Stereotyping or Segmentation? An Analysis of Children's Advertising Across Networks

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ABSTRACT

This study uses a content analysis to examine gender stereotyping in advertising on children's television networks. Role prominence, ad orientation, voice over, and setting are used as measures for stereotypy. Results indicate that differences in gender portrayals may be a segmentation strategy for advertisers rather than inherent gender imbalance. Findings and implications are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Children have always been receptors of information from their family, friends and teachers who instruct them in how to function in society. However, technology is an ever increasing learning source for children. Children aged of 8 to 10 spend an average of 3 hours and 45 minutes per day using electronic media, with almost 2 and a half hours devoted to live television (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). The influence of television, and subsequently advertising, has been shown to mold children's perceptions of the world outside of their immediate reach. While the child may not be able to conceptualize the purpose of the advertising, it has the ability to influence a child's preferences and behaviors (Gorn & Goldberg, 1982; Macklin, 1987). Since children are not able to understand the persuasive intent of an advertisement until around the age of seven, advertising needs to be monitored for the consumers who are unaware of its intent (Rossiter & Robertson 1974; Ward, Wackman, & Wartella 1977).

In order to protect the naiveté of children, it is important to communicate non-biased and accurate messages in advertising specifically, stereotyping should be avoided. However, there is still a traditional perspective in how females are portrayed in advertising. Women and girls are shown to be passive, in domestic roles, quiet, less active and decorative (Goffman, 1976; Lynn, Hardin & Hardin, 2002; Macklin & Kolbe 1984). A study of children's perceptions of stereotyping in children's cartoons found that children are very much aware of how female characters act. The children described female characters as focusing on appearance, chasing boys and playing with babies (Thompson & Zerbinos, 1997).

The study presented here uses social learning theory as a framework to study gender stereotyping. Social learning theory posits that children can create new behaviors and learn by observation (Bandura, 1963; Bandura, Ross and Ross, 1961). This has a tremendous impact on what children believe is appropriate for themselves and for others. Children tend to model themselves after members of the same sex, so if females are always shown as being submissive and domestic, girls may believe that is how they must also act (Bussey & Bandura, 1984; Bussey & Perry, 1982).

The impact of gender stereotyping is magnified when children perceive a higher gender consistency, usually starting around the age of five (Ruble, Balaban & Cooper, 1981). At this age, children identify so strongly with their own gender that a single commercial showing the opposite sex using a toy can dissuade them from playing with it (Bakir, Blodgett & Rose, 2008). The implications of girls and boys believing that certain products are only for one gender can have an effect on a child's development. 'Boy toys' are shown to develop visual-spatial skills and require construction or action, while 'girl toys' develop verbal skills, but focus on stereotypical feminine activities of mothering and beauty (Francis, 2010; Serbin & Connor, 1979). The disparity in the skills girls are developing could play a part in the lack of female representation in technical careers, such as engineering. The stereotypy of children's products, and consequently their commercials, could confirm the idea that children are "being inculcated to different gendered worlds due to their distinctive gendered consumption" (Francis, 2010).

The three major children's networks (Disney, Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network) use the high gender consistency of children to appeal to different audiences. Disney has a high female viewership, Cartoon Network has a high boy viewership and Nickelodeon appeals to both genders (Schmuckler, 2006). Since there is a variance in viewership, there should be a difference in the content of commercials on each network. The present study takes this into account.

THE CURRENT STATE OF AMERICAN WOMEN
A stereotype is defined as a "standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group" ("stereotype," 2014). Although stereotypes can be useful for mental processing, problems arise when stereotypes are believed to be representative. Today women are represented in many job fields and enjoy the freedom to pursue interests outside of the home. No longer bound to only domestic roles, 70.5 percent of mothers with children under the age of 18 hold jobs. In education, women outnumber men in obtaining a college degree, which has greatly impacted their earning power. Additionally, the earnings ratio has continued to increase relative to men's pay (Department of Labor, 2012). This increased economic capability indicates women are able to support themselves without a husband, and often do, with 13 percent of householders being led by single women (US Census, 2012). Given that women are accomplishing many of the same activities historically reserved for men, there should be more autonomy and influence associated with how women are portrayed in the media.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Gender Stereotyping in Advertising
Gender stereotyping in has been documented in all the major areas of advertising: television (Bang and Reece, 2003; Wilkes and Valencia, 1989), print (Kang, 1997), radio (Alreck, Settle, & Belch, 1982) and the internet (Knupfer,1998; Plakoyiannaki, Mathioudaki, Dimitratos, & Zotos, 2008). Additionally, there is copious research in advertising across cultures, most with similar findings: women are portrayed in stereotypical female ways, such as a sexual object or maternal figure, while males convey dominance, power and control (Arima, 2003; Browne, 1998; Kim & Lowry, 2005; Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008; Valls-Fernandez & Jose, 2007). Gender stereotyping is ubiquitous across cultures, networks, and type of advertising. Women, especially older women, are underrepresented in advertising compared to US census data (Ganahl, Kim & Baker, 2003; Lemish & Muhlbauer, 2012).

