How (the Lack of) Representation in Television Affects College Students' Social-Emotional Well-Being

A thesis submitted by

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Abstract

While there has been a lot of existing research on the content of children's television programs especially with regard to diversity or lack thereof, little research exists that explores the effects of lack of diversity. In addition, little research has explored what not seeing yourself reflected in the media you consumed as a child has on young adults. This study used a multi-method approach, including a survey and in-depth interviews, to explore what some of the effects of media representation might have had on a college-aged population. The results not only show that participants belonging to under-represented groups in racial, ethnic, and gender categories did not see themselves reflected in the media they consumed as children, and that the lack of representation negatively affected participant's social-emotional well-being along several metrics.

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Table of Contents

How (the Lack of) Representation in Television Affects College Students' Social-Emotional Well-Being

Chapter 1: Problem Statement and Significance

In 2020, children between the ages of five and eight spent an average of three hours on a screen every day, 73% of that time was watching television, films, and other videos (Rideout & Robb, 2020). Given the substantial presence of screen time in children's lives, it is important to understand its impact on social and emotional well-being, both as children, but also the lasting impact that screen time may have on emerging adults. The effects of television use on children has long been a topic of interest: from whether violent programs lead to violence in real life, to whether television use has a correlation with body-mass index, and whether television is damaging children's ability to learn. Throughout these research topics, a topic that needs attention is the influence diverse television programs have on young children. This topic is crucial to understand both because the U.S. population has become increasingly diverse, and also because television content has started to diversify more. For example, the current shift in representation and diversity in media can be seen with more additions of characters like Thomas, a nonbinary child, in Netflix's series *City of Ghosts* (Ito et al., 2021); Molly, an Indigenous Alaskan in PBS's show *Molly of Denali* (Gillim, 2019); and Julia, an autistic Muppet on Sesame Workshop's program, *Sesame Street* (Ferraro et al., 2017).

Problem Statement

With the shift in diverse programming and the increasingly diverse population watching programming due to the increase of a more diverse population in the United States, it is more

important than ever to understand the effects of viewers seeing themselves (or not seeing themselves) in the media (Frey, 2022). To understand the importance of diverse media, it is vital to first see how media affects the viewers. While there are many ways media viewing can affect viewers, an important part is looking at representation and authenticity. Since the media landscape has changed over the past two decades, college students can provide an insight into how that change has affected their perceptions of themselves represented in television. These students are also currently in a developmental place where they can easily reflect on their youth, while also having the social-emotional understanding to interpret some of the effects not seeing themselves represented may have had on their well-being.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze whether participants felt that they were represented in television as a child and how instances of misrepresentation, lack of representation, and erasure in children's television may have affected Tufts University students' thoughts about their racial, ethnic, and gender identity and their social and emotional well-being. The study will also explore how these feelings changed over time, both from childhood to young adulthood, but also the change over the seven-year age range as the television landscape changed. The participants' ages are important to the study as this age cohort grew up as American television shifted from a limited library of programs to a rapid expansion of programs through streaming and participants were able to go from only seeing a limited catalog to being able to search out characters that may closely resemble the viewer's identity.

I hope that this study will begin to illuminate how recalled representational experiences with children's media might have affected students' thoughts about themselves and others. The main research questions are looking into whether participants feel as though they were

represented in the characters they watched on television programs as child, whether those characters were authentic representations of their identities, and if they did not see accurate representation, or representation at all, how did that impact their social-emotional well-being as a young adult.

Definitions

For this study, television and media are often interchanged and are defined as video content one consumes in the home, primarily series lengths instead of films. Throughout the study, there will be indications as to whether this media only includes "basic" television or streaming/DVDs/DVR or other consumption methods.

While presenting the study, the terms *authentic* and *stereotypical* are often used to talk about the different types of representation of characters in media. For this study, authentic means that a character both looks and acts in a way that a certain group can relate to the portrayal and the character's life resembles that of a real person. Stereotypical characters, therefore, are defined as characters that are based on inaccurate depictions of a certain group and may perpetuate a certain myth about a group of people. While there are aspects of authentic characters that some viewers may not relate to and aspects of stereotypical characters that a viewer may relate to, the consensus that participants come to about whether something is stereotypical or authentic holds authority.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Children's Television History

To understand how television can hold such a vital part in a child's life that it could impact their own social-emotional well-being, it is important to understand how television evolved to be such a vital part. Not only that, but to understand why the participant cohort is such a unique age group, first it is important to understand how television shifted from a live viewing to a on-demand viewing experience and how different regulations may have changed that viewing experience for children.

While it is difficult to pin down one exact inventor of the television, due to the many different inventors that contributed to the technology of the television, it is easy to pinpoint the history of television in the United States. In September of 1928, John Baird's design for the first commercially available television set was first shown to the public, and by 1938, the sets were available to the public (Hur, 2018). While television programs were slower to be adopted by United States audiences, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) created the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) in order to create television programs for the sets. They began this process in 1939 by broadcasting President Franklin D. Roosevelt opening the World's Fair to television monitors around the fair's pavilion (*Television at the 1939*, n.d.). This launched the world of television into the United States' audiences who previously relied on films in cinemas and programs on radio sets for the majority of their entertainment.

In 1947, the first television program created specifically for children was broadcast which was a show called *Small Fry Club.* Its host, Bob Emery, went on to star in the *Howdy Doody Show*, a very popular program at that time (Bryant, 2010). While these first shows were mainly mixes of puppets and live action, cartoons quickly started taking over in the early 1950's and

1960's largely due to the shift in how advertisers saw children as consumers due to the post-World War boom (Pecora, 1995). This was because not only were cartoons cheaper to produce, especially since voice actors often played many characters, but the networks were also able to run more commercials during the shorter shows (Moss, 2021). Advertisers saw that they had the largest audience on Saturday mornings, which prompted the creation of the long running tradition of Saturday morning cartoons starting with *Crusader Rabbit* in 1949 (Dessem, 2016). Children's television, especially animated programming, was booming. In 1967, top-rated animated children's shows were bringing in around $50,000,000 a year with an audience of 14 million children (Erickson, 1995).

While children's television programs were booming, a group of activists were becoming worried about children's health from watching these programs. One of these groups was Action for Children's Television (ACT), a group of moms who convened in 1968 to work towards higher quality television (Bryant, 2010). The ACT formed as a reaction to being dismayed at not seeing any book-based television programs (J. Dobrow citing Peggy Charren, personal communication, October 11, 2022). The group started as a group of concerned parents in Massachusetts, wanting to find a solution to change what their children were watching. In order to do this, they started by analyzing one show, *Romper Room*, and found that almost 17 of the 30-minute-long program was commercials or segments of the show selling merchandise for the show. This contributed to the ACT petitioning the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to ban commercials (Clark, 2004). This petition failed at first to make any changes, but eventually led to the National Association of Broadcasters to introduce more recommendations about commercials during children's television blocks in 1973, and the eventual creation of the federal Children's Television Act of 1990 (Osborne, 1997). Considering that ad revenue on

children's digital media went from $.3 billion in 2012 to a projected $1.7 billion for 2021, it becomes debatable as to whether the recommendations have actually been effective (Guttmann, 2020).

In the mid 1960's, a few different people saw the potential for creating educational programming for children. Most notably, in 1966, Joan Ganz Cooney began research for a program that would become *Sesame Street* in 1969, a show that focused on letter and number learning (Kamp, 2021). In 1968, Fred Rogers created the show *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, which mainly focused on teaching social-emotional skills (King, 2018).

As the market for children's television programs was rising, the next step in history began in 1977 when a new channel was introduced; *Pinwheel*. *Pinwheel*, which two years later became the currently branded name, *Nickelodeon*, was the first channel dedicated solely to children's programming (Encyclopædia Britannica). This ushered in a new era for children's content as other children's television channels popped up like *Disney Channel* in 1983 which started as a premium channel and later transitioned to network, and *Cartoon Network* in 1992 (*Disney Channel*; *Cartoon Network*). It was at this point in the 1980s and early 1990s that groups concerned about the content on television began to be heard. This culminated in two congressional bills, the Children's Television Act of 1990 which was supposed to regulate how television channels advertise to children and fund educational programs, and the Telecommunications Act of 1996 which among many things added stricter guidelines for what networks could count as "educational programming," parental guidelines for safe television viewing including the attempt to censor graphic material, and the introduction of the rating system like TV-PG (Children's Television Act of 1990, 1989-1990; Telecommunications Act of 1996, 1996).

The Children's Television Act and the FCC

The Children's Television Act of 1990 pressured the FCC to create rules and definitions that broadcasters had to comply with to have their broadcasting license renewed. The FCC defined children's educational programming as "any television programming that furthers the educational and informational needs of children 16 years and under in any respect, including children's intellectual/cognitive or social/emotional needs" (Federal Communications,1991, 2111). The FCC declared that television stations had to air core educational programming as defined above to comply with the new rulings and be able to renew license. The FCC also ruled that during weekdays, there could only be 12 minutes per hour of advertising, and 10.5 minutes per hour on weekends (Federal Communications, 1991). In the years after the ruling was put out, it was clear that the definition of "educational and informational" was too broad as shows like *Flintstones* were being defined as "educational" (Andrews, 1993). Pressure built to strengthen and further refine these definitions and in 1996, the FCC introduced stricter guidelines. The FCC changed the definition of children's educational programming to:

> Programs that meet the following requirements: (1) the program has education as a significant purpose; (2) the educational objective of the program and the target child audience are specified in writing in the children's programming report; (3) the program is aired between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.; (4) the program is regularly scheduled; (5) the program is of a substantial length (e.g., 15 or 30 minutes); and (6) the program is identified as educational children's programming at the time it is aired, and instructions for listing it as educational programming are provided by the licensee to program guides. (Federal Communications, 1996, para. 4)

Stations also needed to air a minimum of three hours of the core educational programming to meet the requirements and needed to state and identify that they were airing educational programming for easy recognition. Lastly, stations needed to report publicly about their programming to be held accountable (Osborne, 1997).

In 2006, with the incoming switch from analog to digital television, the FCC introduced a new change to regulations. The first main clarification that was made was that even if a channel chose to multicast, they were still required to provide three hours of core educational programming on their main channel as well as an additional three hours per additional stream. The rulings also stated that during the entirety of core programming the E/I (educational and informational) logo must be always shown on screen. Lastly, the FCC commented that the addition of website addresses was allowed as long as they pertained to the core programming and did not lead to additional commercialized content (Federal Communications, 2006).

In 2019, new rulings were added by the FCC that mainly focused on the fact that broadcasters could use their subchannels to air core programming and that core programming could also include shorter public service announcements (PSAs) and short- form content as part of their required educational and informational time (Federal Communications, 2019). It should be noted that the FCC only has jurisdiction over broadcast television, so streaming platforms like Netflix and pay cable stations like Disney do not fall under FCC jurisdiction.

