

Does Exposure to Sexual Hip-Hop Music Videos Influence the Sexual Attitudes of College Students?

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This study investigated short-term effects of exposure to hip-hop music videos with varying degrees of sexual imagery on viewers' acceptance of the objectification of women, sexual permissiveness, gender attitudes, and rape myth acceptance. Using a posttest-only group experimental design, college undergraduates ($N = 195$) viewed a set of 5 hip-hop music videos of either high or low sexual content. Male participants who were exposed to hip-hop music videos of highly sexual content expressed greater objectification of women, sexual permissiveness, stereotypical gender attitudes, and acceptance of rape at posttest than male participants in the low sex condition. Results for female participants were mixed. In addition, hip-hop fandom played a significant role in participants' objectification of women and sexual permissiveness.

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Implications are discussed within the frameworks of vicarious learning through the media and parasocial interaction with media figures.

Music is an integral part of youth culture. Since the advent of the music video in 1981, music and music videos have gone hand-in-hand, and the effects of music videos on youth have been the subject of research and controversy. The common reason for the concern has been aptly summed by Arnett (2002), who explained,

A typical music video . . . features one or more men performing while beautiful, scantily clad young women dance and writhe lasciviously. Often the men dance, too, but the women always have fewer clothes on. The women are mostly just props. . . . They appear for a fraction of a second, long enough to shake their butts a couple of times, then the camera moves on. (p. 256)

This description is particularly applicable for hip-hop music videos, and there has been an increasing concern that hip-hop culture as seen in music videos has become heavily influential on young people's views of sexuality (Jones, 1997; Larson, 1998). In fact, the concern about mainstream hip-hop music and music videos sexualized depictions of women in particular is so ubiquitous that the U.S. Congress held a special hearing in September 2007 addressing the issue (Abrams, 2007).

The Kaiser Family Foundation (2001) reported that teenagers rank entertainment media as a key source of information about sexuality and sexual health. The target audience for music television (MTV) ranges in age from 12 to 34, and sexual imagery in music videos has increased over the years (Gan, Zillmann, & Miltrook, 1997; Jones, 1997; Pardun & McKee, 1995). On a daily basis, 65% of adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18 listen to hip-hop over any other genre, a preference that holds true across different ethnicities (Rideout, Roberts, & Foehr, 2005). Such media exposure clearly feeds questions among researchers regarding the possibility of subsequent unhealthy attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors among young people.

One niche within the body of research on media effects explores connections between exposure to sexual imagery in music videos and young people's sexual attitudes and behaviors (Arnett, 2002; Hansen & Hansen, 1991; Roe, 1995; Ward, 2002; Ward & Friedman, 2006; Ward, Hansbrough, & Walker, 2005). However, few studies have investigated the effects of sexual imagery specifically contained in hip-hop music videos. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the effects of sexual images presented in hip-hop music videos on viewers' gender attitudes, acceptance of female objectification, and acceptance of rape myths.

SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY AND PARASOCIAL INTERACTION

Social cognitive theory and parasocial interaction are both viable theoretical frameworks to explain this phenomenon (Bandura, 2002; Rubin, 2002). Young people have a large amount of choice and control in the media they choose to consume, and in doing so have a choice in the socialization they receive from such media (Arnett, 1995). Indeed, some may choose to emulate media portrayals through vicarious modeling, where media figures can serve as models much like parents, educators, or peers (Bandura, 2002; Brown, Halpern, & L'Engle, 2005).

Two aspects of social cognitive theory relevant to the current study are the concepts of *vicarious learning* and *abstract modeling* (Bandura, 2002). According to Bandura, humans have the capability to learn through symbolic environments, such as through media portrayals. Through this vicarious learning, people then act based on their images of reality, and the more their reality depends on the symbolic environment, the more likely they are to act in ways reflective of that environment. Further, abstract modeling grows from this vicarious learning, whereby individuals extract the generic features of media portrayals, integrate those portrayals into composite rules of behavior, and then use these rules to produce new behaviors (Bandura, 2002). These mechanisms are particularly applicable to those who consume a large amount of a particular genre of music and music videos, such as hip-hop, whereby “rules of behavior” are modeled consistently and experienced vicariously over music video channels.

