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ABSTRACT

A study examined kinds of messages prevalent in the media used by preteen and teenage girls, asking what messages are sent about goals, dating, careers, behavior, and appearance and its relationship to well being. Four media were the subject of the study, which comprised 12 samples from television programs, theatrical films, music videos, and teen magazines. Results indicated that the under-representation of women in the samples was consistent with analyses from the past 40 years up to current studies. Findings suggest that the media offer girls many positive role models in independent women who rely on themselves to solve their own problems and who use intelligence, honesty, and efficiency to achieve their goals. Findings also suggest that the media contain stereotypical messages about appearance, relationships and careers. (Contains 19 tables of data. Appendixes contain lists of the television shows, films, music videos, and magazines used in the analysis.) (EF)

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A CONTENT ANALYSIS

**Reflections of Girls in the Media:
A Content Analysis. A Study of Television Shows and
Commercials, Movies, Music Videos, and Teen
Magazine Articles and Ads**

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INTRODUCTION

The portrayal of gender roles on television has been the subject of numerous studies during the past 30 years. Such studies, most of which were conducted during the seventies and eighties, typically found that prime time television presents very stereotyped and often traditional characterizations, particularly of women.

The nineties have become the decade of media specialization and narrow casting. Adolescents, especially young teen and preteen, have emerged as a special advertiser-targeted audience. For example, special programming strategies both on networks and cable channels have been designed to attract preteen and young teen viewers. Similarly, numerous other media, including music videos and a new generation of teen-oriented magazines are also specifically designed to target this special audience.

The media are an important part of young teens' lives--they watch television, listen to music, and read magazines practically every day. In addition, young people, especially those between 10 and 15, are faced with the turmoil and changes of puberty and early adolescence. Their bodies are changing, their faces are breaking out, they have mood swings, they have conflicts with their parents and others in authority roles, and sometimes they wonder where they truly fit in. They often turn to each other and to the media to find the answers to their questions about how they can solve problems, how they should act, how they should behave with the opposite sex, what they should wear, and what they should look like.

But what kinds of answers do today's media provide? Do today's media messages go beyond the traditional and stereotyped messages of the preceding decades? This research explores the messages relating to body image, behavior, activities, motivation, as well as capturing the demographic make-up of the characters in the media consumed most often by young girls.

The research examined messages in four media, focusing on six separate venues: television (the top 25 television programs for teenage girls and the commercials before, during and after these programs), theatrical films (the top 15 movies seen in movie theaters by teenage girls), music videos, and teen magazines (content and advertisements).

Focus of the Study

This study was specifically designed to explore further the kinds of messages prevalent in the media used by preteen and teenage girls. The following research questions were examined:

- (1) What messages do the media send girls about the importance of appearance and the relationship of appearance to romance, happiness, and success?
- (2) What messages are girls sent about goals and how to achieve them?
- (3) What messages are girls sent about the importance of having a boyfriend and the relationship of appearance to this goal?
- (4) What messages are girls sent about the importance of having a career?
- (5) What messages are girls sent about how they should behave and what behaviors they should use to achieve their goals?
- (6) Are there differences in the frequency and intensity of the messages girls receive across the different media? Are the messages that girls receive reinforced across the media?

METHODS

Samples For Analysis

Twelve separate samples of different media and its characters, models, and/or performers were examined in this study. The samples included (1) television programs; (2) television programs' leading/supporting characters; (3) feature/theatrical films; (4) films' leading and supporting characters; (5) television commercials; (6) models in the commercials; (7) music videos; (8) the performers in the music videos; (9) magazine articles; (10) the people in the accompanying photos of the magazine articles; (11) magazine advertisements; and (12) the models in magazine advertisements. Each of these samples had its own recording instrument.

The samples of media used in this research were generated during the fall of 1996, except for the sample of theatrical films. Using the Nielsen Television Index Ranking Report, the top 25 programs for girls between 12 and 17 years were selected. A two-week sample of these programs was recorded during November 1996. The final sample consists of 46 programs because two of the top 25 programs were movies. A report generated by Simmons Market Research Bureau isolated the top 15 theatrical films, released in 1995 and seen in movie theaters by girls between 12 and 17 years. As these films had all been released for the video-rental market, copies were rented in order to conduct the analysis. The sample of commercials consists of all the commercials broadcast during the time parameters of the sample of television programs. Commercials were coded once and weighted by the number of times they appeared during these programs. The sample of music videos consists of the top 20 videos shown on MTV during the first three weeks in November 1996, weighted for the

number of times each one appeared. Finally, the sample of magazines consists of four issues (September, October, November, and December) of the four leading teen girl magazines (*Sassy*, *Teen*, *YM*, and *Seventeen*). All advertisements one-page or larger in the magazines were coded as part of this project. See Appendices A-D for lists of the sample of media analyzed. Table 1 gives the number of cases in each of the samples of media.

These samples of media represent adolescent girls' favorite television programs, the commercials in these programs, music videos, and the feature films that they saw in movie theaters. The magazines are also those specifically targeted to this particular age group. These samples thus do not reflect the entire body of television programs, commercials, feature films, or magazines that are available for viewing or reading by this group and the population at large.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE SIZE FOR EACH MEDIA TYPE AND CATEGORY

Media Type and Category	Number
Television Programs	46
Television Characters	242
Commercials on Television*	859
Models in Commercials	465
Feature Films	15
Film Characters	71
Magazines	16
Magazine Articles	378
People in Photos Accompanying Magazine Articles	372
Advertisements in Magazines*	602
Models in Magazine Ads	352
Music Videos*	60
Performers in Music Videos	64

*Numbers are weighted by how many times the same advertisement, video or commercial appeared during the study period.

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Recording Instruments

The recording instruments contain all the coding schemes and detailed definitions used in the research. The instruments were generated by the principal investigator with considerable input from Children Now and the Kaiser Family Foundation. The recording instruments were generated so as to use the same coding schemes, whenever possible, across the different media. For example, coding schemes relating to demographics were coded for all of the characters, models, and performers. The following list briefly outlines the general framework of the coding schemes used in this analysis.

