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RUNNING HEAD: College Males' Attitudes Toward Sexually-Explicit Material: An Experimental
Study

College Males' Attitudes Toward Sexually-Explicit Material: An Experimental Study

By
Cody Schulte

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
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College Males' Attitudes Toward Sexually Explicit Material: An Experimental Study

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Abstract

Sexually explicit materials (SEM) are an ever-growing presence in our society. The ramifications of these types of images and videos have been studied in depth, and the field is still researching whether these materials have harmful effects to individuals who view them or not. Regardless of these findings, sexually explicit videos are used in educational and therapeutic settings with an educational intent behind the usage. While these materials are being used there is little, to no, data on the attitudes that the clients or participants viewing these videos hold. This study will examine the attitudes that collegiate males hold towards the use of these audiovisual materials in a classroom setting. The attitudes being assessed will focus on self-views and also views that they believe another classmate (male and female) would hold towards the materials. Results show that males hold neutral attitudes towards the usage of such material in classroom settings and believe that these videos are degrading and offensive. Implications of the findings and future avenues for research are discussed.

Introduction

Terminology

Sexually-explicit material (SEM) is any material that contains depictions of genital nudity, or oral, vaginal, and/or anal penetration, and/or other sexual scenes that are not found in media outlets meant for audiences of all ages (Shoen, 2014). It is a general, umbrella term that is not specific to a particular medium or to a specific motivation to consume. The focus of this thesis will examine perceptions of *educational sexually-explicit material* (ESEM) and *pornographic sexually-explicit material* (PSEM). ESEM is any media that is produced with the primary aim of educating audiences, whereas PSEM is any media that is produced with the primary aim of sexually arousing audiences. While this paper uses terms such as ESEM and PSEM, the literature still largely conflates pornography and sexually-explicit material. Sexually-explicit material can be referring to either educational materials (ESEM) or pornographic materials (PSEM) depending on the study, methods, aims. The distinction can be very nuanced and difficult to navigate. In the rest of the paper the words *porn*, *pornography*, and *PSEM* are used interchangeably.

History of SEM Research

Sexually-explicit material has seen three main waves of research movements in the past sixty years. The first wave started in the 1970s, with the "President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography." This commission was started after a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Stanley V. Georgia* that deemed individuals have the right to privacy in their own homes, including the possession and viewing of pornographic videos (*Stanley v. Georgia*, 1969). The commission's goal was to study pornography to better understand the effects it had on individuals.

The second wave of pornography research was in the 1980s when the United States Attorney General, Edwin Meese established a task force to further study the effects of pornography on Americans (U.S. Department of Justice, 1986). This commission was developed to combat the findings of the previous commission's report and to examine any negative impacts of pornography on individuals. Their findings are more controversial than the first commission's findings and sparked the most recent research wave.

The third, and most recent, wave has occurred in the past decade with an increase in public awareness and scientific validity regarding a more truthful nature of the use of sexually-explicit materials and pornography. During this wave, research is beginning to recognize that pornography and sexually-explicit materials have a more nuanced effect on individuals, in that how it is presented can have positive benefits, negative effects, or no distinguished findings.

Attorney General's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography (1970)

Perhaps the most interesting finding from this commission's report was that sexually explicit materials were found to produce no role in criminal youth behavior, and that adult exposure shows no effects on character or moral attitudes when examining sex (Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, 1970). In the 1970 report, research provided little to no evidence to support claims that the use of pornography or sexually explicit materials negatively impacted youth or adults' lives. However, these results were against the thinking and desires of the times, and were rejected by the public, and most notably then president, Nixon. President Nixon gave a speech that condemned these findings and issued a strong statement against the use of pornography and the moral issues surrounding it (Nixon, 1970). Due to wanting results that aligned with the moral authority of those in positions of power, the next wave was set out to show negative results of pornography use.

Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, the Meese Report (1986)

In 1985 Edwin Meese, the United States Attorney General, was tasked by President Reagan to establish a task force to understand the effects of pornography. The final report was published in 1986, and titled "Attorney General's Commission on Pornography," but more commonly referred to as the "Meese Report." The Meese Report found results with regards to pornography that were the opposite of the previous commission's findings. What they found was an expert consensus in five areas (Koop, 1986).

The first area was that "children and adolescents who participate in the production of pornography experience adverse, enduring effects" (Koop, 1986, p. 945). The second area is "prolonged use of pornography increases beliefs that less common sexual practices are more common (p. 945)." Third, "pornography that portrays sexual aggression as pleasurable for the victim increases the acceptance of the use of coercion in sexual relations (p. 945)." Fourth, "acceptance of coercive sexuality appears to be related to sexual aggression (p. 945)." Finally, "laboratory studies measuring short-term effects, exposure to violent pornography increase punitive behavior toward women (p. 945)."

Despite the consensus over the condemnation of child pornography, the Meese Report was scrutinized for its scientific claims in the remaining areas, especially with its overarching, concluding remarks that "pornography does stimulate attitudes and behaviors that lead to gravely negative consequences for individuals and for society (Koop, 1986, p. 945)." Researchers held fast against the claims the Meese Report stated, and one researcher, Brian Wilcox, summarized the findings succinctly. He stated that "with time, many of the gaps in knowledge may be filled. Nevertheless, even the clearest and least ambiguous research findings can be misunderstood or intentionally distorted, leading to a misrepresentation of those findings (Wilcox, 1987, p. 943)."

