



GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

SOCIOLOGY

Applying Sociological Research Techniques

B673/CS

PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL FOR 2010 EXAMINATION

Tuesday 29 June 2010
Afternoon

Duration: 1 hour



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- This is a clean copy of the case study material which you have already seen.
- You may **not** take your previous copy of the case study material into the examination.
- You may **not** take notes into the examination.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- This document consists of **12** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

INSTRUCTION TO EXAMS OFFICER/INVIGILATOR

- Do not send this insert for marking; it should be retained in the centre or destroyed.

Investigation 1 – source: Female Primary School Teacher, aged 40, in Birmingham, 2008

A study into the effect of primary socialisation on children's identity.

Introduction

The process of socialisation is to teach what society expects and to make sure that people fit into society by learning the norms and values. As a teacher of children in year 6 (10–11 years), I see that boys' and girls' behaviour in school is different. I would like to find out how far children's gender identity is affected by the way their parents socialise them. I am interested in the way that in the home, children might be taught to behave in a way which fits with the gender stereotypes. It might be that males are seen as making money for the family and being the dominant and active gender while females are taught to be passive, caring and look after the emotional needs of the family. In studying this, I will need to consider other influences such as the media and the children's peer group. 5 10

The aims of my investigation are as follows:

- To find out how parents treat their children and see whether daughters are treated differently from sons.
- To find out parents' views about gender stereotyping. 15
- To see if toys, games and representation in books show children that boys and girls are expected to act differently.

Methodology

To investigate primary socialisation I will use one primary method.

I will carry out semi-structured interviews with parents of the children at my school. I will ask the parents about games and toys they encourage, chores they expect their children to do and the freedom they allow their children. I will try to find out whether they think sex role stereotyping takes place and if it is acceptable. 20

I have chosen to use semi-structured interviews because they will let me ask specifically about the things which I want to find out about. If the interviews were unstructured they could be very long and the parents might talk about things which are not very useful to me. I can also change questions during the interview and ask parents to add to their answers. This means I will get more in-depth information and it is likely to be more valid. 25

I will interview parents when they come to the school to collect their children and I will write down their responses as they talk to me. I will ask the first five parents who turn up to the school on one Monday. 30

I will use two pieces of secondary data.

One is an article published in a journal of sociology which has the main findings from studies, carried out by well respected sociologists, into how both genders are represented in children's books. 35

The other is from some research I found on the internet. This is about the relationship that parents have with their male and female children. This source of data is easy for me to access and also free.

Interview Results

The interviews took up a lot of time so I only interviewed the first five parents to arrive at the school. All five were white and female. This is an example of one of the interviews (With Mrs Claire Johnson, 37). 40

Q. *When buying toys for your children, what do you consider?*

A. I think about what the child would like and this depends on whether it is for a boy or a girl. It is also important to think about what their friends have as my children want to be like everyone else and not be the only one without the latest toy. 45

Q. *What chores do you make your children do in the house? (I added the question 'why?' during the interview.)*

A. I make both of them tidy their bedrooms and clear away their toys and games. Sarah often helps with the tea but Tom is usually out playing football and sometimes doesn't come in until nearly dark and his meal is cold! If he does help it is usually with his Dad as they are both mad about cars. 50

Q. *So do you mind Tom (aged 10) being out in the evening?*

A. Not really as he is usually with a gang of other boys and they can look after each other but sometimes I do worry as they do encourage each other to take risks such as playing 'chicken' on the main road. I would worry about Sarah because although she is 11 and more sensible, she is a girl and girls are more likely to be in danger aren't they? 55

Q. *Do your children play any particular games, depending on their gender?*

A. They both play a range of games for both boys and girls but when they were younger, we used to laugh at Tom when he played with Sarah's dolls! Sarah has had the opportunity to play sport but is not interested. Tom likes skateboarding with his friends and he sometimes goes to motocross racing with his dad. 60

Q. *Do you buy them books? Do you think they contain sex stereotypes?*

A. Yes we buy books for them. I don't think it's that simple but boys do always seem to be more dominant and the leaders in the stories. 65

Q. *Do you think sex stereotyping is acceptable or is it a problem?*

A. While I don't really think it is a problem, children do pick up that some things are seen as male and others female. They see the gender roles me and my husband play and copy them. But this can be good as it helps them practise for their future roles – after all, it is still women who have and mostly care for the babies! 70

In my view, the other interview results were very similar to this one so I have decided not to include them here. The interviews are useful as they link with my aim to find out about primary socialisation in the family.

Secondary Data Results

I found the article from the journal (Appendix A) to be really useful. All the sociologists showed how both genders are represented differently in children's books. They show that: 75

- male characters are more common than female characters
- boys are more active and adventurous than girls.

