

ABSTRACT

Exposure Effects of Hegemonic Masculinity in Men's Magazines

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While the effects of viewing narrowly-defined female roles in the media on women's reported moods and attitudes have been studied for decades, similar studies on men have a shorter history. Hegemonic masculinity prevails in media depictions of men, but the relatively few studies on men and media exposure have yielded as yet inconclusive results. The present study was designed to contribute to the emergent research on men's responses to brief media exposure. Four hundred sixty-three adult men were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk, a crowdsourcing website, to participate in an experiment on exposure effects of viewing men's magazine content. Participants were randomly assigned to one of six conditions containing themed magazine content (magazine covers, objectified women, technology and gadgetry, fashionable men, muscular men) or control images of household items. Before and after short-term media exposure, men were tested with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), the EDITS Profile of Mood States (EPOMS), the Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS), and the Manifest Alienation Measure (MAM). Change scores were calculated for each participant on each

measure, and one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to test for differences among mean change scores in each condition. Significant differences were found in change scores for the EPOMS, while no significant differences were found in the RSES, PANAS, GRCS, and MAM. Participants' EPOMS change scores were further analyzed using ANOVAs across six EPOMS subscales; in post hoc testing, eight pairwise comparisons across four subscales were found to have significant differences. Among the results, participants reported feeling more anger and fatigue, and less vigor, after viewing household items than viewing magazine covers with women on them. Also, men in the study reported more anger and fatigue after viewing male fashion models than viewing magazine covers. Finally, participants reported more vigor after viewing objectified women than viewing household objects. Results and future directions for research were discussed.

Keywords: men, masculinity, gender, media exposure, magazines

Exposure Effects of Hegemonic Masculinity in Men's Magazines

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To Jimmy, Masako, and Robert

In loving memory of Ericka

And for those who seek and support healthy and honest expressions of masculinity

There's a lot of disappointment involved in buying men's magazines. You get excited about buying a new copy of a magazine like *FHM*, it's so nice and glossy, and they have a style of photography that makes everything look so sparkly and desirable (especially, of course, the women). But then it's a bit disappointing because there's not really much in it, and it's disappointing to find that the women, when interviewed, don't sound that interesting really. And it's disappointing because you see these gorgeous women who wouldn't look twice at you, but then you remember that they probably look quite like people you know, really, and it's the very careful styling and makeup and photography that makes them so irresistible, but then that's quite disappointing too. Most of all, it's disappointing that you fell for it, and will continue to fall for it.

— 24-year-old male, cited by David Gauntlett, *Media, Gender, and Identity*

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Men's magazines used to be centered on stereotypically masculine topics like hunting, sports cars, and athletics, while generally avoiding the dispensing of advice on fashion, grooming, and relationships that have traditionally been found in women's magazines (Gauntlett, 2008). This has changed in the last thirty years, and men now have a modest selection of male lifestyle magazines to choose from (e.g., *GQ*, *Maxim*, *Esquire*, *Details*, *Men's Health*, *King*). Magazines such as *Maxim*, *FHM*, and the original incarnation of *Stuff* have "virtually revolutionized the media messages to which men are exposed" (Hatoum & Belle, 2004, p. 399). However, the burgeoning market for men's magazines may be accompanied by an unwanted side effect: Just as exposure to women's magazines has been implicated in lowered self-esteem (Hawkins, Richards, Granley, & Stein, 2004; Irving, 1990), increased depression (Cash & Henry, 1995; Stice & Shaw, 1994), and risk for disordered eating in females (Harrison & Cantor, 1997; Vaughan & Fouts, 2003), it has been speculated that exposure to men's magazines may be cultivating damaging moods, attitudes, and behaviors in men (Agliata & Tantleff-Dunn, 2004; Brownell & Rodin, 1994; Davis, 2005; Hatoum & Belle, 2004; Lorenzen, Grieve, & Thomas, 2004). This trend was articulated by Hobza, Walker, Yakushko, and Peugh in 2007, who stated that "research suggests women and men alike are increasingly feeling pressure to conform to the standards set by their same-sex counterparts in the media" (p. 162).

To begin, it is helpful to discuss what constitutes a “men’s lifestyle magazine.” Although there is no “official” taxonomy of magazines by topic, the media trade journal MediaWeek uses a category called “Men’s Lifestyle/Fitness/Outdoor” (2010) and the non-profit Audit Bureau of Circulations designates a “Mens [*sic*]” category (2010b). Both categories include titles such as *Esquire*, *Field & Stream*, *Maxim*, *Men’s Health*, *Playboy*, *Popular Mechanics*, and many others. Gauntlett (2008) noted that “men’s lifestyle magazines” share a format that includes advice on matters not addressed by sports or hobby magazines (such as sex, work, and fashion), and usually include reviews of film and music as well; the author also pointed out that each lifestyle magazine is somewhat distinct in tone, with variations in social class references, intellectual aspirations, and sexism. For the purposes of this study, “men’s lifestyle magazine” and “men’s magazine” will be understood to mean magazines that refer to themselves as intended for men, have a predominantly male readership, and address an array of sociocultural topics instead of focusing on, for instance, sports (*Sports Illustrated*), fitness (*Muscle & Fitness*), music (*Vibe*), or erotic/pornographic content (*Playboy*).

The Media Niche of Men’s Magazines

A handful of academics, mostly in the United Kingdom, have addressed the advent of something called “lad culture,” the “new lad movement,” and the “lad mags” that have either ushered in or accompanied them. Benwell in 2004 credited coinage and definition of the term “new lad” to Sean O’Hagan, who defined a new lad as “fun-loving, politically incorrect, and insistently heterosexual” (p. 5). Benwell (2004) further elaborated that “laddish” magazines can be summarized with the list “Beer, Women, Football” (p. 5), in contrast with other magazines that have a greater emphasis on style

and sophistication. He added that they vehemently eschew the “twin pariahs” of femininity and homosexuality (2004, p. 6). The British magazine *Loaded* has been tied to the fast-rising mainstream visibility of the “new lad” in the 1990s (Benwell, 2004; Davis, 2005; Gauntlett, 2008; Rogers, 2005). Although the term “lad culture” and its spinoffs are not familiar parlance in the United States, the spirit of the reference has been addressed. In a content analysis publication, Krassas, Blauwkamp, and Wesselink (2003) stated that *Maxim*, *Stuff*, and *FHM* differ from *GQ* and *Esquire* because the former have more sexual images and articles, a more blatant focus on sex, higher circulation, and more influence on the format of other popular magazines (such as *Rolling Stone*) than the latter. Gauntlett (2008) acknowledged the “dim sexism” (p. 182) of US *Maxim*, and an experiment by Hamilton (2010) utilized exposure to US *Maxim* in order to investigate possible effects of so-called “lad magazines” in American participants.

Whether it is called a lifestyle magazine or a lad magazine, *Maxim* is clearly a publishing success story. The magazine’s US edition was launched in 1997 and became the most popular men’s lifestyle magazine by 1999 (Johnson, 2007). In the second half of 2010, it boasted an average paid or verified circulation of over 2.5 million issues per month, maintaining its position as the most-popular men’s magazine in America by a margin of over 680,000 (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2010a). The magazine has been credited with single-handedly breaking through to a vast male readership that others like *Esquire* and *Playboy* never could, and importing lad culture to the United States (Davis, 2005). Aspects of *Maxim*’s particular brand of masculinity have been co-opted by other men’s magazines; the sexual focus in particular has had tangible effects on magazines like *Details* and *Esquire*, which began to feature scantily-clad cover models and more

articles on sex as a result of *Maxim*'s success (Foege, 2002; Lambiase, 2007; Reichert & Zhou, 2007). As men's magazines increasingly cater to a certain type of male, an examination of this masculine rhetoric and its effects on men becomes essential.

