

EARLY ADOLESCENT SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, AND BELIEFS:  
THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA, PEERS, PARENT COMMUNICATION, AND  
RELIGIOSITY

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## DEDICATION

To my sweet and amazing Bryant,  
thank you for all the love and patience  
you have shown me through this process.  
Words can never express how much you mean to me  
– my whole world!

To my great uncle Bob,  
your amazing spirit and loving heart  
have always been points of inspiration  
for me to become a better person.

To Jacey, Paige, and Madi,  
thank you for letting me have the honor of being your “other mom.”  
You have each inspired me more than you’ll ever know.

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## ABSTRACT

VIVIAN BAXTER

### EARLY ADOLESCENT SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, AND BELIEFS: THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA, PEERS, PARENT COMMUNICATION AND RELIGIOSITY

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Sexual messages are ever prevalent on television, the internet, and in music; making access to sexual content, whether inadvertently or intentionally, fairly easy for early adolescents. The purpose of this study was to look at early adolescent media diets and how media and peers inform their knowledge and beliefs about sex as well as whether parents or religiosity play a role in how adolescents filter sexual messages. Theoretical frameworks guiding this study were cultivation theory and social Cognitive theory. Cultivation theory addressed adolescent media consumption and social cognitive theory addressed peer influence.

This research study used path analysis via additive moderation and mediation analysis via multiple linear regression to analyze data generated from parents and adolescents via a researcher made survey and the TV Mediation Scale (Valkenburg et al., 1999). A total of 99 parents and 63 adolescents completed their respective surveys.

Findings revealed that peer influence was a significant predictor of sexual values and beliefs and that parent communication and religiosity were significant moderators in this relationship. Religiosity significantly predicted level of parent communication, but

did not significantly predict sexual values and beliefs. Religiosity also predicted accurate sexual knowledge through parent communication. When active mediation was entered into the parent communication equation, the overall models of parent communication and active mediation predicting accurate sexual knowledge and sexual values and beliefs were found to be significant. Implications, limitations, and directions for future research were also discussed.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Sexual behaviors are introduced to most early adolescents through media exposure, mainly television, far before they are cognitively mature enough to know and emotionally mature enough to understand what sex is and physically mature enough to engage in sexual activity (Lemish, 2007). However, many early adolescents state that much of the sexual content on television is not necessarily sexual activity, but rather conversations about sexual experiences. This dialogue, on television, of sexual experiences offers opportunities for fantasies about sex, the use of the imagination, and social learning.

Based on public perception, both adults and adolescents believe media has become the central source of information about sex for adolescents (Malamuth & Impett, 2001). Sutton, Brown, Wilson, and Klein (2002) found that more than half of the adolescents surveyed reported getting most of their information about sex from television or magazines. Early adolescents may be more influenced by sexual media when watching television with friends. Watching sexually explicit media with friends may produce feelings of peer pressure to discuss or even engage in sexual behavior so that they may fit in or feel normal (Malamuth & Impett, 2001). What is being watched on television during early adolescence has been linked to their sexual behavior during middle adolescence (Brown et al., 2006).

According to Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts (2010), adolescents from 8 to 18 years of age watch, on average, 4.5 hours of television a day and spend about 1.5 hours on the computer each day. This is not surprising since nearly all adolescents live in a home with at least one television, many live in homes with as many as four televisions, and 93% live in a home with at least two computers. Of these adolescents who have more than one television in their home, 71% have a television in their bedroom with 49% having cable or satellite TV and 24% having access to premium channels. Thirty-six percent have computers in their room with 33% having access to the internet.

Early adolescents are bombarded with sexual messages on a daily basis. These sexual messages are prevalent in mainstream media such as television, the internet, movies, music, and magazines that target children (Pardun, L'Engle, & Brown, 2005). In 2005, of the top 20 shows among teen viewers, 70% of the episodes contained some type of sexual content and 8% contained sexual intercourse (Kunkel, Eyal, Finnerty, Biely, & Donnerstein, 2005).

According to the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance survey, 46% of high school students (grades 9 to 12) nationwide have had sex at least once (Eaton et al., 2010). Of those 46%, nearly 6% had sex before the age of 13. Of those reporting having sex before the age of 13, almost 8% were in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at the time of the study whereas about 4% were in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Thus, it appears that adolescents today are initiating sexual activity at a younger age, and mass media could be seen as a contributing factor in their sexual knowledge, beliefs, values, and practices.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Most of the literature on adolescence and mass media's impact on sexual knowledge includes adolescents age 12 and older, but there is virtually no literature covering this topic with adolescents as young as 10 years, the early adolescent. The time period known as adolescence has changed over the last few generations (Steinberg, 2011). Adolescence was once thought to be the ages of 13 to 18, but that has now changed. Adolescence is now thought to begin around the age of 10 and extend well into the mid-20s. This is because puberty occurs earlier and adolescents remain dependent on their parents longer. The age range for early adolescence, sometimes referred to as preadolescence begins around the age of 9 or 10 years and lasts until the age of 12 or 13 years (Pickhardt, 2007). Since adolescence is typically marked by the beginning of puberty, early adolescents as young as 10 years of age need to be studied to determine the effects that mass media and its sexual messages are having on them.

While there are studies that examined adolescent media consumption, religiosity, and parental communication (Bobkowski, 2009; Brown et al., 2006; Collins et al., 2004; Fisher et al., 2009; Hamilton & Rubin, 1992; Malamuth & Impett, 2001; McCree, Wingood, DiClemente, Davies, Harrington, 2003; Meier, 2003; Regnerus, 2005; Zillmann, 2000) as well as how these things influence adolescent sexual attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs, some of the research is dated due because it does not address the issue of the increase of teen directed sexually explicit shows such as *Skins* on MTV. The actors and actresses on *Skins* are not adults portraying teens, but actual teens (the

youngest cast member is 15) involved in sexually explicit scenes such as simulating masturbation, implied sexual assault, and teens in bed with each other (Friedeman, 2011). By the show's 10<sup>th</sup> episode, there were already 577 depictions of teen sex (Parents' Television Council, 2011). The premiere episode of *Skins* drew about 1.2 million viewers under the age of 18 (Friedeman, 2011). As long as shows that have actual teens engaging in sexually explicit situations are allowed to be broadcast on cable or network television, research needs to be continually updated to study and understand the impact these shows, and media in general, will have on early adolescent sexual behavior, knowledge and beliefs.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to look at early adolescent media diets and how the media and peers inform their knowledge and beliefs about sex as well as whether parents or religiosity play a role in how early adolescents filter sexual messages from the media. This study also looked at parental beliefs about their early adolescent's mass media diets and their perceptions of their early adolescent's knowledge and beliefs about sex. A survey of early adolescent mass media intake and content, views on relationships, peer relationships, and religiosity was used to gather data from the adolescents. A survey of parents' perceptions of their early adolescent's mass media diets, the parent's view of relationships, and their perceptions of their early adolescents' knowledge and beliefs about sex was used to gather information from the parents. The Television Mediation

Scale (Valkenburg, Krcmar, Peeters, & Marseille, 1999) was used to assess parental mediation styles as measured by the parents and the adolescents.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

The theoretical frameworks used to guide this study are cultivation theory and social cognitive theory. Cultivation theory addresses adolescent media consumption and how it impacts their views and beliefs about sex. Social cognitive theory addresses what types of shows and music videos the adolescents watch, what they are doing/viewing on the internet, what they are watching with peers, how much they perceive their peers influence them, and how these things impact, inform, and influence adolescent knowledge and beliefs about sex.

#### **Cultivation Theory**

Cultivation theory explains how heavy exposure to mass media - television in particular - creates and develops attitudes and beliefs that are more consistent with media's view of reality instead of actual reality (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994). Cultivation theory predicts that, over time, people who are heavy television viewers will begin to perceive the world that is portrayed on television as an accurate view of reality. Simply put, cultivation theory explains how people who watch more television or consume more mass media in general tend to have distinct, specific concepts of reality. They begin to believe the messages (intentional and implied) as real and perceive the real world in ways that reflect what they watch on a regular basis.

Television, one of the most used forms of mass media, plays an important part in the cultivation or adoption of common and specific images, beliefs, values and ideologies (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). Young adolescents who are heavy television viewers and see sex portrayed as glamorous, recreational, risk-free, and acceptable with multiple partners will be more inclined to accept and adopt this perspective about sex (Ward, 2003).

However, cultivation is not a one-way process, but rather there is an interaction between the medium (television, internet, music videos, etc.) and the user (Gerbner et al., 1994). It is not the mass media itself that has an impact on the viewer, but how the viewer interprets what he or she sees and hears. The viewer's age, gender, and social class make a difference in how the content is perceived and internalized.

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

Bandura and Walters (1963) stated that imitating certain behaviors is dependent on the punishment or reward of the model. This means individuals will imitate certain behaviors if they see the person they are observing receiving certain positive reinforcements. Bandura (1989) stated that virtually all learning resulting from direct experiences can occur vicariously by observing the behavior of other people and the consequences or rewards for that behavior. Most learning occurs by deliberately or inadvertently observing the behavior of other people and the consequences or rewards of that behavior. In observational learning, unlike learning by doing or trial and error experiences, a single model (person, television character) can transmit new ways of

behaving to many people at the same time (Bandura, 1996). One is more likely to imitate the behaviors if the model is perceived as attractive and similar to the observer and the behavior is possible, simple, prevalent, and has a functional value (Bandura, 2001). Adults or adolescents who view media content that shows attractive people enjoying having sexual intercourse and not suffering negative consequences as a result of their actions are more likely to imitate the behavior (Brown, 2002).

Cognitive factors play a role in what will be observed, the meaning placed on what was observed, the emotional impact, the motivating power and the whether or not there will be a lasting effect, as well as how the observed behavior is organized to be used in the future (Bandura, 2001). During the exposure of the observed behavior, the observer acquires mostly symbolic representations of the modeled behavior that serve as a guide for appropriate performances. Observational learning involves the cognitive ability to learn and retain the behavior and the skills to reproduce the behavior. There are four subfunctions of observational learning that take place: attentional processes, retention processes, production processes, and motivational processes.

The attentional processes determine what is observed and extracted from the modeled events (Bandura, 2001). Being able to extract certain modeled events is determined by a person's cognitive skills, his or her preconceptions, and value preferences. It is also determined by the salience, the attractiveness, and the functional value of the modeled person or activity. People will not pay attention to everything that



they see, but who and what they pay attention to has to have some value and has to be considered attractive or appealing to the observer.

The retention process involves the cognitive ability to retain the activities or behaviors that were modeled (Bandura, 2001). It is the active process of transforming and restructuring information into rules and conceptions for representation in the memory. People cannot be influenced by the modeled behavior if they do not remember the behavior. In order for the observed behavior to be imitated when the model is no longer present, the information must be stored in the observer's permanent memory in symbolic representations. Also, the ability to recall events involves more than just a simple retrieval of events; it involves a process of reconstruction.

The behavioral production process involves converting the symbolic representations into appropriate actions (Bandura, 2001). The construction and execution of a behavior pattern is compared against the model for adequateness and accurateness. The behavior is then modified on the basis of comparative information so that the conception and the action are similar. Whether the observed behaviors can be reproduced or not depends on the cognitive level of the observer and the ability to physically perform the action or behavior. If the observer is not able to perform the action or behavior right away, then the skills that are needed will be practiced until they are mastered. Once mastered, the observer can then put them together cognitively to perform the action or behavior. The execution of a skill is varied to match the circumstance.

The final component is the motivational process. Although a person may observe many behaviors, not all will be modeled and repeated (Bandura, 2001). There has to be a reason to model the behavior. People are more likely to model behaviors that result in an outcome that is of some value or pleasure to them. People tend to be motivated by the successes of others who they perceive are like them. However, if the person sees that a behavior results in negative consequences or punishment, then that behavior is most likely not going to be modeled back and it will be discounted. People will pursue activities they find satisfying and meaningful but will reject activities they disapprove of.

This theory predicts that through the observation of models within the media, the viewer learns which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate, the behaviors that will be rewarded or the behaviors that will bring about punishment (Donnerstein & Smith, 2001). According to Brown and Steele (1995), social cognitive theory also predicts that the observation of attractive characters (in TV shows, movies, or videos) enjoying sex with few or no negative consequences will influence teens to perceive this behavior as appropriate, and they will then store the information for future use. Adolescents do not immediately imitate what they have seen on TV; they store this knowledge so that it can be retrieved and used when they find themselves in a circumstance that warrants a certain behavior (Huston, Wartella, & Donnerstein, 1998).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the framework of the hypotheses based on the theoretical frameworks of cultivation theory and social learning theory:

1. How do media and peers influence adolescent knowledge, values and beliefs about sex?
2. Do parent communication and religiosity act as moderators in the relationship of media and peer influence on adolescent knowledge, values and beliefs about sex?
3. Are there discrepancies in the reports of parents and adolescents about parent – child communication about sex and parents’ mediation of television?

### **Hypotheses**

H1: Adolescents who have private access to screen media will be exposed to more mature media content and will hold more liberal values and beliefs about sex than adolescents who do not have private access.

H2: Adolescents who spend more time with their peers, who discuss sex and relationship with their peers more often, who believe their peers strongly influence their values and beliefs about sex, and who watch sexually mature shows with their peers will have more liberal values and beliefs about sex than adolescents who spend less time with their peers, who discuss sex and relationship with their peers less often, who believe their peers do not strongly influence their values and beliefs about sex, and who do not watch sexually mature shows with their peers.

H3: Adolescents with more conservative religious values will have less accurate knowledge about sex and will hold more conservative values and beliefs about sex compared to adolescents who have more liberal religious values. Also,

adolescents with more conservative religious values will be less likely to discuss sex with their parents compared to adolescents who have more liberal religious values.

H4: Adolescents whose parents discuss sex with them and who use higher levels of active mediation will have more accurate knowledge about sex and have more conservative values and beliefs about sex than adolescents whose parents do not discuss sex with them and who use lower levels of active mediation.

H5: There will be a difference in what parents/caregivers say they discuss with their adolescents in terms of sex and what adolescents say their parents/caregivers are discussing with them in terms of sex.

### **Delimitations**

1. The research sample is limited to early adolescents who are 10 to 12 years of age and at least one of their parents/caregivers.

### **Assumptions**

It is an assumption that all participants, both adolescents and adults will give truthful and honest answers on the surveys. It also assumed that the adolescent lives with the parent/caregiver who is answering the parent/caregiver survey.

### **Definition of Terms**

1. Adolescence – a stage of development that begins about the age of 10 years and extends in to the mid-20's (Steinberg, 2011).

2. Mass media - Television, magazines, movies, music, and the Internet (Brown, 2002).
3. Religiosity – The formal, institutional, outward expression of one’s belief in God, importance of religiosity, religious services, prayer, and meditation (Cotton, Zebracki, Rosenthal, Tsevat, & Drotar, 2006).
4. Sexual behaviors: Kissing, mutual masturbation, oral sex, anal sex and vaginal sex (Halpern-Felsher & Reznik, 2009).
5. Tween – A child who is not yet a teen, typically a term used for children who are between 8 and 12 years of age (de Mesa, 2005).
6. Sexualization - Making a person seen as being sexual in nature (Parents Television Council, 2010a).
7. The Family Hour - The 8/7pm Central time slot (Bowling, 2007).
8. Presexual stage - Holding hands and kissing (Beckett et al., 2010).
9. Precoital stage - Touching of the breasts and/or genitalia of another person (Beckett et al., 2010).
10. Coital stage - Vaginal intercourse (Beckett et al., 2010).
11. Social co-viewing – When parents watch television with their children as an activity (Nathanson, 2001).
12. Active Mediation – When parents talk with their adolescent about the content of their media diets (Nathanson, 2001).

13. Restrictive Mediation – When parents set rules in regards to their child’s media use (Nathanson, 2001).

14. Technical virgins – Someone who abstaining from vaginal intercourse while engaging in other forms of sexual activity such as oral or anal sex (Uecker, Angotti, & Regnerus, 2008).

### **Summary**

The increase of sexual messages in the media (Kunkel et al., 2005) and the appearance of adolescents initiating sex at a younger age (Eaton et al., 2010), coupled with the fact that adolescence is beginning earlier because of the early age puberty can begin (Steinberg, 2011), have led to the need for research that studies the mass media’s impact on the sexual knowledge and beliefs of the younger adolescent culture.

The purpose of this study was to look at early adolescent media diets and how the media and their peers inform their knowledge and beliefs about sex and whether parents and/or religiosity play a role in how adolescents filter sexual messages from the media. This study also looked at parental beliefs about their children’s mass media diets and their perceptions of their children’s knowledge and beliefs about sex. Through quantitative methodology this study examined how mass media, peers, parents, and religiosity affect a young adolescent’s knowledge, values and beliefs about sex. Outlined in this chapter are the statement of the problem, the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study and a list of terms that will be used throughout the paper. The

delimitations include a description of the participants and it was assumed that the participants would be honest and truthful in their answering of the survey questions.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to look at early adolescent media diets and examine how mass media and peers inform their sexual knowledge. Furthermore, this study looked at how mass media and peers influence early adolescents' values and beliefs about sex and whether religiosity and parent - child communication played a role in how adolescents filter the sexual messages. Topics included in the review of the literature are as follows: sexual attitudes and behaviors in adolescence, exposure to sexual messages in the media (TV, music lyrics and videos, and the internet), media's influence on sexual attitudes and behaviors, peer influence, parent-adolescent communication about sex, religiosity, the impact of religiosity on sexual attitudes and how religiosity is a mediator for sexual messages.

#### **Sexual Attitudes and Behaviors in Adolescence**

Although the timing of adolescent sexual behaviors varies according to gender, race, and type of relationship, adolescent sexual behaviors usually start with adolescent self-stimulation and then progress to behaviors that involve a partner (Halpern-Felsher & Reznik, 2009). Sexual behaviors that adolescents engage in are no different than the sexual behaviors of adults. Sexual activity among teenagers is not limited to monogamous romantic relationships. Manning, Longmore, and Giordano (2005) found that the majority of sexually active adolescents had experience with sex outside of a



romantic relationship and that sexual activity and experiences move between romantic relationships and casual sexual relationships over time.

Data from the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance showed that approximately 32% of high school freshmen reported that they have been sexually active (Eaton et al., 2010). Of those 32%, approximately 8% reported that they had sex before the age of 13. This is about 4% higher than the seniors who reported having sex before the age of 13. While overall there are more seniors who report having sex (62%), the fact that more freshmen reported having sex before the age of 13 indicates that adolescents are initiating sexual behaviors while still in late childhood or the tween years. Eggermont (2005) found that among 12-year-olds, about 82% reported having kissed a girl or a boy on the cheek, about 29% had experienced “French” kissing, about 6% had touched the sexual organs of someone of the opposite sex, and 3% had experienced sexual intercourse.

There is typically a progression or sequence of adolescent and tween romantic and sexual behaviors starting with less intimate behaviors such as holding hands and kissing. The progression then moves toward more intimate sexual behaviors such as fondling, oral sex and then first intercourse (O’Sullivan & Brooks-Gunn, 2005). Girls are more likely to focus on the intimate aspects of relationships (Graber & Sontag, 2006), creating greater stress and making it more difficult for them to find a relationship that meets both their emotional needs and their desire for sex (Rudolph, 2002). This could be a reason why girls seek out relationships with older, physically mature boys. The tendency to want and have an older boyfriend is associated with a variety of problems including early

sexual activity (Young & d'Arcy, 2005). Girls who have older boyfriends are more likely to engage in intimate sexual behaviors such as intimate touching, oral, anal, and vaginal sex as well as engaging in more risky sexual behaviors than girls who have similar-aged boyfriends (Gowen, Feldman, Diaz, & Yisrael, 2004).

Waylen, Ness, McGovern, Wolke, and Low (2010) found that about 25% of 11-year-olds had held hands with someone and about 16% had kissed someone or been kissed. A year later, at the age of 12 years, approximately 41% had held hands with someone, 33% had kissed someone, and 34% had cuddled with someone. Also at the age of 12 years, more intimate sexual behaviors were reported. Approximately 12% of the participants (both boys and girls) reported lying with someone of the opposite sex, and about 5% reported petting or coital behaviors such as being touched under their clothes, oral sex, and sexual intercourse. Most of the participants reported enjoying the romantic and sexual experiences, but boys reported more enjoyment than girls, and girls tended to report more regret than boys. Markham, Peskin, Addy, Baumler, and Tortolero (2009) discovered that out of 1279 seventh graders, 12% had engaged in vaginal sex and about 8% in oral sex. Out of those who had vaginal sex, about 21% initiated sex before the age of 10 years, and of those who had engaged in oral sex, about 30% initiated it before the age of 10 years.

In a study of college undergraduates, Cecil, Bogart, Wagstaff, Pinkerton, and Abramson (2002) found that students were less likely to classify someone as a sexual partner if they had only had oral sex as opposed to anal or vaginal sex. Of these same

college students, in a separate study, 54% said that they thought a man would not consider fellatio as sex, and 59% said that they thought a woman would not consider cunnilingus to be sex (Bogart, Cecil, Wagstaff, Pinkerton, & Abramson, 2000).

Being sexually active or a virgin can mean different things to different people. Bersamin, Fisher, Walker, Hill, and Grube (2007) found that about 84% of adolescents believed one was still a virgin even though he or she had engaged in genital touching, and about 71% believed one was still a virgin even though he or she had engaged in oral sex. Engaging in anal sex still constituted virginity according to about 16% of the adolescents and about 6% still considered one a virgin even if he or she had engaged in vaginal sex.

### **Oral Sex**

Adolescents engage in oral sex for a number of reasons: pleasure, improved relationship, popularity, curiosity, and considering it less risky than vaginal sex (Cornell & Halpern-Felsher, 2006). Girls, significantly more than boys stated that a reason to have oral sex was to improve intimate, romantic relationships, but the number one reason overall from both girls and boys to have oral sex was pleasure. Girls see oral sex as a way of preserving their virginity and of not getting pregnant (Uecker et al., 2008).

