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Education from birth : research, practices
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Paula Frapiccini Ferreira

Assessment of gender equity in educational practice in pre-school

Presentation on the 21st EECERA annual conference, 15.9.2011, Geneva/Switzerland

Abstract

In the work for a fairer society educating children is, among other factors, considered to be a priority. Development and education in the early years provide the solid foundations of the personality. Improving the quality of services at this stage of life is basic for equity and fairness in the society as a whole.

The Catalan curriculum for education children highlights that "the kindergarten encourages the development of skills and their relationship, which should enable children grow as people fully in today's world, with a continuous and progressive learning process that will continue at the stage of primary education with the acquisition of basic skills (...)"(Generalitat de Catalunya, Decret 181/2008, p. 4). Gender is seen as a basic aspect of social relationships, diversity and plurality in society.

In this paper, we present results of an ongoing research project on gender in pre-schools undertaken by the GREPSIDE study group* at Ramon Llull University, Barcelona. The project builds up on former research on values and attitudes regarding gender issues in Early Childhood Education (Vendrell et al. 2007, 2009). It focuses on methods for evaluation of gender equity in pre-school and on gender aspects of verbal interactions between children and adults.

We are convinced that pre-school is a privileged context to educate towards gender equality. The professionals show sensitivity for questions of gender and equal rights. But we also know that we need tools to assure the quality and objectivity of the work related to gender equity in schools. It has not always been sufficiently proven that we act according to what we know.

To encourage practice based on knowledge, objective observations and conviction, a protocol was developed that facilitates the objective analysis of educational practice, shared reflection of teaching teams, and the entire educational community. The instrument provides a method for analyzing issues of gender equity in educational practices and projects in Early Childhood Education.

Purpose of the research is the development and validation of the proposed protocol and its subsequent adaptation to different educational realities of our country. The protocol, which is already in pilot tests in Catalan pre-schools, covers the following three areas:

- elements of the institutional analysis
- didactic field analysis and
- personal analysis.

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The protocol consists of 40 questions related to the above areas. Target group is the population of teachers of pre-school children, average ages between 3 and 6 years old. In the first phase of the project (pilot test) a representative sample of teachers of public and private schools was selected, taking into account the population of Catalonia. The number of participants in this first phase was about 90 teachers from 35 schools. The sample consisted mostly women but also men.

In the presentation, results of the pilot tests are presented as well as the definitive Protocol. We would like to share more of all results of the pilot tests in the three areas concerning the protocol.

- * The GREPSIDE study and research group focuses on projects linking theoretical research with applied practice, thus strengthening the links between different educational contexts and university. GREPSIDE has acknowledged the support of the Catalan Institute for Women (ASC / 46 / 2008 exp: U-92 / 08) that allowed us to delve into the importance of equal education in values from early childhood. Convinced of this interest we believe that we should continue insisting on this topic and - where possible - provide resources for professional practice.

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The assessment of gender equity in educational practice in Pre-school Spain

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1. GREPSIDE
2. Protocol
3. Some Results
4. Analysis

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1. GREPSIDE

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1. GREPSIDE

Research group focuses on projects linking theoretical research with applied practice, thus strengthening the links between different educational contexts and university. In this regard we have already acknowledged the support of the Catalan Institute for Women (ASC / 46 / 2008 exp: U-92 / 08) that allowed us to delve into the importance of equal education in values from early childhood. Convinced of this interest we believe that we should continue insisting on this topic and - where possible - providing resources for professional practice.

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2. Protocol

The instrument provides a method for analyzing issues of gender equity in educational practices and projects in Early Childhood Education.

Purpose of the research is the development and validation of the proposed protocol and its subsequent adaptation to different educational realities of our country. The protocol covers the following three areas:

- Institutional
- Didactic and
- Personal analysis

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2. Protocol

Institutional Area

1. **The management documents include the philosophy of the school on gender equality beyond the non-sexist language**
2. **Both genders are represented in the primary school teachers**
3. **Both genders are represented in the work of school services (dining, concierge, cleaning, etc.)**
4. **All the educational staff of the center share moments of reflection on the same team that conduct related to gender equality, non-discrimination based on sex.**
5. **Both genders are represented on the extracurricular activities staff**

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2. Protocol

Institutional Area

- 6. School staff receives training to foster a relationship with the students on gender equality**
- 7. The school teachers receive training to foster a relationship with the students on gender equality**
- 8. It's possible the involvement of both fathers and mothers in all activities of family-school relationship**
- 9. In the content of the activities of family-school relationship is taken into account gender equity**

