

**Mass Media Manipulation and Gender: The Message Advertisements Are Sending
Young Girls**

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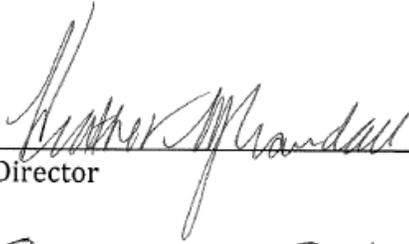
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We the undersigned, certify that we read this thesis and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree Master of Arts.



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Abstract

This study investigates messages advertisers are sending young girls ages 6-16 in America. The theoretical basis of the research includes Cultivation Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Social Learning Theory. Television advertisements and toy stores were coded during an 18-day study. Non-traditional advertisements, such as toys, were also part of the study. The findings of the study are: 1) advertisements encourage young girls to be similar to television characters, 2) advertisements focus on glam, beauty, and royalty, 3) advertisements promote changing appearances by using makeup and weight loss supplements, 4) television networks manipulate children into thinking they are “friends” with the characters on the shows. This study concluded media manipulates children and encourages them to attain a life that is unattainable. The study aligns with past research and implications of the harmful impact advertisements can have on children. Future research on this study should be done in different countries and with multiple coders.

Keywords: media, manipulation, advertisements, children

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

“Young people are threatened... by the evil use of advertising techniques that stimulate the natural inclination to avoid hard work by promising the immediate satisfaction of every desire.” – Pope John Paul II

Importance of Study

Media and advertising are socializing institutions, and what is considerate appropriate and inappropriate for children regarding television and commercials has been an ongoing debate. (Bakir, 2008). However, research continues to discover risks of exposing children to advertisements and making them a viable target audience. Children are vulnerable and unable to comprehend the difference between fantasy and reality. From a young age, television, commercials, and toy manufacturers are sending distorted messages to American children.

This thesis analyzes television commercials and toys aimed at young girls to determine the messages they are sending. Television commercials and toy stores were coded during this study. A wide variety of television shows and networks were viewed and multiple toy stores were visited. The goal of advertisements is to make money and alter reality in order to motivate consumers to buy the product(s).

Statement of Purpose

Media and society are heavy influencers on young girls and can dictate and determine the way they view and feel about themselves. “Although each ad is trying to get you to buy a particular product, at a deeper level, all ads are teaching you lessons about who you should be and how you can get there” (Potter, 2013, p. 224). This study was conducted in order to ensure parents are aware of the messages advertisements are sending young girls, and the way it is shaping the children’s behavior and feelings. The

study focused on a variety of categories and determined if those advertisements were trying to conform and persuade young girls and teenagers to be something they are not. If young girls are receiving inaccurate and misleading information, parents, educators, and families need to be aware.

Definition of Terms

It is imperative to provide working definitions of words that will be used frequently in this study. The chapters throughout this thesis will provide more detailed definitions and information of the terms *Non-traditional advertising*, *Spokescharacters*, and *Designated Market Area (DMA)*. However, for now, this section will provide working definitions of these phrases.

Non-traditional advertising will be used numerous times throughout this thesis. Non-traditional advertising is used in this study to describe the indirect ways of advertising and marketing. This form of advertising includes games, toys, food products with characters, etc. Advertisers strive to attract children's attention in ways other than television, including at the grocery store and toy stores. If a toy has a television character on it, the toy is a non-traditional advertisement for the television show. If a food product is branded with a character, it is a non-traditional advertisement.

Spokescharacters is the term used when a character from a television show is used in a commercial to gain children's attention. Children recognize the character and become more engaged in the commercial. This is frequently used during advertising geared towards children. Spokescharacters can be tied with toy products, food products, clothing, etc.

Designated Market Area is an area in which television and commercials are viewed. This is usually made up of different counties and is the area television and commercials feed into. It is important to note which DMA the research was conducted in, since different DMA's may receive different networks, shows, commercials, and advertisements.

Organization of Remaining Chapters

Chapter 2, the review of literature, follows the introduction to this thesis. This literature addresses how and why advertisements affect young girls. The research and literature focuses on the harm of advertisements geared toward young children and the average age children are able to comprehend the motive and purpose of advertisements. Chapter 2 provides a brief background on Marshall McLuhan and philosophical considerations. Chapter 2 also includes Gerbner's Cultivation Theory and Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Social Cognitive Theory, to support the research conducted in this study. Chapter 3 describes the method and scope of the research. Chapter 3 also includes Simmons studies to show the indices of the children's and teenagers shows chosen for the research. The research was conducted watching television shows and commercials aimed towards children and visiting toy stores and coding the messages non-traditional advertisements are sending. Chapter 4 contains the research conducted and the findings of this study. This thesis concludes with Chapter 5, which addresses the limitations of the study, suggestions for future research, and a conclusion.

Chapter 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The harmful impact of advertising to children has been proven by years of study and research. However, marketers and advertisers still view children as moneymakers for their business and disregard the damage it may cause them. “Marketers have long recognized the economic potential of the children’s market” (Moore, 2004, p. 161).

Society needs to be mindful of future generations and promote and encourage self worth and appreciation in children. Media and advertising are socializing institutions. Media research shows a direct correlation with young American girls looking at a Barbie Doll and immediately comparing themselves and feeling a decrease in confidence and body satisfaction levels. “Although each ad is trying to get you to buy a particular product, at a deeper level, all ads are teaching you lessons about who you should be and how you can get there” (Potter, 2013, p. 224). Most advertisements and non-traditional advertisements, such as dolls, are communicating wrong messages to young girls and their purpose in life. “The way fashion dolls such as Barbie are physically formed and dressed communicates messages of sexualization and objectification to girls” (Klampe, 2014, p. 1). This is concerning given American girls are exposed to advertisements of Barbie from a young age. Parents or guardians should monitor children’s television and the advertisements they are exposed to.

Philosophical Considerations

“The medium is the message”– Marshall McLuhan

This was McLuhan’s way of explaining his philosophy that the different ways society receives information, primarily through media, has more power and more effect on the individual than the message itself. Media is a socializing agent in society. From

television, to surfing the web, reading magazines, listening to the radio, and engaging in social media websites. Countless advertisements are seen on a daily basis. Companies are constantly trying to grab consumer's attention and inform them about their business or product. Most participate in some form of media without realizing these activities are shaping their lives. McLuhan believed media has the strength to shape and define lives. Technology continues to grow, advance, and change society. Due to this, advertisements have also grown and changed over the years. This research focuses on television and nontraditional advertisements, such as toys; to determine the message advertisements are sending young girls. "All media work us over completely. They are so pervasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered" (McLuhan, 1967, p. 26).

