TEENS, SOAPS, AND SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS

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ABSTRACT

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This is an analysis of the relationship between daytime soap opera viewing and social perceptions and the salience of sex. Two hundred eighty-five high school juniors were interviewed in the spring of 1983. Overall, daytime and evening soap opera viewing was significantly related to estimates of the occurrence of illegimate pregnancies, deaths at childbirth, marriages resulting from pregnancies, and rape. Daytime viewing was also related to the perceived importance of sex to adults. Specific contingency analyses of perceived reality, isolation, self-degradation, and other channels of information about sex show varied influence of the relationship between exposure and social reality and the salience of sex.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Daytime serials have been a popular form of entertainment for more than 50 years. Although early radio soap operas received some attention, television soap operas, like other forms of daytime television, such as talk shows and quiz shows, were practically ignored by social scientists until the late 1970s. Katzman (1972) noted that although the soap opera is an important part of television programming, it is rarely considered important enough for serious analysis. Downing (1974) suggests that because the soap operas are directed toward women, they are perceived as unimportant by critics. Also, critics are quick to critize potential ill-effects of television on children and soap operas are presumed to have no children in the daytime audience (Cantor, 1979). To date soap opera research consists of who watches, why they watch, what they see, and how are they affected.

Soaps: Who Watches

Katzman (1972) defined the 1970 soap opera audience. Twenty million viewers were watching one or more soap operas each weekday. Seventy-six percent of the audience consisted of females 18 years or older. Fifteen percent were males 18 years or older, five percent were teenagers 12-17, and four percent were children 2-11. Although soap operas had viewers in all economic cateogories, most viewers were and remain to be in the lower and middle economic levels.

The primary purpose of soap operas is to attract women 18-49 years old for advertising dollars. Although they succeed, specific soap opera program audiences vary in composition and size. For instance, in 1971 the most successful soap operas were The Guiding Light and As the World Turns. These programs successfully attracted older women as well as a few teenagers and men. As of the summer of 1981, the size of the audience of these two programs remained about the same, but the composition of the audiences for the ABC network All My Children and General Hospital had changed significantly. They had become the most successful soap operas on television by attracting the most women between 18-49, drawing in many young women, but the changes in the teenage audience is of more interest. In 1971 both of

these program's audiences were ten percent teenagers 12-17.

In 1981 the teenage audience for <u>General</u> <u>Hospital</u> rose to 25 percent (<u>Nielsen</u> <u>Television</u> <u>Index</u>, 1971, 1981).

In general the viewership of soap operas has not changed greatly over the past 15 years. Women viewers are still the majority. The number of men in the audience is relatively small and consists of many retirees. Both male and female teenage audience has increased and most tend to be viewers of the ABC network programs. It is the teenagers of the audience that are of interest in this study.

Why Soap Operas Are Watched

Why do people watch soap operas and why do young teenagers and men of all ages watch soap operas that are written and produced for the 18-49 female audience? In Frank and Greenberg (1980) television viewers were categorized into one of 14 "interest segments" based on demographic information, interests and needs, and media usage. Three of these groups were heavy soap opera viewers. The heaviest soap opera viewers were those with "elderly concerns." Members of this group were mostly retirees and widowed females who had few

interests and felt a strong need for social integration.

The second most frequent soap opera viewers were in the "home and community" segment. They were married homemakers who felt a strong need for family ties. They seem to turn to soap operas for learning to understand others rather than for intellectual or creative stimulation. Many members of this group were adults who lack adult companionship during the day and watch daytime soap operas for social integration. The third soap opera viewing group were youths interested in "indoor games and social activities." They were predominantly low income, nonintellectual females who were heavy television viewers. Of Frank and Greenberg's segments, soap opera viewing was lowest for all segments that were predominantly males. Also, groups with high intellectual interests were not soap opera viewers.

Another study, by Compesi (1980), sought to explain why people watch soap operas. In the study, viewers of the ABC network All My Children reported seven major reasons for viewing. The most noted reason for viewing was entertainment. Habit, convenience, social utility, relaxation, escape from boredom, and reality exploration followed in the rank order. Slightly different motivations for viewing were described by Carveth and Alexander (1983) in their study of college students soap

viewers. The five motivations they revealed were entertainment, character identification, reality exploration, escape from work, and escape from boredom. In their analysis, watching soap operas to facilitate social interaction was included in the entertainment factor.

Soaps and Perceived Reality

Researchers have also looked at perceived reality as an influence on the way people watch television. One may anticipate that the more a viewer watches a specific medium or program, the more realistic it will appear to be. Greenberg and Reeves (1974) found that general use of television is strongly related to general measures of perceived reality of television. Most of the previous studies have looked at children's perceptions (Chaffee and Tims, 1976; Greenberg, Ericson and Vlahos, 1972; and Greenberg and Reeves, 1976), and/or the perceived reality of televised violence (Gerbner, 1969; Dominick and Greenberg, 1970; and Feshbach, 1972). Specifically, Lyle and Hoffman (1972) found that young teens often respond that "people on television are like people they know." Although skepticism increases with the age of a child, 60 percent of teenagers 12-16 believed that "television characters and real people are alike most of the time."

Rosengren and Windahl (1972) discussed the role of involvement, interaction, and identification in examining mass media consumption and motives. Perhaps these mediating variables also influence the perceived reality of media content. In Greenberg et al. (1982) viewer's involvement in the soap operas were divided into physical involvement (talking to the characters while watching the show and arranging schedules around the viewing time) and emotional involvement (becoming concerned about soap character's problems and becoming emotionally involved with happenings on the shows). This study found positive relationships between perceived reality and physical and emotional involvement.

Many authors have commented on the unique realistic qualities of soap opera program content. The soap opera is generally perceived as more realistic than prime time programming (Cantor and Pingree, 1983). Soap opera time is "real time" rather than "film time." A soap opera event may develop day-to-day rather than squeezing long time spans into a prime-time drama or film. Newcomb (1974) points out that the problems faced by soap opera characters are ones that can also be experienced by the audience in their own lives. This is not as often true for prime-time problems. Soap operas concentrate on

interpersonal relationships for themes and aim these themes toward the females 18-49 in the audience. Interpersonal relationships, romantic love, and personal problems dominate almost all action in soap operas. It appears that the reality of the soaps lead to greater involvement, greater identification, and possibly greater effects.

Sexual Content of Soap Operas

The most concern with effects of soap operas is based on the amount of sexual content. Soap operas, like all other network programming, do not portray explicit sexual content. They are, however, recognized as the programming that portrays the most sexual content of all commercial and public television (Cantor and Pingree, 1983). Prime-time television has less sexual content but is "steamier" than daytime soap operas. This was especially true in the late 1970s when intercourse was the type of sex shown and referred to most often on prime-time television. At that time, soap opera's sexual content consisted of mostly petting and kissing. Since that time the number of instances of implied sexual intercourse has grown to equal the amount of explicit petting.

Lowry, Love, and Kirby (1981) examined a fall 1979 sample of soap operas and found 6.5 acts of sexual behavior per hour. Sexual content was categorized as erotic touching, verbal and implied instances of sexual intercourse, and various other behaviors. Erotic touching occurred three times per hour, verbal or implied sexual intercourse two times per hour, and 1.7 times per hours additional sexual behaviors were found. Greenberg, Abelmen, and Neuendorf (1981) sampled the 1976, 1979 and 1980 soap opera seasons. Erotic touching or "petting" was the most often presented type of sexual content in this study. In 1980, references to sexual intercourse occurred once per hour.

Once again in 1982, a content analysis of sexual content in soap operas was conducted (Greenberg and D'Alessio, 1983). Sexual references and acts had increased to two acts of intercourse per hour, one of petting every two hours, one of prostitution every four hours, and one of rape every 11 hours. Overall, sex acts are heterosexual intercourse and foreplay. Prostitution are rare and homosexuality, masturbation, and incest were nonexistent in daytime soap operas.

It is vital to further describe the context of the sexual content in soap operas. What does the audience know about the participants? Are they married to each

other or to other people? Are they relatively
unacquainted? Are they young or old? Are they
typically portrayed as good or bad people? Is alcohol
involved? Who initiated the act? Are there implicit or
explicit motives and negotiations involved? Some of the
characteristics of the sexual content have been
examined. Greenberg, Abelman, and Neuendorf (1981)
found sexual activity occurred among those not married
to each other 4-5 times more often than among married
participants. Greenberg and D'Alessio (1983) found that
partners in intercourse were usually young white adults,
none under 20 years old and only two cases of acts
involving a person over 40. Two-thirds of the time no
one person initiated the act. Only 20 percent occurred
among married partners while 20 percent occurred among
partners who were married to others. Cantor and Pingree
(1983) say that although intercourse is often portrayed
between married partners in both prime-time and daytime
television, daytime soap operas are more likely than
prime soaps to show sex taking place between married
partners and is, therefore, more conventional.

Three content analyses provide descriptions of soap
opera problems and topics of conversation. Katzman
(1972) and Greenberg et al. (1982) described the 1970
and 1977 soap opera problems. Marriage problems,

particularly infidelity, were predominant and represented 29 percent of the problems in 1970 and 28 percent in 1977. Break ups of romance between unmarried partners made up seven percent of 1970 soap problems and 11 percent in 1977.

Most sexual content in soap operas is in the form of conversation. Fine's (1981) content analysis examined conversational content. Twenty-two percent of all conversation topics were about marriage. Romance between unmarried people was the topic of conversation 19 percent of the time. Other frequent topics were vocational and business matters (26.3%), personality (23.3%), and family (21.1%). Seventy-six percent of all conversations about romance were male-female dyads. Female-female dyads accounted for 22.2 percent and male-male dyads accounted for only 2.2 percent.

Cassata and Skill (1983) compared socially responsible portrayals and socially irresponsible portrayals of interpersonal behaviors in seven daytime soap operas and five prime time family dramas. Socially responsible portrayals included nonaggressive touching, kissing, and embracing. Socially irresponsible portrayals included verbally suggestive, aggressive touching, and physically suggestive portrayals. Differences in the amount of socially responsible and

irresponsible portrayals were exaggerated because of the type of drama chosen to compare with daytime soaps. Soap operas are not written for children, and the prime time programs ie., Eight Is Enough and Little House on the Prairie were to be viewed by the entire family. In both types of dramas socially responsible portrayals were most common, but socially irresponsible portrayals were twice as common on soap operas (35.3% vs. 16.5%). Unfortunately, daytime and evening soap operas have not been compared.

A study by Maykovich (1975) provides qualitative descriptions of sex-related circumstances in soap operas. Maykovich speaks of triangles and romantic complications arising from partners being presumed dead. Often premartial and extramarital sex are common in cases where characters experience poor marital relations, financial difficulties, work conflicts, and step children problems. Interestingly, in most cases of extramaritial sex, problems in the marriage are worked out and the affair ends.

Another consequence of sex in the soaps is pregnancies, especially problem ridden pregnancies. Greenberg et al. (1982) found 16 percent of all fathers on soaps had illegitimate children. Cassata, Skill, and Boadu (1979) found 19 pregnancies in the 13 soap operas

on television in 1977; eight resulted in miscarriages and three pregnant women died. It is noted that few of the pregnancies occurred under happy circumstances.

