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Misogynous Messages in the Media Increase Hostility to Women: Evidence From a Meta-Analysis of 257 Experimental and Nonexperimental Studies

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Media often portray women in misogynous, discriminatory, and negative ways. By considering different types of misogynous media content and hostile responses to women, this meta-analysis of experimental and nonexperimental studies examined the relation between exposure to misogynous media content and hostility to women. The meta-analytic review included 257 eligible studies published across 47 years and encompassed 132,933 participants, thereby yielding 1,421 effect sizes. Analyses used robust variance estimation to examine the relationship between misogynous media exposure and hostility. On average, such exposure was associated with greater hostility to women ($g = 0.26$, 95% confidence interval, CI [.21, .30]), in both experimental ($g = 0.28$, 95% CI [.22, .35]) and nonexperimental ($g = 0.24$, 95% CI [.18, .29]) studies. Notably, exposure to misogynous media content affected both women and men, although the effect tended to be stronger among men ($g = 0.27$) than women ($g = 0.20$). The 95% prediction interval for the overall effect ranged from −0.52 to 1.04, indicating large heterogeneity. In fact, violent content easily recognized as antiwomen resulted in greater hostility among men ($g = 0.38$) but not women ($g = 0.03$), whereas humiliating ($g = 0.29$) and pornographic ($g = 0.21$) content yielded similarly hostile responses in women and men. In addition, adolescent participants were more influenced ($g = 0.32$) than participants in their midlate adulthood ($g = 0.17$), but they did not differ from those in their early adulthood ($g = 0.27$). Overall, this research showed that misogynous media content elicits demeaning attitudes and hostile behaviors directed toward women, thereby perpetuating the gender hierarchy defined by women's lower status in society.

Public Significance Statement

Our systematic review of 257 studies conducted over nearly 50 years showed that exposure to misogynistic media is associated with more hostile responses toward women. Men and adolescents appeared especially susceptible to exhibiting hostile reactions when exposed to such content. These effects were further amplified when the media content was violent and easily recognizable as antiwomen. By showing that a broad swath of misogynous media content—from violence to humiliation and pornography—was consistently related to increased hostility toward women, this research sends a powerful message. Media producers have a clear opportunity to reduce the portrayal of women in misogynistic, discriminatory, and negative ways and thereby foster decreased hostility and violence toward women and support their ongoing efforts to attain gender equality. Without such amelioration, the effects of misogynous media could increase given the popularity of digital platforms that allow misogynistic narratives to spread easily and reach larger audiences.

Keywords: hostility to women, meta-analysis, misogynous media, pornography, sexism

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continued

The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women identified the potential of mass media to foster gender equality "by portraying women and men in a nonstereotypical, diverse and balanced manner" (UN Women, 1995, p. 27). However, the media often portray women in misogynistic ways that perpetuate their relatively lower status in society (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2019). Therefore, countering the impact of misogynous media on attitudes toward women and violence against them is a key initiative in several national action plans supporting gender equality (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2019). Consistent with such initiatives, a representative poll found that 54% of European respondents thought that "there is a problem with the way women are presented in media and advertising" (European Commission, 2017, p. 9). Also, a global poll found that about one in five women reported being targeted by online gender-based abuse or sexist content in the past 2 years (45% average globally, 40% in the United States; Ipsos, 2022).

Misogyny in the media is a growing concern, given the increasing amounts of time that people spend consuming media—a development accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Koeze & Popper, 2020). In 2023, people in the United States, for example, spent 12.5 hr per day consuming major media formats such as television, magazines, radio, and digital platforms (Guttmann, 2025). Moreover, recent political shifts toward greater conservatism in many countries (Kaltwasser et al., 2024) have been accompanied by a masculine social movement featuring a new wave of so-called "manosphere media," referring to a wide range of often misogynous media content designed to attract men (Bernstein, 2025). In addition, social media algorithms designed to increase engagement foster the spread of extremely misogynous content among teenagers (University College London, 2024). The potential of these phenomena to increase exposure to a broad range of misogynous media content heightens the importance of studying whether exposure to different types of misogynous content (i.e., violent, humiliating, and pornographic) elicits different types of hostile responses toward women (e.g., aggression, objectification, stereotyping, and rape myth acceptance). Therefore, this review offers a comprehensive test of the association between misogynous media and hostility toward women and reveals the conditions that influence the strength of this association. This breadth differentiates this project from earlier syntheses of research examining a specific type of content (i.e., sexualized content; Burnay et al., 2022) or response (i.e., rape myth acceptance; Hedrick, 2021).

Misogyny and Its Prevalence in the Media

Identifying media content as misogynous requires consideration of the meaning of the word *misogyny*, which has gradually changed over time. In accord with its etymological roots, the definition of misogyny was once limited to "hatred of women" or "hatred or contempt for women" in early English documents dating back to 1656 (Safire, 2008). Contemporary definitions are broader, such as "hatred or dislike of, or prejudice against women" (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d., https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=misogyny), and may include such demeaning beliefs as "women are less intelligent than men" (Cambridge University Press, n.d., https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/misogyny). Similarly, the Scottish Government (Justice Directorate & Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights Directorate, 2022), for example, defined misogyny as "a range of abusive and controlling behaviours including rape, sexual offences, harassment and bullying, and domestic abuse" toward women (p. 29).

Despite these and other definitions of misogyny, what counts as misogyny in media portrayals is often not entirely clear. Without a clear consensus, our conceptual definition of misogynous media derives from our own review of this literature, revealing that relevant studies focused primarily on three main types of content: violence against women, pornography, and humiliation of women. Thus, for our meta-analysis, media portraying violence against women (e.g., physical aggression, nonconsensual sexual violence), mainstream pornography (e.g., sexual activity, nude bodies), or humiliation of women (e.g., derogation through demeaning stereotypes, sexualized portrayal, and antiwomen jokes) qualified as misogyny.

Misogyny manifests in various forms in the media. Blatant examples include, for instance, an advertisement from the airline Ryanair that presented a seductive woman posing in underwear and the headline "Red Hot Fares & Crew! One way from £9.99" (Boyce, 2012). Another example is from the popular video game Grand Theft Auto, which portrays female characters mostly as prostitutes or pole dancers. The typical storyline is that players' characters speed in stolen cars, avoid the police, and "halt in front of a prostitute, pay her for her services, and then kill her to get their money back" (Sifferlin, 2016, para. 6). Consistent with these examples, content analyses of music videos found women often portrayed in submissive roles, as hypersexualized objects of male desire (Aubrey & Frisby, 2011; Wallis, 2011), or as recipients of degrading, sexual, and aggressive actions (Hovater & Farris, 2020; Sommers-Flanagan et al., 1993). Internet content also encompasses misogynist influencers and sexist hashtags (e.g., #IHateFemalesWho and #ThatsWhatSlutsDo on 𝕏, formerly Twitter) that regularly go viral (Willingham, 2022). Other misogynous content is more subtle. For example, content analyses showed that media underrepresented women as primary characters in video games (Lynch et al., 2016) and more often depicted women in the subordinate role when women and men appeared together in advertisements (Tsichla, 2020).

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Research on the Consequences of Misogynous Media Content

The association between exposure to misogynous media and hostile responses has been a focus of experimental as well as nonexperimental studies. Experimental studies conducted in controlled settings typically incorporated a treatment group with exposure to misogynous media content (e.g., misogynous rap music) and a control group without exposure (e.g., neutral music or no music; Fischer & Greitemeyer, 2006). For example, Cobb and Boettcher (2007) found that misogynous rap music increased sexist attitudes, especially among men. However, other studies yielded null or mixed results. For example, van Oosten, Peter, and Valkenburg (2015) found that exposure to sexual music videos increased sexist attitudes for adolescent girls but not boys. Nonexperimental studies, which are commonly more varied in their participants and settings, typically assessed misogynous media exposure by asking participants how often they had consumed such media during a specific period of time. Whereas many of these studies found a positive association between exposure to misogynous media and hostile responding, some studies suggested weak or null effects. For example, de Heer et al. (2021) found a positive association between self-reported pornography consumption and sexual aggression, yet Miller et al. (2020) did not find an association between this consumption and sexist attitudes. Such mixed findings call for a meta-analysis to ascertain the overall magnitude of the effect and the moderating variables influencing its magnitude and direction.

Our meta-analysis adds to the knowledge produced by earlier meta-analyses that reviewed misogynistic content not specifically focused on misogynous responses but rather on hostile responses in general. For example, a meta-analysis including 166 studies by Burnay et al. (2022) focused on the effects of sexualized media on aggression-related thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors toward others. P. J. Wright et al. (2016) adopted another focus by examining research on pornography and sexual aggression. Other meta-analyses on misogynistic content focused on one specific outcome only, such as rape myth acceptance (Hedrick, 2021). In contrast, our meta-analysis included different types of both misogynous media content and hostile responses to women and tested for moderators of relations between this content and hostile responses that are shared across the various types of studies, namely, participant age, participant gender, and stimulus–response similarity. Our meta-analysis further explored differences between experimental and nonexperimental studies.

Theoretical Perspectives on How Misogynous Media Exposure Affects Hostility

The predictions and interpretations of this meta-analysis are framed by learning theories, which explain the psychological processes by which exposure to misogynous media can affect hostility to women. According to social learning theory (Bandura, 1978), people learn general tactics and strategies of behavior not only from direct experience but also from observing media depictions. Observers form knowledge structures based on these depictions, which can serve as cognitive guides for their behavior in daily life (Bandura, 2001). Specifically, our predictions follow from the general learning model (GLM; Buckley & Anderson, 2006), which derives from the general aggression model tailored to the learning of aggressive behavior (GAM; Anderson & Bushman, 2002, 2018; Bushman & Anderson, 2021).

