



Western Washington University
Western CEDAR

WWU Graduate School Collection

WWU Graduate and Undergraduate Scholarship

Summer 2021

Gender Socialization in Contemporary American Culture

Drew Elizabeth Wright

Western Washington University, lemonsandflowers@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cedar.wwu.edu/wwuet>

 Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Wright, Drew Elizabeth, "Gender Socialization in Contemporary American Culture" (2021). *WWU Graduate School Collection*. 1053.

<https://cedar.wwu.edu/wwuet/1053>

This Masters Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the WWU Graduate and Undergraduate Scholarship at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in WWU Graduate School Collection by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact westerncedar@wwu.edu.

Gender Socialization in Contemporary American Culture

By

Drew Elizabeth Wright

Accepted in Partial Completion
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr. Anne Riggs, Chair

Dr. Anne Fast

Dr. Antonya Gonzalez

GRADUATE SCHOOL

David L. Patrick, Dean

Master's Thesis

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at Western Washington University, I grant to Western Washington University the non-exclusive royalty-free right to archive, reproduce, distribute, and display the thesis in any and all forms, including electronic format, via any digital library mechanisms maintained by WWU.

I represent and warrant this is my original work, and does not infringe or violate any rights of others. I warrant that I have obtained written permissions from the owner of any third party copyrighted material included in these files.

I acknowledge that I retain ownership rights to the copyright of this work, including but not limited to the right to use all or part of this work in future works, such as articles or books.

Library users are granted permission for individual, research and non-commercial reproduction of this work for educational purposes only. Any further digital posting of this document requires specific permission from the author.

Any copying or publication of this thesis for commercial purposes, or for financial gain, is not allowed without my written permission.

Drew Elizabeth Wright

July 26th, 2021

Gender Socialization in Contemporary American Culture

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
Drew Elizabeth Wright
July 2021

Abstract

The social changes of the previous decade have led to an increase in gender egalitarianism. Popular national retailers such as Target have removed gender labels from their toy sections in a move toward gender inclusivity (Yagoda, 2016). The goal of the current study was to investigate the relationship between parent and child preferences for gendered objects, in light of these societal changes. We examined whether the shift toward gender egalitarianism in the broader cultural context is evident in both parent and child selections of items in our three domains of interest. In this correlational design, participating dyads ($N = 85$) responded to questionnaires designed to assess parents' gender role socialization, parent gender role orientation along with parent and child preferences for items representing a spectrum of gendered stereotypes. Although results did not suggest parent preference predicts child selections on the same task, parent gender role orientation did significantly predict their child's preferences. As the culture surrounding gender stereotypes and gender roles in the United States continues to shift towards gender egalitarianism, it is important to consider the potential effects on child gender development. Overall, the complex interplay between parents and their children as it relates to gender has lasting implications.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Annie Riggs, for her guidance and support through every step of this thesis work. The breadth of her knowledge has allowed me to find success throughout this program. I would also like to acknowledge and thank my committee members, Dr. Annie Fast and Dr. Antonya Gonzalez for sharing their time and expertise with me in the development of this project.

I would next like to thank my dear friends Allison Schwam, Kira Means, Vida Pourmand, and Zach Willett. Their support gave me the strength to carry on to the finish line. Although our get togethers were largely virtual, we held each other up through the hardest times of the lockdown and our bonds were made stronger for it. I would also like to acknowledge my two research assistants, Ripley Morris and Morgan Woodruff. Their assistance with data coding and collection was invaluable to me. They were both thoughtful, diligent, and a joy to work with through the final months of this project.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge my parents, Ricardo and Susan, for getting me Hot Wheels when I was little. Their unquestioning support in my journey into (increasingly) higher education has borne me higher still. My younger siblings, Paige and Mitchell, deserve acknowledgement as well. They have constantly cheered me on, through the bad days and the good ones too. For listening to my struggles and my triumphs, Paola, Katie, Ellie, Nick, James, and so many more family and friends deserve my appreciation. To each of you, I could never have made it half as far in life as I have if it weren't for you. Thank you ♥

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	v
List of Tables and Figures	viii
Introduction	1
Background	2
Theoretical Foundations of Gender Development	4
Gender Schema Theory	4
Gender Rigidity and Flexibility	5
Gender Socialization	8
Socialization of Traditional or Egalitarian Gender Attitudes	11
Desirability and Gender-typing of Toys, Clothing, and Room Décor	12
Present Study Overview	15
Hypotheses	17
Method	18
Participants	18
Materials	18
Normative Gender Role Orientation (NGRO)	18
Child Gender Socialization Scale (CGSS)	19
Procedure	20
Results	22
Regression Analyses	23
Item Domain	24

Mediation Models	24
Parent NGRO, Parent DT, Child DT Responses	25
Parent CGSS, Parent DT, Child DT Responses.....	26
Discussion	26
Summary of Research Questions and Findings	27
Worthy of Further Exploration	33
Limitations	35
Future Research	37
Conclusion	39
References	42
Appendix A	50
Appendix B	51
Appendix C	52
Appendix D.....	56
Appendix E	57

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations.....	44
Table 2. Regression results using Parent Sum of DT as the criterion.....	45
Table 3. Regression results using Child Domain Sum as the criterion.....	45
Table 4. Regression results using Toy Sum as the criterion.....	46
Table 5. Regression results using Décor Sum as the criterion.....	47
Table 6. Regression results using Clothing Sum as the criterion.....	48

Figures

Figure 1. Mediation Model of the NGRO with Coefficients	49
Figure 2. Mediation Model of the CGSS with Coefficients	49

Gender Socialization in Contemporary American Culture

We are in the midst of a revolution regarding gender, not only of adult gender roles, but also in how we teach children about gender. The social changes of the previous five years are in and of themselves radically different from the decade prior. In particular, changes in regard to transgender visibility and the rise of third-wave feminism could be affecting how gender is socialized to children (Andone, 2019; Paul, 2019; Romano 2021). Parents are increasingly likely to make an effort to raise their children in a gender non-conforming or gender-neutral manner (Kollmayer et al., 2018). This has created a market of items made for children that attempt to neutralize masculine or feminine qualities but may still align with gender stereotypes to an extent (e.g., a pink truck; Ankeny, 2016; Garcia, 2018; Powers, 2019). In accordance with the current Western academic understanding that gender-identity lies along a spectrum (Linstead & Pullen, 2006; Richards et. al. 2016; Vijlbrief et al., 2020), the current study examined the correlation between what parents find desirable for their children, and what children find desirable in three key areas. These are: toys, clothing, and bedroom decor. The current study is highly inspired by the larger shifting cultural context within which parents teach their children gender. For example, toys and clothing marketed to children are no longer strictly divided by what is stereotypical for either boys or girls (Tabuchi, 2015; Garcia, 2018; Acklin, 2019; Powers, 2019). The current study explored one facet of parent-child gender socialization, specifically whether parents' gendered attitudes and preferences are related to their children's gendered preferences in early childhood.

For the purposes of this study, gender socialization was theoretically considered on two bases. The first is the parent-child relationship. That is, the interactions between parent and child dyads that facilitate the acquisition of gender stereotype knowledge and expectations transmitted

from a parent to their child. To our knowledge, the bulk of existing research on children's gender socialization does not yet account for changes in child-rearing practices within contemporary parenting ideology. The second way we examine gender socialization is the shifting market of consumer goods for children that are less traditionally gendered. Within the children's sections of major department stores, consumers are being presented with items that are more indicative of the gender spectrum (Shaw, 2015). A mixed-gender object may possess the qualities of traditionally gender-typed items (i.e., items that are stereotypically masculine, or stereotypically feminine), but also contain a significant amount of cross-typed (i.e., a girl playing with a very masculine toy), or "opposite" gender-typed, qualities. For example, a pink truck is still largely boy-typed due to the stereotype of "trucks are for boys," but it also contains the stereotypically girl-typed color, pink. In the interest of making a selection that conforms less to the traditional gender binary, parents are purchasing these items in large enough quantities that it is profitable for manufacturers to offer items which are more indicative of a gender spectrum (Ankeny, 2016; Garcia, 2018; Powers, 2019; Tabuchi, 2015). Therefore, it is increasingly important to study the ramifications of this cultural shift on children's gender development.

Background

Gender roles are the expectations for how an individual "should" act based on their gender, and gender stereotypes are behaviors associated with individuals who identify with a particular gender (e.g., women are more emotional than men (Raag & Rackcliff, 1998; Martin & Ruble, 2010; Eagly et al., 2018)). We approach the current study with the understanding that the gender roles children observe and the gender stereotypic information they are presented at home influences their gender schemas. For example, in traditional households, mothers may be home

all day, and do the cooking and the cleaning. Fathers may go to work during the day and perform disciplinary duties. Children witness the gender roles at play here which dictate that this division of labor is how men and women should act in a nuclear family setting. They also observe the gender-related stereotype that women are naturally better and more inclined to clean that emerges from these traditional gender roles.

Much, but not all, of children's knowledge about gender comes from parents, who serve as the first models in a child's life (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). They demonstrate how to behave in a given situation, and act as models for how to interact in a social environment. As such, parents are the primary models of gender roles and may, knowingly or unknowingly, teach their child cultural gender stereotypes (Endendijk et al., 2013). Traditionally in American culture, this leads to a promotion of nurturing behaviors in young girls, and a promotion of competition in young boys (Rheingold & Cook, 1975; Blakemore & Centers, 2005). The transmission of cultural gender stereotypes happens both explicitly and implicitly.

The ways in which parents actively dictate what is, or is not, appropriate behavior for a young girl or young boy to engage in is called explicit socialization (Endendijk et al., 2014). Examples of explicit socialization include discouraging a young girl from participating in highly physical sports or discouraging a young boy from wearing a dress (Ignacio, 1988; Zaslow, 2018). Children internalize these messages and apply them to their interactions with the world. Parents also teach children gender stereotypes implicitly through their modeling of gender roles in types of clothing or décor that they purchase for their children (Halim et al., 2016; MacPhee & Prendergast, 2019). We expand on explicit and implicit modeling in the Gender Socialization section below. Parental attitudes toward gender stereotypes, positive or negative, are the first exposure children have to stereotypic behaviors, and shape these aspects of gender development

(Boe & Woods., 2018; Endendijk, 2013). Therefore, understanding the relationship between child-rearing practices, parental attitudes and children's gender development is undeniably important.

Culturally defined gender stereotypes are subject to shifts depending on historic trends and changes in what a culture finds important (Eagly et al., 2018; Meagher & Shu, 2019). The understanding of gender in American culture has shifted considerably in the previous decade and continues to be a major topic of cultural discussion. One component of these shifting stereotypes is an increased interest by some parents in raising children in a gender-neutral manner. Some parents have rejected early use of gender labels completely, electing to allow the child to manifest the gender identity they best align with, without external influence (Poisson, 2011; Compton, 2018). This example is extreme and represents a small portion of parents in the broader sense. However, the movement towards gender egalitarian child rearing (Martin, 2005; Rahilly, 2015; Meagher & Shu, 2019) has been gaining in popularity and is also indicative of changes in the ways in which parents communicate gender stereotypes to their children. These changes may have a larger impact on children's gender development.

Theoretical Foundations of Gender Development

Gender Schema Theory

Gender Schema Theory (GST; Bem, 1981) is key to understanding the study of gender development as it is understood today. Schemas are cognitive tools which aid in organizing external stimuli into rapidly understood information, and applied constantly (Taylor & Crocker, 1981; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973, 1974). Being the tools that they are, schemas serve as mental shortcuts for many daily events as well as intra- and inter- personal interactions. For example, a young child may mis-label a dog as a cat because of the schema they have developed for a cat.

Four legs and a swishy tail each tick the schematic box for what a cat is, so they exclaim “kitty!” when they first meet a dog. A gender schema is an organized set of gender-related beliefs that influence behavior. Gender schemas are a way for individuals to rapidly recognize gender congruent (e.g., a woman performing household duties), or gender incongruent (e.g., a woman playing football) behavior in themselves and in others (Bem, 1981). The gender schema is influenced by exposure to gender roles and stereotypes as presented by parents and other areas of a child’s life (e.g., school, media, wider cultural context). An individual’s gender schema is influenced by whichever gender roles are modeled in the home, and which stereotypes they are exposed to. The gender schema that is developed is highly dependent on parents in early life but extends to other adults as the child grows and enters spaces different from their home.

