The Gender Marketing of Toys: An Analysis of Color and Type of Toy on the Disney Store Website

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Abstract The purpose of this study was to examine 1) the extent to which the gender marketing of toys on the Internet replicates findings of previous studies of the gendering of toys, and 2) the extent to which toys for "both boys and girls", a previously overlooked category of toys, share characteristics, such as color and type of toy, with toys marketed for "boys only" or for "girls only". The sample consisted of the 410 toys listed for boys and the 208 toys listed for girls, including 91 toys that appeared on both lists, on the English language U.S. Disney Store website. The marketing of toys on the Disney Store website is important not only because of the growth in e-commerce, but also because of this company's global domination of the children's entertainment industry. Tabular analysis and chi-square revealed that bold colored toys, predominantly red, black, brown, or gray toys, and those that were action figures, building toys, weapons, or small vehicles typified toys for "boys only" on this U.S. website. Pastel colored toys, predominantly pink or purple toys, and those that were dolls, beauty, cosmetics, jewelry, or domestic-oriented typified toys for "girls only". A majority of toys for "both boys and girls" were mostly "gender-neutral" in type, but they resembled toys for "boys only" in terms of their color palette, presumably to appeal to boys, who are less likely to cross gender lines than girls. The potential impact of the gendering of toys on individuals as well as limitations of this research and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Keywords Gender · Toys · Socialization · Children · Disney

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Introduction

Toys play an important role in children's lives and socialization, particularly since children spend time playing with toys by themselves as well as with their peers, parents, and other family members (Corsaro 1997; Seiter 1993). All of the studies described in this paper were conducted in the U.S. unless otherwise noted, and many of these revealed the ways in which many aspects of adults' expectations for children are gendered, including adults' perceptions of the toys that are appropriate for boys and appropriate for girls (Blakemore and Centers 2005; Caldera et al. 1989; Fisher-Thompson 1990; Fisher-Thompson et al. 1995; Kane 2006). Children learn about the toys seen as appropriate for their gender not only from adults and children but also through the media, which serves as an important source of socialization (Gerbner et al. 1994). While television and film have been the focus of many past studies of the impact of media on gender socialization and gendered choices, our study adds to that research with a study of another form of media, namely the Internet, a vehicle of consumer marketing and purchasing that is skyrocketing in popularity (Pew Research Center 2010). Our research allowed us to examine how adults, namely marketing executives, market toys to adults and children, but it cannot reveal adults' and children's actual perceptions of toys. The sample for our content analysis consisted of images of all of the toys on the English language U.S. Disney Store website, which allowed us the opportunity to analyze the images of boys' toys and girls' toys as labeled and marketed by a multinational corporation that has global domination in the children's entertainment industry (Davis 2006; England et al. 2011; Giroux 1997; Orenstein 2011; Wasko 2001).

Our study potentially makes a number of contributions to the literature. First, since the Internet is a relatively new form of the consumer marketing of toys, it is important to examine the extent to which specific characteristics of toys serve as

gender markers when toys are marketed on the Internet as well as the extent to which findings about the e-commerce marketing of toys replicate the findings of past studies of adults' and children's choices of toys. The characteristics studied here were color palette (i.e. bold or pastel), predominant color (e.g. pink, yellow, black), and type of toy (e.g. action figure, doll). Second, on the Disney Store website, gender was trumpeted above all other categories, letting customers click on a "Girls" tab that provided a list of toys marketed as appropriate for girls and a "Boys" tab that provided a list of toys marketed as appropriate for boys. There was no tab on the website that indicated "Toys for Children" or "Toys for Both Boys and Girls" though some toys appeared on both the list for boys and the list for girls. We were especially interested in the extent to which toys simultaneously marketed to both boys and girls have characteristics similar to or different from toys marketed to only boys or only girls. The characteristics of such toys may reveal the extent to which gender expectations for girls and boys overlap and the degree of flexibility of gender expectations for girls and boys. Third, the wide-reaching impact of The Walt Disney Company, a company described as an "architect of consumer culture" (Schor 2004, p. 9), is also of importance. While scholars have studied the portrayal of gender, particularly the role of women, in Disney films (Bell et al. 1995; Davis 2006; England et al. 2011; Giroux 1997; Wiersma 2000), they have not examined the marketing of toys by The Walt Disney Company.

Literature Review

In the lead article of a special issue of Sex Roles, Rudy et al. (2010) described a number of motivations for conducting research using content analysis. These included studying gender-based inequities as well as the effects that "message producers have on message content" and that "messages have on audiences" (p. 307). Our examination of the gendered marketing of toys on the Internet reflects the impact that message producers have on message content, though our study cannot evaluate the actual effect on audiences, namely those purchasing the toys. Nevertheless, Bandura (1986) describes many ways that gender socialization is influenced by direct interactions with others, but he and others also acknowledge that the media, which presumably would now include the Internet, can have a notable impact on what individuals learn during the process of socialization (Bandura 2002; Goldstein et al. 2004), including gender socialization. Gerbner et al. (1994), in their discussion of "cultivation theory", emphasize the impact of the exposure to television, as a form of media, on gender expectations, but one could easily extend their ideas to the Internet as a form of media. Thus, individuals' own experiences and their observations of others both in their immediate environment and in the media contribute to their socialization and self-

socialization, including their gender socialization (Martin et al. 2002; Tobin et al. 2010).

The Marketing and Gendering of Toys

Customers visit websites to garner ideas for toys or decide on the appropriateness of their ideas or the ideas of the children requesting the toys. Throughout the childhood years, parents and other adults largely control what is purchased which, of course, reflects what those adults perceive as appropriate or inappropriate toys for the children in their lives, though children are also important active agents in expressing their toy choices and how they play with toys; in this respect, children also engage in gender self-socialization (see Tobin et al. 2010). Individuals' toy choices are shaped by societal expectations, including how those toys are marketed to both the adults and children making the choices (Clark 2007). Admittedly, the gendered marketing of toys reveals choices by marketing executives that could represent the preferences of marketing executives, their assumptions about what their customers want to see on the website, or some combination of the two.

Color Palette and Predominant Color

Color palette as bold or pastel and predominant color are often an important aspect of gendered learning that allows children to begin to associate objects, including toys, with one gender or the other (Karniol 2011). Another indication of the importance of color is that toy designers say, "Colors are used for identifying as well as differentiating—it's like eye candy" (Fishel 2001, p. 17), and toy marketers carefully research details such as color in their development and marketing of toys (Clark 2007). Consequently, it is important to look at these characteristics in this study of the gendered marketing of toys as well as at the findings of previous studies of these characteristics.

