

Assessing Sexual Television (TV) and Radio Programming That Nairobi Adolescents Watch and Listen To

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to find out the most popular sexual radio and TV programming amongst Nairobi City County public secondary school students. It examined these issues amongst 546, 13-20 year old respondents. This study was accomplished via quantitative and qualitative method. Five hundred and forty six questionnaires were administered and five focus group discussions conducted in five clusters of secondary schools in Nairobi City County. The study had two objectives: One, to find out the most popular radio and TV programs amongst Nairobi adolescents and Two, to find out which radio and TV programs have the highest sexual content according to Nairobi adolescents. The study found out that local TV programming; especially music and comedy was most popular with Nairobi adolescents when compared to radio programming and that local TV programs were more popular than foreign programs. Secondly, Kenya radio programs popular with adolescents were mostly the morning, afternoon and evening music and talk shows and were high in sexual content. The study concluded that breakfast and evening talk and afternoon music shows were the programs most popular with Nairobi adolescents. TV programs were more popular with Nairobi adolescents compared to radio programs. Also the study concludes that the few radio programs adolescents in Nairobi listen to are high in sexual content and recommended that it was important for parents and teachers to be more concerned and involved in the kind of TV and radio programs teenagers consumed while on holidays and at schools respectively if they were to give them proper guidance and tutelage in the kind of programming that will help them develop positively.*

Keywords: *Television, Radio Programming, Sexual content, Users and gratification, Nairobi Adolescents, Entertainment Media, Sexual Development.*

I. Introduction

Evidence suggests that the level of sexual content in Kenyan media has increased in recent years (Abuto, 2013). As a result of liberalization of media policy in the country, both the number of outlets and range of content in Kenyan media have dramatically expanded in recent years. The current media landscape is dominated by popular vernacular FM radio stations which are available everywhere as people can listen to them on their cell phones, cars, and computers whether at home, school, work or even when commuting (Synovate Kenya, 2007). By 2007, there were 107 vernacular, FM and community radio stations in Kenya and over 15 television stations in the country many of which offer mainly entertainment programming (Bowen, 2010). About 60% of this expanded media content especially on television is imported, much of it from the U.S., where studies indicate the amount of sexual content is most suggestive and has steadily increased over the past two decades (Kunkel, Eyal, Finnerty, Biely, & Donnerstein, 2005). Above all, it contains messages which are mostly inaccurate, and misleading (Strasburger, 2005).

Research from the developed world shows that entertainment media influence adolescents' sexual development and decision-making (Rideout, Foehr & Roberts, 2010; Brown, 2009; Brown, Halpern & L'Engle, 2005; Brown, L'Engle, Pardun, Guo, Kenneavy, & Jackson, 2006). However, despite the increase of sexual content in Sub Sahara Africa (Abuto, 2013; Gatsiounis, 2011; Miller, Kinya, Kizito, Ngula, Njoroge, & Davis, 2011; Wabwego, 2012)—there is little if any empirical literature about the TV and radio sexual programming that youth in this region are consuming. Consequently, we purposed to identify the TV and radio content that Nairobi adolescents consume. This information is a first step toward investigating such content for its sexual messages, as well as the motivations and context that adolescents report for consuming sexual TV and radio content which in turn could help in creating adolescents' media literacy curriculum.

II. Literature Review

Sexual media content in Kenyan radio saturates most electronic media sources including FM radio morning and afternoon shows, and music programs, TV afternoon music shows and soaps. Kanjama (2011) observed for example that though Kenyan radio presenters generally do a great job some publicly struggle through their own adolescent crises. He criticizes the giggles of presenters that in his view carry an adolescent personality laced with vulgar talk. The author admits that a respectful discussion of sexuality and relationships at the right time and place can contribute to the health of society, and agrees that some societal taboos should even be exposed by the sober lights of reason and faith to reflect changing culture. However, he objects to what he characterizes as gleeful imposition upon the public by these presenters; their obsession with sex and infidelity, especially on the captive audiences commuting daily in public transport.