With a vested interest to see whether or not these claims were as factual as they were presented, multiple meta analyses were done to examine both laboratory and naturalistic experiments (Allen et al., 1995; Hald et al., 2010; Malamuth et al., 2000). These meta-analyses were interested in examining sexual aggression and coercion against women with relation to pornography variables.

In the meta-analysis done by Allen et al. (1995), they examined 33 studies with over 2,000 participants. What was found through these meta analyses was that exposure to pornography increased the acceptance of rape myths. Allen was unable to find any naturalistic differences among acceptance of rape myths and exposure to pornography.

In 2000, Malamuth and colleagues examined pornography and sexual aggression studies to attempt to make more generalizable findings (Malamuth et al., 2000). What they found was that through the research literature, when examining the connection between pornography use and coercion against women, that when controlling for various factors previously identified as predictive of sexual aggression, pornography use still remained a significant factor. While this variable remained significant in the equation, it accounted for about 1% additional variance, which leaves interpretation quite open to the direct impact pornography holds on sexual aggression. The authors are quite hesitant to draw the conclusion that pornography has a causal relationship towards sexual aggression. Instead in their concluding remarks, they state that for the majority of American men, pornography exposure is not associated with higher levels of sexual aggression. This is the key statement made. While statistics can show correlations between variables, the nuanced interaction between variables is much more tedious to decipher.

In 2010, Hald and colleagues examined a flaw that they described in the Allen meta-analysis (Hald et al., 2010). In the Allen meta-analysis there was the finding that in laboratory

studies there was a connection between pornography and acceptance of rape myths, however this was not found in nonexperimental studies that they examined. This finding was contradictory in nature, and Hald went back to examine the same studies and correct any possible mistake that was made. What Hald discovered was that there was indeed a significant relationship between pornography consumption and attitudes supporting violence against women in nonexperimental studies. While this correction is important, Hald also makes the distinction to clarify that there are many other variables that can influence this relationship and there is a moderating effect present.

Current Research

In the current wave of SEM research following the Meese report, the scientific community has continued examining the effects of pornography on a wide-range of attitudes and behaviors. What is currently being examined are similar beliefs that were held in the mid-eighties during the refutation of the Meese Report, with unique caveats such as an individual's opinions of others' reactions (Pariera, 2014). A second large area of research that is being done in the current wave is understanding sexually-explicit material as it relates to internet usage and how the ease of access has impacted young and older adults (Peter, 2009). The findings that have been seen to align most closely to the findings of those authors who refuted the Meese Report, as well as continued monitoring of acceptance as things become easier to access among individuals.

Refuting Negative Findings

To begin with refuting that individuals experience aggression while watching violent or graphic sexually-explicit material, researchers have shown through meta-analysis that these tendencies can be reduced and controlled with educational debriefings (Allen et al., 1996). Through ten major studies that examined various extreme stimulus, i.e. consensual rape and/or

violence, or slasher depictions, results were found to be consistent. Debriefing consistently reduced harm and aggression from the stimuli (Allen). Furthermore, the studies showed a reduction in rape myths due to the educational debriefings. While one study can be claimed to be a false positive or have an error due to sample size, 10 studies highlighting consistent results indicate that these educational debriefings are indeed something to negate the finding that sexually-explicit material creates negative changes, or if it does indeed create this negative effect it can be reduced to where participants were before the viewing and negated.

The second area that has been refuted or shown to have mixed results is that SEM use is associated with sexual anxiety. Todd Morrison and colleagues examined the correlates between SEM use and various measures (2004). One of these measures was a sexual anxiety inventory. As aforementioned previous literature has shown an inverse relationship between SEM use and sexual anxiety, such that as these materials are used more often, individuals report lower exposure levels to SEM. While this study only examined college students, this study's findings are contrary to the claim that high levels of SEM or pornography usage are correlated with sexual anxiety. While one study does not negate another, it shows that there is uncertainty as to the effects of pornography and SEM on sexual anxiety, and claims made one way or another can be refuted.

While the area of pornography and sexually explicit material research has seen an increase, definitive claims are something that are incredibly difficult to maintain and stand by, as is the case with most new research areas. As is seen, for studies that examine the negative aspects around sexually explicit material, other studies show results that contradict these findings. The literature suggests that at this point, SEM research has neutral or no lasting effects on individuals (Allen et al., 1996; Malamuth, 1984; Morrison, 2004).

Permissiveness towards Porn

While the first two major complaints focus on individual behaviors, the following complaint against the use of sexually-explicit material is one that can impact society as a whole. The complaint is that use of these materials creates a more permissive view, which depending on the stance as a researcher takes, can be positive or negative. Two studies have shown this to be accepted as true, the first was done in Hawaii when examining community standards around sexually-explicit material (Diamond, 1989). The second focused on young adults who accessed sexually-explicit internet materials and followed the development of their attitudes and permissiveness throughout developing years (Doornwaard, 2015).

Permissiveness towards sexually-explicit materials is an ethical dilemma for many individuals and one that will not be furthered examined in this project. It is an important area to highlight findings, however, when examining results for the current study.

Participant Differences

Perhaps the most intriguing finding of most sexually-explicit material are the consistent participant differences that have been observed. In most cases the researchers have seen certain trends continue to appear in research. The three areas where differences are consistently observed are, age, religion, and gender (Diamond, 1989; Goodson, 2001; Janssen, 2003; Lottes, 1993; Merritt, 1975; Norris, 1989).

