STAGE 2 CHILD STUDIES
ASSESSMENT TYPE 3: INVESTIGATION
STUDENT RESPONSE
(B STANDARD)

Child Studies;

'Are young girls being encouraged to grow up too quickly?'

Word Count: 1978

Contents:

Stage Two Child Studies
Special Study; Introduction

'Are young girls being encouraged to grow up too quickly?'

Children are innocent, naïve beings. They have a simple view of the world, and their minds are easy to please. Dressing your child up in provocative clothing and letting her date at too young of an age will not help her mature in other ways, such as with school work and getting a job, it could hinder both of these more important things.

Scope of the study
The aim of this investigation is to investigate whether young girls are being encouraged to grow up too quickly. This refers to any action, from any source, which pushes children to do anything that is above their physical or mental maturity level.

The focus questions that have been used to guide the study and structure the discussion are:
1. How are young girls being encouraged to grow up too fast?
2. Who is promoting and why?
3. What role does the media play?

Methodology
A range of primary and secondary sources were used to investigate the topic. These included:
Primary sources:
- a survey distributed to 10 parents and 10 peers in order to gain a varied range of opinions on the matter.
- use of the internet to research up to date secondary information from many different sources.
- own observations of young girls when out in the public, such as their behaviour and how they are dressed etc.
- photographs.
Secondary sources:
- magazine articles.
- episodes of
- newspaper articles relevant to the topic.

1. How are young girls being encouraged to grow up too quickly?
Young girls are being encouraged to grow up too quickly in many different ways. The focus of this sub-topic was to find out how.

Of the parents and peers surveyed in the study, a large majority agreed that young girls are being encouraged to mature too quickly.

'Do you believe that young girls are being encouraged to grow up too quickly?' -Parents

☑ Yes
■ No

'Are young girls being encouraged to grow up too quickly?' - Peers

☒ Yes:
No:
■ More so pressured:
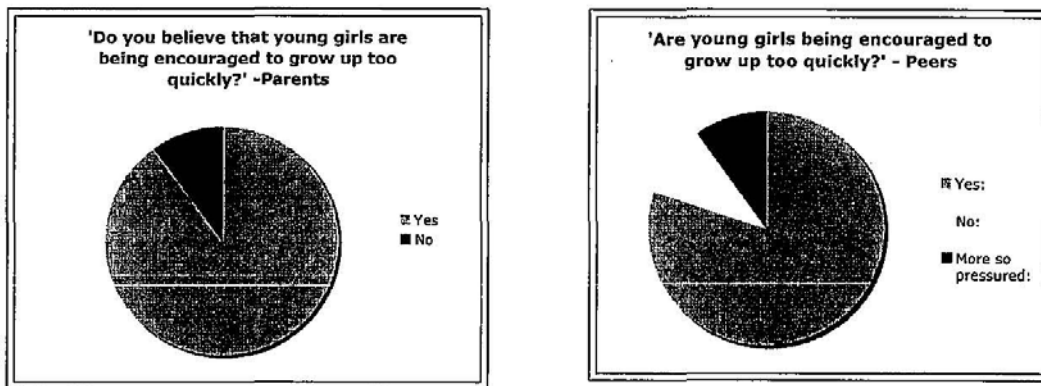
These figures indicate that more of the parents surveyed believe that young girls are being encouraged to grow up too quickly than peers.

Of the parents that said yes, the reasons given as to how it was happening were the media, peer pressure and parents not stopping it. Of the peers surveyed, the reasons given were the media, marketing, parents, peer pressure/social influence, and letting or encouraging children to look up to people much older than them. This shows that the people who didn't have a child had some different views on the reasons for young girls being encouraged to grow up too quickly than the people who had children did.

An interesting fact that I found was that while half of the parents revealed that they let their daughter wear makeup (of any kind) under the age of 5, only three did not believe that parents were letting their children do things that are not age appropriate, such as wear makeup or provocative clothing when they are too young. If such evidence has been presented, it would be interesting to then see how young these parents believe a child has to be before they are 'too young' for makeup.

One of the secondary sources I used,[1] stated that the author's seven-year-old daughter 'freaked me out a whole different way – by begging for a bra.' The child argued that two of her peers had them. This is a good indication of the social influences that the child would have observed, and then decided that she too wanted to be like the other girls in her class. This is one of the reasons that young girls are being encourage to grow up too quickly, because they are being pressured by their peers to mature.

