

Examining the Effects of Men's Magazines on Men's Perceptions of Women Through  
Cultivation Theory

By

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## **Abstract**

This survey study examines the effects of viewing non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and Internet pornography on men's perceptions of women. The 108 men surveyed reported their demographic information; viewing habits of non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and Internet pornography; and their perceptions of women as sex objects, less moral than men, and less intelligent than men in an online survey. Using Pearson correlation, the findings suggest that interest level in non-pornographic men's magazines and overall usage of Internet pornography were positively correlated to the perception of women as sex objects. In addition, frequency and overall length of usage of pornographic magazines were positively correlated to the perception of women as less intelligent. Multiple regression findings show that only the overall usage of Internet pornography was a predictor of the perception of women as sex objects. Neither test yielded significant results for determining the perception of women as less moral than men.

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# Examining the Effects of Men's Magazines on Men's Perceptions of Women Through Cultivation Theory

## Chapter 1 – Introduction

For the past 30 years, many researchers have attempted to determine how the media affect the behaviors and attitudes of people. Most of the research has centered on television as the principle medium. Much has been discovered about how exposure to certain television programming can impact people's perception of reality, their gender roles, and societal norms. In this study, however, I shift from using television, and instead use magazines as the principle medium. I will attempt to draw the line between the exposure to men's magazines and the perceptions of women in society. Past research indicates that magazines are particularly influential to young people, and that many young people cite magazines as a preferred and reputable source of information (Bielay & Harold, 1995). It should stand to reason then that cultivation analysis will provide a solid theoretical framework for this research

Cultivation analysis has been one of the more influential research methods used to study the long-term effects of television viewing (Woo & Dominick, 2001), and I believe it can also be used to study the effects of magazine exposure. The typical cultivation analysis study begins by identifying the most recurrent patterns and consistent images on television, and then surveys the audience to see if their perception of reality matches what was seen on television (Morgan & Shanahan, 1997). I attempted to determine if readers of men's magazines, which typically portray women in a sexual manner to varying degrees, have different sexual attitudes and beliefs about women than those who do not read men's magazines at all. The study incorporated both non-pornographic and pornographic men's magazines.

Much research has been done on the effect magazines have on women. Only recently have researchers taken an interest into how magazines affect men. Overall, a majority of the findings indicate that the behaviors and attitudes of both men and women are influenced by what they see in magazines. For women, magazines tend to set the standard for women's ideal body image, and may inadvertently influence harmful practices (Pompper & Koenig, 2004). Some of these harmful practices, or the "drive for thinness," are done in pursuit of the "ideal body," and can be defined as excessive concern with dieting, fear of weight gain, or obsession with weight in general (Pompper & Koenig). Magazines have also become the platform for the standards of beauty and thinness for women. These standards are unrealistic and unachievable for a majority of women, and in turn have begun to underscore appearance and social belongingness over personal health (Pompper & Koenig). Additionally, magazines have all too often portrayed women as secondary to their male counterparts (Shaw, 2000). Women have been seen as able and intelligent, but not as able and intelligent as men. Women can work outside of the home, but that work is always seen as secondary to that of the male (Shaw). Research has also shown that women's magazines focus on the importance of making oneself as sexually desirable as possible with the goal of gaining the attention of men (Taylor, 2005). Two studies that included both men and women looked at *Cosmopolitan*, *Self*, *GQ*, and *Playboy* magazines, and the authors found that the contents treated women as sex objects through both objectifying images (Krasses, Blauwkamp, & Wesselink, 2001) and written content regarding relationships (Duran & Prusank, 1997).

Men's magazines such as *Maxim*, *FHM (For Him Magazine)*, and *Stuff* are not exactly known for their great fashion tips, book reviews, or relationship advice. Sure, these magazines may include fashion tips, book reviews, and relationship advice, but it is clearly not their

number-one priority. According to Stevens and Taylor (2005), men's magazines promote a clear vision of what a man's lifestyle should include, and arguably the most important aspect is sex. The average men's magazine has at least a couple of articles related to sex, and images of sexually provocative women fill their pages while sexual allusion and humor are a mainstay of their prose (Stevens & Taylor). It is relatively obvious that the scantily clad women, often wearing only lingerie or tiny bikinis, that line the pages are what make these magazines hot sellers. From cover to cover, these men's magazines, or so-called "lad's mags" feature pictures of women in erotic poses wearing very few clothes or no clothes at all. And while none of these women were forced to pose, and many make a good living doing what they do, what message does this send to young men? What perceptions about women are they developing when they are exposed to these magazines? Is this all women are good for and intelligent enough to accomplish? This thesis attempted to determine if the way men's magazines portray women affects the perceptions young men who read the magazines have about women, and whether or not those perceptions are realistic.

## Chapter 2 – Literature Review

### *An Overview of the Cultivation Theory*

The cultivation theory was first introduced by George Gerbner in 1969. Gerbner wanted to determine what the effects of television were on the American public. With many large-scale projects, Gerbner (1970) attempted to discover a relationship between the amount of television a person viewed and their specific attitudes and behaviors. Initially, he was mainly concerned with how violent programming related to violent behavior and violent perceptions. His premise was that those people who spent more time watching television would begin to see their own world in terms of the images, values, portrayals, and ideologies they saw on television. What he found was that television watching did not necessarily have direct effects, but rather that it “cultivated” a symbolic structure which was used by viewers to interpret everyday life (Hughes, 1980). Subsequent research by Gerbner and others sought to compare individuals of different demographics, and answer the question of whether or not those who spend more time watching television are likely to perceive social reality in way that reflects the lessons of the television world than are those who watch less television (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli & Shanahan, 2002).

Early research by Gerbner and colleagues referred to television as a “storyteller,” and that people learn from continued exposure to the “stories” they saw on television (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Early results of Gerbner and his fellow researchers’ studies said that people who spend many hours a day watching television are exposed to so much violence and violent imagery that they come to see the world as more violent and more dominated by criminal issues than it really is (Hughes, 1980). As a result of these views, those individuals will ultimately have unrealistic

perceptions of the amount of crimes committed, the kinds of crimes committed, and the number of people involved in law enforcement (Hughes). Additionally, the same people will trust others less, alienate themselves, take more precautions to prevent crime, and generally fear more than those who watch less television (Hughes). Hawkins (1977) goes even further in suggesting that the more a person perceives television content as “real,” the more involved and relevant the viewing process will be, thus enhancing the effect of television on that person.

A critical component to the cultivation theory is understanding how Gerbner and other researchers determined how the amount of television viewing, along with the variables of race, sex, and education, impact particular viewers. Gerbner (1998) found that the average U.S. household uses the television set for more than seven hours a day, and that actual viewing by individuals over the age of two is about three hours a day. Additionally, he said that the more people watch television the less selective they become, therefore, the most frequently recurring images on television become inescapable to the regular viewer. In other words, the more people watch television, the more likely they are to develop perceptions of the real world based on what they see on television. Past research shows that women watch more television than men, black people watch more television than white people, and those with less education watch more television than those with more education (Hughes, 1980). What that leads to is women, black people, and the less educated being more susceptible to the effects of cultivation, while men, Caucasians, and the highly educated are able to resist some of the effects of cultivation according to Hughes.

### *Common Findings and Results of the Cultivation Theory*

One of the important findings in cultivation research is that the amount of television viewing is positively correlated to the perception of the prevalence of violence and crime (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1980), meaning the more a person watches television, the more likely they are to see their world as violent and crime-infested. Additionally, studies suggest that since much violence on television is performed in the context of moral approval, the violence will be seen by the viewers as appropriate behavior in some situations (Gerbner & Gross, 1978). Other studies correlated television viewing with the perception that many people work in professional jobs, such as doctors, lawyers, and businessmen (Buerkel-Rothfuss & Mayes, 1981), meaning those who watched more television believed they lived in a world dominated by professionals.