Kahlenberg and Hein (2010) found that when commercials on Nickelodeon were mostly pastel, they had only girls in them and pastel colored toys tended to be shown with girls. In contrast, boys tended to be dressed wearing bright or neon colors in these advertisements (Kahlenberg and Hein 2010). Similarly, in her study of Halloween costumes and sewing patterns for Halloween costumes in Canadian stores, Nelson (2000) found that male clowns were shown wearing bold colors, while female clowns were shown wearing pastel colors and princess costumes tended to be predominantly pink. The symbolic significance of colors is undoubtedly socially constructed. "For example, a Ladies' Home Journal article in June 1918 said, 'The generally accepted rule is pink for the boys, and blue for the girls'", and in Time magazine in 1927, leading American department stores promoted dressing one's son in pink (Maglaty 2011). Today, however, pink is an important gender marker for girls, and Ruble et al. (2007) described

some young American girls' near obsession with "pink frilly dresses (PFD)". Stern and Schoenhaus (1990) further reported, "…when a girls' toy is failing, they [toy marketers] try 'pinking it up' to make it more popular" (p. 201). A sample of birth congratulations cards and the accompanying envelopes for girls were more likely to be pink, while blue was the predominant color for boys (Bridges 1993). Karniol's (2011) study of Israeli children's crayon preferences for use in coloring books revealed that boys avoided using pink, offering further support for pink as a girl color in the American, Canadian, and Israeli cultures. Moreover, in toy stores, the aisles for girls are flooded with pink and purple (Fishel 2001; Seiter 1993), and Turgeon (2008) found that 2nd and 3rd grade girls showed a stronger preference than boys for pink and purple in their free drawings. Pennell's (1994) qualitative findings of a study of toy advertisements from catalogues and newspapers indicated that toys for girls were more likely to be pastel, particularly pink and lavender. Moreover, toy marketers believe girls are more likely to prefer pastel colors, while boys go for stronger colors (Clark 2007). These findings were further supported by a study of attitudes about color among British subjects that revealed that red and darker colors are associated with dominance (Little and Hill 2007). In short, darker and bold colors have been associated with boys, and pastel colors, particularly pink followed by lavender or purple, have been associated with girls.

Type of Toy

Fishel (2001) says, "Toyland really is boy and girl land" (p. 13) and Steinberg and Kincheloe (1997) argue that a gendered children's consumer culture persists, including little change in toy advertisements since the 1950s. Even in the 1990s, Seiter's (1993) and Kline's (1993) research in Canada showed that the themes of television advertisements for toys supported traditional gender expectations in terms of types of toys with a focus on battles, action, and domination for boys, and nurturing, glamour, and domesticity for girls. Nearly two decades later, Kahlenberg and Hein (2010) examined toy commercials appearing on Nickelodeon, an American television channel aimed at children, and found little had changed; toys related to action figures, sports, and transportation were predominantly featured in boys only commercials, and dolls, animals, and toys related to grooming, childcare, and domesticity were featured in girls only commercials.

Williams (2006) suggested that adults choose gender-typed toys in hopes that this "…will allow the child to experience the pleasures of gender and pick up some lessons on proper stereotypical behavior" (p. 171). Adults' choice of "sex-typed" toys was evident in the types of toys found in toddlers' rooms among French-speaking Canadians (Pomerleau et al. 1990) as well as in the objects pictured on birth congratulatory cards (Bridges 1993). Moreover, studies of adults' attitudes

about children's toys have shown that many adults, including college students, continue to tend to rate and evaluate toys in very gender stereotyped ways (Blakemore and Centers 2005; Fisher-Thompson 1990; Fisher-Thompson et al. 1995). In such studies, adults seemed to use clues related to the category into which the toy fit as well as color or even the logo on the object (Fisher-Thompson et al. 1995) as gender markers.

Regardless of adults' attitudes about the gendering of toys, children are also active agents in the process of socialization, including their gender socialization (Thorne 1993; Tobin et al. 2010). Children have preferences that can be shaped by the many people in their lives as well as by the media (Bandura 2002; Gerbner et al. 1994). A study of letters to Santa written by elementary school age children showed that toy selections traditional for each gender were common (Downs 1983). The findings of a more recent study of 5- to 13-year olds indicated that children's toy choices were still quite gendered; girls were more likely to prefer dolls, stuffed animals, and educational toys as favorites, while boys preferred manipulative toys, vehicles, and action figures (Cherney and London 2006). In a study of coloring book choice among Israeli children, the importance of a gender-linked character, such as Batman, on the cover affected children's choice of coloring book, and boys tended to avoid coloring a fairy (Karniol 2011), thus further supporting the gendering of types of toys. Seiter (1993) succinctly describes the difference between American boys' and girls' choices as follows: "Boys become their toys in play; girls take care of their toys" (p. 131).

Gender Crossing and Gender-Neutral Toys

The findings of the studies discussed above showed that adults' and children's perceptions and choices of toys are quite gendered and that particular types of toys and colors are strongly associated with gender. Nevertheless, there is greater variation in the choice of colors for or by girls (Fishel 2001; Kahlenberg and Hein 2010; Karniol 2011; Pomerleau et al. 1990), and girls are more likely than boys to find gender-neutral toys appealing or to cross gender lines (Caldera et al. 1989; Downs 1983; Marcon and Freeman 1996). This tendency of girls more so than boys to engage in this gender crossing may be due to the fact that boys' parents tend to discourage their sons from engaging in most feminine activities and encourage them to engage in the more narrow range of activities associated with traditional masculinity (Kane 2006).

In Toy R Us stores, the gender crossing is locational; "…boys' toys are encountered before girls' toys – so that girls must pass the boys' toys before reaching their own sections, but boys can completely avoid the girls' aisles…" (Seiter 1993, p. 208). Schor (2004) suggests that to make toys appealing to boys, boy characters and masculine behavior must be pervasive in toy ads that are aimed at boys or both genders since boys tend to avoid that which appears feminine and are

more reluctant than girls to cross gender lines. Although the primary colors, namely blue, red, and yellow, associated with the packaging for infant and preschool toys are supposedly gender-neutral, Seiter believes that they are packaged in these colors so that they are "inoffensive to boys" (p. 210). Furthermore, toy marketers are more likely to choose a boy for a toy commercial since "girls will listen to boys, but boys won't necessarily listen to girls" (Clark 2007, p. 185). In short, girls are more likely than boys to engage in gender crossing and this affects how toy marketers promote their products.
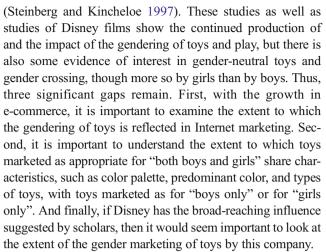
If marketers have correctly assessed what appeals to boys and girls, then marketers' strategies also reflect girls seeking and having available to them a wider range of acceptable choices. With regard to color, although pastel toys in the Nickelodeon commercials were promoted for girls and not for boys, many girls' toys were also bright or neon colors (Kahlenberg and Hein 2010). Pomerleau et al. (1990) also found that when Canadian parents decorated toddlers' rooms, parents chose more variation in wall color in girls' rooms than in boys' rooms. Karniol (2011) found that Israeli girls showed more flexibility and variation than boys in their choice of crayon color for use in coloring books. In recent years, Parham Santana, a major advertising and branding firm for Mattel, updated Barbie's traditional pink with a selection of bright colors (Fishel 2001, p. 15) and the "Get Real Girl" line of athletic dolls were dressed in bold colored athletic clothes and packaged in bright blue and orange (Fishel 2001, p. 33), not typical girl colors.

