



Alternative female portrayals in animated movies

The impact of strong animated women on the viewing audience

Student Name: Suzanne Alblas
Student Number: 345251

Supervisor: Dr. Julia Kneer

Master Media Studies - Media & Journalistiek
Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication
Erasmus University Rotterdam

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Abstract

There has been an observable increase of *alternative* female leading characters that possess non-stereotypical attributes in animation. It has been shown in previous research that stereotypical female portrayals are capable of influencing notions and perceptions held on women by viewers (Calvert & Huston, 1987). Considering this societal impact, it is important to investigate these portrayals as well as developments thereof.

Research on this topic, has been considerably lacking in respect of the most current *alternative* female portrayals and audience effects, especially regarding animation. Most studies that have touched upon this particular subject have been performed more than a decade ago and were geared towards the effects of *stereotypes* rather than those of *non-stereotypical* characters.

This study was hence affiliated with uncovering audience effects of *alternative* animated female characters. An experimental study was performed in which two separate research groups were subjected to animated videos that contained stereotypical or non-stereotypical female characters. After viewing, the respondents had to fill out survey questions enquiring about their *prejudice towards women, mood* and levels of *self-objectification*.

Results showed no effects regarding the displayed female character and prejudice against women, nor were there effects concerning self-objectification. Respondents who viewed non-stereotypical content, however, did show a significant increase in positive mood, whereas those who viewed stereotypical content showed a decrease. Male respondents also showed significantly more prejudice towards women and a significantly larger decline in positive mood than female respondents.

This study managed to add some updated knowledge to the current field that could inspire further study into the effects of media content on mood and the effects of gender on prejudice.

Key words: Stereotypical female portrayals, alternative female portrayals, animation, animated female characters, prejudice, mood, self-objectification, influence, effects, audience

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Theoretical framework.....	4
2.1 History of female portrayal in media	4
2.1.1 Early female portrayals	5
2.1.2 Changes in female portrayals.....	9
2.2 Stereotypical female portrayals in conventional media	12
2.3 Alternative female portrayals in conventional media	15
2.4 Female portrayals in animation	17
2.4.1 Stereotypical female portrayals.....	17
2.4.2 Alternative female portrayals	19
2.5 Previous research on the influence of female portrayals.....	21
2.5.1 Founded effects of stereotypical female portrayals.....	21
2.5.2 Founded effects of alternative female portrayals	23
2.5.3 Effect differences between animated and conventional media.....	26
2.6 Recent research on female portrayals and audience effects	27
2.6 Concepts.....	29
2.6.1Conceptualization of stereotypical female portrayals.....	29
2.6.2 Conceptualization of alternative female portrayals	31
2.6.3 Conceptualization of influence	33
2.6.4 Conceptualization of the viewing audience	34
2.7 Relevance of this research	35
2.7.1 Scientific relevance	35
2.7.2 Research gap	36
2.7.3 Societal relevance	37
2.7.4 What this study will add to the current field	38
2.8 Hypotheses	39
3. Methods.....	41
3.1 Study design.....	41
3.2 Stimulus material	43
3.2.1 Videoclips	43
3.2.2 Research units.....	46
3.2.3 Sampling units.....	47

3.2.4 Operationalization	48
3.2.5 Data collection and analysis.....	50
3.2.6 Results from pre-test	50
3.3 Main study	52
3.3.1Procedure.....	52
3.3.2 Measurements	53
3.3.3 Participants	54
4. Results.....	55
4.1 Prejudice towards women	55
4.2 Mood.....	57
4.3 Self-objectification	60
5. Discussion.....	61
5.1 Interpretation of results.....	61
5.2 Limitations.....	64
5.3 Conclusion.....	65
Bibliography	68
Video references.....	76
Appendix A- Survey questions	78
I Pre-test.....	78
II Main study	81
Appendix B- Relevant SPSS output pre-test.....	87
Appendix C- Relevant SPSS output main study.....	93
I Prejudice	93
II Mood difference	97
III Self-objectification	104

1. Introduction

When we discuss common media practices, the implementation of gender roles and gender stereotypes remains to be a commonly discussed subject amongst media researchers. The stereotypical representation of females especially, has proven to be an interesting topic of research for many media investigators. According to these studies, media representations of women are predominantly prone to objectify women, stereotype them, and put them in arranged roles which leave little room for character development or distinct personalities other than those defined by gender (Furnham & Bitar, 1993). It has been stated, however, that this stereotypical portrayal of women has somewhat declined within more recent media products, which has led to a significant weakening of depictions based on dominant gender ideologies (Allen & Coltrane, 1996). Most studies do mention that despite these noticeable differences, stereotypical gender portrayals remain dominant within most media products (Bretl & Cantor, 1988). It has to be noted, however, that a large amount of these studies have been conducted more than two decades ago, which makes it likely for these investigations to be out of touch with current changes and developments on the issue of female representation.

Despite the dominant presence of such representations within the media, there has been a recent increase in the construction of *alternative female portrayals* that incorporate stereotypical male character traits such as independence, dominance, strength and sometimes even violence within female characters (Ferguson, 2012). These *alternative portrayals* of women have significantly increased since the late 1990's after which female representation headed more towards representing the ideals of a *liberated woman* than those of an oppressed one (Charlebois, 2010; Mosely & Read, 2002).

This change has been noticeable within several media constructs; however, one construct in which this change has been especially noticeable is that of animated movies. Movies such as *Brave*, *The princess and the Frog*, *Mulan*, *Shrek* and *Tangled*, all contain strong leading female characters who are not only known for their independence and distinct personalities, but also for their more violent personalities, which are sometimes used as a means to exercise dominance or to conduct heroine acts (Stover, 2013). Former representations of animated female characters incorporated character traits such as passiveness, weakness and helplessness. They were often portrayed as damsels in distress within predominantly domesticated roles, and rarely were they portrayed as being self-reliant (May, 2011). These roles have become less frequent within animated movies and are currently being replaced by stronger female leads that show more diversity in their characters and show more likeness to male character traits. The increase of *alternative female portrayals* is clearer in animated movies due to the fact that it shows a large contrast with former dominant female representations.

The influence that such an increase in alternative portrayals could have, has not been researched extensively within contemporary science. Ferguson (2012) conducted an investigation towards the effects of violent female portrayals and found that there are some clear effects to be associated with viewing extremely violent female characters. He uncovered in his research that putting powerful women in sexually dominant atmospheres would create a more positive attitude towards women than when they were portrayed as vulnerable. Similar research that has been conducted previously on the issue of female representation in animated movies, however, focuses specifically on the implementation of sexist stereotypes and the possible implications these representations could have on its viewing audience (Thompson & Zerbinos 1995; Leaper, Breed, Hoffman & Perlman 2002). These studies have been able to illustrate the impact sexist imagery can have on gender perceptions within society and have been able to show a definite influence.

Despite this it has to be noted that most of these investigations have been performed more than a decade ago, which creates a necessity for new study. Most studies that have touched upon the subject recently, perform meta-analyses and base their findings on datasets collected by studies conducted in the 1970's or 1980's (Dill, 2013). There has been significantly more research conducted towards the externalization of (non)stereotypical female portrayals in animation than there has been on the effects these representations might cause (Dill, 2013). Considering the fact the target audience of most animated movies predominantly consists of children, it is vital to consider and investigate the impact that alternative female portrayals could have on this viewing audience. Most of our notions about social constructs and societal roles are being developed during our childhood. When children are consistently exposed to images that portray similar constructs of gender roles or other societal values, these images are able to impact their future notions on these subjects quite extensively (Browne, 1998; Davidson, Yasuna & Tower, 1979; Steyer, 2014). This research is therefore concerned with exploring the possible effects of such alternative representations. This has resulted in the following research question:

RQ: To what extent do alternative and stereotypical female portrayals in animated movies influence its viewing audience?

This research question will be able to unveil the possible effects of alternative female portrayals and will be able to theorize the future implications this might have for both its viewing audience as well as society. Due to the mentioned findings in previous research, it could be stated that a viewing of these alternative portrayals could influence the perceptions on women by the viewing audience. This cannot, however, be stated with certainty due to the fact that there has been such little research conducted on the influence of alternative gender portrayals. However, due to the proven impact of former *sexist* stereotypes, it can be hypothesized that these portrayals are likely to exhibit an influence on the viewing audience as well, with regards to their mood and prejudice towards women

This paper will critically assess the possible effects of alternative female portrayals through the usage of respondents who will have to complete a survey prior to and after viewing content that contains these portrayals. These respondents will have to answer questions related to the content they have been shown in the survey. These questions will measure their reactions, opinions and feelings towards these alternative female portrayals, by asking them opinion and mood-related questions before and after viewing the content. There will also be an enquiry towards the amount of self-objectification performed by the respondents. These findings will be tested for statistical significance, in order to create reliable results. It is important that the content displayed to the respondents is first critically selected via a pre-test on the presence of stereotypical and alternative female stereotypes, before it is used within the final research. This pre-test will also consist of a survey which will be modelled to enquire respondents about their mood and their perception of the presence of stereotypical or alternative female portrayals within the provided content.

Considering the scientific relevance of this study, it can be stated that it primarily serves as an extension or rather as a continuation on previous studies. The current increase in animated female leading characters that possess *alternative* character traits, has made further research into this subject an important premise (Hains, 2009). This study will hence serve as a building block towards further investigation into the possible effects of alternative female portrayals, as well as the possible effects of counter stereotypical characters as a whole. The possible effects of animation content on its own can also be assessed through this study.

Furthermore, it also has to be noted that there is a current research gap present regarding this particular subject. Previous studies that show close resemblance to this subject date back to the 1980's at its latest (Davidson, Yasuna & Tower, 1979; Calvert & Huston, 1987). Due to this, most studies conducted on this subject are not in touch with current developments nor are they in touch with the current constructions of alternative female portrayals. There has been recent study conducted towards the externalization of counter-stereotypical female portrayals, however, recent study towards the effects of these portrayals is considerably lacking, especially regarding animated content. It also has to be noted that studies towards the effects have exercised a prominent focus on stereotypical portrayals rather than counter-stereotypical ones, as well as a more prominent focus on children, rather than teenagers and people in their early twenties.

Lastly, this study also serves a significant societal purpose, due to the fact that it has been demonstrated in previous studies that a consistent subjection to stereotypical imagery can affect the views and opinions someone holds on a group of people within society and how one perceives themselves (Gunter & Wober, 1982; Gorham, 2004; McGarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002). If depictions are in fact capable of influencing the notions and opinions of their viewers, this could not only affect socialization processes, but also affect society as a whole as a result. Considering how animated

content is often targeted towards children, who are considered to be quite an influential demographic, these possible effects become even more significant for further study.

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, there will be a further elaboration on the history of female portrayals within media and animation, their established characteristics and an evaluation of their possible effects on the viewing audience. This chapter will also provide an extensive overview of previous findings and studies regarding the subject, as well as evaluate findings that are located in more recent studies. In order to construct a complete image of what classifies as a stereotypical female portrayal and what classifies as an alternative one, this piece will draw upon various sources to the likes of (Ferguson, 2012; Gunter & Wober, 1982; Van Zoonen, 1994) and several other authors who have looked into various aspects of the subject in depth.

2.1 History of female portrayal in media

As mentioned previously, there has been a significant amount of research conducted on female portrayals and how these tend to be formatted and constructed within mainstream media. The term ‘portrayal’ or ‘depiction’ on its own, is regarded as a depiction or representation of entities onto pictures, literature, or any other piece of artwork (Tuchman, 1979). Within the scope of this research; ‘female’ portrayal can thus, be classified as a constructed depiction of the female gender that can be distributed through several media products, such as movies, television programmes, animations or advertisements. Not only do female portrayals play an important role in the depiction of women and the generalizations thereof; they are also believed to play a crucial role in the construction and dissemination of gender ideologies as well as within the socialization of genders (Brooks & Hébert, 2006 p.289). Most analyses that have been conducted on female portrayals, have stated that it is common for female characters, to be depicted along the lines of stereotypical constructs, however, despite this commonality, it has also been observed that there is a steady increase in the creation and implementation of female characters that are not formatted along these lines and hence display non-stereotypical characteristics (Moseley & Read, 2002). These changes have been regarded to occur somewhat simultaneous to the societal and social developments of women, whereas the persistent stereotypical views are still based on outdated views on women and their roles within society (Tuchmann, 1979).

Thus, when a female portrayal is formatted along stereotypical constructs, it might cause a strengthening of traditional gender ideologies within society and reinforce stereotypical views about women. Previous studies have shown that regular viewers of stereotypical content are more likely to hold preconceived notions about the groups of people that are being stereotyped. These notions do not only concern women, but also minorities such as darker-skinned people (Gorham, 2004 ; Gunter &

Wober, 1982). In relation to female portrayals; it was found by Zemach and Cohen (1986) that especially heavy viewers of stereotypical content were less likely to distinguish between actual reality and the reality as depicted on the television screen. Due to this, heavy viewers of female-related stereotypical content were less likely to perceive differences in between the actual *social reality* of women and the *symbolic reality* of them, causing them to hold stronger preconceived notions about women and their roles within society (Zemach & Cohen, 1986). Whenever there is an *alternative* portrayal of women being shown, however, it has been documented to achieve the opposite effect (Ferguson, 2012). A depiction of a strong female character is capable of challenging current dominant ideologies by providing a different outlook on the female gender, which has been noted to result in a more positive opinion on women (Ferguson, 2012).

This change in female portrayal has been a product of several societal changes, such as feminism and the increasing presence of women in the workforce (Sullivan & O'Connor, 1988; Lotz, 2006; Charlebois, 2010). The portrayal of women has thus become more diverse and less driven through gender stereotypes than beforehand, which propagates a more *realistic* and *positive* outlook on the female gender. It is expected that these notable changes in female portrayal will result in a more truthful view on genders and their worth in society and less preconceived notions about the female gender amongst the viewing audience. Recent studies have shown that the portrayal of men and women has become significantly more equal during the past few decades, which has resulted into a weakened depiction of stereotypes (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Allen & Coltrane, 1996; Moseley & Read, 2002).

Hence, women are currently portrayed more often as independent, strong and active people who work high-demanding jobs, which shows extensive differences to earlier portrayals that depict a more stereotypical view of women (Moseley & Read, 2002). Despite this increase in diversity, however, there is still a dominant presence of one-dimensional female characters that are formatted along stereotypical conventions (Furnham & Bitar, 1993). The fact that both types of female portrayal are still present within most media constructs makes the implemented characterizations and generalizations that are associated with such portrayals an interesting subject within contemporary literature.

2.1.1 Early female portrayals

In the previous paragraph, it was mentioned that the term ‘portrayal’ constitutes as a representation of any entity onto man-made constructs, such as art, movies, literature etc. (Tuchman, 1979). Ever since the development of the mass media, the creation and implementation of portrayals in general has grown in an extensive rate (Fujimura-Fanselow & Kameda, 1995). This is due to the fact that the up rise of the mass media has allowed for a growth in entertainment products and media platforms that enable the implementation of a variety of characters, depictions and storylines (Prior, 2005). During the early stages of mass media development and accessibility, which roughly occurred during the

1950's/1960's, the television and radio were upcoming mass media formats that quickly became more prominent within family households and rapidly evolved from 'status symbols' into common household appliances in the early 1970's (Gunter, 2010).

Nowadays, the television medium has shown an expansion of television networks, programmes and an increasing variety of genres (Hill, 2007). Not only has the amount of production companies and television networks grown since those days, there has also been a simultaneous up rise of digital media such as the computer and portable digital devices (Feldman, 1996). Due to these changes, there has been an extensive growth of the demand and supply for entertainment products within society (Sherry, 2002). This has led to an increase of suppliers of media content, which in turn has inspired a greater competitiveness between media production companies and distributors (Picard, 2002). Due to this media saturation, there has been a greater need for compelling and interesting media products alongside a use of niche marketing strategies in order to capture the audience's attention as well as that of the advertiser (Sherry, 2002).

Comparatively, television programming used to be quite one-dimensional in its essence. Television was not always the lucrative field it is today and thus high quality programming was often an exceptional phenomenon (Sterling & Kittros, 2001). Most television genres around the 1950's and 1960's, were hence based on the premise that they had to be produced under limited circumstances such as small budgets, modest casts and low production capacities (Bamouw, 1990). This resulted in simple concepts such as variety shows, sitcoms, westerns and political broadcasts, which left little room for multi layered characters with compelling personalities and plotlines (Edgerton, 2013). The purpose of these constructed characters was thus limited as well. They would most frequently serve comedic purposes or advertise products and rarely served the purpose of providing drama and action (Sterling & Kittross, 2001). There was less interest in creating multifaceted dramas for television, during the 1950's and early 1960's, because these would acquire similar budgets to those used for cinema-intended movies. And the cinema and theatre were still the most prominent places to view drama or action related content during that period of time (Edgerton, 2013). Television would hence often refrain from producing such shows as a result. Taking the current amount of drama/ action centred television shows into account; it can be observed that previous television-show characters often showed limited character traits, purpose and also performed in a less extensive amount of genres than they do currently (Barnouw, 1990).

Alongside these different purposes, the viewing audience also differed significantly during the early years of media development and cinematographic productions (Ellis, 2002). Currently, the media realm has become more competitive and consumer-driven, which requires extra attention to the creation of compelling and likeable characters in order to create a product that stands out from the majority (Sherry, 2002). During the early years of electronic mass media, which roughly occurred

during the 1950-1960's, most mass media outlets and even cinemas had a limited audience to their disposal. Television was more often considered to be a luxury medium during this period of time and cinema was considered to be more of a social activity (Ellis, 2002). This meant that most media products needed to appeal to only a small segment of society and were more often than not targeted towards the significantly wealthier demographic. This phenomenon often resulted in a representation and perpetuation of dominant ideologies held within society (Gerbner, 1969). Ideologies can be described most accurately as the dominance of ideas and representations in a given social order, which mostly serve the interest of the highest ranking class (Durham & Kellner, 2009).

These ideologies would often get reinforced through the construction of stereotypical characters, whose traits were based on the preconceived notions about the lower classes of society held by the upper class. As a result, the constructed characters within earlier media formats were often stereotypical representations of society as a means of appealing to these higher classes (Gerbner, 1969). The current growth of media has made this segmentation within media and its audience less prominent. Seeing how most family households with lower income can currently afford most media products and devices; television programmes, movies and videos can now reach a far greater and diverse audience than beforehand (Webster & Ksiazek, 2012). This stronger difference in between audiences also requires for a simultaneous variation in between the portrayals displayed by these media.

However, despite the fact that these portrayals serve different purposes and are often targeted towards different audiences, the general characteristics and generalizations that these female portrayals reinforce have been found to be significantly similar. Especially concerning the beginning stages of the mass media and its resulting products (Tuchman, 1979). During the early years of media, as well as the early years of media related studies, which roughly occurred during the late 1960's, critique started to emerge against the generalized characteristics and settings associated with female characters (Tuchmann, 1979). This critique mostly stemmed from feminist movements and groups of media researchers, who wanted to raise consciousness amongst the public on how the media was capable of constructing a collective notion of gender roles, race and its stratification (Tuchmann, 1979). A few of the leading observations concerning female portrayal that were made by these groups, were the underrepresentation of women, the objectification and sexualisation of women, and the strong reinforcement of assigned gender roles (Collins, 2011). These typical characteristics of female characters would often portray a one-sided, stereotypical view of women, which would not only reinforce gender ideologies, but also make it an ingrained part of society (Brooks & Hébert, 2006).

These gender roles would not only get reinforced through the portrayal of females, but also through gender-related portrayals of men (Gill, 2007). These portrayals would often show distinct differences between characteristic male attributes and typical female ones, which would assist in the creation of an even greater contrast between males and females. It was often the males who would get

portrayed in a work-related setting, whereas the females were more often shown in a domestic setting, performing typical household chores such as laundry, cooking or cleaning (Furnham & Bitar, 1993). The main difference between the standardized portrayal of masculinity and the standardized portrayal of femininity lies in the fact that portrayals of masculinity are often regarded as hegemonic, whereas female portrayals are more regarded as being one-dimensional (Gill, 2007).

This hegemonic portrayal of men signifies that there is no single portrayal of masculinity; in fact, there are several ways in which masculinity can be portrayed. The portrayal of men, occurs through a hierarchic archetype of masculinity that expresses itself by providing men with different functions and putting them in several different positions, some more powerful than others (Charlebois, 2010). The hierarchy that occurs during this process makes the portrayal of men vastly more diverse than the portrayal of women. The presence of this power structure within masculinity can be associated with a multitude of facets, such as strength, occupation or charisma (Gill, 2007).

The majority of female portrayals, however, were generally located at the bottom of this previously mentioned hierachal archetype. The concept of femininity, unlike masculinity did not show major differences in power structure, nor did it show a significant difference in assigned functions and settings (Gill, 2007 p. 30). Women were often depicted as housewives and rarely placed in positions of power or noticeable wealth (Sullivan & O'connor, 1988). This puts the female gender at the bottom of this hierachic archetype of masculinity and also provides a very one-dimensional power structure within femininity itself (Gill, 2007).

A research conducted by Bretl and Cantor (1988), that has focused extensively on the depiction of men and women in advertisements, has found that only 39% of female portrayals that were constructed during the 1970's and 1980's showed women in a different setting than their family household. According to these findings, women were often depicted in domestic locations such as the kitchen; bathroom or living room, which meant that women were rarely depicted in locations outside of the house, not to mention more professional settings such as offices, law firms, governmental institutions etc. These findings differ vastly from the overall portrayal of men that occurred around that time (Bretl & Cantor, 1988). Male portrayals were found to be more often located in an outdoor setting. In 53% of all analysed cases, male characters were depicted in a setting outside of the house, which shows a great difference in relation to the depiction of females (Bretl & Cantor, 1988).

This vast difference in the assigned locations for male and female characters that occurred during this period of time also unveils the expectations within society regarding the established gender roles of males and females. A predominant depiction of women in household settings such as the kitchen reinforces the belief that women should not take part in labour and should not be integrated members of the workforce when their husband is able to provide for them instead (Gill, 2007). The male portrayals reinforce this belief as well, because they tend to depict men in an outdoor setting, which strengthens the notion that men are the ones who should provide for the family

and not partake in domestic activities (Zemach & Cohen, 1986). It has to be noted; however, that there has been a noticeable increase in the depiction of male characters inside of the household, however, despite these positive changes, the depiction of women in domestic settings has remained constant and has not significantly decreased throughout these two decades (Bretl & Cantor, 1988).

2.1.2 Changes in female portrayals

The general construction of gender portrayals and depictions within media already started to show slight changes during the early 1970's, due to the various sociological, economic and technological changes that occurred during this period of time (Nelson-Field & Riebe, 2011). During the 1970's a significant amount of social and civil right movements were rising up, such as feminist movements, ecological movements and local-autonomy movements (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). These movements were able to influence public opinion and also put the public in a more 'active' stance regarding their position within society, a phenomenon which has not only inspired significant changes within society, but also within most mass media products and how these portray groups of people and perform generalizations (Browne, 1998).

The change within media accessibility and capacity has also caused major societal changes and managed to alter most media production processes and operations (Webster & Ksiazek, 2012). The up rise of media as a lucrative business and the increasing presence of digital media formats have strengthened competition and have thus created a stronger need for interesting media productions that acquire large amounts of production capital and are able to captivate the user and hold their attention (Sherry, 2001). As a result of these changes, media representations and portrayals in general started to show far more distinctions and depth than they would beforehand, which in turn could have influenced the creation and implementation of female portrayals throughout the onward decades (Gill, 2007). It is therefore important to regard what noticeable changes have occurred within female portrayals distinctively as a result of these societal and technological influences.

