



CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR 2014 PROJECT SUMMARY

Name(s) Will J. Shadley	Project Number 34639
Project Title What Influences People to Pick Up Coins?	
Objectives/Goals I decided to do my project because my father and I always enjoy watching people pick up coins. I have always been intrigued by psychology. One day, my dad and I were bored while my mother was shopping so we decided we would put some coins on the ground and watch people make a fool of themselves. Along with entertainment value, doing this also posed some interesting questions that I wanted to find an answer for. What influences these people to pick up the coins? Abstract Methods/Materials For my project, I used 10 pennies, 10 nickels, 10 dimes, 10 quarters, 40 permission slips, a clipboard, a notebook, and a stopwatch (phone). To begin my experiment, I grabbed a coin from the bag, placed it on the ground when no one was looking, started the stopwatch, waited for a subject to pick up the coin, approached the subject, had them sign the permission slip, recorded the data, and repeated the process 39 more times. I made sure to avoid bias by not using any data that may be inaccurate if the subject had seen me place the coin. I also, started the stopwatch as soon as the coin was placed on the ground to get the most accurate information for my study. Results In my study, I tested what gender was most likely to pick up coins, which coin was picked up the fastest, and a few other minor details that cannot necessarily be graphed. While I originally hypothesized that men would be slightly more likely to pick up coins based on the fact that men generally have slightly better eyesight than women, I found that men and women were about equal in chances of picking up coins. The most quickly picked up coin was a quarter, which is to be expected. However, the nickels were picked up much faster than the dimes. This leads me to believe that the value of the coin is not as important as the size of the coin. Conclusions/Discussion My study sheds some light on the vexing puzzle of human behavior. The study can be used in a few applications. The most obvious is advertising. What catches people's attention and makes them want to pick up the advertised product. It may be more likely the size of the advertisement as opposed to the real value based on the findings of nickels being picked up faster than dimes. Most of all, this was a topic that excites and intrigues me and I could not have asked for a more enjoyable project.	
Summary Statement I wanted to understand the motivation behind people's actions and what influenced them to pick up the coins.	
Help Received Father sat with me at the pier while I conducted research; Mother helped me glue and cut materials for the display board.	