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THE IMPACT OF PROTAGONIST RACE, GENDER, AND GENRE ON LATINA ADOLESCENT PERSONAL ASPIRATION, SELF-ESTEEM, AND SELF-EFFICACY

by

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Abstract

Inspired by the lack of minority female representation in the media, this study questions how 11-14 year old Latina adolescents from low SES backgrounds are influenced by protagonist race, gender, and genre in stories with respect to participant personal aspiration, gender atypical personal aspiration, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. Due to the particular lack of representation of non-whites and non-males in action/adventure stories, it is predicted in this intervention study completed each week over the course of 8 weeks, that Latina adolescents will experience the most positive increase in self-esteem, self-efficacy, and gender atypical personal aspiration when exposed to Latina female protagonists in action/adventure stories. They will also experience significant increases in the dependent variables from highest to lowest in the following conditions: Latina female biographies, Latino males in action/adventure, Latino male biographies, White females in Action/Adventure, and White female biographies. It is predicted that there will be a decrease in self-esteem, self-efficacy, general aspiration, and gender-atypical personal aspiration for participants exposed to White male action/adventure stories, and to a lesser significant extent from the preceding condition, a decrease in self-esteem, self-efficacy, general aspiration, and gender-atypical personal aspiration for participants exposed to White male Biographies. This research is significant in understanding the influence of minority female representation in books, film, and the general media.
Introduction

How many science-fiction, action, or adventure films can you name that feature minority female protagonists? A report conducted by *The Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film* reported that only 12% of clearly identifiable protagonists of the top 100 films of 2014 were female (Lauzen, 2015). That same year, only 4% of those female characters were Asian, 4% were Latina, and 11% were African-American (Lauzen, 2015). Action and sci-fi books, comics, and movies throughout history have rarely featured female protagonists. There are even fewer minority female protagonists, and exponentially fewer minority women leading in action and adventure film genres. These statistics are important to keep in mind when discussing representations of minority women in the media and how they relate to reality.

Women in the media are often denied a voice, and if that voice exists, it often confirms sexist and stereotypical female tropes. While women in film are often pictured as focused on and supporting men, men in film are frequently depicted as confident, independent, and courageous, as they go on risky adventures and complete athletic, scientific, or adventure-related tasks (Holt, 2004). Such autonomous male characters are often depicted in three major forms: man as the breadwinner, man as the rebel, and man as the man-of-action hero (Holt, 2004). All of these depictions of men, while not necessarily healthy for male psychology, feature men who act dominant and tough in some manner (Holt, 2004). Whether men are featured as breadwinners who serve a meaningful leadership role in society, independent rebels who live life on their own terms, or man-of-action heroes who play the role of rescuers—all of these characters, though stereotypical, are shown to be confident, capable, and strong (Holt, 2004).

While men are depicted as autonomous, confident, and capable, female characters are often portrayed as one-dimensional and passive. To illustrate this disparity in male and female
representation in film, one only needs to look to Bechdel test statistics of top-grossing films of 2015. The Bechdel test requires a, “yes” response to the three following questions; 1. Are there more than two named female characters? 2. Do those two named characters have a conversation at any point? 3. Is that conversation about anything other than a man? (Bechdel, 1985). While critics of the Bechdel test may argue that these three rules do not thoroughly account for gender equity in film, FiveThirtyEight’s writer, Walt Hickey contends that, “it’s the best test on gender equity in film we have—and, perhaps, more important […] the only test we have data on” (Hickey, 2014). Shockingly, out of the top 100 grossing movies of 2015, only 54% of the films passed the Bechdel test, implicating the startling lack of female representation and female character development in recent film history.

The lack of active female representation in film is present cross-culturally, and impacts various racial groups in the United States. This gendered representation is not only present in Hollywood, but it is also present in Spanish media. In a study by Alvarez et al. (2015) contemporary Spanish teen films were analyzed between 2009-2014. The results indicated that males and females in these roles fulfilled gender stereotypes, for example, “bad, rebellious boy,” and “naïve, sweet girl” stereotypes were very prevalent in the movies. There were significantly higher numbers of male protagonists than female protagonists in these teen films. The movies portrayed women in passive roles while men were featured as leading, active characters (Alvarez et al., 2015).

Stepping out of the world of books and film and into the real world, it is important to question women’s roles in modern society. Research shows that women are more likely to experience lower confidence levels than men, and as of 2015, are less likely to pursue male-dominated, science-related, and leadership-oriented careers (Lips, 2003). According to the
Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2015 women made up only 9.4% of aircraft pilots and flight engineers, 24.7% of computer and mathematical occupations, 34.5% of lawyers, 27.9% of business chief executives, and 37.9% of physicians and surgeons. Female minorities often make up even smaller percentages of these fields. For example, 20% of the population is Latino, while the percentages of Latina women in stereotypically white-male dominated fields were strikingly low, making up 5.6% of aircraft pilots, 6.8% of computer and mathematical occupations, 5.1% of lawyers, 5.5% of business chief executives, and 6.4% of physicians and surgeons.

Not only are women still lacking representation in many fields, but they also tend to be less confident and assertive than men. The researched demographic with the lowest confidence levels is Latina females (Lips, 2003). Women also talk much less than men when speaking to males (Lips, 2003). Although females have a reputation for being chatty and talkative, psychological research suggests that men tend to dominate much of the conversation, in both career and relational settings (Lips, 2003).

Firstly, given the present state of passive, undeveloped representations of women in film, and secondly, keeping in mind women’s current confidence levels and career orientations, one may ask: is there a relationship between stories and people’s behavior, perceptions of themselves, and perceptions of what is possible? Furthermore, will counteracting stereotypical portrayals with gender-atypical depictions of minority women increase females’ confidence levels and shift their career goals?

Relating to the preceding questions, author and social commentator Warren Ellis asked the following biting question, “If you believe that your thoughts originate inside your brain, do you also believe that television shows are made inside your television set?” (Ellis, 2003). While it seems clear that stories originate from some kind of human thought, it is essential to
investigate how these stories may or may not reinforce particular stereotypes or perceptions of various demographics, and how individuals within these specific groups utilize these stories to behave, perceive, and understand themselves.

Varied theoretical and empirical background supports the notion that stories influence the manner in which people perceive themselves and their abilities. Social Learning Theory, Cognitive Developmental Theory, Gender Schema Theory, Motivational Theory of Role Modeling, and Social Identity Theory provide theoretical background to ground the possibility that stories that people are told about their particular gender and race may impact their attitudes and behavior. Not only does psychological theory suggest that stories can influence gendered behavior, but empirical literature indicates that stories we tell children in particular can influence their conceptions of gender roles and what is possible for them to achieve (Martin, 2014). Stories are a particularly influential manner of reinforcing concepts regarding gender (Bender and Leone, 1989). The following empirical literature in this field reveals that stories featuring gender-atypical behavior can alter children’s beliefs regarding gender stereotypes, shift gendered behavior, and influence children’s personal aspirations.

Bandura’s “Bobo Doll” study examined children who were exposed to adults either acting aggressively towards an inflatable doll named “Bobo,” or nonviolently interacting with Bobo. Results showed that children in the aggressive Bobo Doll condition were more likely to act in physically aggressive ways when they played with the toys (Bandura & Ross, 1963). Social learning theory suggests that people act according to the examples of behavior that are provided to them (Bandura & Ross, 1963).

Social Learning theory asserts that story characters modeling certain behaviors might prompt people to act similarly. For example, a story about a character who completes a lot of
math problems might prompt the reader to practice math problems. One study that supports Social Learning Theory featured two to five-year olds who were read a story about a child of the same sex that played with a gender-atypical toy (Ashton, 1983). After hearing the story, children were more likely to play with the gender-atypical toy, i.e. toys that were stereotypically associated with the opposite gender (Ashton, 1983). This study highlights the possible influence of modeling in accounting for the learning and adapting of gender-atypical behaviors. Research shows that children not only model examples of gendered behavior, but seek these illustrations of gender in order to adjust themselves to a social context (Martin, 2014).