When examining age differences, two trends consistently appear. First, younger individuals have higher acceptance levels toward sexually-explicit material when compared to older individuals (Diamond, 1989; Lottes, 1993), and secondly, individuals with higher education levels also show higher acceptance when compared to lesser educated individuals

(Merritt, 1975; Robinson, 1996). These age views are also related to attitudes toward distribution and restriction.

The second major area of difference is seen within religiosity. For individuals who report religion being an important aspect of their life or that it is a core feature in their personality, these individuals report more negative views toward sexually-explicit materials (Diamond, 1989; Norris, 1989).

The third area is seen within gender differences. When comparing males to females with relation to views and attitudes towards sexually-explicit material, males report more positive attitudes (Janssen, 2003). Furthermore, males report higher usage rates, and higher sexual experience rates (Goodson, 2001).

These participant differences that have been consistently reported are important to the current study due to participant selection being all males. A detailed discussion of these key findings will be examined later with examining study rationale.

Regulation Statures

Perhaps the most intriguing research questions asked in the field of sexually-explicit materials is regulations around legality. While consensus, having 75% or more agreement, has hardly ever been reached when polling individuals, a simple majority has been consistently found. For example, in Hawaii, a majority, 58%, of surveyors believed the sale of pornographic materials should be allowed for adults (Diamond, 1989). This viewpoint is not unique to Hawaiians either, it is common among many states across the United States. In Phoenix, 87% voted for adults to be allowed home access to explicit materials, and 41% said that films could improve sex lives of couples (Diamond). In the bay area the majority of individuals, 62%, felt that there should be laws against the sale of pornographic materials to minors, but no such laws

against adults were found (Diamond). In multiple Indiana cities, 68% and 67% of individuals polled claimed to not want charges against adults who purchase adult materials (Diamond). This list continues in the Diamond article with other U.S. cities, highly conservative states (Utah and Maine), and the Midwest region, all with similar findings: Adults should not be charged with the possession of pornographic material.

While this finding is dated in the sense that this is not a current issue, looking back at the climate with relation to presidential commission's findings, public viewpoints, and timeframe, it is a major finding that refutes many of the common beliefs that individuals and the United States society had as a whole. These findings also have likely impacted current laws, as pornography is not against the law for adults to purchase and own in their home, and there are not many, if any, major public fights to change this law.

ESEM

After seeing the history and debate rage among scholars with regards to the effects and behaviors of sexually-explicit materials and pornography on individuals, it is important to see where sexually-explicit material has been used educationally and therapeutically. There are two areas that ESEM are used predominately: classroom and therapy settings.

Classroom Settings

Educational sexually-explicit material, as aforementioned, is the use of explicit materials with the intention to educate and promote learning instead of having the intention to promote arousal. Sexually explicit materials were first introduced in the classroom in the 1940s by Alfred Kinsey (Shoen, 2014). He adapted images and films for this use to enhance knowledge and attitudes towards what was deemed normal human sexuality. Due to negative societal pressure, he and others soon after quickly stopped usage. It was not until the late 1960s that ESEM became

more accepted than previously. A key distinction is that being more accepted does not mean that it was highly or favorably accepted, just that it had slightly more acceptance in use.

In the 1960s, Dr. Edward Tyler implemented the use of sexually-explicit materials to use in the teaching of human sexuality to medical students at Indiana University (Shoen). What he found was that the use of these films for his classroom elicited comfort in the ability to communicate about sexuality towards patients in the future. These feelings have been reciprocated by many professionals across the United States due to its ability to elicit the attitudes and anxieties about human sexuality that people experience. With the successful implementation, other higher learning institutions adopted the use of sexually-explicit materials for classroom use in medical fields, and in counseling and therapist fields for those seeking to become a sexuality educator or therapist.

Therapy Settings

Similarly with classroom settings, educational sexually-explicit material is used to enhance learning among mental health therapy patients who may be struggling with sexual dysfunctions (primarily erectile functioning difficulties) or relationship conflict (primarily communication difficulties with a significant other) (Brewster, 2008; Darnell, 2015; Van Lankveld, 2009). While these materials are not the norm in therapy settings, they have a long history of continued use with professionals who are willing to adapt these materials in this setting.

The use of ESEM with regards to male erectile functioning has not been scientifically validated, however it is a source that clinicians can choose to explore with patients (Brewster, 2008). In couples counseling with sexually explicit material, the audiovisual materials are a source of information to help facilitate communication between partners (Darnell, 2015). In most

cases, the audiovisual materials are useful to help aid in learning terms and descriptions of intimate body areas and functioning.

In a therapeutic setting, there are multiple steps that are undergone to decide if the use of ESEM or PSEM are appropriate for the client (Brewster, 2008). For example, a clear understanding and explanation of what is going to be used in the therapy setting along with a rationale of why it is going to be used must start the conversation. Patients must have the choice to initially view them or discontinue viewing should the materials become distressing or uncomfortable. And finally, the therapist must be able to assess readiness for the client to utilize these materials. There are numerous settings where the materials may be introduced premature or cause more issues than if they had not begun in the first place. For example, some relationship difficulties can interfere with the use of ESEM, furthermore, the use of ESEM can cause some negative outcomes such as sexual anxiety (Neidigh, 1987), or dissatisfaction with their own sex lives (Van Lankveld, 2009).

Despite the use of ESEM and PSEM in educational and therapeutic settings, an area of concern that has been neglected, or unconcerned about in these studies, is how the material is perceived and how well it is received by the students or patients. McPherson et al. (*in review*) examined whether individuals could see the educational benefit to these materials, or if they viewed it simply as pornographic. The researchers had university students examine four different video conditions, with instructions present or not present, and a sex therapist giving instructions present or not present, to examine different attitudinal beliefs. Results indicated no significant differences between conditions on measures of attitudes toward the appropriateness of the SEM.

