

TELEVISION SEXUALITY, PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT  
AND ADOLESCENTS' SEXUAL ATTITUDES AND  
BEHAVIOR: A PRELIMINARY  
INVESTIGATION

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of Problem

The desirability of sexual portrayal on television is being widely debated in society. Some groups charge that America's moral standards are being lowered by sexual values which are portrayed on television. Others argue that television merely reflects society's norms and express concern that freedom is threatened by censoring program content on television. This debate is commanding an increasing amount of attention as the quantity of television sexuality increases.

Television, itself, is found in virtually every American household. Ninety-eight percent of American families have at least one television set, and almost half of those have two or more sets (Comstock, Chaffee, Katzman, McCombs, & Roberts, 1978). In the average American household, the television is on 6 3/4 hours a day, seven days a week (Comstock, et al., 1978). Older and younger members of the population seem to watch the most television. The amount of viewing decreases during the high school years (Comstock, et al., 1978; Lyle, 1972). The age group

consuming the lowest amount of TV seems to be at the high school and college level, but that amount is still approximately four hours a day (Comstock, et al., 1978). Time spent watching television often exceeds the time that family members interact (Altheide, 1979). Television logically has the potential to influence viewers simply because of the preponderance of time individuals spend watching television.

In addition to the implications associated with the quantity of time spent watching TV, the content of the programming could also be considered. The values projected in television programming may affect the values of the viewer. Television's messages are evidently having an impact on society. While the details of television's impact as a socializing agent are controversial (Himmelweit, Oppenheim, & Vince, 1958; Schramm, Lyle, & Parker, 1961; McLeod & O'Keefe, 1972), the literature is consistent in documenting the general influence on aggressive behavior, stereotypes, political attitudes and pro-social behavior (see Murray, 1980; Pearl, 1982 for more complete reviews).

Television offers the viewer a wide variety of programs. However, for about the last fifteen years violence has dominated the TV screen. Partly due to criticism of the general public and pressures from government and social agencies, the television industry has gradually shifted its emphasis in programming away from violence. In an apparent effort to keep ratings high and to

attract more viewers, the industry has incorporated more and more sexuality into the programs (Waters, 1978; Fischer, 1978; Hickey, 1980; Waters, 1981; Henry, 1981; Alsop, 1981; Clarke, 1981; Powers, 1981; Ellis & Sexton, 1982).

The emphasis on sexuality is further promoted as pay TV becomes more prevalent. For the first time, uncut programs rated "R" by the movie industry are coming into the home via pay television. As a result of the increasing number and explicitness of sexually oriented programs, questions are being raised concerning who is watching these programs, and what, if any, effects such programming is having on the individual.

#### Need for Research

Studies investigating television sexuality have typically emphasized physical touching in the form of kissing and embracing (see Chapter II). However, this definition limits itself to only one aspect of sexuality. It does not examine television's treatment of the responsibilities that go along with sexual behavior. It does not deal with such issues as the realism and seriousness of the portrayal, nor how, and if, it is affecting viewers' attitudes and behavior.

Several studies conclude that the most predominant sexual behavior implied by the portrayal on television is the occurrence of intercourse between unmarried individuals

(see Chapter II). These findings associate television with one of society's most serious problems. The 1980's have begun with concern that venereal disease may be at epidemic proportions, illegitimate births at an all time high, and more couples living together without being married than ever before (Guttmacher, 1981). A relatively new and thus far incurable venereal disease, herpes, is creating problems for scores of individuals. If there is a relationship between television's portrayal of sexuality among singles and society's problems resulting from sexuality among singles, research identifying who is being affected, and under what conditions would be justified.

Research on the effects of television sexuality which focuses on adolescents is justified for additional reasons. Sexual values and sexual identity are very salient subjects during late adolescence. Adolescents are going through the transition from childhood to that of an adult; a transition from dependence to independence. Part of that independence involves their individual sexuality. Sexual values are being examined and tested with as much concern and attention as they will be during any other period in life.

Certainly in an area as complex as the acquisition of sexual values there are numerous influences. One very important influence is parents. Two different ways that parents may be involved in the transmission of sexual values are: indirectly, as a role model; or directly, by verbally communicating about sexual subjects.

An individual's most salient role model during the years of value formation is a parent. It would seem that parents' effectiveness as an adequate role model could play a major part in determining how other factors influence that child. One study suggests that without an adequate role model, characters portrayed on television can be effectively modeled by viewers (Bandura, 1973).

Adequate communication is vital to learning in all areas. In an area which tends to be more covertly learned, such as sexual subjects, communication is more critical. If an adolescent's parents are open and communicative, then that adolescent should have some idea of the degree of reality in the sexual portrayal on television. If the parents are not open with the adolescent, that individual may experience some forms of sexual behavior on his/her own, or may seek out other avenues of information. If the adolescents are not guided, or able to gain experience or knowledge on their own, their knowledge about sexuality may be severely limited. British researchers' findings indicate that without accurate information to rely upon, individuals assume that characters and situations portrayed on television are realistic (Hartmann & Husband, 1973; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980; Signorielli, Gross, & Morgan, 1982). In the same manner, television sexuality might be considered to be realistic by those who don't have an adequate knowledge of sexuality.

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the role that parents play in mediating the tendency of adolescents to define as realistic, and thus model, television sexuality.

The following assumptions will be tested:

1. Adolescents will perceive television's message about sexual relationships to be that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples is acceptable. ✓
2. Adolescents will perceive television's message about sexual relationships to be that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples is expected. ✓
3. Adolescents will perceive television's message about sexual relationships to be that there are no consequences as a result of sexual behavior. ✓

Four propositions concerning the amount adolescents view sexually oriented television programming and permissiveness of adolescents' attitudes and behavior will be examined. The phrase "the amount" is being used throughout this project for lack of a better word choice. The phrase refers to an estimate of time based on a self-report measure which is adjusted to compensate for the degree of implicit sexuality in the programs being watched. Therefore, "the amount" is not just time but also an estimate of the intensity of the sexual portrayal being seen by the adolescent. The measure referred to as "the amount"

is being used for comparison purposes only and is not intended to be used for demographic purposes. The propositions are:

1. There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the degree to which adolescents perceive the portrayal of television sexuality to be realistic. ✓
2. There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual attitudes. ✓
3. There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual behavior. ✓
4. There is a negative relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the degree of responsibility sexually active adolescents manifest for preventing pregnancy.

Eight propositions will examine the mediating effects of parental influence. Four of the propositions will examine the mediating effects of the degree of parental closeness and four will examine the mediating effects of the level of parental communication concerning sexuality.



5. The relationship between the amount of viewing and the degree of realism of television sexuality will be mediated by the degree of parental closeness by the adolescents.
6. The relationship between the amount of viewing and the degree of realism of television sexuality will be mediated by the level of parental communication concerning sexuality.
7. The relationship between the amount of viewing and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' attitudes will be mediated by the degree of parental closeness perceived by the adolescents.
8. The relationship between the amount of viewing and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' attitudes will be mediated by the level of parental communication concerning sexuality.
9. The relationship between the amount of viewing and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' behavior will be mediated by the degree of parental closeness perceived by the adolescent.
10. The relationship between the amount of viewing and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' behavior will be mediated by the level of parental communication concerning sexuality.
11. The relationship between the amount of viewing and the degree of responsibility sexually active adolescents manifest for preventing pregnancy will

be mediated by the degree of parental closeness by the adolescent.

12. The relationship between the amount of viewing and the degree of responsibility sexually active adolescents manifest for preventing pregnancy will be mediated by the level of parental communication concerning sexuality.

The rationale of these assumptions and propositions will be explained in Chapter II.

#### Overview of Dissertation

In the chapters that follow, the ideas discussed in the introduction are more fully presented. A brief overview of these chapters may help the reader place this material in context.

The theory for this research project is developed in Chapter II. The chapter begins with a review of the literature which concerns sexuality on television. From this information, an examination is made of the specific messages concerning sexuality which are being portrayed on television, and the assumptions regarding these messages are outlined. In the next section of Chapter II, the correlates of the viewing of television sexuality by adolescents are discussed. In the last section, parents are considered as a mediating factor in how adolescents react to what they are seeing on television.

Chapter III outlines the research methods utilized in this study. This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section, "Samples in the Study," explains the reason for having two samples. This section also discusses the reasons for a non-random sample, the sampling procedure, the anonymity involved in administering the survey, and the confidentiality involved in the interviews. Also included in this section are the characteristics and limitations of the sample.

The second section, "Instrumentation," details the administration of the pilot study and the final revision of the instrument. The rationale involved in the development of the operational indicators for the assumptions and variables used in this study are discussed, and the statistical procedures used in this project are reviewed.

Chapter IV presents the findings of this study. The first section details the findings of the quantitative study. Frequency and percentages are reported for the demographic variables and the assumptions. Pearson product moment correlation coefficients are given for the first four propositions. The last eight propositions test the mediating effects of the degree of parental closeness and the level of parent-adolescent communication concerning sexuality. These propositions are tested in two ways: (1) Partial correlations and (2) Pearson correlations after breaking the sample into groups following the mediating variables. The last section details the findings of the

qualitative study and interrelates the qualitative and quantitative findings.

Chapter V, the concluding chapter of the dissertation, presents a summary of the findings of this research project. Implications and recommendations for future research are given at the conclusion of the chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FORMULATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the rationale for the assumptions and propositions being tested in this study. This rationale is based on a review of the literature which has been conducted in the area of television sexuality. Since the studies on television sexuality are so sparse, it is necessary to incorporate literature from related areas, such as the perceived realism of television portrayals and television's portrayals of values.

The first section analyzes television's message concerning sexuality, and discusses three assumptions which are testing aspects of that message. In the second section, correlates of viewing sexual portrayals are discussed. These include correlations between the viewing of sexually oriented programs and adolescents' perceptions of the reality of the sexuality portrayed; the adolescent's own sexual attitudes and behavior; and sexually active adolescents' responsibility for preventing pregnancy. The third section examines parents as a mediating factor for the above mentioned correlations.

Television's Messages About  
Human Sexuality

Television has been criticized for a variety of alleged evils. One such charge is that television tells people what to think. However, Swerdlow (1981) states that "it does not so much tell people what to think, as it tells them what to think about" (p. 60). This viewpoint is in agreement with Signorielli, et al. (1982), who, in referring to the world of television, conclude that "the system as a whole plays a major role in setting the agenda of issues that people will agree or disagree about" (p. 169).

The observations by Swerdlow (1981) and Signorielli, et al. (1982) invite a closer examination of the question, "what does television tell people to think about?" For several years, the focus of television, and consequently the focus of concern by public opinion polls, was the portrayal of violence. Violence dominated the screen through the mid-seventies, and then several factors, such as the controversy created by conservative groups, and the continuing pressure for high ratings, have led the networks to look for alternative subjects with as much public appeal as the portrayal of violence. The predominant subject which has emerged is the portrayal of sexuality. Sexuality is an area which lends itself to a wide variety of program types, such as comedy and drama. Sexual portrayals are used in combination with portrayals of violence to add another

dimension to the variety of programming available. Other aspects of sexuality, such as seductive portrayals and "sex appeal," have been widely adapted as a medium for selling products.

### Popular Press

The trend of increased portrayal of sexuality has been documented by the popular press. Waters (1978) observed that

the most widespread suspicion is that prime time's new blue hue is a carefully calculated replacement for the old blood-red one . . . the networks are turning to risqué material as the next best lure for viewers. (p. 54)

Corliss (1980) observes that "the medium has never more fully deserved its reputation as the boob tube" as he describes 1980 situation comedies as "smutcom" (p. 100).

The sexual portrayal is not limited to programming. Commercials are incorporating sexual themes to sell products. In an article in Time magazine which describes controversial ads such as an advertisement of Calvin Klein jeans, it is pointed out that "sex is being used to promote items as varied as cologne and traveler's checks" (1980, p. 95). Even the newscasts have been included in the transition to sexuality. Waters (1980) criticizes the television networks in an article entitled "Sex and the Anchor Person" by pointing out that broadcast journalism is being reduced to a competition of sex, looks and age rather

than competence.

In 1981, religious leaders eased up on their campaign against the portrayal of violence on television but intensified their campaign to curtail the portrayal of sexuality on television. Throughout that year, religious pressure groups threatened to boycott TV sponsors supporting sexually oriented programs (Powers, 1981). The effects were felt and publicized. Clarke (1981) reported that the "jiggle shows" were on the way out, and that the networks had received the message that they had gone too far in the sexuality presented on television.

Current comments concerning sexuality reflect a different perspective. The popular press now mentions that "soap operas may be warping our sense of reality" (Alsop, 1981, p. 29; Bricker & Dykhouse, 1982, p. 76). At the same time, they are proclaiming that a new TV show treats sex and violence with stunning new realism (Gritten, 1982). Therefore, sexual portrayals seem to have gained legitimacy within the popular press. However, an examination of current television programming reveals that sexual portrayal has not diminished. Sexual portrayal on television continues to increase, both in the number of references to sexual subjects and in a shift toward more controversial behavior.

#### Research on Television Sexuality

In four research projects, physically intimate and



sexual behavior on prime time television has been investigated (Franzblau, Sprafkin, & Rubinstein, 1977; Silverman, Sprafkin, & Rubinstein, 1979; Sprafkin, Silverman, & Rubinstein, 1980; Sprafkin & Silverman, 1981). In these studies, trends are reported which reveal increases in the frequency of sexual portrayal. These trends are further amplified by the fact that the greatest increases are in the more controversial categories (Sprafkin, et al., 1981). The frequency of the appearance of the least intimate behaviors, kissing and hugging, have increased gradually, from 3.32 acts per hour in 1975 to 4.06 in 1977 to 7.30 in 1978. Direct verbal references to intercourse have increased from two occurrences per week in 1975 to six references in 1977 and 53 in 1978 (Sprafkin, et al., 1981). References to prostitution have increased more than four-fold, and references to aggressive sexual contacts have increased three-fold from 1977 to 1978 (Sprafkin, et al., 1981).

During the same time that sexual portrayals have been increasing on public television, the cable television industry has been developing rapidly. Cable systems are not regulated by the Federal Communications Commission and do not depend on sponsors who regulate, to an extent, programs that are shown on commercial television (Gunther, 1981). Therefore, while sexuality is implied or suggestive on commercial television, it is often explicit on cable

systems. "R" rated movies, which are subject to federal restrictions when shown at a theater, are now available in the home, without those restrictions. Ellis (1983) and Vincent, Ellis, and Jones-Webb (1982) indicate that 11 percent of 10 year olds surveyed have HBO in their own room and 66 percent had viewed some "R" rated programming during the preceeding month.

The conclusion must be that sexuality is prevalent on television and much more so if subscription movie systems are consumed. Swerdlow (1981) appears to be correct in observing that television is telling people what to think about. To a great extent what television is telling people to think about is sex. However, that observation is only partially correct, television also may be telling people what to think about sex.

To some degree, the previously mentioned studies by Franzblau, et al. (1977), Silverman, et al. (1979) and Sprafkin, et al. (1981) identify types of sexual portrayal. These studies define 16 types of sexual behaviors which included kissing, hugging, other types of touching suggestiveness, intercourse, prostitution and several types of atypical behavior such as homosexuality. They rate weekday evening programs for degree of sexual content and suitability for particular age groups (adult, teenager, and child). However, trying to classify sexuality on the basis of "touching" behavior is like trying to describe differences in automobiles by color only.

Human sexuality is a complex phenomenon which is not limited to touching behaviors. Indeed, many touching behaviors are not labeled as sexual even when restricted to affectionate touching. One has to wonder when a coder records a kiss or hug whether or not it is even performed within a sexual context. Certainly a kiss given by a mother to her four year old son would not be labeled as sexual. On the other hand, a mere "look" can be quite sexual in nature and be classified as having sexual overtones without any body contact whatsoever. The classifications of touching behaviors hardly qualify as a operational indicator of sexual portrayal.

Other research has been conducted which includes the context under which the behavior occurs. Fernandez-Collado, Greenberg, Korzenny, & Atkin (1978) define six types of intimate sexual behavior which are 1. rape (homosexual and heterosexual), 2. consenting homosexual acts, 3. intercourse (married partner), 4. intercourse (unmarried partner), 5. prostitution, and 6. all other illegal or intimate sexual acts. Two studies have been published concerning sex on the soap operas (Greenberg, Abelman, & Neuendorf, 1981; Lowry, Love, & Kirby, 1981). Lowry, et al. (1981) report

numbers of beautiful, rich, successful (many of them professionals), and sexy role models engaging in intercourse outside of marriage twice as often as they engage in intercourse within the bonds of marriage. (p. 95)

This occurrence is further reinforced by Greenberg, et al.

(1981) who report that "unmarried partners outnumbered married partners in incidents of and references to intercourse by a ratio of four to one" (p. 86). The findings that relate the television portrayal of sexual behavior among the unmarried suggests another dimension to television sexuality: the portrayal of sexual values. Sexual values are learned in a more covert manner than most other types of learning, because sexuality is a much more personal issue. Many people feel that sexuality should be kept private; therefore, many children and adolescents who know their parents' values on other topics, don't know their parents values about sexuality.

Public concern toward sexuality is not focused on whether or not it is acceptable behavior, but rather for whom, and under what conditions, specific types of sexual behavior are appropriate. The problem concerns how the transition is made from being non-sexually active to sexually active. Societal standards dictate that sexual intercourse between married partners is both acceptable and necessary for continuing the species; sexual intercourse between young people is discouraged. However, there is considerable variation as to the acceptability of intercourse for those of a marriageable age. Some take the position that intercourse is reserved for marriage (and marriage until after education) (Elkind, 1981), while others consider intercourse a natural part of even a casual relationship. In the middle are those who feel that

intercourse is acceptable with varying degrees of commitment to the relationship.

### Assumptions

If the research by Fernandez-Collado, et al. (1978), Greenberg, et al. (1981), and Lowry, et al. (1981) is accurate, then television's message is that sexual intercourse among unmarried people is much more common than sexual intercourse among married people. For adolescents who either are, or soon will be, making decisions concerning their own transition from being non-sexually active to sexually active, such portrayals may be misleading. Research indicates that sexual intercourse among unmarried couples is the most predominate type of sexual portrayal on television. However, for this message to have an impact on people, they must receive this message from television. A common belief is that television is different things to different people, and that what is perceived is based on each individual's own experiences. If that is the case, a sexually mature and experienced adult may perceive a different meaning from a program than a young person who is somewhat naive. Therefore, a necessary step toward evaluating effects of television's messages concerning sexuality would be to test assumptions concerning the perceptions adolescents have about what is being portrayed on television. The first assumption to be tested in this

study is a direct result of the findings of previous research. Since sexual intercourse among unmarried couples is the most predominant portrayal of sexual behavior, then that behavior is portrayed as being accepted. Assumption number one is:

Assumption 1

Adolescents will perceive television's message about sexual relationships to be that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples is acceptable.

It may be, however, that television's message goes beyond just being acceptable; some could argue that television's message actually implies that sexual intercourse is an expected part of even causal relationships. A case in point is the movie, "Ode to Billy Joe", which was shown recently on a subscription movie channel. This movie is rated "PG," presumably because there is no explicit sex or graphic portrayal of violence. The movie's theme is about two 15 year olds' introduction to sexual activity. According to the rationale of the movie, a 15 year old girl's hesitance to have sexual intercourse with her boyfriend "caused" him to have a homosexual experience which led to his eventually committing suicide. The movie leaves the impression that she was expected to have sex with her boyfriend, and if she had, the resulting problems would not have occurred. Several television shows reflect this same perspective; that people are expected to have

intercourse, and simply by having intercourse, they will reduce problems they are having, or prevent problems from arising. The second assumption, then, will concern perceptions of sexuality being an expected behavior.

### Assumption 2

Adolescents will perceive television's message about sexual relationships to be that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples is expected.

A research project conducted by Cassata and Skill (1983), adds another dimension to the issues associated with television sexuality. Cassata and Skill evaluate programs by what they call "social responsibility." In an evaluation of seven soap operas, Cassata and Skill (1983) report that "General Hospital" is the most socially responsible, even though it has nearly twice as much sexual behavior portrayed as "All My Children," which is the most socially irresponsible.

