



Media and Gender

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT *Mass media plays pivotal role in a modern world, by broadcasting information in fast pace and entertaining large mass audiences. Media consist of press, television, radio, books and the Internet as well as social networking system. However,The latter is now the most developing medium in the present scenario. Perhaps, TV also has a wide influence over on the mass audiences for ever, By creating a certain type of message, media can mould public's attitude and opinions. Apparently, I would like to emphasis over on problem and challenges by investigating commercials structure; I will also make an attempt to specify gender stereotypes, which are used in advertising as a pervasive technique.*

Much of children's knowledge and their experience in this world is indirect. Media has been used as a tool but not a transparent technologies are explored; they do not offer a wide range of window for this world. In addition, values and images are often influenced by commercial considerations. In mediating events and issues, television, film, video games and other media are involved in selecting, constructing and representing reality in this world. In so doing, the media tend to emphasis and reinforce the values and images of those who create the messages and own the means of disseminations a result, the viewpoints and experiences of other people are often left out, or shown in negative ways.

Whereas other forms of guidance do not restriction of the use of one medium may lead to an increase of another medium offering a similar gratification. Children's perception differs between the guidance behavior of father and mother. In this study parental guidance (measured as verbal cues) had an effect only on the media consumption of girls.

Introduction

Mass media portray sex in a dual dimension . Stereotypes are recurrent in every main media (television, radio, magazines, newspaper). In cartoons for instance, women are usually fond of shopping and always look at themselves in the mirror. Let us we know telling especially for young girls, Cartoons display an irresistible and inaccessible representation of femininity. Firstly, the report points out the systematic behavior dedicated to women and men. Almost like small adults with big muscles and generous breast, characters already determine gender at a very early age.

Secondly, the report stresses the way men and women are qualified in media. For instances, In TV shows, even though equality of sex is more and more integrated, they notice that the boss is usually a man. Furthermore, secondary characters often have discriminated status.

Finally, the report observes that the shooting techniques reflect a biased vision of gender due to redundant camera shots: emotiveness, parents' parts, and seduction.

Woman is fetishize in mass media. Her body is portrayed, her face, her silhouette, her thinness, her breast and her legs too. There is a clear purpose to emphasis on her sexuality and attractiveness. On the contrary, men have diverse representations in video programs. The only commune characteristic the report has noted is the musculature.

In radio and advertisement, women are targeted for cosmetics products and housekeeping. They receive a vocabulary evoking beauty and are usually judged on physical criteria, for instance the age. Conversely, scientific topics are attributed to men. Adjectives used to qualified men

are usually turned to foolishness and funniness.

Male and female images

As one dramatic example, the image and representation of women and girls in the media has long been a subject of concern. Research shows that there are many fewer females than males in almost all forms of mainstream media and those who do appear are often portrayed in very stereotypical ways.

Constantly polarized gender messages in media have fundamentally anti-social effects.

In everything from advertising, television programming, newspaper and magazines, to comic books, popular music, film and video games, women and girls are more likely to be shown: in the home, performing domestic chores such as laundry or cooking; as sex objects who exist primarily to service men; as victims who can't protect themselves and are the natural recipients of beatings, harassment, sexual assault and murder.

Research tells us that the more television children watch, the more likely they are to hold sexist notions about traditional male and female roles and the more likely the boys are to demonstrate aggressive behavior.

In fact, images aimed at children are particularly polarized in the way they portray girls and boys. In advertising, for instance, girls are shown as being endlessly preoccupied by their appearance and fascinated primarily by dolls and jewelers, while boys are encouraged to play sports and become engrossed by war play and technology.

Furthermore, children are increasingly being exposed to

messages about gender that are really intended for adult eyes only. These images also help shape the notions little girls and boys have about who they should be and what they can achieve.

Anti-social messages

In the context of some of society's real life problems, the constant reinforcement of polarized gender messages has fundamentally anti-social effects. Research tells us that the more television children watch; the more likely they are to demonstrate aggressive behavior. Furthermore, the linking of sex and violence - increasingly evident in everything from mainstream advertising to slashed movies - is particularly troublesome in the context of a society struggling to overcome real life violence against women.

The role of media education

Media education can play a crucial role in counteracting the impact of these messages. Helping children to understand that media construct - as opposed to reflect - reality; that they communicate implicit and explicit values; and that they can influence the way we feel and think about ourselves and the world, are vitally important lessons towards achieving a society in which women and girls are seen and treated as equal to men and boys.

The media tendency to link sex and violence is alarming.