The GLM recognizes the influence of two types of input variables on the learning outcome, namely, personal attributes (e.g., gender, age, and motivation) and situational factors (e.g., the presence of other people during media exposure; Gentile & Gentile, 2021). These personal and situational input variables independently and interactively influence the observers' psychological state, involving cognition, affect, and arousal. These states affect observers' appraisals and decisions and, in turn, affect their behavior. According to the GLM, depending on personal factors such as gender and age, exposure to media depicting violence against women can encourage hostile cognitions. Such cognitions then influence the likelihood of aggression directed to women (Kersten & Greitemeyer, 2024). Each time a person learns or rehearses a specific behavior from media content, a learning trial occurs (Anderson & Carnagey, 2004). With repetition of such trials, the behavior becomes more likely to occur.

Based on these theoretical accounts, we predicted that greater exposure to misogynous media content would result in greater hostility to women (Hypothesis 1). This hypothesis is far from trivial, as it intersects with continuing and unsettled discussions in the field of media psychology concerning the extent to which media influence attitudes and behaviors (Valkenburg et al., 2016). For example, heated debates surround the effects of violent video games, with some meta-analyses indicating increased aggression (e.g., Anderson et al., 2010; Greitemeyer & Mügge, 2014) and others reporting no significant effects (Ferguson et al., 2020). Similar disagreements exist regarding violent media more broadly (e.g., Bushman & Huesmann, 2006; Savage, 2004), social media use (Appel et al., 2020; Twenge et al., 2018), and smartphone adoption (Dienlin & Johannes, 2020; Twenge & Campbell, 2018)—domains in which researchers have conflicting views regarding the impact of media exposure on aggression, mental health, and social attitudes. Hence, the proposed link between misogynous media content and hostility toward women represents a theoretically sound yet empirically contested prediction. The present findings, therefore, not only shed light on whether misogynous media content increases hostility toward women but also contribute to the broader discourse on whether and how media consumption influences social attitudes and behavior.

Moderation of the Association Between Misogynous Media Content and Hostility to Women

Do Women and Men Respond Differently to Misogynous Media?

The learning models described above suggest hypotheses concerning personal factors (e.g., gender) interacting with the situational influence of media exposure (e.g., Groves & Anderson, 2017; Morgan et al., 2016). Concerning gender as a moderator, men and adolescent boys might show increased hostile responses for multiple reasons. First, the GLM indicates that the likelihood of a certain behavior increases with opportunities for learning this content (Gentile & Gentile, 2021), and men consume misogynous media content more often than women, in particular, sexually violent movies (Emmers-Sommer et al., 2006) and pornography (Rostad et al., 2019; Willis et al., 2022). Second, learning models postulate that the likelihood of adopting a behavior is greater if the role model

showing the behavior is similar to the consumer (Bandura, 2001). Assuming that the perpetrators are mostly male, men might model their behavior more strongly. Finally, women may identify with female victims of misogynous messages and thus show decreased hostile responding. For these reasons, hostility to women following exposure to misogynous content should be stronger in men than women (Hypothesis 2).

Another personal input variable specified by the GLM is motivation. Specifically, if a person has sufficient motivation as well as time and cognitive resources, a learning situation can be reappraised, and counterarguing can occur (Gentile & Gentile, 2021). If the media content is explicitly misogynous, that is, the antiwoman message is easily recognizable and blatantly negative, such as in portrayals of physical and sexual aggression toward women, counteracting is more likely. Therefore, the more hostile response to misogynous content among men than women should be more pronounced when this content is violent compared to humiliating or pornographic (Hypothesis 3).

Do People of Different Ages Respond Differently to Misogynous Media?

Consistent with learning theories, age is an additional personal factor that should interact with the effects of media exposure on learning (e.g., Bushman & Anderson, 2021). Given that learning from media content is rooted in social learning (Gentile & Gentile, 2021) and that social learning has proven to be typically greater in adolescents than in adults (Foulkes et al., 2018), media exposure may have a particularly strong influence on adolescents, perhaps because they encounter less interference from previously learned content and are less equipped to counterargue (Bushman & Huesmann, 2006). Research findings consistent with this assumption indicated that younger participants were more susceptible to persuasive appeals than older participants (i.e., impressionable years hypothesis; Krosnick & Alwin, 1989; Visser & Krosnick, 1998) and that adolescents were more influenced by risk-glorifying media content than were young adults (Fischer et al., 2011). Therefore, hostile responding to misogynous content should be stronger among younger than older participants (Hypothesis 4).

Does the Stimulus–Response Similarity of Media and Response Content Affect Hostile Responses?

The basic principle of social learning theories is that individuals imitate observed behavior (Bandura, 1978). The GLM also postulates that previous learning can be transferred to other situations that are different from the original learning context (Gentile & Gentile, 2021). Yet, transfer depends on how similar the learning situation is to the transfer situation (Barnett & Ceci, 2002). This prediction follows the logic of extensive research *on stimulus–response compatibility* (e.g., Proctor & Reeve, 1990), which demonstrated that the degree of conceptual similarity between stimulus and response increases the strength of the association between the two. For example, Fischer et al. (2011) found that the relation between risk-glorifying media content and risk-taking behavior was stronger when they were more similar (e.g., depiction of risky driving has a stronger effect on risky driving than on gambling behavior). Therefore, this meta-analysis tested the hypothesis that the effect of misogynous content increases with greater stimulus–response similarity between media content and hostile responding (Hypothesis 5).

Does Active Involvement Affect Hostile Responses?

Active consumption, such as controlling a game character in a video game, covaries with greater engagement with the media content. In contrast, passive consumption, such as watching a movie (see Burnay et al., 2022), does not elicit active participation. Theoretically, it is reasonable to assume that this more active engagement yields stronger effects due to, for example, higher identification with the protagonist (Fischer et al., 2011). According to social learning theory (Bandura, 2007; Legg, 2023), individuals learn through observing models and rehearsing the observed behavior (i.e., enactive learning), thereby intensifying the learning experience, as suggested by Fischer et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis but not confirmed by Burnay et al.'s (2022) meta-analysis. Our meta-analysis should shed light on these mixed findings pertaining to active consumption and level of engagement.

Does Perpetrator Gender Affect Hostile Responses?

Another consideration is whether the source of the misogynous content was male, female, or a gender-mixed group. Because perpetrators of real-life misogyny are predominantly men (see, e.g., UN Women, 2021, for gender-based violence), the concept of a male compared with a female perpetrator is likely more available for observers. Therefore, the presence of a male perpetrator would be more accessible and, therefore, produce stronger responses (Gentile & Gentile, 2021; see also Burnay et al., 2022).

Experimental Versus Nonexperimental Studies Examine Different Phenomena

Various considerations pertain to whether experimental or nonexperimental studies would show stronger effects of misogynous media on hostility to women. The GLM proposed that repeated exposure to specific media content increases its chronic accessibility (Gentile & Gentile, 2021). Thus, frequent exposure would generally increase the overall likelihood of enacting the portrayed behavior. Because the reported exposure to misogynous media presumably occurred over time in nonexperimental studies but occurred on one occasion in experiments, its effect would be stronger in the nonexperimental studies. However, the experimental studies typically assessed responses immediately after the exposure, when the media content was still highly salient, whereas nonexperimental studies usually lacked this temporal proximity. This countervailing temporal consideration would strengthen the effect of experimental relative to nonexperimental studies.

Another difference between experimental and nonexperimental studies is whether participants choose to expose themselves to misogynous content. Given that participants presumably chose this content only in the nonexperimental studies, they likely had greater preexisting hostility to women than those in the experimental studies, who were randomly assigned to conditions. In addition, the study designs likely varied in the severity of the hostile response examined, with ethical norms about experimentation

disallowing inquiring about the more severe forms that can be consumed in natural settings (Bonino et al., 2006). These complexities preclude predicting differences due to experimental versus nonexperimental study designs. Nevertheless, the meta-analysis tracked this variable as a potential methods confound to reveal the consistency of the effects of other variables across the two study designs.

In addition, our project distinguished between the different study designs within the nonexperimental studies. Specifically, we coded for correlational designs (examining association between two or more variables) and cross-sectional designs (comparing two or more preexisting groups at one point in time).

Categorization of Misogynous Media Content and Hostile Responses to Women

In the absence of commonly accepted categorizations of misogynous media content or hostile responses, we developed such categories to organize the available research (see Table 1). Our review of the relevant literature revealed three main types of misogynous

Table 1
Definition and Examples of Identified Categories in the Selected Literature

