

## **US-7 Followup Report**

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### ***Images of Popularity in Selected High School Movies: Myth vs Reality?***

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The purpose of my paper, *Images of Popularity in Selected High School Movies: Myth vs Reality*, was to find out whether the dramatic way high school popularity is portrayed in films such as *Clueless* (1995), *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999) or *Mean Girls* (2004) can be regarded as realistic. In these films popularity is depicted as a power position which can be used by popular students to control and manipulate other people and sustain a certain social hierarchy; popular students in the films often behave in a conceited and even manipulative manner.

In order to determine the authenticity of the cinematic image of popularity, an online questionnaire was developed to solicit responses from U.S. high school students and recent graduates from several regions of the United States. On the basis of their answers it may be suggested that while high school films often contain some elements of truth, they are nearly always too dramatic and exaggerated to be considered realistic.

If I were to start this paper again, I would probably do some things differently. I would reserve more time for processing the questionnaire responses; I had not realized beforehand how much time it requires. I would also try to find a larger number of respondents to take my questionnaire; it would be interesting to see if a more comprehensive study would produce a different conclusion for the paper.

My paper discussed high school popularity and popular students, but there are many other related research topics that might be interesting study: for example, high school cliques in general would very likely be an interesting and fruitful subject. Different kinds of student cliques, such as "the J.V. jocks" or "the Persian mafia," were portrayed in all three films cited in this paper, and they were also commented on by several respondents. It might be interesting to examine what kind of cliques exist in real high schools and how they relate to each other.