Theoretical Basis

Cultivation Theory proposed by Gerbner and later expanded by Gerbner and Gross, "regards television as the dominant force in shaping modern society" (Griffin, 2013, p. 305). Television has a strong impact and dominance over society, and the message it sends young girls is not something to take lightly. "Heavy viewers of TV are thought to be 'cultivating' attitudes that seem to believe that the world created by television is an accurate depiction of the real world" (MassCommTheory.com, 2015, p. 4). Television is shaping the way people think and behave. Children believe the advertisements and programming they see on television are realistic. "According to Cultivation theory, the more time individuals spend watching television, the more likely they are to develop a view of the real world that reflects the world as displayed on the

screen” (Gunter, 2005, p. 131). This is of major concern, especially in regards to young children. If children believe the things they see on television, there needs to be heavier and stricter rules regarding the content of the programming and advertisements. Cable networks will be the focus of this research. “Cable networks have a relatively constant child audience, whereas broadcast networks have periods that experience large fluctuations in children’s viewing” (Desrochers & Holt, 2007, p. 187).

Social Learning Theory and **Social Cognitive Theory**, both proposed by Bandura focus on human behavior and observations. Social Learning Theory states “new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behavior of others” (Bandura, 1971, p. 5). Social Cognitive Theory believes “human nature is a vast potentiality that can be fashioned by direct and observational experience into a variety of forms within biological limits” (Bandura, 2001, p. 266). Young girls struggle with the need to fit in and be beautiful and accepted. The behaviors and styles they see on television may influence their thoughts and behaviors. Young children take things at face value and may feel the things they see or hear on television and in advertisements is acceptable and/or normal behavior. Young girls may also look up to and idolize certain characters or models. Children look at the characters, actresses and models in television shows or advertisements and think of them as the ideal for success and acceptance. “It is not surprising to see advertisements cater to a young child’s want for achievement at such a transitional point in a child’s social development” (Nichols, Duke, & Cooley, 2009, pp. 17-18).

Social Learning Theory provides insight into the way television and advertisement viewing can influence children’s behavior, good or bad. Opinions and beliefs are also

influenced by behavior and statements made by others. “Observational learning could not occur unless cognitive processes were at work” (Simply Psychology, 2015, p. 2).

Children are especially susceptible to Social Learning Theory. Parents, teachers, peers and television characters surround children and have the ability to influence their thoughts and behaviors.

The Literature

Children and Advertisements

“The American Academy of Pediatrics believes advertising directed toward children is inherently deceptive and exploits children under age 8 years of age” (Pediatrics, 1995, p. 295). Children of this age group and those younger have a hard time comprehending and interpreting advertisements. Their young brains do not understand the motive or purpose of advertisements. The human brain takes time to develop and to fully understand and comprehend the world. “Because children are neither fully developed nor independent consumers, policy analysis related to marketing to children evokes complex debate” (Seiders & Petty, 2007, p. 238). Children have a hard time accurately breaking down and understanding advertisements. Children can decipher advertisements from programming, but they do not understand the purpose for advertisements. “Young children can articulate that commercials are ‘shorter’ or ‘funnier’ than programs” (Moore, 2004, p. 163). Children believe commercials are for their entertainment and do not understand they are targets and being sold to. “This age group also tends to judge things at face value and to spend little time in reflective thinking” (Hoy, Young, and Mowen, 1986, p. 172). Children are quick to believe things they see or hear and do not spend time thinking or analyzing them.

Persuasion and Manipulation

Advertisers and marketers spend a lot of energy, time, and money to mislead, manipulate, and persuade children. Over the years, advertising to children has become a bigger industry. “Marketing budgets targeting children continue to rise” (Childers, 2007, p. 3). Marketers and advertisers also mislead and manipulate their child audience. “The use of fantasy is one of the more common techniques in advertising that could possibly mislead a young audience” (Gunter, Oats, & Blades, 2005, p. 21). Advertisers take advantage of the youth and their inability to decipher fantasy from reality. “Advertisers can alter our perceptions of what is real” (Potter, 2013, p. 223). Society needs to ensure the things seen in magazines or on the television screen do not impact children.

Children’s brains soak up everything they see and hear around them. Advertisements alter reality and misinform their child audience. “The impetus for sheltering the child culminated in the 1970s, responding to a trend toward aggressive direct advertising to children that began with the Mickey Mouse Club (1954). Peggy Charren’s Action for Children’s Television and others petitioned the regulatory agencies to protect children from excessive and manipulative advertising” (Cross, 2002, p. 443).

Advertisements and Stereotyping

Advertisements are also full of stereotypes and may send the wrong message to children. This is especially troubling given the insight learning theory and cultivation theory provide. “The danger is that advertising may encourage viewers to form unrealistic and clichéd opinions on a range of issues, from body size to gender roles and racial stereotyping” (Gunter, Oats, & Blades, 2005, p. 24). The FCC (Federal Communications Commission) has changed the rules regarding advertising to children

several times since 1974 (Wilson & Weiss, 1992). “Television has changed in a manner that increases children’s access to more targeted programming on a greater array of television stations and networks, consequently increasing their exposure to advertising” (Desrochers & Holt, 2007, p. 183). Since 1974, the rules and stipulations regarding advertising to children have changed tremendously. Children now have networks and programs intended specifically for them and their entertainment. “Over the years, marketers have relied on different stereotypes and the perceptions, connotations, and meanings conveyed in order to target their products to various consumer segments” (Bakir, 2008, p. 1). Children are learning a misconception and seeing things at face value. Children see stereotypical advertisements regarding race, gender, age and the like and are manipulated into thinking they are true. According to Bakir & Palan (2010) “Children are likely to observe and imitate gender stereotypes portrayed in the media” (p. 36).

Boys and girls tend to have different opinions on whether or not a “boy” should be in certain advertisements or whether or not a “girl” should be. Girls tend to be more flexible and boys tend to label toys and advertisements as girl or boy toys. Girls are more likely to think boys and girls can be in an advertisement for action figures or cars, where boys believe only boys should be featured in those types of advertisements (Bakir & Palan, 2010). “Children tend to choose favorite characters that are the same gender as themselves, but girls choose less gender-typed favorite characters than do boys” (Kotler, Schiffman, & Hanson, 2012, p. 888).