Category	Definition	Example (prototype of study)
Media content		
Violence against women	Content that implies or depicts physical aggression or sexual aggression against women who did not consent to these acts	Music with lyrics promoting aggression against women (e.g., Barongan & Hall, 1995) Rape videos (e.g., Boeringer, 1994) Slasher films (e.g., Mullin & Linz, 1995) Video game aggression against women (e.g., Beck et al., 2012)
Pornography	Content that displays or describes consensual sexual activity, sexual organs, or nude bodies	Nude female bodies (e.g., Cornett, 2012) Sexual intercourse (e.g., Barak et al., 1999)
Humiliation of women	Content that derogates women through expressions of demeaning stereotypes, sexualized portrayal, or antiwomen jokes (i.e., derogation by means other than violence or pornography)	Sexism and demeaning stereotypes through jokes (e.g., Ford et al., 2001), video games (e.g., Fischer, Kastenmüller, & Greitemeyer, 2010), and advertisements (e.g., Rudman & Borgida, 1995) Female promiscuity in television shows (e.g., Ferguson, 2012) Suggestively clothed women (e.g., Fox & Bailenson, 2009) Sexualized avatars (e.g., Fox et al., 2015)
Hostile responses		
Aggressive behavior	Physical, verbal, and relational acts that are harmful to women and are intended to harm a person who is motivated to avoid that harm	Aggressive behavior to women (e.g., the intensity of electric shock administered to a female target; Donnerstein, 1980) Self-reported aggression/violence against women (e.g., Demaré et al., 1988) Denied prosocial behavior (e.g., bystander unwillingness to help female target in potential rape situation; Foubert et al., 2011)
Demeaning stereotypes and attitudes	Attitudes and stereotypes that are hostile to women and have a demeaning component	Sexism (e.g., Carr & VanDeusen, 2004) Demeaning attitudes (e.g., Barak & Fisher, 1997) Disapproval of women's rights (e.g., MacKay & Covell, 1997)
Objectification	Treatment of women's bodies as objects	Perception of women as sex objects (e.g., Ward, 2002) Negative judgments of a woman's physical appearance (e.g., Frable et al., 1997) Sexualized behavior by a man (e.g., male participants looking at an attractive female confederate's body; Rudman & Borgida, 1995)
Rape myth acceptance	Tendency to deny and justify male sexual aggression to women	Responses on the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (e.g., Fox et al., 2015) Estimation of jail time for rape (e.g., Sweeney, 2002)
Other	Combinations of responses from the four preceding categories and hostile responses not otherwise classified	Sending and receiving of sexual images or messages known as "sexting" (e.g., N. Stanley et al., 2018) Judgments of whether to reemploy a female experimenter (e.g., Sapolsky & Zillmann, 1981)
Stimulus–response similarity		
High stimulus–response similarity	High conceptual similarity between media content and hostile response	Sexual nonviolent content and nonviolent sexualized responses such as objectification Violent content of any kind and violent or physically punishing response Sexually violent content of any kind and sexually violent or physically punishing response Demeaning (not sexual or violent) content and negative gender stereotypes, sexist attitudes, or nonviolent behavior that implies sexist or antifemale attitude
Low stimulus–response similarity	Low conceptual similarity between media content and hostile response	All other combinations, such as exposure to pornography and participants' beliefs about women as managers (e.g., W. A. Fisher & Grenier, 1994)

media content: violence against women, pornography, and humiliation of women. Their inclusion lent greater scope to this project than projects focusing on only one of these types of misogyny (e.g., Burnay et al., 2022; Rodenhizer & Edwards, 2019).

The first content category, *violence against women*, consisted of content that implies or depicts physical or sexual aggression against women who did not consent to these acts. Such studies, for example, used videos or vignettes that displayed rape, sexual aggression, or other types of nonconsensual violence against women (e.g., Mullin & Linz, 1995).

The second category, *pornography*, consisted of content that displays or describes consensual sexual activity, sexual organs, or nude bodies, such as in X-rated films (e.g., Hald & Malamuth, 2015). Classifying such pornography as misogynous follows from content analyses concluding that pornography harms women (Bridges et al., 2010) by featuring male pleasure and the objectification of women (Fritz & Paul, 2017). This definition excluded the small but growing genre of pornography designed to induce pleasure in female viewers.

Finally, the third category, *humiliation of women*, consisted of content that humiliates women through demeaning stereotypes, sexualized portrayal other than pornography, or antiwomen jokes, that is, derogation by means other than violence or pornography. These studies depicted women as weak, for example (Thomae, 2013), or dependent on men (Kneeskern & Reeder, 2020).

With respect to types of hostile responding, our literature review revealed four distinct research traditions that guided our categorization. The first category, *aggressive responses*, encompassed the large body of research on the relationship between violent media content and aggressive responding (see Bender et al., 2018), which typically tested the GAM. In this tradition, aggressive behavior included physical, verbal, and relational acts intended to harm women (Bushman & Huesmann, 2010) who were motivated to avoid that harm (e.g., Anderson & Bushman, 2002). Examples of hostile responses included administering electric shocks to a woman as part of the experimental manipulation (Hyatt et al., 2017) and engaging in (or intending to engage in) other types of violence against women (Bonino et al., 2006).

The second category, *demeaning stereotypes and attitudes*, encompassed attitudes and stereotypes that are hostile to women. Responses in this category had a disparaging component, for example, endorsing benevolent sexism (Altenburger et al., 2017) or expressing unfavorable attitudes toward women's rights (Barak & Fisher, 1997).

The third category, *objectification*, encompassed the treatment of women's bodies, body parts, or sexual functions as objects that exist merely for others' pleasure (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Such reactions deny women their full mental capacities and sense of agency and can thereby foster prejudice, devaluation, and even violence against women (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014).

The fourth category, *rape myth acceptance*, encompassed the endorsement of beliefs that justify rape. Because researchers have investigated this type of response independently of other hostile responding, it formed a separate category in this meta-analysis. Such beliefs deny or justify male sexual aggression toward women (e.g., Malamuth & Check, 1985) and were typically assessed by the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (e.g., Fox et al., 2015).

The fifth category, *other*, encompassed misogynous responses not included in the other categories because they (a) represented combinations of responses from these categories or (b) were not otherwise classified, such as sending unsolicited sexual images or messages to women (e.g., N. Stanley et al., 2018).

These classifications facilitated the assessment of the *stimulus–response similarity* of studies' combinations of media content and hostile responses in terms of their conceptual similarity. This variable resulted from classifying similar content and responses as *high stimulus–response similarity* (e.g., violent content related to aggressive responses) and dissimilar combinations as *low stimulus–response similarity* (e.g., exposure to pornography related to beliefs about women as managers; W. A. Fisher & Grenier, 1994).

Method

Inclusion Criteria

We defined misogynous media broadly and included media such as films, games, TV, music, books, social media, images, advertisements, and magazines (see Boolean search string in Supplemental Material E). This comprehensive scope allowed for the inclusion of a wide range of misogynous media content and hostile outcomes. The four main criteria that guided inclusion are summarized in the following paragraphs (for more detail, see Supplemental Material C). These criteria placed no restrictions on the publication language,[1] study location, or publication year.

Criterion 1: Exposure to Misogynous Media Content

Consistent with the contemporary definitions of misogyny, we included research that exposed participants to, or measured their use of, any kind of misogynous media content. As explained in the introduction, this content included (a) violence against women, (b) derogation of women, and (c) pornography.

Criterion 2: Assessment of Hostility to Women

The included measures of hostile responses to women took the form of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Specifically, these responses included (a) aggressive responses, such as sexual or physical violence against women or the approval thereof; (b) objectification of women's bodies; (c) demeaning attitudes and beliefs pertaining to women; and (d) victim blaming and harmful beliefs about rape and rape victims. The focus on hostility to women excluded measures assessing (female) participants' perception of themselves (e.g., self-objectification). Also excluded were measures not necessarily reflecting misogyny, such as sexual intent, attitudes pertaining to misogynous content, or attitudes about consuming such content.

Criterion 3: Sample Consisting of Typical Adolescents and Adults

The included studies had participant samples that represented the general population of adolescents or adults, including college students. Consequently, excluded were studies that examined only

[1] Our keyword searches, which used English terms, gathered records in other languages because the databases contained translated English abstracts for non-English reports. The research reports in languages other than English were translated with the assistance of DeepL Translate.

children (<10 years) or focused on specific subgroups of people, such as prison convicts or clients of prostitutes.

Criterion 4: Reported Sufficient Statistics to Extract an Effect Size

The search included studies that contained sufficient data to compute at least one effect size for the overall sample or at least one subgroup (e.g., women). In the absence of sufficient information, we emailed the authors to request more information. A complete data set containing details of all included studies is available on the Open Science Framework at https://osf.io/ubk92 (Nater et al., 2025).

Literature Search

The identification of records for potentially relevant studies used (a) keyword searches of relevant databases: APA PsycInfo, Business Source Ultimate, CairnInfo International, ERIC, Ovid Medline, PSYNDEX, APA PsycExtra, PubPSY, Scopus, and Web of Science; (b) gray literature searches examining ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global and OSF Preprints; and (c) citations present in relevant literature (see below). These search methods yielded 61,829 records. After the removal of duplicates, 37,382 unique records remained.

Keyword Searches

The keyword searches extended to December 2024. Using Boolean expressions, the searches identified studies whose titles, abstracts, or author-provided keywords included at least one term in each of the three following categories: (a) misogyny (e.g., misogyn*, hostil*, sexis*, humiliat*, derogat*, antiwom*, objectif*), (b) media (e.g., video*, game*, TV, music, advertise*, porno*, "social media"), and (c) gender (e.g., woman, female*, man, masculin*).

Supplemental Material E includes the full Boolean search terms and displays the exact database-specific search string for replicating the search as well as the resulting records for the most relevant database, APA PsycInfo. These searches placed no limits on publication dates or languages.