On the other hand, it could be that these individuals already harbor certain attitudes or dispositions, and therefore seek out media that reinforces these attitudes or dispositions. One aspect of uses and gratifications is the involvement that one has with particular media (Rubin, 2002). One key aspect of involvement is the *parasocial relationship* between the viewer and the protagonist of a media script, whereby a viewer feels a connection with the media figure similar to that of a friend, peer, or counselor (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Rubin & McHugh, 1987). Although parasocial interaction does not always lead to fandom (it is possible to engage in parasocial interaction without becoming a true “fan”), parasocial interaction is a necessary component of fandom. People who are fans of hip-hop and seek out this genre may already carry certain attitudes toward the objectification of women, sexual permissiveness, and gender. It is difficult to discern, however, which comes first—vicarious learning, which informs abstract modeling, or the seeking out of certain media to reinforce already-present attitudes and beliefs. Either way, whether it is vicarious learning or existing attitudes that comes first, exposure to certain media content such as hip-hop music videos often carries negative implications for the cognitive or emotional health of young people.

SEXUAL MEDIA CONSUMPTION AND SEXUAL ATTITUDES

Many studies have demonstrated links between sexual media exposure and sexual attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Newcomer, 1991; Lackley & Moberg, 1998; L'Engle, Brown, & Kenneavy, 2006; Pardun, L'Engle, & Brown, 2005; Peter & Valkenburg, 2007; Strouse, Burekel-Rothfuss, & Long, 1995; Ward & Friedman, 2006; Ward, Hansbrough, & Walker, 2005; Ward & Harrison, 2005). For example, teens with highly sexual "media diets" perceived more sexual encouragement from those media messages and were more likely to intend to engage in sexual intercourse than teens with low sexual content in their media diets (Brown & Newcomer, 1991). Brown et al. (2005) further found that teenage girls sought information about sex through media and that there was a significant positive relationship between greater consumption of sexual media content and the perception that sexually themed television advocated sexual intercourse. Concordant findings were reported by L'Engle et al. (2006), whereby attendance to sexual media contributed significantly to adolescents' intentions to initiate sexual intercourse in the near future.

Studies of exposure to visual sexual themes and women as sexual objects have generally supported the notion that such exposure influences participants' attitudes toward women. Ward and Friedman (2006) executed an experiment among predominantly White high school students examining the effect of neutral/nonsexual sitcom content versus sexually stereotyped and sexually objectifying sitcom content. Those in the stereotyped/objectified condition endorsed women as sexual objects significantly more than those in the neutral/nonsexual condition. In addition, survey results indicated that participants' identification with same-sex popular television characters significantly associated with greater support of women as sex objects and with greater sexual experience. Peter and Valkenburg (2007) demonstrated that the degree of media's sexual explicitness informs the relationship between exposure to a sexualized media environment and notions of women as sex objects. Specifically, as the media environment became more sexual (ranging from nonexplicit fashion magazines, through semiexplicit television, up to explicit XXX Internet pornography), the less explicit forms of sexual media ceased to significantly contribute to their model. Finally, Zillmann and Bryant (1982), in their classic experiment on pornography exposure among college students, demonstrated that frequent exposure to pornography resulted in a loss of compassion for women as rape victims among both male and female participants.

Effects similar to those just described are not limited to television programs and pornography. Pardun et al. (2005), based on the examination of six different forms of popular media, concluded that it was not the specific form of sexual media that mattered but the overall quantity of sex

in the media diet that predicted participants' greater sexual activity and intentions. One of these six media was music, which reportedly contained high doses of sexual content.

Investigations specifically concerning music media have demonstrated its relationship with unhealthy outcomes. Cross-sectional studies have shown positive correlations between music video exposure and permissive attitudes toward premarital sex (Strouse & Buerkel-Rothfuss, 1987; Strouse et al., 1995). In particular, consumption of hip-hop and rap music related to teens' acceptance of premarital sex, with teens who were high consumers of rap and hip-hop more likely to express the sentiment that teens should be having sex (Lackley & Moberg, 1998). Researchers studying the effects of violent music lyrics on students using a series of tightly controlled experiments that exposure to violent lyrics predicted greater aggressive thoughts and feelings at posttest (Anderson, Carnagey, & Eubanks, 2003). Although this study was concerned with aggression outcomes rather than sexual outcomes, it nonetheless speaks to the potentially powerful influence of the music medium, even among young adults, and the need for experimental research investigating effects of music media.

EFFECTS OF MUSIC VIDEOS

Experimental evidence specifically addressing effects of music video is scarce, although the studies that do exist focus specifically on sexual aggression, rape myth acceptance, and gender stereotypes. Barongan and Nagayama Hall (1995) conducted an experiment whereby male participants were exposed to either misogynous rap music or neutral rap music, and then exposed to a sexually violent, an assaultive, and a neutral film vignette. Thirty percent of the men in the misogynous rap condition chose to show the sexually violent vignette to a female confederate, as compared to only 7% in the neutral condition, suggesting that exposure to misogynous rap facilitates sexually aggressive cognition and behavior. It seems reasonable, then, to conjecture that sexually themed music videos might have similar effects regarding sexual aggression. Kalof (1999) examined this very phenomenon and found that female undergraduates exposed to a sexually stereotyped music video indicated greater acceptance of interpersonal violence (i.e., violence within relationships) than those exposed to a neutral music video. She also found that both male and female participants in the sexually stereotyped condition indicated more adversarial sexual beliefs (e.g., the belief that sexual relationships are manipulative), gender role stereotyping, acceptance of interpersonal violence, and acceptance of rape myths than those in the neutral condition. Only one music video was used in each of the two conditions in this study; therefore it is difficult to decipher what

