

The Investigation of the Elementary School Students' Perception of Gender Equality from English Textbooks

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Abstract

As more and more women are pursuing equal rights with men, the issue of gender equality has received increasing academic and public attention in the past decades. However, researches illustrated that the gender stereotype or bias was still displayed in elementary school, especially in their textbooks (Klein, 1985; Law & Chen, 2004; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). This study aims to investigate if any gender bias appears in the pictures of English textbooks and how elementary school students perceive about the gender bias. The gender parity and equity were analyzed by the distribution of two genders and different activities they were engaging in each picture. Additionally, based on the possible gender bias disclosed in the pictures, thirty statements of questionnaire were designed to inspect students' perception of gender stereotypes or biases. Among students' perception of gender issues, the stereotype in appearances and characters has gradually alleviated; yet other stereotypical gender-role perception is still common among elementary school students, and most of them confirm the textbooks have made certain impact on it. It is essential for educators to be aware of the importance of gender equality in elementary education, and help youngsters to build the positive attitude in dealing with the relationship among different genders.

Key words: gender equality, gender stereotype, gender bias.

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