

Gender Roles in American Television: Are They Impacting You?

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Abstract

Characters portrayed in American children's television programming often lack diversity, realistic lifestyles, and personality traits. Such a lack of representation shown to young American audiences poses a threat to how they interpret their own gender identities. This research used the gender roles from the American television shows *Sam and Cat*, *Liv and Maddie*, and *Alexa and Katie* to gauge the long-term effects they have on the target demographic (18-25 years old). This study found that characters, specifically women, are based around stereotypes, which are then reinforced to children audiences. The data from this study overall suggests that people do believe that gender role portrayals in the media, largely television, do impact their perceptions of gender. Furthermore, the results from this study align with Gerbner's cultivation theory, which states that people who frequently consume television are likely to be influenced by the messages they are seeing.

Keywords: gender roles, children's television, cultivation theory

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Gender Roles in American Television: Are They Impacting You?

The television industry is one of the leading industries when it comes to entertainment in the United States. Nearly 80 percent of Americans watch TV, and each person averages four hours a day in watch time (Krantz-Kent, 2018). Most Americans see TV shows as nothing more than a form of enjoyment; however, television goes beyond what meets the eye.

While viewers have met many diverse characters through TV shows, the question remains whether or not these characters have a significant impact on that audience. Many scholars agree that television characters have an effect on people in ways they might not even be aware of. As the TV industry continues to progress, gender roles portrayed in TV shows for the American youth should also evolve to mirror the present society. Currently, it is more common to see gender stereotypes being perpetuated through the characters on the screens. Not only does this communicate isolating messages to young viewers, but it also sustains a broken cycle. Change is crucial, particularly in television, to ensure a more equal and fair society (Steyer, 2014). It is important to raise awareness about gender diversity in children's television programs because once it is addressed, change can be made.

Across American television, characters uphold sexism, reinforce stereotypes, and contribute to the idea of the male gaze, which can be described as a masculine, hyper-sexualized viewpoint of women and the world. Research has shown that gender portrayals can have a massive impact on one's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Martin, 2017). To what extent do these stereotypical gender portrayals affect the young viewing audience? Do they affect viewers subconsciously, or do viewers make conscious, intentional decisions solely based on the TV characters they watch? The intention of this research is to analyze the repercussions of gender

roles in children's and young adult American television, specifically in the shows *Sam and Cat*, *Liv and Maddie*, and *Alexa and Katie*, so scholars can understand more about the direct and indirect results of these gender roles.

Literature Review

As the entertainment industry continues to progress, gender roles portrayed in TV shows for the American youth have not yet evolved to mirror the present society. Gender representation in current television shows is exceedingly gender-targeted, meaning character portrayals can vary solely based on the character's gender. Specifically, representation of women is far more stereotypical than that of their male counterparts. Since television viewing contributes to an individual's perception of gender, it is important that television shows begin to accurately represent gender roles (Daalmans et al., 2017).

Television's reliance on characters that personify gender stereotypes is not a recent trend. A study conducted in 2000 claimed that many of the same male and female gender stereotypes that existed in the 1970s still exist in television (Bartsch et al., 2000). To validate this assertion, researchers found that female characters in commercials were more likely to be advertising household products than their male counterparts (Bartsch et al., 2000). These findings not only support the claim that gender roles are very much exploited in the television industry, but they perpetuate the gender stereotype that a woman's place is inside the home caring for the family.

Not only has television continued to reinforce the same gender stereotypes throughout the decades, gender itself has also become targeted in TV shows (Daalmans et al., 2017). A recent study found that in shows targeting a male audience, women are both underrepresented and inaccurately depicted. When female characters are present, they are typically playing a domestic assistant or a household wife and tend to be more stereotypical depending on age and occupation (Daalmans et al., 2017). The results of this study contend that TV shows with a male target

audience tend to portray an unequal but traditional idea of gender that does not align with the values of the current society. Not only is such representation teaching men unrealistic ideas of what a woman should be, physically and otherwise, but these detrimental inaccuracies often bleed into other important areas of society, as well.

Children's television rarely depicts real-life gender roles. In 2017, researchers found that in commercials aired on the network Nickelodeon, "women are significantly underrepresented as lead presenters both overall and also as voiceover actors compared with their real-life population numbers" (Peruta & Powers, 2017, p. 1144). While the researchers did conduct a content analysis on commercials, the study noted that children are often unable to make the distinction between commercials and television programs (Peruta & Powers, 2017). Therefore, whatever a child is seeing on the screen makes a lasting impression, so when a specific gender is being inaccurately portrayed in any way, the industry is hindering that child's ability to form their own social and gender identities (Peruta & Powers, 2017).