- (1) Demographics
- (2) Appearance
- (3) Satisfaction with physical appearance
- (4) Relationship between appearance and how others perceive the character/model
- (5) Solving problems and achieving goals
- (6) Motivations
- (7) Topics of conversation
- (8) Behaviors, including if they are used to achieve goals
- (9) Activities
- (10) Topics of magazine articles
- (11) Product Appeals

Each of the above dimensions of content was isolated using several different coding schemes. Where possible, the same schemes were used to code each of the samples of analysis. The recording instrument and coding schemes for the television/film characters were the most detailed and extensive instrument. While the instrumentation for the other units included most of the above outlined dimensions of content, some of the specific coding schemes were simplified for the samples of commercials and magazines.

Reliability

A critical component of content analysis methodology is to ascertain the degree of reliability of the coding to insure that the data reflect consistency in the interpretation and application of the coding schemes and not the particular biases and/or interpretations of individual coders. Roughly, one-half of each sample of materials was coded independently by two coders to provide the data for the reliability analysis. Two procedures--Krippendorff's alpha and a percent agreement calculation--were used to measure reliability. Krippendorff's alpha is a measure that takes chance into account and allows the calculation of reliability coefficients for different scales of measurement. Alpha must reach a value between 0.60 and 0.80 to be conditionally reliable and between 0.80 and 1.00 to be unconditionally reliable. In certain instances where the distribution of cases did not support the use of Krippendorff's alpha, the percent agreement was calculated. Variables were accepted as reliable if the measure of the

percentage of agreement was 85 percent or greater. Reliability measures were calculated for each variable in the recording instrument. Only those variables meeting the standards of reliability were included in the final analysis of the data.

Coders and Coder Training.

The coders were masters students and upper level undergraduate majors in the Department of Communication at the University of Delaware. Although the entire coder pool consisted of more women than men, all of the reliability measures were calculated using data generated by both a man and a woman coder. The coders spent roughly 20 hours in a rigorous training exercise. This exercise began by a full presentation and discussion of all the coding schemes. The coders then coded several examples of the materials and discussed the codings with the principal investigator and the entire pool of coders.

Data Analysis

The data analysis focuses on isolating the basic dimensions of content in the samples using basic descriptive statistics. Where possible, the analysis has been conducted and presented in tabular form to make comparisons across the media. The tables generated to report the findings from variables coded for more than one sample include data from all relevant media. Simple descriptive statistics, crosstabs and frequency distributions were calculated, usually comparing the male and female characters in the samples. The statistical significance of the cross tabular analyses of the differences between the men and women was ascertained using Chi Square. Where appropriate, t-tests were used to determine if the differences between mean scores were statistically significant. To simplify the tabular presentation of the data, statistical significance is reported only at $p \leq 0.05$, even if it reached a higher level of significance. A finding that is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ means that 95 times out of 100 the differences exhibited in comparing the women to the men were real differences; in other words, the differences would be due to chance only five times out of 100.

In the following tables of this report, the numbers indicate what percent of women (or men) in a particular media had the attribute of interest. The statistical significance tests only refer to whether there is a “statistically significant” difference between the percent of women and the percent of men with that attribute. In all cases, the percent of women (or men) with that attribute is in itself a meaningful number to paint a picture of how women and men are portrayed in the media that teenage girls most often consume.

The commercials were categorized by whether the product advertised was one typically used by women, by men, by both men and women, or if the gender orientation could not be ascertained. The tables reporting these results focus on three of these categories (women’s products, men’s products, and those for both men and women) and the distribution for the entire sample. Most of the products (58%) in the commercials were those for both men and women, 21 percent were for men’s

products, and only 11 percent were for women’s products.

FINDINGS

Representation of Women and Men Across Media Types

The distribution of men and women in the samples of television programs favored by adolescent girls, the commercials in these programs, the feature films they saw in the theaters, and the music videos generally reflect the patterns of under-representation of women that has been found in analyses of television content conducted over the past 40 years and more recent analyses of commercials and music videos (Table 2).

This sample of television programs watched by teenage girls has a better representation of women (45%) than recent samples of all prime time programming, where an ongoing analysis of all prime-time network programming broadcast in the fall of 1996 found a distribution of 60% male and 40% female. Women are also under represented to some degree in commercials (42% women), while films (37% women) and music videos (22% women) are more likely to show men than women. The greater representation of women in the pictures (70% women) and advertisements (82% women) of the magazines reflects the target audience of these magazines.

TABLE 2: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN SHOWN IN EACH MEDIA SAMPLE

Media Type	Total Number	Percent Women	Percent Men
Television Characters	242	45%	55%
Film Characters	71	37	63
Commercials - Models	465	42	58
Music Videos - Performers	64	22	78
Magazine Articles - People In Photographs with Articles	372	70	30
Magazine Ads - Models	352	82	18

Table 2a refers to the age of the people portrayed across the different media. Characters/models were categorized based on “social age” -- a measure that indicates where in the life cycle the character is situated, for example, childhood, adolescence, adulthood (broken out by younger and older groups). The characters/models in almost all the media types studied were adults, that is not adolescents or children. (The only exception were teen magazines in which the large majority of female

models in the photos accompanying articles were teenage girls, a finding one would expect given that the media is targeted to teenage girls.) Even though most of the characters/models are adults, noteworthy proportions were teenage girls, the same group who in real life are heavy users of all the media studied. In television shows, 16 percent of the female characters were teenage girls, and in movies 19 percent were. Young adult women -- in their 20's -- accounted for the biggest proportion of characters/models in television shows and movies. Male characters in the movies were more likely to be older adults, in television like female counterparts they were more likely to be a young adult.

