

Using empirical evidence, critically explore gender, racial or ethnic stereotyping within the media

This essay is going to explore gender and racial stereotyping within the media including T.V, adverts, and news,. Using empirical evidence. I am going to critically discuss the influence of the media and stereotyping within the media.

Research looking into the influence of media exposure has been looked at over past decades especially the influence of media exposure on gender and race and on how it shapes our perception on gender and the roles that we perceive men and women should be or be like e.g. women should be better cooks than men. "Stereotype is a fixed impression, which conforms very little to the fact it pretends to represent, and results from our defining first and observing second" (Katz & Braly, 1935). The Collins English dictionary defines stereotyping as "If someone is stereotyped as something, people form a fixed general idea or image of them, so that it is assumed that they will behave in a particular way"

Ashmore & Del Boca's (1981) recognised a combination of many definitions suggested by social psychologists which explains stereotyping as "a set of beliefs about the personal attributes of a group of people" (Allport, 1954, Katz & Braly, 1935., Myers, 1990) stated we assume about two groups e.g. "women are better at cleaning than men" even though we can use unfair or distorted information to judge groups, so do we stereotype people/groups by what we see in the media and how they are portrayed in the media have an effect on how we view a certain gender by the stereotype we see through media.

A gender stereotype Is a general interpretation about a quality or characteristic that is perceived about the roles that women or men should be and which roles that they should be "men should be masculine" but these views can be both negative and positive e.g. "women are unprofessional" and "women are very caring". This can lead people to make assumptions on what they think a women and man should be or do. There are four kinds of gender stereotyping personality traits e.g. "women are expected to be nurturing". Domestic behaviour e.g. "men should work women should stay at home and take care of the children". Jobs e.g. "men are doctor's women are nurses". And last appearance e.g. "women should be slim men should be muscular".

As developments have been made in internet and media technology and have made it easier to access (Davidson, 2011) stated "TV is Dead: Long Live the Internet" but despite this television viewing is still the biggest and has been for decades the biggest source of media we use today. As mobiles have become more popular it does not mean that we are watching less television as we can now watch TV programmes on our phones on apps like Netflix, Now tv and Hulu (Pew Research Centre, 2013). So, does media effect the way we think women and men should act and the roles they should take?

Rudy et al, (2011) media has represented women in a more negative light than males and are more confined to a particular role than males are portrayed as they are typically shown as the stereotype roles. They are shown to be stay at home mother/wife and not professional workers, Also Women in the media are stereotypically dressed in suggestive or provocative clothing. They are regarded as less important than males.

Rudy et al, (2010,2011) states that women and girls are not presented as women in real life and are underrepresented across a large variation of media during all 18 of his empirical research nine of these were how men and women were represented showed significantly were underrepresented in media. These findings are backed by Gerbner and Signorielli

(1979) but the significant in the difference in Representation of women and men has continued through the years, through the years though the representation of women in the media has generally grown.

Gerbner and Signorielli, (1979) found during 1969- 1978 males were more than 2.5 ratio compared to female who had a ratio of 1. At the time the writers and producers could have said this was because of the fact that women didn't play a big enough social role that the TV programme wanted to portray, limiting the use where they could involve them, in fact according to the paid labour force the was 2.5 men to 1 women being paid (U.S. Department of Labour, Bureau of Labour Statistics 2000), Also Men are also paid more than women for the same occupation (Coontz, 2013).

During the time of their study the rates did rise to 1.6 to every woman (Fullerton 1999), but the last examination shows even in 2008 the rates still 1.2 males compared to 1 female (U.S. Department of Labour, Bureau of Labour Statistics 2009). So even though in real life women are nearly the same as men in a working setting the media world has continuously been overseen compared to male roles.

This can be can be surprising as the amount of adverts between tv programmes has gone up to well in the three digit mark, this could have been an opportunity for women to be represented in a more positive and be represented more but there is little evidence that this has taken place in fact they seem to be more absent over the more broader media.

Hether and Murphy (2010) studied entertainment television, although their main focus was on the educational potential of entertainment. they also combined how the affect of media into a number of aspects of their research. Their hypothetical base of their research was the social cognitive theory by Bandura 1986 which I will later go into. It shows the significance importance of how people identify and observed the similarity they watch, and they are seeing in the media and themselves.

Hether and Murphy (2010) stated that women were only represented 38% of the time during primetime (7-10) tv programmes as the main characters, also (Desmond and Danilewicz 2010) stated that men are two times more often show in news coverage on different topics than women and men are 3 times more likely to appear on magazine than women in newspaper reporting same sex marriage (Schwartz 2010), but during recent years it seems that the stereotype of women being "powerful" seems to be shown more in recent TV shows.