While there are issues with the population in question and the generalizability towards adult populations that may be using these materials as recommended by a therapist, it begs the

question of should these materials be used even if positive results are found. Studies have shown positive benefits of using SEM in therapy settings with sexual dysfunctions as previously discussed, but again the client's attitudes towards the use or what they were using for therapy were not considered. This study shows that while researchers and professionals may see a distinction between ESEM and PSEM, the general population may not, and this raises concerns for the application should negative views be held by individuals.

Third Person Effect (TPE)

A secondary goal of this study was to examine potential third person effects (TPE) with males' attitudes towards sexually-explicit materials. Third person effect is a social cognitive theory in psychology that people tend to perceive others as being more negatively affected by the materials than themselves (Pariera, 2014). This theory examines the actual effects of media materials on an individual, and then the individual projects their perception of how they think another person would react or be affected by the same material. This theory is applicable to all domains of media usage and has been examined in sexually-explicit media as well (Chia, 2004; Pariera, 2014; Wu, 2001). One thing this theory is helpful in illustrating is attitudes towards regulation when it comes to explicit materials.

Relation to sexually-explicit material

The current study is the one of the few studies to be done in the United States to examine the relationship between sexually-explicit media and third person effects. These effects have been examined outside of the US, notably Taiwan (Chia) and Singapore (Wu). One study has been done in the United States (Pariera), however it used an online convenience sample and thus external validity can be questioned. Every one of these studies found results consistent with the

third person effect theory, and they additionally found results related to regulation attitudes as well.

Perhaps the most valid study examining the relationship between SEM and TPE was done by Chia and colleagues (2004). They examined college students' attitudes towards a sex video that was of a politician in Taiwan at the time. Results indicated that students perceived others to be more negatively impacted by the viewing of this material than themselves. Conversely, results also highlighted the reversed notion of the theory that oneself is more influenced than others when it comes to socially desirable behaviors (Chia). Additionally, support for censorship of material was high if the material had been perceived as more antisocial (Chia). While the findings of censorship cannot be broadly applied as this study was examining a real situation as opposed to a laboratory situation, the findings of censorship towards SEM was strong.

In Singapore, a similar study was conducted, though this was a laboratory-based assessment and there was no sexual scandal to interject as the material being examined (Wu, 2001). Again, TPE and SEM's relationship was examined. On a sample of college-aged individuals, consistent with the TPE, results indicated that participants had attitudes of other people being more negatively affected by the pornographic materials than themselves (Wu). Furthermore, censorship was again questioned, and it was found to have a strong connection with TPE; individuals who were found to report negative impacts of the material were more likely to report stronger feelings towards censorship.

The most relevant study deals with American adults and their views on pornography and views of others (Pariera, 2014). In this study, participants viewed DVD covers and descriptions for instructional, non-instructional, and mainstream non-pornographic films, and then answered

questions about how they would rate the positive and negative effects of these films (Pariera). They rated their attitudes about themselves, adult men, adult women, their closest friend, and their partner. Only the perceptions of instructional pornography results will be discussed in this paper as those results most closely align with the aims of the study. These covers and descriptions were rated as having mostly positive effects. The researchers also found that in the case of instructional films, others were rated as being more positively affected. This finding was novel to this study and is theorized that due to the positive nature of the material as opposed to previous research that examined mainly negative natured materials. Beyond positive effects, the researchers also found that men perceived adult women and their female partners (if applicable) to be much more offended by pornography (Pariera). This finding is more in line with what previous TPE and SEM research has shown.

Aims of Study

This study has two primary aims and a secondary aim. The first primary aim is to examine college-aged men and their attitudes towards SEM usage in the classroom. This is to help gauge whether or not males can view this material and have it as a supplemental tool for educators. A second primary aim is to examine any TPE that may be present within the participants and see if previous literature findings can be replicated in this sample. It is expected that higher educated males would have more positive views and that they would view others as having more negative views towards the SEM video.

The secondary aim of this study is to examine social factors that have been previously studied and see if similar relationships among our surveyed participants can be found. These include relations between attitudes and religiosity, age, sexual experience, and others.

To examine these aims, three hypotheses were examined:

Hypothesis 1: College men will have higher education attitudes between SEM conditions when the material is presented as educational vs pornographic.

Hypothesis 2: College men will view other individuals as having more negative views of SEM than themselves.

Hypothesis 3: Social factors and demographics will impact attitudes similar to what previous research has found. Specifically, age, relationship status, and religiosity will be examined to see if these factors influence the current sample.

Methods

Participants

Male only participants were used in the current study due to the consistent literature findings that show these individuals with more permissive views and having higher reports of positive applications for sexually-explicit materials. It is the thought of the author that if males do not report higher scores indicating usefulness in education or relationships, then females would likely score lower as seen in previous literature and would not need to be examined at this time. 172 individuals initiated and completed the online survey, of these respondents, 21 participants (12.2%) completed enough of the survey to be included in analysis. Participants were eliminated if they indicated they were female, transgender, or if they failed to indicate what sex they are ($n=24$). Participants were also eliminated if they were missing more than 20% of the possible data points ($n=73$), if they took less than 10 minutes to complete the survey ($n=48$), or if they failed to indicate what the video depicted ($n=4$). Finally, two more participants were eliminated for missing multiple manipulation checks. Of the 21 participants included in the analysis, the majority identified as heterosexual ($n=20$, 95.2%) and white ($n=13$, 61.9%). A wide age range was represented, from 18 to 56 ($M=21.48$, $SD=8.59$). For a complete description of

participant demographics refer to Table 1 in Appendix A. For an image of participant flow and eliminations refer to Figure 1 in Appendix B.