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2. Protocol

Teaching Area

- 10. The gender equality is taken into account when doing classroom programs in terms of language and the content of educational activities.**
- 11. Children have available children's stories which make up gender stereotypes**
- 12. The worksheets for children are made taking care of the overcoming of gender stereotypes**
- 13. The documentation of the classroom setting are being careful to avoid gender stereotypes**

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2. Protocol

Teaching Area

- 14. The printed material used in the school is respectful of gender equality**
- 15. The choice of toys made with criteria of gender equality**
- 16. The distribution of positions in the class is done indiscriminately among children**
- 17. It's take into account that both genders are represented when they are small groups in activities aimed**

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2. Protocol

Personal Area

- 18. I think that the game of the kitchenette is common in boys**
- 19. I think that to be scolded more girls than boys**
- 20. I think that girls are more quiet than boys**
- 21. I think that classrooms in where girls predominate favored a better work environment**
- 22. I think that girls make graphics activities more accurately**

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2. Protocol

Personal Area

- 23. I think that boys are more independent than girls**
- 24. I think that girls take longer to resolve emotional conflicts**
- 25. I think that, in general, girls mature earlier than boys.**
- 26. I think that boys play more game drive**

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2. Protocol

Personal Area

- 27. I think that boys tend to be more aggressive than girls**
- 28. I think that I use communication strategies (the voice, the use of generics, etc.) differently as I talk to girls or boys**
- 29. I think that families prefer to kindergarten teacher, on an equal professional quality, before a women than a male teacher**
- 30. I think it is better that a man takes the direction of the school for reasons of credibility**

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2. Protocol

Open Questions

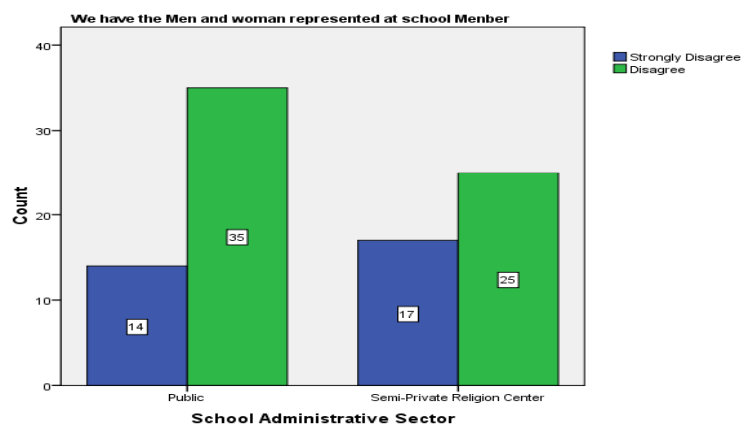
1. Can you explain a situation that is experienced in school of non-discrimination on grounds of sex, gender equity?
2. A situation that existed in the school of discrimination based on sex, non gender equity