exactly was manipulated as well as the success of the manipulation. In addition, the two music videos used were of different genres and neither video was of the hip-hop genre. Hip-hop music videos were more closely examined by Ward et al. (2005), who investigated the effects of music video exposure on gender role attitudes with a sample of African American high school students. In this study, those in the experimental group watched four sexually stereotyped music videos and the control group watched videos that did not contain such stereotypes. Although some of the music videos were of the hip-hop genre, not all of them were hip-hop. The participants who watched the sexually stereotyped videos demonstrated significantly more support for stereotypical beliefs about gender and sexual roles than those in the control group. Furthermore, participants who reported stronger identification with the characters in the videos were more likely to endorse sexual stereotypes and the importance of being athletic, attractive, rich, or cool.

Given the concern about the sexual themes and depictions of women in hip-hop music and music videos in particular, it is important to carefully select and manipulate only the variables in question to the extent possible, without manipulating the genre or participants' enjoyment of the videos. Because most of the existing studies were conducted with adolescents, the question also remains whether the trends discussed continue through late adolescence and young adulthood, particularly regarding the investigation of sexual objectification and beliefs about sexual intercourse. In addition, among college-aged populations in particular, beliefs about sexual coercion and rape are salient and worthwhile topics of inquiry. If the trends just identified hold true with more rigorous stimuli selection and exposure, then we will move closer to identifying and understanding any potential effects of hip-hop music videos on sex and gender outcomes.

HYPOTHESES

Based on the literature, we tested the following hypotheses and two research questions.

- H1: (a) Male and (b) female participants exposed to the "highly sexual" hip-hop music videos will express greater acceptance of the sexual objectification of women than those in the "low sexual" condition.
- H2: (a) Male and (b) female participants exposed to the "highly sexual" hip-hop music videos will express more permissive sexual attitudes than participants in the "low sexual" condition.
- H3: (a) Male and (b) female participants exposed to the "highly sexual" hip-hop music videos will express more traditional gender attitudes than participants in the "low sexual" condition.

H4: (a) Male and (b) female participants exposed to the “highly sexual” hip-hop music videos will express more acceptance of rape myths than participants in the “low sexual” condition.

In addition, a gender interaction effect is expected, with stronger effects for male than female participants for all hypotheses. Furthermore, participants’ hip-hop fandom and original gender attitudes are suspected to influence the results. Therefore, two additional research questions are posed.

RQ1: Will hip-hop fandom play a role in participants’ levels of objectification, sexual permissiveness, gender attitudes, or rape myth acceptance?

RQ2: Will participants’ gender attitudes before the exposure to the music videos play a role in their levels of objectification, sexual permissiveness, gender attitudes, or rape myth acceptance?

METHOD

The experiment was a posttest-only group design with random assignment. There were two experimental conditions: highly sexual videos and low sexual videos, and a control group. Two participants were dropped from the analyses because they had to leave the study early and therefore much of their data were missing.

Participants

The sample consisted of college undergraduates ($N = 195$), 59 male and 136 female, attending a large northwestern university. They were recruited from mass-lecture, introductory courses in human development, group communication, and geology. The human development and group communication participants received extra class credit for their participation, the geology students did not, and therefore the bulk of the participants were students from the first two classes. Because these were mass lecture courses designed to fulfill general university requirements, the participants represent an array of intended majors, rather than a particular set of students focused on a certain academic major.

Sixty-four participants (17 male, 47 female) were assigned to the highly sexual condition, 66 (23 male, 43 female) to the low sexual condition, and 63 (19 male, 44 female) to the control condition. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 30 ($M = 19.88$, $SD = 1.72$). The majority of the participants were White (87%, $n = 169$). Most participants (55%, $n = 108$) indicated they were from “middle income” families, and another third (30%, $n = 59$) indicated their families were “high income.” Religiosity ranged on a 5-point

scale from *not at all religious* to *very highly religious*. Forty-five percent ($n=86$) indicated being “not at all” or “a little” religious and 23% ($n=46$) indicated being “highly” or “very highly religious,” with the remaining 32% ($n=63$) falling in the middle at “somewhat religious.”

