

Gendered Portrayals In Cartoons

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Media, particularly television, are crucial to the learning process of small children. Television is considered to be an active tool in shaping and moulding the characters of children in their gender roles in the community. Depending on the type of material children watch, it shapes their social life and has an impact on later days. Behaviour, culture, social and skills are important for children to learn or adopt through social and cultural norms. Media is very important in the way adults and children socialize through varied dramatization, characters and storylines of different genders through portrayals and themes. Different studies have proved that genders are stereotypically in childhood and adulthood. Animated cartoons are important in the growth of children and their activities (Rozario 220). It means that gendered portrayals found in cartoons have helped to communicate ideas and offer values on how children should see things and understand gendered behaviour in society.

By observing the social learning theory, it is widely believed that young children's social behaviours, beliefs and ideas about gender roles in society are shaped and moulded by gender role portrayals in cartoons. Furthermore, the social learning theory suggests that a good number of children begin to learn steadily and smoothly from various cartoons, particularly those that are aired on TV. From a tender age, they begin to learn about behaviours that relate to their gender or sex in their social learning theory. Working with other agents, cartoon programs on television contribute to and shape human behaviours, particularly channels such as Cartoon Network. Social learning theorists understand that effective and positive behaviour change can be brought into the gender roles of each child at a tender age through animated cartoons. Being part of the crucial agent of social identities, such as friends, social groups and parents, the cartoon also moulds the minds of small children to rely on their identities in society. It is imperative to understand that when children get more time to watch cartoons that have stereotypical materials, there is a high chance that they will adapt and learn the social practices regarding gender behaviours from the cartoons they watch (Rozario 215). Such exposure will give children varied characters and help them identify if they are boys or girls. It implies that the presence of hegemonic control state's masculine belief and through stereotypical portrayal, the boys below five years are trained to become more active, aggressive and intelligent, whereas five-year-old girls are required to be attractive and passive. Because of the current values on gender that are disseminated through cartoons, it is possible that in the process of socialization, all types of stereotypical representation of gender result in superiority and inferiority complex in boys and girls, respectively.

There are common male and female characters in cartoons. Male and female characters are exhibited in the cartoons and are normally on the basis of their physical appearance. Because of male dominance, men are regarded as strong and powerful both mentally and physically. On the other hand, women are normally regarded as passive in society and whose existence is meant for beauty purposes and sexual objects. Males have been portrayed as strong and have masculine bodies that

have the capability of fighting. The male characters are always ready to face danger or compete with rivals. For instance in Generator Rex, there is a boy called “Rex” ‘Lion-o-lion” in thunder cats appears as ten aliens and has always been portrayed to be very strong and powerful. This relationship shows that a strong person is always a male. Male characters are shown in cartoons to depict intelligence. Male characters have been shown to think rationally with knowledge and intelligence. They always give different forms of ideas, and they seem to be very genius. In the cartoon “Power Puff Girls”, the male figure is shown to be very intelligent. The scientist behind the creation of the power puff girls seems to be very intelligent. On the other, cartoons have portrayed females as physically weak. The characters are abused and receive physical assault by other characters.

Females always depend on male characters to rescue them in cases where there is danger. For example, Daphne in the Scooby Dooby Doo is presented as weak though she has some attractive looks. Additionally, females are shown to be caring and emotional towards others. Most of the time, the female characters tend to cry because of some occurrences. Cartoons tend to show women to be passionate and loving as well as patient in issues that affect others. For instance, “Dawn” in Pokemon is portrayed to be confident and active but starts to be emotional since she gets depressed from the defeat and failure of her Pokemon (Rozario 211). Cartoons, particularly on television, are vital for small children. Programs aired on TV are considered to be an active tool in moulding the characters of children in their gender roles in the community. Behaviour, culture, social and skills are important for children to learn or adopt through social and cultural norms. Media is very important in the way adults and children socialize through varied dramatization, characters and storylines of different genders through portrayals and themes. Different studies have proved that genders are stereotypically in childhood and adulthood. Animated cartoons are important in the growth of children and their activities. It means that gendered portrayals found in cartoons have helped to communicate ideas and offer values on how children should see things and understand gendered behaviour in society.

Works Cited

Rozario, Ann Maria, Vaageessan Masilamani, and Arulchelvan Sriram. “Kids’ TV programming in India: A comparison of gender representation in imports versus locally produced programmes.” *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications* 3.3 (2017): 207-227.