Several studies of older adolescents, 14 through 16 years old, indicate that they are engaging in oral sex before vaginal sex (Brady & Halpern-Felsher, 2007; Halpern-Felsher, Cornell, Kropp, & Tschann 2005). However, Markham et al. (2009) found that out of 1279 seventh graders, 4% had engaged in all three types of sex: vaginal, oral and anal. Of the students that reported engaging in vaginal and oral sex, about 67% reported

initiating vaginal sex at the same time or earlier than oral sex. Older adolescents viewed oral sex as significantly less risky than vaginal sex, and they saw vaginal sex as having a more negative outcome. Lindberg, Jones, and Santelli (2008) found that about 55% of adolescents had engaged in heterosexual oral sex as opposed to vaginal sex. Girls were more likely than boys to report that they have given oral sex, and of the adolescents who had engaged in vaginal sex, about 87% had also engaged in oral sex as compared to 23% of “virgins” who had engaged in oral sex.

Adolescents believe oral sex is more acceptable than vaginal sex for their age group (Halpern-Felsher et al., 2005). They believe that it is more acceptable to have oral sex rather than vaginal sex with someone whether you are dating them or not, and that oral sex is less against their moral values. While oral sex is not the only sexual behavior adolescents believe can be substituted for vaginal sex, it seems to be preferred over anal sex (Uecker et al., 2008).

### **Exposure to Sexual Messages in the Media**

#### **Television**

The age at which children are being exposed to sex and sexual messages gets younger and younger. Children as young as 8 are getting the message that sexual behavior is appropriate and therefore begin to engage in sexual activity because they see it as acceptable and normal (Durham, 2008). Sex on television is not a new phenomenon, but it has become more graphic. In the 1990's on *Beverly Hills 90210*, viewers saw spring dance sex scenes, then in the mid 2000's viewers saw scenes of a threesome in a

hot tub on *The O.C.*, and more recently, late 2000's, scenes of quickie sex on a bar on the television show *Gossip Girl*. These casual hookups that depict unprotected sex, which is not planned and lacks foreplay or romance, are standard in teen and tween television.

The newest television show that is causing controversy is *Skins* on MTV. The show is a cause for concern because of the nudity and sexual situations depicted by its underage actors on screen (Pflum, Kunin, & Van Allan, 2011). The show portrays teens involved in sexual situations, such as simulated masturbation, sexual assault, and in bed with each other implying sexual intercourse (Friedeman, 2011). About 1.2 million teens under the age of 18 tuned in to watch the premiere episode of *Skins*. In the first episode, there were 95 depictions of sex and by the 10<sup>th</sup> episode, two months later, there were 577 depictions of sex (Parents' Television Council (PTC), 2011). Teens, however, report liking shows such as *Skins* because they feel it is true to life whether parents want to believe it or not. Teens and tweens who view such shows report that they believe the sexual situations to be very realistic, and that they can strongly identify with the main characters (Ward, Gorvine, & Cytron, 2002).

The PTC (2010a) conducted a study that looked at teen female sexualization in prime-time television. Of the top 25 prime-time shows of the 2009-2010 season, 14 scripted shows were examined. The results showed that there are more depictions of underage female characters engaging in sexual behavior, such as suggestive dancing, erotic kissing and touching, implied nudity, and intercourse than adult female characters. This study also found that of the sexual scenes that included underage or young adults,

86% of the female characters were shown as being only in high school, and only 5% of the underage female characters expressed any form of dislike for being sexualized. Of the scenes that included sexualized incidents involving underage characters, 55% were initiated by the underage female or were presented as being mutually agreeable between the girl and her partner, and 98% were shown occurring between the underage teen and a partner who were not in a committed relationship with each other.

Comedic genre had the highest content of underage girls in sexualized scenes (67% of the episodes), and 73% of the sexualized incidents involving underage girls were usually presented in a humorous manner, such as a punch line to a joke (Parents' Television Council, 2010a). Comedic relief and laughter are powerful in the desensitization and trivialization of topics that might typically be seen as disturbing.

In 2006 the PTC conducted a content analysis of children's after school and Saturday morning television shows and the results were disturbing (Fyfe, 2006). The television shows were those that were aimed at children 5 to 10 years of age. The results showed a total of 275 instances of sexual content, which is an average of .62 instances per hour. The most prevalent forms of sexual content were adult subtext, innuendo and double entendre in shows such as the WB's *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends*, Nickelodeon's *Danny Phantom* and *Sponge Bob Square Pants*, and Disney's *Sister, Sister*, followed by nudity and partial nudity in shows such as the Cartoon Network's *Totally Spies!* and Nickelodeon's *Fairly Odd Parents*. The PTC also found that certain sexual material, like innuendo and double entendre, was more prevalent on certain

television stations, like Disney with 51 instances, WB with 29 instances, Nickelodeon with 26 instances, and the Cartoon Network with 12 instances.

With sexual content in children's television shows, it is not surprising to find sexual content in prime time family shows during the "Family Hour." Since the 2000-2001 television season, the amount of sexual content found in the Family Hour television shows has increased by 22.1% (Bowling, 2007). Over half (54.8%) of all the programs on the six major broadcast networks looked at in 2006-2007 television season contained sexual content. This includes shows such as Fox's *American Dad* and *House*, ABC's *Ugly Betty*, and NBC's *The Office*. There were a total of 677 spoken sexual references or sexual scenes, making that about 3.76 instances per hour. It is important to note that the entire season was not studied, but rather it was three separate 2-week periods; 2 weeks during the fall of 2006, 2 weeks during the winter of 2007, and 2 weeks during the spring of 2007.

Not only are there more sexual situations, language, and messages in television shows these days, but the context in which the sexual behavior takes place has moved from married relationships to non-married relationships, as shown in ABC's *Gray's Anatomy*, NBC's *Las Vegas*, and CW's *The Game*, adulterous relationships, as shown in ABC's *Boston Legal*, *Desperate Housewives*, and *Dirty Sexy Money*, and CBS's *Two and a Half Men*, one night stands, and casual hookups (Henson, 2008). In mainstream media across the five major networks during a 4 week period during the 2007-2008 season, references to adulterous sex were mentioned or portrayed twice as often as marital sex.

Non-married sex references are nearly four times more common than references to sex with in marriage during the Family Hour. Sex with in marriage is often mocked and made fun of but adulterous relationships are treated sympathetically. Sex is also often portrayed as something that just happens spontaneously, in the heat of the moment, without much thought (Lemish, 2007). When the actors and actresses are more attractive, they are also depicted as being more sexually active, but not necessarily sexually responsible. The negative impact of sex, such as unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are hardly ever depicted.

## **Music**

Adolescents surround themselves with music. It is almost constantly a part of their lives outside of school (Arnett, 2002). They listen to music while doing homework, riding in the car, and exercising. Songs that are of love or that depict sexuality have been popular with adolescents for decades, but the explicitness of sexual lyrics is on the rise.

Pardun et al. (2005) found that music contained more sexual content (40%) as compared to television (11%), movies (12%), magazines (8%), the internet (6%), and newspapers (1%). The lyrics of some songs sexualize women or refer to them in degrading ways such as *“I tell the hos all the time, Bitch get in my car”* (50 Cent, 2005, track 9) or *“Bitch pop it, till you percolate.....Bitch ya gotta shake it...”* (Ying Yang Twins, 2003, track 5) (APA Task Force, 2007). Most of the sexual lyrics and sexually degrading lyrics are found in the rap and R&B genres (Martino et al., 2006).



Music videos provide a visual to go along with the songs, so if a song is sexually explicit in the lyrics, then the music video may contain sexually explicit content. Videos that are of a rap and R&B mix display scenes of sexual content most frequently, followed by R&B only videos, and then rap only videos, whereas country music videos showed sexual content the least often (Turner, 2011).

Videos depicting predominately African American characters, in general, are more sexualized than Caucasian videos in terms of provocative clothing and frequency of sexual behaviors (Turner, 2011). African American women are twice as likely to be shown in provocative clothing as Caucasian women and more than twice as likely shown wearing provocative clothing versus nonprovocative clothing. Exposure to such videos can have an impact on the way females view relationships. Girls who are exposed to violent rap videos are more accepting of teen dating violence than girls who are not exposed to rap videos (Johnson, Adams, Ashburn, & Reed, 1995). African-American females that had a high exposure to rap music videos were twice as likely to have had multiple sex partners and 1.5 times as likely to acquire sexually transmitted disease as opposed to those who had a low exposure to rap music videos (Wingood et al., 2003).

### **The Internet**

Teen internet use rose from 73% in 2000 to 93% in 2009 (Pew Research Center, 2009). According to Gross (2004), most of an adolescent's time online is spent chatting with friends via instant messaging (IM), surfing different websites, and downloading music. However, with the rise of social networking sites, such as Facebook and

MySpace, 73% of teens are now spending more online time on social networking sites.

This is a significant increase from the 55% who used social media in 2006 (Pew Research Center, 2009). Adolescents, according to Gross (2004), are not working on one thing at a time while on the computer; they are multi-tasking activities such as downloading music, doing homework, and IMing with friends all at the same time.

With 36 % of adolescents having computers in their room and 33% having access to the internet (Rideout et al., 2010), adolescents have the means and the opportunity to view sexually explicit material in the privacy of their bedrooms (Donnerstein & Smith, 2001). Because the rating system used by online providers is ineffective and inadequate for blocking explicit material, adolescents can view explicit videos and material regardless of their age. Children can state they are of age, even when they are not, in order to access adult sites. Even if they identify themselves as being underage they can still be exposed to sexually explicit material (Parents' Television Council, 2010b).

Some adult sites have web addresses that are similar to popular internet sites, making it easy for a child to access an adult site if they type in the URL address of the intended popular site incorrectly (Donnerstein & Smith, 2001). However, while we would like to think that children are being exposed to sexually explicit material on the internet accidentally or inadvertently, research shows that is not the case. Boys and girls expose themselves to various types of sexually explicit material on the internet, such as movies depicting sex and photos of individuals with their genitals exposed (Peter & Valkenburg, 2006). Internet pornography is accessible and available to adolescents, and more than

50% have visited sexually explicit websites; however, boys are more likely than girls to frequent such sites (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009; Brown & L'Engle, 2009; Peter & Valkenburg, 2006).

Luder et al. (2011) found that males (29.2%), more than females (1.4%), had intentionally exposed themselves to online pornography. Intentional exposure to internet pornography, for males, was associated with first intercourse before the age of 15, having four or more sexual partners in their lifetime, and not using a condom the last time they had sex. Adolescent males who intentionally exposed themselves to internet pornography were also more likely to use the internet more frequently.

In a study of Chinese adolescents (age 14 to 21), Wei, Lo, and Wu (2010) found that of the active internet users, the average time spent on the internet per day was about 141 minutes and that about 42% had explored pornographic websites. Of those who sought out internet pornography, 65.3% used the interactive feature of clicking and selecting, about 52% used the interactive feature of searching, and about 48% used the interactive feature of downloading. Seeking out and interacting with pornographic sites, in this population sample, was related to sexual permissive attitudes and behaviors.

The more adolescents seek out and use internet pornography, the more they think about sex and are preoccupied with thoughts of sex (Peter & Valkenburg, 2008a). Teens that used internet pornography more frequently had a stronger interest in sex, but were also less satisfied with their sex life (Peter & Valkenburg, 2009). The less satisfied teens were with their sex lives, the more they sought out internet pornography.

### **Media's Influence on Sexual Attitudes and Behaviors**

Children today are turning to media over parents, friends, and other sources as their primary source for sexual information (Halpern-Felsher & Reznik, 2009).

Adolescents see sex in the media portrayed positively and as just a part of life for adults and adolescents. This view of sex in the media helps to shape adolescents' attitudes about sex. When adolescents perceive media as endorsing sexual activity, they are more likely to initiate or engage in sexual activity (L'Engle & Jackson, 2008). Adolescents' sexual behaviors and beliefs are related to their exposure to sexual content in the media, specifically television (Fisher et al., 2009). Being exposed to sexually suggestive cable television is related to the increased likelihood of engaging in oral and vaginal sex, an increased intention to engage in these behaviors in the near future, and a lower perception that engaging in these sexual acts would yield negative consequences and health problems. Adolescents who perceive sexually permissive content on television as being real or more realistic are more likely to be influenced by what they watch (Taylor, 2005). They are more likely to have permissive attitudes about sex and endorse sexual behaviors outside the confines of a relationship.

Even though the media can provide some positive messages about sex, some of the messages about sex in the media can be harmful to children because they do not show that there are negative consequences of sex (Escobar-Chaves et al., 2005). Children who watch shows that are high in sexual content are about twice as likely to engage in sexual behaviors earlier than their same aged peers who do not watch shows high in sexual

content (Durham, 2008). Sexual references on television and in movies may be a contributing factor to early sexual debut, negative attitudes towards contraception, the likelihood of having multiple sex partners (as adolescents), and teen pregnancy (Chandra et al., 2008; Collins et al., 2004; Wingood et al., 2011).

While television and movies play a role in the formation of a teen's attitudes and beliefs about sex, they are not the only forms of media teens turn to. Magazines and music are also influencing teens towards sexual activity (Brown et al., 2006). Teens who are exposed to more sexual content in the media they consume and who feel the media supports teen sexual behavior are more likely to engage in sexual activities, and they have greater intentions to have sex in the near future as opposed to teens who are not exposed to sexual content in the media (L'Engle, Brown, & Kenneavy, 2006). Teens who have a high exposure to sexual media are also twice as likely to get pregnant (or get somebody pregnant) in the next few years as compared to teens who did not have a high exposure to sexual media (Chandra et al., 2008).

In a study of adolescent females, being exposed to X-rated films was associated with living in a single parent family and being monitored by someone other than their mother (Wingood et al., 2011). This exposure to X-rated films is also associated with negative attitudes regarding contraception, making adolescent females who are exposed to X-rated films twice as likely to have multiple sex partners and a strong desire to conceive a child, as well as being one and a half time more likely to not have used a condom the last time they had sex.

One of the most popular forms of television is reality shows. In 1997 there were three reality dating shows; by 2004 this number had grown to over 30 reality dating shows (Zurbriggen & Morgan, 2006). In 2000 there were only four reality type shows; a decade later, that number grew to 320 in 2010 (Orcasio, 2012). While these types of shows may be viewed for entertainment purposes, viewing these shows affects men's and women's attitudes toward sex. College age men and women who watch reality dating shows are more likely to endorse a sexual double standard and believe that relationships between men and women are adversarial. They also believe that physical appearance is important in dating, that dating itself is a game, and that men are driven by sex.

Television in general has been associated with men and women's attitudes and assumptions about sex. Ward (2002) found that women who watched more music videos and prime-time programs, who were watching either for entertainment or learning purposes (viewer involvement), and who strongly identified with the female characters were more likely to have sexual stereotypes, such as seeing females as sex objects, males as being sex-driven, and the feeling that dating is a game. For men, however, it was not viewer involvement, but viewing amounts - specifically viewing hours of music videos - that influenced their endorsement of sexual stereotypes. In adolescence, boys who are exposed to sexualized media are also more likely see women as sex objects (Peter & Valkenburg, 2007).

There is an association between exposure to sexually explicit media and engaging in sexual behaviors. Adolescents, specifically boys, engaging in oral sex and vaginal

sexual intercourse are more likely to use or view sexually explicit media than adolescents that have not engaged in these sexual behaviors (Brown & L'Engle, 2009). Use of sexually explicit media can also predict an adolescent's chances of engaging in sexual behaviors. Adolescents who have more exposure to sexually explicit media expect fewer negative outcome experiences from engaging in sex and they perceive more of their peers to be sexually active (Martino, Collins, Kanouse, Elliott, & Berry, 2005).

Because adolescents today have grown up with casual sex on television and in movies and porn so easily available on the internet, teens do not really think they are being influenced by the media. Werner-Wilson, Fitzharris, and Morrissey (2004) found that adolescent females minimized the effects of media's influence on sexual behavior and mocked the idea that teens would just go and have sex after seeing a movie that contained sexual content. They did not believe that sexual content in movies could influence their sexual behavior. Parents, on the other hand, were worried about the effects of sexual media content on adolescent sexuality. Parents were especially concerned with the influence of television programs such as sitcoms and soap operas, as well as the influence of teen magazines, computer games, television ads, and music. Parents were concerned that only positive, fun experiences related to sex were being shown and not the negatives of being sexually active. Parents believed their children were passive recipients of media messages.

Adolescents who frequented sexually explicit websites (pornography) were more likely to engage in high risk sexual behaviors such as anal sex (Braun-Courville & Rojas,

2009; Rogala & Tydén, 2003), sexually permissive behavior, such as having multiple sexual partners (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009; Lo & Wei, 2005), have sexual permissive attitudes about premarital and extramarital sex (Lo & Wei, 2005), acceptance of casual sex, and use drugs or alcohol during sex (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009). Of course sexually permissive attitudes vary by the degree of exposure, meaning that adolescents who frequent sexually explicit websites have more permissive sexual attitudes than those who frequent them less often or not at all. Peter and Valkenburg (2008b) found an association between sexually explicit internet material and a teen's sexual uncertainty. The more frequent sexually explicit material was consumed on the internet by teens, the more positively the teens viewed uncommitted sexual exploration. Age and gender were also factors in this association, with males and younger adolescents having more positive attitudes about uncommitted sexual exploration.

With sexual media content now more readily available because of the internet, cable television and movies, adolescents are more likely to learn patterns of sexually aggressive behavior. Prolonged exposure to sexually explicit media can have an effect on how a person, particularly an adolescent, views sex, committed relationships, love, and marriage. Over time they may begin to think sexual activities such as sodomy, group sex, and bestiality is common (Zillmann, 2000). They may no longer believe in monogamy but rather think promiscuity is the norm and that love is something to be sneered. Finally, they may see marriage as sexually confining and the thought of marriage and children as unappealing to them.



## **Peer Influence**

As children move into adolescence, peers become increasingly more influential in their lives (Fuligni, Eccles, Barber, & Clements, 2001). Adolescents are becoming less dependent on their parents, and peer relationships increase in importance (Sumter, Bokhorst, Steinberg, & Westenberg, 2009). This influence peaks in early adolescence and then begins to decline as adolescents redefine and reexamine their relationships with their parents (Fuligni et al., 2001) and develop more autonomy away from peers (Sumter et al., 2009). As adolescents get older, they become more resistant to peer influence.

Peers relationships are known to influence an array of behaviors from academic success (Fuligni et al., 2001; Ryan, 2001) and prosocial behaviors to risky behavior such as violent behaviors, smoking, drinking, drugs (Prinstein, Boergers, & Spirito, 2001) and sexual activity (Bersamin, Walker, Fisher, & Grube, 2006; Potard, Courtois, & Rusch, 2008). When adolescents are around their peers, they may take more risks, see risky behavior more positively, and make more risky decisions as opposed to when they are by themselves (Gardner & Steinberg, 2005). Susceptibility to peer pressure is more prominent during early and middle adolescence than adulthood.

### **Influence on Sexual Behavior**

Peers are strongly associated with one's decision to engage in sexual behavior such as oral or vaginal sex (Bersamin et al., 2006; Potard et al., 2008). Adolescents who thought their peers were sexually active were likely to report that they themselves were sexually active (Potard et al., 2008). Also, adolescents who thought more of their peers

were engaging in oral sex were more likely to report engaging in oral sex as compared to those who thought few or none of their friends had engaged in oral sex (Bersamin et al., 2006). Those who thought their peers approved of oral sex or had liberal sexual attitudes (Potard et al., 2008) were also more likely to engage in sexual behavior. Teens that are very involved with their friends may find themselves part of a group that encourages early dating (Connolly, Furman, & Konarks, 2000) and may think they will be respected more by their friends if they have sex, so they are more likely to have sex (Sieving, Eisenberg, Pettingell, & Skay, 2006). Boys, more than girls, feel pressure from peers to engage in sexual acts such as oral or vaginal sex. Boys, more than girls, also think that their friends feel that love has nothing to do with sex, and boys tend to think their friends approve of one night stands more than girls think their friends approve of one night stands. Adolescents who perceive that their peers are sexually active are more likely to engage in sex themselves (Potard et al., 2008). A teen's perception of their friends' feelings about sex has a stronger relationship to sexual initiation than the friends' actual feelings about sex (Sieving et al., 2006).

About one out of five 12-year-olds believed that their peers had seen their girlfriend/boyfriend naked, and 13.5% believed that their peers had engaged in sexual activity with their girlfriend/boyfriend (Eggermont, 2005). About 29.7% of 12-year-olds believed their peers have had sex with multiple partners and 31.9% believed their peers had had sex in public places. Teens tend to think that their best friend's oral sexual behaviors are similar to their own (Prinstein, Meade, and Cohen, 2003). Prinstein et al.

found that over half of the adolescents that reported engaging in oral sex reported that their best friend had also engaged in oral sex and that their best friend had a similar numbers of oral sex partners.

### **Sex-Related Media**

Chia (2006) found a relationship between adolescent exposure to sex-related media and their perceptions of peers' exposure to sex-related media. The more an adolescent thought their peers were watching shows with sexual content, the more they perceived media's influence on their peers. This leads to more sexually permissive norms among the peer group. Adolescents who spend more time watching television tend to think their peers are engaging in sexual activities (Eggermont, 2005). These peer perceptions may be a result of television's numerous references to sexual relationships, which in turn may also be linked to the sexual expectations of adolescents as young as age 12. Brown, Halpern, and L'Engle (2005) suggested that media is a sort of "super peer" for early maturing girls. Early maturing girls may be embarrassed and unable or unwilling to seek advice from their peers, so they turn to the media for information and norms about sex and sexuality.

### **Parent-Adolescent Communication**

As children move into adolescence, the parent-child relationship goes through transformations (Steinberg, 1990). Parents and adolescents are both active participants in the redefining and transformation of the relationship. The parent-adolescent relationship moves from one of unilateral authority to one that is made up of cooperation and

negotiation. This transformation is necessary for the adolescent's social and psychological development to continue on course.

