



Feminist Fairy Tales for Armenian Children

Creative Project by Margarita Nahapetyan

Purpose

- The project aims to introduce Armenian children to feminist fairy tales.
- The project revises false gender representations included in world-famous fairy tales, challenging the traditional roles and duties of female protagonists.

Introduction

Fairy tales have an important role in a child's development process.

- They stir children's imagination and emotions.
- They help children to differentiate between the good and evil.
- **But** they also define how children view the society and their societal roles

Problem Identification

In world-famous fairy tales like Cinderella, Snow White or Sleeping Beauty genders and their roles are very often stereotyped.

Women are portrayed as vulnerable, submissive, weak and dependant creatures.

Meanwhile, men are represented as strong and brave humans, who are always ready to save the day for poor maidens.

Biased Representations of Women

Cinderella is naïve and timid, while her step mother is evil and bossy.

Little Red Riding Hood and Goldilocks are disobedient trouble makers.

Snow White and Sleeping Beauty need a Prince to save them from evil Queens and fairies.

Women in fairy tales are not good team players.

Fairy tales portray marriage as a woman's best accomplishment.

Main Problem

When exposed to gender-biased fairy tales at a young age, children **accept** gender roles as they are described and represented in fairy tales.



Literature Review

“Literature, a powerful vehicle for helping children understand their homes, communities, and the world, provides impressions and messages that can last a lifetime.” (Santora, 2013)

“Repeatedly exposing children to biased representations could have dangerous consequences: it could make such distortions become part of their thinking, especially if reinforced by societal biases.” (Santora, 2013)

Literature Review

“Unlike their male counterparts, Grimms’ women are – in most cases – operating without the benefit of female companionship, support or even contact.” (Mendelson, 1997)

“Instead, we have a collective portrait in which women are only seen together when they are acting as a threat.” (Mendelson, 1997)

Literature Review

Romantic tales transmit obvious warnings to rebellious women: resistance to the cultural command to wed constitutes a threat to the “social fabric” and thus they will eventually be forced to submit, as in “King Thrushbeard.” (Rowe, 1979)

Fairy tale portrayals of marriage as a woman’s only option “limit female vision to the arena of hearth and cradle,” perpetuating a patriarchal status quo. (Rowe, 1979)

Research



Survey

Conducted among Armenian parents.

Consisted of ten questions, aimed to understand Armenians' viewpoint on gender roles and their openness to feminist fairy tales.

Included both multiple choice and linear scale questions.

Posted on three Facebook groups -- "Baby-sitters & Caregivers Wanted," "Armenian Parents' Corner" and "Club of Armenian mothers and mothers-to-be."