Gray Literature Searches and Manual Citation Tracking

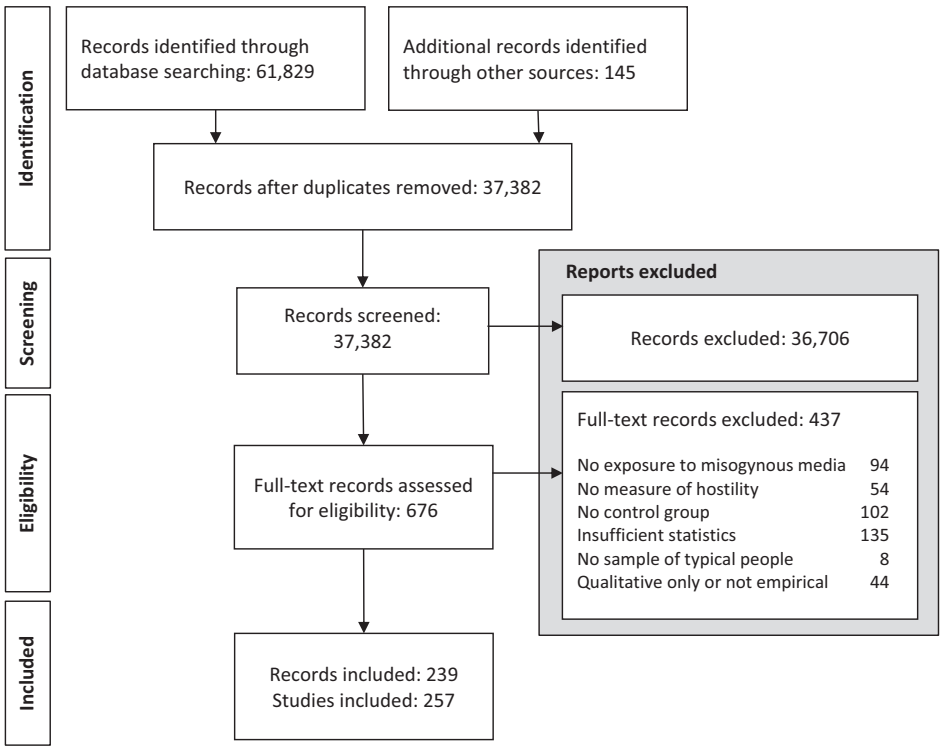
Our search for gray literature encompassed ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global database, which includes doctoral dissertations, and OSF Preprints. We also posted requests for data to relevant listservs in different languages (e.g., Economic Science Association, German Psychological Society). Finally, we manually examined the reference lists of the three prior meta-analyses of portions of the target research (i.e., Burnay et al., 2022; Hedrick, 2021; Rattan et al., 2018).

Screening

A team of 10 screeners, consisting of the first and last authors as well as eight research assistants, reviewed the records for eligibility in three stages: (a) abstract screening, (b) full-text screening, and (c) data availability screening. Figure 1 depicts the flow of records

Figure 1

Flow of Records Through the Literature Search and Screening



through these stages using a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) diagram format (Page et al., 2021). The data file with the screening decisions for all 37,382 records is on the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/ubk92), including the specific reason for excluding ineligible records at Stage 2.

In Stage 1 (abstract screening), two screeners independently examined each article's title, abstract, and keywords. Different pairs of screeners were randomly selected from the pool of 10 screeners. To facilitate the display and assignment of the articles to the human coders, we used the semiautomated machine learning algorithm of Abstrackr (Rathbone et al., 2015). This tool continuously learned from screeners' decisions and resorted the abstracts so that those with the highest probability of inclusion were shown to the human coders next. This tool did not replace human judgment but instead helped prioritize the records that the screeners reviewed earlier in the process. The screening decisions about inclusion yielded moderate interrater reliability (Fleiss' $\kappa = .62$, 95% confidence interval, CI [.57, .67]), with discrepancies resolved through discussion. Among the disagreements, 64% of the records were ultimately excluded at this first screening stage (i.e., false positive), 28% were passed to the next screening stage but still ultimately excluded at the eligibility checking stage (i.e., false positive), and 8% were ultimately included (i.e., false negative). Following best practice guidelines, the screening protocol displayed in Supplemental Material B guided these decisions (Polanin et al., 2019). Of the 37,382 selected abstracts, 676 proceeded to full-text screening.

In Stage 2 (full-text screening), two screeners independently read each of the 676 full-text reports, judging them against the inclusion criteria and recording specific reasons for exclusions. Figure 1 displays the counts of the six exclusion reasons (e.g., no exposure to misogynous media, no measure of hostility). These decisions had high interrater reliability (Fleiss's $\kappa = .90$, 95% CI [.81, .98]), with discrepancies resolved through discussion. Of the screened 676 full-text reports, 239 reports remained, yielding 257 unique studies and 1,421 effect sizes. The data extraction included one person collecting the relevant information, a second person independently checking the information, and weekly meetings to discuss disagreements and ambiguities.

Coding

From the initial team of 10 screeners, a subset of six coders (including the first and last authors) coded study characteristics and extracted quantitative information from eligible studies. The first and last authors provided continuous weekly feedback to the coding team to prevent coding drift over time and ensure consistent interpretation of coding procedures and definitions. Each study, with its extracted quantitative information, was examined by two coders.

When possible, the coding encompassed not only the overall study sample but also demographic subsamples (e.g., female vs. male participants, adolescent vs. early adult vs. midlate adult participants). Supplemental Material D displays the coding protocol that guided the coding decisions.

Coding of Moderators for Confirmatory Analyses

These moderators included type of media content, hostile response content, and stimulus–response similarity between the media content and the hostile response content. Table 1 displays these categories with examples, and Supplemental Material D includes the detailed instructions and examples used by the coders.

Media Content. As described in the introduction and displayed in Table 1, the coding of the type of media content included the following three categories: (a) violence against women, (b) humiliation of women, and (c) pornography.

Hostile Responses. The coding of the hostile response content included the following five categories, (a) aggressive responses, (b) demeaning stereotypes and attitudes, (c) objectification, (d) rape myth acceptance, and (e) other responses, which consisted of combinations of responses from the four preceding categories or other hostile responses (e.g., sending sexual images or messages to women, known as "sexting"; N. Stanley et al., 2018; judgments of not reemploying a female experimenter; Sapolsky & Zillmann, 1981).

Stimulus–Response Similarity. The following combinations of media content and actual, reported, or endorsed hostile response were coded as high stimulus–response similarity: (a) sexual nonviolent content related to nonviolent sexualized responses such as objectification, (b) violent content of any kind related to nonsexually violent or physically punishing response, (c) sexually violent content of any kind related to sexually violent or physically punishing response, and (d) demeaning (not sexual, not violent) content related to antifemale beliefs and attitudes. All other combinations were coded as low stimulus–response similarity, for example, exposure to pornography related to participants' perceptions of women as managers (e.g., W. A. Fisher & Grenier, 1994).

These confirmatory moderators had high interrater reliability between the two coders in the different sets of coders: type of media content, Cohen's $\kappa = .93$ (95.70% agreement); hostile response content, $\kappa = .95$ (96.50% agreement); and stimulus–response similarity, $\kappa = .88$ (94.10% agreement). Disagreements were resolved by discussion.

Additional confirmatory demographic moderators included participant gender (women, men, mixed including women and men) and participant age (adolescents aged 10–18 years, who were mainly high school students; early-adult participants aged 18–25 years, who were mainly college students; and mid-late-adult participants aged over 25 years). For those articles that did not separate the data of the female and male participants, we contacted the authors and requested this information.

Moderators for Exploratory Analyses

Categories for modality of responses consisted of (a) behavioral (actual or self-reported behavior or intention to behave, e.g., administering hot chili sauce to woman who dislikes spicy food; Fischer & Greitemeyer, 2006) or (b) nonbehavioral (cognitive and affective, e.g., expression of sexist attitudes; Hald et al., 2013). Categories for media type included (a) pictures, (b) films, (c) music, (d) texts, (e) music videos, (f) video games, and (g) mixed media types (e.g., pornography consumption across TV, the internet, magazines; Tomaszewska & Krahé, 2018).

In addition, we coded whether the type of consumption was (a) active (e.g., involvement and option to participate, design, or adjust how the content was consumed, such as in video games) or (b) passive (e.g., no involvement, such as when watching sexist pictures or pornography). The coding also encompassed perpetrator gender by assessing whether the misogynous content emanated from

(a) men, (b) women, or (c) a gender-mixed group. The interrater reliability of the coding of these two moderators was acceptable: type of consumption, Cohen's $\kappa = .63$ (72.70% agreement), and perpetrator gender, $\kappa = .98$ (99.60% agreement). Supplemental Material D displays the detailed protocols for these codings.

Moderators for Study Quality

To account for differences in the quality and risk of bias between individual studies, the coding included (a) publication status (i.e., published or unpublished), (b) preregistration of the study (i.e., present or absent), and (c) study design as experimental (i.e., random assignment of participants to experimental and control conditions) or nonexperimental (i.e., no random assignment). Moreover, only for the nonexperimental studies, the coding included (d) type of study design (i.e., correlational or cross-sectional).

Moderators for Contextual Characteristics

The coding of publication characteristics included (a) year of publication (or year of dissemination or data collection for unpublished studies), (b) gender of the first author (examining the author's first name and departmental website for other evidence such as pronouns), (c) percentage of male authors, and (d) participants' regional location (i.e., Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, South America).

Meta-Analysis Models and Robust Variance Estimation

Effect Size Calculations

For all effects, we computed the Hedges's g effect sizes and respective variances (Borenstein et al., 2009). Positive values on this standardized mean difference score indicated a positive association between misogynous media exposure and hostility to women. When possible, Hedges's g was computed from the means and the pooled within-group standard deviation. In all other cases, t, F, r, χ^2, or p values served to estimate Hedges's g (see Borenstein et al., 2009). Correlation r statistics were converted first to Cohen's d and then to Hedges's g standardized mean differences (see Supplemental Material F for details).

In the absence of appropriate statistics, we emailed first authors (or other authors if the first author did not respond) for additional information, with two reminders if needed. In total, these author queries were unsuccessful for 192 eligible reports that did not (a) provide sufficient information to compute an effect size or (b) report effects separated by participant gender. A lack of response from authors for 125 records and no contact opportunity for 27 records resulted in either the use of only the mixed-gender data provided in the report or the exclusion of the study.

