

At a very young age, girls are barraged by a variety of mixed messages in the media about her worth as a person. Young girls, as well as older ones, are influenced by what they see in popular media. From shows like “Toddlers and Tiaras” to Victoria Secret commercials and runway shows, girls are continuously exposed to the over-sexualization of women in the media. The American Psychological Association revealed that the over-sexualization of young women have frightening consequences for healthy development and have been correlated with the three most common problems in girls and women: eating disorders, low self-esteem and depression (Abram).

The motivation behind these sexualized images is simple: sex sells. However, this simple motivation results in the desensitization to the destructive influences that girls are bombarded with everyday. Over-sexualized images are on magazines, television, film, online and in most popular culture mediums. A study conducted by Calogero provided evidence that increased exposure to sexualized images impacts an individual's self-esteem and body image. The 2014 VMA awards was centered around the over-sexualization of the women performers. The target audience of MTV are those born around the year 2000. This is the age group that is exposed to the excessive, glamorized sexualization of women. Love making is a beautiful part of life, but when the act is exploited, corrupted and sold to young, immature minds, it can produce lifelong negative interpersonal and psychological effects (Vigilant). Katie Marvin said there is evidence that over-sexualization may “have an impact on young women's desire to change their appearance through body hair removal and cosmetic surgery” (Marvin).

So basically a girl exposed to the overly sexualized popular culture will more than likely result in her wanting to physically alter her appearance.

Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) argue that “an environment where women are given value based on culturally define physical attractiveness, women are conditioned to internalize these messages and begin to objectify themselves”. Using popular culture as a measuring tool may in turn contribute to mental health risks such as unipolar depression and eating disorders (Fredrickson). Self-objectification has been repeatedly shown to detract from the ability to concentrate and focus one’s attention, thus leading to impaired performance on mental activities such as mathematical computations or logical reasoning (Quinn). Research by Fabrianesi found that at least five of the most commonly featured celebrities in pre-adolescent magazines had publicly recorded suffering from some form of eating disorders, three with drug and alcohol abuse and one had participated in a pornographic film. These are the role models provided to girls between the ages of five and twelve.

Adding to this culture crisis is the sexually explicit content of lyrics and music videos. Artist, if they can be called such, like Nicki Minaj, Miley Cyrus and Lil Wayne are known for glamorizing sexual acts. According to a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 8-18 year olds spend an average of 10 hours and 45 minutes with entertainment media with 2.5 of those hours listening to music (Kaiser). L’Engle (2006) study revealed that exposure to over-sexualized media increases pressure on young girls to engage in sexual activities.

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