Another interesting finding is the idea of “resonance.” This idea couples the cultivation theory with the direct experience of the individual viewer. The idea states that those who are exposed to some of the same events in real life as they see depicted on television will be especially susceptible to cultivation (Morgan, 1983). The everyday reality in which those people live and the television they watch provides a “double dose” of messages that “resonate” to amplify cultivation (Morgan). For instance, the relationship between the amount of viewing and fear of crime is the highest among those who live in urban areas with high crime rates. Additionally, the idea of resonance states that the relationship between the amount of viewing and the fear of being victimized is highest among the demographic subgroups of women and minorities, whose fictional counterparts are frequently victimized on television (Morgan).

Perhaps the most profound finding in cultivation research is that which is termed “mainstreaming.” Most cultures of the world, despite small differences in subgroups, contain a dominant set of attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices. These are the most general, functional, and stable mainstreams that represent the broadest dimensions of each culture (Gerbner, 1998). With television being the largest and most accessible form of media, its central role in our society makes it the primary channel of our culture according to Gerbner. Gerbner also stated that the impact of television then is so great that it can cause “mainstreaming”, or an overriding of the small differences among cultures and subgroups to create a common perspective of the world. That common perspective is seen as even more real to those who watch more television.

#### *A Look at Some Cultivation Theory Research*

A 2001 study by Diefenbach and West used the residents of a North Carolina county to explore whether or not the crime rates and type of crime estimated by the respondents were similar to the actual crime statistics of the county. After conducting a content analysis of 103 programs on the four major networks, the researchers used a random dialing survey to reach 410 respondents. The residents of the county overestimated the amount of crime in their county and estimated that more violent crime took place than actually did according to Diefenbach and West. The county actually had a lower crime rate and significantly less violent crime than the national average, but due to the exposure of violent crime on television, the residents saw their county as being more dangerous than it really was. The conclusion of the researchers was that exposure to television increases estimations of violent crimes, a confirmation of the cultivation theory.

DiPietro, Johnson and Lett (2004) studied the effect of the television news coverage of a specific event rather than the effect of television in general. They used the television news coverage of the 9/11 attacks to determine its influence on personal emotions towards Islamic people. Since a majority of the television coverage of the 9/11 attacks was violent, the study found that the randomly surveyed college students who watched more of it were more likely to have negative personal emotions in general and more negativity towards relationships with Islamic peers.

In perhaps one of the most comprehensive studies in cultivation research, a meta-analysis by Shanahan and Morgan (1999), nearly 6,000 separate findings from 97 study samples are summarized. Shanahan and Morgan looked at attitudes concerning aging, abortion, use of marijuana, interracial marriage, sex roles, crime, and many more. One of the interesting findings they documented was what they called the “cultivation differential.” This was described as the margin of difference in conceptions of reality between light and heavy viewers in the same demographic subgroups, across different variables and populations. Additionally, Shanahan and Morgan found that on average, all cultivation studies, regardless of sample, method, or measures, found a consistent relationship between exposure to television and beliefs about the world. They concluded their book by saying, “Looking back over 20 years, it is clear that Gerbner’s work established a theoretical paradigm of enormous elegance and usefulness” (Shanhan & Morgan, p.38)

A study that expanded and tested the validity of cultivation theory for second order measures was conducted by Shrum (1999). Shrum used students who watched soap operas to investigate how attitude strength and attitude extremity are represented in memory, and how television plays a role in the development of those attitudes. He looked at people’s attitudes

pertaining to marital problems, owning expensive products, and distrust of people. For attitude extremity, Shrum found that for those who watch more soap operas, the cultivation effect was observed for attitudes toward marital discord and marital distrust, but not for owning expensive products or distrust of people in general. In terms of attitude strength, however, those who watched more soap operas were found to have greater attitude strength for all three variables, thus supporting the cultivation theory. Shrum concluded then that heavy television viewing appears to cultivate stronger, more accessible attitudes.

While a majority of the research using cultivation has been done domestically, one particular study was done in Perth, Australia, to determine if the effects would be the same in a different culture. The Australian study examined 1280 children in grades 2, 5, 8, and 11. The basic principle of cultivation theory, that the more an individual watches television, the more they will see the world as violent place, was replicated in this study (Hawkins & Pingree, 1980). An interesting finding, however, was that the replication was only found in adolescents, not in younger children grades 2 and 5. This finding indicates that in order for a person to integrate discrete television events into their behaviors and attitudes they must first possess a certain amount of cognitive skills that younger children do not yet have.

Another international study, published in 2000 by Cohen and Wiemann, investigated the impacts of television viewing on the cultivation of fear and interpersonal trust among Israeli youth. This study expanded on the cultivation theory by studying the effects of different genres of television, as well as effects on different sub-populations. The study included nearly 5,000 Israeli high school students from across Israel, and used the support of the Ministry of Education to ensure maximum participation. Cohen and Wiemann found that movies, horror and mystery programs, comedies, and music videos were the prevalent programs watched by all youths. They

also found that news viewing was also quite frequent, and that girls watched more soap operas and boys watched more sports. Initial results mirrored previous cultivation research, in that they discovered heavy viewers of television in general saw themselves as being unable to trust, potential victims, potentially exploited, and a world with many violent crimes. Specifically, those who were heavy sports viewers were more fearful of victimization, and those who watched music videos and soap operas were less trusting. However, when broken down by genre, some of the results were not consistent with previous cultivation research. For instance, watching the news resulted in more trust and a lower fear of being victimized or exploited. Additionally, watching comedies, especially sitcoms, resulted in a much rosier picture of the world, one with more trust and less victimization. When broken down demographically by age, older participants were more likely to be unable to trust, see themselves as potential victims or exploits, and see a much more violent world. When broken down by religiosity, Cohen and Wiemann found that those who were more religious were less susceptible to the effects of cultivation, meaning that despite exposure to television, they were less likely to see a gloomy version of the world.

A study that was not necessarily conducted internationally, but involved the use of participants from different nations was conducted by Woo and Dominick (2001). This study attempted to determine if daytime television talk shows cultivated negative attitudes and perceptions of interpersonal relationships in the U.S. among international and U.S. students. This study added to cultivation research by examining the effect of cultural background on cultivation. The results showed that international students who were heavy viewers of daytime talk shows overestimated the amount of improper and undesirable behaviors in the U.S. more than U.S. students who were heavy viewers of the same daytime talk shows. Additionally, the

study found that international students who were heavy viewers of daytime talk shows had more negative attitudes about family relationships, marriage, and romantic relationships than did U.S. students who were heavy viewers of the same shows. Only attitudes about friendship failed to yield significant cultivation results. In their conclusion, Woo and Dominick emphasize that cultural background does play a significant role in the cultivation process, and that repeated exposure to a certain genre can heavily impact the cultivation process.

### *Cultivation Theory and Other Forms of Media*

The studies discussed thus far have focused on relating cultivation theory to the attitudes and beliefs of television viewers. The majority of the studies aim to find a connection between those who view violent television and their attitudes and beliefs about violence. The overwhelming conclusion is that those who watch more television, especially television with high volumes of violent content, are more likely to perceive the world in violent manner and accept violence as a normal part of life. But can cultivation theory be applied to other forms of media and other attitudes and beliefs? Does it stand to reason that if violent television impacts violent attitudes and beliefs, perhaps media that represents other pervasive ideas will influence other attitudes and beliefs as well?