Advertisements and Celebrities

Using a recognizable face has long been used in the world of advertising. “The goal of these spokespeople is to influence viewers to behave in ways that benefit the company,

organization, or society at large” (Kotler, Schiffman, & Hanson, 2012, p. 887). These spokespeople attract viewer’s attention and may be more trusting of the product or organization when the spokesperson is someone they admire and strive to be like. “Studies have indicated that the emotional appeals tend to have greater effect on children” (Nichols, Duke, & Cooley, 2009, p. 2). Children are more interested in advertisements when they are associated with a character or celebrity they are familiar with and passionate about. “Advertisers naturally want to present their products in the most appealing way, and this might mean, for example, using celebrities to endorse a product” (Gunter, Oates, & Blades, 2005, p. 7). Hsu’s research (2006) provides a wealth of insight on the way girls identify with and desire to be similar to celebrities. “One of the predominant types of secondary attachments to celebrities is identification attachment, which refers to a desire to be like the celebrity” (Hsu, 2013, p. 1). Hsu used social cognitive theory for the base of the research. Most celebrities and social figures are attractive and thin. Girls under 8 do not understand that the image(s) they see on the television screen or in a magazine is not the same face or body they would see in real life. Images are highly photo shopped and altered to create a flawless and unrealistic human. Young girls may try to mimic and copy the models they see in an advertisement, but do not understand the image is not realistic. “By using technology, advertisers can make the world look different. They can electronically morph people’s appearance” (Potter, 2013, p. 223). This is very crucial and worrisome, especially in regards to advertisements aimed toward children. Children receive false information and have a deformed idea of beauty and attractiveness. Children do not understand that the images and photographs they see have been heavily altered. “Advertising a product using physically attractive models may

help it become linked to other qualities that the viewer associates with physical beauty” (Gunter, 2005, p. 8).

Barbie Dolls and Characters

Barbie has the highest revenue and most sales of any fashion doll (Dittmar, Halliwell, & Ive, 2013). Barbie Dolls and characters used in toys are a form of non-traditional advertising. “Non-traditional advertising encompasses anything that is not TV, radio, standard print or direct advertising” (Christian, 2011, p. 1). A character used in a toy product is a non-traditional advertisement for the show. Barbie is a non-traditional advertisement for the manufacturer. “Marketers know that tweens respond well to strong, popular, attractive characters who have fun” (Austin, 2006, p. 542). When Barbie was introduced in 1959, she changed the way dolls looked and the messages they send to young girls. Baby dolls were originally created with the mentality that girls want to feel maternal. However, Barbie’s looks and capabilities forever changed the toys and messages sent to young girls. Girls can now play with the doll and picture themselves as businesswomen and having roles outside of the home (Bainbridge, 2010). However, Barbie is also sending girls the wrong message about weight and the way they should look and behave. “Barbie’s design was itself based on a sexy souvenir for adult men, the Lilli doll, ‘a pornographic caricature’ modeled after the German comic strip floozy and the gold digger in *Bild Zeitung*” (Bainbridge, 2010, p. 838). In addition, Barbie’s proportions are not only unhealthy they are humanly impossible. Dittmar, Halliwell and Ive (2006) researched the impact Barbie has on young girls and their weight. Sociocultural theory was used in the research to describe and analyze body dissatisfaction. The study focused on Barbie images, and girls having a significant

decrease in their body satisfaction. Barbie's and dolls tend to be the first toys young girls identify with, and if Barbie is an unrealistic ideal of the female body, society needs to educate children and make sure they are literate about body types and being healthy from an early age. Girls should never strive to have a body that is similar to Barbie or any other doll, toy, or person they see in an advertisement because the shape is unattainable. "When characters in ads seem desirable, children want to be like those characters and do what those characters do to be successful" (Austin, 2006, p. 543).

Advertisers and marketers are known to put characters in the advertisement to gain children's attention and create a sense of familiarity. "Advertisers hope that once children bond with a likable character they will be loyal customers for years to come" (Castonguay, Kunkel, Wright, and Duff, 2012, p. 6). Putting a character in an advertisement not only attracts children's attention, if the child is a fan of the character, they will desire the product simply for the sake of the character. Advertisers and marketers hope children will nag their parents to purchase the product and also instill a sense of loyalty and purchase the product when they grow older and begin earning their own money. "Children aged 4-6 years state they prefer the taste of products when they are promoted with popular licensed children's cartoon characters" (Castonguay, Kunkel, Wright, and Duff, 2012, p. 6). Children have a sense of trust when they see a character or actress they recognize advertising a product. "Studies have indicated that the emotional appeals tend to have greater effect on children" (Nichols, Duke, & Cooley, 2009, p. 2).

Advertisers try to grasp children's attention by putting spokescharacters in the advertisements. "Spokescharacters often entice children and attract attention for a product or brand" (Childers, 2007, p. 4). Advertisers try to persuade and manipulate children by

using this form of advertising. Advertisers know they are more likely to notice the advertisement and have a strong desire for the product if a character they like and admire is seen using or playing with the product. “Spokescharacters play an important role in mass communication by allowing companies to establish a personal connection with consumers” (Childers, 2007, p. 5). As previously mentioned, children identify with characters and celebrities; they may trust what the character is saying in an advertisement must be true. Children may like or be more drawn to a product if they feel a character they admire also likes it. “Characters likeability is effective when consumers like and pay attention to the advertisement and when consumers like the ad and transfer positive feelings to the brand or product with possible purchase” (Childers, 2007, p. 6). This is particularly worrisome because children admire and aspire to be similar to their favorite characters. Some children’s goals and desires come directly from characters they see on television. “One study found that children had similar education levels and income inspirations as their favorite media characters” (Kotler, Schiffman, & Hanson, 2012, p. 888).

Television Advertisements

One of the most common ways to reach the child audience is through television advertisements. “There is little doubt that television remains the most effective medium to reach children” (Moore, 2004, p. 162). Advertisements for cars, furniture, bedding, food and the like are aimed towards children, even though these individuals do not have the money or resources to buy or consume products, advertisers still spend enormous amounts of money targeting them. These advertisements should worry parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and society as a whole. These advertisements are shaping the

way children think and act. “Advertising appeals to emotions, not to intellect, and it affects children even more profoundly than it does adults” (Linn, 2005, p. 2). Some advertisements go directly against things parents teach their children, such as playing with their food. Television viewing has been proven to be harmful to children in a number of ways. One study’s “results indicate that background television exposure and having a TV in the child’s bedroom is related to a poorer understanding of mental states, including beliefs, desires, intentions, and emotions” (Nathanson, Sharp, Alade, Rasmussen, & Christy, 2013, p. 1101).

Marketers and advertisers want children to “nag” their parents and persuade them to buy the toy or cereal they see advertised. “The nag factor describes children’s persistent requests that influence parents’ purchases of clothing, shoes, fast food, food to prepare and eat at home, and prepared food items” (Bridges & Briesch, 2006, p. 162). In addition to convincing their parents to buy them products, marketers are also trying to instill a lifelong consumer. “James McNeal, a psychologist who has written extensively about how and why companies should market to children, estimates that a lifetime customer could be worth \$100,000 to an individual retailer” (Linn, 2005, p. 42).