Stimulus

Initially, 103 unrepeated hip-hop music videos that regularly aired predominantly on MTV2 and MTVJams were recorded between the hours of 3 p.m. and 11 p.m., hours when undergraduates are typically out of class and thus more likely to watch television. To be clear, we wish readers to note that just because these channels were used to record the music videos does not mean that we assume that the affiliate channels of MTV are the only avenues through which hip-hop music videos are available, or even the primary venue through which college undergraduates might consume such music videos. For example, music videos of choice can be selected and viewed for free through numerous Internet sites such as YouTube, MySpace Video, Facebook, and Yahoo Music, to name a few.

Of the original 103 hip-hop music videos, a trained graduate student selected a set of 40 videos: 20 that contained moderate to strong sexual imagery and 20 that contained mild or little sexual imagery. For our purposes, “sexual imagery” describes scantily clad female performers, models, or dancers who were posing seductively, writhing their torsos, “bouncing” their buttocks, shaking their breasts, and/or staring seductively into the camera. Such women were typically performing for the entertainment of men in the video, or they fawned over the male artists as the male artists addressed the camera (Arnett, 2002). Female hip-hop artists often exhibited similar sexually charged behaviors and postures, yet typically without male models or dancers fawning over them.

From this set of 40 music videos, two graduate-level assistants (one male and one female) rated each video, utilizing Pingree, Hawkins, Butler, and Paisley’s (1976) Scale for Sexism, plus one additional item ascertaining their perceived “degree of sexual imagery contained in the video.” Based on the rankings from the graduate assistants, the 10 “most sexual” and the 10 “least sexual” hip-hop videos were chosen. Next, 15 undergraduate students in an introductory public speaking course ranked each video utilizing the same measures previously described. The undergraduate raters were evenly distributed by gender and were from diverse majors. Based on the undergraduate ratings, the 5 most sexual and the 5 least sexual videos were selected as the stimulus for the experiment.

The highly sexual group viewed “My Humps” by the Black Eyed Peas, “Touch It” by Busta Rhymes, “Laffy Taffy” by D4 L, “Here It Go” by

Juelz Santana, and “Shake” by the Ying Yang Twins. The low sexual group viewed “Tell Me When to Go” by E-40, “When I’m Gone” by Eminem, “My Hood” by Young Jeezy, “Testify” by Common, and “Poppin’ My Collar” by Three Six Mafia.

To be sure the final videos were selected based on content rather than the undergraduate raters’ “liking” of the videos, they had also completed items asking how much they “enjoyed watching the video,” and if they thought the video was “entertaining.” Enjoyment of the videos was not related to the level of sexual imagery in the videos, $r(14) = -.034$, $p = .56$, nor was the entertainment value of the video, $r(14) = -.02$, $p = .76$. Therefore, we were reasonably confident that we had in fact manipulated the sexual imagery of the videos and not the likeability or entertainment value of the videos. There was a strong correlation between women as objects and the degree of sexual imagery in the video, $r(14) = .65$, $p < .001$. The presence of sexual imagery and women as “two-dimensional, nonthinking objects” go hand-in-hand. Therefore, it would be difficult, at best, within the hip-hop genre to solely manipulate sexual imagery in a music video without simultaneously manipulating the objectification of women.

Materials

Thirteen undergraduates pretested the questionnaire. Measures included in the final questionnaire were the Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS; Spence & Helmreich, 1978), a fandom scale developed by the researcher, a modified Sexual Objectification Scale (Kalyanaraman, Steele, & Sundar, 2000), the Premarital Sexual Permissiveness scale (Sprecher, 1998), the Sex Role Stereotyping scale (Burt, 1980), and the Rape Myth Acceptance scale (Burt, 1980). All items used 7-point Likert-type scoring, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicated greater acceptance of or affinity for the construct of interest. Full item scales are available in Table 1.

Attitudes toward women scale. Participants completed the AWS at pretest to get a baseline measure of gender attitudes for each group ($M = 2.15$, $SD = .09$). Of the original 15 items, 6 items emerged as loading significantly and were used as the baseline scale for the experiment with an *alpha* of .74.

Fandom. Fandom for the hip-hop genre of music was assessed to explore possible covariation. Six items comprised the fandom scale ($M = 4.5$, $SD = .12$, $\alpha = .93$). The items were, “I listen mostly to hip-hop music,” “I can’t stand hip-hop music” (reverse-coded), “Most of the music I dance to is hip-hop,” “I rarely, if ever, listen to hip-hop” (reverse-coded),

TABLE 1
Scale Items

Baseline Gender Attitudes ($\alpha = .74$)

Men should be the ones who propose marriage.
 The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.
 There are some professions that women should not pursue.
 If a man and woman are a couple and both work full-time jobs, the woman should care for most of the household tasks.
 There are many jobs where men should get preference over women in being hired or promoted.