Many studies have attempted to demonstrate the link between television, and media exposure in general, to sexual attitudes and beliefs. For instance, several studies have found a link between young women who view sexual media and their tendencies to initiate and engage in sexual behaviors (Brown & Newcomer, 1991; Brown, Halpern & L'Engle, 2005; L'Engle, Brown & Kenneavy, 2006). These studies find that teenaged women who are exposed to a

higher concentration of sexual media are more likely to have sexual intercourse than teenaged women who view a lower amount of sexual media.

The classic study by Zillmann and Bryant (1982) formed the basis for more recent studies by Ward and Friedman (2006) and Peter and Valkenburg (2007). Zillmann and Bryant concluded that exposure to pornography resulted in a loss of compassion for rape victims. Interestingly enough, this result was consistent among women, as well as men. Ward and Friedman used television sitcoms to study the correlation between viewing sexually stereotyped and objectified women and the perception of women as sex objects among the viewers. They found that those young men and women who were exposed to more sexually stereotyped and objectified women were more likely to view women as sex objects. In addition, if the viewers were more able to identify with the characters partaking in the stereotyping and objectifying, then they were also more likely to have greater support for women as sex objects. Peter and Valkenburg found that the more sexual the media became, the more likely its viewers were to see women as sex objects. Moreover, as the exposure to media became more sexual, the media with lower concentrations of sex and explicitness became less of an influence on viewers.

Aside from studies relating television exposure to sexual attitudes and beliefs, several studies have been conducted to measure how exposure to certain types of music affects sexual attitudes and beliefs. Strouse & Buerkel-Rothfuss (1987) and Lackley & Moberg (1998) studied how the exposure to certain types of music affected attitudes and beliefs about sex. They found that the consumption of specific types of music, specifically hip-hop and rap music, is related to an acceptance of premarital sex. They also determined that exposure to hip-hop and rap music results in teens that are more likely to feel that they and their peers should be having sex.

Anderson, Carnagey & Eubanks (2003) also studied how music affects young people, but their

study focused on aggression as opposed to sexual attitudes and beliefs. They found that young men and women who were exposed to more violent lyrics in both rap and heavy metal music were more likely to demonstrate aggressive thoughts and feelings.

The study of how magazines affect sexual attitudes and beliefs, as well as perceptions of women, has also been undertaken in the past. The amount of studies involving non-pornographic magazines is far less frequent than studies regarding pornographic magazines, but there have been common findings among those that have been done. The findings indicate that non-pornographic men's magazines are clearly an important source of information about sex for young men, and that over 75% of young men say they regularly receive sex-related information from magazines (Bradner, Ku, & Lindberg, 2000). Findings also indicate that young men prefer to receive sex-related information from magazines because it is less embarrassing than asking an adult in a face-to-face conversation (Triebe & Gotthoffer, 2002).

A majority of the studies using magazines focus more on advertisements as opposed to content. Beginning in the late 1970s, several studies found that magazine advertisements typically portray women as having less power than men and simply as "decorations" for men (Goffman, 1979; Kang, 1997; Umiker-Sebeok, 1996). In addition, several studies concluded that women in magazine advertisements tend to be portrayed in a degrading or demeaning fashion, usually adhering to specific sexual stereotypes (Culley & Bennett, 1976; Peterson & Kerin, 1977; Venkatesan & Losco, 1975). More recent research has determined that over half of the advertisements in the ten most popular U.S. magazines featured women nude or scantily-clad, and nothing more than objects meant to garner feelings of sex or sexual desire (Lindner, 2004).

When it comes to the actual content of non-pornographic men's magazines and how it affects men's perceptions of women, the results were not much different. As stated before, there

are only a limited number of studies from which to gather information, but the results have been consistent thus far. North (2011) found that men surveyed had a difficult time telling the difference between quotes from men's magazines and quotes made by convicted rapists. The men viewed quotes from the magazines *FHM*, *Loaded*, *Nuts*, and *Zoo*, as well as quotes from a book about convicted rapists called *The Rapist Files*. The men in the study were unable to clearly identify the difference between the statements made by the rapists and those that came from previously published men's magazines. In addition, when asked to rate the quotes based on how derogatory they were towards women, North reported that the men continually rated the quotes from the magazines as more derogatory. North also quoted the lead author of the original study, Dr. Miranda Horvath, who said, "There is a fundamental concern that the content of such magazines normalizes the treatment of women as sexual objects."

Another article by Taylor (2006) found that young men who frequently read non-pornographic men's magazines were more likely to view women as willing sexual partners than those who were less frequent readers of men's magazines. Those same men also exhibited a tendency to exhibit feelings of dominance over women and the desire to engage in more varied intimate behaviors than men who did not read men's magazines as frequently according to Taylor. Despite the limited body of work, I find the results intriguing and worthy of further study.

A more common topic of study has been how pornographic magazines affect men's perceptions of women. There have been countless studies on how pornography affects men's perceptions of women. For example, Fejes (1992) indicated that pornography in general creates feelings of sexual aggression and dominance over women. In addition, Allen, D'Alessio and

Bregzel (1995) conducted a study that found that increased viewing of pornography leads to increased aggression overall in men.

A study involving how sex-related media affects men's perceptions of women would not be complete without exploring the vast expanse of Internet pornography. Even though this thesis attempted to draw a correlation between the viewing of men's magazines and certain perceptions of women, I would be remiss not to at least discuss Internet pornography. The seemingly endless amount of Internet pornography and the ease of which it can be accessed makes it relevant, even if only on the periphery.

The world of Internet pornography exploded nearly 20 years ago amid a decrease in obscenity restrictions and the emergence of Internet technology as an easily accessible medium (McGeeney, 2009). Before the advent of the Internet and the subsequent onslaught of pornographic content, people generally had to go outside of the home to find pornography. The Internet made it possible to view pornography at home in a much more affordable and anonymous way (Cooper & Griffin-Shelley, 2002). Today, anyone with Internet access, whether it be from a computer, smart phone, or tablet, can access pornography from anywhere at any time.

Researchers have hypothesized that those who view Internet pornography have a tendency to internalize the sexual attitudes and behaviors displayed by the actors and actresses they see in Internet pornography (McGeeney, 2009). That phenomenon is not that different than Gerbner's theory of cultivation, which has been discussed at great length already. Men are seen as the dominant force hunting women who are largely portrayed as extremely interested in sex and easily swayed to perform whatever the man desires (Cook, 2006). In addition, studies have proven that viewing Internet pornography can not only affect current behavior, but it can also

teach new behaviors, including violent and destructive (Harris & Scott, 2002). Lo and Wei (2005) found that the more a person is exposed to Internet pornography, the more likely it is that they will display permissive attitudes toward sexual behavior, including premarital and extramarital sex.

### *Additional Literature Relating to the Study*

I used Glick and Fiske's (1996) Ambivalent Sexism Inventory as the inspiration for many of the questions on the survey. Peter Glick and Susan Fiske developed the theoretical concept of ambivalent sexism to better understand how men feel towards women. According to Glick and Fiske (1997), ambivalent sexism has two sub-categories, benevolent sexism and hostile sexism. The two sub-categories are similar in that they reinforce traditional gender roles and agree that women are the weaker sex; however, the difference in hostile and benevolent sexism lies in the expressions of that sexism.

The inventory Glick and Fiske developed asks respondents a series of questions to determine their level of either hostile or benevolent sexism. The goal was to show that in addition to the negative effects of hostile sexism, there were also many detrimental effects of benevolent sexism as well. Although the present author is mainly focused on the hostile sexism towards women that is developed through exposure to non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and Internet pornography, an understanding of Glick and Fiske's research and theoretical assumptions is deemed necessary.