Responsibility for sexual behavior adds another perspective to the problem of sexual portrayal on television. It often distorts the consequences of sexual behavior, usually by ignoring the fact that there are consequences to sexual behavior. For example, a male private investigator is shown in bed with a client after he has rescued her from a distressing situation, and the show ends. The next week, the program begins with a new

situation and no mention is made of the past relationship. Seldom does anything result from these encounters on television. In reality, there are consequences, such as venereal diseases, pregnancy, feelings of rejection, loneliness, and many others too numerous to mention. The third assumption, then, will assess perceptions of sexual behavior on television.

### Assumption 3

Adolescents will perceive television's message about sexual relationships to be that there are no consequences as a result of sexual behavior.

In addition to testing these assumptions, correlations are being made to see if there are relationships between viewing sexually oriented programs, adolescents' perceptions of sexual reality, adolescents' sexual attitudes and behavior, and sexually active adolescents' responsibility for preventing pregnancy. The rationale for these correlations are examined in the next section.

## Correlates of Viewing Sexual Portrayals

### Perceived Realism of Sexual Portrayal

Television's messages concerning sexual portrayal are documented as being consistent. Roberts (1982) asserts that television affects a child's sexual socialization, due, in part, to "the overwhelming consistency of the messages



about sexuality that are communicated" (p. 209). Regardless of how realistically the sexuality is portrayed, it is the viewer's perceptions of that reality which will determine how much of that portrayal will be accepted as realistic. One theory which has been used to explain portrayals of violence on television being related to fear of violence in the real world might be appropriate to partially explain why sexual portrayal on television might be perceived as realistic. This theory has been labeled "Cultivation Analysis" and is derived by Gerbner and his associates at the Annenberg School of Communications (Gerbner, et al., 1980). This theory is summed up well in a statement by Signorielli, et al. (1982) which contends that:

The basic expectation concerning cultivation analysis is that the more time one spends living in the world of television, the more likely one is to report conceptions of social reality that can be traced to television portrayals. (p. 169)

Applying this theory to television's sexual portrayals, cultivation analysis would suggest that the more sexually oriented programming that is watched, the more likely the viewer is to subconsciously internalize these messages as being what the real world is like.

In addition to the amount of viewing, a factor which would affect how realistic television sexuality is perceived to be is alternative sources of information. This is especially critical in the area of sexuality, because it is an area which is less open to discussion than most other areas. It is also an important consideration when

considering how young people internalize television's messages concerning sexuality. Roberts (1982) addresses this issue:

Adult viewers are presumably sophisticated in the ways of the world, cognizant of differences between reality and fantasy, and aware of the commercial purposes of television. But for the young viewer, the content of television is often far different from anything else in a limited life experience. (p. 209)

This viewpoint, concerning realism of television portrayals and alternate sources of information, has been documented in other areas of research (De Fleur & De Fleur, 1967; Gerbner, et al., 1980).

A concern which has been expressed about general television viewing is that whatever time is spent watching television is time that would have been spent doing something else (Herndon, 1980). One activity that has been pointed out as being reduced by television viewing is interacting with others (Walters & Stone, 1971). In other words, the more time that is spent watching television, the less time is being spent interacting with the real world. If this replacement of real experience occurs to a great enough extent, then the sexual portrayal on television may be perceived as realistic.

The first proposition in the present study is concerned with the correlation between highly sexually oriented TV viewing and adolescents' perceptions of the degree of reality of the sexual portrayal on television. The first

proposition is:

Proposition 1

There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the degree to which adolescents perceive the portrayal of television sexuality as realistic.

It is assumed that adolescents are able to distinguish realistic and unrealistic portrayal more easily within the reference group than within the general population. Therefore, the perception of realism of sexual portrayal of adolescent sexuality is being measured as well as for society in general. Although high levels of viewing of sexually oriented programs would expect to be positively correlated with both dimensions of realism; it is expected that adolescents will see adolescent sexuality as being less realistic than for society in general. This could be due to a greater degree of knowledge concerning the sexual behavior of themselves and of their peers than of society in general. Therefore, the two hypotheses relating to this proposition are:

Hypothesis 1. There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the degree to which adolescents agree that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic.

Hypothesis 2. There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the degree to which adolescents agree that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in the general population.

Adolescents' Sexual Attitudes  
and Behavior

A second area of interest in this study, is the possible correlation between sexual portrayal on television and adolescents' own sexual attitudes and behavior. The influence of sexuality as portrayed on television appears to be highly contingent on extraneous factors (Report on Obscenity and Pornography, 1970; Cline, 1974), and is hotly debated (Berkowitz, 1971; Dienstbier, 1977). Perhaps for this reason, few studies have focused on the influence of sexually oriented programming on adolescent sexual activity. It is generally recognized that sexual activity among adolescents continues to increase dramatically (Bell & Coughy, 1980; Robinson & Jedlicka, 1982; Zelnick & Kantner, 1977). The most recent statistics indicate that, for college-age youth, "the rates of premarital coitus for each sex are approaching a common asymptote" (Robinson & Jedlicka, 1982, p. 237). At the same time, the median age for first intercourse has dropped below age 16 with almost

25 percent of adolescent women experiencing first coitus prior to age 15. This increase in sexual activity is occurring during the same time period that television sexuality has shown dramatic increases. It may be that both of these occurrences are due to some third factor, but it may also be that television sexuality is being modeled. Bandura (1973) points out that in the absence of an adequate role model, television characters may effectively be modeled.

The Robert Johnston Company (1980) completed a study which indicates that television increased in its power to influence the values and behavior of teenagers from eighth in importance in 1960 to third in 1980. This study suggests that parents and peers are the only sources which are more likely than television to influence adolescents. Swerdlow (1981) reports that television is the most prevalent, although not necessarily the most accurate, source of sexual information. This is supported by Roberts (1982) who warns that "television is a sex educator of our children and a potentially powerful one" (p. 222). Many parents apparently agree with this idea; Roberts, Kline, and Gagnon (1978) have found in interviews with 1400 parents that about half of the parents believe that their children learned the most about sexuality from television.

Despite the general acceptance that television does provide a primary source of learning of sexual information, few studies have focused on the influence of television

sexuality on adolescent sexual activity. Baran (1976a, 1976b) and Courtright and Baran (1980) examined perceived realism of sexuality on television and its relationship to satisfaction with first coitus and the acquisition of sexual information. In a survey of pregnant adolescents, Corder-Bolz & Radek (1980) stress the relationship between evaluation of the reality of sex on TV and adolescents' sexual activity.

It is important to emphasize here that actual "effects" cannot be established because television is so prevalent in our society and has been present during the adolescent's entire life. There really is no matching non-viewing control group available. In order to find large groups of people without television, one would almost be limited to third world countries, and they certainly would differ significantly from the television group on most other variables. Therefore, in a study of television and factors within society, the research is limited to analyzing correlations between factors, rather than to identifying cause of effect. In other words, a person who is highly sexually active may watch a large number of sexually oriented programs because s/he identifies with the behavior being portrayed. The alternative viewpoint could be that watching the sexually oriented programs could cause the person to become sexually active. Since television is an integral part of most people's lives, neither viewpoint can

be substantiated. However, finding correlations between the amount of viewing sexually oriented programs and the level of permissiveness of a person's sexual attitudes and behavior could provide useful information on which to base more detailed studies.

Attitude changes as a result of watching a film have been documented in numerous studies (see Murray, 1980, for complete review). However, very little research has been done concerning television sexuality and adolescents' attitudes toward sexuality. In this study, an assessment of attitudes is made to test for possible correlations with viewing sexually oriented programs. Proposition 2 is stated as follows:

Proposition 2

There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' attitudes.

Most research dealing with changes in behavior as a result of watching films has been conducted in the areas of violence. In the case of sexual behavior, it may be that watching a romantic or seductive program may be enough of a stimulus to elicit corresponding behavior in the viewers. However, since it is almost impossible to test causal relationships of this nature, this study is limited to testing for correlations between viewing sexually oriented programs and self-reports of sexual behavior. Proposition 3

is stated below.

Proposition 3

There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' behavior.

Degree of Responsibility for  
Preventing Pregnancy

A criticism of television is that every problem on TV is satisfactorily solved in 30 or 60 minutes. While this is an oversimplification, it describes another possible shortcoming in dealing with TV sexuality. Life is a process; sexuality is a process which evolves throughout life. Sexuality portrayed on television can, at best, give short excerpts of one small segment of that total process. One segment that seems to consistently be left out is dealing with the consequences of sexual behavior. Television programs and movies generally take a situation, create a problem or crisis likely to interest the viewer, and then end it through a rather simplistic solution with a happy ending. This, of course, is in contrast to situations in real life. In reality, sexual activity definitely has consequences. Sexually transmitted diseases are reported to be at epidemic proportions, at least one of which is incurable thus far, and affecting the mortality rates of



newborns as well as the health of millions of adolescents and adults. Illegitimate births are reported to be at an all time high. The Alan Gutmacher Institute (1981) reports that 362,000 unmarried adolescents give birth each year, and that their children are far more likely to be raised in poverty, have lower achievement scores than other children, and to become teenage parents themselves. In agreement with these findings, the U. S. Bureau of the Census (1980) reports that the birth rate for unmarried females, age 15 through 19, increased more than fourfold between 1950 and 1978, from 56.0 to 239.7 per 1000.

This research project is not meant to be exhaustive but rather to determine whether or not relationships exist between television's portrayal of sexuality and individuals' sexual attributes and behavior so that more exhaustive research can be done at a later date. Because of time limitations only one of the consequences of sexual behavior will be examined.

One of the most highly visible and salient consequences for adolescents is pregnancy. If sexually active adolescents are relying primarily on television as a source of sexual information, they probably are not overly concerned about birth control because television essentially does not deal with this issue. Roberts (1982) points out that "contraceptive responsibility seems to be a 'non-issue' on most television programs" (p. 222). Responsibility for preventing pregnancy is only one of many variables relating

to possible consequences of sexual behavior. Proposition 4 is limited to those who are sexually active, because it cannot be said that those who are not sexually active are inactive in order to prevent pregnancy. It cannot be accurately determined why a person is sexually active or inactive. However, for those who are sexually active, the type of contraceptive and the consistency with which it is used can be said to be an indicator of how responsible that person is with respect to preventing pregnancy. The fourth proposition is stated as follows:

Proposition 4

There is a negative relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the degree of responsibility adolescents' manifest for preventing pregnancy.

Parents as a Mediating Influence

Clearly, opinions about sex and each person's maleness and femaleness come about through information that is gathered from a variety of sources. One of the most important and powerful influencing agents is a parent.

In a now classic study, Bowerman and Kinch (1959) trace children's orientation from mother, to other family members, and finally to those outside the family unit as they seek identity clarification and autonomy. A further development

of this idea is the finding that students who get along well with their parents also get along well with their peer group; those with a high degree of conflict with their parents have trouble relating to their peers as well (Kandel & Lesser, 1969). Condry and Siman (1974) report that fifth and sixth grade students who are peer-oriented manifest that orientation because of a lack of attention and concern from parents and not because of attraction of the peer group per se. Therefore, rather than the conceptualization of parent or peer oriented, the conceptualization might be parent oriented vs. not parent oriented (Stone, Miranne, & Ellis, 1979; Ellis & Stone, 1979). It appears that parental influence is a critical long-term factor when considering salient issues of adolescent attitudes and behavior. The absence of such influence is noted by Donohue (1978), as he comments that

The absence of physical relationships with loving adults apparently leads to personal insecurity which forces the child to seek reinforcement elsewhere. Television, by providing generally pleasant companionship, helps relieve some insecurity and facilitates the learning of social behaviors, values and norms from television models. (p. 189)

While parents have the potential to influence in the area of sexuality, they often do not. There are several reasons why they may not. First, sexual behavior, as opposed to other types of learning interactions between parents and children, is much more subtle and often ignored. Some parents feel that sexuality is an area where the

adolescent should take an active lead without parental involvement. Others are not aware that their adolescents have sexual interests and sexual activities, and by ignoring the situation do not help to direct that influence. Even mild displays of father-mother affection, such as kissing and hugging, are often restrained if children are present. In addition, sexual behavior is difficult for many parents to discuss with their children. Research indicates that the only significant discussion of sexual issues occurs between mothers and daughters, and that parents tend to ignore sons' sex education (Elias, 1978). Children often learn sexual values and behaviors indirectly, and their perceptions of their parents' values may be very unclear. However, the very orientation and outlook of the adolescent is largely a reflection of the parents' values (Schwartz & Merten, 1967; Kandel & Lesser, 1972). While parents' values may not be an active influence on their adolescents' sexuality, the adolescents' approach to sex would be expected to be consistent with the general value orientation of the parents, though it may differ in specific expressions of those values. Naturally, the extent to which prior modeling in the younger years would influence adolescents' sexual attitudes and behavior would vary on a continuum.

It seems obvious that consistency between adolescents' sexual attitudes and behavior and parents' values is greater where the parents' values are well-known and expressed and when the adolescents feel close to their parents. This

suggests two areas concerning relationships with parents that would seem salient for this study. These areas are perceived closeness of a parent and how effective the adolescent feels that parent is in communicating information concerning sexuality. Despite literature which chronicles the implications of parental influence on television viewing, little research has addressed parental mediation of television's influence on sexual activity (Abel, 1976; Brown & Linne, 1976; Rosenblatt & Cunningham, 1976; Brody, Stoneman, & Sanders, 1980; Buerkel-Rothfuss, Greenberg, Atkin, & Neuendorf, 1982).

Therefore, the four previously stated propositions will be tested controlling for the effects of adolescents' perceived parental closeness and adolescents' reports of the amount of communication concerning sexual subjects that they have received from that parent. The related propositions are:

Proposition 5

The relationship between the amount of viewing and the degree of realism of television sexuality will be mediated by the degree of parental closeness perceived by the adolescents.

Proposition 6

The relationship between the amount of viewing and the

degree of realism of television sexuality will be mediated by the level of parental communication concerning sexuality.

Proposition 7

The relationship between the amount of viewing and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' attitudes will be mediated by the degree of parental closeness perceived by the adolescents.

Proposition 8

The relationship between the amount of viewing and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' attitudes will be mediated by the level of parental communication concerning sexuality.

Proposition 9

The relationship between the amount of viewing and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' behavior will be mediated by the degree of parental closeness perceived by the adolescent.

Proposition 10

The relationship between the amount of viewing and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' behavior will be mediated by the level of parental communication concerning sexuality.

Proposition 11

The relationship between the amount of viewing and the degree of responsibility sexually active adolescents manifest for preventing pregnancy will be mediated by the degree of parental closeness perceived by the adolescent.

Proposition 12

The relationship between the amount of viewing and the degree of responsibility sexually active adolescents manifest for preventing pregnancy will be mediated by the level of parental communication concerning sexuality.

Summary

To summarize, the purpose of this chapter is to examine television's messages concerning sexuality to identify possible correlates of TV viewing. In order to ascertain what messages are being perceived by adolescents, assumptions are being tested concerning whether television sexuality portrays intercourse between unmarried couples as being acceptable behavior, even to the point of being an expected behavior. An assumption is also being examined concerning adolescents' perceptions of television's portrayal of consequences as a result of sexual behavior.

Several correlates of TV viewing of sexually oriented programming are suggested, including perceived reality of television's sexual portrayal and a possible relationship

between television sexuality and adolescents' sexual attitudes and behavior. The relationship between viewing of sexually oriented programming and the degree to which adolescents manifest responsibility for preventing pregnancy is examined as one example of an awareness of, and therefore, the responsibility for, the consequences of sexual behavior.

Finally, the effects of the degree of parental closeness and the level of parental communication concerning sexuality are examined as possible mediating effects of the above correlations.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### Introduction

This chapter outlines the procedure followed in carrying out this project. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section deals with the selection of the subjects. It includes the sampling procedure, characteristics of the sample, data collection procedures and limitations of the sample. The second section deals with the development of the instrument, the pilot study used in this project, and the development of the final instrument. The third section details the procedure for the analysis of the data.

#### Samples in the Study

Two samples were used in this research project: 1. a high school sample of both males and females, and 2. a sample of students enrolled at the Deaconess Home for Pregnant Adolescents. The high school sample was used for the major part of the project, which was quantitative in nature. Due to the complexity of the issues involved, any relationships found were expected to be subtle; therefore,

the qualitative sample of pregnant adolescents was used to help clarify the findings of the quantitative survey. The pregnant adolescents responded to the same survey as the high school sample. In addition to the survey, they were interviewed concerning their perceptions of television, their relationship to their parents, and their attitudes concerning their pregnancies.

### Sampling Procedure

A non-random sample was utilized for the following reasons. First, this research was concerned with unmarried people. Finding a large group of unmarried people willing to take the time to complete a questionnaire generally suggests a school situation. High school students were surveyed because they are fairly representative of the population of single people. Almost everyone attends high school, most are contemplating marriage at some time in the future, and most are testing their sexual values at this particular time in their lives.

The second reason for a non-random sample involved the subjects being surveyed. The area of sexual attitudes and behavior was a highly personal and controversial matter which restricted the number of samples and the number of schools willing to participate in a survey of this nature. Since most high school students were not of legal age, at least until the latter part of their senior year parental approval was also a consideration. For this reason Family

Living classes were selected. Most parents of students in these classes were aware that their adolescents were being exposed to discussions about sexual matters. The parents were, therefore, more likely to allow their adolescents to be surveyed.

A third reason for a non-random sample was due to the type of research. The present study was investigating a relatively new area of research and the purpose of the study was to verify that relationships exist and identify them so that more detailed research can be conducted and verified in the future.

Burr (1973), in "Theory Construction and the Sociology of the Family" offers the following opinion.

Sampling procedures are highly crucial in descriptive research, but they are relatively less important in verificational research. Probably because so much of the social research that has been done in recent decades has been merely descriptive rather than testing relationships that have a theoretical basis, a belief has developed in the social sciences that researchers should be highly concerned about the sample that is used. However, in the type of research that tests theoretical ideas it is possible to move the priority of the sampling issues down considerably in the list of issues that must be satisfactorily coped with. (p. 38)

The purpose of this research project was to verify that a relationship exists between adolescents' sexual attitudes and behavior and television sexuality. If this and other projects indicate that a relationship does exist, then it may become necessary in the future to establish the conditions under which the relationships occur. Burr (1973)

further elaborates on this point.

Verificational research is interested in testing theoretical relationships, and it is not very impairing if the particular sample that is used in a study is taken from a very restricted universe. This is especially true in the beginning stages of testing the validity of a theory because one or even several separate studies do not provide a high order of proof. Eventually it is necessary to test theoretical ideas in systematically different universes not only to determine the circumstances under which the influence operated but also to compensate for other problems such as measurement error; however, in the slow process of revising and testing theories a great deal of meaningful research can be done with economical, biased, and small samples. (p. 38)

This is, of course, only one approach to the problems of sampling and could be challenged by other perspectives on sampling. However, a non-random sample seems to be appropriate for this research project.

#### Survey Sample

Since anonymity was particularly important for this study, precautions were taken to insure each student's privacy. Each class took the survey during regular class time. Care was taken to insure that each student would have ample seating space in which to complete the questionnaire anonymously. Each student was given a copy of the survey and a coversheet. A number 2 pencil was provided so that all marked questionnaires would look similar. The students were instructed to: 1. not put their names on the questionnaire, 2. circle their answers, 3. print if the question required an individual response, and 4. keep their

questionnaires until all were finished. At the conclusion of the hour the students were instructed to close their surveys, bring them to the front of the room, and deposit them in a ballot box. The box was not opened until all the classes had completed the survey. At that time, the box was opened in the presence of one class and all of the surveys were mixed up so that one class's surveys would not be obvious from the location in the box. Then the surveys were numbered.

#### Interview Sample

The girls from the home for pregnant teenagers were assured of confidentiality. The surveys were identified with the individual who filled it out so that the data could be used with the information on the taped interviews. However, the girls were instructed to use a first name, other than their own. They were to put this name on their survey and the interviewer was to know them by this name only.