Stereotypes that influence the gender schema include, but are not limited to, boys and men are better at math, women and girls are more nurturing, and so on. When children’s behavior aligns with their gender schemas, they are considered to be sex-typed. While Bem used the phrase “sex-typed” throughout her research, we are using the term gender-typed in place of sex-typed because our interest is in gender (the identity one feels they have) rather than sex.

Gender Rigidity and Flexibility

A key process in gender development is a child’s progression through the stages of gender rigidity and flexibility, culminating in what is deemed gender constancy. Once a child has developed their gender schema, they then begin to showcase their knowledge of gender through their expression and adherence to gender stereotypes. Items become organized into two categories based on gender stereotype knowledge and the child’s own sense of their gender: “things for me” and “things not for me” (Martin & Halverson, p.1131, 1981). Having reached the point in which they understand their gender and can recognize the stereotypes of that gender,

children will integrate same-gender stereotypes into many aspects of their appearance and behaviors. In this developmental trajectory, gender rigidity is marked by strict adherence to these gender stereotypes (Martin & Ruble, 2004). Typically, the height of a child's gender rigidity occurs between the ages of 3 to 5 years (Martin & Ruble, 2010). Upon passing through this period of rigidity, children then move into a period of increasing flexibility in middle childhood (Martin & Ruble, 2004; Trautner et al., 2005; Halim et al., 2013). This period of flexibility is marked by a more realistic understanding that people of any gender can participate in "other" gender behaviors. For example, a young boy in this phase would recognize that holding a tote bag, or other similarly feminine accessory, does not make him any less of a boy. Gender constancy is the developmental stage in which children develop a sense that their gender is immutable and endures across situations (Kohlberg, 1966). Progression through the stages of rigidity and flexibility begins roughly at age two and ends around the age of seven when children are considered to have achieved gender constancy (Kohlberg, 1966). It may be the case that if children have a more egalitarian schema, then their schema may be less rigid than those with a more traditional schema (Carter & Levy, 1988; Levy & Carter, 1989). For the purposes of the current study, we focused on parent-child dyads with children in the 3 to 7 year old age range. In doing so, we hoped to capture responses from children at all points in their development of gender constancy.

Research by Halim et al. (2016) shows that the timing and expression of a child's gender rigidity can manifest in different ways. One way this manifests is through "appearance rigidity," an insistence on wearing stereotypically masculine or feminine clothing. Findings of Halim et al. (2014) suggest that gender differences exist in appearance rigidity. Based on parent and child interviews, results of this study show that young girls demonstrate an interest in gender-typed

appearance more so than young boys and move through appearance rigidity earlier than boys. These findings indicate that, to young girls, *looking* like a girl may be key to *being* a girl (Halim et al., 2014). The authors speculate that perhaps to young boys, *acting* like a boy is key to *being* a boy (Halim et al., 2014). Gender rigidity can be expressed in other ways, such as who a child prefers to play with or which adult roles children imitate (Halim et al., 2016). Halim and colleagues (2016) suggest that a child's gender expression can be understood not only in terms of what they choose to play with, but also in what they choose not to play with. This perspective is important for understanding how children process and express gender during this period of rigidity. Therefore, in the current study, we take a similar perspective to Halim and colleagues (2016) by operationalizing children's preference based on what they selected, instead of other measures of gender stereotypes.

This period of rigidity begins to wane somewhat around age five and continues to dwindle through age seven. Research findings from Martin & Ruble (2004) show that children more or less follow the same path of learning, rigidity, and subsequent flexibility, with some fluctuation in the age of onset. Gender flexibility is the process in which children relax their adherence to gendered stereotypes and begin to participate in cross-typed behaviors. The emergence of gender flexibility can be aided by parents, specifically, child-rearing practices and attitudes toward gender that allow children to freely explore cross-gendered behaviors (Egan & Perry, 2001). The freedom to partake in activities and behaviors that are not stereotypical of the child's gender reinforces the child's sense of gender constancy (the understanding that the individual's gender is fixed; Kohlberg, 1966; Slaby & Frey, 1975). Often, when children experiencing gender rigidity are asked to partake in cross-typed play or dress, these children fear that their gender will change based on their behavior (Ruble et al., 2007). These fears dissipate as

gender flexibility emerges, and gender constancy takes root (Ruble et al., 2007). These findings indicate that once a child has gone through a period of gender affirming behavior, a child's individual gender schema (i.e., things meant for me, or things not meant for me) gradually becomes relaxed. Modern approaches to child-rearing recommend parents allow their children to partake in cross-typed behavior to promote development of gender constancy (Martin, 2005). Therefore, the sense of gender constancy is an important aspect of gender flexibility, and vice versa (Egan & Perry, 2001; Levy & Carter, 1989).

Ruble et al.'s (2007) study on gender development sheds light on the relationship between gender rigidity, flexibility and gender constancy. Researchers asked child participants questions to assess knowledge and feelings about gender; and with that, how important it may be for themselves and others to adhere to gender stereotypes. These questions were designed to ascertain the participant's (1) knowledge of gender stereotypes, (2) rule-based rigidity (perceptions of the flexibility of gender stereotypes), (3) self-rigidity (perceptions of others who condone cross-typed behavior) and (4) fear of changing sex (fears of physical changes brought on by engaging in cross-typed behavior; Ruble et al., 2007). Findings of this study indicate that adherence to gender stereotypes declined once a child had experienced a period of rigidity, suggesting that gender rigidity is an important factor in the development of gender constancy.

Gender Socialization

Like other forms of socialization, gender socialization is the process through which children learn about the cultural expectations and behaviors associated with their gender (McHale et al., 1999). Children typically learn these cultural expectations from their guardians, siblings, and peer relationships, which increase in importance as the children age (Endendijk et al., 2013; Martin & Ruble, 2004; Mchale et al., 1999). How do gender stereotypes get

transmitted to children? One way to understand this process is through Social Learning Theory (SLT; Bandura, 1971) which postulates that children learn by watching other people in a given situation. In the context of gender development, this means that children are influenced by their observations of others. Research indicates that children perceive and model parents' attitudes towards gender. Parents model gender stereotypes both implicitly (e.g., consoling a female child differently than a male child) and explicitly (e.g., discouraging young girls from playing contact sports) from the beginning of a child's life. Implicit and explicit stereotypes are transmitted to and received by children before they are even able to communicate. By 18 months, children have been shown to recognize and display a preference for toys that match the gender socialization that they are exposed to (Serbin et al., 2001). Prior research indicates that children as young as four years-old are capable of understanding gender role expectations, demonstrating that continued exposure to stereotype modeling establishes meaningful association with gender stereotypic behavior (Levy & Carter, 1989; Raag & Rackliff, 1998; Serbin et al., 2001). Accordingly, preschool age children understand the way in which their cross-typed play may be perceived by others (Freeman, 2007; Raag & Rackliff, 1998). The expectation of negative adult reaction to cross-typed play impedes the child's desire to partake in such play, thus reinforcing gender stereotypic behavior.

Parents are the first models of gender stereotypes, and as such, the gender attitudes that parents portray are immensely influential in their child's adoption of gender stereotypic behavior (Endendijk et al., 2013, 2018). This influence can be communicated both implicitly and explicitly. The toys that parents select for their children provide some of the earliest implicit messages about gender stereotypes (Blakemore & Centers, 2005; Boe & Woods, 2018; Levy & Carter, 1988; Weisgram et al., 2014). Research has shown that parents gravitate towards toys that

promote social interaction in their daughters, and for male children, parents seek out toys that promote risk taking (Blakemore & Centers, 2005). Parents also convey implicit gendered messages through how they decorate their child's room (Rheingold & Cook, 1975; MacPhee & Prendergast, 2019). Often, décor is gendered in a similar way as toys are, with boys' rooms decorated with military or animal motifs, while girls' rooms are often decorated with lace and ruffles (Rheingold & Cook, 1975; MacPhee & Prendergast, 2019). Therefore, it is important to consider parental socialization of gender in multiple domains.

Children also learn about gender stereotypes through their parents' direct comments (e.g., "dolls are for girls, action figures are for boys"). These comments can be reinforced through negative reactions when a child fails to conform to gender expectations. Mothers with strong traditional gender role attitudes often comment more on their child's cross-typed behaviors (Endendijk et al., 2014). In a study comparing gendered play behaviors of preschool children to their parents' attitudes toward gender roles, researchers determined that children are capable of making judgements about how their actions would be perceived by adults (Freeman, 2007). In combination, implicit and explicit gender stereotyping are fundamental to gender socialization, and further, gender development.

Socialization of Traditional or Egalitarian Gender Attitudes.

Parental attitudes toward gender can manifest as traditional or egalitarian child-rearing. Traditional child-rearing involves parental modeling of traditional gender norms to their children. For example, mothers and fathers who divide domestic tasks in the traditional way (e.g., mothers are homemakers, and fathers are breadwinners). Children are encouraged to model this division during symbolic play, often with gender-typed toys (Kollmayer et al. 2018). Parents with egalitarian gender role attitudes, on the contrary, attempt to model gender roles that do not

adhere to traditional roles. Egalitarian child-rearing is often demonstrated by equal division of domestic labor between parents as well as active encouragement for their children to partake in cross-typed play (Endendijk et al., 2013; Kollmayer et al., 2018).

The gender stereotypes that parents model affect their children's gender schemas (Endendijk et al., 2018). Parents with traditional child rearing attitudes promote strict gender-typing in their children, even after they've developed gender constancy (McPhee & Prendergast, 2018). Research further suggests that regardless of parents' traditional or egalitarian beliefs, families with same-gender siblings demonstrate a high level of traditional gender-typing (McPhee & Prendergast, 2018). Young boys have been shown to accurately predict their fathers' disapproval of cross-typed play, demonstrating stereotype awareness and behavior expectations from adult figures (Raag & Rackcliff, 1998). Fathers of same-gender children (e.g., only boys, or only girls) are more likely to express explicit traditional gender stereotypes, whereas fathers of mixed-gender children (e.g., girls and boys) expressed fewer traditional gender stereotypes (Endendijk et al., 2013). Mothers tend to express implicit gender stereotypes which are transferred specifically to their daughters (Endendijk et al., 2013). Furthermore, parents with egalitarian values are much more likely to endorse cross-typed play than parents with traditional gender attitudes, and their children are likewise more flexible playing with cross-typed toys (Kollmayer et al., 2018). Specific figures are difficult to pinpoint, however, sociological research by Martin (2005) shows that at least in the 2000s, egalitarian child-rearing was increasing in popularity and demand.

Desirability and Gender-typing of Toys, Clothing, and Room Décor

Few studies on gender socialization have been conducted, in the United States, in the most recent decade, thus calling into question the continued relevance of their results. Therefore,

the current study will evaluate parent and child desire to interact with gender-typed items within three previously studied domains (toys, clothing, and room décor) in an attempt to study potential changes in parent preference, and their potential effects on child preferences. Previous studies in this area also demonstrate a limited conceptualization of gender. The current study attempts to address a fuller view of stereotypic choices that children encounter in their daily lives as well as provide a more nuanced understanding of gender.

Prior research on gender stereotyping demonstrates children's ability to accurately predict their parents' attitudes toward gender (Kollmayer et al., 2018). Further studies have investigated the relationship between parents' attitudes toward gender and their willingness to allow their child to partake in cross-typed play (Raag & Rackliff, 1998; Serbin et al., 2001). The current study aims to evaluate the relationship between parent and child preferences within these three domains.

In an investigation of modern gender-typing, MacPhee and Prendergast (2018) replicated Rheingold and Cook's (1975) study on gender-stereotyping of preschool aged children's bedroom environments. The proliferation of egalitarian gender attitudes in the intervening four decades inspired MacPhee and Prendergast to investigate whether or not the original findings remained valid. Egalitarian and traditional gender roles of families in this study were not taken into account. Room decor was evaluated based on 14 categories (i.e., ruffles, educational art materials, animal furnishings, etc.). Findings of this study show that children's bedroom environments remain highly gender-typed, mirroring the findings of the original study (MacPhee & Prendergast, 2018; Rheingold & Cook, 1975). This study suggests a high degree of gender-typing in children's room decor, which may be a function of children's preferences, parental preferences, or both.