Historically, research involving sexism focused primarily on hostile sexism, with results depicting sexist men as having and expressing feelings of domination, degradation, and hostility towards women. Benevolent sexism, on the other hand, is characterized by positive expressions,

such as protection and affection towards women (Glick & Fiske, 1997). Expressions of hostile sexism include sexual harassment of women, jokes that offend women, or discrimination against women based solely on their gender. The assumption with hostile intent is that not only are women the weaker sex, but they are also nothing more than sexual objects meant to satisfy men's needs and desires. Accomplishing anything more is beyond them. Expressions of hostile sexism are usually very obvious and noticeable. Expressions of benevolent sexism, on the other hand, are often less noticeable. Those expressions include helping a woman carry heavy objects and offering to do work for women. The basic assumption with benevolent sexism is that women are not capable of doing things without the intervention of men. Sometimes men who are just being friendly and helpful can be seen as benevolently sexist, because it is usually a very unconscious act, and most men do not even realize they are acting in that manner.

Empirical evidence exists to support Glick and Fiske's original notions about ambivalent sexism. Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, and Zhu (1997) and Glick and Fiske (2001) found that benevolent sexist men who respond the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory tend to look at women and classify them into safe, traditional roles, such as a homemaker. The hostile sexist men, on the other hand, look at the same women and see them as worthless and servile. The studies also determined that the feelings of benevolent sexist men stem from the dependencies they have on women in their own lives, and the feelings of hostile sexist men are a result of them holding a more dominant role over women in their lives.

### Chapter 3 – Hypotheses and Research Questions

Based on the evidence presented in the studies cited above, as well as a plethora of other research, the impact of television on the attitudes and behaviors of people is evident. I believe that the same phenomenon will be found when people are exposed to magazines. It has been determined time and time again that those who are exposed to more violent television are more likely to see the world in a violent way, and that exposure to television in general can impact the world view of those who watch. It stands to reason that people who are exposed to a certain perception of women in magazines will then begin to see real life women in the same light. Of course, those who are “heavy” viewers, or readers in this particular case, tend to be more impacted, and variables such as gender, age, race, and socioeconomic status can also impact results. This study will extend previous research by first expanding cultivation theory to the magazine realm, and then attempting to determine if exposure to men’s magazines can affect a person’s attitudes and behaviors. Specifically, this study will attempt to find a link between young men’s exposure to men’s magazines and their perceptions about women in our society. Based on previous research, and my own assumptions, I have come up with the following hypotheses and research questions:

RQ1: How do various demographic factors (age, race, religiosity, socio-economic status) relate to men’s perceptions of women?

RQ2: How does exposure to non-pornographic men’s magazines affect men’s perception of women?

RQ3: How does exposure to pornographic men's magazines affect men's perception of women?

RQ4: How does exposure to Internet pornography affect men's perception of women?

RQ5: Are the perceptions of women different in those men who have been exposed to non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic men's magazines, and/or Internet pornography for a longer period of time?

H1: Younger men who are exposed to non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic men's magazines, and/or Internet pornography are more likely to develop the negative perceptions of women than are older men who are exposed to men's magazines.

H2: Men who are exposed to more non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic men's magazines, and/or Internet pornography will be more likely to perceive women as sex objects.

H3: Men who are exposed to more non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic men's magazines, and/or Internet pornography will be less likely to perceive women as less moral than men.

H4: Men who are exposed to more non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic men's magazines, and/or Internet pornography will be more likely to perceive women as being unequal to them intellectually.

H5: Men who are "highly interested" in the content of non-pornographic men's magazines and pornographic magazines are more likely to develop the negative perceptions of women than are men who are "moderately interested" or "just browsing."

Ultimately, this thesis aimed to answer the research questions and to prove or disprove the hypotheses by examining some of the differences between readers of pornographic men's magazines, non-pornographic men's magazines, and Internet pornography. In addition, this study determined how age, race, socioeconomic status, religiosity, history of viewing, and other viewing habits affect the perceptions of men exposed to pornographic men's magazines, non-pornographic men's magazines, and Internet pornography.

## Chapter 4 – Method

### *Study Design and Participants*

The survey questionnaire was pre-tested and revised, and went through a typical IRB approval process. Participants came from the University of Kansas and within the surrounding communities of Lawrence and Leavenworth, Kansas. The survey respondents were comprised of a convenience sample. The survey was completely anonymous as well, due to the sensitive nature of some of the questions.

The survey was hosted at surveymonkey.com and garnered 108 male respondents from February 1 to March 15, 2012. The questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix A of this report. I understand the total number of respondents is low. The survey was advertised to a wide range of male respondents by professors at the University of Kansas and by me through various forms of media and face-to-face communication. Many potential respondents were weary of the survey due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Others did not participate because there was no incentive. Despite the low numbers, the data gathered from those that did participate is deemed useful.

I believe that because the respondents were mostly undergraduate students in various disciplines and random individuals in the surrounding community, they had limited or no knowledge about the purpose of the study. The survey included questions about the respondents' exposure to non-pornographic men's magazines, such as *Maxim*, *FHM*, and *Stuff*, pornographic men's magazines, such as *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and *Hustler*, and Internet pornography. The three non-pornographic men's magazines were mentioned to give the respondents an idea of what a typical non-pornographic men's magazine is in my eyes, and because those three magazines

represent the three most popular non-pornographic men's magazines for men aged 18-24, and two of the top 10 men's magazines overall. The three pornographic men's magazines were mentioned because they represent the three most popular pornographic magazines of all time. The survey initially asked for the total amount of times each individual viewed non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and Internet pornography on a monthly basis. The survey then followed-up by asking questions to determine how long the respondents have been viewing that material and their level of interest in the material they read and/or viewed. Next, the respondents were asked about their feelings towards women. Specifically, the survey attempted to determine if the men think of women as sex objects, as being more moral than men, or if women are intellectually inferior to men in general. The survey concluded with demographic questions about age, race, socioeconomic status, and level of religiosity.

### *Measures*

The measure for the amount of exposure to non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and Internet pornography included three categories. I used previous cultivation research as a guideline to develop a scale for "light," "moderate," and "heavy" viewers of each type of medium. Those respondents who view non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and Internet pornography more than six times a month were considered heavy viewers, those who view the material three to five times a month were considered moderate viewers, and those who view the material two or fewer times a month were considered light viewers. I also included a measure for those who do not view the material at all, and gave the respondents the opportunity to enter a manual answer different from the given choices. These measures of viewing were the independent variables in the present research.

The history of viewing non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and Internet pornography was broken down into four categories. The respondents were categorized by those who had been viewing the material for "more than 5 years," "3 to 5 years," "1 to 2 years," "less than 1 year," or "Never." The level of interest among viewers of the magazines was broken down into four categories. I used "highly interested," "somewhat interested," "moderately interested," and "just browsing" as the four categories. Clarification on the survey informed the respondents that "highly interested" meant reading all of the articles intently and looking at all of the pictures in detail. "Somewhat interested" meant that the respondents mainly looked at the pictures and read the articles briefly. "Moderately interested" meant that the respondents read some of the articles, either wholly or partly, and looked at the pictures briefly while going through the magazine. "Just browsing" was identified as those respondents who only read the titles of the articles and glanced at the pictures while flipping through the magazine to pass time. I also gave the respondents the opportunity to enter an open-ended answer different from the given choices. These measures were the controlled variables in the present research.