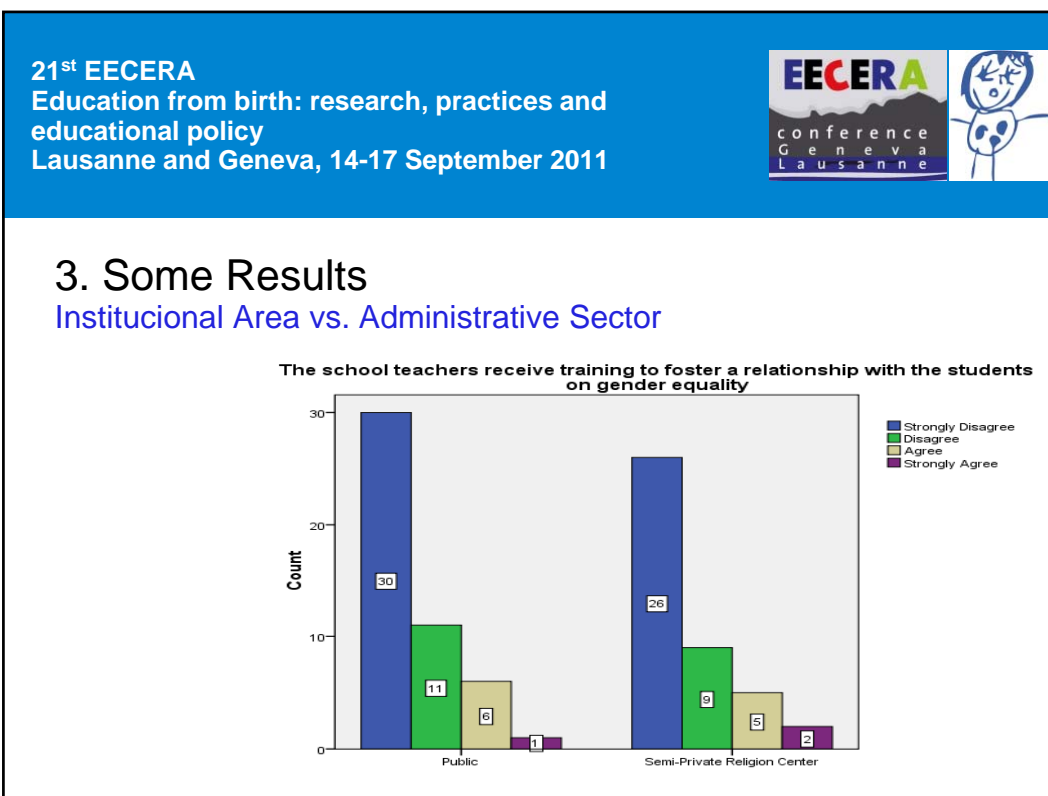
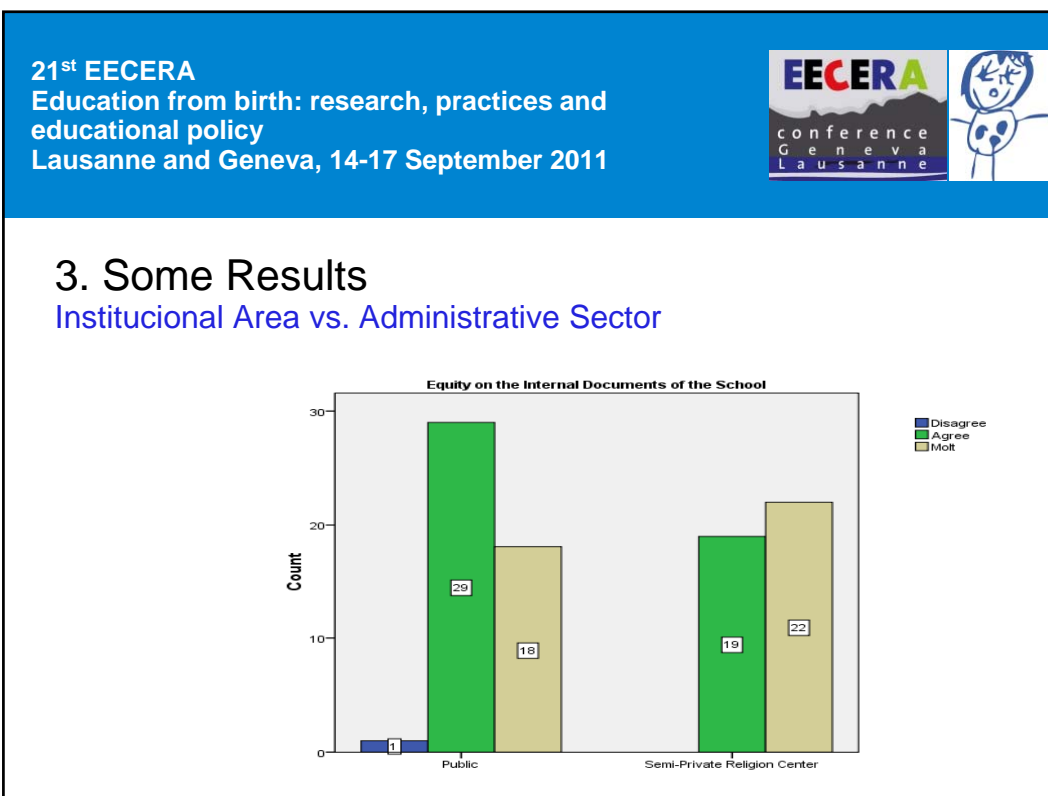
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3. Some Results

