

THE MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF AMERICAN WOMEN IN CHINESE EYES: AN
ANALYSIS OF HOW CHINESE PERCEIVE AMERICAN WOMEN AND HOW U.S. TV
SERIALS INFLUENCE THOSE PERCEPTIONS

By

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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This study explores how Chinese individuals perceive American women and how U.S. TV serials influence those perceptions. Through sending out online surveys via a most popular social network- Renren, the study tried to identify the specific perceptions of American women that the participants had and the American TV serials that contributed most to those perceptions. The aim of the study is trying to establish an association between watching American TV serials and perceiving American women, exploring the differences among respondents' perceptions of American women in terms of gender, and examining Chinese male and female audiences' attitudes toward the influence of watching American TV serials.

The results of the study didn't indicate significant correlation between the exposure, which is measured in hours, and perceiving American women, but suggested a strong correlation between American TV serials reliance and understanding American women as open-minded, independent, sexual open, professional, and aggressive. Six most watched American TV serials were found in the study. They are: Prison Break, Friends, The Big Bang Theory, Gossip Girl, Sex and The City, and Desperate

Housewives. Compared with female respondents, the male respondents in the study were found being more likely to perceive American women as arrogant, violent, and mostly housewives. Additionally, male audiences tend to think female are more susceptible to the influence of watching American TV serials, while women prefer to think men are more affected in perceiving American women.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Mass media have opened up possibilities of stimulating and accelerating development for uplifting the status of women and children. However, if it remains uncontrolled and unguided, this ongoing communication revolution could have negative effects on the lives of women. Nowadays we still see and watch media reports of women activists, which have been described as an “exploitative” projection of women in media particularly in electronic media (Kual & Sahni, 2010). Although the differences between male and females roles are smaller in this modern society, mass media, especially electronic media, still perpetuate traditional gender stereotypes. Women are basically depicted as performing a decorative function and being marginal to national growth and development (Kual & Sahni, 2010). In the content and setting of most of the television productions, women have been placed primarily in certain popular stereotypical positions and roles, like housewives or glamorous “Barbie dolls” who are always compromising and negotiating, and who appear less competent. According to Kual and Sahni’s study (2010), the images portrayed in TV serials are believed to have an important impact on the thought patterns of general public.

In a typical eastern country like China, whose culture, value, and lifestyle dramatically are differentiated from western countries’, the media may exert a greater influence on audiences when it comes to “on-screen” portrayals of out-group cultures. Given to the fact that most of the Chinese audiences still barely have the chance to directly interact with people from another country, their perceptions rely heavily on media messages for information about different cultures. And sometimes, Chinese people, especially the young generation, are told to do so. For example, high school

students in China have been suggested to watch American TV programs and listen to American broadcasts regularly in order to improve their English and have a better understanding of United States' culture and value. Therefore, in order to examine the effect mass media, particularly popular American TV serials, may have on audiences' perception and behavior, Chinese viewers are the selected as subjects in this research.

Since the purpose of the study is to determine how American TV Serials viewing in China is influencing perceptions about American women, more than 800 online surveys were sent out to University students and recent graduates in the mainland of China through a very popular Chinese social network- Renren.

Stereotyping and Media

Mass media entertain and bring people new perspectives about others. Audiences tend to take information they receive from the media for granted. In order "to make sense out of the overwhelming amount of information we receive, we necessarily categorize and generalize, sometimes relying on stereotypes- widely held beliefs about some group (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 205)". The world we confront is much bigger, more complex and transitory than we can know (Samovar & Porter, 2001, p. 268). Thus, stereotypes are convenient and expeditious ways to help us with our classifications and make our minds process information more efficiently (Samovar & Porter, 2001; James, 2006). We may learn stereotypes from direct experience of interactions with people from different groups. According to Martin and Nakayama, "we pick up stereotypes in many ways, including from the media (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 205)". Ellen Seiter (1986) also wrote in her article which related to media stereotyping "Stereotypes are not necessarily based on people's first-hand experiences with members of stereotyped groups. They may be learned from others or from the mass media (p. 15)." Mass media

(including newspapers, radio, TV and the Internet) are powerful presences in almost every culture and often the major source for forming stereotypes of foreigners with whom most people have never interacted (Harris, 2004; Zhu, 2007). For many people, media representations are the only source of information about other cultures (Harris, 2004; Zhu, 2007). This concept can be further explained by the study conducted by Baker (1996): "When experiential knowledge does not exist, we often assume that images we see in film reflect reality (Zhu, 2007, p. 261)". Research reveals consistently that there is a correlation between consuming media portrayals (images) and the resulting of evaluations of out-group members' competence, race-based attributions, and stereotypes (Mastro, 2009). The modest but significant associations between viewing media portrayals of race or ethnicity and outcomes of race-based attributions and stereotypes are revealed by related research. In their book, Martin and Nakayama (2010) also assert that many familiar stereotypes of ethnic groups are represented in the media (p. 363). The idea can be supported by other studies. The findings of those media stereotype studies show that mass media may have an effect on creating stereotypes of certain social groups. For example, Katz and Braly (1933) found a high level of consistency in the adjectives respondents associate with the African-American stereotype, such as lazy, ignorant, loud, athletic, poor, criminal, hostile and etc. (James, 2006, p. 190). Asian Americans are often portrayed as a "model minority" stereotype, which characterizes all Asians and Asian Americans as hardworking and serious (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 205). The media stereotyping also can be found in cross-cultural studies. As Zhu (2007) states, stereotypes of Americans in China have not only been affected by Chinese mass media, but also by American entertainment media. In 1999,

65.5% of China's imported movies were American films (UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, 1999; Zhu, 2007). A previous study by Tan (1982) has identified six major themes of American stereotypes in American television programs learned by Chinese audience, violence, affluence, sex and beauty, individualism, and negative stereotyping of various ethnic groups (Zhu, 2007, p. 20).

Popularity of American TV Serials in China

International contacts have been facilitated by development of new technology, information systems, and globalized economy (Samovar & Porter, 2001). Thus, the media fluidity became international. "The speed at which information and news travel has created a more informed citizenry and galvanized them behind issues and policies as never before (Molleda, 2011)." This trend is also visible to the entertainment function of media. Usually, mass media have been accused of leading the public into forming negative judgments and stereotyping of outside groups (Gorhanm, 2006). As a part of mass media, television serials play an important role in Chinese pop culture in forming audiences' perception, attitude and behavior.

In the 1980s, American television serials, such as "Man From Atlantis", "Garrison's Gorillas", and "Growing Pains", which had been brought into China, produced great social impact at that time (IfMay.com, n.d.). However, because of "restricted topics", the Chinese government had cut off the formal introduction of American TV broadcast in recent years. Compared to Korean and Japanese TV serials, there is only a small number of American ones that are still "on-screen" in China nowadays. Actually according to Rong Cai (2008), the broadcast ratio of all foreign-made TV serials was restricted to 25 percent. However, with the development of China's home video market for TV serials—a powerful alternative to the formal broadcast model (Rong Cai, 2008)—

and the rapidly spreading of Internet use, the number of audiences of American television serials has been expanded dramatically. Thus, those “restricted topics” were readily available in the video market and also on Internet.

Besides, it is found that around 40 percent of TV serials available on the video market was produced outside Mainland China (Rong Cai, 2008). Meanwhile, some other Chinese scholars (2008) have argued that American TV serials seem more appealing to audiences, especially the younger generation in Mainland China, when compared to Korean and Japanese TV programs. In some simple words, “Watching American TV Serials” has become a unique sub-culture for Chinese audiences (IfMay.com, n.d.).

According to the news related to the copy-right disputes between the American entertainment industry and Chinese online TV companies, there are considerable audiences who are ‘huge fans’ of American TV serials in Eastern Asia (Shenzhen Daily, 2010). Chinese audiences who consume those serials do so not only through their traditional media (including TV channels and the DVD rental industry) but also from the web or Peer-to-Peer (P2P) software. PPStream software, Tudou and Youku websites are considered the most frequently used. Youku and Tudou hold 22.5 and 18.5 percent respectively the online video market share according to the CASBAA news (Xinyi, 2010). PPStream accounts for 8.9 percent and has 65 million users (Hudong, n.d.). American TV serials have a huge audience overseas who follows and there are some serials which are considered the most popular, classic, and have been discussed in many online forums in recent years (Sina, 2008), for example, “Friends”, “Sex and City”, CSI series, “The Big Bang Theory”, “NCIS”, “Grey’s Anatomy”, “Ugly Betty”, and “How I

Met Your Mother”. For audiences in China, television serials present a partial view of American life and construct a certain image of United States. As such, a Chinese audience is the ideal group to try to ascertain the influence that American TV serials may have on the way that out-groups perceive the United States and the lifestyle of its citizens.

Many studies showed the concerns about how Americans form stereotypes of co-cultures within the United States or other cultures (Ford, 1997; Murphy, 1998; Zhu, 2007), but seldom paid attention to how stereotypes of Americans, especially American women, are created by people from outside of the United States. In addition, there are some similar studies about how media affect people’s perception, but no study specifically focuses on American television serials. This study focuses on the correlation between American TV serials and the stereotypes the Chinese have regarding American women. In order to determine the comparison of stereotypes formed under the influence of American TV serials and direct interaction experiences, the study concentrates on the perceptions of young people who live in China and have little or no direct interpersonal communication experience with Americans.