In order to measure the participant's perceptions of women, I used a series of Likert Scale questions. The questions asked the students how strongly they agreed or disagreed with statements such as, "I think women are only good for sex, and nothing else," and, "I think men are naturally smarter than women." In addition, some of the questions relating to men's perceptions of women were borrowed from Glick and Fiske's (1996) Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, such as, "Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility." These perceptions were the dependent variables in the present research.

The demographic variables used in this study were be age, race, socioeconomic status, and level of religiosity. I simply asked for the respondents' age. In order to avoid confusion,

categorization of ages was not used. Race was determined by using seven categories: Asian/Pacific Islander, African American/Black, Latino/Latina, Caucasian, Native American, Middle Eastern, and Other. Socioeconomic status was based on the respondent's income using six categories: under \$25,000, \$25,000 to \$45,000, \$45,001 to \$60,000, \$60,001 to \$75,000, \$75,001 to \$100,000, and over \$100,000. Respondents were asked to combine their income with their parents' income if they currently received financial help from them. Level of religiosity was determined by using four categories: Very Religious; Somewhat Religious; Not Religious, but believes in God; and Not Religious, and does not believe in God. These demographic measures were also controlled variables in the present research.

### *Data Analysis*

The average age of the 108 male respondents was 23 years-old ( $M = 22.87$ ,  $SD = 5.17$ ), with respondents ranging in age from 18 to 43. An overwhelming majority (81%) of the respondents were White, with Asians, Blacks, Latinos, and Middle Easterners making up the remaining 19%. Because the majority of the respondents were White, race was ultimately dummy coded (White = 1, All Others = 0). Income was measured on a 1 - to 6-point scale, with 26.6% of respondents reporting an income between \$45,000 and \$75,000 ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 1.86$ ). Religiosity was measured on a 1 - to 4-point scale, with 38.35 of respondents claiming "Somewhat religious – attend church services and activities occasionally" and 27.1% claiming "Not religious, but believe in God – attend church services and activities rarely" ( $M = 2.33$ ,  $SD = .97$ ).

I conducted a factor analysis in order to determine the most logical way to group variables and create indices to measure certain perceptions the respondents could have of

women. It was important to ensure the indices had the proper relevance by utilizing Cronbach's alphas or Pearson correlation coefficients to determine acceptable internal consistency. After the factor analysis, I created three primary indices: 1) The perception of women as sex objects; 2) The perception of women as more moral than men; and 3) The perception of women as less intelligent than men. The following Table 1 depicts the three indices and the corresponding survey questions used to determine them:

Table 1: Measures Used to Create Indices on Men's Perceptions of Women

|   | Mean | SD   | alpha | <i>r</i> |
|---|------|------|-------|----------|
| Index: Women are sex objects  | 6.68 | 2.29 | .70   |          |
| 1. I think women are only good for sex, and nothing else.             | 1.41 | .72  |       |          |
| 2. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.              | 3.12 | 1.00 |       |          |
| 3. Women are a means to an end necessary to achieve sexual pleasure   | 2.16 | 1.15 |       |          |
| Index: Women are more moral than men                                  | 4.84 | 1.77 | .58   | .41      |
| 1. Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility. | 2.51 | 1.03 |       |          |
| 2. Many women have a quality of purity few men possess.               | 2.34 | 1.09 |       |          |
| Index: Women are less intelligent than men                            | 4.66 | 2.18 | .85   | .73      |
| 1. Men are naturally smarter than women.                              | 2.49 | 1.16 |       |          |
| 2. Women do not have the mental capacity to do the same jobs as men.  | 2.18 | 1.19 |       |          |

Following the factor analysis, I conducted Pearson correlation tests to determine whether or not there was a relationship between the indices and the other variables included in the survey. The tests attempted to determine an association between the three primary indices (Women are sex objects, women are more moral than men, and women as less intelligent than men) and the

viewing habits of the respondents as it relates to non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic men's magazines, and Internet pornography. I also used simple correlation tests to determine if a relationship existed between the three primary indices and the demographic variables of age, race, socioeconomic status, and level of religiosity.

Lastly, I conducted a multiple regression analysis in stages to further analyze the relationship between the indices, demographic variables and the viewing habits of the respondents. The variables were entered in four blocks, starting with the demographic variables of age, income, religiosity, and race. Then the variables involving how often one views non-pornographic magazines, how long one has been viewing non-pornographic magazines, and how interested one is when viewing non-pornographic magazines were introduced. Next, I introduced the variables involving how often one views pornographic magazines, how long one has been viewing pornographic magazines, and how interested one is when viewing pornographic magazines. Finally, the last block included the variables relating to how often one views Internet pornography and how long one has been viewing Internet pornography.

## Chapter 5 – Findings

After conducting the Pearson correlation tests, I made several interesting conclusions. Based on those conclusions I was able to answer the Research Questions and determine whether each of the Hypotheses was supported or rejected. Before getting into the Research Questions and Hypotheses, it is interesting to first look at the relationships between each of the aforementioned indices and other significant findings.

There was no correlation between the women as sex objects index and the women as more moral index ( $r = -.04, p > .05$ ). In other words, whether a man perceives a woman as a sex object has no bearing on whether he believes she is more moral than a man. There was a strong correlation, however, between the women as sex objects index and the women as less intelligent index ( $r = .75, p < .001$ ). This indicates that a man who considers women sex objects is more likely to believe women are less intelligent than men. The correlation between the women as more moral index and the women as less intelligent index was not significant ( $r = .06, p > .05$ ). Therefore, whether a man believes women are more moral than men has nothing to do with the perception of women as less intelligent than men.

Research Question 1 asked how the various demographic factors related to men's perceptions of women. It was determined that age and religiosity did not play a significant role in determining whether men will see women as sex objects, as more moral, or as less intelligent. Income, however, was significantly correlated to the perception of women as less intelligent than men ( $r = .20, p < .05$ ). Basically, the higher the income a man reported, the more likely he was to perceive women as less intelligent than men.

Hypothesis 1 stated that younger men who are exposed to non-pornographic men’s magazines, pornographic magazines, and/or Internet pornography were more likely to develop negative perceptions of women than were older men who were exposed to the same mediums. That hypothesis was rejected because age was not correlated to those negative perceptions of women as sex objects, less moral than men, or less intelligent than men. Table 2 below depicts the three indices and their relation to the demographic factors:

Table 2: Correlations Between the Indices on Men’s Perceptions of Women and Demographic Factors

| Index                     | Age  | Income | Religiosity |
|---------------------------|------|--------|-------------|
| Women as sex objects      | -.07 | .12    | .15         |
| Women as more moral       | -.10 | .10    | -.16        |
| Women as less intelligent | -.04 | .20*   | .04         |

Note: \* $p < .05$

Data in Tables 3a, 3b and 3c address the remaining research questions and hypotheses. Research Question 2 asked how exposure to non-pornographic men’s magazines affects men’s perceptions of women. The data determined that there were positive correlations between how often one reads non-pornographic men’s magazines ( $r = -.27, p < .01$ ), how long one has been reading non-pornographic men’s magazines ( $r = -.35, p < .01$ ), how interested one is when reading non-pornographic men’s magazines ( $r = -.36, p < .01$ ) and the perception of women as sex objects.

Research Question 3 asked how exposure to pornographic men’s magazines affects men’s perceptions of women. There was a positive correlation between how often one reads pornographic magazines ( $r = -.30, p < .01$ ) and the perception of women as sex objects. There

was also a positive correlation between how often one reads pornographic magazines ( $r = -.33, p < .01$ ), how long one has been reading pornographic magazines ( $r = -.42, p < 0.01$ ) and the perception of women as less intelligent.