It has been established that the world of soap operas is a place where problems with sex and interpersonal relationships are rampant. Events surrounding pregnancies are unpleasant. Affairs and divorce are common. Do these exaggerated occurrences of problems affect soap opera viewers' perceptions of society? To answer this question it is first important to recognize the problems in demonstrating television's influence on social reality. Hawkins and Pingree in a NIMH report in 1982 discuss some of these problems. Common to most television effects studies is the lack of unexposed groups, causal ordering, and the control of third variables. More specific to effects on social reality, experimental methods are typically less generalizable than usual. This results from choosing a representative group of media messages as stimuli that exist in aggregate in the natural context.

Several studies at the Annenberg School of Communication East have extensively studied the "cultivation" hypothesis. Among those studies, Gerbner and Gross (1976) argue that television is the "central arm of American society, serving to socialize viewers

into certain roles and behaviors." Television portrays basic assumptions about values and society that in turn cultivate people's beliefs. Hawkins and Pingree (1982) summarized nearly 50 papers to find that most studies show evidence for a link between amount of viewing and beliefs. Social perceptions linked to television viewing by past research include, among others, prevalance of violence, family values, images of doctors and the elderly, and traditional sex roles. Statistical relationships appear real but alternative hypotheses have not been ruled out and implications of causality are unreasonable. A relationship between two variables says nothing about the causal nature of the relationship. Potentially, television exposure could affect perceived social reality or perceived social reality could influence television exposure. A spurious variable may be affecting the correlated variables. There may also be a reciprocal relationship explaining the significant correlation. Feningstein (1979) discussed how correlational findings between exposure and aggressiveness may be reciprocal relationships.

Most aspects of social reality that are portrayed on television may also be experienced by the individual. Television's influence does not exist in a vacuum. Viewers have experiences of their own, witness the

experiences of others such as peers and family, and are exposed to many other media sources such as film, books, magazines, newspapers, and radio. Television portrayals may be consistent with other input viewers receive outside of television and reinforce those perceptions. Televison may instead contradict information received through other sources and experiences making it necessary for viewers to evaluate their sources of information. Last, television portrayals may provide unique information.

Gerbner et al. (1980) discusses how television "mainstreams" social reality by portraying beliefs that are shared by many subgroups of society. Here, television adds little to those subgroups, but heavy viewers in divergent subgroups will converge to the mainstream. Gerbner et al. (1980) also discuss another explanation of their findings that somewhat contradicts the "mainstreaming" process. A process labeled "resonance" applies to cases where television content is especially salient. If what people see on television is congruent with a viewer's reality, then heightened cultivation differentials are found. They imply that resonance is a "double dose" of the television message rather than that television is merely modeling society. Television's role as a "cultural arm" appears weaker

when it is limited to showing people a world they already accept as reality. Hawkins and Pingree (1981) admit these processes are hypotheses that are applied post hoc to describe differences. Hirsh (1980) criticizes Gerbner's work on a statistical analysis basis.

Three studies have looked specifically at the relationship between soap opera viewing and social perceptions (Buerkel-Rothfuss and Mayes, 1981; Greenberg et al., 1982; and Greenberg and Heeter, 1983). In their study of college students, Buerkel-Rothfuss and Mayes found moderate relationships between exposure and the perceived number of women in occupations such as doctors, lawyers, and housewives, estimates of illegitmate children and abortions, and the number of divorces. Perceptions of the number of affairs and the number of happily married people were not significantly different for soap opera viewers and nonviewers. Grade point average, sex, age, class, and self-concept were simultaneously controlled for and no changes in the significant correlations were found.

More recently, in a study of adult women, Greenberg et al. (1982) found no relationship between soap opera viewing and estimates of real-life occurrences of major soap opera problems. The four problem areas were marriage, health, love affairs, and divorce. They argue

that it may be wrong to assume "the more exposure, the more impact." (p. 533) Perhaps moderate amounts of exposure yield full impact and further exposure serves only to reinforce the initial impact.

Greenberg and Heeter (1983) looked at the relationship of soap opera viewing and sexual and relational perceptions among college females. There were no significant relationships found between exposure and social perceptions of premarital and extramarital sex, divorce, problems in relationships, illegitimate births, marriages because of pregnancies, death at childbirth, rapes, or women who have successful careers and successful marriages. Soap opera "fans," viewers, and nonviewers were very similar in their perceptions of how often these problems occur. Another analysis looked at the relationship between viewing and the salience of sex. The salience of sex was operationalized as the perceptions of the number of times in a day an average person thinks and talks about sex. Also measured was the perceived importance of sex to teenagers, adults, and society. There were not significant differences in the salience of sex due to viewership.

Overall, soap opera viewing is only modestly related to social perceptions, if a relationship exists at all. The studies have concentrated on samples of

adult women, who make up a majority of the audience, and college students, who make up only a small percentage of the audience but are easily accessible for study. Perhaps among subgroups of soap viewers the relationship will look different. As discussed earlier, the audiences for soap operas, especially for ABC programs, have become younger over the past several years with a large number of high school age teens viewing. Most teens are relatively inexperienced with romance and sexual relationships and are at an age where they are seeking out information. It is reasonable to believe that they may be more influenced by soap opera portrayals than adults.

Just where does television fit in as a source of sexual information? What other sources provide information on which knowledge and expectations are based? How feasible is it that soap opera portrayals of interpersonal relationships and sex influence social perceptions in teenage viewers?

A great deal of descriptive work has been done to analyze sources of sexual information as reported by youths. Elias and Gebhard (1969) discussed data collected by the Kinsey Institute for Sex Research prior to 1955. This data indicates that peers serve as the most frequently reported sources. Mothers were reported

next most often and then fathers. Teachers were consistently reported as an unimportant source of information about sex. The role of the media was not available in the data. Socioeconomic differences were found. Teens of white-collar parents reported less importance in information from peers. Also, blue-collar youths had more knowledge of sexual activities while white-collar youths had more knowledge of reproduction. Dickinson (1978) reported a change over time from 1964 to 1974 where friends became increasingly important, ranking even higher than parents. Later, Gebhard (1977) reanalyzed Kinsey's data and added contemporary respondents to the sample. The then current generation of males more often reported mass media as the main source of information.

Spanier (1977) looked at the impact of sexual information sources. He found that both males and females report mothers as a source less often if the teens are sexually active. Females who are sexually active were most likely to report getting information from male friends and independent reading. Males who are sexually active reported receiving information from male and female friends and independent reading.

Social scientists have hypothesized that media portrayals of sex may be models influencing young people and adults. Along with information that is directly

sought out by curious young people, there may be
acquisition of sexual knowledge from indirect sources
through observational learning. Social learning theory
(Bandura, 1977) allows for learning by observing the
behaviors of others and their consequences. Neuendorf
(1982) discusses social learning theory implications on
learning about sex. An individual may learn how to
behave, when and with whom certain sexual behaviors are
appropriate, perceptions about the nature of sexual
activity and expectations about how people feel and
behave sexually. Baran (1976) argues that children and
adolescents are not given opportunity to observe sexual
behavior in real-life due to the norms of society. This
lack of real-life models leads individuals to media
representations and other sources for sexual learning.

More important to this study is what expectations
teens learn from viewing daytime and evening soap
operas. Implications of social learning theory and
cultivation hypothesis suggest there may be
relationships between exposure and social reality and
the salience of sex based on the content of soap operas.

In this examination of the relationship of exposure
to soap operas and social perceptions and the salience
of sex, the major independent variable is exposure to
daytime and evening soap operas. Inclusion of evening
soaps has not previously been done in soap opera effects

studies. This analysis includes them for two reasons. First, they are commonly thought of as "evening soap operas" and modeled after daytime serials. Second, authors have descriptively compared daytime and evening soap operas' sexual content. By including them, further comparison can be made. Also, three major dependent variables are measured: beliefs about sex and marriage, the importance of sex, and thinking about sex.

A measurement of self-degradation will also be included. Buerkel-Rothfuss and Mayes (1981) found no differences in estimates of real-world occurrences for level of self-concept in their sample of college students. They used a nonstandardized scale of dichotomous adjectives to measure self-concept. This study measures self-degradation, which is conceptually defined as a negative affect in a person based on their personal qualities, achievements, and behaviors. A scale previously used with adolescents was chosen and is discussed further in Chapter II.

Perceived reality of the soap operas will be measured to provide information about the way it influences the relationship between exposure and social reality and salience of sex. In the previous studies looking at exposure and social perceptions, no analyses have examined the role of perceived reality. Here, it is predicted that social reality perceptions of sex and

relational problems will be even more inflated if the respondent feels the soap operas are realistic.

A new variable will attempt to provide information about the role of other channels of information about sex. This seems especially appropriate with a sample of teenagers who are more likely than adults to be looking for and influenced by information about sex and interpersonal relationships. Items assess to whom and how often the respondent talks to others about sex and to whom and how often the respondent goes to others for information about sex. Also, an isloation scale will assess how cut off from others the respondent feels. It is predicted that isolated teens and teens who have few contacts for information about sex will be more dependent on the media for information. Therefore, the relationship will be even stronger for isolated teens with few information sources.

There are, however, limitations to the learning about sex from television. Its sexual content is not explicit enough to answer all questions that unknowledgable viewers might have. Soap opera content, especially, is primarily verbal. Other media, such as sexy paperbacks and magazines, and R-rated films, provide much more explicit information than do soap operas or network programming.

The hypotheses are:

H1 = The higher the amount of exposure to soap operas, the higher the estimated number of problems with sex and marriage (i.e. affairs, premarital sex, illegitmate pregnancies, deaths at childbirth, and rape.)

H2 = The higher the amount of exposure to soap operas, the greater the perceived importance of sex to adults, teens, and society.

H3 = The higher the amount of exposure to soap operas, the more often one thinks about sex.

H4 = For soap viewers, the greater the perceived reality of the soap operas, the stronger the relationship between 1) exposure and the beliefs about sex and marriage, 2) exposure and the importance of sex, and 3) exposure and thinking about sex.

H5 = The greater the level of isolation, the stronger the relationship between 1) exposure and beliefs about sex and marriage, 2) exposure and the importance of sex, and 3) exposure and thinking about sex.

H6 = The greater the level of self-degradation, the stronger the relationship between 1) exposure and beliefs about sex and marriage, 2) exposure and the importance of sex, and 3) exposure and thinking about sex.

H7 = The greater the number of outside channels of information about sex, the weaker the relationship between 1) exposure and the belief about sex and marriage, 2) exposure and the importance of sex, and 3) exposure and thinking about sex.

INDEPENDENT	INTERVIEWING	DEPENDENT
Exposure	Self-Degradation	Beliefs
	Isolation	Importance of
	Perceived Reality	Sex
	Outside Information	Thinking about
		Sex

CHAPTER II

METHODS

This study was conducted in May and June of 1983. A total of 285 high school sophomores from Birmingham Groves and Grosse Pointe High School South were interviewed. Each participating subject completed a questionnaire intended to measure beliefs about sex and marriage, degrees of isolation and self-degradation, the importance of sex, sources of information about sex, and the exposure to and the reality of the soap operas.

