

GENDER STEREOTYPING TOWARDS CHILDREN: A
QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CRAYOLA
TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS

By

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the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in
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ABSTRACT

A Thesis in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Communication Studies to the office of Graduate and Extended Studies of East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania.

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Abstract

Capitalizing on gender stereotypes in television advertising is a highly used practice. The purpose of this research is to explore how boys and girls are represented in Crayola commercials to uncover whether or not gender stereotypes are still used to sell what many would consider a gender-neutral product. This research is important because as society progresses towards an accepting stance regarding children stepping outside of gender norms, television advertisements should be reflecting this progress. Through the use of qualitative content analysis, Crayola commercials over a 10-year period are examined to identify reoccurring gender stereotype themes, trends, or patterns. The findings were consistent with previous research in that television advertisements are still very gender biased, even when advertising what is considered a gender-neutral children's product. Even though the stereotypes may not be super obvious or excessive, they are still present and constructing messages to its viewers in various degrees.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Creativity within Children

“Wow, I like your use of color!” “What are you making? It looks great!” “Let’s hang this up on the fridge.” Phrases like these are typically heard by most children at some point in their life. What are these remarks in reference to? Artwork! Whether it be drawing, coloring, building, painting, or simply playing, children’s creativity shines through when given the opportunity. Engaging in creative conduct can start at a young age and include a variety of environments from outdoor sidewalk chalk art, bathtub soap painting, to canvas painting. Being given the chance to get creative can have positive impacts on a child’s cognitive and physical development. Drawing and painting specifically can help lay the groundwork for reading and writing, not to mention their role in developing fine motor skills. This opportunity to express their feelings and emotions through artwork also plays a role in their personality development and self-esteem (“The Importance of Art...”).

Because there are multitudes of ways for children to engage in creative activities, some brands were created to capitalize on this commonality in childhood. One of these brands is Crayola. The Crayola brand’s purpose is “to help parents and educators raise creatively-alive kids.” They describe achieving that purpose through believing in “unleashing the originality in

every child,” “offering tools that inspire kids to express what they’re thinking,” and “creating products that will help kids free their “what-if?” questions” (“Brand Essence.”). Crayola was started in 1885 by Edwin Binney and C. Harold Smith. They began by making red oxide pigments for barn paint and carbon for black automobile tires. Years later, in 1900, they opened a mill in Easton, Pennsylvania to produce slate pencils for schools before they realized there would be a market for wax crayons. In 1903, they produced their first box of eight crayons.

The production of these wax crayons was a huge development and became the reason Crayola turned out to be a household name (Rubinkam, 2003). Crayola has continued to improve its brand through the development of an assortment of children’s art products from markers, washable crayons and twistable crayons, to a window cling maker, the Melt ‘N Mold Factory, airbrushing kits, and more (“History.”)! The invention of new products is not the only way that Crayola has worked to improve itself. In 1958, they changed the color “Prussian Blue” to “Midnight Blue” after Prussian history was no longer relatable. Crayola continued color name changes in order to be politically correct with “Flesh” being changed to “Peach” in 1962 and “Indian Red” changed to “Chestnut” in 1999 (Smith). In 1992, Crayola introduced “Color Your World,” an assortment of skin-tone based colors to help children color themselves more precisely (“History.”). Crayola followed this up in 2020 with the release of its 24 new “Colors of the World” crayons. These crayons were specifically designed to represent over 40 skin tones from around the world, with the hopes to “increase representation and foster a greater sense of belonging and acceptance” (Setty, 2020). Always looking to refresh the ways in which children can get creative, many of Crayola’s products continue to be ranked #1 in 2020 (Skryp, 2020). Even though they’re continuously #1 and take up other ranking slots, brands besides Crayola also take rankings throughout these lists. They do have competition and this is because

capitalism is a staple in the United States.

Healthy Competition

Capitalism is “an economic system where private entities own the factors of production,” which include entrepreneurship, capital goods, natural resources, and labor (Amadeo, 2020). Through capitalism, consumers are given choices between different brands for each product they would like to purchase. Businesses, brands, or companies aim to provide customers with a product at the highest price they’re willing to pay. At the same time, these prices must also be kept low enough to persuade consumers to purchase one brand’s product instead of another brand’s similar product (Amadeo, 2020). The United States is mostly a capitalistic nation; however, it is typically considered a mixed economy. This is due to the fact that the United States has characteristics of both capitalism and socialism due to the economy having regulations, taxation, and subsidization (“Capitalist Countries 2020”). With this consumer competition going on, brands must use additional sources to gain popularity or attraction to themselves. One source that can be used is already a commonality to American households: the television.

We Love Our Television

If you look in the typical American home, chances are you will find a “living room” with a television. It is estimated that in 2019-2020 about 120.6 million households have televisions (Watson, 2019). According to a 2015 Statista study, the most common number of televisions used in households was two. This was then followed by one, three, then four, and five or more. The least common number of televisions was zero, or not having any (“Number of Television...”). Given the technological nature of our society and the children growing up within it, it seems reasonable to guess that those numbers would change to three, four, or even five or

more being the most common number of televisions within a household by 2020.

The necessity of having a television in an American household isn't a new phenomenon. Once they became available and affordable to most American homes in the 1950s, the need and desire for them skyrocketed ("Land of Television"). Studies on the impact that television media has on individuals began at this time. These studies found that television has a stronger influence on the general public than anything else. Researchers at the time found that television media has a huge impact on people's attitudes, feelings, or behaviors while simultaneously making it difficult to determine which information is actually factual (Mitu, 2010). Because of the reach and the influential role television has the ability to play, it reshaped and increased the way in which people are exposed to racial, gender-oriented, or class-based stereotypes (Mak, 2020). These stereotypes can contribute to our understandings of the world, teaching us how we should live and behave based on what is portrayed to us. One industry that capitalizes on the use of stereotypes that play into our perceptions is the advertising industry. Because brands need a source to get their product out there and television is popular in our society, commercial advertisements on television is the way to go.

Check Out this Product

The beginning of advertising cannot historically be pin pointed to one specific event or thing as various signs, symbols, product displays, or town criers could be considered advertising. However, the rise of advertising in the United States can be dated back to the 17th century, with the promises of the "New World." Once the British colonies were established, even though most families supplied their needs for themselves, if their crops produced a surplus, they could find buyers in the village marketplace or barter these goods. Decades later, the first documented advertisement appeared, in *The Boston News-Letter*, advertising a plantation for sale in what

would become Long Island, New York. Advertising started to take off in newspapers, typically focused on land, transportation, miscellaneous goods, slaves, and searching for runaways. After the United States had become independent from Britain and loved feeling self-sufficient. The citizens wanted to buy American made goods, so the economy depended on the local nature of things. Advertising during this time consisted of flyers, posters, and newspaper advertisements that typically revolved around slaves/runaways, land, and transportation (Mendelová, 2018).

The end of the 18th century brought about the first Industrial Revolution, followed by the second industrial revolution in the late 19th century and early 20th century, then the third industrial revolution in the 1960s, and the fourth at the turn of the new Millennium. With these industrial revolutions, new mechanical, technological, communication-based, and economical advances were taking place, allowing society to progress greatly as a society of consumers was born. Factories made it cheaper to buy a product rather than make it yourself and new developments in transportation and communication allowed for a much faster exchange of information. As the population increased, the literacy rates rose, and with this so did the demand for newspapers and magazines. These demands brought many different newspapers into circulation, including the penny press. The penny press was named as such as a way to describe just how much cheaper this paper was than the other newspapers, making them accessible to a larger portion of the general public. Because this paper was very inexpensive, the primary source of income to produce and make a profit off of it wasn't from selling the papers themselves, but from selling advertising spaces. This contributed to the first job of an advertising agent coming into place and soon after, the first advertising agencies being established (Mendelová, 2018).

This rise of advertising influenced the practice of branding goods. "With the development of manufactured goods and establishment of specialized companies, advertising's ability to

create imaginary differences between near-identical soaps (or other products for that matter) began to emerge rapidly” (Mendelová, 2018). The use of advertising was able to take a commodity that was unnamed and turn it into a social symbol. Soon, consumers were more likely to pay a higher price for a brand name product rather than purchase the unmarked one. Since being brand name became increasingly important, all companies felt the need to differentiate themselves from their competition with memorable names and striking packaging/trademarks. Some problems involving dishonesty and over the moon advertising arose, leading to some control over advertising being necessary. While gaining control over the advertisements, advertising companies also wanted control over the content of the advertisements. Thus, the full-service advertising agencies were in bloom, providing creative ways of presenting and copywriting advertisements, along with the process of planning, creating, and placing advertising campaigns. The advancing and organizing of the advertising industry helped to legitimize the profession as a “mirror of societal metamorphose occurring in different periods of the human history” (Mendelová, 2018).

The advertising industry has evolved over time, finding newer and better ways to advertise products to the largest population or the most relevant viewers. Different mediums for advertising now include platforms like social media, magazines, newspapers, billboards, television. One of the most common forms of advertising most people think of is probably television advertisements, or commercials, but these didn’t always exist. Advertising on television was actually banned until the Federal Communications Commission gave commercial licenses to 10 stations on May 2nd, 1941 which allowed the airing of television commercials to begin on July 1st, 1941 (Newman, 2016). By 1955, television was the leading advertising medium in the United States with over \$1 billion in advertising revenue. The practice of

television advertising continued to advance along with technology and society while the revenue and costs of advertising increased accordingly (“Television”).

Despite how well television advertising has done since its beginning, according to eMarketer, television advertising has reached its peak in 2018. Many people are “cutting the cord” as they subscribe to streaming services and discontinue their traditional television services. This is the root cause of the forecast that advertising spending will continue down a road of decline for years to come (Sterling, 2019). This being said, many big companies still choose to advertise on television, as well as on social media or through streaming services. Commercial director Laurence Shanet runs down a list of reasons why big companies still advertise on television, with the top reason being that it still works. It is still an effective medium to use when trying to reach the largest and most diverse audience. One other reason he listed that really stood out was that it is not a matter of this or that, but rather a matter of this and that. Advertisements are usually a portion of a larger advertising and marketing plan that television still plays a part in. It is crucial to use different mediums for advertising purposes because each one can be used in their own calculated ways for the best results (Shanet, 2019). Not only do advertisers and marketers calculate what mediums to use for the best results, they also analyze who should be featured in certain situations within their advertisements.

Gendered Advertising

When deciding the content of or characters within advertisements, it’s not a random process. Instead, it is a well thought out plan introduced on the basis of relatability. Using stereotypes within your content is an easy way for your audience to make connections with the product or service being advertised. One of the more common stereotype categories is that of gender roles and norms. Eisend defines gender stereotypes as the belief that “certain attributes

differentiate women and men,” making note that there are four components of gender stereotyping including: trait descriptors, physical characteristics, role behaviors, and occupational status (Eisend, 2010). It would be safe to say that most adults could name at least one stereotype for each gender, but why is this? It is reasonable to credit our lives within a patriarchal society and how the media uses these stereotypes that are ingrained into our being to their advantages.

One of the more taken advantage of groups when it comes to media exposure are children. Children spend many years gradually learning their place in society from an assortment of sources. One of these sources being is television, but what happens when the content of this medium is full of gender roles and stereotypes? Research has shown that programmers, producers, and advertisers aim to create their content to appeal to boys. Because of the social status differences that are deep-seated in our society, females increase their status if interested in something directed at males while males would be decreasing their status if interested in something targeted at females. Therefore, most advertisements feature primarily male characters, who are constructed to be adventurous, problem solving, knowledgeable, and tough while the secondary female characters stay on the safe, passive, and helpless side (Merskin, 2002). As society continues to progress with equality for all, one would hope that these stereotypes have also progressed. Sadly, previous research has shown that despite some slow changes, a lot of gender roles and stereotypes continue to exist in our television advertisements. The representation of gender stereotypes would be easier to see in children’s commercials for brands such as Barbie or Hot Wheels because those products themselves are extremely gendered, but what about other children’s products? How are male and female characters represented in television commercials for more gender-neutral brands or products?

