

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

RELATION BETWEEN MASS MEDIA AND YOUNG
ADULTS' SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL BEHAVIORS: A
PILOT STUDY

by
ROSE KFOURY

A project
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
to the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Media Studies
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
April 2015

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

RELATION BETWEEN MASS MEDIA AND YOUNG
ADULTS' SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL BEHAVIORS: A
PILOT STUDY

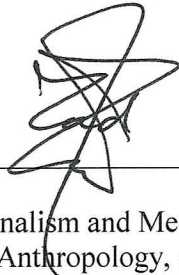
by
ROSE KFOURY

Approved by:



Dr. Nabil Dajani,
Professor of Journalism and Media Studies
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Media Studies

First Reader



Dr. Jad Melki,
Assistant Professor of Journalism and Media Studies Director
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Media Studies

Second Reader

Date of project presentation: April, 29, 2015

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THESIS, DISSERTATION, PROJECT RELEASE FORM

Student Name: _____
Kfory *Rose* *Samir*
Last First Middle

Master's Thesis Master's Project Doctoral Dissertation

I authorize the American University of Beirut to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of my thesis, dissertation, or project; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

I authorize the American University of Beirut, **three years after the date of submitting my thesis, dissertation, or project**, to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of it; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

_____ *Rose Kfory* *May 7, 2015*

Signature

Date

Relation Between Mass Media and Young Adults' Sexuality and Sexual Behaviors: A
Pilot Study

Rose Kfoury

American University of Beirut

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my Advisors Dr. Nabil Dajani and Dr. Jad Melki for their continuous support, supervision, and patience in assisting me finish my project.

I would like to thank my parents and brother for their constant love, moral support, and encouragement in helping me finish my masters.

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
ABSTRACT.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	iv
I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Purpose of Study.....	1
B. Scope of Study - Significance.....	2
II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	4
III. METHOD AND PROCEDURE.....	11
A. Sample and Participants.....	11
B. Instruments and Measures.....	11
C. Results.....	13
IV. DISCUSSION.....	21
V. LIMITATIONS	23
VI. FURTHER STUDY.....	25
VII. CONCLUSION	26
VIII. REFERENCES.....	28

Tables

Table

1: Correlations between exposure to sexual content on media and sexual activity (N= 55)	15
2: Crosstab between gender and frequency of sexual activity engagement.....	17
3: Crosstabs between gender and number of partners engaged in sexual intercourse with	18
4: Crosstab between gender and number of partners engaged in sexual activity with	19
5: Crosstab between gender and age at first time of sexual activity	20

Abstract

This study focuses on understanding the influence of mass media, especially television, movies, and internet use on young adults' sexuality and sexual behaviors in relationships. With the rise of different mass media outlets and the widespread of sexuality on television and movies as well as internet use, more young adults are being exposed to contents and internalizing messages from those media. The purpose of this pilot study is to understand whether higher television and movie consumption by young adults relates to their sexual behaviors by being sexually active at a younger age, more sexually active in general, and being sexually active with more uncommitted partners. A self-selected random sample of 55 young adults participated in the online survey. SPSS was used to analyze the results by using descriptive frequency data tables, running correlation tests to check for relationships and correlations, and crosstabs to check whether there is a difference between males and females. The hypotheses tested were true and there was a correlation between higher exposure to television, movies, and internet in relation to higher sexual activity, sexual activity debut at a younger age, and sexual activity with uncommitted partners. It could not be confidently said that there was a significant difference between males and females concerning their sexual activity behaviors.

Keywords: Mass Media, Television, Movies, Internet, Sexual Behavior

Introduction

Television, movies, and internet use dominate households and serve as one of the major entertainment or informative tools that young adults use. There has been a growing interest in understanding how mass media, especially television and movies affect young adults and college students (O'Hara, Gibbons, Gerrard, Li, & Sargent, 2012). Not much research has been done on young adults and students' exposure to television and the relation it has to their sexual behaviors and attitudes with respect to the Arab world and Lebanon in particular.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the relation between media exposure and the sexuality and sexual behavior of young adults. The study examined how young adults' behaviors change in relation to television and movie viewing concerning sexual content. It also examined if there is a correlation between television viewing and exposure to sexual content on television and increased sexual activity. Several questions are of interest:

Does more television and movie viewing relate to the sexual behaviors of young adults?

Are young adults who are more exposed to sexually explicit content on television and movies more sexually active?

Are young adults who are more exposed to sexually explicit content on television and movies sexually active at an earlier age?

Are young adults who are more exposed to sexual content on television and movies, more prone to having uncommitted and uncertain sexual activity exploration?