Materials

DVD Covers

Two separate DVD covers were used in this study. The first DVD cover showed an educational setting where the video source would come from. The DVD Cover was titled “The expert guide to positions: Sex ed for a new generation” and came from VividEd (Bean, 2008). The second DVD cover depicted an overt sexual setting where the video source would come from. The second DVD cover was titled “Reunited: Never say never,” a Wicked Feature source (Morgan, 2009). These images can be viewed in Appendix B.

Videos

Two, 4.5-minute videos were used in this study. The video utilized for this study (Bean, 2008) was specifically designed for educational purposes, and thus included both on-screen text and audio educational messages included alongside the heterosexual sexually-explicit scene. The video's contained the same scenes being shown, with one video having a narrator explaining what was being depicted, and the other having no narration over the scene. The videos shown had two actors, one male and one female, engaged in various sexual activities, including kissing, foreplay, and various positions of heterosexual intercourse. These videos are currently in use by licensed sex therapists to be used in sex therapy.

Measures

Attitudes Toward Erotica Questionnaire

A shortened and revised version of the Attitudes Toward Erotica Questionnaire (Lottes, 1993) was used. The standard assessment is a 21-item questionnaire that assesses a participant's

attitudes about an image or video of sexually explicit media. The standard assessment has three subscales: *Hurt*, *Positive*, and *Restrict*. Each question is rated on a Likert scale with scores ranging from 1-7, with a score of 1 indicating strongly disagreeing with the statement and scores of 7 strongly agreeing with the statement. However, due to the nature of the research questions being asked, the full subscales were not needed and the assessment was shorted to 10 questions with portions of all subscales present. The questions that were used can be seen in Figure 2 in Appendix B.

Third Person Effects

There are no validated measures to assess third person effects among individuals. How it is measured is by asking the same research question and changing the focus of the individual answering. This is the common practice to examine attitude beliefs of self and others and is how research has been done in previous TPE articles (Pariera, 2014). For example, instead of answer how the participant feels, it would be how the participant thinks *another* person would feel. The 10 questions from the shorted ATEQ were asked in three ways, how the individual felt, how they think a male classmate would feel, and how they think a female classmate would feel with the video material.

Procedures

Participants accessed the present study through SONA systems hosted on the Minnesota State University, Mankato psychology department website. Completion of the study allowed participants to be eligible for course extra credit. The present study consisted of informed consent, and an age check. If participants indicated they were under the age of 18, or if no age was submitted, the survey was immediately discontinued. Participants who were 18 or older were again reminded that sexually explicit materials would be present and the study continued.

Participants were then given a short vignette describing the situation that they would imagine themselves in. Once they read through the vignette they were exposed to the independent variables (DVD cover type and video type). Both the DVD cover and video that were shown to participants were randomized. After viewing these, participants were asked to complete the shortened ATEQ questionnaire three times. Once for how they felt about, once for how they believed a male classmate would feel, and finally once for how they believed a female classmate would feel about the video. After answering these questions, the participants were asked eight demographics questions to conclude the study. After completion of the survey, participants were informed of the nature of the study and provided with contact information if they had any questions of concerns.

Results

Hypothesis 1: College men will have higher education attitudes between SEM conditions when the material is presented as educational vs pornographic.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) finds there is not a significant difference in *Self* views among the 10 items of the questionnaire items, $F(10, 8) = 1.301, p = .362$ Wilk's $\Lambda = .381$, partial $\eta^2 = .619$. What this means is that regardless of the education condition (which DVD cover was presented) a participant was in, they do not have any significantly different views from the other group when it comes to views held about one's self. MANOVA's could not be ran examining group differences among narration vs no narration conditions due to a majority of participants (>75%) failing the manipulation check.

Similarly, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) finds there is not a significant difference in *Male* views among the 10 items of the questionnaire items, $F(10, 9) = .883, p = .579$ Wilk's $\Lambda = .505$, partial $\eta^2 = .495$. Again, no matter which education condition a

participant was in, this does not significantly impact the results on the survey pertaining to views held about a male classmate.

However, when a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is run on Female views, it finds there is a significant difference in views among the 10 items of the questionnaire items, $F(10, 9) = 13.485, p = .037$ Wilk's $\Lambda = .205$, partial $\eta^2 = .795$. What this means is that the education condition (DVD Cover) a participant was in does have an impact on views they hold about a female classmate.

When the 10 questions are examined to see if any are significantly different we find that 2 questions stick out: Degrading and Improvement in sexual education. Degrading was significant at: $F(1,19) = 13.714, p = .009$. Improve sexual education was significant at: $F(1,19) = 14.881, p = .013$. Questions examining degrading did not differentiate who was being degraded in the video, the male or female actor, so degrading views cannot be assessed further.

When we examine the means for these scores for "Overall she would find this degrading" we see that the educational condition had a mean score of 4.86 ($SD=.69$) and the pornographic condition had a mean score of 3.14 ($SD=1.46$). What this shows is that in the views of a female classmate, those in the educational condition averaged a neither agree nor disagree response, where the pornographic condition averaged a slight disagree response.