Gendered Colors

What is something else that anyone can enjoy but has become gendered? Colors! Pink if the baby is a girl, blue if it's a boy! It hasn't always been this way though. In centuries past, all children wore white dresses up until the age of six. Because white cotton can be bleached when washed, this was practical and acceptable. The mid-19th century introduced pink and blue along with other pastel colors for baby clothing. Suddenly, in June of 1918, a trade publication called *Earnshaw's Infant's Department* decided that pink, a strong color, is for boys and blue, a delicate color, is for girls. Other sources followed suit with *Time* magazine in 1927 printing a chart showing sex-appropriate colors for boys and girls according to the leading United States stores. Boys in pink, girls in blue (Maglaty, 2011).

This preferred color set up didn't change until the 1940s. Some say it was a result of how manufacturers interpreted America's preferences (Maglaty, 2011), while others say it was influenced by traditional French culture and the fashion industry (Wolchover, 2012). A clear switching point doesn't seem to exist. Unisex clothing became the rage along with the feminist movement in the mid-1960s, with all the new clothing taking on a more masculine style. This unisex clothing remained popular until about 1985, when prenatal testing came into the picture. Excited expectant parents learned the sex of their unborn babies and then went shopping for either "girl" things or "boy" things. Thus, gendered colors took off once again (Maglaty, 2011).

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory is used to explain human behavior as learned through the observation and evaluation of others. Albert Bandura's take on social learning theory emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Bandura adds two important ideas to the social learning theory:

1. Mediating processes occur between stimuli and responses.
2. Behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning.

One group of people who are easily imprinted on are children. Children are surrounded by many influences to model their behavior after such as parents, family, friends, teachers, and characters on children's television programs. When children watch these models, they encode their behavior and may later imitate that behavior. They may wish to imitate certain models because these models have a quality that the child would like to have themselves. Even though it is possible for children to model behaviors that are not 'gender appropriate,' there are processes in life that make it less likely that children would stray from what society has decided is appropriate for their gender (McLeod, 2016).

First of all, children are more likely to pay attention to those models that they find similar to themselves, resulting in modeling same gender behaviors. Secondly, those around the child will respond to the behavior. This can result in either reinforcement for the behavior or punishment for the behavior. Obviously, children are more likely to continue the behavior that received positive reinforcement and discontinue behavior that received negative reinforcement. An example would be a little boy putting on mommy's makeup. He may be scolded for such a behavior whereas his sister may be praised, reinforcing what is 'gender appropriate.' It is likely that the little boy will not do something that is 'for girls' again, while the little girl will. Third, is vicarious reinforcement. Children pay attention to the consequences of another person's behavior when they determine whether or not they will copy that person. If a child sees someone they want to model after being rewarded for certain behaviors, the child is more likely to repeat this behavior (McLeod, 2016). Children are involved in a nonstop learning process to figure out who they should be and what their place in the world is.

Crayola

As mentioned earlier, the Crayola brand has been helping all children, regardless of whether they are male or female, show off their creative side with the countless array of artistic products they have available for purchase. Even though Crayola provides “gender-neutral” products, this does not necessarily mean that these products are advertised without gender stereotypes. This thesis will explore how boys and girls are represented in Crayola commercials to uncover whether or not gender stereotypes are still used to sell what many would consider a gender-neutral product. Focusing on a gender-neutral brand such as Crayola makes this study different from previous studies done. Earlier studies have analyzed other aspects of gendered advertising such as adult perceptions, children’s reactions to gendered stereotypes, and advertising specifically marketed on children’s networks. Therefore, while there are many studies looking at gender stereotypes in advertising, this is different in that the focus is on how a gender-neutral product used by people of all ages is marketed via television advertising in a gendered manner.

Because society as a whole is progressing towards a more accepting stance towards children stepping outside of what were considered gendered norms, our television advertisements should be reflecting this progress. Due to the younger and younger audiences that television has, this progress is vital. These children are still learning the way of the world and where they fit into it, with television being one of their biggest muses. When children see characters in television advertisements that they believe looks like them, they will pay attention to what that character is doing, saying, or how they are behaving. Ultimately, these stereotypes that exist within the media get ingrained into the children’s sense of being. Figuring out how people, explicitly males and females, are portrayed in advertising can help advertisers determine whether

or not they need to actively make some changes to these portrayals.

Through the use of online video platforms such as YouTube, I will be examining Crayola television advertisements over a 10-year period, from 2006-2016 to examine how Crayola's television commercials are portraying their male and female users. Research questions I would like to answer include:

RQ1: Despite being a gender-neutral brand, are "male" gender stereotypes present in the commercials examined?

RQ2: Even though Crayola is a gender-neutral brand, are "female" gender stereotypes present in the commercials examined?

RQ3: Has there been a decrease over time in the amount of gender stereotypes portrayed in the Crayola commercials examined?

Going Forward

This thesis will be made up of four additional chapters, which will include: a literature review, a methodology segment, the textual analysis, and the overall conclusion and discussion of this study. For the literature review, I will be reviewing twelve other studies that revolve around gender, stereotypes, and advertising. In the methodology segment, I will go into detail about how my analysis will be conducted. My textual analysis will contain descriptions of each commercial watched along with my analysis on the commercials as individuals. Lastly, the conclusion will focus on my textual analysis findings as a whole, as well as suggestions for the focus of future research, and how advertisers may need to alter their approach to progress with our societal norms that are changing.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to the Literature Review

This literature review will focus on past research studies regarding the use of gender roles or stereotypes in advertising. Some of the samples are more similar in nature, as they focus on the same portion of the population such as children, while others are more general. A look at past research will help support this current study, while demonstrating that this is a topic worth looking into, with the hope of opening the eyes to advertisers about how they are using gendered stereotypes in their advertisements. Although previous researchers dive into different aspects or specifications within the studies selected, each article was chosen based on their unique perspective on gender roles and stereotypes in advertising. We will begin with a more general review of gender stereotypes in advertising overall, leading in to research specifically on advertising targeted at children, and ending with studies done on advertisements that show non-traditional and non-stereotypical gender roles.

Gender Stereotypes in Advertising: A Review of Current Research

“Gender Stereotypes in Advertising: A Review of Current Research,” examines the ‘what,’ ‘why,’ and ‘now what’ of using gender stereotypes in advertising by looking at research done from 2010-2015, and providing a better direction for the medium to go in the next five

years. This examination begins with briefly discussing three social and historical changes that have sparked the research regarding stereotypes. The three social and historical changes are: the rise of feminism, changes in the labor force, and the changing role structure in the family. The researchers continue by explaining the ‘mirror’ versus ‘mold’ debate. This is a long debate between advertisers and sociologists about the role that advertisements can play within society. The ‘mirror’ point of view suggests that advertising reflects the values that are already present and dominant within society. This view sees advertising as a magnifying glass that already shows dominant concepts that are already held. Since it just reflects what is already there, this view doesn’t value advertising as having a significant impact on those who view it. On the other hand, ‘mold’ suggests that society’s social reality is shaped by what is portrayed in the advertisements. This point of view follows cultivation theory, due to the perceptions of social reality being shaped by the media after incorporating what they see in advertisements into their own system of beliefs (Grau & Zotos, 2016).

Reviewing recent research in this area has shown that gender stereotyping in advertising still exists in many countries around the world such as China, Germany, Belgium, and the United States. Despite the results that this phenomenon of gender stereotyping is very present in many societies, progress within each country is also showing a decrease in the use of traditional gender roles and stereotyping. Some places, such as in the EU after receiving an increasing number of consumer complaints, began to update their ethical guidelines on gender portrayals in advertising because their already existing self-regulation practices were clearly not seen by consumers as successful at regulating their gendered content (Grau & Zotos, 2016).

Grau and Zotos have some suggestions for future research on this topic. First of all, the researchers state that most research on gendered advertising only exists if viewing print and

television advertising, claiming a lack in studies involving advertising on online platforms. Because of this, they propose that future research existing coding schemes be modified as well as new ones developed in order to examine the digital advertising market. The second suggestion is to take a close look at the stereotypes of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) consumers within advertising, and see whether or not members of this community are being fairly represented. The last suggestion that Grau and Zotos offer is a detailed examination of femvertising, or ‘pro-women’ and empowering advertising, to figure out what elements of femvertising make those messages meant to positively impact the self-image of females more or less effective.

Gender Roles and Children's Television Advertising

Kolbe and Muehling noticed something was lacking in the increasing amount of studies done around advertising directed at children, so they took it upon themselves to try and fill that gap. “Gender Roles and Children’s Television Advertising,” aims to examine whether or not children are aware of traditional and nontraditional gender roles when exposed to commercial advertisements containing them. Researchers then continue to try and determine if these gender role portrayals influence the child’s perception of the product (Kolbe & Muehling, 1995). While conducting this study, four research questions were established:

RQ1: Do children attend to gender-role portrayals in television commercials?

RQ2: Does the gender of the person appearing in an ad affect how children evaluate the advertised product?

RQ3: Does the gender of the person appearing in an ad affect how children evaluate the ad?

RQ4: Do children recognize the gender of the person serving as the offscreen announcer?

If so, does this affect their evaluation of the product and/or advertisement?

In order to get children's perspectives, the researchers needed child participants. Two elementary schools in rural college towns (with written parental consent) allowed 170 children to be used for this study. The children were in the first or second grade, chosen specifically because this age group is expected to have already developed certain views relative to gender. Of the 58% of first and second graders in this study, 60.9% were male and 54.9% were female. Four versions of a television commercial for a remote-control car were created, containing either a male or female child actor handling the toy with either a male or female adult voice-over. Each commercial was identical to the others, with the only difference being the swapping out of male or female. The children were assigned at random to one of the four groups, taken to the experiment room, watched the 30-second advertisement, and then answered a series of questions posed by an experimenter. These questions were asked in order to best measure advertisement recall, gender appropriateness, advertisement evaluation, and product preference. Each child was given stickers as a reward for their participation (Kolbe & Muehling, 1995).

The results for advertisement recall concluded that most of the children were aware of the gender of the child actors in the advertisements. When it came to gender-appropriateness of the child playing with the toy in the commercial, the boys' and girls' responses were similar. The commercial sample featuring the female child actor playing with the toy made both male and female students believe that the remote-control car could be a good toy for boys and girls. However, those male and female students viewing the sample with the male child actor stated that they believed the remote-control car is only appropriate for boys. Effects of actor's gender on product preference found that, surprisingly, the actor's gender didn't have much of an impact on whether or not the children would prefer the product. As one could have guessed, boys did

give the remote-control car toy higher ratings for preference than girls did. Similar results were displayed on the effects of actor's gender on ad evaluations, showing that both male and female students generally liked the advertisement with a slightly more favorable view from the boys. The male and female voice-over difference didn't yield any significant results either, with a good portion of children thinking the female voice-over was actually a male voice-over (Kolbe & Muehling, 1995).

Ultimately this study found that children are in-fact aware of whether television commercial actors are male or female. The results also suggest that because male and female students considered the toy to be for both male and female children when seeing a female in the commercial, it may be beneficial for advertisers to take note of. Despite the effect being small, having a nontraditional character within a commercial is capable of changing the toys classification for gender appropriateness (Kolbe & Muehling, 1995), leading to a bigger consumer market.

Sex Role Stereotyping in Children's Advertising: Current and Past Trends

The article, "Sex Role Stereotyping in Children's Advertising: Current and Past Trends" defines sex-role stereotypes as "classificatory schemata that children and adults use to organize and make sense of their social environment" (Macklin & Kolbe, 1984) which lead to, of course, expectations of how males and female should behave in society. Macklin and Kolbe want to know if sex role portrayals in the media are reasonably realistic or whether they are restrictive and have a negative connotation. Advertisers have expressed the same concern, with the National Advertising Review Board preparing a self-regulatory checklist asking the following:

Am I implying in my promotional campaign that creative, athletic, and mind-enriching toys and games are not for girls as much as for boys?

Are sexual stereotypes perpetuated in my ad?