TABLE 2A: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN BY PERCEIVED SOCIAL AGE

Social Age	Television Characters (number)		Film Characters* (number)		Commercials Models (number)		Music Videos People (number)		Mag. Articles Photographs (number)		Magazine Ads. Models (number)	
	Women (109)	Men (133)	Women (26)	Men (45)	Women (195)	Men (270)	Women (14)	Men (50)	Women (262)	Men (110)	Women (288)	Men (64)
Child	1%	1%	0%	4%	10%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%
Adolescent	16	11	19	7	8	4	0	6	58	30	32	22
Young Adult	41	50	42	36	39	27	79	64	39	69	42	61
Adult	38	34	27	47	19	23	21	12	0	1	0	2
Elderly	3	2	4	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cannot Code	2	2	8	4	24	26	0	18	0	0	24	14

*Note: In these cases, when comparing the distribution for the women to the men, we find differences that are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, indicating a difference in the racial and ethnic composition of women and men in that media. Percents may not equal exactly 100% due to rounding.

The distribution of the characters and models by race and gender is given in Table 3. This analysis indicates that the distribution by race, for both men and women, on television slightly over-represents the proportion of African-Americans in the U.S. (which is about 13% of the population), but significantly under-represents other minorities. The sample of movies under-represents all people of color with the exception of Native Americans which was 4 percent of the sample, reflecting inclusion of Pocahontas. While, there are fewer minority male models in the magazine advertisements and photographs, there are considerably more minority males in the commercials. Minority women, on the other hand, are under represented in both commercials and magazine advertisements--roughly nine out of ten of the women models in both the commercials (87%) and the magazine advertisements (88%) were white. The distribution of minority women in the magazine photographs is much closer to the distribution seen on television. Finally, the distribution of people of color among music video performers is most similar to that seen in the commercials--women of color are very under represented

while there is a considerably larger proportion of men of color (42%).

TABLE 3: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN BY RACIAL AND ETHNIC CATEGORY

Race/Ethnicity:	Television Characters (number)		Film Characters* (number)		Commercials Models (number)		Music Videos People (number)		Mag. Articles Photographs (number)		Magazine Ads. Models (number)	
	Women (109)	Men (133)	Women (26)	Men (45)	Women (195)	Men (270)	Women (14)	Men (50)	Women (262)	Men (110)	Women (288)	Men (64)
White	77%	71%	85%	84%	87%	54%	86%	58%	73%	80%	88%	88%
African-American	19	20	8	4	7	37	14	42	19	12	8	0
Asian	2	1	0	0	4	4	0	0	5	0	1	2
Hispanic	0	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	6	1	7
Native American	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Other	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cannot Code	2	5	4	4	0	5	0	0	0	2	1	2

*Note: In these cases, when comparing the distribution for the women to the men, we find differences that are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, indicating a difference in the racial and ethnic composition of women and men in that media. Percents may not equal exactly 100% due to rounding.

Activities

Table 4 gives the percentage of men and women in television, movies, and commercials who exhibited each of a number of different activities.

The most obvious differences are seen in the activities reflecting the world of work and the world of romance and relationships. There is a difference in the percentage of men and the percentage of women seen “on the job.” In these television programs favored by adolescent girls, four out of ten of the men (41%) compared to a little more than a quarter of the women (28%) are seen working. In the films, six out of ten of the men compared to over one third (35%) of the women, are seen “on the job.” Similarly, in the commercials, almost twice as many men (17%) as women (9%) are seen “on the job.” Women, however, are more often than men seen in activities related to romance and relationships. Women on television and in feature films are more likely than the men to talk about specific romantic relationships-- almost four out of ten of the women (39%) compared to three out of ten of the men talk

about their romantic relationships on television and three out of ten of the women (31%), compared to a little more than one in ten men (13%) in the films. On television, in movies, and in commercials more women than men are seen dating -- 23 percent of the women compared to 17 percent of the men on television, 27 percent of the women compared to 16 percent of the men in the films, and 9 percent of the women compared to 4 percent of the men in the commercials.

TABLE 4: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN WHO ENGAGE IN EACH ACTIVITY FOR TELEVISION, FILMS, AND COMMERCIALS

(Listed by most frequent activity for women on television)

Activities:	Television Characters		Film Characters		Commercial Models	
	Women (n=109)	Men (n=133)	Women (n=26)	Men (n=45)	Women (n=195)	Men (n=270)
Talk of specific romance	39%	30%	31%	13%	1%	1%
On the job	28	41	35	60	9	17
Gender stereotyped chores	27	1	19	2	5	2
Dating	23	17	27	16	9	4
Talk about friends	20	19	31	9	0	0
Talking on phone	19	20	23	11	5	7
Talk about clothes	14	10	35	13	8	2
Sports	12	10	23	14	1	5
Grooming/preening	10	3	31	7	17	1
Talk about opposite sex	9	17	27	7	2	0
In class	8	5	23	7	1	4
Shopping	8	4	23	4	9	1
School/homework	6	5	15	4	0	0
Reverse-gender stereotyped chores	5	5	4	4	0	2
Working out	1	2	19	4	2	1

Note: Bolded pairs of number indicate that the differences between the percent for women and men is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Percents do not add up to 100% due to characters engaging in multiple activities during the same program.

The women in these media are also more likely to be seen doing activities best described as

stereo-typically female. On television, three times as many women as men (10% to 3%) are seen grooming or preening (i.e., combing hair, looking in the mirror), and in the films the difference is even greater -- 31 percent of the women compared to 7 percent of the men. In the commercials, the percentage of women who preen or are seen grooming (17%) outnumbers the percent of men who do these activities (about 1%). Similarly, more than a quarter of the women (27%) in these television programs and movies perform female-stereotyped chores (doing dishes, cooking, cleaning) compared to 1 percent of men who perform male-stereotyped chores (fixing things, taking out the garbage, etc.). In the movies, almost one-fifth of the women (19%), compared to only 2 percent of the men, are seen doing gender-stereotyped chores.

Grouping topics of conversation into broad categories, Table 5 shows which topics men and women were observed talking about. In both television and film a greater percentage of women were seen talking about romance and dating (63% television and 65% film) than talking about work and jobs (40% television, 60% film), or about their appearance (16% television, 27% film). In both media, almost two-thirds of women talked about romance and dating compared to less than half of men (49% television, 38% film).