Hip-Hop Fandom ($\alpha = .93$)

I listen mostly to hip-hop music.
 I can't stand hip-hop music. [Reverse-scored]
 I rarely, if ever, listen to hip-hop. [Reverse-scored]
 Hip-hop is one of my top two types of music.
 I am a fan of hip-hop music.

Objectification^a ($\alpha = .88$, both genders)*Male participants*

It is okay to check out an attractive woman at a bar or dance club.
 It is okay to whistle at or call out to an attractive woman that you've never met.
 I approve of female strip clubs.
 I'd be likely to hire a female stripper for my best friend's bachelor party.
 If there was a wet t-shirt contest on my Spring Break itinerary, I would go to it.
 When women are out at a club, it is okay to think of them as "eye candy."
 Women dancing in cages for entertainment purposes is exciting to me.
 It is okay to evaluate women's bodies as they pass by on the street.

Female participants

It is okay for men to check out attractive women at bars or dance clubs.
 It is okay for men to whistle or call out to attractive women that they don't know.
 I approve of female strip clubs.
 It is okay if men hire female strippers for bachelor parties.
 When on Spring Break, men should be able to attend and enjoy wet t-shirt contests.
 When women are out at club, it is okay for men to think of them as "eye candy."
 It is fine for women to dance in cages as entertainment for male onlookers.
 It is okay if men evaluate women's bodies as they pass by on the street.

Sexual Permissiveness^b ($\alpha = .94$)

I believe that sexual touching/oral sex/sexual intercourse/is acceptable for me . . .
 . . . on the first night I meet someone.
 . . . when I'm casually dating my partner. (dating less than one month)
 . . . when I'm seriously dating my partner. (dating almost a year).
 . . . when I'm pre-engaged to my partner. (we have seriously discussed marriage)
 . . . when I'm engaged to my partner.

Gender Attitudes ($\alpha = .78$)

The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.
 Sons should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.

(Continued)

TABLE 1
Continued

There are many jobs where men should get preference over women in being hired or promoted.
There are some professions that women should not pursue.

If a man and woman are a couple and both work full-time jobs, the woman should care for most of the household tasks.

Rape Myth Acceptance^c ($\alpha = .72$)

If a woman engages in making-out or sexual touching and things get out of hand, it is her own fault if her partner forces sex on her.

The majority of female rape victims are usually promiscuous or have bad reputations.

A promiscuous woman has a higher chance of being raped.

Any healthy woman can successfully resist a rapist if she really wants to.

A woman who gets drunk at a party and has consensual sex with a man at the party should be considered "fair game" to other men at the party.

Women who dress provocatively or wear revealing clothing are just asking for trouble.

Note. All items used 7-point Likert-type scales from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Scale items were selected using SPSS Principal Components Analysis with oblique rotation.

^aEach set of 5 items was asked for each level of sexual involvement (sexual touching, oral sex, and sexual intercourse), for a total of 15 items.

^bItems for this scale were developed using Kalyanaraman, Steele, and Sundar (2000) as a guide, however, additional items were created for this study, others were modified for clarity based on the instrument pretest, and all were worded so as to create separate items for male and female participants assessing the acceptance of female objectification by men.

^cSome items were slightly modified from the original scale to clarify that the rape victim is female and the perpetrator male, given today's greater awareness among college students in particular of men as potential rape victims.

"Hip-hop is one of my top two types of music," and "I am a fan of hip-hop music." In our sample, nearly 70% ($n = 135$) of participants responded to the last item with a 5, 6, or 7, and nearly 45% ($n = 87$) responded with a 6 or 7. Similarly, 44% ($n = 86$) responded with 5, 6, or 7 to the item "Hip-hop is one of my top two types of music." Clearly, hip-hop is a formative genre of choice for this sample of undergraduates.

Sexual objectification. An eight-item objectification scale ($\alpha = .88$) was completed after viewing the videos. Item wording was changed slightly for male and female participants. For example, one item for male participants read, "When women are out at a club, it is okay to think of them as 'eye candy,'" and the corresponding item for female participants read, "When women are out at a club, it is okay for men to think of them as 'eye candy.'" It is imperative to note that these scales, as tailored to participant gender, measure male participants' own acceptance of objectification of women, whereas for female participants it taps their specific approval of *men objectifying women*, not self-objectification or their own propensity to approve of

female objectification. This is an important distinction from other studies that present female participants with objectified female images, and then assess self-objectification or their objectification of other women (e.g., Monro & Huon, 2005; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005).

Gender attitudes. Fourteen items assessed gender attitudes. These items included the original 7 items from the aforementioned AWS scale and were mixed with Burt's (1980) 7-item Sex Role Stereotyping scale in order to "hide" the original AWS items, which were identical to the items utilized to assess initial gender attitudes. Five were retained from the AWS ($\alpha = .78$) to form the scale.