The article is useful for my aim to find out about the representation of gender in children's books.

The research from the internet (Appendix B) was interesting. It seemed to me that overall, the psychologist found that parents treat daughters and sons the same although girls tended to do more housework than boys. This data fits with my aim to find out about the treatment of sons and daughters in the family but the results do not support the information I gained in my interviews. 80

Conclusion

Overall I have found out that my primary data and my first secondary source (the journal article) support each other. 85

The interviews showed that parents see males and females as having different roles. They do not purposely treat their children differently. However, they accept that parental role models, messages given by the media through the children's books they buy and the activities and games children play, will lead to different behaviour. 90

The journal article proves that children's books are responsible for gender stereotyping. It says that books show boys as active and dominant and girls as passive and caring. Children will copy this behaviour and this will result in different adult gender roles. Males will be more competitive and willing to take risks but females will take on the caring and probably the housewife roles. I am concerned as a teacher that girls will not reach their potential in school and be encouraged to gain successful careers. 95

However, my other secondary source (from the internet) does not support my primary and first secondary source. It says that parents value children of both genders and try to treat them equally.

Evaluation

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Overall I am pleased with my research. The data I gathered fitted with my aims and no parent refused to take part in the interviews. I gained a good understanding of primary socialisation in the families I studied and I did not have any ethical issues as the data was not sensitive. My secondary data was easy to find and helped me to understand the way children are influenced. It was a good way to find out about the content of children's books. 105

If I was to continue with my research I would conduct more interviews as my sample was small. Perhaps I would interview a wider range of people with different experiences and views. I might even carry out a questionnaire to get some statistical data.

Appendix A**Gender Stereotypes in Children's books – American Journal of Sociology 1996** 110

Many studies of children's books find that most are dominated by male figures. For example, Ernst (1995) found male names appeared twice as often as female names in book titles. She also found that even when the title had a female name, the main character in the book could be male.

Girls are often shown as 'acted upon' rather than active (Fox 1993). They are also represented as sweet and dependent while boys are typically shown as strong, adventurous and independent (Masland 1993). 115

Boys tend to have roles as fighters and rescuers. Girls, in more passive roles, tend to be mothers, princesses in need of rescuing and characters who support males (Temple 1993). Even when girls are active and assertive at first, most of them are passive by the end of the story (Rudman 1995). 120

Overall, studies show that girls appear less often than boys in children's books, and both genders are often shown in stereotyped ways.

Appendix B**Review of Families in Sweden – Internet 2009** 125

Parents say they prefer to have a child of each sex and treat sons and daughters the same. However, studies show that fathers tend to be more involved with the family where there are sons and spend more time with sons than with daughters. Mothers report more happiness in marriage when there are sons. However, this pattern is getting weaker.

Daughters do more housework than sons, mirroring the gender divisions in adult roles. Parents' support for educational success varies: some parents support sons more, but others support daughters more. 130

Whether parents encourage gender differences or whether it is the children's behaviour which causes the parents to treat them differently is difficult to prove.

Investigation 2 – A Study by a Male student studying GCSE Sociology, in Newcastle 2008

'Males are socialised more than females into risk-taking and thrill-seeking behaviour'

Introduction

I am studying how males and females are socialised into risk-taking behaviour from a young age. I want to find out if this has anything to do with the way children are brought up by their parents, or the influence of the peer group, or maybe it is because fast thrill-seeking activities just appeal to them. 5

I read a report in a newspaper about Richard Hammond who nearly died in a car accident whilst trying to break the land speed record but survived a 200 mph crash. I also read about Steve Irwin who died from a stingray attack when working with dangerous animals in Australia. As they were both male, it proves that risk-taking is more a masculine activity than a female one. 10

I also think that risk-taking behaviour is increasing these days with the popularity of more dangerous sports, the new extreme sports and faster, scary roller coasters and I wondered what makes people want to do these things.

My aims are:

- To find statistical information on road deaths and accidents caused by fast driving. 15
- To find out what drives people to do extreme sports.

Methodology

To investigate risk-taking behaviour and gender I will use two primary methods and one secondary method.

First I will conduct a survey. I will design a questionnaire to find out people's views of risk-taking and how thrill-seeking some people are. 20

This will be a good method as I can easily find a representative sample of 50 males and females at my school. It will be quick and easy to collect data and, because it will be anonymous, people are not likely to lie. The results should be reliable and I will be able to compare the behaviour and views of males with those of females. 25

I will need to think of another suitable primary method to use.