Magazines and Masculinity

There are different explanations proposed for the construction and media dissemination of new masculine identities fomented in the 20th century and continuing today. Breazeale (1994) suggested that men, who were historically defined as producers while women were consumers, were challenged to forge a new identity once the Industrial Revolution eliminated the need for every man to be adept at production and the Great Depression shattered the archetype of male prosperity. Breazeale's argument continued that *Esquire* was established as a discourse whereby a male identity of consumption was normalized and defeminized (1994). Rogers (2005) took a slightly different perspective in which men's magazines are used to simultaneously masculinize and exhibit mastery over the domain of intimacy, reconciling a male need for intimacy with its traditionally feminized connotation. Other speculation from Stibbe (2004) and Whelehan (2000) posited that a growing disaffection for feminism in the 1990s, on the heels of the feminist movement of the 1970s, resulted in a backlash of unrepentant hegemonic masculinity as seen in magazines like *Men's Health*. This argument might be considered an update to Faludi's assertion of a "crisis of masculinity" that produced a backlash against women in the 1980s (1991).

It is necessary here to define "hegemonic masculinity" as used by Benwell (2004), Crawshaw (2007), Stibbe (2004), Vigorito and Curry (1998), and many others in

the literature on men's media. In a 2005 review of the hegemonic masculinity concept, Connell and Messerschmidt cited the origins of the model:

The concept of hegemonic masculinity was first proposed in reports from a field study of social inequality in Australian high schools (Kessler et al. 1982); in a related conceptual discussion of the making of masculinities and the experience of men's bodies (Connell 1983); and in a debate over the role of men in Australian labor politics. (p. 830)

Connell (1987) explained that “hegemonic masculinity” refers to a culturally-dominant form of masculinity that subjugates females and rejects all femininities and alternative masculinities (e.g., homosexuality, “metrosexuality”). Connell's hallmarks of hegemonic masculinity include staunch heterosexuality, dominance over women, and aggression and power. Connell pointed out that hegemonic masculinity is perpetuated by majority consensus, not force, and that it is the dominant, but not the sole, option for men. The author also suggested that hegemonic masculinity can be considered a public, symbolic, or fantasy form of masculinity, and that “Few men are Bogarts or Stallones; many collaborate in sustaining those images” (Connell, 1987, p. 185). This tendency for hegemonic masculinity to be played out publicly and symbolically means that popular media are a rich source for display and reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, Gentry and Harrison (2010) found in a content analysis of television commercials that portrayals of men are almost exclusively hegemonic, while Alexander (2003) and Gauntlett (2008) agreed that contemporary men's magazines are openly peddling what they respectively call “male gender role resocialization” (p. 540) and “the social construction of masculinity” (p. 179). Some researchers noted that “lad magazines” in particular adopt a deliberately tongue-in-cheek, ironic tone that exculpates them from accusations of offensively blatant sexism and misogyny, and more importantly reflects

men's ambivalence about the quest for an acceptable masculine identity (Benwell, 2004; Gauntlett, 2008). But Benwell (2007) and others (Davis, 2005; Mooney, 2008) also warned that the irony only thinly veils dangerously hegemonic messages, and is all but lost on readers.

Motivated to assert this aggressively heterosexual identity, men's lifestyle magazines typically plaster photos of female celebrities and models in near or full-but-obscured nudity throughout their issues. In this way, men's magazines perpetuate the "centerfold syndrome," coined by Brooks in 1995, wherein men's relationship with women's bodies is characterized by voyeurism, objectification, and fear of intimacy. Certainly, it is problematic for women and gender relations that these magazines constantly depict women in a sexualized and objectified manner, with rare exception. The less obvious failing of these magazines, however, is in their service to their own readers. The centerfold syndrome's damage is exacted less visibly, but just as profoundly, upon men (Brooks, 1995). Jackson, Stevenson, and Brooks (2001) reflected that "the magazines themselves were a disappointment, conforming to what came to be known as 'laddish' versions of masculinity rather than sustaining their early promise of providing a space for exploring new and more progressive alternatives" (p. 173). Davis (2005) contributed an argument that *Maxim* consistently expresses contempt for its own readers, whom the magazine encourages to "indulge in dangerous forms of self-loathing" (p. 1011). And Gardiner (2002) eloquently described the perils of hegemonic masculinity for men:

[Hegemonic masculinity] narrowed their options, forced them into confining roles, dampened their emotions, inhibited their relationships with other men, precluded intimacy with women and children, imposed sexual and gender conformity, distorted their self-perceptions, limited their social consciousness,

and doomed them to continual and humiliating fear of failure to live up to the masculinity mark. (pp. 5-6)

Studying Negative Effects

Stepping away from the intriguing semantic debate over the construction of masculine rhetoric in men's magazines, the present study focuses instead on immediate effects in men who are exposed to male-directed media. To explain the need for such studies with men, a brief review of research on media and women is in order.

Starting with marketing research in the 1970s (Duker & Tucker, 1977; Wortzel & Frisbie, 1974) and continuing to present-day social science, (e.g., Hine, 2011; Slevec & Tiggemann, 2011), the correlational and experimental interactions between media content and women's attitudes, behaviors, and feelings have been studied fairly rigorously. The literature contains evidence for relationships between media exposure and women's body image (Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, 2008; Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002), self-esteem (Hawkins et al., 2004; Irving, 1990), attitudes toward gender roles (Taylor & Setters, 2011), disordered eating (Slevec & Tiggemann, 2011), acceptance of rape myths (Kahlor & Eastin, 2011), positive and negative mood (Harper & Tiggemann, 2008; Jung, 2006), and many other outcomes. Other published studies have failed to find significant effects, but current researchers describe a general consensus on deleterious effects from modern media portrayals of women. Since the acceptance of this reality, contemporary studies indicate that research on women and media has progressed toward studies of moderating and protective factors.

By contrast, many academics have noted the under-researched state of male-directed media (Agliata & Tantleff-Dunn, 2004; Aubrey & Taylor, 2009; Davis, 2005;

Hatoum & Belle, 2004; Hobza et al., 2007; Lorenzen et al., 2004; Olivardia, 2001; Stibbe, 2004), and empirical data is even more scarce (Hatoum & Belle, 2004; Vigorito & Curry, 1998) despite its especial value in exploring media influence (Groesz et al., 2002; Wright, 2011). Nonetheless, studies on media and men are beginning to accumulate a body of data that point to deleterious effects. Agliata and Tantleff-Dunn (2004) demonstrated that viewing ideal-male television advertisements led to greater state depression and muscle dissatisfaction in men, while Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2009) also found that showing men commercials containing muscular males resulted in lower self-reported attractiveness and muscle satisfaction. Farquhar and Wasylkiw (2007) explored thematic content of visual portrayals and found that adolescent males evaluated themselves more negatively when presented with images of men in aesthetic poses, compared with performance poses. In a focus-group study, Fawkner and McMurray (2002) found that half their male participants reported a negative impact on their psychological state and behavior due to routine self-comparison with idealized male media images. Lorenzen et al. (2004) discovered that college males reported less body satisfaction after viewing advertisements depicting muscular men as opposed to average men. Morry and Staska (2001) found that fitness magazine reading habits correlated with body shape dissatisfaction and eating problems in men. A meta-analysis by Barlett, Vowels, and Saucier (2008) found that, in both correlational and experimental studies, exposure to images of muscular men were “associated with lower levels of body esteem and body satisfaction and with increased levels of negative behavioral and psychological outcomes” (p. 302).

