

Lake wobegon effect research paper examples

[Environment](#), [Water](#)



The Lake Wobegon effect is “ a natural tendency to overestimate one’s capabilities and see oneself as better than others” (White, 2012, par 1). In addition, it is a tendency to underrate one’s weaknesses. This term was based on a mythical community by Garrison Keillor in his radio series, “ A Prairie Home Companion”, wherein the people are described as “ all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking, and all the children are above average” The Lake Wobegon effect was popularized in 1987 by John Cannell when he discovered that all students in every state in the country got an above average score in standardized tests. Cannell attributed this to the fact that the students taking the tests were not being compared to the students who are taking the test at same time; rather, they are being compared to the group to whom the test was originally developed. According to Cannell, the results will be then be misleading because it does not show how a student fairs with the group which took the test at the same time he did. Moreover, it is quite probable that the students today know more than the students in the previous years because of improvements in the curriculum.

Lake Wobegon effect arises primarily due to one’s desire to be better compared with other people. That is because one’s self-worth can only be seen when compared to others. Some psychologists refer to the Lake Wobegon effect as self-enhancement bias. Others may refer to it as unrealistic optimism , perennial optimism or superiority illusion. An illustration of the Lake Wobegon effect is in the salaries of CEOs. Because no company will admit that their CEO is below average than the other CEOs, they tend to increase the salaries of their CEOs.

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