

Women on the Chopping Block? Gender Dynamics on Popular Kids Cooking Competition Shows and in the Culinary Profession

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Introduction

- ❖ Traditionally, cooking is considered a gendered act in the domestic sphere; most cultures perceive it to be a female responsibility.
 - Despite this, women have insufficient representation compared to men on the cooking competition show *Chopped* (Jalalzai, Sethuraman et al.) and are therefore less likely to win (Fig. 1). This may be attributed to women's role (or lack thereof) in the culinary field. Women lag substantially behind men in the culinary profession (see Table 1).

Table 1: Chefs and head cooks entering the US workforce and the median wages during 2010 and 2019

2019 Year		Male	Female
2010	Total employed	323,233	79,662
	Wages per year	\$29,931	\$23,839
2019	Total employed	457,013	143,891
	Wages per year	\$37,326	\$27,095

source: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata.html>

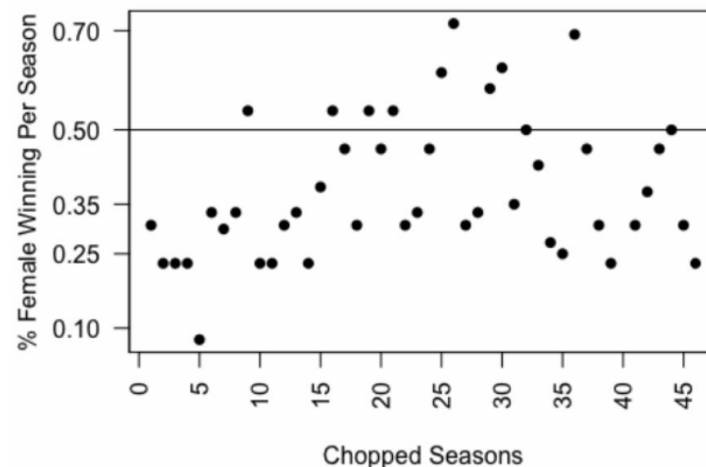


Figure 1: Proportion of female chefs winning per season on *Chopped*

Introduction

- ❖ It is known that female representation in media affects young girls' perceptions of themselves. Young aspiring female chefs may be discouraged from participating in cooking competition shows and entering the culinary profession due to the lack of representation of professional female chefs on cooking shows such as *Chopped*.
- ❖ The gender gap in the culinary profession may be better understood by exploring the gender dynamics of kid and adult cooking shows and examining representation of young female chefs and women chefs in media.

Hypothesis & Purpose

- ❖ Hypothesis: Young female chefs' success rates is proportional to their representation as contestants in kids cooking competitions.
- ❖ Purpose:
 - To determine whether young female chefs are underrepresented as contestants on cooking competition shows and therefore less likely to win
 - To further examine the impact this representation may have on the gender makeup of adult cooking competitions and the culinary profession

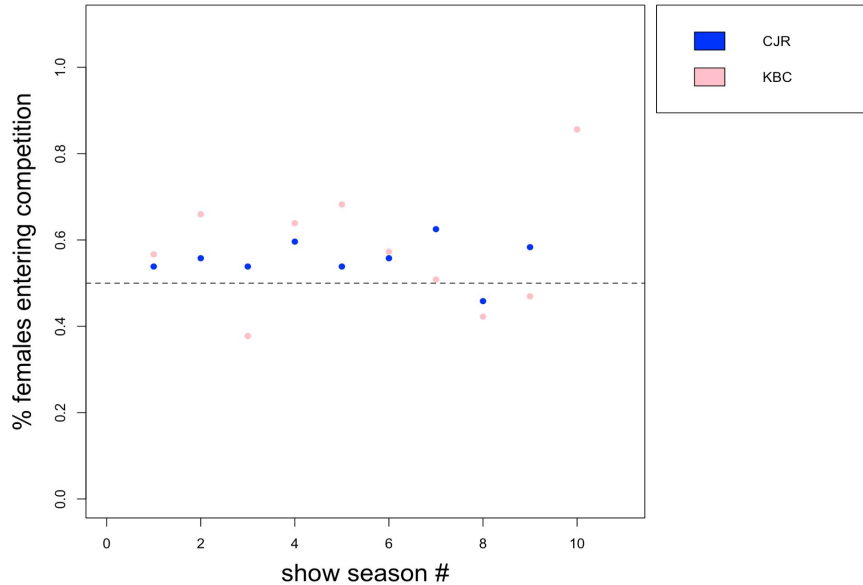
Methods

- ❖ To better understand this project, a thorough description of the structure of *Chopped Junior* and *Kids Baking Championship* is necessary.
- ❖ *Chopped Junior*:
 - Four chefs between the ages of eight and thirteen compete in a three-round contest. At the end of each round, one contestant is eliminated. At the end of the episode, one winner is declared.
- ❖ *Kids Baking Championship*:
 - In each season, anywhere between eight to twelve bakers between the ages of eight and thirteen compete in a baking competition. At the end of each episode, one contestant is eliminated. In the last episode of the season, one winner is declared.