Research Question 4 asked how exposure to Internet pornography affects men's perceptions of women. There was a positive correlation between how often one views Internet pornography ( $r = -.44, p < .01$ ) and the perception of women as sex objects. In addition, the data found a positive correlation between how often one views Internet pornography ( $r = -.34, p < .01$ ) and the perception of women as less intelligent. The findings above suggest that the consumption of mass media (men's magazines – non-pornographic and pornographic – and Internet pornography) leads to the perception of women as sex objects.

Despite the multitude of correlations between men's exposure to non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and Internet pornography and the perception of women as sex objects and less intelligent than men, there were not significant correlations between any of those variables and the perceptions of women's morality compared to men's morality. In fact, there were no statistically significant correlations between any of the variables relating to non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic men's magazines, or Internet pornography and the perceptions of women as more moral than men.

Hypothesis 2 stated that men who are exposed to more non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and/or Internet pornography will be more likely to perceive women as sex objects. This hypothesis was supported, as the data determined that exposure to non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and Internet pornography has a positive association with men's perception of women as sex objects.

Hypothesis 3 stated that men who are exposed to more non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and/or Internet pornography will be less likely to perceive women as more moral than men. This hypothesis was rejected. The data actually suggest that the media in question are not related to men's perceptions of women's morality.

Hypothesis 4 stated that men who are exposed to more non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and/or Internet pornography will be more likely to perceive women as being unequal to them intellectually. This hypothesis is partially supported. The data suggested those men who read pornographic magazines more often, and have been for a longer time, see women as less intelligent. Those men that are heavier viewers of Internet pornography also see women as less intelligent. Non-pornographic magazines, which affects men's perception of women as sex objects, does not have an effect on their perception of women's intelligence.

Hypothesis 5 stated that men who are "highly interested" in the content of non-pornographic men's magazines and pornographic magazines are more likely to develop negative perceptions of women than are men who are only "moderately interested" or "just browsing." Present data only partially supported Hypothesis 5, suggesting that men who are highly interested in non-pornographic men's magazines are more likely to develop negative perceptions of women. The level of interest in pornographic magazines, however, was not a factor.

Research Question 5 asked if the perceptions of women are different in those men who are exposed to non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and/or Internet pornography for a longer period of time. The data showed that the longer a man is exposed to non-pornographic men's magazines, the more likely he is to see women as sex objects. In

addition, a man who had viewed pornographic magazines for a longer period of time is more likely to have the perception of women as less intelligent. There was no correlation between the length of time a man is exposed to Internet pornography and any perception of women.

Tables 3a through 3c below show the Pearson correlation data as it relates to the variables involving men’s viewing habits of non-pornographic magazines, pornographic magazines, and Internet pornography:

Table 3a: Pearson Correlations Between Non-Pornographic Men’s Magazines Variables and Three Primary Indices

|                                  | How Often<br>Non-Porno | How Long<br>Non-Porno | How Interested<br>Non-Porno |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| <u>Women as Sex Objects</u>      | -.27**                 | -.35**                | -.36**                      |
| <u>Women as Less Moral</u>       | -.04                   | .26                   | .09                         |
| <u>Women as Less Intelligent</u> | -.24*                  | -.21                  | -.31*                       |

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Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Table 3b: Pearson Correlations Between Pornographic Magazines Variables and Three Primary Indices

|                                  | How Often<br>Pornographic | How Long<br>Pornographic | How Interested<br>Pornographic |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <u>Women as Sex Objects</u>      | -.30**                    | -.36*                    | -.11                           |
| <u>Women as Less Moral</u>       | -.08                      | .04                      | -.03                           |
| <u>Women as Less Intelligent</u> | -.33**                    | -.42**                   | -.04                           |

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Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Table 3c: Pearson Correlations Between Internet Pornography Variables and Three Primary Indices

|                                  | How Often<br>Internet Porn | How Long<br>Internet Porn |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <u>Women as Sex Objects</u>      | -.44**                     | -.19                      |
| <u>Women as Less Moral</u>       | -.20*                      | .26*                      |
| <u>Women as Less Intelligent</u> | -.34**                     | -.15                      |

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

In order to be more thorough, I continued analyzing the data by conducting a multiple regression procedure. Multiple regression allowed me to look at all of the variables at the same time and determine if any significant relationships existed. Interestingly enough, the multiple regression procedure produced some results that conflicted with the results of the Pearson correlation.

As was stated before, the multiple regression attempted to determine whether or not men's perceptions of women as sex objects, more moral, or less intelligent was affected when all variables regarding demographics and viewing habits of non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and Internet pornography were considered. When it came to women being perceived as sex objects, the last multiple regression model in Table 4 showed only one significant relationship. A higher frequency of Internet pornography viewing was related to the perception of women as sex objects ( $\beta = .52, p < .05$ ). This relationship partially supported Hypothesis 2, which hypothesized that men exposed to non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and Internet pornography were more likely to see women as sex

objects. No relationship between this perception and reading non-pornographic or pornographic magazines was not found.

Hypotheses 1, 3, 4, and 5 were rejected by the multiple regression models. No statistical significance was found between any demographic factors, including age, race, income, and religiosity, and the perceptions of women as more moral (Table 5) or less intelligent (Table 6). In addition, no relationship was found between men's viewing habits involving non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic magazines, and Internet pornography and the perceptions of women as more moral (Table 5) or less intelligent (Table 6). Even though a lower level of interest in non-pornographic magazines was associated with the perception of women being less intelligent ( $\beta = -.62, p < .05$ ) according to the second model in Table 6, the coefficient became non-significant after more variables were entered.

Table 4: Factors Predicting the Perception of Women as Sex Objects

|                                    | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <u>Dependent Variables</u>         | $\beta$ | $\beta$ | $\beta$ | $\beta$ |
| <i>Block 1</i>                     |         |         |         |         |
| Age                                | -.31    | -.15    | -.09    | -.16    |
| Income                             | .29     | .35     | .33     | .23     |
| Religiosity                        | -.07    | -.06    | -.11    | -.24    |
| Race                               | -.21    | -.34    | -.37    | -.14    |
| <i>Block 2</i>                     |         |         |         |         |
| How often non-porn mag             |         | -.05    | -.09    | -.10    |
| How long non-porn mag              |         | .24     | .33     | .29     |
| How Interested in non-porn mag     |         | -.62*   | -.59    | -.38    |
| <i>Block 3</i>                     |         |         |         |         |
| How often pornographic mag         |         |         | -.23    | -.06    |
| How long pornographic mag          |         |         | .11     | -.09    |
| How interested in pornographic mag |         |         | -.14    | -.18    |
| <i>Block 4</i>                     |         |         |         |         |
| How often Internet porn            |         |         |         | -.52*   |
| How long Internet porn             |         |         |         | .20     |
| F                                  | 1.01    | 1.68    | 1.24    | 1.59    |
| R <sup>2</sup>                     | .14     | .36     | .41     | .54     |

Note: \* $p < .05$ ; N = 29

Table 5: Factors Predicting the Perception of Women as More Moral Than Men

|                                    | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Dependent Variables                | $\beta$ | $\beta$ | $\beta$ | $\beta$ |
| <i>Block 1</i>                     |         |         |         |         |
| Age                                | .05     | .15     | .26     | .35     |
| Income                             | .06     | .07     | .08     | .14     |
| Religiosity                        | -.20    | -.23    | -.37    | -.24    |
| Race                               | -.14    | -.17    | -.20    | -.27    |
| <i>Block 2</i>                     |         |         |         |         |
| How often non-porn mag             |         | -.42    | .44     | .46     |
| How long non-porn mag              |         | .51     | .61     | .42     |
| How interested in non-porn mag     |         | -.03    | -.05    | .15     |
| <i>Block 3</i>                     |         |         |         |         |
| How often pornographic mag         |         |         | -.31    | -.42    |
| How long pornographic mag          |         |         | .27     | .36     |
| How interested in pornographic mag |         |         | -.32    | -.22    |
| <i>Block 4</i>                     |         |         |         |         |
| How often Internet porn            |         |         |         | .33     |
| How long Internet porn             |         |         |         | .28     |
| F                                  | .37     | .60     | .82     | 1.22    |
| R <sup>2</sup>                     | .06     | .17     | .33     | .49     |