During the 1970's and onwards, the media realm went through drastic changes regarding its technological capacities, its accessibility amongst the general public, and its increase in supply and demand of content (Sterling & Kittross, 2001). The television medium, for instance, went from a luxury good, which used to be a possession predominantly owned by upper class citizens, to a mass media product that was located within the living rooms of most middle class family's (Gunter, 2010). The medium was now accessible to a greater amount of people who all came from various classes of society. This greater diversity within the receptive audience inspired a simultaneous need for greater diversity within television programming (Webster & Ksiazek, 2012).

This change within media capacity and audience width dramatically affected the need for competition amongst media production companies, as well as the increasing production capacities and revenues (Sherry, 2002). This phenomenon is called 'audience fragmentation', which can be

described as a visible consequence of a steady growth in the number of media outlets and products competing for public attention (Webster & Ksiazek, 2012 p.40) This phenomenon gets strengthened through the expansion of older media (such as the expansion that occurred with television) or the up rise of new media formats. Audience fragmentation has become even more prominent since the up rise of digital media and the simultaneous growth in multi-media platforms this has caused (Webster & Ksiazek, 2012). As a result of these increasing media capacities, the audience now has a never ending variety of media products and platforms to choose from, which gives the audience a new found power to choose a media product that caters to their exact needs (Prior, 2005).

This increase in competition has caused media suppliers to engage in differentiation strategies in order to promote their content as being ‘niche’ and ‘highly targeted’ (Nelson-Field & Riebe, 2011). This ‘differentiation’ is most often achieved by re-aligning the programme’s content in order to attract a specific market segment as a means of seeming ‘unique’ (Nelson-Field & Riebe, 2011). This has created a media environment that caters to the needs of specific segments of people within society, which has resulted in television channels, movies and multimedia platforms that cater exclusively to either the needs of men, women, minorities, children, middle class citizens, upper class citizens etc. (Nelson-Field & Riebe, 2011).

In relation to the portrayal and characterization of females, this *narrowcasting* phenomenon has had a significant effect on the frequency of female characters as well as their depth and characterizations (Atkin, 1992). With the up rise of media suppliers that cater exclusively to the needs of women, as well as the growing importance of women as media consumers, the previous stereotypical portrayals of women had to be adjusted in order to appeal to the female audience (Lotz, 2006). More and more female centred media products emerged that portrayed women in a newfound ‘active’ setting. They were portrayed as opinionated, working, self-sufficient and professional (Lotz, 2006).

However, despite the fact that technological developments have been able to inspire an increase of female-directed content and the need for more compelling and complex characters as a means of establishing uniqueness and catering to niche markets (Nelson-Field & Riebe, 2011). It is also important to note how the sociological and societal developments of women have been able to inspire a mutual change within female portrayals.

During the 1970’s, the feminist movement was rising up and became significantly more established within society. More women started to join the workforce and were also becoming more aware of the relationship between the images of females in the mass media and the roles given to women within contemporary society (Tuchman, 1979). Both the importance of female rights movements, as well as the career options for women were increasing, which contributed to a changing society that embraced women not only as newfound contributing members, but also as a newfound consumption demographic (Lotz, 2006).

This had a mutual effect on the production of female oriented programming, due to the fact that more women started to enter the media workforce as well, which inspired a stronger capacity for producing accurate depictions of women (Lotz, 2006). Prior to these societal changes, women were prone to stay at home and were hence an easier target audience to generalize, due to them not having diverse jobs or differentiated contributions to society (Lotz, 2006). They were thus stereotyped along conventional gender norms, which used to be a more accurate depiction of women prior to these societal changes (Gunter & wober, 1982).

According to the feminist- and other social movements, the depictions within mass media did not adapt quickly enough to the changing roles of women within society and thus did not depict an accurate image of their contributions and worth (Tuchmann, 1979). Due to the overflowing critique and the increasing participation of women into the workforce, steadily, these issues decreased. An increasing representation of the strong *working* woman occurred during the 1980's and 1990's along with a mutual rise in female centred dramas and even female directed cable networks (Lotz, 2006).

These changes inspired a new non-traditional depiction of women, namely one that often gets referred to as a *post-feminist* portrayal of women (Moseley & Read, 2002). This type of portrayal was especially common during the late 1990's and is known for depicting females as independent career-women who are professional, yet feminine (Lotz, 2006; Charlebois, 2010). These characters often face issues regarding their need for independence whilst battling female-related issues such as sexism and their need to find Mr. Right and achieve happiness (Moseley & Read, 2002). Despite the fact that these characters show significant progress regarding the previous constructed images of women and pull away from most stereotypical depictions, they are still flawed, due to their suggestion that personal happiness and professional success are mutually exclusive when you are female (Moseley & Read, 2002).

Another type of female portrayal that may be considered to fall under the umbrella of post-feminism is often referred to as *power-feminism* or in more general terms *girl power*, which also emerged during the late 1990's (Hains, 2009; Potts, 2001). This type of female portrayal focused specifically on the 'assertiveness' and 'power' of women and was especially affiliated with representing women as 'heroes' whilst being capable of maintaining their feminine attributes (Hains, 2009). This shows vast differences with the typical post-feminist portrayal that tends to depict the *battle* between being independent and strong whilst being in touch with your femininity at the same time (Moseley & Read, 2002). Power-feminism would promote the opposite of this by depicting women as strong and powerful whilst having no problems being feminine. This would result in depictions of female superheroes (such as the powerpuff girls), who would take action when needed and wield authority for themselves (Hains, 2009). Often, these depictions would have a correlational effect on the portrayal of men, seeing how the male characters would often get portrayed as 'less intelligent' and lacking in authority as a means of accommodating to the newfound authority and

strength of women (Hains, 2009). The main attributes that have changed regarding the depiction of women are thus related to their independence, strength, authority, assertiveness, careers, intelligence and contribution to society (Lotz, 2006; Moseley & Read, 2002; Hains, 2009).

However, the numbers regarding female portrayal do show that despite these remarkable changes, there is still a consistent underrepresentation of women (Signorielli & Bacue, 1999). This underrepresentation has decreased significantly in relation to the past; however, the amount of female characters currently still only encompasses 30 % of the total amount (Glascok, 2001). And despite the fact that women are now more often portrayed as ‘working’ and independent, they are frequently depicted in lower-paying, less-prestigious occupations (Glascok, 2001; Charlebois, 2010). The gender-gap between women and men, however, has significantly decreased and is currently not as strongly visible as it was during the 1950’s-1960’s (Glascok, 2001).

The changes that occurred within technology, society and economy, thus contributed to a more frequent depiction of female characters as well as to an increase of female centred content and a change in female depiction overall (Lotz, 2006). Despite the overall consistencies within certain stereotypes and underrepresentation’s, there have been a lot of positive changes regarding the image of women and how they are portrayed within media. Movements such as feminism have inspired a new generation of strong, powerful, independent, career driven female characters, who are capable of (or struggling with) maintaining femininity whilst trying to survive in a male dominated world.

2.2 Stereotypical female portrayals in conventional media

Stereotyping is most often described as a cognitive process that adopts thoughts about specific types of individuals, acts or segments of people within society. These thoughts are often not completely accurate and do not constitute as a concrete image of reality (Mcgarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002). Stereotyping, hence, most often occurs when trying to relate common characteristics and experiences to certain groups of people within society. This often translates to the creation of generalizations, which can either be damaging or beneficial to these groups of people (Mcgarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002). Race, heritage and gender, are hence the most common attributes to stereotype within current society, due to them serving as significant differences between human beings (Mcgarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002).

When discussing gender-stereotyping in particular, it can be best referred to as ingrained beliefs about sex-linked traits and characterizations according to gender roles (Browne, 1998). These stereotypes are hence based on the gender-related roles that women have performed throughout history, as well as their perceived biological differences (Browne, 1998; Hust & Brown, 2008). These stereotypes affirm notions, such as women being in charge of raising the children, whilst men are the sole breadwinners (Dill, 2013; Mcgarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002). It also perpetuates the notion that

women are irrational beings due to their extreme emotions and sensitivity, whilst men are perceived to be more rational and tough (Zemach & Cohen, 1986). Relating further onto the biological predispositions of men and women, another apparent stereotype is that men are strong and dominant, whilst women are weak and submissive (Gill, 2007). Or that women predominantly serve as sexual objects who exist to gratify the needs of men (Sullivan & O'Connor, 1988).

In relation to females, these stereotypes are regarded as being damaging, due to the fact that they undermine female capacity and are damaging to the evaluation of women's self-worth (Furnham & Bitar, 1993). Previous research has uncovered that male stereotypes can be potentially damaging as well, due to the fact that they tend to perpetuate the notion that men are overly sexually driven and aggressive. However, alongside these notions, male stereotypes also encompass the idea that men are strong, dominant, powerful, brave etc., which are terms that rarely get associated with female stereotypes (Dill, 2013; Glascock, 2001). Thus, when discussing stereotypes, it becomes evident that the female stereotype enables a greater amount of *negativity* than the male stereotype would. This is perceived to be quite damaging, due to the fact that stereotypes are often used to make sense of the world, distinguish between groups and are roughly considered to be interpretations of real stimuli (Mcgarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002). Because of this, stereotypes are prone to become ingrained within public opinion and perception, which is quite a damaging process to demographics that have *negative* stereotypes attached to them (Zemach & Cohen, 1986). Due to this reason, several feminist movements are battling the perpetuation of stereotypes within society, especially those that occur within mass media products (Browne, 1998).

A reason for this backlash from feminist movements is the ability of the mass media to reach an immensely large audience that is capable of adopting and pursuing these depicted gender ideologies (Brooks & Hébert, 2006). Within media, the stereotypical depiction of women has always been found to be quite a common practice. Despite the emergence of positive female role models and alternative depictions of *femininity*, there is still a rather dominant depiction of women as housewives, mothers and sex-objects (Furnham & Bitar, 1993). The most prominent indicators on whether a portrayal can be regarded as stereotypical lie within the characteristic attributes of the female character, the setting/location of the character, or the sexualisation/focus on outer appearance that occurs (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Dill, 2013).

Previous research has shown that it is especially common to stereotype women as being *passive, dependent, submissive* and *weak*, whilst men are portrayed as being *strong, dominant, rational, independent* and *active* (Zemach & Cohen, 1986; England, Descartes & Collier-Meek, 2011). Furthermore, it is also common for women to be portrayed as *victims* whilst men are either being portrayed as the *aggressors* or the *heroes* (Tuchman, 1979). Due to this women are often portrayed as helpless *damsels in distress* who need a man to save them and cannot function on their

own (Stover, 2013). These characters barely exercise wit or any other type of *active* stance regarding the situation they are in (England, Descartes & Collier-Meek, 2011; Zemach & Cohen, 1986).

As has been mentioned previously, another important element to consider is the setting/location of the character. Previous studies have shown that most stereotypical portrayals regarding women depict women within their home environment, performing domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning and doing laundry (Dill, 2013; Furnham & Bitar, 1993). These depictions are particularly stereotypical, due to the fact that they reinforce gender ideologies and gender-related expectations (Gill, 2007). However, these ideologies can also be reinforced when women are depicted outside of their domestic setting. This phenomenon occurs when women are situated into typical feminine occupations. Within most mainstream media products it was common to put female characters in such occupations, which would often consist of *nurses, teachers, secretaries, servants or actresses* (Zemach & Cohen, 1986). This depiction of women differs vastly from the depiction of men, seeing how men are more often than not portrayed as hardworking members of the labour force, often in high-earning positions (Bretl & Cantor, 1988). More often than not female characters appear discouraged to enter stereotypical male professions as a result (Charlebois, 2010).

The last dominant indicator of a stereotypical female portrayal is related to the focus that occurs on outer appearance and sexuality. This can refer to the objectification of women, as well as the importance of *good looks* and *youth* (Dill, 2013; Zemach & Cohen, 1986). Previous research has managed to uncover that most female characters possess *youth* and *beauty* and are often solely validated because of these two possessed traits (Sullivan & O'connor, 1988). Often, these two trademarks of youth and beauty either coincide with women being portrayed as *innocent* and *fragile*, or as overly *sexual, provocative* and *objectified* (Gill, 2007). Regarding animation, this phenomenon can be seen quite clearly within Disney's established *princess franchise*, where physical attractiveness not only serves as a main validation of the character, but also as a main contributor to the storyline (England, Descartes & Collier-Meek, 2011; Hayes & Tantleff-Dunn, 2010). Thus, female characters often serve as a decorative element, within media productions. According to stereotypical notions, physical attractiveness and youth are important indicators to female worth and hence get emphasized accordingly (Zemach & Cohen, 1986).

From these traits it can be seen that the most important pillars regarding stereotypical female portrayals are related to the *setting* of the character, the importance regarding the character's *physical appearance* and it's possession of typical female *character traits* such as: *weakness, dependence* and *passiveness* (Dill, 2013; Charlebois, 2010; Zemach & Cohen, 1986). These are the main elements that differ grossly from male portrayals and are hence, stereotypical connotations of femininity.

2.3 Alternative female portrayals in conventional media

As mentioned previously, there has been a significant amount of research conducted on female portrayals and how these are formatted and constructed within media. When we discuss the subject of female portrayals in a general context, it becomes clear that the vast majority of representations of women are, in fact, objectifying women, putting them in traditional domesticating roles and giving them bland character traits, which are often associated with being female. These character traits include: *weakness*, *frailty*, *obedience* and a *lack of principles* (Gill, 2007). These portrayals are inclined to represent women along the lines of dominant stereotypes and societal standards of how a woman is 'supposed' to behave (Van Zoonen, 1994).

Despite the continuous commonality of these stereotypical depictions within media, there has been a significant change regarding the portrayal and characterization of female characters (Lotz, 2006). Societal movements such as feminism and the increasing importance of women as consumers and contributing members of society, has made the depiction of women more *diverse* and in some aspects completely oppositional towards female stereotypes (Charlebois, 2010; Lotz, 2006). Due to the increasing economic worth of women as consumers and overflowing critique from feminist movements, a significant rise in female centred content has emerged (Nelson-Field & Riebe, 2011). This type of content is often affiliated with depicting women in a way that is desirable to the female consumer, which translates to the creation of a large array of *strong*, individually minded female characters (Lotz, 2006). Where stereotypical portrayals would depict women as housewives and mothers, the *newer* female portrayals depict women as contributing members of the labour force, who pursue careers and possess *independence* and *authority* (Moseley & Read, 2002). The portrayal of women along conventional gender norms thus started to make way for a depiction of women in more *alternative* settings. This type of portrayal can be labelled as an *alternative* way of depicting women and breaking through the gender stereotypes associated with womanhood.

Hence, what has to be noted about these *alternative female portrayals* is that they deviate from the formerly established norms of female representation. It could even be stated that they are completely *oppositional* from these more dominant female portrayals within media, in the sense that they show strength, non-passivity and sometimes even exercise physical dominance over men (Ferguson, 2012; Hains, 2009). Alternative femininity can thus generally be defined through strategies of resistance and non-compliance, especially towards men (Charlebois, 2010). Most traits associated with alternative female portrayals seem to mirror those that have been located within stereotypical content and as a result tend to show more similarities to stereotypical masculine traits than feminine ones (Gill, 2007).

An extreme example of this phenomenon is the portrayal of women as *aggressive*, *violent* or even *sexually aggressive* (Ferguson, 2012). These are originally traits that have been associated with *negative* male stereotypes; however, when associated with female characters, these traits become *empowering* and serve as an indication of *strength*, *authority* and *independence* (Ferguson, 2012;

Hains, 2009; Gill, 2007). One could argue from the previous literature that the *sexualisation* of women can be regarded as stereotypical in any case; however, most post-feminist portrayals use the *sexuality* of women as a means of empowering femininity less than a means to undermine it (Moseley & Read, 2002). Stereotypical portrayals of a woman's sexuality tend to depict women as being *passive* and *submissive*, whereas alternative portrayals present the woman's sexuality as being a *powerful asset*, which signifies liberation of the woman and hence, puts the woman in a dominant position (Gill, 2007; Lotz, 2006). Once this is combined with aggression the woman shows a great amount of authority and female-related dominance and power (Ferguson, 2012).

The idea of the violent woman is considered to be a typical trait of the alternative portrayal of women, due to the fact that it enables them to physically exercise authority and dominance over her male and female counterparts, which puts her atop of the previously male-dominated hierarchy (Gill, 2007; Ferguson, 2012; Taylor & Setters, 2011). The most important association regarding the depiction of a violent woman is the physical strength she possesses. The notion of a physically strong woman has simultaneously inspired a growth of female superheroes and villains, who manage to dominate and wield authority (Hains, 2009). This phenomenon shows a significant difference to the previous portrayal of women as helpless *damsels in distress*. These traits are all considered to be very untypical for the female gender and are hence referred to as being *alternative* portrayals of women as opposed to the stereotypical that ones have been perpetuated consecutively in the media.

An alternative portrayal of females, however, does not necessarily need to result in an aggressive or violent portrayal of a female character; it can also take more subtle forms in which the woman has political power, a well-established career or is showing strength by simply deviating from the formerly mentioned stereotypical traits such as *obedience* or *frailty* (Gunter & Wober, 1982). The female character might even be referred to as *unruly* in case of the former (Rowe, 1995). The character might not be physically strong, but she is mentally strong and portrays a great will to break through gender stereotypes or fight general injustice (Stover, 2013). They are also often defying authority and are particularly considered to be *disobedient* and *self-confident* in doing so (Hains, 2009). This shows great differences towards female stereotypes that often expect women to be submissive, humble and self-conscious (Rowe, 1995).

A clear exhibition of strength (sometimes violently) conducted by a female character, however, still provides the strongest indicator for the presence of an alternative female portrayal. This is due to the fact that it provides the highest contrast towards the most dominant established female trait, namely *weakness* and being a *damsel in distress* (May, 2011; Potts, 2001). Ferguson (2012), established in his research that a representation of powerful females in a violent setting was perceived as most threatening to the previously established gender-role stereotypes. Because it challenged dominant ideologies associated with women, such as submissiveness, kindness and passiveness. In short, the alternative female portrayal can be best defined as a portrayal of women that strongly

deviates from stereotypical characteristics formerly proven to be strongly associated with womanhood.

2.4 Female portrayals in animation

Up to this point, this theoretical framework has discussed female portrayals from a general standpoint that has regarded all types of female depictions within mass media and how they have been altered throughout the decades. Generally, these alterations are expected to have occurred within most media genres, due to the significant changes of women within society and economy. Despite this, it is important to consider the possible differences that might occur within animated movies, due to the fact that they contain a different audience than most media products and hence might incorporate other methods to portray women as *stereotypical* or *alternative*.

2.4.1 Stereotypical female portrayals

The depiction of women within media has proven to be a topic of concern for a multitude of media researchers and social movements. It is therefore no wonder that the depiction of women within animation deserves an equal amount of concern, due to its exposure towards a very influential demographic (Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995; Hust & Brown, 2008). Mass media is considered to play an important role in modelling the ‘gender-specific behaviour of children and guiding their socialization between genders (Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995; Huston & Brown, 2008). High amounts of watching television or any other type of media format that contains stereotypical portrayals can therefore be quite damaging to a child’s understanding of sex-roles and self-perception (Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002; Steyer, 2014). Due to these reasons, it is important to evaluate whether animated movies and television shows contain stereotypical portrayals and if so, are they formatted and constructed in a harmful manner?

According to a quantitative study performed by Leaper, Breed, Hoffman and Perlman (2002) the female stereotype is just as ambivalent within animated content; as it is within any other type of media product. According to their results, female characters are also prone to suffer from underrepresentation and tend to display stereotypical character traits such as *fear* and being a hopeless *romantic*. Thompson and Zerbinos (1995) conducted a study in which they attempted to uncover the most common character traits associated with male and female characters in animated movies and TV shows. Their results signified that female personalities were often solely constructed by the use of a few character traits. These character traits often included: *attractiveness, emotionality, warmth, romance, affection and sensitivity*, which are closely related to gender stereotypes in their essence (p.668). These traits were vastly different for male characters, who were more prone to be portrayed as being *independent, assertive, athletic, important, attractive, technical, and responsible*, especially more so than their female counterparts (Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995). A significant difference within occupational setting was also signified, due to the fact that men outnumbered women in occupational

settings with 87 %, leaving only 13% of female characters portrayed outside of the function of a *caregiver*. A function that male characters have been found to *never* have adopted within animated media content (Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995).

Consecutively, not many differences have been found between the stereotypical portrayal of women in animations and within general media content. However, it has to be noted that despite the presence of similar stereotypical portrayals within animation, they are often presented in a *desirable* manner that appeals to little girls and provides the parents with a sense of *innocence* and *harmlessness* (Stover, 2013). A good example of this phenomenon is the construction of the *princess* formula, a process that has raised an incredible amount of popularity within the Disney franchise and imitations alike (May, 2011).

One of the main reasons as to why the *princess* formula is so effective, is due to its portrayal of a woman who has desirable attributes such as *wealth*, *beauty*, *youth* and *status* (Stover, 2013; England, Descartes & Collier-Meek, 2011)). These attributes provide certain desirability to being this character, even if she might be embodying negative stereotypical traits at the same time (Stover, 2013). Most princesses within animated films are still primarily affiliated with finding their *prince* and are often grossly validated on their looks, which can be regarded as stereotypical notions about a woman's goals in life (Cheu, 2013; England, Descartes & Collier-Meek, 2011)). Another aspect as to why this formula is so successful is the fact that the childish *innocence* the character possesses is more alluring to the viewer, because of the vulnerability and corruptibility attached to it (Stover, 2013).

It must also be said that animated female characters are less likely to be objectified from a *sexual* aspect, or depicted within sexually provocative situations. This is due to the fact that it is preferable to shield the younger demographic from any type of sexual content, which makes it a logical predisposition to create animations that do not contain explicit content of any sorts. Despite this fact, the objectification of women is still an occurrence within animated media, however, it is less frequent and often of a more *subliminal* nature (Cheu, 2013; Charlebois, 2010).

When discussing stereotypical female portrayals within animation, it can be stated that there are no significant differences observed when comparing them to the stereotypical depictions of women that occur in general. The under representation of women seems to be a recurring pattern in both animation as well as in conventional media. And the usage of stereotypical character traits such as: *weakness* and *obedience*, are also strongly applied within the animated genre. Despite this, it can be said that the stereotypes contain less sexual explicitness and are often covered in a mutual desirability and innocence of the character.

2.4.2 Alternative female portrayals

In relation to the portrayal of females in animated movies, former research has indicated that despite the lingering presence of dominant stereotypes, there has been a significant change of the female character since recently, especially amongst leading roles (Cheu, 2013). What has to be noted in particular, is that the amount of women as leading characters has increased significantly during the 1990's and 2000's (May, 2011). Prior to the 1980's, only 8 lead characters were found to be female as opposed to a presence of 121 leading male characters (Thompson & Zerbino, 1995). Currently this ratio is made up out of 74 leading female characters as opposed to a 170 male leads. Despite the fact that the ratio is still skewed in the favour of men, it does show significant differences towards previous eras, even more so than conventional media content (Thompson & Zerbino, 1995).

A phenomenon that seems to be partially related to this is the earlier mentioned concept of *narrowcasting*; a type of broadcasting that is affiliated with catering to the needs of a specific demographic (Atkin, 1992). Alongside the growth of female-centred content that narrowcasting has stimulated, a simultaneous growth of children's networks and children-related media content also occurred during this period of time (Hains, 2009). Drawing back upon previous research, a simultaneous rise in the creation of animated media content was hence a logical predisposition, due to the fact that animated movies and cartoons have been proven to be preferred by little children and hence serve as the most desirable entertainment format (Thompson & Zerbino, 1995).

The up rise of feminism and the growing importance of media as a *paternal* tool, heavily consumed by children, has made the depiction of *positive* role models regarding gender, race and personality, increasingly important within animation, perhaps even more so than within conventional media (Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002; Thompson & Zerbino, 1995; Hains, 2009; Cheu, 2013). Children-related media content has always been under larger amounts of scrutiny and critique than any other type of media, due to the differing cognitive processes of their intended demographic, as well as content being more quickly deemed as *unsuitable* or *inappropriate* (Leaper, Breed, Hoffman & Perlman 2002). Children-related content is deemed to set an *example*, because of the possible harm they might cause when they fail to do so. Due to this, animated female characters have seen dramatic changes regarding their general story lines and purpose, as well as within their main characteristics and attributes.