With this as background, the following review looks at the relationship between audiences and media texts. It begins with a discussion of theories used to explain media effects, reviews second-level agenda setting theory and cultivation theory and their limitations in order to illustrate the media effects as long-term perspectives. This study also explores the differences of perception by gender under the third-person. It then proposes the core research questions for the study.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are two key assumptions need to be addressed here to support the research presented in this study. The first is that mass media have diverse effects on media audiences, and more importantly in terms of this study, that audiences' personal perceptions about the larger social group of a foreign culture is shaped largely through indirect experience- media exposure via Internet, television, film, magazine, news coverage, etc. The study focuses on American TV serials because Chinese audiences, particularly the younger generation, have a heavy exposure to popular American TV serials over decades. 58.9 percent of American Literature review viewers in China are 19 to 25 years old, and 35.2 percent of them fall into the age range of 26-40 (Jingyi Duan, 2009). Moreover, according to Rong Cai (2008), American Literature review TV serials seem more appealing to Chinese young generation audiences when compared to Korean and Japanese TV serials.

The other assumption is that this study supposes American TV serials are one of the primary sources if not the primary source of information about American culture and people, especially American women. Furthermore, it is also assumed that as a most important form of information medium, American TV serials contributes dramatically to the stereotypes that exist about American women. As Walter Lippmann (1922) claimed in his book, "Stereotypes arise out of limitations of time and space and the inability for intimate acquaintances with the world." Thus, "The subtlest and most pervasive of all influences are those which create and maintain the repertory of stereotypes. We are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience

them. And those perceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception.” (p. 57)

Women Stereotypes in Mass Media

Why is this study specifically about women? As the hidden forces shape us and our world view, often without us being aware that they are doing this, mass media have promoted certain gender roles by producing stereotypical media images of men and women (Bengü AKSU, 2005). For example, “The Simpsons”, a very famous cartoon, dramatically reinforces gender-based stereotypes. The father, Homer, is the breadwinner and the mother, Marge, is the homemaker. Also, the girl, Lisa, is portrayed as intelligent and well-heaved, while the boy, Bart, is portrayed as playful and naughty. According to Julia T. Wood (1994), of the many influences on how we view men and women, media are the most pervasive and one of the most powerful. Numerous former studies had found that, when compared to men, women have been underrepresented in mass media (Armstrong, 2004), and that when women are present they are typically scantily dressed and related to stereotypical roles (Collins, 2011). Typically women are portrayed as sex objects who are usually young, thin, passive, dependent, enmeshed in relationships, and often incompetent and dumb. Female characters have been depicted primarily as traditional roles trying to improve their appearances and taking care of homes and people (Wood, 1994). Dramatic programming is a tried and true form of television entertainment. It represents a critical ingredient of television programming during both daytime and evening broadcasting (Ceulemans & Fauconnier, 1979). It is reported that television portrays women less frequently and less often in central roles than men. Male characters far outnumbered females in both major and supporting roles when it comes to American dramatic programming on prime-time TV (Ceulemans &

Fauconnier, 1979). Even in this 21st century, women are still presented in a stereotypical way in television serials to some extent. Take “Sex and City” as an example. Although three of the four leading female characters are portrayed as independent professionals, on the other hand, they are still depicted as women devoted to seeking romantic relationship and marriage. When it comes to relationships between men and women, we shouldn’t be surprised to find that romantic relationships are similarly depicted in ways that reinforce media stereotypes on both men and women. For instance, women in romantic relationships are still identified as being dependent on men in most of the television program. Disney’s award-winning animated film “The Little Mermaid” provides a good example to illustrate this point. In this film, the mermaid gives up her identity as a mermaid and sacrifices her beautiful voice to the evil witch in order to get accepted by her human lover- the prince. Obviously, this fairy tale well illustrates the asymmetrical relationship between women and men that is more subtly conveyed in other media productions. Additionally, women in media representations of relationships are usually portrayed as helpless and incompetent individuals who need men coming to their rescue. There are many examples can be addressed here to support this statement. For instance, in films like “Spiderman”, “Iron Man”, “Kick Ass”, “Transformers”, “Fast and Furious”, etc., the typical plot is that the male hero saves the female leading character from her incompetence at the end of the story and live happily together. This study is trying to find out whether women are still portrayed in those stereotypical ways in modern popular American TV serials and what exactly the stereotypes are.

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory is a social theory developed by George Gerbner and Larry Gross (1969). They noted that “television has become the primary common source of socialization and everyday information (mostly in the form of entertainment) of otherwise heterogeneous populations” (p.18). Cultivation theory research has studied how television viewing may cultivate and form impressions within individuals through exposure to television. In other words, cultivation theory suggests that exposure to television, especially over time, subtly “cultivates” viewers’ perceptions of reality and values about society.

In contrast to media priming, cultivation theory examines the long-term effects of media exposure. Simply speaking, the cultivation research explores the central hypothesis that those who spend more time watching television are more likely to perceive the real world in ways that reflect the most common and recurrent messages of the “on screen” world, compared to people who watch less television (Morgan & Shanahan, 1999).

Most of the related research starts with examining the divergence between the real world and “the world portrayed on screen”. An early study conducted by Buerkel-Rothfuss and Mayes (1981), aiming to explore the relationship between exposure to soap operas and perceptions about people and events in the real world, found that the amount of exposure correlated significantly with increased perception of the number of certain professionals (doctors and lawyers) and people who have been divorced, have been in jail, and have committed crimes in the real world. The researchers found that heavy viewers, when asked to estimate the number of professionals and the problems

of illegitimacy in society, gave answers much closer to the soap opera reality than did light viewers and non-viewers.

Other researchers have also studied the effects of television on international audiences. For example, Jorge A. Aguilar (2005) aimed to explore how Nicaraguan citizens perceived the lifestyle of Americans and to analyze how particular messages from U.S. television programs influenced those perceptions. Aguilar's study indicated that television messages reinforced the "facts" that the students had heard about United States from friends and families. It seems that they tend to rely on the messages perceived from television program to draw certain conclusions about U.S. lifestyles, both in its fictional and non-fictional form.

Similarly, in "Images of Life in America: the Impact of American T.V. in Israel", Gabriel Weimann (1984) also found that the media tend to reinforce existing attitudes rather than to change them. In this study, the researchers tried to uncover Israeli youth's perception of the American lifestyle by using cultivation analysis approach. His findings concerning the impact of heavy viewing of American television programs on the overestimation of wealth and living standard in United States stand side by side with the conclusions of other cultivation studies relating to different aspects of social reality, like crime, violence, sexual behavior, etc.

Cultivation Theory and Gender-Role Attitudes

Although many cultivation studies had been conducted to examine individuals' perceptions of, and attitudes toward, culture or value, violence or crime, others have applied the theory to a wider range of various topics, including opinions pertaining to gender roles. Cultivation scholars have also studied the relationship between television viewing and traditional gender-role attitudes. Most of the cultivation scholars have

viewed women as a marginalized social group, given to the fact that they are usually underrepresented and over victimized in the typical world of television (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). Moreover, they also stated that television prefers “to traditionalize female’s roles, while privileging the status of men in the society, economy, and polity” (p.96).

In order to examine whether television viewing cultivates traditional gender-role attitudes and contribute to the maintenance of the status quo, Japanese scholar Shinichi Saito (2007) found that television viewing was related to more traditional attitudes regarding gender roles among many respondents, like females, highly educated respondents, or political moderates. In other words, with regard to attitudes toward gender roles, television tends to decelerate social changes through cultivating traditional perceptions among many views particularly females.

Based on the results of abundant content analyses of American television portrayals of women, Signorielli (1989) claimed that women in prime-time TV programs were depicted in traditional and stereotypical ways and that the typical “on-screen” image is that women, particularly if married, should stay at home, take good care of children, and leave the world of work to men. Even if women are portrayed as professionals who work outside, they are often casted in traditional female occupations such as waitress, nurses, teachers, and sometimes secretaries (p. 352). In Signorielli’s study, she conducted a cultivation analysis using four survey questions (e.g. Women should take care of running their homes and leaving running the country up to men? Do you agree or disagree?). The result of the study indicated a statistically significant

correlation between television viewing and certain perceptions and opinions toward gender roles.

However, even though cultivation theory has been placed among the most important contributions yet made to scientific and public understanding of media effects, not everyone in the field has a strong confidence on the validity of cultivation findings. For instance, Hirsch (1980) claimed that the effects of television viewing are minimal if a researcher controls for other variables like the respondents' occupation, income and social status rather than only how many hours of television are watched. Besides, cultivations theory had been analyzed in terms of some specific program types in other studies. In Potter's study (1991), it was found that no linear relationship existed between television viewing and attitudes toward social reality when the random categorization of viewers and date were altered.

“Second Level” Agenda Setting

The core assertion of cultivation theory is that heavier television program viewers should have a perception of reality that more closely resembles the “on-screen” portrayals and images than light television viewers. However, cultivation theory is troubling not only because of its validity concerns mentioned above, but its “incomprehensiveness” as well. For instance, previous cultivation studies about international audiences' perceptions had focused mostly on the television program that projects United States' lifestyles, which to some extent excluded audiences' perception of the diverse cultural, social-economical, and political perspectives that American citizens, especially American women, may have.

McCullagh (2002) states in his book “Media Power” that mass media are not only selective in the messages they deliver about the objects and issues in the society, but

also in how they present those messages. Therefore, it controls media audiences' accessibility to certain information and so has the potential ability to limit or to shape audiences' knowledge and perceptions about the social reality (p.22).

