

5-2015

# Polly Pocket & Ninja Turtles: A Content Analysis of Gender Stereotypes in Children's Advertisements

Michele Bailey Deloney  
*University of Arkansas, Fayetteville*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.uark.edu/jouruht>

---

## Recommended Citation

Deloney, Michele Bailey, "Polly Pocket & Ninja Turtles: A Content Analysis of Gender Stereotypes in Children's Advertisements" (2015). *Journalism Undergraduate Honors Theses*. 1.  
<http://scholarworks.uark.edu/jouruht/1>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Journalism at ScholarWorks@UARK. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journalism Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UARK. For more information, please contact [scholar@uark.edu](mailto:scholar@uark.edu), [ccmiddle@uark.edu](mailto:ccmiddle@uark.edu).

**Polly Pocket & Ninja Turtles: A Content Analysis of Gender  
Stereotypes in Children's Advertisements**

An Honors Thesis submitted by

Bailey Deloney

2015

Journalism

J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences

**The University of Arkansas**

## *Acknowledgement*

I owe much of the intellectual and emotional motivation that equipped me to bring this endeavor to completion to the steadfast encouragement and support from my family, close friends and professors at the University of Arkansas.

Though it seems a grave understatement to merely credit her with advising me as a thesis director, I would like to offer a special thanks to Dr. Lucy Brown, Clinical Assistant Professor in Advertising and Public Relations. Through patient guidance, thoughtful and constructive criticism and countless hours spent editing my many drafts, she continually challenged me to fix my standards high and go beyond the expectation.

Lastly, I would like to thank my parents for their support and patient contribution of recording the commercials for this study, and my brother for his continual willingness to listen.

## *Abstract*

This content analysis examined the use of gender stereotypes, in the forms of product association and various traditional behaviors expected of a particular gender, in children's advertisements aired on Nickelodeon network. Results of the study revealed that although children's commercials appear to be breaking away from some long-standing gender stereotypes, such as boys being the dominant gender in athleticism, many of the same gender stereotypes that researchers have been investigating for decades remain prevalent today.

Results indicate that commercials on Nickelodeon network favor boy characters in overall time on-screen. Girls-only commercials made up the lowest percent of commercials in the sample. Even male narrators were preferred for voice-overs. Additionally, children's commercials continue to reinforce the social expectation that boys play with construction and transportation toys, while girls play with dolls and stuffed animals. Enduring behavioral stereotypes include the idea that boys are competitive and aggressive, while girls are nurturing and domestic. Lastly, the gender association of girls playing indoors and boys playing outdoors remains a prevalent stereotype within children's advertisements.

## *Table of contents*

<i>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>CHAPTER 4 RESULTS.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION.....</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>APPENDICES.....</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>REFERENCES.....</i>	<i>61</i>

*List of graphs and charts*

<u>Figure 1</u>	Products Advertised in Children’s Commercials .....	33
<u>Figure 2</u>	Gender Relationship with Setting.....	34
<u>Figure 3</u>	Racial Representation of All Children’s Commercials.....	35
<u>Figure 4</u>	Gender Representation of Narrators.....	36
<u>Figure 5</u>	Overall Gender Representation of Children’s Commercials....	36
<u>Figure 6</u>	Total Behavior Featured in Characters.....	38
<u>Figure 7</u>	Presence of Competition in Children’s Commercials.....	40
<u>Figure 8</u>	Presence of Nurturing Behavior in Children’s Commercials....	40
<u>Figure 9</u>	Presence of Aggression in Children’s Commercials.....	41
<u>Figure 10</u>	Presence of Athleticism in Children’s Commercials.....	42
<u>Figure 11</u>	Presence of Dancing in Children’s Commercials.....	42
<u>Appendix 1</u>	Inter-coder Reliability.....	54
<u>Appendix 2</u>	Coding Sheet.....	55

## *Chapter One*

### *Introduction*

Children represent a vast and increasing consumer market in the United States. They are purchasers, as well as major influencers in the buying of goods and services (Bakir, Blodgett & Rose, 2008; Impact on Daily Spending, 2014). Small children and pre-teens are estimated to influence more than \$1.2 trillion a year in direct purchases (The Next Generation, 2012; Horovitz, 2011). According to a 2014 Nielsen report entitled “The littlest consumers’ big value in the entertainment industry”, children have a particularly significant influence in the industries of music, books, home entertainment and video games (The littlest consumers, 2014). For example, the report notes that the popularity of 2014’s best-selling digital song, “Happy” by Pharrell Williams, was significantly boosted by its appearance in the highly successful kids’ movie *Despicable Me 2*.

Over half of 2014’s top-selling DVD/Blu-ray titles were targeted toward child audiences, or were based on young adult fiction or comics (Tops of 2014). Additionally, since 2011, consumers’ intentions to buy toys online have doubled (Global online purchase, 2014). Children today are also influencing more book purchases than ever before (Nielsen TV: How children, 2014). In light of this, advertisers recognize the crucial role that children play in the consumer market, and as a result, they carefully design a large portion of their marketing communications with this specific target audience in mind. A significant share of this budget goes toward television commercials.

In 2014, children ages 2-11 watched nearly 23 hours of television per week and children ages 12-17 watched an average of 19 hours (Nielsen, 2015). This corroborates

Strasburger and Hogan (2013) findings that 71 percent of children and teenagers have a personal television set in their bedroom. They spend upwards of 11 hours per day watching or using some form of media, and it is reported that children today spend more time with media than in school (Strasburger & Hogan, 2013). Even with the innovations in technology and the capability of viewing programs online, via mobile devices, tablets, DVR or various other media, the primary source for television viewing still takes place on ad-supported platforms (Common Sense Media, 2014) so it is still relevant for researchers to be concerned about the content of commercials targeted to children.

By nature, children tend to be vulnerable, naïve, and easily swayed, due to their lack of experience and incomplete cognitive development (Reynolds, 2011). Given that children have limited processing abilities, the Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU) cautions advertisers to take into account kids’ “special vulnerabilities” and “susceptibility to being misled or unduly influenced.” The extent to which advertisers adhere to the guidelines of CARU is a question researchers have been asking for decades. There are eight areas of guidelines established for advertisers. This includes guidelines encouraging advertisers to take into account children’s limited knowledge about the credibility of information, to avoid deceptive or unfair material, to avoid techniques that stimulate unreasonable expectations about the product, and to avoid social stereotyping.

Principle 6 from the CARU guidelines (2009, p. 5) states “Advertisers should avoid social stereotyping and appeals to prejudice.” Although advertisers may believe they are *reflecting* society in commercials, stereotypes also *shape* society and the way that children perceive themselves and others. Given that children’s mental reasoning capabilities are not fully developed, they are often unable to discern the persuasive intent

or unintended negative messages that stereotypes carry in advertisements (Reynolds, 2011). This could easily put children in an unfair disadvantageous position, and presents the risk that these unintended negative beliefs, attitudes or behaviors will be conveyed as societal expectations and norms.

Social cognitive theory purports that “characters in advertisements offer models of behavior,” (Gilmore & Jordan, 2012). This suggests that television has the potential to impact viewers’ beliefs and attitudes about social norms (Mastro & Stern, 2004). Social cognitive theory holds that both “direct and vicarious observations contribute to learning about our social environment,” (Mastro & Stern, 2004, p. 216). By providing models who display socially accepted behavior and who viewers can repeatedly observe, television can influence the behavior of viewers themselves. Furthermore, children are more likely to imitate the behavior illustrated in an advertisement, if they consider the actors or characters displayed to be similar to themselves (Gilmore & Jordan, 2012).

Along the same lines, distinctiveness theory predicts that children will pay closer attention to and become more influenced by advertisements featuring characters of their own gender. Research suggests that viewers are more likely to mimic the behavior of models whom they find relatable to themselves (Mastro & Stern, 2004; Gilmore & Jordan, 2012).

Additionally, social identity theory posits that people “derive much of their identity from association with groups,” (Comello, 2011, p. 313-314). Thus, if children perceive themselves to be a part of a certain group, such as a particular gender, they may be more likely to try to align their behavior or appearance with that group’s identity. Similarly, optimal distinctiveness theory proposes that “people have a need to belong and to feel

similar to others,” (Comello, 2011, p. 313-314). Again, it would follow that a need to be similar to others might influence a child to act in accordance with children models they see repeatedly on television.

Collectively, these theories suggest that children who see models of their own gender in television commercials may alter their own attitudes or behavior in accordance to the characters that they deem similar to themselves (Comello, 2011; Gilmore & Jordan, 2012). Advertisers and the media in general, have a powerful influence over social mindset, and particularly children’s concepts of themselves. For this reason, it is important that consumers understand exactly what ideas are being conveyed through these advertisements (Hein & Kahlenberg, 2009).

Through television commercials, children can learn for example, to associate certain toys with a particular gender. For example, there exists a cultural expectation that girls like to play with dolls, while boys would prefer to play with action figures. Therefore, in order to better market their products to a targeted audience, advertisers will likely feature female characters in doll advertisements and boy characters in action figure commercials, thus reinforcing a gender stereotype within society. Various studies have been conducted to investigate the gender stereotypes that advertisers present in child-targeted commercials (Eisend & Sollwedel, 2014; Hein & Kahlenberg, 2009; Martínez, Nicolás & Salas, 2013).

Children may also observe that in commercials boys are often portrayed exhibiting certain types of behavior, while girls are observed exhibiting mainly other types, so behavioral gender stereotypes have also been the focus of various journalism and

advertising studies. The stereotypes, also referred to as traditional gender behaviors in this study, studied include boys portraying more dominant, aggressive and overall independent behavior, while girls seem to be portraying more submissive, domestic and overall cooperative behavior (Bakir, Blodgett & Rose, 2008; Browne, 1998; Hein & Kahlenberg, 2009; Klinger, Hamilton, & Cantrell, 2001; Eisend & Knoll, 2011).

In regard to the traditional male behaviors observed in commercials, dominant behavior generally includes decision-making, power, control, and leadership (Browne, 1998). Aggressiveness may be defined as fighting for the sake of fighting; this can include hitting, slapping, punching, kicking and wrestling of any sort. Although Eisend and Knoll (2011) defined independent roles as those where characters were shown working, Hein and Kahlenberg (2009) differentiate independent behavior in children's advertising as commercials where only one character is shown on screen without any interaction with others. Similar to independent behavior is "parallel behavior," which indicates that two or more characters are shown on screen together, but not playing or interacting with one another (Hein & Kahlenberg, 2009).

In contrast, the stereotypical female counterpart to "independence" is "dependence," which can refer to characters in the role of a parent or spouse (Eisend & Knoll, 2011). Dependence can appear in the form of domestic behavior, which includes actions such as cooking, cleaning, taking care of the household and any other activity taking place at home. Furthermore, dependence can also encompass submissive behavior, which denotes a degree of subordination, displays of appeasement and acts of service. Lastly, in children's advertisements this stereotype can be fulfilled through "cooperative behavior," which features two or more characters playing together and implies the female

dependence on others (Hein & Kahlenberg, 2009). Whatever form the stereotype may take, the message being conveyed to the child remains the same: certain behaviors appear to be expected of girls and others are expected of boys.

In light of the various gender expectations prevalent in society, this study investigates the behavioral patterns and gender stereotypes, as well as the negative messages that may be imbedded in those stereotypes, which advertisers are presenting to children today. This study will examine the implied association between gender and a range of variables, such as competitiveness, nurturing, aggression, athleticism, dancing, independence, parallel behavior and cooperativeness, many of which fall under the categories of character behavior and character interaction.