It is difficult to say concretely if gender stereotyping has decreased due to different employed methods of content analysis (see Wolin 2003 for content synthesis). However, in many areas stereotyping has decreased. Women are represented in equal numbers to men, including the primary role in the commercial. Additionally, females are more likely to be shown as autonomous and promoting the product without male presence, especially in advertising aimed at women and children (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Gentry & Harrison, 2010). However, the decrease in stereotyping varies by channel, with commercials on men's programming more likely to show women in submissive and sexually driven ways. Women are often shown in sexually objectifying light, but are portrayed as being empowered for exposing their bodies (Bratu, 2013).

Men were also shown in very narrow stereotypical masculine ways and rarely shown with non-traditional actions, such as being nurturing or shown cleaning. A study of 225 children's commercials found that fathers only appeared in only seven (Gentry & Harrison, 2010). Men are shown as not being as capable for caring for a family, displayed by the frequency of female actresses in medicinal commercials (Craig, 1992; Kaufman, 1999). In an age where men and women are likely to both work and share the burden of household duties, there is a discrepancy on how these roles are portrayed in advertising.
Gender Roles in Children's Programming
Although, women's roles have changed, programming for children is largely aimed at boys. An examination of children's television programming found that advertisers and television

programmers believe that boys won't identify with programming that is aimed at girls. Jordan (1996) described that since girls are considered lower in society than boys, it is embarrassing to watch shows for girls. However, a study in 2003 documented that males will identify with shows that have main female characters when they don't behave traditionally 'girly' ways. This shows a preference for masculinity, not necessarily males (Calvert, Kondla, Ertel, & Meisel, 2001). Girls can be perceived as empowered for taking on traditionally male traits of power or knowledge, as illustrated in shows like 'Legend of Korra' or 'Doc McStuffins' suggest.

Conversely, stereotyping can be applied to both genders. Many children's shows perpetuate the idea of hyper-masculinity, where male characters who are emotional or show weakness are teased for being feminine or gay (Myers, 2012). There has been documentation that reducing the chastisement of 'girly' boys would have positive effects for both genders by increasing acceptance of a wide variety of personalities (Kimmel, 2006; Renold, 2007; Risman & Seale, 2010). However, children's shows widely use sex stereotyping for comical relief and plot development (Myers, 2012).

HYPOTHESIS

There has been many content analyses of gender stereotyping in children's advertisements over the years, with focus varying from type of commercial (Childs & Maher, 2003; Lynn, Walsdorf, Hardin and Hardin, 2002), to levels of aggression (Larson, 2003), to the network or programming featuring the advertisement (Hentges, 2013; Kahlenberg & Hein, 2009). Longitudinal analyses have shown interesting results, perhaps indicating a lag in the advertising industry to keep pace with a modernizing society. A longitudinal analysis by Macklin and Kolbe conducted in 1984 found that little had changed over the decade studied and females were portrayed in traditionally stereotyped ways in children's advertising. Maher and Childs used these findings and other studies for a twenty-seven year analysis in 2003, which showed similar results: stereotypy persists, but to a lesser degree than past studies. The industry is trending towards gender neutral advertising, where both genders are featured and share the place of dominant role.