Despite the saturation of sexual entertainment content in their air waves there is very little empirical knowledge in Africa generally and particularly in Kenya on its implications. Among scanty general literature on consumption of sexual content is Gakahu (2011) who examined the role of broadcast media on behaviour change amongst the youth. The author found that radio programming is basically music whereby Kenyan songs portray a skewed relationship between clear messages about safe sex and sex for sex's sake. The study set out to examine the role of broadcast media on behaviour change amongst the youth. It examined content of some of the popular lyrics in an average FM radio station in Kenya. For example, in the hit song, "Juala," condom for sheng, which was hugely popular with college and high school students in Kenya when it was released, despite the fact that the artist is promoting the use of contraceptives, he seems, to be encouraging casual sex. He sings about (manyake) women backsides coming in all sizes and for all prices especially on Friday's, ... (juala ndio wahitaji) hence what men need are just condoms. The artist commercializes sex and gives an okay to casual sex as long as the individuals involved have a condom. Other songs like "Wee Kamu", "Kamata Dame", and "John Nampenda John" among others are heavy on sexual content. For example, in the song "Wee Kamu" (just come to my room), the artist uses graphic language and glorifies promiscuity. The song delves into bedroom matters, describing a sexual encounter and leaves nothing to the imagination of its listeners. The song is done in "sheng", which masks most of the profane language used in it. Many music videos in Kenya portray half-nude women in sexually suggestive performances and play lyrics intended to arouse sexual urges (Gakahu, 2011). However, this study does not attempt to find out the specific programming popular with Nairobi adolescents.

Findings by research firm Consumer Insight (2013) indicate that there was too much negative sexual content on television although friends were the main and most trusted source of sexual information for the youth. The study revealed that boys and girls as young as 13 are engaging in unprotected sex, raising the risk of teenage pregnancy and contracting HIV/Aids. It showed that some of the teenagers engaged in multiple sexual relationships, further raising the risk of contracting and spreading sexually transmitted diseases. According to the report, four in every 10 youth aged between 13 and 19 interviewed had engaged in sex, with the incidences of multiple sexual partners higher among boys than girls. Consumer Insight managing director Ndirangu wa Maina commented that, "There is obviously too much sex in the media — magazines, television, and the Internet. There is also a lot of texting with 47 per cent of youth saying they have received or sent a sexual text message. Two-thirds of them say they enjoyed it," (p.3). Local media also carries expressions of concern about sexual content on Kenyan TV:

Kenyan TV stations are helping destroy whatever is left of this country's moral compass, all in the name of ratings. First are the *telenovelas* that have flooded our screens. These Latin American soaps hit our screens early in the evening when children are very much awake and watching TV. The scantily clad women and half naked men kiss, grope and fondle each other leaving nothing to the imagination. Prior to this is the 5-6 pm slot when all channels are competing with each other to screen the most sexually explicit videos, local African and American all lumped together. Producers of these shows, will defend them saying it helps keep their ratings up. They claim their shows reflect reality of the Kenyan family as it is today. If that is true then we are sunk. Seriously, these guys are targeting 13 year-olds with their sexually charged shows (Palaver, 2013, p.15).

With very little empirical data about the type and extent of TV and radio sexual programming in Kenya it is likely that the Kenyan radio and television programming has become more laced with sexual content due to increased liberation of media waves in the country since late 1990's (Synovate-Kenya , 2010). Therefore, as a foundational step in closing that gap of literature, the purpose of this study is to develop a fundamental understanding of what radio and TV programs Nairobi adolescents consume. This foundational study can thus be helpful to scholars in identifying media content to be investigated for its sexual media messaging and pave way for inquiry of attitude and behavioral effects and the initiatives to counter such effects.

III. Theoretical Framework: Uses and Gratifications

This study uses the uses and gratification theory (U & G). The theory was initially proposed by Elihu Katz in 1959 when he posed the question ‘what do people do with media’ instead of ‘what do media do to people.’ In the early 1970’s Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch expanded the idea exploring the functions of media and the role of the audience needs and expectations. They outlined three basic goals of uses and gratifications as a) to explain how people use media to gratify their needs, b) to understand motives for media behavior, and c) to identify functions or consequences that follow from needs, motives, and behavior. Accordingly, U & G focuses on the social and psychological origins of needs which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources and which lead to differential patterns of media exposure (Rossi, 2002).