Rape myth acceptance. Nine items assessed rape acceptance using a modified version of Burt's (1980) Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. Six items loaded onto one component and were retained to form the Rape Acceptance scale ($\alpha = .72$).

Sexual permissiveness (PSP). As described by Sprecher (1998), the basic 5-item PSP scale was expanded to three sets of five items for a total of 15 items ($\alpha = .94$). Each set of 5 described how approving the participant would be with a certain type of sexual contact at various premarital stages of a relationship. The stages of the items ranged from "the first night I meet someone" up to "when I am engaged to my partner." The three types of sexual contact were sexual touching, oral sex, and sexual intercourse. For example, one item stated "I believe that sexual touching is acceptable for me on the first night I meet someone." Another item stated, "I believe that oral sex is acceptable for me when I'm seriously dating my partner (dating almost a year)." Six items loaded on sexual permissiveness on the first stage was used to create the Sexual Permissiveness scale ($\alpha = .92$).

Procedures

The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board prior to the experiment. Participants were recruited from undergraduate classes and received extra credit for participation. Upon arrival, the participants were randomly assigned to conditions. All participants read and signed consent forms before beginning the experiment. The researcher and two research assistants executed the study using scripted instructions and procedures. The participants were told that the purpose of the study was to gather college students' selection and preference of music videos as well as their opinions on sex and gender roles. Prior to viewing the videos, the participants completed the AWS to get a baseline gender attitude score for each group, mixed in with several distractor items to alleviate the potential for participants

to guess the purpose or hypotheses of the study. The five hip-hop music videos were then played successively, which took about 20 minutes.

After viewing the five videos, the treatment group participants completed the posttest questionnaires for our dependent variables, which also included several distractor items. Participants in the control group completed the same questionnaires as the treatment groups, but did not watch music videos beforehand. Total participation time was approximately 60 minutes.

Manipulation check. The participants rated the set of videos using the 7-point Likert-type items used by the undergraduate coders, including the item, "Overall, on a scale of 1–10 (with 10 being the highest), how sexual would you say these videos were?" *T* tests indicated the participants in the highly sexual condition rated the videos as significantly more sexual ($M = 8.54$, $SD = 1.24$) than the low-sexual condition ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.90$), $t(122) = 16.83$, $p < .001$ (one-tailed), $d = 3.05$, and as more stereotyped ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.02$) than the low-sexual condition ($M = 4.34$, $SD = .86$), $t(129) = 4.61$, $p < .001$ (one-tailed), $d = .81$. Therefore, the experimental manipulation was successful.

To test the success of the random assignment, the participant's hip-hop fandom was compared among the three groups. An analysis of variance test revealed no significant hip-hop fandom differences among the groups, $F(2, 192) = .82$, $p = .44$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$, as well as no significant group differences in initial gender attitudes, $F(2, 192) = 1.38$, $p = .25$, $\eta_p^2 = .014$. As expected, independent samples *t* test revealed that the male participants ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 1.43$) held more stereotyped gender attitudes than the female participants ($M = 1.77$, $SD = .85$), $t(193) = 7.24$, $p < .01$ (one-tailed), $d = 1.04$.

RESULTS

Independent samples *t* tests were used to test the main hypotheses separately for male and female participants and the General Linear Model was used to test the gender by condition interaction effects. Table 2 shows means and standard deviations by condition and gender.

The first research hypothesis predicted the effects of sexual hip-hop video exposure on objectification of women among male participants. There was a significant condition effect, $t(38) = 1.90$, $p < .05$. As predicted, those who watched the highly sexual hip-hop videos exhibited a higher level of objectification of women ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 1.14$) than those who watched the low sexual hip-hop videos ($M = 4.09$, $SD = .99$). Therefore, H1a was supported.

However, the condition effect was not significant among the female participants, $t(87) = 1.22$, $p = .12$ even though the anticipated direction was

TABLE 2
Means and Standard Deviations by Gender and Condition

Group	Male			Female		
	Highly sexual	Low sexual	Control	Highly sexual	Low sexual	Control
Dependent Variables	<i>n</i> = 17	<i>n</i> = 24	<i>n</i> = 19	<i>n</i> = 47	<i>n</i> = 43	<i>n</i> = 44
Objectification						
<i>M</i>	4.73 _a	4.09 _a	4.00	3.72	3.47 _b	4.11 _b
<i>SD</i>	1.14	0.99	1.43	1.18	1.11	1.11
Sexual Permissiveness						
<i>M</i>	5.53	4.96	5.19	4.50	4.21	4.91
<i>SD</i>	0.81	1.43	1.68	1.41	1.53	1.13
Gender Attitudes						
<i>M</i>	3.57 _c	2.68 _c	2.46	1.80	3.54	1.75
<i>SD</i>	1.41	1.09	0.78	0.65	8.89	0.66
Rape Myth Acceptance						
<i>M</i>	3.31 _d	2.60 _d	2.53	2.43	3.03	2.22
<i>SD</i>	0.98	0.90	0.56	0.81	3.90	0.77