This has hence inspired a visible growth of *alternative female portrayals*. A reason as to why this is highly noticeable within the realm of animation is due to the large contrast these characters show towards former animated movies. When you compare the leading female character of the movie *Snow White* (1937) to that of the female lead in the movie *Tangled* (2010), a definite change in female portrayal can be spotted, due to the fact that the *Tangled* character shows more dominance, less passiveness and more *masculine traits*, such as physical strength and wit (Cheu, 2013). In relation to movies such as *Cinderella* and *Snow White*, the newer depictions of women by Disney show vast

improvements (Stover, 2013). Instead of women being portrayed as *voiceless* beauties they are now *active heroines*, who crave a desire for adventure and something more (Stover, 2013). The main occurrence being, that these characters break free from being merely subordinate to male characters and construct their own identities (Charlebois, 2010). More often than not they are hence affiliated with breaking through gender stereotypes and hence incorporating more masculine traits in the process, such as *assertiveness*, *strength* and *independence*. A phenomenon that can be clearly observed within movies such as: *Mulan*, *The hunchback of Notre dame*, *Tangled* and the like (Stover, 2013; May, 2011).

In relation to these character traits; Thompson and Zerbinos (1995), managed to uncover within their research that there was a larger frequency of female characters that moved away from gender-based stereotypes and as a result showed a large array of non-stereotypical character traits. Not only were female characters found to show more *leadership* and *initiative*, they were also more prone to show a growth in: *independence*, *competence*, *responsibility*, *helpfulness*, *strength* and a decrease in *emotionality*, *affectiveness*, *sensitivity* and *tentativeness* (p. 669). These changes can be related to a general increase of alternative animated female characters, due to a noticeable decline of stereotypical female portrayals and an increase of female characters that have *uncommon female traits* (Ferguson, 2012).

As has been mentioned earlier, one of these traits that can be most evidently associated with alternative female portrayals is that of the *strong* or sometimes even *violent* woman, who can exercise force when it's needed (Ferguson, 2012; May, 2011; Hains, 2009; Potts, 2001). Despite the fact that this is often a present portrayal within conventional media as well, this pattern is still more likely to emerge within animated movies due to the fact that animated movies have to make use of more visual stimuli and excitement and more often portray violence in a comical sense rather than a conflicting one (Yokota & Thompson, 2000; Edgar, 2000). This process is inclined to make the association of women with violence in animated movies a bit less farfetched than within some other entertainment genres. It has been mentioned previously, that most alternative female portrayals in the general sense, are capable of using *sexual violence*, *aggressiveness* and *dominance*, as a means of showing authority and empowerment (Ferguson, 2012).

Due to the innocent nature of children programming and its content being quickly deemed as inappropriate, this trait of alternative femininity occurs significantly less within animated content. Because of this, animated female characters are more likely to perform violence as a means of being heroic or for comedic purposes (Edgar, 2000). It has also been shown by Luther and Legg (2010), that animated media products contain far more portrayals of physical violence (be it innocent) than conventional media. In their study, 83.8 percent of investigated cartoons contained traces of physical violence, of which 23.1 percent was acted out by women. Within animation, the alternative portrayal of women is hence likely to be associated with a slightly more *violent* woman, but mostly in a comical sense (Yokota & Thompson, 2000)

There has been a definite change regarding the depiction of women within animated media content. Female characters are currently more prone to incorporate masculine traits and show strength and determination, which shows significant similarities to the *alternative* portrayal of women that, occurs within conventional media. There are however differences within the extent that females are *sexualized* as a means of empowerment. Despite a larger presence of violent female characters within animation, there is rarely a depiction of a sexually aggressive or sexually dominant woman, which has been found to be a prevalent occurrence within conventional media. This does not mean, however, that the more dominant stereotypes concerning women have diminished within animated movies. It is still common for women to be portrayed amongst the lines of passive, domesticated roles; however, there has been a definite change spotted concerning these portrayals making room for more and more alternative ones.

2.5 Previous research on the influence of female portrayals

Seeing how a significant portion of this research is affiliated with uncovering the possible effects that might occur when one gets subjected to an *alternative* or *stereotypical* female portrayal. It is important to establish beforehand whether there has been previous research conducted regarding this subject and whether these studies have given any indication to assume a possible effect.

2.5.1 Founded effects of stereotypical female portrayals

It has been generally proven within contemporary research that the manner in which genders, cultures or nationalities are depicted in the media influences the way the viewing audience evaluates these subjects cognitively. This is partially due to the fact that media images correlate to our *cognitive processes* as well as to our ability to *associate* with these depictions (Baker & Raney, 2007; Gorham, 2004). According to psychologists, stereotypes should be regarded as *cognitive schemas* that assist in the simplification of socially complex environments (Gorham, 2004 ; McGarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002). They are typically used to solidify the beliefs, knowledge and expectancies an individual person holds about a human group within society (Gorham, 2002).

Due to this, stereotypes are often a product of numerous *associations* that one either has about themselves or about others (Gorham, 2004; Steyer, 2014). When looking further into the concept of *association*, it becomes clear that the importance of this subject must not be undermined when looking into the effects of stereotyping (Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002). Relating back to the previously mentioned cognitive schema; associations tend to serve as a constructional framework for these schemata. This means that once a certain *trait* is observed that is associated with a stereotypical notion, the entire schemata will be activated, triggering a simultaneous activation of relatable associations and concepts (Gorham, 2004).

Thus when stereotypical depictions and associations get continuously perpetuated within society, it activates a cognitive schema that tends to generalize people to an entire framework of

associations, solely based on the observation of one singular trait (Gorham, 2004; Ramasubramanian, 2011). In relation to female portrayals, this means that even when a female character depicts only one single stereotypical asset, she is prone to get stereotyped along all other associated gender-norms as well, which increases the overall public perception of women as *sexual objects* , *housewives*, *dependent*, *weak* etc. on a societal level as well (Calvert & Huston, 1987; Hust & Brown, 2008). Media depictions have often been found to activate these existing *gender schemata*'s and influence the acquisition of similar new schemata (Calvert & Huston, 1987).

Furthermore, it has also been found within previous studies that stereotypical depictions play a significant role in *self – perception* as well as the general perception of gender roles (Steyer, 2014). According to an experimental study performed by Davidson, Yasuna and Tower (1979), girls tend to categorize themselves less towards conventional gender norms when they are confronted with non-stereotypical content. The direct opposite effect occurred when the girls were confronted with stereotypical female characters, which made them evaluate themselves and others more critically towards the norms of gender roles. If a child gets continuously confronted with negative images of their gender it can damage a child's self-esteem, as well as the development of child's positive self-concepts, abilities, choices and interests (Steyer, 2014). Stereotypes are hence capable of altering self-evaluation, as well as the evaluation of others.

Another study that has been able to show this particular relation between gender expectations and female portrayals is the one conducted by Gunter and Wober (1982). Their study shows that heavy viewers of male-centred action content that tends to depict women as secondary characters with very stereotypical attributes hold a greater number of expectations and notions about how women are and how they *should* be. This includes preconceived notions about how women solely aspire to be mothers and do not want careers, alongside with the expectation that women are ought to behave like this (Gunter & Wober, 1982). Similar results were obtained by Choe (2008) in which viewers of stereotypical female portrayals, such as women portrayed in sexual or nurturing positions, would hold stronger stereotypical expectancies about women than those who did not view such images. Often stereotypical images result in a reinforcement of the negative notions and generalizations society holds about certain groups of people.

Alongside with creating *expectations*, *assumptions* and *notions*, stereotypes are also capable of creating prejudice and negativity towards the stereotyped group at hand (Gorham, 2004; Gunter & Wober, 1982; Davidson, Yasuna & Tower, 1979; Ramasubramanian, 2011). This phenomenon tends to get more prominent when someone is a *heavy* viewer of stereotypical content, as has been illustrated by Gerbner's (1969) cultivation theory. In this theory, he claims that people who are heavy viewers slowly start to see the constructed reality of television as the actual social reality (Gerbner , 1969). As a result, stereotypes can be regarded as truth after heavy exposure, even if this might be damaging.

Gorham (2004), managed to illustrate a similar effect in his study by subjecting a group of research participants to negative stereotypical depictions of minorities. His study showed that people who were confronted with these negative depictions showed a far greater negative stance towards the depicted ethnic minority than those who weren't. Ramasubramanian (2011), managed to replicate this effect by subjecting research participants to both negative and positive images of racial out-groups that differed from the respondents' own. His study showed that even a brief exposure to stereotypical portrayals of racial out-group characters can alter a person's beliefs, and even increase hostile feelings towards that group. In relation to gender, the same process occurs. People evaluate themselves towards gender-related predispositions and format general expectancies towards how a gender behaves and how it *should* behave. These previous studies have shown that reinforcement of traditional female stereotypes in particular can have a definite effect on its viewers in relation to how the gender gets evaluated, constructed and prejudiced (Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002).

2.5.2 Founded effects of alternative female portrayals

Various studies that have looked into the effects of gender stereotypes, have often simultaneously evaluated the effects of alternative female portrayals on the viewer. It is believed that these portrayals and their effects are mutually exclusive and should hence be investigated simultaneously. Both Ferguson (2012) and Taylor and Setters (2011) conducted research towards the effects of female representations in violent scenes. Ferguson (2012) analysed the effects that violent female portrayals had on both women and men. His findings were that when viewers regardless of gender were confronted with *positive* female stereotypes in a violent setting (in this case, women who defended themselves) they were more prone to develop more positive views on women after viewing. However, when reinforcing the negative stereotypes, where women were put in a weaker setting and showed submissiveness, it had the opposite effect on the participants, resulting in a more negative opinion towards women. This is mostly due to the fact that these *violent* yet *positive* stereotypes were able to challenge common ideologies of what women should represent and what their characteristics should be. The negative stereotypes, however, would accomplish the opposite effect by reinforcing these common ideologies instead of challenging them.

Similar results were obtained by Taylor and Setters (2011), who conducted research towards the counteractive effects of aggressive female depictions on female stereotyping. This was measured by subjecting respondents to depictions of a physically attractive aggressive female and a non-aggressive female who wasn't physically attractive. The idea behind this was that both portrayals included a gender stereotype (non-violent/ physically attractive) and a non-stereotypical element (aggressiveness/non-physical attractiveness). The results indicated that those who viewed the aggressive female character showed an increase in stereotypically masculine role expectations for women, and hence a decline of stereotypical female-related notions.

An important part of this phenomenon, relates to the earlier mentioned concept of *self-identification* that occurs when one gets confronted with stimuli that is ought to represent the social group the individual belongs to (Baker & Raney, 2007). This means that a female viewer will more often relate to female characters and the behaviour they exhibit and relate it to herself and her identity as a person (Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002). A female character belongs to the same social group as the female viewer and therefore the viewer expects to share joint characteristics and expectations with the character portrayed at hand. This phenomenon has been found to often occur when faced with stereotypical content; however, this does not exclude the same occurrence from happening when one gets subjected to non-stereotypical content (Calvert & Huston, 1987).

The study conducted by Davidson, Yasuna and Tower (1979), which has been mentioned previously within this framework, attempted to uncover whether a little girl's sex role perceptions and notions would change when faced with different types of female-related media content. These girls were subjected to stereotypical as well as non-stereotypical portrayals and were then asked to answer questions regarding stereotypical notions. Their study showed that girls who are subjected to content with non-stereotypical portrayals of women show a stronger deviation regarding their perception on the established gender norms within society, than those who did not view such depictions (Davidson, Yasuna & Tower, 1979). It was also found within their study, that there were no significant differences between those who viewed gender-neutral content and those who viewed stereotypical content, which indicates that only *alternative* female portrayals are capable of inspiring a deviation within established gender norms and self-perception (Davidson, Yasuna & Tower, 1979).

This notion is also reaffirmed by the study conducted by Choe (2008) that measured how implicit female stereotyping can be affected through exposure to counter stereotypical images of women in both the news and entertainment genre. In her study, she managed to uncover that people who are exposed to counter stereotypical depictions of women, especially within the news, show a positive change in their beliefs on the characteristic traits of women and their function in society.

. Dasgupta and Asgari (2004) show similar results in relation to someone's social environment and their exposure to counter-stereotypical examples. When women were more often confronted with images that featured famous women who have made major contributions to science, law, politics etc., they were more inclined to express non-stereotypical beliefs about women and their roles within society. The same effect occurred when women were more often confronted with influential women in their direct social environment than when confronted with male-dominated atmospheres (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004). What has to be noted, however, about Dasgupta and Asgari's (2004) study is that they focus on counter-stereotypical examples in a social setting as well as counter-stereotypical role models and thus do not exclusively cater to those located in media.

In relation to the perception of others, similar results have come forward during the study conducted by Gunter and Wober (1982), where heavy male viewers of action-drama content were

compared to those who would view male-centred action content on a continuous basis. Alongside the previously noted results, the male viewers of the action-drama content were more likely to view women as *self-reliant*, *independent* and more focused on career prospects than becoming mothers (p.7). This is due to the fact that the action-drama genre would depict women more often as *independent* and *active* than the other genres the research participants viewed. Heavy exposure to positive female portrayals is hence regarded to have a correlated positive effect on the perception of women (Gunter & Wober, 1982).

One of these positive female portrayals that has been proven to have a significant effect on gender perception is that of the female super *hero*, an *alternative* female portrayal that has been found to be especially common during the 1990's and early 2000's (Hains, 2009). Children and adults are known to form attachments to television characters and personalities who they perceive to be similar in terms of gender, ethnicity, social class or age (Baker & Raney, 2007). This attachment has been found to increase when these characters possess desirable attributes such as attractiveness, strength and hero-status (Baker & Raney, 2007). These attributes manage to appeal to someone's *wishful identification*, which can be regarded as a secondary type of self-identification in which the viewer wishes to be like, or behave like the character depicted on screen (Baker & Raney, 2007). This is especially suited to characters that contain heroic attributes due to the fact that they show an exceptional attractiveness towards the audience (Baker & Raney, 2007). Not only does this inspire a change in female *aspiration* and *expectancy*, it is also capable of reinforcing *wishful* identification and altering gender schemata in the process, due to the fact that they defy gender-related norms and display attributes that are desirable for both men and women (Calvert & Huston, 1987; Baker & Raney, 2007). It has thus been found that both girls and boys hold less stereotypical views when confronted with female characters that depict non-stereotypical attributes that are conventionally desirable, especially upon a heavy amount of exposure to these portrayals (Calvert & Huston, 1987).

Previous research thus provides feasible ground to assume that representations are able to impact the perspective of the viewing audience. Alternative female portrayals are hence, also likely to inspire a change in the viewing perspective on women. Ferguson (2012) has shown in his research that sexually violent media, when associated with positive female portrayals can simultaneously create a positive attitude towards the female population amongst its viewing audience, whereas stereotypical portrayals inspire a more negative stance. Taylor and Setters (2011) have shown that such representations of aggressive females are even capable of increasing more masculine stereotypical expectancies regarding women, despite a presence of stereotypical female attributes. Similar results have been obtained by Davidson, Yasuna and Tower, (1979), Choe (2008) and Gunter and Wober (1982), who managed to show that different depictions can result in a simultaneous difference in expectations and notions about women. A phenomenon that especially seems to occur

when one gets frequently exposed to highly deviating non-stereotypical content. These results are thus a reason to ponder the possibility of obtaining similar results within this research.

2.5.3 Effect differences between animated and conventional media

Despite the fact that most female depictions appear to be facing similar treatment, such as underrepresentation, an extensive focus on outer appearance and a similar composition of (non)stereotypical traits, there have been small differences spotted regarding the effects of these representations within animated media and conventional media genres.

Firstly, it is important to note, that most if not all studies that have focused on the effects of animated media content have been inherently linked to children and how this would affect their gender perception and socialization processes, whereas studies towards conventional media have a preliminary focus on adults and how media images are capable of affecting their perceptions (Calvert & Huston, 1987; Gunter & Wober, 1982). One important difference to take into account regarding this, is the fact that studies targeting children look into the ‘formation’ of stereotypical thoughts, whereas conventional media studies target the ‘strengthening’ of stereotypical thoughts. This study is hence affiliated with investigating the possibilities of animated content to strengthen/inflict stereotypical notions. Considering how such a study is currently lacking, this could lead to a dramatic underestimation of animation effects, not just on children, but perhaps also on the parents or young adults who like to indulge in such types of media alongside their children or siblings (Steyer, 2014).

The main difference found within studies targeting animation and those targeting conventional genres, thus lies within the investigated demographic, which accounts as an external variable. According to Calvert and Huston (1987), the gender schemata of children is far more susceptible to dramatic changes than those of adults, due to the fact that children are still busy constructing their own identities and show less comprehension of concepts than their elder peers. Due to this, it can be observed from the various collected studies, that children show larger changes in gender schemata than adults, when faced with subtle counter stereotypical changes in portrayals, whereas adults tend to show the same alterations when faced with extreme counter-stereotypical portrayals (Davidson, Yasuna & Tower, 1979; Calvert & Huston, 1987; Ferguson, 2010; Taylor & Setters, 2011). Despite the fact that both types of studies show changes in gender perception amongst participants, it can be stated that those investigating animated content have had a larger effect, due to a lesser extremity of stimulus materials, yet similar results as those who were investigated within the conventional media spectrum.

In relation to this, it is also important to note that 83.8% of animated content contains traces of violence, whereas the presence of violence in conventional media products has been measured up to 66% (Gerbner, 1970; Luther & Legg, 2010). However, due to the intended demographic of most animated products, the violence is often portrayed in a ‘goofy’ way, showing no graphic injuries or harm upon infliction (Yokota & Thompson, 2000; Edgar, 2000; Huston & Brown, 2008; Luther &

Legg, 2010). This trivialization of violence in animated content has been stated to make violence more appealing to young viewers often leading to a re-enactment of the characters. This is due to the lack of consequence involved when harming others and downplaying its seriousness (Luther & Legg, 2010). Regarding conventional media, this is slightly different, seeing how depictions of violence in conventional media shy away from this comical aspect and more often display violence in relation to crime, dominance, homicidal acts and the consequences thereof. Violence as a result, is portrayed as a serious predicament, often with negative undertones, as opposed to children's movies where the violence has more positive connotations regarding its comedic approach. It could be seen from Ferguson (2012) and Taylor and Setters (2011) studies that aggressive depictions of women are able to decrease stereotypical notions about them. However, it could be theorized that violent/aggressive animated female characters might have a more positive effect on viewers than aggressive female characters in conventional media, due to the lighter undertone of the performed violence.

2.6 Recent research on female portrayals and audience effects

When looking further into the research that has been recently conducted on female portrayals and their possible effect on the receptive audience, it becomes evident that not much research has been conducted over the past two decades. Looking into the recently conducted meta-analyses of Steyer (2014) and Hust and Brown (2008), it can be seen that most studies conducted towards the particular subject of gender representation in children media and their effects have been performed two decades ago. Recent investigations regarding *animated* female portrayals and their effects, aside from those focusing on video game characters appear to be quite marginal within current research. Most recent studies conducted on animated female portrayals; focus on externalizations of violence and gender rather than their effects on the perceptive audience.

However, most recent studies that do approach the subject of audience effects base their fundamental understandings of this subject on studies such as those that have been previously mentioned within this theoretical framework. Most recent studies that focus on the effects of animated female portrayals tend to target newer media formats such as videogames and digital media, or elaborate on how certain aspects of gender representation affect societal perception or body image (Dill & Thill, 2007; Tonn, 2008; Hayes & Tantleff-Dunn, 2010).

Tonn (2008) conducted research towards the effects that female Disney characters have on the perceptions of gender and love amongst women. Her study questioned thirteen female college students on their perception of love and gender and whether they believe Disney movies might have played a role. They were also questioned on their knowledge of Disney movies, by asking Disney-trivia related questions, which the respondent would have to answer correctly to be considered for further study. The obtained results were then measured through a categorization of similar responses of the students. These responses were then matched to previously conducted research on love and

gender perception. The main objective was to look for similarities between the obtained responses from the students and previous research that has stated that media are capable of affecting women's perception of gender and love in a negative manner. From her obtained results, it could be seen that most participants did feel like Disney characters affected their perceptions of love and gender in some aspects that showed correlation to previous research. However, these aspects were not found to be exclusively negative. It was stated by most respondents that real-life experience in love and dating has altered their previous expectations. The influence on gender perception was rendered as less significant than the effects on love and romance.

A similar study was performed by Hayes and Tantleff-Dunn (2010), except they focused on the possible influence of animated female characters on body dissatisfaction amongst young girls. Their study procedure included 120 young girls who were enquired to answer questions about body perception of others as well as themselves. Their ages ranged from 3-6 as a means of uncovering effects from an early age. They were then subjected to conventionally attractive animated female characters and observed for changes in behaviour regarding their engagement in appearance-related play behaviours. From this study it could be concluded that the exposure to animated female characters did not affect body-dissatisfaction. These results have been stated in their study to bring support to earlier claims that girls younger than 6 years old are not affected by media in regards to their body dissatisfaction (Hayes & Tantleff-Dunn, 2010). Most studies conclude otherwise, however, for girls beyond that age.

Another recent study that has focused on the effects of female portrayals and sex-roles has been conducted by Dill and Thill (2007) and focuses exclusively on sexist depictions of videogame characters and the effect they have on gender role socialization. In videogames, it has become apparent that female characters are most often showed in objectified roles, that either portrays them as merely sexual or *sexually aggressive* beings. Some alternative portrayals are present, however, the majority of female characters often depict ideal body images and perpetuate the idea that women play secondary roles and should be scarcely dressed. Dill and Thill (2007) managed to show that these sexist depictions are capable of reaffirming notions about sex roles that are hold within society. Respondents were asked to name the characterizations they associated with male and female characters, to which male characters were predominantly associated with being *muscular, dominant, athletic, aggressive* and *cocky*, whereas female characters would receive associations such as: being *thin, having curves, being victimized, subservient, polite, pretty* and *bitchy*. These implied characteristics among the perceptive audience, were equivalent to the actual found depictions within video games, which shows a significant strengthening of societal perceptions regarding gender and gender-roles (Dill & Thill, 2007).

In conclusion, it can be stated that most recent studies uncover similar results regarding the effects of female portrayals as studies that have been conducted previously. Despite the contrasting results within Hayes and Tantleff-dunn's (2010) study, the majority still manages to show a significant correlation between the nature of a female portrayal and the effect that occurs on perception of gender roles and gender socialization. Hence, it can be expected that a heavy exposure to *alternative* portrayals of female characters will result in less prejudice against women, whereas a heavy exposure to stereotypical images will likely result in an increase of prejudice. There is a definite absence of recent studies into the effects of alternative female portrayals within animation, especially regarding assigned gender roles. Due to this reason, this study could serve as an important addition to the current field.

2.7 Concepts

As has been mentioned previously, the research question of this study constitutes itself as follows:

RQ: To what extent do alternative and stereotypical female portrayals in animated movies influence its viewing audience?

This research question contains four terms that need further conceptualization in order to make proper inferences, namely *alternative* and *stereotypical female portrayals*, *influence* and the *viewing audience*. This chapter will hence serve as an elaboration on these four concepts and will provide further information on how they will be measured and processed within this study.

2.7.1 Conceptualization of stereotypical female portrayals

Concepts can be most accurately described as: 'Constructs derived by mutual agreement from mental images. Our conceptions summarize collections of seemingly related observations and experiences (Babbie, 2008 p.135). Stereotypes can be explained in a similar manner, due to the fact that they are also based on observed differences and preconceived notions that lead to the generalization of an entire group of people within society (Mcgarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002). Drawing back on the previous literature, several of these related observations and experiences have come forward that can be associated with *stereotypical female portrayals*. These mutual findings will hence be used as a guide during the conceptualization process of stereotypical female portrayals.

