female Torah scholar teaching Torah may be viewed as inappropriate, there are other ways to introduce the students to female Torah scholars. Administrators should consider inviting female Torah scholars to participate in a panel of speakers, or to give a lecture during a *yom iyun*, day of learning. Furthermore, school leaders, especially of male schools, must be careful when welcoming the female scholar, to address them with the same deference they would show a male Torah scholar, modeling for their male students how to show respect to a female scholar.

For Co-Ed Schools

Since the research suggests that exposure to female Torah scholars predicts higher levels of religiosity for female students, it would seem essential for a school whose student body is half female to give its students equal exposure to female Torah scholars as is given to male Torah scholars. Administrators should take this opportunity to educate their students that the value of modesty and teaching Torah to males are congruent. Furthermore, since our findings demonstrated that the level of religiosity and desire to learn Torah among students in co-ed schools is lower than students in single-gender schools, it is imperative for co-ed high

school administrators to seek out ways to inspire their students religiously, including having Torah role models of both genders.

Learned and Steps to Take in Advancing Women's Leadership Roles

For the Greater Society

The first step in expanding female leadership is an acknowledgement of gender bias (Gipson et al., 2017). If research shows that female leaders are either equally as effective or even more successful than men, then addressing the causes for the dearth of female leadership might be helpful to the community. It would be effective to teach those who evaluate leadership to judge based on behavior and results rather than on gender (Eagly et al., 1995). Raising awareness among young professionals is likely to be an important step to fight against the gender bias of the future (Place & Vardeman-Winter, 2018). More significantly, we need to teach our daughters that they can become leaders and inspire them to take on leadership positions (Sandberg, 2013).

For Senior Leadership

A possible strategy to help female leadership advance could be to encourage men in senior leadership positions to promote qualified females and not mistake the confidence of male applicants for competence (Gipson et al., 2017). Another approach would be to develop a path for women in middle positions to overcome barriers and reach the top (Place & Vardeman-Winter, 2018), including creating mentor programs for women with both male and female mentors (Gipson et al., 2017; Sandberg, 2013), as well as giving women access to the same world of networking that is available to men (Gipson et al., 2017).

For Women who Aspire Leadership

It might also benefit women to be educated about gender incongruity and the backlash that is caused by acting masculine. Women can choose to either tolerate the prejudice and bias, or to lead in a unique feminine manner, such as using a democratic and communal style of leadership, keeping in mind that when they act in agentic ways, they risk being viewed negatively (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly et al., 1995; Ferguson, 2018, Gipson et al., 2017). For example, Rosener (1990) recommends that women lead without formal authority. After interviewing fifty female executives in major corporations, Bowles (2012) concludes that there are two paths for women in leadership. One path is navigation: setting a goal to reach the top, excelling at each level, and climbing to the top through high performance and self-promoting the work they have done, through others, to their superiors. The second path is pioneering: a woman uncovers an innovative idea, gains support and followers to implement it, and displays her expertise through speeches, actions, or writing. In either of these ways, women must claim their own authority, promote their ideas, and become recognized and accepted by others as the leader.

Women's confidence should be boosted to not allow prejudices, glass ceilings, and gender biases to stop them from choosing leadership in their field (Eagly et al., 1995; Sandberg, 2013). They can be taught how to fight against their innate feelings of imposter syndrome and push themselves to apply for leadership positions. Sandberg (2013) suggests that women should first fix themselves, removing their own internal obstacles, before addressing external factors. Furthermore, women who reach leadership roles should be

encouraged to mentor younger females, training them in how to deal with both the external and internal obstacles.

For the Modern-Orthodox Community

Although this study focuses on the relationship between the exposure to female Torah scholars and high school students, it has implications for the greater Jewish community. On a basic level, every community consists of high school students who are seeking ways to be inspired religiously. But more broadly, based on the writings of Jewish scholars, like Lichtenstein (2016), Rosenberg (2012) and Henkin (2021) who claim that there is a positive correlation between having female Torah role models and religious growth in all stages of our lives, one could maintain that exposure to a female Torah scholar could predict higher levels of religiosity and desire to learn Torah for all women *and even men* within the community. Thus, this study could suggest that it would be beneficial for Synagogue leaders to welcome more female Torah scholars as speakers, scholars in residence, and perhaps consider finding a non-controversial position and title, to include a female Torah scholar as part of the Torah leadership of the synagogue.