In addition to the greater variation in color marketed to girls, girls have been more likely than boys seek out or find gender-neutral toys appealing (Caldera et al. 1989; Downs 1983). Furthermore, on birth congratulations cards, quite a number had pictures of gender-neutral items, such as rattles and mobiles, but these appeared more often on cards for the parents of newborn girls than for those of newborn boys (Bridges 1993).

Despite this emphasis on the gendered marketing of toys, both boys and girls asked Santa for sports equipment, male dolls, and educational, musical, and art toys (Marcon and Freeman 1996), and it was games and building toys that appeared in gender-neutral commercials (Kahlenberg and Hein 2010). Nelson (2000) also found a few Halloween costumes and sewing patterns that were gender-neutral, but they tended to be for infants. In sum, although there were gender-neutral toys that were equally appealing to boys and girls, girls were more likely than boys to have available to them a wider variety of acceptable activities and colors and engage in gender crossing reminiscent of gender expectations for adults.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Since the 1970s, social scientists have been studying adults' and children's gendered perceptions and choices of toys and found that a gendered children's consumer culture persists (Steinberg and Kincheloe 1997). These studies as well as studies of Disney films show the continued production of and the impact of the gendering of toys and play, but there is also some evidence of interest in gender-neutral toys and gender crossing, though more so by girls than by boys. Thus, three significant gaps remain. First, with the growth in e-commerce, it is important to examine the extent to which the gendering of toys is reflected in Internet marketing. Second, it is important to understand the extent to which toys marketed as appropriate for "both boys and girls" share characteristics, such as color palette, predominant color, and types of toys, with toys marketed as for "boys only" or for "girls only". And finally, if Disney has the broad-reaching influence suggested by scholars, then it would seem important to look at the extent of the gender marketing of toys by this company.

Based on previous research, we developed the research questions and hypotheses that follow. Our first research question focused on the extent to which the Internet marketing of toys on the Disney Store website would replicate the findings of previous studies about adults' and children's toy choices and preferences. Prior research showed a strong association between gender and color palette with bold colors more likely to be associated with boys and pastel colors more likely to be associated with girls (Clark 2007; Kahlenberg and Hein 2010; Nelson 2000; Pennell 1994) and a strong association between gender and specific colors, including pink (Bridges 1993; Fishel 2001; Karniol 2011; Nelson 2000; Ruble et al. 2007; Seiter 1993; Turgeon 2008); lavender or purple (Fishel 2001; Pennell 1994; Seiter 1993; Turgeon 2008); red (Little and Hill 2007); and blue (Bridges 1993). Several authors also pointed to the gendered aspect of strong or dark colors (Clark 2007; Fisher-Thompson et al. 1995; Kahlenberg and Hein 2010; Little and Hill 2007). In addition, previous research showed that traditional gender expectations were reflected in adults' assessment of toys and the types of toys that boys and girls chose (Blakemore and Centers 2005; Cherney and London 2006; Downs 1983; Fisher-Thompson 1990; Fisher-Thompson et al. 1995; Kahlenberg and Hein 2010; Kline 1993; Marcon and Freeman 1996; Pomerleau et al. 1990; Seiter 1993). As a result of this past research, we developed the following hypotheses for the first stage of analysis.

H1a. The color palette of toys will reflect gender stereotypes, such that pastel colored toys will be more likely to be for "girls only" than for "boys only", and bold colored toys will be more likely to be for "boys only" than for "girls only".

H1b. Toys that have as their predominant color red or blue or colors that are both dark and more neutral, such as black, gray, or brown, will be more likely to be for "boys only", while toys that have pink or purple as their predominant color will be more likely to be for "girls only". The remaining colors will not be gendered.

H1c. The types of toys will reflect traditional gender activities, such that toys associated with domestic activities, including personal beauty, will be more likely to be for "girls only", while toys associated with action figures, small vehicles, building, and weapons will be more likely to be for "boys only". The remaining types of toys will not be gendered.

Our second research question focused on discovering the extent to which the characteristics of toys listed as appropriate for boys and appropriate for girls would be similar to or different from toys for "boys only" or for "girls only". The tendency of girls to be more likely than boys to cross gender lines (Caldera et al. 1989; Downs 1983; Kane 2006; Marcon and Freeman 1996; Schor 2004; Seiter 1993) as well as findings that showed greater variation in the choice of colors for or by girls (Fishel 2001; Kahlenberg and Hein 2010; Karniol 2011; Pomerleau et al. 1990) informed our predictions.

H2a In terms of color palette, toys for "both boys and girls" will be more likely to resemble toys for "boys only" than for "girls only".

H2b In terms of predominant color, toys for "both boys and girls" will be more likely to resemble toys for "boys only" than for "girls only".

H2c In terms of the type of toy, toys for "both boys and girls" will be more likely to resemble toys for "boys only" than for "girls only".

H2c1 Toys for "both boys and girls" that are "gender-neutral" in type based on the analysis associated with H2c will still resemble toys for "boys only" in terms of color palette (i.e. bold).

Method

Sample

In order to examine the relationship between a variety of characteristics of toys, such as color palette, predominant color, and the type of toy, we used images of all of the toys on the official Disney Store (2010) website. Our focus was on toys on the Disney Store website, not on other items such as Disney clothes, costumes, home décor, or movies. After selecting "Shop by Category" and "Toys", one could select tabs for types of toys such as "Dolls" or "Action Figures", but it was not possible to select toys for "either boys or girls" or for "both boys and girls". Instead, one could only select "Boys [sic] Toys" or "Girls [sic] Toys". Consequently, our sample consisted of all of the toys displayed on the website, of which 410 were listed for boys and 208 were listed for girls, though 91 of these appeared on both the list for boys and the list for girls. Since Disney adds and deletes

toys on the website with some regularity, we saved images of each toy in order to have a permanent record of the toys on the website that were used in this analysis.