Cognitive Developmental Theory and Gender Schema Theory suggest that children search for ways to orient themselves in their environment (Martin, 2014). Gender identity develops as children recognize they belong to a specific gender, which results in motivation to be similar to other members of their same gender (Martin, 2014). The theories also imply that selective attention and memory are devoted to information relevant to their particular sex (Martin, 2014). According to this theory, it is likely that children will pay particular attention to people and story characters that share their same gender, and employ this knowledge to place themselves in terms of roles, behaviors, and personal aspirations.

For example, gender is often the most powerful predictor of children’s future occupations (Eccles et al., 1999). A study found that the strongest predictor for future occupational aspiration of American 4th graders was a child’s sex (Stockard & McGee, 1990). This predictor was more powerful than any other factors, including perceived job importance, supervisory responsibilities, and salary (Stockard & McGee, 1990). The prevalence of this factor implies the importance gender perception plays in configuring one’s identity and determining one’s future.
Also in support of this theory, research indicates that children prefer to play with toys associated with their own sex, even before the age of three (O’Brien & Huston, 1985). While according to the findings of this study, children seek to fulfill behaviors associated with their sex before the mere age of three, other research indicates that children gather more information about what is “gender-schema appropriate” as they grow older and gain more information regarding acceptable gendered behaviors (Ashton, 1983).

In Ashton’s 1983 study, children viewed 16 watercolor pictures of bears that were identical except for size and participation in gendered stereotypical behavior. Four to five year olds who viewed these pictures tended to attribute their own gender to the bears, regardless of the size or gendered behavior of the bears. However, children ages seven and up were more likely to attribute gender to the bear based on the stereotypical activity illustrated in the pictures (Ashton, 1983). For example, if the bear was picture playing sports, the children were more likely to label the bear as male (Ashton, 1983). The findings of this study suggest that Cognitive Developmental Theory and Gender Schema Theory comply with societal standards.

Ashton’s findings suggests that beliefs regarding what is “gender-appropriate” is not innate knowledge, but learned information. With these findings comes the potential to shift what children associate with each gender. The power to change children’s gender associations then creates the ability to alter children’s gender-based behavior and perceptions. One possible solution in changing associations of gender may involve the use of role models. Use of role models may be effective in terms of Social Learning Theory, as certain behaviors are modeled by these figures in a manner that one can imitate directly. These role models may come in a variety of forms: fictional, nonfictional, or real people in one’s life.
According to the Motivational Theory of Role Modeling, role models serve three distinct functions: the first as serving as behavioral models, the second as representing the possible, and the third as being inspirational (Morgenroth, 2015). Research shows that female mentors who exhibit gender-atypical behaviors may encourage gender-atypical behaviors in a variety of fields (Chan, 2000). For example, one study examined two Advanced Placement Calculus classes during a semester to understand why intelligent and capable young females often opt out of pursuing careers involving math (Chan, 2000). Results indicated that access to role models was significantly associated with increased consideration of a mathematics or engineering college major (Chan, 2000).

According to the Motivational Theory of Role Modeling, it is possible that characters in stories might be able to serve as role models, and therefore influence people’s behavior and personal aspirations. Some literature suggests that gender-atypical biographical stories can alter personal aspirations (Nhundu, 2007). One study investigated the influence of stories depicting women pursuing nontraditional careers in primary schools in Zimbabwe (Nhundu, 2007). The stories featured women of similar cultural backgrounds, as the use of ethnically similar role models tends to increase the impact of modeling (Yancey, 1998). Results of the study indicated that girls who read biographies of such women were more likely to have an interest in the careers of the role models than both the boys who were also given the treatment, and the children in the control group. This study demonstrates a long-term impact of gender-atypical biographies on gender-atypical personal aspirations, particularly when the biographies are culturally and ethnically relevant to the readers (Yancey, 1998).

Social identity theory suggests that groups to which people belong provide an important source of social identity and self-esteem (Tajfel, 1979). People therefore come to divide the
world in terms of in-groups, or, “us,” and out-groups, or, “them.” Social Identity theory states that in-groups discriminate against out-groups, to increase their own self-image (Tafjel, 1979). There are three primary steps in Social Identity Theory. The first is categorization. An example of categorization would be labeling oneself as female. The second stage of Social Identity Theory is social identification, which entails adopting the identity of the social category you belong to. For example, a female might try to behave in ways that she believes females act. The third stage of Social Identity Theory involves social comparison, in which one compares her group to other groups.

Social Identity theory might apply to story characters in that they may offer examples of how certain genders “should act,” and how minority females in particular should behave in order to increase their affiliation with their group. In support of Social Identity Theory, a study featured children who read stories in which either the majority of the primary characters were male, female, or equally represented (Scott, 1979). The stories were adventure themed, which is a typically male character-dominated story genre. The results of the study indicate that exposure to female characters in atypical role activities increased children’s perceptions of the number of activities females can participate in.

These results suggest the strong potential of stories to influence readers’ in the “social identification” aspect of Social Identity Theory, as readers can identify as female in other ways besides conforming to stereotypical tropes. In other words, if readers gather enough information regarding women who participate in gender-atypical activities, then they are more likely to deem that behavior as “acceptable,” and as something that the female readers themselves can participate in if they choose to do so (Scott, 1979).
Although psychological literature seems to establish that stories can alter children’s perceptions and behaviors regarding gender stereotypes, literature lacks information on stories’ influence on female adolescents. This literature gap exists although self-confidence among female adolescents plummets during the adolescent years, and gender-typical behavior increases (Lips, 2003). Research in this field also seems to lack an intersectional component, in that it appears that representation of minority female characters in gender atypical roles is even less common than white female representation in such roles. Adding this intersectional component is also important, as some race and gender combinations are more prone to lower confidence levels than others (Lips, 2003). Latina women in particular have been shown to experience the lowest confidence levels of any gender-racial combination (Lips, 2003). Low self-confidence levels in adolescents are also correlated with growing up in a low-income family, so adding this component to the study is also important. Latina women, low-income adolescents, and adolescent females experience low confidence levels, so one can extrapolate that Latina adolescent females from low-income families may experience the lowest confidence levels of any demographic. Due to these gaps in empirical literature, this study will address how stories can influence low-income Latina adolescent females’ confidence levels and personal aspirations.

The independent variables in this study are exposure to a story that is either fictional and adventure-themed or a biographical account. Additional independent variables in this study involve a protagonist that is either a Latina female, Latino male, White female, or White male.

The dependent variables include self-esteem, self-efficacy, personal aspiration, and gender atypical personal aspiration. The term, “self-esteem” in this study will be operationalized to mean “global self-worth” and faith in one’s personal capabilities (Rosenberg, 1965). The term “personal aspiration” in this study will be operationalized to indicate “children’s feelings [and
plans] about their goals and activities in life” (Loeber et al., 1991). “Gender atypical personal aspiration” will comprise of personal aspirations that are atypical of females, and typical of males, according to the 2015 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report. Self-efficacy in this study will be operationalized to indicate one’s general belief in one’s ability to succeed in specific situations and accomplish certain tasks (Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M., 1995).

This study will take place in an in-person laboratory setting. Participants will be middle school aged Latina females from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds recruited from family-friendly organizations. Because the participants of this study are minors, I will obtain consent from both the legal guardian and the participant to complete the study. I will administer a pretest-posttest to a group of adolescent Latina females. The pretest-posttest measures will be identical, and include measures for self-esteem, self-efficacy, and personal aspiration.

After the pretest, Latina adolescent females will be randomly assigned to one of 8 conditions. Participants will read either an action/adventure stories, or a biography. The stories will feature either a Latina female protagonist, a Latino male protagonist, White male protagonist, or White female protagonist. The stories will be presented with illustrations to enforce gender and race of the character. Every week, the participants will come to the lab, read a story, have a short discussion, and write a short paragraph about the story. The participants will read only stories from the particular race, gender, and genre of their condition.