### *Problem Statement*

Television programs and commercials can often serve as media to present positive stereotypes and a reinforcement of a society's culture and values. However, the "absorbing" and "fascinating" nature of television can also serve as a powerful depiction of negative stereotypes circulating within society (Mitu, 2011, p. 917). This contrast presents viewers with the real difficulty of discerning fact versus fiction. Though a thirty second commercial may seem of little importance in the course of a person's day, the repeated content and underlying messages presented in advertising impact society. Gender stereotypes can inhibit the development of children and limit the scope of their self-realization, thus impeding the growth of society as a whole. For children, even more so than adults, the imbedded stereotypes that advertisers weave into the portrayal of the world can shape the way that children perceive themselves and society. For example, an advertisement depicting both boys and girls playing sports may help to socialize children in the idea that competition and athleticism are gender-neutral qualities. However, if a commercial depicts only girls playing with dolls, although that may be an expectation already set within society, it may also reinforce the social message that nurturing behavior is a quality reserved for mothers and not one that is desired for fathers. Moreover, this depiction of reality can alter children's view of gender roles. Society can benefit from academicians and communication professionals routinely studying the contents of ads to monitor the character of the social stereotyping manifested in them.

### *Purpose of the study*

This content analysis study examines the intended or unintended manifest gender socializing messages advertisers are communicating to children through commercials. This stream of research is worthy of investigation because children of ages 2 to 11 are estimated to view more than 3.3 hours of television per day (Nielsen, 2014). In 3 hours children are likely to be exposed to about 30 commercials which therefore can serve as an important socializing force in developing their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors as teenagers and adults.

Kolbe and Muehling (1995) found that children notice and can identify the gender of a character playing with the product in toy commercials, and furthermore, that the gender of characters in toy advertisements influences children's perception of the gender-appropriateness for that toy. Similarly, Bakir and Rose found that boys favor male stereotypes portraying independent or problem solving behavior, while girls tend to favor female stereotypes portraying relationship-focused behavior (Bakir, Blodgett, & Rose, 2008, p. 256). This study aims to investigate the extent to which these same stereotypes apply to commercials today and how they may have changed in recent years. It is vital that both the viewers of commercials and the advertisers themselves be aware of the degree to which commercials depict gender stereotypes and consider the impact that stereotypes can have not only on children's perception of themselves, but on society's concept of gender as a whole.

The following chapters in this paper will (i) review the precedent literature, (ii) present a detailed description of the methodology for this study, (iii) summarize the

results and (iv), provide an explanation and discussion of the findings and outline the limitations of this research.

## *Chapter Two*

### *Review of the Literature*

Although recent trends in media usage indicate that American youth are watching less television overall, the medium is still a highly prevalent influence on society (Are young people, 2014). In 2014, Nielsen reported that in every age group across the board, television remains the primary technology-based medium of entertainment for Americans to spend their time, surpassing the Internet, game consoles, video via smart phones and the radio (Turrill, 2014). According to an American Time Use Survey, the average American spent 2 hours and 48 minutes watching television per day in 2013, constituting more than half of Americans' total leisure time (Ritcher, 2014). Furthermore, this is 10 minutes longer than the average amount of time Americans watched television a decade ago. For this reason, it is imperative that society be made aware of the intended and unintended messages presented through television and the advertisements presented via this medium.

The use of gender stereotypes in advertising is a scope of research that has captured the interest of academicians and feminists globally, including the United States, India, the Philippines, the Netherlands and many other countries, as will be discussed later in this review (Centeno & Prieler, 2013; Anuradha, 2012; Hoftsee, Odekerken-Shröder and De Wulf, 2001). The following review of literature presents an overview of antecedent research pertaining to the use of stereotypical gender roles in commercials. This overview includes: (i) the use of stereotyping as a technique in advertising; (ii) Stereotypical messaging in children's commercials, and finally (iii) the use of gender-specific behaviors in children-targeted commercials.

*The use of stereotyping as a technique in advertising:* To understand the reasons that stereotypes are often used in advertising, it is important to examine the role that they play in communication generally and message development in marketing communication, specifically advertising. The following review of the stereotype literature synthesizes two specific areas: the benefits and detriments of using stereotypes in advertising.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a stereotype as “A preconceived and oversimplified idea of the characteristics which typify a person, situation, etc.; an attitude based on such a preconception.” In other words, stereotypes are assumptions that ascribe certain characteristics to an overarching group of people, things or situations. Although the use of stereotypes generally has a negative connotation, in order to produce effective advertising, shortcuts are often used to deliver the advertiser’s message in thirty seconds. There is a necessity for advertisers to craft commercials using symbolic meanings that align with cultural norms within a given society. For example, culture frequently perceives symbolic meaning even from an element as arbitrary as color. In the western culture, black is often associated with evil, white with good; pink with girls, and blue with boys. Thus, an advertiser may advertise pink shoes when targeting girls or feature a character riding a black horse to signify a villain. By strategically utilizing the predispositions existent within society to sell products, advertisers can create more effective and even compelling advertisements, in that these stereotypes help to deliver messages quickly if the audience is in agreement with, or is neutral to the symbolic meaning presented in the advertisements.

Ifezue (2010) suggests that men and women process information in two distinct ways, indicating that these differences can play a significant role in the way that

advertisers tailor messages to persuade each gender. For example, Ifezue found that men prefer to focus on the big picture, while women can process multiple pieces of information at once and generally have an eye for detail. With this information, it may be more effective for advertisers to layer a female-targeted advertisement with multiple components and more detail, while narrowing the focus of a male advertisement to one or two focal points. Additionally, Ifezue's study discusses various expectations that society places on men and women, regarding the ways that they use or view a product. Using the example of a food advertisement, Ifezue explains that because women are taught by culture to maintain a certain image, women's food advertisement may focus on the nutritional value. After all, society socializes women to be more concerned than men about their size and weight. In contrast, because society often has the expectation that men will enjoy greasy, fatty comfort foods, men's commercials may be more successful if they advertise more "masculine" food. Clearly both men and women need to be concerned about eating well and their caloric intake to be healthy. However, this may not be the message that advertisers find to be most effective in selling certain food products.

Nevertheless, use of outmoded symbolic meanings or the use of traditional stereotypes in advertising can be ineffective and offensive to certain viewers. Eisend, Plagemann and Sollwedel (2014) found that women were more often aware of stereotypes in commercials than men, likely because of women's tendency to process detail more thoroughly than men or perhaps because women's views are often under-represented in making many business decisions. In addition, research shows that women more than men, are more aware of the negative effects that stereotypes can have on society and thus are more likely to view commercials displaying traditional gender

stereotypes negatively. For this study, a traditional stereotype denoted a woman in a domestic role. For example, a traditional stereotype might be portrayed by showing a woman cleaning while a man relaxes; in contrast, the nontraditional counterpart to this stereotype would feature a man cleaning while a woman relaxes (Eisend, Plagemann & Sollwedel, 2014). The results of the study indicated that female-targeted advertisements portraying women in nontraditional roles were more effective than those portraying traditional stereotypes, perhaps because women are more aware of the negative limitations that these representations reinforce (Eisend, Plagemann & Sollwedel, 2014).

Similarly, in an earlier study, Whipple and Courtney (1980) concluded that consumers and practitioners rated advertisements featuring women in a progressive role as equal to or superior to commercials with women in traditional roles. Although, the study also indicated that consumers' preference of female roles in advertisements is somewhat dependent on the type of product being advertised and the demographic of the viewers. For example, women under the age of 35, married women and full-time housewives, for example, rated breakfast food advertisements with women in a progressive role as significantly more effective than those featuring women in traditional roles. The inference is that the women sampled in this study possess a view of themselves that is more contemporary than the limited roles depicted in the advertisements.

Researchers have also investigated gender stereotyping in advertisements to determine if there is an association between gender stereotyping in ads and a country's masculinity score, an index reflecting the degree to which a culture prefers a traditional distinction between male and female roles. Findings were somewhat unexpected.

Hoftsee, Odekerken-Shröder and De Wulf (2001), for example, found no clear

association between a country's masculinity score and the degree of gender stereotyping in advertisements. The majority of the hypothesized associations between the country's cultural view of gender roles and the gender stereotypes portrayed in that nation's advertisements were not supported by this study. Hoftsee, Odekerken-Shröder and De Wulf suggested that a possible explanation for this disconnect is that Hoftsee's index scores may be out of date, not accurately reflecting the gender perception of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Another possible explanation for this incongruity could be that advertisers have not yet caught up with consumers in their representation of contemporary gender roles.

Aside from product type and audience demographic, other factors may affect consumer response to gender stereotypes used in commercials. Eisend, Plagemann and Sollwedel (2014) noted that use of humor in a commercial played a significant role in the overall impact of stereotypes on women. When humor was tied to the stereotype, women tended to have a more favorable view toward the product and the advertisement. The study proposed that when gender stereotypes were presented in humorous ads, the stereotypes were less serious and generally viewed as less harmful.

While in some instances the use of stereotypical associations can increase the efficacy of advertising, in the case of gender stereotypes, women today respond more favorably to advertisements that portray them in less limited, more progressive roles. In light of this, the question remains: What symbolic messages about society are commercials intentionally or unintentionally inferring through the use of those traditional stereotypes, particularly to children who are so impressionable?

**Stereotypical messaging in children’s commercials:** The examination of child-targeted commercials, indicate that the use of stereotypical symbols in advertisements, such as traditional patterns in the gender of models and narrator, settings or environments designated mainly to one gender, the pairing of certain products with only one particular gender, all can convey messages that restrict children’s aspirations and self-realization.

Kolbe and Muehling (1995) study observed that the models within the commercial impact children’s perception of gender-appropriateness for the product being advertised. The study found that 94.6 percent of children ages 5 to 9 could correctly identify the gender of a child playing with the toy in commercials. The gender of the model in the toy advertisement affected children’s judgments about gender-appropriateness for that toy. Of the 40 participants in the study, 78 percent of the boys who saw a male actor playing with the toy felt that the toy was meant for “boys-only”. However, boys who saw a female actress playing with the toy were twice as likely to feel that the toy was appropriate for girls and boys (67.4 percent). Girls were also less likely to view a toy as appropriate for “boys-only” if the advertisement contained the presence of a female actress.

Similarly, Hein and Kahlenberg (2009) suggest that advertisers teach children to embrace gender stereotypes by targeting a specific gender for different types of toys. Stereotypical “boy toys” were most often modeled by male actors and “girl toys” usually had female actresses, meaning that certain toys are only appropriate for one sex or the other. For example, dolls (58.3 percent) and animals (82.6 percent) were more often featured in girls-only commercials, while transportation/construction toys (87.1 percent),

action figures (72 percent) and sports (63 percent) were all shown most often in boys-only commercials.

Not only is the gender of the models in commercials found to be selected based on the type of toys, but the gender of the voice-over in the commercial appears to be selected based on the type of toy, which can indicate to children the gender-appropriateness of the toy. Martínez, Nicolás and Salas (2013) found there was a male voiceover in 79.83 percent of commercials advertising a vehicle and a female voiceover in 66.09 percent of advertisements for dolls and accessories. Anuradha (2012) conducted a similar study researching the commercials aired in India. This study found that no commercials targeted at girls utilized female voiceovers and 39 percent of commercials targeted at girls used male voiceovers. Similarly, Centeno and Prieler (2013) showed that in Philippine's advertisements, males dominated the area of voiceovers. This finding may be an indication that the male voice is considered to be more persuasive or fewer women are employed in the creation of commercials (Centeno & Prieler, 2013).