Scope of Study – Significance

Mass media and the internet have grown tremendously where television and internet are a vital part of everyone's home being the number one source of information and entertainment in the 21st century (Chan & Fang, 2007). More and more young adults and students are spending time on television and watching movies as well as surfing the internet for their entertainment and information needs. Hence it is highly important to understand in what ways television viewing and the internet influence young adults on many levels and different aspects of their lives including their sexuality. First by studying this, psychologists and scholars can understand in what ways students and young adults decipher messages on media and in what ways they decode and re-encode them to understand the way they perceive things. Moreover, it assists them in understanding problems and issues that may arise with these young adults. By understanding the above, psychologists, scholars, professors, and health professional would be able to understand important issues for young adults and students which could affect their daily performance, self-esteem, and peer pressure issues. Moreover, media and communication researchers would gain a better insight into how these young adults are affected. Marketers targeting young consumers would grasp a better knowledge of the internet's importance in these young adults' life and better place their advertisement (Chan & Fang, 2007). This would assist them in knowing what lingers in their brains. Moreover, educators can then get a better understanding of how to design proper messages and new education techniques to raise sexual awareness among students and young adults (Ciesynski, 2013). Nonetheless, more knowledge would be gained about how television exposure and the internet can influence young adults' sexuality as opposed to the culture they have been raised in. Understanding in what ways exposure to sexual content on television, movies and internet affects the sexual behaviors and attitudes of young adults can raise

awareness based on the culture of the different young adults. Some cultures consider premarital sexual activity a complete taboo. If sexual content on media serves as a viable tool in dissolving the cultures and beliefs of those young adults, then it would be an important factor to study this issue in which one would gain greater insights in things that might defy culture and serve as a globalization tool not only in thoughts and products but also as in shared culture. Internal conflicts can arise between young adults' cultural norm and the way they were raised as abstaining from sexual activity before marriage and concerning what they see on television and media and end up practicing. Understanding this gap in beliefs, culture, and background to what is viewed on the media as normal can assist educators, scholars, and psychologists in dealing with conflicts rising in young adults. Another similar aspect is that young adults sometimes use television and the internet as a guide to their everyday lives. Some scholars such as Baudrillard believe that consistent images, notions, scripts, and beliefs on television create what is called a reality for some of the young adults, and hence the young adults usually believe what is on television or the internet as the reality (Baudrillard, & Evans, 1991). Baudrillard named it 'hyperreality' (Baudrillard, & Evans, 1991). As a result young adults end up internalizing what they see on television of images, scripts, and behaviors and adopt them as their own attitude seen as this is the reality of the world as opposed to what reality really is leading them to be misled between what is reality and what is not (Baudrillard, & Evans, 1991). By understanding in what ways this affects them, greater awareness can be raised among the young adults so they are not led astray, in addition to raising media literate and educated young adults when it comes to images and scripts on television or on the internet. On another note, by seeing if there is a relation between young adults' exposure to sexual content on television and their sexual behavior, advertisers can know to what extent media can affect the young adults' sexual

behaviors against their culture and background. Young males viewing sexual content in advertisements and television tend to be more sexually aggressive with females (Reichert, 2003). Advertisers and marketers can then know what is viable and what not and would know how to advertise a certain product based on what is acceptable in a certain country or not (Reichert, 2003). Young adults, teenagers, and college students' sexuality and sexual behavior is a public health issue and understanding the way it is shaped and affected by media can help educators and guardians raise sexual awareness and sexual education to decrease the growing sexual risks faced by young adults and college students nowadays (Olarinmoye, Olarinmoye, Adebimpe, & Omisore, 2014).

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

We live in a media saturated world where sexual content is growing and being more displayed, and where we are being exposed to it more and more each day (Peter, Valkenburg, 2007). 70% of the most viewed television shows by US teenagers included sexual content and 45% featured sexual behavior, as well as 92% of the movies included sexual content and behaviors (Peter, Valkenburg, 2007). Over the years more and more sexual content has been depicted on television and movies and more sexually explicit content has been approved to be included and showed more often on TV (O'Hara, Gibbons, Gerrard, Li, & Sargent, 2012). Most movies especially popular movies provide teenagers with a wealth of sexual content and exposure where if imitated by teenagers, it would result in risk behaviors (O'Hara, Gibbons, Gerrard, Li, & Sargent, 2012). Due to being exposed to all these sexual explicit content and material, it is believed that students' sexual behavior and attitudes as well as young adults have

been influenced by such media (O'Hara, Gibbons, Gerrard, Li, & Sargent, 2012). Several studies were conducted to understand in what way being exposed to sexually explicit content on television, movies, and the internet affects young adults and college students' sexual behavior and attitudes.

According to the Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura (2001), individuals learn by observing others' behaviors and learning from them. Nowadays most of people's life observation and information collection is through media, specifically mass media which has a vast array of content and information. An individual observes how certain individuals behave on TV and in movies and see the respective consequences and results associated with such behavior, as a result the individual will perform such behaviors when put in a similar context in real life to try and achieve the expected desired result. Bandura (2001) believed that high exposure to television viewing shapes the viewer's beliefs and conception about reality. An individual's attention is set on a certain behavior that will be internalized and retained (Bandura, 2001). When the time comes when the individual is put in a similar situation, he/she will reproduce the behavior based on what was previously retained by being motivated in getting a certain outcome as previously seen or experienced (Bandura, 2001). In addition, individuals observe the consequences of certain behaviors and see which have a positive reinforcement (Bandura, 2001). Therefore, for example, individuals would observe the behaviors of the characters on TV and in movies and see the way they act to certain cues and situations. Individuals would then pick up on the behaviors that are likely to succeed in their opinion and keep them for future references to act them out in real life, to try and get the same positive and desired results. Hence, in the scope of this study, the individual would observe the sexual behaviors of the characters on TV and internalize what should be done and the way to act according to certain situations, also by learning what is