In media studies, initially emphasized by McCombs and Shaw in 1972, the agenda setting function in mass media has been examined by scholars over decades. It describes the influence of the news coverage on the salience of public issues among the general public (Lopez-Escobar, Llamas, McCombs & Lennon, 1998). Over the first two decades, agenda setting research had mainly detailed the patterns in issue salience transfer from the media agenda to the general public agenda (Ghanem, 1997). In other words, research dealt with how news media transfer issues emphasized in news coverage to the general public. Scholars had most traditionally studied the agenda setting theory in the aspect of how the media coverage of some specific "Objects", usually issues and political candidates, in the news leads to the increased public concerns of the same "Objects" (Kiousis, Mitrook, Wu & Seltzer, 2006), the so called the "First level" agenda setting.

However, since the end of last century, researchers have identified that beyond the agenda of "objects", there is an agenda of "attributes", the "Second level" agenda setting. And since then scholars had started to be interested in studying this "second level" agenda setting, which examines how news media affects both what the general public thinks about and how public thinks about it. It deals with the specific attributes/characteristics of an issue/object and how this agenda of attributes/characteristics also influences public opinion (McCombs, Shaw & Hugh, 1997). Built on the basic/first level of agenda-setting hypothesis, the second level of

agenda setting involves two major hypotheses about attribute salience (McCombs, Shaw & Hugh, 1997):

1. The way an issue or other object is covered in the media (the attributes emphasized in the news) affects the way the public thinks about that object.
2. The way an issue or other object is covered in the media (the attributes emphasized in the news) affects the salience of that object on the public agenda.

In addition to the object salience, the contemporary interpretation of second level agenda setting theory has linked the concept with media framing by suggesting that media attention can affect how individuals think about an object or issue by emphasizing certain attributes and ignoring others (Kiousis, Mitrook, Wu & Seltzer, 2006). In the study, an attribute can be thought of as a characteristic, quality, or social status that describes American women in popular American TV dramas. If the TV dramas, for example, focus on the aggressiveness of an American woman in the story, audiences' perceptions about that woman should also emphasize her aggressiveness.

For decades, many former second level agenda setting studies mostly focused on news media. However, there are also studies examining the theory on non-news resources. Golan, Kiousis and McDaniel (2004) examined the second level agenda setting function of televised political advertisements in the context of the 2004 U.S. presidential election. In order to find out how the advertising agendas of the Bush and Kerry campaigns may have influenced the voters' agendas of the two candidates issues and attributes (Golan, Kiousis & McDaniel, 2004), the authors conducted two separate content analyses of political advertisements and television newscasts to compare the agenda of candidate issues and attributes between them and then conducted a public

opinion survey based on the data they had collected from the prior content analyses. Built on the analysis of comparing the responses to the survey, the authors found the salience of affective attributes in political ads can affect perceived object salience as Kerry's negative ads were significantly correlated with public opinion of issues (Golan, Kiouisis & McDaniel, 2004). That is to say, the result of the study provided evidence for second level agenda setting influence between political ads and public opinion.

Most of the second level agenda setting studies have focused on non-fictional television programming such as newscasts and advertising instead of dramas or TV serials. However, some studies have indicated that various patterns can be applied in fictional programs and entertainment media. The study attempts to examine the second level agenda setting in a relatively new context—American TV serials.

According to Holbrook and Hill (2005), little attention has been paid to the effects of agenda setting in entertainment media, regardless of the fact that entertainment programs make up a much larger portion of television programming and enjoy a larger audience group than do television news programs. In the study, Holbrook and Hill examined second level agenda setting by trying to find out how television crime drama viewing contributes to increased public concern about crime and people's perception about the president in a political perspective. The results of the study not only indicated a positive correlation between the continuous exposures to crime drama and viewers' increased concern about crime issues, but also explained the effects of viewing television TV serials on individual/public's certain perception in terms of the frequency, duration, and consistency of media message exposure. In other words,

compared with news media, TV serials as a major form of entertainment media ranks higher in both intensity (including frequency and duration) and consistency.

“Second Level” Agenda Setting and its Common Attributes of Women

Innumerable studies have been conducted on the patterns of “television reality” about women. By reading television program synopses in TV Guide, Greenberg & Collete (1997) had found that most women in programming were described as housewives or unskilled labor while men were cast as professionals of some sort. In Berg and Streckfuss (1992)’s study, they found that classic female characters performed “more interpersonal/relational actions and fewer decisional, political and operational actions than do male characters” (p. 201). However, according Kaul and Sahni (2010), although women in television entertainment programs were depicted in a traditional stereotypical way as non-thinking, sacrificing, and suffering beings, other studies had found “new images” for women. For instance, Gahulant (2002)’s study about women in commercial advertisements and TV serials in Kerala found that women were cast as selfish, actively aggressive, sexist, insensitive and female chauvinist. And those relatively new stereotypes of women are not limited in ads and TV serials. In Lady Gaga’s 2011 new music video “You and I”, for example, she was not only cast as sexual appealing, but also cast in two different gender roles. Her “male role” in that music video was described as extremely aggressive and abusive. While media play an important role for changes, in most of the popular music videos, female characters are still cast mainly in romantic relationships or in a sexual appealing way with an ideal body shape image. Given to the fact that media messages are believed to have an influence on people’s attitudes and perceptions on certain issues, those common attributes of

women delivered through various media may also exert a significant impact on both individuals/public's attitudes and perceptions toward women.

The Third-Person Effect

Media messages have never been perceived and understood by their audiences in an identical way because of gender differences, cultural issues, social factors, etc. Audience analysis has sought to understand how media audiences cognitively digest, filter, and organize the media messages with which they come across. However, it does not generally answer how television audiences perceive the media effects on others. It is said that sometimes people tend to believe that "others" may be easier to be influenced by the information sent via mass media than themselves. Originally recognized by Davison (1983), the phenomenon called "the third-person effect", a self-other discrepancy, demonstrates that individuals presume that others will be more susceptible to media effects than they themselves are.

During the decades since Davison first published his findings, supporting evidences for the third-person effect theory have been found for various media content, including rap music, product and political advertising, pornography, and dramatic television programs (Hoffner, Plotkin, Buchanan, Anderson, Kamigaki, Hubbs, Kowalczyk, Silberg & Pastorek, 2001).

Basically two major hypotheses—the perceptual hypothesis and the behavioral hypothesis—have been developed in the prior studies. Although recent studies are more focused on exploring the behavioral hypothesis which suggests that perceived messages can influence receivers' behavior, the present study emphasizes the perceptual hypotheses more. The Perceptual Hypothesis, which suggests that people tend to believe that others are more vulnerable to media influences than they are

(McLeod, Detenber & Eveland, Jr, 2001) has gained considerable attention from researchers and scholars. During the decades of studies, two most important moderator variables have been identified in the third-person effect perception research: social desirability and social distance. Results concluded that the third-person effect would be increased/strengthened when the media message is perceived as socially undesirable. According to the authors of the study “The Third-Person Effect in Perceptions of the Influence of Television Violence” (2001), it is found that most of the respondents tend to rate others as more affected by television violence than themselves in terms of mean world perceptions and aggression.

Other researchers argued that individuals prefer to overestimate media effects on others, but underestimate media effects on themselves to preserve a positive self-image, called “unrealistic optimism” (Brosius & Engel, 1996). For example, especially in a conservative country like China, which values “Mian Zi”—never losing face—most in its culture, Chinese audiences would be most reluctant to admit that the media texts (e.g. pornography, violent contents) exert a larger influence on themselves if those messages are recognized as socially undesirable. The present study is trying to examine the third-person effect in perceptions of the influence of American TV serials on Chinese viewers. In terms of the huge cultural/value differences/conflicts between China and United States, the dominant content in American TV serials might stimulate and produce a strong third-person effect on Chinese audiences.

Additionally, other alternative factors that can possibly contribute to Third-Person Effect phenomenon (such as demographic, liking for, and the degree of exposure to

television programs) have been discussed by researchers as well (Hoffner, Plotkin, Buchanan, Anderson, Kamigaki, Hubbs, Kowalczyk, Silberg & Pastorek, 2001).

In a study conducted in Singapore (Wu & Koo, 2001), a conservative country similar to China, researchers found that perceived likelihood of exposure to content might affect the third-person effect. And this assumption is also supported by other research. For example, the results of Lo and Wei (2002)'s study "Third-Person Effect, Gender, and Pornography on Internet" suggested that women have the tendency to believe that men are more likely to have a higher degree of exposure to online pornography, thus are potentially easier to be negatively affected via watching it.

Jensen and Dines (1998) concluded that Internet pornography seemed to strengthen "traditional constructions of men's power over women in the forms of hierarchy, objectification, submission, and violence" (p. 23). Actually few studies have ever specifically explored whether the gender factor would contribute to the third-person effect. However, because of the fact that most of the female characters cast in American TV serials, particularly leading characters, are portrayed as blond, attractive, sexy appealing, and sometimes fragile, it worth trying to find out how men or women would think of those "on-screen" portrayals of American women. Will those portrayals exert a greater influence on men's attitudes towards American women than women's, or the reverse?

In addition, some research contends that audiences with long-term exposure to specific types of content tend to believe that they have developed resistance to media effects (e.g., Gunther, 1995). However, most of those studies were focused on examining the third-person effect in terms of negative media effects. The present study

tends to explore whether Chinese audiences would develop a strong third-person effect in terms of stereotypical televised portrayals of American women by watching American TV serials in a long run.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The present study examines how Chinese audiences, in developing certain perceptions about American women, decode the messages in American TV serials and more importantly, what and how the stereotypical “on-screen” portrayals about American women influence Chinese viewers’ perceptions and attitudes toward them. The study aimed to explore whether audiences’ attitudes and reactions would differ from others in terms of gender and social class. Centering on trying to achieve these goals, the following research questions and hypotheses were addressed here.