The original framework of the theory described five basic assumptions. First, the audience is active and its media use is goal oriented, purposive, and motivated. Second, the initiative in linking need gratification to a specific media choice rests with the audience member. Third, the media compete with other sources of need satisfaction such as significant others for selection, attention, and use to gratify our needs or wants. Fourth, people are aware of their own media use, interests and motives. Lastly, social and psychological factors mediate people's communication behavior (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974). Rubin (1983) noted that gratifications researchers were making a systematic attempt to (a) conduct modified replications or extensions of studies, (b) refine methodology, (c) comparatively analyze the findings of separate investigations, and (d) treat mass media use as an integrated communication and social phenomenon.

U & G provides this study with an appropriate framework for understanding what kind of programs are popular with Nairobi adolescents and the sexual content media programs adolescents expose themselves to. This is because one of the assumptions of U& G is that media use is purposive and motivated that is, people are active audience members who select specific media and use it to satisfy their needs, interests, and preferences (Bleakley, Hennessy & Fishbein, 2011). It thus can be used to identify the media programs that audiences engage with and can be applied to a variety of media technologies as radio, television, VCRs, and remote control devices (Rosengren, Wenner & Palmgreen, 1985).

IV. Research Objectives

- 4.0.1** a) To find out the most popular sexual content TV programs amongst Nairobi adolescents.
b) To investigate the most popular sexual content radio programs amongst Nairobi adolescents.

- 4.0.2** a) To find out which TV programs have the highest sexual content amongst Nairobi adolescents.
b) To find out which radio programs have the highest sexual content amongst Nairobi adolescents.

4.1. Research Questions

- RQ1: a) What are the most popular sexual content TV programs amongst Nairobi adolescents?
b) Which are the most popular sexual content radio programs amongst Nairobi adolescents?
RQ2: a) Which TV programs have the highest sexual content?
b) Which radio programs have the highest sexual content?

V. Research Methodology

This study used a mixed methods design. The advantage of a mixed methods approach is that it allowed the researcher to view research problems from multiple perspectives, contextualize information, develop a more complete understanding and triangulate results. The primary design for current study is quantitative. Qualitative data were used for both triangulation and complementarity purposes. That is, it was used for enhancing the study as it seeks convergence, corroboration, and correspondence of data from the first method and clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method as (Cresswell, 2003) envisioned.

The sampling frame for the study was envisioned as consisting of six clusters. However, the researcher was not able to access a pure girls’ day school. Consequently data were collected from five clusters: girls’ boarding, boys’ boarding, girls’ day and boarding, boys’ day and mixed day and boarding. Respondents were sampled randomly using class registers, hence the quantitative sampling was representative of the public secondary school students of the city county. For this study, participants were purposively selected in the sampled schools from form one to form four.

5.1. Survey Sampling Procedure

Nairobi County Education Directorate records indicate that Nairobi County has 42,422 public secondary school students. Out of these, 54% are male. The sample responding to questionnaires was determined according to Daniel (1999), in Fischer *et al.* (1991) and Cochran's (1977) formulae designed for large populations. In Fischer's, samples for infinite populations such as of the current study (of 42,422) is calculated using the formula: $n = Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q / d^2$. In this case, n = sample size, z = the value at the chosen confidence interval (1.96 for a confidence interval of 95%), p = estimated population with attributes of interest which if infinite $p = 0.5$, $q = 1 - p$, and d = degree of desired precision (0.05 will be used in this study). Therefore, the sample size n needed for the proposed study was: $(1.96^2) \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5) / (0.05)^2 = 385$. Previous experience of the author with research among high school young indicated that a high proportion of incomplete questionnaires could be anticipated.

Five focus group discussions out of the six envisioned were carried out. This is because the researcher did not find a 'girls only' day school in Nairobi City County as envisioned before. Each of the five FGDs had eight students, hence 40 students participated in the qualitative part of the study. The total sample for analysis in the current study was therefore $437 + 40 = 477$ respondents. The study also used 65 raters to judge the level of content on both TV and radio programs. Mean age for respondents was 15.5 years. Over half of the respondents (55.1%) were male while the rest were females. Respondents for current study straddle all the secondary school classes. Form one were 34 %, form twos, 33 %, form threes, 20 % and lastly form fours were 13%.