Statistical Models

Mixed-effects meta-regression models assumed that the observed effect size variation was due to fixed effects of moderators (e.g., participant gender), random effects of residual between-study heterogeneity (τ_B), within-study heterogeneity of multiple effect sizes (τ_W), and sampling error (Borenstein et al., 2009). Several distributional statistics accompany our report of the weighted mean effect size: (a) heterogeneity values (τ_B, τ_W), (b) I^2 statistics (a measure of the percentage of total variability in effect sizes due to true between-study heterogeneity rather than chance), and (c) the 95% prediction intervals (a measure of the estimated dispersion of true underlying effects; the true effect size in 95% of all populations falls in this interval; Borenstein et al., 2009).

Because most studies yielded multiple effect sizes, robust variance estimation (RVE) accounted for effect size dependencies (Tanner-Smith et al., 2016). The RVE analyses implemented the rma.rv() function in the *metafor* R package (Viechtbauer, 2010) and the *clubSandwich* R package (Pustejovsky, 2018a). Specifically, the estimation of the mixed-effects meta-analysis model parameters used the rma.rv() function and then adjusted the standard errors, degrees of freedom, and p values by implementing RVE using the coef_test() function in the *clubSandwich* R package (Pustejovsky, 2018b). These analyses implemented the small-sample corrections based on the Satterthwaite approximation suggested by Tipton (2015) and the "CR2" bias-reduced linearization adjustment (Pustejovsky & Tipton, 2018). Given these methods, if the degrees of freedom are less than 4.0, there is a heightened risk of a Type I error (Tipton, 2015).

Contrasting with the *robumeta* R package implementation of RVE (Z. Fisher & Tipton, 2015), this combined *metafor* and *clubSandwich* implementation allows for greater flexibility in specifying the effect size covariance structure used to determine the model weights (i.e., it accounts for the nesting of effect sizes within samples and the nesting of samples within studies).

To account for dependency between the effect sizes, the assumed correlation between multiple outcomes ρ was set to a default $r = .50$ (Tanner-Smith & Tipton, 2014). Sensitivity analyses showed that varying this parameter did not substantially influence the conclusions drawn from the models. For example, the overall mean estimate of the effect of misogynous media exposure on hostile responses was robust to different values of ρ ($\Delta g = 0.005$ when changing from $r = 0.2$ to $r = 0.8$).

Moderator Analyses

Mixed-effects RVE meta-regression models tested for moderation. These models logically extend standard multiple regression to meta-analysis (Tipton et al., 2019). Confirmatory moderator analyses tested our directional hypotheses, for example, that hostility to women following exposure to misogynous content would be stronger in men than women (Hypothesis 2). We examined each moderator one-by-one in separate models. In addition, one multivariable model simultaneously adjusted for all confirmatory moderators (i.e., gender, age, media content, stimulus–response similarity) and for the two methods confounders: the dummy-coded covariates study design (i.e., experimental vs. nonexperimental) and scale of independent variable (i.e., continuous scale vs. two-groups; see Tipton et al., 2019).

In addition, separate models analyzed each of the following exploratory moderators: outcome type (i.e., nonbehavioral vs. behavioral), response content (e.g., aggressive, objectification, stereotypes), type of consumption (i.e., active vs. passive), perpetrator gender (i.e., men, women, mixed), media type (e.g., films, music, text), participant regional location, year of publication, gender of first author, and percentage of male authors.

Analytic Methods for Detecting Publication Bias

Although our literature search targeted unpublished studies, the results could, nevertheless, be subject to selective reporting bias (e.g., authors publicly report only studies or outcomes with significant effects). To identify and counter selective reporting biases, we ran a comprehensive battery of sensitivity analyses that included the following three approaches: (a) comparison of unpublished versus published studies, (b) meta-regression to assess small-study effects, and (c) contour-enhanced funnel plot. These approaches are best viewed as sensitivity analyses, rather than definitive corrections for bias (Carter et al., 2019).

The first approach (published–unpublished differences) examines whether unpublished studies (e.g., dissertations) were less influenced by selective reporting bias than published journal articles. We, therefore, included the dummy-coded publication status (1 = published; 0 = unpublished), meaning that the regression intercept can be interpreted as the estimate for unpublished literature. This approach can provide suggestive evidence for the presence of selective reporting (Polanin et al., 2016). Additionally, we explored this published–unpublished difference separately for the three media contents. Given that some forms of media content (e.g., humiliation that includes objectification and sexism) might be more controversial and contested than other misogynous content (e.g., pornography), studies with null or negative findings may be less likely to be published in those areas.

The second approach (meta-regression of small-study effects) relies on the assumption that small studies with small observed effects may not be reported due to lack of statistical significance (see Simonsohn, 2017, for critiques of this assumption). To assess small-study effects, we used the precision-effect test (PET) and precision-effect estimate with standard error (PEESE; T. D. Stanley & Doucouliagos, 2014). These methods yield adjusted mean estimates by extrapolating to effect sizes with a standard error or variance of zero (i.e., infinite sample size), presumably removing the influence of small-study effects. We modified the standard PET and PEESE approaches and used (a) a modified version of the standard error and variance formulas that did not induce a dependence on the effect size (Pustejovsky & Rodgers, 2019) and (b) RVE to account for effect dependencies (Rodgers & Pustejovsky, 2021). Also, similar to Egger's regression test for funnel plot asymmetry, we tested for the presence of selective reporting by using the p values for the slopes (e.g., for the effect size standard error) from meta-regression models.

Third, the contour-enhanced funnel plot displays the effect sizes (x-axis) plotted against their precision (y-axis) to yield a visual representation of the potential censoring of small studies with small, nonsignificant effects. Specifically, a funnel plot displays the original and the trim-and-fill imputed (i.e., suppressed) data (Peters et al., 2008). If the imputed data cluster primarily in the areas of statistical nonsignificance, they suggest that these studies were indeed missing, and publication bias might be present. This analysis used the contour-enhanced plot that includes lines to indicate conventional milestones in levels of statistical significance that serve to differentiate asymmetry due to publication bias from other causes of asymmetry (e.g., selective outcome reporting, chance; Peters et al., 2008).

Transparency, Openness, and Reproducibility

This project adhered to the Meta-Analysis Reporting Standards (Appelbaum et al., 2018), followed the guidelines for PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021), and included the PRISMA checklist in Supplemental Material A. Supplemental Material B provides the list of included records. Records in languages other than English were translated with the assistance of DeepL Translate. Otherwise, generative artificial intelligence was not used in this research. To facilitate the reproducibility of this meta-analysis (Lakens et al., 2016), all data and analysis code are available on the Open Science Framework at https://osf.io/ubk92.

Data were analyzed using R, Version 4.2.1, and the packages *metafor* (Viechtbauer, 2010) and *clubSandwich* (Pustejovsky, 2018a). Supplemental Material C displays the protocol for abstract screening, and Supplemental Material D presents the protocol for coding the moderator variables. This meta-analysis was not preregistered.

Results

Numbers of Effect Sizes and Descriptive Frequencies

This meta-analysis included 1,421 effect sizes from 239 records reporting 257 studies, representing 132,933 participants. The studies on average reported 5.53 effect sizes, with a minimum of one effect size per study and a maximum of 72 effect sizes ($Mdn = 4$).

Characteristics of Reports Included in Meta-Analysis

As shown in Table 2, the 1,421 effect sizes included 755 male samples and 414 female samples, as well as 252 mixed-gender samples, for which the reports did not disaggregate results by gender, and the disaggregated statistic information could not be obtained. Most effect sizes stem from participants in their early adulthood (74%) rather than in their midlate adulthood (14%) or adolescence (12%). Furthermore, most effect sizes derived from samples collected in North America (75%) or Europe (21%). The geographical origins of the included effect sizes are illustrated with heat maps in Supplemental Material G.

Most effects described nonbehavioral (89%) rather than behavioral outcomes (11%). The studies thus examined the consequences of media content that was humiliating (50%), pornographic (35%), or violent (15%). Focusing on the response content, most studies examined effects related to stereotypes and demeaning attitudes (37%), followed by aggressive responses (30%), rape myth acceptance (24%), and the objectification of the female body (8%). Table 3 summarizes descriptive frequencies for the effect sizes, grouping these statistics into the categories of participant gender, media content, and experimental versus nonexperimental study designs.

Displaying publication characteristics, Table 2 shows that most of the 239 reports were published (77%) rather than unpublished (23%). The published articles came from 88 different journals, with the highest numbers published in *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research* (20 articles), *Psychology of Women Quarterly* (11 articles), and *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (eight articles). These journals had a median impact factor of 2.34 at the time of the included

Table 2

Descriptive Frequencies: Number of Studies, Effect Sizes, and Sample Sizes

Characteristic	*k*	%	*n*	%	Participant	%
			Demographics			
Gender						
Women	119	34	414	29	59,090	44
Men	171	50	755	54	46,839	35
Mixed-gender samples	57	16	252	18	27,004	20
Age groups						
Adolescence	37	15	172	12	37,625	28
Early adulthood	172	67	1,054	74	72,538	55
Midlate adulthood	46	18	195	14	22,770	17
Participant regional location						
North America	171	66	1,064	75	82,974	62
Europe	70	27	303	21	44,605	33
Asia	10	4	36	2	3,796	3
Oceania	5	2	15	1	968	1
Africa	1	0	2	0	287	0
South America	1	0	1	0	303	0
			Outcome type			
Behavioral	49	17	150	10	5,599	4
Nonbehavioral	234	83	1,271	90	127,334	96
			Content type			
Media content						
Violent	34	12	209	15	5,135	4
Humiliating	144	51	713	50	55,922	42
Pornographic	102	36	499	35	71,876	54
Response content						
Aggressive	112	30	364	26	50,226	38
Stereotypes	139	37	631	44	54,664	41
Rape myth	91	24	328	23	14,118	11
Objectification	29	8	91	7	11,443	9
Mixed	3	1	7	0	2,482	2
			Publication type			
Published	197	77	1,005	71	119,254	90
Unpublished	60	23	416	29	13,679	10
Doctoral dissertations	42	69	301	72	10,689	78
Bachelor's theses	4	7	54	13	757	6
Master's theses	9	16	46	11	1,391	10
Unpublished data	5	9	15	4	842	6
			Methodological characteristics			
Dependent variables						
Correlations	120	45	639	44	105,312	79
Cohort rates	10	4	43	3	882	1
Independent groups	134	50	758	53	29,126	20
Manually computed Hedges's *g*	4	1	10	1	199	0
Independent variables						
Two-groups						
Experimental studies	139	100	751	100	23,045	100
Nonexperimental studies	14	11	87	13	33,118	30
Continuous						
Experimental studies	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nonexperimental studies	112	89	583	87	76,770	70
Design of nonexperimental studies						
Correlational	116	93	623	93	77,534	71
Cross-sectional	9	7	47	7	32,354	29
Total	257		1,421		132,933	

Note. *k* = number of studies; % of experimental studies = percentage of experimental studies; *n* = number of effect sizes; % of effect sizes. These numbers do not sum to the total because some studies included multiple media contents or mixed-gender samples.

articles' publication and of 3.66 in 2025. Only seven reports included studies that were preregistered (3%).