TABLE 5: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN WHO TALKED ABOUT EACH TOPIC

Topic:	Television Characters		Film Characters	
	Women (n=109)	Men (n=133)	Women (n=26)	Men (n=45)
Romance/Dating	63%	49%	65%	38%
Work/School	40	52	60	58
Appearance	16	10	27	2

Note: Bolded pairs of number indicate that the differences between the percent for women and men is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Percents do not add up to 100% due to characters having multiple conversations about different topics in the same program.

Most of the characters in these samples, particularly the women, could not be categorized as having either a professional or blue collar occupation, that is, they were neither shown on job nor mentioned an occupation. Of the television characters who were presented as having an occupation, over a third of the men (35%) and one-fourth of the women (26%) were cast as professionals (doctor, lawyer, teacher, social worker, entertainer, etc.) or white collar workers (administrators, managers). There were very few characters, 11 percent of the men and 4 percent of the women, in blue collar jobs. The theatrical films had a similar distribution for the women. Men in these movies were also more likely to be seen working-- 29 percent were professional/ white collar workers and 11 percent were blue collar workers.

TABLE 6: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN SPECIFICALLY DEPICTED AS WORKING IN PROFESSIONAL OR BLUE COLLAR OCCUPATIONS IN TELEVISION, FILMS, AND COMMERCIALS

	Television Characters		Film Characters		Commercial Models	
	Women (n=109)	Men (n=133)	Women (n=26)	Men (n=45)	Women (n=195)	Men (n=270)
Occupation:						
Professional/White Collar	26%	35%	27%	29%	4%	17%
Blue Collar	4	11	0	11	0	5
TOTAL	30	46	27	40	4	22

Percent do not equal 100% because table includes only those characters/models depicted in occupations.

Motivations and Behaviors

Table 7 gives the percentages of men and women who exhibited specific motivations in the samples of television programs and theatrical films favored by adolescent girls.

TABLE 7: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN CHARACTERS WHO EXHIBIT EACH MOTIVATION

Motivations:	Television Characters		Film Characters	
	Women (n=109)	Men (n=133)	Women (n=26)	Men (n=45)
To have a romantic relationship	32%	21%	35%	20%
To obtain or succeed at job or school	24	32	31	53
To be pro-social, as in “change the world”	10	18	23	29
To do well financially	8	8	4	27
To be popular	6	2	15	7
To improve appearance	2	4	19	4

Note: Bolded pairs of number indicate that the differences between the percent for women and men is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Percents do not add up to 100% due to multiple motivations exhibited by the same character throughout a single program.

Of the motivations coded for in this analysis, having a romantic relationship and succeeding in a job appeared most frequently. In television and films almost one-third of the women (32% and 35%, respectively), compared to two in ten men (21% and 20%, respectively), wanted to have a romantic relationship. Alternatively, on both television and films a higher proportion of men (32% television, 53% films) than women (24% television, 31% films) were motivated to succeed in a job.

While physical appearance did not appear as an important motivation in this sample of television programs, it was important for almost one in five women (19%) in the sample of films. Men in films (27%), on the other hand, were more likely than women (4%) to want to do well financially. In addition, although for only a small group, more women than men want to be popular, particularly in the sample of films (15% of women and 7% of men). The men, on the other hand, were more often shown than women to be motivated by doing things that were pro-social in nature, such as wanting to make the world a better place. While most of these comparisons were not statistically significant, they do indicate a tendency for programs and films watched by adolescent girls to portray men and women with different motivations.

The kinds of behaviors exhibited by the characters in the samples of television programs, movies, commercials and magazines were examined for whether or not behaviors appeared during the programs (Table 8); and second, for television and films, whether it was used to achieve the character's goals (Table 9).

TABLE 8: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN WHO EXHIBIT EACH BEHAVIOR FOR TELEVISION, FILMS, AND COMMERCIALS; AND PERCENT OF MAGAZINE ARTICLES THAT MENTION EACH BEHAVIOR (Listed by most frequent behavior seen for women on television)

Behaviors:	Television Characters		Film Characters		Commercial Models		Magazine Articles
	Women (n=109)	Men (n=133)	Women (n=26)	Men (n=45)	Women (n=195)	Men (n=270)	Articles (n=378)
Honesty	46%	52%	58%	47%	11%	6%	16%
Joking/Teasing	38	46	39	36	7	9	9
Intelligence/Efficiency	34	30	69	71	15	7	0
Crying/Whining	34	20	44	24	3	4	4
Flirting	31	26	39	22	10	4	8
Threats/Intimidate	19	11	15	27	0	1	1
Hard Work	18	16	8	33	5	2	4
Risk Taking	17	11	15	24	1	2	9
Compromise	17	17	35	18	0	1	5
Promise of Sex	9	3	8	2	4	3	1
Intuition	9	5	39	20	0	2	2
Brawn/Physical Force	7	11	19	53	0	2	1
Seduction	6	7	15	4	0	1	1

Note: Bolded pairs of number indicate that the differences between the percent for women and men is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Percents do not add up to 100% due to multiple behaviors exhibited by the same character in a single program.

In terms of the behaviors captured in this analysis, both women and men on television were most often seen as being honest (46% of women and 52% of men), joking and teasing (38% of women and 46% of men), and being intelligent (34% of women and 30% of men). Over three in ten women were also shown crying or whining (34%) and flirting (31%). On film, a large percent of both women

and men were also shown being intelligent (69% of women and 71% of men), and being honest (58% of women and 47% of men). Many women were also shown crying and whining (44%), using intuition (39%), flirting (39%), and joking and teasing (39%). On the other hand, men in films were often shown using brawn and physical force (53%) (Table 8).