Lest there be skepticism that negative effects might be limited to men who view images of men, there is some evidence for problematic effects after viewing women. Wright (2011) conducted a review of empirical research to find validation for the centerfold syndrome and called the current quantitative data “suggestive” despite its scarcity. Two studies (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2002; Lavine, Sweeney, & Wagner, 1999) found that brief exposure to thin-ideal or objectified women resulted in more appearance schema activation and less body confidence, respectively, for males. Also, a three-part study by Aubrey and Taylor (2009) found significant elevations in men’s appearance anxiety after manipulated exposure to images of objectified women from *Maxim*, *Stuff*, and *FHM* magazines. Their study also included findings of a longitudinal increase in appearance anxiety and body self-consciousness in men who read “lad magazines” (2009). Finally, Johnson, McCreary, and Mills (2007) found that men exposed to objectified images of women reported greater levels of anxiety and hostility. These data can be considered quantitative representations of the centerfold syndrome described earlier.

Magazines’ Potential for Influence

There is a public perception that print media like newspapers and magazines are quickly becoming obsolete. The prognosis remains uncertain; although magazine circulation and revenue have been decreasing in the last five years (The Association of Magazine Media, 2010a; The Association of Magazine Media, 2010b), observers have been reluctant to condemn the future of magazines. Sherman (2009) suggested that the downturn in the magazine industry has primarily affected mediocre or poorly-timed new titles, while forcing more enduring titles to improve and even grow. Other articles have

tackled the question “Are magazines dying?” and published optimistic responses: Bennet, cited by Friedman in 2009, stated, “There is still an experience to reading a magazine that the online world can't replicate” (para. 6); Maclean (2010) argued, “Though the internet is a serious threat, its ephemeral nature is no match for the tangibility of print” (subheading); and Link, quoted by Elliott (2010), explained that “there is something unique about magazines — the immersive experience, the curated content and the sense of a community of interests” (para. 16). Lastly, Sherman (2009) also offered a compelling defense of magazines’ future viability:

Magazines still offer an unsurpassed ability to marry literary ambitions with deep reporting, photography, and visual design. In this new media age, people talk about the importance of transforming readers into "communities." Magazines have never had a community problem. Great magazines have built enduring relationships with their readers that Facebook and Tumblr still aspire to. (para. 9)

Compatible with these assessments, a press release from the online database MediaFinder reported that the magazine industry yielded a net gain of 30 titles in the first quarter of 2011, as opposed to a net gain of 3 titles in the same period of 2010 and net losses in 2008 and 2009 (MediaFinder, 2010), suggesting that the magazine industry is rebounding from recent losses. Also, most popular magazines, including men’s magazines, have established an online presence to supplement their print content. It will be interesting to see whether readers eventually abandon print magazines or continue to use them in conjunction with online content.

Magazines, like other visual media, have a particularly influential role in shaping social attitudes and behaviors (Gauntlett, 2008; Groesz et al., 2002; Hatoum & Belle, 2004). Tiggemann (2003) found that magazine exposure exerts social influence in a manner distinct from television exposure, and the Hatoum and Belle study (2004)

investigated four forms of visual media (television, movies, magazines, and music videos) and found that reading of men's magazines was most strongly correlated to bodily concern in men. Advertisements seen in magazines have been found to act as the reader's standard for social comparison (Martin & Kennedy, 1993; Shaw & Waller, 1995). With the ubiquity of advertising, it is understandable that most experiments on men and media have been conducted with advertising images. However, a magazine's advertisements don't necessarily reflect the same rhetoric that publishers intend to promote in editorial content (Krassas et al., 2003). Indeed, editorial content has been found to drill home a few obvious ideologies in men's magazines, such as "an obsession with heroism and jeopardy" (Gauntlett, 2008, p. 173), specific targeting of more vulnerable women for sexual conquest (Krassas et al., 2003), and frequent, unrepentant consumption of red meat and beer (Stibbe, 2004).

Even brief media exposures can have a deleterious impact (Lorenzen et al., 2004; Stice & Shaw, 1994). It is conceded that changes in state mood might be transitory (Farquhar & Wasylikiw, 2007; Lorenzen et al., 2004), and it is not known if the impact is lingering or cumulative. However, Garst and Bodenhausen (1997) pointed out that "it may be more fruitful to focus on the short-term impact of viewing media depictions" (p. 552) since even brief contextual influences have the power to shape malleable attitudes and behaviors.

Mechanisms of Influence

The impact of media exposure, especially those of brief duration, might be explained in part by priming theories. A meta-analytic chapter on media priming stated that "'Priming' refers to the effect of some preceding stimulus or event on how we react,

broadly defined, to some subsequent stimulus” (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Klinger, & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007, p. 53). Priming does occur on a cognitive level, although its net effects and its mechanism of influence on semantic information are still debated. Related to our topic, a 2001 fMRI study by Aharon et al. found that men who were shown pictures of attractive female faces were inherently rewarded by stimulation of the brain’s reward center. In another experiment, Olson and Marshuetz (2005) saw that priming with attractive faces enabled participants to identify positive words more quickly than those primed with controls. It is possible that the glut of attractive female faces and bodies in *Maxim* create a rewarding, positive-priming experience for men. (This would certainly help to explain the magazine’s immense popularity.) On the other hand, Aubrey and Taylor (2009) addressed the potential for media priming to activate appearance and dating/sex schemata, which they found to be the case in their data, which found increased appearance anxiety and decreased dating confidence in men exposed to lad magazine images. Thus, the question in need of answering is not whether priming occurs when men read a men’s magazine, but rather in what direction the magazine exerts its priming influence. Ostensibly, priming occurs alongside other effects and becomes part of the information captured by any self-report measure. For this reason, priming is acknowledged as a component of the effects investigated in this study, but broader mechanisms of influence are necessarily addressed.

One such plausible mechanism is that of social comparison. Festinger’s social comparison theory (1954) described the phenomenon in which humans compare themselves to others in order to gain a more accurate self-assessment. This comparison can be directed upward toward others who embody a social ideal, resulting in a threat to

well-being, or downward toward others who embody unfavorable traits, resulting in reassurance about one's own standing (Lyubomirsky & Ross, 1997). Furthermore, recent research has suggested that social comparison is automatic, context-dependent, and mediated by individual differences (Lyubomirsky & Ross, 1997). Social comparison theory has been used to explain the well-documented effects of media depictions on women's self-appraisal (Myers & Crowther, 2009). Although there is a comparative shortage of literature on media effects upon men, upward social comparison has been considered as a possible mechanism for experimental effects of media exposure in men. Myers and Crowther's meta-analytic review of 156 studies found a relationship between social comparison and body dissatisfaction for both genders (2009). Using separate measures of self-esteem and social comparison, Gulas and McKeage (2000) found that men's self-esteem scores suffer from experimental exposure to advertising images of financially successful men and women, and that these effects were moderated by participants' tendency for social comparison. Hobza et al. also attempted to investigate social comparison by measuring the effects of slides of physically-ideal men, affluent and high-status men, and controls on male participants' self-esteem (2007). They discovered that self-esteem trended downward in the status condition, although this effect was not statistically significant (Hobza et al., 2007). Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2009) found that upward social comparison intensified the detrimental effects of muscular-male television images on men's own muscle satisfaction. On the other hand, Aubrey and Taylor (2009) acknowledged men's vulnerability to social comparison through muscle-oriented media, but expressed doubt that social comparison can account for all media effects on men. Aubrey and Taylor argued that overtly muscular men are present in a

narrow section of male-directed media, while objectified women are nearly omnipresent in men's media. Their finding that viewing images of objectified women is correlated with more appearance anxiety in men certainly indicates a theoretical mechanism beyond direct social comparison.