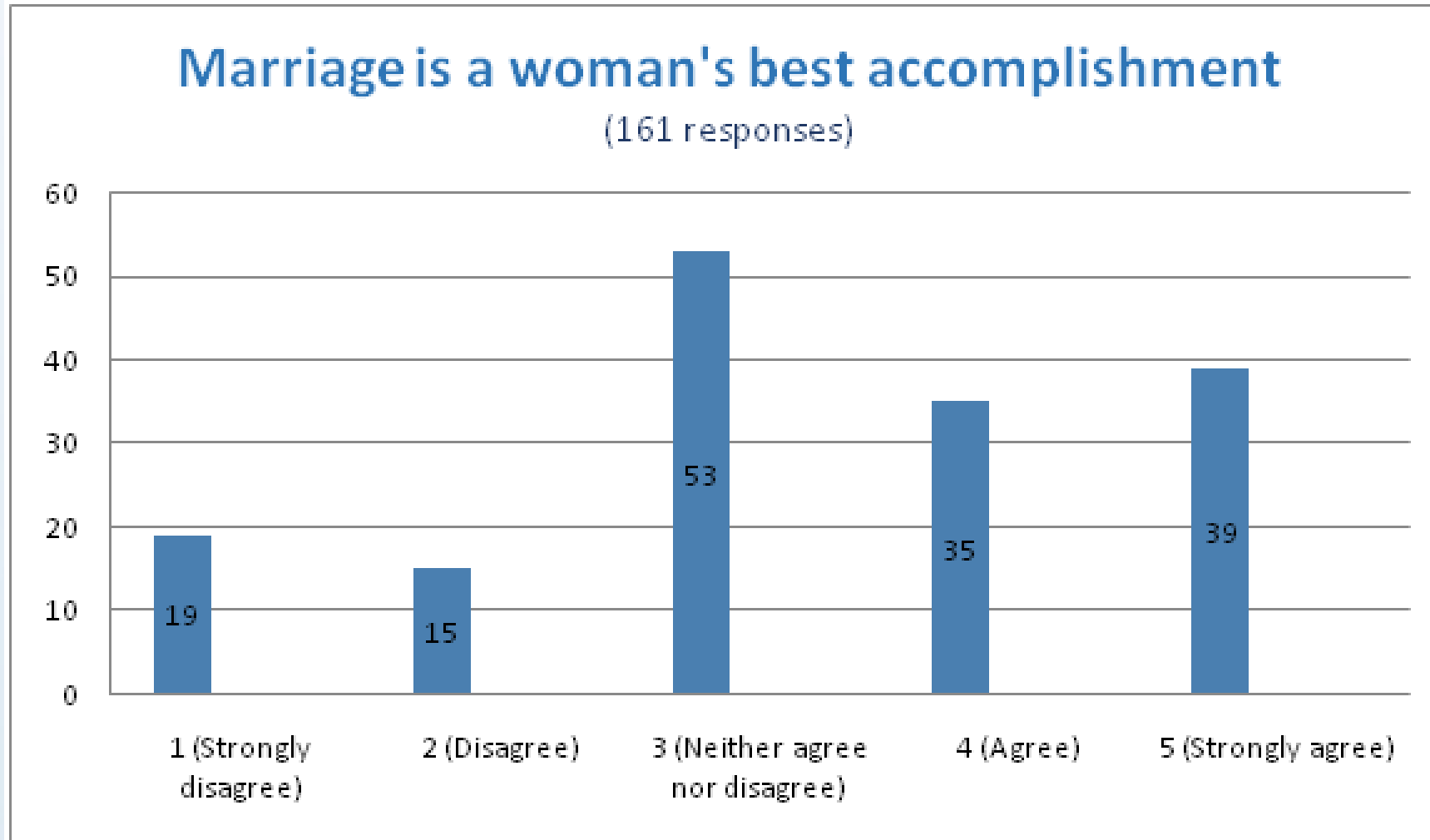
Results

Overall 166 participants

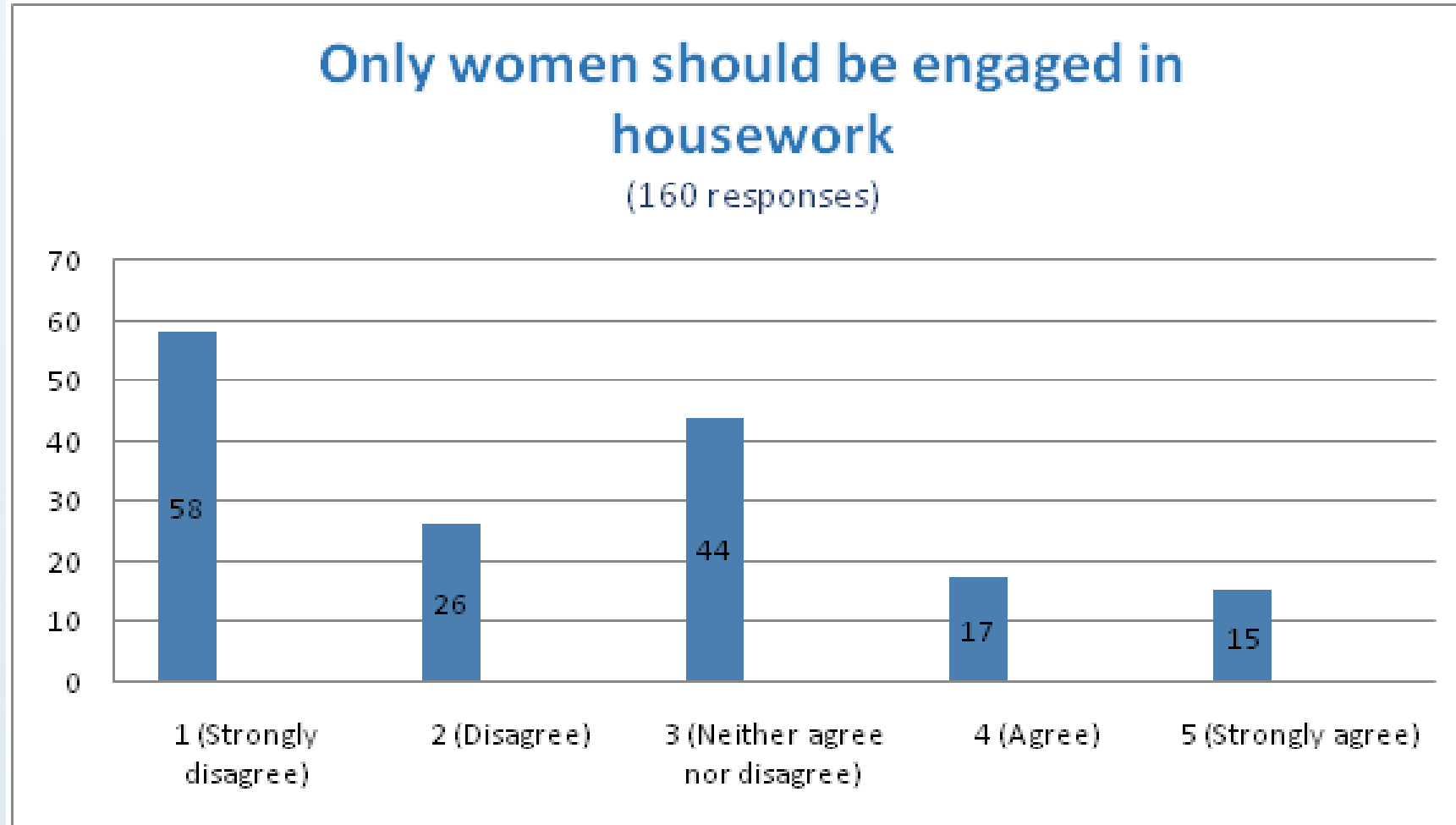
160 female participants; 2 male participants

130 participants (80.7 %) read fairy tales to their children, while 31 did not (19.3 %).