The purpose of the interviews was not specifically to test relationships, but rather to help shed some light on the questions being investigated. The interview consisted of several very general questions concerning television sexuality, in order to allow the interviewees to discuss any comments they had about television.

### Characteristics of the Samples

This study included high school students enrolled in Family Living classes at four suburban high schools in central Oklahoma during the Spring semester of 1982. The teachers had the option of sending out permission slips for the parents to sign. Of the seven teachers involved in the survey, four sent out the slips. An additional group consisting of girls from a home for pregnant teen-agers was obtained. Permission for interviewing and administering the instrument was given by the director of the home. The total sample included 97 males and 220 females. Seven of the females were from the home for pregnant teenagers.

### Limitations of the Samples

When dealing with human subjects, any type of research study is limited to those who agree to participate. As the nature of the research becomes more personal, the more likely the respondents are to prefer not to participate in the study. This may be a serious limitation in all research on human sexuality. Some researchers have found that people who are more liberal in their attitudes and behavior are more likely to participate in studies of this nature (Clippinger, 1980). This would bias the data toward more sexually active end of the continuum.

In this research project, participation was not a serious problem. No one declined to fill out the survey.

Of the 321 surveys filled out, only four were determined to have been filled out in a non-serious manner, and therefore, left out of the study. The cooperative environment encountered may have been due to the fact that Family Living classes were surveyed, and they were more likely to be comfortable answering personal questions concerning sexuality.

Another limitation a researcher must face when dealing with personal information concerning human subjects is honesty. If the researcher has not clearly established the trust of the respondent concerning the confidentiality or anonymity, the subject may not feel comfortable revealing information about him/herself. Also, some respondents are more likely to give accurate information if they can fill out a written form which cannot be traced back to them, rather than by disclosing the information to an interviewer who then knows personal information about an individual regardless of whether or not the information is confidential.

Honesty was not thought to have been a serious problem in this study. Although honesty can never be established without doubt, the conditions under which the surveys were given were conducive to establishing a sense of trust. The reactions of the students after taking the survey reinforced the assumption that they felt comfortable taking the survey and confident that no one was going to try to find out about them, personally.

For the group of pregnant adolescents honesty did not seem to be an important factor. None of the subjects reacted negatively to the interviewer. However, most were quite emotional when discussing their pregnancy, and some were having difficulty coming to terms with their current situation. Therefore, there was some degree of failure to be honest with themselves in the areas of the permanency of the relationship with their boyfriends and in their opinions concerning the sexual behavior of their peers. These were expected attitudes and they were not thought to affect the honesty of the interview.

#### Instrumentation

##### The Pilot Study

One purpose of the pilot study was to clarify the questions and to obtain comments and criticisms of the survey. (Due to the very general nature of the qualitative portion of this study, it was not considered necessary to pilot test the interview portion.) To obtain information for this study, a questionnaire was initially designed which was limited to ten pages (approximately 125 items) and was produced in booklet form according to procedures outlined by Dillman (1978). The questionnaire was composed of several content areas discussed in greater depth below. The areas included: a. general information; b. parental closeness; c. parental communication concerning sexuality;



d. premarital sexual permissiveness; e. sexual experience; and f. television sexuality.

The pilot survey was given to 68 students in a university human sexuality class in the fall semester of 1981. These surveys were filled out during class time and turned in at the end of the hour. A total of 65 useable surveys were obtained and a preliminary analysis of the pilot data was undertaken. The pilot group indicated that the questions were clearly stated. The only strong criticism was that the survey was too long. Steps were taken in the revision of the instrument to reduce the length. The only question which seemed to elicit a negative response was the question concerning the family's income. Four people left the question blank and two wrote "none of your business." Since socioeconomic status is not considered crucial in this particular study and since high school students often don't know their family income this question was omitted from the final survey.

#### The Revised Instrument: Assumptions

The revised instrument was reduced to six pages of approximately 100 items. It was designed to assess three assumptions and to measure the seven main variables of this study. A minimum of background questions were asked in order to shorten the questionnaire, to help insure anonymity, and because most background variables were not

considered important for this study. The background questions which were considered relevant and which were included in the survey were sex and age of the respondents, parents' marital status, and with whom the respondents were living.

The assumptions were assessed by asking direct questions with a four category response format ranging from "definitely yes" to "definitely no." The direct question approach was used for two reasons. First, this study was exploratory in nature, and a direct question has the potential to elicit the most straightforward answer in the least amount of space. The second reason for asking direct questions related to the scarcity of research in this area. There are no known scales available to measure these assumptions. The assumptions are presented below with the operational indicator for each one.

#### Assumption 1

Adolescents will perceive television's message about sexual relationships to be that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples is acceptable behavior.

Operational Indicator 1. "Do you think that television's message about sexual relationships is that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples is acceptable behavior?"

### Assumption 2

Adolescents will perceive television's message about sexual relationships to be that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples is an expected behavior.

Operational Indicator 2. "Do you think that television's message about sexual relationships is that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples is an expected behavior?"

### Assumption 3

Adolescents will perceive television's message about sexual relationships to be that there are no consequences as a result of sexual behavior.

Operational Indicator 3. "Do you think TV programs and movies (excluding educational specials) adequately show the consequences of premarital sex (such as pregnancy and abortion)?"

### The Revised Instrument: Correlations

The propositions for this study were composed of seven variables. Indicators of these variables are identified and an explanation given for measurement of the indicators in this section. The major variables for testing the correlates were: 1. the amount adolescents view sexually oriented programming, 2. the degree of realism of television

sexuality perceived by adolescents, 3. the degree of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual attitudes, 4. the degree of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual behavior, 5. the degree of responsibility adolescents manifest for preventing pregnancy, 6. adolescents' perceived closeness to parents, and 7. the level of parental communication concerning sexuality. Each was operationalized to provide some measure of the variable being tested. In some areas, multiple measures were used to try to determine which ones more accurately predict variability on other correlates. This determination might aid investigators in future research.

Variable 1. Viewing of Sexual Programming

There is little agreement on how to accurately measure the amount of TV a person watches. Traditional television viewing measures involve many methods of estimating amount of viewing. These methods involve estimates of 1. hours of TV watched yesterday (Chaffee, McLeod, & Atkin, 1971; Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, & Morgan, 1980), 2. viewing diary (Pingree & Hawkins, 1981; Hawkins & Pingree, 1980), 3. number of hours per day (Chaffee, et. al., 1971; Haney & Manzolati, 1980; Hughes, 1980), 4. average number of evenings per week television is viewed at least one hour (Fox & Philliber, 1978), and 5. frequency of viewing a particular type of program (Gerbner, Gross, Eeley, Jackson-

Breck, Jeffries-Fox, & Signorielli, 1977). It is even more difficult to accurately measure how much sexually oriented programming is watched. Since the viewing of sexually oriented programming was the central issue in this study, several indicators were used separately and in combination to estimate how much sexually oriented programming was watched.

For the present study, the three indicators of the viewing of sexually oriented programming were: A. the frequency with which sexually oriented commercial television programs are watched, B. the rating of sexually oriented movies, and C. an estimate of the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programs. Indicator C includes three factors. These factors were self-report estimates of: 1. total amount of viewing time, 2. percent of viewing time that was spent watching sexually oriented programs, and 3. percent of time spent viewing subscription movie channels.

Operational Indicator IA. Commercial Television Programs. In order to ascertain which programs were considered the most sexually oriented, a college class was asked two questions: "What do you consider sex on television to be?" and "What programs do you think are the most sexually oriented?" The two program titles listed most frequently were "Benny Hill" and "Saturday Night Live;" therefore, they were listed by title on the questionnaire.

The program type listed most frequently was soap operas. Since most of the specific soap opera titles were listed, but no one predominant title emerged, two classifications of soap operas were used on the questionnaire. They were daytime soaps, such as "General Hospital" or "All My Children;" and evening soaps, such as "Dallas" or "Dynasty." Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they watched these programs on a five item scale ranging from 1. "never" to 5. "very often". These scores were added to give a range of scores from 4 to 20, to measure how much sexually oriented programming was watched on commercial TV.

Operational Indicator 1B. The Rating of Sexually Oriented Movies. Another indicator of sexually oriented programming was the rating of sexually oriented movies. Three sexually oriented movies rated "R" by the movie industry were included in this study. Two were selected because they had been on at theaters and they had also been on Home Box Office, a pay TV movie system, during the month the surveys were taken. The other was selected because it was showing at theaters at the time of the study and was specifically geared toward the high school age group. The three movies selected were "The Postman Always Rings Twice," "Dressed to Kill," and "Porkys." The respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they saw the movies, and if they did, to rate how well they liked each movie. Those who did not see a movie were give a zero for each one they did not

see. For each movie they did see, they are given one point if they rated the movie as poor, up to five points if they rated the movie as excellent. These scores were then added to give a range of scores from 0 to 15 to be used to evaluate how much they enjoyed watching sexually oriented movies.

Operational Indicator 1C. Commercial and Subscription Television. The third indicator was by far the most complicated of the three indicators and was a measure of the quantity of sexually oriented programming being consumed by the respondent. It was used strictly for the purpose of preliminary research to see if this line of reasoning had validity as a method of assessing exposure to sexual portrayal on television. This indicator was divided into three self-reported estimates of: 1. the time spent viewing TV per week, 2. the percent of viewing time which was spent viewing sexually oriented programs, and 3. the percent of viewing time spent viewing a subscription movie channel.

The first, and most basic factor, was the total time spent viewing television per week. The use of this factor to measure sexually oriented TV viewing was based on the assumption that the more television was watched, the more likely it was that the viewer saw programs of a sexual nature. Some viewers may be watching sports, religious, or Public Broadcasting System programs, but generally people are watching the more common commercial television stations.

The method utilized to assess viewing time was a self-report of TV viewing on a typical school day as well as on Saturday and on Sunday. Total hours for a week were calculated by taking the number of hours watched on a school day, multiplying that number by five and adding the number of hours watched on Saturday and Sunday.

The second factor considered in this indicator involved an estimate of the percent of programs respondents watch which they consider to be sexually oriented. There are many problems with this type of measure because the term "sexually oriented" may not mean the same thing to all people. A wide variety of answers was received from the college class concerning the question "What do you consider sex on television to be?" (referred to above.) The answers received from the college class were used to derive a definition for sexually oriented programs. That definition was "Any program which contains sexually suggestive jokes, references or manner of dress, shows sexual encounters or conveys sexual values." This definition was listed preceding the question concerning the percent of sexually oriented programs. The pilot group did not ask questions concerning the clarity of this definition; therefore, it was assumed to define the concept adequately. Another problem with this type of measure is that it may reflect the respondents' awareness of the many aspects of sexuality portrayed on TV rather than how much they watch. However,



it may be that those who are more aware of the aspects of sexuality are aware of it because they have been exposed to more sexually oriented programming. By multiplying the percent of sexually oriented programming being watched by the total number of hours watched per week, a self-report measure of the amount of sexually oriented programs watched was obtained.

The third factor considered in Indicator C was subscription movie channels. Some of the most explicit or graphic portrayals of sexuality are shown on subscription movie channels. This is not meant to imply that all features on subscription movie channels are heavily sexually oriented. It is recognized that, like commercial channels, there are channels which feature various non-sexually oriented programs. However, sexual portrayals on subscription movie channels are not subject to the same sanctions as sexual portrayals on commercial television; therefore, the sexuality portrayed is usually more explicit and intense.

In order to reflect this extra dimension of sexual portrayal, the respondents were asked to indicate what percent of their TV viewing time they spend watching a subscription movie channel. The percent watched was multiplied by the total hours of sexually oriented TV watched; the resulting number was added to the score for the total hours of sexually oriented TV watched. The numerical value of the total score was, therefore, changed from an

hour reference to a unit reference to be used only for comparison purposes.

The rationale behind the decision to calculate this factor in this manner was as follows: no estimates in research have been made concerning the relationship between sexuality portrayed on commercial television and that portrayed on a subscription movie channel. It is generally recognized that the subscription movie channels have a higher percentage of sexual themes as well as more explicit portrayals. Therefore, the assumption was made that if two individuals watched 30 hours of television per week each, but viewer A watched a subscription movie channel for 80% of that time and viewer B only watched commercial TV, then viewer A consumed a much greater quantity of sexually oriented programming than viewer B. Since it was not known how much more sexually oriented programming was actually consumed, an arbitrary amount was determined by the percent of time that was spent viewing the subscription movie channel. In the illustration of viewer A and B, viewer B would have a score of 30 and viewer A would have a score of  $(.80 \times 30) + 30$  or 54.

Variable 2. Realism of  
Television Sexuality

An area of interest in this study concerned the realism of television sexuality. This was an area which had not

been adequately researched; therefore, the literature did not give suggestions on how to test this relationship. However, general research on television reality typically focused on direct questions relating subjects on television to subjects in real life (Reeves, 1978; Rubin, 1977). An example of a statement used by Reeves was "TV shows tell about life the way it really is" (1978, p. 685). Literature on the realism of television, itself, indicated that by its very nature, television tends to be unrealistic (see Chapter II). The same may be true for sexuality on television; the fact that couples are shown in specific situations, either romantic encounters, confrontation, or other highs or lows of relationships and does not show the day to day drudgeries, might be considered unrealistic. In this study, one purpose was to try to determine if predictors could be identified which give information on the degree to which adolescents consider sexuality on television as realistic.

In the absence of any known scales, two statements were used to determine two dimensions of television sexuality. Both items were agree-disagree statements with six response categories ranging from "strongly agree" scored 1, to "strongly disagree," scored 6.

Operational Indicator 2A. "Television portrays sexual interaction between teenagers as it really is."

Operational Indicator 2B. "The amount of sexual interaction implied on TV is representative of real life

relationships."

Operational indicator 2A was concerned specifically with the respondents' perceptions concerning adolescents portrayed on television. Operational indicator 2B was concerned with the respondents' perceptions of the sexual portrayal of the general population on television. Adolescents were expected to be able to distinguish realistic and unrealistic portrayal more easily within the reference group than within the general population. These items were not intended to go in depth into the question of the reality of television sexuality, but to provide a beginning for research in this area.

### Variable 3. Permissiveness of Sexual Attitudes

Reiss's Premarital Permissiveness Scale (1967) was used in this study. This scale was chosen to measure permissiveness of attitudes for two reasons. The scale was designed by a leading authority in the field of premarital sexual behavior, thus it has face validity. In addition, many of the studies concerning premarital sexual behavior used the Reiss's scale; therefore, increasing the construct validity of the scale.

Recent research suggests that adolescents are less conservative than adults and that society seems to be shifting to a less conservative attitude toward sexuality.

For this reason, the short form of the Reiss's scale was utilized following the suggestions made by Reiss (1967) for groups which were not particularly conservative. Essentially, the changes made in the scale by using the short form omitted questions concerning kissing, because those questions do not discriminate between conservative and liberal attitudes of adolescents. Also, Reiss suggested using either the questions about being engaged or about being in love, or to combine the two questions into one, engaged or in love. The former option was used for this study.

The shortened scale consisted of 12 items. The questions involved whether petting and full sexual relations are acceptable for males and/or females when they are engaged or in love, when there is strong affection, and when there is no strong affection.

In an earlier study of adolescent attitudes, Sexton (1981) found that a double standard existed in one sense - in that boys were more liberal than girls in attitudes toward both males and females. However, neither males nor females exhibit a different set of standards for males and females. In other words, boys were more likely than girls to say that sex without affection was acceptable for boys and girls. But neither boys nor girls were likely to say that sex without affection was acceptable behavior for boys, but not for girls. Ferrel, Tolone, and Walsh (1977) refer to this phenomenon as being attitudinally single standard,

and behaviorally double standard. Therefore, in order to further shorten the scale, the distinction of "for males" or "for females" was deleted. This reduced the scale to six items which were in the following form; "I believe that petting is acceptable before marriage when the couple feels strong affection for each other." The response categories ranged from "strongly agree," with a score of one, to "strongly disagree," with a score of six.

In order to assess how close the students thought their attitudes were to those of their parents, each student was asked to answer the same six items according to how they thought their parents felt. In the pilot study, the scale, answered as adolescents thought their parents would respond, had an Alpha reliability of 0.919. The Alpha reliability for the scale as the subjects answered for themselves was 0.89.

#### Variable 4. Permissiveness of Sexual Behavior

Permissiveness of sexual behavior is a difficult variable to measure. In an earlier study conducted by this researcher, Sexton (1981) tested a number of indicators to see which ones would distinguish between those who were highly sexually active and those who were not. Of the indicators tested, the most reliable item was the self-report of the number of partners with which the respondent

had intercourse. Another highly reliable indicator was the reported number of times the respondent had intercourse. These two indicators were used for the present study. Since the "number of partners" was the most reliable item, it was weighted more heavily than the "number of times" item. In other words, a person who had intercourse with one person ten times would be said to be less permissive than a person who had intercourse with ten partners, one time each. Therefore, the number of partners was multiplied by 15 and added to the number of times to obtain a permissiveness of sexual behavior score. The weight of 15 was used to insure that those people who had several partners have a higher score than a person who had intercourse several times, but with the same partner. Persons who had not had intercourse were assigned a score of 5, rather than 0 to be sure that they would be included in the analysis of the data rather than as missing. The range of scores was 5-125.

Variable 5. Sexually Active  
Adolescents' Responsibility  
for Preventing Pregnancy

Another variable important for this study was how responsible sexually active adolescents were for their behavior. One of the major consequences of premarital sexual behavior is pregnancy. Two indicators which measure how consistently sexually active adolescents tried to prevent pregnancy were: 1. the types of birth control

methods used by the sexually active couple, and 2. how consistently those methods were used. The consistency of use was measured on a five point scale from "never" (0) to "always" (4). The types of temporary birth control methods were classified according to the effectiveness of the methods. In very general categories, experts on contraceptives consistently agree on effectiveness, although there was some disagreement on specific methods within the more general categories; therefore, the general categories were used in this study. The categories from least to most effective were: 0. nothing, 1. rhythm or withdrawal, 2. foams, creams, jellies or suppositories, 3. condom, diaphragm, or IUD, and 4. oral contraceptives. Scores on these two indicators were combined to form the responsibility for preventing pregnancy score. The scores ranged from 0, which indicated the couple did not use birth control, to 8, which indicated consistent use of the pill.

One category not considered in this ranking was those respondents who have not had sexual intercourse. They might be said to be always using abstinence, (100% effective, 100% of the time). However, it was not known why these people had not had intercourse; it might have been lack of opportunity, aversion to the opposite sex, or a number of reasons other than to prevent pregnancy. For that reason, the analysis of the data concerning responsibility for preventing pregnancy used only those adolescents who were



sexually experienced.

#### Variable 6. Closeness to Parents

Self-report measures of adolescents' perceived closeness to their parents were used in this study. There are debates for and against self-report measures concerning relationships. Some argue that the adolescents and the parents must be surveyed or interviewed in order to get an accurate perception of the relationship. Others take the position that it is not necessary to know how the parents feel about a relationship if it is characteristics of the adolescent that are being studied. It is how the adolescents perceive the relationship that affects the adolescents' attitudes and behavior.

Adolescents' perceived closeness to their parents is a variable which can be measured in a variety of ways. Two indicators were used in this study: 1. adolescents' perceived closeness to their parents in terms of the parents' awareness of and understanding of how the adolescents feel, and 2. the perceived similarity of the premarital sexual values held by the parents and the adolescents. These two indicators are discussed more fully below.

Operational Indicator 6A. Closeness Scale. In an effort to measure how close adolescents felt to their parents, two scales were combined to form a parental

closeness scale (Bowerman & Bahr, 1973; Teevan, 1972). The Bowerman and Bahr (1973) scale was an eight item scale measuring value orientation. This scale varied in wording from "do you . . ." to "how much do you . . .". The questions read more smoothly, and therefore, were expected to be easier to answer if the wording were consistent from one question to the next. For the reason, the "do you . . ." question format was used for the questions. The Teevan Scale (1972) was a three item scale measuring parent orientation. A sample item from that scale read as follows: "is this parent aware of most things you do and feel?"