deemed to be right and acceptable according to the movies, irrespective of the individuals society and background. The individual then keeps this new acquired and internalized information to be used as behavioral guides for the future. However, many critiques emerged to Bandura's social cognitive theory. One critique is related to environmental factors where it was argued that one's behaviors are consistent and do not change according to environment, hence changes in the young adults viewed environment shouldn't change their behavior (Marzillier & Eastman, 1984). Another criticism is the biological or innate nature where it is criticized that the social cognitive theory ignores the genetics and biological factors of individuals where it has a huge effect on how individuals process information regardless of experiences or situations they have been put into, and that some individuals are better than others in their learning abilities (Marzillier & Eastman, 1984). Peter and Valkenburg (2011) conducted a study using the social cognitive framework to see whether sexual explicit internet content impacts the risk behavior of adults and adolescents. They surveyed a random sample of 1,445 Dutch adolescents and 833 Dutch adults. They concluded that sexually explicit internet content mainly impacted adults more than adolescents (Peter & Valkenburg, 2011). Peter and Valkenburg (2008) had conducted an earlier study where they surveyed 2343 Dutch adolescents aged from 13 to 20 and found that higher exposure to sexual content on the internet was associated with high sexual uncertainty and higher sexual engagement with uncommitted partners whether casual relationships or one night stands. Another study under this framework was by Olarinmoye, Olarinmoye, Adebimpe, & Omisore (2014) in which they conducted a cross-sectional survey of undergraduate students in Nigeria in which a sample of 450 students were surveyed. The result of the experiment was that students who spent more time watching TV were more sexually active (Olarinmoye, Olarinmoye, Adebimpe, & Omisore, 2014). They concluded that watching television and movies, especially

with no control with not limits was related to a heightened sexual activity, on the students' sexual behavior and attitudes (Olarinmoye, Olarinmoye, Adebimpe, & Omisore, 2014). Another study is by Pardun, L'Engle, and Brown (2005), where 3261 7th and 8th graders were studied followed by a subsample of 1,074 respondents. They found that there is a statistically significant association between higher exposure to sexual content on television and movies and adolescents' higher sexual activity and future sexual activity intentions (Pardun, L'Engle, and Brown 2005).

Another theoretical framework is the Sexual Script Theory that was introduced by John H. Gagnon and William Simon (1986) which brings several tools from sociology to psychology to culture in order to study human sexualities. Basically sexual scripts are the way males and females are supposed to behave in certain situations concerning sexual encounters. Just like the scripts of a movie or TV role, individuals assign specific roles and behaviors to certain encounters according to details in the way they are supposed to behave and interact (Gagnon & Simon, 1986). In the context of this study, for example, if a male asks the female for a certain sexual activity, the female would behave in a certain way which in movies would result in positive or negative outcomes. Individuals then internalized such scripts found on television and movies and act accordingly in real life, reliving the sexual scripts seen in movies as the way to behave. As suggested by Simon and Gagnon (1986), "in the most pragmatic sense, sexual scripts must solve two problems. The first of these is gaining permission from the self to engage in desired forms of sexual behavior. The second problem is that of access to the experiences that the desired behavior is expected to generate." O'Hara, Gibbons, Gerrard, Li, & Sargent (2012) conducted longitudinal studies using the sexual script framework which showed that increased TV exposure lead to increased earlier sexual debut and an increase of casual partners for males (O'Hara, Gibbons, Gerrard, Li, & Sargent, 2012). Their findings also included that an increased

degree of exposure to sexual content on television was related in predicting more permissive sexual attitudes and a lasting influence on risky sexual behavior (O'Hara, Gibbons, Gerrard, Li, & Sargent, 2012). Brown and L'engle (2009) conducted a study on 967 adolescents using the sexual socialization theory and claimed that adolescents exposed to sexual content in media and especially the internet tend to be more sexually active with permissive sexual norms, and sexually active at a younger age with "sexual harassment perpetration". Braun-Courville and Rojas (2009) conducted a study on exposure to sexually explicit content on the internet and adolescents sexual behaviors and attitudes by surveying 433 adolescents, and found a high association between being exposed to the sexual content on the internet and adolescents being more sexually permissive in having more than one sexual partner and having several lifetime sexual partners.

A third framework that also aids in the understanding of television viewing effects on the sexual behavior of young adults and college students is the cultivation theory by Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli (1986). The cultivation theory states that the more individuals spend time on TV the more they believe what is on TV to be the reality of the real world and they cultivate what they see into their real lives (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli, 1986). Hence young adults and students supposedly who overly watch TV and movies on TV would basically believe what is in these shows and movies to be a real depiction of the real world and hence would internalize what they see and cultivate it into their daily lives. In general cultivation theory states that the more individuals view television the more the effects of it on their daily lives and the more they are influenced by what they see, internalizing the messages more. Using this theoretical framework to study the effects of higher exposure to television and movies on sexual attitudes was done by Escobar-Chaves, Tortolero, Markham, Low, Eitel, & Thickstun

(2005). They studied “the relevant biomedical and social science literature” and discovered that adolescents and young adults who watched more TV and movies engaged in sexual activity at a younger age, were more prone to having multiple partners being in uncommitted relationships, and definitely had a positive permissive attitude to premarital sex (Escobar-Chaves, Tortolero, Markham, Low, Eitel, & Thickstun, 2005). Another study was conducted by Peter and Valkenburg (2007) where they sampled 2343 Dutch adolescents and found that increased exposure to sexual content on television was correlated to an increase in sexual permissive attitudes and behaviors, an increased sexual uncertainty, and positive attitudes towards uncommitted sexual relationship and partners.