In addition to the strategic use of product association and voiceovers, the use of fantasy, often times through cartoons or product animation as a technique in children's advertising can also serve to more easily influence a child's judgment of reality (Rose, Merchant & Bakir, 2012). A cartoon is a form of two-dimensional illustrated visual art and refers to a typically non-realistic or semi-realistic drawing or painting intended for satire, caricature, humor, or fictional entertainment. Cartoons are frequently used in the realm of advertising when communicating to children because they capture children's attention and draw them into the content of the commercial. This animated technique can take the form of animals, people, mystical creatures or a life-like version of the product

itself. However, the use of cartoons is also a strategy that can cause young viewers to become so absorbed by the magical world presented, that their discernment of reality, as well as their perception of gender roles, can be more easily manipulated (Rose, Merchant & Bakir, 2012).

*The use of gender-specific behavior in child-targeted commercials:* In addition to the use of traditional patterns in the gender of models, narrators, settings and gender associated with advertising children products, researchers have also uncovered a multiplicity of findings regarding gender stereotypes pertaining to behavior (Bakir, Blodgett & Rose, 2008; Hein & Kahlenberg, 2009; Anuradha, 2012; Klinger, Hamilton & Cantrell, 2001).

There are contrasting findings in the literature regarding how children respond to various behaviors found in commercials. Bakir, Blodgett, and Rose (2008, p. 256) found that boys favor male stereotypes portraying agentic, or what is referred to as independent or problem solving behavior, and girls favor female stereotypes portraying communal, namely, relationship-focused behavior. Contrary to expectations, Bakir, Blodgett and Rose (2008) found that preadolescent boys and preadolescent girls equally favored agentic and communal advertisements. There was no statistical difference between the response of boys and girls. On a scale of 1 to 5, boys' positive attitude toward agentic commercials averaged 4.16 and girls averaged 4.24. For communal commercials, boys averaged 4.19 and girls averaged 4.04. These findings support the view that advertisers do not need to produce separate commercials (with either agentic or communal themes) to market to preadolescent boys and girls, but rather can produce a single commercial targeted to both the genders that is just as effective.

Additionally, boys in commercials targeted at child audiences are also more likely to be shown in active roles, while girls have the tendency to be given more passive roles (Davis, 2011). Likewise, while independence is a trait typically more associated with boy characters, advertisements most often show girls in cooperative roles, playing with other children (Anuradha, 2012; Hein & Kahlenberg, 2009). Hein and Kahlenberg (2009) found that while girls were most often portrayed in cooperative roles (71.2 percent), boys were shown in a more diverse range of interactions, one of these being competitiveness. Over half (58.3 percent) of the competition displayed in the commercials was depicted in commercials with only boys, while none of the girls-only commercials featured competitive behavior.

Children appear to note differences in behaviors in commercials. An experimental study found that both boys and girls rated male-focused advertisements as more aggressive than female-focused commercials (Klinger, Hamilton & Cantrell, 2001). However, girls rated imagined play with boys' toys as having a higher degree of aggression than boys rated them. The authors of this study concluded that media's repeated exposure of violent behavior may be socializing boys toward aggression, noting as well that this could lead eventually to boys' desensitization toward this behavior.

Due to the fact that advertising reflects society, this study believes that athleticism is traditionally more often portrayed as a behavior expected of boys more than girls (That's what little boys, 2011). Athleticism, defined as natural physical skill, agility, strength or talent pertaining to sports, can sometimes be a manifestation of dominance, similar to competitiveness. Contrastingly, because girls are often

portrayed as more docile, playful and cheerful, perhaps dancing may be an athletic behavior that is more associated with girls in commercials (Klinger, Hamilton & Cantrell, 2001; Bakir, Blodgett & Rose, 2008).

Coinciding with some of the behavioral expectations for both men and women in society, there appears to be a relationship between gender and the settings used in commercials. Similar to the traditional expectations that place women in domestic roles, children's advertisements tend to portray girls indoors more than outdoors (Anuradha, 2012). Hein and Kahlenberg (2010) found that about 84 percent of girls-only commercials featured girls playing inside, while 77.8 percent of the characters in commercials with an outdoor setting at home were boys. Along the same lines, boys have also found to be shown in a work setting more often than girls (Davis, 2011; Hein & Kahlenberg, 2009). Anuradha (2012, p. 214) also found that children's advertisements in India "hold on to traditional and stereotypical images" of both women and young girls with regard to setting. In nearly half of the 118 commercials included in the study, girls were shown to be playing inside. In contrast, boys seemed to have no dominant setting in advertisements and were shown in various locations, including swimming pools, stores, cricket grounds etc. Seventy-seven percent of boys were shown in locations away from home. Again, this would seem to suggest that girls are expected to behave in more domestic roles, while boys are more active and belong in a range of environments.

Centeno and Prieler (2013) found similar results in Philippine advertisements. Nearly forty-six percent (45.9 percent) of female characters were found in a home setting, while only 24.5 percent of males were shown at home. Although there is a similar proportion of males and females in the workplace in the Philippines, Centeno and Prieler

found a significant association in the advertisements between gender and the work place setting. While 17.9 percent of male characters were shown at work, only 7.4 percent of females were shown there.

In summary, advertisers' use stereotypes or messages with symbolic meanings to serve communication purposes. It appears to be effective only if it is in sync with the sensibilities and cultural values of the targeted audience and opinion leaders. However stereotypes can also carry a wide array of damaging messages and can serve as a reinforcement of social limitations and negatively influence viewers' perception of themselves and others. The effectiveness of gender stereotypes within a commercial can depend on a multitude of factors including the type of product, the demographic of the viewers and their opinion of gender roles, as well as the use of humor (Ifezue, 2010; Eisend, Plagemann & Sollwedel, 2014; Whipple & Courtney, 1980). Research also indicates that there is a strong association between gender and the type of product being advertised to children (Hein & Kahlenberg, 2009). Additionally, various studies suggest that children advertisements adopt many of the same gender stereotypes as adult-targeted advertisements, though the form in which these stereotypes are manifested may differ. Setting can be one manifestation of a cultural stereotype that implies certain behavioral expectations of a girl or boy.

In light of these findings, this study proposes to replicate Hein and Kahlenberg's content analysis (2009) by investigating contemporary children's commercials for several of the same variables, including the gender association of products, behavior and setting. Six years ago, Hein and Kahlenberg found that advertisers portrayed a statistically significant association between types of toys and gender. Namely, Hein and Kahlenberg

found that advertisements featured only girls playing with dolls and stuffed animals, while boys played with action figures and construction or building toys. Additionally, the commercials favored the depiction of behaviors such as independence and competition in boys, while cooperation was a characteristic associated with girls. Patterns in commercial settings for girl-dominated advertisements were most often shown indoors, while boys were depicted outdoors. The present study is a descriptive analysis that reexamines these similar constructs in a more recent context, as well as adds to the antecedent content analysis by additionally investigating the gender-association presented in commercials with behaviors such as nurturing, dancing and athleticism.

## *Chapter Three*

### *Methodology*

This content analysis examined a one-week composite sample of 200 television commercials broadcasted on Nickelodeon network in July, 2014, from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. In order to collect a comprehensive representative sample, the study selected a day-part during weekday after-school hours and a morning day-part on the weekend. These time frames were selected to correspond with the day-parts in which children view the most television. In accordance with the longstanding tradition, weekend mornings appear to remain a popular time frame for children to watch television, as top rated children's programs such as Nickelodeon veteran "SpongeBob SquarePants" airs multiple times between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturday mornings (Trefis team, 2014). However, with the advancement in media outlets available over the Internet, research indicates children's viewing of television is no longer limited to Saturday mornings (Morgan, 2013). Whitney (2005) suggests that many children have begun to watch more television after school. Thus, both timeframes were utilized for this study.

Nickelodeon was selected as the focus for this study because it was named basic cable's number-one network for 2014, with 834,000 total day viewers ages 2-11 and 1.6 million total viewers (Nickelodeon networks, 2014). When Nickelodeon's ratings were combined with those of its top competitor, Cartoon Network, they represent more than 60% of the Nielsen ratings points for 2-to-11-year-olds (Whitney, 2005). This quarter, Nickelodeon's "SpongeBob SquarePants" was named television's top animated series for children ages 2-11 with 1.3 million viewers.

The unit of analysis for this study was each commercial shown during the two time frames. Duplicate commercials were included in the content analysis since the literature suggests that the more a child views a commercial, the more likely it is that the child's perception of reality will be influenced by its content (Kahlenberg & Hein, 2009).

In order to analyze the content of current children-targeted commercials and determine to what extent gender stereotypes are being used, a content analysis was considered the most appropriate methodology for this study. Manifest information observed in the commercials was coded independently by three coders. After the coders were trained, each coder independently coded 5% of the total commercials to establish appropriate inter-coder reliability. Using Holsti's method (Poindexter & McCombs, 2000), inter-coder reliability was calculated to be 98 percent agreement. However, in order to account for any amount of inter-coder agreement that could have occurred by chance, the Scott's pi method of inter-coder reliability was also calculated separately for variable 18 (see Appendix 2) of a randomly selected commercial. For this variable, Scott's pi was calculated to be 97 percent agreement. This variable (V18) was selected for this additional calculation because it asks the coder to select the *most* dominant behavior displayed by the main character, thus subjecting the coder to a higher degree of personal judgment, in comparison to other variables.

In order to find out what messages commercials are relaying to children about gender roles today, this content analysis tested 8 hypotheses. They are as follows:

- H1. Commercials with action figures and construction, building or transportation toys will feature only male actors
- H2. Commercials with dolls and stuffed animals will feature only female actresses
- H3. More boys-only commercials will feature boys in competition
- H4. More girls-only commercials will feature girls in a nurturing role

H5. More boys-only commercials will feature aggression or fighting than girls-only commercials

H6. More girls-only commercials than boys-only commercials will feature girls playing indoors

A coding scheme was developed to facilitate the objective description of manifest content in order to make valid inferences about (i) Gender Appropriateness Depicted in Toy Commercials and (ii) Gender Specific Behaviors in Commercials. Hypotheses 1 and 2 fall under the first coding scheme, examining the association between product type and gender:

H1. Commercials with action figures and construction, building or transportation toys will feature only male actors

H2. Commercials with dolls and stuffed animals will feature only female actresses

The following section delineates the main coding categories and offers justification for the selection of categories. To determine the relationship between the toy advertised and the gender of the children being targeted, type of product advertised and the gender composition of the characters or actors were analyzed in the commercial (Hein & Kahlenberg, 2009; Kolbe & Muehling, 1995).

To determine whether there were certain types of products that were associated with girls and another set associated with boys the commercials were analyzed to establish the types of products that were being advertised during this prime time.

Advertised products in the commercials targeted to children were coded as *type of product* being advertised, grouping the coding categories of products as “toy,” “food/beverage,” “make-up/beauty product,” “clothing,” or “arts and crafts”.

*Types of toys* were classified as “action figures,” “construction/building oriented,” “transportation,” “dolls,” “stuffed animals,” “sports/outdoor,” “technology related,” or

“board games” (Hein & Kahlenberg, 2009). With regard to the specific toys mentioned in Hypotheses 1 and 2, the study replicates that of Hein and Kahlenberg (2009), as action figures, construction, building or transportation toys were classified as “boy toys,” while dolls and stuffed animals were classified as “girl toys.”

*Type of food/beverage* was coded as “cereal,” “fast food,” “soda,” “frozen meal,” “juice,” “snack food,” “candy/gum,” “dessert/cookie,” or “pasta” .

*Type of make-up/beauty product* was coded as “eye shadow,” “lip stick/gloss,” “fragrance,” “mascara,” “nail polish,” “hair accessories,” or “nail accessories” .

*Type of clothing* was coded as “sports attire,” “shoes,” “casual,” or “dresses”.

In order to ensure that all coding categories were exhaustive “other,” “ambiguous” or “unsure” were listed as choices, with an option for the coder to “specify” details.