Are the women portrayed in my ad stupid?

Does my ad use belittling language?

Does my ad make use of contemptuous phrases?

Based on previously done research, Macklin and Kolbe predicted that male and female characters would appear in commercials together, however males would be more dominant in the commercial. They also predicted that male-oriented advertisements would feature more activity, higher aggression levels, and louder soundtracks while male voice-overs would be used more frequently than female voice-overs. To test their predictions, a content analysis would need to be completed. Using three major networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) 64 commercials were recorded from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on three consecutive Saturdays. After training six undergraduate business students (three male judges and three female judges), each individually evaluated the commercials. The assessments were based on the five dimensions mentioned earlier: advertisement dominance, active/passive behaviors, aggressive behaviors, voice-overs, and audio track/background music (Macklin & Kolbe, 1984).

As the researchers expected, in terms of advertisement dominance, a majority of the advertisements were gender neutral, meaning that both male and female characters were together. However, 63.9% of the dominant characters within these commercials were male, showing no real differences from past studies. The results of this study didn't show any significant difference between male and female featured advertisements on the dimension of active/passive behaviors. For the dimension of aggressive behaviors, only 12.5% of the commercials under examination were judged as containing some kind of aggressive acts. Due to a lack of percentage data from previous studies, no trends on this dimension could be stated. The

findings of the dimension on voice-overs was right on track with previously noted trends with male voice-overs dominating in commercial advertisements. The final dimension, audio track/background music, yielded results similar to previous research with female oriented advertisements containing softer sounds than the gender-neutral advertisements. Inconsistent however, is that these results showed little difference between female oriented advertisements and male oriented advertisements (Macklin & Kolbe, 1984).

Overall, Macklin and Kolbe's study found that few changes have occurred when comparing their results to previously done studies. The continued lack of change should be an invitation to advertisers to try some new advertising strategies instead of continuing the same stereotypical trends that appear to be occurring within the content for a variety of brands and services (Macklin & Kolbe, 1984). As most studies do, this study is missing other dimensions that could be put under examination. One dimension that could be considered missing and should be used in future studies is the presence of stereotyped personality traits, such as toughness and weakness.

Gender Stereotypes in Advertising on Children's Television in the 1990s

“Gender Stereotypes in Advertising on Children’s Television in the 1990s: A Cross-National Analysis,” examines how sex role stereotyping in television commercials in the 1990s that are meant for children in both the United States and Australia through the use of content analysis. These stereotypes can be problematic as they potentially set the stage for how children see themselves or others. Browne defines gender stereotypes as, “general beliefs about sex-linked traits (collections of psychological characteristics and behaviors characterizing men and women) and gender roles (activities differentially appropriate for men or women)” (Browne, 1998).

Previously done research shows some patterns of stereotyped advertising targeted towards adults as for example women are portrayed as passive, dependent, and respectful while lacking intelligence and credibility. Men however, are shown to be constructive, powerful, independent, and able to accomplish anything. Research on advertising aimed towards children had very similar results to that of adult's stereotyped advertising, featuring twice as many boys as girls and showing boys in dominant and active roles. Male characters are shown working outside of the home while women are shown inside of the home. All of these details within advertisements promote the stereotypes of females being weaker, softer, and passive while males are active, inventive, and aggressive.

Do these stereotypes in children's advertising even make an impression on the children? Research from 1978 shows that children as young as two-years-old are able to associate different traits with a male or female, softer traits belonging to females while harder traits go to males. A 1990 study found the same results with five-year-old children. Study after study presented evidence that children do in fact pick up on and have influenced beliefs about gender stereotypes. Although some parents may try to modify these stereotypes, what children are exposed to on television takes a greater hold on them. Browne's hypothesis are as follows:

H1: Gender portrayals in TV commercials have less stereotyped content than has been indicated by previous research.

H2: Ratios of male and female characters, voiceovers, product usage, credibility, activity, aggression, roles occupied and format characteristics in TV commercials are more consistent with traditional gender stereotypes in the United States than in Australia.

H3a: Stereotyped body language in TV commercials does not differ between countries.

H3b: In a total sample, girls exhibit more withdrawal behaviors (such as shyness, eye or

head aversion, snuggling, and hiding) than boys.

H3c: Boys exhibit more dominance behaviors and girls exhibit more deference behaviors.

H3d: Boys engage in more verbal and physical directing than girls.

H3e: Girls exhibit more gentle touching of people and objects and boys exhibit more direct manipulation of people and things.

H3f: Adults' self-presentations are more ritualized than children's.

To complete the content analysis, three-hour blocks of commercials (pre-Christmas and post-Christmas) during Saturday morning cartoons was recorded. One female and one male were hired by Browne for coding the samples. They were provided instructions that defined the variables to be coded, explained the coding sheet, and instructed use for the video equipment used to view the advertisements. To ensure that the coders were confident in what they were doing, practice sessions were conducted. The results of this study concluded that there is very little difference from the results of previously done studies. For example, more male characters continue to be shown in commercials, voiceovers were still more likely to be male than female regardless of the target audience for the product being sold, and male characters were more likely to demonstrate or explain products (Browne, 1998). These consistent results continue to emphasize the need for change within the advertising industry.

A Longitudinal Content Analysis of Gender Roles in Children's Television Advertisements

The article, "A Longitudinal Content Analysis of Gender Roles in Children's Television Advertisements: A 27 Year Review. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*," compares gender roles and stereotypes in children's advertising with various studies that have been conducted over the past 27 years at the time this article was written. Maher and Childs, explores how children may be more vulnerable to stereotypic gender expectancies due to their

lack of clear self-perceptions and repeated exposure to advertising through a content analysis of children's television advertisements. Their sample of children's commercials was gathered through taping five television networks after school for five days and on Saturday and Sunday mornings during one week in March of 2000. After filtering through 215 commercials, 90 was the final number of commercials targeted towards children for the sample size. The following content variables were used during coding: ad orientation, voice-over, dominant product user, and main character. The coders included one male undergraduate student and one female undergraduate student who underwent brief coding training (Maher & Childs, 2003).

The results of this study suggest that gender stereotypy is still present in children's television commercials. The current analysis finds that there seems to be an equal number of commercials directed towards girls and boys, however males outnumber females in the major aspects of children's television commercials that were examined such as who is the dominant product user, who is the voice-over, and who is the main character. When it comes to looking at this study from a longitudinal analysis, comparing the 27 years of different research studies, they found that there has been an increase in gender neutrality as well as a movement towards using more females or more "mixed" genders in dominant product user roles, voice-overs, and main character roles. Even though this has shown that over time children's advertising has been de-emphasizing gender preferences, males still outnumber females. This is problematic because expectancy theory suggests that the gender stereotypy in children's television advertising, being that television often acts as an important socialization agent in learning, can be instrumental in molding children's expectations of their and others' gender roles in a social context (Maher & Childs, 2003).

Gender Stereotyping and Intended Audience Age

In the research article “Gender Stereotyping and Intended Audience Age: An Analysis of Children’s Educational/Informational TV Programming,” Mark Barner aims to examine the different levels of gender stereotyping in programs with different intended audience ages. Child development theorists believe that children develop their sex roles at various stages during childhood and that one of the ways in which they learn sex-role behavior is by observing models. These models can include those of whom children see on television. Studies have found that children tend to want to be like the same-sex models on television, which is why it is worth looking into the potential impact that television characters can play on the sex-role development of their viewers. The following is hypothesized: male and female characters in child-oriented programs (6-11 age range) will contain more traditional stereotypical behaviors than those in teen-oriented programs (Barner, 1999).

Using the mandatory three-hour educational core from five broadcast networks, a sample of television programs that featured a storyline plot were selected for analysis for three consecutive weeks. Out of the eleven shows that were selected for this study, seven were considered child-oriented (ages 6-11) and four were considered teen-oriented (ages 12-16). For coding purposes, eight categories of social behavior were used including: construction, dominance, aggression, autonomy, deference, harm avoidance, dependence, and nurturance. Each of these behaviors were then categorized as “male” or “female” based on “Bakan’s (1966) dualistic view of masculine and feminine stereotyping” (Barner, 1999). Construction, dominance, aggression, and autonomy are stereotypical “male” behaviors while deference, harm avoidance, dependence, and nurturance are stereotypical “female” behaviors. Only two trained coders coded the programs.

The results found that male and female characters in child-oriented shows displayed a significant amount of gender stereotypic behaviors. The female characters showed more than twice as many stereotypical “female” behaviors than the males did and the males showed almost twice as many stereotypical “male” behaviors than the female characters did. On the other hand, the teen-oriented shows did not display as many stereotypical gendered behaviors. The female characters did show more “female” stereotyped behaviors significantly more than the males did, but the male characters did not noticeably display more “male” behaviors than the female characters.

The hypothesis, which suggested that programs for young children would contain more gender stereotyping than programs for teens, was supported by the results of this study. Despite that, both child-oriented programs and teen-oriented programs displayed gender stereotypes. When comparing the age range programs, female characters in both showed about the same amount of stereotypic behavior. The male characters in the two age range programs however, displayed more stereotypical behavior in the child-oriented program than they did in the teen-oriented program. Barner credits this to plot differences between the age groups since teen-oriented programs take on a more “feminine” plot dealing with romance and relationships. Barner hopes that this study can help parents see the potential power that is messaged very subtly in their children’s programming (Barner, 1999).

Interactions, Activities and Gender in Children's Television Commercials

Mary Strom Larson’s article, “Interactions, Activities, and Gender in Children’s Television Commercials: A Content Analysis,” aims to examine the “nature of the interactions and activities of girls and boys portrayed in television commercials placed in television programming targeted at very young children.” This examination will be done through

answering the following research questions that were created after reviewing previous research on this topic:

RQ1: What is the proportion of girls to boys in commercials aimed at children?

RQ2: What is the proportion of commercials that feature girls only, boys only, and boys and girls together?

RQ3: Are there differences in the settings of commercials that portray girls only, boys only, or boys and girls together?

RQ4: Are there differences in the types of interactions featured in commercials that depict girls only, boys only, and boys and girls together?

RQ5: Are there differences in the types of activities featured in commercials that depict girls only, boys only, and girls and boys together?

RQ6: Are there differences in the nature and amount of aggression in commercials that depict girls only, boys only, and boys and girls together?

RQ7: Are there differences in the types of products featured in commercials that depict girls only, boys only, and boys and girls together?

In order to complete this study, 13 ½ hours of commercials were recorded by research assistants from July of 1997 to July of 1998. The goal was to collect a year's worth of commercial samples so as to include all seasons of the year to ensure no seasonal toys or gift advertisements were favored. These commercials came from channel's programming that was rated TVY or TV7, suitable for the youngest of viewers. Although this could lead to biases, the one main researcher coded all of the commercials after two afternoons of training with the coding system. Commercials had to have an image of at least one real or animated child and reoccurring commercials were coded for each time they aired. Several variables were identified

to be used for coding these television commercials. First was the number of identifiable girls and boys featured in the commercials. This was followed by setting, dominant type of interaction, the type of activity being engaged, presence of aggression, and lastly the type of product being advertised (Larson, 2001).

This study yielded a variety of results that answer all of the research questions and are worth taking in to consideration. Out of a total of 892 identifiable children in the featured advertisements, 457 were girls and 435 were boys. There was no significant difference in the proportion of girls and boys in commercials, however the researcher also wanted to examine how many advertisement spots had girls only compared to boys only. Out of 284 single-gender commercials, 117 of them featured girls only while 167 featured boys only. This study also set out to find how often girls and boys are shown in commercials together, resulting in 292 commercials portraying boys and girls together out of the 595 total commercials (Larson, 2001).