This study aims to update and add to research of gender stereotyping in children's advertising. Due to findings in previous literature, it is predicted that stereotypy will be found in this study's sample of commercials using similar variables that measure different aspects of stereotyping. Additionally, due to the differences in audience between the main children's networks (i.e. Disney, Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon) there should be a link between gender stereotypy and channel. Based on these expectations, the following hypotheses are presented:

Representation

Children are more likely to identify with characters of the same gender, making representation of both sexes in advertising important to reaching both boys and girls (Grace, David & Ryan, 2008). Even as early as the 1980's, 60 percent of ads aimed at children featured both genders (Macklin & Kolbe, 1984). However, the presence of each gender is not as important as how they are portrayed. In the same 1983 study, males were the dominant character in 63.9 percent of ads. Although male main characters have decreased to 42 percent, they still make up the dominant roles in children's advertising. From these previous studies it is predicted:

H1A: There will be more male characters than female characters in children's advertising

H1B: Male children will play a more prominent role in the advertisement than female children.

Ad Orientation

Due to traditional industry beliefs that programming needs to be male oriented to be successful and that females are more likely to use male products than the reverse, we can expect that networks will cater more to male consumption in advertising (Jordan, 1996). In older studies, advertising has been predominantly aimed towards boys (Macklin & Kolbe, 1984; Verna, 1975). Even though more recent studies have been showing trends towards gender neutral advertising (Maher & Childs, 2003; Merskin, 2002), it is not dramatic. Thus the following hypothesis is presented:

H2: The ad orientations will more often be male than female

Voice Over

The narration of children's advertising has historically had a predominance of male voices. Early research showed that female voice overs were very uncommon and only occurred in female oriented product categories (Dolittle & Pepper, 1975). Recent research has shown similar conclusions that males outnumber females in voice over, but Maher and Childs' (2003) longitudinal analysis showed that use of male voice overs decreased from 91 percent in 1970 to 62 percent in 2000.

The use of males as the narrator for an advertisement indicates a societal belief that males are more authoritative and will persuade viewers to buy the product. In children's advertising, female voices were used in only 3 percent of ads oriented towards boys, while male voices were used in commercials aimed at both sexes (Merskin, 2002). The use of male voices may be more predominant, but Rodero and Vázquez (2013) found that using a male voice in advertising does not increase the effectiveness or recall of the ads message. The predominant use of male voices is one based on tradition, not inherent effectiveness. Despite the lack of usefulness of using male voices, we expect to find:

H3: Voice over will be more often male than female

Setting

Another aspect of stereotyping in children's advertising is the idea that certain places are more appropriate for boys rather than girls. In previous literature, it has been shown that boys are more likely to be shown in a greater variety of places outside the home (Kahlenberg & Hein, 2010; Larson, 2001). The differences in product types may lend an explanation to why girls would be shown in home type settings rather than outdoors. Girls are shown playing with dolls, 'beautifying' and socializing (Merskin, 2002). The types of toys being marketed to girls are ones that reinforce traditional gender roles, where females are expected to be mothering and have communal type values and shown being used in the home. Thus:

H4: Female children will be more likely to be shown indoors than outdoors

Gender Across Networks

The three major children's networks offer a variety of programming, each with their own target audiences. Since the focus of each network is different, the content of its advertising

should have different levels of stereotypy. Cartoon Network offers the most animated content of all the networks and primarily focuses on the male audience, since boys are more likely to watch animated programming (Larson, 2004). A content analysis of gender role portrayal of Cartoon Network programming showed female characters in a very biased light. The most common traits

Table 1
Operational Definitions of Variables

		Definition	Source
Role Prominence		Very important to the commercial theme or layout, shown in	Wilkes and
	Major Role	foreground and/or shown holding the product and/or appears to be speaking	Valencia (1989)
	Minor Role	Average importance to the commercial theme or lay-out, does not appear to speak or handle product	Bang and Reece (2003)
	Background Role	Hard to find, not important to the commercial theme or layout	
Ad Orientation		The gender most people would think of as appropriate for the product. Gender neutral products would be appropriate for both sexes	Maher and Childs (2003)
Gender of Voice Over		Voice(s) from unseen source	Maher and Childs (2003)
Setting	Indoor	Any enclosed and indoor space	Bang and
	Outdoor	Backyard, forest, beach, road, sidewalk	Reece (2003)

found for female characters were: physically weak, emotional, sexually dressed/attractive and dependent (Merskin, 2002).

