

NEW GIRL MEANS
NEW SEX ROLE
PERSPECTIVE? OR
NOT...

INTRODUCTION

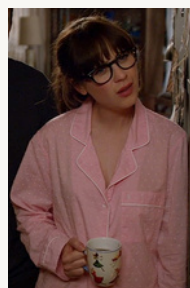
In this project I applied the sex-role perspective to the show New Girl which was aired in 2011. The sex-role perspective focuses on different personality traits that are feminine and masculine. Using the sex-role perspective I am able to see if New Girl breaks the normal stereotypes or not. This is what we know about sex role perspectives in sitcoms: "Sitcoms have been shown to utilize many tropes of traditional masculinity but also have the potential to counter masculine gender stereotypes through emotional expression by male character and other indicators of sensitivity." We also know about the popular myth of beauty and the beast and the typical stereotypes of genders including body shapes, attitudes, and personalities. New Girl goes on to balance both the masculine and feminine traits in their characters and allows audience to see more than just a specific stereotype of how they should be behaving.

By: Chloe VandenHouten



METHODS

Season one of New Girl contains 24 episodes roughly around 25 minutes in length. Every week I watched two episodes and compared the episodes to the sex-role perspective. Using this analysis, I could identify specific feminine or masculine traits characterized in each episode of New Girl. When I was watching I looked for examples in mostly the main characters but, also characters who played a big role in that episode. I wrote a summary of each episode and key points that happened in the episode relating to gender stereotypes. I included masculine and feminine traits and how it relates to the sex-role perspective.



References

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RESULTS

From my research I discovered that many of the main characters have both feminine and masculine traits. The most common femininity trait was nurturing and the most common masculinity trait was assertiveness. The episodes with Jess showing traits of mostly femininity characteristics were 2,4,10,11, and 12. However, many episodes break the stereotypes. 1,2,5,6,7,8,10,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20 & 21. A main example of the main characters having both feminine and masculine traits is in episode 5 we start to see Schmidts "feminine side" that continues throughout the whole show. He comes out only wearing a kimono. Nick and Winston start making fun of Schmidt for it but he continues to show it off and talk about the fashion and culture of it. Then when CeCe walks in he starts doing push ups and running around to look muscular and masculine to CeCe. Within five minutes, Schmidt had both feminine and masculine traits.



DISCUSSION

The show New Girl demonstrates how both men and women can have both feminine and masculine traits. Often times, people watch sitcoms and laugh at the gender stereotypes but don't realize how much it could affect their thoughts and opinions on gender stereotypes. The gender roles in New Girl provide a good example of how women can have masculine traits and men can have feminine traits. This research shows that men also can be more nurturing and caring and women can also be assertive and show leadership. Jesse shows both masculine and feminine qualities throughout the show such as being very nurturing and caring to others but also being assertive. Gender stereotypes also apply to appearance. "They argued that exposure to such differential vicarious verbal reinforcement may contribute internalization of the "thin ideal" stereotype in young viewers." We see this throughout the show between CeCe and Jesse. CeCe is always getting the boys and is seen as the hot model. This also correlates to Schmidt and what he use to look like in college. In episode 10, we find out that Schmidt use to be fat in college and then met his best friend who helped him become "cool" and in shape. This is seen in both men and women that your appearance is important to having friends and a significant other. Gender stereotypes also corresponds with, "popular myth of beauty and the beast work together to encourage viewers to accept patriarchy a "natural" male trait and trivialize sexism as a laughing matter." This is widely seen in sitcoms where the male is the "beast" and gets a beautiful girl. This can be seen in New Girl when Schmidt and CeCe decided to become boyfriend and girlfriend which is in episode 21. Schmidt was always seen as unattractive and feels like CeCe is out of his league. Then there are frequently many jokes made why the girl would be with someone like that. This is also demonstrated in episode 13. I found out that gender stereotypes are portrayed in sitcoms and most characters bear both feminine and masculine traits which is important because it allows the audience to see more than just the stereotypes.