The posttest will occur on the eighth week after reading the last story, and it will include the same measures of personal aspiration, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. The “Expectations/Aspirations Measure” will be used to evaluate the participants’ personal aspiration and gender atypical personal aspiration (Loeber et al., 1991). Self-efficacy will be measured
through the “The General-Self-Efficacy Scale” (Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M., 1995). The “Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale” will be used to measure participants’ self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). After the posttest, the participants will be debriefed with a general overview of the study and puppy videos to elevate any negative feelings. Compensation for this study will include entry to a raffle for essential school supplies. Participants will also receive transportation to and from the lab because the participants are in middle school and are therefore under the driving age.

The study tests the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Latina adolescents exposed to the Latina female gender atypical biographies will have higher self-esteem, higher self-efficacy, more personal aspiration, and more gender atypical personal aspirations after the manipulation than those exposed to the biographies featuring Latino male protagonists, White female protagonists, or White male protagonists.

Hypothesis 2: Latina adolescents exposed to the action/adventure stories featuring Latina protagonists will have higher self-esteem, higher self-efficacy, more personal aspiration, and more gender atypical personal aspirations after the manipulation than those exposed to the action/adventure stories featuring Latino male protagonists or White female protagonists.

Hypothesis 3: Latina adolescents exposed to the Latino male biographies will have higher self-esteem, higher self-efficacy, more personal aspiration, and more gender atypical personal aspirations after the manipulation than those exposed to the biographies featuring White female protagonists or White male protagonists.

Hypothesis 4: Latina adolescents exposed to the action/adventure stories featuring Latino male protagonists will have higher self-esteem, higher self-efficacy, more personal aspiration, and
more gender atypical personal aspirations after the manipulation than those exposed to the action/adventure stories featuring White female protagonists or White male protagonists.

Hypothesis 5: Latina adolescents exposed to the White female biographies will have higher self-esteem, higher self-efficacy, more personal aspiration, and more gender atypical personal aspirations after the manipulation than those exposed to the White male biographies.

Hypothesis 6: Latina adolescents exposed to the White female action/adventure stories will have higher self-esteem, higher self-efficacy, more personal aspiration, and more gender atypical personal aspirations after the manipulation than those exposed to the White male action/adventure stories.

Hypothesis 7: Latina adolescents exposed to the White male action/adventure stories will have lower self-esteem, lower self-efficacy, less personal aspiration, and less gender atypical personal aspirations after the manipulation. This decrease in dependent variables will be more significant for White male action/adventure stories than White male biographies.

Hypothesis 8: Latina adolescents exposed to the White male biographies will have lower self-esteem, lower self-efficacy, less personal aspiration, and less gender atypical personal aspirations after the manipulation.
Proposed Method

Participants

Configured from a power analysis table (Cohen, 1992), this study will have 136 participants. This sample was determined given a medium estimated effect size, which was determined from a similar study (Nhundu et al., 2007). The participants will be Latina female adolescents aged 11-14 who are enrolled in middle school. They will be of low SES backgrounds recruited through advertisement on social media and flyers posted in places like cafes, toy stores, frozen yogurt shops, and family-friendly organizations such as the YMCA. These establishments will be targeted to locations with high concentrations of Latinx communities.

Participant compensation will include entrance into a raffle for books and school supplies. Transportation will be provided for participants to commute to and from the lab, as participants are not of driving age.

Materials

Personal Aspiration. This study proposes use of the Expectations/ Aspirations measure (Loeber, Stouthamer-Loever, Van Kammen & Farrington, 1991), a 22-question measure, to evaluate participant personal aspiration. The scale offers a series of statements regarding participant values and expectations with respect to personal aspiration. The measure asks participants to rate how important it is for them to accomplish particular personal goals, for example, “how important is it for you to have a well-paying job later?,” or, “how important is it for you to work hard to get ahead?” (1= very important, 4= not important at all). Next the measure questions how far the participant would like to go in school, offering a series of options associated with a number that the participant chooses (1=8th grade or less, 3=high school graduate, 7=more than college). The measure proceeds to ask the participant how far she thinks
she will go in school, offering the same series of options associated with a number that the participant chooses (1=8\textsuperscript{th} grade or less, 3=high school graduate, 7= more than college). The questionnaire then asks the participant to rate how likely it is that as a grown up, they will have accomplished a series of goals, like “do you think that when you are a grown-up, you will have well-paying job?,” or “Do you think that when you are a grown-up you will marry?” (1=very likely, 4=not likely at all). Finally, the measure inquires the participant’s ideal future job, and questions how likely the participant is to get that job (1=very likely, 4=not likely at all). This scale was reported to be reliable and valid.

Scoring procedures for this measure were used to create three subscales for the measure. The first scale, “Current Importance,” measures the current importance the participant places on accomplishing goals. The second scale, “Future Expectations I” measures the participant’s belief in her achieving those goals. The third scale, “Future Expectations II” measures the participant’s belief that she will have accomplished the goals. The question, “Do you think when you are a grown-up, you will be in trouble with the police?” will be reverse-scored in the opposite direction than the other items. The question that inquires of the participant’s ideal future job will be scored so that a 1 indicates that the individual mentioned a job, and a 2 indicates that the participant’s response was, “I don’t know.” These responses will then be scored as “gender atypical,” “gender typical,” or “gender neutral,” based on statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics from 2015. If under 40% of people in a given occupation are female, it will be deemed “gender atypical,” if over 60% of people in a given occupation are female, it will be deemed “gender typical,” if between 40% and 60% of people in a given occupation are female, than the response will be categorized as “gender neutral.” All the responses will be summed so
that the lower the sum, the more it will indicate that the participant is aspirational, or in other words, has a general focus on and belief in one’s personal aspirations.

**Self-Esteem.** This study will use The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) to measure participants’ current self-esteem. The 10-item scale measures overall self-worth through measurement of both positive and negative feelings with respect to one’s self image. The measure includes 10 statements concerning general feelings the participant holds towards herself. The participant is asked to rate their agreement with the statements through a 4-point Likert scale, for example, “I am able to do things as well as most people,” or, “I feel I do not have much to be proud of” (*strongly agree, strongly disagree*).

On this scale, “Strongly Disagree,” will be worth 1 point, “Disagree,” 2 points, “Agree,” 3 points, and “Strongly Agree,” 4 points. Items 2, “At times I think I am no good at all,” 5, “I feel I do not have much to be proud of,” 6, “I certainly feel useless at times,” 8, “I wish I could have more respect for myself,” 9, “All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure,” will be reverse scored. The scores for the ten items will be summed. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem. The internal consisten
cy for this scale ranges from .77 to .88. The test-retest reliability ranges from .82 to .85. Its criterion validity averages to .55, and its construct validity indicates that the RSE is negatively correlated with anxiety (-0.64) and depression (-0.54).

**Self-efficacy.** This proposed study will use the “General Self-Efficacy Scale” (Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M., 1995). The 10-item scale measures general self-efficacy. The participant is asked to rate agreement with statements concerning herself, for example, “I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough,” or, “Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations” (*Not at all true, Hardly true, Moderately true, Exactly true*). The total score is calculated by summing all ten items. The
higher the score, the more self-efficacy. To indicate internal reliability for this scale, the Chronbach’s alphas are between .76 and .90. Its validity is suggested by its correlations to emotion, optimism, and work satisfaction.

My manipulation will include stories of 8 varieties. There will be 64 stories total, one each week for each condition (see appendix A for examples). The story will either be an action/adventure story or a biography. Each of these stories will feature either a Latina female protagonist, a White female protagonist, a White male protagonist, or a Latino male protagonist. The action-adventure story will feature an agent who must retrieve a CD with dangerous information on it, from their nemesis, Mr. Hyde. The biography will feature an intelligent science student who becomes an accomplished astronaut through hard work. Both of the stories will contain the theme of overcoming two major difficulties to accomplish a goal. The story manipulations will be illustrated to reinforce the race and gender of the protagonists. Within each of the story genres, only the gender, race, and name (to reinforce the gender and race manipulation) will be varied in the stories. The story line and plot will remain consistent throughout genres, leaving the race, gender, and name of the protagonist the only manipulated factors in the comic representations.