Consuming Kids provides significant research and statistics of the harm of advertising to children, especially on television, and children under two should not be watching television at all. However, despite research and advice from professionals, parents still place their children in front of the television on a daily basis. “The average child sees about 40,000 commercials a year on television alone” (Linn, 2005, p. 5).

Advertisements and Weight

Another growing concern when advertising to children is weight issues and the messages that advertisements are sending. “Childhood obesity and its flip-side counterparts, anorexia nervosa and bulimia, are escalating public health problems that are exacerbated by media and media marketing” (Linn, 2005, p. 95). Overweight actresses and/or models are rarely seen by society, and children are given the misconception that they must look a certain way in order to be accepted. Young girls may strive to look similar to actresses or models, even though the images they see are altered. On the contrary, children are also targets for an enormous amount of food companies and products. The majority of this food tends to be sugary, confectionery, and unhealthy food that is damaging to their health and children should not be consuming. “While childhood obesity was increasing, there were concurrent changes in the media and techniques used to market all products to children, including food” (Desrochers & Holt, 2007, p. 183).

While children should not be worried about their weight, they should be concerned about their health and living a balanced and active lifestyle. Advertisements should never be harmful to children, and that includes food advertisements that could potentially have repercussions. “Although food advertising has been the primary focus of obesity research, nonfood advertising also has the potential to influence behaviors that affect a child’s weight” (Desrochers & Holt, 2007, p. 188). Advertisers and marketers need to be mindful of children and their wellbeing. The sole purpose of advertising and marketing is to earn sales and have a substantial return on investment. Children are no exception and seen as a profitable audience. “Researchers frequently note that children are influenced in product categories that might be considered bad for health reasons” (Bridges & Briesch, 2006, p. 165). Advertisers and marketers play a vital role in

children's health and behavior. "Children are an important consumer segment, but must be treated with respect and care" (Nichols, Duke, & Cooley, 2009, p. 19). Advertising to children may never be outlawed, but more regulations need to come into play. The number of advertisements or what can be advertised should be limited. "It is well recognized that children need additional protection over what is appropriate for adults" (Seiders & Petty, 2007, p. 236).

Loyalty

Advertisers and marketers strive to instill loyalty in children and hopefully receive a lifelong customer for their product(s) or business. To form loyalty, advertisers need to attract the consumer from a young age. "Adults remain active in many of the product categories for which they were targeted as children, both for their own consumption and for that of their children" (Connell, 2014, p. 119). People enjoy familiarity and are resilient to change. If they have used a product for years, they will have trust and faith in the product and continue to purchase the product throughout their lifetime. Advertisers have many reasons for targeting young children. "Children are also viewed as a future market, and are thus often the target of campaigns aimed at forging brand loyalties at an early age" (Moore, 2004, p. 161-162).

Programming Toys

Advertising takes place in many different forms. Toys on a shelf are advertisements for television shows, movies, or a business or corporation. Young children have the highest risk and disadvantage of this type of advertising (Owen, Lewis, Auty, & Buijzen, 2013). Even when they are playing with toys and engaging in activity, they are seeing advertisements. "Toys from product-based programs may also have an inhibitory effect

on the imaginativeness of children's play because such toys could act as visual cues to the story lines and actions the children have just seen in the associated shows"

(Greenfield, Yut, Chung, Land, Kreider, Pantoja, & Horsley, 2009, p. 239).

Children are being targeted when they go to the toy store or grocery store with their parents. Marketers and advertisers know where and how to advertise in these stores in order to gain the child's attention. "Unlike television advertising, which is broadcast or published by purchasing space in an appropriate medium, nontraditional advertising is inextricably connected with the entertainment itself (e.g., video game, licensed product, movie, television program) and often appears as part of the entertainment" (Owen, Lewis, Auty, & Buijzen, 2013, p. 197).

Rationale

Most of the studies in this review of research explain the harmful effects of advertisements in regards to children. According to Social Learning Theory, children mimic the behavior they see. Instead of having a positive influence, advertisements provide young girls with a misconception of beauty, the food they should be eating, and what their goals should be. The research provides enormous insight into the messages non-traditional advertising (toys, games, etc.) and television advertising send young girls. From non-traditional advertisement to television commercials, children are viewed as a critical audience to advertisers. Most of the research comes to the same conclusions and outcomes in regards to the impact of advertisements on young girls in America.

Research Questions

This study hypothesizes that advertisements on television and nontraditional advertisements through toys are sending young girls the wrong message. Children have

difficulty deciphering fantasy from reality and marketers and advertisers heavily alter images. Thus, the following three research questions are advanced:

RQ1: Currently, what are the messages advertisements are sending young girls?

RQ2: Are characters from television shows, Barbie's, or beauty products advertised in commercials during every show?

RQ3: Are television advertisements trying to communicate self worth and cultural acceptance will be achieved through the use of beauty products?

Chapter 3: SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Scope

The goal of this study is to answer the questions about messages current advertisements are sending young girls through television and non-traditional advertising, such as toys. Since the change in children television laws in 1974, advertisements to children continue to grow and expand. Children have also become a top priority for marketers and advertisers. Children's television shows, commercials, and toy aisles in stores were researched to determine the messages that are sent to young American girls of different age groups. Content within the shows and commercials before, during, or after the show aired were coded. Toys 'R Us, Target, and Wal-Mart were the toy stores researched in this study. Barbie's were coded and the different occupations she had and the accessories that were available for purchase. Toys were also coded to see if the manufacturers and companies put an emphasis on beauty products. Toys were also coded to see if they encourage young girls to be similar to the product or character represented through the toy. At the toy stores, emphasis was put on Barbie Dolls and toys linked to television shows.

Dora, the Explorer (Nick Jr.), *Peppa Pig* (Nick Jr.) *Lalaloopsy* (Nick Jr.), *Max and Ruby* (Nick Jr.), *The Backyardigans* (Nick Jr.), *Jessie* (Disney Channel), *Austin and Ally* (Disney Channel), *Girl Meets World* (Disney Channel), *Sofia the First* (Disney Junior), *Zack and Quack* (Nick Jr.), *Pretty Little Liars* (ABC Family), and *True Life* (MTV) were the shows and commercials before, during, and after the show that were analyzed. Notes were taken about the date, time, and channel the show ran on and the advertisements or product placement that was shown. Saturday morning television was also viewed and analyzed for two weekends. The shows mentioned above target different age groups and

are shown on a variety of networks. This ensured the research was not biased and did not focus on one type of show or one type of network and provided broad research and analyses.

The main focus of this research was coding the messages into categories rather than what was being advertised. The commercials were coded to see the message they are sending young girls. Research was conducted with curiosity if commercials focus heavily on beauty products rather than encouraging natural beauty. Toys were researched to see if they encourage the young girls to dress and act similar to the television character.