Many prior media studies suggest that exposure to media, especially long-term media exposure, can cultivate media audiences’ perceptions and attitudes about certain groups. In the context of electronic media, it is concluded by many Cultivation theory researchers and scholars that people who spend more time watching television programs are more likely to perceive the “reality” in ways reflected in the televised TV shows. Thus, the first hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 1: The degree of exposure to American TV serials is positively correlated with stereotypical perceptions on American women. People who spend more time watching American TV serials in their daily time are more likely to have stereotypes/misperceptions about American women.

Third-person effect theory contends that people tend to think “others” are more vulnerable to media effects, especially when the “others” are described as more socially distinct with themselves.

Hypothesis 2: Chinese audiences tend to assume that other people are more likely to have stereotypical perceptions about American women under the influence of watching American TV serials.

In order to examine how the specific “attributes” about American women in TV serials affect audiences’ way of thinking, those “attributes” need to be found first. Therefore, the first research question is concerned with the specific perceptions/misperceptions the respondents in the study:

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions that the Chinese respondents have of the American women in terms of personality, sexuality, socio-economic status, job opportunities, and leisure activities?

The study also aimed to produce a list of some specific American TV serials that were contributing to stereotypical images and messages about American women. So the second research questions is:

Research Question 2: What specific American TV serials contribute most to the way Chinese audiences perceive American women?

Audiences receive and interpret media message in different ways, because of factors such as gender, age, and social status. In order to find out whether gender issues play important roles in people’s perceptions of American women, the third research question is addressed:

Research Question 3: Are there any differences among Chinese audiences’ perceptions on American women in terms of gender and age?

CHAPTER 3 METHOD-SURVEY

The purpose of the present study is to examine how the TV serials texts produced in the United States are influencing out-group's perceptions about Americans, particularly American women. It doesn't suggest that American TV serials are working as the only resource that Chinese audiences depend on in coming to certain stereotypical perceptions on American women, but working as one of many various channels such as direct interpersonal communication and/or other media (e.g. radio, newspapers, social networks, etc.). Therefore, it is also necessary to explore what perceptions in general about American women that Chinese audiences have and the role American TV serials plays in those perceptions.

Based on the hypotheses and research questions, an online questionnaire was designed and 800 (maximum number) copies of the questionnaire were sent out to university students or recent graduates through the most popular Chinese social network- Renren. Built on the fact that 58.9% of American TV serials viewers in China are 19 to 25 years old and 35.2% of them fall into the age range of 26- 40 (Jingyi Duan, 2009), university students and recent graduates are chosen to be the respondents in the study. The other reason is that most of the users of the social network are college students and recent graduates from different provinces and cities all over China, which can help increase the generalizability of the study results.

Survey Design

The survey was designed to test the effect of exposure to American TV serials and previous contact on the specific stereotypes of American women and the valence of those stereotypes (positive; negative; neutral).

Measurement of the Stereotypes Variable

Most of the prior stereotype studies emphasized the attributes of ethnic groups. For instance, Katz and Braly (1933) applied an adjective checklist in their study in order to find out what racial stereotypes college students may have. The checklist, consisting of 84 “character traits”, was presented to 84 college students, who were asked to check five adjectives to describe each different ethnic group. Then researchers counted the frequency of each attribute on the list. However, even though many researchers and scholars have used the measurement in studies, it has been criticized for years because it fails to capture the structure of stereotypes (Funk, Horowitz, Lipshitz, & Young, 1976) and compare the weights that the different subject groups assigned to different ethnic groups (Zhu, 2007). Guichard and Connolly (1997)’s study design solved this problem by asking the subjects to evaluate the five ethnic groups (Whites, Blacks, Chicanos, Asians and American Indians) by apportioning each of them a percentage number in terms of each character trait, which included artistic, lazy, cruel, shrewd, scientific, intelligent, industrious, pugnacious, sportsmanlike, and superstitious. Finally, the researchers added the percentage weights together and divided them by the total number of respondents, then came up with an arithmetic average weight for each character trait.

The survey employed in the present study uses a pre-defined list of 15 attributes, given to the potential that a free response methodology would yield virtually limitless responses. In the study, respondents are asked to rate statements such as “American women are aggressive” on a scale of 1-5 (1 represents strongly disagree; 2 slightly disagree; 3 neither disagree nor agree; 4 slightly agree; 5 strongly agree). The advantage of adopting a Likert-type is that “it transfers nominal attributes into

meaningful numerical values and allows for T-tests and other tests of relationships” (Zhu, 2007).

Measurement of the American TV Serials Exposure Variable

In order to measure media effects, particularly the effect of exposure to American TV Serials, both cultivation research and the second-level agenda setting studies provided useful insight to the present study’s methodology. Cultivation research usually involves analyzing the relationship between the degree of media exposure and audiences’ perceptions of certain groups. The second-level agenda setting analysis is a method of first identifying the specific attributes from television representations and then examining the public’s opinion to see whether there is a relationship between the two.

In the current study design, respondents were asked to report the number of hours they spend watching American TV serials each week. In order to find out what specific TV serials contributed most to their perceptions toward American women, the respondents are asked to report how often they watch each TV serial from a list.

Measurement of Previous Contact Variable

The number of contacts and degrees of relationship were used to measure previous contact with people from another cultural group in many prior media effect studies. (e.g. Zhu, 2007) This measurement is also employed in the current study. Respondents are asked to report whether they ever had any kind of relationship with Americans and how often they are in contact with the Americans. They are also asked to describe the degree of the relationship, if any, they’ve had with an American on a 0-9 scale with 0 representing “distant relationship” and 9 representing “close relationship”.

Media Reliance and Personal Contact Reliance

Other than measuring media exposure, viewing motivations, and previous contacts in numbers, the present study also sought to find out whether the Chinese audiences mainly depend on mass media or interpersonal communication in forming attitudes. The respondents are asked to rate the importance of the news media, magazines, radio, TV serials, social media, and previous interpersonal communication in their understanding of American women on a 0-9 scale with 1 representing “not important at all” and 9 representing “very important”. The method provides a way to compare the perceptions of people who depend mostly on personal contact and the perceptions of who rely mainly on mass media, especially TV serials.

Measurement of Gender and Third-Person Effect

In order to examine the role of gender in Third-person Effect in the study, the participants were asked how much they think the perceptions male/female audiences have about American women are affected by American TV serials. They will be also asked to rate the degree of the influence on a 0-9 scale with 0 representing slightly influenced and 9 representing strongly influenced.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

Convenience samples of Chinese college students and recent graduates were drawn from different places around the mainland of China via the Chinese social network- Renren.com. A total of 435 participants responded to the survey link and filled in the online questionnaire. My Renren “friends” helped to recruit volunteers from their social network friends. Additionally, recruiters in the study tried to draw participants from different majors and to obtain gender balance.

All data were entered into SPSS for analysis. Four hundred twenty valid responses from the sample were collected. Among them, 10% (N= 43) responded that they had never watched American TV serials. Thus, only 377 survey responses were used in the further data analysis. In the sample, 16% (N=61) of the participants didn't want to convey the gender information. There were 53% (N=167) male respondents and 47% (N=149) females. Among 290 participants who responded to the age question, there were 60% (N=174) aged from 24 to 26, 22.07% (N=64) aged from 21 to 23, and 13.1% (N=38) aged from 18 to 20. Forty-eight percent (N=148) were currently enroll in college, and 52% (N=164) were recent graduates. Among those who were still in college, 56% (N=85) were graduate students, 26% (N=40) were freshmen. Thirty percent of the respondents (N=94) majored in Business, 23% (N=71) in Computer and Information Science, 17% (N=54) in Engineering, 12% (N=38) in Foreign languages and Literature, and the rest of them were from various other majors or undeclared.

Stereotypes on American Women

Respondents were asked to rate their degree of agreement on the following attributes: open-minded, easy-going, sexual open, Blondie, native, aggressive, mostly

housewives, independent, professional, fashion, arrogant, violent, have less job opportunities than men, love working out, and do not love to commit to marriage. With 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree”, therefore each attribute has a mean score from the sample, indicating how the respondents perceive this attribute as typical of American women.

In response to the first research question in the current study trying to explore what are the specific perceptions that the Chinese respondents have of American women, results show that respondents agreed that 3 out of 15 attributes are more typical of American women, as their arithmetic average score on a 5-point scale exceeded 3.7, indicating relatively stronger perceptions on those attributes. These three attributes are: open-minded (M=3.92), independent (M=3.86), and sexual open (M=3.72). Additionally, another 6 attributes have mean ratings range from 3.4-3.7, indicating moderate perceptions. They are: easy-going (M=3.64), fashion (M=3.61), love working out (M=3.61), professional (M=3.53), aggressive (M=3.50), and Blondie (M=3.41).

It was found that the arithmetic mean scores of all the 15 attributes had exceeded at least 2.5, which means that no strong disagreement is conveyed on those attributes.

See the Table on the following page.