When concerning the setting in which girls and boys were located in the commercials, only 12% of boys only commercials were in an identifiable setting at home while 39% of girls-only commercials were in an at home setting, reifying the stereotype of females belonging in the home. Next, researchers want to see if there were any differences between the interactions that boys and girls have within these commercials. They found that the characters in girls-only commercials were extremely cooperative whereas the boys-only commercials featured a lot of competitiveness (Larson, 2001). This is once again, staying right with gender trait stereotypes that exist in our society. Also, on the list was to observe any differences in the activities that boys and girls are portrayed doing in the television advertisements. In all of the commercials, the main activity portrayed was playing. About 75% of the girls-only commercials showed the girls playing while only 45% of the boys-only commercials showed the boys playing, and 33% of the

commercials with both boys and girls showed them playing. The next dominant activity shown was eating, with boys being shown eating in commercials significantly more than girls or both of them combined (Larson, 2001).

The next question was a question of violence and aggression within commercials aimed toward children. About 35% of commercials contained aggression, most of which were commercials with both boys and girls. Within the commercials containing aggression, girls-only commercials featured very little violence while boys-only commercials often featured more than one type of violence. Lastly to be looked at, is the types of products advertised. Food items were the most advertised product, while also being the product advertisements that featured boys and girls together the most often. The second most heavily advertised product was toys, which also happens to be the product type in which boys and girls were rarely portrayed together (Larson, 2001).

The findings of this study suggest that single-gender advertisements featuring boys are still favored significantly. However, the increase in the use of female characters give girls more actively present models to look up to, while also showing young children that it is perfectly natural for boys and girls to play together. The results also found that, consistent with past studies, girls are still portrayed as belonging within the home which keeps up with traditional gender expectations. Another traditional gender expectation that was still present was the cooperativeness of the female characters as opposed to their competitive male counterparts (Larson, 2001).

In addition to those, the activity in girls-only commercials were more so displaying what the toys do, rather than actively role playing with the toys, giving off the impression that this is how calm, quiet, and unimaginative girls should be playing. A concerning find was that out of

the 595 commercials, only three (the same one commercial aired three times) featured girls-only eating. Of course, it would be a stretch to suggest that this means it is good for girls to not eat, but the lack of a healthy eating portrayal for young girls can be a cause for concern. Another concerning aspect of these commercials is that 34% of the commercials featuring children also contained a variety of aggressive acts which, according to cultivation theory, can cause children to develop expectations of the violence or aggression that awaits them in their lives. The results found an increase from what previous studies have found in the amount of toy commercials that aired on television. However, these commercials continue to be gender-stereotyped with boys playing with video games and action figures and girls playing with Barbies and fashion figures (Larson, 2001).

Overall, this study found that some things in the world of children's advertising has changed, such as the numbers of boys and girls featured in commercials together. Despite the small changes that have occurred over time, there is still a large amount of differences in the interactions, activities and gender portrayals in these advertisements geared towards children. This means there is still plenty of room for continued research and many pathways down which the research can go to find answers on whether or not boys and girls are continuously being portrayed in television commercials through gender stereotypes.

Children's Responses to Gender-Role Stereotyped Advertisements

"Children's Responses to Gender-Role Stereotyped Advertisements," investigates whether preadolescent boys and girls have different attitudes towards advertisements that include gender-role characteristics. Numerous television networks, magazines, and websites exist that directly target children, giving marketers the chance to jump at the opportunity to appeal to these capitalist consumers in training. Previous research has found that adults' gender-role stereotypes

influence their responses to advertising and purchasing behavior, so the researchers in this study question what the relationship is with this phenomenon in regards to children (Bakir, et al., 2008).

In this study, stereotypes are defined as a “fixed general belief, characteristic, etc. that a lot of people believe to represent a particular type of person or thing.” Using stereotypes is a common practice in popular culture that marketers have relied on for effective advertising. One of the more commonly used stereotypes involves the differences between men and women, specifically their roles in society or the traits they possess. Prior research has shown that understandings of gender-role stereotypes varies by age as well as gender. Girls have been shown to be more accepting to take on both gender roles than boys are, indicating to advertisers that what might appeal to young girls probably won’t appeal to young boys, but what appeals to young boys can also appeal to young girls. Due to earlier gender differences studies, the researchers hypothesize that young boys will find agentic advertising more alluring than communal advertisements while young girls will see communal advertisements more favorably than agentic advertisements (Bakir, et al., 2008).

In order to complete this study, researchers needed samples of younger and older preadolescent boys and girls. A mix of 280 children in kindergarten and children in the 3rd and 4th grade from an elementary school in the southern United States were used for this study (with consent from their parents). Students got to pick a prize for participating. The students were presented with advertising storyboards, one agentic and one communal, that had a voice-over about a “gender neutral” product such as crackers. After being independently exposed to the advertisements, the children had to answer a few questions that the researcher read to them and indicate their response through the use of a smiley face scale.

This study found no real differences in what the older preadolescent boys and girls found more alluring between an agentic message and a communal message. There was no huge difference between the views of the kindergarten boys and girls either. The only difference that appeared was when comparing the kindergarten girls to the 3rd/4th grade girls, as the kindergarten girls did find the communal advertisement more compelling than the older girls. This can help marketers curve their strategy based on the specific gender and age they are trying to appeal to, knowing to use more nontraditional roles for advertisements targeting the older preadolescent females while using more traditional communal role advertising to appeal to the younger preadolescent females (Bakir, et al., 2008).

The biggest limitation of this study is that it was only done once. Studies on children can be difficult to conduct, especially when large groups of them are needed. More studies of this kind would have to be done to enhance the quality of this research and provide more reliable results. Another limitation is on behalf of the students. Students may have been experiencing what is described as a “halo” effect. Getting escorted individually, watching something on a laptop, wanting to be a “good subject,” and knowing they can pick a prize are all things that could have influenced children to view the advertisements in a more positive light no matter how they might have actually felt about them (Bakir, et al., 2008).

Boys will be Boys

The article “Boys Will Be Boys: A Content Analysis of Gender and Race in Children’s Advertisements on the Turner Cartoon Network,” looks to figure out how race and gender are portrayed in advertisements on the specific children’s cable channel, Turner Cartoon Network. According to Merskin, this research is important for three reasons; little attention has been paid to the advertisements that children are exposed to since the 1970s and 1980s, there is a lack of

research on the content within advertising that runs on cable television, and being exposed to this content provides the foundation for a child's self-conception and understanding of stereotypes. Some stereotypes that children will be exposed to can revolve race and gender. In fact, previous research called the Annenberg study pointed out that programmers, producers, and advertisers create content to target boys. This is due to the social status differences between males and females that is already integrated into our society. If a girl wants to watch a "boy" program, that's looked at as an increase in status whereas a boy wanting to watch a "girl" program is seen as a decrease. Having this mindset is comparable to how girls are glorified as "tomboys" when they like "boy" activities, but boys are harassed and may be called a "sissy" when they enjoy "girl" activities (Merskin, 2002).

These messages that get portrayed on television screens set up societal norms, status positions, and institutional functions within society, preparing children for the roles they may play later in life, including the gender roles they may be expected to fulfill. Advertisements that target children feature mostly male characters who are shown as central active participants in society while the female characters are portrayed as passive and secondary, reinforcing to children the gender stereotype that males hold more power and legitimacy. The use of male voice-overs more than female voice-overs, even when the content is targeting girls, is credited to reinforcing societal views of males being more knowledgeable and in-charge. On the note of preparing children for the roles they may play later in life, most children's commercials were found to feature primarily white characters, showing non-white children that they do not really have a place in society (Merskin, 2002).

To study whether the results of past studies still reins true, Merskin gathered 28 hours of Turner Cartoon Network programming from 2-6 p.m. on weekdays since these are the hours that

children arrive home from school and are likely to watch television before their parents take over to watch something such as the 6:00 news. There ended up being a total of 381 commercials that were coded on dimensions such as: product category advertised, target audience, sex of the narrator, setting, gender of cast, and the race of the cast. The researcher found that advertisements feature an all-male cast more than an all-female cast while a mixed cast was the most common, supporting the notion found in past studies that advertisers feel safe created products that boys will like since girls may be interested as well rather than products that girls will like. Also consistent with previous research is the use of male voice-overs more than female voice-overs, upholding the view that men are more knowledgeable, in-charge, or superior. Another consistency found was where girls were compared to boys setting-wise. Advertisements targeting girls featured girls in indoor settings such as their bedrooms while boys are in adventurous outdoor settings, establishing the mindset that a girl's place is in the home while a boy is able to have adventures outside of the home. In terms of race, nonwhite children featured in advertisements tended to either be accompanied by white children or marginalized with girls in advertisements that girls are more likely to pay attention to than boys (Merskin, 2002). As subtle as these things may be, they are already establishing socially constructed sex roles and stereotypes about race and gender in children's heads, keeping the white male at the top of the world.

A Longitudinal Analysis of the Changing Roles of Gender in Advertising

The purpose of the article, "A longitudinal analysis of the changing roles of gender in advertising: a content analysis of Super Bowl commercials," is to examine gender representations within a variety of product categories in Super Bowl commercials over a 20-year period (1990-2009). Super Bowl time is thought to be one of the most important television

advertising events in the United States, and the costliest with a 30-second commercial costing \$4.5 million in 2015. Prices like that emphasize how important Super Bowl advertising is to both marketers and consumers. Previous research has studied the effectiveness of Super Bowl advertisements, but not how gender is portrayed nor how those portrayals have shifted over time. Given the crucial role that advertisements can play in the social construction of gender roles, it is important to study whether or not they are progressing along (Hatzithomas, et al., 2016). The researchers pose the following questions to explore this situation:

“RQ1: How do female and male stereotypes in Super Bowl commercials before the millennium (1990-1999) compare with those after the millennium (2000-2009)?”

“RQ2: How do these stereotypes vary for the five most advertised product categories?”

Content analysis is the research method used for this study, as it is commonly used for analyzing advertising messages. Using Adland, the world’s largest collection of Super Bowl advertisements, 447 commercials were analyzed for 1990-1999 and 2000-2009. Prior research helped to identify several product categories: food and (nonalcoholic) drinks, alcoholic beverages, services, auto and related products, and financial services. Every commercial was analyzed by one male coder and one female coder, all of which were trained and received lists of the product categories, lists of gender stereotypes and their definitions, and instructions on how to categorize. Later, chi-square tests were conducted to observe whether or not male and female stereotypes have changed before vs. after the millennium (Hatzithomas, et al., 2016).

The researchers found that despite the increase in women’s viewership of the Super Bowl, they are still highly underrepresented in Super Bowl commercials. This can suggest that advertisers are still targeting a male audience, consistent with previous research. However, there was a shift in the representation of male and female stereotypes, leaning away from the

traditional patriarchal norms, and steering towards a more egalitarian portrayal. To answer the first research question posed, male and female stereotypes changed after the millennium and the changes made were consistent with fluctuations in American society. A second research question can also be answered that stereotypes in the product categories have changed as well, particularly in the category's food and drinks, alcoholic beverages, and auto and related products. The changes present here can also coincide with the nontraditional changes in American society (Hatzithomas, et al., 2016).

A Meta-Analysis of Gender Roles in Advertising

The article, "A meta-analysis of gender roles in advertising," looks to contribute to the study of gender stereotypes in advertising and the longstanding debate regarding the relationship between advertising and values in society. Eisend begins by giving an understanding of gender stereotypes as the belief that "certain attributes differentiate women and men," with four components being trait descriptors, physical characteristics, role behaviors, and occupational status. Trait descriptors which are personality traits commonly associated with either male or female and can include things such as self-assertion or concern for others. Some physical characteristics thought to be typical of males or females include hair length, body height, and body width. Examples of role behaviors or roles in life that should be taken on by a male or a female can include leadership or child caretaking. Lastly, occupational status is comprised of the jobs or occupations associated with male or female such as a truck driver or housewife (Eisend, 2010).