**Procedure**

The study will be run in the lab. Participants will come to the lab and be randomly assigned to one of the eight story genre conditions involving Latina female protagonists in action/adventure genres, Latina females in biographies, Latino males in action/adventure genres, Latino males in biographies, White females in action/adventure stories, White females in biographies, White males in action/adventure stories, or White males in biographies. The pretest
will include them first taking the self-esteem scale, then the self-efficacy measure, and lastly, the personal aspiration measure. The participant will then be assigned to read a story each week based on their random assignment. After reading the story, there will be a brief open-ended discussion with a research assistant about what they noticed about the story. Participants will then be asked to write a paragraph on what occurred in the story. The participant will read a story of the same condition genre each week over the course of 8 weeks. After reading the last story at the last week, the participant will complete the posttest measures. The posttest will include the same self-esteem, self-efficacy, and personal aspiration measures in the same order as the pretest. Participants will be debriefed with an explanation of the study’s motives and will be asked to view a puppy video so that the participants leave the lab feeling positive emotions.

**Ethics**

This study involves minimal risk as it asks questions that one might encounter regularly in daily life. Participants in this experiment will be questioned about their confidence levels and personal aspirations. They will also read an action/adventure story or biography. These components of the study involve events that could reasonably occur on an average day in the participants’ daily lives. For example, it would be an ordinary event if a teacher asked a student what they would like to be when they grow up, a good friend asked how her friend was feeling about herself lately, or a student read a story or biography in an English class.

Perhaps the most risky aspect of the study’s methodology involves assessing the participants’ confidence levels. This part of the study occurs when the participants are given the Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem scale in both the pretest and posttest. The scale involves asking participants to rate how much they agree with given statements. These statements revolve around how the participant feels about herself and what she thinks about her individual abilities.
Because this particular target demographic is prone to low confidence issues (Lips, 2003), this aspect of the experiment might be risky, as this information might trigger participants to experience unpleasant feelings regarding participants’ lack of confidence.

To counter these potential negative emotions, after the study research assistants will debrief participants. The debriefing process will include explaining the study’s purpose to understand how different stories impact female adolescent minorities’ confidence levels and personal aspirations. Debriefing will also involve giving the participant a piece of candy and having the participants watch a puppy video before they leave the lab. Hopefully this process will help elevate the mood of participants should they be upset. Debriefing will occur after the posttest measures are given.

Even with this debriefing process following the posttest, there still exists an issue with potential participants’ reactions to the pretest, which is identical to the posttest measures. This study will not involve debriefing after the pretest in order to avoid interfering with the participants’ reactions that this experiment aims to study i.e. personal aspirations, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. They will be debriefed after the posttest. Although this time interval between the pretest and posttest is mildly concerning, the minimal risks associated with this concern are outweighed by the knowledge that will be gained from the experiment.

Another more risky aspect of this study entails the fact that the participants in this experiment are middle school aged minors. To protect these minor participants, this study will require both consent from a primary legal guardian, and verbal assent from the participants. Participants will be reminded that participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Participants will also be told that if any aspect of the study makes them feel uncomfortable, they may skip any questions or withdraw from the study altogether. This study will also inform participants that
the data collected will be kept anonymous. The participants will be randomly assigned to a condition, assigned a participant number, and this number will be written on the pretest/posttest measures. This participant number will be the only means of distinguishing between participant results of the pretest and posttest. There is no deception in this study. This study will assure participants that their names will not be published or used in the data analyzing process. The preceding precautions will be taken to preserve participant well-being while still receiving the benefits of knowledge from the study.

Although there are risks in studying minor populations, it is essential that this experiment is targeted to this particular demographic to fill gaps in the literature and investigate how stories impact females at this critical stage of development. There is little research on how gender atypical characters influence adolescents, although middle school is a significant stage for gender identity development. Adolescents in middle school experience a drop in confidence levels and an increase in stereotypical gender behavior (Lips, 2003). It is important to study how gender atypical characters influence participants at this age in order to investigate its utility when females are just coming to define themselves and develop into adults.

The study has the potential to gain important knowledge regarding how stories we tell minority females influence their confidence and personal aspirations. This research offers value to a society in which women experience lower confidence levels than men (Lips, 2003), and a country in which, as of 2015, there is a substantial lack of female representation in traditionally male-dominated work fields (U.S. Bureau of Statistics, 2015). To this day, stories, both fiction and nonfiction, do not portray minority women as active, bold, complex, or present in male-dominated fields. This study will measure the potential that manipulating race and gender in action/adventure stories and inspirational biographies has to increase female minority confidence
levels and encourage females to pursue gender atypical careers. We will learn which story factor, or combination of factors, (genre, race, or gender), is the most influential in impacting minority females. This understanding may be applied to the demographic with possibly the lowest confidence levels and least media representation; Latina adolescents from low-income backgrounds. If the study is run, we may also gain exciting insight into how fiction, e.g. what plays in movie theatres, versus how nonfiction, for example, what is in the news, impacts this group’s self-esteem, self-efficacy, gender atypical personal aspiration, and personal aspiration. It is likely that some of the participants exposed to the stories featuring minority or female protagonists will experience a spike in self-esteem levels, and broadened perceptions of what their personal aspirations can be. As explained in the preceding paragraphs, the vast knowledge gained from this study clearly outweighs the minimal risk present in this study.

**Proposed Results**

**Self-Esteem**

A 2 (gender of protagonist) x 2 (race of protagonist) x 2 (genre of story) ANOVA will be conducted to investigate effect of protagonist gender, race, and genre on Latina adolescent self-esteem.

**Self-Esteem Main Effects**

It is predicted that there will be a significant main effect for gender of protagonists on participant self-esteem, \( F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx. (r = .xx) \). In general, it is predicted that participants will have higher self-esteem after reading stories that feature female protagonists \( (M = x.xx, SD = x.xx) \) than those who read stories that feature male protagonists \( (M = x.xx, SD = x.xx) \). This result is predicted due to research discussed within the realm of Gender Schema.
Theory, which suggests that people are more likely to imitate behavior modeled by people of their own gender than people of the opposite gender (Martin, 2014).

There will also be a significant main effect for race of protagonists on participant self-esteem, $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx. (r = .xx)$. In general, it is predicted that participants will have higher self-esteem after reading stories that feature Latino or Latina protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) than those who read stories that feature White protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). This result is predicted due to research discussed within the realm of Social Identity Theory, which suggests that people will be more likely to exhibit behaviors similar to their in-group (Tafjel, 1979).

There will be a marginally significant main effect for genre of story on participant self-esteem, $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx. (r = .xx)$. It is predicted that participants will have higher self-esteem after reading action/adventure story genres ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) than those who read biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). This result is predicted due to the mere fact that action/adventure stories rarely feature women or minorities, so the appearance of these demographics as protagonists will be particularly striking to participants and in turn, influence their self-esteem.

**Self-Esteem Interactions**

There will be a significant race x gender interaction $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ so that Latina female protagonists increase participant self-esteem ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) more than Latino male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), White female protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), or White male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). This predicted interaction draws from psychological empirical research from Social Learning Theory, which suggests the participants
are more likely to be influenced by people of similar race and genders (Ashton, 1983). In this example, Latina adolescents are likely to be more influenced by Latina female protagonists.

There will be a marginally significant race x genre interaction on self-esteem $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ so that Latinx protagonists in action/adventure stories increase participant self-esteem ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) more than Latinx protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), White protagonists in action/adventure stories ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), or White protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$).

There will be a marginally significant gender x genre interaction on self-esteem $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ so that female protagonists in action/adventure stories increase participant self-esteem ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) more than female protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), male protagonists in action/adventure stories ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), or male protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). This interaction is predicted due to the rare presence of female leads in action/adventure genres. The surprising nature of protagonists in these roles will make these stories the most influential with respect to participant self-esteem.