Another study from 2017 found the majority of children's shows depict more male characters than female characters (Martin, 2017). An analysis was conducted on the major children's TV shows, such as *Barney and Friends*, *Spongebob SquarePants*, and *Dora the Explorer*, to see how genders were divided and portrayed (Martin, 2017). The study revealed that children will see more males than females in television shows from their early years and onward, and these unequal gender representations create confusion for who is important and who is not in the current society (Martin, 2017). This study does validate the theory that gender roles in children's TV shows do have a lasting impact on the developing minds of the young viewers.

In television for young adults, issues with gender are further complicated by the portrayal of sexuality, specifically that of female characters. Popular TV shows highlight female sexuality as ambiguous or confusing, and these female characters are often objectified to a great extent. A

study conducted in 2014 analyzed the television series *Gossip Girl* and how it brings *Sex and the City*-like “salacious story lines and trend-setting fashion” to teenagers (Petković, 2014, p. 133). The researcher found that *Gossip Girl* not only promotes female stereotypes through rich, snobby characters, but the show makes little separation between sexuality and professional advancements (Petković, 2014). With American TV shows like *Gossip Girl* showing young adults unrealistic lives of power and success, and tying those two things to hypersexual female characters, a developing teenager could easily adopt a false perception of gender. The existence of harmful gender portrayals across various television genres is the basis to why researchers began to study the true impacts and effects of these stereotypes on its viewers.

Millions of Americans consume television every day and fail to realize the potential ramifications of what they are watching. Gender stereotypes on TV can significantly affect the way viewers develop opinions about the genders. Through heavy exploration into a popular American television show, *Game of Thrones*, researchers found that, as with most TV shows, women are frequently represented as objects for men and carry no other substantive traits (Clapton & Shepherd, 2017). Clapton and Shepherd (2017) express that male characters in the show are active in political affairs and authority, while the female characters are either conquests or mothers. The power dynamics in shows like *Game of Thrones* can be dangerous because they perpetuate the idea that men should be placed in higher regard than women. That kind of ideology can have a substantial impact on viewers, especially in younger viewers.

Women are negatively impacted by the gender stereotypes that are exacerbated through television programs. As in most other fields, female characters on TV are commonly measured by “how they look and what they represent, rather than simply by the work they do” (Leggott et al., 2015, p. 2). Setting a standard for females to fit a certain mold, physically and emotionally, in order to be deemed important is extremely dangerous for developing girls and older women

alike. In 2018, an analysis of the stereotypes portrayed through fairy tales showed that princesses usually conform to the typical gender roles of a patricentric civilization (Yakalı-Çamoğlu, 2018). This includes being homemakers and finding ultimate happiness in their prince. While neither of these things are bad, these characters validate the stereotypes of a woman belonging in a domestic environment and living to please a man.

Another study conducted in 2019 stated that, “over time, repeated experiences of...objectification result in women internalizing an objectifying perspective toward their body and self” (Eggermont et al., 2019, p. 187). Media exposure among younger boys can contribute to the development of sexually objectifying attitudes towards women that they will carry with them as they age. Not only does this cause the male gaze to be extremely unrealistic, it also creates impractical standards for women to meet. Once these are not able to be met, women will suffer psychologically. A consequence of this oversexualization of women can be tied to an increase in hostile sexism and sexual violence. Recent societal research suggests that various television shows can contribute to the perpetuation of rape myths, which is tied back to the increase in sexism and sexual violence (Custers & McNallie, 2017). These false portrayals of gender have been recycled for decades and carry significant negative effects on its viewers, yet there is still a lack of accurate gender representation in today’s television media.

As researchers and TV viewers recognize the damage of gender stereotypes in television, many agree that a change is crucial. One of the first steps to combat inaccurate gender representation is to raise awareness about sexism in television. This awareness is necessary if there is to be a better, more equal future (Steyer, 2014). While some researchers suggest that there has been some change made, there is still much-needed room for improvement considering the lack of accurate gender representation.

Although many Americans consider television to be nothing more than a mere form of entertainment, TV shows are much more impactful on the viewer. The effects of inaccurate gender portrayal in television shows have both emotional and physical consequences for women. Although there has been a lack of gender representation for years, recent research suggests that a gradual change is being made. To truly achieve an equal portrayal of women onscreen, characters, specifically in television for children and young adults, must be created and updated to accurately reflect the role of the female in modern society.