Methods: Data Collection & Analysis

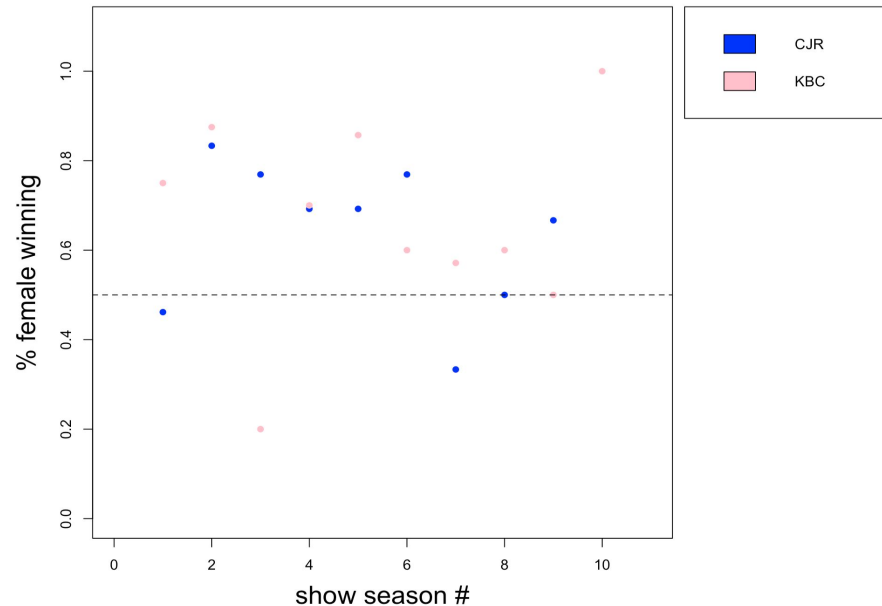
- ❖ Systematic review of all available *Chopped Junior* and *Kids Baking Championship* episodes (203 in total)
 - Categorized contestants by gender to determine the number of young female chefs participating per episode and the gender of the winner
 - Gender of contestants are triangulated through watching episodes of each show or through media articles
- ❖ The percent of young female chefs entering the competition each season was calculated
- ❖ The percent of young female chefs that won the competition each season was calculated
- ❖ Descriptive and correlative analysis was performed using R programming

Results

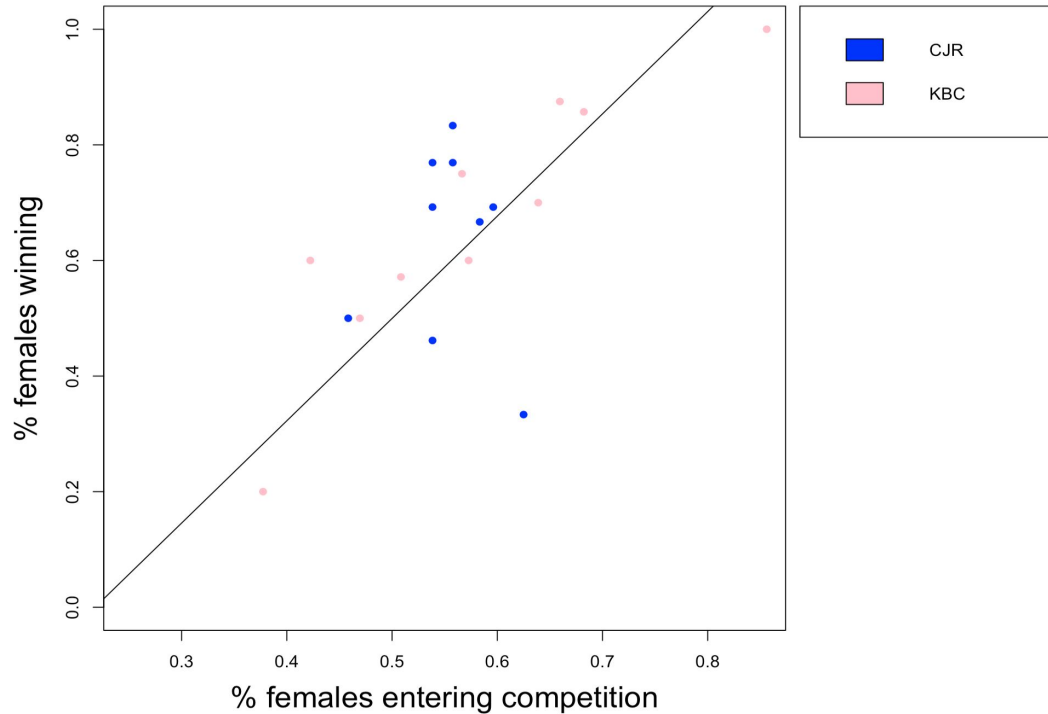


Out of the 384 contestants in *Chopped Junior* (CJR), 213 (55.5%) were female. Out of the 107 contestants in *Kids Baking Championship* (KBC), 58 (54.2%) were female.

On average, 60% of winners in *Chopped Junior* (CJR) were girls, and 62% of winners in *Kids Baking Championship* (KBC) were girls.



Results



- ❖ On both *Chopped Junior* (CJR) and *Kids Baking Championship* (KBC), young female chefs' success rate is slightly higher than their representation as contestants.

Findings

- ❖ Young girls are not underrepresented and are not less likely to win on *Chopped Junior* and *Kids Baking Championship*.
 - However, older female chefs don't appear to be in positions of leadership in the culinary profession (Jalalzai et al.), even though cooking in the domestic sphere is a gendered role.
- ❖ This difference in representation on kids cooking competition shows and the culinary profession link to gender inequalities women face in the workforce.

Discussion

- ❖ In the previous study, it was shown that dynamics on the show *Chopped* relate to larger gender inequalities that women face in a male-dominated industry.
 - This aligns with patterns in other professions—when compared to men, women aren't equally represented in leadership positions even though they have had a growing presence in the workplace.
- ❖ Based on the current study, girls have a greater presence in cooking competition shows; however, they don't appear to be sufficiently represented in cooking competition shows or professional positions of power as they grow older.
 - This possibly indicates that although many girls may want to be chefs, they may not be able to gain enough prominence to do so due to the prevalent disparities that women face.
- ❖ Disparities that women face in the culinary profession may be addressed by ensuring that women and men have equal access to opportunities and ensuring that girls have symbols of successful women.

References

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