Since cartoons are particularly enjoyed by children and have a strong impact on the attention they pay to programs and commercials, character types currently used in commercials were observed for this study. Cartoons in this content analysis study are two-dimensional, non-realistic or semi-realistic animation style used in commercials. In order to determine whether cartoons or real people in the commercial were more prevalent in children’s advertising, the commercials were coded by *Type of characters*, with classification choices of “cartoon animal,” “cartoon people,” “real animal” (as in not animated), “real people,” or “unsure.”

Gender Specific Characteristics in Commercials: Determining the gender representation of each advertisement was imperative to this study. Thus, in order to capture the overall proportion of gender represented by the characters on screen, *Gender*

*of characters* was coded as “girls-only,” “boys-only,” “more boys than girls,” “more girls than boys,” “equal amount of boys and girls” or “ambiguous.” Since the gender of the narrator of a commercial is often distinguishable and may impact an audience’s perception of a commercial, the *Gender of narrator* was coded as “male adult,” “male child,” “female adult,” “female child,” “no narrator,” “ambiguous,” or “unsure.”

The following definitions provide insight into the meaning that the terms used to describe behaviors and interactions analyzed in this study. This list includes several behaviors referenced in the literature previously reviewed as well as additional behavioral terms (athleticism and dancing) that are unique behavioral constructs analyzed in this study.

#### ***Behavior displayed by characters***

**Competitive:** characters showing a strong desire to win a game/competition (i.e. sport, competition with goal to win)

**Nurturing:** characters shown coddling, feeding, nursing or taking care of a doll, animal or another character

**Aggressive:** characters or toys shown battling, wrestling or using physical force (fighting for sake of fighting)

**Athleticism:** characters shown playing or using some form of physical talent/skill, but not competing with main goal to win (i.e. hiking, swimming but not racing, running etc.)

**Dancing:** moving along in the rhythm of music

#### ***Interactive behavior***

**Cooperative:** two or more characters playing and interacting together

**Parallel:** two or more characters shown together, but not playing/interacting directly with one another

**Independent:** only one child was shown playing in the commercial

For the purposes of better understanding the behavioral stereotypes currently associated with gender and to draw a comparison of stereotypes that have been most prominently discussed in the literature, *behavior displayed by characters* was coded as

“competitive,” “nurturing,” “aggressive,” “athletic,” or “dancing”. *Interactive behavior of characters* was coded as “cooperative,” “parallel,” or “independent.”

To determine if there was any difference in the environment that was associated with commercials with girls or boys the environment or location was analyzed. *Location* was coded as “indoors,” or “outdoors”.

These variables were used to investigate the following hypotheses:

- H3. More boys-only commercials will feature boys in competition
- H4. More girls-only commercials will feature girls in a nurturing role
- H5. More boys-only commercials will feature aggression or fighting than girls-only commercials
- H6. More girls-only commercials than boys-only commercials will feature girls playing indoors

On casual observation it appears that children’s commercials tend to have numerous characters, often of equal importance, so few commercials had one main character. For analytic purposes, only commercials with up to four main characters were included in the analysis. Characters were determined as “main characters” if they were featured on the screen repeatedly or more so than other characters, had noticeably more speaking lines than others, were featured in close-up distances or were shown in more scenes than other characters. If a commercial contained more than four main characters, the commercial was removed from the study, as the number of main characters represented a key step in coding several variables such as *Gender, behavior, interactive behavior and race*.

*Race of the characters* was coded to analyze the observed races represented in the commercials. The options for this variable included “Caucasian,” “African American,” “Asian,” “Hispanic” and various combinations of those races.

Data analyses were conducted through the use of SPSS software. Cross tabulations were performed with *Gender of Characters* and one other pertinent variable and Pearson's chi-square tests were used to determine whether there was significance between the expected frequencies and observed in all the coding categories. For example, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested through the cross-tabulation of *Gender of Characters* and *Types of Toys*, with the purpose of finding out whether advertisers presented any association between types of toys and the gender of the children playing with those toys. In order to determine whether there was any association between gender and character behavior as presented in Hypotheses 3-5, presence or absence of competitiveness, nurturing behavior and aggression in commercials were analyzed. Hypothesis 6, the prediction that girls-only commercials would most often be set indoors, was analyzed by cross-tabulating *Gender of Characters* and *Location*. Frequency of *Interactive Behavior of Characters* and *Gender of Characters* were tabulated.

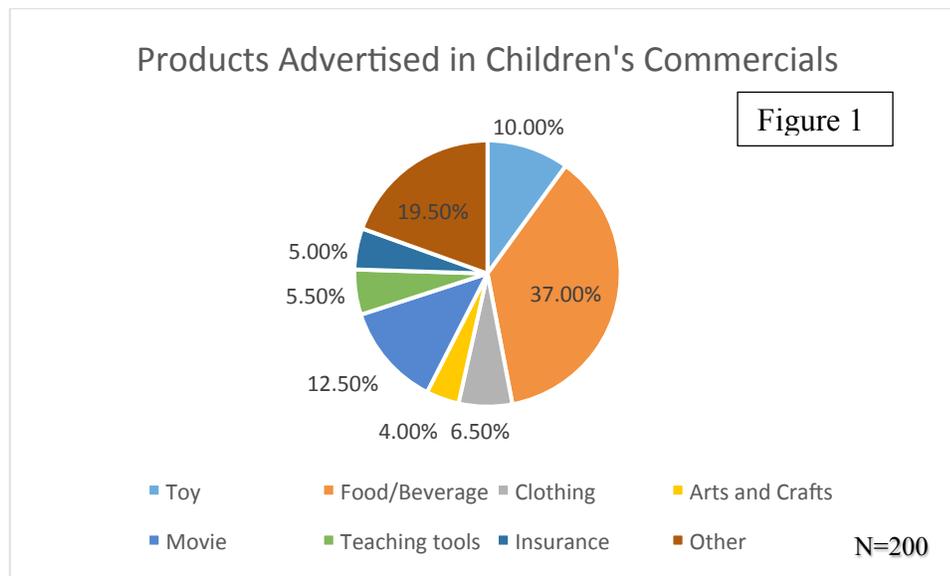
The following chapter provides the results of this content analysis which used a thirty-three point coding scheme that provided a descriptive analysis of the contents of one-week composite sample of 200 television commercials broadcasted on Nickelodeon network in July, 2014.

## Chapter Four

### Results

#### **Description of the Advertised Products**

From the sample of 200 commercials analyzed, two-thirds of the commercials were for food /beverages, movies, toys or clothing. Thirty-seven percent of the commercials advertised food or beverages, 11 percent were movies, 10.5 percent were toys, 6.5 percent were clothing items, 5 percent were insurance companies, 4 percent were arts and crafts, 4 percent were online teaching tools and 19.5 percent fell under “other,” which included, in numerical order, Chuck E. Cheese (2.5 percent), Febreze air freshener (2 percent), Pampers diapers (1.5 percent), babysitting websites (1.5 percent) among others.



Cereal commercials constituted half (50 percent) of all the food products advertised, followed by snack foods (20 percent) and fast food (10.5 percent). In addition, 8 percent of food commercials advertised candy or gum and 6.5 percent featured juices.

Dolls represented the largest percentage of toys advertised (32 percent), followed by technology-related toys such as computer games or learning-related websites (23 percent), for example, ABCmouse.com, K12.com and Moviestarplanet.com; and construction/building toys (18 percent). Shoes represented 82 percent of the clothing items advertised. Most often, the shoes advertised were athletic-type shoes or sneakers (primarily Sketchers).

***Description of Setting***

Most commercials were set indoors (44 percent). Less than a quarter (23 percent) were set outdoors while 28.5 percent featured scenes that were both indoors and outdoors.

**Gender Relationship with Setting**

Figure 2

<b>Gender Representation in Commercials</b>	<b>Indoors</b>	<b>Outdoors</b>	<b>Both indoors &amp; Outdoors</b>
Girls-only	63.6% [7]	0.0% [0]	36.4% [4]
Equal boys and girls	60.8 % [31]	13.7 % [7]	25.5 % [13]
More girls than boys	41.7 % [10]	16.7% [4]	41.7% [10]
More boys than girls	34.6 % [18]	30.8% [16]	34.6% [18]
Boys-only	31.4 % [11]	37.1% [13]	31.4% [11]
*(Percentages within gender category) N=200		$(\chi^2=17.218^a, 8df, p=.028)$	

None of the commercials with only girl characters were set outdoors, while 63.6 percent of girls-only commercials were set indoors. Similarly, commercials with more girls than boys were more frequently set indoors (41.7 percent) than outdoors (16.7 percent). However, the difference between the percent of boys-only commercials set

indoors (31.4 percent) and those set outdoors (37.1 percent) is much smaller. Similar results were found for commercials with more boys than girls.

### ***Description of Characters***

Overall, 30 percent of commercials featured only one main character, 24 percent featured two main characters, 17.5 percent featured three main characters, 18 percent contained four main characters and 10 percent had no obvious “main” characters. More than half (52 percent) of the characters in the study were real people, 19 percent were cartoon or animated animals, 11.5 percent were cartoon people, 10 percent were a combination of real people and animated characters and 7.5 percent were some other type of character representation, such as imaginary creatures or animated inanimate objects.

### ***Race Representation of All Children’s Commercials***

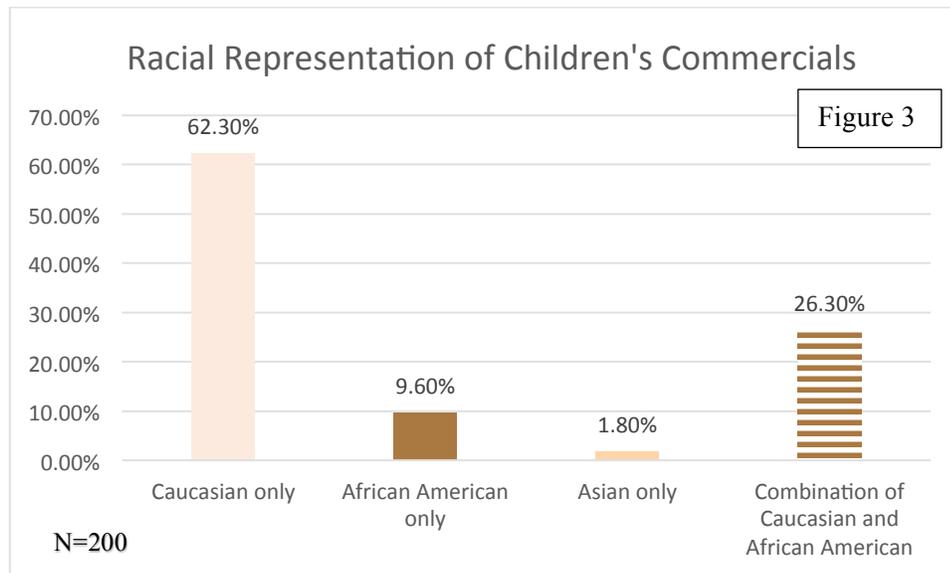
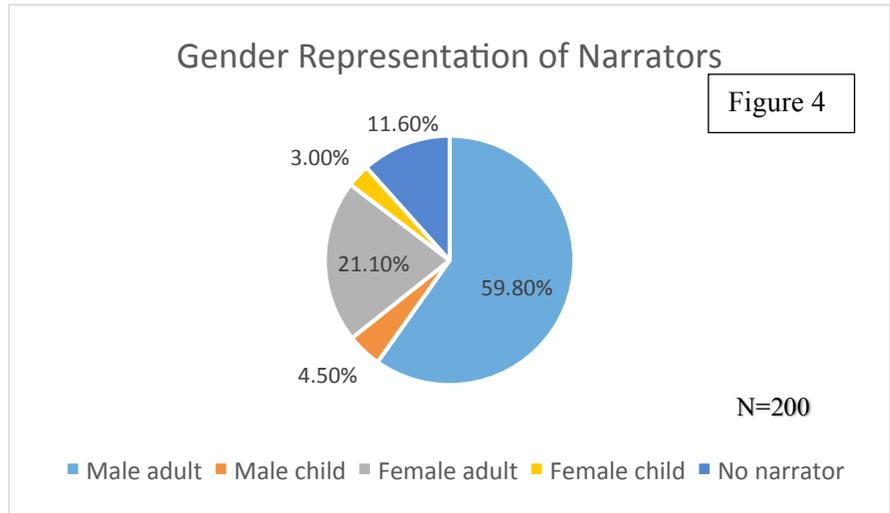


Figure 3 shows that of *all* the commercials analyzed, the majority (62.3 percent) had only Caucasians, followed by African Americans (9.6 percent) and Asians (1.8 percent). For commercials where only one race was represented, the finding was similar.