In the pilot data, the Alpha reliability coefficient of this scale was 0.86. There was very little variation within the scale on individual items; therefore, in order to shorten the scale, five items were used for the final scale. These items were selected for theoretical reasons rather than for the reliability coefficients. The scale included four items from the Bowerman scale and one from the Teevan scale. The Alpha reliability of the five item scale was 0.74. The items were scored on a six point scale ranging from "not at all" (1) to "completely" (6). The range of possible scores is 5 to 30.

Operational Indicator 6B. Agreement Scale. Another indicator used to measure how close adolescents felt to their parents was a self-report of the adolescents' own attitudes compared to their perceptions of what they felt

their parents attitudes were. Reiss's Premarital Sexual Permissiveness Scale (1967) was used for this measure. The absolute value of the difference between the scores on each item was added to form a closeness of perceived attitudes score. The higher the score, the more difference in attitudes was perceived. The range of possible scores was from 0 to 30.

Variable 7. Parental Communication  
Concerning Sexuality

The degree to which parents talk to adolescents concerning sexuality is vital to the acquisition of sexual information by the adolescents. However, many aspects of that communication, such as the manner in which information is given, the timing, the circumstances which prompted the discussion, and many other factors influence how that information is accepted by adolescents. In order to account for some of these factors without directly trying to measure their possible effects, the respondents were asked how important they considered the sexual information obtained from their parents to be to their acquisition of sexual information. In addition, the respondents were asked how frequently their parents talked to them concerning several specific areas of sexuality. These indicators are discussed below.

Operational Indicator 7A. Degree of Importance of Parental Information Concerning Sexuality. Adolescents gain their sexual information from a variety of sources. The respondents were asked to indicate how important the information they received from their parents was to them. The five response categories ranged from "not at all important" (1) to "very important" (5).

Operational Indicator 7B. Parental Communication Scale. In order to ascertain how much adolescents talk to their parents about sexual subjects, the respondents were asked to indicate how often their parents talk to them about nine different subjects such as love and childbirth. The answers ranged on a five point scale from "never" (1) to "very often" (5). These scores were added to form a sexual communication scale. A low score indicated less communication; a high score indicated more communication. The range of possible scores was from 9 to 45.

#### Analysis of the Data

The quantitative data were collected to establish that correlations exist in the hypothesized relationships and to provide a foundation on which to base future research. Quantitative data were considered most appropriate for this research project because of the personal nature of the study. Anonymity is vital when personal information is being sought; therefore, an anonymous survey was chosen.

The background characteristics of the subjects were analyzed with a percentage and frequency count to describe the population being surveyed. A percentage and frequency count was also used to examine the three assumptions to determine if there was consistency in the perceptions of adolescents concerning television's messages pertaining to sexuality. Pearson product-moment correlations were used to examine the first four propositions in this study. The last eight propositions concern the mediating effects of parental closeness and communication. They were measured in two ways: by using 1. partial correlations controlling for external factors, and 2. Pearson correlations using a sample divided by the mediating variables. The statistical procedures and the rationale for the divided samples will be explained more fully in the next paragraphs.

The purpose of collecting the qualitative data was to add an illustrative dimension to the research as well as to draw preliminary conclusions. Since the main research project was an exploratory survey, it was felt that further insight might be gained through interviews with a small number of people. The area of research concerned the relationship between television's portrayal of sexuality and the sexual activity of adolescents. In order to interview a group certain to be sexually active, pregnant adolescents were selected. These adolescents were asked to complete the quantitative survey, but, in addition, they were asked specific questions concerning the relationship of sexual

portrayal on television to their own knowledge of sexuality in the real world.

### Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients

Pearson product moment correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) were utilized to measure the associations between variables. The range of  $r$  is between the values of +1.0 and -1.0. A positive correlation means that two variables tend to increase or decrease together; a negative  $r$  denotes an inverse relationship. When there is no association between the variables,  $r$  will be close to zero. The objective of correlation analysis is to determine the extent to which variation in one variable is linked to variation in the other (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1975). Squaring the Pearson's  $r$  statistic gives a measure of the proportion of the total variation in one variable that is explained by the other.

Since the purpose of this study was to investigate covariation between the viewing of sexually oriented programs and perceptions of reality, sexual attitudes and behavior, and responsibility for preventing pregnancy, correlational research was appropriate. Correlational research was also appropriate because television sexuality and adolescent sexual attitudes and behavior are very complex variables which do not lend themselves to

experimental method or controlled manipulation.

In the interest of maximizing usable "n" in this study "pairwise" deletion was employed (Nie, et al., 1975). With this technique, a case is only deleted from the analysis if it lacks information for one of the two variables in the computation; hence "pairwise". This technique retains the largest possible sample size, but must be used with caution, if other statistical procedures are used which are based on equal size "n". Since the computations under both pairwise and listwise deletion of missing data showed only minimal differences in this study, pairwise deletion of missing data was employed for each Pearson and partial correlations.

A limitation of correlational research is that it only identifies factors which covary and does not identify cause-and-effect relationships. Another limitation is that it is a less rigorous type of research because there is very little control over the independent variables. Care must be taken in this type of research to distinguish between spurious and valid correlations. Correlations tend to be ambiguous and therefore, must be examined with reliance upon an accumulation of research in the area. A limitation of this research project is that some of the data are ordinal level which violates an assumption of Pearson correlations; however, since it is a fairly robust test; it is not thought to affect the accuracy of the correlations.

### Partial Correlation Coefficients

Partial correlation coefficients are used to measure the associations between variables while adjusting for the effects of mediating variables. In effect, partial correlations remove the effects of the mediating variable, and measure the two remaining variables with Pearson product moment correlation coefficients. The partial correlation has the advantage of using the entire sample and the capability of controlling for more than one mediating factor at a time.

For the present analysis, first order partial correlations were used on the variables of parental closeness and parental communication. These two variables were tested to see if they have a mediating effect on the relationship of the variable, viewing of sexually oriented programs, to the variables of: perceptions of reality, sexual attitudes and behavior, and responsibility for preventing pregnancy.

### Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients Using a Divided Sample

Pearson product moment correlation coefficients may be used to test for mediating effects a variable might have on a direct correlation. To do this, the sample must be divided into groups by characteristics found within the mediating variable. The Pearson correlation is run on the



direct correlation variables for each group within the mediating variables and the correlations of the two groups are compared. This method has the advantage of being more intuitively understandable, by indicating where the variation is occurring. The resulting differences can be explained more easily. However, this method has the disadvantage of reducing the sample with each division.

For this research, each of the two control variables was divided so that more than one-third of the sample was in each category and the mean score was somewhere within a middle category that not analyzed. This procedure followed in order to make each cell fairly equal in size as well as fairly balanced by score.

Appendix B contains a complete list of the propositions and hypotheses tested in this project. The hypotheses were derived from the propositions, utilizing the operational indicators which were selected to test the propositions. Each set of hypotheses is listed under the appropriate proposition.

### Summary

To summarize, Chapter III discussed the methods used in carrying out this project. The rationale for using two samples was discussed. The operational indicators for the variables were developed and explained, and the statistical methods used to examine the propositions and hypotheses were detailed.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter IV begins with descriptive information concerning the subjects. The sample is discussed in terms of demographics, television viewing habits, perceptions of parents, and sexual behavior.

The next section of the chapter is devoted to the presentation and discussion of the findings of the quantitative survey. The findings are reported in three sections. The first section discusses the assumptions involving television's messages concerning sexuality. The second section deals with the direct relationships between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programs and the adolescent variables of: 1. perceived realism of television sexuality, 2. sexual attitudes, 3. sexual behavior, and 4. the degree of responsibility sexually active adolescents manifest for preventing pregnancy. The third section examines the mediating effects of parental closeness and parent-adolescent communication concerning sexual subjects on the direct relationships listed in section two.

The remainder of the chapter describes the findings of the qualitative interview. The findings are interrelated with the quantitative findings.

## Quantitative Results

### Description of the Subjects

#### Background Information

A description of the 317 subjects who participated in the study is presented in Table I. The respondents were students enrolled in Family Living classes in various high schools in central Oklahoma. Over two-thirds (69.4%) of the respondents were female. Nearly half (44.4%) of the respondents were 17 years old, and over 90 percent were in the age range of 16 to 18 years old (93.6%). Approximately two-thirds (67.8%) of the respondents were from intact families. Of those whose parents were divorced, most of the respondents lived with only their mother or with their mother and a stepfather.

#### Television Viewing Patterns

The respondents watched an average of 27 1/2 hours of television per week or almost four hours per day. Males watched slightly more television than females (Table II). The range varied from a low of 0 hours per week (reported by two respondents) to over 70 hours a week, or 10 hours per day (reported by three respondents).

Table III indicates that nearly two-thirds of the respondents had subscription television in their home. Of

TABLE I  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS

Variable Classification	Total		Males		Females	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
<b>Sex:</b>						
Male	30.6	97	-	-	-	-
Female	69.4	220	-	-	-	-
<b>Age:</b>						
15	3.5	11	4.4	4	3.2	7
16	19.8	62	15.8	15	21.6	47
17	44.4	139	35.3	43	44.0	96
18	29.4	92	28.4	27	29.8	65
19	2.6	8	5.2	5	1.4	3
21	0.3	1	1.1	1	-	-
<b>Parent(s) in the Home:</b>						
Both Parents	67.8	215	77.3	75	63.6	140
Mother Only	12.9	41	9.3	9	14.5	32
Father Only	2.8	9	3.1	3	2.7	6
Mother/Stepfather	10.1	32	8.2	8	10.0	24
Father/Stepmother	4.1	13	1.0	1	5.5	12
Other	2.3	7	1.0	1	2.7	6

TABLE II  
TIME SPENT VIEWING TELEVISION

Average Television Viewing Hours	Total	Males	Females
On a School Day	4.0	4.1	4.0
On Saturday	4.0	4.0	4.0
On Sunday	3.6	4.2	3.3
Per Week	27.6	28.6	27.1
Per Day	4.0	4.1	3.9

TABLE III  
TYPE OF PROGRAMMING WATCHED

Variable Classification	Total		Males		Females	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Pay TV in the Home:	70.0	222	73.2	71	68.4	151
Viewing of Specific Programs:						
M*A*S*H	81.1	257	84.8	78	81.4	179
Saturday Night	44.5	141	51.5	50	41.4	91
Benny Hill	46.1	146	70.8	68	35.4	78
Daytime Soaps	54.3	172	25.3	26	67.3	148
Evening Soaps	46.4	147	29.7	27	54.5	120
Viewing of Specific Movies:						
The Postman Always Rings Twice	33.6	107	44.8	43	29.1	64
Dressed to Kill	55.3	175	63.5	62	51.4	113
Porkys	35.0	111	41.2	40	32.3	71

those who had subscription television, one-third reported that they watched the subscription channels more than half of the time that they watched television. Among the programs listed, females were more likely to have watched soap operas, and males were more likely to have watched "Benny Hill." The program most consistently watched by both males and females was M\*A\*S\*H.

Males were more likely to report seeing highly sexually oriented movies than females. The movie which was most likely to have been seen by the respondents was "Dressed to Kill," which over half of the sample had seen (55.3%, total; 63.5% of the males and 51.4% of the females). Of the other two movies, over a third of the males reported seeing them (44.8% and 41.2%) while slightly less than a third of the females had seen them (29.1% and 32.3%).

#### Parental Influence

Table IV reveals that the largest percentage of respondents felt closest to their mother (45.9%). This is consistent with most research and may be due to the mothers role as the primary socializing agent and the close association with the mother during the years of value formation. However, when broken down by sex of the respondent, males were more likely to feel closer to both (30.4%), while females were more likely to feel closer to their mothers (51.6%). This finding may be attributable to the identification of a child with the same-sex parent

TABLE IV  
PARENTAL INFLUENCE

Variable Classification	Total %	Total No.	Males %	Males No.	Females %	Females No.
<b>Closest Parent:</b>						
Mother	45.9	145	33.0	32	51.6	113
Father	13.6	43	16.5	16	12.3	27
Both	30.4	96	40.2	39	26.0	57
Neither	10.1	32	10.3	10	10.0	22
<b>Parent Which Communicates Most About Sexual Subjects:</b>						
Mother	57.7	183	29.9	29	70.0	154
Father	6.3	20	9.3	9	5.0	11
Both	18.6	59	35.1	34	11.4	25
Neither	17.4	55	25.8	25	13.6	30
<b>Parents as a Source of Sexual Information</b>						
Very Important	32.3	101	22.9	22	36.4	79
Important	20.1	63	21.9	21	19.4	42
Somewhat Important	20.4	64	22.9	22	19.4	42
Not Very Important	16.0	50	16.7	16	15.7	34
Not at All Important	11.2	35	15.6	15	9.2	20

during the years of maturation. Since the males still have the feeling of bonding with the mother and yet are experiencing same-sex identification with their father, they would be more likely to list that they are closer to both. Females, on the other hand, have the early bonding with the mother and then identify to a greater extent with the same-sex parent and are, therefore, more likely to list their mother as the parent to whom they are closest. Ten percent of the respondents did not feel close to either parent (10.3% of the males; 10.0% of the females).

Mothers were the parents most likely to talk about sexual subjects with their adolescents (57.7%). However, again, more mothers talked to females (70.0%), while the largest percent of males reported that both parents talked to them (35.1%). One-fourth of the males (25.8%), compared to 13.6 percent of the females, reported that neither parent talked to them concerning sexual subjects.

Most adolescents felt that their parents were an important source of sexual information. Thirty-two percent rated their parents' information as very important, while another 20 percent rated their parents' information as important. These ratings were slightly higher for females than for males which was consistent with the finding that parents, especially mothers, talked to daughters more than sons.



### Adolescent Sexual Activity

Table V outlines the details of adolescent sexual activity. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents had sexual intercourse. As in most research, more males than females had sexual intercourse (75.3% of the males, compared to 58.0% of the females). However, when a comparison was made of those who were sexually active, there were few differences. Females were slightly more likely to report intercourse with only one person (37.8%, females; 32.5%, males). But for those who were highly sexually active (which in this research was defined as having had intercourse with seven or more partners, for a total of over 16 times), males and females were almost the same. Twelve and one-third percent of the sexually active males and 12.6 percent of the sexually active females reported having had seven or more sexual partners, while 44.1 percent of the sexually active males and 49.18 percent of the sexually active females report having had sexual intercourse 16 or more times.

There was wide variation in the consistency of use of contraceptives among sexually active adolescents. Roughly one-third of those who were sexually active always used contraceptives (30.3%), while another one-third never used contraceptives at all (29.2%). Of those who used contraceptives, the condom was listed most often (34.3%). Use of the pill was listed by 19.9% of the respondents. The

TABLE V  
 ADOLESCENT SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Variable Classification	Total		Males		Females	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
<b>Have Had Sexual Intercourse:</b>						
Yes	63.3	200	75.3	73	58.0	127
No	36.7	116	24.7	24	42.0	92
 <b><u>Of Those Sexually Active</u></b>						
<b>Number of Sexual Partners:</b>						
1	32.5	65	23.3	17	37.8	48
2	18.5	37	20.6	15	17.3	22
3	18.0	36	19.2	14	17.3	22
4	9.0	18	12.3	9	7.1	9
5	6.0	12	6.9	5	5.5	7
6	3.5	7	5.5	4	2.4	3
7 or more	12.5	25	12.3	9	12.6	16
 <b>Number of Occurrences of Sexual Intercourse:</b>						
1-5	30.3	59	32.9	24	28.7	35
6-10	15.9	31	23.3	17	11.5	14
11-15	9.7	19	8.2	6	10.7	13
16 or more	44.1	86	35.6	26	49.2	60
 <b>Regularity of Use of Contraceptives:</b>						
Always	30.3	59	26.4	19	32.5	40
Usually	13.8	27	11.1	8	15.4	19
Sometimes	15.9	31	19.4	14	13.8	17
Rarely	10.8	21	15.3	11	8.1	10
Never	29.2	57	27.8	20	30.1	37

TABLE V (Continued)

Variable Classification	Total		Males		Females	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Type of Contraceptive Used By the Couple						
Pill	19.9	40	13.7	10	23.4	30
Condom	34.3	69	42.5	31	29.7	38
Foams, Creams, Jellies	4.5	9	1.4	1	6.3	8
Rhythm, Withdrawal	6.0	12	11.0	8	3.1	4
Nothing	35.3	71	31.5	23	37.5	48

only other types of contraceptives mentioned were foams, creams and jellies (4.5%) and rhythm or withdrawal (6.0%). The respondents were asked to list the type of contraceptive used by the sexually active couple, not just what the reporting individual used, which clarifies why some males listed the pill and some females listed the condom. A problem with this measure of contraceptive use was that not all contraceptives were necessarily obvious to one partner. In the case of the pill and the diaphragm, the male may not have been aware of whether or not it was being used. This could bias the data in either direction. The male may assume, or be told, that the female was using something when she was not; or he may assume, or have been told, that the female was not using anything, when, in fact, she was.

### Assumptions

The assumptions measured utilized single-item agree-disagree statements. The purpose of testing the assumptions was to see if adolescent TV viewers were perceiving consistent messages concerning the portrayal of sexuality. The findings concerning the assumptions are listed below. Table VI details the specific responses to these assumptions.

#### Assumption 1

The first assumption posited that adolescents' perceptions of television's message concerning sexuality

TABLE VI

FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES REFLECTING ADOLESCENTS'  
LEVEL OF AGREEMENT CONCERNING TELEVISION'S  
MESSAGES RELATED TO SEXUALITY

Assumption Classification	Total		Males		Females	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
1. Do you think that television's message about sexual relationships is that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples is acceptable behavior?						
Definitely Yes	20.9	66	20.6	20	21.0	46
Probably Yes	51.2	162	55.7	54	49.3	108
Probably No	20.9	66	17.5	17	22.4	49
Definitely No	7.0	22	6.2	6	7.3	16
2. Do you think that television's message about sexual relationships is that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples is an expected behavior?						
Definitely Yes	19.0	60	23.2	22	17.3	38
Probably Yes	50.5	159	49.5	47	50.9	112
Probably No	22.5	71	22.1	21	22.7	50
Definitely No	7.9	25	5.3	5	9.1	20
3. Do you thin Tv programs and movies (excluding educational specials) adequately show the consequences of premarital sex (such as pregnancy and abortion)?						
Definitely Yes	8.8	28	3.1	3	11.4	25
Probably Yes	26.8	85	20.6	20	29.5	65
Probably No	35.6	113	44.3	43	31.8	70
Definitely No	28.7	91	32.0	31	27.3	60

were that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples was acceptable. When frequencies and percentages were used to examine this assumption, the findings indicated that adolescents generally agreed that television's message was that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples was acceptable. Nearly three-fourths (72.1%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, while the other fourth disagreed (27.9%). However, for an assumption to be accepted, agreement would need to be almost universal, which, in this case, it was not. Of the 72.1 percent of the respondents who agreed with the statement, only 20.9 percent answered "definitely yes," while the remaining 51.2 percent answered "probably yes." An answer of "probably yes" indicated that there was some doubt as to whether they actually agreed with the statement. Essentially those 51.2 percent agreed more than they disagreed, but this could not be taken to imply that they universally agreed that television's message was that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples was acceptable behavior.

#### Assumption 2

The purpose of the second assumption was to ascertain that adolescents perceived that television's message concerning sexuality not only implied that sexual intercourse among unmarried couples was acceptable, but that it was an expected behavior. Over two-thirds (69.5%) of the respondents agreed that sexual intercourse between unmarried

couples was an expected behavior on television, while the remainder disagreed (30.4%). However, as in assumption 1, the percentage of definite agreement, which would lead to acceptance of the assumption was low. Only 19 percent answered "definitely yes."

### Assumption 3

The third assumption presumed that adolescents perceived television's message about sexual relationships to be that there were no consequences as a result of sexual behavior. Almost two-thirds (64.3%) of the adolescents agree that television did not adequately show the consequences of sexual behavior, while over one-third (35.6%) disagreed.

The question on the survey which measured assumption 3 was asked to that those who agreed with the assumption answered "definitely no" or "probably no." In the other two questions the direction was reversed i.e., agreement with the assumption elicited a "yes" response. Assumption 3 had the highest percentage of definite agreement. Over one-fourth (28.7%) responded "definitely no" to the question which indicated that television did not adequately show the consequences of sexual behavior. Over one-third (35.6%) indicated that television probably did not show the consequences of sexual behavior. Slightly over one-third (35.6%) implied that television did show the consequences of

sexual behavior to some extent.