As has been mentioned previously within this theoretical framework, there is a collective understanding of which traits are distinctive for stereotypical gender-related depictions. Most stereotypical notions revolve around observable differences, which are often rooted in biological as well as gender role-centred differences (Mcgarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002). In relation to their biological differences, this roughly translates into men being portrayed as physically strong and active, whereas women are considered to be weak and in need of protection (May, 2011). It also translates into differences regarding sexual desires, seeing how men are sexually driven beings,

whereas women are sexual objects (Glascott, 2001; Steyer, 2014). In relation to gender-role centred differences, the same process occurs, women are expected to be caring mothers, who perform domesticated tasks, whereas men are expected to work outside of the house and provide for the family (Furnham & Bitar, 1993; Dill, 2013; Hust & Brown, 2008). These concepts define the root of *stereotypes* regarding gender, which transfers into smaller observable differences that define stereotypical depictions. These differences are inherently linked to the observable biological differences between both genders and the variation in their assigned societal purposes.

In relation to these smaller observable differences, previous studies have managed to uncover that gender stereotypes often lead to a difference in *location*, *occupation*, *goals* and *characteristics* of the portrayed female characters (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Sullivan & O'connor, 1988; Zemach & Cohen, 1986; Hust & Brown, 2008). They inherently differ in these aspects from male characters in a way that can be solely related to the previously mentioned associations made regarding their gender. However the most prevalent differences found within these established regions, will serve as the most significant conceptualization of whether a character can be considered stereotypical or not.

- *Location*: The character is located in a domestic setting, or otherwise a setting that is affiliated with either sexualizing the female character or putting a significant focus on the outer appearance of the character (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Furnham & Bitar, 1993; Hust & Brown, 2008).
- *Occupation*: This encompasses the difference depicted between the *working man* and the *stay-at-home mother* in particular. However, if the woman is portrayed in an occupation and not in a domestic setting, it can still be regarded as stereotypical if the woman is depicted in an occupation that is considered to lie within stereotypical female regions such as *nursery*, *modelling*, being a *stewardess* or a *secretary* etc. (Gill, 2007; Glascott, 2001; Zemach & Cohen, 1986; Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995; Hust & Brown, 2008).
- *Goals*: This relates back to the previously mentioned differences about men and women's societal roles. Hence, it is expected of a stereotypical female portrayal that she strives to *cook*, *clean*, *be attractive*, *Take care of the children*, *be a good housewife*, *be sexually available/pleasing* and *be submissive to her husband* (Cheu, 2013; (Mcgarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002; Furnham & Bitar, 199; Hust & Brown, 20083).
- *Characteristics*: The portrayed characteristics of the female character are the most important assets to consider when evaluating a portrayal as *stereotypical*. Within previous research, similar characteristics were found to be the most prominent indicator of stereotypical

portrayals, even if other facets differed. These characteristics are stereotypical when the character is portrayed as: *weak, submissive, dependent, fragile, passive, irrational, helpless, being a damsel in distress, emotional, scared, unmotivated* and overall any other characteristic associated with being the weaker sex and needing protection and guidance from men.

These assembled indicators will be further distinguished within the *operationalization* section of this study; however, this is the main conceptualization to which a stereotypical portrayal can be recognized first hand. Accommodating this conceptualization, is the fact that the analysed character in question has to be located within animated media content and has to exhibit a multitude of these aforementioned *characteristics, goals, occupational settings and locations* in order to be considered as stereotypical.

2.7.2 Conceptualization of alternative female portrayals

What has to be noted about alternative female portrayals is that they can be considered as concretely *oppositional* from stereotypical female portrayals (Lotz, 2006; Charlebois, 2008). When referring back to the previous paragraph, it was mentioned that stereotypical female portrayals are rooted in biological and societal differences between men and women (Mcgarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002). This differs significantly from alternative female portrayals, which are affiliated with breaking through these stereotypes and making these pre-existing boundaries between men and women less apparent. As a result, alternative female portrayals often serve to break through gender stereotypes, which leads to female characters adopting more *masculine traits* as a result (Gill, 2007; Cheu, 2013). Similarly to the conceptualization of stereotypical female portrayals, previous findings on the subject will be consulted as a means to conceptualize alternative female portrayals correctly.

As has been mentioned previously, alternative female portrayals can be considered to be completely oppositional from female stereotypes in the sense that they are counteractive to them and in particular affiliated with providing an *alternative* (Cheu, 2013; Ferguson, 2012; May, 2011; Tuchman, 1979). Hence, alternative portrayals are counteractive to the stereotypical notions that women are biologically weaker, in need of male protection and sexually passive (Glascock, 2001; May, 2011; Hains, 2009). They also oppose to the idea that women should solely strive to be mothers, to satisfy her husband and to perform domesticated tasks (Furnham & Bitar, 1993; Lotz, 2006). Previous research found that similarly to stereotypical notions, the root of alternative portrayals lies in counteracting the biological observable differences between men and women and counteracting the established societal gender roles (Lotz, 2006). Hence, it can be observed that most female portrayals are most clearly *alternative* when they contain physically powerful women, who can exercise dominance and authority over men (Hains, 2009; Ferguson, 2012; Taylor & Setters, 2008). Or they contain women who do not need any guidance from men and are hence, independent, witty and stable

or located within high-ranked occupations (Moseley & Read, 2002; Lotz, 2006).

Previous research managed to uncover that *location*, *occupation*, *goals* and *characteristics* of the character served as the strongest indicators of whether a portrayal could be regarded as stereotypical (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Sullivan & O'connor, 1988; Zemach & Cohen, 1986 ; Hust & Brown, 2008). Considering the counteractive nature of alternative portrayals these same indicators will be used in order to conceptualize when a portrayal can be considered as alternative

- *Location*: The character is located outside of the house performing other actions than domestic chores, or the character is located in either a male-dominated or gender-role related setting that puts a significant focus on gender stereotypes and challenges the character to defy them or break through them.
- *Occupation*: The character is portrayed as hard-working and is most often depicted in high-ranked occupational settings that provide her with a lot of authority over others (preferably men). Furthermore, the character will not be depicted in stereotypical female occupations such as being a *stewardess*, *secretary* or *nurse*, but instead will be depicted in more male-dominated occupations such as being a militant, scientist, surgeon, astronaut etc.
- *Goals*: The character strives towards goals that vastly differ from stereotypical female norms. The character might strive to become very powerful, to obtain a degree, to be a hero, or to inspire societal change. Hence, the alternative portrayal is often affiliated with breaking through gender stereotypes and making the world a better place. This leads to a stronger adaptation of stereotypical *male* goals in the process.
- *Characteristics*: The characteristics prove to be the most deciding indicators on whether a portrayal can be considered as stereotypical or alternative. Alternative characters are directly oppositional from female stereotypes and hence incorporate characteristics previously considered to be more *masculine*, such as: *physical and psychological strength*, *dominance*, *independence*, *heroic attributes*, *bravery*, *intelligence*, *motivation* etc. In short, any attribute that could be originally accounted to *masculinity* and is directly oppositional from female stereotypes serves as an alternative female character trait.

This conceptualization has served to make these observed differences and traits within depictions more tangible and concrete for further analysis. A considerable amount of these facets will have to be present within an animated female character in order to be considered for this study. The concrete operationalization of these indicators will occur later on in this research. Then there will be a direct

selection made from these differentiating traits, in order to make them measurable and most applicable for further investigation.

2.7.3 Conceptualization of influence

Another aspect this research is strongly affiliated with is that of the possible *influence* these female representations could have on their viewing audience. This acquires for further conceptualization on the concept of *influence* in itself, which has been described in contemporary research as follows: “Influence is a way of having an effect on the attitudes and opinions of others through intentional (though not necessarily rational) action. The effect may or may not be to change the opinion or to prevent a possible change” (Parsons, 1963 p.38). The main element to consider within this description is how influence manages to exert *change* by practicing an effect on others. *Change* and *effect*, are hence the primary concepts to consider in relation to ‘influence’ (Parsons, 1963).

From this description, it can be stated that *influence* most prominently signifies an effect on the *attitude* and *opinion* someone holds on something. In this study, influence can hence be regarded as the effect that occurs on the attitude and opinion of the participant after viewing the selected animated content. How does the stereotypical or alternative depiction of women manage to influence the attitude and opinion the respondent holds on them? What is regarded as the *influence* of an alternative female portrayal in this sense is strongly related to how a depiction of an animated female character can form either a *negative* or a *positive attitude* towards women (Ferguson, 2012). This negative or positive attitude towards women can also be referred to by using the word *prejudice*. Hence, this study will look into the influence that occurs on *prejudice* against women when faced with two different types of animated female characters. This study aims to uncover whether there will be an increase in prejudice when one gets subjected to stereotypical content and whether there will be a simultaneous decrease when presented with alternative female portrayals. The influence on the viewing audience is largely regarded in this prospect.

However, the concept of influence within this research is also strongly affiliated with uncovering a *change* in state of emotion after subjection to the selected content. In relation to the main description of influence, this could be regarded as an effect on general *attitude*. This assessment on mood aims to establish whether the participant’s mood gets influenced in a *negative* way or a *positive* way after viewing the content, similarly to the earlier established assessment of prejudice. Furthermore there will also be an assessment on the amount of self-objectification the respondent possesses and whether this has been influenced by the presented content.

Hence, concerning the conceptualization of ‘influence’ this concept will be regarded as the *effect* or *change* that the selected stimulus material performs on *prejudice against women*, *mood* and *self-objectification*.

2.7.4 Conceptualization of the viewing audience

The term ‘audience’ has always been considered to be a key word within the vocabulary of communication and media research (Bogart, 1966). In its original state, an audience was described as a group of spectators who actively participate in the show they are observing, through their reactions (Bogart, 1966). However, when regarding an audience of mass-media content, this process of interaction disappears, due to the fact that mass media formats can only communicate in a one-way pattern. Because of this, the meaning of the term ‘audience’ has changed and has scattered itself amongst various categories such as audiences for videogames, theatre, mass-media and musical performances. The only commonality within this aspect remains to be that of the audience as a *spectator* of content (Bogart, 1966). By this reasoning, it can be stated that animated media content has a mass-media audience; due to the fact that the communicative interaction is one-directional and that these animated films get distributed on mass communication platforms only and cannot be altered as a result from audience reaction.

When trying to conceptualize the concrete meaning of a viewing ‘audience’, however, several prospects come up. The first thought that occurs, is that the viewing audience within the scope of this research could include anyone who is subjected to the stimulus material at hand. However, at the same time, this study is of an inferential nature and hence wants to make further inferences about the population. This acquires a further dissection of what is currently considered to be the main audience for animated content. According to Nathanson, Wilson, McGee and Sebastian (2002), the main audience of animated content, remains to be children aged 1- 12, of which only slightly more than half possesses the proper cognitive abilities to interpret content correctly. It also has to be noted that alongside this intended demographic, the audience also consists of parents who view the content with their children, as well as a range of adults who still find the content stimulating and entertaining to watch (Stover, 2013).

Within previous studies, several experiments have been conducted on children and how they react to stereotypes (Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002; Davidson, Yasuna & Tower, 1979). However, there has been no research conducted on the influence of animated female portrayals on young adults and teenagers. This is quite peculiar due to the fact that adults are often co-watching animated content alongside their children or siblings, as a way of interacting as well as mediating the children’s media consumption (Tanner, Haddock, Zimmerman & Lund, 2003). Furthermore, it has also been shown that there are a multitude of adults that engage in the consumption of animated content, due to nostalgia, personal enjoyment or general interests (Robertson, 2013). The general lack of investigation towards the effects of animated content on young adults, could serve as a problem in relation to the assessment of animation-effects. Considering the difference between investigated demographics, the third variable of age could serve as a problem concerning the main comparability between the effects of animated content and conventional media.

It is therefore impossible to assess whether animated content could have a larger effect on people than conventional media through assessment of studies that exist currently. Due to this reason, the viewing audience as a concept will be considered within this research as the audience presented with the stimulus material at hand. Any person, who gets subjected to the selected animated content, will be considered as part of the ‘viewing audience’. These participants can be male or female, educated or not-educated, it does not matter, as long as they are subjected to the selected content, they will be considered to be a part of the ‘viewing audience’. However, as a means to make inferential claims, these participants have to fall within the age range of 16- 30. The reason for this is that it is important to consider whether people with proper cognitive abilities will be similarly affected by stereotypical or alternative animated stimulus material as children. This criterion will also make it possible to relate the findings to general animated media effects.

2.8 Relevance of this research

In order to make sure that this study is worth conducting, it is important to reflect on the worth it will add to the current scientific field, as well as the possible societal impact this study could bring forward. Therefore, this chapter will serve as a concrete explanation of this study’s inherent worth and purpose.

2.8.1 Scientific relevance

Concerning the scientific relevance of this study, it can be stated that it serves particularly as a continuation on previously conducted studies and an extension thereof. Within previous literature, there has been an extensive focus on the construction of female characters and how these have changed during the decades (Lotz, 2006; Moseley & Read, 2002; Hains, 2009). These studies have found that both stereotypical as well as alternative female portrayals are prevalent within current media and are still evolving (Gunter & Wober, 1982; Ferguon, 2012). The animation realm in particular has proven to be a realm of rapid change concerning this phenomenon (Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002; Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995; Hains, 2009). The up rise of female characters who are designed to serve as counter-stereotypes, has made further investigation towards these characters quite an important predicament. Especially the considerable increase in *alternative* female leads within animation has made further study into this subject and its possible effects quite desirable.

This study will hence serve as a building block towards further study into alternative portrayals and their possible effects. This research allows for an incorporation of the newest animated female portrayals and evaluates which ones can be considered to be most alternative or stereotypical, after which the occurring effects will be analysed. Not only will this allow for an accurate assessment of current female portrayals, it will also allow for an evaluation of their effects.

Seeing how this study focuses particularly on women, it also provides further options for

assessing the possible effects of alternative male portrayals or other counter stereotypical depictions of society. Considering the increase of these non-stereotypical characters, this study will serve as a main indicator on whether these characters have any effect on the population and thus will also manage to evaluate whether there is an actual beneficial purpose to the construction of these alternative characters.

Furthermore, this study can also serve as a framework for further investigation into the possible effects of animation content. In the case that this study manages to uncover significant effects, further study can be conducted towards other additional effects of animated content, such as the possible effects of portrayed violence, life expectancies, social behaviour etc. Once it can be stated through this study that animations are capable of affecting prejudice and mood, other possible effects are more likely to occur as well.

2.8.2 Research gap

From analysing the previously conducted literature on this subject, it became evident that there are still some current research gaps, despite the fact that there are a multitude of studies addressing the same subject. Through this research, it will be able to address these research gaps and possibly diminish them in the process.

What has to be noted first is that most studies conducted towards the effects of stereotypical and/or alternative portrayals within animation are very outdated and are hence likely to be out of touch with the change and formation of current alternative portrayals. It is also important to consider this due to the fact that alternative female portrayals have been found to be quite prevalent within current media, which makes further investigation towards these portrayals exceptionally important. The most current studies towards (counter) stereotypical gender portrayals and their effects within animated media in particular have been conducted by Davidson, Yasuna and Tower (1979) and Calvert and Huston (1987). It can be seen that these studies date back to the 1980's at its latest. There have been recent studies conducted towards the formation and presence of alternative and stereotypical portrayals; however, these do not investigate the effects of these portrayals but rather the externalization of them. Furthermore, there have been studies conducted towards the effects of female portrayals, yet these studies will look into different aspects, such as body dissatisfaction or socialization processes or consist of meta-analyses (Steyer, 2014; Hust & Brown, 2008). Most recent authentic studies tend to focus on the general spectrum and relate more often to conventional media instead of animated content in particular. This study will hence be capable of filling this research gap by implementing the knowledge of previous studies on the externalization of female portrayals and updating those that have looked into the possible effects.

Furthermore, it also has to be mentioned that these previously mentioned studies by Davidson, Yasuna and Tower (1979) and Calvert and Huston (1987), have looked into the effects that animated portrayals can have on *children* in particular. There has not been a single study performed on the possible effects that animated characters can have on teens and young adults. Even studies that address the general spectrum of female portrayals have generally looked into a broad range of ages, or children in particular as well (Gunter & Wober, 1982; Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002). The exception to this occurrence is the study performed by Ferguson (2012), however, seeing how his study focuses on the effects of sexually violent women in particular and does not show a correlation towards animated media content, the research gap is still prevalently present regarding this subject matter. It is important that this changes, especially considering how adults have been found to engage in animated media content as well, either through active mediation alongside their children or siblings, or personal interests (Tanner, Haddock, Zimmerman & Lund, 2003; Robertson, 2013). This study will hence be capable of addressing these research gaps and updating the current subject matter towards recent developments and necessities for further study.

2.8.3 Societal relevance

When discussing the societal relevance of this study, it is important to regard the societal relevance of stereotyping and depictions in general. Previous studies have managed to show that a consistent subjection to stereotypical images, or to images that are counter-stereotypical, can alter the opinion or views someone holds about a group of people within society (Gunter & Wober, 1982; Gorham, 2004; McGarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002). Especially so when these images get distributed on a regular basis and are capable of reaching such an extensive audience (Gerbner, 1969; Webster & Ksiazek, 2012). Considering this, it can be stated that stereotypes and the depictions thereof hold a significant value within society, as well as the depictions that deviate from these stereotypes. Alternative and stereotypical portrayals of women thus play an important role within society and its established gender roles.

Considering how animated content is directed towards one of the most influential demographics and has been through the most significant changes regarding female portrayals, it is important to consider how these images are capable of impacting their viewers. Previous research has been able to establish that negative stereotypes are capable of creating a negative attitude or opinion towards the stereotyped demographic at hand (Gorham, 2004). The reinforcement of negative ideologies towards other social groups can result in social segregation and discrimination of others, which is quite a significant societal effect to consider (Gerbner, 1969; Gorham, 2004). These reinforcements are also capable of altering how someone views themselves and their assigned purpose within society (Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002). This phenomenon can cause people to subconsciously limit their capacities and status within society.

This study is hence of societal relevance, because it evaluates how (counter) stereotypical media images (that are primarily subjected to children) are capable of influencing its viewers and the amount of prejudice they hold towards women. If a certain depiction is capable of causing a positive or a negative effect, these depictions are indirectly affecting society and the socialization processes it entails (Brooks & Hébert, 2006). Regarding animation, these effects are important to investigate, because it is especially targeted towards an influential demographic that will grow up with these images and form a large part of their identity through them (Thompson & Zerbino, 1995).

2.8.4 What this study will add to the current field

This study will be capable of adding an updated investigation on the impact of female portrayals as they are portrayed within animation nowadays. Unlike most previous studies that have been conducted in the 1980's, this analysis will be capable of assessing even the most recent alternative portrayals and evaluating their effect on the receptive audience. This study will thus incorporate female depictions as they exist currently within animated media content, whilst evaluating their *alternative* and *stereotypical* attributes, as well as the amount of influence they can perform on the respondent.

It also has to be stated that there have only been a handful of studies conducted towards the *effects* of female portrayals, especially regarding those present within animation. These studies also did not contain such an extensive conceptualization of *alternative* female portrayals as this study does, due to the fact that they prevalently focused on the effects of *stereotypical* portrayals more so than alternative ones. The time-frame of these previous studies has also been during the 1980's, which was a time frame where alternative female portrayals weren't as established as nowadays. This study will hence be capable of investigating a more accurate depiction of *alternative* female portrayals and will therefore make the evaluation of its effects more reliable than previous studies.

More specifically, this study will provide insight into the influence that stereotypical/alternative female portrayals have on prejudice and mood. The results from this study will make it possible to gain knowledge regarding stereotypes and their negative impact, as well as the possible positive impact of alternative portrayals. Furthermore, this study will also provide a new insight into the way young adults and teens can be affected by stimulus material originally intended for children. Previous research has solely focused on children or broad age ranges, but never on teens and young adults particularly. Once this demographic shows significant effects regarding animated content, this could imply an even stronger effect on children. If there are no significant effects, it could be a clear indicator that animated content is less capable of causing effects than conventional media.

2.9 Hypotheses

As has been mentioned previously, this study is affiliated with uncovering the possible effects of alternative and stereotypical female portrayals on the perceptive audience. Considering the findings within previous related studies, it can be assumed that there is in fact a high probability of effect on the viewer, when subjected to specific types of content. It has been shown that a heavy exposure to stereotypical content can lead to a negative change in perceptions and notions held about certain groups within society (Gorham, 2004; Gunter & Wober, 1982; Davidson, Yasuna & Tower, 1979).

A similar, yet oppositional effect has been found to occur amongst participants who are faced with counter-stereotypical content. They tend to have similar changes in opinion and perception; however, these tend to be altered towards a more positive direction as opposed to a negative one (Ferguson, 2012; Gunter & Wober, 1982; Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002). In relation to the formations of hypotheses, these findings are hence used as a guideline on what direction can be expected from the obtained results.

Within the conceptualization section of this theoretical framework, it has been mentioned that the concept of *influence* is widely regarded as an effect that occurs on the attitude and opinions of others through intentional action (Parsons, 1963). Within this research, this description has been conceptualized into several fragments, namely into the effect (either negative or positive) that occurs on *prejudice against women*, *mood* and *self-objectification*, after viewing stereotypical or non-stereotypical animated female characters. In order to translate these indicators into more measurable entities, it is important to construct hypotheses that illustrate the expected results regarding these indicators as a means of deciding what statements can be proven or disregarded through our obtained results.

Relating back to previously obtained results, it can be seen that stereotypical portrayals tend to evoke negative reactions, whereas alternative portrayals tend to evoke positive ones (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004; Ferguson, 2012; Gorham, 2004; Gunter & wober, 1982; Davidson, Yasuna & Tower, 1979; Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002). In relation to prejudice against women in particular; Ferguson (2012), has been able to show that images of violent female characters have been able to reinforce positive views on women amongst the participants, whereas the opposite occurred when confronted with stereotypical images of women. Similar results were obtained by Gunter and Wober (1982), due to the fact that viewers of alternative female characters showed a vast difference in expectations about women and their role within society than those who viewed stereotypical ones. These notions were far more positive and regarded women as being self-reliant, independent and intelligible (Gunter & Wober, 1982). Male respondents, however, seemed to hold stronger prejudice against women within both accounts. It has also been stated in previous research that stereotypical female portrayals tend to put a larger emphasis on outer appearance and attractiveness than non-stereotypical portrayals, which might lead to an increasing *self-awareness* of the respondent when

faced with such content (Browne, 1998; Zemach & Cohen, 1986).

Taking all these previously stated results into account, it can be hypothesized that stereotypical portrayals of women, evoke negative reactions amongst the participants, whereas non-stereotypical female portrayals are likely to induce a positive stance towards women and thus a decrease of prejudice. It can also be stated, although with less certainty, that there are observable differences between men and women on some regards (Ferguson, 2012; Gunter & Wober, 1982). These previous findings have thus served as an underlying guideline for the following main hypotheses:

H1: Respondents who are subjected to animated content that contains alternative female characters show less prejudice towards women than respondents who have been subjected to animated content that contains stereotypical female characters.

H2: Male respondents show more prejudice against women than female respondents.

H3: Respondents who are subjected to animated content that contains alternative female characters show a more positive change in mood than respondents who have been subjected to animated content that contains stereotypical female characters.

H4: Female respondents show a more positive change in mood than male respondents

H5: Respondents who are subjected to animated content that contains alternative female characters perform more self-objectification than respondents who have been subjected to animated content that contains stereotypical female characters.

H6: Female respondents will perform more self-objectification than male respondents.

Regarding *mood* the established hypothesis is based on those constructed within the research conducted by Ferguson (2012). Within his research he found that men and women, for the most part, had similar changes in mood regarding the viewed content, however, men did show more negative mood differences on both accounts. Due to this, it can be hypothesized that male respondents would show an overall lesser positive mood than female respondents.