**Self-Esteem Simple Effects**

A significant simple effects analysis $F (x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will indicate that participant self-esteem increases significantly after reading the action/adventure story featuring a Latina female protagonist ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) more than those who read the biography featuring a Latina female protagonist ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). A significant simple effects analysis $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will also indicate that participants exposed to Latina female biographies will have higher self-esteem after the manipulation ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) than those exposed to the biographies featuring Latino male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$).
A significant simple effects analysis $F(x, \text{xxx}) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will indicate that Latina adolescents exposed to Latino male action/adventure stories will have higher self-esteem after the manipulation ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) than those exposed to the biographies featuring Latino male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), White female protagonists in action/adventure stories ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), or White female protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). This is due to the fact that the Latinx community is featured in action/adventure story genre even less than White females, and their presence in such stories will be striking.

A significant simple effects analysis $F(x, \text{xxx}) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will indicate that participants exposed to action/adventure stories featuring White female protagonists will report higher self-esteem after the manipulation ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) than those exposed to the biographies featuring White female protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), action/adventure stories featuring White male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), or biographies featuring White male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$).

A simple effects analysis $F(x, \text{xxx}) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will indicate that participants exposed to action/adventure stories featuring White males will have a significant decrease in self-esteem after the manipulation ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). A simple effects analysis $F = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will indicate that participants exposed to White male biographies will also experience a decrease in self-esteem ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), but this decrease will be less dramatic for those exposed to White male biographies than for participants exposed to White male action/adventure stories. These results are predicted due to the potentially discouraging nature of continuous portrayal of White males in White male-centered genres.

**Self-Efficacy**
A 2 (gender of protagonist) x 2 (race of protagonist) x 2 (genre of story) ANOVA will be conducted to investigate effect of protagonist gender, race, and genre on Latina adolescent self-efficacy.

**Self-Efficacy Main Effects**

It is predicted that there will be a significant main effect for gender of protagonists on participant self-efficacy, $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$. In general, it is predicted that participants will have higher self-efficacy after reading stories that feature female protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) than those who read stories that feature male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). This result is predicted due to concepts presented in Gender Schema Theory, which suggests that people are likely to use stories’ information to orient themselves in the world in terms of their gender (Martin, 2014).

There will also be a significant main effect for race of protagonists on participant self-efficacy, $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$. In general, it is predicted that participants will have higher self-efficacy after reading stories that feature Latino or Latina protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) than those who read stories that feature White protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). This result is predicted due to research discussed within the realm of Social Identity Theory, which suggests that people will be more likely to exhibit behaviors similar to their in-group (Tafjel, 1979).

There will be a marginally significant main effect for genre of story on participant self-efficacy, $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$. It is predicted that participants will have higher self-efficacy after reading action/adventure story genres ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) than those who read biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). This result is predicted due to the fact that action/adventure
stories rarely feature women or minorities, so the appearance of these demographics as protagonists will be particularly influential with respect to participant self-efficacy.

**Self-Efficacy Interactions**

There will be a significant race x gender interaction $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ so that Latina female protagonists increase participant self-efficacy ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) more than Latino male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), White female protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), or White male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). This predicted interaction draws from psychological empirical research within Social Learning Theory, which suggests the participants are more likely to be influenced by people of similar race and gender.

There will be a marginally significant race x genre interaction on self-efficacy $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ so that Latinx protagonists in action/adventure stories increase participant self-efficacy ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) more than Latinx protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), White protagonists in action/adventure stories ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), or White protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). This result is predicted due to the rare presence of the Latinx community in action/adventure stories. The rare nature of these stories will cause participants to be most influenced by this race and genre combination.

There will be a marginally significant gender x genre interaction on self-efficacy $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ so that female protagonists in action/adventure stories increase participant self-efficacy ($M = x.xx, SD = x.x$) more than female protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), male protagonists in action/adventure stories ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), or male protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). This interaction is predicted due to the rare presence of female leads in action/adventure genres. The surprising nature of protagonists in these roles will make these stories the most influential with respect to participant self-efficacy.
Self-Efficacy Simple Effects

A significant simple effects analysis $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will indicate that participant self-efficacy increases significantly after reading the action/adventure story featuring a Latina female protagonist ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) more than those who read the biography featuring a Latina female protagonist ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). A significant simple effects analysis $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will also show that participants exposed to Latina female biographies will have higher self-efficacy after the manipulation ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) than those exposed to the biographies featuring Latino male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$).

A significant simple effects analysis $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will indicate that Latina adolescents exposed to Latino male action/adventure stories will have higher self-efficacy after the manipulation ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) than those exposed to the biographies featuring Latino male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), White female protagonists in action/adventure stories ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), or White female protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). This is due to the fact that the Latinx community is featured in action/adventure story genre even less than White females, and their presence in such stories will be striking.

A significant simple effects analysis $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will indicate that participants exposed to action/adventure stories featuring White female protagonists will report higher self-efficacy after the manipulation ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) than those exposed to the biographies featuring White female protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), action/adventure stories featuring White male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), or biographies featuring White male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$).

A simple effects analysis $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will indicate that participants exposed to action/adventure stories featuring White males will have a significant decrease in
self-efficacy after the manipulation \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\). A simple effects analysis \(F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)\) will indicate that participants exposed to White male biographies will also experience a decrease in self-efficacy \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\), but this decrease will be less dramatic for those exposed to White male biographies than for participants exposed to White male action/adventure stories. These results are predicted due to the potentially discouraging nature of continuous portrayal of White males in White male-centered genres.

**Personal Aspiration**

A 2 (gender of protagonist) x 2 (race of protagonist) x 2 (genre of story) ANOVA will be conducted to investigate effect of protagonist gender, race, and genre on Latina adolescent personal aspiration.

**Personal Aspiration Main Effects**

It is predicted that there will be a significant main effect for gender of protagonists on participant personal aspiration, \(F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)\). In general, it is predicted that participants will have higher personal aspiration after reading stories that feature female protagonists \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\) than those who read stories that feature male protagonists \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\). This result is predicted due research within the field of Gender Schema Theory, which suggests that people are more likely to imitate behavior modeled by people of their own gender than people of the opposite gender (Martin, 2014).

There will also be a significant main effect for race of protagonists on participant personal aspiration, \(F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)\). In general, it is predicted that participants will have higher personal aspiration after reading stories that feature Latino or Latina protagonists \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\) than those who read stories that feature White protagonists \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\). This result is predicted due to research discussed within the realm of
Social Identity Theory, which suggests that people will be more likely to exhibit behaviors similar to their in-group, which in this case, is race (Tafjel, 1979).

There will be a marginally significant main effect for genre of story on participant personal aspiration, \( F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx. \) \((r = .xx)\). It is predicted that participants will have higher personal aspiration after reading action/adventure story genres \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\) than those who read biographies \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\). This result is predicted due to the mere fact that action/adventure stories rarely feature women or minorities, so the appearance of these demographics as protagonists in this genre will be shocking to participants, and in turn, influence their personal aspiration significantly.

**Personal Aspiration Interactions**

There will be a significant race x gender interaction \( F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx) \) so that Latina female protagonists increase participant personal aspiration \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\) more than Latino male protagonists \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\), White female protagonists \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\), or White male protagonists \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\). This predicted interaction draws from psychological empirical research from Social Learning Theory, which suggests the participants are more likely to be influenced by people of similar race and genders.

There will be a marginally significant race x genre interaction on personal aspiration \( F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx) \) so that Latinx protagonists in action/adventure stories increase participant personal aspiration \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\) more than Latinx protagonists in biographies \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\), White protagonists in action/adventure stories \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\), or White protagonists in biographies \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\).

There will be a marginally significant gender x genre interaction on personal aspiration \( F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx) \) so that female protagonists in action/adventure stories
increase participant personal aspiration \((M = x.xx, SD = x.x)\) more than female protagonists in biographies \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\), male protagonists in action/adventure stories \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\), or male protagonists in biographies \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\). This interaction is predicted due to the rare presence of female leads in action/adventure genres. The unexpected nature of protagonists in these roles will make these stories the most influential with respect to participant personal aspiration.