Sexual content has been increasing over the years on various media outlets and tools, especially television and movies (Chan & Fang, 2007). As a conclusion, the above mentioned theories put together make a good framework for the context and subject of this study. By the cultivation theory, individuals who are exposed to a great amount of television time are more influenced to believing that it is an accurate representation for their real world, hence when individuals tend to form the sexual scripts in their minds from what they view. This in turn brings the social cognitive theory into play where these individuals are observing these acts, scenes, and roles on television which they are learning from and being affected by them. Recent content analysis have found that sexual content and behavior on television, movies, and sitcoms have increased over the years with great depictions of sexual intercourse whether suggestive or explicit (Olarinmoye, Olarinmoye, Adebimpe, & Omisore, 2014). Adolescents and young adults exposed to such content tend to internalize and cultivate what they see, depicting it as the reality and following the leads on such media. “Sexually explicit media depicts such realities that deviate from adolescents’ sexual lives” as well as beliefs and values taught by families and

schools which could conflict (Peter, Valkenburg, 2007). Not much solid research has been done over the influence of exposure to sexually explicit content on television and movies on adolescents' and young adults' sexual behaviors attitudes in the present and in the future. In specific, not many research if any was done concerning this topic in the Middle East or in Lebanon where most adolescents and young adults are being exposed to western television more often. Most of the research findings were that higher exposure to sexually explicit content on television and movies were strongly related to higher sexual activity, sexual activity debut at a younger age, being more sexually permissive, and positive attitude towards uncommitted sexual relationships, uncertainty, and exploration.

Putting together the above mentioned research studies and theoretical frameworks, the below 3 hypotheses will be tested.

H₁: Higher exposure to mass media with sexual content on television, movies, and internet relates to higher sexual activity.

H₂: Higher exposure to mass media with sexual content on television, movies, and internet relates to higher sexual activity at a younger age.

H₃: Higher exposure to mass media with sexual content on television, movies, and internet relates to higher uncommitted and uncertain sexual activity among young adults.

Method and Procedure

Sample and Participants

Since this is a preliminary or pilot study, a group of 55 young adults were randomly self-selected to take part in this study. The sample was self-selected and voluntary in which the participants self-chose whether they would like to participate or not. Participants, who saw the flyers and invitation to take part of the survey and were interested, chose to follow the link and take part in the survey. According to Johanson and Brooks (2009), adequate and best sample sizes for pilot studies are around 30 participants or 40 – 60 participants especially for instrument development studies. Participants were all young adults, with ages ranging from 18 years old to 26 years old. The sample was 55 young adults of which 26 were females, 19 males, and 10 that did not specify their gender.

Instrument and Measures

An online survey was used to test the three hypotheses mentioned above. Surveys were chosen for this study since they are inexpensive and easy to use (Leavitt, 2009). Moreover, surveys are the best way to gather information and objective facts of participants in terms of understanding their attitudes and behaviors which is the purpose of this study in understanding their television and media consumption in relations to their sexual behavior (Leavitt, 2009). Surveys serve best in such sensitive topics as it remains anonymous as opposed to interviews which are hugely time consuming and is not anonymous (Leavitt, 2009).

Survey questions were prepared of which some were from other similar studies done on this subject matter. Survey questions were made reliable and valid to answer the above mentioned hypotheses. Reliability was ensured with 1) alternate form reliability where 2

questions were formed to test the same variable but with different wording and 2) internal consistency where Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to determine to what extent questions measure different aspect of same concept. Validity was ensured by using face validity and content validity where the survey questions were presented to two reviewers. The questionnaire asked about the time spent watching television and movies as well as how sexually active the young adults are and at what age they started. The survey used Likert scaling questions as well as multiple choice questions. Young adults were told before beginning the survey that it is anonymous and confidential, there is no right or wrong answer, and that they should answer as honestly as possible to try and eliminate bias and answering according to desirability. Survey questions consisted of three parts. The first part included demographic questions such as age and gender. The second part included questions about frequency with which they viewed sexual content on media (television, movies, Internet and online) such as "how often do you come across sexually explicit material on television and movies?". The third part included questions about their sexual behavior such as if they engage in sexual activities whether sexual intercourse or sexual activity and how often, as well as if their sexual behavior is governed by the sexual content on media and internet. The survey questions were then given to a professional in the field and approval on the questions were granted.

The online survey was conducted through LimeSurvey hosted on AUB server. An invitation for the research was used around Hamra area where the invitations and flyers were posted on walls and places where it was allowed. Advertisement and invitation to take part of the study was posted on Virgin Radio's Facebook Page and on Mix FM Facebook page since they are from the top used Facebook pages in Lebanon according to social bakers (Socialbakers, 2015). Moreover, they target the specific and proper target audience for the research. The survey

layout had 2 forms of security. The first one consisted of warning participants that they could not take part in the survey if they are below 18 years of age, and once they specified that they were below 18 years old the survey terminated. The second one consisted of the consent form stating that the information is anonymous, that they can skip answering any questions, and that they could terminate the survey at any time they wish so. IP tracking in Limesurvey was used to make sure that one individual could not have answered the survey twice. Even though surveys are a fast and anonymous way to collect data, yet they do have some disadvantages and limitations such as it is thought by some to be an inadequate measure of some aspects such as behavior or emotions, there is no way to tell how truthful the respondent is being, and that the respondents may respond based on their own interpretation of the questions. The survey has been approved by IRB to be administered online on Limesurvey through AUB servers.