5.2 Focus Group Discussions (Fgds)

FGDs guides followed the questionnaire structure in terms of topics examined. They likewise inquired into preferred programming, demographic information such family and religious affiliation, viewer motivations, media habits and media viewing contexts with respect to sexual radio and TV content. FGDs required respondents to indicate popular TV and radio programming among youth. Data collected from these focus group discussions was used to triangulate survey data as well as to create the list of programming to which survey participants responded.

5.3 Fgd Sampling Procedure

As Morgan (1997) explained, FGDS are not conducted through rigorous probability sampling as they are not expected to statistically represent the population. Therefore the researcher selected FGDs respondents purposively but made sure age, gender, class form were considered from the sample schools. This sampling procedure is appropriate as FGDs only seek an in-depth understanding of the perspective of study respondents within their natural context about a certain matter (Obwatho, 2014). The researcher selected respondents from each of the five clusters of school types, i.e. boys' boarding, girls' boarding, boys' day, girls' day and boarding and mixed day and boarding schools. Half of the FGDs respondents were between 12-15 years and the other half between 16-20 years.

5.0.4 Data Processing And Analysis
After completion of data collection, a data cleaning exercise was effected on quantitative data to correct anomalies such as incomplete surveys. Data were transcribed and then coded and analyzed. Key themes and patterns emerging were coded, analyzed and interpreted using U & G model. As Bradley, Curry and Devers (2007) suggested, themes provided general propositions that emerged from diverse and detail-rich experiences of participants and recurrent and unifying ideas regarding the subject of inquiry. Both transcription and entry of survey data were carried out by research assistants. The researcher randomly cross-checked data entry and the transcribed scripts against recorded material for quality control.

5.4 Measures

Demographic data were gathered from participants regarding gender, age, family structure, religiosity as measured by frequency of attending religious services, socio-economic status (as measured by amount of school fees per term), and school residence type (day or boarding). The most popular sexual content TV programming amongst Nairobi adolescents and the programming with the most sexual content were measured by means as table 1 and 2 shows.

VI. Popular radio programming with high sexual content

6.1 Radio Programming Popular with Adolescents

In order to measure respondents’ motivations for listening to radio programs, participants were presented with a list of 17 radio programs. The radio programs are listed in table ... Each program had been rated by a team of independent raters from 1 to 5 in terms of level of sexual content. Participants indicated on a scale of 0 (*never*) to 4 (*very often*) how often they listened to each. Total sexual content exposure was calculated by multiplying the frequency of listening indicated by participants with the sexual content score of the specific program that had been assigned by the independent raters. Possible scores ranged from 0 to 196.48. Actual scores ranged from 0.00 to 183.96. Mean score was 62.81 (*SD* = 34.13). Table 4.2 also presents the program popularity means and standard deviations on a 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very often*) scale.

The most popular radio programs were by Radio Africa Group. The most popular program in the study was KISS FM Rush Hour (2.54), followed by KISS FM Top Ten Hits (2.47) and Dance Republic (2.11). It is important to note that radio programming was not as popular as TV programming.

6.2 Radio Programs With High Sexual Content

On sexual content again, Radio Africa radio station was rated to be most popular. Maina Kageni’s Classic FM (Morning/evening shows (4.13). Noteworthy is that this is the highest score of sexual content for both radio and TV programs rated in the current study. It was followed by Ghetto Radio, Friday Night Live (3.38) and KISS FM, Rush Hour (3.29) and KISS FM 100 (3.07), Morning breakfast show by Caroline Mutoko. Nairobi adolescents did not record any foreign radio programs that they listened to.