The opposite target audience is found on Disney Channel, where live action shows dominate the network and appeal more to female children. Although shows with female leads such as Hannah Montana have attracted diverse viewers, the network is watched primarily by girls. Nickelodeon, conversely, has been marketed as a network for both sexes and has high viewership for shows with male and female leads (Schmuckler, 2003). Hentges and Case found that Nickelodeon was the most neutral in its gender role portrayal (2013). Both Nickelodeon and Disney were found to have high amounts of male characters that displayed feminine traits (88 percent displayed hegemony). However, non-hegemonic characters were revered for their behavior, despite variance in gender portrayals and greater female viewership (Myers, 2012). Given the above information it is possible there will be differences in the aforementioned variables across networks. Thus the following research question is presented:

RQ1: Are networks consistent with unifying their target viewers in their network to their advertisements in respect to role prominence, ad orientation, gender of voice over, and setting?

METHOD
This study used content analysis to analyze the sample of advertisements, in accordance with the recommendations of Kolbe and Burnett (1992).
Sample of Commercials
The sample of commercials used in this study were taped from three cable television channels (Cartoon Network, Disney Channel, and Nickelodeon). The recordings were taken after school for several hours during the week and early morning to afternoon on Saturday and Sunday. The recording took place in January, after the conclusion of the holiday season when

programming and advertising returned to normal schedules. A total of 1,363 commercials were recorded. Commercials aimed at adults (161), public service announcements (34), network promotions (476), and other non-codable advertisements (91) were removed from the sample. A total of 556 commercials were coded by two independent coders.

Coding Procedure

In order to enhance reliability, a coding sheet was developed and adjusted to the children's programming based off of recommendations by Taylor and Stern

Table 2
Intercoder Reliability

Variable	N	K	F_o	I_r
Main Character Gender	556	4	64	.945
Secondary Character Gender	556	4	62	.924
Background Character Gender	556	4	55	.574
Ad Orientation	556	3	62	.915
Voice Over Gender	556	3	64	.940
Setting	556	3	63	.890

K=number of categories, Fo=number of agreements
N=number of observations, Ir=reliability

(1997). Two independent undergraduate business majors from a private university coded the commercials. Both were instructed in coding procedure and coded a series of practice commercials prior to starting coding for the study. Coders worked independently and did not discuss the advertisements. Disagreements in codings were resolved by the authors.

The coders were given a guide sheet that contained the operational definitions of each variable. The coders examined each ad for: 1) frequency of appearances for each gender 2) role prominence 3) ad orientation 4) gender of voice over 5) setting. Table 1 displays the operational variables used in the master coding sheet, which were defined from previous literature.

The intercoder reliability for every variable, except for background role, was found to be in greater than .85, the level as recommended by Kassarjian (1977). All reliabilities were calculated in accordance with the Perreault and Leigh (1989) index and are shown in Table 2. The low kappa value for background characters is likely due to a discrepancy in the character being coded, since many characters can often be cast in the background.

RESULTS
The results for the following variables are summarized in Table 3.
Representation

This study showed that male characters were shown much more frequently than female characters, with males making up 63.6 percent of the models in this sample. Females only made up 36.4 percent, supporting H1A that male characters will be shown more frequently than female characters.

Additionally, H1B is supported by showing that female characters were less likely to be shown in main character roles in the commercial. Males made up 64.6 percent of the sole main characters in the advertisement, with girls only filling 17.3 percent of the lead roles alone. Girls, however, did make up most of the background roles, either alone at 13.8 percent or with boys, at 14.9 percent.

Table 3
Results

	Frequency of Representation		Role Prominence						Ad Orientation		Setting						Voice Over	
			Main Character		Secondary Character		Background Character				Indoor		Outdoor		Neither			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Male	1,320	63.6	359	65	177	31.8	24	4.3	110	19.8	76	25	81	40	28	60	427	77
Female	757	36.4	96	17	68	12.2	77	13.8	60	10.8	43	14	15	7.3	2	4.3	100	18
Both	-	-	26	4.7	45	8.1	83	14.9	386	69.4	185	61	109	53	17	36	9	1.6
Neither	-	-	75	14	266	47.8	372	66.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	3.6
Total	2,077	100	556	100	556	100	556	100	556	100	304	100	205	100	47	100	556	100

Ad Orientation

The majority of ads in this sample were aimed at both genders, at 69.4 percent. Boys' commercials made up 19.8 percent of the advertisements, with girls making up 10.8 percent of the sample. Thus, H2 is only partially supported.