Results

SPSS was used for the analysis of the results. Several tests were used to analyze the data. Frequency tables and descriptive analysis were first done. Correlation analysis was then done to check if there is actually a correlation between higher exposure to media and increased sexual activity, sexual activity debut at a younger age, and sexual activity with more uncommitted partners. Crosstabs were used to check whether there was a difference between males and females concerning higher exposure to sexually explicit material on media and increased sexual activity.

52.7% of the participants were 26 years old and 18.2% were 25 years old. 36.4% of the participants were religious and 25.5% were somewhat religious. 30.9% of the participants specified being between 17 and 21 years old when they first engaged in any sexual activity and it was the average answer. The average choice of partners that the participants had sexual

intercourse with was between 1 and 3. 43.6% (24) said they were average sexually active and that was the average which means most of the participants are sexually active. 34.5% (19) said that they sometimes accessed sexually explicit material on the internet, 38.2% (21) sometimes came across sexually explicit material on the internet, and 34.5% (19) sometimes came across sexually explicit material on television and movies. 52.7% (29) watched between 1 to 2 hours of television per day, 34.5% (19) spent between 3 to 4 hours on the internet each day, while 38.2% (21) spent 5 hours or more on the internet each day.

Table 1: Correlations between exposure to sexual content on media and sexual activity (N= 55)

		Sexual Activity	Romantic Partners with sexual intercourse	Age at first time of sexual activity
[How often do you access sexually explicit material on the internet?] Exposure to Sexual Content on Media	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.481** 0.000	.571** 0.000	.663** 0.000
[How often do you come across sexually explicit material on the internet?] Exposure to Sexual Content on Media	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.568** 0.000	.568** 0.000	.631** 0.000
[How often do you come across sexually explicit material on television and movies?] Exposure to Sexual Content on Media	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.675** 0.000	.423** 0.001	.597** 0.000
How many hours do you spend on the internet per day?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.530** 0.000	.366** 0.006	.618** 0.000
How many hours of television and movies do you watch per day?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.705** 0.000	.352** 0.008	.631** 0.000

Table 1 shows the correlations between sexual activity, age at which first sexual activity occurred, and number of partners with sexual intercourse in relation with exposure to media (hours spent on television, movies, internet and being exposed to sexually explicit material on the three mediums). Correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed). Since there are 15 correlations, the odds are increased that one correlation could be statistically significant by

chance and hence the Bonferroni correction was used. For statistical significance the $p < 0.05$ is divided by the number of correlations being 15 and hence for a statistical significance p should be less than or equal to 0.003. All variables seem to be medium to strongly correlated with each other except that of number of partners with the hours spent watching television and movies, $r(53) = 0.352$, $p > 0.01$ and on the internet, $r(53) = 0.366$, $p > 0.001$ (with $p > 0.003$). Sexual activity is highly and mostly correlated with hours spent watching television and movies, $r(53) = 0.705$, $p < 0.001$. Hence, we can confidently say that H_1 is true and that there is a correlation between higher exposure to sexually explicit material on media and increased sexual activity with television being the highest correlated media factor. Number of partners with sexual intercourse is highly and mostly correlated to the access of sexually explicit material on the internet $r(53) = 0.571$, $p < 0.001$. Hence, we can confidently say that H_2 is true and that there is a relationship between higher exposure to sexually explicit material and increased number of sexual partners, with the internet being the highest correlated media factor. Age at which first sexual intercourse is highly and mostly correlated with access to sexually explicit material on the internet, $r(73) = 0.663$, $p < 0.001$. Hence, we can confidently say that H_3 is true and that there is a correlation between higher exposure to sexually explicit material on media and sexual activity debut at an earlier age with the internet being the highest correlated media factor.

Table 2: Crosstab between gender and frequency of sexual activity engagement

		Gender		Total	
		Female	Male		
Frequency of sexual activity engagement	Count	0	1	1	
	%	0.00%	5.30%	2.20%	
	Never	Count	6	5	11
	%	23.10%	26.30%	24.40%	
	Once a month	Count	12	7	19
	%	46.20%	36.80%	42.20%	
	Once a week	Count	7	6	13
	%	26.90%	31.60%	28.90%	
	Daily	Count	1	0	1
	%	3.80%	0.00%	2.20%	
Total	Count	26	19	45	
%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		

46.20% of females said they engaged in sexual activity once a month while 36.80% of males said they engaged in sexual activity once a month. Both percentages are the highest amongst the distribution. The Pearson Chi-Square results indicate that there is no difference between males and females in the frequency they engage in sexual activity ($X^2 = 2.45$, $df = 4$, $N=45$, $p = 4.891$) hence p is not significant and we cannot confidently say that there is a significant difference between males and females.