Table 1. Means for Listening to Specific Radio Programs

Radio programs	M freq. of watching scale: 0 – 4	sd	M Sexual Content Rating scale: 1 - 5	sd
Hits not Homework – Capital FM	.96	1.30	2.75	0.96
Goteana – Ghetto Radio	1.50	1.51	3.13	1.05
Rush Hour – KISS FM	2.54	1.44	3.29	1.20
Friday Night Live – Ghetto Radio	1.42	1.59	3.38	1.13
The Heat – Capital FM	1.06	1.34	2.71	1.07
Club H2O – Homeboyz Radio	1.59	1.56	2.60	0.96
Coco Sobo Moto – Hot 96	.78	1.27	2.71	1.24
Top Ten Hits on KISS FM	2.47	1.50	2.98	1.11
Sports Bay with Ghost Mule – Jambo FM	.79	1.26	2.14	0.95
Classical Old School - Tuesday	.89	1.29	2.49	1.12
Classic Room – HomeBoyz Radio	1.17	1.45	2.49	0.76
Dance Republic – KISS FM	2.11	1.57	2.98	1.29
Maina Kageni – Classic FM	1.37	1.53	4.13	1.07
Rickdeez- Capital FM	.81	1.28	2.64	0.96
The Jump Off – KISS FM	1.32	1.56	2.70	0.99
Morning Drive - XFM	1.04	1.46	2.93	1.13
Caroline Mutoko – KISS FM	1.25	1.51	3.07	1.29

VII. Popular TV Programming With High Sexual Content

7.1 Television Programs Popular With Adolescents

Participants were presented with a list of 29 popular radio programs. Each program was rated from 1 to 5 in terms of level of sexual content. Each program had been rated by a team of independent raters from 1 to 5 in terms of level of sexual content. Participants indicated on a scale of 0 (*never*) to 4 (*very often*) how often they listened to each. Total sexual content exposure was calculated by multiplying the frequency of listening indicated by participants with the sexual content score of the specific program that had been assigned by the independent raters. Possible scores ranged from 0 to 405.4. Actual scores ranged from 2.90 to 336.31. Mean score was 126.30 (*SD* = 59.71). See Table 2 for results.

Table 2. Means for Watching Specific TV Programs

TV programs	<i>M</i> freq. of watching scale: 0 – 4	<i>sd</i>	<i>M</i> Sexual Content Rating scale: 1 - 5	<i>sd</i>
Straight Up	2.71	1.22	2.90	1.05
Museto	.40	1.22	2.32	.96
Keeping up with the Kardashians	1.44	1.55	2.32	.96
Hollywood Brothers	.82	1.32	3.92	1.22
Tia and Tamara	.99	1.37	2.96	1.19
The Beat	2.20	1.26	2.64	1.16
Live on Blast	2.15	1.42	2.13	1.30
Tahidi High	2.29	1.33	2.26	1.10
MTV Base	1.80	1.66	3.66	1.12
Vampire Diaries	1.92	1.66	3.56	1.13
Sound City	.66	1.15	3.11	1.21
Churchill Raw	2.68	1.26	2.04	1.12
BBC Discovery	.87	1.28	2.04	1.07
National Geographic	1.35	1.49	1.90	.96
1000 Ways to Die	2.06	1.60	1.74	1.09
Trace	1.32	1.62	3.73	1.27
Arrow	1.53	1.66	3.11	1.11
Top Gear	1.01	1.47	2.09	1.03
Dysebel	1.65	1.61	2.78	1.18
Man versus Food	1.10	1.37	2.17	1.12
WWF	1.01	1.36	2.89	1.23
Pretty Little Liars	1.42	1.56	3.41	1.12
True Blood	1.22	1.51	3.90	1.29
The Simpsons	1.44	1.61	3.07	1.36
Sixteen and Pregnant	1.08	1.49	3.81	1.14
The Cube	.83	1.23	2.78	.99
Teen Republic	2.08	1.46	2.68	1.09
The Suite Life of Zack and Cody	.98	1.45	2.36	1.03
Yolo	1.44	1.54	2.80	1.06

On programming popularity, local TV programs were more popular when compared to foreign programs. At the very top was Straight UP (2.71), followed by Churchill Raw (2.68), Tahidi High (2.29), The Beat (2.20) and Live on Blast (2.15). These programs were more popular than most popular foreign programs accessed via DSTV, ZUKU and other pay TV channels such as 1000 Ways to Die (2.06), Vampire Diaries (1.90) and MTV Base (1.80).

7.2 Television Programs With High Sexual Content

Foreign television programs were rated higher in sexual content rating in comparison to local programs. Top most was Holly Wood Brothers (3.92), True Blood (3.90), Sixteen and Pregnant (3.81), Trace (3.73), MTV Base (3.66), Vampire Diaries (3.56) and Sound City (3.11). Just like in popular programs, Straight UP led the local programs in sexual content at (2.90) followed by Yolo (2.80), The Cube (2.78), Teen Republic (2.68) the Beat (2.64) and the beat as table 2 shows. Most of the popular TV and radio programming and the programming from both channels rated as having a lot of sexual content were aired during the morning breakfast shows, afternoon and evening programs.