Note: all coefficients are n.s.; N = 29

Table 6: Factors Predicting the Perception of Women as Less Intelligent

|                                    | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <u>Dependent Variables</u>         | $\beta$ | $\beta$ | $\beta$ | $\beta$ |
| <i>Block 1</i>                     |         |         |         |         |
| Age                                | -.20    | -.02    | -.07    | -.16    |
| Income                             | .03     | .13     | .05     | -.04    |
| Religiosity                        | -.24    | -.25    | -.25    | -.38    |
| Race                               | -.02    | -.12    | -.27    | .11     |
| <i>Block 2</i>                     |         |         |         |         |
| How often non-porn mag             |         | -.03    | -.13    | -.13    |
| How long non-porn mag              |         | .33     | .71     | .75     |
| How interested in non-porn mag     |         | -.62*   | -.44    | -.26    |
| <i>Block 3</i>                     |         |         |         |         |
| How often pornographic mag         |         |         | -.28    | -.13    |
| How long pornographic mag          |         |         | -.29    | -.46    |
| How interested in pornographic mag |         |         | .12     | -.19    |
| <i>Block 4</i>                     |         |         |         |         |
| How often Internet porn            |         |         |         | -.48    |
| How long Internet porn             |         |         |         | .02     |
| F                                  | .55     | 1.07    | 1.14    | 1.45    |
| R <sup>2</sup>                     | .09     | .27     | .40     | .54     |

Note: \* $p < .05$ ; N = 29

## Chapter 6 – Discussion and Conclusion

### *Summary of Findings*

I made some interesting discoveries while conducting this study. Based on the hypotheses I started with, some outcomes were a surprise, to say the least. I posited that men who are exposed to more non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic men's magazines, and/or Internet pornography will be more likely to perceive women as sex objects, as less moral, and as less intelligent. Past research, including those already cited in a study by Fishbein & Yzer (2003), concluded that mass media can influence people's behavior and attitudes towards others. Whether it is exposure to television or magazines, many studies have concluded that people develop at least part of their attitudes and beliefs based on what they see and read. Therefore, I was sure this study would show a strong correlation between men who are exposed to non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic men's magazines, and/or Internet pornography and certain perceptions of women. That was indeed the case when I conducted the Pearson correlation tests. The results of those tests strongly support the cultivation theory.

The results were less definitive, however, after running multiple regression. This study found no connection between the perception of women as more moral or less intelligent and men's exposure to non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic men's magazines, and/or Internet pornography. In other words, when many factors are taken into consideration at the same time, media have no effect on men's perception of women. These findings offer less support to the cultivation theory.

I believe there are three reasons for the surprising outcome following the multiple regression. The first is the small sample size ( $N = 29$ ) in this set of analysis. Therefore, perhaps

the regression models should not be used to negate the Pearson correlation findings. Second, I believe men today are exposed to a greater variety of female images in the media. Instead of just seeing the scantily clad and objectified women in non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic men's magazines, and Internet pornography, men are exposed to women in the media and in real life who are accomplished and intelligent. In addition, these positive images of women are accompanied by stories of hard-work, resilience, and perseverance, whereas in the past the same women may have been depicted as using their sexuality to advance and improve their lives. Third, technological advancements have made people in general more aware of their surroundings and provided the opportunity for exposure to more diverse thoughts and ideas. In the past, men may have been more influenced by non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic men's magazines, or Internet pornography because they had fewer alternatives to help them develop attitudes and beliefs.

The fact that there was a strong correlation between viewing Internet pornography and the perception of women as sex objects is not surprising. As it was discussed before, the Internet is packed with still images and videos of women conducting sex acts in every possible scenario. The Internet pornography industry has exploded and uses the most current technology to depict women of all types performing seemingly pleasure-filled sexual acts without regard for how it makes women appear in general. The bottom line is that the Internet is the most widely used medium today, and it has an incredible influence on people. When millions of web pages show women as nothing more than sex objects meant for men's pleasure, it is no wonder the results of this study followed suit.

As perhaps a sign of the times, it is also not surprising that men are influenced more by Internet pornography than non-pornographic or pornographic men's magazines. As magazine

circulation dwindles and the privacy of the Internet increases, it makes sense that men would turn to the Internet more than they would to magazines. It is far more common nowadays for a man to view Internet pornography from the comfort of his home, and thus be influenced by it, than it is for a man to go to a store and have to buy a magazine from a clerk in person. The results of this study support the fact that more men partake in the use of Internet pornography than buying magazines. Had this study been done 15 years ago, the results may have been different.

Prior to the use of multiple regression to analyze the data in more depth, Pearson correlations yielded some interesting results. It was determined that the exposure to non-pornographic magazines had more of an effect on men's perceptions of women than the exposure to pornographic magazines and Internet pornography. The frequency of viewing, the history of viewing, and the interest level when viewing non-pornographic men's magazines all had an effect on the perception of women as sex objects. Only the frequency of pornographic magazine and Internet pornography viewing yielded similar results, whereas the history of viewing and interest level in pornographic magazines and Internet pornography had no effect on the perception of women as sex objects. I did not hypothesize or ask research questions directly related to whether one medium was more influential than the others, but I feel this fact warrants a short discussion. If I had had the forethought to ask about or hypothesize about this particular fact, there is little doubt I would have suggested the history of viewing habits and level of interest in both pornographic magazines and Internet pornography would have an influence on the perception of women as sex objects. The exact reason behind the fact that non-pornographic men's magazines become more influential with frequency and interest level is beyond the capabilities of this study, but could come from the fact that non-pornographic men's magazines

are known for repeatedly portraying women as sexual objects meant to please men. In addition, the plethora of advertisements within these magazines often carry a similar undertone.

Oddly enough, even though non-pornographic men's magazines had a greater effect on men's perception of women as sex objects based on the Pearson correlation, it is the pornographic magazines and Internet pornography that affected men's perception of women as less intelligent. Again, the reasons behind these correlations are not known, but I would venture to guess that men who view pornographic magazines and Internet pornography are repeatedly exposed to women who are often easily convinced to have sex with men despite initial unwillingness to do so. The fact that the women in pornographic magazines and Internet pornography are seemingly easily swayed and convinced to go against their better judgment may be the reason why men perceive them as less intelligent.

Perhaps the most interesting of all results garnered from this study is that exposure to non-pornographic men's magazines, pornographic men's magazines, and/or Internet pornography has no effect whatsoever on men's perception of women's morality. I hypothesized that more exposure to these mediums would increase the perception of women as less moral, and internally believed this was one hypothesis that was sure to be supported. Maybe these results are an anomaly, and further study may contradict them. I am concerned, however, that the results may be a sign that women involved in the business of selling sex are becoming more accepted. Now, this may not be troubling to everyone, but I believe these results speak volumes about what is becoming acceptable within our society. In the past, women involved in the sex industry were likely to be seen as deviants or dirty, but these results could signal a change. Are men, and perhaps society as a whole, seeing these women in a different light? Is it no longer a bad thing to be the star in a sex-related medium? What does this say about the morality of our

society as a whole? Those questions and others will make for a great addition to the current body of work.