Eisend also points out that stereotyping is not solely a negative thing, as it helps us with expectations in life. However, when the knowledge provided by stereotypes is oversimplified or applied to situations inappropriately, they are problematic and can restrict life opportunities

Because stereotyping can be positive or negative, it is vital to understand how they are used in the advertising that millions of people are exposed to on a daily basis. For this study, 37 manuscripts that covered 64 independent studies were found to be appropriate to analyze. Each study was coded in comparison to the others. The categories used for coding gender role variables included the sex of the central figure, basis for credibility, role, location, arguments given on behalf of a product, type of product advertised, mode of presentation, background, end comment, and age. Each gender role coding category fits into the components of stereotyping mentioned earlier: trait descriptors, physical characteristics, role behaviors, and occupational status. Because the studies still differ in a variety of ways, substantial moderator variables also had to be coded. These included: country/masculine index, year, and interaction between masculinity index and year. Method factors that are used as controls include: TV vs. radio, time of day, total sample vs. subsample of central figures, central figures per advertisement, duplicates, and credibility coding/role coding/ age coding (Eisend, 2010).

The results of this study showed that gender stereotyping has continued to be present in advertising. The odds of females being stereotyped were between 1.5 – 4 times the odds for males. However, in countries that are considered “high masculinity,” results show that there has been a gradual decrease in stereotyping over the years. “Low masculinity” countries have already resolved gender issues to a greater extent, which is why they do not show dramatic improvement over time like “high masculinity” countries do. Occupational status was the component with the highest degree of stereotyping in advertising. This is important to note because of how advertising is still depicting females, despite how far they have come in the workplace and in education within society. Results also suggest that gender stereotyping in advertising is dependent upon the developments related to gender equality within that society. Marketers pay

attention to gender developments and use existing values in society to sponsor their brands. Even so, they indicated that cultivation effects of television advertisements need to be further studied through various methodological approaches and that this study has bias due to picking through studies to sample rather than doing a random sampling (Eisend, 2010).

Gender Roles and Humor in Advertising

A research study done by Martin Eisend, Julia Plagemann, and Julia Sollwedel, explained in the article “Gender Roles and Humor in Advertising: The Occurrence of Stereotyping in Humorous and Nonhumorous Advertising and Its Consequences for Advertising Effectiveness,” uses content analysis and experimental studies to examine how humor affects depictions of gender-role portrayals in advertising. Sollwedel defines gender stereotypes as “beliefs that certain attributes, such as occupations or role behaviors, differentiate women and men,” which can lead to the production of “oversimplified conceptions and misapplied knowledge evaluations.” This article emphasizes that gender stereotyping can be directly used as a source of humor in advertising or may be combined with humor in advertising in an attempt to improve the advertisements effectiveness (Eisend, et al., 2014). The research questions for this study are as follows:

RQ1: Is gender stereotyping the same in humorous versus nonhumorous ads?

RQ2: If not, how do humorous versus nonhumorous ads differ with respect to stereotyping?

RQ3: Do humorous depictions of gender stereotyping in advertising influence advertising effectiveness, and does this influence depend on the gender of the audience members?

RQ4: Is there a difference in the way women and men are stereotyped between humorous and nonhumorous advertising?

To complete this content analysis, two of the most popular private television channels in Germany were assessed for four nonconsecutive days, randomly chosen from a two-week period. All advertisements on those two channels from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. were recorded to be coded by one female coder and one male coder. If a problem arose, it was discussed and reconciled with a third coder. The coding categories included: age, argument, background, credibility, hierarchy, location, product type, role, voiceover, and whether or not humor was used. The results of this analysis revealed that gender-role stereotyping in television advertisements depended on the use of humor in the ad. They found that nonhumorous advertisements would show traditional stereotyping of women, while humorous advertisements would portray traditional stereotypes of men (Eisend, et al., 2014). Does this use of humor make these advertisements more effective?

This is conducted in the following experiment with three hypotheses:

H1: Humor (compared to nonhumor) in ads increases the favorability of attitudes toward the ad and attitudes toward the brand, and this effect is stronger for nontraditional stereotyping than for traditional stereotyping.

H2: Nontraditional stereotyping compared to traditional stereotyping increases portrayal acceptance and credibility, and this effect is stronger for women than for men.

H3: Humor (compared to nonhumor) in ads produces a greater increase in attitudes toward the ad and attitude toward the brand for women than for men.

For the experiment, four stimulus print ads were used, containing a product description of a couch offered by the well-known brand IKEA. These print advertisements showed a male and female couple in their living room, with one person cleaning and the other person relaxing. Stereotype manipulation was completed by having the woman cleaning and the man relaxing (traditional) or the man cleaning and the woman relaxing (nontraditional). Humor manipulation

was completed by showing different cleaning behaviors, adding a headline to the humorous advertisements and leaving no headline on the nonhumorous ones. A pretest of 28 students determined how realistic the stimulus advertisements were, finding the advertisements very realistic. Those stimulus advertisements were then shown to 196 student participants, a combination of male and female, who had to indicate on a seven-point scale how humorous they found the print advertisements to be. The results of this experiment found multiple things. First, humorous stereotypes increase consumers' attitudes toward the advertisement and the brand, more so if nontraditional stereotyping is shown. Humorous stereotyped advertisements had a stronger effect on women than it did on men, and the characters are looked at more favorably and seen as more credible when involving nontraditional stereotyping. These results show that the portrayal of gender-roles in advertisements should be looked at separately based on whether they are humorous or nonhumorous because of the differences in effect that they have on the audience (Eisend, et al., 2014).

Summary

As this chapter has shown, the practice of using gender stereotypes within advertising is not a new concept. The chapter began by examining past studies that have been done in this field that focus on a specific population, the children who are exposed to these gender stereotype filled advertisements. They looked at whether or not the children notice or prefer particular advertisements as opposed to others, how prevalent gender stereotypes were, and what some of the stereotypes used are. Later, this chapter broadened up by taking a look at previous studies done on the use of gender stereotyping within advertisements in general. There it was discussed how its use was for humorous purposes, the odds of men or women being stereotyped, how present gender stereotyping is despite the obstacles that women have overcome in society, and

what common stereotypes were being used. In the next chapter, chapter three, the methodology of this paper's study will be discussed.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction to Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to outline how the examination of gender portrayal within Crayola television advertisements over a 10-year period will be completed through qualitative content analysis. In order to do this, first this chapter will review the research method of qualitative content analysis. Then will be an explanation of ideological criticism. This will be followed by a list of the Crayola television commercials that will be used for this study. Finally, this chapter will go over the stereotypes used for the analysis of the Crayola commercials as compiled from previous research on advertising and gender.

Qualitative Content Analysis

Content analysis is an easy-to-understand and inexpensive research tool that can be defined as “any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages,” (Content Analysis.) This research method is used to determine the reoccurring presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within a text. This then allows researchers to use the information from the data that was collected to interpret or make inferences about the messages that are being portrayed by that text to the audiences of the text by reducing that data into “concepts that describe the research phenomenon,” (Elo et al., 2014). The

“text” under analysis can be any occurrence of communicative language such as books, speeches, discussions, and media texts such as television advertisements, or commercials (Content Analysis). Qualitative content analysis has a variety of uses however, in the case of this current study, the use of content analysis is to “identify the intentions, focus, or communication trends of an individual, group, or institution,” and “reveal patterns in communication content” (Content Analysis). Collecting the data from a qualitative content analysis will allow identification of trends regarding gender stereotypes within the advertising industry or if there are any patterns to be revealed.

Ideological Criticism

Given the topic of how gender is portrayed within the advertising industry, an ideological criticism will provide a useful frame to have while examining the trends and patterns with the analysis. What is ideology? “Ideology can be defined as a system of ideas or a pattern of beliefs that determines a group’s interpretations of some aspect(s) of the world” in order to “look beyond the surface structure of an artifact to discover the beliefs, values, and assumptions it suggests” (Foss, 2018). Some subjects that are usually addressed within ideologies include: membership, activities, goals, core belief, defining event, sacred text, ultimate authority, values/norms, position and group relations, and resources. Ideologies lead to cooperation and cohesion within particular groups, however multiple ideologies can exist within the same society.

Typically, some ideologies are more privileged, causing the opposing ideologies to be repressed. This privileging is called hegemony, which gives the ideologies of more powerful groups domination over the less powerful groups. Sometimes ideologies become hegemonic in a culture, serving the interests of particular groups more than it does others. Depending on the ideologies that are becoming dominant, this can be highly positive for the culture or extremely

negative as the dominant ideology becomes an established norm, seen as normal, natural, or just the way it has to be. In order to maintain the dominant position within a culture, the hegemonic ideology must continuously be reinforced (Foss, 2018).

The reinforcement of ideologies does not need to be blatantly obvious, but can be rather subtle. Ideologies can be subtly reinforced in a multitude of ways, including television advertisements. Television advertisements can reinforce the hegemonic ideologies within their given cultures. Some ideologies that exist and have existed in our culture for a long time have to do with gender stereotyping. They are often opposing tasks, personality traits, or appearances. Some female stereotypes include being passive (Browne, 1998), cooperative (Larson, 2001), dependent, and nurturing (Barner, 1999). Males are stereotypically aggressive, active, (Macklin & Kolbe, 1984), competitive (Larson, 2001), and independent (Browne, 1998). Thinking of gender in specific ways that create expectations for men and women have created hegemonic ideologies within our culture for far too long. Although progress has been made, the ideologies regarding expectations of gender performance remains present.

Research Questions

In order to analyze the representations of gender in Crayola commercials, three research questions shape this study. To serve as a reminder of what this study is looking to discover through the use of qualitative content analysis and ideological criticism, the research questions framing this study are:

RQ1: Despite being a gender-neutral brand, are “male” gender-stereotypes present in the commercials examined?

RQ2: Even though, Crayola is a gender-neutral brand, are “female” gender stereotypes present in the commercials examined?

RQ3: Has there been a decrease over time in the amount of gender stereotypes portrayed in the Crayola commercials examined?

Crayola Television Commercials

In order to examine a 10-year span of Crayola commercials from 2006-2016, the popular online video platform YouTube was used to search for commercials. By searching in YouTube's "search" bar, a total of 18 different Crayola advertisements were found for the years 2006-2016. Some of these commercial advertisements are just generally about Crayola as a brand for art supplies; these were typically "back to school" or "holiday" themed. Other commercial advertisements found were to specifically advertise new products that Crayola was offering at the time such as Melt N' Mold Factory or Dino Destruction. These commercials will be reviewed and analyzed in order by year, starting with 2006. The list of Crayola commercials that will be examined are as follows: "Crayola Outdoors 2006," "Crayola 2007," "Crayola Beginnings 2010," "Crayola Holiday Gifts 2011," "Crayola Glow Book 2011," "Crayola Digttools 2012," "Color Explosion 3D 2012," "Made in America 2012," "Melt N' Mold Factory 2013," "Marker Maker 2013," "Crayola Dry Erase Light Up Board 2013," "Crayola Dino Destruction 2013," "Crayola Outdoor Colorful Beats 2014," "Crayola Cling Creator 2015," "Crayola Crayon Carver 2015," "Crayola Thread Wrapper 2015," "Crayola Color Wonder 2016," "Crayola Sketch Wizard 2016."

Stereotypes of Gender

In order to be able to answer the gender stereotype-oriented research questions being posed for this study, some gender stereotypes need to be established. The stereotypes that will be used for this study are compiled from some of the previous research that was reviewed in chapter two. In addition to common gender stereotypes, attention will be paid to the colors that the

children in the television advertisements are using. As aforementioned, even colors have been gendered with pinks and purples being “girl colors,” and blues and greens being “boy colors.”

The gender stereotypes that will be looked for involving female characters include: being in the home (Browne, 1998), harm avoidance, dependence, nurturance (Barner, 1999), passiveness, respectful/submissive, lacking intelligence (Browne, 1998), cooperative, displaying a toys function, quiet, calm, unimaginative, and playing with fashion figures or dolls (Larson, 2001). The gender stereotypes that will be looked for in regards to the male characters in children’s television commercials include: being outside of the home (Browne, 1998), construction, aggression (Barner, 1999), dominant appearance, high activity, loud (Macklin & Kolbe, 1984), powerful, independent, able to accomplish anything (Browne, 1998), competitive, and likely to play with vehicles, action figures, and video games (Larson, 2001).