Institucional Area vs. Administrative Sector





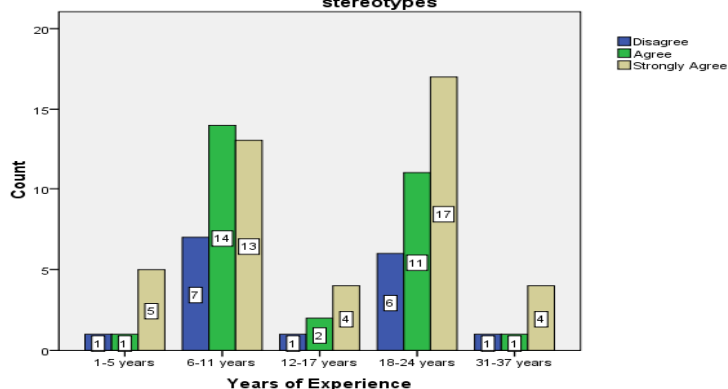
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3. Some Results

Didactic Area vs. Years of Experience

The worksheets are made taking care of the overcoming of gender stereotypes



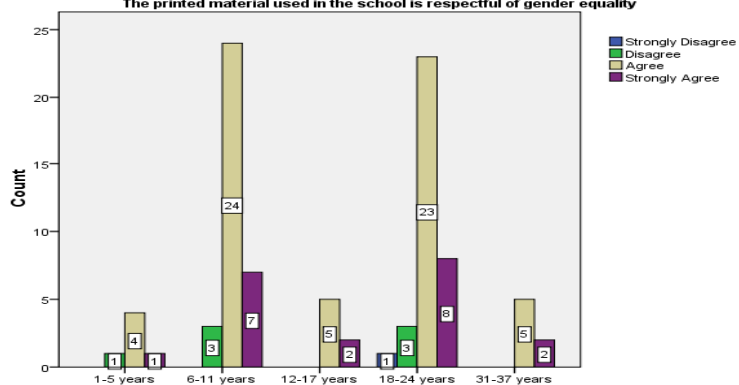
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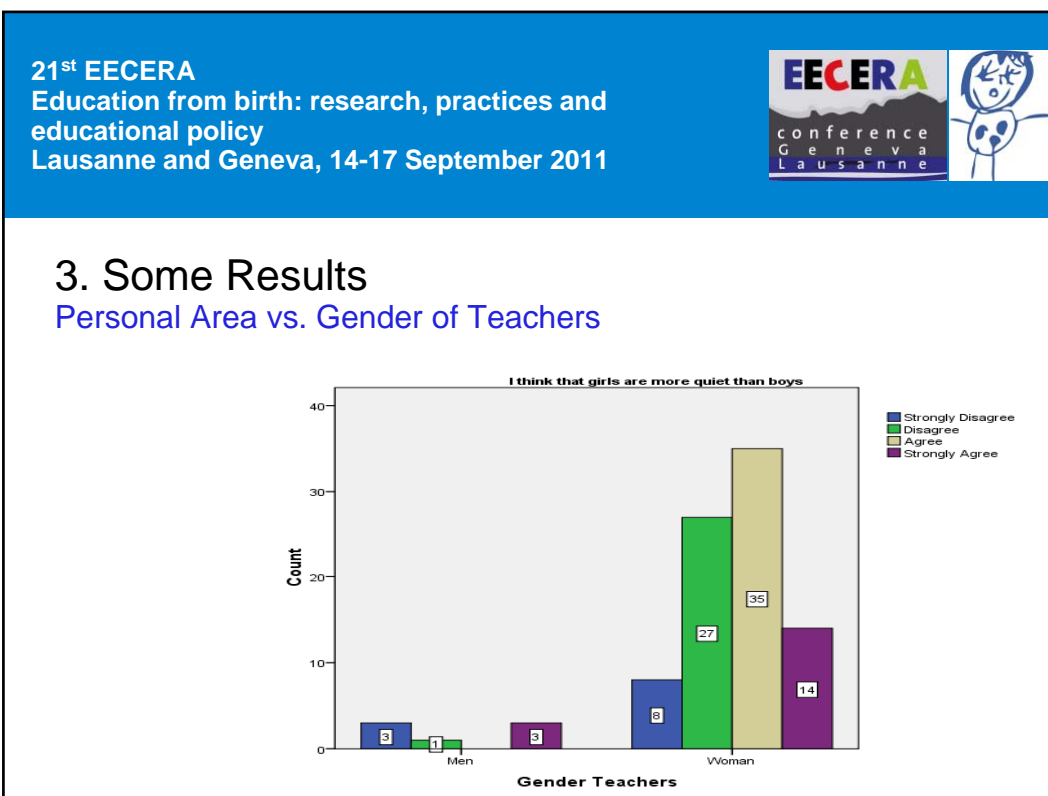
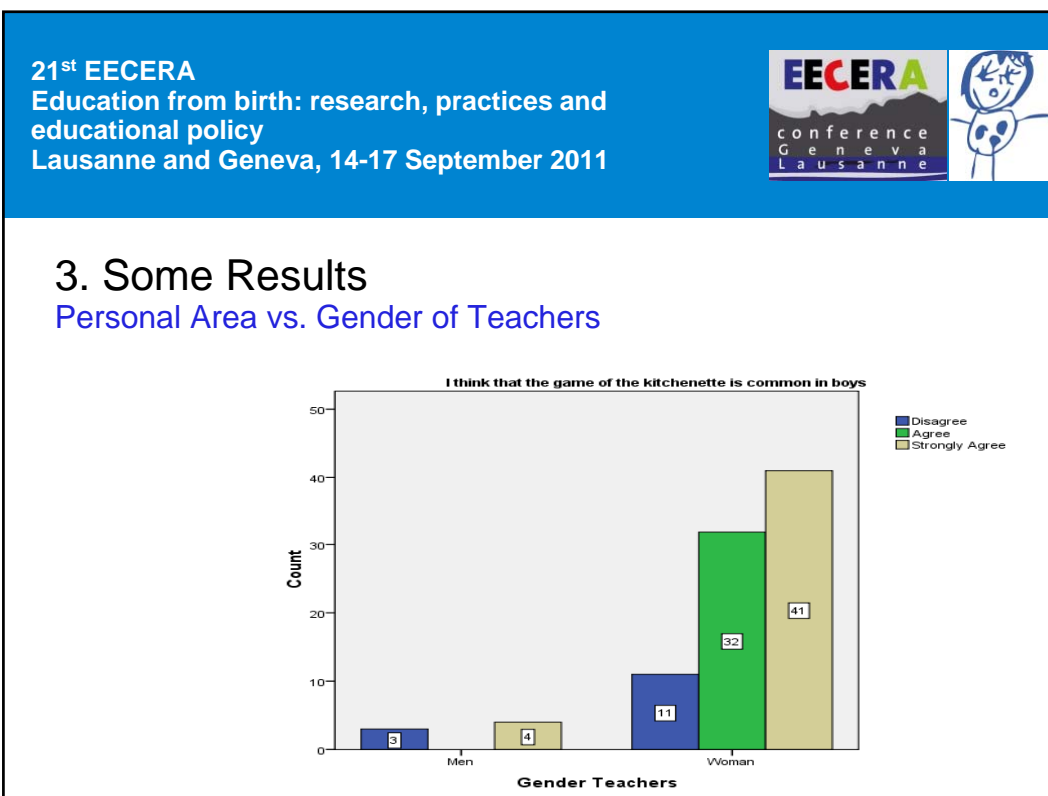