Coding

Each toy was then coded on the basis of three characteristics. First, each toy was assigned one of two codes based on whether the overall color palette was bold or pastel. If the toy appeared to reflect both bold and pastel, the toy was assigned the code that reflected the most overwhelming color palette. Second, toys were coded for the predominant color based on the color that covered the most surface area of the toy. Twelve different colors, including red, black, pink, and yellow, made up the coding scheme. The third characteristic, type of toy, was coded using 15 categories, such as action figures, dolls, and stuffed animals and plushes (see Appendix). The name of the toy as it appeared on the website as well as how the toy was supposed to be used was taken into account in coding this variable. For example, the toy with the name "Deep Dive Armor Iron Man 2 Action Figure" was coded as an "action figure", while "Pook-a-Looz Minnie Mouse Plush Toy" was coded as "stuffed animals and plushes". Both the "Vinylmation The Muppets 1 Series Figures" and the "Disney Fairies Figurine Play Set" were coded as "figures and figurines". The category "small vehicles" included the "Disney Cars Friction Powered Sheriff Car" and "Handy Manny's Fix-It Motorcycle Toy Vehicle", toys associated with transportation that were small enough for imaginary hand play. In contrast, the "Buzz Lightyear Toy Story 3 Bike" and the "Disney Princess Scooter" were coded as "sports, bicycles, scooters" since these wheeled vehicles were intended to be ridden by children.

Reliability

We assessed inter-rater reliability by having one of the researchers serve as the first coder and an individual not familiar with the project serve as a blind second coder for 100 % of the sample. Cohen's kappa (Neuendorf 2002; Wimmer and Dominick 2011) appropriate for nominal data was used as the measure of reliability. Reliability between the coders for all three variables was high: color palette (kappa=.86); color (kappa=.90); and type of toy (kappa=.84). Since these variables all involved coding manifest rather than latent content, this may have contributed to the high kappa values. Nevertheless, the author who had not yet coded the toys then compared the coding of the first and second coders to identify the nature of the existing discrepancies. Nearly all of the discrepancies were of the sort for which there was some sort of understandable ambiguity. For example, for color, the actual color covering the most surface area was occasionally ambiguous, such as orange-yellow, a color that was coded as orange

by the first coder and yellow by the second coder. In addition, some toys consisted of multiple parts, such as two blocks, each of which was a different color; one coder chose green and the other coder chose blue. To resolve these types of coding discrepancies, the choices of the coders were used in an alternating pattern. For example, for first toy for which there was a discrepancy for color between coders, the color chosen by the first coder was assigned to the toy. For the next toy for which there was a discrepancy for color between coders, the color chosen by the second coder was assigned to that toy. For the third toy with a discrepancy between coders, the code category chosen by the first coder was assigned to the toy, and so on. In this way, such discrepancies were resolved in an unbiased manner by using this alternating system.
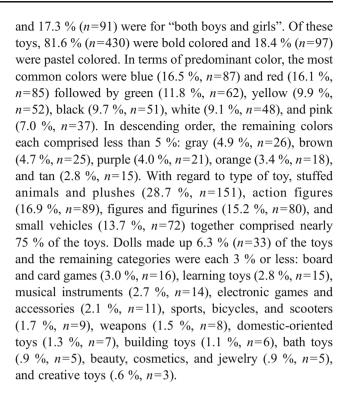
Procedure

For the first stage of the analysis and three hypotheses related to the possible replication of findings in the existing literature, we looked the relationship of the two-category classification of toys, toys for "boys only" ($n=319$) and toys for "girls only" ($n=117$) as identified on the Disney website with each of the three characteristics, namely color palette, predominant color, and type of toy. For each of these three relationships, the characteristic was used as the independent variable and the two-category classification of toys was used as the dependent variable in the tabular analyses. Chi-square was used as a test of statistical significance. In this way, we would be able to see the distribution of these potential gender markers across the two categories of toys; that is, for example, of toys that were pink, we would know what percent of toys were for "boys only" and what percent were for "girls only".

For the second stage of the analysis, a toy that appeared both on the list of toys Disney deemed as appropriate for boys and the list of toys for girls would be categorized only as a toy for "both boys and girls". When we added the toys for "both boys and girls" to the previous two-category classification, the result was that toys were in three mutually exclusive categories. This three-category classification of toys was comprised of toys for "boys only", "girls only", and "both boys and girls". This three-category classification of toys was then was used as the independent variable and the three characteristics of toys were used as dependent variables for this second stage of the analysis.

Results

Descriptives

The sample was comprised of 527 toys; 60.5 % ($n=319$) were for "boys only", 22.2 % ($n=117$) were for "girls only",

and 17.3 % ($n=91$) were for "both boys and girls". Of these toys, 81.6 % ($n=430$) were bold colored and 18.4 % ($n=97$) were pastel colored. In terms of predominant color, the most common colors were blue (16.5 %, $n=87$) and red (16.1 %, $n=85$) followed by green (11.8 %, $n=62$), yellow (9.9 %, $n=52$), black (9.7 %, $n=51$), white (9.1 %, $n=48$), and pink (7.0 %, $n=37$). In descending order, the remaining colors each comprised less than 5 %: gray (4.9 %, $n=26$), brown (4.7 %, $n=25$), purple (4.0 %, $n=21$), orange (3.4 %, $n=18$), and tan (2.8 %, $n=15$). With regard to type of toy, stuffed animals and plushes (28.7 %, $n=151$), action figures (16.9 %, $n=89$), figures and figurines (15.2 %, $n=80$), and small vehicles (13.7 %, $n=72$) together comprised nearly 75 % of the toys. Dolls made up 6.3 % ($n=33$) of the toys and the remaining categories were each 3 % or less: board and card games (3.0 %, $n=16$), learning toys (2.8 %, $n=15$), musical instruments (2.7 %, $n=14$), electronic games and accessories (2.1 %, $n=11$), sports, bicycles, and scooters (1.7 %, $n=9$), weapons (1.5 %, $n=8$), domestic-oriented toys (1.3 %, $n=7$), building toys (1.1 %, $n=6$), bath toys (.9 %, $n=5$), beauty, cosmetics, and jewelry (.9 %, $n=5$), and creative toys (.6 %, $n=3$).

Gender Markers

First, we used color palette as the independent variable and the two-category classification of toys based on Disney's categorization, namely toys for "boys only" and for "girls only", as the dependent variable to identify bold and pastel as possible gender markers. We hypothesized that the color palette of toys would reflect gender stereotypes, such that pastel colored toys would be more likely to be for "girls only" than for "boys only", and bold colored toys would be more likely to be for "boys only" than for "girls only". Table 1 shows that this hypothesis was supported and that the relationship between color palette and the two-category classification of toys was significant χ^2 (1, $n=436$)$=96.0$, $p<.001$. Although 83.6 % of toys that were bold colored were toys for "boys only", only 16.4 % of bold colored toys were for "girls only". A bold color is reflected by the "Club Penguin 6½ Limited Edition Penguin Plush Graduate", a vibrant red penguin dressed in a black suit, which Disney categorized as for boys. In contrast, 68.2 % of pastel toys were for "girls only" and only 31.8 % of pastel toys were for "boys only". "The Princess and the Frog Tiana's Serving Set" is categorized by Disney as a girls' toy and consisted of a variety of pastel cups, plates, and utensils, each of which was pink, lavender, light green, pink, or light yellow. Thus, a bold color was more likely to be a gender marker associated with toys for "boys only", while a pastel color was more likely to be a gender marker associated with toys for "girls only".