This change or shift in the parent-adolescent relationship can lead to a closer relationship between parent and adolescent, and it can also lead to arguments and a more distant relationship. When parents and adolescents mutually create, write, and agree on the rules and expectations, parent/adolescent conflict is less likely (Sorkhabi, 2010).

When adolescents take part in rule construction, they are able to define the limits of their autonomy and see their parents as granting them that autonomy. However, parents who disregard the adolescents' perspective and impose their own rules are depriving adolescents of shared control of the limits of their autonomy. This can negatively affect the adolescents and their sense of personal control leading to conflict in the parent – adolescent relationship. Another source of conflict may be the parents not stating their expectations for conduct and responsibility. Conflict is likely to occur when the adolescents do not know parental expectations and when the adolescents do not have the opportunity to be a part of a mutual understanding of the rules and expectations. Shearer, Crouter, and McHale (2005) found that parents reported more arguing and conflict with their adolescent when it came to things such as dating or their curfew.

Communication during adolescence is perceived differently from the perspectives of parent and adolescent. Girls and boys also perceive communication with parents differently. Xiao, Li, and Stanton (2011) found that parents perceived a lower level of open communication within the family as compared to their adolescents and that boys, as

compared to girls, reported lower levels of open communication with their parents. Some parents perceived a change in the closeness they once had with their child (Shearer et al., 2005). While most parents reported that they thought their relationship with their adolescent became closer, some parents reported a decline in closeness and that the relationship was more distant than before. Which parent an adolescent feels closest to during adolescence affects communication as well. Miller-Day (2002) found that more adolescents felt more comfortable talking to their mothers, in general, and that closeness enabled the adolescents to talk to their mothers about such topic as alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Feeling emotionally close to their mothers enabled them to feel comfortable talking about risky topics.

### **Discussions about Sex**

Parents know that there is a need to eventually discuss sex with their teen because of sexual messages in the media, peer pressure, technology (computers, tablets and smart phones), and the threat of HIV/AIDS, but to many parents, talking to their teen or preteen about sex can be scary and confusing (Wilson, Dalberth, Koo, & Gard, 2010). They may feel their child is not ready to hear about sex, that they do not know enough themselves to discuss sex, or they may think they do not need to talk to their child yet. Parents may be embarrassed or uncomfortable discussing sex with their child or it may not be culturally acceptable. They may think someone else could do a better job at discussing sex with their child. They may have tried to discuss sex with their child and found their child was not receptive to the discussion.

Parents who report a greater level of comfort and knowledge about sex discuss more sexual topics with their teen (Jerman & Constantine, 2010). More sexual topics are also discussed when the parent is the same sex as the teen. Mothers and daughters tend to discuss more sexual topics than fathers and daughters. Mother's responsiveness and daughter's age and pubertal development were predictors of early mother-daughter discussions about sex (Miller et al., 2009). Mothers, older parents, and more educated parents encouraged their children to ask questions about sex related topics (Byers, Sears, & Weaver, 2008). Parents who were satisfied with the information they had received about sex from their parents reported feeling more knowledgeable about sex and more comfortable talking about sex with their children.

Parents who talk to their children about sex seem to do so in stages or sequences according to the sexual stage of the adolescent. Beckett et al. (2010) found that parents of children in the presexual stage talked with their children about relationships, such as choosing friends, why not to have sex, and about development (how girls' and boys' bodies are changing during puberty). Adolescents who were in the precoital stage had parents who talked to them about decision making and sexually transmitted diseases. They also had some discussions about relationships and male development. When parents felt their adolescent was in the coital stage and had initiated vaginal intercourse, discussions were about recognizing symptoms of STD's, how to use a condom, and choosing birth control. Communication revolved around what the parents thought. If the parent thought their child had not yet engaged in sex, then the communication focused on

parental values regarding sex, but once the parent thought their child had engaged in sex, the communication shifted to more concrete matters such as STDs and birth control methods. Interestingly, Beckett et al. (2010) also found that parents' communication was almost always earlier with daughters than with sons. Bersamin et al. (2006) found that much of the parental communication about sex revolved around vaginal intercourse such as the emotional reactions of having sex, skills for refusing to have sex, pregnancy and how to prevent sexually transmitted infections such as HIV.

Mothers and fathers that discussed sex with their adolescent before the adolescent's first intercourse predicted an older age for first intercourse, fewer lifetime partners, use of more birth control methods, more condom use, and a greater intent to abstain from sex (Clawson & Reese-Weber, 2003; Doswell et al., 2003; Miller, Levin, Whitaker, & Xu, 1998). Adolescents who have parents that talk to them repeatedly about sex feel closer to their parent, have more positive perceptions about their ability to communicate with their parents about anything, but specifically sex, and they feel that their discussions about sex, with their parents, are very open (Martino, Elliott, Corona, Kanouse, & Schuster, 2008). Additionally, adolescents who are satisfied with their relationship with their parents are less likely to engage in sexual activity at a young age, are more likely to use birth control when they do have sex, and are less likely to engage in frequent sexual intercourse. The closeness of parent and child is also associated with lower adolescent pregnancy risk because the adolescent chooses to remain abstinent, postpones sexual intercourse, or consistently uses contraception (Miller, 2002).

Adolescents are less likely to engage in sexual intercourse if they perceive their mothers as being disapproving of adolescent sexual activity or they perceive their mothers as having a high emphasis on abstinence (Jaccard & Dittus, 2000; Jaccard, Dittus, & Gordon, 1996).

On the other hand, teens whose parents discussed sex with them only after first intercourse were more likely to be younger at first intercourse, have more lifetime partners, and have been or gotten someone pregnant (Clawson & Reese-Weber, 2003). Adolescents who have mothers that discuss birth control and perceive maternal approval of birth control are more likely to engage in sexual intercourse (Jaccard & Dittus, 2000; Jaccard et al., 1996). Adolescents may misunderstand maternal approval of birth control and may mistake approval of birth control as approval of adolescent sex (Dittus & Jaccard, 2000).

McBride, Paikoff, and Holmbeck (2003) found that family conflict played a role in predicting early sexual debut. If preadolescents perceived greater family conflict, they were more likely to start having sex in early adolescence. Also, if adolescents were further along in pubertal development and experienced a greater increase in observed conflict, they were more likely to debut sexually at an earlier age. Early pubertal development in preadolescence or early adolescences may be a sign of the transition to adulthood, which may concern parents and cause them to become more restrictive which in turn leads to an increase in parent/child conflict.



Parents' religious beliefs play an important role in whether or not parents talk to their children about sex and what they talk about if they do talk about sex. Parents who attend church regularly tend to talk more about the moral issues of sex and less about birth control (Regnerus, 2005). Black Protestant church members talked to their adolescents with ease about a range of sex related topics, whereas parents who are Mainline Protestants felt the least at ease talking to their children about sex and communicated with their children the least about sex as compared to Black Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Mormon parents. However, when compared to Black Protestant parents, Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Mormon parents also reported feeling less at ease talking to their children about sex. Parents who have no religious affiliation also reported talking with ease to their children about sex.

### **Mediation**

There are three types of television mediation that parents use when it comes to their child's media diets: social co-viewing, active mediation, and restrictive mediation. Social co-viewing involves a parent or adult being around during the adolescent's television viewing (Lemish, 2007). Generally it involves the parent/adult watching television together with the child as a deliberate, conscious act of mediation rather than an accidental occurrence of parent and child watching the same show (Nikken & Jansz, 2006; Valkenburg et al., 1999), but there is no discussion of the content that is being watched (Eggermont & Opgehaffen, 2008). Social co-viewing is actually related to adolescents engaging in sexual activities at an earlier age and having more sexual

partners. This could be because parents who watch programs with sexual content in them with their children are unintentionally sending the message that these behaviors are acceptable (Guo & Nathanson, 2009). Social co-viewing is associated with higher TV exposure, more positive attitudes towards TV, and with the viewing of adult television programs (Paavonen, Roine, Penonen, & Lahikainen, 2009).

Active or instructive mediation is when the parent or adult discusses with the child the content that was viewed and helps the child understand what he/she saw (Valkenburg et al., 1999). The parent or adult may express approval of one show and the disapproval of another (Austin, Bolls, Fujioka, & Engelbertson, 1999). Nathanson, Wilson, McGee, and Sebastian (2002) found that active mediation can prevent children from believing stereotypical messages about gender that they see on TV. Children whose parents talked to them and repeatedly contradicted the stereotyped behavior within the programs, were more likely to modify their reactions to those shows and the characters in them. Active mediation can be a spring board for discussions about sex. Guo & Nathanson (2009) found that parents' contradictions of sexual messages in the media were more effective when done so in the form of open dialogue, but when parents contradicted sexual television in the form of lectures or speeches, the messages backfired and produced more undesirable outcomes with the adolescents.

Restrictive mediation is when the parent or adult sets rules and limits for television viewing. This may involve prohibiting the child from watching certain shows (Valkenburg et al., 1999) or controlling the amount of time a child spends watching

television (Nikken & Jansz, 2006). Using television as a reward or a form of punishment is also considered a form of restrictive mediation (Lemish, 2007). Parents of African American teens, parents who monitored their teen's behaviors at an earlier age, parents who believed media is full of harmful messages, and parents who were more aware of their teen's media preferences were more likely to use restrictive mediation (Kenneavy, 2007). Guo and Nathanson (2009) warned that parents should use restrictive mediation with caution when their child is entering adolescence. Adolescents are fine with moderate rules because it leaves the door open for the opportunity for discussion, but when the rules are too many or too harsh, adolescents are left vulnerable to the negative influence of television. It could be that adolescents rebel against severe restrictions. Nathanson (2002) found that when parents restricted their adolescent's viewing of violent and sexual television, the adolescents were more likely to seek out these types of shows when they were with their friends.

### **Mediation, Media and Sexual Behaviors**

Adolescents whose parents monitor their television viewing are less likely to view mature programs (Bobkowski, 2009). Parental mediation of their adolescent's television viewing was found to be a significant factor in counteracting potential negative media influences (Fisher et al., 2009). Restricting certain media was related to the increased likelihood that the adolescent had not engaged in oral or vaginal sexual intercourse. Limiting the number of hours and what was watched on television was related to an increased expectation that sex would lead to negative health consequences and reduces

the adolescents' expectations regarding pleasure. However it was found that when parents discussed sexual television content with their adolescent, the adolescent was less likely to engage in oral sex (if exposure to sexual content was low) and surprisingly the adolescents perceived less negative health consequences associated with vaginal sex. This may be because parents were taking that time to discuss birth control methods.

### **Religiosity**

Religiosity during the adolescent years is associated with prosocial behavior and values, such as respect for their parents (King, Elder Jr., & Whitbeck, 1997). Adolescents who were engaged in religious behavior, such as attending church services or church activities, through the high school years had a stronger faith that could guide them with their decisions regarding peers and academics.

King et al. (1997) found that church attendance declined significantly during the early adolescent years; however, attendance to youth activities that were related to church, such as a church youth group, increased. During early adolescence, the value of being a religious person remained stable; while some youth became more religious, others did not want to define themselves as such. Youth, from religious families, who were close to their parents and identified with their parents were more likely to be religious than youth who were not close to and did not identify with their parents. Also, adolescents who associated with a different religious affiliation than their parents tended to be less religious and were inclined to become even less religious over time.

### **Impact of Sex on Religiosity**

Although Hardy and Raffaelli (2003) and Meier (2003) found no evidence that a teen's transition to sexual intercourse reduced religiosity, Regnerus and Uecker (2006) found that transitioning to sexual intercourse (engaging in sex for the first time during their study) corresponded significantly with a decrease in religious importance, but it did not affect religious service attendance. Teens who were non-virgins were more likely to report less religious importance and service attendance. Older adolescents who were sexually active also reported having a lower level of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity (Zaleski & Schiaffino, 2000).

### **Impact of Religiosity on Sex**

Religiosity does have an impact on sexual attitudes and behaviors. Religious teens are more likely to delay first intercourse, less likely to have sexual experiences, and less likely to engage in any type of sexual behavior (Meier, 2003; Rostosky, Regnerus, & Comer Wright, 2003; Uecker et al., 2008). Religiosity can be considered a protective factor against adolescent sexual intercourse (Hardy & Raffaelli, 2003; McCree et al., 2003). More religious involvement is associated with less sexual risk taking, more positive attitudes about condoms, greater self-efficacy to communicate with partner about sex, STD's, HIV, pregnancy, and the refusal to have unsafe sex (McCree et al., 2003). Greater religious involvement is associated with living in a two parent family, having a mother as the primary caregiver, and greater parental monitoring, which also could be considered protective factors against teen sex. Religiosity contributes to the delay of

sexual intercourse because of perceived consequences of sexual activity, such as guilt for having sex, loss of respect from one's partner, knowing that having sex will upset one's mother, and by producing or reinforcing a sexual ideology that is prohibitive and negative toward teen sex (Rostosky et al., 2003). Girls tend to consider the costs and benefits of those they are close to, like their parents or their partner, when weighing the decision to have sex or not (Meier, 2003).

However, girls who have high personal conservatism (a strict and rigid adherence to religious creed) are at a greater risk to be exposed to unprotected sex (Miller & Gur, 2002). A strict and rigid adherence to religious creed, specifically doctrine that prohibits premarital sexual activity, may offer few resources to girls when they are faced with sexual dilemmas. These girls are not only at a greater risk of being forced into sex; if and when they do decide to have sex, they are more also likely to let the boys control the use and types of birth control. This may be because they most likely have a lack of knowledge about birth control and do not know where or how to get it.

Being less religious and expecting positive emotional outcomes after sex and few negative outcomes concerning pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases are factors associated with teen sexual debut (Rostosky et al., 2003). Lower levels of religiosity are known to influence adolescents' decision to have sex for the first time (Meier, 2003). Uecker et al. (2008) found that of the religious teens who attended church more than once a week, 61.8% were total abstainers, but 11.1% were "technical virgins" – they abstained from vaginal intercourse but were engaging in other forms of sex such as oral and/or anal

sex. Religious teens are more likely to oppose vaginal sex, but not oral sex, because of their religious values. Adolescents who say that being religious is somewhat important to them are about half as likely to be technical virgins as opposed to adolescents who says being religious is not important to them. Those who say that being religious is very important to them are about 70% less likely to be technical virgins.

### **Mediator for Mature Media Messages**

Religiosity plays a role in what adolescents watch on television for entertainment purposes (Bobkowski, 2009). Adolescents who are religious, as opposed to their nonreligious counterparts, are less likely to watch sexually mature shows or movies (Bobkowski, 2009, Collins et al., 2004), and are more likely to watch less television per day (Thomsen & Rekve, 2003). Boys and adolescents with more permissive attitudes about premarital sex are more likely to watch mature television programs (Bobkowski, 2009). Individuals who identify themselves as being conservative Christians are more likely to view fewer sexually oriented shows than are liberal or moderate Christians (Hamilton & Rubin, 1992).

### **Summary**

There is a progression of romantic and sexual behaviors exhibited by early adolescents starting with holding hands and kissing then moving into more intimate behaviors - fondling, oral sex, and finally sexual intercourse (O'Sullivan & Brooks-Gunn, 2005). Oral sex is seen as less risky than vaginal sex and for girls it is seen as a way of preserving their virginity and a way to be intimate without getting pregnant (Uecker et

al., 2008). Children as young as 8 are exposed to sex and sexual messages in the media (Durham, 2008). Adolescents reported liking shows that they feel depict real teen issues such as sex and shows that they can relate to the main characters (Ward et al., 2002). Other areas of concern for the exposure of sexual messages were the types of music adolescents listened to and what they were finding on the internet, advertently or inadvertently.

Sexually mature media influenced permissive sexual attitudes and beliefs when adolescents identified with the main characters and perceived the content as being real (Taylor, 2005). Teens that perceived media as condoning teen sexual behavior were more likely to engage in sexual behavior (L'Engle et al., 2006). Peers were also a factor in one's sexual decision making. Teens who perceived their friends as being sexually active also tended to be sexually active (Potard et al., 2008).

Parent-adolescent communication and religiosity can be seen as protective factors against early initiation of sexual intercourse. Adolescents who have parents that talked to them before they began having sex were more likely to prolong coital debut until an older age, more likely to have less sexual partners, and know about and use more birth control methods (Clawson & Reese-Weber, 2003; Miller et al., 1998). Religious teens were more likely to delay first intercourse (Rostosky et al., 2003) and were more likely to watch less sexually mature shows and movies (Bobkowski, 2009, Collins et al., 2004).



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

Chapter III discusses the variables, describes the instruments used to measure the variables, and describes the statistical tests that were used to analyze the data. Chapter III also details the methods that were used in the study, including the recruitment and description of the participants. Procedures for the protection of human participants are also discussed and the research surveys are described. Lastly, the data collection methods and the analysis of data are discussed.

The purpose of this study was to look at early adolescent media diets, how the media and peers inform their knowledge, values and beliefs about sex, and whether parent communication and religiosity play a role in how adolescents filter sexual messages from the media. In addition, this study looked at parental beliefs about their adolescent's mass media diets and their perceptions of their adolescent's sexual knowledge, values and beliefs. A survey of adolescent mass media intake and content, views on relationships, parent communication about sex, and religiosity was used to gather data from the adolescents. A survey of parents' perceptions of their children's mass media diets, the parent's view of relationships, and the parent's perceptions of their adolescents' knowledge, values, and beliefs about sex was used to gather information from the parents.

The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study based on the review of literature that pertains to the research topic:

Research question 1. How do media and peers influence adolescent knowledge, values and beliefs about sex?

Research question 2. Do parent communication and religiosity act as moderators in the relationship of media and peer influence on adolescent knowledge, values and beliefs about sex?

Research question 3. Are there discrepancies in the reports of parents and adolescents about parent – child communication about sex and parents’ mediation of television?

Hypothesis 1. Adolescents who have private access to screen media will be exposed to more mature media content and will hold more liberal values and beliefs about sex than adolescents who do not have private access.

Hypothesis 2. Adolescents who spend more time with their peers, who discuss sex and relationship with their peers more often, who believe their peers strongly influence their values and beliefs about sex, and who watch sexually mature shows with their peers will have more liberal values and beliefs about sex than adolescents who spend less time with their peers, who discuss sex and relationship with their peers less often, who believe their peers do not strongly influence their values and beliefs about sex, and who do not watch sexually mature shows with their peers.

Hypothesis 3. Adolescents with more conservative religious values will have less accurate knowledge about sex and will hold more conservative values and beliefs about sex compared to adolescents who have more liberal religious values. Also, adolescents with more conservative religious values will be less likely to discuss sex with their parents compared to adolescents who have more liberal religious values.

Hypothesis 4. Adolescents whose parents discuss sex with them and who use higher levels of active mediation will have more accurate knowledge about sex and have more conservative values and beliefs about sex than adolescents whose parents do not discuss sex with them and who use lower levels of active mediation.

Hypothesis 5. There will be a difference in what parents/caregivers say they discuss with their adolescents in terms of sex and what adolescents say their parents/caregivers are discussing with them in terms of sex.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The study sample ( $N = 162$ ) was composed of parents ( $n = 99$ ) and their adolescent children ( $n = 63$ ) between the ages of 10 to 12 years. A total of 207 participants opened the survey to view it and determine consent. Of these, 4 (1.9%) opened and closed the survey without indicating whether they were parent or adolescent, 137 (66.2%) indicated they were the parents, and 66 (31.9%) indicated they were the adolescent. Of the 137 parents, 106 (77.4%) gave consent, 8 (5.8%) declined consent, and 23 (16.7%) just closed the survey thereby defaulting to declined consent. Of the 66

adolescents, 65 (98.4%) agreed to participate and 1 (1.5%) exited the survey without responding to assent. Of the 106 parents and 66 adolescents who gave consent and assent, 99 parents (93.3%) and 63 (95.4%) adolescents completed surveys. Of these 99 parents and 63 adolescents, 58 (36%) were matched parent/adolescent dyads.

**Age and gender.** The parent sample ( $n = 99$ ) was comprised of participants ranging in age from 26 to 54 ( $M = 38.27$ ,  $SD = 5.73$ ). There were 5 male and 93 female parents; 1 parent did not answer the parent gender or age questions. The adolescent sample ( $n = 63$ ) consisted of 18 (28.6%) ten-year-olds, 22 (34.9%) eleven-year-olds, and 23 (36.5%) twelve-year-olds. There were 28 (44.4%) boys and 35 (55.6%) girls. Table A1, pp. 117-118, shows the age range of the parents, the adolescents' age, and the gender of the parents and adolescents.

**Race.** The majority of the parent sample reported their race as Caucasian (63.3%) and African American (21.4%). The remaining parent participants identified themselves as the follow races: Latino/a American (4.1%), Asian American (5.1%), Native American (2.0%), Bi-racial (2.0%), and Multi-racial (2.0%). The majority of the adolescent sample reported their race as Caucasian (66.7%) followed by African American (14.3%). The remaining adolescent participants identified themselves as the following races: Latino/a American (6.3%), Asian American (4.8%), Native American (3.2%), Bi-racial (1.6%), and Multi-racial (3.2%). Table A1, pp.117-118, also displays the race demographics.

**Parent education and income.** A little over a third of the parents reported their highest level of education being a Bachelor's degree (35.4%), followed by some

college/Associate's degree (30.3%), and a Master's degree (26.3%). Table A2, p. 119, displays parent education level. Almost a third of the parents in this study reported an annual income of more than \$100,001 per year (31.3%), with incomes of \$20,001 – \$40,000 (18.8%) and \$40,001 - \$60,000 (17.7%) being reported by about another third of the parents (Table A3, p. 120).

**Parent marital status and employment status.** The majority of the parents reported they were either married or living a partner (68.7%) followed by divorced or separated (19.2%) (Table A4, p.121). Parents reported working full time at least 40 hours a week (56.6%), being a stay-at-home parent (12.1%), and being full-time student (12.1%) as the most common employment statuses (Table A5, p. 122).