Research

The following research provides the show indices from Simmons Kids Fall 2014 study and Simmons Teens Fall 2014 Study. Each show selected has an index above 100, meaning it is a popular show among children of that particular age group.

Program	Girls 6-11 Index
Austin & Ally	128
The Backyardigans	117
Dora the Explorer	132
Jessie	131
Peppa Pig	141
Lalaloopsy	167
Max and Ruby	112
Girl Meets World	n/a
Sofia the First	164
Zack & Quack	n/a
Pretty Little Liars	n/a
True Life	n/a

Source: Simmons
Kids Fall 2014 Study

Program	Girls 12-17 Index
Austin & Ally	n/a
The Backyardigans	n/a
Dora the Explorer	n/a
Jessie	122
Peppa Pig	n/a
Lalaloopsy	n/a
Max and Ruby	n/a
Girl Meets World	n/a
Sofia the First	n/a
Zack & Quack	n/a
Pretty Little Liars	168
True Life	n/a

Source: Simmons Teens Fall 2014 Study

Methodology

Research began on March 2, 2015 by watching the television shows listed above during an 18-day timeframe. The programs themselves and the advertisements were coded based on what the advertisement was for (toys, food, clothes) and the message and content. Product placement was also coded. The commercials were coded for stereotypes and the message(s) they were sending young girls. Target, Wal-Mart, and Toys ‘R Us were visited between March 2, 2015 and March 20, 2015 to determine the different types of toys companies are selling young girls and the messages those toys are sending. The main focus was the different types of Barbie’s available and toys related to television shows. Toys were also studied to determine if they are encouraging young girls to behave or act in a certain way. Toys were studied to see if they sell products that encourage young girls to be similar to a character. The toy stores were all located in Orange County,

CA. Saturday morning cartoons were watched and analyzed on Nick Jr. for two weekends, March 7, 2015 and March 14, 2015.

Cultivation Theory was used to determine if television and commercials were encouraging young girls to think and feel a particular way about their appearance. Social Learning Theory was used to determine if the commercials, characters, and toys encourage, through representations of reward and efficacy, girls to mimic certain behaviors. These theories and the literature were used to determine the messages advertisements are sending young girls.

The research to determine the messages sent through advertisements was qualitative content analysis, also known as textual analysis. In an effort to determine the message advertisements are sending young girls, content analysis was the most adequate methodology to determine the words and sayings used in advertisements to children. Words, images, and/or objects were analyzed to determine how they are used in advertising and how they differ between programming demographics. Through these methods and using Cultivation Theory and Social Learning Theory, this study was able to explore the answers of the three research questions proposed in this thesis.

The study began on March 2, 2015 and continued through March 20, 2015. Multiple television shows across multiple cable networks were watched to determine the advertisements being aired to young girls of different age groups. All of the television and commercials were viewed in the Los Angeles DMA and on the cable provider AT&T U-Verse. Toy aisles and the types of toys available for purchase were also analyzed. Two different Targets', two Wal-Marts', and one Toys 'R Us' were visited and researched. All of these stores were located in Orange County, California. The two Targets' visited,

researched, and analyzed were located in Tustin, California and Anaheim Hills, California. Toys R' Us' was located in Tustin, California. The two Wal-Marts' analyzed were located in Brea, California and Irvine, California.

The commercials were coded and set into different categories. Emphasis was put on whether the commercial was:

Food Products: what type of food, how often were these commercials shown, how many of them were seen?

Characters: was a character from a television show or movie in the commercial?

Toys: what is the toy for, does it relate back to a television show or movie?

Princess: is a princess in the commercial, does the commercial use the word princess?

Beauty: is the commercial for a beauty product or encouraging the young girl to "improve" her appearance?

The toys were coded and set into different categories. Emphasis was put on:

Barbie: how many Barbie products are available for purchase, what accessories are available, what are her jobs and roles?

Characters: are toys available that are branded with television characters, are they encouraging young girls to be similar to the character?

Princess: Are princesses available for purchase, do they use glam and royalty?

Ethical Considerations

Each television show is properly cited within the research. The research is very descriptive and reference the time, date, name of the show, the network the show aired on, and the Designated Market Area (DMA) the show was watched in. "A Designated Market Area or DMA is a geographic area that represents specific televisions markets as

defined by and updated annually by the Nielsen Company” (SRDS). Every toy analyzed will be mentioned with a lot of description and detail about the product, including store name and location the toy was available for purchase at. The Fair Use Doctrine also states permission does not need to be granted if the information is gathered and used for research purposes. “Section 107 contains a list of the various purposes for which the reproduction of a particular work may be considered fair, such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research” (U.S. Copyright Office).

Chapter 4: THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the messages advertisements are sending young girls ages 6-16. Commercial advertisements and non-traditional advertisements (toys and toy sections) were analyzed to determine the current messages they are sending American girls. The advertisements were also analyzed to determine if characters from television shows, Barbies, and beauty products were regularly advertised. The final phase of the analysis focused on current advertisements and if they were encouraging girls to purchase beauty products.

The Television Commercials

Food products were not heavily advertised. During one showing of Lalaloopsy, one food commercial was advertised out of eleven total commercials. However, the same commercials were viewed multiple times. The most frequently viewed food commercials aired during this study was Arby's, Cici's Pizza, Dunkin' Donuts, Olive Garden, Chili's restaurant, and Subway.

Learning and Growing

Networks play general Disney Channel or Nick Jr. commercials to encourage the audience to continue watching the network. "Wake up with Nick Jr." was played during Saturday morning programming. A commercial for "Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards" Live on Saturday, March 28, 2015 was aired multiple times. A commercial for Nick Jr.'s Noggin App was also viewed several times. With this app your child can watch "hundred of episodes of their favorite preschool shows" anytime on a tablet. Nick Jr. communicates in their commercials that children are "playing" with the characters in the television

shows and they are “friends”. Their commercials say “Learn and play with your Nick Jr. friends anytime at nickjr.com/play”. “We’re back, and Tommy and Tullulah are almost ready to play. Tickety Toc is coming up soon.” “We’re almost ready to play. Lalaloopsy is coming up next.” “Coming up next, lets play with our buddy buddy’s on Peppa Pig.” “You’re playing with Nick Jr.” “We’re back and ready to play with the hippest hippo in town. Hang with Tasha on The Backyardigans.”