The author goes on to state that a local children's store had 'a whole assortment of flirty bras and panties perfectly sized for second-graders.' This shows the intellegence of the marketers, because by marketing a range of child's lingerie, the children may pressure their parents into buying them new and most likely more expensive underwear, because they feel it will make them seem more grown up and mature. Some parents do not have the knowledge to realise that their daughter/s are too young to be wearing lingerie as it sexualises them, makes them more 'attractive' which is something they should not need (or want) to be.

Another reason that both the surveys and the secondary sources showed was that some parents wish to be 'more of a friend than an authority figure', which means they essentially let the daughter do whatever she wants,.

The most talked about factor in the encouragement of young girls maturing too early is the media, but this will be the main focus of my third sub-question.

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[1] Swaney, D. *Girls Growing Up Too Fast: How The Media Influences The Sexy-Girl Trend.* http://www.familycircle.com/teen/parenting/sex-talk/growing-up-too-fast/?page=2 (Tues 13th Sept)

2. Who is promoting and why?

The focus of this question is to find out exactly who is encouraging the young girls to grow up too quickly, and why.

The surveys distributed show that the ten parents surveyed believe that marketing, media and parents are the three main factors promoting the early maturation of young girls. Figure 1 below shows that results that the parents listened when asked to write down as many reasons that they could think of that are promoting the early maturation of young girls.

Reasons Parents Wrote for 'Main Pactors Promoting Young Girls'

- Media
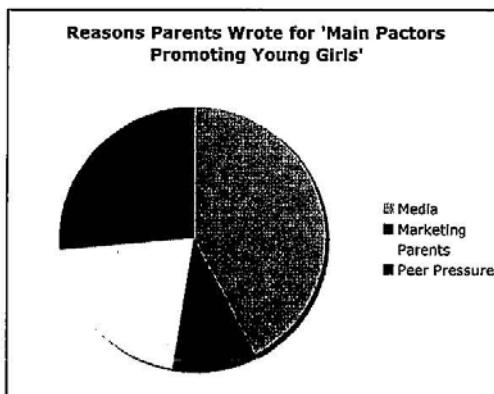- Marketing
- Parents
- Peer Pressure

Figure 1

Promotion of the products such as the children's lingerie, mentioned in the last topic, make-up products for young girls and provocative clothing is high. My personal observation shows pictures of young girls being made-up, wearing sparkly clothing and short skirts, generally in places that young girls are more likely to see such as toy shops, and children's clothes shops. The marketers believe that to sell their products they need to idealise these products, make the advertisements seem mature and grown up. This seems to be what young girls wish to be; more mature.
'Companies noticed girls' love for ultra-feminine programs and their product tie-ins, and played it to the max.'[2] This means companies noticed younger girl's fascinations with teenaged characters, and decided that they could market from them to seem even more idealistic, because they knew they could profit from merchandise tied in to these television shows.   and
merchandise is hard to avoid when walking through a child's store. It seems that no matter what you are after, you will be able to find one with a TV star's face on it. The character   is fourteen, and yet the target audience is around 8-12.

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[2] Swaney, D. *Girls Growing Up Too Fast: How the Media Affects The 'Sexy-Girl' Trend.*
http://www.familycircle.com/teen/parenting/sex-talk/growing-up-too-fast/?page=2
(Tues 13th Sept)

Young girls look up to older people as their role models, and when these role models do things that are appropriate for their age, such as dating or wearing make-up, the younger girls believe that they can do it too. Companies that market their products towards young girls noticed this and use it, because it doesn't matter to them that the younger girls are starting to do things out of their emotional and physical maturity levels.

There are many theories as to why the media is pushing young girls to grow up too young, but the main and most logical one that I came to is that they get younger actors and singers out of it, and they look older than they are. It is a constant competition for the record companies, model scouts and acting scouts to find younger, more talented musicians/singers/models/actors/actresses. The media needs the young girls to have a higher maturity level than normal, because otherwise they may not be able to handle the pressure of whatever profession they are entering. It helps the media for the younger people to be more mature both physically and mentally, because then they can handle being in the spotlight and the media will not get blasted for writing sometimes horrible things about them.

3. What role does the media play?

The media plays possibly the biggest role in the encouragement of young girls to grow up too quickly.

'So many children are exposed to subject matter beyond their years, and then go off emulating these things in their day-to-day life.'[3]   .

As the above writer said, young people are exposed to many things beyond their years. These are things like make-up, provocative clothing, social networking, phones, dating and even sex. When such things are presented to young girls, they feel as though they should be owning/wearing/doing all these things, when they are too young to be, just because the girls the media proposes to them as role models are doing it. They are being pushed to worry about body size or shape, the clothes they wear, how much money they have and things like this, instead of more important things.