Nevertheless, the good news is that parents and teachers can have a much greater impact on a child development than the media to which the child is exposed. Real life modeling of alternative ways of being male or female, or of resolving conflict; time spent engaging children in inspired play, and in activities which teach pro (as opposed to anti) social values, ultimately have the most lasting influence.

Mass media uses stereotypical characters to make it easy for the audience to identify the good guys or girls. It is easier to create programs around stock characters than to develop varied personalities. Stereotypes limit our views of ourselves and others and of the reality of the world. The media construct their own version of reality. The elderly are under-represented. Women and girls are both under represented and portrayed in a very limited set of roles. Victims of violence are usually portrayed a young and beautiful women. A stereotype is a view or a description of a person or a group of persons based upon narrow and frequently incorrect assumptions. Although children will be able to recognize some examples of stereotyping, this concept is very sophisticated and can be difficult to grasp at a young age.

Consequences of stereotypes on gender identification

Stereotypes influence the way we perceive femininity and masculinity. On the one hand, media project a young girl, tender and sexy, helping her mum in the kitchen; on the other hand, a cute boy playing in the garden with his dad. Those references are internalized and valued by teenagers during the construction of their sexual identity.

Stereotypes

People organize their knowledge about the world around them by sorting and simplifying received information. Therefore, they create cognitive schemes, which are certain representations of the reality displaying its most typical and fundamental elements and properties. These schemes are responsible for defining the essence of our worldview and have a significant influence on social cognition

- understanding, anticipation, and situation and emotion control.

One of the most important types of schemes used for orientation in the social environment are the stereotypes, representing the opinions among members of a certain group about the other groups. They are internalized during the socialization.

Gender roles

Difficulties in differentiating gender roles in the modern societies can be a perfect example of the negative social effects of using stereotypes. A division of gender roles is deeply rooted in the social archetypes. In the past, the patriarchy was a dominant family model. Through the ages men have been considered to be financial providers, career-focused, assertive and independent, whereas women have been shown as low-position workers, loving wives and mothers, responsible for raising children and doing housework. Nowadays a family model is based rather on a partnership than on patriarchy and women have more rights and possibilities on the labor market. Feminist environment had a significant impact on the change in this situation. Women's liberation movement fought for the rights of women and for redefining traditional gender roles. They claimed, that there should be no distinction between typical masculine and feminine occupations, and that traits of character should not be ascribed once and for all to one gender. Although females and males are still not equal, the differences between gender are not so vast anymore. Nevertheless, many social institutions, such as mass media, still use gender stereotypes, basing on the assumption, that they are well known to everyone and help the receivers to understand the content of the message.

Gender in mass media

Gender stereotypes in the mass media have a great power and reaches large audiences. In order to create a medium which is universal, understandable and acceptable for numerous and diverse recipients, senders very often use stereotypes, which fill the social life and evoke certain associations. However, mass media not only gives people information and entertainment, And educate too. As I mentioned above, men have been perceived as the head of the household and women were mainly housewives. Nowadays the differences between male and female roles are smaller, however mass media still perpetuates traditional gender stereotypes. Moreover, due to their great influence on people's attitudes, they can depict certain social groups in negative and unrealistic manner. They can be a very useful tool for those remaining power. By manipulating the message, media can create a certain image of reality, which is consistent with the policy of the dominant group. As a result, the reflection of a real world is incomplete and distorted. Although people are aware of the unequal representation of certain social groups in mass media, it is hard to remain objective and insensitive to its influence.

Commercials purpose

Commercials are the vast source of gender stereotyping, because they are adapted to the specific, either male or female target, and are "The Reflection of The Recipient". The aim of the modern commercial is not only the satisfaction of needs but also their creation.

Women are more often presented in commercials, because they are seen as responsible for making everyday purchases. Men generally advertise cars, cigarettes, business products or investments, whereas women

are shown rather in the commercials with cosmetics and domestic products. They are also more likely portrayed in the home environment, unlike men, who are shown outdoors. Another important distinction is the face-ism phenomenon in the commercials, which consists in showing the entire figure in case of women and close-up shots in case of men (Matthews, J. L. 2007). The first method lowers the receiver's estimation of the intelligence of the person on the photo. The second one more often evokes positive associations.