Examining methodological characteristics, most effect sizes were calculated based on independent groups (52%), correlations (44%), or cohort rates (3%). The study design was associated with the type of independent variable: In the (a) experimental studies, all 751 effect sizes were calculated with two-groups independent variables (100%), whereas in the (b) nonexperimental studies, the

Table 3
Number of Experimental and Nonexperimental Studies by Media Content and Participant Gender

Participant gender / Media content	Experimental study		Nonexperimental study	
	k	%	*k*	%
Overall				
Violence	20	14	14	11
Humiliation	108	74	38	30
Pornography	18	12	87	67
Total	139		125	
Women				
Violence	11	14	1	2
Humiliation	57	74	24	48
Pornography	9	12	25	50
Total	72		48	
Men				
Violence	12	13	12	12
Humiliation	66	72	27	27
Pornography	13	15	62	62
Total	87		89	

Note. *k* = number of studies; % of experimental studies = percentage of experimental studies that examined each media content among women and men separately; same applies to the nonexperimental studies. These numbers and percentages do not sum to the total or 100% because some studies included multiple media contents or mixed-gender samples.

majority were calculated with continuous independent variables (89%) and the minority with two-group independent variables (11%). Finally, of the 670 nonexperimental effect sizes, most effect sizes came from correlational (93%) rather than cross-sectional (7%) designs.

Characteristics of Reports With Insufficient Statistics

As shown in Figure 1, 135 reports were excluded because they failed to provide sufficient statistical information to compute an effect size, and the needed information was not obtainable from the authors. These reports did not substantially differ from the included articles in their content and publication features (see Supplemental Material H for a detailed description).

Mean and Distribution of Effect Sizes

Supporting Hypothesis 1, exposure to misogynous media content was associated with increased hostility to women, based on a random-effects model with RVE corrections, $g = 0.26$, 95% CI [.21, .30], $SE = 0.02$, $t(220.89) = 11.87$, $p < .001$. This overall average that combined results from 1,421 effect sizes across 257 studies exceeded the traditional threshold of small effect sizes ($g = 0.20$) as well as the empirically derived threshold for a small effect (i.e., $d = 0.15$; identified as the 25th percentile of the empirically derived distribution of effect sizes in social psychology; Lovakov & Agadullina, 2021).

Categorizing the individual effects sizes as small, medium, or large, as well as positive or negative in sign (following Lovakov & Agadullina, 2021), revealed that 41% were classified as small positive, 20% as medium positive, 11% as large positive, as well as 21% as small negative, 4% as medium negative, and 2% as large negative.

Between-studies and within-studies heterogeneities were large ($\tau_B = 0.26$, $\tau_W = 0.30$), with the estimated 95% prediction interval ranging from −0.52 to 1.04. This large prediction interval includes values indicating that exposure to misogynous content yields *less* hostile responses (negative values as low as $g = -0.52$) or more hostile responses (positive values as high as $g = 1.04$), suggesting that any new study might yield a substantial protective effect or a substantial harmful effect of misogynous media exposure (also see Table 4 for the estimated percentage of true effects greater than 0). The variability in observed effect sizes was mainly true effect heterogeneity rather than chance ($I^2 = 91.48$).

An analysis showed that the average effect size for the experimental ($g = 0.28$) and nonexperimental studies ($g = 0.24$) did not differ, $b = -0.05$, $SE = 0.05$, $t(89.46) = -0.98$, $p = .328$. As shown in Table 3, experimental studies most frequently examined effects of humiliating content (78% of all experimental studies), whereas nonexperimental studies most frequently examined effects of pornographic content (70% of all nonexperimental studies).

Moderator Analyses

Confirmatory Analyses

Table 4 shows separate random-effects models for the confirmatory moderators of participant gender (Hypothesis 2), the interaction between participant gender and media content (Hypothesis 3), participant age (Hypothesis 4), and stimulus–response similarity (Hypothesis 5). Table 5 shows the differences in effect sizes across the confirmatory moderators from the unconditional simple models (left side), which included one moderator at a time, as well as the multivariable model (right side), which simultaneously controlled for all confirmatory moderators and the two methods confounders (i.e., study design, continuous vs. two-groups independent variables). Table 4 provides a descriptive summary (each row representing a different random-effects, intercept-only model), and Table 5 displays the main hypothesis tests.

As shown in Table 5 (left side), descriptively, responses were stronger in men ($g = 0.27$) than women ($g = 0.20$), but this result was nonsignificant in a univariate model, $b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.03$, $t(70.36) = 1.90$, $p = .061$. In a multivariable model including several controls (for details see below), the gender difference was significant, thus providing partial support for Hypothesis 2.

To test Hypothesis 3, stating that men's (but not women's) response to misogynous content would be stronger when this content was violent compared to humiliating or pornographic, the model included the Participant Gender (man vs. woman) × Media Content (violence vs. humiliation vs. pornography) interaction, which was significant by a multivariate Wald test with RVE corrections, $F(5, 21.75) = 4.69$, $p = .005$. As shown in Figure 2 and consistent with our hypothesis, for violent content, effect sizes were substantially larger for male participants ($g = 0.38$) than female participants ($g = 0.03$). Gender differences in effect sizes were smaller for humiliating content ($g = 0.28$ vs. 0.26 for men vs. women, respectively) and pornographic content ($g = 0.23$ vs. 0.11). Meta-regression models confirmed that the gender difference was larger for violent than humiliating content, $b = 0.25$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(9.01) = 2.78$, $p = .022$, but not significantly larger for violent than pornographic content, $b = 0.17$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(13.94) = 1.78$, $p = .098$.

Supporting Hypothesis 4, adolescent participants showed greater hostility ($g = 0.32$) than participants in their midlate

Table 4

Results for Confirmatory Categorical Moderators (Separate Random-Effects Models)

Moderator	*k*	*n*	*g*	95% CI	*SE*	*df*	*p*	τ	>0 (%)	>0.2 (%)
Gender of participant										
Women	119	414	0.20	[0.14, 0.26]	0.04	106.73	<.001	0.45	67	50
Men	171	755	0.27	[0.22, 0.33]	0.03	148.17	<.001	0.35	78	57
Age of participant										
Adolescence	37	172	0.32	[0.22, 0.42]	0.04	28.47	<.001	0.26	88	66
Early adulthood	127	1,054	0.27	[0.22, 0.32]	0.03	145.25	<.001	0.41	75	57
Midlate adulthood	46	195	0.17	[0.07, 0.26]	0.05	29.97	.004	0.59	61	47
Media content										
Violence	34	209	0.29	[0.20, 0.37]	0.04	16.79	<.001	0.32	83	62
Women	12	79	0.03	[-0.12, 0.19]	0.08	5.52	.669	0.25	46	18
Men	24	115	0.38	[0.27, 0.48]	0.06	16.51	<.001	0.31	90	74
Humiliation	144	713	0.29	[0.23, 0.34]	0.03	92.83	<.001	0.44	75	59
Women	80	238	0.26	[0.18, 0.34]	0.04	67.21	<.001	0.48	74	60
Men	92	305	0.28	[0.21, 0.35]	0.04	66.30	<.001	0.36	79	60
Pornography	102	499	0.21	[0.15, 0.27]	0.03	88.46	<.001	0.41	70	51
Women	34	97	0.11	[0.01, 0.21]	0.05	26.26	.043	0.55	55	41
Men	72	335	0.23	[0.16, 0.30]	0.03	67.27	<.001	0.37	72	52
Stimulus–response similarity										
Low	180	787	0.23	[0.18, 0.27]	0.02	164.44	<.001	0.42	69	51
High	139	634	0.30	[0.25, 0.35]	0.03	134.26	<.001	0.37	79	61

Note. Positive values on the standardized mean difference score (*g*) indicate a positive association between misogynous media exposure and hostility to women. The means reported here (estimated from separate random-effects models) slightly differed from those reported in the text (which reports differences across moderator levels) due to differences in the meta-analytic weights that estimated the mean values. *k* = number of studies that contributed to the respective moderator level; *n* = number of effect sizes for the respective moderator level; *g* = random-effects weighted mean effect size (Hedges's *g*); CI = confidence interval; *SE* = robust variance estimation-corrected standard error for the mean; *df* = small-sample corrected Satterthwaite degrees of freedom; *p* = robust variance estimation-corrected *p* value for the mean differing from 0; τ = estimated standard deviation of true underlying effect sizes; >0 = estimated percentage of true effects greater than 0; >0.2 = estimated percentage of true effects greater than 0.2.

adulthood ($g = 0.17$), $b = 0.15$, $SE = 0.07$, $t(39.80) = 2.08$, $p = .044$. Yet, the adolescents showed similar responses as participants in their early adulthood ($g = 0.27$), and the contrast between these two groups was not significant, $b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.05$, $t(31.42) = 1.04$, $p = .306$.