On-Demand Viewing

The participant cohort involved in the present study were born between 1998-2004 which means the conversations and data surrounding television programs from the participants are coming from television consumed in the early 2000s. At this time, there were many shifts to the television landscape from “Live” viewing to “On-Demand” viewing which shows a shift from

participants having limited viewing options, to ostensibly being able to seek out the representation they are looking for.

Cable and Premium Channels

When television was first introduced into homes in the 1940's, viewers could only watch broadcast channels that used airwaves to broadcast to antennas from surrounding towers. While this method enabled many urban communities to be able to consume television, those who lived in more rural spaces were unable to pick up the signals from so far away (Encyclopedia.com, 2023). This led to community antennas being created in 1948 which enabled users to attach "cables" to one antenna for a community to enable larger broadcast systems. By 1963, cable TV was watched in one million homes. By 1972, HBO, the first pay-for-view channel which ultimately introduced Premium Cable channels, was introduced (*History of cable*. CCTA, n.d.). By 1992, around 60% of all American homes had subscribed to cable channels (Encyclopedia.com,
2023).

When exploring cable and premium channels for the purpose of this study, it is important to understand how children's channels fit in. PBS, which offers many children's programs, is a broadcast system, which means it is free to view. Nickelodeon was part of a cable package that included many channels as part of a single fee, whereas the Disney Channel first started as a premium channel that needed to be bought separately before slowly moving to a basic cable channel in 2002 (Encyclopædia Britannica; *Disney Channel*). This meant that some participants of the study watched only PBS or other network channels due to not having cable, or did not watch Disney when it was a premium channel.

VHS and DVD and Blu-Ray

What really makes this participant cohort unique is their view of how television evolved over their childhood. A large piece of this is the evolution of physical copies of media from VHS tapes to DVDs and Blu-Ray through the large extinction of physical media both in the home but also through rental.

When the oldest members of the participant cohort were born in 1998/1999, VHS tapes had a stronghold over American households, while DVDs were just beginning to take over. The VHS (Video Home Service) was first introduced to the United States in 1977 and by 1985, there were around 11.5 million VCRs sold in the U.S. (Burr, n.d.; ScanCafe, 2020). The VHS was popular due to its more accessible nature and the ability to record media allowing more access to films and repeated viewings of television programs (Burr, 2023). VHS tapes also allowed guardians to better monitor what their children were watching and allowed young children to view their favorite media repeatedly. The tapes also lasted into 2005, when around 95 million Americans were still using VHS tapes, a time that overlaps the participants' childhoods, even though in 2003, DVDs started outselling VHS tapes (Burr, n.d.; ScanCafe, 2020). Overlapping the VHS in 1997 in America was the DVD, a disk that had larger storage capacity than VHS tapes, allowing entire seasons of shows to be on a single disk, and the capability of no longer needing to rewind. By 1998, 1.4 million American households owned a DVD player (Arnold, 2022). This fact, including newer DVD rental chains like Netflix, started to bring down the Blockbuster rental stores as they were slow to adapt to the technology in 2005. In 2006, Blu-ray, a disk that was capable of high-definition video was introduced which led to confusion by consumers and contributed to a decline in both DVD and Blu-ray sales, especially as digital streaming was beginning to hit (Arnold, 2022).

Streaming

When thinking about streaming services in 2023, the first company that comes to mind is Netflix, as it is the company that revolutionized the way television and movies are consumed. Netflix was originally founded in 1997 as a solution to renting DVDs as a cheaper alternative to Blockbuster, and one that was delivered straight to mailboxes. By 2007, Reed Hastings, the founder of Netflix introduced streaming, a new technology that brought a catalog of movies straight to computers. The streaming service really took off in 2013 when the participants in this study were already 10-16, with the introduction of Netflix's first original show *House of Cards* (Lamare, 2020). This was seen by the jump in subscribers from 21.5 million in 2011 to 35.63 million in 2013 and by 2021, Netflix reached 209 million subscribers (Iqbal, 2022). In July 2022, streaming overtook cable viewing for the first time when 34.8% of tv viewing was streaming, 34.4% Cable, 21.6% Broadcast, and 9.2% Other which includes DVD and DVR views (*Streaming claims*, 2022).

Children's Television Consumption

As it is becoming harder and harder to distinguish between network watching, streaming, and online videos, it is becoming more important to measure children's media consumption. Of the video watching portion of media consumption in 2020, children eight and under spent 11% of that time watching DVDs, 23% on live television, 29% on subscription services, and 37% on online videos (Rideout & Robb, 2020). In this breakdown of children's screen time, it was found that Black children, zero to eight, spent an average of four hours of screen time per day compared to three hours for Latine children, and two hours for White children (Rideout & Robb, 2020). This specific statistic shows that racial and ethnic minorities are exposed to television programs more than majority racial and ethnic children, and it is consistent with what researchers

from previous decades had found. This is important to note when exploring the topic of representation in the media.

Covid-19 Pandemic

While looking at the statistics above illustrate some of the most recent surveys on media use among children, it is vital to add context to the numbers. According to a census put out by Common Sense Media, the Covid-19 pandemic - especially during lockdown and online schooling, - caused a rapid increase in screen use among tweens and teens. Tweens (8-12) went from an average of four hours and 36 minutes of entertainment screen use per day in 2015, to four hours and 44 minutes in 2019 (a 3% increase) all the way to five hours and 33 minutes in 2021 (a 17% increase). Teens (13-18) went from an average of six hours and 40 minutes of entertainment screen use per day in 2015, to seven hours and 22 minutes in 2019 (an 11% increase) all the way to eight hours and 39 minutes in 2021 (a 17% increase) (Common Sense Media, 2021). A similar trend is also seen in children 11 and under as children using tablets and computers went up 13% just from March of 2020 to March of 2021 (McClain, 2022). Although the Covid-19 Pandemic is still ongoing, the daily lives of society have returned to "normalcy" as the lockdowns of Spring 2020 are no longer in effect, and schools have reopened their doors. This could shift the ever-rising numbers of technology use closer to pre-pandemic days, however, that data is difficult to determine at this writing.

Identity Formation

To understand how diversity in children's television programs might affect children, it is important to understand the main theories surrounding this topic especially when it comes to how children formulate their identity that plays into how they may (or may not) see their identity represented on television. At the core of all theories and studies on child development is that

children learn about the world around them by their own experiences with the world (Witt, 2000). A theory that is used often in research about children and media is cultivation theory, which states that television shows can serve as the foundation of children's experience of the world. The more time a child spends watching television, the more likely they base their conceptions of the world on television shows and characters (Morgan, 2009). The second theory is observational theory which states that children learn from models around them (Bandura & Walters, 1963). While learning had previously come primarily from parents, peers, and other communal settings, the increase in children's exposure to media has deemed media the modern role model in learning (Signorella, 1987). Children, through socialization, learn about their culture and its beliefs, to begin to identify themselves (Roberts & Maccoby, 1985). Children look at the characters and ask themselves who the characters are; are they evil or good, male or female, authentic or stereotypical, and they use those traits to question the characters and themselves to understand their own identity and place in their community (Lemish, 2015). For example, if a Black child primarily sees depictions of Black characters in criminalized or lower-class roles, they may start to feel as though that is where they belong (Rogers et al., 2021).

Gender Identity Formation

To understand the importance of how gender is depicted in children's television shows, it is imperative to first understand how young children understand gender and how they learn the stereotypes associated with each gender. Martin and Halverson's gender schema theory, describes how children form schemas which are ways that our brains categorize information. While there are schemas for everything from understanding what an animal is and who are family members, the theory states that there is also a schema built in early childhood surrounding gender (Shaffer & Kipp, 2014). While these schemas include things like the fact that a mother is

female and different genitals indicate different sexes; the schemas also start to include stereotypical behavior. If a child is taught that only girls wear pink and sees pink only associated with females, pink will cement into that child's gender schema as female. Socialization theory also explains that children's behavior is shaped through negative and positive reinforcement (Larsen & Buss, 2018). This means that whenever children are told things like "real boys don't cry" and that "boys will be boys" to get out of aggressive or inappropriate behavior, these reinforcements will imprint on children that these negative behaviors are acceptable for their gender. This theory is especially important as children spend a significant amount of time "socializing" with media characters.

Children learn these stereotypes and gender identity at different times. From ages two until six, children learn that there is a difference between genders, there are stereotypical activities and objects associated with each gender, prefer to play with children of their own gender, and start to apply the stereotypes to themselves. From ages seven until ten, children start to associate psychological and emotional differences, occupations, and hobbies with each gender and also learn they can be slightly more flexible in their own gender representation (Ward & Aubrey, 2017). This concept of gender identity formation is accepted as the widespread understanding of how children understand their own gender. A problem occurs though, as this concept only addresses children who identify as gender binary. Unfortunately, there is very little research into genderqueer identity formation, especially in young children as most research on genderqueer identity is focused on older individuals.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Formation

Children's racial and ethnic development is shaped by four aspects: racial and ethnic identification, racial and ethnic preference, racial and ethnic attitudes, and reference group orientation (Iruka et al., 2021; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990).

Identification. Racial and ethnic identification is the ability to associate oneself as part of a specific group (Iruka et al., 2021). At the age of three or four, children can recognize and group individuals based on their skin color. By age five or six, children are then able to accurately label skin color to the socially constructed race label (i.e., dark brown skin means an individual is Black) (Iruka et al., 2021). This identification process for ethnicity occurs slightly later, as ethnic markers like being Latine can be harder to recognize than skin color. This is also true for the understanding of what ethnicity is versus what race is (Serrano-Villar & Calzada, 2016). Race, at least in the United States today, is seen as a sociological definition for grouping people mostly by physical markers, whereas ethnicity is based more on shared culture and traditions (Morin, 2023). Since race can more easily be identified at a glance, children can categorize those groups sooner.

Preference. Racial and ethnic preference is defined as having a positive relationship to one's own group (Iruka et al., 2021). As early as three months, infants begin to see differences between certain racial and ethnic facial characteristics and prefer faces that match their own race (Kelly et al., 2005). One caveat though, is that this only occurs in infants who are raised by and around same-ethnic/racial adults. For example, if a Black infant interacts with Black parents but also with many White caregivers, the infant shows no preference (Bar-Haim et al., 2006). This seems to be like biracial children who only have a slight increase in ability to distinguish Caucasian faces, but the researchers stated that they need more evidence (Gaither et al., 2012).