**Personal Aspiration Simple Effects**

A significant simple effects analysis \(F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)\) will indicate that participant personal aspiration increases significantly after reading the action/adventure story featuring a Latina female protagonist \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\) more than those who read the biography featuring a Latina female protagonist \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\). A significant simple effects analysis \(F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)\) will also indicate that participants exposed to Latina female biographies will have higher personal aspiration after the manipulation \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\) than those exposed to the biographies featuring Latino male protagonists \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\).

A significant simple effects analysis \(F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)\) will indicate that Latina adolescents exposed to Latino male action/adventure stories will have higher personal aspiration after the manipulation \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\) than those exposed to the biographies featuring Latino male protagonists \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\), White female protagonists in action/adventure stories \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\), or White female protagonists in biographies \((M = x.xx, SD = x.xx)\). This result is predicted due to the fact that the Latinx community is featured in action/adventure story genre even less than White females, and their presence in such stories will be striking.
A significant simple effects analysis $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will indicate that participants exposed to action/adventure stories featuring White female protagonists will report higher personal aspiration after the manipulation ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) than those exposed to biographies featuring White female protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), action/adventure stories featuring White male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), or biographies featuring White male protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$).

A simple effects analysis $F(x,xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will indicate that participants exposed to action/adventure stories featuring white males will have a significant decrease in personal aspiration after the manipulation ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). A simple effects analysis $F = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will indicate that participants exposed to White male biographies will also experience a decrease in personal aspiration ($M = x.xx, SD =x.xx$), but this decrease will be less dramatic for those exposed to White male biographies than for participants exposed to White male action/adventure stories. These preceding results are predicted due to the potentially discouraging nature of continuous portrayal of White males in White male-centered genres.

**Gender Atypical Personal Aspiration**

A 2 (gender of protagonist) x 2 (race of protagonist) x 2 (genre of story) ANOVA will be conducted to investigate effect of protagonist gender, race, and genre on Latina adolescent gender atypical personal aspiration.

**Gender Atypical Personal Aspiration Main Effects**

It is predicted that there will be a significant main effect for gender of protagonists on participant gender atypical personal aspiration, $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$. In general, it is predicted that participants will report more gender atypical personal aspiration after reading stories that feature female protagonists ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) than those who read stories that
feature male protagonists ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$). This result is predicted due to research discussed within Gender Schema Theory, which suggests that people are more likely to imitate behavior modeled by people of their own gender than people of different genders (Martin, 2014).

There will also be a significant main effect for race of protagonists on participant gender atypical personal aspiration, $F(x, xxx) = x.xx$, $p < .xx$, ($r = .xx$). In general, it is predicted that participants will report more gender atypical personal aspiration after reading stories that feature Latino or Latina protagonists ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$) than those who read stories that feature White protagonists ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$). This result is predicted due to research in Social Identity Theory, which suggests that people will be more likely to exhibit behaviors similar to their in-group than an out-group (Tafjel, 1979).

There will be a marginally significant main effect for genre of story on participant gender atypical personal aspiration, $F(x, xxx) = x.xx$, $p < .xx$, ($r = .xx$). It is predicted that participants will have higher gender atypical personal aspiration after reading action/adventure story genres ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$) than those who read biographies ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$). This result is predicted due to the mere fact that action/adventure stories rarely feature women or minorities, so the appearance of these demographics as protagonists will be particularly striking to participants and in turn, influence their gender atypical personal aspiration.

**Gender Atypical Personal Aspiration Interactions**

There will be a significant race x gender interaction $F(x, xxx) = x.xx$, $p < .xx$, ($r = .xx$) so that Latina female protagonists increase participant gender atypical personal aspiration ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$) more than Latino male protagonists ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$), White female protagonists ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$), or White male protagonists ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$). This predicted interaction draws from psychological empirical research from Social Learning Theory,
which suggests the participants are more likely to be influenced by people of similar race and genders (Bandura & Ross, 1963). In this example, Latina adolescents are likely to be more influenced by Latina female protagonists with respect to gender atypical personal aspiration.

There will be a marginally significant race x genre interaction on gender atypical personal aspiration $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ so that Latinx protagonists in action/adventure stories increase participant gender atypical personal aspiration ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) more than Latinx protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), White protagonists in action/adventure stories ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), or White protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$).

There will be a marginally significant gender x genre interaction on gender atypical personal aspiration $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ so that female protagonists in action/adventure stories increase gender atypical participant personal aspiration ($M = x.xx, SD = x.x$) more than female protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), male protagonists in action/adventure stories ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$), or male protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). This interaction is predicted due to the rare presence of female leads in action/adventure genres. The surprising nature of protagonists in these roles will make these stories the most influential with respect to participant gender atypical personal aspiration.

**Gender Atypical Personal Aspiration Simple Effects**

A significant simple effects analysis $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will indicate that participant gender atypical personal aspiration increases significantly after reading the action/adventure story featuring a Latina female protagonist ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$) more than those who read the biography featuring a Latina female protagonist ($M = x.xx, SD = x.xx$). A significant simple effects analysis $F(x, xxx) = x.xx, p < .xx, (r = .xx)$ will also indicate that
participants exposed to Latina female biographies will report more gender atypical personal aspiration after the manipulation ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$) than those exposed to the biographies featuring Latino male protagonists ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$).

A significant simple effects analysis $F(x, xxx) = x.xx$, $p < .xx$, $(r = .xx)$ will indicate that Latina adolescents exposed to Latino male action/adventure stories will have more gender atypical personal aspiration after the manipulation ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$) than those exposed to the biographies featuring Latino male protagonists ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$), White female protagonists in action/adventure stories ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$), or White female protagonists in biographies ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$). This is due to the fact that the Latinx community is featured in action/adventure story genre even less than White females, and their presence in such stories will be striking.

A significant simple effects analysis $F(x, xxx) = x.xx$, $p < .xx$, $(r = .xx)$ will indicate that participants exposed to action/adventure stories featuring White female protagonists will report more gender atypical personal aspiration after the manipulation ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$) than those exposed to the biographies featuring White female protagonists ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$), action/adventure stories featuring White male protagonists ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$), or biographies featuring White male protagonists ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$).

A simple effects analysis $F(x, xxx) = x.xx$, $p < .xx$, $(r = .xx)$ will indicate that participants exposed to action/adventure stories featuring white males will have a significant decrease in gender atypical personal aspiration after the manipulation ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$). A simple effects analysis $F(x, xxx) = x.xx$, $p < .xx$, $(r = .xx)$ will indicate that participants exposed to White male biographies will also experience a decrease in gender atypical personal aspiration ($M = x.xx$, $SD = x.xx$), but this decrease will be less dramatic for those exposed to White male
biographies than for participants exposed to White male action/adventure stories. These results are predicted due to the prospect that solely viewing White male protagonists in both action/adventure genres and inspiring biographies will be discouraging to Latina minority females.

**Discussion**

Psychological theory supports the notion that stories influence reader behavior. The proposed study seeks to explore the possible link between lack of minority female representation in media with lacking minority female self-esteem and absence in male-dominated fields. This study specifies this research question to Latina populations for experimental control, as Latina females are vastly underrepresented in film, media, and the male-dominated work force. A 2016 report finds that although Latinos make up around 17.4% of the U.S. population, out of 11,000 speaking characters surveyed in film and TV, only 5.8% were Hispanic or Latino (Latimer, 2016). Of this 5.8%, only 38% of the characters were female, who were often portrayed as overly sexualized (Latimer, 2016). Research also indicates that Latina women exhibit the lowest confidence levels of any intersected race and gender demographic (Lips, 2003).