Theoretical Framework

For this research, the cultivation theory can be applied. The cultivation theory was proposed by George Gerbner and is one of the core theories when studying the effects of media. Cultivation theory suggests that people who watch television frequently are more likely to be influenced by the messages of television, as it contributes directly to the way people perceive social reality (Communication Theory, 2015).

Research Questions

By applying the cultivation theory, a few research questions can be proposed:

RQ1: How do gender roles in the television shows *Sam and Cat*, *Liv and Maddie*, and *Alexa and Katie* affect its viewers?

RQ2: How do viewers perceive the gender portrayals from each television show?

RQ3: What are the lasting effects of the representations in these specific shows?

Methodology

Participants

For this survey, the population is children and young adults (under 25) who consume American television, specifically the TV shows *Sam and Kat*, *Liv and Maddie*, and *Alexa and Katie*. Since the effects of gender roles in these specific shows are being measured, the participants must agree that they are within the required age ranges and have watched at least one of the listed television shows. The sample includes both Kennesaw State University students and others that do not attend Kennesaw State University. This survey also requires parental consent from participants under 18 years of age.

The participants will be a convenience sample, as people will have the option to choose if they would like to participate or not. The survey will be distributed online, and the participants will remain anonymous, which will increase the likelihood of honesty and accuracy. This survey will contain an age restriction that will not allow anybody over the age of 25 to participate. Informed consent will be obtained by including a consent statement at the beginning of the questionnaire.

In order to acquire participants for this study, the survey link will be posted on Jordan Stewart's personal Facebook profile that will potentially reach 431 people. Additionally, the survey will be sent to members of EcoOwls, a Kennesaw State University club, that could reach 129 people. In an even greater effort to increase the sample size and accuracy, the survey will be sent to a class group chat for International Media that will reach 30 students and in an email to 18 students enrolled in the Media and Entertainment Capstone course (Section W02). In total, this sample could include responses from 608 participants.

Materials

This survey will be created and facilitated through the platform Qualtrics. This platform provides professional aesthetics, ease of use for mobile devices, and the use of logics to guide

participants through the survey. The logics function will be used to direct participants out of the survey if they do not meet the age criteria, if they do not receive parental consent, or if they have not watched any of the three television shows listed. This survey will be distributed through posting the Qualtrics link on digital platforms such as Facebook, GroupMe, and Outlook email.

Questions for the survey will be mostly on the Likert-type scale to provide participants with maximized flexibility when responding. For the Likert-type scale questions, there will be five options ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” with a “Neutral” option in the middle. For questions outside of the Likert-type scale, there will be multiple-choice questions that will include an exhaustive list of options, such as age ranges, race, and gender.

Procedures

A survey is the best and easiest way to collect information from a large target population, and this specific survey will allow for potentially hundreds of people to give their feedback on how they view gender roles in general and about the gender roles presented in *Sam and Kat*, *Liv and Maddie*, and *Alexa and Katie*.

At the beginning of the survey, participants will be asked to agree to an informed consent form, allowing for the collection of their responses. Participants under 18 will also have to agree to receiving parental consent before continuing with the survey. If they decline consent, the survey logics will direct the participant to the end of the survey. The participant will also be directed to the end of the survey if they are over 25 years old or have not watched one of these shows: *Sam and Kat*, *Liv and Maddie*, and *Alexa and Katie*.

Once consent has been given and the participants have been cleared to start answering the questions, they will begin by giving some basic background information, such as age, race, and gender. These questions will allow for a better look at which viewpoints come from which demographics.

After those questions are answered, participants will answer questions specific to how they view gender roles in television. The questions are specifically asking about characters in TV shows geared towards children and young adults, which is the subject of this study. Questions in this survey also ask specific questions about female portrayal in children's and young adult television shows. For the purpose of this survey, the term "gender roles" can be defined as a role or behavior learned by a person as appropriate to their gender which is typically determined by cultural and/or societal norms. The term "hyper-femininity" can be defined as exaggerated femininity, and the term "stereotype" can be defined as an overly generalized belief or assumption about a particular person.

The final questions of the survey cover the three TV shows used in this study: *Sam and Kat*, *Liv and Maddie*, and *Alexa and Katie*. These questions will not only help answer all of the questions posed in this research but will offer honest opinions of gender roles in specific examples of television shows for children and young adults.