An interesting note is that this preference changes back and forth during development. At ages three to six, children no longer prefer same-identity preference, as BIPOC children prefer White-biased choice behavior. By nine, though, this changes again, and BIPOC children prefer their own group (Murray & Mandara, 2002). White-biased choice behavior means that Black children, for example, would prefer White characters over Black characters and when looking at a picture of a Black and White child together, they would assign the negative traits to the Black child (Spencer, 1983).

Attitudes. Racial and ethnic attitudes are knowing the stereotypes that society places upon one's group (Iruka et al., 2021). Racial and ethnic attitudes really begin by age eight when children understand that there is a classification for races and ethnicities beyond physical features and cultural characteristics. By age ten, this is solidified, and children recognize how stereotypes are associated with racial and ethnic groups (Swanson et al., 2009). This is also around the time that children begin to associate White as being positive and BIPOC as being negative both because of the stereotypes they attribute with these identities and with the way they see how these groups are socially treated both in person and on television (Iruka et al., 2021). These attitudes and the perceives racial discrimination highly contribute to low self-esteem in minority groups (Fernandez et al., 2011).

Orientation. Racial and ethnic orientation is how a child determines their own group (Iruka et al., 2021). Children use their connections with members of a shared culture, language, and behavior to determine how they identify (McMahon & Watts, 2002). For example, if a child sees that they speak Spanish and that the family around them also speaks Spanish, but the children in their school do not, the child begins to identify with that shared group. Also by age five, children begin to internalize the stereotypes around their own group and succumb to

stereotype threat which is where the negative stereotypes associated with their groups begin affecting performance (Ambady et al., 2001).

Representation in Children's Television Programs

Understanding the actual representation, or lack thereof, that occurs in children's television programs is an important key in understanding the background that framed the present study and knowing what previous results to similar studies may have yielded.

Gender Representation

In many content analyses on gender in children's television programs, the results show the same outcome: male characters consistently outnumber female characters. A meta-analysis of studies on gender representation on children's television found the same result (Calvert et al., 1997). There has been some change to the ratio that male characters outnumber female characters as in 1983, the ratio was 6:1; 1997, the ratio was 3:1; and in 2015, the ratio was down to 3:2 (Barcus, 1983; Calvert et al., 1997; Case, 2015).This is compared that the fact that according to the United States' census, children under 18 have almost an exactly equal number of males and females (*Child population by gender,* 2021).

Female characters also speak less often and are portrayed most often as emotional, romantic, and passive; while male characters are portrayed most often as strong, dominant, and aggressive (Calvert et al., 1997). While sometimes these stereotypes are gone against, for example female superheroes, the characters are often undermined by mistakes or clumsiness which provides the message that those characters are not as good as male heroes (Dobrow & Gidney, 1998).

These findings on gender do not even include nonbinary characters in their findings, as there were almost no Transgender characters portrayed in children's media when the research

originally came out. Also, only recently have children's shows begun to include a handful of genderqueer characters (Chik & White, 2021). This is partly, due to the census not including a nonbinary option, and also due to many children having to hide their identities. In 2021, there were an estimated 1.2 million nonbinary adults in the United States (a little less than 0.5% of all adult citizens). It is also estimated that the number of those identifying as nonbinary is steadily increasing, especially among children, and due to the politics surrounding the issue. It might well be that the estimated numbers might not be accurate at all (*Nonbinary LGBTQ adults in the United States*, 2021; Schmid, 2020).

Race and Ethnicity

Race is also another salient topic of diversity to analyze in children's media. In 1983, content analyses showed that of 1,100 characters analyzed only 42 were Black (3.82%) and only 47 others (4.27%) were considered non-White (Barcus, 1983). In 2007, the racial breakdown of characters in children's sitcoms were 71% White, 22% Black, 3% Latine, 1% Asian, and less than 1% Middle Eastern or Native character (Rogers et al., 2021). In 2020, those numbers were roughly 71% White, 15% Black, 8% Latinx, 3% Asian, and less than 1% Middle Eastern or Native characters (Geena Davis Institute on Gender In Media, 2020). Table 1 illustrates this breakdown of racial identity in children's media compared to the United States census numbers by percentages from 2010 and 2020 (United States Census Bureau, 2022).

Table 1

Percentages of Breakdown of Race in Children's Media Versus Census Breakdown

Race	2007 Breakdown of Race in Children's Media	2010 Census Breakdown	2020 Breakdown of Race in Children's Media	2020 Census Breakdown
White	71%	72.40%	71%	61.60%
Black	22%	12.60%	15%	12.40%
Asian	1%	4.80%	3%	6%
Middle Eastern or Native	>1%	0.90%	>1%	1.10%
Latine	3%	16.30%	8%	18.70%

Graph created by author using data from (Rogers et al., 2021; Geena Davis Institute on Gender In Media, 2020; United States Census Bureau, 2022)

This data shows that while the diversity of races is increasing, the number of minority characters has not. These trends are not just in children's television programs, but also in programming for adults. When looking at prime time for 1996-1997, only 16% of roles were Black (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). For Native characters, in 2011, there was only .3% representation in all television and film roles and two-thirds were supporting or background characters (Kopacz & Lawton, 2011). For Latine characters there were only 18 characters in 64 shows and five of the characters were in one show (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). This lack of representation is still going on today in the 2020-2021 television season. Table 2 below illustrates the percentage of minority races in lead roles in different scripted programs comparing the 2012-2013 season to the 2020-2021 season, including a racial breakdown of the leads from the 2020-2021 season (Ramón et al., 2022).

Table 2

Breakdown of Leads by Race in 2012-2013 Compared to 2020-2021

	Broadcast Scripted	Cable Scripted	Digital Scripted
2012-2013	6.5%	19.3%	20.7%
2020-2021	27.4%	39.6%	37.6%
White	72.7%	60.4%	62.4%
Black	11.3%	22.6%	16.1%
Latine	5.7%	2.8%	3.2%
Asian	3.8%	1.9%	3.2%
Multi	5.7%	11.3%	12.4%
Native	0.9%	0.9%	0.5%
MENA			2.2%

(Chart created by author using data from (Ramón et al., 2022))

Also, in 2022, of all new and returning primetime and top streaming shows half of the Latine lead characters were portrayed in a negative light and the shows were primarily dramas (Latino Donor Collaborative, 2022).

Latine characters more often appear in crime shows and are often one-off guests as neighbors or criminals (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). Often, the portrayals of minority groups are more likely to depict characters in criminal or lower work ethic positions (Rogers et al., 2021). There is hope though as the depiction of Latine people, and other minority groups, as criminals and subservient characters are slowly diminishing (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). While there are some shows like *The George Lopez Show* or *Black-ish* that are not dramas and have positive role models, they are not likely to interact with White characters which pushes the characters away from inclusion. (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005).

Impacts of Invisibility

The actual impacts of invisibility and inauthentic representation in children's television has been studied very narrowly because any study on the impact of media on children's identity first establishes that it is very difficult to measure the influence of television in a concrete way. It is nearly impossible to prove whether television is the cause of any issue because a control group of children with no exposure to television is improbable to find while holding other factors constant (Jackson-Beeck, 1977). For example, a child who might not have access to television may also be living in poverty or maybe living in an isolated environment, which could skew the results. As a result, studies that suggest the causal impact of television on any diversity and inclusion issue are biased as all results will be influenced in some capacity by outside variables. Because of this bias in research, it is often difficult for researchers to separate what identity roles come from real life and which ones are rooted in characters on television (Lemish, 2015). Given this caveat, it is still vital to analyze what television shows are depicting to understand how they *could* possibly affect children's understanding of themselves.

The problem with diversity in television, and the basis for many current and past studies on identity and media, is that stereotypes are the agent of socialization in television (Singer & Singer, 2012). While some stereotypes can be positive—like males being strong, they can also be negative, like males not being allowed to show emotion. Stereotypes are also often used in children's television because the short run time does not allow adequate time to explore characters' backgrounds. As a result, writers rely on stereotypes to give their characters motivation (Singer & Singer, 2012). These stereotypes are then ingrained in children's schemas about a certain identity and subsequently reinforced by more media and other people (Bandura, 1977). This is evident in the fact that young children can easily use facial features on cartoons to

determine whether a character is “good or bad” even if they have never seen the character before (Dobrow et al., 2018). While it is important for children to have role models to begin the socialization process, it is vital that those role models are not based on stereotypes that can harm the way children perceive themselves and others (Hart, 2000). Once it is understood how harmful stereotypes can affect children’s identity, it is crucial to understand how they are affected.

Researchers state that if children are continuously exposed to harmful stereotypes, they might believe that damaging perception of people regardless of whether it is rooted in reality (Singer & Singer, 2012). This phenomenon is especially important to combat in order to prevent harmful circumstances like the increase in eating disorders in females due to harmful body images (Morris & Katzman, 2003), the increase in male suicide potentially caused by toxic masculinity (Winerman, 2005), and hate crimes due to the lack of understanding of gender queer individuals (Kehoe, 2020).

Gender

To understand why it is essential for television shows to portray equal and non-stereotypical gender representation in children’s television, Martins and Harrison (2012) conducted a study on how television characters are represented and how that affects children in many ways including their self-esteem, body image perception, and gender norms acceptance. This phenomenon is caused by the many characters in television— especially children’s television— that have unrealistic body types, stereotypical gendered-behaviors, and highly stereotypical gender roles in terms of jobs and hobbies. If a child sees themselves not fitting into the schema, or ideals of a certain gender, their self-esteem might suffer (Martins & Harrison, 2012). Children are also seeing negative stereotypical behaviors that can cause harm to children. Autonomy is critical to a child’s healthy development, but when young females only see passive

female characters, they are more likely to develop passive behaviors because that is what is modeled for them (Seidman, 1999). Children are also more likely to recall characters of and activities associated with their own gender after watching a television show (Thompson & Zerbinos, 1997). While this finding may be insignificant in the short-term, in the long run this may lead to children only associating certain characteristics with specific gender identities.

Race and Ethnicity

Children who identify as an underrepresented race are less likely to see themselves in media; if they do, the depictions they view are most often of characters in negative depictions, which is associated with lower self-esteem of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) children (Martins & Harrison, 2012; Dobrow et. al, 2018). For example, Sheryl Browne-Graves conducted a study that found that the stereotypical depictions of Black characters on television programs correlated significantly with negative self-esteem among Black teenagers (1993).