As this chapter briefly established, qualitative content analysis will be used to identify reoccurring gender stereotype themes, trends, or patterns that follow our culture’s hegemonic ideologies to be able to make inferences about the messages being communicated by advertisers to children. This will be completed through the use of YouTube to watch 18 different Crayola advertisements spanning from 2006-2016. To answer the research questions posed, a list of stereotypes that was created from previously done studies will be used. The next chapter, chapter four, will be the textual analysis. The textual analysis will contain descriptions of each commercial, along with an analysis of each individual commercial.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS

Introduction to Analysis

This analysis will introduce 18 different Crayola commercials that aired on television between the years 2006-2016. The times of year that these commercials aired is completely random as some are holiday commercials, some back-to-school, and others more general. One by one, the commercials will be analyzed. First, with a description of the events and characters featured in each Crayola commercial. This is followed by an examination of these events and characters to discover whether there are reoccurring themes present. Specifically, themes regarding messages being constructed within the advertisement about particular groups of people.

Crayola Outdoors 2006

This 2006 commercial features some of Crayola's outdoor products that were available for purchase at the time of airing. The commercial opens with two little girls running through some flowers while holding a few of the same flowers in their hands. It then quickly changes to a variety of summer-like scenes. First, children (genders unidentifiable) running barefoot through a sprinkler, a boy smiling with flowers in the background, two boys using some of Crayola's outdoor sprinkling chalk paint products, the girls checking out and painting one of the flowers

they previously picked with Crayola's super brush, and a little boy in the grass just spinning in circles to show what a beautiful day it is to be outside playing. Then they go back to the two little boys, decorating an entire driveway in fast motion with a couple of different Crayola outdoor products right before the two boys "clean the canvas" while laughing and spraying the driveway and each other with hoses. The commercial uses calming music and a male voice telling viewers to "help them create memories outdoors with Crayola," as they show the different outdoors products available (Feldman, 2012a).

A couple of observations were made about this commercial. First, there was a male voiceover. There were only two perceivable female characters while there were four recognizable male characters. Perhaps the reason this commercial featured more boys is because the setting of the commercial was outside of the home. The girls in this commercial are only shown being active for a brief moment while they were running through the flowers. After that, they were sitting idle while drawing those flowers with their Crayola super brushes, which appears to be the simplest product available in this commercial as it is essentially an outdoor paintbrush that doesn't require much assembly or activity for use. Idly drawing seems to keep up with the stereotype that girls play calmly and quietly. They were even shown being stereotypically cooperative as one girl drew the flower stems while the other makes the flower's petals. Even what the girls are drawing, flowers, are a stereotypical "girly" thing.

On the other hand, the boys in the commercial (besides the one sitting and smiling) are shown in a constant state of motion. They are running around while using the products in fast motion, spinning in circles, they are loudly laughing as they competitively spray each other with the hoses. The boys are also shown using the more complicated looking products which could be a nudge at the stereotype of boys being constructive because they have to put these products

together, or at the stereotype of boys being more knowledgeable because they need to know how to use these products. Although the two boys are shown creating pictures in the same space, they are not creating pictures together like the two girls mentioned earlier were. The boys are not being cooperative and working together, they are just independently creating within close proximity of each other. One instance that occurred that does not follow stereotypical gender behavior is the one little boy shown using pink chalk paint in a close-up. Because of the use of the close-up on the little boy's hand, some distance is created between the boy and the color pink.

Crayola 2007

This back to school advertisement opens with a “tomboy” dressed girl drawing and creating a swing, while another little girl in a pink flowery outfit is laying in the grass while drawing and coloring a variety of flowers, sunshine, and butterflies. She then gets distracted by a butterfly (looks like one she just drew coming to life off of the page) flying up around a tree that many children seem to be doing activities on. The scene changes to showing a little girl drawing and creating an apple on the tree, picking it, and then tossing it up into the air. After that we see a little boy writing “imagination” on a tree branch before blowing the word away, right off of the surface he wrote on. The apple that was tossed up by the little girl earlier appears before a little boy dressed as a pirate as he slices it in half. He then appears to yell “argh” along with two additional little boys dressed as pirates. The commercial shows children (genders unidentifiable) playing on the tree with a song about “a colorful world” sung by a male singer playing softly in the background. We see a girl helping a little boy, as she is dressed like a scholar with a cap and gown on and appears to be teaching him. Using her pointing stick, she whooshes away alphabet letters that have come off of a page, which then go down into a book that a boy is holding while

dressed in school uniform type attire. A male voice over then tells parents that their kids “deserve all of the tools they need to create futures,” (Wu, 2007).

This commercial advertisement uses a male voice-over along with a calm sounding song sung by a male. There are four identifiable female characters, one of which could be seen as more of a tomboy as her apparel is not as noticeably “girly” as the others. The other girls are wearing pink shirts, jean skirts, bracelets, necklaces, and hairbands, while the tomboy is wearing a red hat sideways, brown knee-length plaid shorts, and a red long sleeve shirt underneath a blue polo shirt. This commercial featured six identifiable male characters. Only a girl was shown drawing flowers and butterflies, things that are stereotypically the interest of girls. On the other hand, only boys were shown pretending to be pirates making it seem as though pretending to be a pirate is more of a “boyish” thing. The one girl being shown as a teacher could either be following a stereotype as teaching being a female role because of working with children or Crayola’s way of trying to show a female in an intelligent role. Although the characters within the entire commercial are actually silent, viewers can see that they girls are playing and drawing quietly, while it can be implied that the boys playing pirates are being loud and rambunctious even though you cannot actually hear them behaving that way. Other characters like the girl drawing an apple or a boy reading his book appear to be rather neutral behaviors.

Crayola Beginnings 2010

This 2010 commercial advertises Crayola’s new Beginnings line of products that are made specifically for babies. It starts by showing a baby girl ripping tissues out of a tissue box all over the floor before her mother picks her up and sits her down to play with a new baby toy, Crayola TaDoodles Slide & See. Viewers then see a baby boy and his mother playing with a different baby product, the Crayola TaDoodles Drop & See. The scene then shows another baby

girl and mother using new markers, the Crayola TaDoodles First Marks, which are made to be easily gripped by a baby's hands. This commercial is short and simple as a female's voice describes how the products being used helps to open up a baby's mind (Feldman, 2012b).

Unlike the two previously analyzed commercials, this one features a female voice-over. This could be a tactic used to appeal to moms. Moms are the only caretakers present in this commercial with each baby, and they are stereotypically the primary caretaker of children, especially babies due to their assumed nurturing nature. The babies themselves feature two baby girls and one baby boy. Two of the babies are perceived to be girls due to one wearing purple pants and a girly looking blouse while the only one is wearing a flowery blouse and pink pants. One of the babies is perceived to be a boy because he is dressed in a blue shirt and tan pants. The previously viewed commercials featured more boy characters than female, this one however features a total of five female characters and only one male character. This more feminine dominant approach could be again, to try and appeal to those more "feminine" people in life, mothers. Even though it is a little harder to see gendered stereotypes with babies besides the clothing they are put in, the baby boy is shown using the one more active toy while the product used by the baby girls are more of an idle play thing.

Crayola Holiday Gifts 2011

This commercial opens up with a Christmas morning scene. Viewers see the outside of a large opened package with presents and wrapping paper all over and a Christmas tree in the background. A little boy in his pajamas then runs towards another little boy and little girl who are also in their pajamas, coloring inside of the large box. The girl is drawing a big star with yellow, pink, purple, and orange markers while the boy is drawing a big green alien. The commercial continues to show the children drawing and playing with their new gifts as they do

close ups on the products including a 150-piece Crayon Tower, the Dry Erase Activity Center set, and the 86-piece Ultimate Art Case. A female voice-over describes the products and ends with “this holiday, give more than presents. Give the gift of wonder and adventure” (Crayola, 2011).

This commercial uses a female voice-over. Two identifiable male characters are used while only one identifiable female character is featured. One boy is wearing blue and white pajamas while the other is wearing red and white pajamas. The girl’s pajamas are pink and white. The girl’s side of the cardboard box shows that she has drawn flowers and more colorful images with “girly” colors while the boy’s side is predominantly green with his big alien. Although all of the children in the commercial are laughing and playing, the one little boy jumps up and yells “roar,” which could be a hint at the stereotype that little boys are louder than littler girls. Overall, both the boys and the girl are engulfed in drawing their outer space scene, a scene that may typically be seen as “boyish” due to the perception that boys are more interested in science and technology.

Crayola Glow Book 2011

This Crayola Glow Book commercial is another holiday commercial, that takes place inside what we can imagine is a darkened child’s bedroom. Immediately we see a little boy displaying a feature of the glow book with a count up he drew on the screen with little boy voices counting “1, 2, 3, 4” before showing two other little boys “drumming” on the glow book with a drum set that they drew while a little girl watches over. The commercial is loud, fun, and exciting. Then the girl “blows a bubble” that pops with the glow book, really trying to emphasize the motion that the product can create. It continues to show little boys drawing on the clear glow panels of the glow book, while describing how to use the product. A girl eats pretend candy from

the glow book by shaking it above her open mouth as the different panels light up, and then we see a changing sign made with the glow book that reads “we need some pizza.” A girl is then displaying her face behind the glow book while a series of masks they drew are featured one at a time on her face. The commercial ends with the kids watching fireworks that they created on the glow book (SavingsToysDeals, 2011).

The commercial uses a male child for the voice-over. There appears to be two identifiable boy characters and two identifiable girl characters. All of the children are shown actively using this product, making this commercial come off as truly gender neutral. However, the boys in this commercial are slightly more active or take on more rambunctious roles than the girls. The boys actively and loudly “play the drums,” actually draw on the glow book, and shout numbers while the girls are primarily shown using the glow book by just holding it close to their faces. Though the difference is pretty subtle, it is still present and can be a consequence of gendered stereotypes that already exist like boys being loud and active while girls are calmer and more passive.

Crayola Digttools 2012

This 2012 Crayola Digttools holiday commercial opens by showing the product in either purple or green. A boy walks over and picks up a pen from the green set before plopping down on the couch with his iPad. It starts to show how these digttools can be used on an iPad to draw as the boy draws a lightning bolt. A close up shot of the boy’s hands shows him rotating between using the green kit’s tools and the purple kit’s tools, as the different kits have different tools available. The commercial zooms back out to show the boy using the green kit once again with green 3D glasses on with another boy next to him as he displays the different effects that can be made using digttools. It shows the boys creating a jungle scene and then a picture of an octopus before zooming out once again to show that a woman, whom we can assume is their mother has

joined in by checking out the digitoools. The commercial ends by showing the four different digitoools packs to choose from: effects, 3D, deluxe, or airbrush. Each pack has its own color: purple, blue, green, and orange (Crayola, 2012a).

This commercial uses a male voice-over while featuring two male main characters. The only female character present appears for a very short amount of time, and is assumed to be the mother of the two boys. Males dominate this commercial as no female children and only one female total shows up in the commercial at all. The boy in the commercial uses the green Digitools kit the most, even though he also has the purple kit. This could be because green is more of a “boy” color. Perhaps the advertisers wanted to show that both a “boy” color and a “girl” color are available for purchase, which is why the boy was alternating between the two colors. Then focusing on the green kit towards the end may create an appeal to other boys who may be picturing themselves in the character’s shoes and would want to be using a “boy” color. At the end of the commercial, when they show the different kits available for purchase, the kits colors are purple, blue, green, or orange. Each kit has its own unique features, so they want all children to want each kit. Notice there is no pink kit. Mostly “boyish” colors like blue, green, and orange are used with one darker “girly” color. This coincides with the practice and belief that girls will use products that are made to appeal to boys, but boys will not want products that appeal to girls (Merskin, 2002). In this case, girls will have no problem receiving the blue, green, or orange kit just like the boys won’t. However, the boys might be a little more skeptical about the purple kit or if there was a pink kit whereas the girls would not be.