Results

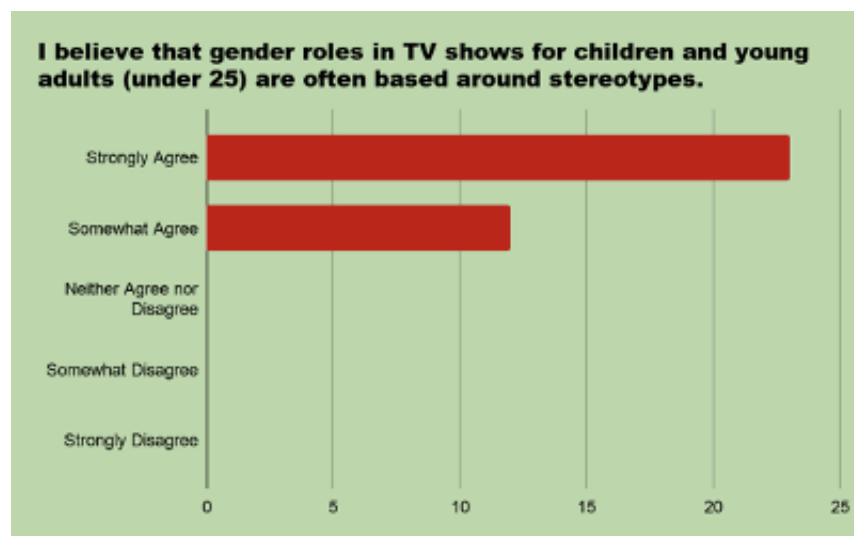
This survey presented the participant with 18 questions. Over the period of a week, it garnered 75 responses. Out of those 75 contributions, 98.67% gave full consent, while 1.33% did not. As a result of declining consent, the participant was directed to the end of the survey and was not able to answer any further questions.

Out of the remaining 74 participants, 1.35% were under 18, 74.32% were in the 18-24 age range, 5.41% were in the 25-31 age range, 4.05% were in the 32-38 age range, and 14.86% were over 39 years old. Any participant outside of the under 18 and 18-24 age ranges were directed to the end of the survey. The one participant who was under 18 did provide parental consent to participate. Based on the age ranges of under 18 and 18-24, this reduced the sample size to 54 participants. Of those participants, 22.22% were men, 75.93% were women, and

1.85% were non-binary. Additionally, 9.26% of the participants identified as Black or African American, 88.89% identified as White, and 1.85% identified as biracial.

When asked if the participant had watched at least one episode of *Sam and Cat*, *Liv and Maddie*, or *Alexa and Katie*, 64.91% responded with “Agreed” and 35.19% responded with “Disagree.” Participants who answered “Disagree” were directed to the end of the survey. After this question, this reduced the sample size to 35 participants.

When presented with the statement “I believe that gender roles in TV shows for children and young adults (under 25) are often based around stereotypes,” 65.71% responded with “Strongly Agree” and 34.29% responded with “Somewhat Agree,” as shown in Figure 1.



(Figure 1)

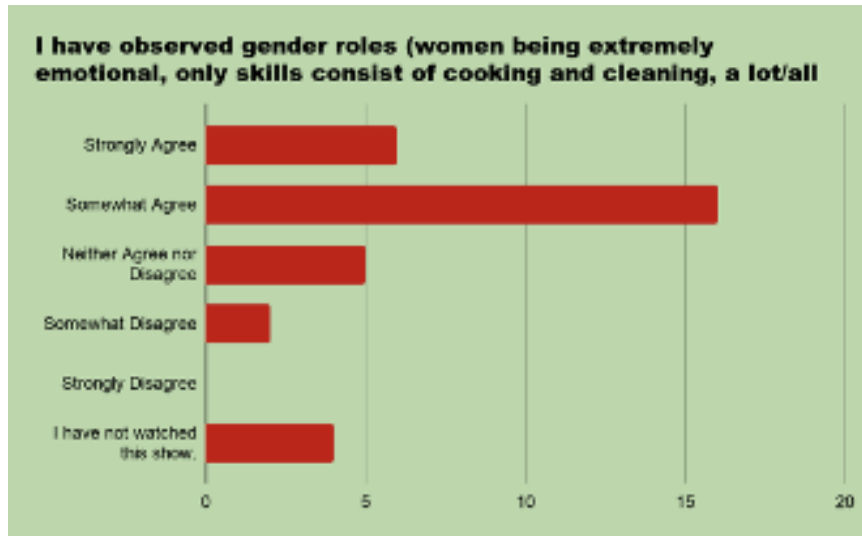
When presented with the statement “Women are often portrayed as extremely emotional, overly accommodating, and lacking intelligence in American media,” 54.29% responded with “Strongly Agree,” 40% responded with “Somewhat Agree,” and 5.71% responded with “Somewhat Disagree.”