Nick Jr. also puts a heavy emphasis on children learning and growing with their television shows. Before each show, the network displays the benefits of watching the television show and how the children will grow due to their programming. These commercials do not advertise food, toys, or movies; they advertise the network as a whole. This is often referred to as house ads. “A house ad is an advertisement placed in some sort of media that is run by the company who owns the media outlet. The house ad is a common device for using up unsold advertising inventory, as a way of promoting the company’s own interests” (wisegeek.com, 2015, p. 1). Examples include:

While watching Lalaloopsy, children “discover the importance of”:

- Friendship skills
- Problem solving
- Appreciate diversity

Max and Ruby teaches children to:

- Recognize and handle feelings

“Each play date with Peppa Pig encourages kids to expand their”:

- Social and emotional development
- And explore the diversity of the world

“When your kids go on a Pop Up adventure with Zack and Quack they will learn”:

- Problem solving skills
- While developing creativity and imagination

“It is time to play with Nick Jr. Every adventure with The Backyardigans introduces children to”:

- Music and dance traditions

“It’s time to play with Nick Jr. Every time kids explore with Dora, they expand their”:

- Observation and problem solving skills
- Spanish language and culture

Be a Princess

Most commercials focus on being a princess, glam, and royalty. The television commercials aimed towards children 6-12, as indicated by Simmons Kids Fall 2014 Study, focus on princesses and royalty. “It’s your majesty month.” “We are in a royal class all month long on Nick Jr.” There are also “Royal word’s of the day” such as “steed” and “joust.” A general commercial for Nick Jr. states, “Max, us princesses are very sensitive. Sensitive means we have very special feelings. They feel things that normal bunnies don’t even notice. Nick Jr. The smart place to play.” A commercial for “Barbie Princess Power” available on Blu-Ray and DVD was also aired. The commercial mentioned “you can watch her and get a free power princess mask available with the Blu-Ray or DVD while supplies last.” This not only communicates young girls want to be royal, but also want to be similar to Barbie. A general commercial for Disney Channel states “There’s no wrong way to be a princess. In fact, I bet you’ve already been a princess. It’s about being brave when you’re nervous...” The commercial lists everything

it takes in order to be a princess. Commercials were never seen that encourages girls to be smart or caring. Most commercials focus on being a princess, glam, and royalty.

Commercial for Twirling Skirt Cinderella states, “With every whirl and twirl, you can let your inner princess sparkle and shine. Make all your fairytale dreams come true.” A commercial for Cinderella movie, released on March 13, 2015 states, “His destiny is to marry royalty.” The theme song for Sofia the First states “In a school that’s just for royalty...a whole enchanted world is waiting for me...I’m finding out what being royal is all about.” One episode of Sofia the First is called “The Princess Test”. The princesses in the show must take a test “about everything they have learned about being a true princess.” The test includes testing their posture by balancing a book on their head. During the episode, Sofia mentions “I wasn’t born a princess and sometimes I feel like I have to keep proving I belong.”

Being like a Character

The television commercials for older children also focus on encouraging young girls to be similar to the television characters. K.C. Undercover is a television show that premiered on Disney Channel in early 2015. There is also a new line of K.C. Undercover available for purchase at Kohl’s. The commercial encourages young girls to “Get new looks for spring with the K.C. Undercover collection available only at Kohl’s.” This commercial was seen multiple times throughout the study.

Beauty and Changing Appearance

Commercials targeted to teenagers aired during *Pretty Little Liars* and *True Life* encourage girls to focus on beauty through using products. The theme song of *Pretty Little Liars* shows a girl putting on mascara, lip-gloss, and high heels, painting her nails,

and curling her hair. A commercial for L'Oreal Mascara "Voluminous Butterfly Intenza" the double new brush "stretches eyelashes out to the extreme." L'Oreal's "Infallible Pro-Matte" commercial was also viewed. A commercial for "Fat Burning Supplement" Zantrex and Zantrex 3 was seen multiple times throughout the study. Commercials also focused heavily on having clear and beautiful skin. Pro-activ commercials were seen numerous time as well as Neutrogena Oil-Free Acne Wash commercials. A commercial for Clean & Clear products ends with "Clean & Clear & Confident." The commercials aimed towards this age group focused on beauty and the products they can use to achieve this.

Toy Store Findings

Wal-Mart's toy aisle for young girls was plastered with pink and royalty. Almost every toy in the "girl" aisle was tied to a television or movie character, roughly 80% of the toys available. The different Barbie's available for purchases were heavily focused on fashion, beauty, and princesses. "Barbie Fashionistas", "Barbie in Princess Power", "Barbie Bubble-Tastic Mermaid", "Barbie Endless Curls", "Barbie Color 'N Style Fashion Purse Activity", "Barbie Glam Getaway". The Disney inspired toys available for purchases were "Disney Fairytale Wedding", "Disney Princess - A Grand Carriage for a Princess", "Frozen Disney Palace Pets", "Sofia the First Royal Art Class", "Minnie Bow-tastic Stylin' Set". The only toy that focused on an actual career was a doctor coat, but this was also linked to a character and had Doc McStuffins on it. Doc McStuffins is a show on Disney Junior and she is a doctor for her stuffed animals. Toys also encouraged young girls to be similar to the character. A Lalaloopsy doll comes with a "Hair Clip for

You!” This particular toy focuses heavily on the dolls hair and her “hair changes color” and the set comes with clips for the doll as well.

While coding Wal-Mart in Irvine, CA, the “girl” toy aisles were once again pink and focused on “glam” and royalty and being a princess. There was even “Barbie Wam-Glam Tapeffiti” for sale. This was a case of 30 scotch tapes. Minnie had a polka dot yacht. There was a Disney Princess Rapunzel “Glam ‘N Go Hair Stylin’ Tote” available. The show Sofia the First focuses heavily on royalty, so it is no surprise that the Sofia the First toys available for purchase focus heavily on royalty and being a princess. A Sofia the First Royal Classroom and Royal Art Class were available. Disney also has “Palace Pets” available for purchase. “Runway Pink” has “Glam Heels” for ages 3+, “Queen of Glam Crown & Earrings” and “Gorgeous Lips and Eyes Makeup”.

While coding Target, it was noticed the toys available for purchases were similar to the toys at Wal-Mart. The toys focused heavily on princesses and royalty. There was a Disney Princess mirror in the aisles. (Picture below for reference). A Sofia the First backpack was for sale with “I’m in Princess School” plastered on the front. It also said “Royal Prep Academy.” Legos were for sale, but they were Disney Princess and girls can build “Cinderella’s Dream Carriage.” Toys focused heavily on television or movie characters. Disney “Fashion Activity Tote” and a princess “ride to the royal ball - carriage really rolls” were in the aisles. A Sofia the First plaque read “Kindness makes a princess.” Barbie’s were all about beauty, fashion, and chores within the home. The Barbie’s and accessories available for purchase were:

- Barbie Glitz & Glam
- Barbie Hair-Tastic- Glitter Blow Dryer

- Barbie Dream Bathroom
- Barbie Laundry Time
- Barbie Deluxe Kitchen
- Barbie Fashion Details Head to Toe- Barbie Style Flats to Heels
- Barbie Glam Convertible
- Barbie Fashion Portfolio
- Barbie Princess in Power Dress “Princess Kara Dress”
- Barbie Glam-Tastic Purse Kit
- Barbie Beauty Train Case
- Barbie Pearl Princess
- Barbie Color, Style, & Cut

While coding the Target in Tustin, CA, the toys were consistent with the toys for sale at the stores previously mentioned. A Play Circle “shopping day” shopping cart was on the shelf and read “play the day away!” Play Circle also had a Mighty Tidy sweep set and a princess purse set available. Disney Princess had a Royal Talking Cash Register. Minnie Bow-tique Cleaning Set was also available for purchase. A Barbie Mirror was in the aisle for children’s entertainment. The child can pick a Barbie dress and the program makes it seem the child is wearing the dress in the mirror. (Picture below for reference).