### ***Gender Representation of Narrators***

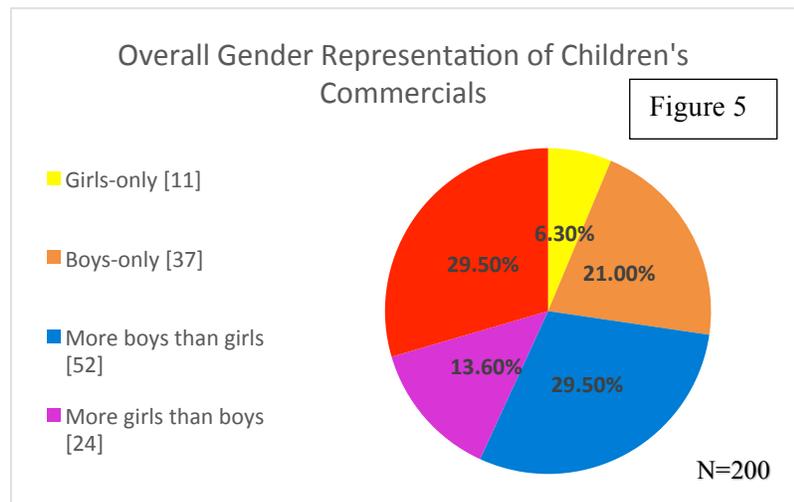
Over three-quarters of the commercials had narrators and men dominated in that role. Nearly 60 percent of the narration featured in commercials was of male adult voices. Twenty-one percent featured a female adult narrator, while 11.5



percent had no narrator. Children narrated only 7.5 percent of the commercials, most of which (4.5 percent) featured a male child.

### ***Overall Gender Representation of Characters***

The gender representation of these commercials is exhibited by figure 5. Boys were represented by themselves in the commercials three times more than girls. Only 6.3 percent [11] of commercials had only girls, while 21 percent [37] of commercials featured only boys and almost 30 percent of commercials featured more boys than girls. About thirty percent featured



equal amounts of boys and girls, while only 13.6 percent featured more girls than boys.

### ***Gender Relationship with Type of Toy***

The results of the study supported Hypotheses 1 and 2, which predicted that action figures and construction, building or transportation toys would feature only male actors, while doll and stuffed animal commercials would feature mainly female actresses.

There was a significant relationship (*chi-square* = .005) between the gender representation and type of toys. Commercials advertising traditional “boy toys” had only boys or primarily boys featured in the commercial and traditional “girl toys” advertisements only featured girl characters in the commercials.

None of the “boy toys” advertisements featured either “girls-only” or “more girls than boys” in the commercials. All of the commercials that were advertising action figures, construction, building or transportation toys featured boys-only (33.3 percent) or more boys than girls (66.7 percent) characters or models. Likewise, none of the commercials advertising dolls or stuffed animals featured “boys-only” or “more boys than girls.” The majority of “girl toy” advertisements featured “more girls than boys” (60 percent), and the rest featured only girls (40 percent). None of the commercials advertising either “boy toys” or “girl toys” featured equal amounts of boys and girls.

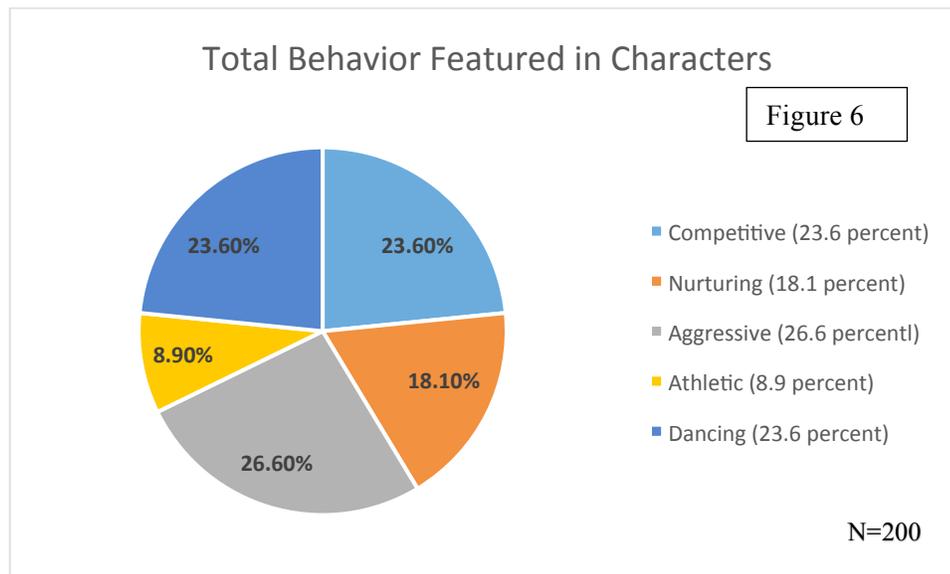
Sixty percent of technology-related toys were advertised in boys-only commercials. Although, 20 percent of these toys were advertised in commercials with more girls than boys, 20 percent were also in commercials with equal amounts of boys and girls.

There was a distinct pattern seen in how toys were advertised commercials targeted to children. Within boys-only commercials, 100 percent of toys advertised were “boys’ toys”, meaning action figures, construction/building toys and transportation toys.

Likewise within the girls-only commercials, 100 percent of toys advertised were dolls or stuffed animals.

The results of the study supported Hypotheses 1 and 2. There was a significant relationship (*chi-square* = .005) between the gender representation and type of toys. Commercials advertising traditional “boy toys” had only boys or primarily boys featured in the commercial and traditional “girl toys” advertisements only featured girl characters in the commercials.

### ***Description of Characters’ Behavior and Interaction***



The most frequent behavior featured in the commercials was aggression, followed by dancing, then competitiveness, nurturing and then athleticism. With 72 main characters displaying aggression as their most dominant behavior, this represented over one quarter (27 percent) of the commercials. Following close behind were the behaviors of dancing (23.6 percent each) and competitiveness (22.9 percent). Nurturing (18.1

percent) and athleticism (8.9 percent) were the behaviors least observed in the commercials.

Overall, independent behavior (47.9 percent) was the most common behavior displayed in children's commercials. The next most frequently portrayed behavior was cooperation (37.5 percent). Only 8.3 percent of commercials depicted parallel behavior.

The succeeding section presents the results of the relationship between these behaviors and gender. Given the disparity between the number of boys-only and girls-only commercials, chi-square analyses were computed to compare all five categories of gender representation.

### ***The Relationship between Gender and Type of Behavior***

Chi-square analyses reveal a statistically significant relationship between gender and behaviors such as competition, nurturing and aggression, which are traditionally used in a stereotypical manner in commercials targeted to children. However, results also indicate that athletic behavior and dancing show no statistically significant relationship to gender.

## Gender Relationship with Competition

Results indicated a significant relationship between gender and competition ( $p=.008$ ). The highest percentage of competitive behavior was featured in commercials that had more boys than girls

(58 percent) characters. Twenty-five percent of commercials that displayed competition were advertisements with equal amounts of boys and girls,

while 17 percent of competitiveness was displayed in commercials with only boys.

Neither girls-only commercials nor commercials with more girls than boys displayed any instance of competition.

Nurturing behavior was found to be most prevalent in commercials with equal amounts of boys and girls (38 percent) and commercials with more girls than boys (35

percent). Fifteen percent of nurturing behavior was present in girls-only commercials, while 4 percent was accounted for in boys-only commercials.

Commercials with more boys

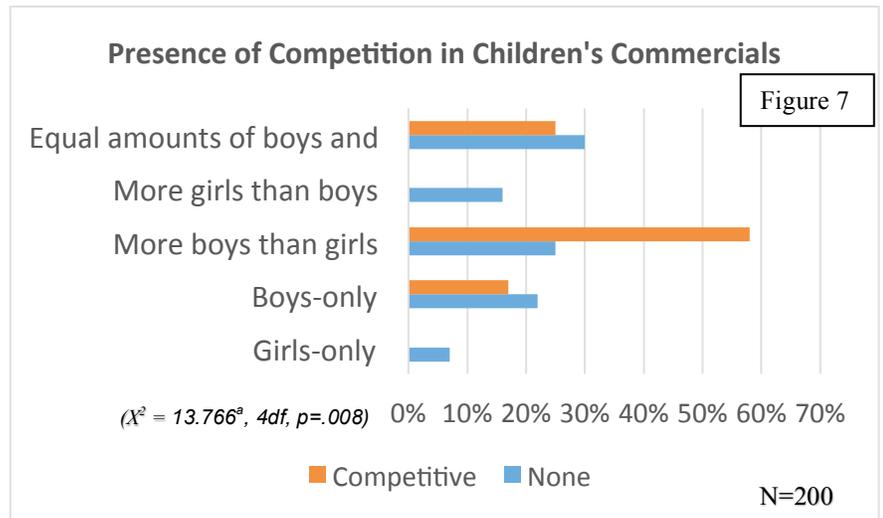


Figure 7

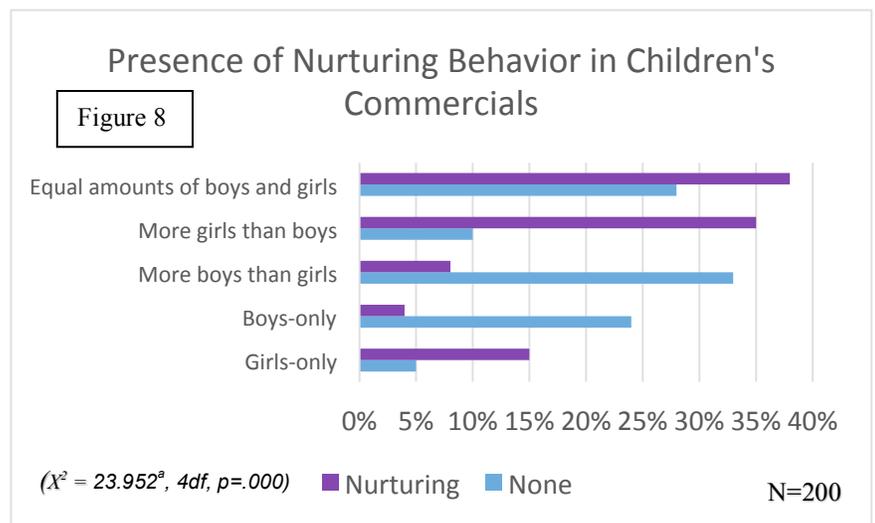
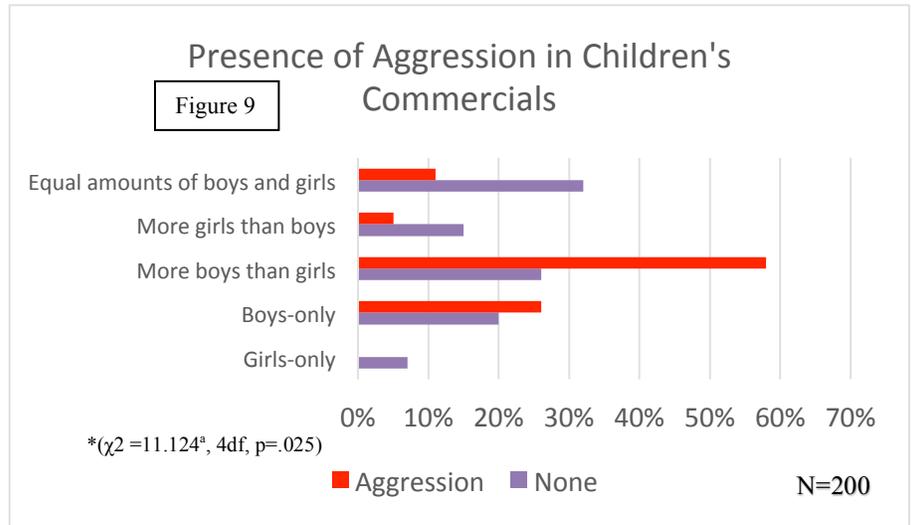


Figure 8

than girls displayed only 8 percent of the total nurturing behavior, while those with more girls than boys displayed 35 percent of the total nurturing behavior. These results indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship ( $p = .000$ ) between female-targeted commercials and nurturing behavior.