This chapter will describe 1) the sample selection and the respondents, 2) the pretest and questionnaire, 3) data collection, 4) operationalization of the variables, and 5) statistical analyses.

Sample Selection and the Respondents

A sample of 300 high school juniors were initially sought for the study. This number was chosen in order to provide a sufficient number of individuals for the

subsets involved in the analyses and to lead to greater generalizability. The major criterion for selecting the high schools were 1) the school had to be large enough to provide the required number of students, 2) the school needed to provide easy access so that traveling and time costs could be kept at a minimum. Of the four schools contacted, Birmingham Groves High School and Grosse Pointe High School South in the Detroit suburbs saw no policy conflicts and after a personal interview agreed to allow their students to participate. The high schools are located in upscale socio-economic suburbs of Detroit, Michigan.

Prior to the interview sessions, students were told that their participation was voluntary. Two students from Birmingham Groves High School did not participate in the sessions. These students were excused from all extracurricular research by request of their parents. All other students responded to the questionnaire.

The total sample consisted of 158 males and 126 females. Sixty-eight percent of the sample were 17 years of age, while 30 percent were 16 years and 8 percent were 18 years of age. The average "kind of grades" received was 2.6 on a 4-point scale. The sample is overrepresentative of upscale families where of the fathers, 42 percent were higher executives, proprietors,

or major professionals, and 31 percent were business managers or lesser professionals like opticians, pharmacists, or social workers. Of the mothers who worked, 41 percent were clerical or sales workers and 39 percent were administrative personnel or minor professionals. No income levels were measured because figures would be unreliable projections based on the teen's knowledge of their parent's income. Fifty-four percent of the sample reported working outside of school and home.

Pretest and Questionnaire

Pretest interviews were conducted in May 1983. Each of the two assistants on the project interviewed ten high school juniors using a five-page questionnaire designed for the project (See Appendix A). The pretest was conducted to evaluate the instrument and to provide an estimate of the time needed for administration of the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of sections that had been created specifically for this study, others that had been used only in telephone interviews, and others that had never been used with young people. It was important to verify that the items thoughout the questionnaire would be comprehensible to the sample. Pretesting also helped in evaluating the response

categories and wording for construction of a final instrument.

As a result of the responses made during the pretests, several minor alterations were made, most of which were clarity in written and verbal instructions and refinements in response categories. One other major change was made in the format of the instrument. In order to prevent students from using soap opera programs as referents in answering all the questions, the soap opera exposure items were moved from the first page to the third page.

The final format of the questionnaire was six pages in length (See Appendix B). A short written introduction preceded the first section which measured the respondent's beliefs about sex and marriage. The second page contained items measuring the importance of sex, how often the respondent thinks about sex, and who the respondent talks to and goes to for information about sex. The second section measured different aspects of the student's exposure to daytime and evening soap operas. Items measured frequency of exposure to the specific soap operas, the number of years viewing daytime soap operas, and the perceived reality of many aspects of the soap operas. This study hypothesized relationships with the amount of exposure and the

perceived reality of the soap operas. The data from the items looking at other aspects of viewership will not be discussed in this analysis.

Eight isolation items and seven self-degradation items were placed next in the instrument. The items were not intermingled but were presented in blocks based on what they measured. Last, the demographics of the respondents and their families were asked. These included measures of the respondent's age, grades, and outside work, and the family member's ages and occupations. Here also, were measures of the respondent's average weekday (2.9 hours) and weekend (2.1 hours) television viewing.

Data Collection

Students were interviewed in their normal classroom setting. To prevent selection bias, only classes that were required by the school curriculum were used to provide subjects. In each of the classes, a few students were not part of the desired sample based on their grade level of sophomore or senior. They were also interviewed but were not included in the study data. An equal number of advanced and below average level classes

were interviewed but most of the clases were not
designed for a specific performance level.

In the interviewing sessions at Birmingham Groves
High School, two female and one male interviewers were
present. At Grosse Point High School South one female
interviewer was present. There was a time lapse of 15
days between the two data collection sessions. Care was
taken to see that the procedure remained the same
regardless of the number of interviewers. Any systematic
differences in responses due to the number of
interviewers is confounded by differences in the
students of the two schools or the time lapse between
data collection dates. Demographic differences between
the two groups are shown in Table 1.

Each session began with the classes' teacher
introducing the interviewer(s) by name as researchers
from Michigan State University. There was no mention of
the topic of the study or commentary on its importance
by the teacher. The teacher also explained to the
students that their participation was voluntary. Next,
the interviewer introduced the project using a standard
script (Appendix C). The introduction briefly explained
how the students would participate and the importance of
their participation. The questionnaire took

TABLE 1. Demographics of the Two Schools Sampled
(in percents).

		Birmingham Groves High School	Grosse Pointe South High School
Gender	Female	37.7	48.6
	Male	62.3	51.4
Work Outside School	Yes	57.6	51.4
	No	42.4	48.6
Soap Opera Viewers	Yes	52.7	67.6
	No	47.3	32.4

approximately 25 minutes to complete. After the questionnaires were collected by the interviewers, a short discussion session debriefed the respondents. The discussion began with a desciption of the hypotheses and reasoning behind the study. Students were encouraged to ask questions or make comments. Discussion sessions varied greatly. Some classes were very interested and asked many questions, while others had no questions or comments. No analyses were made to compare the responses based on these differences.

Operationalization of Variables

Beliefs about sex and marriage. The major dependent variable of the study was measured in 19 items. Most of the items were adopted from Greenberg and Heeter's (1983) study with college students. Two items were added to measure the degree of parental interference into teen's problems.

> Of every 100 mothers, how many interfere in their teenager's problems?

> Of every 100 fathers, how many interfere in their teenager's problems?

Each question represents an aspect of sex or marriage problems in daytime and evening soap operas. The items were worded negatively, thus providing

estimates of these problems. Two items, "Of every 100 married career women, how many have successful careers and successful marriages?" and "Of every 100 marriages, how many happen for love and romance?" were stated positively and later recoded to reverse their response values. Available responses for each item ranged from 0 to 100. Responses to all 19 items were significantly intercorrelated at the $p < .05$ level. Table 2 shows descriptive frequencies for the individual items.

An exploratory factor analysis was used to provide a four factor solution. Originally, a five factor solution was obtained, but one of the factors contained an illogical mix of items so the rape items were removed and the analysis provided the four factor solution. For each of the four indices, the standardized items were weighted by factor score coefficients.

Factor 1 represented the items dealing with AFFAIRS. High loading items were "Of every 100 married men with an opportunity to have an affair, how many are likely to do so?... Of every 100 men, how many are likely to have an affair?... Of every 100 married women with an opportunity to have an affair, how many are likely to do so?....Of every 100 married working women, how many are likely to have an affair?...Of every 100

TABLE 2. Beliefs About Sex and Marriage - Frequency Data

	MEAN	S.D.
1. Of every 100 births, how many babies die at childbirth?	12.50	9.20
2. Of every 100 births, how many mothers die at childbirth?	6.48	7.18
3. Of every 100 married career women, how many have successful careers and successful marriages?	50.06	21.11
4. Of every 100 romances in real life, how many have major problems?	60.09	24.48
5. Of every 100 marriages, how many happen for love and romance?	68.50	22.04
6. Of every 100 marriages, how many happen because the woman is pregnant?	25.48	17.59
7. Of every 100 mothers, how many interfere in their teenager's problems?	69.40	24.86
8. Of every 100 fathers, how many interfere in their teenager's problems?	56.64	26.00
9. Of every 100 women in the U.S., how many are likely to be raped?	19.19	17.22
10. Of every 100 men, how many are likely to be rapists?	13.91	17.00
11. Of every 100 marriages, how many are likely to end in divorce?	44.94	18.10
12. Of every 100 men, how many are likely to have an affair?	41.00	22.45
13. Of every 100 houswives, how many are likely to have an affair?	31.04	18.83
14. Of every 100 married working women, how many are likely to have an affair?	34.13	21.15
15. Of every 100 unmarried women, how many are likely to have sex before marriage?	76.68	20.33
16. Of every 100 unmarried men, how many are likely to have sex before marriage?	85.62	17.49
17. Of every 100 babies born, how many do you think are born to unmarried mothers?	24.94	16.30
18. Of every 100 married men with an opportunity to have an affair, how many are likely to do so?	47.70	25.36
19. Of every 100 married women with an opportunity to have an affair, how many are likely to do so?	39.73	22.42

housewives, how many are likely to have an affair?...and, Of every 100 marriages, how many are likely to end in divorce?"

Factor 2 represented the items dealing with PREGNANCIES. High loading items were "Of every 100 births, how many babies die at childbirth?"... Of every 100 births, how many mothers die at childbirth?...Of every 100 marriages, how many happen because the woman is pregnant?...and, Of every 100 babies born, how many do you think are born to unmarried mothers?"

Factor 3 was made up of items about PREMARITAL SEX. The high loading items were "Of every 100 unmarried women, how many are likely to have sex before marriage? and, Of every 100 unmarried men, how many are likely to have sex before marriage?

Factor 4 included the two items about PARENTAL INTERFERENCE. These items were the ones discussed earlier as being added to the scale. Three items did not load significantly on any of the four factors. These were: Of every 100 married career women, how many are likely to have successful careers and successful marriages?...Of every 100 romances in real life, how many have major problems?...and, Of every 100 marriages, how many happen for love and romance?" See Table 3 for the factor matrix.

TABLE 3. Beliefs About Sex and Marriage - Factor Matrix

BELIEF	AFFAIRS Factor 1	PREGNANCIES Factor 2	PREMARITAL SEX Factor 3	PARENTAL INTERFERENCE Factor 4
1	.006	.844	.108	-.008
2	-.040	.784	-.012	-.013
3	.254	.156	-.040	-.120
4	.236	.073	.253	.122
5	.160	.156	-.110	-.310
6	.200	.582	.011	.012
7	.109	.061	.146	.818
8	.037	.037	-.015	.731
11	.531	.175	.113	-.027
12	.754	.162	.185	-.045
13	.721	.127	.141	.054
14	.738	.154	.145	.036
15	.196	.007	.984	.056
16	.194	.104	.747	.112
17	.317	.571	.140	-.020
18	.761	-.016	.105	.037
19	.748	-.095	.110	.012

The rape items were summed to provide the fifth dimensional variable of beliefs about sex and marriage. These items are "Of every 100 women in the U.S., how many are likely to be raped? and, Of every 100 men, how many are likely to be rapists?" By summing these two items, a range of 0 to 198 is possible for any respondent. For the analysis the four factors and the summed rape variable made up the five variables representing beliefs about sex and marriage.

Thinking about sex. A single item measured how often the respondents think about sex.

How often do you think about sex?

    4-5 times a day = 3

    2-3 times a day = 2

    once a day = 1

    less than once a day = 0

The mean response was 1.57 with a standard deviation of 1.035.