This study predicts that the intervention with stories featuring Latina female protagonists in action/adventure stories will have the most significant impact on increasing Latina adolescent self-esteem, self-efficacy, personal aspiration, and gender atypical personal aspiration. The next most impactful condition is hypothesized to be Latina female protagonists in biographies, followed by Latino males in action/adventure stories, Latino males in biographies, White females in action/adventure stories, and White females in biographies. This study predicts a decrease in participant self-esteem, self-efficacy, personal aspiration and gender atypical personal aspiration for those who are exposed to the White males in action/adventure stories condition. There will
also be a fall in the dependent variables for White males in biographies, but this decrease will not be as extreme as it is for White males in action/adventure stories.

The significance of this study’s proposed results points to the great potential benefit of showcasing minority females in media and the vast potential harm of continuing to picture primarily White males in confident, dominant, action roles. If results are to indicate that exposure to Latina female protagonists in biographies and action/adventure stories is linked to significantly higher self-esteem, self-efficacy, and more gender atypical personal aspiration, implementing these stories could inspire great change over the course of Latina adolescent lives. For example, math is a notoriously male-dominated subject, and females often do not pursue it (Sunha et al., 2016). However, research indicates that female students with higher levels of self-efficacy are more likely to pursue and succeed at math (Sunha et al., 2016). Higher self-efficacy in male-dominated fields of study will be key in increasing presence of Latina females in gender atypical occupations; i.e., higher self-efficacy will result in more Latina lawyers, doctors, and engineers. If Latina adolescents are to have more gender atypical personal aspirations, it is likely that they will pursue and succeed at these aspirations more than if they had no interest in these aspirations in the first place. If Latina women have more personal aspiration, then they will be more likely to pursue and work towards their dreams, whatever they may be. Increased self-esteem would result in higher success, and general feelings of well-being and mental health for minority females.

Due to the significance of the proposed results, it is possible that these results may be useful in schools and in curriculums for determining which books to focus on for classes. This awareness could hopefully spread to the film industry so that more Latina female protagonists, and minority female protagonists in general are more likely to be represented in action books and
films. This knowledge will prompt more representation of minority females as bold, adventurous, confident, and autonomous. The circulation of results will also ensure that they will also be featured in films as doctors, lawyers, bread-winners, and other typically male-dominated roles.

The study leaves the field with many remaining research questions. One of the greatest questions we are left with entails, how do the findings of this study apply to other groups? Media representation issues lie with not only with Latina females but other minority females, and to a lesser degree, females in general. A future direction of research should investigate how minority females are impacted by female protagonists of a different minority. For example, how are Asian participants impacted by Black female protagonists in action film? How are Latina adolescents impacted by a female Asian character who plays the role of a successful surgeon? Future directions might also look to different age groups and how impactful these stories are depending on participant life stages. Future research should also address minority males and how they respond to minority female protagonists, minority male protagonists, and white protagonists.

Limitations of the proposed study might include a lack of means to ensure that participants are engaged in the stories. Although the study includes a discussion and writing a paragraph after reading the story each week to ensure comprehension and absorption of the material, it still possible that the participants will be uninterested and unengaged in the stories. To ameliorate this issue, perhaps future research can include Audio Visual material, like film or TV shows to better captivate participants. Including film could also be a promising direction due to the mere fact that it is now more common for adolescents to watch TV or movies than read books.
While historically, stories have emboldened some groups and disempowered others, the proposed results of this study point to the great opportunity for stories to empower those who historically and presently, are not given the same privilege as White males. Because stories; on television, in film, in books, and in the general media often indicate that minority females are passive, submissive, or overly sexualized, there must be an extra focus to portray minority females as strong, courageous, and independent. This portrayal can occur in realistic nonfiction storylines and news stories, or unrealistic fantasy, fiction, and science-fiction stories. This transformation of the stories we share will hopefully result in greater numbers of minority females in male-dominated fields, higher minority female personal aspiration, improved minority female self-esteem levels, and increased minority female self-efficacy—ultimately resulting in a healthier, fairer, and more equal society. The power of storytelling is particularly effective because stories are not necessarily out rightly combative against systems of oppression, but they have the ability to work directly and engagingly to present possibilities of who and what people can be.
References


Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. (2016, February 10).


Appendix A

White Female Biography- Supplemented with Illustration by Kinza Jamal. (See Appendix B).

Ellen Smith always had an interest in science. It was her favorite subject in school.

After graduating from the top of her high school class, Smith attended San Diego State University, where she decided to major in Physics.

After graduating from SDSU, she got her Master’s degree at Stanford University where she pursued degrees in electrical engineering.

Smith soon applied for the NASA Training program but she got rejected. She felt discouraged, but decided to get her pilot’s license in the hopes that this would help her chances next time she applied.

The next time Smith applied, she was turned down yet again. She also learned she made the top 100 of the thousands of prospects who had applied to become an astronaut.

Smith applied again for a third time, and she was finally accepted! Smith would become an astronaut soon.

Very shortly after being accepted, Smith was selected for a very important mission, to understand the impact of the sun’s solar activity on the earth.

Smith was placed in charge of controlling a robot arm to launch and retrieve a satellite. She was successful!

She continued to accomplish many other dreams, including serving as commander on a mission to learn more about the sun’s energy.

Today she is director of the Johnson Space Center in Houston and has won countless awards and honors.

Latina Female Biography- Supplemented with Illustration by Kinza Jamal (See Appendix B).

Ellen Ochoa always had an interest in science. It was her favorite subject in school.

After graduating from the top of her high school class, Ochoa attended San Diego State University, where she decided to major in Physics.

After graduating from SDSU, she got her Master’s degree at Stanford University where she pursued degrees in electrical engineering.
Ochoa soon applied for the NASA Training program but she got rejected. She felt discouraged, but decided to get her pilot’s license in the hopes that this would help her chances next time she applied.

The next time Ochoa applied, she was turned down yet again. She also learned she made the top 100 of the thousands of prospects who had applied to become an astronaut.

Ochoa applied again for a third time, and she was finally accepted! Ochoa would become an astronaut soon.

Very shortly after being accepted, Ochoa was selected for a very important mission, to understand the impact of the sun’s solar activity on the earth.

Ochoa was placed in charge of controlling a robot arm to launch and retrieve a satellite. She was successful!

She continued to accomplish many other dreams, including serving as commander on a mission to learn more about the sun’s energy.

Today she is director of the Johnson Space Center in Houston and has won countless awards and honors.

Jose Ochoa always had an interest in science. It was his favorite subject in school.

After graduating from the top of her high school class, Ochoa attended San Diego State University, where he decided to major in Physics.

After graduating from SDSU, he got his Master’s degree at Stanford University where he pursued degrees in electrical engineering.

Ochoa soon applied for the NASA Training program but he got rejected. He felt discouraged, but decided to get his pilot’s license in the hopes that this would help his chances next time he applied.

The next time Ochoa applied, he was turned down yet again. He also learned he made the top 100 of the thousands of prospects who had applied to become an astronaut.

Ochoa applied again for a third time, and he was finally accepted! Ochoa would become an astronaut soon.

Very shortly after being accepted, Ochoa was selected for a very important mission, to understand the impact of the sun’s solar activity on the earth.
Ochoa was placed in charge of controlling a robot arm to launch and retrieve a satellite. He was successful on this very important mission!

He continued to accomplish many other dreams, including serving as commander on a mission to learn more about the sun’s energy.

Today he is director of the Johnson Space Center in Houston and has won countless awards and honors.

White Male Biography- Supplemented with Illustration by Kinza Jamal (See Appendix B)

Joey Smith always had an interest in science. It was his favorite subject in school.

After graduating from the top of his high school class, Joey Smith attended San Diego State University, where he decided to major in Physics.

After graduating from SDSU, he got his Master’s degree at Stanford University where he pursued degrees in electrical engineering.

Smith soon applied for the NASA Training program but he got rejected. He felt discouraged, but decided to get his pilot’s license in the hopes that this would help his chances next time he applied.

The next time Smith applied, he was turned down yet again. He also learned he made the top 100 of the thousands of prospects who had applied to become an astronaut.

Smith applied again for a third time, and he was finally accepted! Smith would become an astronaut soon.

Very shortly after being accepted, Smith was selected for a very important mission, to understand the impact of the sun’s solar activity on the earth.