Table 4-1. Sample's Perceptions of American Women

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Open-minded	3.92	0.78
Independent	3.86	0.75
Sexual open	3.72	0.88
Easy-going	3.64	0.60
Fashion	3.61	0.80
Love working out	3.61	0.74
Professional	3.53	0.73
Aggressive	3.50	0.76
Blondie	3.41	0.92
Do not love to commit to marriage	3.04	0.73
Arrogant	2.86	0.65
Have less job opportunities than men	2.79	0.74
Naïve	2.68	0.79
Mostly housewives	2.54	0.79
Violent	2.53	0.74

Reliance on Media and Personal Contact

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of the news media, magazines, radio, TV serials, social media, and previous interpersonal contact—in their understanding of American women on a 0-9 scale with 0 representing “not important influence” and 9 representing “very strong influence”. The following graph represents the ratings from the respondents.

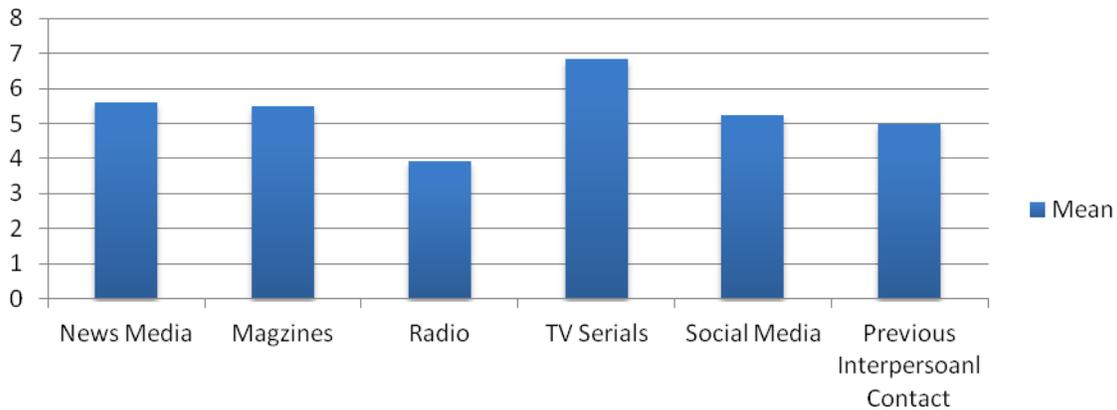


Figure 4-1. Importance of Sources for Information about American Women

From the above graph we can tell that the respondents considered TV serials (M=6.84) as the most important source of information about American women, while previous interpersonal contact (M=4.79) ranked the penultimate place among the six sources. To some extent it suggested that electronic media, especially American TV serials played a critical role in Chinese audiences' understanding about American women.

Additionally, respondents in the study were asked to rate the degree of the influence of American TV serials on their perceptions of American women on a 0-9 scale with 0 representing "not important influence" and 9 representing "very strong influence". There are 50.8% (N= 164) of the respondents who rate the influence at the level of 5 to 9, which indicate stronger influence.

At the same time, the study results confirmed the presumption in the study about the Chinese audiences' lacking of direct personal contact with Americans. Even though 65% of the respondents (N=211) reported that they had a relationship with Americans, 44% of them (N=91) contacted Americans less than once a year. The following graph

shows how often the respondents contact with the Americans they have relationship with.

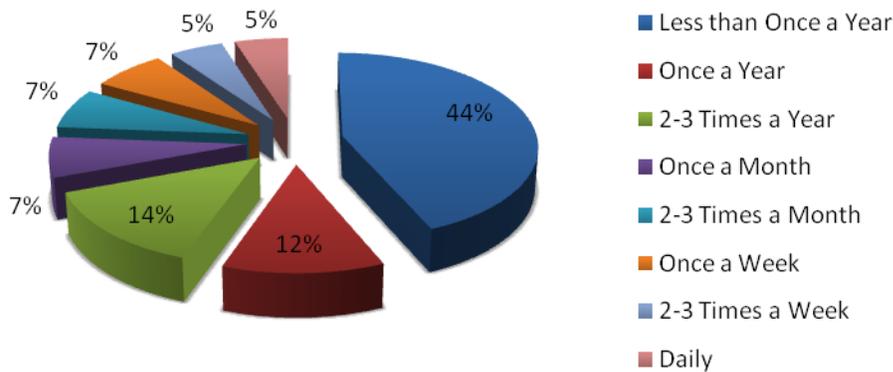


Figure 4-2. Frequency of Contact with Americans

The graph indicates that only 10% of the respondents are in contact with the Americans with more than once a week. Based on the two graphs above, in other words, respondents in the study do rely heavily on media messages rather than personal contact in understanding American women. There is a strong association between Chinese audiences' perceptions of American women and watching American TV serials.

American TV Serials Exposure

The Hypothesis 1 in the current study relates to the relationship between exposure to American TV serials and the stereotypical perceptions of American women. It predicts that Chinese audiences who spend more time watching American TV serials are more likely to have stereotypical perceptions on American women. Respondents

were asked to report how many hours they spend on watching American TV serials in a typical week, what kind of TV serials do they prefer to watch, and the frequency of watching following TV serials: 24, American Idol, Bones, Criminal Minds, Desperate Housewives, Every Loves Raymond, Friends, Gossip Girl, Heroes, House, How I Met Your Mother, Lie to Me, Lost, Miami Vice, Nikita, Prison Break, Sex and the City, The Big Bang Theory, The X- Files, and Vampires Diaries. The research question 2 in the study explores the specific American TV serials that contribute most to Chinese audiences' perceptions of American women. The chart on the next page shows the percentage of respondents who reported their frequency of watching those American TV serials as "Often" and "Sometimes". Based on the graph, we can see that "Prison Break" (67%, N=201), "Friends" (62.89%, N=183), "The Big Bang Theory" (61.02%, N=180), and "Gossip Girl" (51.76%, N=147) are the Top 4 TV serials had been rated as "Often watching" and "Sometimes Watching", followed with "Sex and The City" (37.69%, N=101) and "Desperate Housewives" (36.73%, N=101).

In order to determine the relationship between watching those six TV serials and the perceptions of American women, an independent sample T-test was done to test a significant difference between the group of respondents who watch at least four out of six TV serials mentioned above "often" and the group who watch less in perceiving American women.

In other words, respondents who often watch any four of the six TV serials are more likely to have stronger agreement on the 15 attributes about American women.

The results are presented in the following table:

Table 4-2. Independent Sample T Test (1)

Category	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	P (T<= t)
<i>Watch at least four of the six watched most TV serials "Often"</i>	6.971	2.467	1.943	0.029
<i>Watch less or "Sometimes"</i>	6.102	2.676		

Therefore, the six most watched American TV serials, "Prison Break", "Friends", "The Big Bang Theory", "Gossip Girl", "Sex and The City", and "Desperate Housewives", seems to have a strong association with respondents' understanding of American women in the current study.

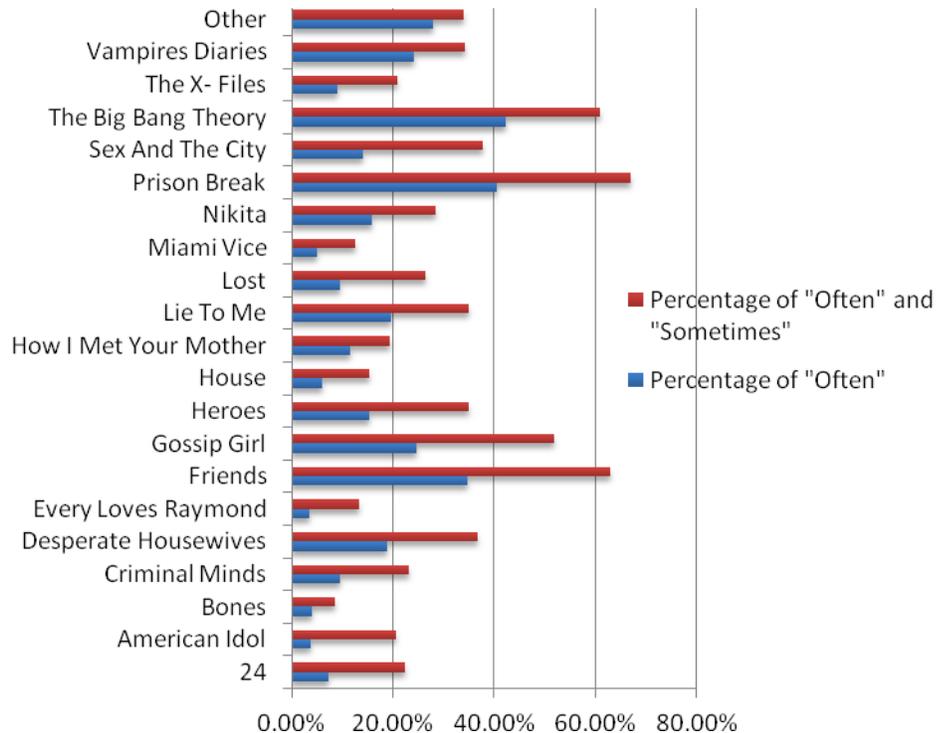


Figure 4-3. Frequency of Watching Those American TV Serials

No significant correlations were found between the exposure to American TV serials (Measured in hours per week) and perceiving American women in those stereotypical ways, except perceiving American women as independent. The Table 4.4 shows that the degree of exposure to American TV serials is negatively correlated to perceiving American women as independent ($r=-.114$, $p<0.05$). However, an independent sample T-test reveals some differences in perceiving American women between those Chinese audiences who are exposed to 4 hours or more than 4 hours of American TV serials (heavy TV serials consumption group) and those who are exposed to less than 4 hours of American TV serials (light TV serials consumption group). For example, the respondents who watch American TV serials for 4 or more than 4 hours in a typical week are more likely to perceive American women as open-minded ($p<0.05$) and sexual open ($p<0.05$).