When examining the scores for "this video can improve sexual education among college students" we see that the educational condition had a mean score of 2.14 ($SD=1.35$) and the pornographic condition had a mean score of 3.93 ($SD=1.44$). What this shows is that the views held of a female classmate in the educational condition averaged a response of "disagree", and those in the pornographic condition averaged around a "neither agree nor disagree" response.

Hypothesis 2: College men will view others as having more negative views of SEM than themselves.

A Univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted among each of the ten questions in the survey to examine potential significant third person effects of the three viewpoints, *self, male, female* that were asked about.

When the questions are examined individually we see that the three viewpoints do not vary significantly on these six questions: "This video can improve sexual education among college males" ($p=.051$), "This video should be viewed in classrooms" ($p=.054$), "This video has a positive effect on sexual education" ($p=.16$), "This video can improve sexual relations among college males and their partner" ($p=.12$), "Overall this type of material would benefit to be in curriculum" ($p=.62$), and "Overall I/he/she would recommend this to be viewed in subsequent classes" ($p=.28$).

The other four questions show significant differences among the different viewpoints. These questions were, "This video was offensive", "This video increases the probability of sexual violence", "Overall I/he/she viewed this video as degrading", and "Overall I/he/she viewed this video as educational."

The findings for this video was offensive are as follows: $F(2,59) = 7.761, p=.02$. When we examine the mean differences among views we see that the male viewpoint held the highest scores at 5.95 being approximately $.190(SE=.421)$ higher than the self viewpoint at 5.76 ($p=.653$) and $1.152(SE=.427)$ higher than the female viewpoint at 4.8 ($p=.009$). The self viewpoint was also higher than the female viewpoint at a significant degree of $p=.028$.

This video increases probability of sexual violence findings are as follows: $F(2,60) = 6.778, p=.027$. When we examine the mean differences among views we see that the male

viewpoint held the highest scores at 5.81 being approximately .143 ($SE=.410$) higher than the self viewpoint at 5.67 ($p=.729$) and 1.05 ($SE=.427$) higher than the female viewpoint at 4.76 ($p=.013$). The self viewpoint was also higher than the female viewpoint at a significant degree of $p=.031$.

This video is viewed as degrading findings are as follows: $F(2,57) = 12.439, p=.004$. When we examine the mean differences among views we see that the female viewpoint held the highest scores at 3.71 being approximately 1.46 ($SE=.451$) higher than the self viewpoint at 2.25 ($p=.002$) and 1.19 ($SE=.457$) higher than the male viewpoint at 2.53 ($p=.012$). There was no significant difference between the male and self viewpoints.

This video is viewed as educational findings are as follows: $F(2,60) = 3.556, p=.035$. When we examine the mean differences among views we see that the self viewpoint held the highest scores at 4.62 being approximately .952 ($SE=.459$) higher than the male viewpoint at 3.67 ($p=.042$) and 1.14 ($SE=.459$) higher than the female viewpoint at 3.48 ($p=.016$). There was no significant difference between the male and female viewpoints.

All questions asked as a part of the study can be seen in Table 2 in Appendix A. Mean scores for self viewpoints, other male viewpoints, other female viewpoints, and an overall mean score are presented.

Hypothesis 3: Exploratory analyses with relations to previous literature.

When Pearson correlational analyses are run on demographic variables and results on the questionnaire items, multiple significant findings are present. First, higher reported porn usage was negatively correlated with self views ($r=-.564, p<.01$, two-tailed) and views of a female classmate ($r=-.500, p<.05$, two-tailed) with finding the video offensive. Second, the more committed relationship an individual was in indicated a negative relationship with finding the

video as educational ($r=-.499$, $p<.05$, two-tailed). Finally, those in committed relationships also were found to have negative correlations with self views on viewing the video in subsequent classes ($r=-.452$, $p<.05$, two-tailed) and this video can improve sexual relations ($r=-.474$, $p<.05$, two-tailed).

No other relationships between any demographic data, religiosity, relationship status, or current porn usage, and individual questions were found.

Discussion

The current study examined college males' attitudes toward the use of sexually-explicit material in classroom settings. The primary focus was seeing if college males would see educational benefits of SEM dependent on how the stimuli was presented. The findings indicate that students are not able to differentiate between an educational use of sexually-explicit material and a pornographic one. While the visual stimuli stayed the same, some videos had audio instructions over the visuals, and the priming DVD cover was manipulated to show an educational focus as opposed to a sexually arousing focus. While the sample size was too small to adequately compare the four unique groups, in comparing groups that received educational vs recreational and instruction vs no instruction, the groups scored no differently on any self-attitudinal questions. These findings are in line with previous research that examined a similar question but for therapeutic uses (McPherson, *in review*). While these results are disheartening to examine in the sense that individuals cannot differentiate educational vs non-educational stimuli as it is presented, the lack of an adequate sample size could be a contributing factor to these findings.

A secondary aim was to examine third person effects and see if findings from previous literature) could be replicated in this sample. While there was mixed support for third person

effects, there were also confounding findings to the theory. In the case of others being negatively impacted more so than oneself, three questions can be examined for this aspect of the TPE theory: The video was offensive, the video increases the probability of sexual violence, and the video is degrading. In each case the attitudes about negative views were significantly different among groups. However, the self-view of the males was found to have the highest scores with females being lowest in the case of the video is degrading, which is contrary to previous typical findings. In the other two questions, with the video being offensive and promoting sexual violence, the attitudes of "other male" scores were the highest with the females being the lowest. These findings contradict previous research that discusses that oneself will be the least negatively impacted and females will be the highest of those impacted, with views of other males scoring somewhere in the middle.