Like room decor, clothing is a salient indicator of gender-typing. Halim et al. (2016) concluded that children as young as two are aware of stereotypes surrounding appearance and are capable of adhering to them. Further results of this study suggest that children with a strong sense of gender constancy and gender identity dress themselves in gender-typed clothing (Halim et al., 2016). Continuing this line of research, Halim et al. (2018) investigated children's preoccupations with their appearances. When asked why they felt being "pretty" or "handsome" was important to them, children were unable to articulate why, only that it was important (Halim et al., 2018). Both boys and girls reported a high level of appearance preoccupation, but this phenomenon was found most often in girls (Halim et al., 2018). Results of this study indicate that early gender stereotype knowledge shapes the motivation of young boys and young girls to dress according to their gender's stereotypical fashion. In the context of our study, this could mean that child participants will make selections that are based on stereotypical associations with their gender.

The last domain we will analyze is toy preference. Blakemore and Centers (2005) conducted a comprehensive analysis of children's toys across two studies. The first study presented undergraduate students with 275 images of children's toys, which were assessed on a 9- point Likert scale (1 = this toy is only for girls, 5 = this toy is for both boys and girls, and 9 = this toy is only for boys). Study 1 revealed that toys remain strongly gender stereotyped, with most rated on either extreme on the scale. The second study investigated characteristics of boys' and girls' toys. Toys associated with nurturance were rated as highly feminine. As to be expected, the less nurturance a toy conveyed, the more masculine it was rated (Blakemore and Centers, 2005). Overall, results of this study show that toys pertaining to appearance and nurturance were perceived as being highly girl-typed, while toys depicting violence were rated as

being highly boy-typed (Blakemore & Centers, 2005). This study's findings demonstrate the highly gendered nature of many children's toys, highlighting their salience for study.

Toys, clothing, and room decor are highly salient areas of a child's life that have historically been heavily gendered. Toy selection is a way for parents to socialize their child to specific gender roles (Blakemore & Centers, 2005). The toys and costumes that adults purchase for their children act as an endorsement, either implicit or explicit, of stereotypical gender roles (Boe & Woods, 2018). As children play and engage with gender stereotypical toys, they are socialized to understand that some behaviors, or occupations, are off limits depending on their burgeoning identity as a boy or as a girl. Clothing, too, has a similar effect on the child's developing understanding of gender stereotypes. Little girls are often seen wearing dresses featuring lots of sparkles and piled high with tulle (Halim et al., 2014). Little boys, on the other hand, are often seen dressed in sports clothes, or camo patterns (Halim et al., 2014). Either style of clothing has its role in socializing stereotypical femininity, and or masculinity in young children. On a macro level, the child's environment plays a significant role in gender socialization and gender stereotyping as well. Decorating a child's room is one of the first ways in which expecting parents apply gender stereotypes (Cunningham & Macrae, 2011). The environment in which the child is raised is a reflection of gender socialization efforts of their parents (Bem, 1981; Halim, 2018; MacPhee & Prendergast, 2018). The current study focuses on these three domains; however, we recognize that this is not an exhaustive list. Regardless, their salience in daily life merits investigation into their effects on gender socialization and children's gendered preferences.

Present Study Overview

Prior research has shown that gender development may be affected by a changing cultural conception of gender, and thus changing gender stereotypes (Martin, 2005; Boe, 2018; Kollmayer, 2018). This change has manifested in recent years in an increased market of items that are not specifically marketed for either boys or girls. The current study is designed to investigate the potential relationship between parents' gender attitudes and their 3- to 7-year-old child's preferences for gendered items. We ask how a changing concept of gender in contemporary American culture, specifically the shift away from a strict gender binary, has affected the relationship between parent socialization and their children's gendered preferences. By using the NGRO and CGSS as assessments of parent's gender role orientations and parent gender socialization respectively, we investigate the relationship between parent attitudes toward gender to predict the parent's preferences as measured by the DT.

Parents' egalitarian gender attitudes will be assessed via the Normative Gender Role Orientation scale (Athenstaedt, 2000). Parents who receive high scores on this scale are identified as having a traditional gender role orientation whereas parents who receive lower scores demonstrate a more egalitarian orientation. The Child Gender Socialization Scale (Blakemore & Hill, 2008) will be used to assess parent gender socialization through behaviors and stereotypes. This scale highlights four highly salient factors that correlate with areas of parent gender socialization. These are: toys and activities stereotyped for girls, toys and activities stereotyped for boys, helping at home, and disapproval of other gender characteristics (Blakemore & Hill, 2008). We believe that not only will these measures parent preferences will help to explain the relationship between parent gender attitudes and child preferences related to toys, clothing and décor.

Based on prior research, the current study also recognizes gender as a spectrum (Linstead & Pullen, 2006; Richards et. al. 2016; Vijlbrief et al., 2020). Conceptually, the gender spectrum of the domains featured in the current study recognizes 5 points: very masculine, moderately masculine, neutral, moderately feminine, and very feminine (see Blakemore & Centers, 2005). The bulk of prior research in this area largely focuses on gender-typed, cross gender-typed, and gender-neutral items. For example, a gender-typed item for a young girl would be a dollhouse, or an Easy Bake oven. These items are highly associated with traditional gender norms and stereotypes. A gender-neutral item would be Play-Doh, or a slinky, neither of which are strongly associated with either gender. A cross-typed item for a young girl would be a helicopter toy, or an erector set. These items are more commonly associated with young boys and cross the gender spectrum when a young girl interacts with them. We posit that in place of the “gender-typed,” and “cross-typed” labels that are commonly used when describing our domains of interest, that it is more accurate to describe them as a spectrum of gendered representation. The NGRO and CGSS, as assessments of parent’s attitudes toward gender, will be used to predict both the parent and child preferences for items along this spectrum. Therefore, the current study explores the predictiveness of parents’ traditional or egalitarian attitudes towards gender and their desire for their child to interact with gender stereotypic and non-stereotypic items on their child’s interest in items that span the gender spectrum.

Within the domains of interest, we have established sub-scales within domains, with each scale containing items representative of each point on the gender spectrum, as noted previously. Along this spectrum we include a novel descriptor: mixed-typed. These are items that combine aspects of binary gender stereotypes to accommodate a more nuanced understanding of gender. For example, a t-shirt adorned with a dinosaur wearing a tutu and lipstick contains a boy-typed

item (the dinosaur) and girl-typed items (the tutu and the lipstick). Similarly, toys marketed for young boys, such as a play grilling set (i.e., taking the girl-typed play kitchen and making it a more acceptably boy-typed item), may be considered gender-typed to a socially acceptable extent.

The current study presents images representative of gender-typed (i.e., girl-typed items presented to girls), cross-typed (i.e. boy-typed items presented to girls) and mixed-typed (i.e. mixed-typed items presented to any child) items of each domain to both parents and children. These will be presented in sets of five. In separate sessions, parents and children will select one item out of the five that they desire for their child (parent), or desire for themselves (child). Scores from parents' desirability task will be compared to their child's, and parent's gender and age along with the child's gender and age will be analyzed as covariates.

Hypotheses

There are two primary hypotheses guiding the current study: (1) parent gender role orientation (egalitarian to traditional, as measured by the Normative Gender Role Orientation scale (NGRO; Athenstaedt, 2000)), and parent gender socialization (as measured by the Child Gender Socialization Scale (CGSS; Blakemore & Hill, 2007)) will predict a parent's desire for their child to interact with mixed-gendered and cross-typed items. Hypothesis one addresses our research question concerning parent attitudes toward gender and their relation to parent preference. And (2) parents' scores on the desirability task along with their attitudes towards gender as measured by the NGRO and CGSS will **A.** predict children's desire to interact with those items **OR B.** is independent of children's desire to interact with those items. The second hypothesis addresses our research question wherein we suspect parent attitudes toward gender (as measured by the NGRO and CGSS) predict child preferences. However, it is also important

to recognize the potential effects of gender rigidity and flexibility that children in our age range of interest may be subject to. Children around the ages of 3 and 4, regardless of household type, may not select items that are “other” to their socialized gender due to the period of rigidity that children of this age undergo (Martin & Halverson, 1981). Due to potential age-related changes in rigidity and flexibility, we have specified a target age range of 3- to 7- years old for our child participants. Therefore, in our analyses, we will be using parent NGRO and CGSS scores to predict parent DT scores as well as child DT scores. The NGRO and CGSS scores will provide information concerning parent attitudes toward gender and that this will predict child preferences as measured by the DT. Further, we hypothesize that parent preferences, as measured by their DT scores, will explain the relationship between parent attitudes toward gender (as measured by the NGRO and CGSS) and child DT scores. Building on our hypotheses that NGRO and CGSS scores will predict parent DT scores, and that parent DT scores predict child DT scores, we predict that parents’ preferences will have an effect on the relationship between our measures of attitudes toward gender and child preferences. This study will provide critical information about how cultural values around gender are socialized and whether parental socialization might be differentially impactful to children of different ages.

Method

Participants

A total of 87 parent-child dyads (mothers or fathers and 3- to 7- year old children) were recruited for this study. The racial/ethnic makeup of this study included 78 White identifying adults, 2 Asian, and 3 multi-racial, and 4 unspecified with 72 White identifying children, 12 multi-racial, 2 unspecified. Gender of child and adult participants included 46 female identifying children, and 79 female identifying parents and 1 non-binary parent. Parent age ranged from 25

to 47 years ($M = 36.79$, $SD = 4.16$), while child age ranged from 3 to 7 years ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 1.3$). The target sample size was determined with a sensitivity test using G*Power (Version 3.1.9.7), specifying 80% power. This analysis indicated an effect size of 0.095. The decision to proceed with analyses of an underpowered sample was based on time constraints. Parental consent was gained using a signature block on Qualtrics. All families were encouraged to participate as long as they have a child that falls within our target age range, have access to a private computer with a webcam, and can speak, read, and understand English. Demographic information such as parent age, ethnicity of parent and child, income, education, and rural/suburban/urban residency will be gathered via Qualtrics. Participant dyads were compensated for their time with a \$15 Amazon e-gift card. Families with more than one child within the target age range were encouraged to participate for additional compensation.

Materials

Normative Gender Role Orientation (NGRO)

The NGRO (Athenstaedt, 2000) is a 29-item scale ($\alpha = .10$) designed to place respondents on a continuum from traditional to egalitarian gender-role attitudes. Sample items include: “Performing household tasks, like ironing shirts, is not a task that men should be required to perform,” and “Women are equally suited/able to run a tech company than men are”. Responses are recorded using a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher averaged scores indicate a more traditional gender-role orientation. This scale was originally written in German, therefore, for use in this study, we have translated and edited the NGRO to be understood in English. The version of the NGRO to be used in this study is included in Appendix A.

Child Gender Socialization Scale (CGSS)

The Child Gender Socialization Scale (CGSS; Blakemore & Hill, 2007) is a measure of parents' attitudes about gender-related behaviors in their children. The CGSS is a 28-item scale ($\alpha = .10$) designed to distinguish between parents with traditional and feminist beliefs. For the purposes of this study, this scale has been shortened to 24-items. Parents are asked to think of their child and rate their reactions to survey items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very negative) to 7 (very positive). Pronouns on the scale are adjusted depending on the gender of the child in question. Sample items include: "Cleaning his (her) room," "Playing with a toy tool kit," and "Setting the table." Higher averaged scores on the CGSS represent less traditional beliefs about gender. The full CGSS is included in Appendix B.