Color Explosion 3D 2012

Crayola’s Color Explosion 3D commercial from 2012 opens by showing a boy in red 3D glasses exclaiming “woah,” who is then joined by a girl also wearing the glasses as they appear

to be fascinated by something. The commercial then shows different pictures being drawn by a different boy and girl at a coffee table, followed by how those pictures appear when wearing the 3D glasses. The children who appeared using the product in the commercial first are shown again “grabbing at the pictures” in the air. The male voice-over then exclaims “see everything you make explode into the air,” as a third boy finishes hanging pictures on his bottom bunk so he can see a fireworks scene in 3D when he lays in bed (Crayola, 2012b).

As mentioned earlier, this commercial is another male voice-over. There are two different identifiable female characters in the commercial, while there are three different identifiable males used in the commercial. The male characters make more exclamatory commentary throughout the commercial, but that is the only big behavioral difference between the male and female characters featured in this commercial. The product packaging itself features only male characters using the 3D glasses to look at menacing looking creatures.

Made in America 2012

Crayola’s “Made in America” commercial, also from 2012, opens with a boy drawing a portrait of Abraham Lincoln followed by someone drawing the Statue of Liberty. Then we see a girl drawing Rosa Parks, which is followed by a circle of children holding up drawings of their “inventions” with a little girl in the middle of the circle. We see two boys and a girl drawing a big mountain scene with one boy using purple, the girls using green, and the other boy using blue. It cuts to two children, one boy and one girl, getting to sit at a table full of crayons as they prepare to draw and color like everyone else in the classroom. There are multiple shots just of kids coloring before showing at least ten children coloring a giant American flag, followed by six children drawing and coloring the United States map. This back to school commercial really emphasizes that their products are “made in the USA” (Crayola, 2012c).

This commercial uses a male voice-over. The scenes within the commercial feature a lot of different children. From what the viewers are able to see, equal amounts of male and female characters are shown throughout the entirety of the commercial. This commercial even shows a boy using a “girly” color like purple (purple mountains majesty), while a girl uses a “boyish” color like green (screamin’ green). It seems as though because this commercial is trying to be patriotic, they made sure that different children were equally represented within the advertisement and nothing was overly gender stereotyped.

Melt N’ Mold Factory 2013

This holiday commercial opens with a girl running up to two boys with her broken up crayons saying “they’re barely alive, can you fix them?” The one boy responds with “no, but I can make them better. To the Melt N’ Mold now!” The three kids then rush the crayons, imitating a hospital emergency, to the Melt N’ Mold. Continuing as if they are in an operating room, the one boy uses the Melt N’ Mold on the crayons. Holding up her new big diamond ring-shaped crayon in shades of pink, the girl is pleasantly surprised and excited about what the Melt N’ Mold created. The one boy shows some swirled crayons that he recreated in mostly hues of greens and yellows, while the other boy is excited about his new racecar shaped crayon that has swirls of blue and red together. The commercial ends with a male voice-over, telling viewers this would make a good holiday gift (KidsToysVideos, 2013c).

This commercial has a male voice-over which is consistent with the findings of previous research. There is one identifiable female character and two identifiable male characters in this commercial. The girl desperately needs help and goes to the boys for it, enforcing the stereotype that females are dependent on males and do not know what to do. Stereotypically, the boy has the answer for her problem because he is independent and powerful. When they use the Melt N’

Mold on the crayons, the girl gets a “fashion” based crayon (stereotypically a female interest) in the shape of a ring in “girly” colors. The boys receive either the gender-neutral colored crayons or the race car shaped crayon (stereotypically a male interest).

Marker Maker 2013

This 2013 Marker Makers commercial opens with three kids coloring inside what appears to be a bedroom or playroom area. The boy shares that his favorite color is blue, so the one girl responds that she likes pink. The other girl then says “my favorite color is electric pineappleopolis.” After the two other children tell her that is not a real color, the scene changes to the girl looking like a scientist as she uses the marker maker to carefully combine colors and make her own special colored markers. Then the scene goes back to the three of them as she shows the other two kids some additional colored markers that she made and named. They exclaim “woah” as they grab the markers to use for their drawings (KidsToyVideos, 2013b).

This commercial uses a male voice-over. Unlike most of the other commercials analyzed thus far, this commercial features two female characters and one male. Stereotypically, the boy says his favorite color is blue while the one girl says hers is pink, following the gendering of colors that exists in our culture. A non-stereotypical instance in this commercial is the little girl being shown as a scientist, using a machine to make markers. Both science and using machinery are thought to be stereotypically male things, so featuring a female character in this way goes out of the norm.

Crayola Dry Erase Light Up Board 2013

This holiday commercial opens with a boy sneaking away with the dry erase light up board, as he erases an old picture and gets ready to draw a new one. He draws monster eyes to enable him to sneak up on and scare his sister from behind the couch with a “roar!” Then his

sister takes it and draws an alien looking bug and has it “flying” around an unidentifiable adult while they are working on a computer. The boy then has a boat “sailing” around a doorway, followed by a rocket ship. This is followed by the children using the dry erase light up board to draw silly hats and glasses that the girl puts in front of her face. They erase that and draw a variety of other things such as a bird and a shooting star. The commercial ends with a mom shutting a bedroom door with the dry erase light up board hanging on the door with “genius at work” written on it (Christmas Toy Commercials, 2013).

A female voice-over is used for this commercial. Overall, the commercial is pretty gender neutral. It takes place inside of a home with one male main character and one female main character. Both children draw a variety of neutral creations, whether it be bugs, birds, silly faces, or stars. None of their creations were stereotypically “girly” or “boyish” in nature. The only instance within this advertisement that may hint at any stereotype would be the boy loudly yelling to scare his sister while she quietly sits and watches television. The girl quietly sitting is a stereotypical behavior, as is the boy being loud.

Crayola Dino Destruction 2013

This advertisement for Crayola’s Dino Destruction opens up like a preview for a new movie. First it shows the ruins of a destroyed city before shadows of dinosaurs appear. This is followed by showing the actual dinosaur product. The dinosaur toys are shown crushing clay cars in their mouths, knocking down clay “brick” walls, catapulting at walls, anything that is considered “complete dino destruction!” They then show how you can build, launch, and smash with this playset before the commercial zooms out to show three little boys playing with the product in what appears to be a bedroom (KidsToyVideos, 2013a).

This commercial uses a male voice-over, along with the only three characters being all

male. Some stereotypes present with this playset match up with the “boys only” feel that this commercial offers. They show construction as they build and create shapes with the clay. The playing is loud and aggressive as the boys literally create things to destroy them with the dinosaurs. Dinosaurs themselves are typically considered a male interest, which is reinforced by not including any females within the commercial.

Crayola Outdoor Colorful Beats 2014

The Crayola Outdoor Colorful Beats commercial from 2014 is an upbeat and fun summery scene. It opens to a boy beatboxing and singing into a piece of chalk as a boy skateboards by and two girls draw a dinosaur. Then, it shows a girl drawing a big toad followed by the boy singing next to a girl drawing a big flower. She then draws a hummingbird that has special zapping powers with the help of another girl. The boy highlights the different and unique colored chalk being used for each of these pictures. Three girls are shown playing double Dutch jump rope right before a girl starts rapping and singing. She shows a boy drawing a boat and then a water monster. Then they highlight the 48 different colors of chalk that Crayola offers as the original boy dances in the center of five female back up dancers. The boy and girl who have both done the rapping and singing are shown drawing a windmill together and making plans to draw an alien right before their mom calls them in for dinner. All of the children run home (Crayola, 2014).

This outdoor setting commercial has a female voice-over and can be considered female dominant as there are more perceivably female characters than there are male. It is pretty stereotypical for a girl to be the one drawing things such as flowers and humming birds, as is the girls double dutching because jumping rope is historically considered a “girly” activity. It is also stereotypical to have a boy skateboarding by as this is more of a dangerous “boy” activity. What

is not very stereotypical is showing girls only drawing dinosaurs and toads, both of which would typically be considered the interests of a boy. Even though this commercial had more female characters than male, a male character was still the leading role of the commercial. He played a dominant role, despite the fact that the male presence overall was not dominant. The commercial ends with a mom calling the kids in for dinner. This alone suggests that moms, or females, are the ones cooking and handling the childcare within the home, reinforcing a gendered stereotype.

Crayola Cling Creator 2015

This advertisement is for Crayola's window cling maker. The commercial opens with a boy picking up a glass of orange juice and noticing a fake bug stuck to the bottom of it while he is mid-drink as a voice-over says "bug cling," "snake cling" showing a window with a bunch of fake snakes on it, followed by "glitter cling" as a girl is shown holding up a music note covered in glitter. It then shows another girl using the cling creator machine, a bug being made by an unidentifiable character, and then a girl making a flower and then a heart. The scene changes to the boy from earlier waking up to two star clings with googly eyes being stuck to his glasses, spooking him. Then the girl makes herself a monocle and mustache with the cling creator, along with other shapes. The commercial ends with two children, a boy and a girl, looking up at their window full of a variety of window clings that they had made (Crayola, 2015a).

This commercial uses a male voice-over while featuring two identifiable female characters and only one identifiable male character. The girls in this commercial are shown making all sorts of different shapes with the cling creator, not just stereotypical "girly" shapes such as the flowers, butterflies, and hearts. A girl character is the one showing viewers how to use the product, while even creating a more "boyish" shape of a bug. The boy and the girl in the commercial both behave in some not so stereotypical ways, such as the boy getting scared and

the girl being the one doing the scaring instead of being quiet. This commercial is relatively neutral overall, but definitely defies some cultural stereotypes of gender.

Crayola Crayon Carver 2015

This advertisement opens with an older looking boy and girl standing at a table as they say “let’s carve.” Each of them sits down at the table with their own Crayola Crayon Carver. The whole atmosphere of the commercial at this point feels like a western showdown. Then they show you how the product works while a voice-over explains what is happening. The boy shows his message on the crayon saying “noob,” to which the girl shows him up with “smoked” carved into her crayon. He follows that up with “killin’ it,” but she wins with her crayon that says “sick.” The scene pans out to show a pile of crayons that the two have already carved as they both remark that they are going to need more crayons (Ogalala World, 2016).

An indoor setting is used for this commercial, along with a female voice-over. There is very obvious competition between the boy and girl in this commercial, but the girl appears to win each round of competition that we are shown. It follows the stereotype for boys that he is being competitive however, it is not stereotypical for the girl to also be engaging in competition. Because their behavior is extremely similar in this commercial, there is a feeling of equal representation. The most stereotyped instance within this commercial is actually in the background, where you can see a mom doing stuff in the kitchen. Including this small detail helps make the commercial feel more real, but it enforces female stereotypes by having a female or a mom in the kitchen.

Crayola Thread Wrapper 2015

Crayola’s 2015 commercial for their thread wrapper opens showing the thread wrapper sitting on a table. It then pans out to two girls at the table saying “let’s do this.” Girl number one

puts her hairband into the thread wrapper and pulls it back out all threaded as she then puts it in her hair. Girl number two responds by putting her belt into the thread wrapper to be threaded and then shows it off around her waist. Then girl number one threads and shows six threaded Crayola markers. Girl number two threads and wears her necklace. Girl number one follows this by threading her bracelets, and girl number two threads her sunglasses. Girl number one threads her headphones, but before girl number two can come back with threading something even better, they run out of thread. “We’re totally going to need more thread,” they remark (Crayola, 2015b).

This commercial has an indoor setting and uses a young sounding female voice-over. There is a competitive nature to this commercial, which goes against the stereotypical norms for girls as boys are using the ones behaving in a competitive manner. This product as a whole is more of a “girly” product than a gender neutral one, which would explain why the commercial only uses two female characters. What makes it a “girly” product though? The fact that threading is crafty in a fashionable way and fashion is a subject of interest for girls, not boys. In both this commercial and the commercial for the crayon carver, the commercial ends with the users needing more of something to be able to continue use of the product. The only difference is that in the crayon carver commercial, the boy and girl both say that they are going to need more crayons. In this commercial, with two girls as the main characters, they say, “we’re totally going to need more thread.” The “totally” gives the statement more of a Valley Girl feel, as a word that someone who could be seen as fashionable at some point such as Paris Hilton would add to a sentence.