Although most of the differences between men and women in the behaviors exhibited and whether these behaviors were used to achieve goals were not statistically significant, there are some indications of gender-stereotyping. For example, although crying and whining are behaviors exhibited by men and women, more of the women (34%) on television whine or cry than the men (20%). Although crying and whining appear somewhat frequently in television and films, it is not often employed to achieve goals -- only 10 percent of women and 6 percent of men on television. Similarly, flirting appears somewhat frequently and is more likely to be exhibited by women than men--on television, about three out of ten women (31%) compared to a little more than a quarter of the men (26%) are seen flirting (Table 8). And, more women on television try to use flirting to achieve their goals (21% of women, 11% of men) (Table 9). For the most part, we find similar patterns in the films. Almost twice as many women (39%) as men (22%) are seen flirting, and more women (8%) than men (2%) use flirting to achieve their goals. Also, although not many characters use the promise of sex, when it does appear women (9% on television, 8% for film) are more likely than men (3% on television, 2% for film) to exhibit this type of behavior. However, the promise of sex is not often used as a behavior to achieve goals (Table 8 and Table 9).

Men are also likely to use gender stereotyped behaviors. Specifically, they are more likely to use brawn and physical force, particularly in the sample of movies. On television, about one in ten men (11%), compared to 7 percent of the women, uses physical force. In the movies, on the other hand, more than half of the men (53%), compared to 19 percent of the women, use physical force (Table 8). Moreover, in the movies men (38%) use physical force to achieve their goals (Table 9).

We also examined how many of these behaviors were exhibited by the characters in the commercials and/or discussed in the magazine articles. While these behaviors occurred much less frequently in the commercials and the magazine articles, nevertheless, some of the same patterns exist. In particular, women (10%) in commercials are more likely than men (4%) to flirt, exhibit intelligence (15% for women, 7% for men) and honesty (11% of women, 6% of men). In the magazine articles the only behavior that appears somewhat frequently is being honest and direct, with 16 percent of articles discussing this topic. The other behaviors coded for in this analysis were rarely discussed in these articles (Table 8).

TABLE 9: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN WHO EXHIBIT EACH BEHAVIOR TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS FOR TELEVISION AND FILMS

(Listed by most frequent behaviors, Table 8, seen in women on television)

Behaviors:	Television Characters		Film Characters	
	Women (n=109)	Men (n=133)	Women (n=26)	Men (n=45)
Honesty	25%	20%	4%	2%
Joking/Teasing	6	5	0	4
Intelligence/Efficiency	24	14	12	22
Crying/Whining	10	6	8	0
Flirting	21	11	8	2
Threats/Intimidate	14	8	8	13
Hard Work	14	9	0	13
Risk Taking	12	8	12	22
Compromise	7	8	8	2
Promise of Sex	4	2	0	0
Intuition	7	2	0	7
Brawn/Physical Force	6	7	12	38
Seduction	6	4	0	2

Note: Bolded pairs of number indicate that the differences between the percent for women and men is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Percents do not add up to 100% due to multiple behaviors exhibited by the same character in a single program.

Solving Problems and Achieving Goals

Problem solving and achieving goals were examined in relation to the television and movie characters and as information provided in the magazine articles (Table 10). Both male and female characters most often rely upon themselves to solve their problems and achieve their goals. In the television shows about a third of the men (32%) and women (35%) solved their own problems, while in the movies, almost half of the men (49%) and more than a third of the women (35%) solved their own problems. In regard to achieving goals, about four out of ten of the men (38%) and women (39%) in

these television shows and more than six out of ten of the men (67%) and women (62%) in the movies were self-sufficient.

After relying on themselves, both men and women characters turn to other friends and acquaintances for help. About two in ten of women on television (20%) and in films (23%) relied on a male friend or acquaintance, and 20 percent of women on television and 31 percent of women in films relied on a female friend or acquaintance to help them solve problems. Similarly, around a quarter of men on television (23%) and in films (29%) rely on a male friend or acquaintance, while fewer men (16% on television and 11% in film) rely on a female friend to help them solve their problems.

TABLE 10: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN WHO RELY ON EACH SOURCE TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS AND ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS IN TELEVISION AND FILMS, AND THE PERCENT OF MAGAZINE ARTICLES THAT MENTION EACH SOURCE TO RELY ON

	Television Characters		Film Characters		Magazine Articles
	Women (n=109)	Men (n=133)	Women (n=26)	Men (n=45)	Articles (378)
Rely on to Solve Problems					
Self	35%	32%	35%	49%	28%
Mother	6	2	4	4	6
Father	6	1	15	4	3
Women	20	16	31	11	1
Men	20	23	23	29	2
Female-Romantic	3	8	4	16	2
Male-Romantic	12	0	23	0	1
Rely on to Achieve Goals					
Self	39%	38%	62%	67%	NA
Mother	1	1	4	4	NA
Father	2	2	8	4	NA
Women	14	14	46	16	NA
Men	9	21	23	47	NA
Female-Romantic	2	8	8	11	NA
Male-Romantic	9	0	31	0	NA

Note: Bolded pairs of number indicate that the differences between the percent for women and men is statistically

significant at $p < 0.05$. "NA" means data was not available. Percents do not add up to 100% due to the possibility of the same character relying on multiple sources to solve problems or having no problems to solve.

Twelve percent of women rely on their male romantic partner to help them solve problems and 9 percent to help them achieve their goals. Eight percent of men rely on their female romantic partner to solve their problems and to achieve their goals. These patterns were also seen in the movies, where almost a third of the women (31%) rely upon their male romantic partners to achieve their goals where as only 11 percent of men relied upon their female romantic partners (Table 10).

The magazine articles stress relying on oneself to solve problems--more than a quarter of these articles (28%) implied that the reader should solve her problems herself. These articles presented mothers (6%) as the next most likely source of help in solving problems and did not for the most part encourage the reader to seek the help of men or their male romantic partners (Table 10).

Appearance

Numerous studies have found that the media often portray people with perfect, or almost perfect, bodies. Table 11 examines the body weight of the characters and models in this study. Coders were asked to categorize each character, model, or person as being very thin, thin, average, muscular, a bit overweight, or obese. Reliability between the coders suggests that viewers would most likely categorize the individual similarly as they watch or reads the particular program or article.