Limitations and Further Study

This study using JewBALE 3.0 (Goldberg, 2023) was the first endeavor to reveal findings from the new data set and only focused on the religiosity subscale as well as the questions pertaining to exposure to female Torah scholars, differentiating between having a male or female role model and the desire to continue learning Torah, and aspirations to be a Torah scholar. There are ample opportunities to use JewBALE 3.0 for further studies using

both the spirituality and religiosity subscales to understand the correlation between the spirituality and religiosity levels of high school students and other factors in their lives.

The sample of this initial testing of JewBALE 3.0 that was taken from 14 Modern Orthodox schools yielded a few limitations to this study. Six out of 14 schools were single gendered, four were all-female high schools, and *only* two were all-male high schools. This accounts for the fact that 73% of the participating students were female and only 25% of the sample was male (2% identified as ‘other’). It is possible that the low number of male students taking the survey limited the reliability and validity of the results of the male students. It would be interesting to see in a future study if the results would be modified when surveying equal number of male and female students, including more students from male single-gendered schools. Perhaps the results of exposure to female Torah-scholar role models would have more significance with a larger sample of male students in a more equal-varied setting. Additionally, the study showed that generally high school girls showed a higher level of religious commitment than high school boys, as well as boys in single-gendered schools ranked higher than boys attending co-ed schools. It would be interesting to study what factors contribute to these differences in gender and types of schools.

Since the JewBALE scale was distributed to the schools in the month of May, seniors who already graduated were not able to participate, thereby causing seniors to be disproportionately underrepresented in the sample (16% of the sample was seniors in high school). Seniors who have spent four years learning Torah may have produced higher results in their desire to continue learning Torah and become a Torah scholar. Moreover, this study did not distinguish between the different years of high school in considering the effects of having a role model or the exposure to female Torah-scholar role models. A further study of

this information could include more seniors as well as a differentiation of the results by grades within high school.

Although the subscales had evidence of reliability of above .7, students have some level of subjectivity when it comes to definitions, especially when it comes to defining exposure to Torah scholar role models. A student who knows one Torah scholar role model may mark off a seven, where another student could view that type of situation as only deserving a three. Moreover, there were specific limitations in the multiple possible definitions of the term “Torah scholar.” When taking the survey, the students were instructed to define the term as a person who is knowledgeable in Torah and has dedicated years to learning. However, it is plausible for a Torah scholar, either male or female, to gain his/her knowledge without setting aside years studying in an official learning program, so it may be hard to identify who has spent years seriously learning Torah. Furthermore, there are many forms of Torah leadership that do not fit our definition. A Torah leader can run an organization, speak in front of a synagogue, or give public lectures without representing being a leader in Torah scholarship and learning. The nuance of these differences may have been lost on the high school students, especially when quickly answering a survey of over eighty questions.

There is an even further challenge when analyzing exposure to *female* Torah scholars in assessing the reality of students’ exposure. A male Torah scholar is identifiable by his title of “Rabbi” or “Rebbe,” clearly indicating years of study. The ability to automatically earn a title after years of study simplifies the ability of students to recognize his or her exposure to a male Torah scholar. Conversely, a female Torah scholar who receives no title, even after designating years to Torah study, has fewer social markers of identification, especially by

students.⁶ Therefore, many students participating in this study may have assumed their knowledgeable female Judaic studies teacher fit the definition of Torah scholar for this study, not realizing that they had not learned Torah intensely for a few years. On the other hand, students may have not recognized being exposed to a female Torah-scholar role model, who did indeed learn Torah for years after college, since without an official title, it is hard to identify who should be considered a Torah scholar. Optimistically, one can hope for a universal term to be created that connotes female Torah scholarship without inciting controversy.⁷

Furthermore, the social and religious environment presents limitations to equal opportunities for students to be exposed to male and female Torah scholars. A male Torah scholar has many avenues of Torah leadership and opportunities to interact with students outside the classroom, as the Rabbi of a community and in camp settings. Additionally, male Torah scholars are recognized with *kibbudim*, honors, such as given brachot at Torah readings in shuls as well as at the *chupah* of a wedding. Most scholars in residence are male, and most shiurim are given within the community by a male Torah scholar.