**Parent and adolescent reports of religion.** The most common religious affiliation for both parents (27.8%) and adolescents (22.2%) was non-denominational. For the parents, the next most reported religious affiliation was “other” (15.5%) and then Baptist (16.5%). The “other” affiliations that were given included pagan ( $n = 2$ ) and spiritual/non-religious ( $n = 2$ ). Mormon/Latter-day Saints (14.3%) and Catholic (14.3%) were the second most common religious affiliations as reported by the adolescents. Table A6, pp. 123-124, displays religious affiliations as reported by both parents and adolescents.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

An application to conduct research was submitted to the Texas Woman's University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Upon acceptance and approval of the

research proposal (Appendix B), the researcher contacted centers for permission to distribute flyers or to leave flyers (Appendix C) at the centers. An email was also sent out campus wide to all faculty, staff and students at TWU stating that if interested to contact the researcher (Appendix D). Students in an Early Childhood Education class at Collin College were also recruited via the course instructor. In addition, participants were recruited via snowball sampling on Facebook (Appendix E).

Participants were informed that the study might involve some risk in that the subject matter is of a sensitive topic for the age of the adolescents. However, previous research indicates that there are adolescents as young as 12 years engaging in vaginal, oral, and anal sex (Markham et al., 2009; Waylen et al., 2010). While the percentage of early adolescents engaging in these behaviors is small, it is important to study the sexual knowledge, values and beliefs of this young age group to determine which contexts or agents (media, parents, peers, and/or religiosity) contribute to their knowledge, values and beliefs about sex. Participants were informed that their participation was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw their participation at any time.

The confidentiality of the information obtained was maintained to the fullest extent possible. The issue of harm, confidentiality, and consent was addressed in the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application. To ensure the participation of both parent and adolescent, each pair of adolescent and parent/caregiver were given a unique survey ID number. This was for the researcher to match the adolescent survey with the parent/caregiver survey for data analysis only.

PsychData, a professional online survey company, was used to host the surveys. Access to the results of the surveys was available only to the researcher and faculty supervisor via a secure username and password. No identifying information such as the participant names, addresses, or e-mail address were used to identify the participants. Internet Provider (IP) addresses and e-mail addresses were deleted so that they could not be used to track down or identify the participants. Every effort was made to ensure the protection and confidentiality of the participants' identity.

### **Instruments**

This study used two surveys, one for adolescents and one for parents, and a TV mediation scale for adolescents and parents to collect the data. Both of the surveys were created by the researcher to gather data that is lacking in previous research, such as what early adolescents are watching on television, viewing on the computer, and listening to on the radio/iPod/MP3 player, and how religious affiliation influences mass media intake and sexual knowledge, values, and beliefs of adolescents. The surveys also elicited information from parents and adolescents as to what sexual topics are being discussed by parents and with peers. Demographic information was embedded in each survey at the beginning.

**Adolescent survey.** The adolescent survey (Appendix F) was a 58-question survey created by the researcher to elicit demographic information (adolescents' age, gender, race, and religious affiliation), information concerning their media habits, their knowledge and views about sex, their level of religiosity, and any communication they

might have with a parent/caregiver and peers about sex. The survey elicited information about the types of media that is in the home and what types of media the adolescent has access to in his/her room. Opened-ended questions were used to gather information about the adolescent's favorite TV shows, music artist and music videos and why these are their favorite shows, artists, and music videos. Adolescents were also asked about their internet use and whether or not they have been exposed to pornography on the internet. Adolescents were asked about their religious beliefs and practices. Adolescents were asked about their feelings about seeing sexual content on TV. Adolescents were also asked their thoughts about relationships and sex. The survey included open-ended questions asking the adolescents to state what sort of topics their parents discussed with them about sex, if their parents in fact do talk to them about sex and what, if anything, do they discuss with their peers about sex.

**Parent/caregiver survey.** The parent/caregiver survey (Appendix G) is a 53-item survey that was created by the researcher to elicit demographic information such as parents' age, gender, race, marital status, parent education, income, employment status, and religion. The survey also elicited information about types of media in the home and available to their adolescent, how and how often they perceive their child uses the TV, internet, stereo/iPod, MP3 player, and what content they perceive their child is viewing or listening to. The parents/caregivers were asked their thoughts on adolescent relationships and sex, if they talk to their adolescents about sex and what topics do they discuss.



**TV Mediation Scale.** The TV Mediation Scale (see Appendix H) is a 15-item scale developed by Valkenburg et al. (1999) to measure three styles of mediation: social co-viewing, active or instructive mediation, and restrictive media. This scale was modified for the adolescents, so that they could report on their parents' mediation style (see Appendix I). Cronbach's alpha for the three subscales for this study were 0.89 for active mediation (parent) and 0.80 active mediation (adolescent), 0.83 for restrictive mediation (parent) and 0.83 restrictive mediation (adolescent), and 0.94 social co-viewing (parent) and 0.87 social co-viewing (adolescent).

### **Procedure**

Upon receiving permission from the Texas Woman's University IRB to conduct research, the researcher uploaded the surveys to a secure host via PsychData. The researcher then contacted area centers to ask for permission to distribute flyers or to leave flyers at the centers containing information about the study, the researcher, and links to the online surveys. The researcher made arrangements with each center as to determine the best days and times to recruit participants or to leave flyers. Each center director filled out a consent form (Appendix J) before the researcher could be in the center or leave flyers at the center.

The participants were recruited from centers that host afterschool care and activities for adolescents and a parenting center. The researcher handed out flyers to the parents as they entered the centers to pick up their child in the evenings. Parents were spoken to personally by the researcher and given a flyer about the research study. The

researcher also left flyers at some centers that wanted the flyers left instead soliciting parents in the evenings. Participants were also recruited via email and Facebook. Potential participants were instructed to contact the researcher for a copy of the flyer electronically. The flyer contained information about the study, information about the researcher, including the names, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses of the researcher and the research advisor. The flyer also contained a link to each survey and the matching unique survey ID number for both parent and adolescent. Parents were instructed that if they and their child chose to participate in the study, the survey link would take them to the main page where they would enter the password to enter the survey. Once the survey was opened they were asked to enter their unique survey ID number. This was to ensure that both parent/caregiver and adolescent completed the survey and a matched set would be available for analysis. Once the unique survey ID was entered, parents would then click on “parent” to enter the parent survey and the adolescent would click on “adolescent” to enter the adolescent survey. Parents/caregivers were instructed to take the survey first so they could view the adolescent survey before giving or declining consent. Parents were also instructed, if they chose to participate, to complete the parent survey privately and to let their adolescent complete the adolescent survey privately to ensure the most accurate responses.

Once a parent and adolescent agreed to participate, they were to log onto the survey, enter their respective survey, and they were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The participants were

then assured of the confidentiality of their answers and that the website containing the study was housed on a secure server that was only accessible to the researcher and faculty advisor via a protected username and password. The participants were able to read the consent (for parent/caregiver) or assent (for adolescents) to participate that explained the purpose of the study and were able to accept or decline participation in the study.

### **Summary**

This chapter is a review of the methodology that includes a description of the participants, procedures for collecting data, and treatment of data. Descriptions of the survey instruments that were used to gather data and reliability of the TV mediation scale are also discussed as well as the confidentiality of the participants. Parents and adolescents were asked to complete the survey, including demographic information, online and in private. The TV mediation scale was included at the end of both the parent and adolescent surveys.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

A researcher-produced questionnaire, the TV Mediation Scale (Valkenburg et al., 1999), a modified version of the TV Mediation Scale were available online via PsychData to parents and adolescents who consented to be part of this study. A total of 162 participants completed the survey: 99 parents and 63 adolescents. This chapter discusses the statistical analysis and findings of the study.

#### **Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed using SPSS Version 21. The following descriptive analyses were computed for demographics: age of adolescents and range of ages for parents, gender of parents and adolescents, race of parents and adolescents, religious affiliations for parents and adolescents, and parent education, income, marital status and employment status. For media, the average number of TVs and computers in the house and average time spend watching TV or on the internet was computed. The percent of adolescents who had private access to TV, cable, computer and internet and the percent of adolescents who had been exposed to mature media on TV and the internet was also computed. Religiosity descriptives were computed for the percent and frequency of church attendance and prayer, youth group activity, and importance of faith. Average time spent with peers and average time watching mature media with peers was computed, as well as percentages for perceived level of peer influence and how often they discuss

sex with peers. Percent of how often parents talked to their adolescents about sex was computed for parents and adolescents as well as mean levels of active mediation for both parents and adolescents. The frequency and percent of accurate sexual knowledge and when adolescents believed sex to be okay (sexual values and beliefs) were also computed.

Three different path analyses, via additive moderation, were used to analyze research questions 1 and 2 and parts of hypotheses 1, 2, and 4. The first path analyzed the impact of mature media on adolescent sexual values and beliefs and whether parent communication about sex and religiosity served as moderators in this relationship (Figure K1, p. 179). Mature media was entered as the predictor variable, followed by the moderator variables of parent communication and religiosity. The outcome variable was adolescent sexual values and beliefs. The second path analyzed the impact of peer influence on adolescent sexual values and beliefs and whether parent communication about sex and religiosity served as moderators in this relationship (Figure K2, p. 180). Peer influence was entered as the predictor variable, followed by the moderator variables of parent communication and religiosity. The outcome variable was adolescent sexual values and beliefs. The third path analyzed the impact mature media had on adolescent sexual knowledge and whether parent communication about sex and religiosity served as moderators in this relationship (Figure K3, p. 181). Mature media was entered first as the predictor variable, followed by the moderator variables of parent communication about sex and religiosity. The outcome variable was adolescent accurate sexual knowledge. By

entering the predictor and moderator variables one at a time, the influence of the predictor variables on the outcome variables can be examined as well as the interaction between the moderator variables.

Hypothesis 1. Adolescents who have private access to screen media will be exposed to more mature media content and will hold more liberal values and beliefs about sex than adolescents who do not have private access.

A hierarchical regression analysis was used to predict a relationship between private access to media, the exposure to mature media and adolescent values and beliefs about sex. Private media access (adolescents who have or do not have access to a TV, cable, computer, and internet in their bedroom) and mature media were the predictor variables and the outcome variable was sexual values and beliefs.

Mature media was determined by the responses given to questions: “*What are you 5 favorite non-reality TV shows?*” and “*What reality TV shows do you watch?*” Shows were coded as sexually mature based on the TV parental guidelines. Shows that are rated as TV14 (parents strongly cautioned) and TVMA (mature audience only) were coded as *mature* media. Shows that are rated as TVY (all children), TVY7 (directed to older children), TVY7FV (directed to older children – fantasy violence), and TVG (general audience) were coded as *All Audiences* media. Shows that are rated PG (parental guidance suggested) were coded as *PG*. Mature media was then recoded as a 0 (no mature media) or 1 (yes mature media).

Values and beliefs about sex were measured based on the response from the question: “*When do you think it is ok to have sex with someone?*” The responses were measured on a 5-point scale (1 = whenever you want because sex is no big deal, 2 = when you really like someone and they like you, 3 = when you are dating or going together, 4 = when you are engaged to be married, 5 = only when you are married). The variable was then recoded as “SexOk” on a 3-point scale with 1 & 2 = liberal (1), 3 & 4 = moderate (2), and 5 = conservative (3).

Hypothesis 2. Adolescents who spend more time with their peers, who discuss sex and relationships with their peers more often, who believe their peers strongly influence their values and beliefs about sex, and who watch sexually mature shows with their peers will have more liberal values and beliefs about sex than adolescents who spend less time with their peers, who discuss sex and relationships with their peers less often, who believe their peers do not strongly influence their values and beliefs about sex, and who do not watch sexually mature shows with their peers.

A linear regression via moderation analysis was used to predict a relationship between peers influence and sexual values and beliefs. Average amount of time with peers was based on the answer given to question 24 of the adolescent survey. Amount of time discussing sex and relationships with peers was measured on a 5-point scale (1 = never, 2 = a little bit, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all the time) from question 26. Perceived peer influence was measured on a 5-point scale (1 = none, 2 = a little bit, 3 = some, 4 = a lot, 5 = all) from the question: “*About how much do you agree with your*

*friends' views about sex and dating?"* Sexually mature shows watched with peers were based on the response given to the question: *"What television shows do you watch with your peers?"* Shows were coded the same way as described above under the previous hypothesis. All of the coded responses were then added together to form the new "Peer Influence" predictor variable. Values and beliefs about sex were measured the same as in Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 3. Adolescents with more conservative religious values will have less accurate knowledge about sex and will hold more conservative values and beliefs about sex compared to adolescents who have more liberal religious values. Also, adolescents with more conservative religious values will be less likely to discuss sex with their parents compared to adolescents who have more liberal religious values.

Mediation analysis, via multiple linear regression, was used to determine if parent communication acts as a mediator in the relationship between religiosity and sexual values and beliefs and in the relationship between religiosity and accurate sexual knowledge. Adolescent religiosity was the predictor variable and sexual knowledge and sexual values and beliefs were the outcome variables. Parent communication was added as a mediator variable to determine whether parent communication changes the relationship between religiosity and sexual values and beliefs and religiosity and accurate knowledge.

Adolescent religiosity was based on the responses given to the questions: *"How often do you attend church?"* *"How involved are you in your church's youth group?"*



*“How important is your religion/faith to you?”* and *“How often do you pray?”* Each question’s responses were a 5-point scale. Based on the adolescents’ answers, religiosity was coded as follows: 1 = very liberal, 2 = liberal, 3 = moderate, 4 = conservative, 5 = very conservative. The scores on these four questions were added together to form the “Religiosity” variable, which had a range from 4 to 20 with 4 being very liberal and 20 being very conservative.

Accurate knowledge about sex was based upon the responses to the question: *“What do you think sex is?”* Responses were transcribed and coded as 1 = no knowledge/not accurate at all, 2 = somewhat accurate, 3 = very accurate to form the “Accurate Knowledge” variable. Values and beliefs about sex were measured the same as in hypothesis 1.

Communication with parents about sex was based on the question: *“Do your parents/caregivers ever talk to you about sex?”* Frequency of conversations about sex was used to assess communication about sex with parents. Frequency of conversations was coded on a 5-point scale (1 = no, never; 2 = yes, but rarely; 3 = yes, sometimes; 4 = yes, often; 5 = yes, all the time) and renamed as the “Parent Talk About Sex” variable.

Hypothesis 4. Adolescents whose parents discuss sex with them and who use higher levels of active mediation will have more accurate knowledge about sex and have more conservative values and beliefs about sex than adolescents whose parents do not discuss sex with them and who use lower levels of active mediation.

Two multiple regression analyses were used to predict a relationship between frequency of parent communication “Parent Talk About Sex”, level of active mediation and adolescent sexual knowledge, values and beliefs. This analysis determined whether or not frequent parent communication about sex and higher levels of active mediation contributed to adolescents having more accurate knowledge about sex and more conservative values and beliefs about sex.

Communication with parents about sex was measured the same way as discussed in the previous hypothesis. Active mediation was based on the adolescents’ responses to the questions related to active mediation on the TV Mediation Scale (Valkenburg et al., 1999). Responses to the five questions concerning active mediation (How often does your parent...1)...*try to help you understand what you see on TV?* 2)...*point out why some things actors do are good?* 3)...*point out why some things actors do are bad?* 4)...*explain the motives of TV characters?* 5)...*explain what something on TV means?*) was added together using the “Transform-Compute variable” function in SPSS to form the active mediation for adolescent variable. Accurate knowledge about sex was measured the same way as discussed in the previous hypothesis. Values and beliefs about sex were also measured the same way as described above under the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5. There will be a difference in what parents/caregivers say they discuss with their adolescents in terms of sex and what adolescents say their parents/caregivers are discussing with them in terms of sex.

Parents' responses to open ended questions about what they discuss about sex with their young adolescent were transcribed and coded into themes. There were five predetermined themes (abstinence/timing, contraception, STDs, pregnancy/motherhood, and peer pressure) that were looked for with consideration of other themes becoming apparent from the responses. Adolescents' responses to open ended questions about what their parents discuss with them about sex were also transcribed and coded into the same five themes, with consideration of other themes that presented themselves from the adolescents' responses. Parents and adolescents were matched up via their unique survey ID. A new variable was created for the matching analysis. If both parents and adolescents reported at least one common theme, they were coded as a match. If the parent and the adolescent did not report at least one common theme, they were coded as no match. It was expected that parents' reports of sexual conversation topics would be different from those of the adolescents' reports of sexual conversation topics.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

#### **Media**

Adolescents reported having between 0 and 6 televisions ( $M = 2.98$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ) and between 1 and 6 computers ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ) in their house and spending an average of 2.30 ( $SD = 1.43$ ) hours per day watching TV and 1.73 ( $SD = 1.73$ ) hours per day on the internet. Private access to TV, cable, computer, and internet were also reported with 42.6% having private access to TV, 39.3% having private access to cable, 41.0% having private access to a computer, and 54.8% having private access to the internet.

Overall, 72.6% of the adolescents had private access to any type of media. The majority of the adolescents (53.2%) reported watching TV shows that had adult situations such as sexual language, sex, or bad language, but only 8.1% reported looking at adult sites, such as pornography, on the internet. Table A7, p. 125, details the amount of time adolescents report watching TV and on the internet, the types of media in the home and the frequency and percent of private access to media, watching mature media, and viewing pornography by adolescents.

The majority of the shows, watched by adolescents, in the reality genre were rated “PG” (parental guidance suggested) (54%) followed by “Mature” reality shows (29%). In the non-reality genres, “G” (general audiences) rated shows were the most common (64%) followed by “PG” rated shows (62%). For the reality genre, the most popular shows with a PG rating included *American Idol*, *The Amazing Race*, *Duck Dynasty*, *Survivor*, *The Voice*, *The Biggest Loser*, and *Cake Boss*. The most popular G rated shows in the non-reality genre include: *Good Luck Charlie*, *Sponge Bob Square Pants*, *Austin and Ally*, *The Wizards of Waverly Place*, and *My Little Pony*. The most popular PG rated shows, in the non-reality genre, the adolescents reported watching included *The Regular Show*, *Adventure Time*, *Modern Family*, and *Dr. Who*. Table A8, p. 126, details the most frequent categories of G, PG, and Mature rated reality and non-reality shows.

### **Religiosity**

To assess religiosity, adolescents were asked about their church attendance, their frequency of prayer, youth group activity level, and importance of their faith. Almost half

(47.6%) stated that their religion/faith was very important to them, and almost half (44.4%) attended church on a weekly basis. About a third (30.2%) reported praying several times a day and being somewhat involved in their church's youth group. Table A9, p. 127-128, reports the frequency and percent of adolescent religiosity

### **Peer Influence**

Peer influence was assessed by amount of time spent with peers, amount of time spent watching mature media with peers, perceived level of peer influence, and how often they discussed sex with peers. Overall, adolescents reported spending between 0 and 50 hours per week ( $M = 5.20$ ,  $SD = 7.61$ ) with peers and watching between 0 and 5 hours of mature media ( $M = .28$ ,  $SD = .83$ ) with their peers. About half of the adolescents (49.2%) stated that they never talk to their peers about sex, 28.8% talked to their peers a little bit about sex, and 15.9% stated they sometimes talk to their peers about sex. Almost half of the adolescents (44.4%) believed their peers had no influence on them, while 25.4% perceived their peers had a little bit of influence on them. About 12.7 % stated that their peers had some influence on them and 11.1% stated their peers had a lot of influence on them. Table A10, p. 129, displays the amount of time spent with peers, amount of time watching mature media with peers, frequency and percent of perceived level of peer influence and how often they discuss sex with peers. The most common items adolescents discussed with their peers included: who they liked (52%), dating in general (like going out on dates) (34%), and sex related topics (28%) such as puberty, condoms,

pregnancy, and when to have sex. Table A11, p. 130, lists the most common items adolescents discussed with their peers.

### **Parent Communication**

Both parents and adolescents were asked if the parents talked to the adolescents about sex. Of the parents, 43.4% stated that they talk to their adolescent “sometimes” about sex, 21.2% stated they talk to their adolescent “often” about sex, 20.2% reported talking about sex “rarely” to their adolescent, and 15.2% stated they “never” talk to their adolescent about sex. Of the adolescents’ responses, 25.4% of the adolescents stated that their parents talk to them “sometimes” about sex, 6.3% stated their parents talk to them “often” about sex, 38.1% reported their parents rarely talk to them about sex, and 27.0% stated that their parents “never” talk to them about sex. Table A12, p. 131, displays the frequency and percent of if and how often parents talk to their adolescent about sex as reported by parents and adolescents.

### **Active Mediation**

Active mediation was measured using the TV Mediation Scale (Valkenburg et al., 1999). The mediation scores for parent and adolescent were based on the responses to the five questions concerning active mediation. Parents’ level of active mediation scores ranged from 4.20 to 16.80 ( $M = 13.75$ ,  $SD = 2.67$ ) and adolescents’ reported level of parents’ active mediation scores also ranged from 4.20 to 16.80 ( $M = 11.05$ ,  $SD = 3.17$ ). Table A13, p. 132, lists the overall levels of all three mediation styles as reported by the parents and adolescents.

### **Sexual Values and Beliefs and Accurate Sexual Knowledge**

Sexual values and beliefs were based on the adolescents' responses to when they thought it was okay to have sex with someone. The majority of the adolescents (71.0%) chose the response "only when you are married," 22.6% chose the response "when you are engaged to be married," and 3.2% chose the responses "when you are dating or going together" and "when you really like someone and they like you." Half (50.0%) were determined to have a little accurate knowledge about sex, 37.9% had no knowledge or no accurate knowledge about sex, and 12.1% was determined to have very accurate knowledge about sex. Table A14, p. 133, details the frequency and percent of sexual values and beliefs and accurate sexual knowledge.

### **Main Analyses**

This section describes the hypotheses for the study and the statistical results for each hypothesis and the overall models. Interpretation and discussion of the results are detailed in chapter 5.