Beyond self-esteem, another effect the lack of representation in television might have on children is unfavorable ingroup and intergroup relations. Ingroup relations are the way a person relates and interacts with other people of their own identity, and intergroup relations are the way a person relates and interacts with other groups that are different from their own identity. Often, children who do not have any or have little contact with other racial groups, will rely on the depictions of the groups on television to inform their representations of race. This is often the case for White children who only see Black characters on Television (Bramlett-Solomon & Roeder, 2008). For Indigenous groups, even though these groups are not often looked at during these studies, the evidence of harm in intergroup relations through the effects of negative depictions through mascots shows that this is likely the case (Leavitt et al., 2015). If children only see negative relations between groups, then that is how they will treat other groups and the

same for their own groups. This effect is not just for children, but also for adults as there's evidence that if one sees a high rate of stereotypical representation of their own group on prime time, there are more negative attitudes against their own group (Tukachinsky et al., 2017).

Beyond the effect that stereotypical representation might have on children, there is also the question of lack of representation. The theory of invisibility explains that an underrepresentation of a certain group on television can leave that group with a lack of strategies of how to authentically act as a member from that group. This lack of representation on television can lead to children having a narrower self-definition, feeling as though they cannot pursue certain careers, and overall lead to negative self-esteem (Fryberg & Townsend, 2008). Currently, it is unclear which is more harmful to minority groups; lack of inclusion or misrepresentation (Leavitt et al., 2015).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Methods

The data collection portion of this paper was conducted through the Children's Television (CTV) Project based out of the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Studies and Human Development at Tufts University. This specific data set was collected as part of the ongoing research on The Effects of (Lack of) Media Representation of College Students' Social-Emotional Well-Being. I helped conduct this data collection but was not the sole investigator. The study protocol was submitted to the Tufts University IRB and after some minor revisions were made, the study was approved.

Participants and Recruitment

Participants

Participants for this study included undergraduate and graduate Tufts University students during the 2022-2023 academic year who were between the ages of 18 and 24. Participants included students from all backgrounds to try to ensure a sample representative of the Tufts population, while trying to oversample from underrepresented groups through additional recruiting measures.

The current study's sample for survey collection included a sample of 107 Tufts University students to provide a chance for underrepresented student voices. The second part of the study included "deep dive" interviews with a subsample (17) of the survey respondents who self-identified as being willing to participate in a half hour Zoom interview and completed the interview.

Recruitment

Recruitment for the survey was performed using a variety of methods. The first method was through announcements in larger Tufts University classes, especially introductory courses on media and child development due to access through professors. The next method of recruitment was through outreach to affinity groups including the Africana Center, LGBT Center, Indigenous Students Center, Asian American Center, FIRST Center, Latinx Center, and Women's Center to reach a larger population of underrepresented individuals. Lastly, recruitment for the survey also took place through social media posts such as Instagram and Facebook, and through emails with other students. This recruitment process took place during the fall semester of 2022 starting in September until March of spring semester. These methods were chosen as the research group decided this was the most reliable way to reach students and get them to take the survey, especially the underrepresented students.

The recruitment for the interview portion of the study occurred solely through the survey. At the end of the questionnaire, students were asked if they wanted to participate in a survey. If they accepted, they were then sent to a separate Qualtrics survey in order to provide email addresses away from the data if they want to be contacted further. This recruitment method allowed the participants to opt in or out if they felt they could or wanted to contribute more to the information collection during the study process.

Procedure

The complete study conducted by the CTV research lab consisted of a 32-question Qualtrics survey and an optional follow-up interview. The survey took participants around 15-29 minutes and the interview around 30-60 minutes. The survey (see Appendix A) included 18 multiple choice questions, four short answer questions, five rank-order questions, and five Likert

Scale questions (two Likert Scale questions include five statements, two include seven statements, and one include nine statements). Of these questions, eight questions focused on collecting demographic information, 17 focused on media consumption, two focused on motivations, four on perceptions, and one asked the participants if they wanted to be contacted for a further interview.

The deep-dive interview (See Appendix B) included 15 questions split up into four separate parts: Introductory Questions to help the participants start to reflect on media, Questions Regarding Personal Experience that asks participants to reflect on who they saw in media growing up, Impact of Representation which asked participants to talk about how they thought the lack of representation affected their own social-emotional well-being, and Reflection of Media Impact, Purpose, and Problems which asked participants to reflect on the current state of media.

For this current study only, the questions outlined in the Measures and Assessment section were used to narrow the scope on a particular set of research questions. The data collection for the survey was conducted on Qualtrics and then transferred over to SPSS for further analysis. The interviews were conducted over Zoom and recorded for data analysis purposes. Any information that was taken either from Qualtrics or from Zoom sessions was stored in a secure Box folder.

Measures and Assessments

The study's research design for the survey was composed of three main sections: a demographics section, a media use section, and a media consumption section. The following sections will display only the portion of questions asked that are relevant to the current study.

Measures

Demographics

The demographics section collected information on each participant's race/ethnicity, age, and gender. Each question was a single multiple-choice question with an optional “Other” fill in the blank. Often throughout the study, the “Other” fill in the blank was used to determine a group that the participant could belong to.

Media Use and Consumption

Media use and consumption was measured through three different variables using three different question styles. The questions below collected data to understand the relationship participants had with the media.

1. How did you primarily consume television as a child?
    1. Rank the order of frequency for each method.
2. On average, when you were 11 or younger, what was the average number of hours you spent with the following forms of media per week?
    1. Television, Movies, & Streaming Service Usage (Netflix, Disney+, HBO Max, Hulu, YouTube, etc.)

Statements on Media

The last section of the survey used both Likert-Scale ranking and “yes/no/maybe/prefer not to answer” on various statements that applied both to the participants’ childhood and current life. The statements below cover topics that address representation, identity, and inclusion:

1. Motivations
    1. Thinking back to when you were a **child**, how much did you agree with the following statements…

1. I consumed digital and print media that had characters that identified **similarly** as me.

2. Self-Reflections
    1. Thinking back to how you engaged with television as a **child**, to what degree do you agree with the following statements…
        1. As a child, I watched television shows with characters that shared my race or ethnicity.
        2. As a child, I watched television shows with characters that were the same gender as me.
        3. As a child, I watched television shows with characters that looked like me.

Assessments

The data from the Qualtrics survey was exported into SPSS where I analyzed the survey results. First, each individual response was examined to confirm all questions were answered and to see if any fill in the text answers could be combined with a certain category. After that, descriptive frequencies were run to understand the demographic measures and the base for each question. Next, crosstabulations were performed on certain measures and assessed for significance.

The interview results were analyzed in a different way. Research assistants first watched the recording of an interview from Zoom and wrote down any quotes or themes they found that they thought were significant. I read over all the notes to pull the information relevant to this present study and found the recurring themes and quotes that helped illustrate the qualitative side of the data. This information was then split into sections based on category (race, ethnicity, or gender), and then broken down further into groups based on different ideas including

stereotypes, groups participants did not see, the social-emotional impacts, and what participants wanted to see in the future. These groups helped create an outline for the results and discussion sections.

Data Cleaning

The Qualtrics survey collected a total of 224 responses, however only 107 answers were used as the other responses were not filled out completely. The survey was then checked for repeated surveys or surveys that were questionable (e.g., surveys that have had a pattern in the multiple-choice answers) but no flags were raised. The Qualtrics survey for participation in an interview yielded 29 responses, only 26 of them were filled in, and only 17 responded back and were interviewed.

When looking over the data responses, there were certain categories that were given on the survey that needed to be combined due to low numbers of responses. For Race, there were options for smaller Asian subgroups, as seen in Table 3 that did not include enough responses to have each separate category, so they were combined into a singular Asian group.

Table 3

Asian Demographics Breakdown

	N
South Asian	5
East Asian	12
Southeast Asian	2

There were also a few participants who answered a race that only had one or two participants (one American Indigenous individual, one Middle Eastern individual, and two Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders) as well as five individuals who answered “Other” for race and wrote in Hispanic or Latine. These individuals were combined to form the “Other” category for race.

When looking at ethnicity data, the categories of Prefer Not to Say and Something Else needed to be combined to account for numbers. There were seven participants who answered, “Prefer Not to Say”, five who answered something else and did not fill in an answer in the text box, one who identified as Jewish, and one who identified as Middle Eastern and Ashkenazi.

Lastly, in regard to gender, there were two answers that had to be categorized as they were answered “Other” with a fill in the blank. One participant answered that they were not sure what their gender was, and one answered that they identified as Trans. These two answers were added into the nonbinary category as it was determined as a group that their experiences could more align with those of other nonbinary individuals.

Chapter 4: Results

Results

The results section is split up into two separate parts. The first part covers the quantitative data from the survey. In that part, there is a section on descriptive analysis that goes over the results of the survey and then a section on cross-data analysis that presents the results from the data analysis that had been performed. The second part covers the qualitative data from the interview. That part includes a section that talks about lack of representation, a section on inaccurate representation, a section on participant desires for representation, and finally, a section on the effects of the lack of representation.

Quantitative Analysis

Descriptive Analysis

The first set of variables that were analyzed for descriptive analysis were demographic measures to understand who participated in the study. The first demographic variable that was looked at was the merged Race category. Table 4 illustrates that the majority of participants who completed the survey were White and that the other racial categories were much smaller, even after combining some categories.

Table 4

Race Demographics

	N	%
White	53	49.5%
Black or African American	12	11.2%
Asian	19	17.8%
Two or More Races	14	13.1%
Other	9	8.4%

The second demographic variable described were categories of Ethnicity. Table 5 explains that over three-quarters of participants identifies as Not Hispanic or Latine, showing not only how small the Hispanic or Latine participant pool is, but also that very few participants identify as another ethnicity.

Table 5

Ethnicity Demographics

	N	%
Hispanic or Latine	16	15.0%
Not Hispanic or Latine	77	72.0%
Prefer not to say/Something Else	14	13.1%

Since there is often an intersection between race and ethnicity, especially in the United States, I conducted a cross-analysis to depict how the two coincide to help describe the participant pool more accurately. Table 6 depicts a clearer image that Hispanic or Latine participants identify in multiple racial categories, and that while there are many participants that say they are Not Hispanic or Latine, they may have another underrepresented identity in a racial category.

Table 6

*Race * Ethnicity*

Count

		Ethnicity			
		Hispanic or Latine	Not Hispanic or Latine	Prefer not to say/Something Else	Total
Race	White	7	43	3	53
	Black or African American	1	6	5	12
	Asian	1	17	1	19
	Two or More Races	1	10	3	14
	Other	6	1	2	9
Total		16	77	14	107

Table 7 reveals how the categorical variables of Gender had an overrepresentation of female identifying participants. This may be because the survey was primarily advertised in Child Development and Social Science spaces, subjects that are traditionally overwhelmingly female.

Table 7

	N	%
Male	28	26.2%
Female	67	62.6%
Non-binary	12	11.2%

The last demographic variable that was looked at was Age which highlights the fact that most of the participants were undergraduates who typically fall in the 18-22 age range as opposed to the 23- and 24-year-olds who are more likely graduate students. This information is depicted in Table 8.