Although in Modern Orthodoxy, based on religious tradition, women are restricted from the role of Rabbi, there are many other Torah leadership roles that they can occupy. However, even when given opportunities to teach Torah within the community, female Torah scholars can be limited by many social standards. Often, they are restricted to teaching only the women congregants or to being the token female scholar of the month or year for that

⁶ The debate over the ability to grant titles to women is beyond the scope of this paper. For further discussion, see Adlerstein, 2016; RCA, 2017; Sperber, 2020; and Wolowelsky, 2016. However, for the purpose of this study, the nuance of potential titles, such as Rabbanit or Yoetzet, is not generally understood by high-school students.

⁷ In Israel, the title “Rabbanit” is given to women with noteworthy Torah knowledge and stature.

particular community. For example, it is known in Modern Orthodoxy that Shabbat Shirah is designated as the weekend for synagogues to bring in female Torah scholar. However, when women are chosen as the token speaker or the token female on a panel, they are often not respected or regarded equal to men. This is compounded by the fact that male Torah scholars are referred to as “Rabbi X” and the female Torah scholar is often referenced by her first name. Furthermore, many shuls for sociological reasons will restrict a female scholar from delivering the sermon after morning prayer, which attracts the biggest audience, or have her stand from another location in the room, limiting her view from the men section.

Over the last twenty years, there has been an increase in female Torah scholars as well as an expansion of acceptable leadership roles for them to occupy within the Modern Orthodox world. As more female Torah scholars continue to teach Torah all over the world, it would be important to repeat this study to see if the impact grows on *both* female and male high students. Given our small sample size of both male students in this study and the number of female Torah scholars in the modern orthodox world, it would be important to compare these results to future studies about their impact on male high school students, to see if the results would be more positive. Additionally, secondary analyses could be done in the future with middle school students to gain an understanding if the exposure to role models at a younger age has greater or smaller effect on their levels of religiosity than high school students. Since our community is constantly searching for better methods to religiously inspire our children, it would be vital to understand the best time to expose them to Torah-scholar role models to maximize their impact.

Moreover, it would be incredibly profound if further studies would be conducted to gain insight into the impact of female Torah scholars on the greater community: the female

and male adults of the community, the younger generation *and* the older generations. This information would help acknowledge the need to invest in female Torah scholarship, to create a society where girls are encouraged to learn Torah from a young age all the way through adulthood. These studies could demonstrate a necessity to create an infrastructure of schools, camps, and institutions where increased and intensified opportunity would be given to girls and women to develop their skills in learning and increase their knowledge of Torah. These studies could prove how essentially important it is for the vibrancy and vitality of Modern Orthodoxy to have women learn Torah for many years to become Torah scholars and spread their Torah all over the world.

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Appendix

Individual Information and Consent Form

You are being asked to take part in a research study entitled; JewBALE Study of Jewish Day School Students.

The survey that appears after this consent page consists of 253 questions that are intended to provide a better understanding of what it is that students believe (BELIEFS) and do (ACTIONS) when it comes to their Judaism. This information will be anonymous and your teachers and administrators will not know how or if you respond.

The goal of gathering this information is to help create more meaningful Jewish educational experiences.

It should take you about 30 minutes to complete this survey and your participation is voluntary. If you do not want to take part in this study, simply click on the button at the bottom of this welcome screen that says “No, thanks, I do not agree to take part in this study.”

If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. You may also skip any question that you prefer not to answer or do not have a ready answer to. This will not affect how you are treated at school. The study is being done under the supervision of Scott Goldberg Ph.D. (sjgoldbe@yu.edu), a professor at Yeshiva University. You can reach Dr. Goldberg by emailing him at sjgoldbe@yu.edu. You may also contact Shoshana Ross (jewbale3.0@gmail.com), a research associate involved in this study.

All surveys will be completely anonymous. You may not directly benefit from being in this research study. However, the information learned from this study may, in the future, benefit other young people attending Jewish day schools or otherwise involved in Jewish education. The research records will be kept in a secure manner, computer records will be password protected and the researchers who review the data will have no way of identifying who participated in the study.

1. Do you agree to take part in this study?

- I agree to take part in the study.
- No, thanks. I do not agree to take part in this study.