### *Limitations*

This study did have several limitations that will need to be improved upon during future research. First, the sample was not random. Second, the sample size was small. Ideally, a study of this nature would have at least 400 randomly selected respondents in order to make a better generalization of the population.

Third, the respondents were overwhelmingly White. The study failed to capture enough respondents of different races. In the end, I was forced to consolidate respondents into two categories – White and Non-white. That is not ideal in my opinion – even though this dichotomy is common in many studies – as it did not allow me to compare media effects on different races. Future studies should make a cognizant effort to garner responses from all races in order to avoid this same problem.

Another limitation is the limited variance of age in the respondents. As it was stated before, the age variable was not significantly correlated to any of the indices involving perceptions of women. It should be noted that the minimum age of the respondents was 18 and maximum age was 43. The mean age was 22.87 with a standard deviation of 5.17. That suggests that the majority of the respondents in the study were between the ages of 17.7 and 28.04 years-old. Specifically, 79.6% of the respondents are 25 years-old and younger, 83.3% were 26 years-old and younger, and 88% were 28 years-old and younger. The bottom line is that the study did not really compare younger men and much older men. Instead, it basically

compared young men to other men who were only a few years older. A wider range of ages could have made the age variable more significant.

Lastly, the sensitive nature of this study may have played a role in the results. Although the survey was clearly anonymous, and there was no way for any of the respondents or their associated answers to be identified, the fact that the study focused on a sensitive topic may have skewed the results. Many of the respondents may have been afraid to answer truthfully for fear of being singled out as a sexist or pervert. Many respondents may have answered the questions in a manner they knew to be politically correct, as opposed to how they actually feel. This issue is very difficult to circumvent, and the true feelings of many respondents may never be known because of it. In the future, I believe the only way to ensure the utmost honesty is to continue to ensure the respondents know that not only is the survey anonymous, but that their truthful answers are beneficial to society as a whole.

### *Contribution*

I believe this research is relevant and important. It expanded on past cultivation research and explored a topic important to our society as a whole. Taking cultivation research from television to magazines has been insightful and interesting. Understanding how women are perceived by the opposite sex and why those perceptions exist is key to the development of equal rights and a level playing field for women in today's society. Discovering if mass media exposure plays a role in developing certain perceptions is also important in order to help curb biases within our society. I have appreciated the opportunity to conduct this research and look forward to conducting similar research in the future to further the body of knowledge in the field.

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## Appendix A

The School of Journalism at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. **Participation in this study, or lack thereof, will not affect your grade or standing in the class.**

We are conducting this study to better understand how the reading/viewing of men's magazines and Internet content affect men's overall perception of women. This will entail your completion of a questionnaire. The questionnaire is expected to take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

The content of the questionnaire should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life. **If you do become uncomfortable while completing the questionnaire, and you wish to discontinue your participation, simply return the questionnaire to the researcher and request that it be omitted from the study. You will not be penalized in any way if you choose to discontinue your participation.** Although participation may not benefit you directly, we believe that the information obtained from this study will help us gain a better understanding of media effects in general. Your participation is solicited, although strictly voluntary. Your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings. If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, please feel free to contact us by phone or mail.

Completion of the survey indicates your willingness to participate in this project and that you are over the age of eighteen. If you have any additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385 or write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, email [irb@ku.edu](mailto:irb@ku.edu). If you have questions about this particular study, please contact either of us. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

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1.) How often do you view non-pornographic men's magazines (namely *Maxim*, *FHM*, and *Stuff*, or similar ones) per month? (please check one)

1. More than 6 times a month
2. Between 3 and 5 times a month
3. Less than 3 times a month
4. Not at all (if you choose this answer, please skip to question 4)
5. Other; specify: \_\_\_\_\_

2.) How long have you been viewing such magazines? (please check one)

1. More than 5 years
2. Between 3 and 5 years
3. Between 1 and 2 years
4. Less than 1 year
5. Never

3.) When you read the magazines, how interested are you in the content of the articles and pictures? (please check one)

1. Highly interested – Read all articles intently, look at all of the pictures in detail
2. Somewhat interested – Mainly look at the pictures, read the articles briefly
3. Moderately interested – Read some articles, look at the pictures briefly
4. Just browsing - Read the titles of the articles, glance at the pictures
5. Other; specify: \_\_\_\_\_

4.) How often do you view pornographic magazines (*Playboy*, *Hustler*, and *Penthouse* for example) per month? (please check one)

1. More than 6 times a month
2. Between 3 and 5 times a month
3. Less than 3 times a month
4. Not at all (if you choose this answer, please skip to question 7)
5. Other; specify: \_\_\_\_\_

5.) How long have you been viewing such magazines? (please check one)

1. More than 5 years
2. Between 3 and 5 years
3. Between 1 and 2 years
4. Less than 1 year
5. Never

6.) When you read the magazines, how interested are you in the content of the articles and pictures? (please check one)

1. Highly interested – Read all articles intently, look at all of the pictures in detail
2. Somewhat interested – Mainly look at the pictures, read the articles briefly
3. Moderately interested – Read some articles, look at the pictures briefly
4. Just browsing – Read the titles of the articles, glance at the pictures
5. Other; specify: \_\_\_\_\_

7.) How often do you view pornographic material on the Internet? (please check one)

1. More than 6 times a month
2. Between 3 and 5 times a month
3. Less than 3 times a month
4. Not at all (if you choose this answer, please skip to question 9)

8.) How long have you been viewing such material? (please check one)

1. More than 5 years
2. Between 3 and 5 years
3. Between 1 and 2 years
4. Less than 1 year
5. Never

Please read the following statements carefully and indicate how much you disagree or agree with each of them.

9.) I think women are only good for sex, and nothing else. (please check one)

- |                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Argee | Strongly Agree |
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

10.) Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility. (please check one)

- |                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Argee | Strongly Agree |
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

11.) Women want to have sex all of the time. (please check one)

- |                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Argee | Strongly Agree |
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

12.) There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances. (please check one)

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Argee | Strongly Agree |
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

13.) Men are naturally smarter than women. (please check one)

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Argee | Strongly Agree |
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

14.) Women seek to gain power by getting control over men. (please check one)

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Argee | Strongly Agree |
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

15.) Women do not have the mental capacity to do the same jobs as men. (please check one)

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Argee | Strongly Agree |
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

16.) Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess. (please check one)

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Argee | Strongly Agree |
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

17.) Women are a means to an end for men, necessary to achieve sexual pleasure. (please check one)

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Argee | Strongly Agree |
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

18.) Men are complete without women. (please check one)

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Argee | Strongly Agree |
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

19.) What is your age? (please enter an exact number instead of a range or the year you were born)

\_\_\_\_\_

20.) What is your race? (please check all that apply)

1. Asian/Pacific Islander

2. African American/Black
3. Latino/Latina
4. Caucasian
5. Native American
6. Middle Eastern
7. Other; specify: \_\_\_\_\_

21.) What is your household's annual income? If you receive financial help from your parents, please combine their income with yours. (please check one)

1. Under \$25,000
2. \$25,000 to \$45,000
3. \$45,001 to \$60,000
4. \$60,001 to \$75,000
5. \$75,001 to \$100,000
6. Over \$100,000

22.) What is your level of religiosity? (please check one)

1. Very religious (attend church services and activities regularly)
2. Somewhat religious (attend church services and activities occasionally)
3. Not religious, but believe in God (attend church services and activities rarely)
4. Not religious, and do not believe in God
5. Other; specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for your participation!