Table 8

Age Demographics

	N	%
18	27	25.2%
19	22	20.6%
20	18	16.8%
21	15	14.0%
22	12	11.2%
23	6	5.6%
24	7	6.5%

Another variable looked at was time spent viewing television as a child. As seen in Table 9, most participants viewed between 0-15 hours of television each week.

Table 9

	N	%
0-5 hours	28	26.2%
5+-10 hours	45	42.1%
10+-15 hours	24	22.4%
15+-20 hours	4	3.7%
20+ hours	6	5.6%

Participants of variables are based on self-reflection questions which asked whether participants saw themselves by different traits in television growing up. The first question asked if as a child, the participants consumed digital and print media that had characters that identified similarly as them. Table 10 demonstrates that most participants either answered "Neither Agree nor Disagree" or one of the lesser extremes on either side which shows that for the most part participants had one aspect of their identity that they did or did not see.

Table 10

As a child, I consumed digital and print media that had characters that identified similarly as me.

	N	%
Strongly disagree	11	10.3%
Disagree	22	20.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	25	23.4%
Agree	38	35.5%
Strongly agree	11	10.3%

Next, Table 11 illustrates the answers to whether participants watched television shows as children with characters that looked like them. The participants were split evenly between the answers.

Table 11

As a child, I watched television shows with characters that looked like me.

	N	%
Yes	58	54.2%
No/I am not sure	49	45.8%

Participants were then asked if as a child, they watched television shows with characters that shared their race or ethnicity. Table 12, like above shows an even split between the two answers.

Table 12

As a child, I watched television shows with characters that shared my race or ethnicity.

	N	%
Yes	63	58.9%
No/I am not sure	44	41.1%

Lastly, as seen in Table 13, students were asked if they watched television shows with characters that were the same gender as them and most participants said that they did.

Table 13

As a child, I watched television shows with characters that were the same gender as me.

	N	%
Yes	85	79.4%
No/I am not sure	22	20.6%

Cross-Data Analysis

Finally, I performed cross tabulations and chi-squares between each demographic question and the corresponding self-reflection questions. An assumption check was run, and the data used was categorical and independent.

Race. As Table 14 shows, there was a significant correlation between Race and whether participants consumed media as a child with characters that identified similarly to them. Participants who identified as White skewed more towards “agree” that they consumed media with characters who identified similarly to them, while all other racial categories skewed more towards “neither agree nor disagree” or “strongly disagree”. This crosstabulation had a medium effect size with a Cramer’s V of .294. The standardized residuals also support that there is a strong positive correlation between Asian participants and “Disagree” and Other and “Strongly Disagree” showing that these results are not by chance. It should be noted that this question was not asked about a specific identity so some answers may be skewed by how a participant interpreted the question based off all their identities.

Table 14

*Race*As a child, I consumed digital and print media that had characters that identified similarly as me.*

			As a child, I consumed digital and print media that had characters that identified similarly as me.					
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Race	White	Count	2	6	10	27	8	53
		% within Race	3.8%	11.3%	18.9%	50.9%	15.1%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-1.5	-1.5	-.7	1.9	1.1	
	Black or African American	Count	2	3	6	1	0	12
		% within Race	16.7%	25.0%	50.0%	8.3%	0.0%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	.7	.3	1.9	-1.6	-1.1	
	Asian	Count	1	8	6	3	1	19
		% within Race	5.3%	42.1%	31.6%	15.8%	5.3%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-.7	2.1	.7	-1.4	-.7	
	Two or More Races	Count	3	5	1	4	1	14
		% within Race	21.4%	35.7%	7.1%	28.6%	7.1%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	1.3	1.3	-1.3	-.4	-.4	
	Other	Count	3	0	2	3	1	9
		% within Race	33.3%	0.0%	22.2%	33.3%	11.1%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	2.2	-1.4	-.1	-.1	.1	
Total		Count	11	22	25	38	11	107
		% within Race	10.3%	20.6%	23.4%	35.5%	10.3%	100.0%

Table 15 depicts the next cross-tabulation which was the comparison of different races by whether as children, participants consumed television shows with characters that looked like them. The results show a significant correlation between the participants' race and whether they saw characters that looked like them. 83% (n=44) of White participants said that they did see characters that looked like them, while only 25% (n=3) of Black or African American participants, 26.3% (n=5) of Asian participants, 35.7% (n=5) of Two or More Races, and 11.1% (n=1) of Other participants said that they saw characters that looked like them.

This had a very strong effect size with a Cramer's V of .584. The standardized residuals also concluded that there was a strong positive correlation between White participants and "Yes" and a negative correlation between White participants and "No/I am Not Sure" showing that the majority racial population went beyond the expected correlation between those answers. While the results could skew slightly because of Ethnicity, the results show a significant difference

between whether minority and majority groups were able to see characters that looked like them growing up.

Table 15

*Race *As a child, I watched television shows with characters that looked like me. Crosstabulation*

			As a child, I watched television shows with characters that looked like me.		
			Yes	No/I am not sure	Total
Race	White	Count	44	9	53
		% within Race	83.0%	17.0%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	2.8	-3.1	
	Black or African American	Count	3	9	12
		% within Race	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-1.4	1.5	
	Asian	Count	5	14	19
		% within Race	26.3%	73.7%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-1.7	1.8	
	Two or More Races	Count	5	9	14
		% within Race	35.7%	64.3%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-.9	1.0	
	Other	Count	1	8	9
		% within Race	11.1%	88.9%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-1.8	1.9	
Total		Count	58	49	107
		% within Race	54.2%	45.8%	100.0%

The final racial cross-tabulation performed that showed significant results was between Race and whether participants saw characters that shared their race or ethnicity growing up, as seen in Table 16. 88.7% (n=47) of White participants said that they did see characters that shared their race or ethnicity, while only 33.3% (n=4) of Black or African American participants, 26.3% (n=5) of Asian participants, 35.7% (n=5) of Two or More Races, and 22.2% (n=2) of Other participants said that they saw characters that shared their race or ethnicity.

This cross-tabulation had a very strong effect size with a Cramer's V of .604. Also, according to the standardized residuals, there was a very strong positive correlation between White participants and the answer "Yes" and a strong negative correlation between White participants and the answer "No/I am Not Sure" which aligns with the expected hypothesis. Further, the standardized residuals showed a positive correlation between Asian participants and the answer "No/I am Not Sure" which is interesting give that racial population most often stated

that their ethnic group was Not Hispanic/Latine which may have meant those individuals were not looking at the question with the possibility of having to decide between a majority and a minority identity. These results are very similar to that of the results of the previous question which shows consistency in the participant's feeling about the (lack of) representation in the characters they saw on television growing up, in terms of race supporting the hypothesis.

Table 16

			As a child, I watched television shows with characters that shared my race or ethnicity.		
			Yes	No/I am not sure	Total
Race	White	Count	47	6	53
		% within Race	88.7%	11.3%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	2.8	-3.4	
	Black or African American	Count	4	8	12
		% within Race	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-1.2	1.4	
	Asian	Count	5	14	19
		% within Race	26.3%	73.7%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-1.8	2.2	
	Two or More Races	Count	5	9	14
		% within Race	35.7%	64.3%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-1.1	1.4	
	Other	Count	2	7	9
		% within Race	22.2%	77.8%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-1.4	1.7	
Total		Count	63	44	107
		% within Race	58.9%	41.1%	100.0%

Ethnicity. An assumption check was run, and the data used was categorical and independent. The first cross-tabulation performed for Ethnicity, as seen in Table 17 was the comparison of different ethnicities by whether as children, participants consumed television shows with characters that looked like them. The results show a significant correlation between the participants' ethnicity and whether they saw characters that looked like them. 75% (n=12) of Hispanic or Latine participants said that as children they either didn't see or weren't sure if they

saw characters that looked like them as compared to only 37.7% (n=29) Not Hispanic or Latine and (n=8) 57.1% Other.

While the results proved to have a medium significance with a Cramer's V of .278, the strength of correlation was less than that of Race. Ethnicity also did not have any correlation with the answers to whether participants saw characters that shared their same Race or Ethnicity although this may have been an effect of the two being combined.

Table 17

*Ethnicity * As a child, I watched television shows with characters that looked like me. Crosstabulation*

			As a child, I watched television shows with characters that looked like me.		
			Yes	No/I am not sure	Total
Ethnicity	Hispanic or Latine	Count	4	12	16
		% within What is your ethnicity? - Selected Choice	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-1.6	1.7	
	Not Hispanic or Latine	Count	48	29	77
		% within What is your ethnicity? - Selected Choice	62.3%	37.7%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	1.0	-1.1	
	Prefer not to say/Something Else	Count	6	8	14
		% within What is your ethnicity? - Selected Choice	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-.6	.6	
Total		Count	58	49	107
		% within What is your ethnicity? - Selected Choice	54.2%	45.8%	100.0%

Race and Ethnicity. Since Race and Ethnicity can *often* be tied together or separate, especially for individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latine, Table 1***8*** was created to show a breakdown of individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latine and the race they identify with.

Table 18

*Hispanic or Latine Ethnicity * Race*

		What is your ethnicity? - Selected Choice			
		Hispanic or Latine		Total	
		N	%	N	%
What is your race?-Combined for data	White	7	43.8%	7	43.8%
	Black or African American	1	6.3%	1	6.3%
	Asian	1	6.3%	1	6.3%
	Two or More Races	1	6.3%	1	6.3%
	Other	6	37.5%	6	37.5%
Total		16	100.0%	16	100.0%

To understand the intersection of Race and Ethnicity by whether participants saw characters that shared their Race and Ethnicity, a multi-layer cross-tabulation was run through all three as seen in Table 19. The results were significant with a very strong effect size with a Cramer's V of .604. The standardized residuals showed a positive correlation between being White and Not Hispanic or Latine and answering "Yes" as well as a negative correlation between being White and Not Hispanic or Latine and answering "No/I am Not Sure". Additionally, like in the Race section above, there was a positive correlation between being Asian and Not Hispanic or Latine and answering "No/I am Not Sure".

