

From an Elderly Middle-Aged Man to ‘a Scientist May Be Anyone’: Draw-A-Scientist-Test in Nepalese Context

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Abstract : This paper explores the attitude of high school Nepalese students toward scientists using a famous method named as Draw-A-Scientist-Test (DAST). A total of 145 students from Grade 11 and Grade 12 took part in this research and drew images of scientists. The findings indicated gender imbalance with male dominance in the images of scientists. The result also showed some usual stereotypes relating to hair, equipment, objects, use of eyeglasses, and lab coat in the drawings of scientists. Moreover, the influence of some mainstream western male scientists was widely seen in the drawings implying the exposure of limited male scientists to the students. In contrast to this, no real-life female scientists were mentioned by the participants demonstrating limited exposure of female scientists contributing to the gendered attitude toward the scientists. However, some of the findings also challenged the previous findings and depicted scientists with local features, positive expression, and working outdoors. Moreover, participants' awareness that scientists could be anyone with an inquisitive mind was indicated by the variations in the characters in their drawings. The drawings indicated that scientists could be someone like a mother, themselves, a fashion icon, Buddha, or a crazy-looking person. This study recommends the inclusion of participants' interviews, and exploration of their textbooks' depiction of scientists to uncover additional details regarding their understanding of scientists. Also, a critical discussion of the stereotypical attitudes about scientists in class could help challenge the stereotypical assumptions of scientists.

Keywords : scientists, drawings, stereotypes, gender, high school students

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