Males were slightly more likely to agree to all three of the assumptions than females. This may have been because males were usually more liberal in their sexual attitudes and behaviors than females and both sexes tended to see television as reflecting their own attitudes. It may also have been a reflection of the differences in the types of programming being watched. Males may have primarily watched programs which portray sexual behavior among unmarried couples as being both acceptable and expected behavior, without showing the consequences of that behavior. Females, in contrast, may have watched programs which were more conservative in the portrayal of sexuality, and therefore, did not receive the same message from television as males.

The findings for all three assumptions indicate that they were not universally accepted, and therefore, probably should not be accepted as assumptions, but should be treated as variables in future research. In other words, the message that one received from television concerning sexuality may have affected how realistic that individual perceived the sexual portrayal on television to be, and may have determined how the individual's attitudes and behavior were affected.

#### Propositions and Hypotheses:

##### Direct Correlations

The first four propositions were tested using Pearson



product moment correlation coefficients to examine the correlations between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programs and 1. the perceptions of television sexuality as realistic, 2. the level of permissiveness of sexual attitudes, 3. the level of permissiveness of sexual behavior, and 4. the degree of responsibility for preventing pregnancy. The findings for these propositions are listed below.

#### Proposition 1

The first proposition concerned the relationship between the amount adolescents perceive the portrayal of sexuality to be realistic. Proposition 1 was measured using three operational indicators for the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programs and two operational indicators for the degree of perceived realism of television sexuality. This yielded a total of six hypotheses for this proposition. The correlations of these hypotheses are given in Table VII.

Proposition 1 was accepted to some degree. All of the hypotheses were in the predicted direction: that is, the more sexually oriented television that was watched, the more likely that respondent was to believe that the sexual portrayal seen on television was realistic. Of the six hypotheses, three were significant. The weakness in accepting this proposition was the small amount of variation that was explained by viewing sexually oriented programs.

TABLE VII

PROPOSITION MEASURING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND THE DEGREE OF PERCEIVED REALISM OF TELEVISION SEXUALITY

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients

Amount of Viewing Sexually Oriented Programs via:	Adolescent Sexuality on Television Perceived as Realistic						Sexuality for the General Population Television Perceived as Realistic					
	Total		Males		Females		Total		Males		Females	
	r	No.	r	No.	r	No.	r	No.	r	No.	r	No.
1. Commercial Television	.044	293	.013	89	.058	204	.087	293	.030	89	.120*	204
2. Movies	.212***	310	.221**	94	.216***	216	.150**	309	.226**	94	.105	215
3. Commercial Television and Subscription Movie Channel	.033	315	.025	97	.070	218	.094*	314	.162*	97	.048	217

\* p ≤ 0.05  
 \*\* p ≤ 0.01  
 \*\*\* p ≤ 0.001

rating of movies and perceived realism of adolescent sexuality on television, and that was only 4.5 percent.

The operational indicator which appeared to be the best predictor of perceptions of reality was the ratings of sexually oriented movies. This may have been because the sexuality portrayed tended to be more explicit on movies. It may also have been because movies generally were sought out to be watched, whereas, a TV program may have been watched regularly, not because it was liked, but because it came on between two programs that were liked, and it was watched simply because the viewer was watching television.

The operational indicator which combined commercial television and a subscription movie channel appeared to be the second best predictor. A limitation of this indicator which might not be present in future work was the newness of the subscription industry. At the time the survey was conducted, cable television was not available to all areas covered by the survey. Separate subscription movie channels without cable were available to everyone, but due to the expense involved, many were waiting to get a subscription movie channel until they could get it through cable.

The assumption that adolescents could more accurately perceive the reality of adolescent sexuality on television than they could for the general population could not be concluded from these results. Two of the hypotheses relating to perceived realism of sexuality in the general

population were significant, while only one hypothesis relating to the realism of adolescent sexuality was significant. However, the highest correlation, 0.212, was found in the correlation concerning adolescent sexuality on television. The low correlations and the three insignificant correlations prevented reaching any meaningful conclusion.

### Proposition 2

The second proposition concerned the relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programs and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' attitudes. Proposition 2 was measured using three operational indicators for amount of viewing and one operational indicator for adolescents' sexual attitudes, resulting in three hypotheses. The specific correlations are listed in Table VIII.

Proposition 2 could not be rejected. All three hypotheses were significant beyond the 0.01 level. There was a positive relationship between the viewing of sexually oriented programs and movies and the level of permissiveness of sexual attitudes. It must be emphasized that this finding did not suggest "cause." It may have been that television was having an influence on sexual attitudes; however, it may also have been that permissive sexual attitudes may have determined which programs were watched. The largest amount of explained variation was between the

TABLE VIII  
 PROPOSITION MEASURING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF  
 VIEWING AND DEGREE OF PERMISSIVENESS  
 OF SEXUAL ATTITUDES

		Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients					
		<u>Permissiveness of Sexual Attitudes</u>					
		<u>Total</u>		<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>	
		<u>r</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>No.</u>
Amount of Viewing of Sexually Oriented Programs Via:							
1.	Commercial Television	.163**	290	.213*	87	.212**	203
2.	Movies	.345**	307	.354***	92	.296***	215
3.	Commercial Television and Subscription Movie Channel	.165**	312	.051	95	.194**	217

\*  
\*\*  
\*\*\*  
p ≤ 0.05  
p ≤ 0.01  
p ≤ 0.001

Those who had permissive sexual attitudes may have watched sexually oriented programs either because they approved of, or identified with, the attitudes on television. Those with less permissive sexual attitudes may have elected not to watch a program because it reflected values contrary to their own.

As in Proposition 1, the ratings of movies appeared to be the best predictor of sexual attitudes. It explained nearly 12 percent (11.9%) of the variation of sexual attitudes. Since all three hypotheses were significant, all of the operational indicators can be said to predict attitudes; however, if one is to be used in future research it should be the rating of movies.

### Proposition 3

The third proposition concerned the relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual behavior. Proposition 3 was measured using three operational indicators for amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and one operational indicator for the hypotheses relating to proposition 3 are listed in Table IX.

Proposition 3 was accepted to some degree. Two of the hypotheses were significant. All three hypotheses were in the predicted direction. The more sexually oriented programming was watched, the more likely the viewer was to be sexually active. Causation was not implied here, for the

TABLE IX  
 PROPOSITION MEASURING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF  
 VIEWING AND DEGREE OF PERMISSIVENESS  
 OF SEXUAL ATTITUDES

		Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients					
		<u>Permissiveness of Sexual Attitudes</u>					
		<u>Total</u>		<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>	
		<u>r</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>No.</u>
Amount of Viewing of Sexually Oriented Programs Via:							
1.	Commercial Television	.080	288	.040	89	.123	199
2.	Movies	.180***	305	.233**	94	.123*	211
3.	Commercial Television and Subscription Movie Channel	.130**	310	.084	97	.132*	213

\*  
\*\*  
\*\*\*  
p ≤ 0.05  
p ≤ 0.01  
p ≤ 0.001

same reasons explained in Proposition 2.

The rating of movies appeared to be the best predictor for Proposition 3, as it was in Propositions 1 and 2. The indicator combining the amount of viewing of commercial television and subscription movie channels appeared to be the second best predictor.

As in Proposition 1, the explained variation was extremely small. The highest explained variation was between the rating of sexually oriented movies and the degree of permissiveness of attitudes, and that was around three percent (3.2%). This limited any generalizations which could have been made concerning the relationship between viewing sexually oriented programs and the viewers' sexual behavior.

The purpose of this research was not to indicate causation, or to make irrevocable decisions concerning relationships, but rather to find areas which illustrate enough of a relationship to justify more extensive research. With this purpose in mind, the fact that all hypotheses were in the predicted direction and the majority of the hypotheses were statistically significant indicate that Propositions 1, 2 and 3 bear further investigation.

#### Proposition 4

The fourth proposition concerned the relationship between the amount adolescents viewed highly sexually



oriented programming and the degree of responsibility sexually active adolescents manifested for preventing pregnancy. Three operational indicators were used to measure amount of viewing; one operational indicator was used to measure responsibility for preventing pregnancy. This resulted in three hypotheses relating to Proposition 4. The coefficients are listed in Table X.

Proposition 4 was rejected. A correlation was not indicated in any of the three hypothesis related to Proposition 4. This may have been due to a variety of reasons, including: 1. the lack of portrayal of consequences on television was not obvious, 2. there were too many other reasons why birth control is not used, and 3. the operational indicator used may not have been valid. These reasons are discussed in the paragraphs below.

1. The nature of television programs does not make the lack of showing consequences obvious to the viewer. Programs are satisfactorily ended and the primary themes of the programs are solved. very often the sexual portrayal is a secondary theme, important as far as creating interest in the program, but not important to the plot. Therefore, at the conclusion of the program, the viewer is occupied with the plot. It may be that the viewer never consciously realizes that the consequences of the sexual theme are not resolved.

2. Many variables have been identified which predict whether or not adolescents will use a birth control method,

TABLE X  
 PROPOSITION MEASURING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT  
 OF VIEWING AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR  
 PREVENTING PREGNANCY

		Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients					
		<u>Responsibility for Preventing Pregnancy</u>					
		<u>Total</u>		<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>	
		<u>r</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>No.</u>
Amount of Viewing of Sexually Oriented Programs Via:							
1.	Commercial Television	.083	181	.050	65	.135	116
2.	Movies	.046	190	.180	69	.036	121
3.	Commercial Television and Subscription Movie Channel	.082	195	.003	72	.142	123

and how consistently they will use it. Some of the variables are motivation, knowledge of contraceptives, availability of contraceptives, inaccurate perceptions of when and how pregnancy occurs, acceptance of their sexual activity, commitment to the relationship, etc. It may be that these factors have much more impact on decisions to use contraceptives than the fact that television may not adequately deal with the possibility of pregnancy.

3. Certainly more factors would need to be considered than what type of contraceptive was used, and how consistently it was used. Before the survey was given, these two indicators seemed adequate. However, in the analysis of the responses to the survey, one important shortcoming which was noticed was how sexually active the person is. If, for instance, a person had intercourse one time, chances are good that that person was not using the pill for contraception. If the person used any type of contraceptive then their response to how consistently it was used would be "always." If they used nothing, that one time, then their response would be "never." The likelihood of that act of intercourse resulting in pregnancy would be far less than for a person who had intercourse over 20 times.

In addition, a person who always used a contraceptive would be less likely to be involved in a pregnancy, even if the contraceptive was not particularly reliable, than a

person who used a contraceptive irregularly or incorrectly. A person who used the pill for contraception, may not have realized that it must be taken regularly over a relatively long period of time to be effective; and yet, if a subject indicated that the pill was used, the score reflected that use, assuming that it was used correctly and consistently.

If a relationship does exist between television's lack of portrayal of consequences and responsibility for preventing pregnancy, it could not be detected with the indicator used. If it is tested in future research, much more detail should be concentrated on how sexually active the subjects were, how knowledgeable the subjects were concerning the use of the contraceptive, and how consistently the contraceptive was used.

#### Propositions and Hypotheses:

##### Mediating Effects

In this section, the mediating variables of perceived parental closeness and parent-adolescent communication concerning sexuality were examined. Two operational indicators of parental closeness were used. These were: 1. adolescent perceived importance of the sexual information received from parents, and 2. scores on the parental closeness scale.

The only hypotheses which were tested for mediating effects were those where the hypotheses in the direct correlation propositions were significant. There seems to

be little sense in determining whether perceived parental closeness and parent-adolescent communication concerning sexuality mediated a relationship which was non-significant. Therefore, the mediating effects of perceived parental closeness and parent-adolescent communication concerning sexuality were examined in relation to:

- 1B. Movies and perceived realism of adolescent sexuality on television.
- 1E. Movies and perceived realism of television's sexual portrayal of the general population.
- 1F. Commercial and subscription television and perceived realism of television's portrayal of the general population.
- 2. All hypotheses relating to the amount of viewing and sexual attitudes.
- 3B. Movies and sexual behavior.
- 3C. Commercial and subscription television and sexual behavior.

The first method of analysis to test for mediating effects was to utilize partial correlations controlling for parental closeness and parental communication. The resulting coefficients were compared to the Pearson correlation coefficients. The difference between the two correlations was examined to see if there was sufficient change to be able to establish that parents did, in fact, have an effect on the relationship between television viewing and

adolescents' perceptions.

As Tables XI through XVI indicate, there were no significant differences on any of the hypotheses examined. The largest difference found, is in Table XIII, under Scores on Parent/Adolescent Agreement, Movies/Attitudes, which was 0.055. In order to be considered significant, the correlations would have to appear to vary substantially. Therefore, the prediction that parental influence had a mediating effect was rejected.

The second method of analysis, computing the Pearson correlation on a divided sample, allowed a closer examination to determine where the variation was occurring. It must be kept in mind that any differences that were found were of a very limited magnitude, since it had already been established that there were no major effects or they would have shown up with the partial correlations. It is also necessary to keep in mind that the coefficients on the propositions testing for direct correlations were small, accounting for only 12 percent of the variation at the most. Therefore, the mediating effects were examined on propositions where the direct effects themselves were very small.

Due to the very small differences examined, the categories of male and female were excluded from the discussion. Tables illustrating the mediating effects for males are listed in Appendix D; tables illustrating mediating effects for females are listed in Appendix E.

TABLE XI

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL CLOSENESS ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND PERCEIVED REALISM

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Less Important	No.	More Important	No.
			Importance of Information From Parents						
H5B. Movies/Adolescent Realism	.212	310	.222	305	.009	.386***	110	.218	128
H5E. Movies/General Realism	.150	309	.151	305	.001	.256**	109	.009	128
H5F. Commercial, Subscription TV/General Realism	.094	309	.094	309	.000	.250**	109	.016	130
			Scores on Parent/Adolescent Agreement			Low Agreement		High Agreement	
H5H. Movies/Adolescent Realism	.212	310	.208	293	.004	.275***	132	.218**	111
H5K. Movies/General Realism	.150	309	.137	293	.013	.197**	131	.093	111
H5L. Commercial, Subscription TV/General Realism	.094	314	.085	298	.009	.116	133	.027	114

\*  $p \leq 0.05$   
 \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$   
 \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$

TABLE XII

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL COMMUNICATION ON  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND REALISM

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Close to Parent		Close to Parent	
			Scores on Parental Closeness Scale			r	No.	r	No.
H7A. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.212	310	.213	304	.002	.362***	146	.089	164
H7B. Movies/ Attitudes	.150	309	.147	304	.003	.252**	146	.046	163
H7C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Attitudes	.094	314	.093	308	.001	.136*	148	.059	166
			Scores on Parental Communication Scale			Low Com- munication		High Com- munication	
H6H. Movies/Adolescent Realism	.212	310	.213	305	.001	.354***	115	.040	131
H6K. Movies/General Realism	.150	309	.150	305	.000	.259**	113	.089	132
H6L. Commercial, Subscription TV/General Realism	.094	314	.098	309	.004	.264**	117	.032	134

\* p ≤ 0.05  
\*\* p ≤ 0.01  
\*\*\* p ≤ 0.001



TABLE XIII

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL CLOSENESS ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND SEXUAL ATTITUDES

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Scores on Parental Closeness Scale		Scores on Parental/Adolescent Agreement	
						r	No.	r	No.
H7A. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.163	290	.169	287	.006	.201*	100	.250**	121
H7B. Movies/ Attitudes	.345	307	.332	304	.013	.243**	107	.337***	128
H7C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Attitudes	.165	312	.163	307	.002	.173*	107	.188**	130
H7D. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.163	290	.152	276	.011	.067	124	.185*	102
H7E. Movies/ Attitudes	.345	307	.291	293	.054	.142*	129	.511***	111
H7F. Commercial, Subscription TV/Attitudes	.165	312	.121	298	.044	.084	131	.339***	114

\* $p \leq 0.05$   
\*\* $p \leq 0.01$   
\*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$

TABLE XIV

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL COMMUNICATION ON  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND SEXUAL ATTITUDES

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample					
	r	No.	r	No.		Importance of Information from Parents		Less Important		High Important	
	r	No.	r	No.		r	No.	r	No.	r	No.
H8A. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.163	290	.189	287	.026	.092	136	.250***	154		
H8B. Movies/ Attitudes	.345	307	.342	304	.003	.313***	143	.375***	164		
H8C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Attitudes	.165	312	.165	306	.000	.204**	145	.129*	167		
			Scores on Parental Communication Scale				Low Com- munication		High Com- munication		
H8D. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.163	290	.184	287	.021	.204**	107	.153*	124		
H7E. Movies/ Attitudes	.345	307	.349	304	.004	.363***	113	.342***	131		
H8F. Commercial, Subscription TV/Attitudes	.165	312	.181	307	.016	.294***	117	.120	133		

\* $p \leq 0.05$   
\*\* $p \leq 0.01$   
\*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$

TABLE XV

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL CLOSENESS ON  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Not Close r	No.	Close r	No.
H9B. Movies/Behavior	.180	305	.174	302	.006	.159*	111	.082	123
H9C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Behavior	.130	310	.128	305	.002	.094	111	.152	125
			Scores on Parent/Adolescent Agreement			Low Agreement		High Agreement	
H9E. Movies/Behavior	.180	305	.129	293	.051	.078	131	.295***	108
H7E. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Behavior	.130	310	.098	294	.032	.173*	133	.103	111

\* p ≤ 0.05

\*\* p ≤ 0.01

\*\*\* p ≤ 0.001

TABLE XVI

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL COMMUNICATION ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample					
	r	No.	r	No.		Importance of Information From Parents		Less Important		More Important	
						r	No.	r	No.	r	No.
H10B. Movies/Behavior	.180	305	.175	302	.005	.186**	145	.163*	160		
H10C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Behavior	.130	310	.128	304	.002	.061	147	.196**	163		
			Scores on Parental Communication Scale					Low Com- munication		High Com- munication	
H10E. Movies/Behavior	.180	305	.180	302	.000	.249**	115	.163*	129		
H11E. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Behavior	.130	310	.128	306	.002	.089	119	.159*	131		

\*p≤0.05  
\*\*p≤0.01  
\*\*\*p≤0.001

### Proposition 5

The fifth proposition examined the mediating effects of parental closeness on the relationship between adolescents viewing of highly sexually oriented programming and adolescents' perceptions of television sexuality. Proposition 5 was measured by three operation indicators for amount of viewing, two for perceived realism of sexual portrayal on television, and two operational indicators for parental closeness. Of these twelve hypotheses, six were tested, and they are listed in Table XI.

Proposition 5 was accepted in a limited sense. For adolescents who were close to their parents, there was no correlation between the amount of viewing of television sexuality and perceived realism of the sexual portrayal. For those who were not close to their parents, the more sexually oriented programming that was watched, the more likely those adolescents were to perceive television's sexual portrayal as realistic. This was supported because all of the hypotheses were in the expected direction, that is, the coefficients were higher for the group not as close to their parents and lower in the group close to their parents. In four of the six hypotheses, the difference was significant.

In every case, the correlation for the group not close to their parents was higher than the correlation for the entire sample. This suggested that for the group in the

middle range which was excluded from the divided sample correlations the scores were inconsistent and extreme. Therefore, the middle range scores obscured the variation which was occurring in the extreme groups.

The parental closeness scale appeared to be a better predictor of parental closeness than parent/adolescent agreement because all of the parental closeness scale hypotheses were significant, whereas, only one hypothesis of the parent/adolescent agreement was significant.

#### Proposition 6

The sixth proposition examined the mediating effects of parental communication on the relationship between adolescents viewing of highly sexually oriented programming and adolescents' perceptions of television's portrayal of sexuality as realistic. Proposition 6 was measured by three operational indicators for the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming, two for the level of perceived realism of sexual portrayal on television and two operational indicators for the amount of parental communication. Of these twelve hypotheses, six were tested; details of the correlations for Proposition 6 are listed in Table XII.