It was not surprising that Toys ‘R Us had more aisles and more toys available for purchase. A Disney Royal Tablet and Disney Glitter Glider Castle Playset were available for purchase. All off the aisles were pink and focused on “royalty”, “glam” and “princess”. Almost all of Barbie focused heavily on “glam”. Barbie and available accessories for her in Toys R’ Us:

- Barbie Malibu House
- Barbie Glam Pool
- Barbie VIP Nail Salon
- Barbie Nail Dryer
- Barbie Glam Nail Station
- Barbie “Singing Star” Microphone
- Barbie Dream House
- Barbie Fairytale Dress Up
- Barbie Glam Camper
- Barbie Glam Convertible
- Barbie Glam Jams Boombox
- Barbie “My Fab Shopping Cart”

All of the toy stores aisles for “girls” were pink and focused heavily on glam, royalty, and being a princess. Almost all of the toys available for purchase linked back to a character of a television show. Multiple Barbie’s were available with different occupations, accessories, homes and cars for her. Almost all of these toys focused on Barbie being “glam” and additional toys can be bought to help her achieve a “glam” lifestyle.



Barbie Magic Mirror in Toy Aisle in Target located in Tustin, CA



Disney Princess Mirror in Toy Aisle in Target located in Anaheim Hills, CA



Lalaloopsy Doll with "Hair Clip for You!" available in Toy Aisle in Wal-Mart located in Brea, CA

Discussion

With the findings shown above, it is clear that television is shaping young girls in modern society who not only watch television shows, but also, almost every toy available to them is branded with a television character. A plain, white doctor coat was not available to children at the toy stores visited; the only one available had a *Doc McStuffins* logo on it. This does not encourage young children to have big dreams of being a doctor; it encourages children to be similar to the television character. In this case, the character is a doctor for her stuffed animals, another unrealistic goal. Television has a socializing influence on young children, and the shows they watch and the commercials they view are shaping their lives.

The findings above show the way advertisers are encouraging children to mimic behavior of characters on television. Commercials and toys encourage children to be similar to a television character, although the lives of these characters are unattainable. Some of the characters are princesses, bunnies, and pigs. Movies and toys come with a mask or bow that makes the child feel they are the character in the movie or television show. According to Social Learning theory, children observe certain rewarded behaviors, words, and sayings on television by people who they can identify with and become heavily influenced by what they see and/or hear, especially considering the celebration of these characters.

While watching television programs and commercials aimed towards children, young girls are deluded about the real world. The oversaturated use of the word “princess” and “glam” may lead young girls to have unrealistic dreams and goals. Very few commercials encourage young girls to be kind, motivated, and smart. Only *one* commercial throughout the study was encouraging girls to embrace the people they are. It begs the question of

whether young girls should be watching or exposed to commercials at all. Current commercials, programs, and toys represent an ideal life that is farfetched and unattainable, yet young girls are encouraged to dream and strive for it. Young girls are not taught to be comfortable in their own skin or happy with themselves, they are taught to purchase toys that will help them be similar to a character they watch on television, or purchase products that will help them obtain beauty.

The findings of this study demonstrate the inaccuracies young girls are exposed to from a young age. The ideologies of the commercials and toys are also incorrectly communicating gender stereotypes. The girl toy aisles are pink and one Wal-Mart store had makeup and high heels available for young girls. The commercials and shows focus heavily on being a princess and focus on beauty and appearance. “The use of attractiveness is especially pronounced in advertising aimed at young consumers” (Gunter, Oates, & Blades, 2005, p. 132). The current messages advertisements are sending young girls is that they should be similar to television characters, yet television characters are princesses, bunnies, etc. and it is impossible for young girls to obtain this. Advertisements also encourage young girls to be “glam” and “royal” and learn words that fit this category and encourage them to buy toys and products that will help them reach this unattainable lifestyle. As girls get older, advertisements are communicating that they need to be beautiful through purchases and skinny through purchases. Advertisements for makeup, face wash to prevent acne, and weight loss supplements are heavily advertised.

Characters from television shows, Barbies, and beauty products are advertised regularly. Once again, these toys encourage “glam” and “royalty” and provide masks and bows young girls can wear in order to be similar to the television character. Barbie is

frequently associated with the word “glam” and she has many accessories available for purchase that will help her achieve this lifestyle. Advertisements communicate self worth and cultural acceptance will be achieved through the use of beauty products, to an extent. Commercials communicate what the young woman will feel if she uses the product, such as “confident.”

This study confirms previous findings of the manipulation of advertisements to children and the overuse of spokescharacters. Manufacturers encourage young girls to be similar to television characters. The Lalaloopsy doll has a bow for the young girls who buy it and it is similar to the one the doll wears. A Barbie DVD comes with a mask that is similar to the one Barbie wears in the movie. The only doctor coat available at toy stores is branded with Doc McStuffins. This study contributes as another confirming glance of the current messages advertisements are sending young girls, and the way they are manipulated through commercial advertisements.

Television shows also advertise the educational benefits to parents. This is in line with Social Learning Theory and children’s behavior changes and evolves by observing others. The network believes children will grow and advance by watching their programming, however, there is no research stated to prove the educational benefits of the programs have been studied and tested.

Chapter 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Limitations of Study

This study did not run into any challenges or mishaps, and the commercials and toy stores provided a considerable amount of information and findings. However, there were some minor limitations. This study viewed television commercial advertisements contained in a very short period of time (18 days) in March of 2015. Due to this, the sampling was on the small side and the commercials viewed were limited to current toys for sale and current or near future events during this time period. The commercials were also viewed in one Designated Market Area (Los Angeles) and viewed using one cable provider (AT &T U-Verse). The toy stores were also limited to one county in Southern California (Orange County) and the stores were large retail stores (Target, Wal-Mart, and Toys R Us). In addition, there was only one coder who watched, researched, and coded all the commercials and programming and visited all the toy stores. An important finding could have been missed due to the limited number of coders conducting this study and gathering information. These minimal limitations did not heavily impact the research and findings, but it would not be recommended for future replication or alteration of this thesis.