The next question presented a statement that said, “In TV shows targeted at children and young adults, female characters often have stereotypical personality traits, such as hyper-

femininity, dramatic, needy, etc.,” and 60% responded with “Strongly Agree,” 37.14% responded with “Somewhat Agree,” and 2.86% responded with “Neither Agree nor Disagree.” When presented with the statement “In TV shows targeted at children and young adults, female characters often have stereotypical occupations (wife, mom, housewife, caretaker, nurse, etc.),” 61.76% responded with “Strongly Agree,” 35.29% responded with “Somewhat Agree,” and 2.94% responded with “Somewhat Disagree.”

The following question presented the participant with the statement “In TV shows targeted at children and young adults, female characters often have a storyline based on that of another male character,” and 47.01% responded with “Strongly Agree,” 29.41% responded with “Somewhat Agree,” 17.65% responded with “Neither Agree nor Disagree,” 2.94% responded with “Somewhat Disagree,” and 2.94% responded with “Strongly Disagree.” When presented with the statement “I believe female characters in TV shows targeted at children and young adults accurately represent the female population,” 2.94% selected “Somewhat Agree,” 11.76% selected “Neither Agree nor Disagree,” 55.88% selected “Somewhat Disagree,” and 29.41% selected “Strongly Disagree.”

After being presented with the statement “I have observed gender roles (women being extremely emotional, only skills consist of cooking and cleaning, a lot/all of women's problems revolve around men, etc.) in *Sam and Cat*,” 18.18% responded with “Strongly Agree,” 44.48% responded with “Somewhat Agree,” 15.15% responded with “Neither Agree nor Disagree,” 6.06% responded with “Somewhat Disagree,” and 12.12% indicated that they have not watched this specific show, as indicated in Figure 2.



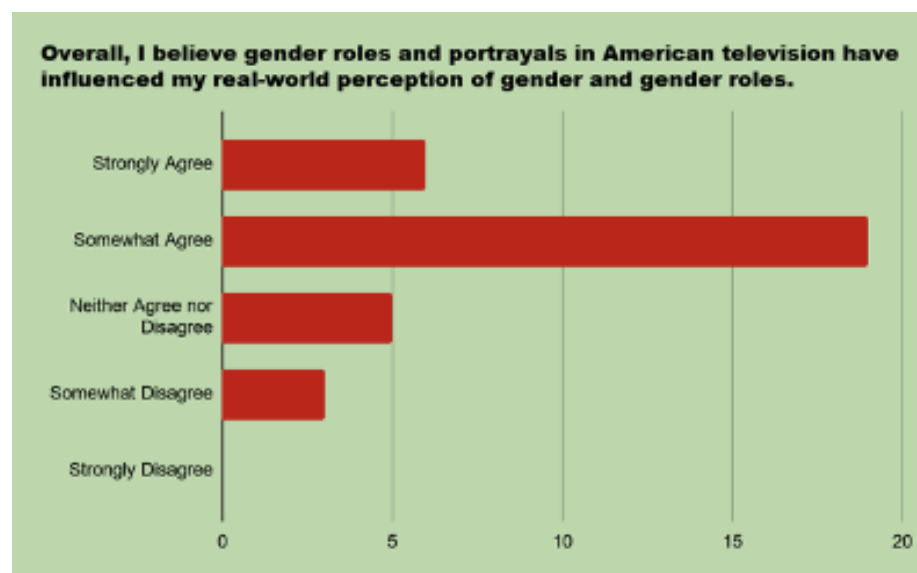
(Figure 2)

When presented with the statement, “I believe any observed gender roles in *Sam and Cat* have affected/influenced my real-world perception of gender and/or gender roles,” 9.09% responded with “Somewhat Agree,” 15.15% responded with “Neither Agree nor Disagree,” 30.30% responded with “Somewhat Disagree,” and 36.36% responded with “Strongly Disagree.”