Smith was placed in charge of controlling a robot arm to launch and retrieve a satellite. He was successful!

He continued to accomplish many other dreams, including serving as commander on a mission to learn more about the sun’s energy.

Today he is director of the Johnson Space Center in Houston and has won countless awards and honors.
"We have a very important mission for you," Agent Jose Lopez’ supervisor, S instructs him. Jose Lopez is the best agent S has ever known.

“I need you to find a CD that has been stolen from the President,” S instructs. “According to our information, the CD holds secrets on some of the newest and most destructive weapon technology known to mankind. He can use this information to destroy the world.”

Jose says, “I got it!” but feels some fear. He feels confident in his abilities to retrieve the CD, but is terrified at the prospect of facing his nemesis, Mr. Hyde again.

“The CD will be in a red checkered box,” S explains to Agent Lopez.

After midnight, long after his office closes, Jose sneaks into Mr. Hyde’s office by scaling the wall to his window, and cutting a hole through it with his laser cutter.

When he arrives, he sees the red-checkered box his supervisor told him about! It is across the room, on the desk far from the window Agent Lopez has snuck into.

“Aha!” He exclaims. However, to Agent Lopez’ dismay, there are red lasers spread throughout the room, blocking his path to the CD box.

Agent Lopez begins hopping through the lasers, struggling to flip through the beams until, BEEP BEEP BEEP. Agent Lopez trips the lasers!

He knows he only has a limited time to retrieve the CD until Mr. Hyde walks in.

Nervous and hurried, Agent Lopez attempts to grab the box in the hopes of running out of the office with the CD inside. But no! The box is bolted firmly to the desk.

“Oh no,” Agent Lopez whispers to himself. He looks at the red-checkered box. “Hmm” he says, looking at the checkered box. There is a small number pad on the box, indicating some kind of code access. Agent Lopez looks closely at the box, noticing three checkers on the box that are purple, not black or red. He presses the number three.

The box pops open, revealing the CD! At this very moment that Agent Lopez is about to rejoice, the door opens. It is Mr. Hyde. He is about to run after Agent Lopez, but Lopez is faster. He escapes out the hole out the window with the CD, safe from Mr. Hyde…until their next encounter.

"We have a very important mission for you,” Agent Joey Smith’s supervisor, S instructs him. Joey Smith is the best agent S has ever known.
“I need you to find a CD that has been stolen from the President,” S instructs. “According to our information, the CD holds secrets on some of the newest and most destructive weapon technology known to mankind. He can use this information to destroy the world.”

Joey says, “I got it!” but feels some fear. He feels confident in his abilities to retrieve the CD, but is terrified at the prospect of facing his nemesis, Mr. Hyde again.

“The CD will be in a red checkered box,” S explains to Agent Smith.

After midnight, long after his office closes, Joey sneaks into Mr. Hyde’s office by scaling the wall to his window, and cutting a hole through it with his laser cutter.

When he arrives, he sees the red-checkered box his supervisor told him about! It is across the room, on the desk far from the window Agent Smith has snuck into.

“Aha!” He exclaims. However, to Agent Smith’s dismay, there are red lasers spread throughout the room, blocking her path to the CD box.

Agent Smith begins hopping through the lasers, struggling to flip through the beams until, BEEP BEEP BEEP. Agent Smith trips the lasers!

He knows she only has a limited time to retrieve the CD until Mr. Hyde walks in.

Nervous and hurried, Agent Smith tries to grab the box in the hopes of running out of the office with the CD inside. But no! The box is bolted firmly to the desk.

“Oh no,” Agent Smith whispers to himself. He looks at the red-checkered box. “Hmm” he says, looking at the checkered box. There is a small number pad on the box, indicating some kind of code access. Agent Smith looks closely at the box, noticing three checkers on the box that are purple, not black or red. He presses the number three.

The box pops open, revealing the CD! At this very moment that Agent Smith is about to rejoice, the door opens. It is Mr. Hyde. He is about to run after her, but Joey is faster. He escapes out the hole out the window with the CD, safe from Mr. Hyde…until their next encounter.

_White Female Action Story - Supplemented with Illustration by Kinza Jamal (See Appendix B)_

We have a very important mission for you,” Agent Ellen Smith’s supervisor, S instructs her. Ellen Smith is the best agent S has ever known.

“I need you to find a CD that has been stolen from the President,” S instructs. “According to our information, the CD holds secrets on some of the newest and most destructive weapon technology known to mankind. He can use this information to destroy the world.”

Ellen says, “I got it!” but feels some fear. She feels confident in her abilities to retrieve the CD, but is terrified at the prospect of facing her nemesis, Mr. Hyde again.

“The CD will be in a red checkered box,” S explains to Agent Smith.
After midnight, long after his office closes, Ellen sneaks into Mr. Hyde’s office by scaling the wall to his window, and cutting a hole through it with her laser cutter.

When she arrives, she sees the red-checkered box her supervisor told her about! It is across the room, on the desk far from the window Agent Smith has snuck into. “Aha!” She exclaims. However, to Agent Smith’s dismay, there are red lasers spread throughout the room, blocking her path to the CD box.

Agent Smith begins hopping through the lasers, struggling to flip through the beams until, BEEP BEEP BEEP. Agent Smith trips the lasers!

She knows she only has a limited time to retrieve the CD until Mr. Hyde walks in.

Nervous and hurried, Agent Smith tries to grab the box in the hopes of running out of the office with the CD inside. But no! The box is bolted firmly to the desk.

“Oh no,” Agent Smith whispers to herself. She looks at the red-checkered box. “Hmm” she says, looking at the checkered box. There is a small number pad on the box, indicating some kind of code access. Agent Smith looks closely at the box, noticing three checkers on the box that are purple, not black or red. She presses the number three.

The box pops open, revealing the CD! At this very moment that Agent Smith is about to rejoice, the door opens. It is Mr. Hyde. He is about to run after her, but Ellen is faster. She escapes out the hole out the window with the CD, safe from Mr. Hyde…until their next encounter.

*Latina Female Action Story - Supplemented with Illustration by Kinza Jamal (See Appendix B)*

“We have a very important mission for you,” Agent Maria Lopez’ supervisor, S instructs her. Maria Lopez is the best agent S has ever known.

“I need you to find a CD that has been stolen from the President,” S instructs. “According to our information, the CD holds secrets on some of the newest and most destructive weapon technology known to mankind. He can use this information to destroy the world.”

Maria says, “I got it!” but feels some fear. She feels confident in her abilities to retrieve the CD, but is terrified at the prospect of facing her nemesis, Mr. Hyde again. “The CD will be in a red checkered box,” S explains to Agent Lopez.

After midnight, long after his office closes, Maria sneaks into Mr. Hyde’s office by scaling the wall to his window, and cutting a hole through it with her laser cutter.

When she arrives, she sees the red-checkered box her supervisor told her about! It is across the room, on the desk far from the window Agent Lopez has snuck into.
“Aha!” She exclaims. However, to Agent Lopez’ dismay, there are red lasers spread throughout
the room, blocking her path to the CD box.

Agent Lopez begins hopping through the lasers, struggling to flip through the beams until,
BEEP BEEP BEEP. Agent Lopez trips the lasers!

She knows she only has a limited time to retrieve the CD until Mr. Hyde walks in.

Nervous and hurried, Agent Lopez grabs the box in the hopes of running out of the office with
the CD inside. But no! The box is bolted firmly to the desk.

“Oh no,” Agent Lopez whispers to herself. She looks at the red-checkered box. “Hmm” she says,
looking at the checkered box. There is a small number pad on the box, indicating some kind of
code access. Agent Lopez looks closely at the box, noticing three checkers on the box that are
purple, not black or red. She presses the number three.

The box pops open, revealing the CD! At this very moment that Agent Lopez is about to rejoice,
the door opens. It is Mr. Hyde. He is about to run after her, but Lopez is faster. She escapes out
the window with the CD, safe from Mr. Hyde…until their next encounter.
Appendix B

*Illustrations by Kinza Jamal*