

Gender development in the family

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It is irrefutable that the mass media plays an active role in socialization. I have chosen to look at how television commercials and cartoons shapes gender role by their portrayal of male and female. I have found out that in both commercials and cartoons, females are always dominated by males both by their number and their roles. For example, advertisements for children both features male and female but boys tend to be the dominant ones. In these commercials, boys are portrayed to be more active and aggressive than girls. Advertisements geared for boys have active toys, varied scenes, rapid camera cuts, and loud music. On the other hand, those for girls have more frequent fades and softer background music. In cartoons, the ratio of male to female characters is 8: 1, with males being portrayed to engage in sports, travel, and troubles, while girls are only on the background helping do the dishes, answering phones, or reading. In this society where children are bound to spend more time with the television than their own parents, it is expected that children will be seeing the characters in cartoons and commercials as their role models. It can be seen that children will likely imitate what they perceive making boys more dominant and girls more submissive.

1. What perceptions of male and female roles do these images generate?

This portrayal of boys and girls in television commercials and cartoons is expected to create more dominant males and submissive females. Boys will see masculinity as being rational, efficient, competitive, and ruthless while

girls will be imbued with femininity by being compliant, emotional, and cooperative (Chandler 5). It should also be noted that commercials and cartoons portray these characteristics as “ natural.”

2. What negative or positive implications do current gender images have for families and our society?

Stereotypes generally create a double standard in the society (Double Standard 3). Current gender images promote discrimination and injustice by making people judged by what they are instead of what they do. In our present society, men are often given more career opportunities than women. An extreme example of double standard is the slut/stud, where a man who slept with ten women is generally envied and highly regarded by his peers while a woman did the same will become an object of disgust.

3. How do different family ideologies influence goals that a family system might have regarding gender roles?

Family ideologies have huge implications on shaping gender roles. More conservative families tend to favor the more traditional and conventional values. In this type of ideology, girls are raised to be demure, gentle, sensitive, submissive, and dependent while boys are raised to be active, aggressive, and independent. Traditional families also favor male dominance. However, more open-minded families create a fairer playing field for boys and girls where each are given the same opportunity and the right to make a decision.

4. Based on your experience with this activity, is content analysis well suited for this type of analysis? Why or why not?

I believe that content analysis is a suitable method for this type of analysis. It

is irrefutable that children are very much inclined to imitate what they perceive. Thus, the content of the programs and advertisements especially designed for children represents a setting of what children will see as an “ideal” world.

Works Cited

Chandler, David. “Television and Gender Roles.” The University of Wales. n.d. 19 October 2006
“Double Standard.” Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. 10 October 2006. 19 October 2006

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