

Psyx 335 Psychology of Gender Critique Topics

1. Analyze the relationship between gender stereotypes and gender roles. Give examples of stereotypes that present men in both a positive and negative light and similarly, women in both a positive and negative light. Describe how each of these stereotypes is related to and support masculine and feminine gender roles. Is it possible to have differences in gender roles without stereotypes? If the role differences were eliminated, would the stereotypes still exist?
2. The traditional division of the work of childrearing is that men work to provide for children, while women caretake the children. Is this division built into us biologically and/or environmentally? Are men biologically better equipped to provide economically for children and women biologically better equipped to caretake children? Are males socialized to provide for children and women socialized to caretake children? For both biological and social causation, consider the arguments pro and con. (Be sure to give examples to support your arguments.)
3. It has been suggested that men and women have fundamentally different ways of interacting in relationships (e.g., the Mars/Venus theory). What evidence is there to support this view that there are fundamental gender differences in relationships? What evidence is there against this view? Assume that there are such differences. Does the evidence suggest that they are inborn (genetic) or learned (environmental)? Be sure to support your answer with specific examples from the area of male-female relationships.
4. What actual differences exist in the way that we raise girls and boys? To what degree are these differences due to biological differences between boys and girls? To what degree are they due to stereotypes about boys and girls? In what ways do both girls and boys benefit from these differences in childrearing? In what ways are both girls and boys harmed by these differences? Be sure to support your answer with specific examples.
5. In traditional society, men have the responsibility to provide for dependent children, and have special rights commiserate with that responsibility. Women have the responsibility to caretake dependent children, and have special rights commiserate with that responsibility. Describe these differences in rights and responsibilities. To what degree are the rights of men and women in American society today equal or different? To what degree are their responsibilities equal or different? Analyze the relationship between gender-specific rights and responsibilities.

Mini-Survey Topics

1. Survey three men and three women. Ask your respondents to list any gender differences that they believe are genetically caused. Specifically, ask them to identify gender differences in cognitive functioning (intelligence, verbal ability, math ability, spatial ability, memory, etc.), and social/emotional functioning (morality, friendships, empathy, aggression, etc.) (If any of your respondents say that there are no genetic gender differences, try someone else!).

2. Survey three males and three females. Your respondents can be either children in grade school, teenagers or adults. Ask your respondents to list the physical games that they enjoyed playing outdoors at recess in grade school. "Physical games" means games involving physical movement, such as hopscotch, jump rope, baseball, tag, etc. Ask them to list as many games/activities as they can remember that they played on a regular basis. Limit their responses to just those games/activities played at recess, not those played at home or elsewhere.
3. We will compile a survey of possible gender differences in the area of male/female relationships in class. Give the survey to three men and three women.
4. We will compile a survey of various aspects of raising and caring for children in class. Give the survey to two mothers and two fathers. These parents must be or have been parenting as part of a two-parent household. If the parents are divorced, then their answers should refer to the time when they were part of a two-parent household. The mothers and fathers whom you survey do not necessarily have to be married to each other.
5. Survey 3 men and 3 women. Ask each of your respondents what special rights, privileges, perks they think that women have that men don't get and what special rights, privileges, perks they think that men have that women don't get.

Project Topics

1. Gender Stereotyping in Advertising: Bring in copies of two advertisements, one that you think stereotypes men and one that you think stereotypes women.
2. Gender Differences in Children's Toys: Bring in two toys (or pictures thereof), one used predominantly by girls and the other used predominantly by boys, that demonstrate gender differences in toys that children are given or that they choose to play with.
3. Gender Differences in Competence: Bring in one example of male bashing, in which the female is depicted as normal, competent and mature, while the man is immature, selfish or incompetent. Bring in one example of female bashing, in which the male is depicted as normal, competent, and mature, while the female is immature, selfish, or incompetent. You could use examples from television (e.g., *I Love Lucy* vs *Home Improvement*), books, comics, cartoons, advertisements, bumper stickers, etc.
4. Gender Differences in Children's Books: Bring in two books, one read predominantly by girls and the other read predominantly by boys, that demonstrate gender differences in stories aimed at children.
5. Gender Differences in Clothing: Select an activity for which men's and women's clothing differs. Bring in pictures that show the difference.