Table 4-3. Independent Sample T Test (2)

Perception	Category	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	P (T<= t)
Open-minded	< 4 hours	3.891	0.909	-1.781	0.039
	>= 4 hours	4.074			
Sexual Opened	< 4 hours	3.673	0.987	-1.789	0.038
	>= 4 hours	3.868			

However, significant correlations were found between relying on the American TV serials in understanding American women and perceiving American women as open-minded ($r=.165$, $p<0.05$), independent ($r=.157$, $p<0.05$), sexual open ($r=.197$, $p<0.05$), professional ($r=.109$, $p<0.05$), and aggressive ($r=.227$, $p<0.05$). There is no significant correlations were found in the other perceptions, such as easy-going ($r=.047$, $p<0.05$),

fashion ($r=.065$, $p<.05$), love working out ($r=.099$, $p<.05$), and Blondie ($r=-.003$, $p<.05$).

Results are presented in the following table:

Table 4-4. Correlations between American TV Serials Reliance or Exposure and Perceptions of American Women

	The Importance of American TV Serials as a Source of Information for Understanding American Women	The Hours that Spent on Watching American TV Serials Per Week
Aggressive	.227*	.000
Sexual Open	.197*	.089
Open-minded	.165*	.045
Independent	.157*	-.114*
Professional	.109*	.001
Love Working Out	.099	-.050
Have less job opportunities than men	.099	.091
Naïve	.098	-.003
Violent	.074	-.044
Arrogant	.067	-.068
Fashion	.065	.050
Easy-going	.047	.040
Do not love to commit to marriage	.033	.056
Blondie	.003	.021
Mostly Housewives	-.005	.051

Gender and Perceptions of American Women

In order to answer Research question 3 about the differences among Chinese audiences' perceptions on American women in terms of gender, results show that compared with female respondents, male audiences tend to agree more on the perceptions of American women, such as "mostly housewives" ($p<0.05$), "arrogant" ($p<0.01$), and "violent" ($p<0.01$). The results of the t test are showed in the following table:

Table 4-5. Differences Between Male and Female Respondents' Perceptions of American Women

Perception	Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	P (T<= t)
Mostly Housewives	Male	2.658	0.893	2.320	0.011
	Female	2.425	0.871		
Arrogant	Male	2.974	0.842	2.461	0.007
	Female	2.750	0.757		
Violent	Male	2.669	0.817	2.940	0.001
	Female	2.383	0.887		

Although the differences were only found in perceiving American women as “mostly housewives”, “arrogant”, and “violent”, the results still suggest that gender issue may play an important role in influencing audiences’ interpretations of media messages in different ways. And interestingly, the three attributes, which out of the 9 mostly agreed perceptions in the study, are all negative ones. The possible explanation for the finding will be discussed in the discussion.

Gender and Influence of American TV Serials

In order to examine the third person effect in the study, the Hypothesis 2 relates to the assumption that Chinese audiences tend to think other people will be more affected by American TV serials in perceiving American women than they are. The current study particularly tries to find out whether there is any difference between male and female audiences’ opinions toward the media influence.

All respondents were asked to rate the influence of watching American TV serials on themselves, male audiences, and female audiences, on a scale of 0-9 with 0

representing “no influence at all” and 9 representing “strong influence”. The results indicate that 73.83% of the female respondents (N=110) rated over “5” the influence of American TV serials on themselves, while 66.8% of the male (N=111) rated themselves over “5”. Therefore, based on the finding, a conclusion can be draw here that in the current study most of the respondents admitted the influence of watching American TV serials in understanding American women.

The following graph tells that, 71.78% of the male respondents (N=117) rated over “5” at the influence on female. In other words, in the study male respondents tend to think female audiences will be more affected by the influence of watching American TV serials in perceiving American women. At the same time, 73.97% of the female respondents (N=108) rated over “5” at the degree of the influence on male. That is to say, in the current study, female respondents tended to think male audiences are more affected by watching American TV serials in understanding American women. Therefore, in terms of gender difference, the Hypothesis 2 is partially supported in the study: Male audiences tend to think female are more affected by American TV serials, while female audiences prefer to think male are more affected by them in perceiving American women.

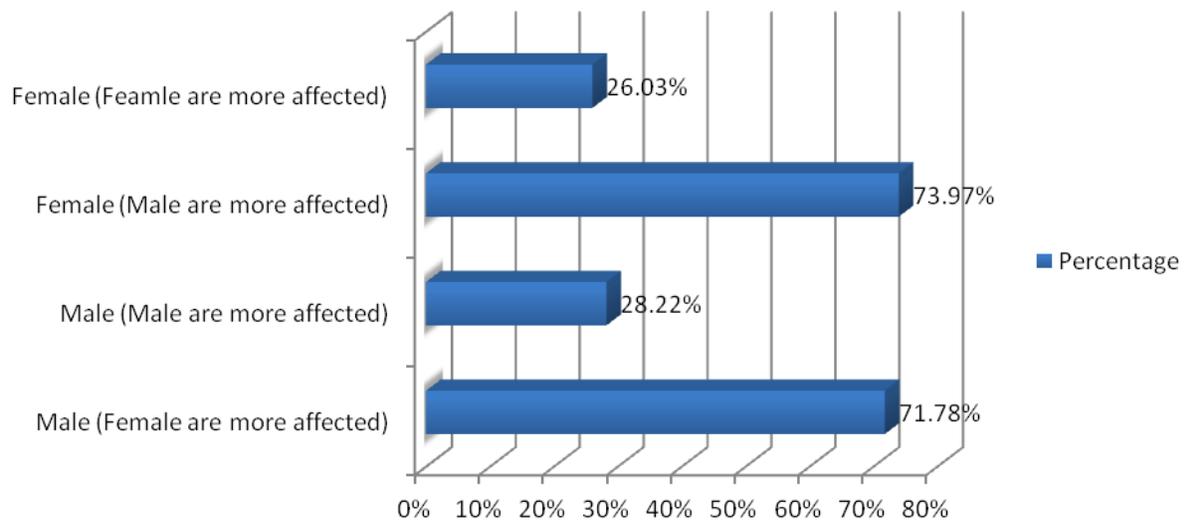


Figure 4-4. Male and Female Respondents' Opinion Toward Influence of Watching American TV Serials

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings will be discussed. The results of the online survey yielded many interesting findings, some consistent with former studies while others were not. The possible explanations will be addressed in this section.

Chinese Audiences' Stereotypes on American Women

First of all, the findings of the current study support the statement that stereotypes of American women exist among Chinese audiences. The fifteen attributes in the study were chosen based on previous literature. According to Hampson (1987) and Anderson (1968), open-minded, easy-going, independent, professional, and fashion are positive attributes (Social desirability or likableness values exceed the median value). Five attributes were perceived as negative in the study, particularly for Chinese. They are: sexual open, naïve, aggressive, arrogant, and violent. The rest of the attributes are not covered by Hampson & Anderson. They are: Blondie, mostly housewives, have less job opportunities than men, love working out, and do not love to commit to marriage, which are all rated as neutral traits in the study.

It is not surprising that the respondents agree on the typicality of the three attributes- open-minded, independent, and sexual open- most in terms of personality and sexuality. However, the attributes in terms of American women's job opportunities and leisure activities, such as having less job opportunities than men and loving working out, were not rated highly in the study. One of the possible explanations is that respondents have paid less attention to American women's career status and leisure activities while focusing on their personality and sexuality when perceiving American women. Given to the fact that 44% of the respondents were in contact with the

Americans they know less than once a year, the alternative explanation is that the American TV serials they rely heavily in understanding American women address less on the career and leisure activity but more on personality and sexuality.

It is a little out of expectation that the average mean of each attribute is lower than 4, which indicates a significantly strong perception. The maximum value of the mean is 3.92 for the attribute “Open-minded” in the study. However, there is a possible explanation for this result.

In a typical eastern country like China, where people have been educated state wide to behave in a moderate way and refuse to give absolute answers, it is not surprising at all that the Chinese respondents in the study rarely rated “5” at the perceptions of American women. Chinese culture values “Chung Yung”, which means that trying to maintain balance and harmony from directing the mind to a state of constant equilibrium. Therefore, it is possible that the respondents might rate the perceptions lower than “5” even when they do strongly perceive American women in that way.

Additionally, based on the results, it seems that the male respondents perceive American women differently from female respondents in these three attributes: mostly housewives, arrogant, and violent. The finding shows that compared with female respondents, men have the tendency to agree more on the three attributes. “Mostly housewives” is one of the traditional female stereotypes (Signorielli, 1989) in mass media, especially in the electronic media. One explanation of the difference is that Chinese female respondents may have a stronger group identity (both American women and Chinese women belong to the group “Women”) than male respondents. Tajfel

(1981) claimed that people prefer to acquire their identity from their “ingroup” and to preserve their self-esteem or self-worth brings about favoring the ingroup people. In other words, people are more likely to develop “ingroup favoritism” when they have stronger group identity. Although “mostly housewives” is treated as a neutral attribute in the study, for most of the modern Chinese women, it is a relatively negative stereotype of women. It has been believed that “in the future, fewer numbers of women will be housewives” (Beaver, Hou, & Wang, 1995) since the end of last century. Additionally, the “ingroup favoritism” can also explain the different opinions on the other two negative attributes: arrogant and violent. The other possible explanation is that male respondents in the study watched more action American TV serials in which female roles were depicted more arrogant and violent. It is worth to find out in the future study.