The foundation of these hypotheses is thus rooted within previous research as well as general expectancy, which makes it a presumption that this study will be able to prove these hypotheses rather than reject them. All these indicators will hence be tested on differences amongst viewed content, as well as gender. They will also be tested within genders and different conditions, as a means of uncovering possible differences within sample groups.

3. Methods

3.1 Study design

As can be derived from the research question, this research focuses predominantly on the possible effects and influences that alternative and stereotypical portrayals of women within animated movies have on the viewing audience. This research is similarly modelled to that of Ferguson (2012) and will hence contain similarities within research methods and design. Drawing upon the aforementioned literature, it is expected within this research that the stereotypical portrayals of women will have a negative effect on the respondent, whereas the alternative female portrayals are likely to inspire positive effects (Gunter & Wober, 1982; Gorham, 2004). In order to investigate this premise effectively, it is important that the stimulus material is selected according to specific criterion, and that the concept of 'influence' is translated into accurate measureable attributes. Considering how most of this research is affiliated with evaluating the effects that alternative female portrayals have on its viewers, it is critical to select several types of content that contain alternative portrayals as well as stereotypical ones, as a means of measuring distinct effects. The theoretical framework in the previous chapter has already been able to provide a sufficient amount of information on the topic of both alternative as well as stereotypical female portrayals and how they differ in their constructions, implementations and effects. This literature will hence be drawn upon when selecting content based on stereotypical and alternative character traits.

The theoretical framework also contained an extensive conceptualization of 'influence' and what attributes of this concept will be considered within this research. In order to investigate how this relates to animated female portrayals, two facets of 'influence' are being regarded within this research, namely the effect that occurs on *attitude* towards women and the effect that occurs on *mood* after viewing the selected content. These two variables will be translated into measurable questions and scales that will indicate the effect that has occurred prior to- and after viewing the stimulus material. Then, the significance of the obtained results will be critically assessed through a quantitative analysis, which is able to provide a stronger credibility than a qualitative study would. From this research it will hence be possible to indicate whether female portrayals within animated movies have the capacity to significantly influence the way someone views women and how they are feeling emotionally.

Seeing how this research is similarly modelled to that of Ferguson (2012), this study will also make use of an experimental research method that uses quantitative analysis as a means of accurately measuring the concept of 'influence'. Considering the fact that similar types of research have been performed previously regarding the effects of female portrayals, there is no need for an exploratory qualitative research method. This research also attempts to generalize the results to the population and make inferential claims accordingly. In relation to this, the applied statistical procedure within this

research will be of an inferential nature, which indicates that the obtained results will be used to make predictions or inferences about a population (Babbie, 2008). Quantitative research methods enable this course of action, due to the fact that they allow for tests of significance, which are able to show whether there is a legitimate relationship between variables or not (Babbie, 2008). Most investigations regarding the subject of female portrayals and their possible influence, have also made use of a quantitative research method, which makes it a logical predisposition to continue further on from these findings (Ferguson, 2012; Gunter & Wober, 1982; Gorham, 2004; Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002) Furthermore, it is also more likely that a quantitative method will provide trustworthy results on this subject, as opposed to qualitative research that will acquire further investigation after completion.

In terms of data collection, there will be a quantitative survey methodology applied. Two distinct surveys will be created for this research, namely one survey that serves as a pre-test and hence plays a deciding factor in the final selection of appropriate stimulus material, whilst the second survey aims to answer the general research question of this study. The obtained results of the pre-test survey, decide which videos will be implemented within the final survey, based on the outcome of a comparative data analysis. The videos that are perceived to contain the biggest differences regarding female portrayal and mood will be selected for further analysis. The final survey will then use these videos as a means to capture the distinct effects that stereotypical and alternative female portrayals can cause amongst the participants, regarding their stance on women, self-objectification and mood.

In order to achieve this, there will be made use of a control group and an experimental group who will be shown the selected content and will be enquired to answer survey questions prior to and after viewing. The control group will be shown stereotypical animated portrayals of women, whereas the experimental group will be shown alternative portrayals. This will make it possible to uncover the effects of alternative female portrayals and also uncover differences between them (Ferguson, 2012).

Once this data has been collected, a quantitative data analysis will be performed in order to estimate whether there is a significant relationship between the portrayal of women within animated movies and the prejudice against women. Other facets are likely to be investigated as well, such as differences between and within gender, regarding self-objectification, prejudice and mood, but also differences within sample groups and differences prior to- and after viewing. These results will be analysed by using univariate analyses of variance, as well as independent sample t-tests and ANOVA tests.

3.2 Stimulus material

This chapter will elaborate on the selection and implementation of the stimulus material. Seeing how this research focuses on the possible effects that animated female portrayals can perform on their recipients, it is important that the selected stimulus material is sufficient enough for further research and implementation. It is important that the selected stimulus material is perceived as either being exclusively *alternative* or *stereotypical* according to the standards of previous research, as well as by the research participants.

3.2.1 Videoclips

According to the aforementioned literature, both stereotypical- as well as alternative female portrayals contain specific characteristics that exclude one from another and can therefore be considered as polar opposites (Cheu, 2013; Ferguson, 2012; May, 2011; Tuchman, 1979). In order to select proper stimulus material, the selection process was hence mostly guided by the overarching themes that came forward within previous literature regarding stereotypical and alternative femininity.

As has been mentioned previously, there were several specific characteristics to consider when observing stereotypical female portrayals. Drawing back on the basic definition of stereotypes, it was important that the character clearly exhibited gender-related actions and/or differences (Browne, 1998). These settings would serve as indicators on whether the content could possibly be regarded as stereotypical or not. These indicators have been divided according to setting, as well as character traits of the animated female character. The setting of the character would be regarded as stereotypical, when she was located in either a domestic, sexual, overly emotional or outer-appearance based situation/ setting (Browne, 1998). Once this was the case, it had to be further evaluated whether the character herself could actually be perceived as stereotypical or not. In order to establish this, various stereotypical character traits were drawn from previous literature to the likes of Gill (2007), Browne (1998), Tuchman (1979) Furnham and Bitar (1993), Lotz (2006) and others. Drawing upon their work it was possible to create a list of traits that was able to establish whether a female character was portrayed as stereotypical or not, depending on whether they were: *weak, helpless, emotional, obedient, submissive, dependent, sexual, a damsel in distress, scared, tame, clueless, passive, undisciplined and unmotivated*. These character traits have been proven by previous research to be typical indicators for stereotypical female portrayals and were hence used as guidelines within the selection process.

The same process was applied when looking for *alternative* female portrayals. As has been mentioned in previous literature, the most important facets regarding alternative female portrayals are that the character is located in a setting of *authority* shows *assertiveness* and most importantly that the character strives to break through gender stereotypes (Hains, 2009; Ferguson, 2012; Moseley & Read, 2002;). Once the character was located in such a setting, it was important to establish whether the

female's character on its own would actually be considered to be *alternative*. Seeing how an alternative portrayal is typically affiliated with being the exact opposite from a stereotypical portrayal, polar opposites from the aforementioned character traits were used. A character would therefore be regarded as *alternative* if she was: *strong, powerful, apathetic, disobedient, dominant, independent, non-sexual, heroic, brave, violent, clever, active, disciplined or motivated*. These distinctions between character traits and settings would assist in deciding whether an animated female character could be considered *alternative* or *stereotypical*.

Drawing back upon these characteristics, a final selection of 10 video clips was made, of which half was considered to be stereotypical, whereas the remaining half was perceived to contain alternative female portrayals. In order to construct a concrete image of these video clips, it might be useful to provide a short summary on their content.

1. *Snow white and the hunter* (1937): The first video contains a scene from the well-known animated Disney movie: *Snow White*. This scene in particular, shows the Snow White character running through a forest whilst trying to flee from a hunter who has been ordered to assassinate her. The Snow White character is portrayed as overly *emotional, scared, helpless* and as being a typical *damsel in distress*. Due to the fact that these characteristics dominated the entire scene, the video content was regarded as being extremely stereotypical towards women.

2. *Cinderella-Sing sweet nightingale* (1950): The second video is a scene from *Cinderella*, which is also a well-known animated Disney movie. In this particular scene, Cinderella is depicted within a *domestic* setting, seeing how she is polishing the floor whilst singing. Her portrayal is also based on *outer-appearance*, due to the fact that she looks at her reflection and fixes her hair. She is being portrayed amongst stereotypical conventions and does not show any indication of being an alternative female portrayal.

3. *Jessica Rabbit- Why don't you do right* (1988): This scene comes from a movie called '*who framed Roger Rabbit?*' ; an animated movie, produced by Touchstone pictures, that managed to combine real-life footage with animation. In this scene, we see one of the main characters who goes by the name '*Jessica Rabbit*', acting out a sensual performance. This scene is very much affiliated with portraying her as *sexual* and putting a significant emphasis on *outer appearance* and *objectification*. This scene thus manages to portray the female character along the stereotypical lines of female objectification and sexualisation.

4. *Barbie- Princess Charm school* (2011): This scene comes from an animated movie, that stems from the Barbie franchise. It portrays the Barbie character as taking part in an extensive training to become a *princess*. Within this scene, you can tell that the most important facets to consider when wanting to become a princess are *outer appearance*, being *obedient*, being *submissive* and being *tame*.

Furthermore, it can also be seen that the Barbie character is quite clumsy and thus often portrayed as being *clueless*. This character encompasses a significant amount of stereotypical traits, however it also has to be noted, that the character is also portrayed as working towards a goal and being *hard working*.

5. *Snow White- Whistle while you work* (1937): Due to the fact that Snow White offered a significant amount of suitable material for this research, it seemed necessary to conduct a selection of two scenes, in order to investigate which scene could be considered as most suitable for this research. In this video, Snow White is seen in a *domestic* setting. The character is seen cooking and cleaning whilst claiming how it is a *woman's job*. The societal gender roles are clearly depicted within this scene along with the clear *domestication* of women.

6. *Esmeralda and the guards* (1996): This video depicts a scene from the movie *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, which was produced by Walt Disney animation studios. In this scene, the Esmeralda character is portrayed as a gypsy who is rising up against an army of guards. She is clearly defying *authority* and shows great *heroic* attributes. She is standing up for the *Quasimodo* character and defies the cruelty that people have been treating him with. When she flees from the guards she is performing a multitude of *wit* and *action*. The character possesses a significant amount of *alternative* characteristics within this scene, because she is *strong, powerful, disobedient, independent, heroic, brave, clever* and *active*. Due to this extensive amount of alternative female character traits, this scene was regarded as being a strongly alternative depiction of women.

7. *Mulan and the Mongolians* (1998): This video depicts a scene from the movie *Mulan* that has been created by Walt Disney animation studios in the year 1998. In this scene, the Mulan character takes down the entire Mongolian army single-handedly. Despite the fact that Mulan's army is considerably outnumbered in comparison to the Mongolian army, Mulan manages to take them down. She achieves this by sending one of the defensive missiles into an ice mountain, which creates an avalanche that manages to take the Mongolian army down. The Mulan character shows a significant amount of *strength, disobedience, heroicness, cleverness, braveness, discipline* and *motivation*. The character is portrayed in a very non-stereotypical setting due to the fact that she is pretending to be male in order to serve in the Chinese army. The character is very strong and knows how to fight. Due to these factors, the Mulan character is perceived to be a very *alternative* female portrayal.

8. *Fiona fights Robin Hood* (2001): This scene is part of an animated movie called *Shrek*, which was released by Dreamworks in 2001. In this video, the Fiona character is fighting Robin Hood and his men, for bothering her and treating her as an object. The Fiona character manages to defeat a large group of men and thus shows great *strength, power* and *braveness*. She is also depicted as being quite *violent* yet *disciplined*. This scene seems to depict the typical kind of *power-feminist* portrayal, due to

the fact that Fiona is very powerful and exercises authority over others, yet is still very feminine at the same time.

9. *Archery scene- Brave (2012)*: This scene comes from the animated movie *Brave*, which was produced by Pixar animation studios in 2012. The theme revolving around this movie in particular is affiliated with defying gender-related expectations and *breaking through gender stereotypes*. The Princess Merida character is supposed to be married off to a prince, however, this is a premise that the Merida character fights against. In this particular scene, she performs archery as a means of showing the princes that she is *independent* and does not need anyone. She was not allowed to join the archery contest and thus showed a great amount of *disobedience* and *motivation*. Considering how the Merida character outperforms everyone during the archery scene, she also shows great amounts of skill and non-stereotypical characteristics.

10. *Powerpuff girl movie (2002)*: This video depicts a scene from the *Powerpuff girl movie*, which was created by Cartoon Network studios in 2002. The powerpuff girls are known for being female superheroes that have been defined as being a typical depiction of *power-feminism*. In this scene they are protecting the city, by fighting the main villain called *Mojo Jojo*. They show a considerable amount of alternative traits within this scene. They are *strong, powerful, non-sexual, heroic, brave, violent, clever, active, disciplined* and *motivated*. This scene incorporated a majority of alternative female traits and thus made it significantly applicable for this research.

According to the criteria that were established previously within this research, these scenes are regarded to provide an accurate depiction of alternative as well as stereotypical female portrayals. However, in order to test this notion and conduct a selection of the most sufficient material for further testing, a pre-test was conducted. This pre-test consisted of a survey, which asked participants to indicate whether they considered the female character to be more *alternative* or *stereotypical*. This was done by creating a ranking scale amongst *alternative* and *stereotypical* character traits and asking the respondents to indicate whether female stereotyping occurred or whether there was an attempt to break through gender stereotypes. The videos that would show the most significant differences after analysis would be selected for further testing.

3.2.2 Research units

The units of analysis can be described as the major entities of the research that are being investigated and to which hypotheses can either be tested or derived from (Babbie, 2008). The units of analysis are thus the people, things or events under study, or better known as the entities we want to say something about. Most often, the units of analysis are summarized as either being *individuals, groups, organizations, social interactions* or *social artefacts* (Babbie, 2008). Seeing how the pre-test is affiliated with investigating the perception that individuals have regarding the showed content and

whether they perceive it as stereotypical or alternative, the units of analysis are thus considered to be *individuals*. Despite the fact that the pre-test is used as a tool to indicate which videos should be implemented within the final study, it still uses the individual respondents as an entity of analysis. This is due to the fact that their opinion and perception of the video, determines the final selection. The number of units of analysis regarding the pre-test will consist of approximately 40 individual respondents.

In relation to the main study, however, the research units are slightly different. The final study incorporates two separate surveys, which intend to show a difference between groups. The participants who are shown the stereotypical female portrayals are thus considered to be part of the control group, whereas the participants who view the alternative female portrayal are part of the test-group. Due to this dominant focus on *groups*, the units of analysis within the final study are considered to be *groups*. There will still be tests conducted within the group samples and between demographic differences such as *gender*; however, the main focus of this study revolves around the difference between groups, which makes *groups* into a more plausible unit of analysis. In relation to the final study, a minimum of 200 respondents will be gathered, in order to establish significant results.

3.2.3 Sampling units

In the previous paragraph it has been established that the research units of this pre-study are *individuals*. However, in order to make the selection process more probable, it is important to establish a clearer definition of the desired respondents and the procedure of sampling.

In relation to the sampling, a randomized yet stratified sampling process will be applied within this study, which indicates a method that is partially associated with dividing participants according to their shared attributes and characteristics, whereas on the other hand the remaining participants who meet these preceding criteria will be selected at random (Babbie, 2008). Random stratified sampling will assist in ensuring that the key group is present within this sample, as well as the fact that it increases statistical precision as opposed to a random sampling process on its own.

Regarding this sampling process, the sampling units of this research will consist of survey respondents aged 16-30. The reason for this age criteria is the fact that it is important to investigate respondents who have clear cognitive awareness of their behaviour and developments thereof (which is questionable with small children) however, it is also important that they are not too far from the intended demographic of most animated content. It also has to be noted that previous studies have already uncovered the effects that occur amongst children, yet not too many studies have been performed on young adolescents. An equal distribution of male and female respondents is desirable, but the respondent can be located anywhere in the world, established criteria concerning career, ethnicity etc. is not needed within this research.

3.2.4 Operationalization

In order to measure *alternative* and *stereotypical* female portrayals it is important to regard the procedures that will be conducted in order to make the attributes of these variables measurable (Babbie, 2008). The pre-test of this study is in particular affiliated with testing whether the selected content is viewed as predominantly stereotypical or alternative through the eyes of the participant and to what extent these videos are capable of evoking emotion. The variables this pre-test attempts to explore are thus *stereotypical* female portrayals, *alternative* female portrayals and *mood*.

In order to make these variables measurable, it is important to discuss the additional attributes these concepts contain beforehand. Within previously mentioned literature, a multitude of characteristics and assets were repeatedly mentioned in relation to female related stereotypes and depictions. For this study, the assets that were most frequently encountered in previous studies were hence used as measurable attributes of stereotypical female portrayals. These attributes translate to whether the character is depicted as: *weak, helpless, emotional, obedient, submissive dependent, sexual, a samsel in distress, scared, tame, clueless, passive, undisciplined, unmotivated* (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Browne, 1998; Furnham & Bitar, 1993; Gill, 2007; Glascock, 2001; McGarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002; Stover, 2013; Zemach & Cohen, 1986) These attributes were found to be most frequent within previous studies and also provide strong indicators for when a female character is depicted along stereotypical lines. Alongside these characteristics attributes, it is also important to regard whether the content is perceived to be *stereotypical* on its own and whether there is a predominant focus on *outer appearance*.

The attributes of alternative female portrayals have been created under the same prospect. Previously conducted studies have brought a multitude of characteristics forward, which are regarded as attributes, however, it was also important that these attributes serve as polar opposites to the previously mentioned stereotypical attributes and still fall within the core characteristics of alternative female portrayals. The character is hence considered to be *alternative* when she is: *strong, powerful, apathetic, disobedient, dominant, independent, not-sexual, hero, brave, violent, clever, active, disciplined, motivated* (Ferguson, 2012; Gill, 2007; Gunter & Wober, 1982; Hains, 2009; Lotz, 2006; Moseley & Read, 2002; Nelson-Field & Riebe, 2011; Stover, 2013). Another attribute of an *alternative* female portrayal, as it is regarded within this study, is whether the character shows signs of *breaking through gender stereotypes* and *acting out male actions*.

The attributes of *mood*, translate to a range of negative and/or positive emotions that people can experience at a particular time (Beck, 1996). In the case of this pre-test, the extremities of evoked emotion in relation to the video content are considered. The attributes within this pre-test for mood are hence modelled after those used by Ferguson (2012) and are thus defined by whether someone feels: *excited, bored or involved*. These emotional traits are capable of showing extremities in emotion,

which will make it easier to select appropriate content for further study. Within the main study, the emotional attributes will be further distinguished.

Regarding the levels of measurement, it has been mentioned previously that *alternative* and *stereotypical* portrayals serve as polar opposites within this study and thus also contain a mutual exclusiveness and exhaustiveness (Babbie, 2008). Despite the exhaustiveness of the variables and the incapacity to consider one attribute more valuable than the other, this pre-test is affiliated with uncovering the *most* alternative or stereotypical female portrayal, which makes an ordinal measurement level most applicable as opposed to a nominal one. The attributes are hence placed on a 5-point scale matrix table that ranges between stereotypical and alternative female attributes, which translates to the respondent having to indicate a score between *weakness* and *strength*, *dependence* and *independence* etc. This will provide the respondent an opportunity to distinguish between mildly stereotypical/alternative portrayals, strong stereotypical/alternative portrayals, and those that are more gender neutral, which will be quite beneficial to this study. Similar ordinal measurements will be used for determining whether the video is:

- *Portrayed in a stereotypical manner*
- *Putting a predominant focus on outer appearance*
- *Breaking through gender stereotypes*
- *Contains a female character acting out male actions*

These attributes will also be measured through the usage of an ordinal measurement that urges the respondent to indicate the presence of these attributes through a 5-point scale that ranges from *not at all* to *slightly*.

Identical measurements are used in relation to the participant's mood. The respondent is asked to provide an indication of their levels of *excitement*, *boredom* and *involvement* through usage of the same 5 –point scale as mentioned above. As a subsequent measurement, the respondents will also be asked to indicate to what extent they found the content to be *humorous*, *violent*, or *sexual*, which will help in establishing whether the video content was capable of evoking strong emotional responses amongst the participants.

In relation to reliability, this experiment makes use of established measurements as well as a split-half method (Babbie, 2008). Regarding alternative and stereotypical female portrayals, this study makes use of two measurements, namely one that focuses on the character traits of stereotypical portrayals, which have been found frequently within previous literature, as well as one that focuses on the presence of female characters acting out male actions, a dominant focus on outer appearance etc. This can be accounted to the split-half method that translates to making more than one measurement in order to uncover a complex subject (Babbie, 2008). Furthermore, the measurements regarding

mood are identically modelled after those used in Ferguson's (2012) study that researched the impact of sexually aggressive women on prejudice and mood.

3.2.5 Data collection and analysis

It has been previously mentioned that this study makes use of a quantitative approach that is focused on making inferential claims about the population and how they perceive content. This pre-test is affiliated with uncovering whether an *alternative* or *stereotypical* portrayal is perceived as such by the population and how strongly it is perceived as such.

As a means of data collection, this pre-test will collect data through the usage of a survey that will be posted online. This survey will be created via *Qualtrics* and is affiliated with gathering at least 30 respondents who fall within the age range of 16-30. The survey will be promoted towards this intended demographic by posting on various group pages located within social media outlets, as well as on forums and other communicative online platforms which people of this age-range are likely to participate in.

The gathered data will then be analysed in a statistical manner using a *general linear model*, which focuses predominantly on uncovering the effects of several predictors on continuous dependent variables (Babbie, 2008). Several tests will be used within this model such as independent sample t-tests, ANOVA-tests and a wide range of multivariate tests, which will indicate whether there are significant differences between variables as well as test the general perception of the content by the respondent (Sirkin, 2006). The gathered data will hence be processed through these analyses, which will provide accurate measurements of which two videos should be used for further study and should hence be implemented within the second survey of this study.

3.2.6 Results from pre-test

Before the main study could be conducted, a pre-test was performed as a means of selecting the proper stimulus material. First, it was important to establish whether there were any differences between independent groups (the selected videos) on more than one continuous dependent variable (the reaction of the viewing audience, most characteristic stereotypical portrayals). In order to investigate this, a new variable was computed in which three mood-related questions were assessed as well as three content related questions. Then, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted on the selected videos and the obtained results from the respondents regarding these 6 distinctive questions. There was a statistically significant difference found in the audience's reaction on videos, based on the type of clip shown to the participant $F(9, 35) = 31.45, p < .0005$; Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.110$, partial $\eta^2 = .89$, as well as the difference in stereotypical/alternative attributes present within the subjected portrayal $F(5, 35) = 38.55, p < .0005$; Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.168$, partial $\eta^2 = .832$. These results indicate that the selected videos, meet the requirements regarding this study, due to the fact that they differ significantly on the most important indicators.

However, from these results it was important to observe, which videos showed the largest contrast regarding video attributes. Therefore the Mauchly's test of sphericity was performed as a means of testing whether the variances of the obtained differences are equal. The results from this test indicated that sphericity was violated, which shows that the variances of the obtained differences are unequal. This was proven to be the case for videos $\chi^2(2) = 74.394, p = .003$, as well as for depicted attributes $\chi^2(2) = 78.376, p = .000$. It could also be seen from observing the Greenhouse Geisser that was obtained with the tests of within subject effects that the mean scores for audience experience ($F(5.953, 255.999) = 43.476, p < 0.0005$) and video attributes($F(2.560, 110.080) = 40.679, p < 0.0005$) were significantly different.

From these results it could be concluded that some videos would show greater differences/ contrasts than others. Seeing how this pre-test was affiliated with finding videos that showed the largest contrast, the graph of estimated marginal means was observed as a means of indicating which videos differed most significantly in audience perception of the content (whether the content was sexual/violent/ humorous) yet showed similar patterns of movement regarding the mood of the respondent (excited/bored/ involved). This was done so that a significant variation in excitement of the content or general difference in enjoyment of the content would not play a factor regarding its effect in later study. From observing figure 1, it can be seen that the video *snow white 1* and *ppg* (powerpuff girls) show a great variance regarding the content, however, show similar patterns regarding the excitement of the participant.