Note. Shared lowercase subscripts indicate a significant difference at $p < .05$; uppercase $p < .01$.

detected. Therefore, H1b was not supported. The analysis of variance test did reveal that there was a significant condition effect among the female participants, $F(2, 131) = 3.47$, $p < .05$. Post hoc Least Significant Difference tests revealed, however, that the differences lay between the low sexual condition ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.11$) and the control group ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.11$) in that the female participants in the control group had higher levels of the approval for men's objectification of women than those who were in the low sexual condition.

To explore a gender interaction effect, a generalized linear model (GLM) model was used and a significant Condition \times Gender interaction was found, $F(2, 188) = 3.22$, $p < .05$ (Figure 1). This interaction effect disappeared after controlling for fandom and initial gender attitudes, however. The model was driven primarily by hip-hop fandom $F(1, 186) = 11.01$, $p = .001$, and initial gender attitudes $F(1, 186) = 3.35$, $p = .07$.

The second hypothesis addressed the effects of hip-hop video exposure on sexual permissiveness. There was no significant condition effect, $t(36) = 1.59$, $p = .06$, therefore H2a was not supported, although means tended in the hypothesized direction, with male participants who watched the highly sexual hip-hop videos ($M = 5.53$, $SD = .81$) rating sexual permissiveness higher than those who watched the low sexual hip-hop videos ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.43$). There was no significant condition effect on sexual permissiveness

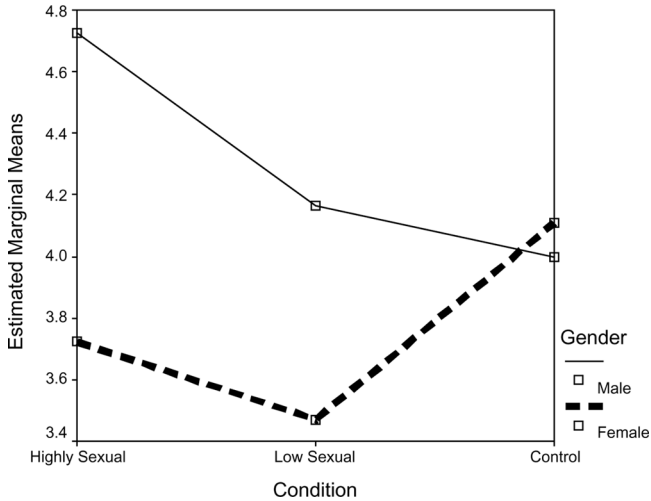


FIGURE 1 Condition \times Gender results for objectification.

for the female participants, $t(87) = 1.02$, $p = .16$. Therefore, H2b was not supported. In addition, the GLM revealed no interaction effects $F(2, 188) = 1.05$, $p = .35$. After incorporating fandom and initial gender attitudes as control variables, the model was shown to be driven predominantly by fandom, $F(1, 186) = 8.03$, $p < .01$, and by gender, $F(1, 186) = 18.90$, $p < .05$.

The third hypothesis addressed the effects of hip-hop video exposure on gender attitudes. There was a significant condition effect on gender attitudes among the male participants, $t(34) = 1.67$, $p = .05$. Those male participants who watched the highly sexual hip-hop videos exhibited a higher level of traditional gender attitudes ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.41$) than those who watched the low sexual hip-hop videos ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 1.09$). Therefore H3a was supported. Among the female participants, no significant condition effect was found on their gender attitudes, $t(41.91) = -1.29$, $p = .11$. Thus, H3b was not supported. Furthermore, the initial GLM revealed no significant gender interaction effect and after controlling for fandom and initial gender attitudes, the GLM was driven mostly by initial gender attitudes, $F(1, 185) = 2.37$, $p = .13$.

The fourth hypothesis addressed the effects of hip-hop video exposure on acceptance of rape myths. There was a significant condition effect for male participants, $t(38) = 2.38$, $p = .01$. Those who watched the highly sexual hip-hop videos exhibited a higher level of rape acceptance ($M = 3.31$, $SD = .98$) than those in the low-sexual condition ($M = 2.60$, $SD = .90$). Therefore H4a was supported. However, there was no significant condition

effect among the female participants, $t(44) = -.97, p = .17$. Therefore H4b was not supported. In addition, the GLM revealed no significant gender and condition interaction, $F(2, 187) = 1.52, p = .22$. After controlling for fandom and gender attitudes, the model was driven primarily by initial gender attitudes $F(1, 185) = 2.89, p = .09$.

