

ANYTHING HE CAN DO, SHE CAN DO BETTER.

A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF CHILDREN'S GENDER ATTITUDES ABOUT OCCUPATIONS

RYAN LINN BROWN & NANCI WEINBERGER

KEY TERMS

IMPLICIT GENDER ASSOCIATIONS:
thought to be a relatively enduring and general evaluative response of which a person has little or no conscious awareness but attributes certain characteristics to one gender

EXPLICIT GENDER ATTITUDES:
conscious beliefs and feelings about a specific gender



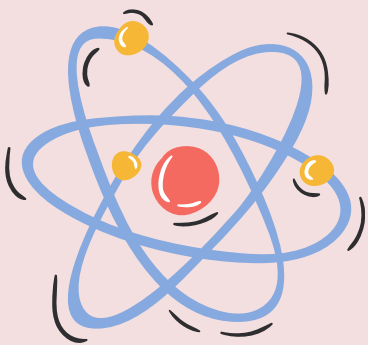
RESEARCH PROBLEM & GOALS

Children are influenced by gender stereotypes when considering their own careers for the future. This study aimed to understand how children view different occupations in relation to gender. The study also investigated children's explicit attitudes about a woman being in a traditionally masculine occupation in comparison to a man in the same role.



THE STUDY

This study investigated the implicit associations and the explicit attitudes of 10-year-old children ($N = 58$; 29 girls, 29 boys) regarding gender and occupations. Implicit associations were tested with a modified auditory Stroop task, and explicit attitudes were tested with the Gender-Stereotyped Attitude Scale for Children (GASC).



SciGirls VIDEO

To explore children's explicit gender attitudes about real people doing their jobs, the children watched a brief video: Kate Heckaman: Firefighter-Paramedic, a PBS *SciGirls* video. The video shows two firefighter-paramedics: Kate & Jeremiah. The video shows them both doing their jobs while Kate narrates, explaining her skills and backstory relating to her occupation. Children's attitudes about them were measured using a modification of the Gender-Stereotyped Attitude Scale for Children.



RESULTS

- The Gender-Stereotyped Attitude Scale for Children findings revealed flexible attitudes about occupations, but not uniformly across occupations.
- Children were most flexible about who can be a doctor and least flexible about who can be a ballet dancer/teacher.
- Finally, children had more favorable views of the woman firefighter from the video as compared with her male counterpart (e.g., she was more often endorsed as a good candidate as a fire chief).



GUESTS FOR THIS CONVERSATION

Dr. Barbara Billington, an instructor, researcher, and writer for *SciGirls*, a Twin-Cities program encouraging girls to get involved in STEM. Her goal is to guide teachers to provide equitable teaching practices throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area and beyond.

Leah Defenbaugh, is the STEM Outreach Manager for *SciGirls*. Her goal is to ensure that youth from all backgrounds have access to engaging, relevant STEM learning opportunities.



CITATION:

BROWN, R., & WEINBERGER, N. (2021). ANYTHING HE CAN DO, SHE CAN DO BETTER: CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES ABOUT GENDER AND OCCUPATIONS. *PSI CHI JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH*, 26(1), 2-13. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.24839/2325-7342.JN26.1.2](https://doi.org/10.24839/2325-7342.JN26.1.2)