Importance of sex. Three items measured the perceived importance of sex. Each item was rated on a five point scale between "not important and very important," with possible values ranging from 0 to 4. Each item was treated as an individual variable

throughout the analysis. The importance of sex responses are reported in Table 4 and the correlation among the importance of sex items is reported in Table 5.

Perceived reality of soap operas. Perceived reality of the soap operas was measured by 20 items each dealing with a different aspect of soap operas. For the items, respondents were instructed to indicate "how realistic you think these things are shown in soaps...on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is not realistic at all and 10 is very realistic." All 20 items were significantly correlated at the P = .05 level. Table 6 shows items and their mean responses.

Many nonviewers of daytime and evening soap operas did not respond to the perceived realism items, so no comparison between viewers and nonviewers was done. Because of the missing values for nonviewers, only soap opera viewer's responses were used in the factor analysis of the items. A four factor solution was obtained for these 20 items. The standardized items were weighted by factor score coefficients and summed to create four perceived reality variables.

Factor 1 represented the items describing ADULTS in soap operas. These were mothers, fathers, women, housewives, and working women. Factor 2 represented

TABLE 4. Importance of Sex - Frequency Data

	MEAN	S.D.
How important do you think sex is to most teenagers your age?	2.53	.87
How important do you think sex is to most adults?	2.69	.94
How important do you think sex is in our society?	2.93	.92

TABLE 5. Importance of Sex/Thinking About Sex - Internal Correlations

	Importance to teens	Importance to adults	Importance to society
Thinking about sex	*.2949	-.0353	*.1312
Importance to teens		.0756	*.3002
Importance to adults			*.3637

* = significant at P = .05 level.

TABLE 6. Perceived Reality Items - Frequency Data

	MEAN	S.D.
1. the mothers in the soaps	4.98	2.52
2. the fathers in the soaps	5.04	2.49
3. the women in the soaps	5.14	2.77
4. the housewives in the soaps	4.60	2.66
5. the working women in the soaps	5.41	2.64
6. the business people in the soaps	5.47	2.79
7. the doctors in the soaps	4.91	3.01
8. the male teenagers in the soaps	5.42	3.04
9. the female teenagers in the soaps	5.12	2.95
10. the children in the soaps	5.05	3.11
11. the marriages in the soaps	4.16	3.08
12. the families in the soaps	4.12	2.93
13. the romantic couples in the soaps	4.93	2.95
14. the sex in the soaps	4.77	3.19
15. the arguments in the soaps	4.95	2.98
16. the parties in the soaps	4.83	2.94
17. the hospitals in the soaps	4.70	3.26
18. the homes in the soaps	5.19	2.92
19. the daytime schedules in the soaps	4.37	2.99
20. the use of alcohol in the soaps	5.67	3.06

CONTEXTS in soap operas. High loading items were doctors, hospitals, homes, and daytime schedules. Factor 3 represented RELATIONAL SITUATIONS. Marriages, families, romantic couples, and sex loaded heavily on this factor. Finally, Factor 4 represented TEENS in the soap operas and was made up of the male and female teen items. See Table 7 for the factor score matrix of these items.

<u>Self-degradation.</u> The measure of self-degradation in this study was based on a factor analysis of responses of 500 subjects on ten items originally reported by Rosenberg (1965) in a study of adolescent self image. The seven items loading on the first factor were used based on the Rosenberg study and one by Kaplan and Pokorny (1969). Negatively worded items which loaded negatively in previous studies were recorded to reverse the response values. Self-degradation was measured by a summative index of the seven items.

> All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
>
> I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.
>
> I take a positive attitude toward myself.
>
> On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
>
> I wish I could have more respect for myself.

TABLE 7. Perceived Reality of Soap Operas - Factor Matrix

REAL	ADULTS Factor 1	CONTEXTS Factor 2	RELATIONAL SITUATIONS Factor 3	TEENS Factor
1	.716	.299	.139	.119
2	.787	.238	.154	.071
3	.450	.019	.218	.380
4	.646	.063	.068	.181
5	.561	.259	.264	.171
6	.385	.394	.215	.140
7	.154	.640	.148	.298
8	.234	.266	.191	.789
9	.197	.185	.260	.788
10	.087	.283	.137	.253
11	.182	.198	.757	.177
12	.334	.215	.680	.236
13	.177	.120	.582	.194
14	.050	.182	.448	.136
15	.192	.163	.236	.163
16	.137	.332	.101	.254
17	.102	.771	.092	.102
18	.359	.429	.278	.156
19	.287	.547	.207	.099
20	.198	.359	.047	.013

I certainly feel useless at times.

At times I think I am no good at all.

The response categories consisted of five point scales where respondents were asked how much they agree with the following statements. The response categories were strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, uncertain = 2, disagree = 1, and strongly disagree = 0. The summed responses ranged from 5 to 23 with a mean of 12.414 and a standard deviation of 3.491. Higher numbers represent higher self-degradation.

Isolation. The measure of isolation was based on a previous scale used by Groat and Neal (1968). Eight items were used in this study with a response scheme identical to the self-degradation items. The isolation items are as follows:

Sometimes I feel all alone in the world.

I don't go out with friends as often as I would like.

Most people today seldom feel lonely.

Real friends are as easy as ever to find.

One can always find friends if one shows oneself friendly.

The world in which we live is basically a friendly place to live.

There are few people you can trust.

People are just naturally friendly and helpful.

A summative index was created which produced a range of responses from 6 to 24 with a mean of 13.611 and a standard deviation of 3.109. The isolation index and the self-degradation index were correlated .2092 (P = .001).

Channels of information about sex. Two variables represent dimensions of who the respondents talk to and go to for information about sex. A four item scale was used to measure how often and to whom the respondents talk to about sex. The items included parents, close friends, brothers and sisters, and doctors. An item for teachers was also included in the scale but was deleted from the index because of the low response frequency as someone the respondents talk to about sex. The respondents rated how often they talk to these people about sex on a scale of almost always = 3, frequently = 2, sometimes = 1, or almost never = 0. Table 8 shows the mean responses and the standard deviations for the items.

A summative index of the four items represented the degree to which the respondents talk to others about sex. The summed responses ranged from 0 to 11. The

TABLE 8.   Channels of Information About Sex -
          Frequency Data

TALK TO ABOUT SEX	MEAN	S.D.
Parents	.653	.819
Close Friends	1.930	.871
Brothers/Sisters	.982	.907
Doctors	.282	.562

GO TO FOR INFORMATION	MEAN	S.D.
Parents	.989	.977
Close Friends	1.947	.935
Brother/Sisters	1.180	1.046
Doctors	.975	.940
Written Material	1.575	1.044

mean indexed response was 3.982 and the standard deviation was 2.522.

Another set of items measured where respondents get information abut sex. They were asked "if you wanted information about sex, how often would you go to: parents, close friends, brothers and sisters, doctors, and written material." These items had the same response categories of almost never = 3, frequently = 2, sometimes = 1, and almost never = 0. Table 9 shows the descriptive results. Again, teachers were retrospectively dropped from the scale because of the low frequency of response as a source of information about sex.

A summative index of the five remaining items yielded a range of responses between 1 and 15. The mean response was 6.663 with a standard deviation of 2.657.

Exposure. In this study, viewership of both daytime and evening soap operas was evaluated. For daytime soap operas, each was measured by how many times in an average week they watch the program. Respondents were asked a filter question and nonviewers skipped this section. Table 9 shows the overall amount of viewing of the daytime soap operas shown by the networks at the time of the study.

TABLE 9. Daytime Soap Opera Viewership - Freqency Data

	MEAN	S.D.
The Guiding Light	.196	.762
The Edge of Night	.140	.589
Young and the Restless	.067	.334
Search for Tomorrow	.014	.118
Ryan's Hope	.207	.699
Days of Our Lives	.183	.724
All My Children	.523	1.118
As the World Turns	.077	.396
Another World	.095	.591
One Life to Live	.347	.905
Capitol	.078	.477
General Hospital	1.911	2.059

For the analysis, a continuous variable was created by summing the total number of daytime soap opera episodes viewed per week. The range of responses was from 0 to 32 as seen in Table 10.

For evening soap operas, each program was measured by the number of times it was viewed in an average month.

	MEAN	S.D.
Dallas	.674	1.063
Knot's Landing	.519	1.118
Falcon Crest	.344	.848
Dynasty	1.253	1.552
Bare Essence	.260	.828

A continuous variable was also created to represent the number of evening soap operas viewed by summing the number of episodes reported. The mean was 3.049 episodes per month with a standard deviation of 3.716. Table 11 shows the frequency distribution for evening episode viewing.

A third exposure variable combined the measures of daytime and evening soap opera viewing to give an estimate of overall soap opera exposure. This third measure was created by mathematically calculating the number of soap opera episodes viewed per week. This was done by summing the number of daytime episodes with one fourth the number of evening episodes to represent one

TABLE 10.   Daytime Episodes Viewership - Frequency Data
            (n = 285)

Number of Episodes	Frequency	Percent
0	112	39.3
1	14	4.9
2	9	3.2
3	25	8.8
4	20	7.0
5	36	12.6
6	12	4.2
7	10	3.5
8	7	2.5
9	9	3.2
10	6	2.1
11	4	1.4
12	2	.7
13	2	.7
14	3	1.1
15	7	2.5
16	3	1.1
17	1	.4
18	1	.4
23	1	.4
32	1	.4

TABLE 11. Evening Soap Opera Episode Viewership - Frequency
Data (n = 285)

Number of Episodes	Frequency	Percent
0	99	34.7
1	30	10.5
2	35	12.3
3	25	8.8
4	29	10.2
5	14	4.9
6	10	3.5
7	6	2.1
8	6	2.1
9	9	3.2
10	4	1.4
11	2	.7
12	6	2.1
13	5	1.8
14	3	1.1
16	1	.4
20	1	.4

week's viewing. The mean number of total episodes per week was 4.58 with a standard deviation of 5.24 and values ranging from 0 to 35.

In this study the daytime episodes were not weighted according to length. Four of the 13 daytime soap operas are 30 minutes in length and the remainder run one full hour. These four programs are Edge of Night, Search for Tomorrow, Ryan's Hope, and Capitol. There is no known evidence that the one hour programs have twice as much sexual content or even twice the number of characters.

To provide further description of the soap opera viewership of the sample, a categorical variable was created for daytime and evening viewing. For daytime viewing, respondents were broken into three groups. One, nonviewers were those who never watch any daytime soap operas. Two, sometime viewers were those who at least one daytime soap opera once a week, but no soap opera more than three times per week. Three, fans were respondents who watch at least one soap opera four or more times per week.

Similarly, the evening soap opera viewership was categorized into these groups. Nonviewers saw no evening soap operas. Sometime viewers saw at least one evening soap opera per month, but none more than twice

per month. Fans were viewers who watch three of four
episodes of any one or more evening soap opera. Table
12 shows a gender breakdown of the categorical exposure
variable.

A cross tabulation matrix (Table 13) gives a more
descriptive picture of the sample in terms of the
daytime and evening viewership. All measures of exposure
to daytime and evening soap opera were significantly
intercorrelated at the P = .05 level.   For the purposes
of analysis, only the continuous measures of daytime,
evening, and combined soap opera viewing will be used.
The categorical measures of exposure were described here
to give additional information about the respondent's
exposure to soap operas.