Here, Pleck's gender role strain paradigm (1981) is an alternative explanation. Preceding (and neatly accompanying) Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, the gender role strain paradigm described a widespread male dilemma that almost inevitably results in psychological distress for men (Pleck, 1981). Pleck proposed that contemporary masculinity is defined by maladaptive and contradictory role norms that make it impossible for men to adequately fulfill all roles expected of them. Levant (1995) summarized the paradigm:

The gender role strain paradigm proposed the following: contemporary gender roles are contradictory and inconsistent; the proportion of persons who violate gender roles is high; violation of gender roles leads to condemnation and negative psychological consequences; actual or imagined violation of gender roles leads people to overconform to them; violation of gender roles has more severe consequences for men than for women; and certain prescribed gender role traits (such as male aggression) are often dysfunctional. (p. 3)

The gender role strain paradigm describes three categories of strain: discrepancy-strain, in which men's failure to fulfill all role expectations results in distress; dysfunction-strain, in which men's efforts to meet role norms results in dysfunctional behavior that harms self and/or others; and trauma-strain, in which the ordeal itself of establishing a male identity inflicts trauma on men (Pleck, 2003). Taken together, these forms of gender role strain can exert substantial pressure on men. Men's magazines present overt and covert signals that designate appropriate male behavior and attitudes (regarding sex and dating, work, physical appearance, health, material possessions, and so on), against

which readers can easily measure themselves. Following this model, men who espouse more hegemonic masculine values do so out of anxiety from gender role strain. This predilection for gender role anxiety makes these men more susceptible to societal pressure to measure up to a male standard. As a result, men who are more hegemonically masculine may feel more dysphoria when presented with explicit depictions of the maleness expected of them, such as the ones in men's magazines. Conversely, men who are less hegemonically masculine are so because they feel less pressure to conform, and will thus feel less negative affect from exposure to media versions of the "ideal man." Although a portion of this relationship has been established in studies that compare men's endorsement of hegemonic masculinity attitudes with their drive for muscularity (Frederick et al., 2007; Mahalik et al., 2003; McCreary, Saucier, & Courtenay, 2005), the relationship with negative affect has not been empirically examined. Of note, a qualitative study conducted by Pompper (2010) examined men's expressions of gender role conflict, including concern over media portrayals: "[P]ervasive mass media-generated images of an ideal male body converge into a significant factor affecting perceptions of masculinities—creating conflict, anxiety, and dissonance" (p. 690).

Goals and Predictions

While studies of exposure to advertisements have been invaluable in their attempts to distill the individual effects of advertising, content analyses have been helpful in identifying the messages propagated by men's magazines, and theoretical examinations have generated plausible models for media influence, it is worthwhile to quantitatively study the effects of short-term exposure to editorial content, which may be more insidious in its influence. When men casually peruse a men's magazine, it can be

assumed that they are simultaneously exposed to advertising, editorial content, and editorial imagery. Despite this assumption, there is a glaring absence of literature on the effects of hegemonic masculinity rhetoric, as presented in forms other than advertising, upon men. Furthermore, a literature review yielded no known experiments that investigated the effects of brief exposure to men's magazine content that included words and images. Given the written cues that typically accompany images in men's magazines (e.g., second-person quips that mock the reader, crass sexual innuendo, and projection of material needs), the formal study of effects from these cues should not be neglected. The current study was designed in a concerted attempt to capture and quantify possible immediate effects of a more representative exposure to standard editorial content.

Mood state was chosen as a dependent variable for its insight into psychological state of mind. Subjective experiences of depression, anger, and anxiety are clearer indicators of psychological impact and clinical concern. Although the present study does not investigate a clinical population, its results will ideally be applicable to treatment considerations for men suffering from psychological distress. Given the mounting evidence that men, like women, are quite susceptible to media influence, it was predicted that men's negative affect and mood disturbance would exhibit a greater mean increase, and their positive affect would exhibit a greater mean decrease, after exposure to magazine content.

H₁: Men exposed to images of men's magazine content will report a greater increase in negative affect than men exposed to neutral images.

H₂: Men exposed to images of men's magazine content will report a greater decrease in positive affect than men exposed to neutral images.

H₃: Men exposed to images of men's magazine content will report a greater increase in mood disturbance than men exposed to neutral images.

Since a measure of self-esteem is commonly used to quantify media effects in individuals, and since men's self-esteem in relation to media exposure has seldom been studied (Hobza et al., 2007, and Hobza & Rochlen, 2009, are two rare examples), one such measure was used in this study.

H₄: Men exposed to images of men's magazine content will report a greater decrease in self-esteem than men exposed to neutral images.

Gender role strain is another potential mechanism for media influence discussed earlier. With their explicit depictions of gender expectations and hegemonic masculinity, men's magazines were predicted to induce more gender role conflict for men than control images.

H₅: Men exposed to images from men's magazine content will report a greater increase in gender role conflict than men exposed to neutral images.

Finally, the concept of "alienation" was examined as a construct which may capture the dysphoria resultant from exposure to hegemonic masculine values, appearance and lifestyle ideals that are extremely difficult or impossible to obtain for most men, sarcastic and ironic humor, a somewhat derisive tone toward readers, blatant visual and verbal objectification of women, or disdain for emotional sensitivity. Indeed, men's magazines often contain several of these aspects on a single page. It was predicted that alienation would increase with exposure to men's magazine content.

H₆: Men exposed to images from men's magazine content will report a greater increase in alienation than men exposed to neutral images.

CHAPTER TWO

Materials and Methods

Participants

Participants were 463 males between 18 and 71 years old ($M = 34$ years, $SD = 10.80$ years). Participants were recruited through Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an online crowdsourcing website. The MTurk site allows individuals to create a profile and complete online “Human Intelligence Tasks” (HITs) for nominal monetary compensation. Preliminary research on data obtained through MTurk has found that data from the MTurk participant pool is of equal or better quality compared with data from traditional college student samples (Behrend, Sharek, & Meade, 2011; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Paolacci, Chander, & Ipeirotis, 2010). Participants were limited to residents of the United States and an MTurk HIT approval rating of 95% or higher. They were awarded \$0.25 for their participation, and were not permitted to participate more than once.

Originally, 493 participants were recruited. The study was terminated early in 30 cases where participants did not verify informed consent, their age, or their gender. This resulted in a final sample of 463 adult males. Of these, 7.3% considered their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino and 92.7% selected not Hispanic or Latino. Participants were allowed to report more than one race, and frequencies were as follows: 86.4% White, 8.0% Asian, 5.0% Black or African American, 3.2% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 2.6% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. When selecting their sexual orientation, 92.4% responded heterosexual or straight, 5.2% responded gay, and 2.4% responded

bisexual. The majority of respondents, 53.1%, were single, while 40.0% were living with a partner or married, and the remaining 6.9% were separated, divorced, or widowed.

Materials

I-PANAS-SF

The original Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) contains 20 items, and was found to have reliability (Cronbach's alphas of .89 for Positive Affect and .85 for Negative Affect) and 2-factor construct validity (Crawford & Henry, 2004). The International Positive and Negative Affect Schedule Short Form (I-PANAS-SF) was developed by Thompson (2007), using factor analysis to find the 10 highest-loading of the original 20 items. This 10-item version of the PANAS was found by Thompson to be acceptably reliable (Cronbach's alphas of .80 for Positive Affect and .74 for Negative Affect), valid, and applicable to a range of cultural sample groups. Positive (e.g., "Inspired") and negative (e.g., "Hostile") affect descriptors are presented, with participants rating the extent to which they currently feel each one. A 5-point Likert scale is provided, with anchor phrases "Not at All" and "Very Much."