With regard to predominant color, the color that covered the most surface area of the toy, the hypothesis was that toys

Table 1 The two-category classification of toys by color palette, predominant color, and type of toy

Characteristics of Toys	Classification of Toys[a]				
	Boys only		Girls only		Total
	%	n	%	n	n
Total	73.2	319	26.8	117	436
Color Palette[b]					
Bold	83.6	291	16.4	57	348
Pastel	31.8	28	68.2	60	88
Predominant Color					
Red	96.3	77	3.8	3	80
Black	95.3	41	4.7	2	43
Brown	86.7	13	13.3	2	15
Gray	86.4	19	13.6	3	22
Yellow	73.8	31	26.2	11	42
Tan	71.4	10	28.6	4	14
Blue	70.8	51	29.2	21	72
Orange	68.8	11	31.3	5	16
Green	66.7	34	33.3	17	51
White	62.9	22	37.1	13	35
Purple	35.3	6	64.7	11	17
Pink	13.8	4	86.2	25	29
Type of Toy					
Small Vehicles	100.0	72	.0	0	72
Weapons	100.0	8	.0	0	8
Building Toys	100.0	6	.0	0	6
Action Figures	97.7	84	2.3	2	86
Figures & Figurines	81.0	51	19.0	12	63
Electronic Games & Accessories	80.0	8	20.0	2	10
Bath Toys	75.0	3	25.0	1	4
Sports, Bicycles, Scooters	62.5	5	37.5	3	8
Stuffed Animals & Plushes	61.8	68	38.2	42	110
Musical Instruments	60.0	3	40.0	2	5
Board & Card Games	56.3	9	43.8	7	16
Creative	33.3	1	66.7	2	3
Dolls	3.0	1	97.0	32	33
Beauty, Cosmetics, Jewelry	.0	0	100.0	5	5
Domestic	.0	0	100.0	7	7

[a] Based on Disney's categorizations

[b] X^2 (1, n=436)=96.0, p<.001

that were red, blue, or colors that are both dark and more neutral, such as black, gray, and brown, would be more likely to be toys for "boys only", while toys that were pink or purple would be more likely to be for "girls only". The remainder of the colors would not be gendered. When we used the predominant color as the independent variable and used the two-category gender classification of toys as the dependent variable to identify colors that were possible gender markers, we found a notable pattern between these two variables. Table 1 shows that more than 85 % of toys that had red, black, brown, or gray as their most predominant color were toys for "boys only". An example of an overwhelmingly red toy for "boys

only" was the "Iron Man 2TM Quantum Quad and Action Figure", a shiny red motorcycle with small gold detailing. The Iron Man action figure was sitting on the motorcycle in a shiny bright red suit and helmet. In contrast, 86.2 % of toys that were pink were toys for "girls only" and only 13.8 % were for "boys only". The "Disney Princess Scooter by Huffy" is a pink scooter with hot pink and light pink accents on it. Everything from the streamers to the wheels is a shade of pink. In addition, nearly two-thirds of toys that were purple were toys for "girls only". For most of the colors, the pattern we predicted was supported. Blue, however, did not appear to be a gender marker for toys for "boys only" in that the distribution

of blue toys closely matched the overall distribution of toys for "boys only" and for "girls only" in the sample.

Our hypothesis for type of toy was that dolls as well as toys that were associated with domestic skills, such as cooking, cleaning, or personal beauty, would be more likely to be toys for "girls only", while toys associated with activities that involved traditional portrayals of masculinity, including those with action figures and weapons, would be more likely to be toys for "boys only". A coding scheme with fifteen categories that reflected a variety of types of toys discussed in the literature was used to test our hypotheses (see Appendix).

When the variable representing these the types of toys was used as the independent variable and, as before, the two-category classification of toys (i.e. toys for "boys only" and "girls only") was used as the dependent variable, the pattern that emerged supported the hypothesis. Table 1 shows that 100.0 % of small vehicles, weapons, and building toys as well as 97.7 % of action figures were for "boys only". The "Iron Man 2TM 3-in-1 Repulsor Blaster Glove Toy", a toy for "boys only" from the Iron Man collection, is a set of bright red and gold weapons with play bullets and a blaster. In addition to these broad categories of toys, all of the toys that were named Disney Cars, Iron Man, Spider-Man, and Super Hero Play Squad were categorized by Disney as toys for boys. In contrast, over 95 % of toys that were dolls, domestic, or related to the beauty, cosmetics, and jewelry were for "girls only". The "Sea Pretty TM Ariel Styling Head", a big doll face with long red hair that a child can comb and style, is a typical example of a toy for "girls only". In addition, all of the toys that had names such as Disney Princesses, Disney Fairies Sets, Disney Dolls, and Princess and Frog were categorized by Disney as toys for "girls only". The findings regarding type of toys for "boys only" and "girls only" supported the hypothesis.

Toys for "Both Boys and Girls"

With the gender markers associated with the first stage of the analysis in place, the second stage of the analysis was to examine the relationship between characteristics of toys, namely the color palette, predominant color, and type of toy, and the three-category classification of toys which is comprised of toys for "boys only", "girls only", and "both boys and girls". To test the hypotheses related to color palette, the three-category classification of toys was used as the independent variable in the tabular analysis and color palette was used as the dependent variable. Based on the findings of the first stage of the analysis, bold and pastel have been identified as masculine and feminine, respectively. Our hypothesis regarding palette was that toys for "both boys and girls" would be more likely to resemble toys for "boys only" than toys for "girls only". Table 2 shows that the relationship between the color palette and the three-category classification of toys was significant χ^2 (2, $n=527$)=108.2, $p<.001$. While about 90 %

Table 2 Color palette by the three-category classification of toys

Classification of toys[ab]	Color palette				
	Bold		Pastel		Total
	%	n	%	n	n
Boys Only	91.2	291	8.8	28	319
Both Boys & Girls	90.1	82	9.9	9	91
Girls Only	48.7	57	51.3	60	117

[a] Based on Disney's categorizations
[b] χ^2 (2, $n=527$)=108.2, $p<.001$

of toys for "boys only" and for "both boys and girls" had a bold color, this was true for only 48.7 % of those for "girls only". About half of toys for "girls only" were pastel, but this was true for less than 10 % of toys for "boys only" and for "both boys and girls".