Desirability Task

In order to establish our scales for the proposed study, we created a list of items representing a gender spectrum across our three domains of interest (toys, clothing, and room decor). Points on this spectrum represent a five-point scale: "very masculine," "moderately masculine," "neutral," "moderately feminine," and "very feminine." These scales are designed to represent a fuller spectrum of gender by incorporating gender neutral items as well as items that are moderately masculine or moderately feminine. Each domain has four to five scales within it, for a total of fourteen scales. Room decor has four scales which include: bedspreads, lamps, rugs, and crafting tables. The toy domain is represented by four scales: stuffed animals, outdoor toys, Lego/Duplo sets, and playsets. The final domain is clothing, and is represented here by five scales: shoes, rain jackets, pullovers, dress up outfits, and t-shirts. Parents were asked to select a single item from each scale that they would most like their child to wear/play with/have in their child's bedroom. Children were likewise asked to select the one item that is their "most favorite" from each scale. Scores are then coded to be "like" or "dislike" the child's gender (+2, +1, 0, -1,

-2), for both parent and child responses. For example, a girl-identifying child who chose the moderately masculine item would be scored as -1 for that item. The images for each item can be found in Appendix C.

Procedure

Recruitment took place primarily on Facebook, through posts in popular local parenting groups. Interested parents were told to contact the researcher via email for further information. Once contact had been established, the researcher sent a brief, vague, introduction to the study, along with a link to the survey on Qualtrics. There, the parent participant signed their consent to participate. This study employs three parent measures to assess gender-role attitudes and parents' attitudes towards gender-related behaviors and occurs in two phases. In the first phase, the parent participant takes the NGRO and the Child Gender Socialization Scale, and the Desirability Task via Qualtrics, independently, with no interaction from the researcher. If parents had more than one child in our age range, they were sent a second link to a supplementary Qualtrics survey which omitted only the NGRO, as this measure is a measure of egalitarian to traditional parenting style, and not associated with preferences for an individual child. Parents responded to these measures independently, prior to a scheduled video call in which child responses to the desirability task were recorded. Order of presentation and order of items on the parent DT were randomized automatically by Qualtrics.

Finally, in phase two, during a scheduled zoom session lasting approximately 8 minutes, the researcher met with the parent-child dyad. This session was conducted live, to help ensure that the parent is less able to change their child's response or answer for their child. The researcher introduced themselves as a teacher, interested in finding out what kids like. The script that the researcher followed is included in Appendix D. Before beginning the desirability task,

the researcher conducted a warm-up phase in which the researcher established rapport by performing a practice scale unrelated to gender (e.g., choosing their favorite animal). Each scale of the DT was presented to the child one at a time. The child was then prompted to select the item that they find most desirable. To ensure proper data recording, each item in the scales was assigned a numerical value. For younger children participating in this study who were not able to read the numbers, their parent facilitated this process by saying aloud the item number their child has selected. For children in the other end of our age group, they read aloud the corresponding number. As a counterbalancing measure a random number generator was used to ensure proper randomization of slide order as well as image order within each slide. These orders were saved as two different PowerPoint presentations and presented to participants based on which slide order had been used prior to a given session. Scores were converted from Slide Order 1 and Slide Order 2 to a standardized 1-5 value aligning with our very masculine to very feminine scale. Once standardized, we then re-coded each participant's responses to a -2 ("not like me") to +2 ("like me") based on the parent's report of their child's gender. Our analyses are based on these values. Once a child's data has been collected, the researcher thanked the child for their help. Parents were sent debriefing information about the true nature of the study along with compensation via email shortly thereafter.

Results

Multiple linear regression analysis was employed with R (version 4.0.5) using the psych (Revelle, 2021), lm.beta (Behrendt, 2014), lavaan (Rosseel, 2012) and lme4 (Bates et al., 2015) packages to analyze a model for predicting children's responses to the Desirability Task (DT) based on parent's scores on the NGRO and CGSS, parents' DT responses, domain, child gender, parent gender, parent age, and child age. Domains were coded as 1 = Décor, 2 = Clothing, and 3

= Toys. Gender was coded as 1 = Female, 2 = Male, and 3 = non-Binary. Before conducting analyses, data were assessed for normality. Basic descriptive statistics and regression coefficients are shown in Table 1. Two dyads were removed from analysis. The first dyad was removed due to an NGRO score above the 3rd IQR. The second dyad was removed because the parent was the sole participant with a gender identity other than male or female. With only a single participant identifying as non-binary or other gender, we are unable to provide sufficient evidence that this gender identity influences child preferences.

Regression Analyses

We began our analyses with the first hypothesis: the NGRO and CGSS ($M = 6.11$, $SD = 0.58$) predict parent preferences on the DT. A multiple regression model was conducted predicting parent DT score from the NGRO ($\beta = -.15$, $p = .195$) and CGSS ($\beta = .04$, $p = .740$). Parent age ($\beta = -.04$, $p = .765$) and parent gender ($\beta = -.03$, $p = .812$) were included in this analysis as covariates. Results of this analysis were non-significant ($R^2 = 0.024$, 95%CI [.00, .07], $p = .749$). This analysis shows that neither the NGRO nor the CGSS were able to predict parent's preferences. Table 2 shows regression coefficients for this model. We then tested the omnibus model addressing our second hypothesis: parent preferences either predict child preferences, or child preferences are independent of parent selection. This model included eight fixed factors: NGRO ($\beta = .19$, $p = .004$) and CGSS ($\beta = -.03$, $p = .64$), parents' DT responses ($\beta = -.03$, $p = .65$), domain ($\beta = .01$, $p = .89$), child gender ($\beta = -.10$, $p = .11$), parent gender ($\beta = -.15$, $p = .02$), parent age ($\beta = -.07$, $p = .31$), and child age ($\beta = .11$, $p = .09$). Parent-child dyad was included as a random effect. The omnibus eight predictor model was able to account for some variance in child DT responses, $R^2 = .075$, 95%CI [.00, .12], $p = .012$. Parent NGRO scores ($\beta = .19$, $p < .001$) and parent gender ($\beta = -0.15$, $p < .05$) were significant predictors of children's

DT responses and explained 7.5% of the variance in child scores. None of the other predictor variables affected child DT selection. Table 3 shows regression coefficients for this model.

Results of this analysis indicate that for every point increase in NGRO score, with higher scores indicating more traditional gender role orientation, child responses are more likely to be gender-typed. With information about the parent's gender, we were able to predict a decrease in child DT response scores, meaning that if the parent is female, their child is more likely to choose "other" gender items.

Item Domain

Further multiple regression analyses were conducted based on item domain. Three models were run predicting children's toy, clothing, and room décor DT responses respectively from the eight predictors of the omnibus model. Tables 4, 5, and 6 show regression coefficients for the Toy Domain, Décor Domain, and Clothing Domain respectively. The Toy Domain model predicted child toy DT score from parents' NGRO ($\beta = .23, p = .031$) and CGSS ($\beta = .02, p = .831$) scores, parents' toy DT responses ($\beta = -.10, p = .349$), child gender ($\beta = .04, p = .0501$), parent gender ($\beta = -.11, p = .329$), parent age ($\beta = -.06, p = .683$), and child age ($\beta = .14, p = .172$). This analysis did not significantly account variance in child Toy DT responses, $R^2 = .13$, 95%CI [.00, .22], $p = .08$. In this model, however, one predictor was significant. The NGRO was able to account for the variance in this model, $\beta = .23, r = .25, p < .05$. This positive correlation indicates that higher NGRO scores relate to more gender-typed selections. In this analysis, child gender approaches significance, but fails to fall below the $p < .05$ threshold. The Décor Domain model likewise employed parents' NGRO ($\beta = .07, p = .524$) and CGSS ($\beta = -.11, p = .351$) scores, parents' décor DT responses ($\beta = .02, p = .837$), child gender ($\beta = -.10, p = .398$), parent gender ($\beta = .01, p = .909$), parent age ($\beta = -.12, p = .341$), and child age ($\beta = .13, p = .300$) to

predict child décor DT score. This analysis did not significantly account for the variance in child Décor DT responses, $R^2 = .060$, 95%CI [.00, .11], $p = .547$. Analysis of the Clothing Domain model also used parents' NGRO ($\beta = .18$, $p = .112$) and CGSS ($\beta = -.06$, $p = .680$) scores, parents' clothing DT responses ($\beta = .06$, $p = .704$), child gender ($\beta = .02$, $p = .971$), parent gender ($\beta = -.13$, $p = .241$), parent age ($\beta = -.09$, $p = .534$), and child age ($\beta = .06$, $p = .495$) to predict child clothing DT score. This analysis similarly did not significantly account for variance in child Clothing DT responses, $R^2 = .045$, 95%CI [.00, .08], $p = .719$.

Mediation Models

Parent NGRO, Parent DT, Child DT Responses

Based on the prediction that parents' scores on NGRO and CGSS would influence parent DT responses, and therefore predict child DT responses, we performed two mediation models. To confirm mediation, we tested whether our data satisfied three conditions, in line with Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure and Sobel's (1982) test. First, I tested whether the predictor variable was significantly related to the outcome variable. A linear regression revealed that the NGRO was a significant predictor of child DT score ($\beta = .17$, $p = .007$). Second, I found that the predictor (NGRO) was not significantly related to the mediator (parent DT score), $\beta = -.12$, $p = .057$. We then tested whether the mediator (parent DT score) was related to the outcome variable (child DT score) controlling for the predictor (NGRO), and this analysis was not statistically significant, $\beta = .015$, $p = .810$. Controlling for parent DT score did not significantly mediate the relationship between NGRO score and child DT score. Sobel's test was not performed in light of this result. A model for this analysis, including beta-weights is shown in Figure 1.

Parent CGSS, Parent DT, Child DT

We then ran a mediation analysis with the CGSS predicting child DT score, mediated by parent DT score. First, I tested whether the predictor variable was significantly related to the outcome variable. A linear regression revealed that the CGSS was not a significant predictor of child DT score ($\beta = -.04, p = .525$). Second, I found that the predictor (CGSS) was not significantly related to the mediator (parent DT score), $\beta = .03, p = .637$. We then tested whether the mediator (parent DT score) was related to the outcome variable (child DT score) controlling for the predictor (CGSS), and this analysis was not statistically significant, $\beta = -.004, p = .949$. Controlling for parent DT score did not significantly mediate the relationship between CGSS score and child DT score. Sobel's test was not performed in light of this result. The model for this analysis, with beta-weights, is shown in Figure 2.

Discussion

The social changes of the previous decade have led to an increase in gender egalitarianism. Popular national retailers such as Target have removed gender labels from their toy sections in a move toward gender inclusivity (Yagoda, 2016). The goal of the current study was to investigate the relationship between parent and child preferences for gendered objects, in light of these societal changes. We examined whether the shift toward gender egalitarianism in the broader cultural context is evident in both parent and child selections of items in our three domains of interest. Prior research has indicated that parent attitudes towards gender can be transmitted to their children (Levy & Carter, 1988; Endendijk, Groeneveld, van Berkel, Hallers-Haalboom, Mesman, Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2013; Weisgram et al., 2014; Endendijk, Groeneveld, Mesman, 2018; Boe & Woods, 2018). We hypothesized that (a) parent gender socialization (measured by the CGSS), and their egalitarian to traditional gender role orientation (measured by the NGRO) and (b) the parent score on the Desirability Task as well as their

NGRO and CGSS scores would either predict their child's DT responses, or that the child's responses are independent of these measures based on the child's age. Our findings, as related to these questions, yielded mixed-results.

Summary of Research Questions and Findings

The goal of the current study was to gain further insight into the relationship between parent and child preferences in an era of changing cultural standards for gendered behaviors. We surveyed parents to assess three theoretically interesting influences on gender socialization (McHale et al., 1999; Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Blakemore & Centers, 2005; Freeman, 2007; Blakemore & Hill, 2008; Kollmayer, 2018), along with their child's preferences for items representing points along a spectrum of gender. For this purpose, we used three measures, two of which were specific to the parent participant, and one was shared between parent and child participants. This third measure was developed for use in this study and presented items representative of our three domains of interest: toys, décor, and clothing. Images chosen for use in this study were based on items previously used in research (Blakemore & Centers, 2005; Freeman, 2007; Halim et al., 2016; MacPhee & Prendergast, 2019).