Table 19

Race As a child, I watched television shows with characters that shared my race or ethnicity. *Ethnicity Crosstabulation*

Ethnicity				As a child, I watched television shows with characters that shared my race or ethnicity. Yes	As a child, I watched television shows with characters that shared my race or ethnicity. No/I am not sure	Total
Hispanic or Latine	Race	White	Count	5	2	7
			Standardized Residual	.8	-.8	
		Black or African American	Count	0	1	1
			Standardized Residual	-.7	.7	
		Asian	Count	0	1	1
			Standardized Residual	-.7	.7	
		Two or More Races	Count	1	0	1
			Standardized Residual	.7	-.7	
		Other	Count	2	4	6
			Standardized Residual	-.6	.6	
	Total		Count	8	8	16
Not Hispanic or Latine	Race	White	Count	39	4	43
			Standardized Residual	2.2	-2.9	
		Black or African American	Count	2	4	6
			Standardized Residual	-.9	1.2	
		Asian	Count	5	12	17
			Standardized Residual	-1.8	2.3	
		Two or More Races	Count	3	7	10
			Standardized Residual	-1.3	1.8	
		Other	Count	0	1	1
			Standardized Residual	-.8	1.1	
	Total		Count	49	28	77
Prefer not to say/Something Else	Race	White	Count	3	0	3
			Standardized Residual	1.5	-1.3	
		Black or African American	Count	2	3	5
			Standardized Residual	-.1	.1	
		Asian	Count	0	1	1
			Standardized Residual	-.7	.6	
		Two or More Races	Count	1	2	3
			Standardized Residual	-.3	.2	
		Other	Count	0	2	2
			Standardized Residual	-.9	.8	
	Total		Count	6	8	14
Total	Race	White	Count	47	6	53
			Standardized Residual	2.8	-3.4	
		Black or African American	Count	4	8	12
			Standardized Residual	-1.2	1.4	
		Asian	Count	5	14	19
			Standardized Residual	-1.8	2.2	
		Two or More Races	Count	5	9	14
			Standardized Residual	-1.1	1.4	
		Other	Count	2	7	9
			Standardized Residual	-1.4	1.7	
	Total		Count	63	44	107

Gender. An assumption check was run, and the data used was categorical and independent. Table 20 shows the cross-tabulation performed between Gender and whether as a child, participants saw characters that had the same gender in children's media. The significant results show a large effect size with a Cramer's V of .508 and the standardized residuals show a negative correlation between female participants and saying "No/I am Not Sure". On top of that, there is also a strong positive correlation between nonbinary participants and the answer "No/I am Not Sure" and a strong negative correlation between nonbinary participants and the answer "Yes". This shows that most nonbinary participants did not feel as though they saw themselves represented on television growing up.

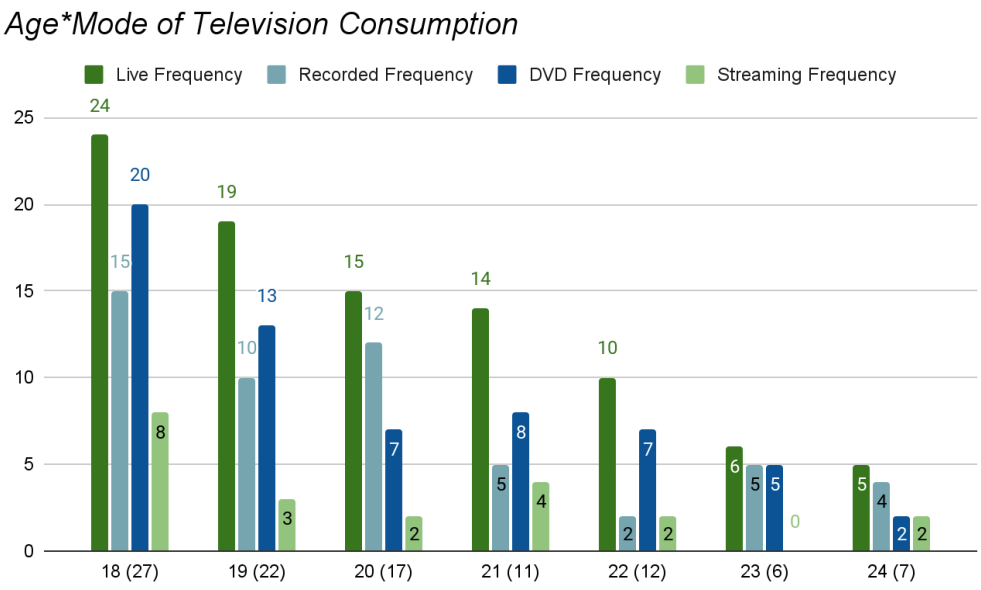
Table 20

*Gender * As a child, I watched television shows with characters that were the same gender as me. Crosstabulation*

			As a child, I watched television shows with characters that were the same gender as me.		
			Yes	No/I am not sure	Total
Gender	Male	Count	21	7	28
		% within Gender	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-.3	.5	
	Female	Count	61	6	67
		% within Gender	91.0%	9.0%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	1.1	-2.1	
	Non-binary	Count	3	9	12
		% within Gender	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-2.1	4.2	
Total		Count	85	22	107
		% within Gender	79.4%	20.6%	100.0%

Age. Finally, Chart 1 depicts a cross-tabulation between Age and Mode of Television Consumption. The chart shows the slight shift in popularity from live to streaming.

Chart 1



Qualitative Analysis

The quantitative data from the survey only shows half of the picture. The deep-dive interviews allowed participants both to support the findings of these analyses, but also expand further on their feelings about different aspects of diversity and representation on television.

Lack of Representation

When talking to the interviewees about who they did not really see in television shows as a child, many different identities were brought up. They mentioned that they barely saw Black, Asian, Latine, and Jewish representation and almost never saw Middle Eastern, Indigenous, Pacific Islander, or Non-binary/Trans characters. Participants also mentioned not seeing very many mixed families and many brought up that they never saw an intersection of identities, even though in real life, many people have more than one marginalized identity. Many also stated that

if there was a minority racial or ethnic character, they were almost always Black and seemed to be there to fill a quota.

Inaccurate Representation

During the interviews, many participants mentioned that if they did see under-represented characters on television as children, often the characters were inaccurate representations. They mentioned that characters usually fall into two different categories. The first category were characters that had a specific identity but didn't share any experiences that those communities had in real life. The other category was often the more problematic one; characters that were full on stereotypical versions of those communities. When talking further with interviewees about how they saw their own and other groups portrayed, they mentioned certain stereotypes that were often attached with different groups of characters. They mentioned that Black characters were often defined as thugs, criminals, angry, threatening, and sassy. Someone said that these stereotypes were reinforced in the real world as they "definitely had kind of instances where people assume[d] that [they were] doing something wrong, when [they were] not". Respondents suggested that Asian characters were most often pictured as perfect students, straightlaced, and "super smart" like Baljeet from *Phineas and Ferb*, and often were associated with magic or curses. Asian characters often also spoke broken English and were either only Chinese or were "general Asians" with no specific background and mashed together cultures. Interviewees mentioned that Latine characters were often energetic (Mexican jumping bean), loud, ate weird food, were either criminals or janitors, wore only red, and were often shown as "sexy". Lastly, some respondents noted that Jewish characters were portrayed as greedy and mischievous. On top of that, many participants mentioned that marginalized characters were always the sidekick or comic relief, or they were predatory villains.

Participants also said that if a character was Queer the character was always the butt of the joke or weird but there weren't really any characters. Also, female participants mentioned that they didn't feel as though there were many strong and smart female characters to look up to and that females could only be interested in fashion and make-up and had to be sexy and emotional even if they were superheroes.

Lastly, participants mentioned that often there were only specific stories that certain groups were a part of. Some mentioned that most often Black characters were only main characters in shows about the civil rights movement or slavery. Others mentioned that often characters were only seen in "very special episodes" that were talking about racism or antisemitism.

Desires for Representation

When asked why they wanted diversity in children's television participants mentioned that they didn't want diverse characters just for themselves, although many said it would have been nice to see other people like them besides their families. They explained that they also wanted diversity for those that live in communities who never see minorities in real life. Some explained that there are many White communities that have never met someone of a minority identity and television could be an introduction to other communities. Also, one participant who was trans-racially adopted, mentioned that her Cis-White father never even thought about what it would be like to never see anyone like you and couldn't even fathom why his Asian daughter would want to see characters that looked like herself. Lastly, students mentioned that they wanted to stop being "headlines"- they no longer want award ceremonies to have the first Asian to win best actress, or the show to be the first children's show to have a trans character, but

rather they wanted diversity to be a common occurrence so everyone could feel as though they belonged no matter what their identity.

In the interviews, a few participants mentioned the impact that their age, and the advancement of technology, had on them seeing themselves in the media. A few mentioned that with the explosion of streaming, their younger siblings are now able to watch children's shows with characters that look like them both with a shift in the focus of diversity in content, and with the huge increase in content available due to streaming instead of only the three children's programs that may be on live at a given time. Additionally, there were a few participants who mentioned that growing up they watched international channels and shows to see themselves, and that the influx of streaming and content makes it much easier to see other countries' programming. Someone said that "it's easier now than ever … when we were little, we just watched whatever was on. And yeah, I didn't have a choice. But nowadays they can …watch whatever captivates [them]. So, there's a lot more freedom to selectively find things that represent you". This shift gave hope to some participants that there will be better representation in the future.

Effects of Lack of Representation

When talking to interview participants about the effects that the lack of representation on television might have had on them, some interviewees mentioned physical effects and some mentioned emotional. The stereotypical depictions of minority racial and ethnic groups on children's television programs compelled some participants to want to change their wardrobe to disassociate from stereotypical characters, question if they were too loud and if they needed to act the opposite way. One participant said that the stereotypes "made [them] feel like [they] had to act [a certain] way because of the few people that were represented like who [they were] or

what [they] looked like. That's how [the characters] were all depicted … [and they] assumed that [they] had to also act in that way". There were also participants who mentioned that they felt as though people only associated them with one character that they had to either act exactly like, or they tried to act completely differently to get around the stereotype. One participant mentioned that she felt like she needed to act like Raven from *That's so Raven* because that was the depiction, she had of how to act like a black female. Many Latinas mentioned being called "Dora" all the time in school and felt as though they needed to lower their voice in order to not be "loud" like Gloria from *Modern Family*. A female participant mentioned that she felt like she had to be interested in fashion and being a pop star because there were many shows like *Hannah Montana* that made her think that was how you had to act to be a girl. Another thing mentioned were negative issues of body image and a need to change their appearance since most characters were super thin with "perfect" beauty and blonde hair and blue eyes, or they were the butt of the joke due to their appearance.

Others mentioned that they felt as though their career choices were limited because that was all they thought they could do based on how characters who shared their identity were depicted. Some participants also mentioned that they only saw White, Cis-men in power and that "the people you see on stages and in positions of power- really just sends messages [about] the types of things you can do" based on your identity.