Supporting Hypothesis 5, stimulus–response similarity between media content and hostile response was a significant moderator. That is, responses to misogynous content were stronger with high ($g = 0.30$) than low ($g = 0.23$) stimulus–response similarity, $b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.03$, $t(56.62) = 2.59$, $p = .012$.

Table 5

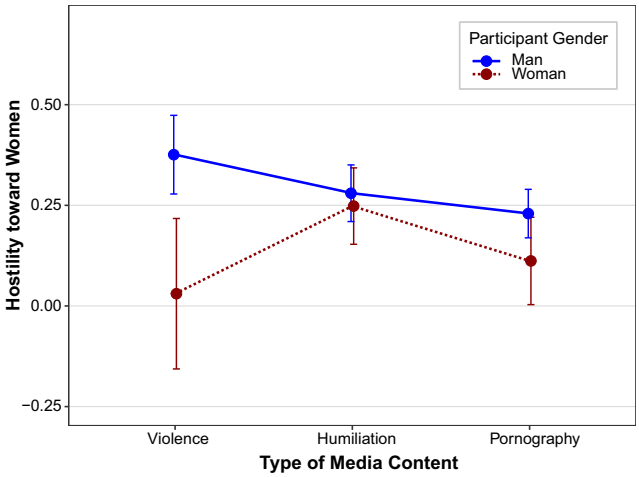
Differences in Effect Sizes Across Categorical Moderators in Simple and Multivariable Models

Comparison	Simple model				Multivariable model			
	b	*SE*	*df*	*p*	*b*	*SE*	*df*	*p*
Hypothesis 2 (participant gender)								
Men vs. women	0.07	0.04	70.4	.061	**0.10**	0.04	64.7	.010
Hypothesis 3 (Participant Gender × Media Content)								
Men–women difference for violence vs. humiliation	**0.25**	0.09	9.0	.022	**0.25**	0.10	9.0	.028
Men–women difference for violence vs. pornography	0.17	0.10	13.9	.098	0.18	0.10	13.7	.092
Hypothesis 4 (age)								
Adolescence vs. early adulthood	−0.05	0.05	31.4	.306	−0.07	0.05	31.9	.151
Adolescence vs. midlate adulthood	**−0.15**	0.07	39.8	.044	**−0.17**	0.07	37.1	.023
Hypothesis 5 (stimulus–response similarity)								
High vs. low	**0.07**	0.03	56.6	.012	0.05	0.03	48.4	.065

Note. The simple models (left-hand side) tested each confirmatory moderator one-by-one in separate models. The multivariable model (right-hand side) simultaneously controlled for all confirmatory moderators, study design (experimental vs. nonexperimental), and the scale of the independent variable (continuous vs. two-groups). Significant coefficients appear in bold. To include all effect sizes, the meta-regression models included the other regression coefficients (e.g., difference between mixed-gender and all-female samples) that are not shown here because they were not central to our hypotheses. All statistics shown here were based on mixed-effects meta-regression models with robust variance estimation corrections. For Hypothesis 3, the coefficient tested whether the male–female difference was larger for violent versus humiliating content and for violent versus pornographic content, respectively. *b* = difference in Hedges's *g* effect sizes (regression coefficient); *SE* = robust variance estimation-corrected standard error for difference; *df* = small-sample corrected Satterthwaite degrees of freedom; *p* = robust variance estimation-corrected *p* value for the difference differing from 0.

Figure 2

Effect of Exposure to Violent, Humiliating, or Pornographic Media Content on Women's and Men's Hostility to Women



Note. Positive values on the standardized mean difference score (*g*) indicated a positive association between misogynous media exposure and hostility to women. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

Multivariable Analyses

The right side of Table 5 displays a multivariable model that simultaneously controlled for all confirmatory moderators at once, in addition to the two methods confounders of study design and scale of the independent variable. In total, these moderators explained 2.3% of the effect size variance, based on the reduction of estimated heterogeneity parameters, as compared to the random-effects model with no moderators. Results for individual moderators generally remained similar to the simple models that included only one moderator at a time, with the notable exception of the male–female difference (Hypothesis 2), which failed to reach significance in the simple unconditional model but was significant in the more complex multivariable model, $b = 0.10$, $SE = 0.04$, $t(64.70) = 2.67$, $p = .010$.

Exploratory Analyses

Exploratory results for the categorical moderators appear in Table 6 and for the continuous moderators in Table 7. Each model included one exploratory moderator at a time.

As shown in Table 6, effect sizes varied by response content, $F(4, 9.54) = 5.56$, $p = .014$, with misogynous media content having the largest effects on objectification ($g = 0.43$, $n = 91$) and aggressive responses ($g = 0.32$, $n = 364$), followed by rape myth acceptance ($g = 0.21$, $n = 328$) and demeaning attitudes and stereotypes ($g = 0.21$, $n = 631$). Moreover, the type of outcome revealed stronger effects for behavioral outcomes ($g = 0.38$) than nonbehavioral outcomes ($g = 0.24$), $F(1, 20.14) = 5.22$, $p = .033$. As further shown in Table 6, moderation was not significant for media type (e.g., films vs. music vs. text), type of consumption (active vs. passive), perpetrator gender (men, women, mixed), or gender of first author. That is, these variables had no significant effect on the strength of hostile responses. Table 7 further displays that moderation was not significant for year of publication or the percentage of male authors contributing to the original record.

Examining potential differences in individual study quality (also see Table 6), studies' preregistration status moderated the strength of the effect, $F(1, 6.11) = 7.01$, $p = .037$, indicating that the effects were larger for the 1,379 effect sizes derived from non-preregistered studies ($g = 0.27$; across $k = 250$ studies) than from the 42 effect sizes derived from preregistered studies ($g = 0.04$; across $k = 7$ studies). However, cautious interpretation is required due to the small number of studies with preregistration.

Examining another proxy for study quality, results were significantly larger for published studies ($g = 0.28$; across $k = 197$ studies) than unpublished studies ($g = 0.17$; across $k = 60$ studies). To the extent that publication reflects higher quality (i.e., peer-reviewed), this result indicates that misogynous media effects are larger in higher quality studies. Of course, another interpretation is that this difference reflects selective reporting bias, as discussed later. Finally, focusing on the nonexperimental studies only, an exploratory analysis showed that the effect sizes did not differ between the correlational ($g = 0.24$) and cross-sectional ($g = 0.21$) studies, $F(1, 8.97) = 0.12$, $p = .742$.

Robustness Check by Examining Experimental and Nonexperimental Studies Separately

As a robustness check examining whether moderator results would differ by study design, we reran the simple models testing our hypotheses individually by separating the 139 experimental studies (including $n = 751$ effect sizes) from the 125 nonexperimental studies (including $n = 670$ effect sizes). Supplemental Material I contains these results. Figure 3 contains a forest plot visualizing the mean effects for the different subgroups. Supplemental Table SI3 contains the estimates of the heterogeneity within these different subgroups.

Overall, most hypothesized differences remained significant in the analyses examining only the nonexperimental studies, whereas some notably different results emerged when examining only the experimental studies (see Supplemental Table SI2). Specifically, for the nonexperimental studies, the hypothesized differences remained significant for participant gender (Hypothesis 2, $g = 0.28$ for men, $g = 0.13$ for women) and stimulus–response similarity (Hypothesis 5, $g = 0.30$ for high, $g = 0.20$ for low). The moderation for age became nonsignificant although the descriptive pattern of means remained as in the overall sample (Hypothesis 4, $g = 0.31$ for adolescents, $g = 0.22$ for participants in early adulthood, $g = 0.18$ for those in midlate adulthood).

For the experimental studies, the differences that no longer attained significance included those based on participant gender ($g = 0.24$ for men, $g = 0.27$ for women), age ($g = 0.33$ for adolescents, $g = 0.31$ for early adult participants, $g = 0.17$ for midlate adult participants), and stimulus–response similarity ($g = 0.30$ for high, $g = 0.27$ for low). Descriptively, these patterns of means corresponded to the overall results for the age and stimulus–response similarity, yet women and men showed relatively similar levels of hostility when exposed to misogyny in experimental studies.