Further Study and Recommendations

This study opens doors for additional research and study. Replication of this study would be recommended for a longer timeframe and in different DMAs and counties of the United States. It would be recommended to conduct the study for at least six months to ensure different toys hit the shelves and different commercials are played and viewed throughout the study. The researcher(s) should also use different cable providers to

ensure all channels are researched. It would also be recommended to have more than one coder to ensure important information is not missed or left out of the findings and conclusions. Smaller, Mom and Pop toy stores would also be recommended to include in the study. It would be interesting and important to see if smaller manufacturers create toys for children and whether or not they are tied to television characters.

Also recommended is to study how these advertisements impact young girls who are heavy viewers of television. It would be recommended to show the young girls the commercials and the toys and survey them to determine what they believe the message is sending them and how it makes them feel. Research needs to be conducted to determine if the commercials and toys impact their beliefs and/or feelings, about themselves and the world.

All of the commercial advertisements and toy stores were also coded in the English language. It would be interesting and useful to code advertisements in different languages and see how they compare to the findings in this study. Different cultures, nationalities, and countries may have different regulations and morals when it comes to advertising to the youth. Researching different cultures television advertisements and American advertisements simultaneously would be useful and provide more insight into world wide advertising, as opposed to focusing solely on American advertising.

Conclusions

This thesis sought to explore the message advertisements are sending young girls and who is in those commercials and what they are promoting. This study sought to answer the following research questions: Currently, what are the messages advertisements are sending young girls? Are characters from television shows, Barbie's, or beauty products

advertised in commercials during every show? Are television advertisements trying to communicate self worth and cultural acceptance will be achieved through the use of beauty products? Through literature reviews, research, and the considerations of Cultivation Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory, these questions were answered. Cultivation Theory was reflected upon numerous times throughout this study. Cultivation Theory “regards television as the dominant force in shaping modern society” (Griffin, 2013, p. 305). At the end of this study, it was clear the commercials young girls are viewing and the toys they play with can shape their beliefs, opinions, and feelings. Young girls are persuaded into believing the things they see and hear on television are accurate. They struggle with the need to fit in and be beautiful and accepted. The behaviors and styles they see on television may influence their thoughts and actions.

This study found that girls are being persuaded to achieve an unattainable lifestyle, and encouraged to change their appearance. All of the commercials and toys were put into categories based on the message they are trying to send. The thesis also sought to explore if those advertisements are trying to communicate beauty and confidence will be achieved through the use of beauty products. A heavy emphasis was put on whether or not commercials are encouraging young girls and teenagers to change their appearance.

The findings of this study support the literature reviewed in chapter two. Children are a vulnerable audience and television commercials are encouraging them to obtain a life that is unachievable. Spokecharacters are often used in commercials and in toys and children are often encouraged to be similar to the television character. Commercials aimed towards older girls focus on beauty and how to obtain a thinner body. Toys

available for sale to children are branded with television characters and put a heavy emphasis on glam, royalty, and being a princess. Toys also encourage young girls to change their appearance. “Dress up” high heels and makeup are available for young girls.

Children are not fully developed human beings and they do not have the ability to accurately decipher commercial advertisements from television programming. Children are being misled, persuaded, and manipulated by the current messages advertisers and marketers are sending them. “Advertisements featuring physically attractive models are more likely to create a desire for the product in girls with poorer body images” (Gunter, Oates, & Blades, 2005, p. 61).

It is recommended that advertisements be not directed to children until they are at least seven-years-old and can understand the purpose of advertisements. “By the second or third grade, most children have overcome their difficulty distinguishing between programs and commercials” (Potter, 2013, p. 67). Media and society are inaccurately promoting glam and beauty to young children and teenagers. Commercials and toy products promote and encourage the audience to change and alter their bodies and appearance and to strive to be someone they are not. Teenagers are viewing commercials for makeup and weight loss supplements and are repeatedly hearing from the media that they need to be a better version of themselves. They are encouraged to use makeup to change their face and encouraged to use weight loss supplements to be thin and considered beautiful by society. By allowing children and teenagers to watch these commercials and purchase these toys, parents are not only misleading their children, they are serving the interests of a manipulating and untrustworthy industry. This industry makes billions of dollars off vulnerable young children, teenagers, and their uninformed

parents. The media is manipulating children and teenagers by the messages they are sending.

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Appendix

The shows watched were shown on a variety of networks and aimed toward different age groups. *Pretty Little Liars* (ABC Family) was viewed on March 3, 2015, March 10, 2015 and March 17, 2015 from 8:00-9:00pm. *Austin and Ally* (Disney Channel) was viewed on March 4, 2015 and March 18, 2015 from 7:00-7:30pm. *Girl Meets World* (Disney Channel) was viewed on March 4, 2015 from 7:30-8:00pm. *Jessie* (Disney Channel) was viewed on March 5, 2015 and March 18, 2015 from 7:30-8:00pm. *Lalaloopsy* (Nick Jr.) was viewed on March 6, 2015 and March 7, 2015 from 8:00-8:30am. *Max and Ruby* (Nick Jr.) was viewed on March 6, 2015 from 11:00-11:30am. *Peppa Pig* (Nick Jr.) was viewed on March 7, 2015 from 9:00-9:30am and 9:30-10:00am. *Zack and Quack* (Nick Jr.) was viewed on March 7, 2015 from 10:00-10:30am. *The Backyardigans* (Nick Jr.) was viewed on March 10, 2015 from 9:00-9:30am and 9:30-10:00am. *True Life* (MTV) was viewed on March 10, 2015 from 10:00-11:00am and 12:00-1:00pm. *Sofia the First* (Disney Channel) was viewed on March 17, 2015 from 10:30-11:00am and 11:00-11:30am. *Dora the Explorer* (Nick Jr.) was viewed on March 19, 2015 from 4:30-5:00pm.

Mass media play a significant role in a modern world, by broadcasting information in fast pace and giving entertainment to vast audiences. They consist of. By creating a certain type of message, media can manipulate people's attitude and opinions. I would like to focus on this problem by investigating commercials structure; I will also attempt to specify gender stereotypes, which are used in advertising as a persuasion technique. Stereotypes. People organize their knowledge about the world around them by sorting and simplifying received information. Mass media address their reports to society and every report is proposed for its own addressee. Nature of manipulation. As a rule manipulation is a double impact when along with an open message manipulator sends the addressee a coded signal to incite in his/her mind images necessary to him. Manipulation as a technology based on suggestion exerts influence of people, and often achieves their obedience not through their minds but feelings.