In this study, the majority of women in television (51%), film (62%), and commercials (55%) are seen as being of "average" weight or heavier (including "bit overweight" and "obese"). A plurality of the women in magazine articles (44%) and advertisements (39%) are seen as "average" weight.

However, a substantial proportion of women across all the media are seen as “thin” or “very thin” -- 46 percent of women on television, 39 percent in films, 32 percent in commercials, 43 percent of women on music videos, 34 percent in magazine articles, and 26 percent of women in magazine ads. A much smaller proportion of men who are seen as “thin” or “very thin” -- 16% of men in television, 4% in film, 6% in commercials, 6% in magazine articles, and 8% of men in magazine ads. Only in music videos does the proportion of men (44%) seen as “thin” or “very thin” come close to women (43%).

TABLE 11: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN’S PERCEIVED BODY WEIGHT

Body Weight:	Television Characters* (number)		Film Characters* (number)		Commercials Models* (number)		Music Videos People* (number)		Mag. Articles Photographs* (number)		Magazine Ads. Models* (number)	
	Women (109)	Men (133)	Women (26)	Men (45)	Women (195)	Men (270)	Women (14)	Men (50)	Women (262)	Men (110)	Women (288)	Men (64)
Very Thin	7%	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	8%	2%	0%	2%	0%
Thin	39	15	39	4	29	6	43	36	32	6	24	8
Average	41	65	58	76	51	60	36	44	44	70	39	58
Muscular	0	2	0	7	0	4	0	12	0	8	0	2
Bit Overweight	9	7	4	2	4	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obese	1	6	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cannot Code	3	5	0	7	14	14	21	0	22	16	36	33

*Note: In these cases, when comparing the distribution of responses for the women to responses for the men, we find differences that are statistically significant at $p < .05$, indicating a difference in the way women and men’s weight is perceived. Percents may not equal exactly 100% due to rounding.

Table 12 shows the type of clothes worn by characters. Men in all of the media except the magazine advertisements, were more likely than the women to wear business clothes (or a uniform). While almost a quarter of women in television (23%) and film (23%) wore business attire, more than a third of men (35% in television, 44% in film) were portrayed in business clothes. Women in television programs, commercials, and particularly movies, were more often than men found in sleepwear or lingerie--15% of the women and 5% of the men on television, 7% of the women and 0% of the men in commercials, and 42% of the women and 11% of the men in the movies wore undergarments on camera. Except for the movies, the women were also more likely than the men to be seen in dressy or evening clothes. About one-fourth of the women on television (24%), four out of ten of the women in the films (42%), and more than one-tenth of the women in commercials (14%) wore dressing or evening clothes.

TABLE 12: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN SEEN WEARING EACH TYPE OF CLOTHING

Type of Clothing:	Television Characters (number)		Film Characters (number)		Commercials Models (number)		Music Videos People (number)		Mag. Articles Photographs (number)		Magazine Ads. Models (number)	
	Women (109)	Men (133)	Women (26)	Men (45)	Women (195)	Men (270)	Women (14)	Men (50)	Women (262)	Men (110)	Women (288)	Men (64)
Sleepwear/Lingerie	15%	5%	42%	11%	7%	0%	21%	0%	3%	1%	2%	3%
Business/Uniform	23	35	23	44	12	30	0	16	0	9	0	0
Casual	15	23	27	16	11	18	0	14	7	20	8	13
Dressy/Costume	24	15	42	42	14	10	79	16	6	2	7	2

Note: Bolded pairs of number indicate that the differences between the percent for women and men is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Percents do not add up to 100% due to characters wearing multiple outfits in a single program or wearing an outfit that does not fall in one of these categories.

Most of the characters, except for the female performers in the music videos, were fully clothed (see Table 13). While only a small percent of women or men were partially clothed, women on television (11%), in commercials (13%), and particularly in the music videos (57%) were more likely to be partially clothed than men (5% television, 5% commercials, and 28% music videos). On the other hand, in the magazine photographs and advertisements, the men (19% articles, 20% advertisements) were more likely than the women (12% articles, 15% advertisements) to be partially clothed. The men and women were about equally likely to be partially clothed in the movies. Nudity was virtually never implied in this sample of media.

TABLE 13: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN BY PERCEIVED DEGREE OF DRESS

Degree of Dress:	Television Characters* (number)		Film Characters (number)		Commercials Models* (number)		Music Videos People* (number)		Mag. Articles Photographs (number)		Magazine Ads. Models (number)	
	Women (109)	Men (133)	Women (26)	Men (45)	Women (195)	Men (270)	Women (14)	Men (50)	Women (262)	Men (110)	Women (288)	Men (64)
Fully Clothed	89%	96%	77%	80%	75%	83%	43%	72%	84%	79%	63%	63%
Partially Clothed	11	5	15	18	13	5	57	28	12	19	15	20
Implied Nudity	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cannot Code	0	0	3	2	12	12	0	0	4	2	22	17

*Note: In these cases, when comparing the distribution of responses for the women to responses for the men, we find differences that are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, indicating a difference in the percent women and men in their degree of dress. Percents do not equal exactly 100% due to rounding.

Appearance-Related Discussions

One of the key questions this study sought to answer was what kind of messages the media send to girls about the importance of appearance and the relation of appearance to romance, happiness, success, etc.

Table 14 examines whether a character's looks were acknowledged by other characters in the samples of teenage girls' favorite television programs, films, and commercials. Acknowledgment of women's looks occurred equally often in television programs (28%) and in the commercials of these programs (26%). While the characters in the television programs tended to make both positive and negative comments about women's looks, most of the acknowledgments about women's looks in commercials were positive. Men's looks were rarely acknowledged either on television (10%) or in

the commercials (7%). More of the characters on film had comments made about their looks by other characters. Almost six out of ten of the women (58%) had their looks acknowledged in some way. Half of the women were acknowledged positively and about a quarter (23%) were acknowledged negatively. Men's looks were also acknowledged in the films--almost one-quarter (24%) of the males' looks were commented on.