EPOMS

The Profile of Mood States (POMS; McNair, Lorr, & Droppleman, 1971) is a 65-item measure of state mood, and is considered the gold standard for measuring mood states. The Educational and Industrial Testing Service, which published the original POMS, later released a short version, the 30-item EPOMS (Bourgeois, LeUnes, & Meyers, 2010). The EPOMS has been found to have good reliability: Correlation coefficients of each subscale with its equivalent subscale on the original POMS range

from .90 to .98, and Cronbach's alpha for five EPOMS subscale ranged from .81 to .88. Only the Confusion subscale, with a Cronbach's alpha of .69, demonstrated problematic reliability that should be taken into consideration when interpreting. Factor analysis revealed that the EPOMS is more psychometrically sound than the original POMS (Bourgeois et al., 2010). Participants taking the EPOMS are asked to endorse each mood descriptor (e.g., "Angry," "Lonely," "Energetic") on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Not at All" to "Extremely."

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) is considered "the standard against which new measures are evaluated" (Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991, p. 123) when measuring self-esteem. Most analyses of the RSES have conceptualized the scale unifactorially; the most recently published analysis, by Sinclair et al. in 2010, included a Cronbach's alpha of .91. Acceptable standards for convergent and discriminant validity were also met across demographic subgroups, although discriminant validity was less reliable within specific demographic subgroups (Sinclair et al., 2010). The ten items (e.g., "I feel I do not have much to be proud of," "I take a positive attitude toward myself") are rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

Gender Role Conflict Scale

Pleck (2003) noted that scores on standardized measurements of disposition to gender role strain (as defined in the above discussion on the gender role strain paradigm) have been linked to negative affect like anger and anxiety, and are instrumental in

investigating the relationship between gender role strain and psychological distress. Demonstrating this, Good et al. (1995) found statistically significant correlations between Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS) scores and psychological distress as measured by the Symptom Checklist-90. An exhaustive meta-analysis of validity studies on the GRCS, first published in 1986 by O'Neil, concluded that the GRCS has good construct validity with internal consistency (as measured by Cronbach's alpha) ranging from 0.70 to 0.89, and its original four subscale constructs can be used with confidence (O'Neil, 2008). Sample statements include the following: "I have difficulty expressing my emotional needs to my partner," "Making money is part of my idea of being a successful man." Items are rated on a 6-point Likert scale anchored with "Strongly Disagree" and "Strongly Agree."

Manifest Alienation Measure

Gould (1969) developed the Manifest Alienation Measure (MAM) to measure and study alienation in college students. Mahoney and Quick (2000) hypothesized that higher levels of alienation could concur with certain personality traits, and they indeed found that higher MAM scores correlated significantly with higher Neuroticism, lower Openness, and lower Conscientiousness on the Big Five Inventory. Statements such as "Success is more dependent on luck than real ability" and "There are so many ideas about what is right and wrong these days, that it is hard to figure out how to live your own life" are rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

Self-Consciousness Scale

The Self-Consciousness Scale (SCS; Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975) is a 23-item measure of private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness, and social anxiety. Fenigstein et al. (1975) conducted two factor analyses and found support in both for the three domains measured by the SCS. Test-retest correlations were also found to be acceptable, falling between .73 and .80 for the three domains. Items (such as “I’m concerned what other people think of me” and “I’m self-conscious about the way I look”) are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “Extremely uncharacteristic of me” to “Extremely characteristic of me.” The SCS appeared in the demographic portion of the present experiment as a trait measure providing additional data about participant characteristics.

Stimulus Materials

Individual pages were scanned in color from men’s magazines and uploaded to the study website. Stimuli used in the experimental conditions were categorized into five groups: magazine covers (all *Maxim*), objectified women (from *Maxim*), male models in fashion spreads (from *Details* and *GQ*), visibly muscular male models in fitness spreads (from *Men’s Health* and *Muscle & Fitness*), and technology and gadgets (from *Maxim* and *GQ*). Each category contained eight pages from a sample of magazine issues from the past year. To create a control condition, eight images were selected from the International Affective Picture System, which contains photographs with standardized scores on three affective dimensions: pleasure, arousal, and dominance (Lang, Bradley, & Cuthbert, 2008). Selection criteria for the eight control images included ratings between

4.1 and 5.9 on all three dimensions (on a scale of 1 to 9), as well as a subjective judgment of face validity for “neutrality.” See the Appendix for sample images from each category.

Study Website

Qualtrics, a sophisticated survey-building website, was used to design and run the experiment online. A neutral gray background with no identifying information was used, and psychometric tests were designed to visually display as similarly as possible to their hard copy versions (e.g., identical layout of Likert points and anchor labels). Instructions were provided for each stage of the study, and participants were warned in instructions that they would be answering the same questions twice to avoid the perception that the study was malfunctioning. Each measure was isolated to its own page. Likert scales were repeated several times down the page so participants could avoid having to scroll up to check anchor points. Experimental stimulus pages were color-scanned and displayed in .jpeg format at a size that maximized readability while minimizing scrolling. The study was programmed to randomly assign participants to one condition, and to administer all of the 8 stimulus images in each condition in random order. Each stimulus image was designed so that the “Next” button would appear only after 30 seconds, and the image would advance automatically after 2 minutes, thus prescribing minimum and maximum exposure intervals. This feature was also explained in instructions to reduce participant confusion.

The first three questions screened for consent, gender, and age; those who did not qualify for inclusion were automatically routed to the end of the study without providing additional data. Demographic questions were voluntary, while psychometric questions

were forced-choice. Participants were debriefed on the final page, and were provided a form to submit comments or suggestions.

Procedures

Participants were able to select this study (described as “Men’s Magazine Study”) from a list of available HITs on the MTurk site. The \$0.25 compensation and 1-hour time limit were displayed in the listing. Once the MTurk participants selected the task, a link was displayed which would open the study on Qualtrics in a new window. Participants would first see the Informed Consent form with a yes/no consent question at the bottom. If they selected “yes,” the study would begin. At the study’s conclusion, participants were given a completion code which they could enter and submit on the MTurk website. Upon submission and verification by the principal investigator, each participant’s \$0.25 credit was electronically deposited into their MTurk account. A handful of participants attempted to participate twice; their second sets of data were discarded, and they were not approved for an additional MTurk credit.

CHAPTER THREE

Results

Internal Consistency of Measures

With one exception, each scale or subscale used in the experiment demonstrated excellent internal consistency. The Confusion subscale of the EPOMS yielded Cronbach's alphas of .59 and .62 at Trial 1 and Trial 2, respectively. These figures exhibit poor internal consistency, suggesting that the items comprising the Confusion subscale did not reliably measure participants' confusion during this study. This corroborates Bourgeois et al.'s finding that the Confusion subscale lacks factorial validity (2010). All other measures were found to be highly reliable in both trials, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .85 to .96 (see Table 1). Although Cronbach's alpha for the GRCS taken as a whole indicated a somewhat redundant level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .94$ and .96 in two trials), GRCS subscale scores demonstrated slightly lower values for Cronbach's alpha, suggesting that the subscales provided distinctive information for each construct. Overall means and standard deviations for each scale are listed in Table 1.

Effects of Brief Exposure to Images on Mood and Attitudes

Change scores were calculated for each of the five measures by subtracting Time 2 scores from Time 1 scores. Next, one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used to analyze the change score means for each condition. As shown in Table 2, reported gender role conflict, alienation, self-esteem, and positive and negative affect exhibited similar amounts of change in control and experimental conditions.