American TV Serials Exposure and Reliance

American TV serials (M=6.84) has been suggested to be the most influential source in respondents’ understanding of American women in the study, but the hours of exposure to American TV serials in a typical week is not significant related to having more/stronger stereotypical perceptions of American women. It does follow Potter (1991)’s study which found that no linear relationship existed between television viewing and attitudes toward social reality when the random categorization of viewers and data were altered, given to the fact that most of the respondents are college students and recent graduates and recruited through the social network.

The only association indicated by the data analysis results is that the more respondents watched American TV serials the less they perceive American women as independent. This contradicts Lin Zhu (2007)’s finding that Chinese perceive Americans as more independent when they spent more time on watching Hollywood movies. It also

does not follow the assumption in the current study that people who spend more time on watching American TV serials are more likely to perceive American women in those stereotypical ways. Including “independent” in the 15 attributes is based on the culture value “individualism” of western countries. According to the definition of “Individualism” on the Free Dictionary, “individualists promote the exercise of one’s goal and desires and so value independence and self-reliance”. Therefore, compared with Chinese who value “Collectivism”, Americans have been rated as more independent in general.

The possible explanation for the finding is that American women are still been misrepresented and mostly depicted as dependent, especially compared with American men, in the modern American TV serials. For instance, one of the leading female characters in *Desperate Housewives*- Lynette Scavo- had been depicted as a mother who has 5 kids but also a very successful professional career working in advertising industry. But in the season 8, when she thought she could bring up her children alone and take care of the whole family with her separation from her husband, she had a difficult time and realized she couldn’t make all these things through without a husband. And then she decided to start trying to experiment with new dates. Similar examples can be drawn from other American TV serials, such as “*Sex and the City*”, “*Vampires Diaries*”, “*Gossip Girl*”, etc.

Although, no significant linear relationship is established in the study between the hours spent on watching American TV serials and perceptions of American women, the study found that people who watch American TV serials for 4 or more hours in a week are more likely to perceive American women as open-minded and sexual open. Watching American TV serials 4 hours or more per week is defined as the heavy TV

serials consumption group in the study, because according to the most recent media statistics about average television viewing hours by country, Chinese people watch television programs less than 18 hours per week. Additionally, given to the fact that 48% (N=153) of the respondents are college students who have very limited time watching TV serials either on television or through the Internet, it is reasonable to define people who spend more than 4 hours out of their limited time on watching American TV serials as a heavy American TV serials viewing group. Therefore, despite the no significant correlation result, more time spent on watching American drama may be a contributing factor for perceptions of American women as being open-minded and sexual open.

Most Popular/Influential American TV Serials

Six American TV serials were found being the most watched among the respondents in the current study. They are: Prison Break, Friends, The Big Bang Theory, Gossip Girl, Sex and The City, and Desperate Housewives.

In the original design of the question asking about respondents' viewing habits of American TV serials, 32 TV serials were chosen based on "the Rank of the Most Popular American TV serials in China" (2009) from soso.com. Twenty of them were kept in the questionnaire. However, according to the answer, 25 more American TV serials were added when asked to write down any other American TV serials they often watched but had not been provided in the list. It shows that American TV serials have gained much more attention and following in the mainland of China.

The study found that respondents who often watch at least four of the six TV serials mentioned above are more likely to have stronger agreement on the 15 perceptions of American women. It is not surprising that these six American TV serials were rated as most watched among the respondents. For example, "Friends" was rated

as the most influential and popular American comedy in China according to in Li Yan & Yin Li (2007). “Prison Break” has gained a lot of fans and followers since 2006. Yan & Li (2007) said, “Even a post on Baidu (an online forum in China) which just mentioned ‘Prison Break’ had gained more than 10 thousands click rate in 4 days.” The “Big Bang Theory” and “Gossip Girl” are the most recent popular American comedy and drama in China because of the humorous story plots and fashion. Many other examples can be draw here to illustrate the popularity of American TV serials in China. It is really worth trying to explore the reasons (e.g. viewing motivations) behind this trend and how this trend will change in future study.

Personal Contact and Stereotypes

The current study found that only 65% of the respondents reported that they ever had a relationship with Americans. And among them, 44% said they contact the Americans less than once a year. It supports the presumption in the study that although the Chinese younger generation has been offered many various ways to access people from other ethnic groups, they still don't have as many chances to develop close relationships with outgroup members. Therefore, the effect of personal contact has been excluded in the study as a predictor of stereotypical perceptions of American women.

However, personal contact especially in close and meaningful relationships with people from another culture group was shown to be a strong predictor of positive stereotypes of another group in many previous studies. (e.g. Mastro & Tropp, 2004; Allport, 1954). At the same time, it is believed that lacking of this kind of contact will foster prejudice and form negative stereotypes (Armstrong, Neuendorf, & Brentar, 1992). To some extent, it helps explain another finding in the study.

Respondents were asked to add any other perceptions they have of American women if they are not included in the 20 attributes. It turned out that most of the perceptions are strongly prejudiced. Ten respondents reported other perceptions they had of American women, which included sense of humor, crazy, big boobs and full hips, strong desire of controlling, and a strong dislike for Chinese.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

This study has not only increased the general knowledge of media effects and stereotyping, but also established a relationship between media reliance and stereotypical perceptions. It confirmed the association between stereotyping American women and watching American TV serials. Stereotypes of American women construct an image of “modern women”, since they are perceived as open-minded, independent, easy-going, fashionable, professional, and love working out in the study. However, American women are also perceived in a prejudiced way as being sexual open (strong perception), aggressive (moderate perception), and Blondie (moderate perception). The study found that lacking of personal contact with Americans might be a contributor to the prejudice and negative stereotypes. Therefore, close interracial contact should be encouraged and efforts need to be made to increase the chance to interpersonally communicate with people from United States in the mainland of China, such as recruiting more international students in the college programs, having more cultural exchange projects, creating more investment opportunities for foreigners, etc.

This study supports the theoretical perspectives of the second level of agenda setting role in perceiving American women. In the study, Chinese audiences’ perceiving American women as open-minded, independent, sexual open, professional, and aggressive is related to the American TV serials attribute agenda. Based on previous literature, those are common attributes of women delivered through entertainment media, especially television. The study found that the more the Chinese audiences rely on American TV serials in understanding American women, the more they tend to perceive American women in those attributes. In other words, American TV serials have

been strongly suggested as being capable of exerting impact on individuals' attitudes and perceptions toward women.

The current study suggests that the heavy (≥ 4 hours) vs. light (< 4 hours) viewers among the younger generation in China might cause differences in perceptions. However, no positive correlation between exposure to American TV serials and perceptions of American women was found. But it does not mean that American TV serials have little effect in China, since a strong correlation was established between the American TV serials reliance and perceptions of American women in the study.

Therefore, in future media effect studies in China, cultivation effects of entertainment media can be determined by not only focusing on comparing the differences of perceptions between heavy vs. light media users, but by comparing the media discourse with public's opinions as well.

Consistent with previous third-person effect studies, the result of the study also supports the theoretical perspectives of the theory in terms of the gender difference. Chinese male audiences in the study are tended to think women are more susceptible to the influence of watching American TV serials than men, while Chinese female audiences tended to think men are more likely to be affected by American TV serials in understanding American women.

Overall, the study supports the important role of American TV serials in Chinese audiences' attitudes and perceptions of American women. It may create, reinforce, and refute some of the common stereotypes. Although no direct positive correlation was established between American TV serials exposure and perceiving American women,

there is reason to be concerned because a positive correlation was found between audiences' reliance on American TV serials and perceptions of American women.

There are weakness and limitations in the current study. First of all, the representative of the sample was not ensured to the highest extent. Convenience samples were employed in the study. Since respondents were recruited through the social network, the geographic locations remain unknown. Additionally, the study is limited by the sample size. A total of 435 valid responses were received. In the future study, larger size and more representative samples need to be achieved to promote the power of the statistical process employed in the study.

Secondly, the respondents in the study were asked to report the level of agreement on the attributes and the importance of the sources in understanding American women on a likert-scale. The self-report is highly subjective. Cultural values, personalities, and personal preferences can result in differences in the answers. For example, it is possible that a respondent who rates "7" on American TV serials are less influenced by American TV serials than another person who rates it as "5", since the person who rates "5" may have stronger belief in "Chung Yung".

Thirdly, individuals may perceive the term "American TV serials" differently, even in the same country. Variances may exist among the respondents. For instance, some people only include "Drama" as "TV serials". Even though examples of comedy and cartoons were given in the list, many of the respondents may still understand differently.

Another weakness of the study might be that respondents were asked to report their media consumption, media reliance, personal contact, and perceptions on American women at the same time. It is possible that they have a self-conscious of the

purpose of the study and give inaccurate answers, particularly given to the fact that 10 percent of the respondents major in communication who may have a better understanding of the importance of media effect and be more familiar with media effect research. Therefore, in future research, separating the measurement of stereotypes and media consumption may eliminate this concern.

Finally, the English version of the survey and the Chinese version do not exactly match, even though strong efforts were made to achieve a perfect translation. People from different culture group may perceive some terms differently. For example, Americans perceive “Naïve” negatively, while Chinese may perceive it positively because of the cultural denotation.