Table 3: Crosstabs between gender and number of partners engaged in sexual intercourse with

		Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
Number of partners engaged in sexual intercourse with	None	Count	0	1
		%	0.00%	5.30%
	1 - 3	Count	12	5
		%	46.20%	26.30%
	4 - 6	Count	9	7
		%	34.60%	36.80%
	7 or more	Count	1	2
		%	3.80%	10.50%
	Total	Count	4	4
		%	15.40%	21.10%
Total	Count	26	19	
	%	100.00%	100.00%	

46.20% of females have never had any sexual intercourse while 26.30% of males have never had any sexual intercourse. 36.80 % of males had sexual intercourse with 1 – 3 partners. The Pearson Chi-Square results indicate that there is no difference between males and females in the frequency they engage in sexual activity ($X^2 = 3.46$, $df = 4$, $N=45$, $p = 3.461$) hence p is not significant and we cannot confidently say that there is a significant difference between males and females.

Table 4: Crosstab between gender and number of partners engaged in sexual activity with

		Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
Number of partners engaged in sexual activity with	None	Count	0	1
		%	0.00%	5.30%
	1 - 3	Count	7	0
		%	26.90%	0.00%
	4 - 6	Count	11	7
		%	42.30%	36.80%
	7 or more	Count	4	4
		%	15.40%	21.10%
	Total	Count	4	7
		%	15.40%	36.80%
	Total	Count	26	19
		%	100.00%	100.00%

42.30% of females engaged in sexual activity with 1 to 3 partners while 36.80% of males engaged in sexual activity with 1 to 3 partners. Both percentages form the majority of answers for each gender. The Pearson Chi-Square results indicate that there is no difference between males and females in the frequency they engage in sexual activity ($X^2 = 8.83$, $df = 4$, $N=45$, $p = 8.832$) hence p is not significant and we cannot confidently say that there is a significant difference between males and females.

Table 5: Crosstab between gender and age at first time of sexual activity

			Gender		Total
			Female	Male	
Age at first time of any sexual activity	Never	Count	5	0	5
		%	19.20%	0.00%	11.10%
	Less than 17 years old	Count	4	8	12
		%	15.40%	42.10%	26.70%
	17 - 21 years old	Count	11	6	17
		%	42.30%	31.60%	37.80%
	22 - 26 years old	Count	6	5	11
		%	23.10%	26.30%	24.40%
Total	Count	26	19	45	
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	

42.30% of females said they were 17 to 21 years old when they first engaged in any sexual activity while 42.10% of males said they were less than 17 years old at the first time of any sexual activity they engaged in. The Pearson Chi-Square results indicate that there is no difference between males and females in the frequency they engage in sexual activity ($X^2 = 6.96$, $df = 4$, $N=45$, $p = 6.975$) hence p is not significant and we cannot confidently say that there is a significant difference between males and females.

As a conclusion, **H₁**: Higher exposure to mass media with sexual content on television, movies, and internet relates to higher sexual activity was not rejected and there is a correlation. **H₂**: Higher exposure to mass media with sexual content on television, movies, and internet relates to higher sexual activity at a younger age was not rejected and deemed true. **H₃**: Higher exposure to mass media with sexual content on television, movies, and internet relates to higher

uncommitted and uncertain sexual activity among young adults was not rejected and deemed true. In addition, crosstabs show that we cannot confidently say that there is a significant difference between males and females in their increased sexual activity in relation to higher exposure to sexually explicit material on media (television, movies, and internet).

Discussion

Correlations were formed using SPSS to check for correlations and associations between the independent variables being exposure to sexually explicit material on the internet, television, and movies and hours spent watching television and on the internet and the dependent variables being higher sexual activity, sexual activity debut at an earlier age, and sexual activity with more uncommitted partners. Associations were to test for the three hypotheses that higher exposure to sexual content on television, movies, and internet with spending more hours watching television and surfing the internet are correlated and associated with higher sexual activity, sexual activity at an earlier age, and sexual activity with more uncommitted partners. H_1 , H_2 , and H_3 were all accepted and true. The analysis supported the fact that there was indeed a strong correlation between higher exposure to media and higher sexual activity. The study results was in agreement with results from the study performed by Peter and Valkenburg (2011) where Dutch adolescents were surveyed and results showed that exposure to sexually explicit material on the internet was associated with higher sexual uncertainty and sexual engagement with more uncommitted partners. In addition, the results also coincided with results from a study performed by Olarinmoye, Olarinmoye, Adebimpe, & Omisore (2014) in Nigeria where there was a strong

relation between young adults who spent more time watching television and movies and having a heightened sexual activity. Escobar-Chaves, Tortolero, Markham, Low, Eitel, & Thickstun (2005) study also revealed that adolescents and young adults who watched more TV and movies engaged in sexual activity at a younger age, were more prone to having multiple partners being in uncommitted relationships, and definitely had a positive permissive attitude to premarital sex. The results of this study coincided with results of other studies performed in other countries and showed the strong associations and correlations. In addition, crosstabs show that we cannot confidently say that there is a significant difference between males and females in their sexual activity, most probably due to the small sample surveyed. While there is difference between males and females' sexual activity in general, it seems that being exposed to more sexually explicit material in media causes males and females to be similarly more sexually active. Further study with a larger sample is needed to confidently be able to infer that there is a significant difference. However, what might be different is the notion and perception of premarital sex in the Arab world. There might not have been young adults who were highly sexually active due to young adults being religious, where premarital sex is considered a sin, and due to the taboo nature of premarital sex in the Arab World. This could explain the fact that while none of the females from the surveyed participants engaged in sexual intercourse, some males did, yet both genders engaged in sexual activity. Women are viewed in a negative way and might be disrespected or seen as non-suitable marriage partners if they have lost their virginity or engaged in any premarital sexual activities (Sakalh-Uğurlu & Glick, 2003). In some places where it is taken to a further length, women who have engaged in premarital sex are considered as having tarnished and stained their honor or the families' honor (Sakalh-Uğurlu & Glick, 2003). This poses as an interesting observation where even though premarital sex is considered a taboo, yet