***Gender Relationship with Aggression***

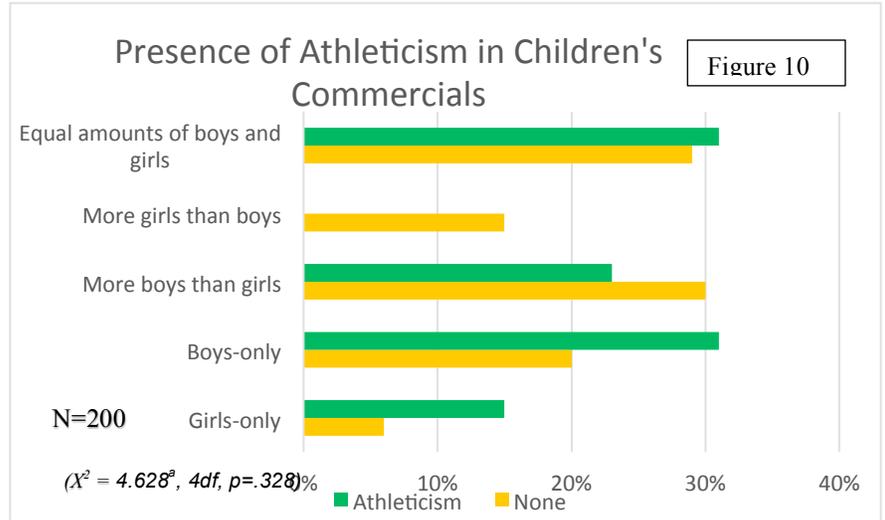
There is a statistically significant relationship between aggression and gender ( $p = .025$ ). Aggression, the most frequently occurring of the behaviors observed in commercials, was found more in commercials with more boys than girls (58 percent) and boys-only (26 percent). There were no “girls-only” commercials that displayed aggressive behavior and only 5 percent of those with more girls than boys had any aggressive behavior.



**Gender Relationship with Athleticism and Dancing**

There was no significant correlation found between gender and athleticism in children’s commercials.

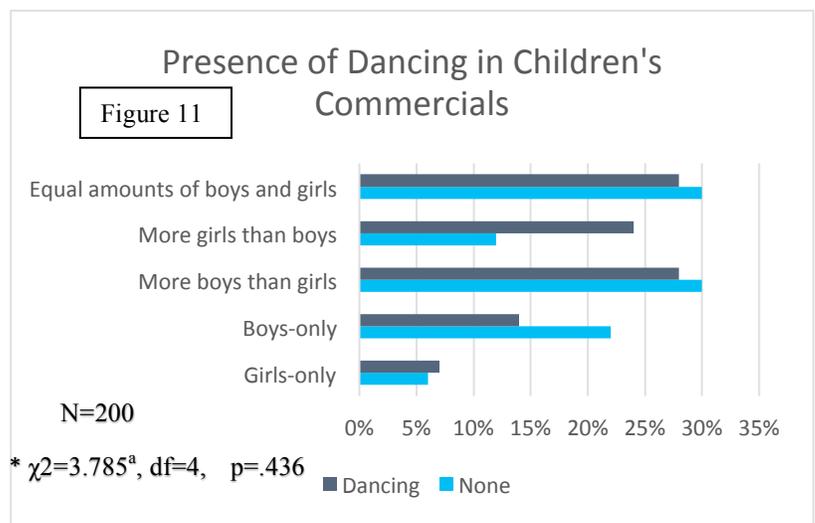
Athletic behavior was found to be most prevalent in boys-only commercials and commercials with equal amounts of boys and girls (31 percent each). The next



highest proportion of commercials with athleticism were those with more boys than girls, at 23 percent.

Results indicated that dancing was most commonly observed in boys-only than girls-only commercials but like athletics, there was no statistically significant association

between gender and dancing was found in the commercials. Results indicated that dancing was most common in commercials with an equal representation of both



genders (28 percent) and commercials with more boys than girls (28 percent). However,

the next highest proportion of dancing took place in commercials with more girls than boys, at 24 percent. Fourteen percent of the boys-only commercials featured characters dancing, while 7 percent of girls-only commercials portrayed dancing.

## *Chapter Five*

### *Discussion*

Many longstanding stereotypes still remain in commercials targeted to children, although there is evidence that advertising has taken some steps toward a more nontraditional representation of gender. The results of a systematic content analysis of children's commercials aired on Nickelodeon network during prime viewing times, reveals that while not all gender roles portrayed in advertising targeted to children have remained stagnant, many of the gender stereotypes from the past three decades continue to endure today. These enduring stereotypes include the association of specific toys with a particular gender, as well as the notion that boys are competitive and aggressive, while girls are nurturing. On the other hand, advertisers also appear to depict behaviors such as athleticism and dancing in a more gender-neutral context.

The overall purpose of this study was to investigate the messages that advertising is relaying to children about gender roles today. The examination of the implied correlation between specific toy types and the gender of the characters modeling those toys represents one piece of this investigation. The study found a strong correlation between gender in children's commercials and the toy being advertised, which results in the perpetuation of the stereotype that certain toys are for boys and other toys are for girls. The analysis found a statistically significant relationship between gender and types of toys ( $p=.005$ ). Similar to the findings of Hein and Kahlenberg (2009), the results of this study supported Hypotheses 1 and 2, which predicted that toy products such as action figures and construction, building or transportation toys would generally feature male actors, while dolls and stuffed animals would be advertised using predominantly female

actresses. Within the commercials that only featured girl characters, 100 percent of the commercials were advertising a “girl toy,” a doll or a stuffed animal, while 100 percent of boys-only commercials advertised a “boy toy,” such as a toy truck or a set of Legos. Additionally, technology toys were targeted primarily to boys. Three-fifths of technology-related toys, such as video or computer games, featured only boy characters.

It should also be noted that the tradition of representing boys as more interested in technology was observed in the commercials. Sixty percent of technology-related toys featured characters portraying competitive behavior and in turn, three-fifths of the technology-related commercials were boys-only advertisements.

Overall, results revealed the enduring existence of a male-dominant representation of gender in children’s advertisements. The data clearly shows that boys are pictured 70 percent more frequently in children’s commercials than are girls, even though boys age 2 to 9 years old only make up approximately 1 percent more of the population than girls of the same age (US Census, 2012). The strong prevalence of male-dominated advertisements, including both exclusively-male advertisements and commercials with more boys than girls, suggests that advertisers are continuing to give male children more opportunities to be visible and vocal in mediated spaces.

Even the narrators tended to be primarily males (64.3 percent), further emphasizing the dominant presence of boys. A narrator in a commercial is the voice of information and persuasion, two noteworthy sources of social power. The prevalence of male narrators serves as supplementary evidence to the view that advertising reinforces not only male-dominated commercials, but also a male-dominated society.

For years, advertising research has indicated that women are most often depicted in the home, while men are shown at work or outdoors (Hein & Kahlenberg, 2009; Eisend & Knoll, 2011). For this reason, Hypothesis 6 predicted that more girls-only commercials would be set indoors. Results for this study support the literature and Hypothesis 6, in that girls continue to be most often depicted indoors. The study found a significant relationship between gender and setting ( $p = .028$ ). While, 63.6 percent of “girls-only” commercials were indoors, only 31.4 percent of “boys-only” commercials were indoors. Furthermore, no girls-only commercials were set outdoors. Overall, these findings add evidence to the view that women are or should be more domesticated, while boys are more “outdoorsy.” By showing girls mainly indoors, commercials perpetuate the narrative that a woman’s place is in the home, while men have the option of exploring a wider range of environments. The implication is that girls and women are expected to remain within the boundaries of a domestic environments and men are free of such limitations.

In addition to the product association and the traditional gender-oriented settings, stereotypical behaviors such as aggression and competition also continue to permeate boy-targeted children’s commercials, while perceived unassuming behavior, such as nurturing, tends to be most associated with girls.

*Advertisers showed competitive behavior in commercials where boys were the main actors:* Competitiveness was noticeably absent from commercials with primarily girls. Anuradha (2012) and Hein and Kahlenberg (2009) found that children’s advertisements tended to characterize boys as more competitive than girls. The results of this study mirror these findings and support Hypothesis 3, as boys were found to be

statistically significantly ( $p=.008$ ) more likely than girls to show competitive behavior. No girls-only commercials showed competitive behavior, but 16.7 percent of competition was shown in boys-only commercials. Furthermore, no competition was present in commercials with more girls than boys, never-the-less 58 percent of all competitive behavior was displayed in commercials with more boys than girls. The implication of this finding is that commercials are socializing girls to avoid competition.

The results from Hein and Kahlenberg (2009) indicated that the second most likely type of commercial to portray competition were the advertisements containing both boys and girls (22 percent), although it should be noted that among the commercials representing both genders, Hein and Kahlenberg did not differentiate which commercials were girl-dominant and which were boy-dominant. Still, this study concurred with Hein and Kahlenberg, in that, 25 percent of commercials with “equal amounts of boys and girls” exhibited competitive behavior, in comparison with the 22 percent in Hein and Kahlenberg’s findings. While this statistic appears to reflect a step away from the traditional stereotype that competition is a realm limited to boys only, it also seems to imply that girls compete more when boys are present, as there were no girls-only commercials that featured competitive behavior.

*Nurturing behavior appears to permeate girl-dominant commercials:* Nurturing behavior is evident in commercials with equal amount of boys and girls and in girls-only commercials, but still noticeably absent in boy-dominant commercials. Domesticity has traditionally been a trait associated with women (Eisend & Knoll, 2011; Davis, 2011; Bakir, Blodgett & Rose, 2008). In children, one manifestation of this stereotype can be seen through nurturing behavior, such as caring for, feeding or cuddling a doll or stuffed

animal. Hypothesis 4 was supported in that nurturing behavior tended to be more prevalent in girls, as 36.4 percent of “girls-only” commercials displayed nurturing behavior, while only 2.7 percent of boys-only commercials showed nurturing behavior. This was a statistically significant relationship ( $p=.000$ ). Results also offered evidence that advertisers seem to be making some advances away from stereotypical gender roles, as the largest percentage of commercials displaying nurturing behavior were those featuring “equal amounts of boys and girls” (38.5 percent). Nonetheless, the deficiency of nurturing behavior in boys-only commercials continues to support the expectation that nurturing behavior is a tendency primarily ascribed to girls. The implication of this finding is that boys are rarely being exposed to images in commercials of males being nurturers without the presence of girls. Boys perhaps are being socialized that being nurturing is not a role for boys and men.