To test the hypothesis about predominant color, we used the results regarding predominant color from the first stage of the analysis to classify each of the colors as "boy colors", "girl colors", or "gender-neutral colors". Since 73.2 % ($n=319$) of the toys in the two-category classification ($n=436$) were for "boys only" and 26.8 % ($n=117$) were for "girls only", only those colors for which the distribution differed notably from 73.2/26.8 were then identified as gendered colors. More specifically, we identified "boy colors" as those for which the percent of toys for "boys only" was 10 % or more above 73.2 %, namely 83.2 % or higher. Similarly, we identified "girl colors" as those colors for which the percent of toys for "boys only" was less than 36.8 %, which is 10 % or more above 26.8 %, the percent of toys for "girls only" in the sample. Using this criteria, the twelve colors were recoded into three categories: red, black, gray, and brown were identified as "boy colors"; pink and purple were identified as "girl colors"; and yellow, tan, blue, orange, green, and white were identified as "gender-neutral colors".

The three-category classification of toys was then used as the independent variable and the recoded color variable was used as the dependent variable. The relationship between the two variables was statistically significant, χ^2 (4, $n=527$)= 98.7, $p<.001$ and the pattern of the results offered support for the hypothesis that toys for "both boys and girls" have colors more similar in to toys for "boys only" than those for "girls only" (see Table 3). More specifically, toys for "boys only" (47.0 %) and "both boys and girls" (29.7 %) were much more likely than toys for "girls only" (8.5 %) to have a "boy color" as the predominant color. In addition, toys for "boys only" (3.1 %) and toys for "both boys and girls" (13.2 %) were much less likely to have a "girl color" as the predominant color than toys for "girls only" (30.8 %).

To set the stage for testing the hypothesis regarding type of toys, we used the results regarding type of toys from the first

Table 3 Recoded predominant color by the three-category classification of toys

Classification of toys[a]	Recoded predominant color[bc]						Total
	Boy colors[d]		Gender-neutral colors[e]		Girl colors[f]		
	%	n	%	n	%	n	n
Boys Only	47.0	150	49.8	159	3.1	10	319
Both Boys & Girls	29.7	27	57.1	52	13.2	12	91
Girls Only	8.5	10	60.7	71	30.8	36	117

[a] Based on Disney's categorizations

[b] Derived from Table 1

[c] X^2 (4, n=527)=98.7, p<.001

[d] Red, Black, Brown, Gray

[e] Yellow, Tan, Blue, Orange, Green, White

[f] Pink, Purple

stage of the analysis to classify toys into three categories. Since more than 95 % of small vehicles, weapons, building toys, and action figures were for "boys only"; these toys were then recoded together as "masculine toys". Since 95 % of toys that were dolls, domestic, or related to the beauty, cosmetics, and jewelry were for "girls only", these toys were recoded as "feminine toys". The remaining types of toys were recoded as "gender-neutral" toys, including board and card games; musical instruments; sports, bicycles, and scooters; stuffed animals and plushes; bath toys; electronic games; and figures and figurines. Since there were no learning toys that were for "boys only" or "girls only", the learning toys were coded as "gender-neutral" toys. The "Baby Einstein Bendy Ball Toy", a toy for "both boys and girls", is a learning toy. It is flexible, sphere with bright yellow, electric blue, red, and green sections and holes through it for working on small motor skills.

To test the hypothesis that toys for "both boys and girls" would be more likely to resemble toys for "boys only" than toys for "girls only", the three-category gender classification of toys was used as the independent variable and the recoded type of toy variable was used as the dependent variable. Despite the statistically significant relationship χ^2 (4, n=527)=280.4, p<.001 between these two variables, nearly all (96.7 %) of the toys for "both boys and girls" were gender-neutral toys (see Table 4) with just over 45 % of the 91 toys for "both boys and girls" falling into the category of "stuffed animals and plushes". In addition, all of the toys with the Disney name Pook-a-Looz Plush and Baby Einstein were toys for "both boys and girls". On the other hand, 53.3 % of toys for "boys only" were masculine and 46.1 % were gender-neutral, while 39.3 % of toys for "girls only" were feminine toys and 59.0 % were gender-neutral. Although the types of toys for "both boys and girls" were expected to be more similar in type to toys for "boys only", this hypothesis was not supported.

The final hypothesis was that toys for "both boys and girls" that were gender-neutral in type would have the color palette

Table 4 Recoded type of toy by the three-category classification of toys

Classification of toys[a]	Recoded type of toy[bc]						Total
	Masculine[d]		Gender-neutral[e]		Feminine[f]		
	%	n	%	n	%	n	n
Boys Only	53.3	170	46.1	147	.6	2	319
Both Boys and Girls	3.3	3	96.7	88	.0	0	91
Girls Only	1.7	2	59.0	69	39.3	46	117

[a] Based on Disney's categorizations

[b] Derived from Table 1

[c] X^2 (4, n=527)=280.4, p<.001

[d] Small Vehicles, Weapons, Building Toys, Action Figures

[e] Electronic Games & Accessories; Bath Toys; Sports, Bicycles, Scooters; Stuffed Animals & Plushes; Musical Instruments; Board & Card Games; Creative

[f] Dolls; Beauty, Cosmetics, Jewelry; Domestic

associated with toys for "boys only", namely bold. For gender-neutral toys, the relationship between the three-category gender classification of toys and color palette was significant χ^2 (2, $n=304$)=32.8, $p<.001$ and the hypothesis was supported. As Table 5 shows, for gender-neutral toys, 89.9 % of toys for "both boys and girls" were a bold color, which is similar to that for toys for "boys only" (84.4 %) and quite different from toys for "girls only" (55.1 %). For example, the "Baby Einstein TM Count and Compose Piano" toy is a small white piano with bright yellow, orange, red, purple, and blue piano keys that yields colors and a color palette that does not offend boys. Thus, when the type of toy was gender-neutral, color palette continued to be a notable gender marker. We did not explore the color palette of feminine toys for "boys only" ($n=2$) or "both boys and girls" ($n=0$) or of masculine toys for "girls only" ($n=2$) or "both boys and girls" ($n=3$) because there were so few toys in these categories.