Pilot Study – I will carry out a pilot study of 5 people before I do my research. This will help me find out about any badly written questions or words which my respondents do not understand. I will also be able to find out if people will agree to take part in my survey or if they will refuse. I can make changes if I need to. 30

I will also collect secondary data (some statistics) which should tell me about the behaviour of people who are not at my school.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire on Risk-Taking Behaviour

Please tick the boxes which apply to you

1. Gender Male Female

2. Age 12–14
 14–16
 16–18

3. Would you consider yourself a risk-taker / thrill-seeker? Yes No

4. Have you ever done (or want to do) any of the following?
 Sky diving Bungee jumping Skiing Snowboarding
 Rally driving Off road 4x4 Motor biking Hang gliding
 Other _____

5. Do you prefer to drive fast or slow? Fast Slow

6. Do you enjoy going on fast rides such as roller coasters? Yes No

7. Have you ever suffered any form of high speed injury? Yes No

8. If yes, has it affected you and how you feel about risk-taking? Yes No

9. Do your parents encourage you to take risks?

Secondary Data

I collected some non-official statistics from the internet website of 'Brake' the road safe charity. I used this because it is a well known and registered British charity and the results of their research are likely to be valid because they use the research of 'Green Flag' which is a good organisation and they can explain exactly how their studies were done and the size of the sample used for the research. 35

Evidence 1

From a 'Brake' conference in January 2004: 40

Young drivers take extreme risks. Research shows that –

- 33% admit to overtaking when they can't see what's coming.
- 9% admit driving on illegal drugs
- 50% admit to using a hand held phone while driving.

Evidence 2

45

Research shows that young male drivers aged 17–20 years are seven times more at risk of having an accident than all male drivers, but between the hours of 2 am and 5 am their risk is 17 times higher.

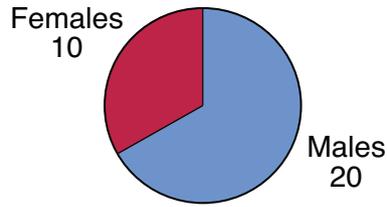
The table below shows the number of car drivers killed or seriously injured in 2004 in Great Britain, by male and female casualties, and highlights the huge difference between the two sexes. 50

Car drivers	Male	Female
Under 17	57	2
17	187	36
18	316	117
19	327	135
20 to 24	1,241	477
25 to 29	820	376
30 to 39	1,343	692

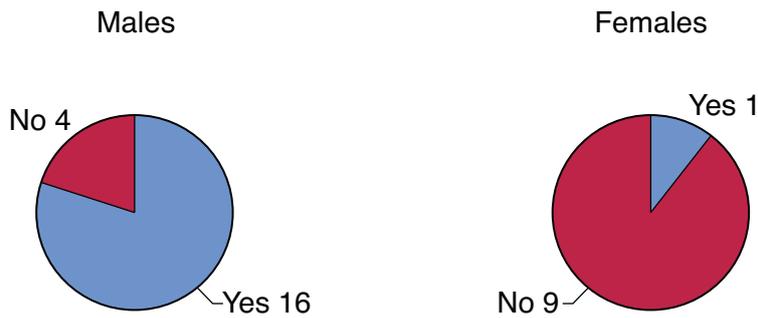
www.brake.org.uk

Results from my questionnaire:

Sample by Gender



3. Would you consider yourself a risk-taker / thrill-seeker?



4. Have you ever done (or want to do) any of the following?

Activity	Males		Females	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sky diving	16	4	1	9
Bungee jumping	15	5	2	8
Skiing	18	2	8	2
Snowboarding	18	2	7	3
Rally driving	19	1	1	9
Off road 4x4	17	3	0	10
Motor biking	15	5	0	10
Hang gliding	12	8	0	10

Other : 1 male said tombstoning

5. Do you prefer to drive fast or slow?

	Males		Females	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Fast	19	1	1	9

- 6. Do you enjoy going on fast rides such as roller coasters? Yes 30
- 7. Have you ever suffered any form of high speed injury? Yes 1 (male) No 29
- 8. If yes, has it affected you and how you feel about risk-taking? No 1
- 9. Do your parents encourage you to take risks?

60

Males		Females	
Yes	No	Yes	No
10	10	5	5

(Please explain) No responses

Conclusion

I didn't have time to do this but I think I would have proved my hypothesis!

Evaluation

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My research was good but would have been better if I had used a second primary method to collect more data. I did get some clear quantitative data with some good statistics to prove things but people only ticked boxes on my questionnaire and couldn't be bothered to explain their answers.

As most of the people in my sample were my mates they were mostly lads as I got them to fill them in when we were all out one night. I forgot who I had given some questionnaires to so some of the 50 (18 I think) were not returned. Two people said stupid things on the questionnaires so I had to put them in the bin!

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