VIII. Discussions

While there is plethora of research in Western contexts regarding the type of TV and radio programming that adolescents listen and watch little or no research has looked at the sexual TV and radio programming that Nairobi adolescents watch and listen to despite the liberation of the Kenyan air waves in late 1990s leading to proliferation of both local and foreign sexual content programming (Abuto, 2013, Synovate-Kenya, 2010). It is imperative to find out the type of both radio and television programs which are popular amongst Nairobi adolescents and those ones which they report to be high on sexual content. Consequently this could enable stakeholders such as parents, schools, and health interventionists to counteract potentially negatively outcomes arising out of consumption of sexual content by the teenagers. Therefore this study investigated popular radio and TV programming, and also radio and TV programs which are high on sexual content as reported Nairobi high school students.

Nairobi adolescents did not report listening to any foreign radio programs. Most importantly radio as a communication channel was not as popular when compared to television programming. However as far as local radio programming is concerned it seems like Radio Africa Group FM radio stations programs were most popular with participants compared to what other FM stations were offering. These results probably mean that KISS FM Rush Hour , KISS FM Top Ten Hits, Dance Republic producers most understood the kind of programming that gratified the needs and wants of Nairobi adolescents. Noteworthy is that all these are music programs hence meaning that Nairobi adolescents were more in radio for listening to music more than any other type of programming.

Secondly, the fact these popular radio stations recorded the highest sexual content programming validates Kanjama (2011) lamentation that though the Kenyan radio presenters generally did a great job some were struggling through their own adolescent crises. For these radio stations presenters no topic no matter how raunchy it is which cannot be discussed even in the morning without minding the fact that at this time many Nairobi parents are driving their teenagers to school in the morning while listening to FM radio together. They seem obsessed with and even appear to encourage consequence free-infidelity in marriage especially on a captive audience commuting daily in private and public transport as it happens every weekday in Nairobi. In Nairobi, almost always, it is the ‘adolescent radio’ on air.

Findings that foreign programs were rated to having far more sexual content compared to local ones are in congruence with Kunkel, Eyal, Finnerty, Biely, & Donnerstein, (2005) that much of the TV content from the west was immense in sexual content. These findings suggest that Nairobi parents and teachers and other stakeholders have far much to worry about imported media content on TV than local ones as per as sexual content programming is concerned.

Surprisingly, the fact that local TV programming was more popular compared to foreign programs shows that Kenyan youth may not be spending most their time glued to foreign programming as hitherto assumed. This therefore means that Nairobi adolescents consider local TV stations to be giving them the kind of programs that satisfies their viewing needs when compared to foreign ones. A close look of the five popular TV programs that is, Straight Up, Churchill Raw, Tahidi High, The Beat and Live on Blast reveals that three are music programs, one is a comedy show and one a local soap. The music programs are normally aired in the afternoon (between 2.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m.) on all national TV stations; Citizen, K24, KTN and NTV air both local and foreign music videos. Churchill Raw and Tahidi High are almost entirely local content programs. The study also shows that for TV, what was sexier is not what was more popular. This could mean that Nairobi’s adolescents were not just watching TV programs to enjoy sexual content but also for other reasons such as to keep company.

IX. Recommendations

This study suggests that parents, teachers, health interventionists and other stakeholders may need to pay more attention to the type local radio programming and imported television foreign programs that their teenagers are listening to and watching if they intend to tackle the problem of teenagers consuming increased sexual content. This is because consuming copious amounts of sexual content is known to impact adolescents’ sexual attitudes and behavior negatively Bleakley, Hennessy, Fishbein, & Jordan (2011) Brown, L’Engle, Pardun, Guo, Kenneavy, & Jackson, (2006). Again parents and teachers should be more involved in the kind of TV and radio programs adolescents consume while on holidays and even at school if they were to give them proper guidance and tutelage in the kind of programming that will help them develop positively. Finally although this study was ground breaking in examining the popular and sexual radio and TV programming that Nairobi adolescents’ expose themselves to future research should examine how this exposure is associated with their sexual attitudes and behaviors.

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