Statistical Analyses

All data were transferred directly into a computer
file in July 1983. Ten percent of the sample cases were
randomly selected and checked for accuracy of coding.
With 183 characters per case and 28 cases, only three
characters were found to be coded incorrectly. Thus, an
error rate of .0006 is expected due to coding error.

To test the hypotheses, the Statistical Package for
the Social Sciences was used.   Statistical tests used
were the Pearson product-moment correlation and
exploratory factor analyses.

TABLE 12. Exposure (categorial variable) - Frequencies
in percents (n = 285)

		MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
Daytime	nonviewers	60.0	13.5	39.3
Viewing	sometime viewers	22.8	31.7	26.7
	fans	17.0	54.8	34.0
Evening	nonviewers	45.6	21.4	34.7
Viewing	sometime viewers	31.6	39.7	35.4
	fans	22.8	38.9	29.8

TABLE 13. Overall Exposure (categorical variables) -
Frequency in Percents (n = 285)

		Evening Viewership		
		Nonviewers	Sometime viewers	Fans
Daytime	nonviewers	21.1	13.0	5.3
Viewership	sometime viewers	9.5	9.8	7.4
	fans	4.2	12.6	17.2

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

This chapter will report the findings of the tests of the overall and contingency hypotheses presented in Chapter I. The results will be organized by 1) hypothesis testing of the major hypotheses, and 2) hypothesis testing of the contingency hypothesis. Additional findings will be presented in Chapter IV.

Major Hypotheses

Beliefs About Sex and Marriage

H1 = The higher the amount of exposure to soap operas, the higher the estimated number of problems with sex and marriage (i.e. affairs, premartial sex, illegitmate pregnancies and deaths at childbirth, parental interference, and rape.)

Pearson correlation provided associations among the three exposure measures (the number of daytime episodes, the number of evening episodes, and the total number of soap opera episodes) and the five variables

representing the belief items (AFFAIRS, PREGNANCIES, PREMARTIAL SEX, PARENTAL INTERFERENCE, and RAPE). All three exposure measures correlated consistently with the beliefs about sex and marriage (PREGNANCIES and RAPE). PREGNANCIES is representative of the estimates of the number of women and babies who die at childbirth, the number of marriages that result from pregnancies, and the number of illegitimate babies born. The RAPE variable estimates the number of rapists and rape victims. Beliefs about pregnancies were correlated with daytime soap opera viewing ($r = .22$), evening soap opera viewing ($r = .22$), and combined soap opera viewing ($r = .25$). Beliefs about rape were related to daytime viewing ($r = .18$), evening viewing ($r = .27$), and combined viewing ($r = .21$). Table 14 shows these correlations.

Some significant relationships were found between beliefs about sex and marriage and the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Beliefs about AFFAIRS were highest for respondents who held jobs outside of school ($r = .15$). Beliefs about PREGNANCIES and RAPE were highest for females ($r = .35$ and $r = .30$, respectively). Beliefs about PARENTAL INTERFERENCE were highest for respondents who watch less television ($r = -.10$) and males ($r = -.12$). There were no significant differences across grade level or the amount of television viewed on weekends.

TABLE 14. Exposure and Beliefs About Sex and Marriage – Correlations

Beliefs about:	Exposure		
	Daytime Episodes (per week)	Evening Episodes (per month)	Combined Episodes (per week)
AFFAIRS	-.0062	.0120	-.0045
PREGNANCIES	*.2281	*.2234	*.2506
PREMARITAL SEX	.0383	-.0376	.0315
PARENTAL INTERFERENCE	.0160	-.0218	.0125
RAPE	*.1817	*.2702	*.2094

*significant at the P < .05 level.

The Importance of Sex

> H2 = The higher the amount of exposure to soap operas, the greater the perceived importance of sex to adults, teens, and society.

This hypothesis was partially supported by a significant correlation between the daytime soap opera exposure and the perceived importance of sex to adults (r = .13). Evening viewership was not correlated with any of the three importance of sex items. The combined viewing measure also correlated with the importance of sex to adults (r = .12). Table 15 shows the correlations.

Gender was significantly correlated with measures of the importance of sex to adults and teens. Females were more likely to rate sex more important to adults (r = .11) while males felt sex was more important to teens (r = -.19). There were no significant correlations with weekday or weekend television viewing or with working outside of school. There was a correlation (r = .20) showing that students who did better in school felt that sex was most important to society.

Thinking About Sex

> H3 = The higher the amount of exposure to soap operas, the more often one thinks about sex.

Hypothesis 3 was counter-supported, thinking about sex was correlated -.14 with daytime viewership, and

TABLE 15. Exposure and the Importance of Sex - Correlations

Importance of Sex to:	Exposure		
	Daytime Episodes (per week)	Evening Episodes (per month)	Combined Episodes (per week)
TEENS	-.0347	-.0156	-.0389
ADULTS	*.1277	.0452	*.1201
SOCIETY	.0596	.0452	.0749

*significant at the P < .05 level.

-.13 with combined viewing measure, but there was no correlation with evening viewership and how often one thinks about sex. Thinking about sex is positively correlated with greater weekend television viewing but did not correlate with weekday television viewing. Males think about sex more than females ($r = .47$) but thinking about sex is unrelated to whether the student does well in school or works outside of school.

Contingency Analyses

The overall relationships between exposure and beliefs about sex and marriage, the importance of sex, and thinking about sex have been examined. This section will examine variables that have been hypothesized to influence those overall relationships. These variables are: the perceived reality of the soap operas, isolation, self-degradation, and the number of outside channels for information about sex. Based on the hypotheses posed, contingency analyses will be done for only the overall significant relationships between exposure and the AFFAIRS and RAPE components of the beliefs about sex and marriage, and exposure and the importance of sex to adults. Any unhypothesized results and relationships identified in the contingency analysis will be discussed in Chapter IV.

Perceived Reality.

> H4 = For soap viewers, the greater the perceived reality of the soap operas, the stronger the relationship between 1) exposure and beliefs about sex and marriage, and 2) exposure and the importance of sex.

As discussed in Chapter II, the reality items were factored into four factors including, ADULTS, RELATIONAL SITUATIONS, CONTEXTS, and TEENS. The most predominant demographic predictor of perceived reality was gender. Females felt that all aspects of soap operas were more realistic, significant correlations were ($r = .21$, $r = .17$, $r = .16$, and $r = .28$, respectively). Respondents who watch more weekday television found TEENS in soap operas to be more realistic ($r = .13$) and students who do well in school felt the CONTEXTS in soap operas were more realistic ($r = .11$). No significant correlations were found between perceived reality and working outside of school or weekend television viewing.

Exposure and beliefs. For the contingency analysis, the level of perceived reality for each of the four factors was divided into three equal groups: low, moderate, and high perceived reality. Table 16 shows the correlations between exposure and beliefs about sex and marriage (PREGNANCIES and RAPE) for each level of perceived reality.

TABLE 16. Contingency of Perceived Reality (Exposure and Beliefs)

PREGNANCIES

Perceived Reality of:		Daytime Episodes	Evening Episodes	Combined Episodes	Daytime Episodes
ADULTS	LO	.14	.08	.14	*.22
	MD	.11	*.19	.13	.06
	HI	*.35	*.32	*.37	*.21
RELATIONAL SITUATIONS	LO	.18	*.24	*.21	*.26
	MD	*.29	*.26	*.31	*.18
	HI	*.23	*.27	*.25	*.18
CONTEXTS	LO	.04	.02	.04	.03
	MD	*.28	*.19	*.29	.15
	HI	*.34	*.39	*.37	*.31
TEENS	LO	.13	.13	.14	.07
	MD	*.27	*.31	*.30	*.28
	HI	*.27	*.26	*.29	*.24

*significant at P < .05 level.

The influence of the perceived reality of soap operas appears to be inconsistent across the four categories of aspects evaluated for realism. The reality of ADULTS (i.e. mothers, fathers, housewives, women, and working women) shows an influence on the relationship between exposure and beliefs about PREGNANCIES and supports the hypothesis. There were significant correlations for exposure and beliefs about PREGNANCIES for respondents who perceived ADULTS in soap operas as realistic. Thus, those who believe ADULTS in soap operas were very realistic, regardless of daytime $(r = .35)$, evening $(r = .31)$, or combined soap opera viewing $(r = .37)$, saw a higher occurrence of illegitimate pregnancies and deaths at childbirth. On the other hand, there were no significant correlations for exposure and beliefs about PREGNANCIES for those who think ADULTS in soap operas are not realistic. In other words, respondents who felt ADULTS in the soap operas were not realistic, regardless of daytime, evening, or combined soap opera viewing, saw a lower occurrence of these problems. For these respondents who believe ADULTS in soap operas are moderately realistic, only evening soap opera viewing was significantly correlated with a perceived higher occurrence of problems with pregnancies and childbirth $(r = .19)$.

The influence of the perceived reality of ADULTS was not, however, as strong for beliefs about RAPE. There were significant correlations for exposure and beliefs about RAPE for respondents who think ADULTS in soap operas are higher in realism. So, respondents who feel ADULTS in soap operas are realistic, regardless of daytime (r = .21), evening (r = .24), or combined soap opera viewing (r = .23), believed there are more rapists and rape victims in society. Evening soap opera viewers who believe ADULTS are only moderately realistic also saw a significant higher occurrence of rape (r = .29). Contrary to the hypothesis, for the respondents who think ADULTS in soap operas are not realistic, there were also significant correlations between exposure and beliefs about RAPE. See Table 16.

For the perceived reality of TEENS in soap operas there is support for the hypothesis when comparing the low perceived reality group to the high perceived reality group. But, for both the beliefs about PREGNANCIES and RAPE, the respondents who see TEENS in soap operas as moderately realistic, there are also consistent significant correlations. For respondents who believe male and female teenagers in soap operas are

portrayed realistically, daytime viewership is significantly correlated with higher perceived occurence of illegitimate births and deaths at childbirth (r = .27) and rapists and rape victims (r = .24). Also for high perceived reality of teenagers, evening and combined soap opera viewership is significantly correlated with perceived high occurrences of problems with pregnancies (r = .26 and r = .29, respectively), and high occurrences of rape (r = .31 and r = .27, respectively).

For low perceived reality of teenagers, there is no significant correlations between exposure and beliefs about sex and marriage. Therefore, respondents who think teenagers in soap operas are not portrayed realistically tend to see less occurrence of problems with pregnancies and rape in society, supporting the hypothesis. Also, see Table 16.

The influence of the perceived reality of CONTEXTS in the soap operas also shows support for the hypothesis if low and high levels of reality are compared. There are significant correlations between exposure and beliefs about PREGNANCIES and RAPE at high levels of reality of the CONTEXTS in the soap operas (i.e. doctors, hospitals, homes, and daytime schedules). There are no correlations between exposure and beliefs for

respondents who believe the contexts in soap operas are not realistic.