Discussion

Our research focused on the gendered marketing of toys on the Internet. The first stage of the analysis explored the extent to which three characteristics of toys, namely the color palette, predominant color, and the type of toy, serve as gender markers for "boys only" and "girls only" toys as well as whether our findings would replicate those of past research. We then used the results of the first stage of the analysis for each characteristic to examine the extent to which toys for "both boys and girls", those toys that appeared on both the list for boys and the list for girls on the Disney Store website, displayed characteristics that were similar to or different from the toys for "boys only" and for "girls only". Past studies of adults' and children's perceptions and choices of toys do not

Table 5 Recoded type of toy by color palette and the three-category classification of toys

Recoded type of toy[a]	Color palette				
	Bold		Pastel		Total
	%	n	%	n	n
Gender-neutral[bc]					323
Boys Only Toys	84.4	124	15.6	23	147
Toys for Both	89.9	79	10.2	9	88
Girls Only Toys	55.1	38	44.9	31	69

The classification of toys is based on Disney's categorizations

[a] Derived from Table 1

[b] Electronic Games & Accessories; Bath Toys; Sports, Bikes, Scooters; Stuffed Animals & Plushes; Musical Instruments; Creative: Board & Card Games

[c] X^2 (2, $n=304$)=32.8, $p<.001$

look at all three of these characteristics (Blakemore and Centers 2005; Cherney and London 2006; Kane 2006) nor do they turn their focus to the characteristics of toys that are nevertheless marketed to both boys and girls (Kahlenberg and Hein 2010; Kline 1993; Seiter 1993) even when the toys are not listed as such. In addition, the Internet marketing of toys that has been growing in popularity has been previously over-looked (Kahlenberg and Hein 2010; Kline 1993; Seiter 1993). In the concluding section of this paper, we also discuss the possible implications of our findings for children's socialization and their preparation for their future.

Gender Markers

For the most part, we found our hypotheses and the findings of previous research on toys and related children's products supported by our analysis of the Internet marketing of toys on the Disney Store website using tabular analysis and chi-square. Similar to the findings of others, toys that were pastel colored were much more likely to be marketed as toys for "only girls" than for "only boys", while bold colored toys were much more likely to be marketed as toys for "boys only" than for "girls only" (Clark 2007; Kahlenberg and Hein 2010; Nelson 2000). In addition, with regard to specific colors, while over 85 % of toys with red, black, gray, and brown as the most predominant color were for "boys only", over 85 % of toys with pink and nearly two-thirds of toys with purple as the most predominant color were for "girls only". The findings regarding color, particularly those related to pink and purple, reaffirmed what earlier studies have found for a variety of items, including toys, Halloween costumes, clothing, crayons, room color, and con-gratulatory birth cards (Bridges 1993; Fishel 2001; Fisher-Thompson et al. 1995; Kane 2006; Karniol 2011; Little and Hill 2007; Nelson 2000; Pennell 1994; Ruble et al. 2007; Seiter 1993; Turgeon 2008); however, the importance of having gender markers emerge from the data is evident in the findings that revealed blue as a gender-neutral color rather than as a "boy color". In addition, it is interesting to note that pink, a color associated with toys for "girls only", is a mixture of white and red, the second of which is highly associated with toys for "boys only". Thus, it seems that even slight shift in color tint changes the gender with which it is associated.

When we examined types of toys, nearly all of the action toys, small vehicles, weapons, and building toys were for "boys only", while nearly all of the toys that were dolls or related to beauty, cosmetics, jewelry, and domestic work were for "girls only". The Disney marketing of toys on the Internet again replicated the findings of previous studies in which toys reflected a traditional view of masculinity associated with physicality and a traditional view of femininity associated with nurturing and domestic qualities as well as concern with physical attractiveness (Blakemore and Centers 2005; Cherney and London 2006; Downs 1983; Fisher-Thompson

1990; Fisher-Thompson et al. 1995; Kahlenberg and Hein 2010; Kline 1993; Marcon and Freeman 1996; Pomerleau et al. 1990) and those regarding the portrayal of traditional gender roles by Disney (Giroux 1997; Wiersma 2000).

Toys for "Both Boys and Girls"

Although logic might have dictated that the toys for "both boys and girls" actually would have been marketed as "Toys for Both Boys and Girls", there was no such category on the Disney website. In addition, for the two-category classification that Disney actually presented on the website, the toys for "both boys and girls" made up 44 % of the 208 toys listed for girls, but only 22 % of the 410 toys listed for boys. Even here, it seemed that the Disney Company assumed boys would be less likely to cross gender lines than girls.

There is additional evidence from this study of the importance of making toys for "both boys and girls" appealing to boys associated with several characteristics of toys. In the second stage of the analysis, we found that toys for "both boys and girls" were more likely to resemble toys for "boys only" than for "girls only" in terms of both color palette and predominant color. With regard to the type of toy, learning toys were likely to be toys for "both boys and girls", and this was true, for example, of the Baby Einstein toys that were marketed for young infants. The lack of gender differentiation among these learning toys for infants is reminiscent of the lack of gender differentiation among Halloween costumes for infants (Nelson 2000). And even the toys for "both boys and girls" that were gender-neutral in type tended to be bold colored and resemble toys for "boys only" rather than for "girls only".

The findings described above would seem to imply that the choice of a gender-neutral toy potentially reflects gender crossing for boys; therefore, the bold color palette of such toys helps reduce the labeling of such a choice as the gender crossing that boys resist. In contrast, it seems that the choice of a gender-neutral toy does not constitute gender crossing for girls; therefore, the color palette can be that associated with toys "for boys", namely bold, and not diminish girls' interest in such toys. Another possibility is that color palette is not as strong a gender marker for girls as it is for boys; an explanation also supported by the finding that even about half of toys for "girls only" are bold and about half are pastel. The above findings are reminiscent of previous research indicating girls were more likely than boys to find gender-neutral toys appealing as well as to cross gender lines (Caldera et al. 1989; Downs 1983; Marcon and Freeman 1996; Schor 2004) and have a more flexible idea of what is gender appropriate (Frey and Ruble 1992).

Implications

Although the gendered marketing of toys on the Internet may not reflect how adults and children actually perceive toys, it may have a tremendous influence on how adults and children think about the toys they want to purchase and ultimately how children do gender, particularly since consumers are increasingly relying on the Internet to fulfill their shopping needs (Pew Research Center 2010). Although we did not directly study the impact of the gender marketing of toys on children's play nor adults' choices of toys for the children in their lives, if customers choose toys based on gendered marketing and children restrict their play to toys marketed to their gender, then boys' and girls' experiences will be limited (Martin et al. 1995). This leads to boys and girls learning different sets of skills (Cherney and London 2006), including cognitive, emotional, and social skills (Kline 1993).

As a result of learning different skills, children may become more experienced in and more prepared for some occupational fields and future roles and less for others (Marcon and Freeman 1996). Children limiting themselves to certain categories of toys may narrow their career interests in the future and contribute to the gender segregation of the occupational structure with women statistically dominating fields such as nursing and men statistically dominating fields such as engineering (U.S. Census Bureau 2011, Table 616). Although women have been entering male-dominated occupations in greater numbers than men have been entering female-dominated occupations, the types of toy marketed to boys and girls appear to have changed little over time. Instead Disney markets toys in a way that seems to rely on girls' willingness to cross gender lines with regard to toys. The gendering of toys may also contribute to the gendering of familial roles and the household division of labor as well as to the gender segregation of adults' recreational choices (U.S. Census Bureau 2011, Table 1249). Thus, our examination of the gendered marketing of toys on the Internet by Disney reflects the impact that message producers have on message content, an important motivation for content analysis suggested by Rudy et al. (2010), even though our study did not evaluate the effect on toy purchasers nor the toys played with by children. And if the amount of exposure to media affects the impact as "cultivation theory" suggests (Gerbner et al. 1994), then the Internet will have an increasing impact in the future.