Crayola Color Wonder 2016

Crayola Color Wonder’s commercial opens up with a few scenes of children making messes. First, the audience sees a little girl on a white bed who is eating and absolutely covered

in what looks like jelly from a pastry. This is followed by a little boy finger painting; whose canvas went from the actual canvas and onto the white wall beside it. Lastly, we see a boy getting ready to brush his teeth, as he squirts this toothpaste on his toothbrush, and the floor, and his feet as he mashes into it. Then the camera pans back to the painting boy and back to the jelly covered girl. The commercial shows the Crayola color wonder before showing a little boy and a little girl sitting on a white couch and coloring with the product. As they go off of the page with their markers, no marks are left on the white couch. A mom walks away triumphantly thanks to this mess free product (Crayola, 2016).

This commercial is all indoors with a female voice-over. The characters in this commercial include two young females and one adult female and three young boys. Both the young females in this commercial are not very active as they sit still either drawing or eating. The boys on the other hand are in more active roles as one is up finger painting and one is stomping around in toothpaste. The one girl gets a close up of what she is drawing with her color wonder and it appears to be a flower, which is very stereotypical for a little girl to be drawing. Other than those differences, the children in the commercial are partaking in messy behavior regardless of whether they are male or female. Of course, as mentioned earlier, a mom appears in this commercial. She is not only a background character as she is seen walking away very happy and triumphant that her children are playing with something that is mess free. This goes right along with the stereotype of females or moms being the caretakers of the children, or nurturers who will end up cleaning the mess that the kids make.

Crayola Sketch Wizard 2016

The final commercial being analyzed is Crayola's 2016 sketch wizard commercial. This commercial opens by showing viewers two boys and two girls waiting at the bottom of a

treehouse as a basket lowers down to them. Inside the basket is a stuffed animal and a well-drawn picture of that stuffed animal. “Thank you sketch wizard,” a little girl calls out when retrieving her things from the basket. A boy then sends up a toy robot for the sketch wizard to draw. As the basket goes up, it is revealed that there are two boys in the treehouse using the Crayola sketch wizard to draw or trace anything they are given. They send it back down to an impressed little boy as the two boys in the treehouse use a megaphone to call down to the other children and keep the whole sketch wizard gig, they have going on (ToysRUs Hong Kong, 2016).

This commercial has an outside setting, with a female voice-over. Two female characters are used in this commercial with four male characters, making it a more male dominant commercial. The items that the children sent up can be viewed as stereotypical as robots are seen as more of a “boyish” toy and a stuffed animal would be more of interest to a little girl. Both the boys and the girls in this commercial are impressed by the sketch wizard, but the fact that two boys are playing the powerful role of sketch wizard keeps up with loud and powerful stereotypes of male characters.

Summary of Analysis

This entire chapter was dedicated to providing descriptions as well as an examination of 18 Crayola commercials over a ten-year period. This was done in order to determine whether or not a gender-neutral brand such as Crayola withstands from including gender stereotypes within their commercials selling products meant for anyone regardless of gender. This analysis has revealed some key stereotypes shown within Crayola’s commercials. Boys are active, leaders, and interested in masculine things while girls are idle, passive characters, and interested in feminine items.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Findings

There are some notable findings from this analysis. First, consistent with previous research, a male voice-over was used more often than a female voice-over. The difference in numbers between the use of male and female voice-overs was not as staggering as one would expect. Out of the 18 commercials analyzed, ten of them used a male voice-over and the remaining eight commercials had a female voice-over. However, what seemed to determine whether a male or female voice-over was used was the overall nature of the commercial.

Compatible with their stereotyped traits, the commercials with a passive nature were more likely to have a female voice-over while the more active commercials used a male voice-over. Another component previous research had used for analysis is whether there are more identifiable male characters, more identifiable female characters, or an equal amount of identifiable male and female characters featured in the commercial. After analyzing the 18 Crayola commercials from 2006-2016, male presence dominated. In the 18 different commercials, nine of them contained more identifiable male characters while only five contained more identifiable female characters. Only four commercials had an equal amount of identifiable male and female characters.

Crayola is considered a gender-neutral brand that provides products for all children.

Despite this, the answer to RQ1: “Despite being a gender-neutral brand, are “male” gender stereotypes present in the commercials examined?” is yes. Yes, “male” gender stereotypes are present within Crayola commercials. Some of the key stereotypes that Crayola commercials tended to show are boys as active, as leaders, and as preferring more masculine items. The male characters in many of the commercials are shown running around, being energetic, and actively interacting with the products and each other. While having more physically active roles in the commercials, they are also more likely to be the leaders in the commercials. The male characters are typically the leads in the advertisements while also being more in charge of situations than their female counterparts. When there is a problem, a male character is consulted. If a character is portrayed in a power position that others look up to such as in the “Sketch Wizard,” it is a male character. The last key stereotype is showing boys as preferring more masculine items. Boys in these advertisements are shown pretending to be pirates, drawing monsters and aliens, using “boy” colors, playing with dinosaurs, and using a racecar shaped crayon. These are all very masculine interests.

The answer to RQ2: “Even though Crayola is a gender-neutral brand, are “female” gender stereotypes present in the commercials examined?” is also yes. “Female” gender stereotypes are also present within Crayola commercials. When counting the number of commercials in which stereotypes occurred, it was challenging for many. Some commercials featured both an identifiable female character drawing something she stereotypically would, but also an identifiable female character drawing something that she stereotypically would not. Overall, there are a couple of key stereotypes present for the female characters as well. Crayola commercials tended to show girls as idle, and as preferring more feminine items. Many of the commercials showed the girls sitting. Sitting and drawing, sitting and painting, simply not

partaking in very active roles. What are these girls idling creating? Hearts, flowers, butterflies. They double Dutch jump rope, they use a thread wrapper to make fashionable accessories, they use “girly” colors, all interests that are feminine in nature.

RQ3 asked: “Has there been a decrease over time in the amount of gender stereotypes portrayed in the Crayola commercials examined?” The answer is no. A commercial from 2012 does a great job with having an equal representation and no use of stereotypes, but then a commercial from 2013 features both male and female stereotypes within it. This continues, jumping from stereotypes present to no stereotypes present throughout the entire ten-year span of the commercials analyzed. It is as if Crayola is actively trying to balance out some of their stereotypical portrayals with some not so stereotypical portrayals. It would be better to say that Crayola still has gender-stereotypes present within their commercial advertising, but to various degrees. Some are severely evident, while others are very mild. After analyzing the 18 commercials, a majority of commercials that contained male stereotypes, also contained female stereotypes. There were a few exceptions, such as the “Dino Destruction” commercial or the “Thread Wrapper” Commercial as those specific products had a specific gender they wanted to appeal to. About eight of the 18 commercials analyzed, almost half, had more of an equal representation of the children featured in the commercials than any male or female stereotypes present.

One finding that was discovered, although not looked for was parental portrayal. The products that this brand sells are aimed towards children, so it would make sense that children are the primary and dominant characters within the advertisements. However, one parent does make an appearance in some of the commercials: moms. Of the 18 commercials, six had an appearance of a female adult that viewers can assume is the mom. Six out of 18 does not seem

like much, but no fathers or male adults were shown in any of the commercials. Viewers see a mom in the background in the kitchen, moms playing with their babies, a mom calling to her children that dinner is ready, a mom closing a bedroom door after tucking the children in, a mom looking triumphant after introducing a mess free product, and a mom interacting with her children and a new product. Where are the fathers? The fact that commercials feature a mother and not a father can be sending a message itself that coincides with gender-role stereotypes. The stereotype is that women are in the home and nurturing. They serve as child bearers and care takers. They are the ones in the homes, playing with their kids, making dinner, doing bedtime, and happy that a product saves them from cleaning up a mess. Despite the strides that women have made in the workforce, the six of the commercials that showed a mom are from the most recent years. Despite the equal and more active roles that men and women are taking on at home, at work, and with their children, Crayola commercials are still showing moms in a more stereotypical light. Whether they are trying to or not, this is sending a message to children of where their mother should be.

Limitations

This study has some limitations. First of all, the number of commercials used is a limitation. Perhaps the 18 commercials analyzed are not enough for the ten-year period to truly determine the messages being portrayed by Crayola. A big reason that those 18 commercials were chosen is because they were freely available for viewing on YouTube. Perhaps using a different video viewing platform with more or better-quality Crayola commercials accessible would have yielded changed results. Having the analysis of only one person is also a limitation of this research. Additional people doing the analysis may have found different commercials having more or less stereotypical representations than what was found in this study. This could

ultimately alter every single finding this research has concluded. The last and biggest limitation is the presumption of gender in a commercial. From simply watching characters in a commercial, there is no way to know the biological sex of the children. All that is shown is how they are physically portrayed to the viewers, which is either as a boy or a girl. Viewers and researchers alike have to make an assumption about who are boys and who are girls based on the clothes they are wearing or how their hair is styled.

Future Directions for Research

From here, research can go in a few directions. One direction would be to study whether or not these portrayals or constructed messages are actually affecting the children. Do they notice the stereotypes? Do they agree or disagree with some of the things they are seeing? Does a little girl love or feel indifferent towards a girl drawing both a dinosaur and a flower? Research could focus on how the children watching these Crayola commercials feel about the children within the commercials. It could also determine whether or not the children would be interested in buying the product. If the “Thread Wrapper” commercial featured two girls and two boys, would boys be interested in the product? Future research can also focus on other products that could or should be considered gender-neutral and whether or not they are portraying stereotypes of gender. An idea of a good brand to analyze the commercials or products of would be Lego. Lego pieces are little bricks that can be assembled in many ways to build a multitude of things; however, they created a “girl” version of this in 2012 called Lego Friends (Ulaby, 2013). Why did they need to make a distinction between “boys” Legos, and “girls” Legos?

While analyzing the commercials, it was hard not to notice that the characters are primarily white. Yes, some of the commercials have at least one child from a different racial category, but white is dominant. Future research could look into the diversity of the children

featured in these commercials and examine whether or not diversity is actually shown. Along with examining the lack of presence of other races, future research could look at how many commercials use nonwhite dominant characters. What messages does a lack of representation send to the children who are viewing?

Future research could also examine the issue of parental representation, as mentioned above. Why are there no fathers playing with their children, worrying about cleaning up a mess, or featured in a parenting role? Are they featured in other commercials that Crayola has done, or any other commercials that are aimed towards children? Only showing mothers as the ones being parents sends an entirely different message itself about what the children may be expected to do when they are adults or parents themselves, falling right into old society stereotypes that many have been working hard to eliminate.

Suggestions for Advertisers

In order to do better, advertisers should be looking at all of the research, while also making an effort to encourage equality on all fronts within our society. They should use their platform to break down any stereotyped norms that are dominant within our culture in order to portray to children that they can be or like whatever they want. They need to stop constructing messages to children about what mold they need to fit into. In Crayola's case, it can be as simple as featuring a diverse cast, showcasing fathers in a parental role, having the main characters within a commercial any other race but white, and portraying actions that are not stereotypical without feeling the need to pair it with something stereotypical. In a commercial for the product "Dino Destruction," Crayola could feature two boys and two girls in the commercial, just like they did for their other products. The same could be said for the "Thread Wrapper." By only putting girls in the commercial for something crafty that can relate to fashion, they are telling

boys that they should not be into such a product or topic. By only showing boys playing with a dinosaur set, the message is that girls should not be interested in dinosaurs causing demolition. The initial interests of young children are very much molded based on what they are shown as something they should like or something they should not like.

Conclusion

Overall, despite being “gender-neutral” as a brand, Crayola jumps on the bandwagon with other brands and uses gender specific stereotypes within their commercials. Although Crayola does seem to make attempts to have inclusive commercials by featuring a variety of children and even behavior that is not stereotypical, stereotypes are predominantly present. Also present is the preference for male voices and male characters within the advertisements. Crayola is not making as many non-stereotypical strides as one would hope for a neutral product, but they are still doing a relatively decent job at trying. As noted above, they are not all “in your face” super obvious and excessive stereotypes, but they are still looming there in various degrees while constructing messages to its viewers.

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