media's relation to sexual behavior was able to overcome this taboo where young adults seem to be engaging in sexual activity. Perhaps, due to media and globalization, such notions are decreasing and hence it is becoming more acceptable in some cities and urban areas to accept the practice of premarital sex even though it is still strongly held true in other traditional countries for women to maintain their virginity until marriage (Fernández-Villaverde, Greenwood, & Guner, 2014). Due to globalization, young adults now engage in premarital sex more without the stigma on it and without feeling guilty (Fernández-Villaverde, Greenwood, & Guner, 2014). It has even been going to length where premarital sex is becoming part of the normal activities practiced by a couple before marriage (Fernández-Villaverde, Greenwood, & Guner, 2014). Women are expected to preserve their chastity and avoid any sexual contact with males before marriage and hence discussing sexuality is considered a taboo (Eisner & Ghuneim, 2013). Hence, acknowledging this issue presents as an interesting subject and topic to look deeper into the aspect of how media and being exposed to sexually explicit material could shatter such rigid traditions and taboos in the Arab world of premarital sexual activity being frowned upon and with a negative view.

Limitations

Since this is a pilot or preliminary study, the sample is a small random sample. The study should be taken further where more participants are sampled. Samples were self-selected and self-voluntary due to IRB limitations and hence participants who chose to take part in the survey could have several attributes in common. Moreover, samples in this study are mostly from one

area in Beirut and the participants should include several young adults from different areas in Lebanon. There is no sure or certain way to know if all the participants are from Lebanon since the study was advertised on 2 Facebook pages which could have fans from other countries that might have taken the survey. The survey does not ask for the nationality of the respondents, and hence the answers and results of the survey could be for young adults from the Arab world with a higher participant number being from Lebanon. Since participants are young adults the age would most probably range between 18 and 26 and hence participants' age could be made to range more between 18 to about 30. The study does not group the age into ranges or groups. The study can be further advanced where different age groups can be surveyed and studied to see the effects of media exposure on their sexuality and sexual behaviors, as well as high school students, and college students could be surveyed separately. Finally, the topic of this study is considered sensitive and more or less personal, therefore participants might not answer honestly and answers could be biased with a tendency for social desirability bias. The true gender of the participants might not all be true as some participants could chose to pick another gender; this poses as one of the drawbacks of using surveys where there is not a 100% accuracy of the answers. This study did not include measures of other factors that could have affected earlier sexual activity or higher sexual activity other than television, movies, and internet exposure. Ten participants failed to specify their gender and hence it would be hard to draw out accurate information about the differences among men and woman since 10 survey answers out of 55 were missing the gender field.

Further Study

There is so much room for further study concerning this topic. The study could be further enhanced to see the difference between males and females in their exposure to television and / or sexual activity by using a t-test as opposed to correlations. The study would maintain an even number ratio of females to males participants by limiting the number of gender participants in the beginning of the survey to reflect an equal number between males and females. Moreover, the sample size would include more respondents to get a clear and significant test result. We can then compare the differences to what extent the exposure to television and movies affects both genders. A t-test would also be used to test the hypotheses mentioned below whether they hold true or not. As mentioned in the limitations, there is a risk that not all participants were from Lebanon, 2 options could be formed, one a question about ethnicity could be added, or another option would be to make sure that all participants are Lebanese if the intention is to study the Lebanese population which is considered the closest to the West from among the Arab world. A further study could be designed to check which media tool or platform mostly relates or correlates to young adults' increased sexual activity. It would be quite interesting to study this topic across different countries and across different age groups. Studying it across countries would enable the researchers to understand the similarities and differences in the way sexual content on media and exposure to it affects young adults and to what extent the young adults are influenced by this content on the media. Then different sub-cultures across the Arab world countries can be compared. Also, studying this issue across the different age groups can give better insights to the type of individuals and the different generations with the way they get influenced. Even taking the study further, by understanding how different generations are

influenced, a timeline or longitudinal study could be formed, or even see the differences in historical images, sexual content, and scripts. Sexual contents in the media found at the times of each different generation can be linked to the scripts and sexual behaviors of young adults of the time to see whether young adults are influenced by the sexual content and scripts of each generation at the time or is it a specific type of sexual content and script that was able to affect the sexual behavior of young adults.