Actress Julianna Margulies has said in an interview "it's a wonderful time for women in television" (Scott, 2014), this can be seen in recent TV programmes for example- *Sleepy Hollow*: Abbie Mills. Another show is "orange is the new black" this show has a mostly all female cast. Other shows like *How to Get a Wife with Murder* also show a powerful woman. This shows have received a lot of praise press for featuring these types of women e.g. strong and successful (Putnam, 2014).

If these can generalise primetime Tv programmes to use women to show that they can be shown as more than a house wife and as successful professional women it can generalise this through the wider media also (Scharrer, 2012) making the stereotype of women becoming wider and not just the homemaker.

Even though the Tv audience are often oblivious the fact that the media images Could even have and effect on them, and may possibly not even not even consider the fact that the media use can that media use can have an impact on their attitudes, beliefs and their actions towards a gender (Perloff, 2002),

The most noticeable and established topics that have been linked to the representation of women on Tv shows and across all media is the sexuality (Scharrer, 2012), generally shows of gender is “hyper-masculinity” for men and “hyper-femininity” for women (Dill & Thill, 2007). “Hyper masculinity” can be assumed to be an embellishment of the manly or masculine characteristics, they seem to see that physical violence as expected characteristic of being a “man”. And to have a tough attitude when it comes to being with a romantic partner. They also wish for action and adventure (Scharrer, 2004). Males prone to be represented as dominant and are at the peak in their life’s (Gerbner et al., 1986).

Greenberg, (1980) stated that in Tv programmes males are likely to be making orders and the plans than the women in primetime tv programmes. Research by Lemon (1977) supported these findings men were found to be the more dominant person than the women were, but women were the more caring and nurturing person (Glascock 2001).

This links to the social learning theories, one is social cognitive it was first (which was first described under the name “social learning theory”), hypothesised by Bandura (1986) he suggested that individuals learn from people around us by observation, imitation, and modelling, it also proposes that we absorb and learn from the media as much as we are learning from the real people and life around us, this can give people the wrong type of message about the role a certain gender should be. The similarity between the gender of the person and gender of model may too impact what is learnt from the media (Bandura 1986). Bandura (1986) stated “reciprocal determinism”, which means that the world and the person’s behaviour effect the other, where behaviourism said the environment impacts behaviour. He thought this was too simple and a person’s behaviour impacts their environment too. Later, he also stated that an individual’s personality is a collaboration of a person’s environment, their behaviour and their psychological processes.

Bandura (1986) study is which was the “bobo doll” one of the most popular social learning theory where he had children observed a individual be either aggressive or non-aggressive behaviour, they were then taken to a different room where there was a lot of toys and told they had entered the wrong room and put in an empty room with just the “bobo doll” the findings were that the children who had witnessed the aggressive behaviour were more likely to show aggressive behaviour towards the doll than those who seen non aggressive behaviour. Does this mean that if an individual who are watching something in the media are more likely act them out themselves?

A limitation to this study is that Bandura (1986) did was he ever used adults only children and a child’s mind is different to one of an adults

Another theory by Gerbner and Gross (1976) the cultivation theory, they stated if a person has a large exposure to the media it can lead people to see things in the media and take on what they see into their own real life’s, this in turn can influence their behaviour because they have an altered representation of what’s real life.

Looking at the findings from the previous study, the findings has shown there is significant evidence that the representation of men and women during the primetime Tv programmes although actresses feel like “it’s a wonderful time for women in television” (Scott, 2014), unfortunately it seems that current research show it’s a wonderful time for women in the media, even though news and media state this is reality. Shows like how to get away with murder have helped with the stereotype of strong women these seem to be an exception and is not the normalised in most Tv shows only a few, most are representing women as submissive and provocative instead. Giving the stereotype that this is how real women should act. This can be extremely harmful as people may feel like they can not express themselves the way they want e.g.

“men don’t want to cry as they seem weak then” or “Women can’t work and have children”. If we can break down the typical gender roles in media people may feel like they want to be and not who we see in the media. Gender stereotypes are all around us though so and why is it important for us to change this? One reason to research this, like Rudy et al. (2010) stated there are other reasons to research this and the impact on people, there is a lot of evidence like Hether and Murphy (2010) study showed that women are underrepresented within the media so how does this have an impact on the audience if people do not see someone who is similar to themselves then can this have an impact on their self-esteem? do we see ourselves as more important than a woman? Media should be showing a broader view of males and females (Greenberg et al, 2002).

From looking at previous research a lot is still needed to be done in showing the real characteristics of gender roles. We shouldn’t all be expected to act and think the same. All women and men should be able to relate to people we see in the media..

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