



California Science Center
CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2001 PROJECT SUMMARY

Your Name (List all student names if multiple authors.)

Sierra D. Weir

Project Title (Limit: 120 characters. Those beyond 120 will be ignored. See pg. 9)

Does Having a Boyfriend/Girlfriend Affect Assessment of Attractiveness and Social Desirability?

Science Fair Use Only

J1715

Division

X Junior (6-8) Senior (9-12)

Preferred Category (See page 5 for descriptions.)

2 - Behavioral Sciences

Abstract (Include Objective, Methods, Results, Conclusion. See samples on page 14.)

Use no attachments. Only text inside these boxes will be used for category assignment or given to your judges.

Objective: The assumption that having a boyfriend or a girlfriend will increase favorable assessment of attractiveness and social desirability among 8th grade boys and girls was tested. The goal of the experiment was to investigate some of the factors that affect social development among adolescents.

Materials and Methods: Participants viewed photographs of teenage boys and girls in either a couples setting or as singles and then rated each person in the photographs on a 9-point scale for attractiveness and the likelihood of wanting to make friends with that person. An independent groups design was used and all participants viewed photographs of the same people, only the setting (couples or singles) was varied. Photographs were presented in a counterbalanced order to control for serial effect biases.

Results: Comparison of means across conditions suggests no significant differences in attractiveness or desirability ratings, whether the person evaluated was in a couples or singles setting. Therefore, the hypothesis is not supported by these data. Mean ratings ranged from 2.46 to 5.93 for all measures with no mean difference exceeding 0.98.

Conclusions: The researcher expected that the participants in the couples group would give higher ratings of attractiveness and social desirability than the singles group, but no significant differences between conditions were found. Post hoc analysis suggests that participants were more likely to give a favorable rating on the social desirability scale than on the attractiveness scale, regardless of condition, suggesting that 8th graders are more interested in friendship than romance.

Summary Statement (In one sentence, state what your project is about.)

This is an experiment to test the assumption that having a boyfriend or a girlfriend will increase assessment of attractiveness and social desirability.

Help Received in Doing Project (e.g. Mother helped type report; Neighbor helped wire board; Used lab equipment at university X under the supervision of Dr. Y; Participant in NSF Young Scholars Program) See Display Regulation #8 on page 4.

Rick Laughlin plan, conduct, and document the experiment and analyze the data. Mom helped buy materials and assemble the display.