TABLE 14: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN WHO'S LOOKS ARE ACKNOWLEDGED IN DISCUSSIONS

Statements:	Television Characters		Film Characters		Commercial Models	
	Women (n=109)	Men (n=133)	Women (n=26)	Men (n=45)	Women (n=195)	Men (N=270)
Percent who had statements made about their looks	28%	10%	58%	24%	26%	7%
Percent who had positive statements made about looks	19	8	50	18	26	7
Percent who had negative statements made about looks	15	3	23	13	1	0

Note: Bolded pairs of number indicate that the differences between the percent for women and men is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Percents do not equal 100% due to characters having multiple statements made about their looks, in either positive or negative way.

Appearance was also examined in relation to how a character's appearance might be connected to how well a he/she did in school, on the job, or how other people relate to them. Table 15 shows that there were very few instances, either negative or positive, when a statement about appearance was related to performance in this sample of television programs. The only time comments about women and men differed was in relation positive comments about how appearance relates to romantic relationships, where appearance was cited more for women (7%) than men (2%).

TABLE 15: PERCENT OF WOMEN AND MEN ON TELEVISION WHO HAD A STATEMENT MADE ABOUT THEM THAT LINKED THEIR LOOKS TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING TOPICS IN A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE WAY

Statements:	Television Characters	
	Women (n=109)	Men (n=133)
Positive Statement about Looks AND:		
Romance/Opposite Sex	7%	2%
Popularity/Opinions	3	2
Job and School Performance	1	1
Self Confidence	1	1
Negative Statement about Looks AND:		
Romance/Opposite Sex	0%	1%
Popularity/Opinions	2	1
Job and School Performance	0	2
Self Confidence	2	0

Note: Bolded pairs of number indicate that the differences between the percent for women and men is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

Magazine articles did not often discuss appearance in relation to how well someone would do in school (4%) or on the job (3%) (Table 16). When such linkages were made, the magazine articles indicated that appearance was related to other people’s opinions (10% of the articles) and to discussion about the opposite sex (9% of the articles).

TABLE 16: PERCENT OF MAGAZINE ARTICLES THAT LINKED APPEARANCE TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING TOPICS

	Magazine Articles (n=378)
Opinions of Others	10%
The Opposite Sex	9
Romantic Relationship	7
Self Confidence	7
Being Popular	5
School Performance	4
Job Performance	3

Products Advertised

Tables 17 lists the products advertised in the commercials and the magazine advertisements occurring in this sample of media teenage girls watch and read. The products in the television programs target a wider audience than those in the magazines for young girls. Food products (39%) predominate in the commercials while appearance related products -- toiletries and makeup (61%) and clothes (20%) -- predominate in the magazines. Commercials oriented towards women are for products typically associated with appearance, with makeup and toiletries accounting for 63 percent of all commercials oriented toward women. In contrast, only 9 percent of commercials targeted towards men are appearance related (4% for toiletries and 5% for clothes).

TABLE 17: PRODUCTS ADVERTISED IN THE COMMERCIALS AND ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE MEDIA THAT YOUNG GIRLS TURN TO (Listed by frequency of appearance of products directed towards women in television commercials)

Product:	Television Commercials (number of products oriented towards each group)				Magazine Advertisements (number of ads)
	Women (n=117)	Men (n=228)	Both (n=629)	Total (n=1081)	Total (n=622)
Toiletries/Makeup	63%	4%	2%	9%	61%
Credit-Bank-Stores	9	2	5	4	1
Other	9	8	18	14	10
Clothes	7	5	5	5	20
Computer-Phone	4	6	13	10	0
Health	4	0	5	4	1
Food/Drink	3	68	32	39	4
Media-CDS-Tapes	1	5	7	6	3
Alcohol	0	2	1	1	0
Cars/Trucks	0	1	12	9	0

Percents may not equal exactly 100% due to rounding.

Appeals and Promises in Commercials and Magazine Advertisements

Commercials and advertisements are one-shot attempts to sell products. The images have to

attract and hold our attention. In presenting their products, both commercials and magazine ads have images that reflect specific appeals. Table 18 presents these appeals in commercials and magazines looking at products for women, men, both men and women, and all products.

TABLE 18: PRODUCT APPEALS IN THE COMMERCIALS AND ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE MEDIA THAT YOUNG GIRLS TURN TO (Listed by frequency of product appeals directed towards women in television commercials)

Appeals:	Television Commercials (number of products oriented towards each group)				Magazine Advertisements (number of ads)
	Women (n=117)	Men (n=228)	Both (n=629)	Total (n=1081)	Total (n=622)
Beauty	56%	3%	6%	10%	50%
Self Improvement	32	0	4	6	13
Being in Control	29	2	12	13	19
Aesthetic Sensation	28	4	28	22	26
Humor/Fun	26	32	68	51	32
Convenience/Value	19	21	41	33	17
Health	18	27	18	18	12
Youthfulness	16	4	9	8	37
Pleasure	10	14	38	27	7
Independence/Edge	10	10	14	12	17
Appeal to Opposite Sex	9	3	4	4	12
Pure & Natural	9	0	1	2	7
Popularity	7	1	3	3	7
Nurturing	6	1	10	7	4
Fear/Guilt	4	59	15	15	4
Envy	3	60	13	26	8
Success	3	6	6	5	5
Sex	3	3	5	4	8

Note: Bolded sets of number indicate that the differences between the percent for women and men is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Percents do not add up to 100% due to multiple appeals made in a single commercial/advertisement.

In commercials, the ads for men's products tend to have different appeals than the ads for women's products. These appeals, moreover, are somewhat gender stereotyped. Commercials for women's products typically appeal to beauty (56%), self-improvement (32%), being in control (29%), aesthetic sensation (28%), convenience/value (19%), health (18%) and youthfulness (16%). Commercials for men's products, on the other hand, include appeals to envy (60%), fear/guilt (59%), humor/fun (32%), and health (27%). The advertisements in teen magazines typically appealed to beauty (50%) and youthfulness (37%) (Table 18).