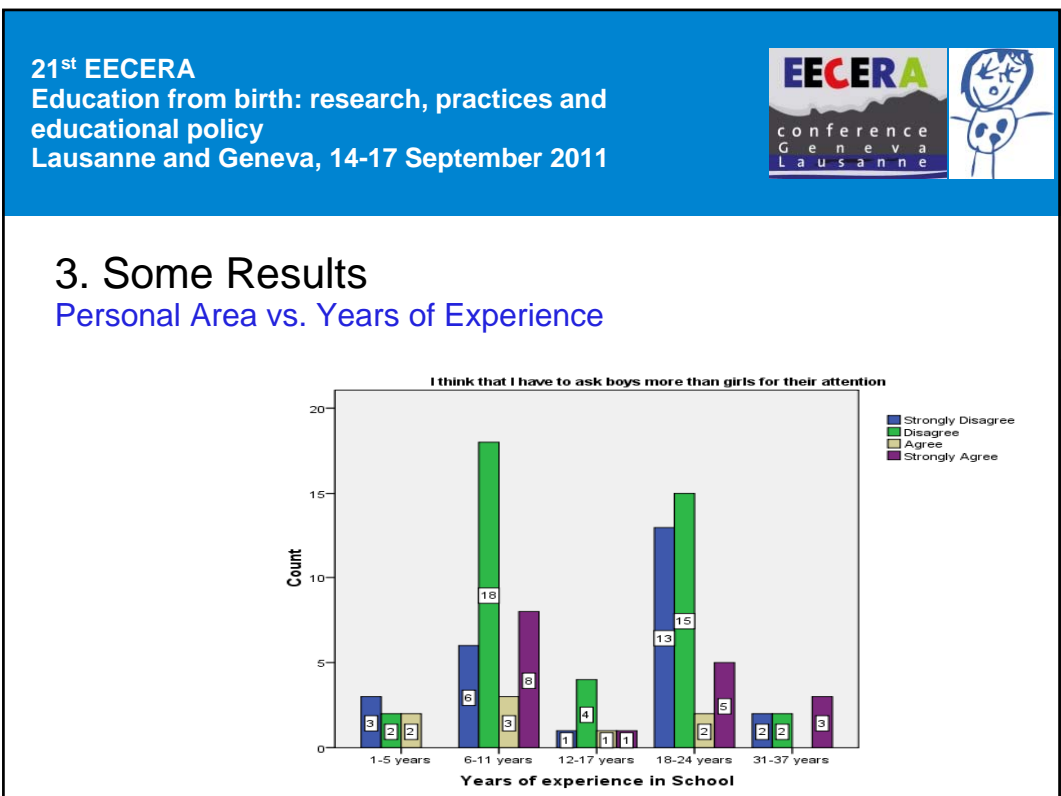
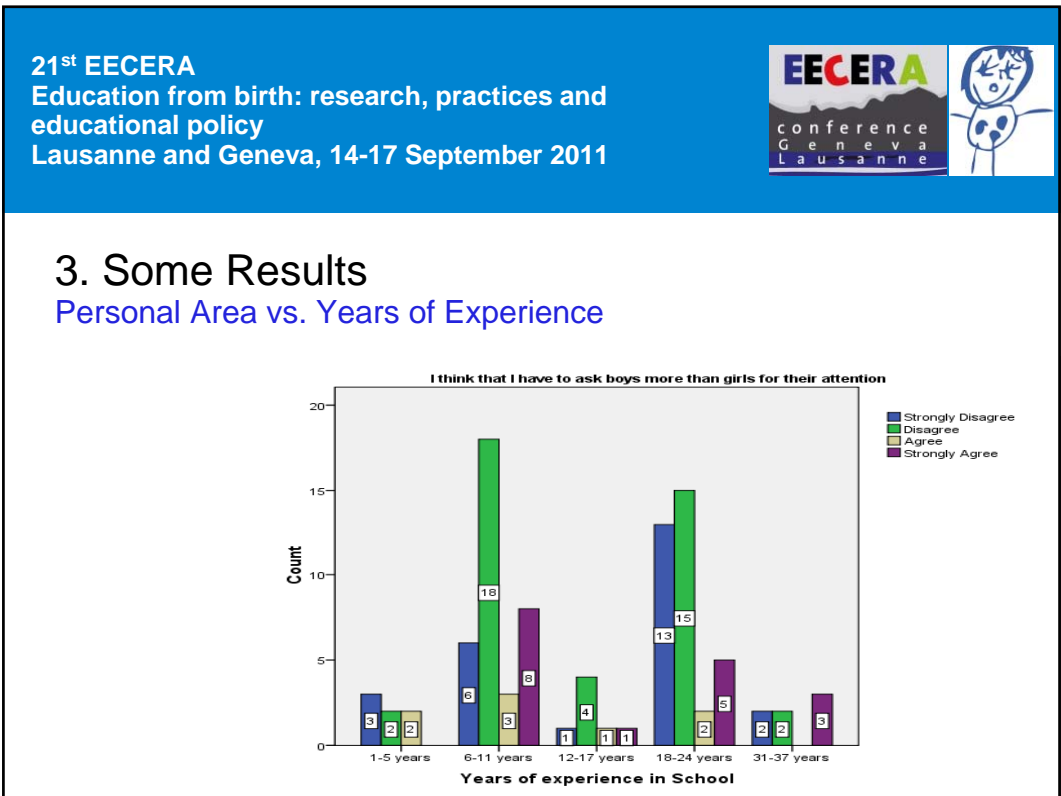
3. Some Results

Didactic Area vs. Years of Experience

The printed material used in the school is respectful of gender equality







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4. Analysis

Institutional Area:

Semi-Private and Public

- More representativeness of both gender at school workers in:
 - Primary school teachers
 - Workers of school services (dining, concierge, cleaning, etc.)
- More training to foster relationship with the students on gender equality:
 - Teacher
 - School Staff

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4. Analysis

Personal Area:

Gender of Teachers:

- More emphasis of some stereotypes on the same gender

Years of Experience

- More years of work more stereotypes

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Any question, suggestion, doubt,
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Thank you very much for your attention!