Three overall moderation regression analyses were conducted to determine whether or not religiosity and parent communication are moderators in the relationships of peer influence and sexual knowledge, peer influence and sexual values and beliefs, mature media and sexual knowledge, and mature media and sexual values and beliefs.

To conduct moderation and mediation analysis the *PROCESS* command is needed in SPSS. *PROCESS* is a computational procedure for SPSS that implements mediation analysis, moderation analysis and the combination of the two in an integrated conditional

process model (Hayes, 2012). Using *PROCESS* allowed the researcher to test for direct and indirect effects in mediation and mediated moderation models, conditional effects in moderation models and conditional indirect effects in moderated mediation models with one or multiple moderators. *PROCESS* is available for free to download from <http://www.afhayes.com/>. Once the file is downloaded, opened as an SPSS syntax, and executed entirely, the *PROCESS* command is added to the SPSS command dictionary and is accessed through the regression menu.

Hypothesis 1: Adolescents who have private access to screen media will be exposed to more mature media content and will hold more liberal values and beliefs about sex.

The overall model (Figure K4, p. 182) for mature media predicting sexual values and beliefs was not significant,  $F(5, 56) = .62, p > .05, R^2 = .10$ . The predictor variable of mature media,  $B = .07, t(56) = 1.20, p > .05$ , and the moderator variables of parent communication,  $B = -.18, t(56) = -1.52, p > .05$ , and religiosity,  $B = .01, t(56) = .54, p > .05$ , were not found to be significant predictors of sexual values and beliefs. The interactions of mature media and parent communication,  $B = .08, t(56) = 1.23, p > .05$ , and mature media and religiosity,  $B = -.01, t(56) = -1.02, p > .05$ , were also found to not be significant predictors of sexual values and beliefs.

The predictor variables of private access to media and mature media were then entered into a linear regression model one at a time based on hierarchy, with private access to media being entered first and then mature media. The hierarchical regression



analysis revealed no significant results for the model,  $F(2, 58) = .49, p > .05$ . Neither of the predictor variables of private media access,  $B = .04, t(58) = .20, p > .05$ , or mature media,  $B = .06, t(58) = .96, p > .05$ , yielded significant results (Table A15, p. 134). This could be due to the fact that 72.6% adolescents reported that they had private access to media in general, thus skewing the results.

Hypothesis 2: Adolescents who spend more time with their peers, who discuss sex and relationships with their peer more often, who believe their peers strongly influence their values and beliefs about sex, and who watch sexually mature shows with their peers will have more liberal values and beliefs about sex than adolescents who spend less time with their peers, who discuss sex and relationships with their peers less often, who believe their peers do not strongly influence their values and beliefs about sex, and who do not watch sexually mature show with their peers.

A linear regression via moderation analysis was used to predict a relationship between peer influence and sexual values and beliefs with parent communication and religiosity entered in as moderators. The overall model (Figure K5, p. 183) was found to be significant,  $F(5, 56) = 2.72, p < .05, R^2 = .17$ . The predictor variable of peer influence was found to be a significant predictor in adolescents' sexual values and beliefs,  $B = -.03, t(56) = -2.03, p < .05$ ; however, the moderator variables of parent communication,  $B = -.12, t(56) = -1.05, p > .05$  and religiosity,  $B = .00, t(56) = .22, p > .05$ , were not found to be direct predictors of sexual values and beliefs (Table A16, p. 135). The interactions of peer influence by parent communication,  $B = .01, t(56) = .73, p > .05$  and peer influence

by religiosity,  $B = .00$ ,  $t(56) = .86$ ,  $p > .05$  were not significant, but parent communication and religiosity were found to be moderators in the peer influence and sexual values and beliefs relationship. Peer influence was found to be greatest on adolescents who have levels of parent communication and religiosity that are low,  $B = -.035$ , 95% CI  $[-0.067, -0.003]$ ,  $t(56) = -2.18$ ,  $p < .03$ , or average,  $B = -.034$ , 95% CI  $[-0.068, -0.0004]$ ,  $t(56) = -2.03$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Hypothesis 3: Adolescents with more conservative religious values will have less accurate knowledge about sex and will hold more conservative values and beliefs about sex compared to adolescents who have more liberal religious values. Also, adolescents with more conservative values will be less likely to discuss sex with their parents compared to adolescents who have more liberal religious values.

Mediation analysis via multiple linear regression was used to predict two different relationships: 1) between religiosity, parent communication and sexual values and beliefs, and 2) between religiosity, parent communication and sexual knowledge. The analysis revealed that the model (Figure K7, p. 185) for religiosity and parent communication was significant,  $F(1, 60) = 8.18$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $R^2 = .12$ , with religiosity being a significant predictor of parent communication,  $B = .08$ ,  $t(60) = 2.86$ ,  $p < .05$  (Table A17, p. 136). The overall model for religiosity predicting sexual values and beliefs with parent communication as the mediator was not significant,  $F(2, 59) = 1.79$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $R^2 = .06$ . For this model, religiosity,  $B = .01$ ,  $t(59) = .65$ ,  $p > .05$ , and parent communication,  $B = -.18$ ,  $t(59) = -2.00$ ,  $p > .05$  (Table A18, p. 137), did not predict sexual values and beliefs. Finally, the

analysis revealed that religiosity did not have a significant indirect effect on sexual knowledge and beliefs,  $B = -.01$ , 95% CI  $[-.04, .00]$ . This means parent communication is not a mediator in the relationship of religiosity and sexual values.

The second mediation analysis via path analysis predicting a relationship between religiosity, parent communication and accurate sexual knowledge yielded more significant results. The overall model (Figure K8, p. 186) for religiosity and parent communication was significant,  $F(1, 56) = 12.19$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $R^2 = .18$ , with religiosity being a significant predictor for parent communication,  $B = .10$ ,  $t(56) = 3.49$ ,  $p < .05$  (Table A19, p. 138). The overall model for religiosity predicting accurate sexual knowledge with parent communication as a mediator was also significant,  $F(2, 55) = 10.16$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $R^2 = .27$ . Parent communication was a significant predictor of accurate sexual knowledge,  $B = .30$ ,  $t(55) = 3.48$ ,  $p < .05$ . Religiosity was not found to have a direct effect on sexual knowledge,  $B = .03$ ,  $t(55) = 1.13$ ,  $p > .05$  (Table A20, p. 139), but was found to have an indirect effect on sexual knowledge,  $B = .03$ , 95% CI  $[.01, .06]$ , meaning parent communication is a mediator of the relationship of religiosity and accurate sexual knowledge. This represents a small effect  $\kappa^2 = .20$ , 95% CI  $[.07, .35]$ .

Hypothesis 4: Adolescents whose parents discuss sex with them and who use higher levels of active mediation will have more accurate knowledge about sex and have more conservative values and beliefs about sex than adolescents whose parents do not discuss sex with them and who use lower levels of active mediation.

In the overall model (Figure K6, p. 184) for mature media predicting accurate sexual knowledge,  $F(5, 52) = 6.44, p < .05, R^2 = .30$ , the moderator variable of parent communication was found to be a direct predictor of accurate sexual knowledge,  $B = .28, t(52) = 3.20, p < .05$ . In the overall model for mature media predicting sexual values and beliefs (Figure K4, p. 182), the moderator variable of parent communication,  $B = -.18, t(56) = -1.52, p > .05$ , was not found to be a significant predictor of sexual values and beliefs.

Two multiple regression analyses were then used to predict a relationship between parent communication, level of active mediation and accurate sexual knowledge and parent communication, level of active mediation and sexual values and beliefs. The results revealed the overall model for sexual knowledge was significant,  $F(2, 48) = 9.50, p < .05, R^2 = .30$ . Parent communication was found to be a predictor of accurate sexual knowledge,  $B = .30, t(48) = 3.36, p < .05$ , but active mediation was not a predictor of accurate sexual knowledge,  $B = .05, t(48) = 1.70, p > .05$  (Table A21, p. 140). The overall model for sexual values and beliefs was also significant,  $F(2, 52) = 4.14, p < .05, R^2 = .14$ . Parent communication,  $B = -.21, t(50) = -2.53, p < .05$ , and active mediation,  $B = .06, t(50) = 2.10, p < .05$  (Table A22, p. 141), were both found to be significant predictors of adolescent sexual values and beliefs.

Hypothesis 5: There will be a difference in what parents/caregivers say they discuss with their adolescents in terms of sex and what the adolescents say their parents/caregivers are discussing with them in terms of sex.

Parents' and adolescents' answers were coded to find themes that were discussed. Twelve overall themes emerged from the parents and adolescents. Parents and adolescents were then matched up via their unique participant ID. A new variable was created for the matching analysis. If both parent and adolescent reported at least one common theme, they were coded as a match. If the parent and adolescent did not report at least one common theme, they were coded as no match. Parent ID's that did not have a corresponding adolescent ID and adolescent ID's that did not have a corresponding parent ID were omitted from this analysis. The majority of the pairs (68%) did not report common themes, while 32% did and were coded as a match. Table A23, p. 142, shows the frequency and percent of match/no match. The themes most commonly reported as matches were abstinence/timing (21%), pregnancy/motherhood (12%), and puberty/biological changes (9%). The themes most frequently reported overall by parents were dating/relationships/love (30%), abstinence/timing (27%), and pregnancy/motherhood (26%). The themes most frequently reported overall by adolescents were abstinence/timing (31%), pregnancy/motherhood (18%), and the physical act of sex (18%). Table A24, pp. 143-144, lists responses for each theme for both parents and adolescents, and Figure K9, p. 187, shows a bar graph with themes and the reporting percent for adolescents and parents. Not all of the adolescents answered the question pertaining to what their parents talk to them regarding sex. Some of the responses given instead were "I don't know" and "I don't want to answer that." There

were also instances where the adolescent did answer this question, but their parents did not.

### **Summary**

This chapter details the data analysis strategy and results of a quantitative research study. Research questions 1 and 2 and hypotheses 1, 2, and 4 were addressed using three different path analyses, via additive moderation. Hypothesis 3 was addressed using mediation analysis via multiple linear regression. Research question 3 and hypothesis five were addressed with transcribing and coding themes to look for matches and discrepancies. Overall, the predictor variable of mature media, and the moderator variables of parent communication and religiosity were not found to be significant predictors of sexual values and beliefs. The predictor variable of peer influence, however, was found to be a significant predictor of sexual values and beliefs. The predictor variables of mature media and peer influence and the moderator variable of religiosity were not found to be significant predictors of accurate sexual knowledge, but the moderator variable of parent communication was found to be a significant predictor.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

The first four chapters of this study detailed the rationale of the study, the review of the literature, the research methodology, the statistical analysis, and the findings of the research. This chapter discusses the data and the findings in detail, the limitations of the study, and the implications for future research.

#### **Discussion**

##### **Private Media Access**

Hypothesis one stated that adolescents who have private access to screen media will be exposed to more mature media content and will hold more liberal values and beliefs about sex. This hypothesis was not found to be supported. Neither private access to media or mature media content were found to be significant predictors of sexual values and beliefs. This could be due to the fact that the majority of the adolescents (72.6%) indicated they had private access to media in general, thus skewing the results.

It was found that the majority of the shows the adolescents watched in the reality genre were rated PG. The majority of shows the adolescents watched in the non-reality genre were rated G, followed by shows with the PG rating. While the PG rating suggests parental guidance, the majority of these PG reality shows do not include blatant adult material, such as nudity, adult language and sexual situations. The exception would be *Survivor*, which has had nudity and casual “hook-ups” in several seasons. Although the

adolescents were exposed to some adult content, this exposure alone did not have an impact on their values and beliefs about sex. According to cultivation theory, the adolescents would have to be heavy viewers of adult content in order for the adult content to have an impact on their values and beliefs about sex. It is how the adolescents perceive, process and internalize the adult content, how they interpret what they are watching, that would impact their values and beliefs. If they see the adult content as part of the show for entertainment purposes and not as an accurate view of reality, then the content has not been interpreted in such a way that will influence the adolescents' values and belief. According to Taylor (2005), adolescents who view sexual content on television as real or more realistic are more likely to be influenced by what they see and are more likely to have permissive attitudes and beliefs about sex.

### **Peer Influence**

Hypothesis two addressed peer influence; stating that early adolescents who are more influenced by their peers will have more liberal values and beliefs about sex than adolescents who are less influenced by their peers. With about half of the adolescents reporting that they talk to their friends at least a little bit about sex, dating and relationships, peer influence was found to be a significant predictor of adolescent sexual values and beliefs. The most common items adolescents discussed with their peers was who they liked, dating in general (like going out on dates), and sex related topics such as puberty, condoms, pregnancy, and when to have sex. It was found that the more peer influence, the more liberal their values and beliefs about sex.



It was found that although parent communication and religiosity did not directly predict adolescent values and beliefs about sex; they were moderators in the relationship of peer influence and sexual values and beliefs. Peer influence was found to be greatest on adolescents who had low or average communication with their parents about sex and who had low or average religious values. Adolescents who had little to no conversations about sex with their parents and who had little or no religious values were more likely to be influenced by their peers in their values and beliefs about sex. This is consistent with previous research that found parent communication about sex and religiosity to be protective factors against early debut of sexual activity. Adolescents whose parents talk to them about sex before they begin having sex have been found to be more likely to prolong first intercourse and know about more birth control methods (Clawson & Reese-Weber, 2003; Miller et al., 1998). Previous studies also found that adolescents who are more religious are more likely to delay first intercourse (Rostosky et al., 2003) and are more likely to watch less sexually mature television shows and movies (Bobkowski, 2009; Collins et al., 2004). For this study, while parent communication and religiosity did not directly influence sexual values and beliefs, they were found to be protective factors against peer influence. Adolescents whose parents talk with them about sex and who were more religious were less likely to be influenced by their peers' sexual values and beliefs.

This finding supports social cognitive theory in that peer relationships can influence an array of behaviors, both good and bad. Adolescents who have friends who

engage in prosocial activities are more likely to engage in the same types of activities (Prinstein et al., 2001). Adolescents who had less peer influences had more conservative values and beliefs about sex. When adolescents are around peers who take more risks and see risky behavior more positively, they may make more risky decisions as opposed to when they are by themselves (Gardner & Steinberg, 2005). Adolescents in this study who had more peer influence had more liberal values and beliefs about sex. At this age, peers are becoming increasingly more influential than parents (Sumter et al., 2009) and may serve as the model to which adolescents imitate. Without parent communication and religiosity, adolescents in this study were more likely to adopt their peers' values and beliefs about sex. Adolescents in this study who had more peer influence and less parent communication and who were less religious had more liberal values and beliefs about sex. Adolescents are more likely to imitate the behaviors and even adopt the ideals of their peers if they see their peers as being similar to themselves. In accordance with social cognitive theory, this imitating of behaviors and adopting of ideals does not happen overnight, but rather over prolonged exposure to peers and their behaviors and ideals. The more time adolescents spend with their peers the more likely they are to imitate behaviors and adopt the same ideals. Since peer influence was a composite variable, amount of time spent with peers, perceptions of peer influence, discussions of sex and relationships and sex, and watching sexually mature media with peers were all accounted for in one variable, therefore all seem to be influences on adolescent sexual values and

beliefs. More overall influence of peers with liberal values and beliefs about sex lead to more liberal values and beliefs about sex for the adolescents in this study.

An implication of this finding would be for parent educators to help make parents aware of how their adolescents' peers can influence their decisions on watching mature media, sexual knowledge, and sexual values and beliefs. However, parent educators can also inform parents that parent communication and religiosity are strong combatants of peer influences. More parent discussions about sex and more religious involvement can negate bad peer influence.

### **Religiosity and Parent Communication**

Hypothesis three looked at adolescent religious values, parent communication, accurate knowledge about sex, and sexual values and beliefs. Religiosity significantly predicted level of parent communication but did not significantly predict sexual values and beliefs. Parent communication was also not a significant predictor of sexual values and beliefs. The more religious the adolescents, the more they talked to their parents about sex. However, just because the adolescents discussed sex with their parents and were religious, they did not necessarily hold more conservative values and beliefs about sex. Parent communication was not found to be a mediator in this relationship, meaning religiosity did not predict sexual values and beliefs through parent communication. Just because religious adolescents discussed sex with their parents, it does not mean those conversations influenced the adolescents' values and beliefs about sex. Religiosity did predict accurate knowledge about sex through parent communication. Parents and

adolescents with more conservative religious values reported more parent-adolescent communication about sex. Religious adolescents who talked to their parents more about sex obtained more accurate information about sex. This was an interesting finding because based on previous research, parents with no religious affiliation are the ones who report talking with ease about sex with their adolescent (Regnerus, 2005), and in this study, the majority of the parents and adolescents reported some sort of religious affiliation.

An implication of this finding is that awareness needs to be created among parents for them to know and understand the magnitude of the influences religiosity and parent communication have on adolescent knowledge, values and beliefs about sex. Parents need to understand that their adolescent may know more about the subject than they are letting on and that it is never too early to discuss sex with their child as long as it is done in a developmentally appropriate way. Some parents may need help with being developmentally appropriate; therefore, parent educators should be prepared to demonstrate and offer guidance in this area.

### **Parent Communication and Active Mediation**

For hypothesis four, in looking at the overall models of moderation analysis, it was found again that parent communication significantly predicted accurate sexual knowledge, but not sexual values and beliefs. When active mediation was entered into the equation, the overall model of parent communication and active mediations predicting accurate sexual knowledge was found to be significant. The overall model of active

mediation and parent communication as a predictor of sexual values and beliefs was also found to be significant. The more parent communication, the more accurate knowledge adolescents had about sex, but more liberal values and beliefs about sex. The higher the levels of parent communication and active mediation, the more conservative values and beliefs adolescents had about sex. This could be because parents who are discussing sex without using active mediation also hold more liberal values and beliefs about sex, and they are more realistic about teens having sex. They are possibly using discussions about sex to talk about the prevention of pregnancy, STD's, and safe sex. However, parents who discuss sex during active mediation may be prompted by what is showing on TV and talk instead about abstinence and what not to do. The use of active mediation can be the start of discussions about sex (Nathanson et al., 2002). Guo and Nathanson (2009) found that parents' contradictions of sexual messages in the media were more effective when done so in the form of open dialogue, but when parents contradicted sexual television in the form of lectures or speeches, the messages backfired and produced more undesirable outcomes with the adolescents. Adolescents may feel less threatened and defensive when discussing characters and thus more likely to be open to discussions. Parents are then able to discuss their values and beliefs about sex in a non-threatening and non-judgmental manner. This finding supports cultivation theory in that it is not just the mature media that has an impact on the viewer, but rather the interaction between the medium and the user. When parents intervene and help adolescents understand what they are watching and discuss the consequences of the actors actions, the adolescents' view of the mature

media can then be interpreted differently as opposed to when parents do not talk to their adolescents about the content or even restrict certain content. When parents can contradict sexual messages seen in the media with open dialogue, adolescents then feel like they can express their own opinions about sex and feel that their opinions are validated (Guo & Nathanson, 2009).

An implication of this finding would be for parent educators to help parents understand the importance of active mediation and how to practice it with their adolescents. Through the use of active mediation, parents can engage their adolescents in a conversation about sex that helps the adolescent feel at ease, unembarrassed, and not judged. It is through these conversations that parents can explain personal and family beliefs about sex and be the provider of accurate information about sex.

### **Conversations about Sex**

Hypothesis five was supported; there were significant differences in what parents said they discussed with their adolescents and what adolescents said their parents discussed. The most common topic parents said they discussed with their adolescents was dating, relationships, and love. Some of the responses that the parents gave that formed this theme include: “We are teaching courtship, so there is no dating. They are not allowed to date around,” “Be comfortable around boys before even think about even kissing a boy,” “...the importance of respect in relationships, communication in relationships, self-esteem, being confident in herself before looking for a relationship.”

The most common theme as reported by the adolescents was abstinence/timing. Some of the responses that were given that made up this theme for the adolescents included: “You should have sex when you are mature and married,” “Never have sex when you are not mature enough to have it,” “How I should wait until I am married,” “How it is not important to have sex to yung and stuff like that.”

When matching up parents’ and adolescents’ responses (via their participant ID) it was evident that what adolescents are hearing and what their parents report discussing are different. In order for the parent and adolescent to be considered a match, both responses had to include at least one common theme. In response to the question of what they talk to their adolescents about pertain to sex, one parent stated “About feeling comfortable with yourself and another person. About only doing something when you feel comfortable and not pressured.” The adolescent’s response was “Puberty and dating and all that junk...” This dyad was considered a match because both parent and adolescent mentioned concepts that encompass the dating/relationship/love theme. Another parent stated “We talk about puberty regularly, about when sex is appropriate and why it is important, about relationships and family units that differ from our own, about where to get reliable information if you need more information about sex, birth control, and about her feelings regarding her changing emotions and body.” The matching adolescent’s response was “They talk to me about, that you should keep your marriage clean by not having sex when ever you want. You should have sex when you are mature and married. Because it can lead to very bad choices and it will lead to immorality.” This dyad was

also considered a match because both mentioned concepts than encompass the timing/abstinence theme.

Dyads in which both did not mention the same concepts that encompassed a theme were not considered matches such, as the following: “Have talked about what sex is. Have talked about reasons to not have sex: pregnancy, STDs.” The adolescent’s response was “not to look it up on the internet, and never to have it when you are not even married.” Another example of a dyad that did not match is: “Respecting others, others respecting you. Inappropriate behaviors and expectations. Reputations and rumors. Peer pressure and saying “NO”.” The adolescent’s response was “When it is ok to have sex, do you know what sex is.”