Respondents who think the contexts in soap operas are realistic think there are more illegitimate pregnancies and deaths at childbirth (daytime viewing r = .37, evening viewing r = .39, and combined viewing r = .37). Respondents who believe contexts in the soap operas are realistic believe there are more rapists and rape victims in society (daytime viewing r = .31, evening viewing r = .35, and combined viewing r = .34). For moderate levels of perceived reality of contexts there are significant correlations between daytime, evening, and combined viewing and beliefs about problems with pregnancies (r = .28, r = .29 and r = .29). Also for moderate levels of reality of contexts, evening and combined soap opera viewing and beliefs about rapes correlated r = .28 and r = .18.

The influence of the perceived reality of RELATIONAL SITUATIONS showed no support for the hypothesis. Here, significant correlations for exposure and beliefs about PREGNANCIES and RAPE were similar for low, moderate, and high levels of perceived reality of RELATIONAL SITUATIONS (i.e. marriages, families, romantic couples, and sex). Table 16 shows that respondents who report that the relational situations in

soap operas are not realistic, regardless of daytime (r = .27), evening (r = .46), and combined soap opera viewing (r = .34), think that there are as many rapists and rape victims in society as those respondents who think the relational situations are very realistic (daytime r = .18, evening r = .27, and combined soap opera viewing r = .20). For moderate perceived reality of relational situations, the significant correlations between exposure and beliefs about rapes were found for daytime soap opera exposure (r = .18) and combined exposures (r = .19).

Respondents who think relational situations in soap operas are very realistic, regardless of daytime (r = .23), evening (r = .27), and combined viewing (r = .25), report that there are more problems with illegitmate pregnancies and deaths at childbirth. Correlations for low reality respondents were also significant for evening viewing and beliefs about pregnancies (r = .24), and combined viewing and beliefs about pregnancies (r = .21). All correlations of exposure and beliefs about pregnancies were significant at moderate levels of perceived reality of relational situations.

<u>Exposure and the importance of sex.</u> The relationship between exposure and the importance of sex to adults is not influenced by perceived reality. Table

17 shows that for respondents who think contexts in soap operas are not realistic, the relationship between exposure and the importance of sex to adults is significant. This counter-supports the contingency hypothesis of the influence of perceived reality. Only the perceived reality of RELATIONAL SITUATIONS strengthens the relationship between daytime or combined exposure and the importance of sex to adults. Here, respondents who report that contexts in soap operas are realistic, if daytime or combined viewers, also report thinking about sex is more important to adults.

Isolation

> H5 = The greater the level of isolation, the stronger the relationship between 1) exposure and the beliefs about sex and marriage, and 2) exposure and the importance of sex.

The degree of isolation appears to be unrelated to all demographic measures except school performance. A significant inverse correlation of $r = .11$ shows that students who receive lower grades in school tend to feel more isolated from others. Isolation was unrelated to television exposure, gender, and working outside of school.

Exposure and beliefs. The influence of the level of isolation on the overall relationship between

TABLE 17. Contingency of Perceived Reality (Exposure and the Importance of Sex)

Exposure and Beliefs

Perceived Reality of:		IMPORTANCE OF SEX TO ADULTS		
		Daytime Episodes	Evening Episodes	Combined Episodes
ADULTS	LO	.01	.06	.02
	MD	*.22	.03	.02
	HI	.08	-.01	.07
RELATIONAL SITUATIONS	LO	-.03	.06	-.01
	MD	.12	.05	.12
	HI	*.20	-.05	*.17
CONTEXTS	LO	*.19	*.27	*.22
	MD	.09	-.08	.06
	HI	.11	-.05	.09
TEENS	LO	.15	*.19	.16
	MD	.15	.01	.14
	HI	.09	-.08	.07

*significant at the P < .05 level.

exposure and beliefs about sex and marriage (PREGNANCIES and RAPE) was examined. Table 18 shows there is no support for the hypothesis. Low and high levels of isolation show similar significant correlations between exposure and beliefs. Isolation appears to have no influence.

<u>Exposure</u> <u>and</u> <u>importance</u> <u>of</u> <u>sex.</u> Table 19 presents the contingency correlations of isolation on the relationship between exposure and the importance to adults. The hypothsis is not supported. Only moderate levels of isolation produce significant correlations between daytime and combined soap opera exposure and the importance of sex to adults.

Self-Degradation

> H6 = The greater the level of self-degradation, the stronger the relationship between 1) exposure and beliefs about sex and marriage, and 2) exposure and the importance of sex.

Self-degradation was significantly related to school performance ($r = -.11$) where better students tended to have lower levels of self-degradation. High levels of weekday television viewing were significantly related to high self-degradation ($r = .10$). Other demographic measures such as: gender, working outside of school, and weekend television viewing were unrelated to levels of self-degradation.

TABLE 18. Contingency of Isolation (Exposure and Beliefs)

| | PREGNANCIES | | | RAPE | |
	Daytime Episodes	Evening Episodes	Combined Episodes	Daytime Episodes	Evening Episodes
ISOLATION					
LO	*.26	*.27	*.28	*.22	*.41
MD	*.21	.14	*.22	.14	.04
HI	*.23	*.30	*.26	*.19	*.32

Exposure and Beliefs

*significant at the P < .05 level.

TABLE 19. Contingency of Isolation (Exposure and the Importance of Sex)

| | IMPORTANCE OF SEX TO ADULTS | | |
	Daytime Episodes	Evening Episodes	Combined Episodes
ISOLATION			
LO	.08	.07	.09
MD	*.19	.08	*.19
HI	.10	-.02	.09

*significant at the P < .05 level.

<u>Exposure</u> <u>and</u> <u>beliefs.</u> The hypothesis was not supported. High self-degradation and exposure were not significantly correlated with beliefs about sex and marriage. Moderate levels of self-degradation show the strongest and most consistent relationship between the exposure measures and beliefs about PREGNANCIES and RAPE. See Table 20.

<u>Exposure</u> <u>and</u> <u>the</u> <u>importance</u> <u>of</u> <u>sex.</u> This hypothesis was not supported. There were significant correlations for exposure and the importance of sex to adults at low levels of self-degradation but no correlations at moderate or high levels. See Table 21.

<u>Channels</u> <u>of</u> <u>Information</u>

H7 = The greater the number of outside channels of information about sex the weaker the relationship between 1) exposure and beliefs about sex and marriage, 2) exposure and the importance of sex.

Channels of information about sex were represented by two measures: the number of people they talk to about sex and to whom they go to for information about sex. Both of these measures were uncorrelated with all five demographic measures of gender, working outside of school, school performance, and weekday and weekend television viewing.

TABLE 20. Contingency of Self-Degradation (Exposure
and Beliefs)

	Exposure and Beliefs				
	PREGNANCIES			RAPE	
	Daytime Episodes	Evening Episodes	Combined Episodes	Daytime Episodes	Evening Episodes
SELF-DEGRADATION					
LO	*.26	*.25	*.24	.08	*.29
MD	*.32	*.37	*.35	*.31	*.35
HI	.17	.13	.17	.11	.14

*significant at the P < .05 level.

TABLE 21. Contingency of Self-Degradation (Exposure
and the Importance of Sex)

	IMPORTANCE OF SEX TO ADULTS		
	Daytime Episodes	Evening Episodes	Combined Episodes
SELF-DEGRADATION			
LO	*.22	-.02	*.20
MD	.11	.12	.11
HI	.02	.05	.02

*significant at the P < .05 level.

Exposure and beliefs. There are consistently significant relationships between exposure and beliefs about sex and marriage for respondents who talk to and go to few people for information about sex. The lowest of these significant correlations is r = .31 for evening soap opera viewing and beliefs about RAPE. Although smaller correlations were found for respondents who talk to and go to more people for information about sex, they were also significant, except in the case of daytime soap opera viewing and beliefs about rape where no relationship was found. The hypothesis is supported when correlations of low and high number of channels of information are compared. It is important to note, however, that the correlations at both levels are significant. In Table 22, a relationship is apparent for the influence of talking to others about sex and exposure correlated with beliefs about PREGNANCIES. Respondents who talk to many people or very few people about sex believe there are more problems with pregnancies than those who talk to a moderate number of people. There is also a relationship for going to people for information about sex and exposure correlated with beliefs about RAPE. Here, respondents who go to very few or mamy others for information about sex believe there

are more problems with pregnancies than those who go to a moderate number of sources.

Exposure and the importance of sex. Again, the hypothesis is not supported. Table 23 shows the inconsistencies of significant correlations at the three levels of the two components of channels of information. It appears that the channels of information about sex have no influence on the relationship between exposure and the importance of sex to adults.

TABLE 22. Contingency of Channels of Information (Exposure and Beliefs)

CHANNELS OF INFORMATION		PREGNANCIES Daytime Episodes	Evening Episodes	Combined Episodes	RAPE Daytime Episodes	Evening Episodes
TALK TO	LO	*.41	*.36	*.43	*.38	*.31
	MD	.12	.14	.13	.12	*.24
	HI	*.23	*.26	*.25	.16	*.25
GO TO	LO	*.33	*.43	*.37	*.37	*.47
	MD	*.20	.08	*.20	.02	.05
	HI	*.18	*.18	*.19	*.18	*.25

*significant at the P < .05 level.

TABLE 23. Contingency of Channels of Information (Exposure and Importance of Sex)

CHANNELS OF INFORMATION		IMPORTANCE OF SEX TO ADULTS Daytime Episodes	Evening Episodes	Combined Episodes
TALK TO	LO	*.22	.18	*.23
	MD	.06	-.04	.05
	HI	*.18	.01	.16
GO TO	LO	*.25	.03	*.23
	MD	*.20	.06	*.20
	HI	-.07	.00	-.06

*significant at the P < .05 level.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

This study has attempted to do three things. First, once again, examine the relationship between soap opera viewership and social reality. Past research has shown inconsistencies that need to be further studied for understanding. Second, define the relationship for teenagers in soap audiences who have yet to be studied in this type of analysis. Third, provide information about evening soap viewing and effects in comparison to daytime soap operas.

Interestingly, the proposed overall relationships were supported in many categories. Daytime soap opera viewership was related to estimates of illegitimate children, marriages resulting from pregnancies, deaths at childbirth, rape, and the perceived importance of sex to adults. Evening viewership was also related to estimates of illegimate children, deaths at childbirth, marriages resulting from pregnancies, and rape, but not

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correlated with the salience of sex in any way. The
daytime and evening soap opera viewing tended to be very
similar in their correlations with all the dependent
variables, self-degradation, isolation, and the channels
of information about sex.

These similarities may be explained by the
crossover of daytime and evening soap viewership. Only
13.7 percent of daytime viewers watched no evening soap
operas and only 18.3 percent of evening viewers watched
no daytime soap operas. Unfortunately, no analysis of
daytime only viewers and evening only viewers was done
because the cell sizes would have been too small. It
appears that soap viewers tend to watch a lot of
television in general, including both kinds of soap
operas. Results show that daytime soap opera viewers
watch more television during the week than nonviewers,
and evening soap opera viewers watch both weekday and
weekend television more than nonviewers of evening soap
operas.