*Aggression was found to be more prevalent in male-dominant children*

*commercials:* In regard to Hypothesis 5, which predicted that boys would be portrayed as more aggressive than girls, this study’s findings were similar to that of Klinger, Hamilton and Cantrell (2001) and Browne (1998), in that boys are portrayed to be more aggressive than girls in children’s advertisements. Most commercials displaying aggression had “more boys than girls,” (57.9 percent), or had only boys (26.3 percent). In contrast, there were no “girls-only” commercials that displayed any aggressive behavior. Across the board, these results reflect longstanding social expectations that women and girls should not demonstrate aggressive behaviors, but it is an expectation from men and boys. While negative aggression is not condoned by this author, the implication of this finding is that it is acceptable for boys to fight, wrestle or use physical force, while this is not an

expectation for girls. The study did not make observations who in terms of gender were the recipient of the male- dominated aggression.

*A propensity to show athleticism in boys was observed in this study, but athletic behaviors were also evident among girls:* Although traditional gender expectations would posit that boys should be characterized as more athletic than girls, advertisements aired on Nickelodeon seem to be making strides toward a more progressive, non-traditional representation of girls. There was not a statistically significant relationship ( $p=.328$ ) found between gender and athleticism. Although there was a clear propensity for athletic behavior in boys-only commercials (31 percent) as opposed to the 15 percent of athleticism portrayed in girls-only commercials, there was an equal display of athleticism in commercials with both boys and girls (31 percent).

*Dancing appears to be a gender-neutral behavior:* Given that there exists a social expectation for boys to be masculine, independent and professional, while girls are viewed as cooperative, less serious and more animated, it would follow that girls would be more associated with dancing (Anuradha, 2012; Neto & Pinto, 1998; Hein & Kahlenberg, 2009). However, the results of this content analysis would seem to contradict this expectation. With a p-value of .426, dancing and gender were not shown to have a statistically significant relationship. Overall, commercials targeted to children do not appear to strongly link dancing to either gender. The highest proportion of commercials featuring characters dancing were advertisements with equal amounts of boys and girls (28 percent) and commercials with more boys than girls (28 percent). A possible explanation for this finding is that dancing is an activity that is often done with a male and female together. That said, the study found that there were twice as many boys-

only commercials (14 percent) displaying characters dancing in comparison to girls-only commercials (7 percent).

In summary, hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported, in that a statistically significant relationship was found between boys and “boy toys” and conversely, girls and “girl toys.” Furthermore, hypotheses 3 to 6 were also supported by results in that there was a statistically significant association between boys and competitive behavior and aggression, as well as girls and nurturing behavior and a domestic setting.

## *Chapter Six*

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, this content analysis contributes to antecedent advertising research in the area of gender stereotyping. Results indicate the clear presence of longstanding gender expectations within current children's commercials, including the association of toy types, setting, nurturing, competitive and aggressive behavior with a particular gender. However, while findings demonstrate nontraditional strides within advertising toward a more contemporary notion of gender, particularly in the areas of athleticism and dancing, there still remains ample room for progress to be made.

Although stereotypes will perhaps always remain a component of advertising, if progress continues, the gender stereotypes that saturate commercials today may one day cease to ensnare children's perception of themselves. For advertising to be more effective, it needs to keep abreast of attitudinal changes in women and girls and keep abreast of cultural changes. Since women are more observant about stereotypes, their opinions of how they are positioned in commercial messages need to be considered. This is particularly necessary of parents, particularly mothers. If progress is to become more evident in future advertising, it is imperative that commercials break away from age-old coded messages that only boys fight with aggression and play to win, while girls should engage in less confrontational behavior, such as taking care of the home and children.

Although this study certainly provided support for previous research that indicated a statistically significant association between gender and the types of toys advertised and certain behaviors, a broader sample size would have provided a clearer

understanding of these relationships. Analyses of 200 commercials did not allow for an all-encompassing view of certain types of behavioral concepts depicted in the commercials.

Future studies can further the research of gender stereotypes in children's advertising by analyzing a broader range of children's networks. Studies could also analyze parents' attitudes and perceptions of stereotypes depicted in children's commercials as well as commercials directed at adults in children's networks. This study found commercials for products such as insurance and pampers as well as baby-sitting services that were clearly targeted to parents, so advertisers are also directing messages to parents in these networks. It is possible that the degree of gender stereotyping and even the type of stereotyping used may differ between children-targeted commercials and adult-targeted commercials. Finally, with the increasing popularity of electronic games, this research could be further advanced by taking a more concentrated focus on the gender stereotypes associated with video games.

In terms of methodological approaches, the issue of gender representation in children's commercial could be empirically tested by exposing children to different types of commercials and examining gender differences and preferences.

Overall, this study reveals that gender stereotypes remain prevalent within contemporary children's advertisements. Thus, advertisers will likely continue to market Pocket Polly to girls who are exhibiting different behaviors from boys who prefer to play with Ninja Turtles. However, the results of the study also indicate that some of the

traditional stereotypes that have characterized children's commercials for the past few decades are now showing signs of transformation.

## Appendix 1

### *Inter-coder reliability calculations using Scott's pi*

#### ***Holsti's Method of Inter-coder Reliability:***

$$C.R. = \frac{2M}{N1+N2} \qquad C.R. = \frac{2(273)}{279+279} \qquad C.R. = 98\%$$

C.R. = Coefficient of Reliability

M= Number of Coding Decisions Agreed On

N = Total number of Coding Decisions made by each coder

**Scott's Pi** was calculated for variable 18 of Commercial 209.

$$Pi = \frac{\% \text{ observed agreement} - \% \text{ expected agreement}}{1 - \% \text{ expected agreement}}$$

V18 asks coders to indicate the dominant behavior that is exhibited individual characters in a commercial. The coder may choose from the following list of possible behaviors: competition, nurturing behavior, aggression, athleticism, dancing or none of the above.

The following calculations were used to compute "expected agreement."

Behavior	Frequency	Proportion
Competitive	(62) =	.27
Nurturing	(49) =	.22
Aggressive	(27) =	.12
Athletic	(24) =	.11
Dancing	(64) =	.28
226 total character behaviors displayed		

$$(.27)^2 + (.22)^2 + (.12)^2 + (.11)^2 + (.28)^2 = .2262$$

$$\frac{.98 - .2262}{1 - .2262} = .97 = 97 \text{ percent inter-coder reliability}$$

## Appendix 2

### Coding Sheet

Variable #	Category Names and Codes	Description
V1 (1-3)	Ad ID # .....	The number given to the commercial
V2 (4-9)	Date .....	000014 (Date the ad was recorded)
V3 (10)	<p><b><u>Type of product advertised</u></b></p> <p><b>[Type Prod]</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Toy</li> <li>2. Food/beverage</li> <li>3. Make-up/nail polish</li> <li>4. Clothing</li> <li>5. Arts and crafts</li> <li>6. Other (Please specify):</li> </ol>	
V4 (11-12)	<p><b><u>Type of toy</u></b></p> <p><b>[Type Toy]</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not applicable</li> <li>2. Action figures</li> <li>3. Construction/building</li> <li>4. Transportation</li> <li>5. Dolls</li> <li>6. Stuffed animals</li> <li>7. Sports equipment/outdoor game</li> <li>8. Technology</li> <li>9. Board games</li> <li>10. Other (Please specify):</li> </ol>	<p>e.g. Lego</p> <p>e.g. toy truck, racecar</p> <p>e.g. basketball, baseball bat, bike etc.</p> <p>e.g. video games, computer games</p>
V5 (13-14)	<p><b><u>Type of food/beverage</u></b></p> <p><b>[Type Food]</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not applicable</li> <li>2. Cereal</li> <li>3. Fast food</li> <li>4. Soda</li> <li>5. Frozen meal</li> <li>6. Juice</li> <li>7. Snack food</li> <li>8. Candy/gum</li> <li>9. Dessert/cookie</li> <li>10. Pasta</li> <li>11. Other (Please specify):</li> </ol>	<p>e.g. McDonald's happy meal</p> <p>e.g. Kid's Cuisine</p> <p>e.g. chips, crackers, fruit snacks</p> <p>e.g. ice cream, Twinkie, Oreo's</p> <p>e.g. Kraft Mac 'n Cheese</p>

Variable #	Category Names and Codes	Description
V6 (15)	<u>Type of make-up/beauty product</u>  <b>[Type Makeup]</b>  1. Not applicable 2. Eye shadow 3. Lip stick/gloss 4. Fragrance 5. Mascara 6. Nail polish 7. Hair accessories 8. Nail accessories 9. Other. (Please specify):	
V7 (16)	<u>Type of clothing</u>  <b>[Type cloth]</b>  1. Not applicable 2. Sports attire 3. Shoes 4. Casual clothing 5. Dresses 6. Other (Please specify):	e.g. shin guards, cleats, under armor  e.g. T-shirt, blouse, shorts, jeans etc.
V8 (17)	<u>Type of characters</u>  <b>[Type character]</b>  1. Cartoon animal 2. Cartoon people 3. Real animal 4. Real people 5. Unsure	e.g. Trix's "Silly Rabbit" (animated)  (no animation)
V9 (18)	<u>Gender of characters overall</u>  <b>[All gender]</b>  1. Girls-only 2. Boys-only 3. More boys than girls 4. More girls than boys 5. Equal amount of boys & girls 6. Ambiguous 7. Other.....	All characters on screen, not must main characters       difficult to tell gender of all characters

Variable #	Category Names and Codes	Description
V10	(19) <u>Gender of narrator</u>	Narrator is a voice in the background of a commercial with no physical character on screen
	<b>[Gender of Nar]</b>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Male adult</li> <li>2. Male child</li> <li>3. Female adult</li> <li>4. Female child</li> <li>5. No narrator</li> <li>6. Ambiguous</li> <li>7. Unsure</li> </ol>	voice is not distinctly identified by gender
V11	(20) <u>Number of Main Characters</u>	
	<b>[# main character]</b>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One</li> <li>2. Two</li> <li>3. Three</li> <li>4. Four</li> <li>5. More than 4 main characters</li> <li>6. No obvious main characters</li> </ol>	A "main character" is a character who appears on screen more than other characters, has more speaking lines or actions shown on screen than other characters or someone who appears to be shown in close up angles on screen, more so than other characters

V12-15 Gender of main characters ("1st, 2nd, 3rd" and 4<sup>th</sup> are arbitrary numbers only used as labels to differentiate one main character from another. Please indicate the gender of up to 4 main characters by checking the according box. If more than 4 main characters appear, please mark N/A.)

(24)	<b>[#1 Gender]</b> (21)	<b>[#2 Gender]</b> (22)	<b>[#3 Gender]</b> (23)	<b>[#4 Gender]</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> main character (V12)	2 <sup>nd</sup> main character (V13)	3 <sup>rd</sup> main character (V14)	4 <sup>th</sup> main character (V15)
1. Male				
2. Female				
3. Unsure				
4. N/A				

Variable #	Category Names and Codes	Description
V16 (25-26)	<u>Race of Characters</u> [All Race]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Caucasian only</li> <li>2. African American only</li> <li>3. Asian only</li> <li>4. Hispanic only</li> <li>5. Combination of Caucasian and African American</li> <li>6. Combination of Caucasian and Asian</li> <li>7. Combination of Caucasian and Hispanic</li> <li>8. Combination of African American and Asian</li> <li>9. Combination of African American and Hispanic</li> <li>10. Combination of Asian and Hispanic</li> <li>11. Combination of Caucasian, African American and Asian</li> <li>12. Combination of Caucasian, African American and Hispanic</li> <li>13. Combination of African American, Asian and Hispanic</li> <li>14. Combination of Caucasian, African American, Asian and Hispanic</li> <li>15. Ambiguous</li> <li>16. Other .....</li> </ol>

V17 (27) Location of setting of commercial

**[Setting]**

1. Indoors
2. Outdoors
3. Both indoors and outdoors
4. Not sure

V18-21 Behavior displayed by main characters (Please indicate the foremost behavior displayed by main characters up to 4 main characters by checking the according box. If more than 4 main characters appear, please mark N/A.).