Table 1
Internal Consistency and Means (Standard Deviations) for Measures and Subscales

Measure	Time 1		Time 2	
	Cronbach's α	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's α	Mean (SD)
SCS	.85	n/a	n/a	n/a
GRCS	.94	3.67 (0.90)	.96	3.66 (0.98)
Success, Power, Competition	.90	n/a	.93	n/a
Restrictive Emotionality	.91	n/a	.94	n/a
Restrictive Affectionate Behavior				
Between Men	.91	n/a	.95	n/a
Conflicts Between Work and Leisure—				
Family Relations	.87	n/a	.92	n/a
MAM	.87	3.90 (1.02)	.89	3.88 (1.08)
RSES	.90	19.54 (6.41)	.91	19.36 (6.52)
PANAS Neg	.90	1.44 (0.76)	.87	1.40 (0.70)
PANAS Pos	.87	2.58 (1.00)	.88	2.40 (1.03)
EPOMS	n/a	11.74 (16.99)	n/a	9.85 (17.00)
Tension	.89	2.62 (3.73)	.91	2.15 (3.70)
Depression	.86	2.95 (3.92)	.88	2.36 (3.81)
Anger	.88	2.14 (3.49)	.93	2.05 (3.77)
Vigor	.90	5.60 (4.84)	.92	5.38 (5.09)
Fatigue	.90	5.43 (4.90)	.92	4.33 (4.90)
Confusion	.59	4.20 (2.87)	.62	4.34 (2.91)

Note: the SCS was administered once as part of the demographics stage of the study. SCS = Self Consciousness Scale; GRCS = Gender Role Conflict Scale; MAM = Manifest Alienation Measure; RSES = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; PANAS Neg = Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, negative affect scale; PANAS Pos = Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, positive affect scale; EPOMS = Profile of Mood States, short version.

Table 2
Difference Score Means (Standard Deviations) and F Values Across Conditions and Measures

Measure	Mean (SD)						F ratio (partial η^2)
	Control	Technology/ Gadgets	Magazine Covers	Objectified Women	Muscular Men	Fashionable Men	
GRCS	0.03 (0.39)	-0.01 (0.49)	-0.01 (0.35)	-0.001 (0.44)	-0.01 (0.38)	0.04 (0.40)	<1 (.003)
MAM	-0.04 (0.45)	0.03 (0.44)	0.01 (0.46)	0.07 (0.57)	0.07 (0.60)	-0.02 (0.70)	<1 (.007)
RSES	0.04 (4.50)	0.20 (3.67)	0.14 (2.25)	0.41 (2.72)	-0.40 (3.23)	0.29 (2.15)	<1 (.007)
PANAS Neg	-0.01 (0.45)	0.05 (0.29)	0.10 (0.49)	0.10 (0.60)	0.02 (0.57)	0.03 (0.34)	<1 (.007)
PANAS Pos	0.30 (0.55)	0.22 (0.64)	0.04 (0.58)	0.17 (0.77)	0.06 (0.77)	0.23 (0.55)	1.98 (.021)
EPOMS	-1.35 (9.04)	1.88 (8.71)	4.81 (9.75)	4.63 (9.24)	1.97 (11.03)	-0.43 (10.96)	5.27*** (.054)

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. GRCS = Gender Role Conflict Scale; MAM = Manifest Alienation Measure; RSES = Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale; PANAS neg = Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, negative affect scale; PANAS pos = Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, positive affect scale; EPOMS = Profile of Mood States, short version.

There were no significant differences found between the magazine content condition and the neutral image condition for these variables.

There was a significant result in the ANOVA test for EPOMS Total Mood Disturbance (TMD) scores, $F(5, 457) = 5.27$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .054$ (see Figure 1).

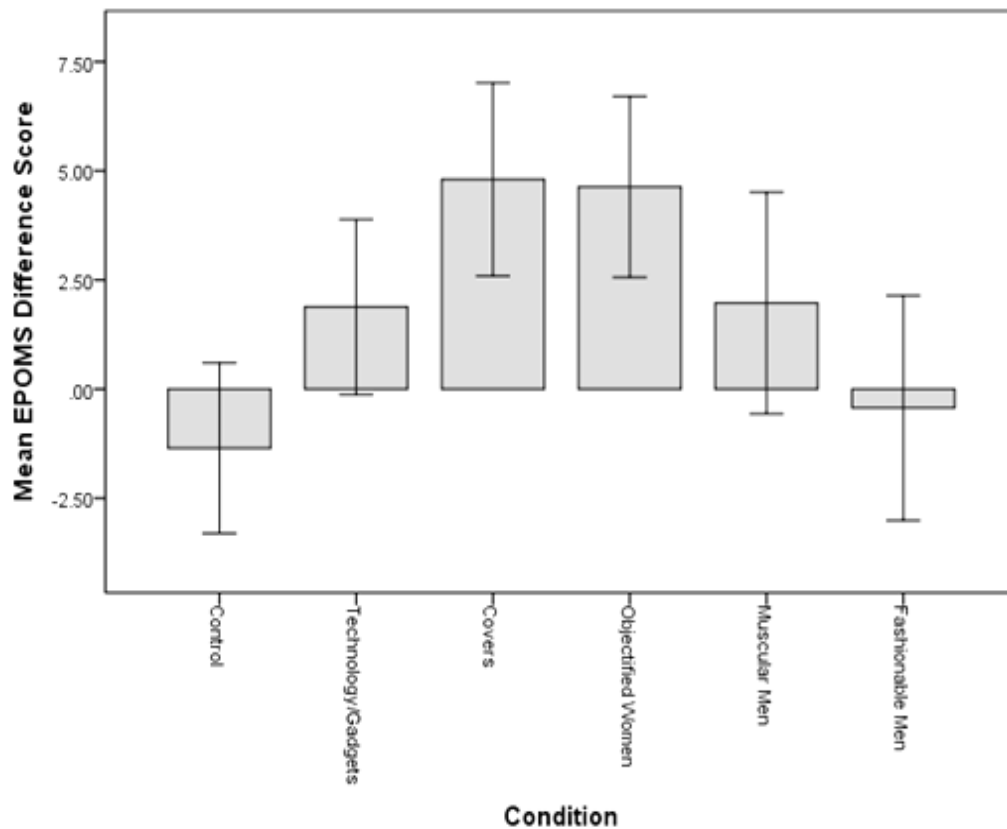


Figure 1
Mean EPOMS change scores across conditions

The statistically significant difference in TMD scores suggests that experimental participants reported greater worsening in mood (increase in negative mood and decrease in positive mood) than control participants as the study progressed. To better understand the relationship between brief media exposure and mood, EPOMS Total Mood

Disturbance change scores were separated into their six individual subscale scores and analyzed. One-way ANOVAs resulted in significant differences in four subscales (results are summarized in Table 3); participants reported feeling more angry, fatigued, and confused, and less vigorous, in certain conditions (see Figure 2). Post-hoc tests using a Bonferroni adjustment revealed significant pairwise differences in 8 pairs.