One newly conceptualized branch of the TPE theory was found to have partial support. In the instances where individuals will believe that they will be more positively impacted by media, this finding was supported through significant group differences among the 'video is educational' question. With self-views having the highest scores.

Scores show a similarity to the Pariera findings where individuals score at a moderate level and rate other adult males as having higher scores across the domains of instructional pornography (2014). While the TPE theory has received mixed results, it is still partially supported.

The final aim of the study was to examine demographic variables related to views that had been assessed in previous literature. While previous findings of religiosity could not be supported, other demographic information found to be significantly related to a person's views. The higher the pornography use the individual consumes, the lower they are to rate the video as

offensive. Secondly, being in a committed relationship was shown to be negatively related with participants' self-views on finding the video educational, improving sexual relations, and having the video be seen in subsequent classes.

Beyond the primary aims of the study, results indicate that males hold a predominately neutral to somewhat negative attitudinal view towards sexually-explicit materials and their educational purposes. The questions that examined improving sexual education and relations, positive effect on sexual education, video as educational, and benefitting to be in curriculum, and recommending to be viewed in subsequent classes all had scores that landed between somewhat disagree (3) to somewhat agree (5). The question pertaining to the material being viewed in classroom however landed at an average score of 2.9, which indicates views being below somewhat disagree. This indicates that males do not believe that the video they had watched does not belong in the classroom. In the questions pertaining to offensiveness, sexual violence, and the degrading nature of the video males reported an average score across all domains of somewhat agree (5) to agree (6). These results highlight that while the support for positive impacts on education can be gleaned from the video, these seem to be outweighed by the negative views held with regard to what the video depicts.

What these findings indicate is that while there may be a small agreement that there are potential benefits, the sample surveyed has more negative views that would indicate these materials are not proper for classroom settings. While the use of sexually-explicit materials in classrooms is generally left to the individual instructor, these findings indicate that males would not be able to adequately see the benefits of these types of supplemental materials. As stated earlier, males were the only participants due to more accepting and permissive views towards SEM. The idea was if these individuals reported positive results to the use of ESEM in education

and relationships then females could be examined at a later date. What was found was that males do not hold positive views towards the application of ESEM in the classroom, so it would be assumed females would hold even lower scores and report disagreement as opposed to somewhat disagree to neutral.

Limitations

While the study has some important findings and can partially support previous literature, there are limitations that are noted. The limitations that will be discussed are the sexually-explicit nature of the video and DVD covers, the small sample size, use of males only, and the online format.

With the use of the video depicting overt sexual acts and not simply images of genitalia, the use of such a video in a classroom setting could be limited and participants could be skeptical of the education use of such a video. Had the video been less overt, perhaps participants would have been able to see the education benefits or how it can enhance a relationship. As they noted, participants just viewed the video as pornographic and could not see a difference in how it was presented, so the use of “porn” in a classroom setting will create limited use to some individuals. Similarly, the DVD covers at a glance can be interpreted as pornographic and neither as educational. If these covers are both viewed as pornographic in nature then the variable manipulation becomes a moot point and there is not a source material that would be sensible in an educational sense. While the cover's are not the focal point of discussion, it is important that manipulations be clear and concise, and if this manipulation failed to do so, it creates a nuanced singular group as opposed to two unique groups.

A second limitation is the small sample size. With only 21 individuals being examined in data analysis every extreme score (1 or 7) can greatly impact the means and how the groups

scored. It also posed the problem of not being able to examine hypotheses that were proposed due to having under 5 participants in some groups. Many participants that were excluded were either female or did not complete the survey while receiving credit for doing so. While the study was presented as "College males' views" many females still attempted to take the survey. Furthermore, one limitation of SONA systems as a whole is that initiating a survey link will grant participant credit while the survey does not need to be completed. This took away nearly half of the surveys that were available to look out when removing non-male individuals. While there are few things that could increase a good sample size due to the promotion and widely accessible nature of the online survey, the current findings are relative to most cold calling promotions with around a 10% response rate.

The use of only males does provide a limitation. While it was hypothesized in the methods that males would have the highest agreement scores and thus would be the population to see the best results toward implementation and use in future settings, the results for females only or females included could show a different story. In future studies having all participants polled and then examining gender differences would be a novel route to examine to get a higher sample and power.

A fourth limitation of the present study is the online nature of the survey. Because the survey was not done in a research lab with any overview of video monitoring or adequate answering, the results can only be taken at face value. The time of completion removal check attempts to remove individuals who did not partake in the survey truthfully by completing it in an unusually fast amount of time (under 10 minutes), but with the survey being unlimited and able to come back and finish, there are no guarantees any individual watched more than a few seconds of the video. This problem affects both quick and slow responses and is difficult to

decipher who adequately answered the presented questions. Furthermore, due to the video being online, many participants failed the manipulation check assessing if audio instructions were present. This was a key distinction in examining educational vs recreational materials, and without verification that the videos were listened to it creates a limit on the conclusions that can be drawn from simply watching visual materials.

Future Research

While the limitations are present, it also creates avenues for future research. Future research could examine all participants attitudes towards the use of such material in classroom settings. By including everyone it would be more representative of the classroom populations typically seen in social science education. Furthermore, research should be conducted in a lab with overview of research assistants. By having individuals come in and take a survey with an assistant in the room, chances to adhering to watching the video and taking the survey truthfully are higher. This also guarantees that audio materials are on and working and allows for variable manipulation to be present. A third avenue of research could examine qualitative responses of attitudes towards the materials. Understanding why someone viewed the materials as pornographic or educational can be an important finding to develop these and other sexually-explicit materials for the use in classroom settings. Finally, attitudinal beliefs of individuals who have had educational sexually-explicit materials should be examined to see the comparison between perceived beliefs towards the use of these materials and the held beliefs with the use of these materials.