In order to be certain a paired sample t-test was performed on the most stereotypical and alternative attributes of these videos. The videos showed significant difference in strength of the character $t(47) = -22.505, p < 0.0005$, as well as the extent to which the displayed content could be perceived as stereotypical $t(46) = 14.410 p < 0.0005$. These videos contained a simultaneous large non-significance regarding differences in mood after viewing. It scored the following results for boredom $t(47) = .121, p > 0.0005$, excitement $t(47) = -1.388, p > 0.0005$ and involvement $t(47) = .371, p > 0.0005$. The non-significance of these differences excludes different viewing experiences as a possible influential indicator during further study. Considering how the non-stereotypical and stereotypical attributes do show large significant differences, these findings thus indicated significantly different content, whilst evoking similar mood-related responses. Due to this, the earlier selected powerpuff girl video and the one featuring Snow white running through the haunted forest were the most applicable for this study.

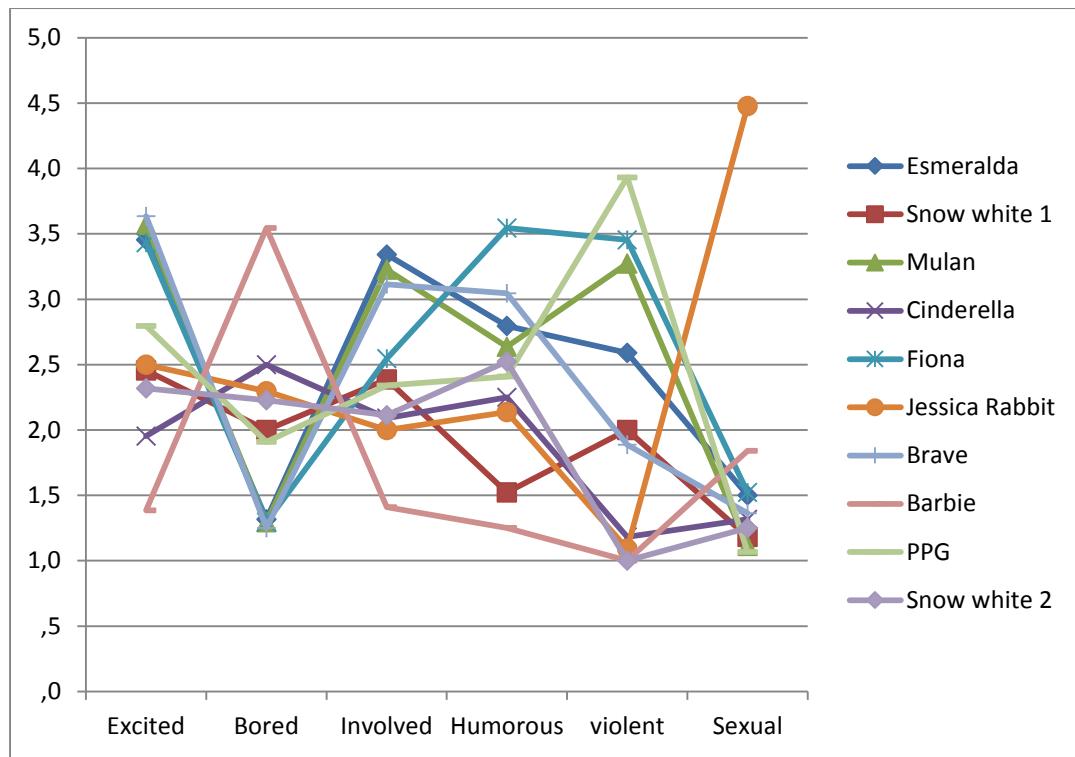


Figure 3.1 estimated marginal means of audience experience

3.3 Main study

Once the pre-test has been conducted, the material will be embedded within the main study. This study is focused on answering the main research question and uncovering the main effects that occur on *prejudice, mood and self-objectification*.

3.3.1 Procedure

The main part of this research is focused on measuring the effects these previously selected alternative and stereotypical female portrayals have on its viewing audience. It has been mentioned previously that this study makes use of an experimental research method that uses a quantitative survey methodology as a means of data collection. A major component of any experimental study is that the respondents are divided in two different groups, namely an experimental and a control group (Babbie, 2008).

The way in which this will be applied is similar to that of Ferguson (2012). The control group will be shown stereotypical animated portrayals of women, whereas the experimental group will be shown alternative portrayals. The respondents will then be enquired to answer survey questions prior to and after viewing. The survey questions that are asked prior to viewing will be enquiring the respondent to provide an accurate depiction of their current mood by answering mood-related questions. Then the respondent is asked to watch the selected video content and enquired to answer the consecutive questions. One part of these questions consists of a post-mood questionnaire, which contains the same questions as the ones provided before the stimulus material.

The respondents will also be asked to answer questions regarding their prejudice against women through a prejudice survey that enquires them to provide their opinion on certain sexist and non-sexist statements. Then there will be an enquiry towards the amount of self-objectification the respondents perform. This will be established by them answering a question that enquires them to rank physical attributes in order of personal importance. Lastly, the respondents will be asked to provide personal information regarding their education, gender, age and highest degree the participant has obtained. These questions will make it possible to uncover the effects of alternative female portrayals and also uncover differences between them (Ferguson, 2012).

3.3.2 Measurements

In order to measure the concept of *influence*, as it is regarded within this research, the same method of measurement will be applied as in the research conducted by Ferguson (2012). In order to assess and measure a possible negative attitude towards women, he uses '*The Attitude towards women scale*' created by Spence and Helmreich (1978). This scale can be described as a 15-item Likert type scale that enquires respondents about their beliefs on equal rights for women (p.892). This same scale will be implemented within this research in order to assess possible effects of alternative and stereotypical female characters. This scale will be capable of measuring possible *prejudice* that occurs towards women, possibly due to the subjected content. Some questions will be discarded, however, due to some statements being significantly outdated or not completely applicable for this research.. The questions consist of both sexist and non-sexist statements, of which the scores can range between 0- 5. A low score will indicate a high amount of prejudice against women, whereas a high score indicates the opposite.

Furthermore there will also be an assessment made of the respondent's mood prior-to and after conducting the survey as a means of measuring *influence*. This will be done through the usage of a mood questionnaire that will be submitted to the respondent prior to answering the survey and after completion. This method is again similarly modelled after Ferguson's (2012) approach, by implementing two scales of measurement as a means of measuring *influence* on mood. These scales consist of: *The depression inventory scale* (Beck, 1996), which is a 21-item assessment on the presence of depression, ranging from severe to mild and the *Anxiety Inventory* (Beck, 1990), which models a 21 self-report measure on the amount of anxiety a person feels. Next to these implemented scales by Ferguson (2012), a third complimentary scale was used for this research, namely the state-trait-cheerfulness inventory created by Ruch, Kohler and van Triel (1996), as a means of adding an extra component to measuring bad mood and positive mood.

Thirdly, there will be a measurement conducted on the amount of *self-objectification* performed by the participant. In order to measure this, Noll and Fredrickson's (1998) Trait Self-Objectification Scale is used. This measurement consists of a 1 to 10 ranking scale of physical

attributes, namely *physical coordination, health, weight, strength, sex-appeal, physical attractiveness, stamina, Sculpted muscles, physical level and measurements* (of the hip, waist etc.). These options consist of an equal distribution of attributes that prioritize health and those that prioritize physical attractiveness. The respondents will be asked to rank these attributes according to their personal preference. The obtained scores can range from 25 to -25. A high score indicates that the participant places a lot of value on physical appearance, whereas a low score indicates the opposite. This scale is capable of measuring the extent to which attributes based on appearance are capable of dominating someone's self-worth.

Furthermore the survey will also consist of questions that incline the respondent to provide personal information about them. These questions will be formatted along general open-ended and multiple choice constructs, which will provide crucial information to our previously established sampling criteria.

3.3.3 Participants

The main study acquired a minimum of 200 participants, who were divided amongst the two different surveys. This means that there were 100 participants located in the control group that was subjected to stereotypical content, and another 100 participants within the experimental group, who were faced with alternative female portrayals. It was also of grave importance that the participants in the main study did not take part in the pre-test survey conducted prior to the final survey, due to the fact that it could possibly skew with the results of the final outcome of this study.

Regarding the sampling process of the main study, it is inherently identical to that of the pre-test. It was considered to be preferable to have an equal distribution of males and females; however, this was still not considered to be a specific necessity, as long as the majority of the participants were female. This is due to the fact that their prejudice levels are expected to show the least interference with societal standards according to previous research and would hence be able to show clearer indicators of *influence*. Despite this, however, it was still the main objective to try and gather an equal distribution of male and female participants.

What was considered to be an important sampling criterion was the age of the respondents. As has been mentioned previously in relation to the pre-test survey, the respondents should fall within the age category of 16-30. The reason for this is that the respondents will show clear cognitive awareness and the possible developments that might occur. They are also not too far from the intended demographic of most animated content and it is also expected that stereotypical beliefs will be more prevalent within matured respondents. There is no further need for criteria concerning career, ethnicity, education, country of residence etc.

4. Results

4.1 Prejudice towards women

The video clips used within the final study were divided across conditions (stereotypical female portrayals / Alternative female portrayals), which made it possible to regard the possible effects and differences that occur between different stimulus materials. The numbers dividing the amount of prejudice against women range from a 1 to 5 scale, in which 1 indicates a strong presence of sexist prejudice, whereas 5 indicates a strong presence of non-sexism.

In order to establish whether these videos were capable of evoking or decreasing prejudice against women, a univariate analysis of variance was performed (Two-way Anova). The subjects were divided amongst *condition*, as well as *gender*, as a means of uncovering in between-subject effects. The results showed a non-significant interaction regarding the effects of gender and condition on prejudice against women, $F(1, 194) = 1.299, p = .256, \eta_p^2 = .007$. It can be seen from the obtained η_p^2 , that there has been a small effect size regarding gender and condition, alongside the non-significance of the obtained results. Regarding the effects of condition on prejudice singularly, the same non-significance was obtained, with an even smaller obtained effect size $F(1, 194) = .074, p = .785, \eta_p^2 = .000$. Indicating that prejudice on its own was not influenced by differences within viewed video content, resulting in a rejection of the H1 regarding the effects of condition on prejudice.

Despite this, results indicated the opposite regarding the effects of 'gender 'alone on prejudice $F(1, 194) = 33.999, p = .000, \eta_p^2 = .149$. These results indicate that the variable gender on its own performs quite a significant effect regarding prejudice against women. It can also be derived from the obtained η_p^2 , that there is in fact a large effect size regarding gender and prejudice, as was expected within the previously formatted H2. As can be seen within the figure 2, men appear to hold more prejudice towards women in both conditions. When men are faced with stereotypical content, however, they appear to be slightly more prejudiced ($M = 3.74, SD = .73$) then when they are faced with counter stereotypical content ($M = 3.82, SD = .68$). According to the univariate analysis of variance, however, this difference should not hold a significant value statistically, but despite this assumption an independent sample t-test was performed by means of a second control method.

Firstly, there was an independent sample t-test conducted on differences between genders when faced with the same content. Regarding weak female portrayals, the following results were obtained: $t(99) = -5.604, p = .000$. This shows that men and women showed significant differences regarding prejudice towards women, when faced with a weak female portrayal. The same test was conducted for those faced with an alternative female portrayal, which brought the following results: $t(95) = -2.992, p = .004$. Despite the fact that the difference between male and female respondents shows lesser significance when faced with non-stereotypical female portrayals, it is still a significant

difference, in which men tend to show more prejudice. It is interesting that the significance of these differences regarding prejudice against women tends to decrease when faced with alternative female portrayals.

Furthermore, there were also independent sample t-tests conducted on the effects of viewed content within genders. Independent t-test showed no significant differences between female respondents who viewed stereotypical or alternative female portrayals, $t (126) = 1.293, p = .199$, despite the minor observable difference in means. The same result came forward after conducting an independent sample t-test on the male respondents, $t (68) = -.475, p = .636$, which shows even less significance than the obtained difference between female respondents.

Table 4.1 *Cell means for outcome prejudice variable*

Condition	Prejudice against women
Stereotypical female portrayal	
Male	3.7359 (.73268)
Female	4.3845 (.42804)
Alternative female portrayal	
Male	3.8166 (.68750)
Female	4.2530 (.70410)

Note: numbers in parenthesis are standard deviations.

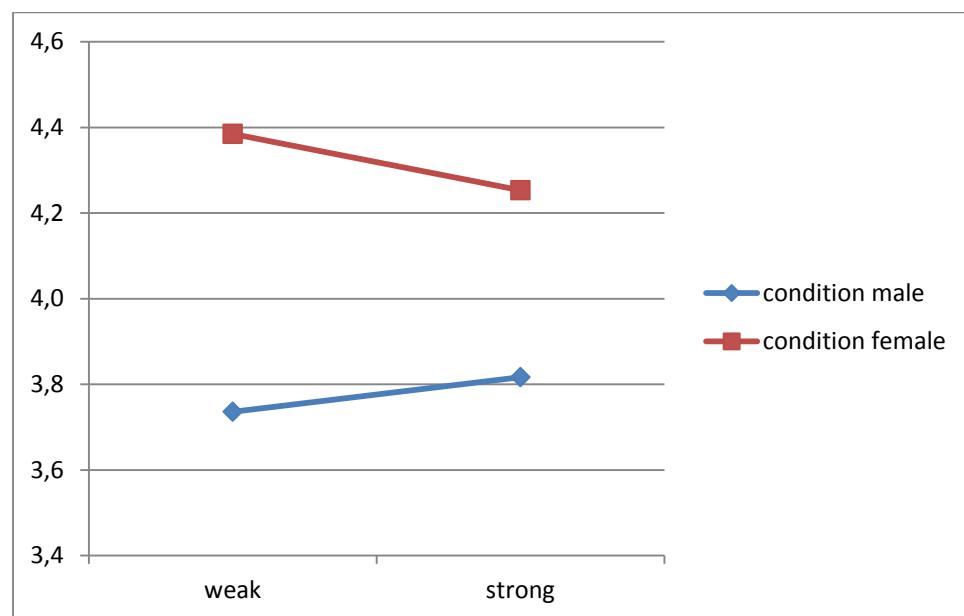


Figure 4.1 Estimated marginal means of prejudice

4.2 Mood

Alongside prejudice, it was equally as important to regard the effects that female portrayals can have on *mood*. The questions regarding mood have been incorporated into four new variables labelled *positive mood*, *negative mood*, *positive mood difference* and *negative mood difference*. These new variables will make it possible to distinguish between positive and negative mood, as well as assess their differences prior to- and after viewing.

In order to establish whether female portrayals can have an effect on mood another univariate analysis of variance was conducted regarding the effect of condition and gender on positive and negative mood. In relation to a positive mood difference, gender and condition combined, performed non-significant effects with a small obtained effect size, $F (1, 194) = .686, p= .409, \eta_p^2 = .004$. Condition on its own, despite being close, also showed non-significant effects regarding a change in positive mood and only a small effect size $F (1, 194) = 3.274, p= .072, \eta_p^2 = .017$. However, when looking into the effect of the *gender* variable on its own, the results do indicate a significant effect on positive mood difference, containing a medium effect size $F (1, 194) = 15.849, p= .000, \eta_p^2 = .076$. From table 2, it can be seen that male respondents show a much larger decline in positive mood ($M = -.23, SD= .93$) than their female counterparts ($M = .23, SD= .72$), which proves the H4 that female respondents show a more positive change in mood than male respondents.

Similar results came forward, after analysing the effects of gender and condition on the change of negative mood. The results again showed no significant interaction regarding the effects of gender and condition simultaneously nor was there presence of a large effect size $F (1, 194) = .042, p= .838, \eta_p^2 = .000$. However, when looking at the effects of gender and condition separately, results showed that the condition conducts a significant influence on negative mood $F (1, 194) = 8.966, p = .003, \eta_p^2 = .044$, showing a small effect size. As can be seen in table 2, the negative mood difference appears to be a lot higher amongst the respondents when subjected to stereotypical female portrayals ($M = -.02, SD= .57$), than those who viewed the alternative female portrayals ($M = -.24, SD= .44$). These numbers indicate a slight decrease in negative mood after watching the video content; however, this decrease is far less prominent amongst those faced with stereotypical portrayals. These results can thus not be accounted for a complete rejection of the H3, considering how there is a significant decrease of negative mood when faced with non-stereotypical characters, despite the absence of a significant increase of positive mood.

The results also showed that the gender variable on its own had no significant effect on negative mood, $F (1, 194) = .860, p= .071, \eta_p^2 = .017$, but does show a small effect size despite the lacking significance. There is a noticeable difference in means between both conditions. Especially amongst those faced with stereotypical content. As can be seen in figure 3, men showed a mean average of ($M = -.08, SD= .72$), whereas women show a mean average of ($M = -.07, SD= .49$).

In order to establish whether this difference in between gender contains any significance within groups divided by condition, an independent sample t-test was performed. Regarding those who viewed stereotypical portrayals the test showed no significant difference between genders and a change in their negative mood $t (99) = -1.265, p = .209$, however, this was not the case regarding positive mood difference. The results of the independent sample t-test showed a significant difference in positive mood between men and women who viewed stereotypical content, $t (99) = -3.292, p = .001$. Men showed a significantly larger decrease of positive mood when faced with stereotypical content, than women, who were more inclined to show a slight increase in mood.

The same independent sample t-test was performed on those who viewed the alternative female portrayals. These results indicated again no significant difference between genders regarding negative mood $t (95) = -1.339, p = .184$, yet did show a significance regarding positive mood difference $t (95) = -2.309, p = .023$, indicating that men who view strong female portrayals show a significantly larger decline in positive mood than their female counterparts.

Lastly, there was another independent sample t-test conducted in order to uncover whether there were significant differences within the same gender when faced with different female portrayals. Female respondents did not show a significant difference in positive mood between those who were faced with stereotypical content and those faced with alternative content $t (126) = -.941, p = .362$. They both tend to have similar increases in mood. However, the results obtained regarding negative mood change indicate differently $t (95) = -2.943, p = .014$. Women show a significantly larger decrease in negative mood when faced with images of strong women, than those faced with stereotypical female depictions, which can be seen in table 2.

Amongst male participants, there were no significant differences found when faced with different content. Regarding negative mood change, male respondents showed no significant difference $t (68) = -1.807, p = .075$, nor did they show significance regarding positive mood difference $t (68) = -1.415, p = .162$. The only thing that remains to be constant is the general decrease of positive mood amongst the male participants.

Table 4.2 Cell means for outcome of mood differences

Condition	Difference in positive mood	Difference in negative mood
Stereotypical female portrayal		
Male	-.3939 (.94493)	-.0833 (.7192)
Female	.1765 (.74787)	.0704 (.48802)
Alternative female portrayal		
Male	-.0811 (.90385)	.1602 (.37321)
Female	.2929 (.68407)	.2827 (.47281)

Note: numbers in parenthesis are standard deviations.

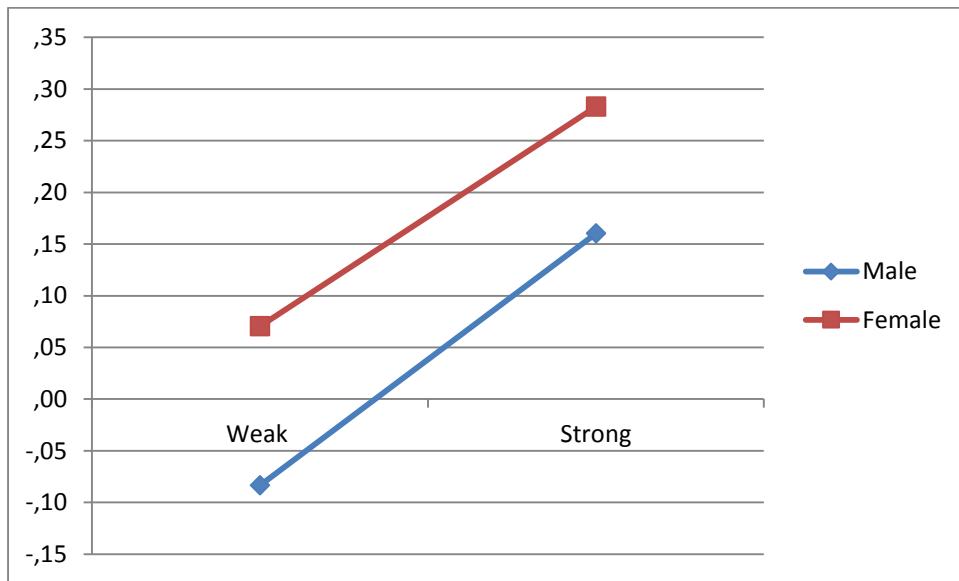


Figure 4.2 Estimated marginal means of negative mood difference

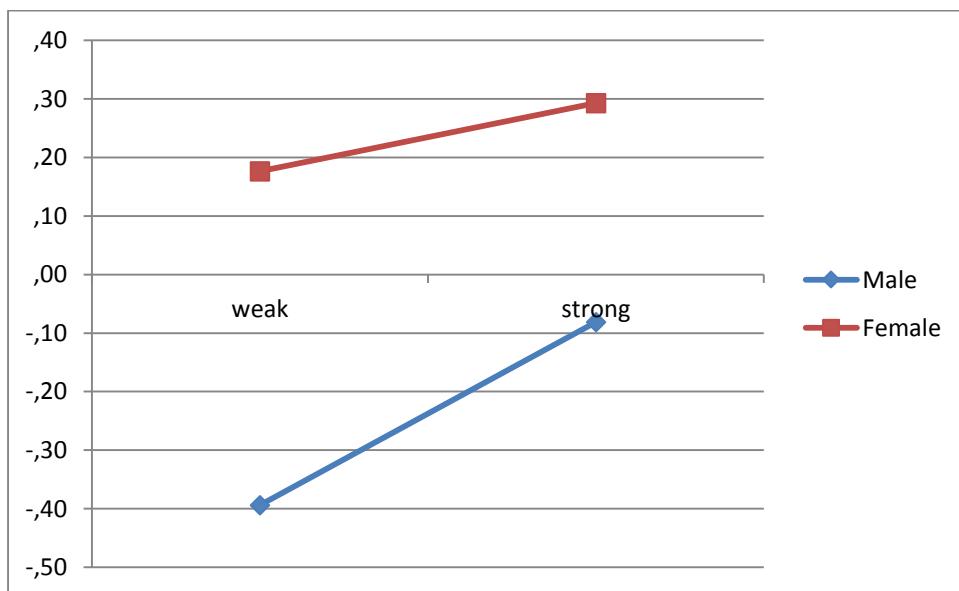


Figure 4.3 Estimated marginal means of positive mood difference

4.3 Self-objectification

The last variable that needed to be measured within this research was that of *self-objectification*. In order to measure whether female portrayals could have an effect on the amount of self-objectification performed by the respondent another univariate analysis of variance was performed. The results indicated no significant interaction or noticeable effect size between the effects of gender and condition on self-objectification $F(1, 194) = .004, p = .948, \eta_p^2 = .000$. Neither did gender on its own have a significant effect on self-objectification $F(1, 194) = 1.097, p = .296, \eta_p^2 = .006$. Respectively, similar results were obtained concerning condition, indicating a non-significant interaction in between subject effects $F(1, 194) = .052, p = .820, \eta_p^2 = .000$. Resulting in a rejection of both the H5, as well as the H6, indicating the effects of content on self-objectification, as well as the hypothesis that women would show higher amounts of self-objectification than male respondents.