According to Steve Craig's research (1997), women can be presented in commercials in several variants. The first one is the most popular: a housewife obsessed by a steam on a new tablecloth or a woman whose main problem is lack of ideas for dinner. The other examples are less traditional. However, they are still very stereotypical. One can distinguish commercials with female vamps – sexy seductresses, the objects of desire of every man. They mostly advertise cosmetics, but they also appear in the commercials directed to men. When a beautiful woman accepts and praises the male cosmetics, it is treated by men as a guarantee of its quality. Another type is a woman, whose major concern is to preserve her beauty. Hence, she presents a healthy life style, is physically active, uses a wide range of body and facial cosmetics. However, one can observe mainly the presence of very thin actresses in this type of commercials, which can lead to the assumption, that only thin women can be beautiful and healthy. As a result, many female receivers fall into the obsession with their weight, which sometimes can have negative effects.

Male stereotypes are also various. The first model is "A Real Man", athletic, successful, professional, seducer with a beautiful woman by his side. He also has a branded car and a smart phone. The other type is less popular and presents men devoted to their families who can save enough time for them. Men are very rarely presented during housecleaning. And if they are, it is rather a satirical image – e.g. in the Mr. Muscle commercial – or they appear as the experts and they advise women, for instance, how to do laundry properly. Advertising specialists also use the stereotype of male friendship, which can be called "Buddy Narratives"; men are presented as acting together, for instance by going to a football match or to the pub. They share the same interests and opinions, and they enjoy spending time together by doing something extremely interesting and adventurous.

More and more commercials are directed to children. They indicate "The Proper Place" in the society for girls and boys. Girls are shown as babysitters nursing dolls or cleaning house with a pink cleaning kit, whereas boys do sports or play computer games (ibid).

If men and women appear in the commercials together, they are mainly presented as a couple or marriage. A sexual subtext is also often used in this case, even if the advertised product has nothing in common with the erotic sphere. In the situation of competition, women appear to be weaker than men.

Gender stereotypes

In spite of significant presence of the stereotypes in commercials, advertising specialists more and more often use non-schematic ideas of the promotion of products and services. Women are presented as liberated, strong and independent of social expectations and men are shown while washing or cleaning.

The most popular, non-stereotypical commercial is Dove campaign aimed at women at every age and with different kinds of figures. It emphasizes natural beauty instead of perfect shapes. The female viewers prefer to watch women, with whom they can identify, thus the campaign proved to be a great success.

Suggested Activities

Images - Using TV or video clips and magazine or newspaper pictures, chart similarities and differences in appearance and body size for the good and bad characters. Look again at the clips and make note of the type of camera shots used for the good and bad guys or gals. Compare the characters with self and peers and family members.

Working women - List the jobs that TV mothers have such as teacher, doctor. Do we ever see them working at their jobs? Does your mother have a job? If she works outside the home do you ever visit her there?

I'd rather be me - Form two groups - one of boys, the other of girls. From various media have the boys list female traits and interests that are most commonly featured, while the girls do the same for male characteristics and concerns. Form new mixed groupings and discuss how boys and girls feel about the stereotypes by which their gender has come to be represented. What is artificial about these stereotypes? An appropriate video resource available from TVO is Behind the Scenes.

Jobs - Examine the media to determine how certain occupations are portrayed, and then interview people in those occupations to ascertain how realistic portrayals are. Count the number of women or men portrayed in jobs. List the types of jobs for women and men portrayed. How do these findings compare to the jobs held by the parents of students? Stereotypes limit our views of ourselves and others and of the reality of the world. They limit our perceptions from infancy to old age.

Posed vs. natural - Select pictures from newspapers and magazines that show the difference between posed and natural photographs of girls and boys, and men and women. Describe what is emphasized in each.

What's wrong with this picture? - This video is available from MediaWatch and has accompanying educational materials. It can be used to discuss gender issues and concepts such as nonverbal messages. Does body language differ by gender? Make your own collection of pictures or TV clips for each gender and explain the message perceived.

Conclusion

Commercials are the powerful tool used for molding shaping people's opinions. Their structure is simplified in order to be understood by heterogeneous mass receivers. Advertisement text contains dominant and well known characteristics of the reality. However, stereotypes are very often used in the commercials as one of the most popular techniques of persuasion. eventually, specific groups in relation to the whole regardless of individual differences.

The main aim of mass media is to be universal and suitable for everyone, in order to gather the largest possible audience. Thus television, responsible for providing the central social discourse, is supposed to be "A Mirror of The Society". perhaps, because of stereotypical way of explaining the reality, some groups are underrepresented

or ignored, and therefore the society image is incomplete. For instance, the way in which male and female roles are presented in commercials reflects the traditional notions of gender in our cultural milieu, where women are dominated by men. Although people are aware of the dangers posed by generalization, they tend to be conformists and would rather submit to the dominant patterns than oppose them and risk a negative reception of such behavior from the others.

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