Voice Over

The voice over gender was found to be overwhelmingly male, with 76.8 percent of ads using a male voice. This supports H3 and is consistent with previous literature that males continue to be the voice of authority when it comes to children's advertising (Maher & Childs, 2003; Merskin, 2002; Smith, 1994).

Setting

The analysis of setting found that 40 percent of outdoor advertisements featured only males, while only 7.3 percent featured only females, as table 3 shows. Girls were more likely to be shown with boys, rather than alone in all settings. This supports H4, that males will be more likely to be shown outdoors than females.

Gender Across Networks

The results for the following variables are summarized in Table 4.

Representation

The channel comparison showed that Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon were equally likely to have males in the main character role. Although Nickelodeon was the most likely to have girls in the main character role between channels, within just Nickelodeon commercials, 65.9 percent of main character roles were filled by males. Cartoon Network rarely had girls alone in their commercials, regardless of role. Females were most likely to be in coed commercials rather than play a prominent role in their own. Disney was most likely to have females in the main role in a commercial, with males more likely to fill background and secondary roles. For background and secondary roles condense the 'neither' and 'both' category were combined due to low cell count.

Table 4
Results Across Networks

	Across Channel Comparison					Individual Channel Comparison		
	Cartoon	**Disney**	**Nick**	**Total**		**Cartoon**	**Disney**	**Nick**
Role Prominence								
Main Character						$x^2=125.66, p<.000, n=556$		
Male	48.50	3.10	48.50	100.00		75.00	18.30	65.90
Female	13.50	39.60	46.90	100.00		5.60	63.30	17.00
Both	61.50	19.20	19.20	100.00		6.90	8.30	1.90
Neither	38.70	8.00	53.30	100.00		12.50	10.00	15.20
						100.00	100.00	100.00
Secondary Character						$x^2=12.643, p<.013, n=556$		
Male	45.80	12.40	41.80	100.00		34.90	36.70	28.00
Female	23.50	11.80	64.70	100.00		6.90	13.30	16.70
Neither/Both	43.40	9.60	46.90	100.00		58.20	50.00	55.30
						100.00	100.00	100.00
Background Character						$x^2=18.717, p<.001, n=556$		
Male	29.20	37.50	33.30	100.00		3.00	15.00	3.00
Female	44.20	9.10	46.80	100.00		14.70	11.70	13.60
Neither/Both	42.00	9.70	48.40	100.00		82.30	73.30	83.30
						100.00	100.00	100.00
Ad Orientation						$x^2=33.169, p<.000, n=556$		
Male	55.50	5.50	39.10	100.00		26.30	10.00	16.30
Female	15.00	25.00	60.00	100.00		3.90	25.00	13.60
Both	42.00	10.10	47.90	100.00		69.80	65.00	70.10
						100.00	100.00	100.00
Voice Over						$x^2=60.167, p<.000, n=556$		
Male	43.30	5.90	50.80	100.00		79.70	41.70	82.20
Female	30.00	25.00	45.00	100.00		12.90	41.70	17.00
None/Both	58.60	34.50	6.90	100.00		7.30	16.70	0.80
						100.00	100.00	100.00
Setting						$x^2=30.136, p<.000, n=556$		
Males Outdoor	51.90	2.50	45.70	100.00		18.10	3.30	14.00
Males Indoor	43.40	6.60	50.00	100.00		14.20	8.30	14.40
Females Outdoor	26.70	6.70	66.70	100.00		1.70	1.70	3.80
Females Indoor	11.60	16.30	72.10	100.00		2.20	11.70	11.70
Both/Neither	43.40	13.20	43.40	100.00		63.80	75.00	56.10
						100.00	100.00	100.00

Ad Orientation

Cartoon Network had the highest male ad orientation among the channels. Nickelodeon had highest female ad orientation in comparison to the other channels at 60.0 percent, with Disney following at 25.0 percent. However, within each channel, most commercials shown were neutral in ad orientation.

Voice Over

Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network were the most likely to use male voice overs, 50.8 and 43.3 percent, respectively between channels. This is even more pronounced when just looking at the channel samples, where 82.2 percent of Nickelodeon commercials and 79.7 percent of

Cartoon Network commercials used male voice overs. Disney commercials had an equal amount of male and female voice overs at 41.7 percent.