From observing the means in table 3, it can even be seen that the male respondents appear to objectify themselves slightly more than females due to their slightly lower scores. An independent sample t-test has proven that these differences, however, hold no significant merit $t(196) = -1.041, p = .299$. There were also independent sample t-tests performed on males and females separately, as a means of uncovering within-subject differences. When observing the means in table 3, it can be seen that female participants who viewed stereotypical content ($M = 9.24, SD = 9.23$) show a decrease in self-objectification when faced with non-stereotypical content ($M = 9.67, SD = 8.79$). A similar effect can be observed when looking at the male participants, who went from a mean of ($M = 7.79, SD = 10.94$) to a mean of ($M = 8.03, SD = 11.66$).

Despite this observable decrease of self-objectification amongst both men and women when faced with non-stereotypical content, the independent sample t-tests showed no significant differences. The differences between females who viewed stereotypical and non-stereotypical content, were shown as non-significant $t(126) = -.270, p = .788$. The same results were obtained concerning male respondents, who showed even less significant difference when faced with different stimulus materials than the female respondents $t(68) = -.088, p = .930$

Table 4.3 Cell means for outcome of self-objectification variable

Condition	Self-objectification
Stereotypical female portrayal	
Male	7.7879 (10.94234)
Female	9.2353 (9.23025)
Alternative female portrayal	
Male	8.027 (11.65830)
Female	9.6667 (8.79651)

Note: numbers in parenthesis are standard deviations.

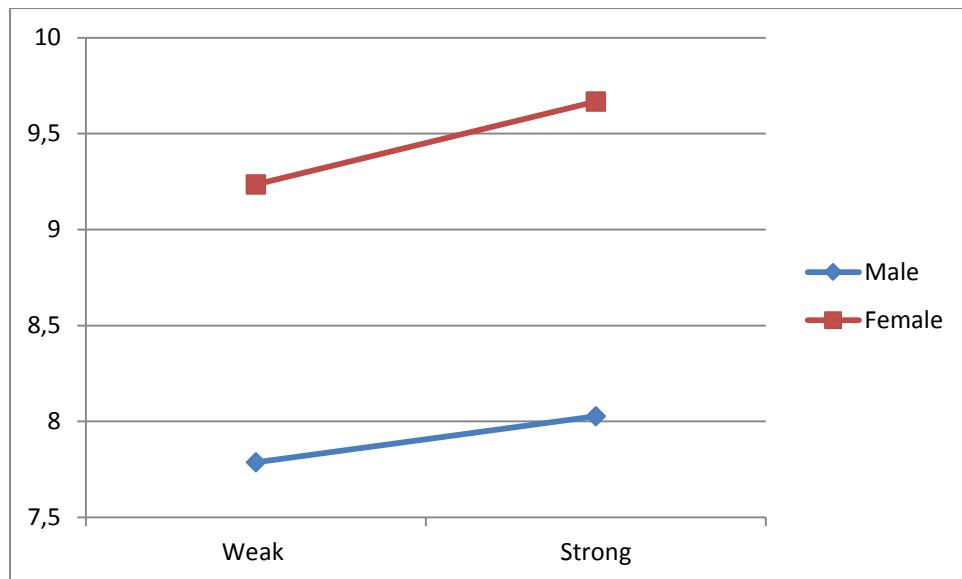


Figure 4.4 Estimated marginal means of self-objectification

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of results

From the obtained results, it became evident that the (non)stereotypical nature of the presented female portrayals did not have a significant effect on prejudice against women, despite previous literature indicating otherwise. Relating back to Steyer's (2014) meta-analysis, it could be seen that most studies conducted towards this subject showed a definite correlation between (non)stereotypical depictions of women and the (non)stereotypical notions on women held by those who view them.

Taking these previous results into consideration, the currently obtained results seem quite controversial in comparison. One possible reason for such results might lie in the lack of extremity within the stimulus material. As has been theorized earlier within this study, animated content does not show the same approach to violence as conventional media does. There is a lack of consequence and visible physical harm, which turns violence into a trivialized concept within most animated films (Luther & Legg, 2010). As a result, animations show less extremity within their content than most conventional media formats, which might play a role in relation to affecting adults. Considering how Ferguson (2013) and Taylor and Setters (2011) did obtain significant results when subjecting their research participants to sexually aggressive female characters, it could be hypothesized that animated content does not provide the same extremity as these conventional stimulus materials. The obtained results, could hence serve as a strengthening of the theory that animated content is less capable of inflicting effects on adults than conventional media is.

A minor decrease in means can be spotted amongst male participants who viewed non-stereotypical content, however, these differences proved to be non-significant. Women even show a

slight increase in prejudice when faced with non-stereotypical content. This effect can be possibly accounted to women feeling more defensive when faced with stereotypical content than they would feel when faced with non-stereotypical content. This phenomenon possibly relates back to the concept of *wishful identification*, which can be described as a secondary type of self-identification in which women aspire to be like the female character depicted on screen if she contains desirable attributes such as strength and heroicness (Baker & Raney, 2007). Taking this into consideration, the Snow White scene might have displayed undesirable attributes for women and was hence capable of steering the *wishful identification* away from the female stereotype, resulting in a more aggressive stance towards female stereotypes and an active promotion of the *wishful* role of women within society.

The results did show a significant difference between male and female respondents, as males were proven to show more signs of prejudice against women. It has been stated previously, that people hold preconceived notions about out-groups, which are often formatted through depicted structures in society (Ramasubramanian, 2011). Media is often capable of strengthening such notions by displaying either unfortunate or stereotypical images about these out-groups. In relation to this study, the male respondents consider women as such an out-group, which is likely to affect their judgement and prejudice towards women according to obtained results in earlier research (Gorham, 2004; Ramasubramanian, 2011),

Regarding a difference in mood, the results indicated the effects of female portrayals on positive mood difference as non-significant. Gender and condition simultaneously did not show significant effects, nor did condition on its own have a significant effect on positive mood. These results might relate back to the previously mentioned difference in violence that occurs between animated and conventional media. The violence within animated media content is often displayed in a comical manner, which makes the general experience of viewing such content more pleasurable and comfortable than when faced with graphic physical injuries (Luther & Legg, 2010). Considering how the association with violence is often more positive within animated content, it could indicate that such an exposure of violence might influence the viewing experience and mood less than the stimulus material used within some other studies (Ferguson, 2013; Taylor & Setters, 2011).

There were, however, significant differences between men and women singularly regarding their change in positive mood. Men seemed to show a significantly larger decrease in positive mood when faced with stereotypical content, whereas female respondents showed a slight increase. This could be due to the fact that men have been found to often prefer entertainment products that contain masculine-specific traits than their female counterparts desiring feminine specific-traits (Hust & Brown, 2008). Men will select most of their entertainment preferences based on the amount of violence, action and adventure present in the content (Hust & Brown, 2008). Being subjected to the Powerpuff girl scene that displays such characteristics is hence likely to affect their mood less than a

snow white scene that displays none of these listed attributes (Calvert & Huston, 1987). Male respondents perhaps do not enjoy typically feminine content, whereas alternative portrayals tend to be more in tune with masculine traits and therefore might be slightly more enjoyable to men. Despite this, males still show a larger decrease in positive mood when faced with alternative portrayals than their female counterparts.

In relation to negative mood, the type of female portrayal that is shown to the participant does have a significant effect. The results show that those who are subjected to non-stereotypical content show a far greater decrease in negative mood than those subjected to stereotypical content. Especially females show a significant decrease in negative mood when faced with alternative female portrayals. These results coincide with the commonly obtained results that alternative female portrayals tend to evoke positive reactions, especially amongst those who belong to the depicted social group (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004; Choe, 2008; Ferguson, 2012; Gorham, 2004; Gunter & wober, 1982; Davidson, Yasuna & Tower, 1979; Steyer, 2014; Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002).

Amongst males, the statistical significance of this effect is absent, which is possibly due to the lack of self-identification involved; however, it can be observed that stereotypical depictions show an increasing effect on negative mood, despite there being no significant differences between genders. This could again be accounted to the fact that men might not enjoy stereotypical female content as much.

Lastly, this study looked further into the effects of female portrayals and gender on self-objectification. Gender and the type of female portrayal did not perform an effect on self-objectification simultaneously, nor did they show singular effects. There were also no significant differences found in between subject groups. Male respondents did not show more self-objectification when faced with different types of content, nor did the female respondents show an increase of self-objectification when faced with stereotypical content. Hence, this study did not obtain any significant results regarding this subject. These results are similar to those obtained by Hayes and Tantleff-Dunn (2010), seeing how their study did not manage to uncover a significant effect of animated female characters on body image either.

From observing the means, it could even be stated that men objectify themselves slightly more than women, which is peculiar, due to the fact that it derives from the main notion that women are more concerned with their looks than men. The videos have not managed to perform any effect on the respondents regarding the amount of self-objectification they exhibit. From observing the means, it can be seen that there was a slight decrease in self-objectification when faced with non-stereotypical portrayals amongst men and women, however these differences have proven to be too insignificant to make inferential statements about them.

5.2 Limitations

Despite the fact that this study managed to bring some interesting results forward, it is important to consider its flaws and how these could be improved for possible further study. It also has to be noted that this research did not manage to uncover the desired results in some aspects, which might be accountable to possible limitations that should be considered.

One of these limitations that has been found to be of quite considerable significance is the extensiveness of video-exposure that was performed. This study incorporated one video of roughly 3 minutes per test-group, which could be considered to be of quite modest length. Due to this, the results of this research might not be as accurate as were the participant subjected to lengthier amounts of content. Perhaps more videos could be incorporated in future study, as well as lengthier content as a means of uncovering more significant results. It is reckoned that the exposure to stereotypical or non-stereotypical portrayals was not extensive enough within this study to perform a significant effect. The short length of the videos within this study, are thus considered to be a limitation, seeing how lengthier, videos might have caused slightly more significant results.

Furthermore, it also has to be noted, that this study was performed through an online survey. Despite this being an effective method to gather participants in a quick rate, it does have some limitations regarding the opportunities for control. The participant might click through the video without paying intensive attention to it, which could also skew with the results. Due to the survey being distributed online, this is a phenomenon that cannot be controlled or regulated by the researcher. Nor can there be a proper regulation performed on the answers given by the respondent. For further study, it might be advised to conduct this experiment in real-life and hand out a printed survey amongst research participants instead of conducting a survey online.

Another possible limitation could be the amount of respondents gathered for this study. Within this research, there were 200 respondents gathered of which 72 respondents were male as opposed to 128 females. It could be possible that a larger sample of respondents could harbour different results than those that are currently obtained within this research.

A larger amount of male respondents might be desirable as well, due to the fact that a sample of 200 male respondents would make the occurrence of statistically significant results more likely than this current sample size of 72 males. For this study, female participants were slightly more important, however, for further study it is advised to have a slightly lesser unequal distribution of male and female respondents.

It can also be advised to consider further study with a younger audience demographic, due to the fact that previous studies, despite their experiments on children, have not focused extensively on the current portrayals of women and the audience effects these could have.

5.3 Conclusion

The research question that was proposed within this study was the following:

RQ: To what extent do alternative and stereotypical female portrayals in animated movies influence its viewing audience?

As a means of measuring *influence*, there were several aspects regarded within this study, namely *prejudice* against women, *mood* and *self-objectification*. These elements were measured through the implementation of an experimental study that made use of a quantitative survey method. Respondents were divided into two groups, of which the former group was subjected to stereotypical content whereas the second group was acquired to view non-stereotypical female characters. Their reactions were measured using scales for *mood*, *prejudice* and *self-objectification* after viewing.

This research primarily tried to uncover whether the differing female portrayals were capable of affecting someone's stance regarding women, seeing how previous research has stated repeatedly that stereotypes and alternatives thereof are capable of affecting someone's stance regarding a group of people within society (Gorham, 2004; Gunter & Wober, 1982; Davidson, Yasuna & Tower, 1979). Despite these former findings, the obtained results from this study indicate no significant effect on prejudice against women when viewing stereotypical or alternative female portrayals. Despite a small observable difference in means, these differences have been proven to be non-significant. Unlike video-content, the gender variable was found to have a significant effect on prejudice, seeing how men were found to be significantly more prejudiced than women in both groups.

Furthermore, this research also tried to uncover whether female portrayals were capable of causing a significant change in mood. It was found that those who viewed alternative female portrayals had a far greater decline in negative mood than those who viewed stereotypical content. This was especially the case amongst female participants, more so than male ones. It was also noticeable that male respondents showed a slight increase in negative mood as well as a significant decrease in positive mood when faced with both types of portrayals. However, men did show to have a significantly lesser decrease in positive mood as well as a lesser increase in negative mood when faced with alternative portrayals as well.

Thirdly, this study also looked into the effects of female portrayals on the amount of self-objectification performed by the respondent. There were no significant results obtained regarding this subject. No significant effects or differences were found amongst the respondents regarding the viewed content. Contrary to popular belief, there were also no significant differences found between male and female respondents, nor were there signs of female respondents objectifying themselves more than their male counterparts.

The fact that this study did not manage to provide some significant differences and effects regarding female prejudice and the viewed content was quite remarkable due to the fact that various studies have provided evidence for the possible implications and effects of (non)stereotypical depictions. A possible reason for this occurrence might be related to the earlier mentioned concept of *heavy viewing* (Gerbner, 1969; Gorham, 2004; Gunter & Wober, 1982). Previous studies that have managed to uncover significant effects, did subject their research participants extensively towards specific subject content. Considering the fact that this research implemented a 3-minute video, the effects might not have been as visible as were the participants faced with lengthier amounts of video content. It might also be partially accounted to the fact that the survey was distributed online, which did not allow for the researcher to have full control over the participants. This could lead to participants clicking through videos without paying full attention to them, as well as participants filling in questions without paying full attention.

Despite the absence of some aspired results, this research still managed to bring some interesting findings forward regarding the influence of female portrayals on mood and differences between genders. From the obtained results it can be stated that men are significantly more prejudiced towards women, which is a phenomenon that could be investigated further in the future. There was also an observable difference in means that men showed slightly less prejudice when faced with non-stereotypical content, as opposed to women who showed a slight increase. These observations could not be verified through our results, however through more intensive stimulus material, further study might be able to modify these observations into significant results.

Furthermore this study also managed to uncover that men and women show significant differences within positive mood when faced with different stimulus material. Male respondents showed a significant decrease in positive mood when faced with both types of female portrayals, as opposed to women who showed a slight increase in positive mood. The type of female portrayal subjected to the participant did have a significant effect on the decrease of negative mood, amongst men as well as amongst women. Men and women showed a slight decrease in negative mood when faced with alternative female portrayals, whereas stereotypical portrayals had an increasing effect on negative mood amongst male respondents and only provided a very slight decrease amongst female participants. These results, managed to add some knowledge towards the effects of stimulus material and gender on changes in mood, which could acquire further study towards the possible effects of media on negative mood, depression, happiness etc.

Thus, this study managed to add some knowledge to the current field that could inspire further study into the effects of media content on mood and the effects of gender on prejudice. Considering the obtained results in this study, it is likely that more interesting patterns could emerge from investigating these subjects further. Regarding possible re-enactment of this study, it is advised

to subject the participant to larger, lengthier amounts of stimulus material and to conduct the experiment in a setting where the respondent can be regulated. Considering how this was not a possibility within an online survey, it is recommended to conduct the survey in a real-life setting instead of a viral one. Conducting the study in this manner is likely to increase significance and decrease skewed results.

It might also be interesting to look further into the subject of self-objectification, due to the fact that this study obtained results that are quite contrary to popular beliefs about self-objectification. Despite the lacking significance of the obtained results, it could be observed that men performed slightly more self-objectification than their female counterparts. According to the obtained means, men prioritized their physical attributes more so than their female counterparts, who seemed to put more importance on attributes regarding health. This is quite an interesting find, despite the absence of significance, and would hence be an interesting subject for further study.

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Appendix A- Survey questions

I Pre-test

For the pre-test, the respondents were asked the same set of questions for every video. Due to this reason, the appendix will only note down the asked questions once, considering how they were identical for every shown video and thus do not require excessive repetition.

Q1 Thank you for helping us with this experiment. As a part of this study you will be asked to watch a few animated movie scenes. This survey will take approximately 20 minutes and will contain 10 videoclips. Your help is very much appreciated. Please answer the follow-up questions about the shown clips carefully.

Q2 Please indicate how strongly you felt after watching this video clip

	Not at all (1)	Slightly (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)
Excited (1)	<input type="radio"/>				
Bored (2)	<input type="radio"/>				
Involved (3)	<input type="radio"/>				

Q3 Please indicate how strongly you found the videoclip to be..

	Not at all (1)	Slightly (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)
Humorous (1)	<input type="radio"/>				
Violent (2)	<input type="radio"/>				
Sexual (3)	<input type="radio"/>				

Q4 Had you seen this video before?

- yes (1)
- No (2)

Q5 Did the depiction of the main female character in this video show signs of..

	Not at all (1)	Slightly (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)
Female stereotyping (1)	<input type="radio"/>				
An emphasis on looks (2)	<input type="radio"/>				
Breaking through gender stereotypes (3)	<input type="radio"/>				
Acting out male actions (4)	<input type="radio"/>				

Q6 How was the main female character portrayed?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)
Weak:Strong (1)	<input type="radio"/>				
Helpless:Powerful (2)	<input type="radio"/>				
Emotional:Apathetic (3)	<input type="radio"/>				
Obedient:Disobedient (4)	<input type="radio"/>				
Submissive:Dominant (5)	<input type="radio"/>				
Dependent:Independent (6)	<input type="radio"/>				
Sexual:Not-sexual (7)	<input type="radio"/>				
Damsel in distress:Hero (8)	<input type="radio"/>				
Scared:Brave (9)	<input type="radio"/>				
Tame:Violent (10)	<input type="radio"/>				
Clueless:Clever (11)	<input type="radio"/>				
Passive:Active (12)	<input type="radio"/>				
Undisciplined:Disciplined (13)	<input type="radio"/>				
Unmotivated:Motivated (14)	<input type="radio"/>				

Q7 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q8 What is your age?

Q9 What is your highest education?

- MBO (1)
- HBO (2)
- WO/University (3)
- Different (4)

II Main study

Similarly to the pre-test, identical questions were asked on behalf of the two videos, which makes a repetition of the same questions twice unnecessary.

effects of animated female portrayals

Q1 Thank you for helping us with this experiment. As a part of this study you will be asked to watch an animated movie scene. This survey will take around 10 minutes and consists of a variety of questions. Your help is very much appreciated.

Q2 Please indicate how you are feeling at this moment:

	Not at all (1)	Slightly (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)
Amused (1)	<input type="radio"/>				
In a bad mood (2)	<input type="radio"/>				
Sad (3)	<input type="radio"/>				
Entertained (4)	<input type="radio"/>				
Cheerful (5)	<input type="radio"/>				
Happy (6)	<input type="radio"/>				
Grouchy (7)	<input type="radio"/>				
Satisfied (8)	<input type="radio"/>				
Downhearted (9)	<input type="radio"/>				
Great (10)	<input type="radio"/>				
Tender (11)	<input type="radio"/>				
Delighted (12)	<input type="radio"/>				
Captivated (13)	<input type="radio"/>				
Touched (14)	<input type="radio"/>				
Concentrated (15)	<input type="radio"/>				
Scared (16)	<input type="radio"/>				
Nervous (17)	<input type="radio"/>				
Anxious (18)	<input type="radio"/>				
Angry (19)	<input type="radio"/>				

Q3 Please watch the following video

Q4 Please provide your opinion on the following statements

	Strongly agree (1)	Moderately agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Moderately disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
Women should take increasing responsibility for leadership in solving the intellectual and social problems (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telling dirty jokes should be mostly a masculine prerogative. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There should be a strict merit system in job appointment and promotion without regard to sex. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

expense when they go out together. (7)					
Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men. (8)	○	○	○	○	○
A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man (9)	○	○	○	○	○
In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children. (10)	○	○	○	○	○
The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men. (11)	○	○	○	○	○
On average, women should be regarded as less capable of contributing to economic production than men. (12)	○	○	○	○	○
There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted. (13)	○	○	○	○	○
Women should be given equal opportunity with men for	○	○	○	○	○

apprenticeship in the various trades. (14)	<input type="radio"/>				
The modern girl is entitled to the same freedom from regulation and control that is given to the modern boy. (15)	<input type="radio"/>				

Q5 Had you seen this video before?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q6 Please rank the following assets in order of preference (You can move these items around upwards or downwards and put the item 'strength' for instance at the top of the list instead of 'physical coordination') Please put your most preferred item at the top and rank the remaining assets accordingly.

- _____ Physical coordination (1)
- _____ Health (2)
- _____ Weight (3)
- _____ Strength (4)
- _____ Sex appeal (5)
- _____ Physical attractiveness (6)
- _____ Energy level (e.g stamina) (7)
- _____ Firm/Sculpted muscles (8)
- _____ Physical/ Fitness level (9)
- _____ Measurements (e.g chest, waist, hips) (10)

Q7 Please indicate how you felt after watching this videoclip:

	Not at all (1)	Slightly (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)
Amused (1)	<input type="radio"/>				
In a bad mood (2)	<input type="radio"/>				
Sad (3)	<input type="radio"/>				
Entertained (4)	<input type="radio"/>				
Cheerful (5)	<input type="radio"/>				
Happy (6)	<input type="radio"/>				
Grouchy (7)	<input type="radio"/>				
Satisfied (8)	<input type="radio"/>				
Downhearted (9)	<input type="radio"/>				
Great (10)	<input type="radio"/>				
Tender (11)	<input type="radio"/>				
Delighted (12)	<input type="radio"/>				
Captivated (13)	<input type="radio"/>				
Touched (14)	<input type="radio"/>				
Concentrated (15)	<input type="radio"/>				
Scared (16)	<input type="radio"/>				
Nervous (17)	<input type="radio"/>				
Anxious (18)	<input type="radio"/>				
Angry (19)	<input type="radio"/>				

Q8 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q9 What is your age?

Q10 What is your highest education?

- MBO (1)
- HBO (2)
- WO/ University (3)
- Different (4)

Q11 What is the highest degree you have obtained?