In the next section, participants were presented with the statement, “I have observed gender roles (women being extremely emotional, only skills consist of cooking and cleaning, a lot/all of women's problems revolve around men, etc.) in *Liv and Maddie*,” and 29.41% responded with “Strongly Agree,” 35.29% responded with “Somewhat Agree,” 2.94% responded with “Neither Agree nor Disagree,” and 32.25% indicated they have not watched this specific show. When presented with the statement, “I believe any observed gender roles in *Liv and Maddie* have affected/influenced my real-world perception of gender and/or gender roles,” 12.12% responded with “Somewhat Agree,” 9.09% responded with “Neither Agree nor Disagree,” 24.24% responded with “Somewhat Disagree,” and 24.24% responded with “Strongly Disagree.”

In the following section, participants were presented with the statement, “I have observed gender roles (women being extremely emotional, only skills consist of cooking and cleaning, a lot/all of women's problems revolve around men, etc.) in *Alexa and Katie*,” and 3.03% responded with “Strongly Agree,” 3.03% responded with “Somewhat Agree,” 3.03% responded with “Somewhat Disagree,” and 90.91% of participants indicated they have not watched this specific show. Of the three participants who indicated they have watched *Alexa and Katie*, when presented with the statement, “I believe any observed gender roles in *Alexa and Katie* have affected/influenced my real-world perception of gender and/or gender roles,” 33.33% responded with “Neither Agree nor Disagree,” 33.33% responded with “Somewhat Disagree,” and 33.33% responded with “Strongly Disagree.”

The final question in this survey presented participants with the statement, “Overall, I believe gender roles and portrayals in American television have influenced my real-world perception of gender and gender roles,” and 18.18% selected “Strongly Agree,” 57.58% selected “Somewhat Agree,” 15.15% selected “Neither Agree nor Disagree,” and 9.09% selected “Somewhat Disagree,” as depicted in Figure 3.



(Figure 3)

Discussion

After conducting a survey to gather qualitative data, this research proved to have some interesting conclusions. For this survey, we were looking to answer the following questions:

1. How do gender roles in the television shows *Sam and Cat*, *Liv and Maddie*, and *Alexa and Katie* affect its viewers?
2. How do viewers perceive the gender portrayals from each television show?
3. What are the lasting effects of the representations in these specific shows?

Based on this survey data, people tend to agree that gender roles in television shows for children and young adults are often based around stereotypes. Not only do people think these roles are based around stereotypes, but they also believe that women are specifically and frequently portrayed as extremely emotional, overly accommodating, and lacking education. This data aligns with main concepts from our literature review that state that media portrayals of gender are both outdated and stereotypical. This research then began to suggest more specific conclusions.

After suggesting that gender roles in television are based around gendered stereotypes, this data also indicates that people agree that current female characters in American television further exaggerate gendered stereotypes by being portrayed as dramatic, hyper-feminine, and needy. Not only do their personality traits reinforce stereotypes, female occupations often include jobs and/or duties such as a wife, mom, caretaker, nurse, and more. From this data, we can conclude that gender stereotypes continue to be reinforced in television targeted towards children and young adults.

Although this data suggests people are aware of general existing gender stereotypes in American television, this research yielded surprising results when participants were asked about

specific television shows. While most people agreed that they had observed gender roles in *Sam and Cat*, *Liv and Maddie*, and *Alexa and Katie*, they disagreed that any of the observed gender roles from these specific shows have impacted their real-world perceptions of gender and/or gender roles. Essentially, this suggests that while people think gender stereotypes are present in these three children's television shows, the gender roles in these specific shows do not influence their real-world gender perceptions. Despite this research indicating that gender roles from these three specific shows have not affected individual real-world perceptions of gender, this data suggests that overall, people believe gender roles and portrayals actually influence individual gender perceptions in general television.

This research focused on three specific children/young adult television shows, *Sam and Cat*, *Liv and*, and *Alexa and Katie*. For this research, we were applying the cultivation theory which states that people who watch television frequently are more likely to be influenced by the messages of television, as it contributes directly to the way people perceive social reality. When applying this theory to this data, it led to unique conclusions. For the specific shows researched, it appears this theory would not apply as people do not think their individual gender perceptions have been impacted by the observed gender portrayals within those three shows. However, this research indicates that people generally agree that gender portrayals do influence individual perceptions of gender, which would align with the concepts of the cultivation theory.