Topics in Magazine Articles

As can be seen in Table 19, the articles in these magazines for adolescent girls typically focused on gender-stereotyped topics. The most frequently appearing themes were those relating to appearance and looks (37%), dating (35%), and clothes and fashion (32%). Many also focused on makeup (18%) and hairstyles (16%). More than a quarter of the articles focused on friends (28%). Fewer examined topics such as self confidence (16%), family (15%), career (12%), school (12%), and becoming independent (5%). Fewer still focussed on health related topics such as alcohol (3%), drugs (3%), smoking (3%), sexually transmitted diseases (3%), pregnancy (2%) and contraception (2%).

TABLE 19: PERCENT OF MAGAZINE ARTICLES WITH EACH THEMATIC TOPIC
(Listed by frequency of topic mentioned)

Topic:	Total Magazine Articles (n=378)	Topic:	Total Magazine Articles (n=378)
Appearance-Looks	37%	Mental Health	8%
Dating	35	Nutrition	8
Clothes-Fashion	32	Sports-Not Stereotyped	8
Friends	28	Pro Social Ideas	6
Famous Men	20	Mood - Unhappy	6
Makeup-Make overs	18	Finding a Job	6
Hairstyles-Make overs	16	Sports-Stereotyped	5
Self Confidence	16	Independence	5
Family	15	Sociopolitical Ideas	4
Famous Women	14	Weight Loss	4
Breaking Up	13	Alcohol	3
Career	12	Drugs	3
School	12	Smoking	3
Physical Health	11	Sexually transmitted Diseases	3
Exercise	9	PMS	3
Music	11	Pregnancy	2
Mood - Happy	11	Contraception	2
Popularity	10	Abortion	2
Sex	9		

Note: Percents do not add to 100% due to multiple topics covered in a single magazine article.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study illustrate the dual role media plays. The media offer girls many positive role models, independent women who rely on themselves to solve their own problem. Women are shown being self-reliant and using intelligence, honesty and efficiency to achieve their goals. Teen magazines reinforce these messages by encouraging their readers to rely on themselves and resolve situations in honest and direct ways.

The study also shows, however, that this same media favored by teenage girls often contain stereotypical messages about appearance, relationships and careers. Findings in the study confirm previous research which shows that appearance is shown as more important -- and more uniformly idealized -- for women than for men. Teen girls' favorite television programs and films continue to under-represent women. In addition, the priorities and activities of women in the media may send girls the implicit message that relationships are more important for women than occupations or careers. Women are portrayed as spending much of their time dating and talking about the opposite sex while men are primarily seen working and concerned about their success. These messages are reinforced-- and, at times, stereotypes are perpetuated -- across the range of media girls watch.

APPENDIX A

TOP 25 TELEVISION PROGRAMS* (Girls, 12-17)

1. Clueless, ABC
2. Sabrina, Teenage Witch, ABC
3. Boy Meets World, ABC
4. Home Improvement, ABC
5. Family Matters, ABC
6. Friends, NBC
7. Beverly Hills, 90210, FOX
8. Simpsons, FOX
9. Seinfeld, NBC
10. E.R.,NBC
11. Party of Five, FOX
12. Single Guy, NBC
13. Suddenly Susan, NBC
14. Life's Work, ABC
15. Spin City, ABC
16. Roseanne, ABC
17. NBC Monday Night Movies (not in sample)
18. Lois & Clark, ABC
19. Living Single, FOX
20. Grace Under Fire, ABC
20. New York Undercover, FOX
20. 3rd Rock from the Sun, NBC
23. Melrose Place, FOX
24. ABC Sunday Night Movie (not in sample)
25. Sister, Sister, WB

*source: Nielsen Television Index Ranking Report

Sample parameters: November 10, 1996 to November 28, 1996

APPENDIX B

MOVIES SEEN BY GIRLS AGE 12-17 IN THEATERS, 1995*

1. Clueless, PG-13
2. Batman Forever, PG-13
3. Dangerous Minds, R
4. Casper, PG
5. Pocahontas, G
6. Ace Ventura, When Nature..., PG-13
7. Jumanji, PG
8. Apollo 13, PG
9. Father of the Bride, part 2, PG
10. Toy Story, G
11. Nine Months, PG-13
12. Mr. Holland's Opus, PG
13. Now and Then, PG-13
14. Happy Gilmore, R
15. Congo, PG-13

*compiled by Simmons Market Research Bureau

APPENDIX C

LIST OF VIDEOS IN THE SAMPLE*

<u>Video Name</u>	<u>Artist</u>	<u>Number of Weeks</u>
All Coming Back to Me Now	Celine Dion	3
All Mixed Up	311	3
Angles of the Silences	Counting Crows	3
Beautiful People	Marilyn Manson	3
Been There Done That	Dr. Dre	3
Bittersweet Me	R.E.M.	3
Blow Up the Outside World	Soundgarden	3
Day's of Our Lives	Bone Thugs-n-harmony	3
Don't Speak	No Doubt	3
I Ain't Mad at Cha	2Pac	3
If It Makes you Happy	Sheryl Crow	3
Love Roller Coaster	Red Hot Chili Peppers	3
No Diggity	Blackstreet [with Dr. Dre]	3
No Woman No Cry	The Fugees	3
Swallowed	Bush	3
What I Got	Sublime	3
You Must Love Me	Madonna	3
Hero of the Day	Metallica	2
Sad Caper	Hootie and the Blowfish	2
This Is For the Lover in You	Babyface	2
Ready or Not	The Fugees	1
Snoop's Upside Ya' Head	Snoop Doggy Dogg	1
The Distance	Cake	1

*MTV countdown 11/8,16,24/97

APPENDIX D

LIST OF MAGAZINES IN SAMPLE

September, October, November, and December issues of:

1. YM
2. Sassy
3. Teen
4. Seventeen



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