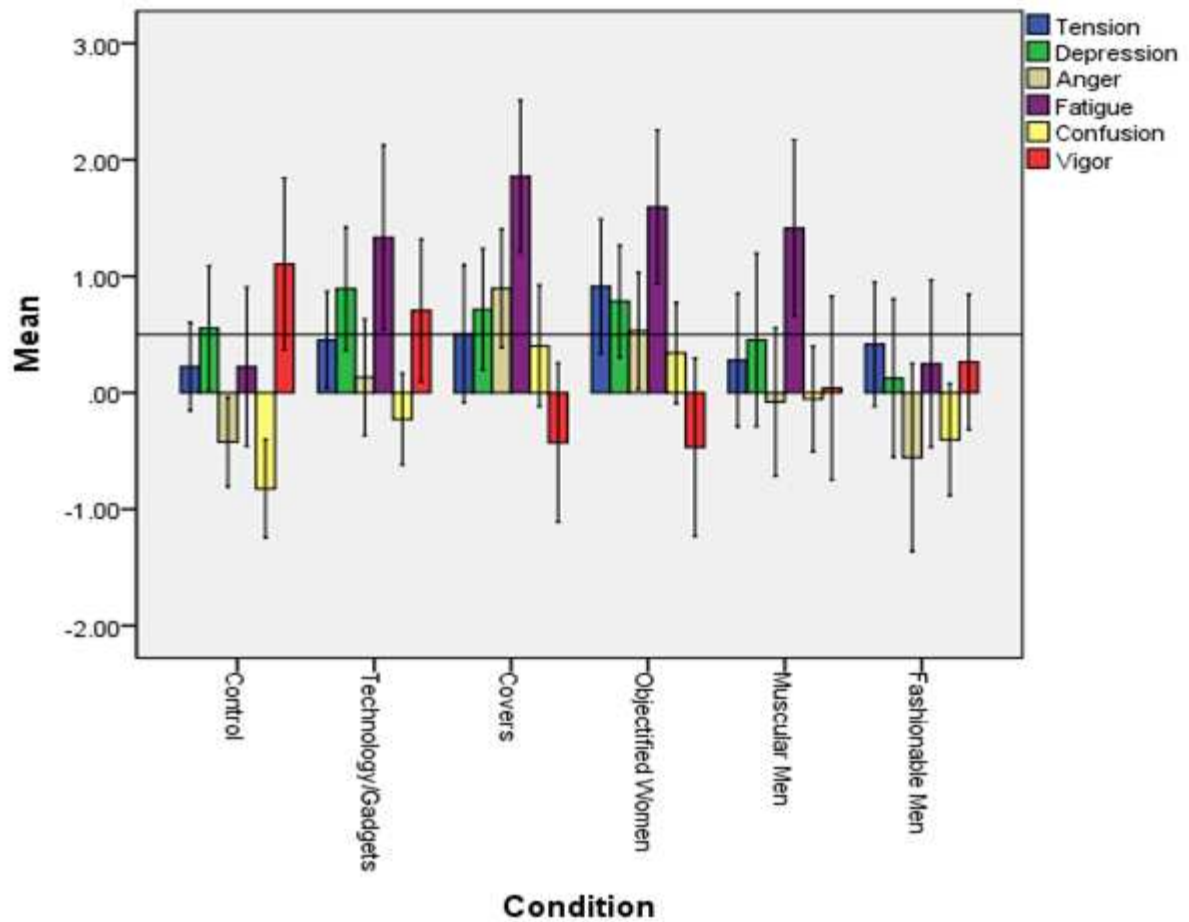


Figure 2
Mean EPOMS subscale change scores across conditions

Table 3
Change Score Means (Standard Deviations) and F Values Across Conditions for the EPOMS Subscales

Subscale	Mean(SD)						F ratio (partial η^2)
	Control	Technology/ Gadgets	Magazine Covers	Objectified Women	Muscular Men	Fashionable Men	
Tension	0.22 (1.76)	0.45 (1.82)	0.51 (2.61)	0.91 (2.59)	0.28 (2.50)	0.42 (2.28)	0.91 (.010)
Depression	0.55 (2.49)	0.89 (2.30)	0.71 (2.30)	0.79 (2.15)	0.45 (3.24)	0.13 (2.89)	0.84 (.009)
Anger	-0.42 (1.79) _a	0.13 (2.18) _{ab}	0.90 (2.25) _b	0.53 (2.23) _{ab}	-0.08 (2.77) _{ab}	-0.56 (3.44) _a	3.93** (.041)
Fatigue	0.22 (3.17) _a	1.33 (3.45) _{ab}	1.86 (2.88) _b	1.59 (2.95) _{ab}	1.41 (3.29) _{ab}	0.25 (3.05) _a	3.90** (.041)
Confusion	-0.82 (1.95) _a	-0.23 (1.71) _{ab}	0.40 (2.31) _b	0.34 (1.93) _b	-0.05 (1.97) _{ab}	-0.40 (2.05) _{ab}	4.36** (.046)
Vigor	1.10 (3.42) _a	0.71 (2.66) _{ab}	-0.43 (3.01) _b	-0.47 (3.42) _b	0.04 (3.43) _{ab}	0.26 (2.48) _{ab}	3.25** (.034)

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Means sharing the same subscript are not significantly different from each other (Bonferroni adjustment, $p < .05$).

Men reported feeling greater anger and greater fatigue after briefly viewing neutral images or images of men in fashionable clothing than after viewing cover images (which included women and headlines). Though confusion scores were lower when men viewed covers or objectifying images and higher when they viewed neutral images, the poor internal consistency of the Confusion subscale calls for cautious interpretation. Finally, men who viewed covers or objectified women reported significantly higher levels of vigor afterward than men who viewed neutral images. Effect sizes as measured by Cohen's d for each pairwise comparison ranged between 0.46 and 0.65 (small- to medium-sized effects; Cohen, 1988), and are listed in Table 4.

Table 4
Effect sizes for significantly different pairwise comparisons

EPOMS subscale	Pairwise Comparison	Cohen's d
Anger	Covers—Control	0.65
	Covers—Fashionable Men	0.50
Fatigue	Covers—Control	0.53
	Covers—Fashionable Men	0.54
Confusion	Covers—Control	0.57
	Objectified Women—Control	0.59
Vigor	Covers—Control	0.47
	Objectified Women—Control	0.46

CHAPTER FOUR

Discussion and Conclusions

Results from this experiment indicate that, overall, men who underwent short-term exposure to images from mainstream men's magazines exhibited statistically significant changes in mood when viewing some, but not all, types of images. Effect sizes were generally moderate, and fell above or near the cutoff for a medium-sized effect (Cohen, 1988). Furthermore, these effects were seemingly unaccompanied by significant changes in gender attitudes, feelings of alienation, or self-esteem. Of the four EPOMS subscales that yielded significant differences, Anger is arguably the subscale capturing the strongest emotional reaction. Contrary to the experimental prediction, men were not angered more by brief viewing of magazine covers with sardonic headlines such as "57 BEST BEERS: Brews That Will Solve All Your Problems," "MAKE \$7 MILLION WITHOUT LEAVING YOUR HOUSE," and "CHEAT AND DON'T GET CAUGHT: Women Tell You How." Presumably, the presence of scantily-clad and sexily-posed women on the covers mitigated any existing negative reaction to the accompanying headlines. Men did, however, report more anger after short-term exposure to control images of neutral household objects or images of handsome males modeling expensive clothing than when viewing female cover models. In the control condition, the relatively "dull" nature of the images may have prompted higher reporting of angry feelings. In the fashionable men category, men may have reported increases in anger because the images triggered feelings of competition with other men, because the men exemplified

appearance standards that the participants resented or disdained, or because the clothes (with prices listed) are financially unattainable for many men.

Changes in fatigue varied similarly among the conditions; in short, neutral images and images of fashionable men left participants reporting more fatigue afterward than images of women on magazine covers. Confusion may have also been high when men were looking at control images, especially compared to when men were viewing women on covers or inside the magazine. Finally, vigor was lower when participants viewed control images compared to covers or objectified women.