Recently in places like Hollywood there have been the beginnings of an unspoken competition of who can find the youngest actors and actresses with the most talent, as such. There has been a sudden boom of younger actresses. The fact that young girls are being pressured to mature earlier helps the producers, because then they can get even younger actresses that have the mental maturity to handle all the attention and work, because if the younger actresses didn't have the mental capability to handle the stressful work-load there would not be a good outcome.

The media tends to particularly focus on celebrities' daughters, as much as their parents try to shield them from it. When young girls see pictures of :
wearing heels and drinking   at age 3, and media coverage of child beauty pageants such as   , they want to mimic these girls. The media also makes girls feel inadequate at much too young of an age, by showing them pictures of only the girls with the highest aesthetics, which makes more average looking young girls feel bad about themselves.

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[3] Author Unknown. *Our children are growing up too fast.*
http://www.glasscityconnect.com/family-and-spirituality/our-children-are-growing-up-too-fast/ (Tues 13th Sept)

'Are young girls being encouraged to grow up too quickly?'

Conclusion

The findings of my research clearly indicate that young girls are being encouraged to grow up too fast.

Young girls are being encouraged to grow up too quickly in many different ways. Parents, the media and marketing are the biggest factors in girls maturing too fast. The parents want to be more of a friend than a parental figure. The media is encouraging young girls to mature by showing articles and news clips of celebrity young girls that are allowed to do things that are too mature for their age, such as wear heels and makeup.

The three main things promoting the early maturation of young girls are also marketing, media and parents. The media is promoting maturity in young girls as it benefits them because they get big news stories of the controversy of 'sexualising' the young girls. The parents are benefited as it leaves them little responsibility over their child because their daughter believes she is mature enough to handle everything herself, when in reality she probably isn't. Marketers are benefited because they get millions of dollars of profit from promoting young girls being more mature, because the younger people believe girls are mature enough to wear provocative clothing and makeup, the younger they can market these things towards them.

When young girls are shown images of things that are above their maturity level in the media, they wish to emulate these things in their lives, even if they are too young to be doing so.

Researching this topic for Child Studies has improved my understanding of why young girls are being encouraged to grow up too quickly. My research helped me discover the main reasons why, and what the role of the media is, and I now know a lot more on the topic.

Word Count: 1978

Bibliography:

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http://www.cathnews.com/article.aspx?aeid-22051 (published 22nd June 2010)

10 surveys distributed to peers.

10 surveys distributed to parents.

Additional Comments

Assessment Type 3: Investigation (B)

- A contemporary topic relating to children has been selected.

- Guiding/focusing questions have been included.

- Both primary and secondary sources of information have been clearly identified in the investigation and in the bibliography. Sources of research link to the topic.

- The research has been analysed throughout the investigation. At times the analysis is well-considered while at other times it is some considered analysis. So both the B and C grade bands have been represented. In a couple of places the analysis is perceptive. This is only in a few places and overall the critical analysis tends to be well-considered.

- The information used tends towards relevant and appropriate. Sources of information have been appropriately acknowledged.

- The literacy and numeracy is effective. There is mostly appropriate terminology used.

- The evaluation varied between well-informed to informed. The investigation focused on child development.

- This investigation has some A, B and C features about it. There is clear evidence across the grade bands in a range of the features.

On balance, the investigation is a B grade.

