

CHAPTER III

EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 Social Identity

A person's attitude or behavior and the social environment influence differences in social status. According to Tajfel & Turner (1985), social identity is the tendency of people to place themselves and others into various social categories, such as organizational membership, religious affiliation, gender, and age group. As the examples show, people can be categorized in different ways, and different people may use different categorization schemes. Social classification serves two functions. First, it cognitively categorizes and organizes the social environment, providing individuals with a systematic way to define others. Second, social classification allows individuals to locate or define themselves within the social environment. Self-concept consists of personal identity, which includes idiosyncratic characteristics (e.g., physical attributes, abilities, psychological traits, interests), and social identity, which includes salient group classifications. Tajfel and Turner (1986) argue that social identity is the result of three main processes, namely social categorization, social identification, and social comparison.

3.1.1 Social Categorization

Individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups based on shared characteristics such as gender, nationality, race, or occupation. This categorization helps people navigate social interactions, but it also creates in-group (us) and out-group (them) distinctions (Tajfel, 1981, p. 230).

3.1.2 Social Identification

Social identification occurs when individuals identify with a group and adopt the group's norms, values, and behaviors as part of their self-concept. This group identification strengthens cohesion and self-esteem (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 76).

3.1.3 Social Comparison

People evaluate their own group (in-group) against other groups (out-group) to establish a sense of superiority or inferiority. This often results in in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination (Turner, 1987, p. 45).

Social identity theory states that group membership significantly influences individuals' behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes, shaping how they navigate societal expectations and identity formation. In addition, self-categorization theory (Turner, 1987) extends social identity theory by explaining how individuals move between personal and social identities depending on the context. This theory provides insight into how identities are fluid and shaped by social dynamics.

Individuals may think of themselves as a unique person (personal identity) or as a member of a particular social group (social identity). This shift is not random, but is influenced by external factors such as the social environment, interpersonal relationships, and prevailing social norms and roles.

3.2 Barbie Culture

Since her introduction by Mattel in 1959, Barbie has become more than a toy, she is a global cultural icon that reflects and shapes society's views on

femininity, beauty, career aspirations and gender roles. Barbie serves as a symbol of evolving societal expectations that both reinforce and challenge traditional expectations of women. Over the decades, Barbie has been the subject of praise, controversy, and critical discourse, making her an important case study of how media, marketing, and popular culture influence perceptions of gender and identity (Rogers, 1999, p. 112).

Barbie's cultural meaning is complex. On the one hand, she represents independence, ambition, and empowerment, demonstrating that women can pursue a variety of careers and lifestyles. On the other hand, Barbie has been criticized for promoting unrealistic beauty standards and reinforcing consumerist femininity (Urla & Swedlund, 1995, p. 87). By examining Barbie as a cultural artifact, researchers explore how toys, media, and branding influence gender identity and social expectations across generations. Her evolution over time reflects broader shifts in feminism, beauty standards, and the representation of women in popular culture.

3.2.1 Ambiguity of Sexual and Social Identity

Barbie's identity is not strictly defined, allowing for different interpretations of gender and sexuality. This ambiguity positions Barbie as a figure that can be reshaped according to cultural and societal influences. Rogers (1999, p. 33) argues that Barbie's open identity allows her to reflect a variety of social and personal aspirations.

In addition, Barbie represents a blend of luxury and accessibility, making her aspirational and acceptable across different social groups. This dual nature has

contributed to her enduring cultural impact.

3.2.2 Barbie as a Reflection of Cultural Contradictions

Barbie simultaneously upholds conventional femininity and symbolizes independence and ambition. On the one hand, she has been criticized for promoting unrealistic beauty ideals and consumerist notions of femininity. On the other hand, Barbie has consistently been positioned as a career-oriented figure who performs roles traditionally dominated by men (Rogers, 1999, p. 87). This paradox makes Barbie an important subject in discussions of gender identity, as she embodies both restrictive and progressive aspects of femininity.

3.2.3 Barbie and Societal Expectations

As a reflection of societal values, Barbie has shaped and been shaped by perceptions of beauty, success, and gender roles. Over the decades, her evolution from a domestic figure to one representing leadership and empowerment illustrates changing ideals about women (Rogers, 1999, p. 112).

Barbie's branding and commercialization contributed to the reinforcement of social identity by aligning with consumer ideals that continued to evolve with cultural trends. Rogers (1999, p. 135) states that Barbie serves as a reinforcement of dominant cultural values and also as a site of resistance to traditional gender roles.