- Propaedeutics (1)
- Bachelor's degree (2)
- Master's degree (3)
- Professional degree, e.g MD/JD (4)
- Different (5)

Q12 If you want to have a chance of receiving an amazon gift certificate, please provide your e-mail address

Appendix B- Relevant SPSS output pre-test

One-way multivariate analysis of variance

Multivariate Tests^c

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
clips	Pillai's Trace	,890	31,452 ^a	9,000	35,000	,000	,890	
	Wilks' Lambda	,110	31,452 ^a	9,000	35,000	,000	,890	
	Hotelling's Trace	8,088	31,452 ^a	9,000	35,000	,000	,890	
	Roy's Largest Root	8,088	31,452 ^a	9,000	35,000	,000	,890	
dvs	Pillai's Trace	,832	38,545 ^a	5,000	39,000	,000	,832	
	Wilks' Lambda	,168	38,545 ^a	5,000	39,000	,000	,832	
	Hotelling's Trace	4,942	38,545 ^a	5,000	39,000	,000	,832	
	Roy's Largest Root	4,942	38,545 ^a	5,000	39,000	,000	,832	
clips * dvs	Pillai's Trace	, ^b	,	,	,	,	,	
	Wilks' Lambda	, ^b	,	,	,	,	,	
	Hotelling's Trace	, ^b	,	,	,	,	,	
	Roy's Largest Root	, ^b	,	,	,	,	,	

Mauchly's Test of Sphericity^b

Measure:MEASURE_1

Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	Chi-Square df	Sig.	Epsilon ^a		
					Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
clips	,154	74,394	44	,003	,661	,780	,111
dvs	,149	78,376	14	,000	,512	,547	,200
clips * dvs	,000	,	1034	,	,327	,506	,022

Tests of Within-Subjects Effects

Measure:MEASURE_1

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
clips	Sphericity Assumed	256,000	9	28,444	43,476	,000	,503	
	Greenhouse-Geisser	256,000	5,953	43,000	43,476	,000	,503	
	Huynh-Feldt	256,000	7,017	36,483	43,476	,000	,503	
	Lower-bound	256,000	1,000	256,000	43,476	,000	,503	

Error(cli ps)	Sphericity Assumed Greenhouse-Geisser Huynh-Feldt Lower-bound	253,200 253,200 253,200 253,200	387 255,999 301,728 43,000	,654 ,989 ,839 5,888			
dvs	Sphericity Assumed Greenhouse-Geisser Huynh-Feldt Lower-bound	331,930 331,930 331,930 331,930	5 2,560 2,736 1,000	66,386 129,660 121,323 331,930	40,679 40,679 40,679 40,679	,000 ,000 ,000 ,000	,486 ,486 ,486 ,486
Error(dv s)	Sphericity Assumed Greenhouse-Geisser Huynh-Feldt Lower-bound	350,870 350,870 350,870 350,870	215 110,080 117,644 43,000	1,632 3,187 2,982 8,160			
clips * dvs	Sphericity Assumed Greenhouse-Geisser Huynh-Feldt Lower-bound	1414,259 1414,259 1414,259 1414,259	45 14,699 22,783 1,000	31,428 96,213 62,076 1414,259	55,949 55,949 55,949 55,949	,000 ,000 ,000 ,000	,565 ,565 ,565 ,565
Error(cli ps*dvs)	Sphericity Assumed Greenhouse-Geisser Huynh-Feldt Lower-bound	1086,941 1086,941 1086,941 1086,941	1935 632,069 979,659 43,000	,562 1,720 1,110 25,278			

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Measure:MEASURE_1

Transformed Variable:Average

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	13140,947	1	13140,947	2827,381	,000	,985
Error	199,853	43	4,648			

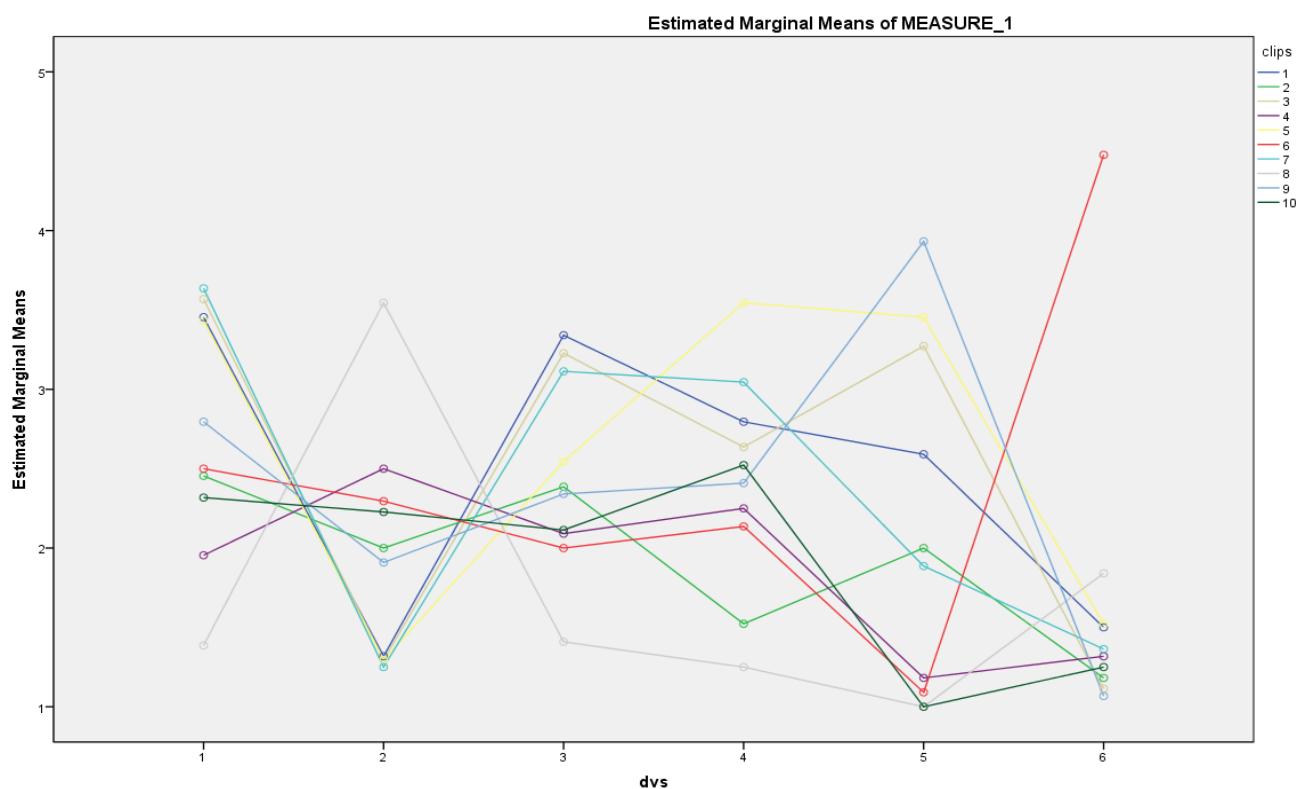
4. clips * dvs

Measure:MEASURE_1

clips	dvs	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	1	3,455	,136	3,181	3,728
	2	1,318	,102	1,113	1,523
	3	3,341	,149	3,041	3,641
	4	2,795	,164	2,464	3,127
	5	2,591	,114	2,361	2,821

	6	1,500	,110	1,278	1,722
2	1	2,455	,157	2,137	2,772
	2	2,000	,138	1,722	2,278
	3	2,386	,150	2,084	2,688
	4	1,523	,128	1,265	1,781
	5	2,000	,134	1,730	2,270
	6	1,182	,081	1,018	1,346
3	1	3,568	,132	3,303	3,834
	2	1,295	,083	1,127	1,464
	3	3,227	,141	2,942	3,512
	4	2,636	,126	2,382	2,891
	5	3,273	,123	3,024	3,521
	6	1,114	,067	,979	1,248
4	1	1,955	,121	1,710	2,199
	2	2,500	,140	2,218	2,782
	3	2,091	,133	1,822	2,360
	4	2,250	,153	1,942	2,558
	5	1,182	,067	1,046	1,317
	6	1,318	,096	1,124	1,512
5	1	3,432	,132	3,166	3,697
	2	1,295	,083	1,127	1,464
	3	2,545	,136	2,272	2,819
	4	3,545	,132	3,279	3,811
	5	3,455	,110	3,233	3,676
	6	1,523	,115	1,291	1,754
6	1	2,500	,158	2,182	2,818
	2	2,295	,171	1,951	2,640
	3	2,000	,145	1,707	2,293
	4	2,136	,140	1,854	2,419
	5	1,091	,044	1,002	1,179
	6	4,477	,100	4,275	4,679
7	1	3,636	,134	3,365	3,907
	2	1,250	,087	1,075	1,425
	3	3,114	,166	2,778	3,449
	4	3,045	,138	2,768	3,323
	5	1,886	,146	1,592	2,181
	6	1,364	,092	1,177	1,550
8	1	1,386	,109	1,167	1,606
	2	3,545	,173	3,196	3,895
	3	1,409	,119	1,170	1,648

	4	1,250	,087	1,075
	5	1,000	,000	1,000
	6	1,841	,172	1,494
9	1	2,795	,186	2,421
	2	1,909	,141	1,625
	3	2,341	,184	1,970
	4	2,409	,170	2,066
	5	3,932	,094	3,742
	6	1,068	,038	,991
10	1	2,318	,145	2,027
	2	2,227	,175	1,875
	3	2,114	,143	1,826
	4	2,523	,161	2,198
	5	1,000	,000	1,000
	6	1,250	,087	1,075



Paired sample t-test

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	powpexcited	2,74	47	1,224	,179
	snow2excited	2,34	47	,962	,140
Pair 2	powpbored	1,98	47	1,032	,151
	snow2bored	2,19	47	1,154	,168
Pair 3	powpinvolve	2,28	47	1,210	,177
	snow2involve	2,13	47	,969	,141
Pair 4	powphumor	2,36	47	1,131	,165
	snow2humor	2,51	47	1,061	,155
Pair 5	powpviolent	3,91	47	,654	,095
	snow2violent	1,00	47	,000	,000
Pair 6	powpsex	1,07	46	,250	,037
	snow2sex	1,24	46	,565	,083
Pair 7	powpstrong	4,72	47	,615	,090
	snow2strong	2,96	47	,833	,121
Pair 8	powpdistress	4,68	47	,594	,087
	snow2distress	2,85	47	,625	,091
Pair 9	snow1strong	1,54	48	,617	,089
	powpstrong	4,71	48	,617	,089
Pair 10	snow1stereotyp	3,98	48	,812	,117
	powpstereotyp	1,73	48	,893	,129
Pair 11	snow1excited	2,42	48	1,069	,154
	powpexcited	2,73	48	1,216	,175
Pair 12	snow1bored	2,02	48	,956	,138
	powpbored	2,00	48	1,031	,149
Pair 13	snow1involve	2,35	48	,978	,141
	powpinvolve	2,27	48	1,198	,173

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	powpexcited	47	-,054	,719
	snow2excited			
Pair 2	powpbored & snow2bored	47	,040	,789
Pair 3	powpinvolve & snow2involve	47	,080	,591
Pair 4	powphumor & snow2humor	47	,169	,256
Pair 5	powpviolent & snow2violent	47	.	.
Pair 6	powpsex & snow2sex	46	,202	,178
Pair 7	powpstrong & snow2strong	47	,189	,204

Pair 8	powpdistress	&	47	,162	,276		
	snow2distress						
Pair 9	snow1strong & powpstrong		48	-,247	,091		
Pair 10	snow1stereotyp	&	48	,197	,178		
	powpstereotyp						
Pair 11	snow1excited	&	48	,072	,625		
	powpexcited						
Pair 12	snow1bored & powpbored		48	,280	,054		
Pair 13	snow1involve & powpinvolve		48	-,011	,941		

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences				95% Interval of the Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower				
				Upper				
Pair 1	powpexcited	- ,404	1,597	,233	-,065	,873	1,735	46 ,089
	snow2excited							
Pair 2	powpbored	- ,213	1,517	,221	-,658	,233	-,961	46 ,341
	snow2bored							
Pair 3	powpinvolve	- ,149	1,489	,217	-,288	,586	,686	46 ,496
	snow2involve							
Pair 4	powphumor	- ,149	1,414	,206	-,564	,266	-,722	46 ,474
	snow2humor							
Pair 5	powpviolent	- 2,915	,654	,095	2,723	3,107	30,568	46 ,000
	snow2violent							
Pair 6	powpsex	- ,174	,570	,084	-,343	-,005	-2,070	45 ,044
	snow2sex							
Pair 7	powpstrong	- 1,766	,937	,137	1,491	2,041	12,915	46 ,000
	snow2strong							
Pair 8	powpdistress	- 1,830	,789	,115	1,598	2,061	15,898	46 ,000
	snow2distress							
Pair 9	snow1strong	- -	,975	,141	-3,450	-2,884	-	47 ,000
	powpstrong	3,167					22,505	
Pair 10	snow1stereotyp	- 2,250	1,082	,156	1,936	2,564	14,410	47 ,000
	powpstereotyp							
Pair 11	snow1excited	- ,313	1,560	,225	-,765	,140	-1,388	47 ,172
	powpexcited							
Pair 12	snow1bored	- ,021	1,194	,172	-,326	,367	,121	47 ,904
	powpbored							
Pair 13	snow1involve	- ,083	1,555	,224	-,368	,535	,371	47 ,712
	powpinvolve							

Appendix C- Relevant SPSS output main study

I Prejudice

Univariate analysis of variance

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: prejudice

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	14.069 ^a	3	4.690	12.016	.000	.157
Intercept	2955.002	1	2955.002	7570.954	.000	.975
Condition	.029	1	.029	.074	.785	.000
Gender	13.270	1	13.270	33.999	.000	.149
Condition * Gender	.507	1	.507	1.299	.256	.007
Error	75.720	194	.390			
Total	3467.751	198				
Corrected Total	89.789	197				

Independent sample t-test divided by type of portrayal

Group Statistics

	Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
prejudice	weak	101	4.1726	.62289	.06198
	strong	97	4.0866	.72618	.07373

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means								
	for Equality of Variances		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	Lower	Upper									
Equal prejudice variances assumed	2.813	.095	.896	196	.372	.08601	.09602	-.10337	.27538		

Equal variances not assumed			.893	189.006	.373	.08601	.09632	-.10400	.27601
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Independent sample t-test divided by gender

Group Statistics

	What is your gender?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
prejudice	Male	70	3.7786	.70513	.08428
	Female	128	4.3228	.57559	.05088

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
prejudice	Equal variances assumed	8.255	.005	-5.865	196	.000	-.54427	.09280	-.72729	-.36126
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.529	119.806	.000	-.54427	.09844	-.73919	-.34936

Independent sample t-test on strong female portrayals divided by gender

Group Statistics

	gender2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
prejudice	male respondent strong female portrayal	37	3.8166	.68750	.11302
	female respondent strong female portrayal	60	4.2530	.70410	.09090

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
prejudice	Equal variances assumed	.943	.334	-2.992	95	.004	-.43642	.14587	-.72601	-.14682
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.009	77.777	.004	-.43642	.14504	-.72519	-.14765

Independent sample t-test on weak female portrayals divided by gender

Group Statistics

	gender2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
prejudice	male respondent weak female portrayal	33	3.7359	.73268	.12754
	female respondent weak female portrayal	68	4.3845	.42804	.05191

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
prejudice	Equal variances assumed	12.056	.001	-5.604	99	.000	-.64852	.11572	-.87814	-.41891

Equal variances not assumed			-4.710	42.916	.000	-.64852	.13770	-.92624	-.37080
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Independent sample t-test on female respondents divided by video content

Group Statistics

	gender2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
prejudice	female respondent weak	68	4.3845	.42804	.05191
	female portrayal				
	female respondent strong	60	4.2530	.70410	.09090
	female portrayal				

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
prejudice	Equal variances assumed	4.768	.031	1.293	126	.199	.13143	.10168	-.06980	.33266
	Equal variances not assumed									

Independent sample t-test on male respondents divided by video content

Group Statistics

	gender2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
prejudice	male respondent weak	33	3.7359	.73268	.12754
	female portrayal				
	male respondent strong	37	3.8166	.68750	.11302
	female portrayal				

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
prejudice	Equal variances assumed	.001	.973	-.475	68	.636	-.08067	.16979	-.41948 .25814
		Equal variances not assumed		-.473	65.880	.638	-.08067	.17042	-.42093 .25959

II Mood difference

Univariate analysis of variance positive mood difference

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Mooddifferencepos

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	11.698 ^a	3	3.899	6.147	.001	.087
Intercept	.000	1	.000	.001	.981	.000
Condition	2.077	1	2.077	3.274	.072	.017
Gender	10.054	1	10.054	15.849	.000	.076
Condition * Gender	.435	1	.435	.686	.409	.004
Error	123.066	194	.634			
Total	135.694	198				
Corrected Total	134.764	197				

a. R Squared = .087 (Adjusted R Squared = .073)

Univariate analysis of variance negative mood difference

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Mooddifferenceneg

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	3.174 ^a	3	1.058	4.048	.008	.059
Intercept	2.085	1	2.085	7.976	.005	.039
Condition	2.343	1	2.343	8.966	.003	.044
Gender	.860	1	.860	3.291	.071	.017
Condition * Gender	.011	1	.011	.042	.838	.000
Error	50.705	194	.261			
Total	57.017	198				
Corrected Total	53.879	197				

a. R Squared = .059 (Adjusted R Squared = .044)

Independent sample t-test divided by condition

Group Statistics

	Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mooddifferencepos	weak	101	-.0099	.85601	.08518
	strong	97	.1502	.79201	.08042
Mooddifferenceneg	weak	101	.0202	.57468	.05718
	strong	97	.2360	.43955	.04463

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Mooddifferencepos	Equal variances assumed	.477	.491	-1.365	196	.174	-.16012	.11733	-.39150	.07126

	Equal variances assumed			-1.367	195.731	.173	-.16012	.11714	-.39114	.07090
	Equal variances not assumed	2.152	.144	-2.960	196	.003	-.21585	.07292	-.35967	-.07204
Mooddifferencepos	Equal variances assumed			-2.976	186.750	.003	-.21585	.07254	-.35895	-.07276
Mooddifferencepos	Equal variances not assumed									

Independent sample t-test divided by gender

Group Statistics

	What is your gender?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mooddifferencepos	Male	70	-.2286	.93009	.11117
	Female	128	.2310	.71824	.06348
Mooddifferenceneg	Male	70	.0454	.57222	.06839
	Female	128	.1699	.49073	.04338

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Mooddifferencepos	Equal variances assumed	6.817	.010	-3.868	196	.000	-.45960	.11881	-.69391	-.22528
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.590	114.714	.000	-.45960	.12802	-.71318	-.20601

	Equal variances assumed	.554	.458	-1.608	196	.109	-.12451	.07743	-.27722	.02819
Mooddifferencepos	Equal variances not assumed			-1.537	124.707	.127	-.12451	.08099	-.28480	.03577

Independent sample t-test on weak female portrayals divided by gender

Group Statistics

	gender2		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mooddifferencepos	male respondent	weak female portrayal	33	-.3939	.94493	.16449
	female respondent	weak female portrayal	68	.1765	.74787	.09069
Mooddifferenceneg	male respondent	weak female portrayal	33	-.0833	.71902	.12517
	female respondent	weak female portrayal	68	.0704	.48802	.05918

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
			F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
										Lower
Mooddifferencepos	Equal variances assumed	5.031	.027	-3.292	99	.001	-.57041	.17328	-.91424	-.22658
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.037	52.113	.004	-.57041	.18784	-.94731	-.19351

	Equal variances assumed	5.180	.025	-1.265	99	.209	-.15371	.12156	-.39491	.08748
Mooddifferencepos	Equal variances not assumed			-1.110	46.791	.273	-.15371	.13845	-.43227	.12485

Independent sample t-test on strong female portrayals divided by gender

Group Statistics

	gender2		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mooddifferencepos	male respondent	strong female portrayal	37	-.0811	.90385	.14859
	female respondent	strong female portrayal	60	.2929	.68407	.08831
Mooddifferenceneg	male respondent	strong female portrayal	37	.1602	.37321	.06136
	female respondent	strong female portrayal	60	.2827	.47281	.06104

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means								
			F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
										Lower	Upper
Mooddifferencepos	Equal variances assumed	2.075	.153	-2.309	95	.023	-.37394	.16194	-.69543	-.05244	
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.163	61.261	.034	-.37394	.17285	-.71955	-.02832	

	Equal variances assumed	1.330	.252	-1.339	95	.184	-.12251	.09150	-.30416	.05915
Mooddifferencepos	Equal variances not assumed			-1.415	89.206	.160	-.12251	.08655	-.29447	.04946

Independent sample t-test on male respondents divided by video content

Group Statistics

	gender2		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mooddifferencepos	male respondent	weak	33	-.3939	.94493	.16449
	female portrayal					
Mooddifferenceneg	male respondent	strong	37	-.0811	.90385	.14859
	female portrayal					
	male respondent	weak	33	-.0833	.71902	.12517
	female portrayal					
	male respondent	strong	37	.1602	.37321	.06136
	female portrayal					

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- taile d)	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Mooddifferencepos	Equal variances assumed	.765	.385	-1.415	68	.162	-.31286	.22110	-.75405	.12834
	Equal variances not assumed									

	Equal variances assumed	7.952	.006	-1.807	68	.075	-.24356	.13482	-.51259	.02546
Mooddifferencepos	Equal variances not assumed			-1.747	46.823	.087	-.24356	.13940	-.52402	.03689

Independent sample t-test on female respondents divided by video content

Group Statistics

	gender2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mooddifferencepos	female respondent weak	68	.1765	.74787	.09069
	female portrayal				
	female respondent strong	60	.2929	.68407	.08831
	female portrayal				
Mooddifferenceneg	female respondent weak	68	.0704	.48802	.05918
	female portrayal				
	female respondent strong	60	.2827	.47281	.06104
	female portrayal				

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means								
			F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
										Lower	Upper
Mooddifferencepos	Equal variances assumed	.108	.742	-.914	126	.362	-.11639	.12730	-.36831	.13553	
	Equal variances not assumed			-.919	125.828	.360	-.11639	.12659	-.36690	.13413	

	Equal variances assumed	.029	.864	-2.493	126	.014	-.21236	.08519	-.38095	-.04377
Mooddifference neg	Equal variances not assumed			-2.498	124.883	.014	-.21236	.08502	-.38063	-.04409

III Self-objectification

Univariate analysis of variance

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: selfobjectification

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	111.923 ^a	3	37.308	.381	.767	.006
Intercept	13587.660	1	13587.660	138.751	.000	.417
Condition	5.069	1	5.069	.052	.820	.000
Gender	107.437	1	107.437	1.097	.296	.006
Condition * Gender	.417	1	.417	.004	.948	.000
Error	18998.057	194	97.928			
Total	34790.000	198				
Corrected Total	19109.980	197				

a. R Squared = .006 (Adjusted R Squared = -.010)

Independent sample t-test divided by condition

Group Statistics

	Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
selfobjectification	weak	101	8.7624	9.79096	.97424
	strong	97	9.0412	9.95816	1.01110

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
selfobjectification	Equal variances assumed	.006	.937	-.199	196	.843	-.27886	1.40360	-3.04696 2.48924
	Equal variances not assumed			-.199	195.353	.843	-.27886	1.40409	-3.04797 2.49025

Independent sample t-test divided by gender

Group Statistics

	What is your gender?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
selfobjectification	Male	70	7.9143	11.24528	1.34407
	Female	128	9.4375	8.99672	.79521

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
selfobjectification	Equal variances assumed	5.972	.015	-1.041	196	.299	-1.52321	1.46381	-4.41005 1.36362
	Equal variances not assumed			-.975	117.910	.331	-1.52321	1.56169	-4.61581 1.56938

Independent sample t-test on weak female portrayals divided by gender

Group Statistics

	gender2		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
selfobjectification	male respondent	weak female portrayal	33	7.7879	10.94234	1.90482
	female respondent	weak female portrayal	68	9.2353	9.23025	1.11933

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
selfobjectification	Equal variances assumed	1.749	.189	-695	99	.489	-1.44742	2.08257	-5.57969	2.68486
	Equal variances not assumed			-.655	54.795	.515	-1.44742	2.20935	-5.87543	2.98060

Independent sample t-test on strong female portrayals divided by gender

Group Statistics

	gender2		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
selfobjectification	male respondent	strong female portrayal	37	8.0270	11.65830	1.91661
	female respondent	strong female portrayal	60	9.6667	8.79651	1.13562

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
selfobjectification	Equal variances assumed	4.554	.035	-.786	95	.434	-1.63964	2.08571	-5.78030 2.50102
selfobjectification	Equal variances not assumed			-.736	61.118	.465	-1.63964	2.22779	-6.09421 2.81493

Independent sample t-test on male respondents divided by content

Group Statistics

	gender2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
selfobjectification	male respondent weak female portrayal	33	7.7879	10.94234	1.90482
	male respondent strong female portrayal	37	8.0270	11.65830	1.91661

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
selfobjectification	Equal variances assumed	.095	.759	-.088	68	.930	-.23915	2.71211	-5.65107 5.17278

Equal variances not assumed								
			-.089	67.811	.930	-.23915	2.70217	-5.63152 5.15322

Independent sample t-test on female respondents divided by content

Group Statistics

	gender2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
selfobjectification	female respondent weak	68	9.2353	9.23025	1.11933
	female portrayal				
selfobjectification	female respondent strong	60	9.6667	8.79651	1.13562
	female portrayal				

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- taile d)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
selfobjectificatio n	Equal variances assumed	.406	.525	-.270	126	.788	-.43137	1.59937	-3.59649	2.73374
	Equal variances not assumed									