Proposition 6 was accepted to some degree. For adolescents who had low levels of communication with their parents, the more sexually oriented programming that was watched, the more likely those adolescents were to perceive television's sexual portrayal as realistic. For those who

had high levels of communication, there was no correlation between the variables. This was supported because all of the hypotheses were in the predicted direction and all of the coefficients for the low communication group were significant, while none of the coefficients for the high communication group was significant.

As in proposition 5, the variation seemed to have been obscured in the partial correlations by the middle range scores which were omitted in the Pearson correlation using a divided sample.

The two variables used to measure parental communication seemed to be equal in the ability to predict the level of parental communication. For research in which space is critical, the measure for the importance of information received from parents might be the most suitable because it is a single item indicator.

#### Proposition 7

The seventh proposition examined the mediating effects of parental closeness on the relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual attitudes. Proposition 7 was measured by three operational indicators for the level of permissiveness of sexual attitudes, and two for the degree of perceived parent-adolescent closeness. All six of the hypotheses were tested; details of

proposition 7 are listed in Table XIII.

Proposition 7 was accepted to some degree in one sense. Parental closeness did seem to mediate the correlation between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of sexual attitudes very slightly. However, if parental mediation was having an effect, it was an effect opposite from that which was predicted. Apparently, the correlation was enhanced by parental closeness. This implied that the closer adolescents were to their parents, the stronger the relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programs and level of permissiveness of sexual attitudes became. In other words, for adolescents who were not close to their parents, there was very little relationship between the variables of viewing and attitudes. For adolescents who were close to their parents, the more they watched sexually oriented programs, the more likely they were to have sexually permissive attitudes. This was supported because all of the hypotheses were in the same direction (opposite from the predicted direction), although only the differences in the scores on parent-adolescent agreement indicated differences large enough to be considered significant. This unexpected finding might have occurred for two reasons: 1. The parents might, in fact, have had highly permissive sexual attitudes, 2. Even if the parents did not have permissive sexual attitudes, they might not have expressed their values; therefore, the adolescents



might have perceived their parents' sexual attitudes as permissive.

#### Proposition 8

The eighth proposition examined the mediating effects of parental communication on the relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual attitudes. Proposition 8 was measured by three operational indicators for the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming, one for the level of permissiveness of sexual attitudes, and two for the level of parent-adolescent communication. All six of the hypotheses were tested; details of Proposition 8 are listed in Table XIV.

No conclusions could be drawn concerning proposition 8. Four of the six hypotheses were in the predicted direction; the other two were in the opposite direction. Only two of the hypotheses were significant; one in the hypothesized direction and one in the opposite direction.

#### Proposition 9

The ninth proposition examined the mediating effects of parental closeness on the relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual behavior. Proposition 9 was measured by three operational indicators for the

amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming, one for the level of permissiveness of sexual behavior, and two for the degree of perceived parent-adolescent closeness. Four of the six hypotheses were tested and they are listed in Table XV.

No conclusions were drawn concerning the mediating effects of parental closeness on the relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual behavior. The four hypotheses tested indicated sporadic variation, which generated more confusion than clarification. Two of the hypotheses were in the predicted direction. Hypotheses 9B and 9F indicated that the group that was closer to parents (as measured by the parental closeness scale and parent-adolescent agreement) had the lower coefficients of 0.082 and 0.103, respectively. Neither of these coefficients were significant. For the groups that were not close the coefficients were higher, 0.159 and 0.173, respectively. Both of these coefficients were significant at the 0.05 level. For the other two hypotheses (9C and 9E) the variation was in the opposite direction. The group that was "not close" had the lower coefficients of 0.094 and 0.078, respectively, which were not significant. The "close" group had the higher coefficients of 0.152, which was not significant, and 0.295, which was significant at the 0.001 level.

Proposition 10

The tenth proposition examined the mediating effects of parental communication on the relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual behavior. Proposition 10 was measured by three operational indicators for the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming, one for the level of permissiveness of sexual behavior, and two for the level of parent-adolescent communication concerning sexuality. Four of the six hypotheses were tested and they are listed in Table XVI.

No conclusions were drawn concerning the mediating effects of parent-adolescent communication about sexual subjects on the relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual behavior. Of the four hypotheses tested, one was significant. Two of the hypotheses were in the predicted direction; the remaining two were in the opposite direction. Hypotheses 10B and 10E each had coefficients in the "high communication" categories of 0.163, significant at the 0.05 level. In the "low communication" categories the coefficients were 0.186 and 0.249 respectively. These two coefficients were significant at the 0.01 level. For the two hypotheses that vary in the opposite direction (10C and 10F), coefficients in the "low communication" categories were 0.061 and 0.089 respectively,

of which neither were significant. In the "high communication" categories the coefficients were 0.196, significant at the 0.01 level, and 0.159, significant at the 0.05 level.

By comparing the coefficients of Propositions 9 and 10, it can be seen that there were few similarities on which to base conclusions. Therefore, without further research, it could not be determined what, if any, effect either parental closeness or parent-adolescent communication concerning sexuality had on the relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual behavior.

### Qualitative Results

#### Description of Interviewees

The seven girls who were interviewed for the qualitative aspect of the study were enrolled at a home for pregnant adolescents. Most of the girls were from small towns in Oklahoma; two reported being from one the larger cities. The group was younger than the survey group; the range of ages being 15 years, 3 months to 17 years, 5 months. Two of the girls had married since finding out about their pregnancy. Of the remaining five, three were planning to put their babies up for adoption, and two were planning to keep them. The girls who opted for adoption cited the welfare of the baby as the primary reason for

giving up the child. Both of the girls who were planning to keep their babies expressed the hope that they would still marry the fathers of the babies. Three of the girls were from intact families; the other four were from divorced families. The four girls from divorced families lived with their mothers only.

Most of the girls expressed that they did not communicate well with their parents, especially about sexual subjects, before their pregnancy. They all reported that since their pregnancy, communication had increased, and that their parents accepted their situation fairly well after the initial shock of being informed that their daughter was pregnant.

The girls' level of sexual activity was not markedly different from the sexually active subjects who were surveyed. Three of the girls reported having had only one sexual partner, three had two partners, and one reported having had sex with three partners. The number of instances of sexual intercourse before pregnancy ranged from one girl who had intercourse one time (which was a case of rape by a cousin), to four of the girls who had intercourse more than 20 times.

The pregnant adolescents reported approximately the same regularity of use of contraceptives as the sexually active respondents in the high school sample. Most of the girls listed lack of availability of contraceptives, lack of thought about contraceptives and fear of discovery by

parents as the reasons for not using them. One girl reported having used the pill regularly until her mother discovered that she was taking them. She explained, "My mom found them and so we quit having sex for awhile so I quit taking them . . . then we quit not having sex and I wasn't on the pill." Two of the girls reported that they talked about contraceptive use with their boyfriends; the remainder indicated that they did not talk about contraceptives. One girl reflected that "it just never seemed right to talk about it." If the sample of pregnant adolescents was representative of the survey sample concerning communication about contraceptives, it may be assumed that most sexually active couples do not discuss contraceptive use, regardless of whether or not they used contraceptives.

All of the girls expressed that their pregnancy drastically changes their lives, and even the two who were married said that things would have been much better if they had not become pregnant. All four of the girls who were keeping their babies (2 single and 2 married) indicated that their educational plans had been altered. They expressed concern about finishing high school. Three of the four had planned to go to college, but now didn't see that possibility in their future.

The girls' television viewing patterns ranged from 13 to 79 hours a week. The average viewing time per week was 37-4/5 hours. This was higher than the average viewing time

of the survey group by nearly ten hours per week, but it may only have reflected an increase in viewing since they became pregnant. Few of the girls had a subscription movie channel and few had seen any of the movies listed in the survey. This seemed to be because cable was not available in many of the small towns in Oklahoma, and because several of the girls' hometowns did not have a movie theater.

### Results of the Interviews

While the pregnant adolescents' responses to the survey questions relating to the assumptions were similar to those of the high school sample, the comments made by the girls indicated stronger support for the assumptions. Statements included such remarks as "I think TV is helping people to do it more (have intercourse), because on TV they make it look really easy, good, and everything is perfect . . . and it's not. TV doesn't deal with the bad parts of it;" and "it really doesn't tell the whole story. They don't show, where, if the girl got pregnant, they don't show anything about that."

The girls consistently expressed the viewpoint that everyone is having sex. This may partly be due to the tendency of people to believe that everyone behaves as they do. However, the girls expressed the view that television makes it seem acceptable to have sex. Several indicated that it was too bad that they show only the good aspects of having sex and never show what can happen as a result. One

girl accepted the blame for becoming pregnant; she stated that "it's my fault, nobody made me do it." However, she indicated that rationally she did not want to have sex, but that physically she did and the signals she was receiving indicated that she was the only one who felt that premarital sex was wrong. She commented "I knew it was wrong, but I wanted to and my boyfriend wanted to. All my friends do. Everyone on TV does and no one gets pregnant, so why not?" One girl who had expressed that she thought most kids are having sex and had said that she felt like television was partly the cause, gave as her reason why she blamed television as "they emphasize it (sexual intercourse) a whole lot. People aren't married and have sex all the time." Another girl expressed the same viewpoint in her statement that "I don't like it (television's portrayal of sexuality) because they make it sound dirty and cheap. They show girls who might go to bed with five different guys in two or three weeks; a lot of one night things, and that is just not right." Another said, "I think television is harmful to young minds. It made me feel like I was just like everyone else."

One of the pregnant adolescents summed up the ideas expressed in the assumptions quite well in defense of a statement as to why adolescents tend to be sexually active. She said that it's "from TV, from curiosity, and from not learning what can happen to them." Apparently the girls did



support the assumption that television's message concerning sexual intercourse among unmarried couples was that it is both acceptable, expected, and did not result in negative consequences. However, the reader should keep in mind that these girls were under a considerable amount of stress at this time in their lives. In their attempt to deal with their pregnancy, they may have had a tendency to focus on external sources, such as television, to blame for their predicament. In this manner they may have relieved some of the guilt and self-incrimination that they were feeling.

The girls' statements implied that they believed that television's portrayal of sexuality was realistic to some extent. One girl who had commented that television portrays "everyone having sex without any feeling behind it," further commented that "our society is getting more like that, people don't care who they have sex with anymore." One adolescent who reportedly watched a lot of soap operas was asked if she thought soap operas were realistic. She said, "Sometimes. Some people may act like that. I think most couples run around on each other like they do on the soap operas." One of the girls who was planning to keep her baby commented that "I don't think kids should be watching anything like that. I learned a lot about sex from stuff on HBO and I don't think it ought to be learned that way."

Most of the girls felt that if they had been closer to their parents or could have communicated with them about the sexual problems they were having, they might not have become

pregnant. One girl said "Communication with parents is very important. Maybe I wouldn't have messed up if I could talk to my mother about sex, but when I'd ask questions she'd say 'You're too young to know about things like that. Wait 'til you're older.' I've learned the hard way."

While definitive answers to the propositions could not be ascertained from the interviews, the responses from the girls suggested that the area of sexual portrayal on television bears further investigation. If television sexuality is perceived as realistic, and if it is affecting attitudes and behavior, then steps should be taken to determine who is affected, and under what conditions they are most likely to be affected.

The girls interviewed indicated that lack of parental closeness and communication were viewed as one of the causes of their pregnancy; however, the possible mediating effects of the parental variables on the relationships between viewing of sexually oriented programs and perceived realism, sexual attitudes, sexual behavior and responsibility for preventing pregnancy were not specifically evaluated. If parents do, in fact, have an effect on adolescents' behavior, then it might be assumed that parents could also mediate the effects that other factors, such as television, might have on adolescents' attitudes and behavior.

### Summary

Chapter IV was divided into two main sections: 1. quantitative results and 2. qualitative results. The first section included a description of the subjects, details of the frequency and percentages of the assumptions, and the findings concerning the propositions and the related hypotheses. The second section detailed the findings of the qualitative findings and interrelated the findings of the qualitative and quantitative studies.

The next chapter, Chapter V, will summarize the findings of Chapter IV in more detail. The remainder of the chapter will be devoted to recommendations for future research and for application.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The future of the nation depends upon the future of the family. The success of the family institution depends on the successful interaction of family members who can effectively deal with the problems of the individual (Goode, 1974). One area in which the family continually exhibits problems is in the area of sexuality. The issue of sexuality has never been dealt with adequately, and for many years the approach seemed to be that, by ignoring it, it would cease to be an issue (McCary, 1979).

A primary source of sexual information is the media. One of the most pervasive areas of the media is television. Television has become a focus of concern to many people, particularly since the availability of subscription movie channels has increased so dramatically in recent years. Adults and children have access to an abundance of sexual information through television, which in many cases is portrayed neither realistically, nor accurately (Swerdlow, 1981). Since sexuality on television is so pervasive, it is essential that studies are undertaken to examine the

possible impact that television is having on sexual attitudes and behavior.

Television has been cited as the source of potential problems. Volumes of research have been documented, citing television's potential for influencing aggressive behavior, violent crime, political attitudes and many other arenas for people's beliefs and actions. However, the effects of the increase in sexual portrayal on television has not yet been adequately researched. Research which has been conducted, has primarily focused on sex roles and sex stereotyping. Since sexuality is such an integral part of life, and since sexuality, inadequately controlled, leads to such devastating consequences in the form of disease, divorce, unwanted, neglected and abused children, and in feelings of insecurity and failure, it is time to investigate the possible relationship between television's portrayal of sexuality and behavior of viewers.

#### Summary of Results

Research dealing with sexuality on television reveals that the messages conveyed by television programs are consistent. The most consistent message is that sexual intercourse occurs most often among unmarried heterosexual couples. The present study tested assumptions concerning television's messages using a survey administered to high school students in metropolitan areas in central Oklahoma and interviews conducted with students enrolled at a home

for pregnant adolescents.

A primary purpose of this study was to investigate the correlation between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programs and 1. adolescents' perceptions of television sexuality as being realistic, 2. the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual attitudes, 3. the level of permissiveness of sexual behavior, and 4. the degree of responsibility exhibited by sexually active adolescents for preventing pregnancy. The direct correlations, detailed above, were tested to see if the parental variables of perceived degree of closeness and level of communication concerning sexuality mediate those correlations.

The assumptions tested must be rejected as assumptions because they were not universally accepted. While nearly three-fourths of the adolescents surveyed generally agreed that the assumptions were true, less than one-fourth answered the questions with a definite yes. Most of the agreeing respondents answered "probably yes" which indicated some doubt of the certainty of their answers. There was obviously room for debate concerning television's messages concerning sexuality; therefore, the assumptions tested must be rejected as assumptions and should be tested as variables in future research.

The first proposition concerning the amount of viewing and perceived reality of television's sexual portrayal was

tentatively accepted. Because the correlations tended to be low, no clear conclusions could be drawn as to whether the sample perceived the portrayal of adolescent sexual behavior or portrayal of the sexual behavior of the general population as being more realistically portrayed on television. While all of the hypotheses were in the direction predicted, only half of the hypotheses were statistically significant. Therefore, even though a statement could not be made concerning the type of sexuality which is perceived as more realistic, there was some support for a positive relationship between the amount of sexually oriented programming watched and the perceived level of realism of the sexual portrayal. Those who watched large amounts of sexually oriented programs appeared to be more likely to perceive that portrayal as realistic. This finding was further supported by the consistent feelings of the pregnant adolescents that "everybody is doing it" and that "television shows everyone having sex with everyone else."

The finding of this study was generally in agreement with the "Cultivation Analysis" theory which contends that "The more time one spends living in the world of television, the more likely one is to report conceptions of social reality that can be traced to television portrayals" (Signorielli, et al., 1982, p. 169).

Proposition 2, concerning the amount of viewing and permissiveness of sexual attitudes, was accepted. All the

hypotheses relating to this proposition were in the predicted direction, and all were statistically significant, although the total amount of explained variation was quite low. The more that sexually oriented programming was watched, the more likely it was that the viewer was permissive in his/her sexual attitudes.

The third proposition was tentatively accepted, and suggested that the more that sexually oriented programming was watched the more likely the viewer was to be permissive in his/her sexual behavior. However, although all three were in the predicted direction, only two of the hypotheses were statistically significant.

In relation to sexual attitudes and behavior, it is necessary to remind the reader that causation was not demonstrated. It may have been that one's prior permissiveness contributed to the selection of a sexually oriented program to watch, rather than the viewing of sexually oriented programs having caused the viewer to have developed permissive attitudes and behavior.

Proposition 4 was rejected. This proposition concerned the amount of viewing and perceived responsibility for preventing pregnancy. It was predicted that television's failure to portray consequences of sexual activity would tend to be reflected in sexually active adolescents non-use of contraceptives. Although the study indicated that adolescents were quite remiss in their use of



contraceptives, there did not seem to be any relationship with the amount that they view sexually oriented programs.

Propositions 5 through 10 were testing for the mediating effects of perceived parental closeness and parent-adolescent communication concerning sexuality on the direct propositions. Since, in most cases, the correlations between viewing and the adolescent variables were small, although significant, any correlations found in the mediating effects of the parental variables were noteworthy. The mediating variables were tested in two ways, using 1. partial correlations controlling for the parental variables, and 2. Pearson correlations using a divided sample.

A comparison of Pearson correlations for the first four propositions and the partial correlations controlling for the effects of parental closeness and parental communication concerning sexuality revealed no significant differences. However, by dividing the sample into categories by characteristics on the parental variables (leaving the middle range scores out of the analysis), some differences were found. For those adolescents who were extreme in their perceived closeness to their parents or in their communication with their parents concerning sexual subjects, the correlations between the amount of viewing and perceptions of realism of television sexuality were no longer significant. For those adolescents who either were not close to their parents or did not communicate with their

parents concerning sexual subjects, the correlations increased in significance. It appeared that the middle group was confounding the results of the partial correlations. This may have been due to extreme scores in the middle group. Some respondents who had middle range scores on parental closeness and communication may have had alternative sources of information which allowed them to realistically evaluate television's sexual portrayals. Others with middle range scores might have seen television's portrayals as being extremely realistic, possibly because of a lack of sexual information.

Parents were found to mediate the effects of the perceived realism of television sexuality if they were close to their adolescents or if they communicated with their adolescents concerning sexual subjects; this suggested that the potential to influence is present. Emphasis could be exerted to see this potential utilized by parents. The finding that parental closeness and parent-adolescent communication tended to mediate the correlation between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and adolescents perceived level of realism of television's sexual portrayal was similar to findings in other areas of research on perceptions of realism of television portrayals. Chaffee and Tims (1976) found that "perceptions of reality and violence are highest while viewing with parents" (p. 98). Greenberg and Reeves (1976) found that "interpersonal

communication about television is a significant predictor of children's reality perceptions" (p. 86).

For the propositions concerning adolescents' level of permissiveness of sexual attitudes, the mediating effects of the parental variables were somewhat unclear. Parental closeness did seem to have an impact on the relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of sexual attitudes; however, that impact apparently strengthened, rather than weakened, the relationship. In other words, for those adolescents who were close to their parents, the correlation between TV viewing and attitudes was strengthened. For those who were not close to their parents, the correlation between TV viewing and attitudes tended to become insignificant.

The mediating effects of parent-adolescent communication was not clear. Four of the hypotheses were in the expected direction; two were in the opposite direction. Two of the hypotheses were significant; one that indicated that the correlation was strengthened if parent-adolescent communication was high and one that indicated the correlation was strengthened if parent-adolescent communication was low.

For the propositions concerning the mediating effects of the parental variables on the relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual behavior, no

conclusions could be made.

The present study basically concludes that:

1. There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents watch sexually oriented programming and the degree to which they perceive the portrayal of television sexuality as being realistic.
2. There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents watch sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual attitudes.
3. There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents watch sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual behavior.
4. Parental closeness tends to mediate the relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and the perceived level of realism of television's sexual portrayal.
5. Parental communication tends to mediate the relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented programming and the perceived level of realism of television's sexual portrayal.
6. Parental closeness tends to strengthen the relationship between the amount of viewing sexually oriented programming and the level of

permissiveness of adolescents' sexual attitudes. This relationship was not predicted.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

The present study suggests relationships between viewing sexually oriented programs, adolescents' sexual attitudes and behavior, and adolescents' perceptions of the realism of television's sexual portrayal. Indicators for measuring some of the related variables have also been suggested. One such indicator is the measurement of adolescents' rating of sexually oriented movies as a measure of how much sexual portrayal is being consumed. Also, since subscription television is rapidly becoming available throughout the United States, and since it is more sexually oriented than commercial television, future studies might develop an indicator using only the programs being seen on the subscription channels. This might be carried out by having subjects rate what they have seen over some period of time, rather than asking about several particular programs which they may or may not have seen.