When participants were asked in interviews "How did it make you feel as a child to not see characters who share the same identities as you" there were many answers including damaged self-esteem, feelings of isolation, felt that they didn't have a place in this world, self-image issues, felt shameful, and felt less human than others. This contributed to some students feeling internalized bias against themselves, and feeling as though people didn't want to see

them, especially in the queer community. One participant said that “growing up, [they] had a lot of internalized self-hatred because of [their] race [and] ethnicity” because they never saw themselves represented and felt that they didn’t get the message that they were “normal-[or] the standard- [they] deserve this-[they] deserve that” that represented children may have gotten and they thought “not having that had such a huge impact on [them] personally”. Another participant mentioned that “for young children to not see themselves on screen honestly is so detrimental, because then it just sends this inherent message that [they’re] not the same level of human as these other people”.

Chapter 5: Discussion

When looking at the results of both the survey and the interviews, it becomes clear that not only do the participants in this study who identify as part of an underrepresented group consistently felt as though they rarely or never saw characters that looked like them of shared their same identities, but they also felt as though not seeing characters like them had negatively impacted their social and emotional well-being.

The quantitative results yielded some interesting results especially when investigating the standard residuals and the ratios further. When examining the cross-tabulation between race and whether participants saw characters that had similar identities to their one, there was a significant correlation between Asian participants and "Disagree" and Other participants and "Strongly Disagree". This data begins to highlight something that many participants mentioned in their interviews which is the fact that while underrepresented groups did not really see themselves reflected in television characters, the rate of that was not equal for each group. This is part of the reason why it was important for me to compare different racial groups with each other rather than just having a White vs. Non-White category. In the interviews, many participants did bring up examples of Hispanic or Latine or Black characters they did see, but few brought up Asian characters and ever fewer brought up characters that would have fallen into the Other category. This shows that even in the world of diverse television, there is still not equal representation. This finding was also found in the Asian findings in the questions of seeing characters with the same race and ethnicity.

Another interesting finding from the quantitative data was the results between gender and whether participants saw characters that shared their same gender. I was surprised at how many male participants said they didn't see themselves and how many Nonbinary participants said they

did. I think this is a result that may have been caused by a limitation in the study; not asking about Trans gender identity. A participant may have said they identify as male but when reflecting on whether they saw someone who shared their gender, they may have thought about the question regarding being Trans, the same could be said for Nonbinary participants who may have reflected on the gender they identified with as a child. There is still a significant number of Nonbinary participants who did not see themselves with one participant even mentioning that they took a while figuring out their identity because they didn't know that being Nonbinary was an option until they were older.

The participants felt as though not seeing themselves made them feel self-conscious and alone and had contributed to the way they saw themselves. Going into the study, I only had the perspective of how *I* felt not being represented which included a damaged self-esteem about how I needed to look and act as a female, feelings of isolation due to not seeing characters that shared my disabilities, and feelings of otherness due to not fitting in with the mainly Christian focused programs. I could not even begin to imagine the impact that the lack of representation could have on other people, especially how detrimental some of those feelings are. Many times, throughout the qualitative data analysis process, I wanted to cry and felt very angry about how other people had been affected. I could not begin to fathom that some participants developed internalized bias against their communities because they were only shown negative depictions about their communities. One non-binary individual mentioned that the first time they saw any mention about trans or non-binary identities in the media was when news first came out about J.K. Rowling being a TERF (trans-exclusionary radical feminist) and that made them conflicted about having liked her series. Some participants also talked more deeply about their feelings of isolation because not only were they the only underrepresented person in their community, but

also didn't see themselves on television, which made them feel alone. One participant even mentioned that because they were a trans-racial adoptee, they couldn't even relate with their familial identity. Lastly, one participant explained that while she was mixed, her father was White and in conversation with him, he admitted that he never really thought about what it would feel like not being represented and never thought that his child might have wanted to see more people like herself. Similarly, another participant brought up that she was jealous of others always being able to see themselves in anything they watched and that she could never fully understand what it was like to never have to think about issues of representation.

Beyond the lack of representation, participants also brought up many negative effects that misrepresentation had had on their social-emotional well-being. One issue that should be noted is that when it comes to stereotypes and stereotypical portrayals it is difficult to differentiate between what was caused by the stereotypes that are perpetuated on television programs and what was caused by the stereotypes that stem from societal racism and sexism. That being said, there were a few examples that participants brought up in their interviews that show that there is some merit for saying that the stereotypes portrayed on screens did affect the behaviors of both those individuals who were not accurately represented and the people around them. One participant mentioned that she was constantly called Dora as a child from *Dora the Explorer* even though she was not Mexican, and spook Portuguese not Spanish. Another Latina mentioned that the only Latina she really saw on television was Sofía Vergara on *Modern Family* which caused her to change how she dressed and how loudly she talked because she did not want to be associated with her. This plays a lot into an interesting finding from the interviews. There was one group of people who talked about changing their behavior and appearance to distance themselves from the stereotypical depictions they saw on television while the other group felt as

though they needed to act *more* like the stereotypes so that they could feel accepted as a member of that group. These results support the hypothesis presented in the introduction of this thesis that Black, Asian, Mixed Race, Latine, and nonbinary participants would not have seen themselves often in media when they were children and that this has affected not just the participants social-emotional well-being, but also their behavior.

Another key finding is that participants did feel that there is a shift in children's content, and all content, today. They mentioned that while part of the reason for this has been a shift in how content creators have been including diversity in their programs, a lot of it was due to massive shifts in how television itself is consumed. Many mentioned that with the creation of streaming services and shift from live viewing and the huge increase of content has enabled them to have access to more television programs that have characters like them especially with the ability to access international programs more easily. That is what makes this age cohort unique, because they grew up and really experienced the shift in content.

Understanding the results is important, not just for the purpose of this study, but also to understand why it is important to include diversity in not just television, but all media, especially for children. This topic is becoming more and more important in the United States as inclusion of diversity in the media has become threatened as of the writing of this paper. About a year ago, Ben Shapiro, an American conservative political commentator, announced that with Daily Wire, a conservative media company, that they were going to spend $100 million to create new children's media content in response to Disney being "too woke" for including a gay kiss in a movie, and for not supporting an Anti-Trans bill in Florida (Edwards, 2022). These shows may prevent children, especially those who are of a majority status, in a majority area, from interacting with or learning about minorities, something that increases levels of racism and lack

of tolerance. Now, almost a year later, there are multiple bills being passed in Florida that threaten diverse media from being taught in Florida schools through multiple bills including, HB 1557: The "Parental Rights in Education Act" (a.k.a. "Don't Say Gay" law), a law forbidding teachers from talking about gender identity or queer relationships in classrooms, and HB 1467, a bill mandating that books in classrooms must be vetted for use. This bill contributed to many teachers pulling books from their classrooms and many parents calling for book banning, especially of books that teach about racial, ethnic, and gender differences (Tolin, 2023). This present study is just one small piece in trying to explain why these decisions can be detrimental to children and lead to feelings of ostracizing which could be detrimental to the health of children. This is important as characters in the media can often be the only introduction a child has to an underrepresented community.

All that being said, there is still a lot of hope for the future. From the interviews it is clear that media *is* becoming more diverse, despite the current politicalization of diversity, so there is optimism that as television shows become more diverse, the effects they have on underrepresented people should diminish. Many participants brought up the *Little Mermaid* movie starring Halle Bailey, a Black actress, and talked about how they loved seeing videos of little Black girls reacting to the trailer, excited because there was a mermaid that looked like them. Also, there is a lot of work being done now to bring in more content creators from underrepresented backgrounds to not only create more diverse content, but also more authentic content. For example, GBH, the Boston PBS station, brought on six Indigenous screenwriting fellows, a Native creative producer, and consulted with Indigenous Alaskan Elders to bring in authentic stories to the show, *Molly of Denali* (Alaskabusiness, 2019; Early, 2019). That being said, the two creators of the show were White.

My hope is that moving forward with more diverse content, especially for children who are still learning about their and others' identities will help bring more tolerance and acceptance into our world.

Limitations

The present study does have some limitations that could be addressed in the future to create an even stronger picture of evidence for why diversity in all media, especially children's television, is vital. First, there were limitations due to the way the study was conducted. The study was only able to interview students from Tufts University, which may have accounted for the lower count of minority races due to the demographic make-up of Tufts University. Also, since a lot of recruitment for the study was conducted through the Child Study and Human Development department, that may be the reason for the much higher female to male ratio, as the department historically is majority female. Another limitation to the study only being conducted at Tufts University is the geographical and political make-up of the Northeastern school which may affect how students approach questions. The last limitation to the study due to Tufts was the time constraint. There was only about a five-month collection period, some of which was run during finals and winter break, which may have contributed to fewer interviews and survey responses.

There were also some limitations to the study due to the questions asked in the survey. For future studies, it is recommended to include other questions in the survey including an option for Trans in the gender category, a separation of the question about whether there were characters that shared the participant's race/ethnicity into two questions to better understand the difference between the two. Also, there should be a question that asks the participants if they

thought there were effects on their social-emotional well-being to gain more answers outside of the interviews.

Opportunities for Future Research

For the immediate future I recommend continuing with analysis of the full data collected from the survey to investigate other identities including sexuality and disability to create wider picture of representation. I also recommend opening the interview and surveys back up to gain a larger participant base.

Based on the limitations of the present study, there are a few recommendations I would like to make to improve future research opportunities. First, I would expand the study to more universities to get different geographical locations included as well as a larger participant cohort. Next, I would encourage future research to approach recruitment differently by recruiting throughout multiple departments to have a more balanced cohort in terms of gender. Then, I would recommend increasing the time frame of the study to collect more participants and interview more people, especially those from under-represented groups.

I would then recommend adding and revising some of the questions both in the survey and in the interview. First, I would revise the demographic questions by adding a Trans option for gender, a requirement to add a text when choosing the “other” option and expanding the ethnicity question to include other ethnicities. Next, I would add onto the method of consumption question a place for participants to talk about different years as they may have watched streaming, but not until late childhood. Then in the Motivations section, I would differentiate between print and different types of digital media as one might be different than the other. Then, in the Reflections section, I would separate some of the questions so that race and ethnicity were different categories. Finally, I would add a section into the survey asking participants about how

they feel about the difference between lack of representation versus inaccurate representation and ask about their social-emotional impacts to gain more information about that subject outside of the interviews.

For the interviews, I would recommend including the following questions to glean more information:

- Reflecting on the television you watched as a child, were you mostly watching programming that was live or were you searching out other television shows that you wanted to watch through streaming or on-demand?
- Do you remember how old you were when you got streaming?
- With all the different streaming platforms available today as well as the huge increase in programming available, do you find that you search out shows that represent your identities?
- Do you feel as though there are certain media platforms that end up being more diverse or representative than others? (i.e., books having more diverse characters than video games)
- Are there other types of representation that you have seen on television or other media that you have not talked about already like body types, religion, or sexuality?
- (If they do not feel as though they are represented) You mentioned that you do not see XX representation in the media. Do you feel as though that has impacted your feelings on your identity or cultural group?
- (If the participant has only mentioned one media type) You mentioned XX, do you also have those same feelings or different feelings about other types of media like (tv/film/video game/comics/books)?