Limitations of Study

For this study, one limitation includes a time constraint. Due to time limitations, this survey had a low response rate. Out of a potential 608 responses, this survey only received 85 responses, which is approximately a 14 percent response rate. If the researchers would have had more time to garner responses, the sample data could have been more statistically representative

of the total population. Due to the low response rate, it is difficult to make accurate, measured conclusions.

Another limitation to this study was the nature of this survey. This survey was distributed online; however, the researchers might have been able to gather more data if the survey was either conducted (a) in person or (b) in an interview format. Some conclusions from this data indicate that there might be potential subconscious impacts of gender portrayals on individual perceptions, which would be much more apparent if the survey was conducted in person or in an interview format.

Directions for Future Research

Based on the data collected from this research, there are a few suggestions we would make for future research. First, the data collected from this survey might have been more accurate and/or conclusive if it was collected from an interview, as opposed to a survey. By conducting an interview, researchers will have more time to understand each participant, and the participant might be more willing to open up about potential impacts of gender stereotypes from these television shows.

The second suggestion we would make is to conduct a content analysis. By conducting a content analysis, researchers can understand more about the specific gender portrayals and stereotypes presented in these specific television shows. Perhaps if researchers conducted a content analysis followed by a survey or interview, the collected data could lead to new conclusions. The third and final direction for future research is to expand on the allotted time period allowed for the survey. While we were able to gather some conclusions from our data, if we had allowed a larger time period for participants to opt into the survey, the results would have been more statistically representative of the total population.

Conclusions

From the collected data, we were able to answer our initial research questions. This research concludes that gender portrayals and stereotypes are present in *Sam and Cat*, *Liv and Maddie*, and *Alexa and Katie*; however, these gender stereotypes are not believed to have any lasting or significant impacts on individual perceptions of gender. Although this data suggests these three shows do not have long term effects on gender perceptions, this research indicates that general American television does, in fact, tend to leave lasting influences on how people think about and interpret gender.

Through this survey, we were able to conclude that viewers of these specific shows do perceive gendered stereotypes as misrepresentations of gender within character portrayals; however, these specific misrepresentations do not actually affect the viewer's real-world perception of gender. From this we can conclude that the existing gender representations in *Sam and Cat*, *Liv and Maddie*, and *Alexa and Katie* are stereotypical, yet not perceived to be harmful by its viewers.

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Appendix A

Survey Introduction:

Hello there! Thank you for choosing to participate in this survey. You and your responses are greatly appreciated! This survey will ask questions related to your perception, knowledge, experience, and opinions of television shows for children and young adults and how you think these shows might have affected (or continue to affect) your perceptions of gender roles. This survey will specifically be asking about three shows: *Sam and Cat*, *Liv and Maddie*, and *Alexa and Katie*.

For most statements and questions below, there is a scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” with a neutral option available, as well. For each question or statement, select the answer that best applies to you. Please answer each statement to the best of your ability and with complete honesty. While your responses will be recorded, your identity will remain anonymous. This survey will take approximately ten minutes to complete.

For the purpose of this survey, gender roles can be defined as a role or behavior learned by a person as appropriate to their gender which is typically determined by cultural and/or societal norms. The term “hyperfemininity” can be defined as exaggerated femininity, and the term “stereotype” can be defined as an overly-generalized belief or assumption about a particular person.

Survey Questions:

1. I consent to participate in this survey.
 - Disagree
 - Agree
2. How old are you?
 - Below 18
 - 18-24
 - 25-31
 - 32-38
 - 39+
3. Which gender are you?
 - AMan
 - Woman
 - Non-Binary
 - Other: _____
4. Which race are you?
 - American Indian or Alaska Native

- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other: _____

5. I have watched at least one episode of Nickelodeon's TV show, *Sam and Cat*, Disney's TV show, *Liv and Maddie*, or Netflix's original show, *Alexa and Katie*.

- Disagree
- Agree

6. I believe that gender roles in TV shows for children and young adults are often based around stereotypes.

- Disagree
- Agree

7. Women are often portrayed as extremely emotional, overly accommodating, and lacking intelligence in the general American media.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

8. In TV shows targeted at children and young adults, female characters often have stereotypical personality traits (such as hyperfemininity, dramatic, needy, etc.).

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

9. In TV shows targeted at children and young adults, female characters often have stereotypical occupations (wife, mom, housewife, caretaker, nurse, etc.).