**Competitive:** characters showing a strong desire to win a game/competition (i.e. sport, competition with goal to win)

**Nurturing:** characters shown coddling, feeding, nursing or taking care of a doll, animal or another character

**Aggressive:** characters or toys shown battling, wrestling or using physical force (fighting for sake of fighting)

**Athletic:** characters shown playing or using some form of physical talent/skill, but not competing with main

goal to win (i.e. hiking, swimming but not racing, running etc.)

**Dancing:** moving along in the rhythm of music

(28) [#1 main Behavior] (29) [#2 Main Behavior] (30)[#3 Main Behavior] (31)[#4 Main Behavior]

	1 <sup>st</sup> main character (V18)	2 <sup>nd</sup> main character (V19)	3 <sup>rd</sup> main character (V20)	4 <sup>th</sup> main character (V21)
1. Competitive				
2. Nurturing				
3. Aggressive				
4. Athletic				
5. Dancing				
6. Other: specify				

7.	N/A (skip to V.26)			
----	--------------------	--	--	--

**Variable #      Category Names and Codes      Description**

V22-25 Behavior displayed by main characters On a scale of **1 to 5**, please rate the following behaviors in each of the main characters, with 1 being the least present and 5 being the most present. Select the one behavior per character that was selected in previous question.

**Competitive:** characters showing a strong desire to win a game/competition (i.e. sport, competition with goal to win)

**Nurturing:** characters shown coddling, feeding, nursing or taking care of a doll, animal or another character

**Aggressive:** characters or toys shown battling, wrestling or using physical force (fighting for sake of fighting)

**Athletic:** characters shown playing or using some form of physical talent/skill, but not competing with main

goal to win (i.e. hiking, swimming but not racing, running etc.)

**Dancing:** moving along in the rhythm of music

(32)  **[#1 Degree Behavior]** (33)  **[#2 Degree Behavior]** (34)  **[#3 Degree Behavior]** (35)  **[#4 Degree Behavior]**

Select one number between 1 – 5 for each Variable	1 <sup>st</sup> main character (V22)	2 <sup>nd</sup> main character (V23)	3 <sup>rd</sup> main character (V24)	4 <sup>th</sup> main character (V25)
1. Competitive	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. Nurturing	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Aggressive	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Athletic	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. Dancing	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6. Other: specify	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

V 26-29 Interactive behavior of characters (Indicate the foremost interactive behavior shown between characters. Select one per character.)

**Cooperative:** behavior (two or more characters playing and interacting together)

**Parallel:** behavior (two or more characters shown together, but not playing/interacting directly with one another)

**Independent:** (only one child was shown playing in the commercial)

(36)  **[#1 Interaction]** (37)  **[#2 Interaction]** (38)  **[#3 Interaction]** (39)  **[#4 Interaction]**

	1 <sup>st</sup> main character (V26)	2 <sup>nd</sup> main character (V27)	3 <sup>rd</sup> main character (V28)	4 <sup>th</sup> main character (V29)
1.Cooperative				
2.Parallel				
3. Independent				
4.Not sure				

Variable #	Category Names and Codes	Description
------------	--------------------------	-------------

V30-33 Interactive behavior of characters (Indicate the degree of the behavior shown between characters. Select one per character.)

**Cooperative:** behavior (two or more characters playing and interacting together)

**Parallel:** behavior (two or more characters shown together, but not playing/interacting directly with one another)

**Independent:** (only one child was shown playing in the commercial)

(40) [#1 Interaction] (41) [#2 Interaction] (42) [#3 Interaction] (43) [#4 Interaction]

Select one number between 1 – 5 for each V	1 <sup>st</sup> main character (V30)	2 <sup>nd</sup> main character (V31)	3 <sup>rd</sup> main character (V32)	4 <sup>th</sup> main character (V33)
1. Cooperative	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. Parallel	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Independent	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4.N/A	0	0	0	0

## References

- Anuradha, M. (2012). Gender stereotyping in television commercials aimed at children in India. *Media Asia*, 39(4), 209-215.
- Browne, B. (1998). Gender stereotypes in advertising on children's television in the 1990s: A cross-national analysis. *Journal of Advertising*, 27(1), 83-96.
- Bakir, A., Blodgett, J. G. & Rose, G. M. (2008). Children's responses to gender-role stereotyped advertisements. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 48 (2), 255-266.
- Centeno, D. & Prieler, M. (2013). Gender representation in Philippine television advertisements. *Sex Roles*, 69, 276-288.
- Children's Advertising Review Unit. (2009). Self-regulatory program for children's advertising.
- Comello, M. L. G. (2011). Characterizing drug non-users as distinction in prevention messages: Implications of optimal distinctiveness theory. *Health Communication*, 26(4), 313-332.
- Davis, S. N. (2002). Sex stereotypes in commercials targeted toward children: A content analysis. *Sociological Spectrum*, 23(4), 407-424.
- Eisend, M., Plagemann, J. & Sollwedel, J. (2014). Gender roles and humor in advertising: The occurrence of stereotyping in humorous and nonhumorous advertising and its consequences for advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Advertising*, 43 (3), 256-273.
- Furnham, A. & Saar, A. (2005). Gender-role stereotyping in adult and children's television advertisements: A two-study comparison between Great Britain and Poland. *Communications: The European Journal of Communications Research*, 30(1), 73-90.
- Gantz, W. & Kunkel, D. (1993). Assessing compliance with industry self-regulation of television advertising to children. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 21(2), 148-161.
- Gilmore, J. S., & Jordan, A. (2012). Burgers and basketball: Race and stereotypes in food and beverage advertising aimed at children in the US. *Journal of Children and Media*, 6 (3), 317-332.
- Global online purchase intentions have doubled since 2011 for E-Books, toys, sporting goods; online market for pet and baby supplies, other consumable products also growing. (2014). *Nielsen*. Retrieved from <http://www2.acnielsen.com/us/en/press-room/2014/global-online-purchase-intentions-have-doubled-since-2011-for-ebooks-toys-sporting-goods.html#sthash.j0lsiSDV.dpuf>

- Hein, M. M. & Kahlenberg, S. G. (2009). Progression on Nickelodeon? Gender-role stereotypes in toy commercials. *Sex Roles*, 62(11/12), 830-847.
- Hentges, B. A., Bartsch, R. A. & Meier, J. A. (2007). Gender representation in commercials as a function of target audience age. *Communication Research Reports*, 24 (1), 55-62.
- Hofstee, N., Odekerken-Shröder, G. & De Wulf, K. (2001). Is gender stereotyping more prevalent in masculine countries? A cross-national analysis. *International Marketing Review*, 19(4/5), 408.
- Horovitz, B. (2011, August 15). Marketing to children gets more savvy with new technologies. *USA Today*. Retrieved from <http://www.usatoday.com>
- Ibroshcheva, E. (2007). Caught between east and west? Portrayals of gender in Bulgarian television. *Sex Roles*, 57, 409-418.
- Ifezue, A. N. (2010). What Makes an Effective Advertising for a Man or a Woman? *J Communication* 1(1), 13-18.
- Klinger, L. J., Hamilton, J. A. & Cantrell, P. J. (2001). Children's perceptions of aggressive and gender-specific content in toy commercials. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 29(1), 11- 20
- Kolbe, R. H. & Muehling, D. (1995). Gender roles and children's television advertising. *Journal of Current Issues in Advertising*, 17 (1), 49-64.
- Larson, M.S. (2002). Race and interracial relationships in children's television commercials. *The Howard Journal of Communication*, 13(3), 223-235.
- The littlest consumers' big value in the entertainment industry (2014). Nielsen. Retrieved from <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2014/the-littlest-consumers-big-value-in-the-entertainment-industry.html>
- Li-Vollmer, M. (2002). Race Representation in child-targeted television commercials. *Mass Communication & Society*, 5(2), 207-228.
- Maher, J.K., Herbst, K.C., Childs, N. M., Finn, S. (2008). Racial stereotypes in children's television commercials. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 48(1), 80-93.
- Marketing Charts staff. (2014). *Are Young People Watching Less TV?(Updated – Q3 2014 Edition)*. Retrieved from: <http://www.marketingcharts.com/television/are-young-people-watching-less-tv-24817/>

- Marketing Charts staff. (2014). *Impact on Daily Spending of Having Kids*. Retrieved from <http://www.marketingcharts.com/traditional/impact-on-daily-spending-of-having-kids-in-the-household-41383/>
- Martínez, E., Nicolás, M. A. & Salas, Á. (2013). Gender representation in advertising of toys in the Christmas period (2009-12). *Scientific Journal of Media Education*, 41(21), 187-194.
- Mastro, D. E. & Stern, S. R. (2003). Representations of race in television commercials: A content analysis of prime-time advertising. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 47 (4), 638-647.
- Mastro, D. E. & Stern, S. R. (2004). Gender Portrayals across the lifespan: A content analytical look at broadcast commercials. *Mass Communications & Society*. 7(2), 215-236.
- Merskin, D. (2002). Boys will be boys: A content analysis of gender and race in children's advertisements on the Turner Cartoon Network. *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, 24(1), 51-59.
- Mitu, B.M. (2011). Television's impact on today's people and culture. *Economics, Management and Financial Markets*, 6(2), 916-921.
- Neto, F. & Pinto I. (1998). Gender stereotypes in Portuguese television advertisements. *Sex Roles*. 39(1/2), 53.
- Nickelodeon networks 2Q 2014 ratings highlights. Retrieved from <http://www.nickandmore.com/2014/07/01/nickelodeon-networks-2q-2014-ratings-highlights/>
- Nielsen TV: How children are influencing book-purchasing decisions. (2014). *Nielsen*. Retrieved from <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2014/nielsen-tv-how-children-influence-book-purchasing-decisions.html>
- Poindexter, P. M. & McCombs, M.E. (2000). *Research in mass communication: A practical guide*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Richter, F. (2014). Watching TV Is the No.1 Leisure Activity in the U.S. Retrieved from <http://www.statista.com/chart/2980/leisure-activities-in-the-united-states/>
- Rose, G., Merchant, A. & Bakir, A. (2012). Fantasy in food advertising targeted at children. *Journal of Advertising*. 41(3), 75.
- Sengupta, R. (2006). Reading representations of black, East Asian, and white women in magazines for adolescent girls. *Sex Roles*. 54(11/12), 799–808.

- Strasburger, V.C. & Hogan, M.J. (2013). Children, adolescents and the media. *Pediatrics* 132(5), 958-961.
- The next generation of consumers. (2012). *Digitas Perspective*. Retrieved from: [centerfordigitaldemocracy.org](http://centerfordigitaldemocracy.org)
- Tops of 2014: Entertainment. (2014). *Nielsen*. Retrieved from <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2014/tops-of-2014-entertainment.html>
- Trefis Team. (2014). Viacom's Nickelodeon continues its ratings uptrend into 2014. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com>
- Turrill, Dounia. (2014). The total audience report. *Nielsen Q3 (2014)*, 11. Retrieved from <http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en/reports-downloads/2014%20Reports/total-audience-report-december-2014.pdf>
- Whipple, T. W. & Courtney, A. E. (1980). How to portray women in TV commercials. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 20(2), 53-59.
- Whitney, D. (2005). For children TV, every day is Saturday. *Advertising Age*, 76(8), 10.
- Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2011). *Mass media research* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth.