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The Objectifying Gaze: Impact of Sexualized Media on Viewer Gaze Behavior towards (Non)Traditional Attire

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Abstract

In this study, we investigate the priming effect of camera-induced objectifying-gaze, operationalised via sexualised music video(MV), on university students when looking at target female images in traditional (saree, salwar) and western (shirt-pant, short-dress) attires in the Indian demographics. We showed participants two videos where female leads wore unrevealing Indian attire (saree) and revealing western clothing in sexualised and traditional MVs respectively. We quantified gaze as fixation-duration and visit-count (revisit frequency) metrics. Our findings report that there is a priming effect of sexualised media. Female images in all attires are equally objectified and body-biased gaze is more pronounced in sexualised MV priming, short-dress is more objectified in traditional MV priming, and saree is less objectified overall, which confirms the social stereotypes on attire and respectability – traditionally clad (vs. non-traditional) women are seen as more moral and worthy of respect and protection compared to women in hypersexualized and objectified roles.