One surprising result is the lack of similarity in reported feelings when male participants briefly viewed fashionably clothed men or muscular men. Given the increases in anger and fatigue that men reported after viewing fashionable men, it might have been reasonable to assume that men would report comparable increases in anger and fatigue after viewing heavily muscled, hyper-masculine, shirtless men. On the contrary, while men reported affective reactions to fashionable men, they failed to report significant effects from viewing muscular men. This might be explained by participants feeling that fitness is a more relatable goal than fashion, that models in a somewhat defenseless state of undress may trigger less defensiveness than fully-dressed and cosmopolitan-looking models, or that muscular men are perceived to be showcasing their physical work and discipline while fashion models are merely flaunting their good looks and expensive clothes. Festinger's model of social comparison includes concepts of upward and downward social comparison (Lyubomirsky & Ross, 1997); the contrasting results between clothed and semi-nude men may indicate opposite directions of social comparison in these two categories of media images.

Another discovery that runs contrary to other studies is the null finding for self-esteem effects. Gulas and McKeage (2000) found that men's self-esteem lowered when they were exposed to images of financially successful men and women, while Hobza and others (2007) saw a trend approaching statistical significance where men who viewed images of high status males (men dressed in "fine suits" posed beside expensive cars or well-dressed women) reported lowered self-esteem. Perhaps the images utilized here were too dissimilar to images used in previous studies of men's self-esteem and media, or men are rapidly becoming better equipped to deflect media threats to self-esteem as media expectations of males become blatantly more superficial and less attainable.

Qualitative Data

Forty-five men provided feedback on the study in the provided space. Of these, seven participants described the experience as "interesting," and three participants speculated that other factors (e.g., length of study, consumption of alcohol, feeding of child while taking surveys) may have influenced their responses. Participants expressed valuable opinions about the experiment and its ability to pull positive and negative reactions from them:

"Very interesting study. I must say that I did not care for some of the advertising that was shown. I felt insulted and would not want any part of whatever magazine they came from. I like being a man and I felt sad for my fellow men if this type of advertising is something they like."

"I just hope this information is used for a good cause, and not market research. Our advertisements are effective enough, nowadays."

“An interesting survey, I enjoyed its challenges, and those ladies were a nice feature.”

“I felt like the study was testing the homosexuality of a man. Especially [once] you showed me the images then asked me the same questions again. Maybe I feel this way because men are molded to feel a certain way (macho, stern, etc.)”

“During the course of this study my girlfriend went home and I drank a beer. Seems to me that those things could have had a stronger effect than viewing images of handsome male models in clothes I can't afford.”

“I found it to be very rude to require those females to be almost nude on my iPad! I do not like females that way and would appreciate the acknowledgment that I selected GAY from the start! Rude!”

Limits

After the conclusion of the study, a few limitations in design emerged. Seventeen participants provided feedback after the study indicating that the experiment was too long and tedious (completion time $M = 27.43$ minutes, $SD = 14.09$ minutes). Although the administration of standardized measures both pre- and posttest is, by nature, more prone to becoming tedious for participants, a future study might benefit from decreasing the number of measures administered and/or utilizing even shorter measures (or versions of measures). Next, stimuli were scanned from magazines and presented online in an attempt to marry ecological validity with wide accessibility. However, this “hybridization” of hard-copy and online media may have confounded participants’ perception of and response to the stimuli, and image resolution was not optimal. In future incarnations, source material and presentation method should probably be

equivalent: magazine pages displayed in person, or digital content displayed online. Stimuli in each category also should have been appraised by multiple raters to ensure that each category contained representative and consistent stimulus images. Items on the GRCS may not have been suitable for measuring state changes, since they describe attitudes that probably don't vary from moment to moment. In the future, the GRCS should be used as a trait measure only. Data on gender role conflict may in fact fit well in the study of moderating factors in men, discussed below. The measures used were generally very reliable, but the process of calculating and analyzing change scores presents unique challenges to the scores' reliability and the accurate interpretation of results (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Analysis of covariance, a two-level within-subject design, or a block design would have better accounted for the diminished reliability of change scores than the analysis of variance used here. Finally, the Confusion subscale of the EPOMS was weak enough as to encourage omission in the future.

Future Directions

Despite what some may call an "intuitive" sense that media depictions of masculinity are evolving into something as destructive to boys and men as their female counterparts are to girls and women, research remains scant and results are suggestive but mixed. While many studies have been able to isolate negative media effects upon males, these outcomes have yet to be reproduced reliably. It is important for scientists to broaden and deepen their research on the effect that media has on men's well-being, for two fundamental purposes. First, an increased understanding of the relationship between media exposure and men's attitudes and self-concept will allow psychologists, and ideally society at large, to be mindful of men's susceptibility to detrimental influences

from the media. Second, acknowledging and understanding this susceptibility will serve to validate the female counterpart in the struggle for healthier gender depictions in the media by demonstrating that both genders share a mutually-relatable vulnerability.

More specifically, future studies can extend the findings of the present experiment by investigating why images of objectified women and fashionable men prompt affective responses in men. For example, are affective outcomes generalizable to images of women presented in different contexts (such as powerful women, average-looking women, attractive women in non-objectifying portrayals, etc.)? Likewise, are affective outcomes related to images of fashionable men attributable to models' physical attractiveness, socio-economic implications, the perceived "femaleness" of fashion or modeling, or something else? These questions will be best answered through continued investigation of males and media.

Men vary widely in their susceptibility to media influence, social influence, and masculinity ideals. When studying the influence of brief magazine exposure on men, it is reasonable to suggest that one or more moderator variables are at play. For example, homosexual men might have a different response to images of attractive men and women than heterosexual men. Age may also have a moderating effect, as older men have likely developed a different relationship with media than younger men. Gender role conflict, magazine reading habits, income level, or geographic location may also hold insight on the moderation of effects in men. In prospective research that is able to replicate significant findings, it will be an important next step to search for moderating variables in the data.

Conclusion

Men studied in the present experiment underwent significant affective changes of a moderate size from pre- to posttest in their responses to brief media exposures of objectified women, household objects, and fashionably-dressed men. Furthermore, changes were favorable in some cases (mostly associated with images of women) and unfavorable in others (mostly associated with images of fashionable men). These affective outcomes stand in contrast to men's self-esteem, gender role strain, and sense of alienation, which were not significantly swayed by short-term media exposure. Results show that brief exposures to images of hegemonic masculinity in visual media are capable of having a measurable impact on men's feelings of anger, fatigue, and vigor.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

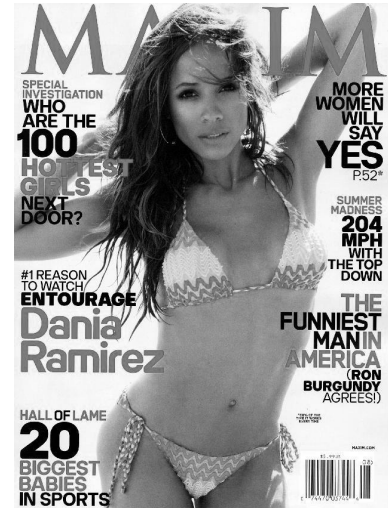
Sample Stimulus Images



Control



Technology/Gadgets



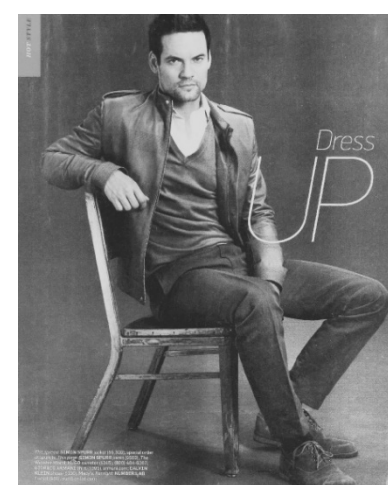
Cover



Objectified Women



Muscular Men



Fashionable Men

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