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

10. In TV shows targeted at children and young adults, female characters often have a storyline based on that of another male character.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

11. I believe female characters in TV shows targeted at children and young adults accurately represent the female population.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral

- Agree
- Strongly Agree

12. I have observed gender roles (women being extremely emotional, only skills consist of cooking and cleaning, a lot/all of women's problems revolve around men etc.) in *Sam and Cat*.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

13. I believe any observed gender roles in *Sam and Cat* have affected/influenced my perception of gender.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

14. I have observed gender roles (women being extremely emotional, only skills consist of cooking and cleaning, a lot/all of women's problems revolve around men, etc.) in *Liv and Maddie*.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral

- Agree
- Strongly Agree

15. I believe any observed gender roles in *Liv and Maddie* have affected/influenced my perception of gender.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

16. I have observed gender roles (women being extremely emotional, only skills consist of cooking and cleaning, a lot/all of women's problems revolve around men, etc.) in *Alexa and Katie*.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

17. I believe any observed gender roles in *Alexa and Katie* have influenced/impacted my perception of gender.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree

- Strongly Agree

Appendix B

Kennesaw State University **STUDENT CLASS PROJECT CONSENT LETTER**

Title of Class Project: Gender and American Television: Shaping Perceptions of Gender?

You are being invited to participate in a class project conducted by Jordan Stewart and Christian Taylor at Kennesaw State University.

This class project is being supervised by Dr. Erin Ryan. If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact her at eryan3@kennesaw.edu.

Once you have reviewed the information below, please advise whether you are willing to participate in this project by confirming the Statement of Understanding. You are able to withdraw your participation at any time. A copy of this letter will be provided to you upon request.

The purpose of this project is to research how television for children and young adults can shape and/or influence perceptions of gender/gender norms.

The information generated will be anonymous (you will not be identified) and will not be used for academic research, publication or presentation outside of the classroom.

For this project, you will be asked to complete a brief survey that will ask participants about his/her experience with American television for children and young adults, and inquire about his/her opinions on the impact these shows have had on his/her perception of gender norms.

Statement of Understanding: The purpose of this class project has been explained to me and my participation is voluntary. I acknowledge that I am able to stop participating at any time of my choosing. I understand that I may request a copy of this letter for my records and contact the faculty/course instructor with any questions or concerns and that the information gained from this project will never be presented outside the classroom, published, or otherwise disseminated.

Student's Contact Information:

Name: Jordan Stewart

Email: jstew175@students.kennesaw.edu

Name: Christian Taylor

Email: ctay1199@students.kennesaw.edu

Appendix C

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Study: Gender and American Television: Shaping Perceptions of Gender?

Researcher's Contact Information: Jordan Stewart (jstew175@students.kennesaw.edu) and Christian Taylor (ctayl199@students.kennesaw.edu)

Your child is being invited to take part in a research study conducted by Jordan Stewart and Christian Taylor of Kennesaw State University. Before you decide to allow your child to participate in this study, you should read this form and ask questions if you do not understand.

Description of Project

The purpose of this project is to research how television for children and young adults can shape and/or influence perceptions of gender/gender norms.

Explanation of Procedures

Your child will be asked to answer questions that we have developed in order to research any possible effects or impacts of watching American television shows on how he/she thinks about and/or perceives gender.

Time Required

The estimated time to complete the task is approximately ten minutes. This all depends on how much time the participant spends on each question.

Risks or Discomforts

There are no risks or discomforts associated with this study.

Benefits

Although there will be no direct benefits to you for taking part in the study, the researcher may learn more about how American television has affected perceptions of gender/gender norms in children and young adults. .

Confidentiality

The results of this participation will be anonymous. Your child's name will not be mentioned in the final draft of this research and no personal information will be disclosed. The only information that will be shared are the views of your child.

Inclusion Criteria for Participation

The intended age of participants range from 12-years-old to 18-years-old.

Consent to Participate

I give my consent for my child, _____,
to participate in the research project described above. I understand that this participation is voluntary and
that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty. I also understand that my child may
withdraw his/her assent at any time without penalty.

Signature of Parent or Authorized Representative, Date

Signature of Investigator, Date

**PLEASE SIGN BOTH COPIES OF THIS FORM, KEEP ONE AND RETURN THE OTHER TO
THE INVESTIGATOR**

Research at Kennesaw State University that involves human participants is carried out under the oversight
of an Institutional Review Board. Address questions or problems regarding these activities to the
Institutional Review Board, Kennesaw State University, 1000 Chastain Road, #0112, Kennesaw, GA
30144-5591, (678) 797-2268.