DISCUSSION

In response to the growing concern that hip-hop music and music videos may foster permissive sexual attitudes and distorted sexual norms (Barongan & Nagayama Hall, 1995; Gan et al., 1997; Lackley & Moberg, 1998; Ward et al., 2005), the current study investigated the potential effects of sexual imagery in hip-hop music videos on college students' objectification of women, sexual permissiveness, gender attitudes, and acceptance of rape myths. It was found that the effects of sexual imagery in hip-hop videos were mainly detected among the male participants. As anticipated, those who watched the highly sexual hip-hop videos expressed the higher levels of objectification of women, stereotyped gender attitudes, and acceptance of rape myths. On the other hand, the effects were not significant among the female participants.

One unanticipated but intriguing finding was that the women in the control condition exhibited greater acceptance of men's objectification of women than either of the exposure conditions. It is possible that the women were unimpressed by the sexualized depictions of women in the highly sexual condition and were therefore more sensitive to this topic at posttest. The result for the women in the low-sexual condition is less understood, but it could be that the hip-hop genre itself activated mental "cues" among these female participants about the genre's propensity to sexualize and objectify women. Female participants in the control group, however, received no such exposure and no opportunity to activate mental cues about the hip-hop genre. It is possible that the women's views in the control group are more representative of the homeostatic state of affairs among college women in the absence of stimuli that may prompt them to critically consider women's objectification by men. This phenomenon warrants further clarification and investigation.

The findings in this study can be interpreted within a theoretical framework, particularly social cognitive theory and parasocial interaction. Long-term exposure to such videos by fans of hip-hop music could provide vicarious models to emulate and serve to reinforce traditional gender attitudes and distorted sexual norms. On the other hand, those who find the depictions distasteful or unattractive can also utilize the information for

how *not* to think or behave. The fact that the hip-hop fandom was shown to be a significant predictor of objectification of women seems to support this concern. It could also be that individuals who already have such a belief are more likely to seek out media that reinforces that belief. Either way, the reciprocal pattern of this phenomenon may promote distorted sexual norms and its consequences.

The most disturbing finding that calls for further investigation is the significant effect of exposure on male participants' acceptance of rape myths. Men in the highly sexual hip-hop videos were portrayed as powerful, sexually assertive, and as having a fair degree of sexual prowess, whereas the women were portrayed as sexually available, scantily clad, and often preening over the men. This might have served as a cue to male participants that sexual coercion is more acceptable and that women exist for the entertainment and sexual fulfillment of men.

Although several significant results were found, this experiment is not without its limitations. First, the low numbers of male participants is certainly a drawback, and further research should be done with a larger sample size of male participants. Second, we created the hip-hop fandom scale for the express purposes of this study, so it could be argued that this scale needs further psychometric testing. Third, only short-term effects of sexual imagery in hip-hop music videos were investigated. The fact that significant findings emerged only after a fairly brief exposure calls for more vigorous attempts to identify the effects of long-term exposure to sexual imagery in hip-hop music videos on male young adults' gender attitudes and sexual behaviors. Although longitudinal studies are more difficult to execute, a time-series analysis of music video exposure on sexual attitudes and behavior is recommended.

Fourth, because this study was done with an undergraduate sample, the findings should be applied with caution. College students are often exposed to university-wide awareness efforts addressing gender equality and sexual coercion, which may have weakened the impacts identified in our study because the general population may not be exposed to such awareness efforts on a regular basis. That our findings nonetheless emerged after only 20 minutes of exposure, however, speaks to the potentially powerful effects of exposure to certain types of media. Therefore, further research needs to be done with diverse and older populations.

As is always the case in experiments such as this one, even though several preventive measures such as random assignment and including irrelevant items in the questionnaires, there always the potential concern of a biased, albeit random, grouping of participants, or of participants guessing at the intent of the study or the study's hypotheses, and therefore tainting their answers. Further studies should be conducted to replicate the findings in the near future with careful consideration of ruling out this potential threat.

Media can be powerful agents of socialization in the lives of young people, particularly on sensitive topics such as sex and sexual attitudes. This study demonstrates a need for further research on the effects of music videos within particular genres that are popular with adolescents and young adults. Many young people watch music videos regularly, and effects that accumulate over time are difficult to capture. In addition, there are many social factors that shape adolescents' and young adults' gender attitudes and perceived sexual norms. Therefore, the short-term media effects identified in this study alone should not be considered the sole cause of their unhealthy sexual perceptions and attitudes. The complexity of how different factors interplay remains to be investigated.

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