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APPENDIX A – Tables

Table 1.

Participant Demographics

	<i>n</i> (total percentage)
Year in school	
Freshman	14 (67%)
Sophomore	5 (24%)
Junior	1 (4.5%)
Senior	0
Other	1 (4.5%)
Sexual orientation	
Heterosexual	20 (95%)
Sapiosexual	1 (5%)
Current relationship status	
Single	10 (47.6%)
Casually Dating	4 (19%)
Partnered	6 (28.6%)
Legal Partnership	1 (4.8%)
Religious importance	
Strongly Agree	3 (14.3%)
Agree	4 (19%)
Neutral	9 (42.9%)
Strongly Disagree	5 (23.8%)
Frequency of pornography use	
Never	3 (14.3%)
Once a month	2 (9.5%)
Once every two weeks	3 (14.3%)
Once a week	7 (33.3%)
Multiple times a week	6 (28.6%)

Table 2.

Survey Questionnaire Mean Scores

	Self	Male	Female	Overall
Survey Questions				
Video can improve sexual education	3.95	4.52	3.33	3.95
Video was offensive*	5.73	5.95	4.80	5.76
Video increases probability of sexual violence*	5.67	5.81	4.76	5.67
Video has a positive effect on sexual education	4.29	3.76	3.48	4.29
Video should be viewed in classrooms	2.90	3.71	2.52	2.90
Video is degrading**	5.75	5.48	4.29	5.18
Video is educational*	4.62	3.67	3.48	4.62
Material would benefit to be in curriculum	3.80	3.65	3.33	3.80
Recommend to be viewed in subsequent classes	3.67	3.52	2.90	3.67
Video can improve sexual relations among college males and their partner	4.43	4.33	3.57	4.43

*denotes significant group differences among scores at a $p < .05$ level

**denotes significant group differences among scores at a $p < .01$ level

APPENDIX B – Figures

Figure 1.

Participant Flow

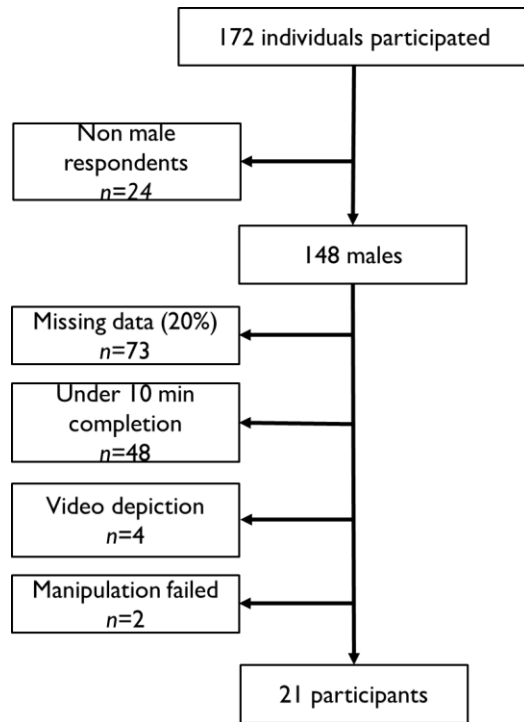


Figure 2.

Survey Questions Administered and Scoring Range

If I/male classmate/female classmate saw this video I/he/she would say that. . .

1. This video can improve sexual education among college males (1-7)
2. This video should be viewed in classrooms (1-7)
3. This video was offensive (1-7)
4. This video increases the probability of sexual violence (1-7)
5. This video has a positive effect on sexual education (1-7)
6. This video can improve sexual relations among college males and their partner (1-7)
7. Overall I viewed this video as degrading (1-7)
8. Overall I viewed this video as educational (1-7)
9. Overall this type of material would benefit to be in curriculum (1-7)
10. Overall I would recommend this to be viewed in subsequent classes (1-7)

Figure 3.

Educational DVD Source

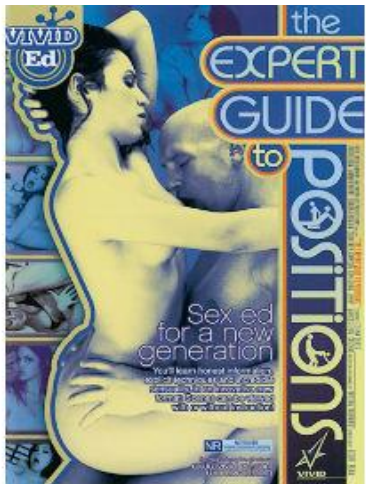


Figure 4.

Pornographic DVD Source

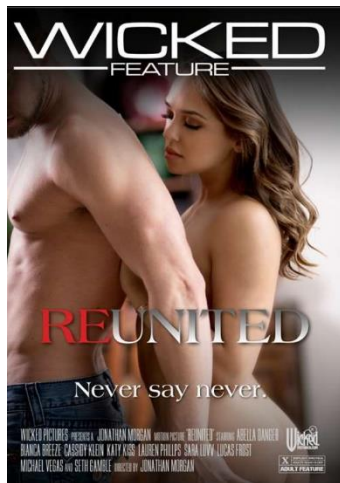


Figure 5.

Significant Group Differences Among Attitudes