Setting

The results of the setting category showed that females were unlikely to be shown outdoors when each network was analyzed individually. However, most channels either included boys and girls together in their ads or used a setting that could be described as outdoor or indoor. The findings show that, for the most part, advertising is aimed at the dominant viewer on each channel. Disney and Cartoon Network were very consistent in their use of main characters, ad orientation, and voice over. Nickelodeon had the most inconsistency in these categories, but was more likely to have a male orientation rather than female with these variables.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings above, this study supports findings of previous research: that gender stereotypy still exists in children's advertising. The imbalance in representation and role portrayed convey that boys are more important in the context of the commercial in comparison to girls. Girls were unlikely to be shown outside without the presence of boys, while male characters could be found outside in 39.5 percent of outdoor commercials. This indicates persistence of traditional values for females, where they are expected to be domestic and being out without a male could be 'unsafe.' According to social learning theory, the perpetuation of male dominance could create a self-fulfilling prophecy in children's minds. Girls could perceive boys as being the most important characters on television and that mentality transfers into their own beliefs about themselves (Bussey & Bandura, 1984).

Recently there has been greater debate about the role of women in professional society, with books like *Lean In* and *Women Don't Ask* suggesting that women are not reaching the tops of their fields due to lack of confidence. The status-enhancement theory of overconfidence states that individuals who were perceived as confident, regardless of actual ability, helps to attain a higher social status (Kennedy, Anderson & Moore, 2013). Thus, if girls are socialized into believing they are not as important as boys, the lasting effects of this mentality could indicate differences in achievement in the work force.

The weight of this argument can be mitigated somewhat by segregating the results by channel. Cartoon Network showed males as being the main character in 75 percent of their advertisements, with girls being present in a commercial without boys as the main character in only 5.6 percent of the ads. Although this would appear to point to a gender bias, Cartoon Network primarily caters to a male audience and has struggled to appeal to girls (Larson, 2004). Given this, it might be simply accurate market segmentation on the part of advertisers. Children are more likely to identify with characters of the same gender, making it good practice for advertisers to use boys more often than girls in this segment. Additionally, girls are more willing to accept messages aimed at boys, increasing the incentive for advertisers to focus their commercials on the boy viewer (Jordan, 2013).

Disney, with its target market mostly comprised of girls, showed a female orientation in advertising and main character portrayals. Even the voice over, which historically is dominated by males, shows equality between both genders on the Disney Channel. The industry belief that females will watch programming aimed at boys but boys will not watch girls programming can be seen in the Nickelodeon data. Although Nickelodeon targets both genders, the main roles and voice overs were most likely to be played by males. Despite that this is between the networks,

Nick had the highest percentage of commercials aimed at females. This data suggests there may not be so much as a gender bias in advertising, but rather proper network segmentation with a slight preference for the male audience.

The implications for this finding point to the conclusion that advertising may have greater gender bias when looking at an aggregate sample of commercials. It has been well documented that commercials on children's networks continue to show stereotypy, but perhaps this stereotyping can be better described as market segmentation. Advertisers are seeking to appeal to those who watch the content on the network, females for Disney and males for Cartoon Network. The caveat is Nickelodeon, despite being prided for having programming with female leads that appeal to both genders, has a male dominance in advertising. The gender neutrality of the network still gives in to industry belief that targeting boys is better practice.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The research represents the current state of gender stereotyping in children's advertisements, but there are a few limitations within this study. First, a convenience sample was used of children's commercials aired in a one week time frame, in one geographic area. Further research should be conducted in multiple metropolitan areas over various times of the year; perhaps during summer when children are out of school and home more or during the holiday months when advertisements are abundant. This would broaden the number of sample commercials are coded and give a wider variety.

Secondly, this study only took into consideration one type of media aimed at children. Today children use a variety of media sources, increasingly those utilizing internet sources. Further research could include video games, websites, apps, and movies.

Finally, while social learning theory was used to guide this research, it did not test the theory. Social learning theory emphasizes the effects of television viewing on the attitudes rather than on the behavior of viewers. Future research should focus on the attitudes and behaviors of children of various ages. It should be studied how they register the viewed stereotypy and then use them in their processing of other stimuli. Additionally, children should be questioned about their understanding of intent and messaging in the commercials, both before and after. Similar to Thompson and Zerbinos (1997) in a cartoon stereotypy study that supported social learning theory and social cognitive theory, further research could use the same model specifically for advertisements.

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