- If there were characters of a minority group that were seen on television or other types of media, do you feel as though those depictions were authentic or stereotypical and misrepresented?
    - Is there an example?
    - Also do you feel as though you only saw marginalized characters as token characters where their minority status was only used to drive plot or were only seen once?

I also think that for future interviews, researchers should strive to recruit a more diverse participant cohort to gain as many different perspectives as possible.

Finally, I would recommend future researchers to revise the definition of children's television that is presented to participants to gain a clearer understanding of the data set. The present study did not differentiate between television programming that was created for a child audience and television programming that was created for a general audience that the participants may have watched as a child. These different types of shows may have changed the stereotypes that the participants perceived as many of those stereotypes no longer exist in children's television programs but may exist in general audience programs.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

1) How old are you?
    a. (18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24)
2) What gender do you identify as?
    a. (Male, Female, Non-binary, Other, Prefer not to say)
3) What is your sexual orientation?
    a. (Straight, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Pansexual, Other, Prefer not to say)
4) What is your race?
    a. (American Indian or Alaska Native, South Asian, East Asian, Middle Eastern, Black or African America, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Two or More Races, Other, Prefer not to say)
5) What is your ethnicity?
    a. (Hispanic or Latine, Not Hispanic or Latine, Something Else, Prefer not to say)
6) In what country/countries did you grow up?
7) Do you identify as having a disability?
    a. (Yes, No, Prefer not to answer)
    b. If you feel comfortable please share what disability you have. Feel free to leave this question blank.

Primary Means for Media Consumption

8) *[Rank Order, with 1 being what you used most often, and 7 what you used least often]* What were the primary forms of media content that you consumed **before college**?
    a. (Books, Movies (including streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu, etc.), Music, Social Media, Television Shows (including streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu, etc.), YouTube, Other)
9) *[Rank Order, with 1 being what you currently use most often, and 7 what you currently use least often]* What are the primary forms of media content that you consume **now**?
    a. (Books, Movies (including streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu, etc.), Music, Social Media, Television Shows (including streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu, etc.), YouTube, Other)
10) How did you primarily consume television **as a child**? Check as many boxes as you would like.
    a. (Live Network or Cable Television, Recorded or DVR Television, DVDs of Television Programs, Online Streaming Service, Other)
11) *[Drag and drop the options to place them into rank order, with 1 being what you used most often.]* Please rank the order of frequency of each consumption method **as a child**.
    a. (Live Network or Cable Television, Recorded or DVR Television, DVDs of Television Programs, Online Streaming Service, Other)
12) How do you primarily consume television **today**? Check as many boxes as you would like.

a. (Live Network or Cable Television, Recorded or DVR Television, DVDs of Television Programs, Online Streaming Service, Other)

13) *[Drag and drop the options to place them into rank order, with 1 being what you used most often.]* Please rank the order of frequency of each consumption method **today**.

a. (Live Network or Cable Television, Recorded or DVR Television, DVDs of Television Programs, Online Streaming Service, Other)

14) *[Rank Order, with 1 being what you currently use most often, and 4 what you currently use least often]* Please rank the order of devices you use to watch **TELEVISION today**.

a. (Television Set, Computer, Phone, Other Tablet Devices)

15) **Childhood Media Use (11 and under) Average Frequency (hours/week)**

On average, when you were **11 or younger**, what was the average number of hours you spent with the following forms of media per week?

a. *Television, Movies, & Streaming Service Usage (Netflix, Hulu, Youtube, etc.)*

i. (0-5 hours, 5+-10 hours, 10+-15 hours, 15+-20 hours, 20+ hours)

b. Social Media Use (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Vine, etc.)

i. (0-5 hours, 5+-10 hours, 10+-15 hours, 15+-20 hours, 20+ hours)

c. Listening to or Reading Books and Comics

i. (0-5 hours, 5+-10 hours, 10+-15 hours, 15+-20 hours, 20+ hours)

16) **Adolescent Media Use (12 to 17) Average Frequency (hours/week)**

On average, when you were between **12 and 17**, what was the average number of hours you spent with the following forms of media per week?

a. *Television, Movies, & Streaming Service Usage (Netflix, Hulu, Youtube, etc.)*
    i. (0-5 hours, 5+-10 hours, 10+-15 hours, 15+-20 hours, 20+ hours)
b. Social Media Use (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Vine, etc.)
    i. (0-5 hours, 5+-10 hours, 10+-15 hours, 15+-20 hours, 20+ hours)
c. Listening to or Reading Books and Comics
    i. (0-5 hours, 5+-10 hours, 10+-15 hours, 15+-20 hours, 20+ hours)

17) **Young Adult Media Use (18 to 24) Average Frequency (hours/week)**

On average, when you were **18 or older**, what was the number of hours you spent with the following forms of media per week?

a. *Television, Movies, & Streaming Service Usage (Netflix, Hulu, Youtube, etc.)*
    i. (0-5 hours, 5+-10 hours, 10+-15 hours, 15+-20 hours, 20+ hours)
b. Social Media Use (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Vine, etc.)
    i. (0-5 hours, 5+-10 hours, 10+-15 hours, 15+-20 hours, 20+ hours)
c. Listening to or Reading Books and Comics
    i. (0-5 hours, 5+-10 hours, 10+-15 hours, 15+-20 hours, 20+ hours)

18) **Favorite Digital and Print Media (i.e. books, tv shows, movies, etc.)**

Name at least three of your favorite forms of digital and print media in your childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood.

a. Childhood (11 and under) Favorite Digital and Print Media (please name at least 3 examples that you remember most liking as a child.)
b. Adolescence (12 to 17) Favorite Digital and Print Media (please name at least 3 examples you remember most liking as an adolescent)
c. Current (18 to 22) Current (17 to 22) Favorite Digital and Print Media (please name at least 3 examples you most like now)

Motivations

19) Thinking back to when you were a **child**, how much did you agree with the following statements...

a. I used digital and print media to help to learn about myself.
    i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
b. I used digital and print media to help to understand the world, as well as to stay up to date with current trends and topics of conversation.
    i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
c. I consumed digital and print media that had characters that identified similarly as me.
    i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
d. I consumed digital and print media that had characters that identified differently from me.

i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

e. I engaged with digital and print media primarily for entertainment, rather than learning about the world.

i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

20) **Today**, how much do you agree with the following statements...

a. I use digital and print media to help to learn about myself.

i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

b. I use digital and print media to help to understand the world and my peers, as well as to stay up to date with current trends and topics of conversation.

i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

c. I consume digital and print media that have characters that identify similarly as me.

i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

d. I consume digital and print media that have characters that identify differently from me.

i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

e. I engage with digital and print media primarily for entertainment, rather than learning about the world.
    i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

Perceptions

21) When engaging with the media as a **young adult**, to what degree do you agree with the following statements...

a. There are a lot of stereotypical portrayals of race and ethnicity in TV/media.
    i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
b. There is not an adequate gender representation seen within TV/media.
    i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
c. There is not an adequate representation of sexual orientation within TV/Media.
    i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
d. There is still a long way to go for television/streaming shows to accurately portray all social groups.
    i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

e. Many of the TV shows I watch today have an inclusive and culturally diverse cast.
    i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
f. Many of the TV shows I watch today accurately represent various social groups (races, sexualities, gender identities, etc.).
    i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
g. Many of the TV shows I watch today make me feel seen by the characters represented in the stories.
    i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
h. When I watch my favorite television/streaming shows, I think about the representation and authenticity of the cast.
    i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
i. When I watch my favorite television/streaming shows, I also think about the representation and authenticity of the creative teams (i.e. directors, writers, showrunners, etc.)
    i. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

22) *Considering questions 22-24, do you have any additional comments to your responses?*

Reflections

23) Thinking back to how you engaged with television as a **child**, to what degree do you agree with the following statements...

a. As a child, I watched television shows with characters that looked like me.
   i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)
b. As a child, I watched television shows with characters that shared my race or ethnicity.
   i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)
c. As a child, I watched television shows with characters that shared my religion.
   i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)
d. As a child, I watched television shows with characters that were the same gender as me.
   i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)
e. As a child, I watched television shows with characters that had the same sexual orientation as me.
   i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)
f. As a child, I watched television shows with characters that spoke the same language as me.
   i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)
g. As a child, I watched television shows with characters that shared my abilities and/or disabilities.
   i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)

24) Reflecting on how you engage with television **today**, to what degree do you agree with the following statements...

a. Today, I watch television shows with characters that look like me.
    i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)
b. Today, I watch television shows with characters that share my race or ethnicity.
    i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)
c. Today, I watch television shows with characters that share my religion.
    i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)
d. Today, I watch television shows with characters that are the same gender as me.
    i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)
e. Today, I watch television shows with characters that have the same sexual orientation as me.
    i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)
f. Today, I watch television shows with characters that speak the same language as me.
    i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)
g. Today, I watch television shows with characters that share my abilities and/or disabilities.
    i. (Yes, No, I Am Not Sure, I Prefer Not To Answer)

25) Would you be interested in participating in a further interview based on this survey's subject?

Appendix B

Interview Questions

- Introductory Questions:
  - Who were some of your favorite characters from the books, shows, and movies you watched as a child? Why were these your favorite characters
  - and what are some attributes that caused you to gravitate towards specific characters?
  - What did you notice or pay attention to when you consumed media as a child? What do you notice or pay attention to when you consume media now?
  - What does media representation mean to you?
- Questions Regarding Personal Experience:
  - What does diversity and media mean to you?
  - In the shows that you watched when you were younger, did you see characters that looked like you? If so, what features, or traits were similar?
    - Follow-up question: If not, did you ever question why there were no similar characters to you?
  - Were marginalized groups depicted in the media you watched as a child? How were they depicted?
  - Can you think of any groups that you never really saw represented in the media you watched or read as a child?
  - Has your culture, or a friend's culture, ever been effaced or misrepresented by the media?

    If so, what has been the impact and influence within your life?

        - Has your culture, or a friend's culture, ever been accurately or well represented by the media? If so, what has been the impact and influence within your life?
    - Impact of Representation:
        - What significance do you think media representation holds?
        - Do you see a difference in children's media now from when you were young? If so, what have you noticed?
    - Reflection of Media Impact, Purpose, and Problems
        - Do you think the media plays a role in what kids think about themselves or other people?
        - What's your overall impression of cultural representation in children's media today, pertaining to where you grew up?
        - What's your overall impression on the current state of diversity, equity, and inclusivity seen within children's media today, pertaining to where you grew up?