To address our first research question that parent attitudes toward gender and their relation to parent preference, we tested the ability of our two survey measures to predict parent preferences. This analysis did not yield significant results; thus, our first hypothesis was not supported, meaning that neither the NGRO nor the CGSS were able to accurately predict parent responses to the DT. This result may indicate that parent DT responses reflect more traditional expectations for their children's play, dress, and bedroom environment than their responses to the NGRO and CGSS would indicate, or vice versa. Analyses of our second hypothesis showed that parent scores on the NGRO was a significant predictor of child selection. The mean score

CGSS is high, indicating more feminist parent gender socialization, however, results of our analyses show that it was not a significant predictor. Parent gender, a covariate, was a significant predictor of their child's selections; however, due to the limited number of male parent participants, these results should be interpreted with caution. Children's preferences on the DT were not significantly predicted by parent preference, parent age, child age, or child gender, nor the CGSS.

Our analyses yielded partial support for our second hypothesis, that is, evidence emerged indicating that the more traditional gender role orientation the parent reported via the NGRO, the more gender-typed their child's preferences would be. However, both the CGSS and parent preference were unable to explain the relationship between parent attitudes toward gender and child preference. This portion of our hypothesis was unsupported. Previous research investigating the relationship between parent and child preferences, suggests that the parent's gender role orientation influences child preferences (Raag & Rackliff, 1998; Kollmayer et al., 2018). More traditional attitudes toward may be passed from parent to child, and be demonstrated in strong gender-typed selections, whereas more egalitarian attitudes may correspond with more gender neutral child preferences. Social Learning Theory (SLT) would explain this phenomenon (Bandura, 1971). SLT explains that children model their behavior based on how others are conducting themselves in a given situation. In the context of gender socialization, SLT says that children perceive and pattern themselves after adults in their lives. Most commonly, these adults are the child's parents. Attitudes toward gender are thus transmitted from parent to child through explicit and implicit socialization (Levy & Carter, 1989; Raag & Rackliff, 1998; Serbin et al., 2001). The transmission of gender stereotypes and norms in the parent-child relationship is then encoded into the child's gender schema (Bem, 1981; Levy &

Carter, 1989; Endendijk et al., 2018). While parent's attitudes toward gender and gender role orientation may skew more egalitarian, and therefore explain our recorded scores on the NGRO, this may not predict children's preference because of differing messages about what is or is not socially acceptable as it relates to gender from sources that the parent does not control.

While parent scores on the DT did not predict their child's preferences, the mean of parent choices indicates a desire for gender neutral items for their children. On average, parents chose more gender neutral items for their children ($M = 4.99$) than children chose for themselves ($M = 10.39$).¹ This trend provides some support for an egalitarian shift in parenting practices in this sample, which prior research supports (Martin, 2005). Children's mean score on the desirability task indicates a trend towards moderately gender typed items versus strict gender typing. Prior research has shown that gender development may be affected by a change in the cultural conception of gender, and thus changing gender stereotypes (Boe, 2018; Kollmayer, 2018; Martin, 2005). There is a trend in modern parenting advisors (Martin, 2005) towards egalitarian parenting practices. This trend is also evident in consumer markets (Ankeny, 2016; Garcia, 2018; Powers, 2019). The NGRO, and especially the CGSS (due to the fact that it was not a significant predictor in our analyses), may be so outdated in terms of the stereotypes they use for evaluation (e.g., "Housework is a task for girls") that they were not able to predict parent preferences. The NGRO, however, was a significant predictor of child preferences. Higher scores on the NGRO (which correspond with higher traditional attitudes) were able to predict higher child DT scores (corresponding with more gender-typed selections). We speculate that the NGRO ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.34$) may be a more accurate assessment of traditional gender role

¹ These means are based on the "like me," "not like me" -2 to +2 scale and the parent's report of their child's gender. For parents it is "like my child," "not like my child." Each sum of DT was averaged across all participants.

orientations rather than as a measure of the egalitarian to traditional gender role spectrum. Parent participants in our sample, on average, showed high scores on the CGSS ($M = 6.11$, $SD = 0.58$) indicating high feminist parent gender socialization. And yet, it was not a significant predictor of neither parent preference, nor of child preference (as measured by the DT). Differences in outcomes may be due to the fact that the NGRO is a household measure, while the CGSS is a measure of attitudes towards a specific child. Participants with more than one child in our age range completed one NGRO survey along with two or more (as necessary) CGSS surveys. This could mean that on an individual basis, parents hold more feminist/egalitarian attitudes toward gender, but when asked to respond to questions assessing their macro gender role orientation, they are more neutral.

Cultural shifts in acceptable behaviors for men and women have changed in the years since either measure was developed. Using surveys based on stereotypes and norms from the early to mid-00s as we have, may not provide accurate assessments of more contemporary views. In a 2019 study of male and female stereotypes, researchers found that women rated themselves in accordance with female stereotypes (i.e., less assertive, less capable of leadership) while males rated themselves counter to stereotypes (i.e. more communal) and both males and females rated either gender as equally competent in ability (Hentschel et al., 2019). In terms of our study, similar changes in gender stereotypes (though unrelated to leadership styles) may have influenced parents' responses on our measures. What were once progressive, egalitarian attitudes toward gender and gendered stereotypes may now be accepted as the cultural standard.

Evidence suggests parent preferences on the DT are not predicted by their gender role orientation, nor by their gender socialization, contrary to expectations. However, parent gender role orientation was able to significantly predict child preferences. Why then, were the NGRO

and CGSS unable to predict parent DT scores? One explanation is that parents may have felt pressure to respond in a way that reflects more egalitarian attitudes toward gender, based on social desirability. This may have occurred because of the region from which we derived the majority of our sample. Individuals from the West Coast, on average, tend to be more liberal (Pew Research Center, 2014) and therefore those in the minority (i.e., less egalitarian views), may have wanted to fit in with what they believe is expected from them. Because children are less biased by these social expectations, this may have contributed to why their responses to the DT, on average, were more gender-typed than their parents' responses. As we have previously discussed, parents hold a heavy influence over their child's gender socialization (Endendijk et al., 2013; Martin & Ruble, 2004; McHale et al., 1999). However, our analyses show that parent DT scores trend towards gender neutral selections and child DT scores trend towards traditional gender-typing despite moderately egalitarian NGRO and highly feminist CGSS scores. One possible explanation is supported by the work of Meagher and Shu (2019). The authors argue that, conceptually, egalitarianism is popular amongst adult men and women; however, these trends give the false impression that egalitarian beliefs are widely practiced (England, 2010; Shu & Meagher, 2018; Meagher & Shu, 2019). It may be the case in the current study that despite the egalitarian trend in our parent measures, their children's responses revealed a more moderate approach to egalitarianism. In the region where we obtained the majority of our sample, it may be that parents believe themselves to be representing egalitarian attitudes toward gender, but their children's preferences for more traditional gender-typed items belie that belief.

Another potential explanation is that children's decisions may be influenced by gender rigidity and flexibility. Our analyses showed no effects of age which was contrary to our expectations. It seems, that in spite of the ages where we would expect to see gender flexibility

demonstrated, the child participants in our sample chose items that were more gender-typed. It is possible that children's responses to the DT were influenced by social desirability, that is, that they felt they were expected to answer in certain ways based on socialized gender stereotypes. Even if they themselves were raised in a more egalitarian household, as the results of our parent measures suggest, negative interactions with peers or other adults may have taught them to respond in a gender-typed manner.

Prior research by Ruble et al. (2007) claim inconsistencies in research that do not confirm Kohlberg's (1966) findings. The authors call this "pseudoconstancy" (Ruble et al., p. 1132, 2007), a term referring to the inconstant findings of studies in the years since 1966. Levy and Carter (1989), too, found that their predictions relating to gender rigidity and flexibility were inconsistent with what they had expected. In fact, their analyses showed the effect of gender constancy to be weak. The pair concluded that it was the child's gender schema, combined with their age, that were the more accurate measures. Based on the conclusions of these studies, the findings of the current study are not inconsistent with prior research. Ruble et al. (2007) discuss controversy over this matter, and it is possible that the findings of the current study add to the larger discussion on gender constancy and gender schema. Therefore, more research in this area is necessary.

In light of our results, it may be possible to attribute differences in expectations to external factors. While we gathered information concerning the parents' gender role orientation and parent gender socialization, we were unable to gather information regarding the use of child-care providers, for how long the child stays in a child-care environment, any information relating to friends the child may have, etc. These other forces may act on a child's gender socialization, and the measurement of such factors falls beyond the ability of the current study. Regardless of

parents' individual attitudes toward gender, external sources may have affected their child's gender schema, causing their flexibility and rigidity to reflect gendered preferences that do not correlate with their parents' choices.

Worthy of Further Exploration

While we did not include the effect of domain as a specific hypothesis, nor did it arise as a significant covariant in our analyses, it is important to discuss their role in the current study. Our domains of interest were selected not only because they convey gender stereotypes (Blakemore & Centers, 2005; Halim et al., 2016; MacPhee & Prendergast, 2019), but also because their place in the midst of our time's shifting gender roles is so salient (Tabuchi, 2015; Garcia, 2018; Acklin, 2019; Powers, 2019). Many toys for girls encourage a focus on appearance and on nurturance, while toys for boys often promote violence and manual labor (Blakemore & Centers, 2005). But do children prefer items that are highly gender-typed, or do they show preferences for other gender representations? Mean scores across the toy domain subscales (outdoor toys, play sets, Legos and stuffed animals) would indicate that young girls do in fact prefer moderate-to-high gender-typed toys. Boys, on the other hand, chose more gender neutral items on average. One possible explanation for these findings could lie in our highly egalitarian sample of parents. Families included in our study may be more likely to discourage violence and aggression, two traits Blakemore and Centers (2005) cite as dominating the boy section of the toy store. These trends could possibly indicate a cultural shift toward empowering young boys to enjoy items stereotypically associated with other genders while at the same time affirming traditional feminine stereotypes, thereby producing the trends observed in the current study.

Past work suggests that it is possible that looking like a girl is key to being a girl in a young girl's gender expression (Halim et al., 2016). The authors speculate that, to young boys,

acting like a boy may be key to being a boy. Average responses to individual scales within the clothing domain indicate that girls in our sample greatly preferred highly gender-typed raincoats and shoes, whereas boys preferred moderate-to-neutral gender-typed raincoats and shoes. Boys, however, did, on average, select highly gender-typed dress-up outfits, while girls were more moderate in their dress up selections. Other subscales in our clothing domain yielded relatively similar mean scores across gender. For example, on average, both girls and boys in our sample chose moderately gender-typed t-shirts. These differences in selections based on subscales within the clothing domain lend support to the observations of Halim et al. (2016). The high gender-typing of certain items in the clothing domain by young girls in our sample, but not from boys when shown the same sets of items, could represent an affinity on the part of young girls to “look the part” of being a girl by choosing pink, floral and rainbow items of clothing, whereas young boys could be more focused on demonstrating their “boy-hood” in other ways.

Finally, in the current study, we found that, on average, parents preferred gender neutral décor items. Children, too, showed more gender neutral preferences on average. The inclusion of the décor domain was inspired by MacPhee and Prendergast’s (2019) study, which itself is an update to Rheingold and Cook’s (1975) study. Results of MacPhee and Prendergast’s (2019) study showed that the gender typing of decor items observed in children’s bedrooms remained just as gender-typed as they were in the original study. Without assessing child participants’ rooms for gendered stereotypes, we can infer there is a disconnect in what parents are willing to purchase versus what they prefer. Likewise, children may show preference on the DT and at the store for more gender-neutral décor, but their parents or guardians may be unwilling to purchase these items for other reasons. It is important to note as well, that children have a higher degree of

agency when selecting toys to play with, as compared to the amount of say they have when choosing clothes, and especially when choosing room décor.

