Gender Bias in Hebrew Wikipedia: Quantitative Assessment
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Abstract

Research data shows the importance of Wikipedia as a distinguished and popular primary information source. Its size and its usage-data makes is a milestone in the encyclopedic knowledge base infrastructure.

Shortly after the emergence of Wikipedia as a popular information source, claims of gender bias and under-representation of women has aroused. Among Wikipedia communities of editors around the world, the gender bias claim has been established in repeated research. Nevertheless, the evidence of gender bias in the content of Hebrew Wikipedia entries has yet to be assessed in a quantitative objective methods. This work focuses on Hebrew Wikipedia, which also enjoys both substantial amount of entries and popularity among internet users.

The purpose of this work is to present a quantitative method to assess the issue of gender bias in Hebrew Wikipedia, using two separate methods: first, we examined the gender balance in the number of entries within certain categories, and its deviation, if exists, from the gender balance in real-world data.

Secondly, a number of textual parameters of the entries' content was measured, and the means of these parameters in the women's biographical entries were compared to the men biographical entries.

In most 3 out of 4 examined categories, gender bias has been found, in the form of under-representation of women in Wikipedia, compared to the real world gender balance.

In some of the examined categories, statistical evidence of gender bias has been found in some of the textual parameters, which reflects smaller volume of content and connectivity in women's entries, in comparison to men's entries.

These findings are inconclusive, and needs further research work to strengthen their contribution to the answer of the question of gender bias, its magnitude and its causes.

Even though, these findings may raise hypothesis that Wikipedia, being both primary information source which is used by decision makers in different areas, and a reflection of people's biographies, might be in itself a factor in the dynamic which creates or preserves gender bias.

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