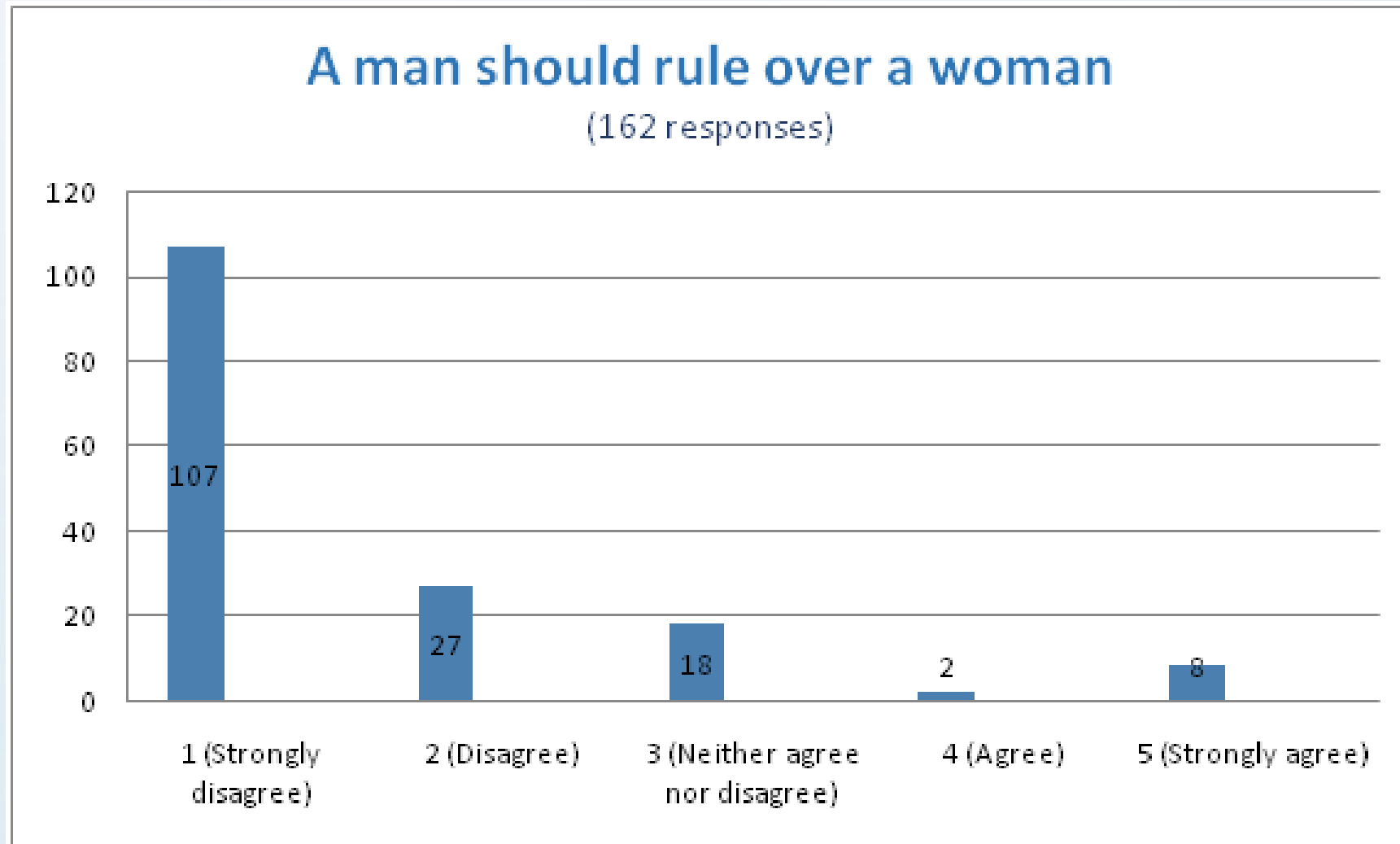
Results



Results



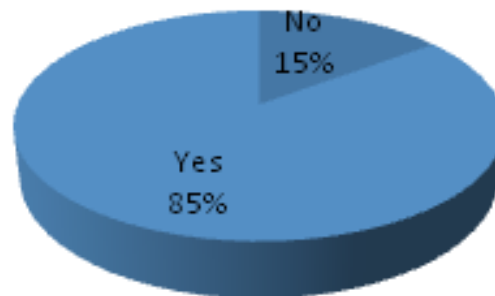
Results



Results

138 of 162 participants expressed their willingness to read Armenian feminist fairy tales to their children while 24 did not.

Would you read Armenian gender-friendly fairy tales to your (grand)children, if there were any?
(162 responses)



And what about you?

Are you **willing** to read Armenian
feminist fairy tales?





If **yes**, make sure to check
my **capstone project!**

Thank you!

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