CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2015 PROJECT SUMMARY

Name(s)

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Project Number

35259

Project Title

At What Grade Level Do Children Start to Develop a Gender Bias towards Various Occupations

Abstract

Objectives/Goals

The objective of my project is to discover when and if children develop a gender bias towards different day to day occupations.

Methods/Materials

I needed to make 8 display papers each with 2 male and 2 female pictures to test the kids with. I also needed to make data sheets to record the kids' responses, and I needed 10 girls and 10 boys from each grade level (K-8) to be my test subjects.

After creating the display papers and data sheets listed above, I randomly selected 10 girls and 10 boys from a Kindergarten class and individually tested them. I showed them the display papers one by one and asked them which they thought did the job listed at the top. I then did the same things with grades 1-8. After collecting my data, I tallied the number of female pictures chosen and the number of male pictures chosen for each job in each grade level. I then turned these tallies into double bar graphs to show my results.

Results

At the end of my experiment, I found that each grade level showed a gender bias towards each occupation. There were some biases that surprised me. For instance, a bias was shown towards females being a doctor when I expected males to be favored. A reasonable explanation came to light though because most pediatricians are females.

Conclusions/Discussion

My results have shown that kids do show a gender bias towards different occupations. My project can be applied to the real world because it provides evidence that gender bias is real in children. I believe that this gender bias develops partly because in a picture book teachers are generally female and pilots are generally male, which shows a kind of traditional gender bias. This can be prevented if illustrators of children's books didn't always use that traditional gender bias. Gender bias is starting to slowly go away in society. For example, news anchors used to always be male, but ABC 30 Action News has multiple female news anchors such as Graciela Moreno and Liz Harrison. Also, sports reporters were always male, but Erin Andrews was a main reporter at the 2014 World Series. This will help the gender bias slowly go away if we start showing new generations that you can be anything you want to be.

Summary Statement

The purpose of my project was to determine when children start to show a gender bias towards different occupations.

Help Received

Dad helped with graphs; Mrs. Loflin helped with research.

Preliminary