Since television, as a source of sexual information, was found to explain only a small amount of the variation, studies using multiple regression or path analysis could be undertaken to see what source of sexual information is most accurate, and to discover what the main sources of information are.

It is understood that studies dealing with human

sexuality are difficult to carry out because of societal resistance in revealing this type of information and because of issues related to the ethics of utilizing research strategies which might yield more efficient and valid data. For example, it seems critical at this point to be able to say more about the relationship between film portrayal of sexuality and sexual attitudes and behavior than that they covary. Experimental research could be conducted with adolescents, which would show films concerning sexuality using a pretest, an immediate post-test and a follow-up post-test a number of months later. This would measure attitudinal changes and measure any long term effects from the film.

An area not controlled in this study which may have contributed more useful information would be to have a measure of the parents' attitudes toward sexuality. It seems as if most researchers use the concept of "parental influence" to mean that a parent's attitude toward sexual behavior for their adolescents is very conservative. However, with the wide variety of people in the world, it cannot be assumed that all parents are conservative. Simply because an adolescent indicates that their attitudes and values are close to a parent's attitudes and values does not imply that the parent is conservative. They may both be very liberal. One of the girls interviewed in this study remarked that her boyfriend was living with her and her

parents at the time she became pregnant, and that her parents were aware, and did not disapprove, of the couple having intercourse. One way to find out if such information is true, is to obtain a measure of the parents' attitudes as well as those of the adolescent.

#### Recommendations for Application

A primary concern of parents, service providers and educators is to teach children to become responsible adults. In the area of sexuality, education which promotes responsible behavior is often lacking. Although sexuality is a normal, and extensive part of a person's life experience, many people reach adult status without being comfortable or secure with their sexuality. It is the responsibility of parents, educators and service providers to overcome their own inhibitions about talking about sexuality with children and adolescents.

One possible strategy would be to implement a program in the public schools which would teach a unit of sexuality in grades K-12. However, in order to institute a program like that, the parents are going to have to be educated first. That is not to say that parents need to learn about sexuality, although that may be true in some cases. In order to have the backing of the parents, the school system must promote responsible sexual behavior and incorporate parent input into the program.

Somewhere in history, sexuality became associated with

vulgarity, aggressiveness, and irresponsibility. In more recent history, sex education in the schools has been identified as "sex instruction." Both of these images must be changed. Sexuality and sexual behavior, like almost everything else, is worthy and acceptable if it is properly dealt with, under proper conditions. However, it can also be misused to the point of being a criminal and/or irrational behavior.

If the initial acquisition of sexual information is negative; that is, whispered and joked about, then that will be an image of sexuality that will be difficult to erase at a more mature time in an individual's life. If responsible sexual behavior is taught, first by parents and then in the schools, as a normal part of life, it would not be as difficult for adolescents to accept and adjust to sexual maturity as it begins to occur.

Teaching about sexuality is analogous to the way children are taught to drive. Small children have a natural curiosity about driving and parents explain to them that driving is a good way to get from place to place and that sometimes it is fun to just "go for a drive" but that they are too young and can only learn to drive when they are older. In addition, the parents usually talk to children years before they are ready to drive about how the car works, how the accelerator, brakes, turn signals, and steering wheel operate, how to make turns, how to watch for



traffic, and many other related subjects. They also talk about how driving can be dangerous. Excessive speed, failure to observe rules, and carelessness are all discussed without anxiety or embarrassment. Parents and schools teach responsible driving. If educators, service providers and parents could teach sexuality in the same manner, it might be that sexuality could be understood, accepted, and responsibility used, without undue anxiety. However, that is an ideal, and like eliminating prejudice, it may take generations for it to occur. Adults can use the media to be able to discuss sexual values. Almost any television program, movie, or novel portrays sexual values. For many portrayals, the sexual values are not a part of the major theme of the story but they are there nonetheless. If adolescents are made aware of the values being presented and can rationally discuss them with someone who has more experience or knowledge, then values can be clarified and responsibility for behavior can be discussed.

For parents, television offers a multitude of opportunities to discuss sexual values with children and adolescents. For family living, psychology, sociology, literature, and history teachers, the opportunities to discuss sexual values and sexual decision making are limitless. Students are always eager to see films or to talk about what they have seen on television. The teacher can take the opportunity to point out the changes in the involved person's life as a result of the sexual decisions

made, and discuss how the outcome might have differed if alternative decisions had been made.

Sexuality is pervasive in the media and probably will be that way for some time. Parents and educators can help to clarify, or rechannel, the attitudes that are reflected by the media by being concerned about the adolescent, and taking time to communicate their own beliefs and values in a straightforward manner.

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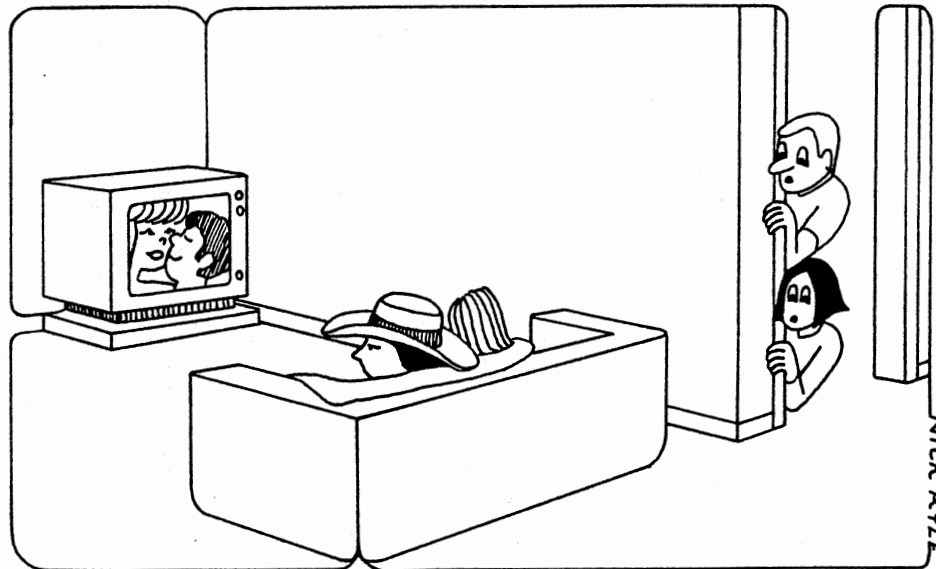
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APPENDIX A

SURVEY

## TELEVISION, TEENAGERS, PARENTS AND SEX



This survey is designed to help in the understanding of several important issues. Part one deals with television and portrayal of sexuality on television. Part two asks about communication between teenagers and their parents. Part three deals with teenagers' attitudes and behavior concerning sexuality.

Please DO NOT put your name on this booklet. These surveys are to remain anonymous. We are interested in information concerning the group and not any one person's answers. You will not be identified in any manner with this survey after you turn it in. Please be as honest and as complete in your answers as possible. This survey is voluntary; you are not required to fill it out.

This survey is part of a research project being done through the Department of Family Relations and Child Development at Oklahoma State University.

PART ONE: TELEVISION USE AND SEX ON TELEVISION

First, we would like to ask you some questions about television. Please check the appropriate item.

1A. On an average day, what times would you say YOU are watching television? (Please circle the times you are watching.)

SCHOOL DAYS

6 7 8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 1  
A.M. NOON MIDNIGHT

SATURDAYS

6 7 8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 1  
A.M. NOON MIDNIGHT

SUNDAYS

6 7 8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 1  
A.M. NOON MIDNIGHT

1B. What percent of that time would you say you are watching a subscription channel such as HBO, VUE, or Showtime? (If you don't have one of these, circle 0.)

PERCENT OF VIEWING TIME 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100%

2. How often do you watch the following programs?

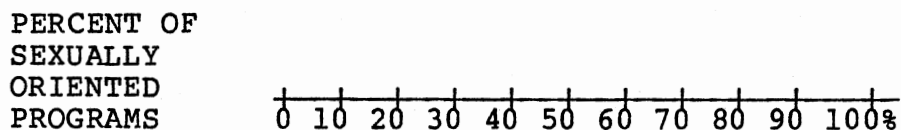
	NEVER	RARELY	SOME-TIMES	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN
HILL STREET BLUES	1	2	3	4	5
SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE	1	2	3	4	5
DAYTIME SOAPS (such as GENERAL HOSPITAL OR ALL MY CHILDREN)	1	2	3	4	5
BENNY HILL	1	2	3	4	5
QUINCY	1	2	3	4	5
THE TONIGHT SHOW	1	2	3	4	5
M*A*S*H	1	2	3	4	5
LOVE BOAT	1	2	3	4	5
DONAHUE	1	2	3	4	5

	NEVER	RARELY	SOME-TIMES	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN
DALLAS OR DYNASTY	1	2	3	4	5
LITTLE HOUSE OF THE PRAIRIE	1	2	3	4	5

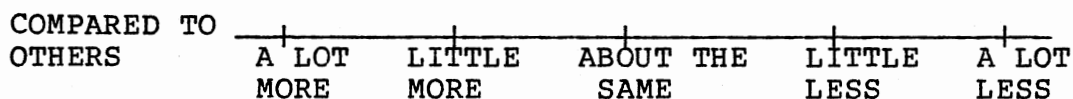
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, how much did you like the following movies and why?

	DID NOT SEE THIS MOVIE	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE	0	1	2	3	4	5
DRESSED TO KILL	0	1	2	3	4	5
THE FINAL CONFLICT	0	1	2	3	4	5
PORKYS	0	1	2	3	4	5
THE ROLLICKING ADVENTURES OF ELIZA FRAZIER	0	1	2	3	4	5

4. If a sexually oriented program is defined as any program which contains sexually suggestive jokes, references, or manner or dress; shows sexual encounters; or conveys sexual values; then what percent of the programs that you watch would you say are sexually oriented?



5. Compared to other people your age, how much TV would you say you watch? (Put an X on the line over the item which best describes how you feel.)



- 6A. Do you think that television's message about sexual relationships is that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples is acceptable behavior?

DEFINITELY	PROBABLY	PROBABLY	DEFINITELY
YES	YES	NO	NO

- B. Do you think that television's message about sexual relationships is that sexual intercourse between unmarried couples is an expected behavior?

DEFINITELY	PROBABLY	PROBABLY	DEFINITELY
YES	YES	NO	NO

- C. Do you think TV programs and movies (excluding educational specials) adequately show the consequences of premarital sex (such as pregnancy and abortion)?

DEFINITELY	PROBABLY	PROBABLY	DEFINITELY
YES	YES	NO	NO

The next set of questions are about characters on specific programs. The questions refer to the personality of the TV character (Ex. Hawkeye Pierce) not the actor playing the part (Ex. Alan Alda). If you have not seen the program leave the question blank.

- 7A. Do you think Hawkeye Pierce (on M\*A\*S\*H) actually has sex with the women he romances?

DEFINITELY	PROBABLY	PROBABLY	DEFINITELY
YES	YES	NO	NO

- B. If Hawkeye did have sex with a woman:

1. How likely do you think it is that they use some form of birth control?

VERY	SOMEWHAT	SOMEWHAT	VERY
LIKELY	LIKELY	UNLIKELY	UNLIKELY

2. How likely do you think it is that the M\*A\*S\*H writers would have her get pregnant?

VERY	SOMEWHAT	SOMEWHAT	VERY
LIKELY	LIKELY	UNLIKELY	UNLIKELY

Why, or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

3. If pregnancy did occur, what do you think Hawkeye's reaction would be? (Check one)

\_\_\_\_\_ HE WOULD STOP SEEING HER

\_\_\_\_\_ HE WOULD FAVOR ABORTION

\_\_\_\_\_ HE WOULD MARRY HER

\_\_\_\_\_ HE WOULD WANT HER TO KEEP THE BABY

\_\_\_\_\_ HE WOULD KEEP THE BABY

\_\_\_\_\_ OTHER (Please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

- C. Which character do you prefer as the commander of the 4077, Col. Henry Blake or Col. Sherman Potter? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_

- 8A. Concerning the television show, "Hill Street Blues," how satisfied do you think Captain Furillo and the lawyer, Joyce Davenport, are with their live-in relationship?

VERY	SOMEWHAT	SOMEWHAT	VERY
SATISFIED	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED

- B. Do you think they are planning their future together or is theirs a temporary relationship?

DEFINITELY	PROBABLY	PROBABLY	DEFINITELY
PERMANENT	PERMANENT	PERMANENT	PERMANENT

- C. How satisfied do you think YOU would be in that type of relationship (living together)?

VERY	SOMEWHAT	SOMEWHAT	VERY
SATISFIED	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED



D. How common do you think that type of lifestyle is in America now?

VERY COMMON	SOMEWHAT COMMON	SOMEWHAT UNCOMMON	VERY UNCOMMON
----------------	--------------------	----------------------	------------------

Please circle the number which corresponds to the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statement.

1	2	3	4	5	6	
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	AGREE MORE THAN DISAGREE	DISAGREE MORE THAN AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	
1	2	3	4	5	6	1. Television portrays sexual interaction between teenagers as it really is.
1	2	3	4	5	6	2. TV shows imply that most young adults have sexual intercourse with or without the relationship developing any further.
1	2	3	4	5	6	3. If TV programs consistently show couples living together without being married, people will believe that is the way society is.
1	2	3	4	5	6	4. The amount of sexual intercourse implied on TV is representative of real life relationships.
1	2	3	4	5	6	5. On television, there are no harmful effects as a result of unmarried couples having sexual intercourse.
1	2	3	4	5	6	6. Television characters don't seem to be concerned with unplanned pregnancies.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7. Television characters never seem to worry about birth control.
1	2	3	4	5	6	8. Television situations, no matter how bleak, always turn out to be happy.
1	2	3	4	5	6	9. Television programs imply that sexual intercourse is acceptable behavior for unmarried couples.
1	2	3	4	5	6	10. I am less sexually active than most of the teenage characters on television.

## PART TWO: PARENTAL CLOSENESS AND COMMUNICATION

In the next section, we will ask some questions about the parent with whom you feel closest. If you feel closer to your mother or to your father, then answer the following questions for this parent. If you feel equally close to both or not close to either, then answer the questions as they apply to both parents in general.

1	2	3	4	5	6
NOT AT ALL	VERY LITTLE	NOT USUALLY	SOMETIMES	VERY MUCH	COMPLETELY

- 1 2 3 4 5 6    1. Do you respect this parent's judgment about normal, everyday matters?
- 1 2 3 4 5 6    2. Would you like to be the kind of person this person is?
- 1 2 3 4 5 6    3. Do you feel that you can trust this parent's judgments about important decisions you must make?
- 1 2 3 4 5 6    4. Do you find the attitudes and opinions of this parent helpful in deciding matters of right and wrong?
- 1 2 3 4 5 6    5. Is this parent aware of most things you do and feel?

About which parent did you answer the last group of questions?

\_\_\_\_\_MOTHER      \_\_\_\_\_BOTH, BECAUSE I AM EQUALLY CLOSE TO BOTH.

\_\_\_\_\_FATHER      \_\_\_\_\_BOTH, BECAUSE I AM NOT CLOSE TO EITHER.

Below are several common sources of sexual information. Please indicate how important each has been to you in acquiring that information.

	NOT ALL IMPOR- TANT	NOT VERY IMPOR- TANT	SOME- WHAT IMPOR- TANT	IMPOR- TANT	VERY IMPOR- TANT
1. SAME SEX FRIENDS	1	2	3	4	5
2. TELEVISION	1	2	3	4	5
3. PARENTS	1	2	3	4	5
4. ADULT FRIENDS, RELATIVES, MINISTERS, ETC.	1	2	3	4	5
5. MOVIES	1	2	3	4	5
6. SCHOOLS, TEXTBOOKS, FILMS, TEACHERS, ETC.	1	2	3	4	5
7. OPPOSITE SEX FRIENDS	1	2	3	4	5
8. NOVELS AND OTHER NON-SCHOOL BOOKS	1	3	3	4	5

Which one of the above listed sources has been most valuable to you in acquiring sexual information?

MOST VALUABLE SOURCE \_\_\_\_\_

We are interested in knowing the extent to which you are able to talk about several subjects. If you are able to talk to your mother or to your father, then answer the following questions for that parent. If you are able to talk to both parents equally well, or you cannot talk to either one well then answer the questions as they apply to both parents in general.

Please indicate how often you have talked to this parent about each of the following subjects.

	NEVER	RARELY	SOME- WHAT	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN
1. PREMARITAL INTERCOURSE	1	2	3	4	5
2. LOVE	1	2	3	4	5
3. ORAL-GENITAL SEX	1	2	3	4	5
4. KISSING, PETTING	1	2	3	4	5
5. SEX ON TELEVISION	1	2	3	4	5
6. ADVERTISEMENTS ON FEMININE PRODUCTS ON TELEVISION	1	2	3	4	5
7. BIRTH CONTROL	1	2	3	4	5
8. MENSTRUATION	1	2	3	4	5
9. CHILDBIRTH	1	2	3	4	5

Compared to most parents, how much sexual information would you say this parent gives you?

A LOT MORE	SOMEWHAT MORE	SAME	SOMEWHAT LESS	A LOT LESS
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About which parent did you answer the last group of questions?

\_\_\_\_\_ MOTHER \_\_\_\_\_ BOTH, BECAUSE I TALK TO THEM EQUALLY WELL.

\_\_\_\_\_ FATHER \_\_\_\_\_ BOTH, BECAUSE I DON'T TALK TO EITHER OF THEM WELL.

## PART THREE: SEXUAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

Now, we would like to find out what your attitudes are toward sexuality. First decide whether you agree or disagree with the view expressed. Then indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with the view expressed in each question. We are not interested in your tolerance of other people's beliefs. Please answer these questions on the basis of how you feel toward the view expressed.

1	2	3	4	5	6	
STRONGLY	AGREE	AGREE MORE	DISAGREE	MORE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY
AGREE		THAN	DISAGREE		THAN	AGREE
						DISAGREE
1	2	3	4	5	6	1. I believe that petting is acceptable before marriage when the couple is in love.
1	2	3	4	5	6	2. I believe that petting is acceptable before marriage when the couple feels strong affection for each other.
1	2	3	4	5	6	3. I believe that petting is acceptable before marriage even if the couple does not feel particularly affectionate toward each other.
1	2	3	4	5	6	4. I believe that full sexual relations are acceptable before marriage when the couple is in love.
1	2	3	4	5	6	5. I believe that full sexual relations are acceptable before marriage when the couple feels strong affection for each other.
1	2	3	4	5	6	6. I believe that full sexual relations are acceptable before marriage even if the couple does not feel particularly affectionate toward each other.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7. I believe that most couples in our society live together before they marry.
1	2	3	4	5	6	8. I believe that most people in our society have intercourse with several partners before they marry.
1	2	3	4	5	6	9. I believe that one of the most important qualities for sexual partners is their looks.

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 10. I believe that sexual intercourse is a normal part of male/female relationships, even when the relationship is fairly casual.

Please answer these questions responding as you think the parent to which you are closest would answer.

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 1. This parent believes that petting is acceptable before marriage when the couple is in love.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 2. This parent believes that petting is acceptable before marriage when the couple feel strong affection for each other.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 3. This parent believes that petting is acceptable before marriage even if the couple does not feel particularly affectionate toward each other.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 4. This parent believes that full sexual relations are acceptable before marriage when the couple is in love.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 5. This parent believes that full sexual relations are acceptable when the couple feels strong affection for each other.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 6. This parent believes that full sexual relations are acceptable before marriage even if the couple does not feel particularly affectionate toward each other.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7. This parent believes that most couples in our society live together before they marry.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 8. This parent believes that most people in our society have intercourse with several partners before they marry.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 9. This parent believes that one of the most important qualities for sexual partners is their looks.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 10. This parent believes that sexual intercourse is a normal part of male/female relationships, even when the relationship is fairly casual.