Limitations

The results of this study should be considered in light of a few limitations. Research that explores the relation between parent and child preferences for gendered items, in the contemporary American context, are few. The theoretical background for this study was informed heavily by two European studies: Kollmayer (2018; Germany), and Endendijk et al. (2013; the Netherlands). Although European and American cultures share similarities, they have significant social and political differences, and may not be able to be directly compared. Thus, it is also possible that the relationship between parent-child preferences and the ways in which gender gets socialized to children are different in America than in Europe. Cross-cultural studies of the 1990s indicate that parent and child interactions differ between European cultures (Bornstien et al., 1991; Best et al., 1994). For example, Best et al. (1994) recorded differences in affection, soothing, play, and discipline between French, German, and Italian parents. This study suggests that even between neighboring countries, cultural practices are noticeably different. These interactions affect socialization from parent to child. It is reasonable, then, to assume that while many Americans share some historical connection to Europe, the differences in cultural gender roles and stereotypes may simply be too different to draw parallels between the European countries that inspired this research and the United States.

Further methodological limitations include the necessity of including parents during the child's Zoom session to ensure that their child was not alone with a stranger on the computer. This measure was necessary; however, the presence of the parent could potentially have influenced child responses by creating a desirability bias. Children may have felt pressure to

select items that were more or less gender-typed under the scrutiny of their parent, or from speaking with a person of authority (i.e., the researcher posing as a teacher).

Another potential limitation lies in our recruitment methodology. Recruitment took place on local and national Facebook parenting groups, the Family Academy Database at WWU, and from Children Helping Science. These spaces on the internet are geared towards parents who may be more active in their child's lives than the general population. Furthermore, interested parents were told to contact the researcher for further information on the study. This created a self-selection bias. A full list of Facebook groups where we posted recruitment information is included in Appendix E. The sample that we recruited was limited to parents who participate in Facebook groups, and parents with knowledge of Children Helping Science. This method of recruitment could contribute to the NGRO scores obtained from our sample, indicating a more egalitarian household type. Because our sample was largely derived from parenting advice and support groups, the nature of these groups may skew more egalitarian, and thus attract members with similar attitudes. A consequence of recruiting online is that our sample entirely omitted families without reliable internet access. These families may have access to the internet through their local library or may have poor connections depending on how rural their residence is. Either of these possible explanations would be unable to support a Zoom session, causing parents to self-select out of participation in our study. Rural populations, especially those with poor internet connectivity, are commonly associated with more conservative/traditional attitudes. If we were unable to reach this population due to poor internet access, that would explain, in some part, our results.

Although there were limitations of this study, there were also many strengths. First, this study gathered a large sample of participants in the Pacific Northwest. We attempted to gather a

national sample, however, the sample that we did recruit is likely indicative of the broader PNW. Our results may not speak to a national sample, but they can shed light on parent-child preferences in the PNW. This sample increases generalizability within this region and allows us to better understand the relationship between egalitarian households and child preferences. Additionally, we conducted child data collection live on Zoom, limiting parent's ability to manipulate child responses to the DT. This method helped to ensure that child responses to the DT were accurate. A third strength was the novelty of our research questions. Studies comparing parent and child preferences for items are largely outdated, or more recently conducted in the European context. The present study attempted to bring this area of research into the contemporary era.

Future Research

Based on the current study, some considerations should be made in future research. First, the regions from which parents and children are recruited from should be as widespread as possible. Parents' responses to the DT may have trended towards gender neutrality based on a handful of factors, chief among them the fact that the majority of our sample was recruited from the PNW, a region of America that is associated with liberal ideology (Pew Research Center, 2014). Parents from this area might be more likely to advocate for gender egalitarian values and have a true preference for gender neutral items for their children. Another possibility is that, coming from a region that is so stereotypically liberal, participants may have felt pressure to answer in a certain way because that is what others expect of them. This desirability bias may have also had an effect on parent responses regardless of region.

A second direction is to expand the age of parents recruited into the study. The mean adult age of our sample is 36.76, ranging from 25 to 47. In prior research, older parents were

shown to hold more egalitarian beliefs (Kollmayer, 2018). The same study by Kollmayer (2018) shows that younger parents, possibly contradicting expectations, tend to hold more traditional attitudes toward gender. Our study oversampled older parents, therefore future research should include younger parents, which may achieve greater variation in CGSS and NGRO scores. Given that child participants were more likely to select-gender typed preferences than their parents, greater participation from younger parents we may have attained results that align with child responses to the DT.

Further research is necessary to determine the influences parent age and region have on American parent-child preferences. Cultural attitudes towards gender may also be highly regional. Further research into regional attitudes toward gender is warranted. There is an overarching American culture, but that may not reflect the lived experience of individuals in different areas of the country. We intended to gather a more national sample from Children Helping Science, however, most of our participants came from the Pacific Northwest. In future research, parents should be actively recruited from more conservative regions and should include younger parents as well.

Lastly, future research into parent-child preferences should necessitate the development of new measures of egalitarian to traditional attitudes toward gender. Both the NGRO and CGSS are severely outdated for use in contemporary analysis. For use in this study, these measures were edited to reflect a more modern vocabulary and understanding of what is or is not permissible for any given gender. However, the underlying sentiments and factors of these measures were antiquated, despite having both been developed in the past twenty years (e.g., “Men earn more on average because they put more effort into their jobs than women” (Athenstaedt, 2000)). We were also unable to assess why parents made the selections they did on

the Desirability Task. Further qualitative research including open-ended response options for participants could yield more insight into what qualities do or do not make something desirable for the parent and for the child.

Conclusion

The social changes of the past five years have called into question how our culture views gender and gender stereotypes. Ideas of what is or is not acceptable for a child of any gender to engage in are moving in a more egalitarian direction (Ankeny, 2016; Garcia, 2018; Powers, 2019). This study attempted to gather information on the parent-child relationship regarding preferences for gendered items which may be changing in the current social climate. We predicted that children of egalitarian households would be more likely to select items that are stereotypically cross-typed, mixed-typed or are gender neutral. Likewise, we predicted that children of traditional households would be more likely to select items that are gender-typed. Our study paradigm was unable to reliably predict child preferences. However, based on the mean values of parent DT scores, we can infer parental preference for gender neutral items. We can also infer that both parents and children, on average, display less preference for cross-typed items. We would speculate that although gender neutral selections were popular in this sample, there is comfort in the familiar gendered nature of certain items, and these items were slightly more desirable for parents and even more so for children. The averaged child scores on the Desirability Task show a trend toward items that are more mixed in their gendered representation; meaning they predominately demonstrate stereotypically gendered characteristics, but also contain elements stereotypically associated with the “other” gender. Although we intended to collect a national sample through Children Helping Science, most of our participants are located in the Pacific Northwest. This highly progressive region of the

United States did not yield variability in parent participants' scores. Further, the mean age of parents in our study is high ($M = 36.6$), which prior research suggests have egalitarian attitudes toward gender. The regional and age bias towards egalitarianism has potentially influenced the average, denoting a trend towards moderate gender-typing and gender-neutrality.

Although the role of the parent in gender socialization is highly influential to their child's gender development (McHale et al., 1999; Serbin et al., 2001; Martin & Ruble, 2004; Freeman, 2007; Endendijk et al., 2013, 2018), we did not find a connection between parent preferences and child preferences. We did, however, find a relationship between parent gender role orientation (as measured by the NGRO) and children's preferences. The period of gender rigidity and flexibility in a child's cognitive development is also influenced by their home life. What is represented in their gender schema as acceptable behavior for a person of any gender goes on to inform the child's expression of gendered stereotypes during their individual period of gender rigidity. If, say, in a household with egalitarian child-rearing practices, a child's developing gender schema associates a toy truck with either boys or girls, then we would expect children of any gender to be equally likely to select a truck as a desirable toy. In a household that practices traditional child-rearing, we would expect children who identify as boys would outnumber girl-identifying children in choosing the truck based on the gender schema that would develop based on more stereotypical gender division. Within this theoretical framework, our measures remain unable to explain the variance in responses to the Desirability Task. While parental egalitarianism, etc. did not predict their children's preference for gendered objects, this research indicates that parents are looking to more gender neutral items for their children while children still seem to prefer slightly more gendered objects.

References

- Acklin, M. (2019, December 11). Common ground: There's a shift towards gender-neutral toys. CivicScience.
- Ankeny, J. (2016, April 4). How gender-targeting marketing is hurting toy retail. Retail Dive.
- Andone, D. (2019, November 13). Transgender Awareness Week starts today. Here's what you should know. CNN.
- Athenstaedt, U. (2000). Normative geschlechtsrollenorientierung: Entwicklung und Validierung eines Fragebogens. *Zeitschrift für Differentielle und Diagnostische Psychologie*, 21, 91-104.
<https://doi.org/10.1024//0170-1789.21.1.91>
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173–1182. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.51.6.1173>
- Bates, D., Mächler, M., Bolker, B., Walker, S. (2015). “Fitting Linear Mixed-Effects Models Using lme4.” *Journal of Statistical Software*, 67(1), 1–48. doi: 10.18637/jss.v067.i01.
- Behrendt, S. (2014). lm.beta: Add Standardized Regression Coefficients to lm-Objects. R package version 1.5-1. <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=lm.beta>
- Bem, S.L. (1974). The measurement of psychological androgyny. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 42(2), 155-162.
- Bem, S.L. (1981). Gender schema theory: A cognitive account of sex typing. *Psychological Review*, 88(4), 354–364. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.88.4.354>
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Prentice-Hall.
- Best, D. L., House, A. S., Barnard, A. E., & Spicker, B. S. (1994). Parent-child interactions in France, Germany, and Italy: The effects of gender and culture. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 25(2), 181–193. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022194252002>

- Blakemore, J., & Centers, E. (2005). Characteristics of boys' and girls' toys. *Sex Roles*, 53(9-10), 619-633. doi:10.1007/s11199-005-7729-0
- Blakemore, J.E.O., Hill, C.A. (2007). The child gender socialization scale: A measure to compare traditional and feminist parents. *Sex Roles*, 58, 192-207. doi:10.1007/s11199-007-9333-y
- Boe, J.L., & Woods, R.J. (2018). Parents' influence on infants' gender-typed toy preferences. *Sex Roles*, 79, 358–373. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-017-0858-4>
- Bornstein, M. H., Tal, J., & Tamis-LeMonda, C. (1991). Parenting in cross-cultural perspective: The United States, France, and Japan. In M. H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Cultural approaches to parenting* (pp. 69–90). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Bussey, K., & Bandura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory of gender development and differentiation. *Psychological Review*, 106(4), 676–713. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.106.4.676>
- Carter, D., & Levy, G. (1988). Cognitive aspects of early sex-role development: the influence of gender schemas on preschoolers' memories and preferences for sex-typed toys and activities. *Child Development*, 59(3), 782-792. doi:10.2307/1130576
- Compton, J. (2018, July 19). 'Boy or girl?' Parents raising 'theybies' let kids decide. NBC News.
- Cunningham, S.J. & Macrae, C.N. (2011). The colour of gender stereotyping. *British Journal of Psychology*, 102, 598-614. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8295.2011.02023.x>
- Eagly, A. H., Nater, C., Miller, D. I., Kaufmann, M., & Sczesny, S. (2020). Gender stereotypes have changed: A cross-temporal meta-analysis of U.S. public opinion polls from 1946 to 2018. *American Psychologist*, 75(3), 301–315. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000494>
- Egan, S.K., Perry, D.G. (2001). Gender identity: A multidimensional analysis with implications for psychosocial adjustment. *Developmental Psychology*, 37(4), 451-463.
- Endendijk, J.J., Groeneveld, M.G., van Berkel, S.R., Hallers-Haalboom, E.T., Mesman, J., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M.J. (2013). Gender stereotypes in the family context: Mothers, fathers, and siblings. *Sex Roles*, 68, 577-590. doi:10.1007/s11199-013-0265-4

