



TEEN MAGAZINES' INFLUENCE ON THE SOCIALIZATION AND IDENTITY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN GIRLS

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The purpose of this study was to examine the influence teen magazines' content had on African-American teenage girls (AATGs). Data were collected on teen magazines' content, girls' socialization process, and identity. Reading behavior and the sample's demographics were also collected.

The sample consisted of 46 African-American girls between the ages of 13 and 19 who were living in the South. The most popular and frequently read magazines included *Seventeen*, *Teen*, and *YM*, each targeted primarily to Caucasian readers.

Stepwise regression analyses revealed teen magazine content to be a significant predictor of AATGs socialization process. AATGs perceived information presented in the content as an authority on how they should behave, think, believe, and value. Magazine content was also a significant predictor of the portrayal of AATGs in a positive manner and realistic role. Fashion and beauty tips presented in magazines helped AATGs form their identity. Content related to socialization as well as fashion and beauty tips were significant predictors of teens' perceptions that the images in magazines were examples of what African-American girls should be like.

Results of the study lend support to the notion that the influence of teen magazines' content exceeds superficial attitudes of its readers (e.g., isn't this outfit pretty). AATGs ability to function in a healthy manner (e.g., positive sense of identity) may be influenced by their reading material. Further research is warranted. It is wise to obtain a representative sample of AATGs as well as other ethnic groups.