Now we need to know about your own sexual behavior. Please keep in mind that this information is completely anonymous. The results of these surveys are to be used only to study group behavior; no individual information will be used. Please be honest in answering the questions. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Have you had sexual intercourse?

YES       NO (Skip to the next section.)

→ If YES:

How many times would you say you have had sexual intercourse?

NO. OF  
TIMES    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

16 17 18 19 20

With how many different partners have you had sexual intercourse?

NO. OF  
PARTNERS 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 OR MORE

How consistently have you used a birth control method when you have had sexual intercourse?

ALWAYS    USUALLY    SOMETIMES    RARELY    NEVER

What type(s) of birth control method(s) have you used when you have had sexual intercourse? (Please list.)

Finally, we would like to ask you a few background questions.

1. What is your sex?

MALE       FEMALE

2. What is your age?

YEARS       MONTHS

## 3. Are your parents married and living together?

 YES NO ----->

With whom are you now living? (Check all that apply. Ex. If you are living with your mother, who is divorced from your father, and has remarried; check "mother" and "step-father.")

 MOTHER FATHER STEPMOTHER STEPFATHER OTHER (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

How many years has this family unit been together?

 YEARS

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

If there is anything else you would like to tell us related to television sexuality, parental communication, or adolescent attitudes and behavior, please write your comments here.



APPENDIX B

PROPOSITIONS AND HYPOTHESES

## PROPOSITIONS AND HYPOTHESES

## Proposition 1

There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the degree to which adolescents perceive the portrayal of television sexuality as realistic.

Hypothesis 1A

There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents view sexually oriented programs on commercial television and the level of agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic.

Hypothesis 1B

There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming on commercial television and the level of agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in the general population.

Hypothesis 1C

There is a positive relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and level of agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic.

Hypothesis 1D

There is a positive relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and level of agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in the general population.

Hypothesis 1E

There is a positive relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and level of agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic.

Hypothesis 1F

There is a positive relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and level of agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in the general population.

### Proposition 2

There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual attitudes.

#### Hypothesis 2A

There is a positive relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and scores on the Reiss's scale.

#### Hypothesis 2B

There is a positive relationship between ratings of sexually oriented movies and scores on the Reiss's scale.

#### Hypothesis 2C

There is a positive relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and scores on the Reiss's scale.

### Proposition 3

There is a positive relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and level of permissiveness of adolescents' sexual behavior.

Hypothesis 3A

There is a positive relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and scores on the sexually permissive behavior scale.

Hypothesis 3B

There is a positive relationship between the ratings of sexually oriented movies and scores on the sexually permissive behavior scale.

Hypothesis 3C

There is a positive relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and scores on the sexually permissive behavior scale.

## Proposition 4

There is a negative relationship between the amount adolescents view highly sexually oriented programming and the degree of responsibility sexually active adolescents manifest for preventing pregnancy.

Hypothesis 4A

There is a negative relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial

television and scores on the reliable use of birth control.

Hypothesis 4B

There is a negative relationship between ratings of sexually oriented movies and scores on the reliable use of birth control.

Hypothesis 4C

There is a negative relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and scores on the reliable use of birth control.

Proposition 5

The relationship between adolescents' TV viewing of highly sexually oriented programming and adolescents' perceptions of television sexuality will be mediated by parental closeness.

Hypothesis 5A

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 5B

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 5C

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 5D

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in society will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 5E

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of

sexuality in society will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 5F

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in society will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 5G

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

Hypothesis 5H

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

Hypothesis 5I

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription



television and agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

Hypothesis 5J

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in the general population will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

Hypothesis 5K

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in the general population will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 5L

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in the general population will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

### Proposition 6

The relationship between adolescents' TV viewing of highly sexually oriented programming and adolescents' perceptions of television sexuality will be mediated by parental communication.

#### Hypothesis 6A

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic will be mediated by adolescents' perceived importance of sexual information received from parents.

#### Hypothesis 6B

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic will be mediated by adolescents' perceived importance of sexual information received from parents.

#### Hypothesis 6C

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and agreement that the adolescent sexuality

portrayed on television is realistic will be mediated by adolescents' perceived importance of sexual information received from parents.

#### Hypothesis 6D

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in the general population will be mediated by adolescents' perceived importance of sexual information received from parents.

#### Hypothesis 6E

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in society will be mediated by adolescents' perceived importance of sexual information received from parents.

#### Hypothesis 6F

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in society will be mediated by adolescents'

perceived importance of sexual information received from parents.

Hypothesis 6G

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

Hypothesis 6H

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

Hypothesis 6I

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and agreement that the adolescent sexuality portrayed on television is realistic will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

Hypothesis 6J

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and

agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in the general population will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

Hypothesis 6K

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in the general population will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

Hypothesis 6L

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and agreement that the amount of sexuality portrayed on television is representative of the amount of sexuality in the general population will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

Proposition 7

The relationship between adolescents' TV viewing of highly sexually oriented programming and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual attitudes will be mediated by parental closeness.

Hypothesis 7A

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual attitudes will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 7B

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual attitudes will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 7C

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual attitudes will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 7D

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual attitudes will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

Hypothesis 7E

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual attitudes will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

Hypothesis 7F

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual attitudes will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

## Proposition 8

The relationship between adolescents' TV viewing of highly sexually oriented programming and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual attitudes will be mediated by parental communication.

Hypothesis 8A

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual attitudes will be mediated by adolescents' perceptions of the importance of sexual information received from parents.

Hypothesis 8B

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual attitudes will be mediated by adolescents' perceptions of the importance of sexual information received from parents.

Hypothesis 8C

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and adolescents' perceptions of the importance of sexual information received from parents.

Hypothesis 8D

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual attitudes will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

Hypothesis 8E

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual attitudes will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

Hypothesis 8F

The relationship between the amount of viewing of



sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual attitudes will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

#### Proposition 9

The relationship between adolescents' TV viewing of highly sexually oriented programming and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual behavior will be mediated by parental closeness.

#### Hypothesis 9A

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual behavior will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

#### Hypothesis 9B

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual behavior will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

#### Hypothesis 9C

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual

behavior will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 9D

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual behavior will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

Hypothesis 9E

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual behavior will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

Hypothesis 9F

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual behavior will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

Proposition 10

The relationship between adolescents' TV viewing of highly sexually oriented programming and adolescents'

permissiveness of sexual behavior will be mediated by parental communication.

Hypothesis 10A

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual behavior will be mediated by adolescents perception of the importance of sexual information received from parents.

Hypothesis 10B

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual behavior will be mediated by adolescents' perceptions of the importance of sexual information received from parents.

Hypothesis 10C

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual behavior will be mediated by adolescents' perceptions of the importance of sexual information received from parents.

Hypothesis 10D

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual behavior will be

mediated by scores on the parental communication side.

Hypothesis 10E

The relationship between the rating of sexually oriented movies and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual behavior will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

Hypothesis 10F

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and adolescents' permissiveness of sexual behavior will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

Proposition 11

The relationship between adolescents' TV viewing of highly sexually oriented programming and sexually active adolescents' responsibility for preventing pregnancy will be mediated by parental closeness.

Hypothesis 11A

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and scores on the reliable use of birth control will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 11B

The relationship between the ratings of sexually oriented movies and scores on the reliable use of birth control will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 11C

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and scores on the reliable use of birth control will be mediated by scores on the parental closeness scale.

Hypothesis 11D

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and scores on the reliable use of birth control will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

Hypothesis 11E

The relationship between the ratings of sexually oriented movies and scores on the reliable use of birth control will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

Hypothesis 11F

The relationship between the amount of viewing of

sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and scores on the reliable use of birth control will be mediated by scores on the parental agreement scale.

#### Proposition 12

The relationship between adolescents' TV viewing of highly sexually oriented programming and sexually active adolescents' responsibility for preventing pregnancy will be mediated by parental communication.

#### Hypothesis 12A

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and scores on the reliable use of birth control will be mediated by adolescents' perceived importance of sexual information received from parents.

#### Hypothesis 12B

The relationship between the ratings of sexually oriented movies and scores on the reliable use of birth control will be mediated by adolescents' perceived importance of sexual information received from parents.

#### Hypothesis 12C

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and scores on the reliable use of birth control

will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

Hypothesis 12D

The relationship between the level of viewing of sexually oriented programs on commercial television and scores on the reliable use of birth control will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

Hypothesis 12E

The relationship between the ratings of sexually oriented movies and scores on the reliable use of birth control will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

Hypothesis 12F

The relationship between the amount of viewing of sexually oriented commercial television and subscription television and scores on the reliable use of birth control will be mediated by scores on the parental communication scale.

APPENDIX C

CORRESPONDENCE



March 23, 1982

Dear Parent:

A survey is being conducted in some of the Home Economics classes the last of March or the first part of April. The survey is part of a dissertation project which is concerned with "Adolescents' Perceptions of Sex on Television." Since individual and family information is requested, I wanted you to be aware of the survey and have your consent to administer it. However, be assured that the survey is to be totally anonymous; your teenager will not put his/her name on the survey and only group results will be used. This dissertation is being conducted through the Oklahoma State University, College of Home Economics, as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree in Family Relations and Child Development. Your cooperation is appreciated. Please sign this form and return it to school with your son/daughter.

Thank you very much,

Diana Sexton  
Ph.D. Candidate

I give my permission for my child to take the survey.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

I would prefer that my child not take the survey.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

APPENDIX D

TABLES FOR MEDIATING VARIABLES - MALES

TABLE XVII

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL CLOSENESS ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND PERCEIVED REALISM

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Not Close to Parent		Close to Parent	
	r	No.	Scores on Parental Closeness Scale			r	No.	r	No.
H5B. Movies/Adolescent Realism	.221	94	.216	90	.005	.399**	37	.173	28
H5E. Movies/General Realism	.226	94	.225	90	.001	.270*	37	.100	28
H5F. Commercial, Subscription TV/ General Realism	.162	97	.162	93	.000	.431**	37	.172	28
			Scores on Parental/Adolescent Agreement			Low Agreement		High Agreement	
H5H. Movies/Adolescent Realism	.221	94	.220	85	.001	.151	49	.417**	26
H5K. Movies/General Realism	.226	94	.197	85	.029	.207	49	.361*	26
H5L. Commercial, Subscription TV/General Realism	.162	97	.157	88	.005	.151	51	.094	27

\* p ≤ 0.05  
\*\* p ≤ 0.01  
\*\*\* p ≤ 0.001

TABLE XVIII

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL COMMUNICATION ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND PERCEIVED REALISM

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Less Important	No.	More Important	No.
H7A. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.221	94	.230	90	.009	.494***	51	.074	43
H7B. Movies/ Attitudes	.226	94	.217	90	.009	.314**	51	.083	43
H7C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Attitudes	.162	97	.163	93	.001	.219*	53	.094	44
			Scores on Parental/Communication Scale			Low Com- munication		High Com- munication	
H6H. Movies/Adolescent Realism	.221	94	.220	91	.001	.379**	43	.253	30
H6K. Movies/General Realism	.226	94	.235	91	.009	.387**	43	.099	30
H6L. Commercial, Subscription TV/General Realism	.162	97	.185	94	.023	.402**	46	.091	30

\* p ≤ 0.05  
\*\* p ≤ 0.01  
\*\*\* p ≤ 0.001

TABLE XIX

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL CLOSENESS ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND SEXUAL ATTITUDES

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Not Close		Close	
						r	No.	r	No.
H7A. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.213	87	.223	84	.010	.414**	31	.404**	27
H7B. Movies/ Attitudes	.354	92	.368	89	.014	.301*	35	.251	28
H7C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Attitudes	.051	95	.052	91	.001	.162	35	.125	28
			Scores on Parent/Adolescent Agreement			Low Agreement		High Agreement	
H7D. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.213	87	.276	80	.063	.016	46	.283	23
H7E. Movies/ Attitudes	.354	92	.324	85	.030	.138	47	.575***	26
H7F. Commercial, Subscription TV/Attitudes	.051	95	.038	88	.013	.029	49	.226	27

\*p≤0.05

\*\*p≤0.01

\*\*\*p≤0.001

TABLE XX

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL COMMUNICATION ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND SEXUAL ATTITUDES

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Less Important		More Important	
			Importance of Information From Parents			r	No.	r	No.
H8A. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.213	87	.236	84	.023	.148	47	.336**	40
H8B. Movies/ Attitudes	.354	92	.341	89	.013	.483***	49	.192	43
H8C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Attitudes	.051	95	.052	91	.001	.192	51	.090	44
			Scores on Parent Communication Scale			Low Com- munication		High Com- munication	
H8D. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.213	87	.220	84	.007	.252*	42	.221	28
H8E. Movies/ Attitudes	.354	92	.388	89	.034	.466***	43	.052	29
H8F. Commercial, Subscription TV/Attitudes	.051	95	.108	92	.057	.297*	46	.057	29

\*  $p \leq 0.05$   
 \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$   
 \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$

TABLE XXI

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL CLOSENESS ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Scores on Parental Closeness Scale		Pearson Correlation Divided Sample	
	r	No.	r	No.		r	No.	r	No.
H9B. Movies/Behavior	.233	94	.229	90	.004	.219	37	.193	28
H9C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Behavior	.084	97	.084	93	.000	.162	37	.062	28
			Scores on Parent/Adolescent Agreement			Low Agreement		High- Agreement	
H9E. Movies Behavior	.233	94	.206	85	.027	.209	26	.170	49
H9F. Commercial, Subscription TV/Behavior	.084	97	.077	88	.007	.044	27	.279*	51

\* $p \leq 0.05$   
\*\* $p \leq 0.01$   
\*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$

TABLE XXII

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL COMMUNICATION ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Importance of Information From Parents		Less Important	High Important
	r	No.	r	No.		r	No.	r	No.
H10B. Movies/Behavior	.233	94	.226	90	.007	.180	51	.290*	43
H10C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Behavior	.084	97	.084	93	.000	.014	53	.145	44
						Scores on Parental Communication Scale		Low Com- munication	High Com- munication
H10E. Movies Behavior	.233	94	.232	91	.001	.189	43	.243	30
H10F. Commercial, Subscription TV/Behavior	.084	97	.081	94	.003	.174	46	.130	30

\*  
\*\*  
\*\*\*  
p≤0.05  
p≤0.01  
p≤0.001



APPENDIX E

TABLES FOR MEDIATING VARIABLES - FEMALES

TABLE XXIII

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL CLOSENESS ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND PERCEIVED REALISM

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Not Close to Parent		Close to Parent	
			Scores on Parental Closeness Scale			r	No.	r	No.
H5B. Movies/Adolescent Realism	.216	216	.220	212	.004	.389***	73	.194*	100
H5E. Movies/General Realism	.105	215	.105	212	.000	.244**	72	.031	100
H5F. Commercial, Subscription TV/ General Realism	.048	217	.047	213	.001	.109	72	.069	102
			Scores on Parental/Adolescent Agreement			Low Agreement		High Agreement	
H5H. Movies/Adolescent Realism	.216	216	.208	205	.008	.367***	83	.151	85
H5K. Movies/General Realism	.105	215	.1007	205	.002	.179*	82	.013	85
H5L. Commercial, Subscription TV/General Realism	.048	217	.048	207	.000	.076	87	.076	82

\* p ≤ 0.05  
 \*\* p ≤ 0.01  
 \*\*\* p ≤ 0.001

TABLE XXIV

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL COMMUNICATION ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND PERCEIVED REALISM

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Less Important		More Important	
				Importance of Information From Parents		r	No.	r	No.
H7A. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.216	216	.216	211	.000	.297**	95	.157*	121
H7B. Movies/ Attitudes	.105	215	.105	211	.000	.200*	95	.080	120
H7C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Attitudes	.048	217	.047	212	.001	.062	95	.041	122
				Scores on Parental/Communication Scale		Low Com- munication		High Com- munication	
H6H. Movies/Adolescent Realism	.216	216	.217	211	.001	.351***	72	.051	101
H6K. Movies/General Realism	.105	215	.105	211	.000	.162	70	.081	102
H6L. Commercial, Subscription TV/General Realism	.048	217	.048	212	.000	.144	71	.002	104

\* p ≤ 0.05  
\*\* p ≤ 0.01  
\*\*\* p ≤ 0.001

TABLE XXV

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL CLOSENESS ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND SEXUAL ATTITUDES

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.	Partial Corr. Controlling For	Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample					
	r	No.	Scores on Parental Closeness Scale			Not Close		Close	
	r	No.	r	No.		r	No.	r	No.
H7A. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.212	203	.215	200	.003	.182	69	.247**	94
H7B. Movies/ Attitudes	.296	215	.275	212	.021	.197*	72	.351***	100
H7C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Attitudes	.194	217	.192	213	.002	.161	72	.298***	102
			Scores on Parent/Adolescent Agreement			Low Agreement		High Agreement	
H7D. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.212	203	.150	193	.062	.012	78	.198*	79
H7E. Movies/ Attitudes	.296	215	.230	205	.066	.119	82	.408***	85
H7F. Commercial, Subscription TV/Attitudes	.194	217	.135	207	.059	.108	82	.366***	87

\*  $p \leq 0.05$   
 \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$   
 \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$

TABLE XXVI

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL COMMUNICATION ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND SEXUAL ATTITUDES

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Less Important		More Important	
			Importance of Information From Parents			r	No.	r	No.
H8A. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.212	203	.231	199	.019	.172*	89	.253**	114
H8B. Movies/ Attitudes	.296	215	.300	211	.004	.129	94	.428***	121
H8C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Attitudes	.194	217	.195	212	.001	.149	94	.240**	123
			Scores on Parent Communication Scale			Low Com- munication		High Com- munication	
H8D. Commercial TV/ Attitudes	.212	203	.221	199	.009	.248*	65	.195*	96
H8E. Movies/ Attitudes	.296	215	.295	211	.001	.218*	70	.390***	102
H8F. Commercial, Subscription TV/Attitudes	.194	217	.196	212	.002	.316**	71	.144	104

\* $p \leq 0.05$   
 \*\* $p \leq 0.01$   
 \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$

TABLE XXVII

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL CLOSENESS ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample			
	r	No.	r	No.		Scores on Parental Closeness Scale		Not Close	Close
	r	No.	r	No.		r	No.	r	No.
H9B. Movies/Behavior	.123	211	.119	208	.004	.119	74	.029	95
H9C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Behavior	.132	213	.131	209	.001	.044	74	.228**	97
						Scores on Parent/Adolescent Agreement		Low Agreement	High- Agreement
H9E. Movies Behavior	.123	211	.064	203	.059	.016	82	.258*	82
H9F. Commercial, Subscription TV/Behavior	.132	213	.089	203	.043	.105	82	.105	84

\*  $p \leq 0.05$   
 \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$   
 \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$

TABLE XXVIII

PROPOSITION REFLECTING THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF PARENTAL COMMUNICATION ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Relating Hypotheses	Pearson Corr.		Partial Corr. Controlling For		Difference In Coefficients	Pearson Correlation Divided Sample					
	r	No.	r	No.		Importance of Informaton From Parents		Less Important		High Important	
	r	No.	r	No.		r	No.	r	No.		
H10B. Movies/Behavior	.123	211	.124	208	.001	.145	94	.103	117		
H10C. Commercial, Subscription TV/ Behavior	.132	213	.132	208	.000	.046	94	.219	119		
						Scores on Parental Communication Scale		Low Com- munication		High Com- munication	
H10E. Movies Behavior	.123	211	.125	208	.002	.257**	72	.105	99		
H10F. Commercial, Subscription TV/Behavior	.132	213	.130	209	.002	.015	73	.143	101		

\* p≤0.05  
\*\* p≤0.01  
\*\*\* p≤0.001

VITA

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Candidate for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: TELEVISION SEXUALITY, PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT, AND  
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PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

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