Dyads were also not considered as a match if only the parent or only the adolescent responded to the question. There were several in which the parent gave a response but their adolescent did not answer the question. This could be because the adolescent did not feel comfortable sharing this kind of information or because they felt their parents did not discuss it. There were some responses by the adolescent but the parent did not respond. This may be because the parent had responded that they did not yet discuss sex with their adolescent, meaning they have not had “the talk” but may have mentioned it in passing or when practicing active mediation. The most common reason parents gave for not talking to their adolescent about sex was that they were “too young.” This was an interesting finding because previous research indicates adolescents are engaging in sexual behaviors at an early age. Although parents in this study felt their



adolescent may be too young to discuss sex with, by the time they get around to discussing it with their adolescent, it may be too late, as sexual intercourse may have already happened. Of the 32% of freshmen engaging in sexual activity from the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, 8% reported that they were sexual active before the age of 13 (Eaton et al., 2010). Markham et al. (2009) found that 12% of 1279 seventh graders had engaged in vaginal sexual intercourse and that 21% of them initiated sex before the age of 10 years. The responses the adolescents gave as reasons for their parents not discussing it ranged from “Because my mom hates it” and “They think I know about it from school because I tell them” to “Being too young” and “Inappropriate.”

One of the most interesting findings from these responses is that not one parent or adolescent mentioned discussing the topics of oral or anal sex. This could be because when they state they discuss “everything,” oral and anal sex is included in everything, or it could be because parents do not feel it is as important to discuss as vaginal sex. Whatever the reason, oral sex is being initiated by adolescents younger than 10 years of age (Markham et al., 2009). Of the 1279 adolescent studies, Markham et al. found that 7.9% had engaged in oral sex. Of the ones who had engaged in oral sex, 30% initiated it before the age of 10 years. Parents may feel that their adolescent doesn’t know about oral or anal sex, but in reality adolescents see oral sex as a safe alternative to vaginal sex (Cornell & Halpern-Felsher, 2006). While both adolescent girls and boys engage in oral sex mainly for pleasure, girls often see it as a way to preserve their virginity (Uecker et al., 2008). Parents and educators need to be aware of adolescent sexual trends because of

the health risks they pose. Adolescents and even some adults may not realize there are many STDs that can still be transmitted through oral and anal contact. By practicing these behaviors unprotected, adolescents are still at risk for herpes, gonorrhea, syphilis and even HIV. Health care providers and parent education programs can help to educate parents on the realities and the dangers of adolescents having oral sex. Once parents get educated, they can then work this knowledge into the conversations they are having about sex with their adolescent.

### **Limitations**

There were several limitations to this study, the biggest limitation being lack of participant involvement. There were parents who, after reviewing the adolescent survey, decided to not participate because they “feared it would open a can of worms they are not yet ready to discuss” or they felt “the topic was too sensitive for their child.” These were responses that were sent to the researcher via email to explain why they would not be participating. Another limitation was lack of adolescent participation. Out of 99 completed parent surveys, there were only 63 completed adolescent surveys. It is unknown why more adolescents did not complete the survey. Maybe they felt uncomfortable answering the questions, or it could be that the parents never passed along the survey information to their adolescents. Whatever the reason, it affected the sample size thereby affecting the results of the study. Also, the sample was not demographically representative so results are only generalizable to the populations in the study and most of the parent information was from the mothers. Another limitation was that this study did

not address sexual experiences, just knowledge, values and beliefs about sex. Having to rely on snowball type recruiting and not being able to make entry into the public school system or after school programs offered at public schools was a big limitation.

### **Directions for Future Research**

Future research needs to focus on sexual experiences (vaginal, oral, and anal) of early adolescents as well as accurate knowledge, values and beliefs about sex.

Adolescents may not be initiating sex at the age of 10, but something is influencing their values and beliefs and leading them to engage in sexual activity at 12 or 14. It is these influences that need to be identified so that parents and educators can address them and try to help young adolescents to prolong not just first coitus, but oral and anal sex as well. Future research should also focus on the values and beliefs and accurate knowledge about oral and anal sex in early adolescents. More qualitative data needs to be collected to really understand the depths of what early adolescents know about sex. Maybe focus groups in gender specific groups could be used to elicit this information. A longitudinal study that can study participants from early adolescents into early adulthood to track parent communication, religiosity, peer influence and media's influence on sexual values, beliefs, knowledge and sexual activity would be ideal. This was researchers can gain a better understanding as what specifically is influencing initiation of coitus and at what age and what factors together or separate can act as protective factors against early coital debut.

Future research can also focus on parents of early adolescents and their reluctance to discuss sex or certain topics with their adolescents. Is it because they are not comfortable discussing sex with their adolescents, because they are unaware of the different influences their adolescents have when it comes to sex, or because they are unaware of their adolescents' knowledge, exposures, and behaviors about sex? It could be the parents are unwilling to discuss such issues because of moral or religious objections. Whatever the case, more research is needed to understand the parents' point of view.

### **Conclusions**

This study is important because of the amount of mature media that is available to younger children. Without proper parent communication, active mediation, and religious values, children and adolescents are left to turn to their peers and the media for information about sex. Getting information from peers and the media leads to more liberal values and beliefs about sex and less accurate knowledge about sex.

There is a need for parent educators to help parents become more aware of the influence their adolescents' peers have on them. Peers can influence the types of media adolescent views to their values and beliefs about sex. Parents should be aware of what they can do to negate and counter balance this peer influence. One way parents can balance peer influence about sexual knowledge, values, and beliefs is using active mediation. By using active mediation, parent-adolescent communication about sex can take place in an open and nonjudgmental atmosphere. Parent educators can also advise

parents that being more spiritually or religiously active can also be a good counter balance to peer influence.

### **Summary**

This study focused on the influence of mature media and peer influences on early adolescents' sexual knowledge, values, and beliefs and whether or not parent communication and religiosity mediate or moderate the relationship. Using a researcher made survey for parents and adolescents and the TV Mediation Scale (Valkenburg et al., 1999), it was found that peer influence was a significant predictor of sexual values and beliefs but not accurate sexual knowledge. Parent communication and religiosity did act as moderators in the peer influence and sexual values and beliefs relationship, but only with adolescents who had low or average parent communication and religiosity. Parent communication was found to be a significant predictor of accurate sexual knowledge and parent communication and active mediation were significant predictors of sexual values and beliefs. It was also found that there were discrepancies in the topics of sex parents report discussing with their adolescents and what adolescents report their parents are discussing with them.

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## APPENDIX A

### Tables

Table A1

*Parent and Adolescent Age, Gender, and Race*

	n	%	M	SD	Min	Max
Parent Age			38.27	5.73	26	54
20-29	5	5.1				
30-39	53	54.1				
40-49	36	36.7				
50-59	4	4.0				
Total	98	100.0				
Parent Gender						
Male	5	5.1				
Female	93	94.9				
Total	98	100.0				
Parent Race						
Caucasian	62	63.3				
African American	21	21.4				
Latino American	4	4.2				
Asian American	5	5.1				
Native American	2	2.0				
Bi-racial	2	2.0				
Multi-racial	2	2.0				
Total	98	100.0				

Table A1 cont.

	n	%	M	SD	Min	Max
Adolescent Age						
10	18	28.6				
11	22	34.9				
12	23	36.5				
Total	63	100.0				
Adolescent Gender						
Male	28	44.4				
Female	35	55.6				
Total	63	100.0				
Adolescent Race						
Caucasian	42	66.7				
African American	9	14.3				
Latino American	4	6.3				
Asian American	3	4.8				
Native American	2	3.2				
Bi-racial	1	1.6				
Multi-racial	2	3.2				
Total	63	100.0				

Table A2

*Parent Education Level*

Education Level	<i>n</i>	%
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	2	2.0
High school diploma/ GED	3	3.0
Some college/ Associates Degree	30	30.3
Bachelor's Degree	35	35.4
Master's Degree	26	26.3
Doctoral Degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D., J.D.)	3	3.0
Total	99	100.0



Table A3

*Parent Annual Income*

Annual Income	<i>n</i>	%
< \$20,000	9	9.4
\$20,001 - \$40,000	18	18.8
\$40,001 - \$60,000	17	17.7
\$60,001 - \$80,000	12	12.5
\$80,001 - \$100,000	10	10.4
> \$100,000	30	31.2
Total	99	100.0

Table A4

*Parent Marital Status*

Marital Status	<i>n</i>	%
< \$20,000	9	9.4
\$20,001 - \$40,000	18	18.8
\$40,001 - \$60,000	17	17.7
\$60,001 - \$80,000	12	12.5
\$80,001 - \$100,000	10	10.4
> \$100,000	30	31.2
Total	99	100.0

Table A5

*Parent Employment Status*

Employment Status	<i>n</i>	%
Stay at home parent	9	9.4
Full-time 40+ hrs per week	18	18.8
Part-time 25-39 hrs per week	17	17.7
Part-time <25 hrs per week	12	12.5
Unemployed	10	10.4
Full-time student	30	31.2
Total	99	100.0

Table A6

*Parent and Adolescent Religious Affiliations*

Parent	<i>n</i>	%
Agnostic/Atheist	3	3.1
Assemblies of God	1	1.0
Baptist	16	16.5
Catholic	8	8.2
Church of Christ	2	2.1
Episcopal	1	1.0
Jehovah's Witnesses	1	1.0
Jewish	1	1.0
Lutheran	2	2.1
Mormon/ Latter-day Saints	6	6.2
Methodist	7	7.2
Muslim	1	1.0
Pentecostal	3	3.1
Presbyterian	3	3.1
Non-denominational	27	27.8
Other	15	15.5
Total	99	100.0

Table A6 cont.

*Parent and Adolescent Religious Affiliations*

Adolescent	<i>n</i>	%
Agnostic/Atheist	5	7.9
Assemblies of God	1	1.6
Baptist	8	12.7
Catholic	9	14.3
Church of Christ	2	3.2
Jehovah's Witnesses	1	1.6
Jewish	2	3.2
Lutheran	1	1.6
Mormon/ Latter-day Saints	9	14.3
Methodist	3	4.8
Pentecostal	1	1.6
Presbyterian	1	1.6
Non-denominational	15	23.8
Other	5	7.9
Total	63	100.0

Table A7

*Media Access and Viewing of Mature Media*

Private Access	<i>n</i>	%
Television		
No	35	57.4
Yes	26	42.6
Cable		
No	37	60.7
Yes	24	39.3
DVR		
No	56	90.3
Yes	6	9.7
Computer		
No	36	59.0
Yes	25	41.0
Internet		
No	28	45.2
Yes	34	54.8
Viewing		
Mature TV		
No	29	46.8
Yes	33	53.2
Porn on Internet		
No	57	91.9
Yes	5	8.1

Table A8

*Frequency and Percent of G, PG, and Mature Rated Reality and Non-reality TV Shows*

Reality	<i>n</i>	%
G	8	12.7
PG	34	54.0
Mature	18	28.6
Non-reality		
G	40	63.5
PG	39	61.9
Mature	21	33.3

Table A9

*Frequency and Percent of Adolescent Religiosity*

Church Attendance	<i>n</i>	%
Never	12	19.0
Several times a year	11	17.5
Several times a month	7	11.1
Weekly	28	44.4
Several times a week	5	7.9
Total	63	100.0
Frequency of Prayer		
Never	14	22.2
Once a week	10	15.9
Several times a week	7	11.1
Once a day	13	20.6
Several times a day	19	30.2
Total	63	100.0



Table A9 cont.

Youth Group Activity	<i>n</i>	%
Not at all	16	25.4
A little bit involved; Go to functions that interest me	12	19.0
Somewhat involved; Go to functions when I can	19	30.2
Pretty involved; Try to go to every function	10	15.9
Very involved; go to every function	6	9.5
Total	63	100.0
Importance of Faith		
Not at all important	4	6.3
A little important	5	7.9
Somewhat important	7	11.1
Important	17	27.0
Very Important	30	47.6
Total	63	100.0

Table A10

*Peer Influence*

	<i>n</i>	%	M	SD	Min	Max
Time spent with peers			5.20	7.61	0	50
Time spend watching Mature media with peers			.28	.83	0	5
Perceived level of peer influence						
None	28	44.4				
A little bit	16	25.4				
Some	8	12.7				
A lot	7	11.1				
All	4	6.3				
Total	63	100.0				
Discuss sex with peers						
Never	31	49.2				
A little bit	18	28.6				
Sometimes	10	15.9				
Often	3	4.8				
All the time	1	1.6				
Total	63	100.0				

Table A11

*Common Topics Discussed with Peers*

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Who they like

- “about who we ‘like’ and who we would ‘go out’ with”
- “who we like”
- “how cute the boy is”
- “who at school we like best”
- “say what type of girl we would love”
- “How we like someone”
- “guys we like”
- “Who likes who”

Dating

- “if we are dating or not”
- “who is dating who?”
- “Going to the movies with friends who are dating also or going to the mall, a resteraunt or the park.”
- “going to the movies on dates and what not”
- “If we are going to ask someone out”

Sex related topics

- “would you have sex before or after marriage”
  - “I learn things from my friends that I haven’t heard before. Like what a boner is”
  - “we talk about which guys are going through puberty and how this one guy had a dream that he had sex with his girlfriend.”
  - “Like what are condoms and stuff...just random questions that our own parents have yet to answer.”
  - “How to make a baby”
  - “before or after marriage, (occasionally) what it would feel like”
-

Table A12

*Parent and Adolescent Reports of Conversations About Sex*

Parents	<i>n</i>	%
No, never	15	15.2
Yes, but rarely	20	20.2
Yes, sometimes	43	43.4
Yes, often	21	21.2
Total	99	100.0
Adolescents	<i>n</i>	%
No, never	17	27.0
Yes, but rarely	24	38.1
Yes, sometimes	16	25.4
Yes, often	4	6.3
Yes, all the time	2	3.2
Total	63	100.0

Table A13

*Overall Levels of Social Co-viewing, Restrictive Mediation, Active Mediation as  
Reported by Parents and Adolescents*

	N	M	SD	Min	Max	Range
<b>Parents</b>						
Social Co-viewing	95	14.76	2.41	8.60	16.80	8.20
Restrictive Mediation	95	13.69	2.65	4.20	16.80	12.60
Active Mediation	97	13.75	2.67	4.20	16.80	12.60
<b>Adolescents</b>						
Social Co-viewing	55	13.18	3.35	4.20	16.80	12.60
Restrictive Mediation	54	10.72	3.97	4.20	16.80	12.60
Active Mediation	55	11.05	3.17	4.20	16.80	12.60

Table A14

*Frequency and Percent for Adolescent Sexual Values and Beliefs and Accurate Sexual Knowledge*

Sexual Values and Beliefs	<i>n</i>	%
When is it okay to have sex with someone?		
When you really like someone, and they like you	2	3.2
When you are dating or going together	2	3.2
When you are engaged to be married	14	22.6
Only when you are married	44	71.0
Total	63	100.0
Accurate Sexual Knowledge		
No knowledge or no accurate knowledge	22	37.9
A little accurate knowledge	29	50.0
Very accurate knowledge	7	12.1
Total	63	100.0

Table A15

*Linear Model of Private Media Access and Mature Media Predicting Sexual Values and Beliefs*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Private media access	.04	.21	.20	.85
Mature media	.06	.06	.96	.34

*Note.*  $R^2 = .02$

Table A16

*Linear Model of Predictors of Sexual Values and Beliefs*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Parent communication about sex	-.12 [-.34, .11]	.11	-1.05	.30
Peer influence	.03 [-.07, .00]	.02	-2.03	.05
Peer influence X Parent communication	.01 [-.02, .05]	.02	.73	.47
Religiosity	.00 [-.03, .04]	.02	.22	.82
Peer Influence X Religiosity	-.00 [-.01, .00]	.00	-.86	.39

*Note.*  $R^2 = .17$



Table A17

*Linear Model of Religiosity Predicting Parent Communication*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Religiosity	.08	.03	2.86	.00

*Note.*  $R^2 = .12$

Table A18

*Linear Model of Predictors of Sexual Values and Beliefs*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Parent communication about sex	-.18	.09	-1.89	.06
Religiosity	.01	.02	.65	.52

*Note.*  $R^2 = .06$

Table A19

*Linear Model of Religiosity Predicting Parent Communication*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Religiosity	.10	.03	3.496	.00

*Note.*  $R^2 = .18$

Table A20

*Linear Model of Predictors of Accurate Sexual Knowledge*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Parent communication about sex	.30	.08	3.48	.00
Religiosity	.02	.02	1.13	.27

*Note.*  $R^2 = .27$

Table A21

*Multiple Regression Predictors of Accurate Sexual Knowledge*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Parent communication about sex	.30	.08	3.36	.00
Active mediation	.05	.03	1.70	.10

*Note.*  $R^2 = .30$

Table A22

*Multiple Regression Predictors of Sexual Values and Beliefs*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Parent communication about sex	-.21	.08	-2.53	.02
Active mediation	.06	.03	2.10	.04

*Note.*  $R^2 = .14$

Table A23

*Frequency and Percent of Match/No Match of Parent and Adolescent Common Themes  
About Sex*

	<i>n</i>	%
No Match	72	67.9
Match	34	32.1
Total	106	100.0

Table A24

*Most Frequent Themes Discussed as Reported by Parents and Adolescents and the Responses for Each Theme*

Theme	Parent	Adolescent
Abstinence/Timing	27%	31%
“waiting”		
“abstinence”		
“not having sex until they get married”		
“reason’s to not have sex”		
“she has to preserve her body”		
“what age to have sex”		
“about when it’s ok”		
“when it’s ok to have sex”		
“how you should wait till you get married”		
“how I should wait until I’m married”		
Pregnancy/Motherhood	26%	18%
“pregnancy”		
“making a baby”		
“having children, teen pregnancy”		
“we have showed where babies come from”		
“potential unwanted pregnancy”		
“like how do girls have babies”		
“how women get pregnant”		
“how to actually give birth”		
“explains how a baby is made and what happens when a baby is made		
Puberty/Biological Changes	22%	16%
“biological facts”		
“the changes she will undergo”		
“how her body is changing”		
“anatomy and physiology of the reproductive system”		
“the biological anatomy of each gender”		
“talked about boners, having a period”		
“body changes”		
“about his own body and what to expect as he gets older”		
“how to deal with a period”		
“my body and how its growing”		



Theme	Parent	Adolescent
Dating/Relationship/Love	30%	7%
“we talk about dating”		
“how to choose a mate”		
“we are teaching courtship, so there is no dating”		
“family standards related to dating”		
“their views on relationships”		
“relationships”		
“encourage conversations about dating and relationships”		
“be comfortable around boys before even thinking about kissing a boy”		
“in the sequence of how the relationship should go”		
“dating”		
Physical Act of Sex	18%	18%
“intercourse”		
“have talked about what sex is”		
“answer any questions she may have pertaining to sexual activity”		
“we talk about how it works, what happens”		
“in depth conversations about the mechanics”		
“what sex is between a man and a woman”		
“about the mechanics of the act”		
“sex from a biological ‘birds & bees’ stance”		
“what sex is, what is/are the process(s), the different kinds of sex		
“I ask questions like how long is sex”		
“how it works”		

## APPENDIX B

### Approval of Research Proposal



**Institutional Review Board**  
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs  
P.O. Box 425619, Denton, TX 76204-5619  
940-898-3378 FAX 940-898-4416  
e-mail: IRB@twu.edu

March 5, 2012

Ms. Vivian Baxter Hunter  
1009 Karen St.  
Aubrey, TX: 76227

Dear Ms. Hunter:

*Re: Early adolescent Sexual Knowledge, Values and Beliefs: The Role of Mass Media, Peers, Parent Communication, and Religiosity (Protocol #: 16942)*

The above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and appears to meet our requirements for the protection of individuals' rights.

If applicable, agency approval letters must be submitted to the IRB upon receipt PRIOR to any data collection at that agency. A copy of the approved consent form with the IRB approval stamp and a copy of the annual/final report are enclosed. Please use the consent form with the most recent approval date stamp when obtaining consent from your participants. The signed consent forms and final report must be filed with the Institutional Review Board at the completion of the study.

This approval is valid one year from February 10, 2012. Any modifications to this study must be submitted for review to the IRB using the Modification Request Form. Additionally, the IRB must be notified immediately of any unanticipated incidents. If you have any questions, please contact the TWU IRB.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kathy DeOrnellas, Chair  
Institutional Review Board - Denton

enc.

cc. Dr. Larry LeFlore, Department of Family Sciences  
Dr. Brigitte Vittrup, Department of Family Sciences  
Graduate School

## APPENDIX C

### Research Flyer

## Research Participants Wanted

Would you like a chance to win a \$50 Wal-Mart gift card? Do you have access to a computer and the internet? Are you the parent/caregiver of an adolescent between the ages of 10 and 12 years or are you an adolescent between the ages of 10 and 12 years? If so, then you are invited to be a part of this study.

Purpose of the study: To look at early adolescent media diets and how the media and peers inform their knowledge and beliefs about sex and whether parents/caregivers and/or religion play a role in how early adolescents filter sexual messages from the media.

What parents and adolescents can do to help: Go to the link below, enter the password, go to the parent survey if you are the parent/caregiver or go to the adolescent survey if you are the adolescent and fill out the survey and mediation scale. It's that simple! Your help and contribution is greatly appreciated.

Principal Investigator: Vivian Baxter Hunter

E-mail: vbaxter@twu.edu

Faculty Advisor: Brigitte Vittrup

E-mail: bvittrup@twu.edu

**Survey link:** <https://www.psychdata.com/s.asp?SID=147488>

**Password:** media

**You and your adolescent's unique survey ID #:**

**\*Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research study at any time.**

## APPENDIX D

### Recruitment E-mail

Hi, my name is Vivian Baxter Hunter and I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Early Childhood Development and Education program in the Family Sciences department. I am currently writing my dissertation and I am looking for parents and their early adolescents, 10 to 12 years of age, to take my survey. The purpose of my study is to look at early adolescent media diets and how the media and peers inform their knowledge, values and beliefs about sex and whether parents/caregivers and/or religion play a role in how early adolescents filter sexual messages from the media. The survey is anonymous and there will be no identifying information connecting you to your responses. I need BOTH parent and adolescent, not just parents. Parents have the opportunity to view the adolescent survey before giving consent. There is also an opportunity to enter a drawing for a \$50 Wal-Mart gift card. If you are interested in participating in this study please email me at [vbaxter@twu.edu](mailto:vbaxter@twu.edu) to receive an electronic flyer with more information and a link to the survey.