A dissimilarity in daytime and evening soap viewing
was the difference in its' perceived reality. Daytime
serial viewers felt the portrayals of people of all
ages, marriages, romantic couples, sex, families,
arguments, and parties were realistic. Evening soap
opera viewers felt the portrayals of all adults,

doctors, businessmen, hospitals, homes and daytime schedules were realistic. Evening soap viewers did not perceive teenagers as being realistically portrayed on soaps. A major weakness of the study lies in the measurement of perceived reality. It would have been more meaningful if a measure of the reality of each kind of soap opera would have been made seperately. Instead, one set of aspects presented in soap operas were evaluated for both daytime and evening soap operas. It is impossible to know if the respondents who watch both daytime and evening soap operas answered those items thinking of daytime, evening, or aspects of both types of soap operas.

For combined soap opera viewing, correlations were always significant with variables that were significantly correlated with daytime and evening viewership. If only daytime or only evening viewership was correlated with a variable, the combined viewing measure usually mirrored the significant correlation or was slightly depressed because of the inclusion of the other measure in its index.

Although no formal hypotheses were made for gender differences in the examined relationships, analyses were done to check for such differences. Any significant gender differences in the individual variables have been

reported throughout Chapter III. This section will describe differences due to gender in the overall relationships between exposure and the dependent variables of beliefs about sex and marriage, the importance of sex, and thinking about sex.

When only the subgroup of males (n = 156) is analyzed, overall significant correlations between evening soap opera viewing and beliefs about RAPE is .18, and combined exposure and beliefs about RAPE is .14 There is no longer a significant negative correlation between exposure and thinking about sex. Also, supported hypothesized relationships between exposure and beliefs about PREGNANCIES, and exposure and the importance of sex to adults are no longer significant.

There are also differences when only females (n = 129) are analyzed. Daytime viewership is significantly correlated with beliefs about PREMARTAL SEX (r = .15) and the importance of sex to teens (r = .20). Evening viewership is correlated with PREGNANCIES (r = .19) and RAPE (r = .19). Most notable, the hypothesized and previously unsupported relationship between exposure and thinking about sex is significant for evening soap opera viewing (r = .19) and combined viewing (r = .16).

The contingency analyses uncovered some findings not hypothesized for this study. Daytime viewers and

viewers of both daytime and evening soap operas perceive a high incidence of premartial sex if they believe the relational situations in soap operas are realistic, i.e. marriages, families, romantic couples, sex, arguments, and parties. Evening soap viewers see a low occurrence of parents interfering in their teen's problems if they perceive the adults in soap operas to be realisitic. Teens who watch evening soap operas and believe that the relational situations and/or doctors, businessmen, hospitals, homes, and daytime schedules are realistic, say that sex is not very important to teens. But teens who believe the relational situations are not realistic and watch evening or watch daytime and evening soap operas think sex is important to teens.

The channels of information about sex contingency analysis uncovered other findings. Evening soap viewers who go to few sources for information about sex reported a higher incidence of affairs while daytime soap viewers and viewers of both evening and daytime soap operas who talk to few people about sex reported a higher occurrence of affairs. Daytime and combined daytime and evening soap viewers, who have many people they talk to about sex, report a lower occurrence of affairs in society. Also, all soap viewers who report going to few

sources for information about sex, report thinking about sex less often.

Also, contingency correlations for self-degradation found some interesting results. All soap viewers who scored as having high self-degradation reported less occurrence of affairs. Daytime and combined daytime and evening soap viewers with high self-degradation think about sex less often.

In previous research the salience of sex included, among other things, perceptions of how often other people think about sex. In this study, how often the respondent thinks about sex is measured. The overall hypothesis was significantly counter-supported and exposure was negatively related to thinking about sex for daytime and combined daytime and evening viewing. A male-female breakdown showed no significant correlations between exposure to soap operas and thinking about sex for males. For females who watch evening soap operas or combined evening and daytime soap operas, there were significant positive correlations between exposure and thinking about sex. A scattergram showed that males tend to be nonviewers and report often thinking about sex (an average of 2-3 times per day). Females tended to be soap opera viewers and report thinking about sex less often (an average of once per

day). This can be interpreted to say that males think about sex more often regardless of soap viewership, but that females who watch evening soap operas or combined evening and daytime soaps do think about sex more often. Again, there appears to be a difference in daytime and evening soap viewing. Perhaps, this goes along with reports that prime-time television has "steamier" sex even though daytime serials spend more time dealing with problems related to sex and interpersonal relationships.

The weaknesses of this study include some possibly important deletions. As discussed earlier, the perceived reality measure may be inappropriately measuring an overall view of a mixture of daytime and evening soap operas. More confidence could be placed in the results and more detailed analysis could have been made if separate measures of the reality of daytime soaps and evening soaps had been used.

There is no information provided about why teenagers are motivated to watch soap operas. If they are nonviewers, what keeps them from watching? Some previous studies have measured why nonviewers do not watch, this may have been valuable information in this study, too.

There is always a possibility of response bias when asking questions about sex. Although the respondents

seemed to take their participation seriously, the predominance of questions about sex may have caused them to respond defensively or, on the other hand, show off by exaggerating.

The study was successful in supplementing research currently examining soap opera viewing. Some relationships between exposure and social reality and salience of sex were found among teenagers that were not found in adult audiences. Also, some additional information about the influence of other channels of information, isolation, self-degradation, and perceived reality was contributed.

Future research would be helpful in providing further understanding of how teenagers and adults are influenced by soap operas' content. First, it will be important to continue content analyses of the programming for any changes that occur. The content has always been based on interpersonal relationships and their problems. But, over the years, content has changed somewhat by including younger characters, sensationalizing with some unusual topics like espionage and crime, and increasing the amount of sexual content. Storylines about homosexuality, incest, and child molestation have received little, if any, attention. During the 1983-84 soap opera season, ABC's Loving

presented a storyline about incest and ABC's _All_ _My_ _Children_ introduced a homosexual character. Perhaps the portrayals of culturally taboo drama storylines will affect the way viewers feel about these taboo subjects.

Second, content analyses have attempted to describe the content of soap operas, but individual viewer reactions to specific soap opera events have not been analyzed. Do fans of these soap operas who "know" these characters see them any differently than researchers who objectively code their behaviors. Does the increased identification and involvement in viewers change the way they evaluate the morality portrayed or emotionally respond to the character's actions?

Third, there is a lack of information about men in the soap opera audience. Men in the audience range from high school teens to retirees. Do they have different motives for viewing? This study suggests some differences in the way soap operas influence female and male viewers. Are there other differences in identification, involvement, or advice-gaining for males?

Fourth, studies should continue to explore relationships between exposure and social reality focusing on possible spurious variables. At this point in time especially, causal relationships may not be

supported with confidence. It is important to keep working toward theoretically sound models of effects in this area.

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APPENDIX A

High School Soap Opera Study

The following is a questionnarie that has been constructed by mass media re-
searchers at Michigan State University. We want to find out how you, as a high
school student, use television. You are representing many other students your age
so please answer the questions carefully and honestly.

Part One

This set of questions asks you how you feel about the society we live in. Using
the example as a guide, answer the questions to tell us how many of 100 people in
our society fit the situation described.

Example: Of every 100 teenagers, how many are involved in car accidents? __25__

(If you felt that about one of four teenagers are involved in car
accidents, then that would be 25 people of 100.)

1. Of every 100 births, how many babies die at childbirth? ____
2. Of every 100 births, how many mothers die at childbirth? ____
3. Of every 100 married career women, how many have successful careers and
   successful marriages? ____
4. Of every 100 romances in real life, how many have major problems? ____
5. Of every 100 marriages, how many happen for love and romance? ____
6. Of every 100 marriages, how many happen because the woman is pregnant? ____
7. Of every 100 mothers, how many interfere in their teenager's problems? ____
8. Of every 100 fathers, how many interfere in their teenager's problems? ____
9. Of every 100 women in the U.S., how many are likely to be raped? ____
10. Of every 100 men, how many are likely to be rapists? ____
11. Of every 100 marriages, how many are likely to end in divorce? ____
12. Of every 100 men, how many are likely to have an affair? ____
13. Of every 100 housewives, how many are likely to have an affair? ____
14. Of every 100 married working women, how many are likely to have an affair?
    ____
15. Of every 100 unmarried women, how many are likely to have sex before marriage?

16. Of every 100 unmarried men, how many are likely to have sex before marriage?

17. Of every 100 babies born, how many do you think are born to unmarried
    mothers? ____
18. Of every 100 married men with an opportunity to have an affair, how many
    are likely to do so? ____
19. Of every 100 married women with an opportunity to have an affair, how many
    are likely to do so? ____
20. If two people got married today, how many years do you think their marriage
    would last? ____

	not important------------very important

21. How important do you think sex is to most teenagers your age? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

22. How important do you think sex is to most adults? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

23. How important do you think sex is in our society? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

24. How often do you think about sex?

    4-5 times/day   2-3 times/day   once a day   less than once a day

25. How often do you talk about sex?

    4-5 times/day   2-3 times/day   once a day   less than once a day

26. For each of the following please tell us how often you talk to these people about sex.

	almost always	frequently	sometimes	almost never
parents	☐	☐	☐	☐
close friends	☐	☐	☐	☐
brothers or sisters	☐	☐	☐	☐
doctors	☐	☐	☐	☐
teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐

27. If you wanted information about sex how often would you go to the following:

	almost always	frequently	sometimes	almost never
parents	☐	☐	☐	☐
close friends	☐	☐	☐	☐
brothers or sisters	☐	☐	☐	☐
doctor's	☐	☐	☐	☐
teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐
written material	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Part Two

1. Do you ever watch daytime soap operas?   YES   NO-(go to question #6)

2. Here is a list of daytime soap operas. For each please tell us how many times in an average week you see the program. Circle zero if you never watch the show.

Guiding Light .0	1	2	3	4	5
Edge of Night 0	1	2	3	4	5
Young and the Restless. 0	1	2	3	4	5
Search for Tomorrow 0	1	2	3	4	5
Ryan's Hope .0	1	2	3	4	5
Days of Our Lives 0	1	2	3	4	5
All My Children 0	1	2	3	4	5
As the World Turns. 0	1	2	3	4	5
Another World 0	1	2	3	4	5
One Life to Live. 0	1	2	3	4	5
Capitol 0	1	2	3	4	5
General Hospital. 0	1	2	3	4	5

3. How old were you when you first started watching daytime soap operas regularly? _____ .

4. Who usually watches the soap operas with you?

_____ I usually watch alone.
_____ I usually watch with my brothers or sisters.
_____ I usually watch with friends.
_____ I usually watch with a parent.
_____ Other _____

5. Do either of your parents watch daytime soap operas?

_____ yes, my mother
_____ yes, my father
_____ yes, both
_____ no, neither

6. How many times in a month do you usually see the following evening "soap operas?" Circle zero if you never watch the show.