Limitations

There were some limitations to our research, mainly associated with using as our sample the images of toys on one website, namely the English language U.S. Disney Store website. First, one cannot assume that the findings regarding color palette, color, or type of toy reflect cultural universals. The link between these toy characteristics may vary across cultures and even Disney's marketing may vary depending on how gender is associated with certain colors or types of toys in other cultures. In addition, we only looked at the gender marketing of toys on one company's English language U.S. website, not those of other companies based in the U.S. nor

those based in other countries. Second, we used the images of toys on the Disney Store website that appeared in the summer. Since Disney updates the website and posts new toys with some frequency, we collected all of the images of toys for our sample on one day so that we would have a consistent set of data, but that may have come at the risk of not representing all of the toys that Disney offers throughout the year.
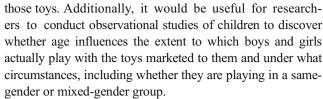
Third, we conducted our analysis without making any attempt to code toys by the age of the child to whom the toy is marketed or who might play with the toy. Consequently, with the exception of Disney's Baby Einstein toys that are overtly marketed to infants, we did not explore how the characteristics of toys that were the focus of this research might vary depending on the age of the children to which Disney is marketing particular toys.

Fourth, the Disney Store website only contains the product details; there is no way of knowing who purchased the toys and to whom they were given. Parents may reinforce traditional gender expectations by buying toys for their children based on toy marketers' gender classification of toys or they may be defying them by buying toys in a way that reflects the skills they want their child to learn regardless of the gender of that child. The website cannot tell us whether toys are purchased for boys or for girls, who chose the toys, and the extent to which the children for whom toys are purchased play with them or not.

Future Research

There are many aspects of this study that could be pursued further. First, future researchers could use our schema to look at the extent to which other companies market toys by gender as well as the impact of the characteristics studied here, such as color palette, color, and type of toy on the gendering of toys, whether on websites, other forms of media, or in toy stores. Additionally, it would be interesting to study the gendered marketing of toys by age since the Disney category of "Baby Einstein", which caters to infants, yielded a high percent of toys that were listed for boys and listed for girls on the Disney Store website. In addition to infant toys, one could also explore more generally the impact of the target age group on how toys reflect gender markers.

Second, we studied the marketing of toys, but we did not explore the role that parents and significant others play in enforcing these traditional views of masculinity and femininity. Toy companies tend to market highly stereotyped toys with advertisements that tend to exaggerate gender differences (Bakir et al. 2008; Fishel 2001; Seiter 1993), and this sample of toys seems no different. It would be useful to know to what extent adults of both genders buy toys for children based on their own views or the desires of children and what conflicts arise between parents and children about the gender appropriateness of particular toys based on specific characteristics of

those toys. Additionally, it would be useful for researchers to conduct observational studies of children to discover whether age influences the extent to which boys and girls actually play with the toys marketed to them and under what circumstances, including whether they are playing in a same-gender or mixed-gender group.

Third, future researchers could explore the impact of toy marketing on the Disney Store website or that of other toy companies in a cross-cultural context. The research that we conducted was based on the English language U.S. version of the Disney Store website, but there are several different versions of the website designed for different countries around the world. Consequently, customers around the world have had the opportunity to view Disney products on those versions of the website and make consumer decisions about the products. We do not know, for example, whether consumers in other cultures would view the toys for boys or for girls in the same way. If those in other countries are less rigid about gender boundaries, then the effect of toy companies categorizing toys by gender on a website may be less influential. Moreover, the colors and functions associated with toys for "boys only", "girls only", and "both boys and girls" in other cultures may differ from those in the U.S. and be worthy of study for that reason.

Conclusion

While Disney continues to overtly market its toys to boys or to girls, we have seen that if one examines the toys for "boys only" and the toys for "girls only" on this company's website, some toys appeared on both lists even though these toys were not marketed overtly as "For Both Boys and Girls" or "For Children". Toy companies have the capability to market toys in a more gender-neutral way, such that action figures and cooking toys could be marketed to both boys and girls. One could also change specific characteristics of toys, such as color, to make some of them more appealing to both boys and girls. This suggestion allows for the possibility of change, but it also reflects the continued impact of certain colors and other characteristics as gender markers. Nevertheless, Blakemore and Centers (2005) believe that "Children of both genders would benefit from playing with toys that develop educational, scientific, physical, artistic, and musical skills" (p. 632). If children played with greater variety of types of toys, they might well develop a wider repertoire of cognitive, physical, and social skills. Providing children with opportunities to develop skills congruent with their talents would be a laudable goal, and wider acceptance of toys as appropriate for both genders would contribute to this possibility.

Appendix

Examples of types of toys

Type of toy	Boys only	Girls only
Action Figures	Captain America Action Figure	Toy Story Jessie Action Figure
Bath Toys	Cars Bath Toys Set	Disney Princess Bath Toys Set
Beauty, Cosmetics, Jewelry[a]	–	Sea Pretty Ariel Styling Head
Board & Card Games	Spider Sense Spider-Man Tub Full Games	Alice in Wonderland - The Board Game
Building Toys[b]	Woody's Round Up Toy Story Lego Set	–
Creative	Toy Story Etch A Sketch	Disney Fairies Make Your Own Keepsake Memory Book
Dolls	Toy Story Interactive Buzz and Woody Dolls	Fluttering Tinker Bell Doll
Domestic[a]	–	The Princess and the Frog Princess Tiana Cooking Set
Electronic Games & Accessories	Toy Story 3 Buzz Blaster Video Game	Tinker Bell Lost Treasure Console Clutch for Nintendo DS
Figure & Figurines	WALL*E Figure Play Set	The Little Mermaid Figuring Play Set
Musical Instruments	Phineas and Ferb Guitar for Kids	Disney Princess Guitar for Kids
Small Vehicles[b]	Cars Darren Leadfoot 82 Die Cast Car	–
Sports, Bicycles, Scooters	Mickey Mouse Clubhouse Tricycle	Disney Princess Scooter
Stuffed Animals & Plushes	Dale Plush Toy	Minnie Mouse Plush Toy
Weapons[b]	Zurg's Blaster Toy	–

[a] There were no toys for "boys only" in this category

[b] There were no toys for "girls only" in this category

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