- Endendijk, J. J., Groeneveld, M. G., Van der Pol, L. D., Van Berkel, S. R., Hallers-Haalboom, E. T., Mesman, J., & Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J. (2014). Boys don't play with dolls: Mothers' and fathers' gender talk during picture book reading. *Parenting: Science and Practice, 14*, 141–161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295192.2014.9727533>
- Endendijk, J.J., Groeneveld, M.G. & Mesman, J. (2018). The Gendered Family Process Model: An Integrative Framework of Gender in the Family. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 47*, 877–904. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1185-8>
- England, Paula. (2010). THE gender revolution: Uneven and stalled. *Gender & Society, 24*(2), 149-166.
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A., & Lang, A.-G. (2009). Statistical power analyses using G*Power 3.1: Tests for correlation and regression analyses. *Behavior Research Methods, 41*, 1149-1160.
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.-G., & Buchner, A. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods, 39*, 175-191.
- Freeman, N.K. (2007). Preschoolers' perceptions of gender appropriate toys and their parents' beliefs about genderized behaviors: Miscommunication, mixed messages, or hidden truths?. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 34*(5), 357-366. doi:10.1007/s10643-006-0123-x
- Garcia, T. (2018, December 11). Pink and blue are out as millennial parents show growing preference for gender-neutral toys. Market Watch.
- Halim, M. L., Ruble, D., Tamis-LeMonda, C., & Shrout, P. E. (2013). Rigidity in gender-typed behaviors in early childhood: A longitudinal study of ethnic minority children. *Child Development, 84*(4), 1269–1284. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12057>
- Halim, M. L., Ruble, D. N., Tamis-LeMonda, C. S., Zosuls, K. M., Lurye, L. E., & Greulich, F. K. (2014). Pink frilly dresses and the avoidance of all things "girly": Children's appearance rigidity and cognitive theories of gender development. *Developmental Psychology, 50*(4), 1091–1101. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034906>

- Halim, M.L.D. (2016). Princesses and Superheroes: Social-cognitive influences on early gender rigidity. *Child Development Perspectives, 10*(3), 155-160.
- Halim, M., Walsh, A. S., Tamis-LeMonda, C. S., Zosuls, K. M., & Ruble, D. N. (2018). The Roles of Self-Socialization and Parent Socialization in Toddlers' Gender-Typed Appearance. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 47*(8), 2277–2285. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1263-y>
- Hentschel, T, Heilman, M.E, & Peus, C.V. (2019). The multiple dimensions of gender stereotypes: A current look at men's and women's characterizations of others and themselves. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00011>
- Ignico, A. A. (1989). Development and verification of a gender-role stereotyping index for physical activities. *Perceptual and Motor Skills, 68*(3_suppl), 1067–1075. <https://doi.org/10.2466/pms.1989.68.3c.1067>
- Kollmayer, M., Schultes, M.T., Schober, B., Hodosi, T., & Spiel, C. (2018). Parents' judgements about the desirability of toys for their children: Associations with gender role attitudes, gender-typing of toys, and demographics. *Sex Roles, 79*, 329–341 doi:10.1007/s11199-017-0882-4
- Levy, G.D., & Carter, D.B. (1989). Gender schema, gender constancy, and gender-role knowledge: The roles of cognitive factors in preschoolers' gender-role stereotype attributions. *Developmental Psychology, 25*(3), 444-449.
- Linstead, S., & Pullen, A. (2006). Gender as multiplicity: Desire, displacement, difference and dispersion. *Human Relations, 59*(9), 1287–1310. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726706069772>
- MacPhee, D., & Pendergast, S. (2018). Room for improvement: Girls' and boys' home environments are still gendered. *Sex Roles, 80*, 332-346. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-018-0936-2>
- Martin, K. (2005). William wants a doll. Can he have one? Feminists, child care advisors, and gender-neutral child rearing. *Gender & Society, 19*(4), 456-479.
- Martin, C.L., & Halverson, C.F. (1981). A schematic processing model of sex typing and stereotyping in children. *Society for Research in Child Development, 52*(2), 1119-1134.

- Martin, C. L., & Ruble, D. (2004). Children's search for gender cues: Cognitive perspectives on gender development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13(2), 67–70.
- Martin, C. L., & Ruble, D. N. (2010). Patterns of gender development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 61, 353–381. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100511>
- McHale, S., Crouter, A., & Tucker, C. (1999). Family context and gender role socialization in middle childhood: Comparing girls to boys and sisters to brothers. *Child Development*, 70(4), 990-1004. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.wvu.edu/10.1111/1467-8624.00072>
- Meagher, K. D., & Shu, X. (2019). Trends in U.S. gender attitudes, 1977 to 2018: Gender and educational disparities. *Socius*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023119851692>
- Paul, C. (2019, December 29). A look back at 10 of the biggest social movements of the 2010s, and how they shaped Seattle. *The Seattle Times*. Poisson, J. (2011, May 21). Parents keep child's gender secret. *Toronto Star*.
- “Political Ideology by State.” Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (2014) <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/compare/political-ideology/by/state/>.
- Powers, K. (2019, September 3). Shattering gendered marketing. American Marketing Association.
- Raag, T., & Rackliff, C.L. (1998). Preschoolers' awareness of social expectations of gender: Relationships to toy choices. *Sex Roles*, 38(9/10), 685-700.
- Rahilly, E. P. (2015). The gender binary meets the gender-variant child: Parents' negotiations with childhood gender variance. *Gender & Society*, 29(3), 338–361. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243214563069>
- Revelle, W (2021). *psych: Procedures for Psychological, Psychometric, and Personality Research*. Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. R package version 2.1.6, <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=psych>.
- Rheingold, H. L., & Cook, K. V. (1975). The contents of boys' and girls' rooms as an index of parents' behavior. *Child Development*, 46(2), 459–463. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1128142>

- Richards, C., Bouman, W. P., Seal, L., Barker, M. J., Nieder, T. O., & T'Sjoen, G. (2016). Non-binary or genderqueer genders. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 28(1), 95–102. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.wvu.edu/10.3109/09540261.2015.1106446>
- Romano, S. (2021, March 31). Today is International Transgender Day of Visibility. Here's what you should know. CNN.
- Rosseel, Y (2012). “lavaan: An R Package for Structural Equation Modeling.” *Journal of Statistical Software*, 48(2), 1–36. <https://www.jstatsoft.org/v48/i02/>.
- Ruble, D., Taylor, L., Cyphers, L., Greulich, F., Lurye, L., & Shrout, P. (2007). The role of gender constancy in early gender development. *Child Development*, 78(4), 1121-1136.
- Serbin, L.A., Poulin-Dubois, D., Colburne, K.A, Sen, M.G., & Eichstedt, J.A. (2001). Gender stereotyping in infancy: Visual preferences for and knowledge of gender-stereotyped toys in the second year. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 25(1), 7-15. doi:10.1080/01650250042000078
- Slaby, R., & Frey, K. (1975). Development of Gender Constancy and Selective Attention to Same-Sex Models. *Child Development*, 46(4), 849-856. doi:10.2307/1128389
- Shaw, M. (2015, September 5). Science shows gender neutral toys empower children, and possibly society at large. Quartz.
- Shu, X., & Meagher, K. D. (2018). Beyond the stalled gender revolution: Historical and cohort dynamics in gender attitudes from 1977 to 2016. *Social Forces*, 96(3), 1243–1274. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.wvu.edu/10.1093/sf/sox090>
- Sobel, M.E. (1982) Asymptotic Confidence Intervals for Indirect Effects in Structural Equation Models. *Sociological Methodology*, 13, 290-321. <https://doi.org/10.2307/270723>
- Tabuchi, H. (2015, October 27). Sweeping Away Gender-Specific Toys and Labels. The New York Times.
- Taylor, S.E. & Crocker, J. (1981). Schematic bases of social information processing. In E.T. Higgins, P. Herman, & M.P. Zanna (Eds.), *The Ontario Symposium on Personality and Social Psychology*, 1, 89-134.

- Trautner, H. M., Ruble, D. N., Cyphers, L., Kirsten, B., Behrendt, R., & Hartmann, P. (2005). Rigidity and flexibility of gender stereotypes in childhood: Developmental or differential? *Infant and Child Development*, 14(4), 365-381. <https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.399>
- Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgement under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases. *Science*, 185(4157). doi: 10.1126/science.185.4157.1124
- Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1973). Availability: A heuristic for judging frequency and probability. *Cognitive Psychology*, 5(2). [https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285\(73\)90033-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285(73)90033-9)
- Vijlbrief, A., Saharso, S., & Ghorashi H. (2020). Transcending the gender binary: Gender non-binary young adults in Amsterdam. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 17(1), 89-106. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2019.1660295>
- Weisgram, E., Fulcher, M., & Dinella, L. (2014). Pink gives girls permission: Exploring the roles of explicit gender labels and gender-typed colors on preschool children's toy preferences. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 35, 401–409. doi:0.1016/j.appdev.2014.06.004.
- Yagoda, M. (2016, October 05). Target Will Phase Out Gender-Based Signs from Stores. People.
- Zaslow, E. (2018). Pink toenails and princess boys: contemporary discourses of boys' gender-fluidity in USA television news. *Journal of Children and Media*, 12, 243 - 257. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482798.2018.1457552>

Tables and Figures

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations.

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Sum Of DT	10.21	11.53													
2. Child Gender	1.46	0.50	-.20												
3. Parent Gender	1.08	0.32	-.04	-.09											
4. Parent Age	36.73	4.16	-.08	.12	.08										
5. Child Age	4.91	1.30	.13	-.02	.16	.29**									
6. NGRO	3.69	0.34	.07	-.06	.08	-.23*	-.08								
7. CGSS	6.13	0.57	-.11	.19	.02	-.25*	-.18	.10							
8. Décor Sum	3.02	3.97	.83**	-.14	.04	-.08	.12	.08	-.12						
9. Clothing Sum	4.68	5.19	.81**	-.02	-.11	-.09	.05	.17	-.03	.76**					
10. Toy Sum	3.12	4.18	.74**	-.23*	-.04	-.10	.08	.25*	-.02	.67**	.69**				
11. Parent Sum of Dt	4.99	9.04	.11	-.08	-.04	-.01	.30**	-.14	.03	.11	-.01	-.12			
12. Parent Décor Sum	1.82	3.27	.00	-.05	-.07	-.04	.29**	-.09	.04	.06	-.08	-.14	.85**		
13. Parent Clothing Sum	1.39	3.42	.12	-.13	-.04	-.02	.27*	-.19	-.01	.09	.04	-.11	.83**	.54**	
14. Parent Toy Sum	1.78	3.82	.15	-.03	-.00	.02	.23*	-.09	.05	.14	.01	-.08	.90**	.68**	.60**

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$

Table 2. Regression results using Parent SUM OF DT as the criterion

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% CI	<i>beta</i>	<i>beta</i> 95% CI	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>sr</i> ² 95% CI	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Fit
(Intercept)	19.56	[-21.00, 60.11]						.340	
NGRO	-3.97	[-10.02, 2.08]	-0.15	[-0.38, 0.08]	.02	[-.04, .08]	-.14	.195	
CGSS	0.61	[-3.01, 4.22]	0.04	[-0.19, 0.27]	.00	[-.01, .02]	.03	.740	
Parent Age	-0.08	[-0.58, 0.43]	-0.04	[-0.27, 0.20]	.00	[-.01, .01]	-.01	.765	
Parent Gender	-0.76	[-7.09, 5.57]	-0.03	[-0.25, 0.20]	.00	[-.01, .01]	-.04	.812	
									$R^2 = .024$ 95% CI[.00,.07]

Note. A significant *b*-weight indicates the beta-weight and semi-partial correlation are also significant. *b* represents unstandardized regression weights. *beta* indicates the standardized regression weights. *sr*² represents the semi-partial correlation squared. *r* represents the zero-order correlation. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

* indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 3. Regression results using Child Domain Sum as the criterion

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% CI	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>sr</i> ² 95% CI	<i>p</i>	Fit
(Intercept)	0.97	[-10.29, 12.24]			.865	
Parent Domain Sum	-0.04	[-0.20, 0.13]	.00	[-.01, .01]	.653	
NGRO	2.48**	[0.76, 4.20]	.03	[-.01, .07]	.005**	
Domain	0.05	[-0.62, 0.71]	.00	[-.00, .00]	.892	
CGSS	-0.24	[-1.26, 0.78]	.00	[-.01, .01]	.643	
Child Age	0.40	[-0.06, 0.87]	.01	[-.01, .04]	.091	
Child Gender	-0.90	[-2.03, 0.23]	.01	[-.01, .03]	.117	
Parent Age	-0.08	[-0.22, 0.07]	.00	[-.01, .02]	.311	
Parent Gender	-2.82*	[-5.21, -0.43]	.02	[-.01, .05]	.021*	
1 Dyad true	NA	[NA, NA]	NA	[NA, NA]		
						$R^2 = .075^*$ 95% CI [.00,.12]