Future research should be conducted in different universities in different cities in China. A separate two-stage research can be carried out so that respondents do not associate the stereotypical perceptions with media reliance and media exposure.

It will be interesting to examine the effect of watching American TV serials on other groups of people than college students and recent graduates. Compared with college student, high school and middle school students may be even more affected by American TV serials since they may have less interracial contact with Americans. Thus, the results might be different if they were included in the current study.

The study found that compared with male respondents, women are less likely to perceive American women in a negative or prejudiced way, such as perceiving them as violent, arrogant, and mostly housewives. It will be interesting to trying to find out whether there is any difference in perceiving American women in terms of other factors, such as personal income and social-economic status, in future studies.

In addition, the availability and accessibility of American TV serials in China should be explored in the future. The result of the current study might be different if the two variables were included. For example, if a person who has extremely limited access to American TV serials while still spending 3 hours per week on watching them, the standard of “heavy” and “light” viewers could be totally different.

The current study should be ameliorated in the future and conducted on different group of samples and in different places. It will not only help examine the degree of the effect of watching TV serials and identify the source of stereotyping, but raise the awareness of television industry to be more responsible and try to reduce the prejudice and negative stereotypes on other racial groups as well.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The Media Portrayals of American Women in Chinese Eyes: An Analysis of How Chinese Perceive American Women and How U.S. TV Serials Influences Those Perceptions

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study:

This is a study about media effect that is being conducted by Xinwen Xu, graduate student at college of Journalism and Mass Communication in University of Florida. The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of watching U.S. TV Serials on Chinese's perceptions about American women.

What you will be asked to do in the study:

You will complete an online survey. The survey includes questions about your media reliance and American TV Serials viewing habits. Other survey questions will address your perceptions of American women, your opinion on the degree of the influence that watching American TV Serials has on other people, and the quantity and quality of previous contacts with people from other culture groups. We also will ask for some demographic information (e.g., age, gender, education level, etc.) so that we can accurately describe the general traits of the participants in the study.

Time required:

10- 15 minutes

Risks and Benefits/Compensation:

No risks or discomforts are anticipated from taking part in this study. If you feel uncomfortable with a question, you can skip that question or withdraw from the study altogether. If you decide to quit at any time before you have finished the questionnaire, your answers will NOT be recorded. You will be contributing to knowledge about televised media effect and the role that American TV Serials plays in stereotyping. There will be no further compensation for the participants in the study.

Confidentiality:

Your identity and responses will be kept confidential to the extent provide by law. We will NOT know your IP address when you respond to the Internet survey. Your

information will be assigned a code number. Only the researchers will see your individual survey responses.

Decision to quit at any time:

Your participation is voluntary; you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time. If you do not want to continue, you can simply leave this website. If you do not click on the "submit" button at the end of the survey, your answers and participation will not be recorded. You also may choose to skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Xinwen Xu, Graduate Student, College of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Florida, Weimer Hall, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611, fiona122@ufl.edu

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone 392-0433.

By beginning the survey, you acknowledge that you have read this information and agree to participate in this research, with the knowledge that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

APPENDIX B
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1 Have you ever watched American TV Serials?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q2 How many hours do you spend on watching American TV Serials in a typical week?

- Less than 1 hours (1)
- 1- 2 hours (2)
- 2- 3 hours (3)
- 3- 4 hours (4)
- 4- 5 hours (5)
- 5- 6 hours (6)
- 6- 7 hours (7)
- 7- 8 hours (8)
- 8- 9 hours (9)
- 9- 10 hours (10)
- More than 10 hours (11)

Q3 What kind of American TV Serials do you prefer to watch? You may choose more than one if applicable.

- Action/Adventure (1)
- Animation (2)
- Comedy (3)
- Romance (4)
- Reality (5)
- Science- Fiction (6)

Q4 How often do you watch following American TV Serials?

	Often (1)	Sometimes (2)	Rarely (3)	Never (4)
24 (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
American Idol (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bones (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chuck (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Criminal Minds (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desperate Housewives (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Every Loves Raymond (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family Guy (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friends (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fringe (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Glee (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grey's Anatomy (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gossip Girl (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Heroes (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
House (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How I Met Your Mother (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lie To Me (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lost (18)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Miami Vice (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
NCIS (20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nikita (21)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prison Break (22)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sex And The City (23)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<u>Smallville</u> (24)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
South Park (25)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<u>SpongeBob SquarePants</u>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

(26)				
Star Trek (27)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Bachelor (28)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Big Bang Theory (29)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Simpsons (30)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The X- Files (31)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
True Blood (32)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vampires Diaries (33)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Victoria Secret Show (34)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (35)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 Here are some perceptions about American Women. Please choose to show whether you are in favor of it or against it.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Slightly Disagree (2)	Neither Disagree nor Agree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Open-minded (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easy-going (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sexual open (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blondie (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Naive (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aggressive (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mostly housewives (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Independent (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fashion (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arrogant (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Violent (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have less job opportunities than men (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Love working out (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do not love to commit to marriage (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6 What are your perceptions about American Women if it is not provided in the list above?

Q7 Please choose one number to indicate the degree of the influence on a 0-9 scale with 0 representing "not at all influenced" and 9 representing "Strongly influenced".

	0 (1)	1 (2)	2 (3)	3 (4)	4 (5)	5 (6)	6 (7)	7 (8)	8 (9)	9 (10)
How much do you think the perceptions you have on American Women are affected by the American TV Serials you have watched? (1)	<input type="radio"/>									
How much do you think the perceptions male audiences have on American Women are affected by the American TV Serials they have watched? (2)	<input type="radio"/>									
How much do you think the perceptions female audiences have on American Women are affected by the American TV Serials they have watched? (3)	<input type="radio"/>									

Q8 Have you ever had any kind of relationship with an American?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Q10...

Q9 How often do you contact with the Americans you have relationship with?

- Less than Once a Year (1)
- Once a Year (2)
- 2-3 Times a Year (3)
- Once a Month (4)
- 2-3 Times a Month (5)
- Once a Week (6)
- 2-3 Times a Week (7)
- Daily (8)

Q10 Please indicate the degree of the relationship on a 0-9 scale with 0 representing "distant relationship" and 9 representing "close relationship".

- {CHOICE 1} (1)
- 1 (2)
- 2 (3)
- 3 (4)
- 4 (5)
- 5 (6)
- 6 (7)
- 7 (8)
- 8 (9)
- 9 (10)

Q11 Please rate the importance of the following medium tool in your understanding of American women on a 0-9 scale with 0 representing "not important at all" and 9 representing "very important".

	0 (1)	1 (2)	2 (3)	3 (4)	4 (5)	5 (6)	6 (7)	7 (8)	8 (9)	9 (10)
News Media (1)	<input type="radio"/>									
Magzines (2)	<input type="radio"/>									
Radio (3)	<input type="radio"/>									
TV Serials (4)	<input type="radio"/>									
Social Media (5)	<input type="radio"/>									
Pervious Interpersonal Contact (6)	<input type="radio"/>									

This page will go over basic demographic information. Please fill it in as completely as possible.

Q12 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q13 What is your age?

Q14 Are you currently enrolled in and attending college?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Q16...

Q15 What is your classification in college?

- Freshman/First-year (1)
- Sophomore (2)
- Junior (3)
- Senior (4)
- Graduate Student (5)
- Unclassified (6)

Q16 Which of these fields best describes your major, or your anticipated major? You may indicate more than one if applicable.

- Agriculture (1)
- Biological/Life Sciences (biology, biochemistry, botany, zoology, etc.) (2)
- Business (accounting, business administration, marketing, management, etc.) (3)
- Communication (journalism, advertising, PR, speech, television/radio, etc.) (4)
- Computer and Information Sciences (5)
- Education (6)
- Engineering (7)
- Ethnic, Culture Studies, and area studies (8)
- Foreign Languages and Literature (English, Spanish, French, etc.) (9)
- Health-related Fields (nursing, physical therapy, health technology, etc.) (10)
- History (11)
- History (12)
- Humanities (literature, philosophy, religion, etc.) (13)
- Liberal/General Studies (14)
- Mathematics (15)
- Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies (international relations, ecology, environmental studies, etc.) (16)
- Parks, Recreation, Leisure Studies, Sports Management (17)
- Physical Sciences (physics, chemistry, astronomy, earth science, etc.) (18)
- Pre-professional (pre-dental, pre-medical, pre-veterinary) (19)
- Public Administration (city management, law enforcement, etc.) (20)
- Social Sciences (anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, sociology, etc.) (21)
- Visual and Performing Arts (art, music, theater, etc.) (22)
- Undecided (23)
- Other (24) _____

APPENDIX C
SURVEY RESULTS- AMERICAN TV SERIALS WATCHING FREQUENCY

	Mean	Standard Deviation
24	3.30	0.98
American Idol	3.29	0.88
Bones	3.66	0.75
Criminal Minds	3.28	1.03
Desperate Housewives	2.86	1.15
Every Loves Raymond	3.52	0.78
Friends	2.19	1.08
Gossip Girl	2.50	1.13
Heroes	2.96	1.13
House	3.47	0.90
How I Met Your Mother	3.36	1.04
Lie To Me	2.94	1.19
Lost	3.15	1.02
Miami Vice	3.57	0.84
Nikita	3.16	1.16
Other	2.90	1.12
Prison Break	2.11	1.11
Sex And The City	2.91	1.23
The Big Bang Theory	2.22	1.00
The X- Files	3.30	1.24
Vampires Diaries	2.90	1.46

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