Dallas 0	1	2	3	4
Knot's Landing 0	1	2	3	4
Falcon Crest 0	1	2	3	4
Dynasty. 0	1	2	3	4
Bare Essence 0	1	2	3	4

-4-

7. The following is a list of things that are seen in soap operas. Please tell us how realistic you think these things are shown in the soaps. (On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is not realistic at all and 10 is very realistic, tell us how realistic you think it is shown.)

	not real--------real
Example: the houses in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the mothers in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the fathers in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the women in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the housewives in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the working women in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the business people in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the doctors in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the male teenagers in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the female teenagers in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the children in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the marriages in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the families in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the romantic couples in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the sex in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the arguments in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the parties in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the hospitals in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the homes in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the daytime schedules of the people in soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
the use of alcohol in the soaps	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. People often talk about what they see on television. How often do you talk to others about the daytime or evening soap operas?

    very often   somewhat often   not very often   not at all

9. Do you sometimes talk to your parent(s) about the soaps?   YES   NO

10. Do you sometimes talk to your friends about the soaps?   YES   NO

11. Do you sometimes talk to your brothers or sisters about the soaps? YES NO

12. Do either of your parents watch evening soap operas?

    _____ yes, my mother
    _____ yes, my father
    _____ yes, both
    _____ no, neither

13. Do either of your parents disapprove of you watching soap operas?

    _____ yes, my mother disapproves
    _____ yes, my father disapproves
    _____ yes, both parents disapprove
    _____ no, they don't mind
    _____ I don't know how they feel

14. For the following list of statements, please tell us how much you <u>agree</u> with each statement. (For each pick from: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, or strongly disagree.)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Sometimes I feel all alone in the world.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
I don't go out with friends as often as I would like.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
Most people today seldom feel lonely.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
Real friends are as easy as ever to find.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
One can always find friends if one shows oneself friendly.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
The world in which we live is basically a friendly place.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
There are few people you can trust.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
People are just naturally friendly and helpful.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
I don't get to go out with my friends as often as I would like.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
I take a positive attitude toward myself.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
I certainly feel useless at times.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱
At times I think I am no good at all.	▱	▱	▱	▱	▱

-6-

Just a few more questions about yourself.

28. How many hours of television do you watch on an average weekday (including before school, after school, and at night)?

        0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   or more

29. How many hours of television do you watch on an average Saturday?

        0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   or more

30. Are you a: freshman   sophomore   junior   senior

31. What kind of grades do you usually get?

        A's   B's   C's   D's   below

32. Are you male or female?   male   female

33. Using the example shown, please fill in the chart to describe your family (those who live in your household.)

EXAMPLE:

Who	How old?	Working?	If yes, what occupation?
Me	17	yes	part-time restaurant help
father	55	yes	high school teacher
mother	48	yes	secretary
sister	22	no	
sister	19	yes	waitress
brother	18	no	

Who	How old?	Working?	If yes, what occupation?
Me			

Thank you very much!

APPENDIX B

High School Soap Opera Study

The following is a questionnaire that has been constructed by mass media re-
searchers at Michigan State University. We want to find out how you, as a high
school student, use television. You are representing many other students your
age so please answer the questions carefully and honestly. -

1. Do you ever watch daytime soap operas?   YES   NO   (go to question # 6)

2. Here is a list of daytime soap operas. For each please tell us how many
   times in an average week you see the program.

Guiding Light. 0	1	2	3	4	5
Edge of Night. 0	1	2	3	4	5
Young and the Restless 0	1	2	3	4	5
Search for Tomorrow. 0	1	2	3	4	5
Ryan's Hope. 0	1	2	3	4	5
Days of Our Lives. 0	1	2	3	4	5
All My Children. 0	1	2	3	4	5
As the World Turns 0	1	2	3	4	5
Another World. 0	1	2	3	4	5
One Life to Live 0	1	2	3	4	5
Capitol. .0	1	2	3	4	5
General Hospital 0	1	2	3	4	5

3. How old were you when you first started watching daytime soap operas
   regularly?   _____

4. Who usually watches the soap operas with you?

   _____   I usually watch alone.
   _____   I usually watch with my brothers or sisters.
   _____   I usually watch with friends.
   _____   I usually watch with a parent.
   _____   Other _____

5. Do either of your parents watch daytime soap operas?

   _____   yes, my mother
   _____   yes, my father
   _____   yes, both
   _____   no, neither

6. How many times _in a month_ do you usually see the following evening "soap operas?"

```
Dallas . . . . . . . . . . 0   1   2   3   4
Knot's Landing . . . . . . 0   1   2   3   4
Falcon Crest . . . . . . . ſ   1   2   3   4
Dynasty  . . . . . . . . . ᴜ   1   2   3   4
Bare Essence . . . . . . . 0   1   2   3   4
```

7. The following is a list of things that are seen in soap operas. Please tell us how _realistic_ you think these things are shown in the soaps. (On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is not realistic at all and 10 is very realistic, tell us how realistic you think it is shown.)

```
                                                  not real--------real
Example:  the houses in the soaps . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3 ④5  6  7  8  9  10

the mothers in the soaps  . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the fathers in the soaps  . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the women in the soaps  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the housewives in the soaps . . . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the working women in the soaps  . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the business people in the soaps  . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the doctors in the soaps  . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the male teenagers in the soaps . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the female teenagers in the soaps . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the children in the soaps . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the marriages in the soaps  . . . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the families in the soaps . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the romantic couples in the soaps . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the sex in the soaps  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the arguments in the soaps  . . . . . . . . . . . . ]  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the parties in the soaps  . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the hospitals in the soaps  . . . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the homes in the soaps  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1  ᴇ 3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the daytime schedules of the people in soaps  . . . 1  ᴇ 3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
the use of alcohol in the soaps . . . . . . . . . . 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
```

8. People often talk about what they see on television. How often do you talk to others about the daytime or evening soap operas?

        very often   somewhat often   not very often   not at all

9. Do you sometimes talk to your parent(s) about the soaps?   YES NO

10. Do you sometimes talk to your friends about the soaps?   YES NO

11. Do you sometimes talk to your brothers or sisters about the soaps? YES NO

12. Do either of your parents watch evening soap operas?

    _____   yes, my mother

    _____   yes, my father

    _____   yes, both

    _____   no, neither

13. Do either of your parents disapprove of you watching soap operas?

_____ yes, my mother disapproves
_____ yes, my father disapproves
_____ yes, both parents disapprove
_____ no, they don't mind
_____ I don't know how they feel

14. For the following list of statements, please tell us how much you agree with each statement. (For each pick from: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, or strongly disagree.)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Sometimes I feel all alone in the world.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I don't go out with friends as often as I would like.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Most people today seldom feel lonely.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Real friends are as easy as ever to find.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
One can always find friends if he shows himself friendly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The world in which we live is basically a friendly place.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There are few people you can trust.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People are just naturally friendly and helpful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I don't get to go out with my friends as often as I would like.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I take a positive attitude toward myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I certainly feel useless at times.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At times I think I am no good at all.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part II

The next set of questions asks you how you feel about the society we live in. Using the example as a guide, answer the questions to tell us how many of 100 people in our society fit the situation described.

Example: Of every 100 teenagers, how many are involved in car accidents? __25__

> (If you felt that about one of four teenagers are involved in car accidents, then that would be 25 people of 100.)

1. Of every 100 births, how many babies die at childbirth? ____
2. Of every 100 births, how many mothers die at childbirth? ____
3. Of every 100 married career women, how many have successful careers and successful marriages? ____
4. Of every 100 romances in real life, how many have major problems? ____
5. Of every 100 marriages, how many happen for love and romance? ____
6. Of every 100 marriages, how many happen because the woman is pregnant? ___
7. Of every 100 mothers, how many interfere in their teenager's problems? ___
8. Of every 100 fathers, how many interfere in their teenager's problems? ___
9. Of every 100 women in the U.S., how many are likely to be raped? ____
10. Of every 100 men, how many are likely to be rapists? ____
11. Of every 100 marriages, how many are likely to end in divorce? ____
12. Of every 100 men, how many are likely to have an affair? ____
13. Of every 100 housewives, how many are likely to have an affair? ____
14. Of every 100 married working women, how many are likely to have an affair? ____

15. Of every 100 unmarried women, how many are likely to have sex before marriage? ____
16. Of every 100 unmarried men, how many are likely to have sex before marriage? ____
17. Of every 100 babies born, how many do you think are born to unmarried mothers? ____
18. Of every 100 married men with an opportunity to have an affair, how many are likely to do so? ____
19. Of every 100 married women with an opportunity to have an affair, how many are likely to do so? ____

20. If two people got married today, how many years do you think their marriage would last? ____

		not important----------important
21.	How important do you think sex is to most teenagers your age?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
22.	How important do you think sex is to most adults?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
23.	How important do you think sex is in our our society?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

24. How often do you think about sex?

> daily   weekly   monthly   never

25. How often do you talk about sex?

                daily   weekly   monthly   never

26. Do you talk to your close friends about sex? YES NO
27. Do you talk to your brothers or sisters about sex? YES   NO
28. Do you talk to your parents about sex? YES NO
29. If you wanted information about sex would you go
    to your friends? YES NO
30. If you wanted information about sex would you go
    to your brothers and sisters? YES NO
31. If you wanted information about sex would you go
    to your parents? YES NO
32. If you wanted information about sex would you look   -
    for written material? YES NO

Just a few more questions about yourself.

33. How many hours of television do you watch on an average weekday
    (including before school, after school, and at night)?

                0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   or more

34. How many hours of television do you watch on an average Saturday?

                0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   or more

35. Are you a: freshman   sophomore   junior   senior
36. What kind of grades do you usually get? A's B's C's D's below

37. Are you male or female? male   female
38. Using the example shown, please fill in the chart to describe your
    family (those who live in your household.)

EXAMPLE:

Who?	How old?	Working?	If yes, what occupation?
father	55	yes	high school teacher
mother	48	yes	secretary
sister	22	no	
sister	19	yes	waitress
brother	18	no	
me	17	yes	part-time restaurant help

Who?	How old?	Working?	If yes, what occupation

Thank you very much!   -5-

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEWER SCRIPT

Hello, my name is _____. This is my co-reseacher, _____. We are here on behalf of the Department of Communication at Michigan State University. Our interest as reseachers is in mass communication as compared to other types of communication. Mass communication is communication transmitted to a large, diverse, and dispersed audience by way of a mechanical device. This means our interest is in studying: newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and film.

This study is designed to investigate how you as high school students use television. Your school has been selected because we feel it is representative of other high schools. Just as Nielsen and the various political pollsters generalize to all of America from a sample of a few hundred or a thousand, we will use the information gathered today to generalize to all high school students. In other words, we don't look at how individuals answer each questionnaire, but rather how groups as a whole answer each question. Please understand that your responses are completely voluntary

and will remain confidential. Do not put your name on the questionnaire. This is not a test but you should understand that the more completely, carefully, and honestly you answer these questions, the better the research.

There are examples in the questionnaire that will help explain some of the sections. If you get held up, however, please feel free to raise your hand and one of us will try to answer your question. Take as much time as necessary, some sections take longer than others, but the entire questionnarie should take no more than 20-25 minutes. Please no talking or comparing answers when filling out the questionnare. When you are finished just raise your hand and one of us will collect the questionnaire. Please hold off talking until everyone has had the opportunity to finish.

We appreciate your time and we will, if time allows, explain the specific design of the study. For those of you who are interested, we will answer any questions you may have. Thank you!