Principal Investigator: Vivian Baxter Hunter

Email: [vbaxter@twu.edu](mailto:vbaxter@twu.edu)

Faculty Advisor: Brigitte Vittrup, Ph.D.

Email: [bvittrup@twu.edu](mailto:bvittrup@twu.edu)

**Confidentiality Statement:** There is a possible risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, and internet transactions.

## APPENDIX E

### Facebook Post



ATTENTION FACEBOOK FRIENDS: I am currently writing my dissertation and am looking for parents and their early adolescents 10 to 12 years of age to take my survey. The purpose of my study is to look at early adolescent media diets and how the media and peers inform their knowledge, values and beliefs about sex and whether parents/caregivers and/or religion play a role in how early adolescents filter sexual messages from the media. The survey is anonymous and there will be no identifying information connecting you to your responses. I need BOTH parent and adolescent, not just parents. Parents have the opportunity to view the adolescent survey before giving consent. There is also an opportunity to enter a drawing for a \$50 Wal-Mart gift card. If you are interested in participating in this study please email me at [vbaxter@twu.edu](mailto:vbaxter@twu.edu) to receive an electronic flyer with more information and a link to the survey.

If you do not have an early adolescent this age or do not think this is something you are interested in will you please share this post on your Facebook page. Maybe you have friends that qualify and may be interested in participating. Please ask your friends to also share this so that the possibility of recruitment increases. Thank you all for your time and consideration.

Vivian

**Confidentiality Statement:** There is a possible risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, and internet transactions.

APPENDIX F  
Adolescent Survey

### Adolescent Information

**You:**

1. What is your age?                      10      11      12
2. What is your gender?                      Male                      Female
3. What is your race?
- Caucasian                      African American                      Latino/a American
- Asian American                      Native American                      Middle Eastern
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Bi-racial (please identify what races)
- Multi-racial (please identify what races)

**Your parents/caregivers and home life:**

4. What is your parents'/caregivers' marital status?
- Married/Living with someone
- Single (never married)
- Divorced/Separated
- Widow/Widower
5. What are your parents'/caregivers' race?
- Caucasian                      African American                      Latino/a American
- Asian American                      Native American                      Middle Eastern
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Bi-racial (please identify what races)
- Multi-racial (please identify what races)

**Religion:**

6. What are your family's religious beliefs? (Circle one)

Agnostic/Atheist	Assemblies of God	Baptist
Buddhist	Catholic	Church of Christ
Church of God	Episcopal	Hindu
Jehovah's Witnesses	Jewish	Lutheran
Mormon/Latter-day Saints	Methodist	Muslim
Pentecostal	Presbyterian	
Non-denominational	Other	

7. Do you agree with your families religious beliefs? No Yes

If no, why not

8. How often do you attend church?

Never  
Several times a year  
Two or three times a month  
Weekly  
Several times a week

9. How involved are you in your church's youth group?

Not involved at all, I do not belong to a church youth group, nor do I care to join one.  
A little bit involved, I go to the functions that interest me.  
Somewhat involved, I go to some functions when I can.  
Pretty involved, I try to go to every function.  
Very involved, I go to every function

10. How important is your religion/faith to you.

Not important at all  
A little important  
Somewhat important  
Important  
Very important

11. How often do you pray?

Never  
Once a week  
Several times a week  
Once a day  
Several times a day

**About relationships and sex:**

12. At what age do you think it is ok to have a boyfriend/girlfriend?

13. At what age do you think it is ok to kiss a boy/girl?

14. At what age do you think it is ok to start having sex?

15. What do you think sex is?

16. Do you know what your parents'/caregivers' think about sex before marriage?

No                      Yes  
I don't know

17. Do you agree with your parents'/caregivers' thoughts about sex before marriage?

No                      Yes  
I don't know

Why or why not?

18. When do you think it is ok to have sex with someone?

Whenever you want because sex is no big deal.

When you really like someone and they like you.

When you are dating or going together.

When you are engaged to be married.

Only when you are married.

19. Do your parents/caregivers ever talk to you about sex?

No, never  
Yes, but rarely  
Yes, sometimes  
Yes, often  
Yes, all the time

If yes, what sort of things do they talk to you about?

If no, why do you think they do not?

20. If your parents/caregivers do not talk to you about sex, would you like them to talk to you about sex?

If yes, what would you like them to talk to you about sex?

If no, why do you not want your parents/caregivers talking to you about sex?

21. Where or who do learn about sex? (Check all that apply)

My parents

My friends

Teachers/nurse at school

Doctor/clinic

### Television shows/movies

## The Internet

## Music videos

I don't care about getting information about sex, because I do not think I am ready for that information.

22. Do you talk with your friends about dating and going together?

No Yes

If yes, what sort of things do you talk about?

23. Do you talk with your friends about sex?

No Yes

If yes, what sort of things do you talk about?

24. About how much time (in hours) do you spend with your friends outside of school?  
Like on the weekends or after school.

25. What television shows do you watch with your friends?

26. About how often do you talk about sex and dating with your friends? (Circle one)

Never A little bit Sometimes Often All the time

27. About how much to you agree with your friends views about sex and dating?

None A little bit Some A lot All

## **Media Survey**

### **Types of Media in the home:**

- |  |   |   |   |   |    |   |     |
|--|---|---|---|---|----|---|-----|
| 28. How many televisions are in your house?                  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5 | 6+  |
| 29. Do you have cable or satellite in your house             |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 30. How many DVR's/TiVo's in your house?                     | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5 | 6+  |
| 31. Do you have a television in your room?                   |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 32. Do you have cable or satellite access in your room?      |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 33. Do you have a DVR/TiVo in your room?                     |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 34. How many computers are in your house?                    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5 | 6+  |
| 35. Do you have a computer in your room?                     |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 36. Do you have internet access in your home?                |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 37. Do you have internet access in your room?                |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 38. Are there stereos/radios in the house?                   |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 39. Do you have a stereo/radio in your room?                 |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 40. Do you have an iPod or MP3 player?                       |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 41. Do you play video games?                                 |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 42. Do you have access to a video game console in your room? |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |

### **Media: Use and Content**

#### **Television viewing**

43. About how many hours a day do you watch TV?
44. What are your 5 favorite non-reality programs?
45. Why are they your favorite shows?



46. What reality TV shows do you watch? (Please list your 5 favorite)

47. Do you watch TV shows that have adult things such as sex talk, sex, or bad language?

No Yes

48. If you do watch shows that have adult things such as sex talk, sex, or bad language, do you talk about what you have seen or heard with anyone?

No Yes

If yes, who do you talk to about what you have seen or heard? (Check all that apply)

Friends	Mom/Step-mom	Dad/Step-dad
Older sister	Older brother	Grandparent
Aunt	Uncle	Neighbor
Other		

49. How often do you watch television with your parents/caregivers?

Never

A few shows a week (1-3 particular shows)

Several shows a week (4-7 particular shows)

Most of the shows I watch, I watch with my parents/caregivers.

I only watch TV with my parents/caregiver, never alone.

50. How do you feel about seeing people being sexy on TV? (Check the one that most applies to your feelings.)

It's no big deal because sex is everywhere.

It's not that big of a deal, it's just TV.

It makes me sort of uncomfortable, but I watch to learn more about sex.

It depends on what is being shown.

It makes me uncomfortable and embarrassed.

I do not watch shows that have people being sexy.

51. Do you watch any shows at your friends' houses that you would not be allowed to watch at your house?

No Yes

If yes, what shows?

### **Internet Use**

52. About how many hours do you spend on the computer and the internet a day?

53. About how much time do you spend on each of the following computer activities per day? (Time in minutes)

Social networking like Facebook or MySpace  
Talk with my friends via instant message or Skype  
Download music  
Just surfing the web  
Mainly just for homework  
Watch YouTube videos  
E-mail  
Reading the news  
Learning (other than for school)

54. Have you ever looked at adult sites such as porn on the internet?

No

Yes

If yes, why?

### **Music and Music Videos**

55. What is your favorite kind of music (choose one)?

Rock/Pop	Spanish/Latino	R&B
Classic Rock	Heavy Metal	Country
Jazz	Classical/Instrumental	Rap

56. Who are your 5 favorite music artists?

57. What are your 5 favorite music videos? (title of song and artist)

58. Why are these videos your favorite?

## APPENDIX G

### Parent Survey

## Parent Information

**\*If you have more than one child in this age range, please report on the youngest child.**

- |                                      |   |  |                   |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|-------------------|
| 1. What is your adolescent's age:    | 10  | 11                                     | 12                |
| 2. What is your adolescent's gender? | Male                                      |  | Female            |
| 3. What is your adolescent's race?   |   |  |                   |
|                                      | Caucasian                                 | African American                       | Latino/a American |
|                                      | Asian American                            | Native American                        | Middle Eastern    |
|                                      | Hawaiian/Pacific Islander                 | Bi-racial (please identify what races) |                   |
|                                      | Multi-racial (please identify what races) |  |                   |
| 4. What is your age?                 |   |  |                   |
| 5. What is your gender?              | Male                                      |  | Female            |
| 6. What is your race?                |   |  |                   |
|                                      | Caucasian                                 | African American                       | Latino/a American |
|                                      | Asian American                            | Native American                        | Middle Eastern    |
|                                      | Hawaiian/Pacific Islander                 | Bi-racial (please identify what races) |                   |
|                                      | Multi-racial (please identify what races) |  |                   |
| 7. What is you marital status?       |   |  |                   |
|                                      | Married/Living with partner               |  |                   |
|                                      | Single (never married)                    |  |                   |
|                                      | Divorced/Separated                        |  |                   |
|                                      | Widow/Widower                             |  |                   |

8. What is your highest level of education?

0 – 8<sup>th</sup> grade

9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade

High school/GED

Associate's degree/some college

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctoral degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D., J.D.)

9. What is your family's average annual salary?

< \$20, 000

\$20,001 – \$40,000

\$40,001 – \$60,000

\$60,001 – \$80,000

80,001 - \$100,000

10. Employment status:

Stay at home mom/dad/caregiver

Work full time at least 40 hours a week

Work part time - 25 to 39 hours a week

Work part time < 25 hours a week

Unemployed

Full time student

### **Religion**

11. What are your family's religious beliefs? (Circle one)

Agnostic/ Atheist

Assemblies of God

Baptist

Buddhist

Catholic

Church of Christ

Church of God

Episcopal

Hindu

Jehovah's Witnesses	Jewish	Lutheran
Mormon/Latter-day Saints	Methodist	Muslim
Pentecostal	Presbyterian	
Non-denominational	Other	

12. How often do you attend religious services?

Never

Several times a year

Two or three times a month

Weekly

Several times a week

13. How involved is your adolescent in your church's youth group?

Our church does not have a youth group.

My adolescent does not belong to a church youth group.

Not involved at all; church youth groups do not interest my adolescent or my adolescent does not have time for a church youth group.

A little bit involved; my adolescent goes to functions that interests him/her.

Somewhat involved; my adolescent goes to some functions when there is time.

Very involved; my adolescent tries to attend every function.

14. How important is your religion/faith to you?

Not important at all

A little important

Somewhat important

Important

Very important

15. How often do you pray with your adolescent?

Never

Once a week

Several times a week

Once a day

Several times a day

### **Relationships and Sex**

16. At what age so you think it is ok for an adolescent to start having boyfriends/girlfriends?

17. At what age do you think it is appropriate for adolescents to hold hand and kiss?

18. At what age do you think it is appropriate for adolescents to have a “serious, committed”, relationship?

19. What are your views on premarital sex?

Never ok

Ok if the couple is engaged to be married or have been in a committed relationship

Hey as long as both people are consenting, then what’s the big deal?

20. Does your adolescent know your stance on premarital sex?

No                      Yes  
I don't know/not sure

21. If you feel premarital sex is ok, then at what age do you think is appropriate to start exploring sexual relationships?

22. Do you talk with your adolescent about sex?

No, never  
Yes, but rarely  
Yes, sometimes  
Yes, often

If yes, what do you talk with them about?

If no, what are your reasons for not talking to your child about sex?



### **Types of Media in the home:**

- |  |   |   |   |   |    |   |     |
|--|---|---|---|---|----|---|-----|
| 23. How many televisions are in your house?                              | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5 | 6+  |
| 24. Do you have cable or satellite in your house?                        |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 25. How many DVR's/TiVo's in your house?                                 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5 | 6+  |
| 26. Does your adolescent have a television in his/her room?              |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 27. Does your adolescent have cable or satellite access in his/her room? |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 28. Does your adolescent have a DVR/TiVo in his/her room?                |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 29. How many computers (desktop or laptop)<br>are in your house?         | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5 | 6+  |
| 30. Does your adolescent have a computer in his/her room?                |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 31. Do you have internet access in your home?                            |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 32. Does your adolescent have internet access in his/her room?           |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 33. Are there stereos/radios in the house?                               |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 34. Does your adolescent have a stereo/radio in his/her room?            |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 35. Does your adolescent have an iPod or MP3 player?                     |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 36. Does your adolescent play video games?                               |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |
| 37. Does your adolescent play the video games in his/her room?           |   |   |   |   | No |   | Yes |

### **Media: Use and Content**

#### **Television**

38. About how many hours a day do you think you adolescent watches TV?
39. What television channels does your adolescent watch most often? (e.g. MTV, BET, Disney, Nickelodeon)

40. What are your adolescent's favorite shows?
41. What reality shows do you allow your adolescent to watch? (Please list all you allow them to watch).
42. Do you think you adolescent watches TV shows that have adult content, such as sexual language and sexual situations? No                      Yes  
Not sure/don't know

43. How often do you watch television with your adolescent?

Never

A few shows a week (1 – 3 particular shows)

Several shows a week (4 – 7 particular shows)

Most of the shows my child watches, I watch with him/her.

My child only watches television when I am there to watch with him/her.

44. If you do watch television with your adolescent or as a family, what TV shows do you watch together?

45. Does watching shows that have sexual content lead to or initiate conversations about sex with your adolescent?

Not applicable, my child is never exposed to sexual content on TV.

No, never

Yes, but rarely

Yes, sometimes

Yes, often

### **Internet**

46. About how many hours do you think your adolescent spends on the internet?

47. About how much time do you think your adolescent spend on each of the following computer activities per day? (time in minutes)

Social Networking like Facebook or MySpace.

Talk with friends via instant message or Skype.

Download music

Just surfing the web.

Mainly just for homework.

Watch YouTube videos.

E-mail

Reading the news

Learning other than for school

48. Do you think your adolescent has ever looked at pornography on the internet?

No                      Yes  
Not sure/don't know

### **Music and Music Videos**

49 What genre of music do you think your adolescent listens to the most? (choose one)

Rock/Pop	Spanish/Latino	R&B
Classic Rock	Heavy Metal	Country
Jazz	Classical/Instrumental	Rap

50. Is there anything about this genre of music that concerns you? No                      Yes

If yes, what concerns you?

51. Do you have any objections/concerns about your adolescent watching music videos? No                      Yes

If yes, what objections/concerns do you have?

52. Do you think some genres of music are higher in sexual content than others?

No

Yes

Not sure/don't know

If yes, what genres do you think are high in sexual content?

53. Do you talk with your adolescent about the content or subject matter in the video he/she watches or do you watch videos with you adolescent?

Neither

Discuss content

Watch with my adolescent

Both

APPENDIX H

TV Mediation Scale

TV Mediation Scale (Valkenburg et al., 1999)

How do you and your child watch television at home? Please indicate how often you act in the following ways....

How often do you...

...try to help your child understand what s/he sees on TV?

never	rarely	sometimes	often
-------	--------	-----------	-------

...point out why some things actors do are good?

never	rarely	sometimes	often
-------	--------	-----------	-------

...say to your child to turn off TV when s/he is watching an unsuitable program?

never	rarely	sometimes	often
-------	--------	-----------	-------

...set specific viewing hours for your child?

never	rarely	sometimes	often
-------	--------	-----------	-------

...watch together because you both like the program?

never	rarely	sometimes	often
-------	--------	-----------	-------

...watch together because of a common interest in a program?

never	rarely	sometimes	often
-------	--------	-----------	-------

\*Because of copyright restrictions, only a few questions from the scale are listed

## APPENDIX I

### Modified Version of TV Mediation Scale

TV Mediation Scale (Valkenburg et al., 1999)

How do you and your parents/caregivers watch television at home? Please indicate how often your parent/caregiver acts in the following ways....

How often do they...

...try to help you understand what you see on TV?

never	rarely	sometimes	often
-------	--------	-----------	-------

...point out why some things actors do are good?

never	rarely	sometimes	often
-------	--------	-----------	-------

...say to you to turn off TV when you are watching an unsuitable program?

never	rarely	sometimes	often
-------	--------	-----------	-------

...set specific viewing hours for you?

never	rarely	sometimes	often
-------	--------	-----------	-------

...watch with you because you both like the program?

never	rarely	sometimes	often
-------	--------	-----------	-------

...watch with you because of a common interest in a program?

never	rarely	sometimes	often
-------	--------	-----------	-------

\*Because of copyright restrictions, only a few questions from the scale are listed



## APPENDIX J

### Consent Form for Center/School Approval

## CONSENT FORM FOR CENTER/SCHOOL APPROVAL

### **STUDY: Early Adolescent Sexual Knowledge, Values, and Beliefs: The Role of Mass Media, Peers, Parents, and Religiosity**

As a representative of \_\_\_\_\_,

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby give Vivian Baxter Hunter, the Principal Investigator of the research study early adolescent sexual knowledge, values and beliefs, permission to recruit participants from this center/school for the intended study.

The Principal Investigator is allowed to conduct research at our location, including distribution of recruitment flyers and/or surveys.

I have been properly informed about the process and requirements of this research study, and I will inform the necessary staff about the study. I understand that all information collected in conjunction is collected anonymously on an online survey website, and none of the participating parents and adolescence is required to provide any identifying information to the researchers. There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all e-mail, downloading, and internet transactions. However, surveys will be downloaded onto a secure computer which is only accessible to the Principal Investigator.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw my consent for the use of this center/school to recruit participants for this study at any time should I feel that this is necessary and in the best interest of the participants and this center/school. If I choose to do so, all I need to do is to contact Vivian Baxter Hunter by telephone at 940-230-6297 or by e-mail at VBaxter@twu.edu. Choosing to end the study will not affect this center/school's current or future relationships with Texas Woman's University.

By signing below, I give my permission for Vivian Baxter Hunter's research study to be conducted at this center/school.

\_\_\_\_\_

Printed name and title of Director/Principal or authorized personnel

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Director/Principal or authorized personnel

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## APPENDIX K

### Figures

Figure K1

*Conceptual Model of Mature Media and Sexual Values and Beliefs with Parent Communication and Religiosity as Moderators*

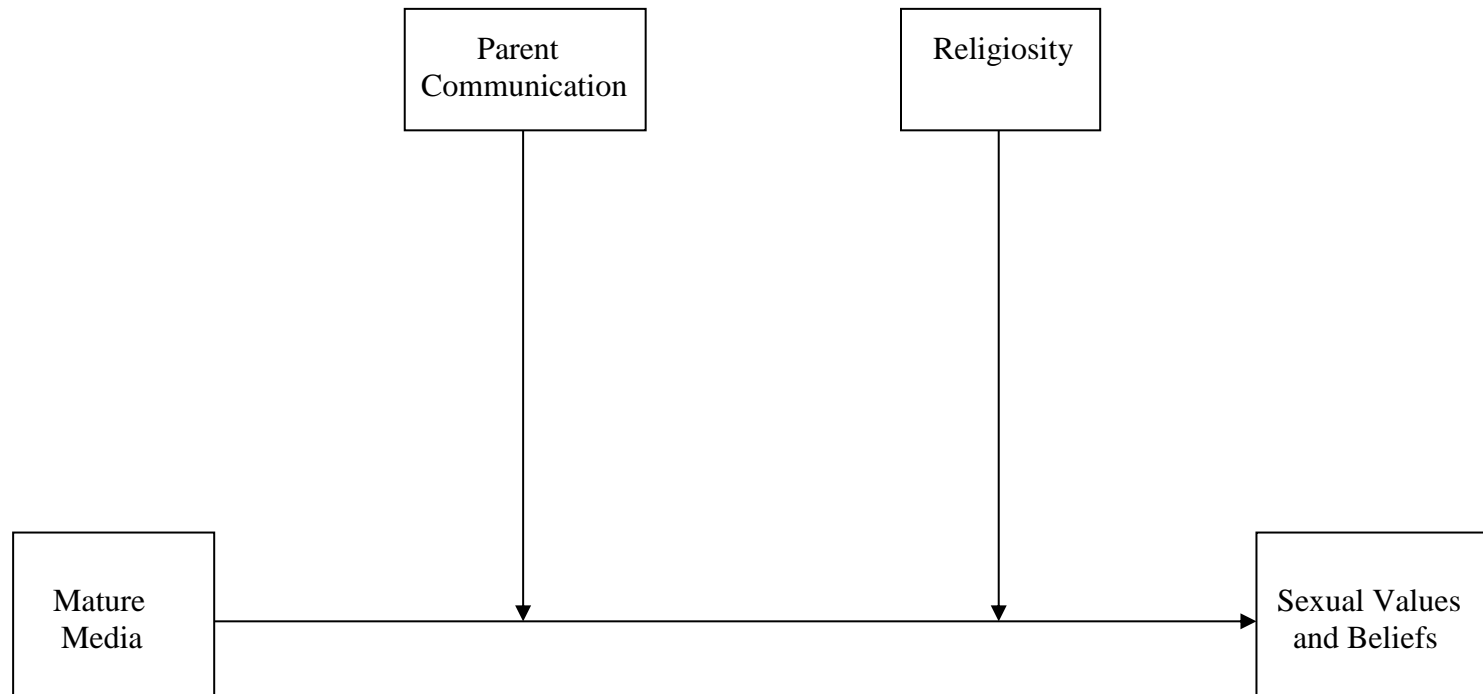


Figure K2

*Conceptual Model of Peer Influence and Sexual Values and Beliefs with Parent Communication and Religiosity as Moderators*