Performance Standards for Stage 2 Child Studies

	Investigation and Critical Analysis	Problem-solving	Practical Application	Collaboration	Evaluation
A	In-depth investigation and perceptive critical analysis of contemporary trends and/or issues related to the health and well-being of children. Perceptive analysis of information for relevance and appropriateness, with appropriate acknowledgment of sources. Highly effective application of literacy and numeracy skills, including clear and consistent use of appropriate terminology.	Astute identification and discussion of factors involved in problem-solving related to the health and well-being of children. Astute and very appropriate decision-making about problem-solving and implementation strategies. Clear and very relevant justification of decisions about problem-solving and implementation strategies.	Ongoing and productive implementation of safe management practices and appropriate techniques, and sophisticated generation and maintenance of quality control. Productive and efficient organisation and management of time and resources. Logical selection and application of the most appropriate technology to prepare learning activities for children in a culturally diverse society.	Initiation of ideas and procedures, display of leadership within the group, and proactive and inclusive response to members of the group. Proactive and focused involvement in group activities and discussions to support the health and well-being of children.	Insightful evaluation of the processes and outcomes of practical and group activities, including their own performance. Sophisticated appraisal of the impact of technology on the health and well-being of children. Insightful explanation of the connections between research and/or planning, and practical application. In-depth evaluation of contemporary trends and/or issues related to child development in a variety of settings.
B	<mark>Detailed investigation and well-considered critical analysis of contemporary trends and/or issues related to the health and well-being of children.</mark> <mark>Well-considered analysis of information for relevance and appropriateness, with appropriate acknowledgment of sources.</mark> <mark>Effective application of literacy and numeracy skills, including mostly clear use of appropriate terminology.</mark>	Well-considered identification and discussion of factors involved in problem-solving related to the health and well-being of children. Well-considered and appropriate decision-making about problem-solving and implementation strategies. Mostly clear and relevant justification of decisions about problem-solving and implementation strategies.	Mostly productive implementation of safe management practices and appropriate techniques, and well-considered generation and maintenance of quality control. Mostly productive organisation and management of time and resources. Mostly logical selection and application of appropriate technology to prepare learning activities for children in a culturally diverse society.	Initiation of some ideas and procedures, some display of leadership within the group, and thoughtful and active response to members of the group. Active and thoughtful involvement in group activities and discussions to support the health and well-being of children.	Thoughtful evaluation of the processes and outcomes of practical and group activities, including their own performance. Well-informed appraisal of the impact of technology on the health and well-being of children. Well-considered explanation of the connections between research and/or planning, and practical application. <mark>Well-informed evaluation of contemporary trends and/or issues related to child development in different settings.</mark>
C	Competent investigation and some considered critical analysis of contemporary trends and/or issues related to the health and well-being of children. Considered analysis of information for relevance and appropriateness, with generally appropriate acknowledgment of sources. Generally effective application of literacy and numeracy skills, including competent use of appropriate terminology.	Considered identification and discussion of some factors involved in problem-solving related to the health and well-being of children. Generally considered and appropriate decision-making about problem-solving and implementation strategies. Generally relevant justification of decisions about problem-solving and implementation strategies, with some clarity.	Competent implementation of safe management practices and techniques, and considered generation and maintenance of quality control. Competent organisation and management of time and resources. Appropriate selection and application of technology to prepare learning activities for children in a culturally diverse society.	Some initiative with ideas or procedures, occasional leadership within the group, and generally active response to members of the group. Active involvement in group activities and discussions to support the health and well-being of children.	Considered evaluation of the processes and outcomes of practical and group activities, including their own performance. Informed appraisal of the impact of technology on the health and well-being of children. Considered explanation of the connections between research and/or planning, and practical application. Informed evaluation of contemporary trends and/or issues related to child development in different settings.
D	Some investigation and basic description of one or more contemporary trends or issues related to the health and well-being of children. Some consideration of information for relevance or appropriateness, with some inconsistent acknowledgment of sources. Inconsistent application of literacy and numeracy skills, with use of some terminology that may be appropriate.	Superficial identification and discussion of some factors involved in solving basic problems related to the health or well-being of children. Some basic and inconsistent decision-making about problem-solving and/or implementation strategies. Some description and partial justification of one or more problem-solving and/or implementation strategies.	Basic implementation of one or more safe management practices and/or techniques, and some basic consideration of the generation and maintenance of quality control. Inconsistent organisation and management of time and resources. Identification and some application of technology that may be appropriate to prepare learning activities for children in a culturally diverse society.	Some participation within the group, and some response to members of the group. Participation is often passive. Some basic involvement in group activities or discussions to support the health or well-being of children.	Basic consideration of the processes and/or outcomes of practical and group activities, which may include their own performance. Superficial consideration of the impact of technology on the health or well-being of children. Some basic description of one or more connections between research and/or planning, and practical application. Superficial reflection on one or more contemporary trends or issues related to child development, tending towards basic description.
E	Limited investigation or basic description of one or more contemporary trends or issues related to the health or well-being of children. Limited identification or acknowledgment of information that may have some relevance. Attempted application of literacy and numeracy skills, with attempted use of some basic terminology that may be appropriate.	Identification of one or more factors involved in solving basic problems related to the health or well-being of children. Attempted decision-making about problem-solving or an implementation strategy. Attempted description of one or more problem-solving or implementation strategies.	Attempted development or implementation of a safe management practice or a technique, and some awareness of the need for quality control. Limited organisation or management of time and resources. Limited identification or application of technology that may be appropriate to prepare learning activities for children in a culturally diverse society.	Some attempted participation in one or more aspects of group work, and occasional response to members of the group. Attempted involvement in one or more group activities or discussions to support the health or well-being of children.	Attempted consideration of one or more processes or outcomes of a practical or group activity, which may include their own performance. Attempted description of an impact of technology on the health or well-being of children. Limited awareness of any connections between research and/or planning, and practical application. Some recognition of one or more contemporary trends or issues related to child development.