Note. A significant *b*-weight indicates the semi-partial correlation is also significant. *b* represents unstandardized regression weights. *sr*² represents the semi-partial correlation squared. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

* indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 4. Regression results using Toy Sum as the criterion

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% CI	<i>beta</i>	<i>beta</i> 95% CI	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>sr</i> ² 95% CI	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Fit
(Intercept)	-5.40	[-23.51, 12.72]						.566	
NGRO	2.82*	[0.15, 5.50]	0.23	[0.01, 0.45]	.05	[-.04, .14]	.25*	.032	
CGSS	0.11	[-1.55, 1.77]	0.02	[-0.21, 0.24]	.00	[-.01, .01]	-.02	.831	
Parent Age	-0.06	[-0.29, 0.18]	-0.06	[-0.29, 0.17]	.00	[-.02, .02]	-.10	.683	
Parent Gender	-1.41	[-4.26, 1.45]	-0.11	[-0.32, 0.11]	.01	[-.03, .05]	-.04	.329	
Child Age	0.45	[-0.28, 1.19]	0.14	[-0.09, 0.37]	.02	[-.03, .07]	.08	.173	
Child Gender	-1.73	[-3.55, 0.09]	-0.21	[-0.43, 0.01]	.04	[-.04, .12]	-.23*	.050	
Parent Toy Sum	-0.11	[-0.35, 0.13]	-0.10	[-0.32, 0.12]	.01	[-.03, .05]	-.08	.349	
									$R^2 = .130$
									95% CI [.00, .22]

Note. A significant *b*-weight indicates the beta-weight and semi-partial correlation are also significant. *b* represents unstandardized regression weights. *beta* indicates the standardized regression weights. *sr*² represents the semi-partial correlation squared. *r* represents the zero-order correlation. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

* indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$

Table 5. Regression results using Décor Sum as the criterion

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% CI	<i>beta</i>	<i>beta</i> 95% CI	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>sr</i> ² 95% CI	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Fit
(Intercept)	7.75	[-10.19, 25.68]						.397	
NGRO	0.87	[-1.77, 3.52]	0.07	[-0.15, 0.30]	.01	[-.02, .03]	.08	.524	
CGSS	-0.77	[-2.41, 0.87]	-0.11	[-0.35, 0.12]	.01	[-.03, .05]	-.12	.351	
Parent Age	-0.11	[-0.34, 0.12]	-0.12	[-0.36, 0.13]	.01	[-.03, .05]	-.08	.341	
Parent Gender	0.16	[-2.69, 3.02]	0.01	[-0.21, 0.24]	.00	[-.01, .01]	.04	.909	
Child Age	0.41	[-0.34, 1.15]	0.13	[-0.11, 0.37]	.01	[-.03, .06]	.12	.300	
Child Gender	-0.79	[-2.59, 1.01]	-0.10	[-0.33, 0.13]	.01	[-.03, .05]	-.14	.398	
Parent Décor Sum	0.03	[-0.25, 0.31]	0.02	[-0.21, 0.26]	.00	[-.01, .01]	.06	.837	
									$R^2 = .060$
									95% CI [.00,.11]

Note. A significant *b*-weight indicates the beta-weight and semi-partial correlation are also significant. *b* represents unstandardized regression weights. *beta* indicates the standardized regression weights. *sr*² represents the semi-partial correlation squared. *r* represents the zero-order correlation. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

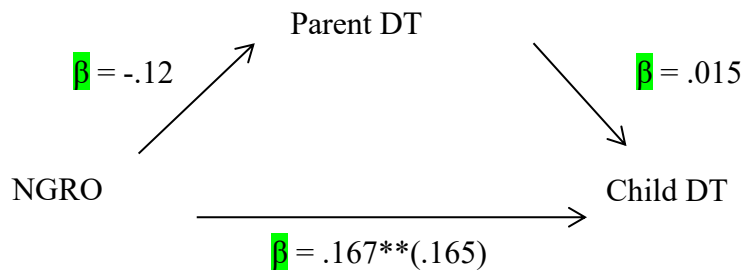
* indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 6. Regression results using Clothing Sum as the criterion

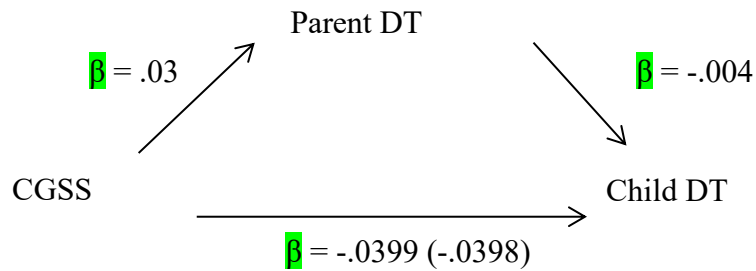
Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% CI	<i>beta</i>	<i>beta</i> 95% CI	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>sr</i> ² 95% CI	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Fit
(Intercept)	0.56	[-23.17, 24.30]						.937	
NGRO	2.69	[-0.85, 6.23]	0.18	[-0.06, 0.41]	.03	[-.04, .10]	.17	.112	
CGSS	-0.56	[-2.71, 1.60]	-0.06	[-0.30, 0.18]	.00	[-.02, .03]	-.03	.680	
Parent Age	-0.11	[-0.41, 0.20]	-0.09	[-0.33, 0.16]	.01	[-.03, .04]	-.09	.534	
Parent Gender	-	[-5.92, 1.51]	-0.13	[-0.36, 0.09]	.02	[-.04, .07]	-.11	.241	
Child Age	0.24	[-0.73, 1.20]	0.06	[-0.18, 0.30]	.00	[-.02, .03]	.05	.495	
Child Gender	0.21	[-2.18, 2.60]	0.02	[-0.21, 0.25]	.00	[-.01, .01]	-.02	.971	
Parent Clothing Sum	0.09	[-0.27, 0.45]	0.06	[-0.18, 0.30]	.00	[-.02, .03]	.04	.702	
									<i>R</i> ² = .045 95% CI [.00,.08]

Note. A significant *b*-weight indicates the beta-weight and semi-partial correlation are also significant. *b* represents unstandardized regression weights. *beta* indicates the standardized regression weights. *sr*² represents the semi-partial correlation squared. *r* represents the zero-order correlation. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

* indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Figure 1.*Mediation Model of the NGRO with Coefficients*

Mediation diagram showing the effect of NGRO on Parent DT score and Child DT score. The C path is statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level.

Figure 2.*Mediation Model of the CGSS with Coefficients*

Mediation diagram showing the effect of CGSS on Parent DT score and Child DT score. No paths are statistically significant.

Appendix A

Normative Gender Role Orientation scale - This questionnaire consists of 29 items formulated as descriptive and prescriptive statements dealing predominantly with men's and women's suitability for different roles and occupations as well as their domestic and family responsibilities. The NGRO scale allows respondents to be placed on a continuum from traditional to egalitarian gender-role attitude.

1. Men should be allowed to take parental leave after their child is born.
2. It is more pleasant to have a male rather than female superior.
3. Boys and girls should be given the same (household) chores/duties.
4. Women are less interested in politics than men.
5. One should not ask women to take over all household chores.
6. It is more important for women to abide by standards of beauty and present an attractive appearance than it is for men to do the same.
7. It is the responsibility of men to "bring home the bacon"
8. Women like to be invited by their male company.
9. Performing household tasks, like ironing shirts, is not a task that men should be required to perform.
10. Achieving a higher education is especially important for men because they are in a leadership position more often than women.
11. Women are equally suited/able to run a tech company than men are.
12. In politics, men should listen more often to women.
13. It would be if there were more male kindergarten teachers.
14. Men are better suited for certain jobs than women.
15. Every young boy should own a doll.
16. Girls inherently like help with housework more than boys.
17. Cleaning duties should be divided between spouses in accordance with the spare time they have.
18. The number of women in politics should be equal to the number of men.
19. People trust female politicians less because they are prone to being distracted by their children.
20. Men earn more on average because they put more effort into their jobs than women.
21. A woman would not be qualified to be head of National Security.
22. Male police officers provide more security than female officers.
23. Housework is a task for women.
24. It is necessary for wives to prepare and serve their families at least one meal a day
25. It is not okay if a woman digs the garden while her husband cooks lunch.
26. Being a stay-at-home dad is a worthy aspiration for a man.
27. Usually, women take over more responsibilities at home because they are more suited for that type of work.
28. Men should be able to mend clothes & be otherwise familiar with needlework (e.g., sewing, knitting).
29. Women are just as responsible for the household income as men are.

Appendix B

Child Gender Socialization Scale - Parents Will Receive only a Son or Daughter Questionnaire with the Appropriate Nouns and Pronouns

Below are several activities in which your child might engage now or in the future. Indicate how you would react if your child participated in each. There are no right or wrong answers.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very	Somewhat	Slightly	Neutral	Slightly	Somewhat	Very
Negative	Negative	Negative		Positive	Positive	Positive

1. Taking ballet lessons.
2. Cleaning his (her) room.
3. Helping with the laundry.
4. Taking out the garbage.
5. Playing football.
6. Playing baseball.
7. Playing with a toy kitchen set.
8. Playing with toy guns.
9. Playing with toy jewelry.
10. Playing with a toy dish set.
11. Playing with a toy tool kit.
12. Sweeping the floor.
13. Cutting the grass.
14. Setting the table.
15. Playing with a toy nurse kit.
16. Playing hopscotch.
17. Playing with action figures.
18. Playing with toy trucks
19. Playing with Barbie Dolls.
20. Washing the dishes.
21. Playing with baby dolls.
22. Playing with toy cars.

Appendix C



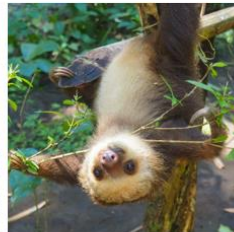
1



2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4



5



1



2



3



4



5

Appendix D

Hello! My name is Drew, it's very nice to meet you. What's your name? I'm a teacher, and I want to know what kids like, would you be able to help me?

I'm going to show you different groups of pictures, and you are going to get to pick out your one favorite thing from each group. You only get to pick one picture, so make sure it's your most favorite!

For 3-4 y/o: When you pick your favorite, point at the screen and your (mom/dad) will read the number above the picture loud to me so that I know which one it is, ok?

For 5-6 y/o: When you pick your favorite, make sure you tell me what number it is so I can write it down, ok?

And if at any point you wanna stop, let me know and we will stop right away. No one will be upset with you if you decide you don't want to do this anymore.

My first question is: Which one of these animals is your most favorite?

- Pretend you got to pick out a new blanket for your bed. Which one would you pick?
- Pretend you got to pick out one of these lamps for your bedroom, which one would you pick?
- Pretend you got to pick out a new rug for your room. which one would you pick?
- When you do arts and crafts, which of these tables would you want to sit at?
- When you get dressed in the morning, which one of these t-shirts would you pick to wear?
- When you go outside, which pair of shoes would you pick to wear?
- Here are some raincoats for when you go outside, which one do you like the most?
- These are some cozy pullovers, which one would you pick to wear?
- When you play pretend, which one of these playsets would you pick to play with?
- Pretend you got to pick one of these lego sets to play with, which one would you pick?
- Pretend you get to pick out a new stuffy to play with, which one of these would you pick?
- These are some toys for outside that you can sit in and ride around in, which one do you want to play with the most?
- Here are some dress-up clothes, which one of these do you want to play dress up like?

Alright we're all done! Thank you so much for helping me.

Appendix E

List of Facebook Parenting Groups

1. Conscious Parenting Support Group
2. Blaine and Birch Bay Neighbors
3. Olympia Lacey Parents Group
4. Bozeman Parents
5. 253 Parents Get Resourceful
6. Moms of Olympia
7. 2021 Parenting
8. Really Awesome Parents in Bellingham Support Group
9. Bellingham Moms