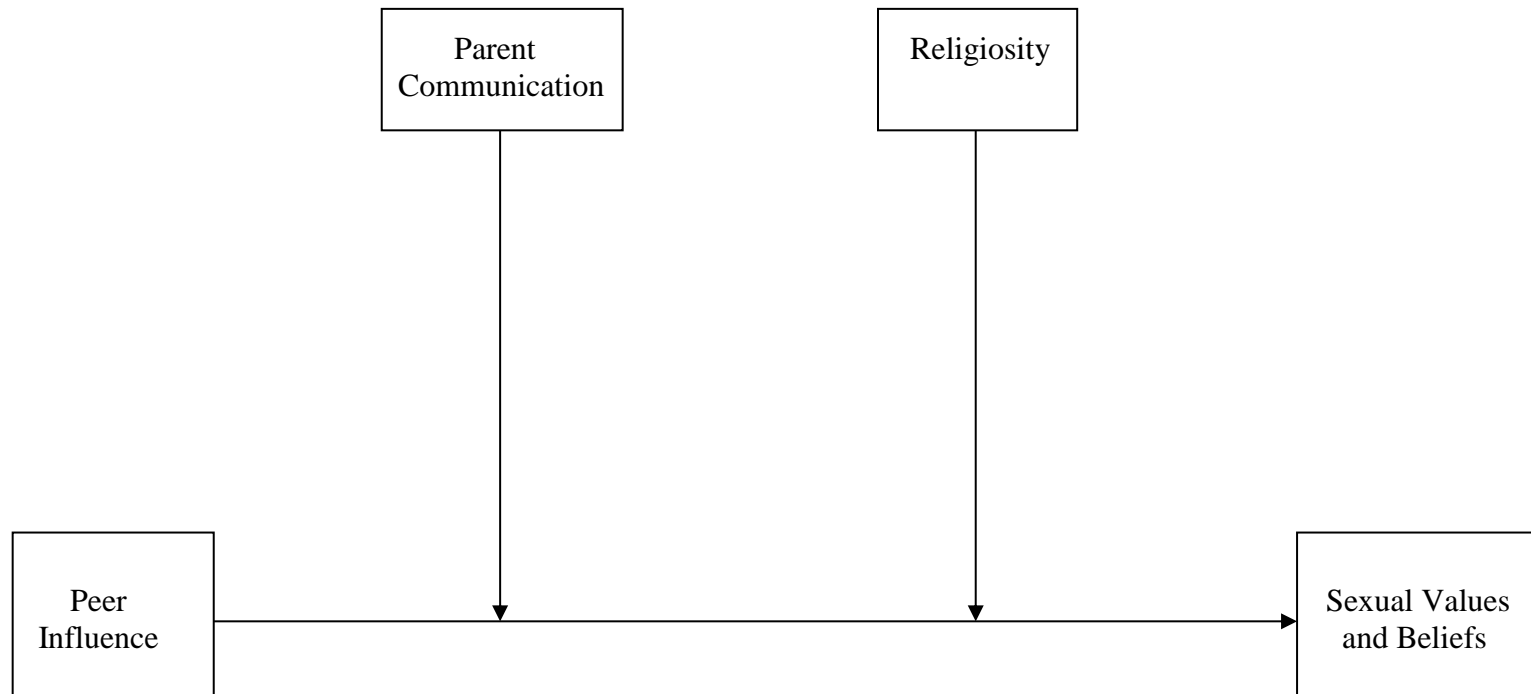


Figure K3

*Conceptual Model of Mature Media and Accurate Sexual Knowledge with Parent Communication and Religiosity as*

*Moderators*

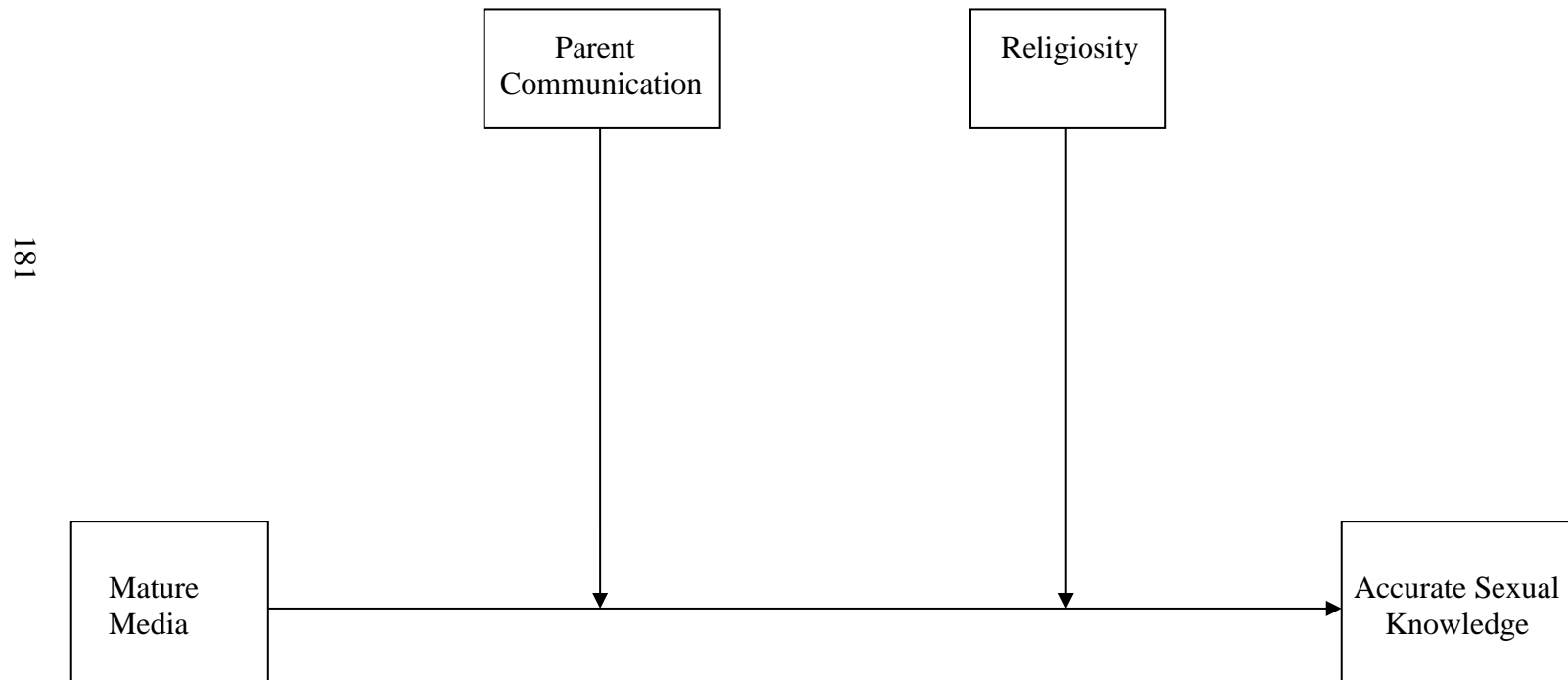


Figure K4

*Statistical Model of Mature Media and Sexual Values and Beliefs with Parent Communication and Religiosity as Moderators*

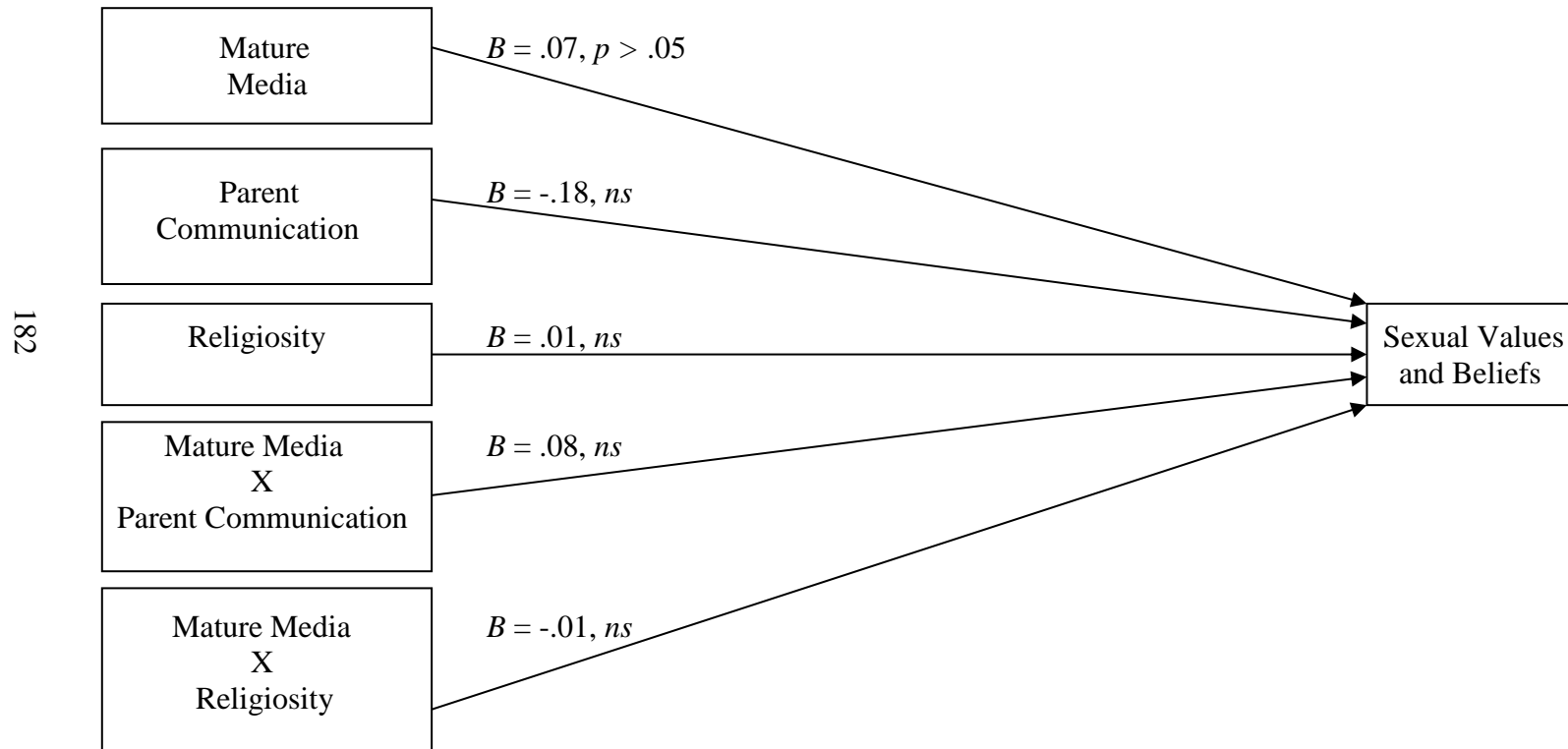


Figure K5

*Statistical Model of Peer Influence and Sexual Values and Beliefs with Parent Communication and Religiosity as Moderators*

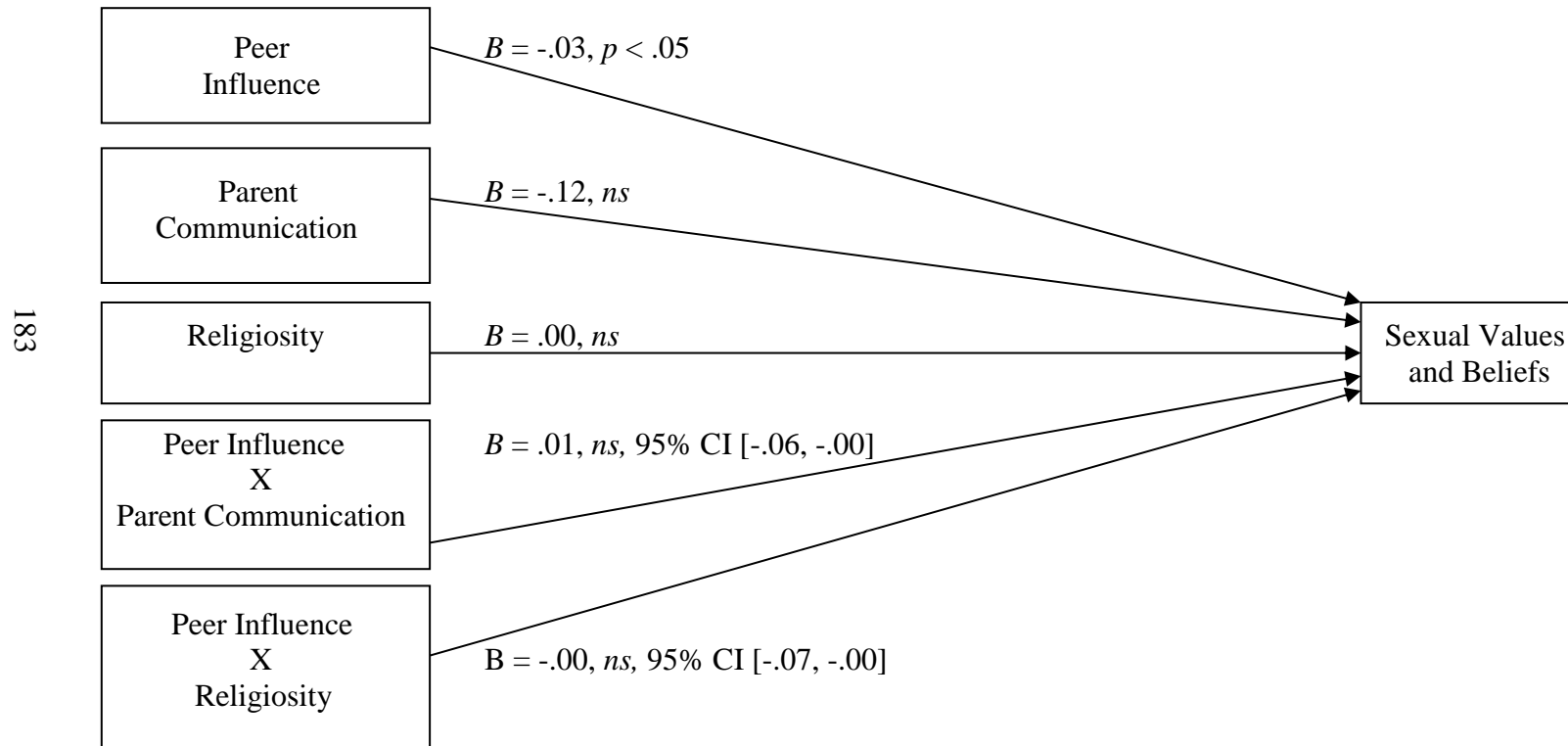




Figure K6

*Statistical Model of Mature Media and Accurate Sexual Knowledge with Parent Communication and Religiosity as Moderators*

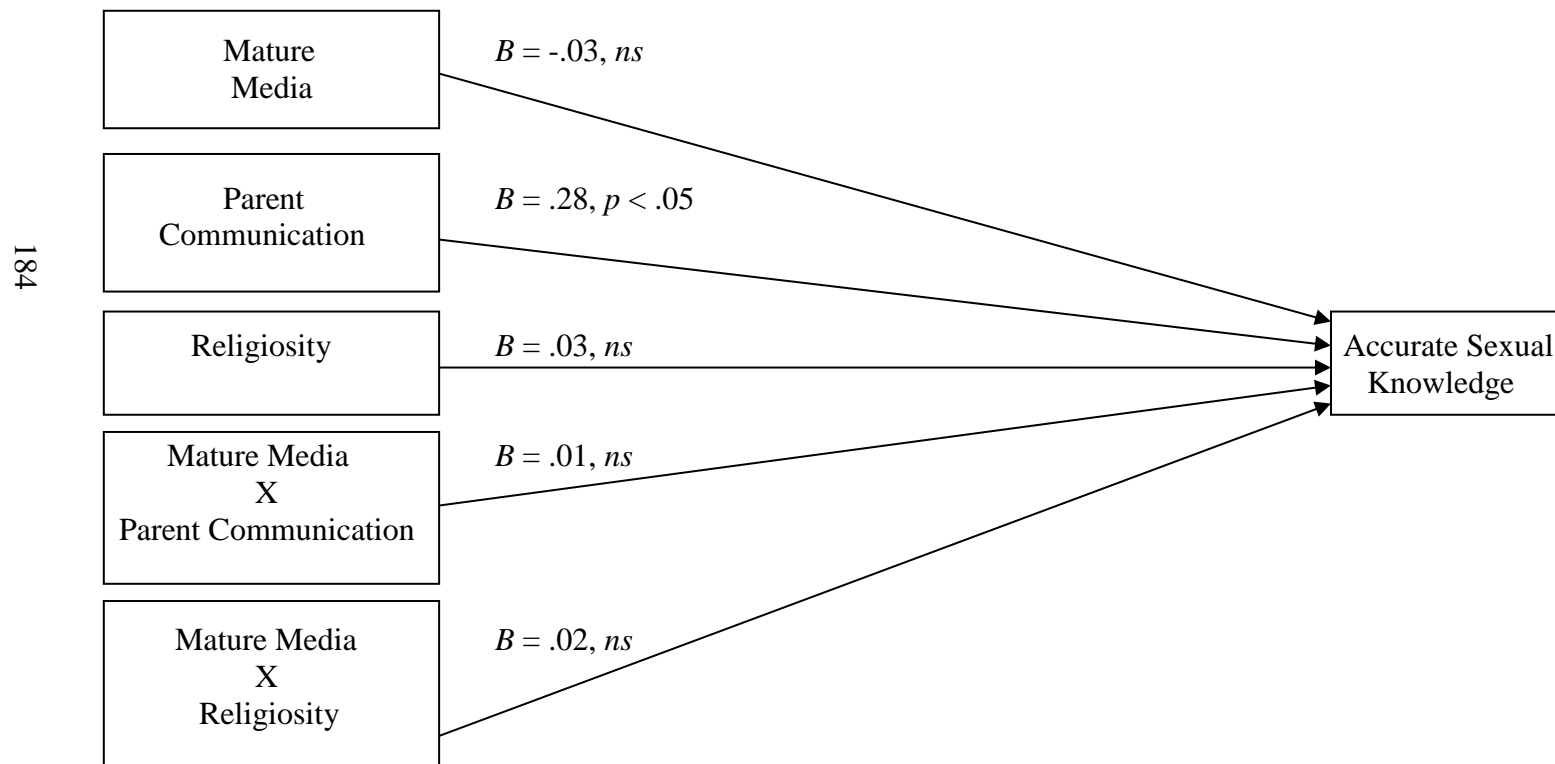


Figure K7

*Model of Religiosity as a Predictor of Sexual Values and Beliefs, Mediated by Parent Communication*

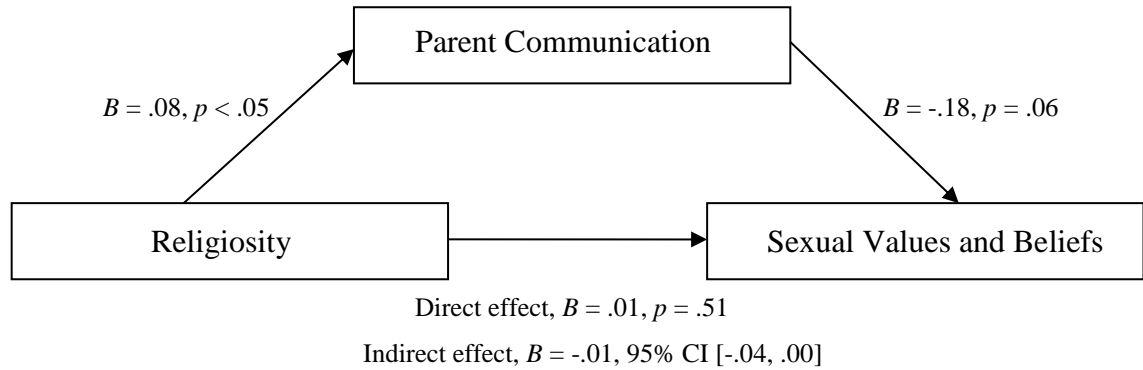


Figure K8

*Model of Religiosity as a Predictor of Sexual Knowledge, Mediated by Parent Communication*

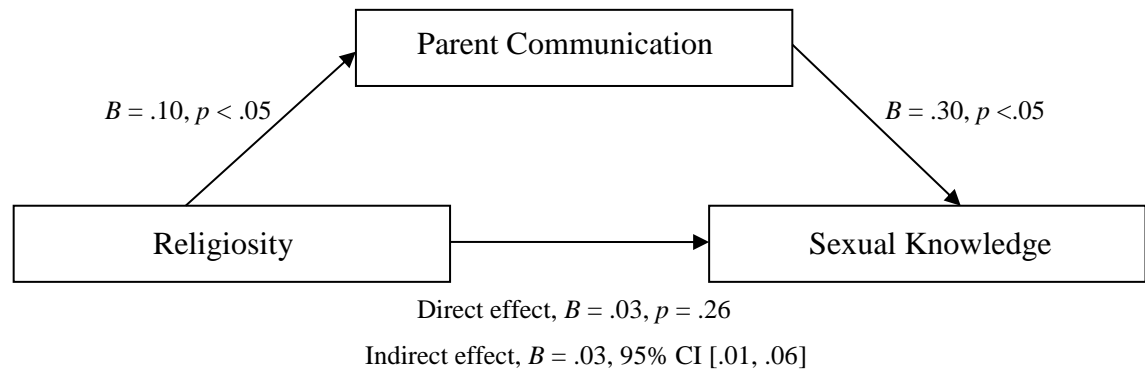


Figure K9

*Bar Graph of Sexual Topics Discussed as Reported by Parents and Adolescents.*