Conclusion

The 55 individuals who took part of the survey are mostly from the Arab world but there was no question that categorizes them from which country they were from. Hence not all could have been from Lebanon since the study was advertised on the 2 most popular Facebook pages according to Social Bakers reports being Mix FM Facebook page and Radio One Facebook Page. Moreover, some of the individuals could have been raised with a more 'western' mentality. H₁: Higher exposure to mass media with sexual content on television, movies, and internet relates to higher sexual activity was accepted with a high correlation and association. H₂: Higher exposure to mass media with sexual content on television, movies, and internet relates to higher sexual activity at a younger age was also accepted and study proved there was a correlation and association. H₃: Higher exposure to mass media with sexual content on television, movies, and internet relates to higher uncommitted and uncertain sexual activity among young adults was also accepted and proven true. Results also show that there was no difference between females and males in their sexual activity in relation to being exposed to higher sexually explicit material

on television, movies, and the internet. The study could be taken further by studying the difference between males and females and a longitudinal study could be performed to check how exposure to sexually explicit material in adolescents and young adults affects their lives after few years. Despite the limitations of this study, it provides insight into the correlation and association between higher exposure to sexually explicit content on media and the increased sexual activity of young adults. The insights presented also shed light on some important underlying aspects of society and traditions where media was able to overcome some of the traditions and norms of the Arab society. By understanding such correlation and how media affects the sexual behavior and attitudes of the young adults, educators and researchers can be able to properly encourage responsible sexual behavior through the media and entail sexual educations to the young adults especially in a culture where premarital sex is considered a taboo and a negative, frowned upon issue. Moreover, with such information educators can consider public health campaigns for young adults as well as teach media literacy to encourage young adults to decipher information from media and be better critical thinkers. Research concerning the influence of exposure to sexual television and internet on young adults' sexuality and sexual behavior can add great insight into the short term and long term effects and impact of media on young adults' attitudes and sexual behaviors. Being in a highly saturated media full of sexual content and being exposed to the "TV reality" enables young adults to create a fake reality about how sexual relationships are meant and supposed to be. High exposure to sexual content on media was able to shatter traditional and cultural teachings concerning sexuality. This poses as an interesting insight especially that as the time goes by, young adults' are relying on media for many of their educational and entertainment purposes with the exposure increasing more with time.

References

- Asekun-Olarinmoye, O. S., Asekun-Olarinmoye, E. O., Adebimpe, W. O., & Omisore, A. G. (2014). Effect of mass media and Internet on sexual behavior of undergraduates in Osogbo metropolis, Southwestern Nigeria. *Adolescent health, medicine and therapeutics*, 5, 15-23.
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory of mass communication. *Media psychology*, 3(3), 265-299.
- Baudrillard, J., & Evans, A. B. (1991). Simulacra and Science Fiction (Simulacres et science-fiction). *Science Fiction Studies*, 309-313.
- Braun-Courville, D. K., & Rojas, M. (2009). Exposure to sexually explicit web sites and adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviors. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 45(2), 156-162.
- Brown, J. D., & L'Engle, K. L. (2009). X-rated sexual attitudes and behaviors associated with US early adolescents' exposure to sexually explicit media. *Communication Research*, 36(1), 129-151.
- Chan, K., & Fang, W. (2007). Use of the internet and traditional media among young people. *Young Consumers*, 8(4), 244-256.
- Ciesynski, M. (2013). *The impact of media on teen sexual health* (Doctoral dissertation, GONZAGA UNIVERSITY).
- Eisner, M., & Ghuneim, L. (2013). Honor killing attitudes amongst adolescents in Amman, Jordan. *Aggressive behavior*, 39(5), 405-417.
- Escobar-Chaves, S. L., Tortolero, S. R., Markham, C. M., Low, B. J., Eitel, P., & Thickett, P.

- (2005). Impact of the media on adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviors. *Pediatrics*, 116(Supplement 1), 303-326.
- Fernández-Villaverde, J., Greenwood, J., & Guner, N. (2014). From shame to game in one hundred years: An economic model of the rise in premarital sex and its de-stigmatization. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 12(1), 25-61.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1986). Living with television: The dynamics of the cultivation process. *Perspectives on media effects*, 17-40.
- Johanson, G. A., & Brooks, G. P. (2009). Initial scale development: sample size for pilot studies. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*.
- Leavitt, F. (1991). *Research methods for behavioral scientists*. Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Publishers.
- O'Hara, R. E., Gibbons, F. X., Gerrard, M., Li, Z., & Sargent, J. D. (2012). Greater exposure to sexual content in popular movies predicts earlier sexual debut and increased sexual risk taking. *Psychological science*, 23(9), 984-993.
- Pardun, C. J., L'Engle, K. L., & Brown, J. D. (2005). Linking exposure to outcomes: early adolescents' consumption of sexual content in six media. *Mass Communication & Society*, 8(2), 75-91.
- Peter, J., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2007). Adolescents' exposure to a sexualized media environment and their notions of women as sex objects. *Sex roles*, 56(5-6), 381-395.
- Peter, J., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2008). Adolescents' Exposure to Sexually Explicit Internet Material, Sexual Uncertainty, and Attitudes Toward Uncommitted Sexual Exploration Is There a Link?. *Communication Research*, 35(5), 579-601.
- Peter, J., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2011). The influence of sexually explicit internet material on

sexual risk behavior: A comparison of adolescents and adults. *Journal of health communication, 16(7), 750-765.*

Marzillier, J., & Eastman, C. (1984). Continuing problems with self-efficacy theory: A reply to Bandura. *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 8(3), 257-262.*

Sakalh-Uğurlu, N., & Glick, P. (2003). Ambivalent sexism and attitudes toward women who engage in premarital sex in Turkey. *Journal of Sex Research, 40(3), 296-302.*

Simon, W., & Gagnon, J. H. (1986). Sexual scripts: Permanence and change. *Archives of sexual behavior, 15(2), 97-120.*

Socialbakers. (2015). Lebanon Facebook page statistics. Retrieved from

<http://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/facebook/pages/total/lebanon/media/>