Focusing on the experimental studies only, the gender difference for the violent compared to the pornographic content reached significance, $b = 0.65$, $SE = 0.17$, $t(11.6) = -3.79$, $p = .003$, although it was not significant in the overall model that included

Table 6

Impact of Categorial Moderators on the Effect of Misogynous Media on Hostile Responses (Exploratory Analyses)

Moderator	*k*	*n*	Mean estimate				Test of moderation	
			g	*SE*	*df*	*p*	*F*	*p*
Response content							$F(4, 9.54) = 5.56$	.014
Aggressive	112	364	0.32	0.03	93.29	<.001		
Objectification	29	91	0.43	0.05	24.10	<.001		
Rape myth	91	328	0.21	0.03	79.86	<.001		
Stereotypes	139	631	0.21	0.03	137.51	<.001		
Mixed	3	7	0.25	0.07	1.53	.103		
Outcome type							$F(1, 20.14) = 5.22$	.033
Behavioral	49	150	0.38	0.06	29.36	<.001		
Nonbehavioral	234	1,271	0.24	0.02	211.71	<.001		
Type of consumption							$F(1, 26.39) = 0.56$	.463
Active	30	154	0.21	0.07	22.04	.008		
Passive	227	1,263	0.27	0.02	197.62	<.001		
Perpetrator gender							$F(2, 24.69) = 0.82$	.381
Men	34	166	0.39	0.09	19.26	<.001		
Women	69	322	0.25	0.04	32.17	<.001		
Mixed	82	592	0.24	0.05	61.14	<.001		
Preregistration							$F(1, 6.11) = 7.01$	.037
Nonpreregistered	250	1,379	0.27	0.02	213.94	<.001		
Preregistered	7	42	0.04	0.08	5.71	.608		
Publication status							$F(1, 83.90) = 5.07$	.027
Published	197	1,005	0.28	0.03	167.56	<.001		
Unpublished	60	416	0.17	0.04	52.04	<.001		
Media type							$F(6, 28.11) = 0.69$	.657
Films	76	316	0.25	0.04	65.92	<.001		
Mixed content	79	454	0.27	0.03	68.94	<.001		
Music	13	62	0.19	0.05	8.37	.003		
Music video	20	167	0.24	0.05	16.37	<.001		
Pictures	31	157	0.35	0.08	24.27	<.001		
Text	26	127	0.20	0.07	20.25	.011		
Video games	26	138	0.22	0.07	21.10	.007		
Participant regional location							$F(5, 6.46) = 5124.29$	<.001
Africa	1	2	1.92	0.01	1.00	.002		
Asia	10	36	0.33	0.08	7.20	.005		
Europe	70	303	0.28	0.03	56.15	<.001		
North America	171	1,064	0.24	0.03	147.02	<.001		
Oceania	5	15	0.22	0.12	3.80	.139		
South America	1	1	0.62	0.00				
Gender of first author							$F(1, 169.26) = 1.33$	.250
Man	96	521	0.29	0.04	80.68	<.001		
Woman	161	900	0.24	0.03	139.18	<.001		
Type of nonexperimental study							$F(1, 8.97) = 0.12$	.742
Correlational	116	623	0.24	0.03	108.96	<.001		
Cross-sectional	9	47	0.21	0.09	7.71	.061		

Note. Positive values on the standardized mean difference score (*g*) indicate a positive association between misogynous media exposure and hostility to women. *k* = number of studies that contributed to the respective moderator level; *n* = number of effect sizes in the respective moderator category; *g* = random-effects weighted mean effect size (Hedges's *g*); *SE* = robust variance estimation-corrected standard error for the mean; *df* = small-sample corrected Satterthwaite degrees of freedom; *p* = robust variance estimation-corrected *p* value for the mean differing from 0 (first *p* column) or differences across moderator levels (second *p* column); *F* = robust variance estimation-corrected Wald *F* test statistic for differences across moderator levels.

both study designs ($p = .098$; see Table 5). In the overall model (see Figure 2), the effect sizes for violent content were larger for men ($g = 0.38$) than women ($g = 0.03$; see Supplemental Figure SI1). Different from the overall model, effect sizes for pornographic content were larger for women ($g = 0.44$) than men ($g = .03$). These results thus suggest that in experimental studies in particular, women showed relatively stronger responses to pornographic content than men, whereas men continued to show relatively stronger responses to violent content than women, as was the case in the overall model.

The second proposed gender difference, for violent compared to humiliating content, failed to reach significance in experimental studies only, although cautious interpretation is required due to this test's small degrees of freedom, $b = 0.23$, $SE = 0.14$, $t(4.70) = -1.69$, $p = .155$. Descriptively, however, as in the overall model, men showed stronger responses to violent content than women (see above) and did not differ for humiliating content ($g = 0.26$ for men, $g = 0.28$ for women).

Focusing on the nonexperimental studies only, the robustness check could not be performed due to a very small sample size.

Table 7
Impact of Continuous Moderators on the Effect of Misogynous Media on Hostile Responses (Exploratory Analyses)

Moderator	*b*	*SE*	*df*	*p*
Year of publication	<0.01	<0.01	54.60	.903
Proportion male authors	0.05	0.06	124.90	.399

Note. *b* = mixed-effects meta-regression coefficient for continuous moderator; *SE* = robust variance estimation-corrected standard error for difference; *df* = small-sample corrected Satterthwaite degrees of freedom; *p* = robust variance estimation-corrected *p* value for the difference differing from 0.

As shown in Table 3, women's reaction to violent content in the nonexperimental studies—which was the comparison group for the other two types of media content—was based on one effect size (from Guzman, 2015). Therefore, Supplemental Table SI2 and Supplemental Figure SI1 do not include the interaction results for nonexperimental studies only, and we refrain from interpreting them (although the statistics appear in Supplemental Table SI1).

Robustness Check by Examining the Moderators Pertaining to Media Contents

We reran the moderation analyses separately by media content (i.e., violence, humiliation, and pornography), and these analyses focused on age (Hypothesis 4) and stimulus–response similarity (Hypothesis 5) because Hypothesis 3 previously addressed how participant gender effects would vary across media content (showing that the gender difference was particularly pronounced for violent media content). Supplemental Material J contains these details, with Supplemental Table SJ1 displaying the results and Supplemental Figure SJ1 forest plots visualizing the effects for the different age subgroups.

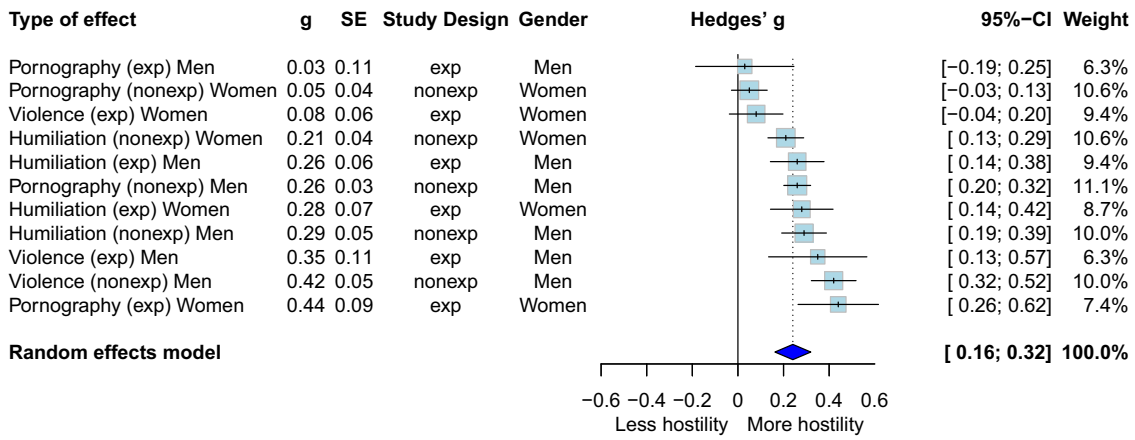
In sum, age was a significant moderator of the relation between misogynous media and hostility toward women only for pornographic content, $F(2, 22.52) = 3.46$, $p = .049$, and not for violent or humiliating content, $F(2, 1.90) = 0.32$, $p = .760$ and $F(2, 21.34) = 0.58$, $p = .568$, respectively (see forest plot in Supplemental Figure SI1). That is, the effect of pornographic media was strongest for adolescents ($g = 0.31$), followed by those in early adulthood ($g = 0.22$), and weakest for those in midlate adulthood ($g = 0.07$). Showing a similar pattern, stimulus–response similarity was a significant moderator of the relationship between misogynous media and hostility toward women only for pornographic content, $F(1, 20.14) = 11.16$, $p = .003$ ($g = 0.38$ for high and $g = 0.18$ for low similarity), but not for violent and humiliating content, $F(1, 7.60) = 0.67$, $p = .439$ and $F(1, 32.36) = 0.73$, $p = .400$, respectively.

Publication Bias

Three approaches examined selective reporting bias. Table 8 shows results from the (a) published versus unpublished differences and the (b) meta-regression of small-study effects. Figure 4 displays the (c) contour-enhanced funnel plot. This battery of sensitivity analyses yielded adjusted mean estimates ranging from $g = 0.17$ to $g = 0.27$, providing both small upward and larger downward adjustments to the unadjusted mean of $g = 0.26$. This range supports the robustness of our results, in that even the most conservative adjusted estimate of $g = 0.17$ would lead to similar conclusions about the statistically small, but detectable, overall magnitude of misogynous media effects, as did the unadjusted estimate.

As shown in Table 8, the only upward adjustment came from the PEESE estimate ($g = 0.27$), based on including the effect size standard error in a meta-regression model. The upward adjustment implies that larger studies had larger average effects, counterintuitively suggesting selective reporting bias *against* significant results. The PET estimate ($g = 0.26$) suggested no adjustment compared to the unadjusted mean of $g = 0.26$. The largest downward adjustment, in contrast, came from the estimate for unpublished literature ($g = 0.17$), but this estimate was still relatively close to the unadjusted

Figure 3
Forest Plot Displaying the Means for the Subgroups Based on Gender, Media Content, and Study Design



Note. Positive values on the standardized mean difference score (*g*) indicate a positive association between misogynous media exposure and hostility to women. The forest plot does not include women's reaction to violent content in nonexperimental studies because this subgroup includes only one effect size. exp = experimental study designs; nonexp = nonexperimental study designs; *SE* = standard error; CI = confidence interval. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

Table 8
Mean Effect Size Estimates Across Adjustments for Publication Bias

Model	Simple adjustment				
	b	*SE*	*df*	*p* for mean	Bias test *p*
Unadjusted	0.26	0.02	220.89	<.001	
PET	0.26	0.05	83.73	<.001	.901
PEESE	0.27	0.03	151.07	<.001	.598
Unpublished literature	0.17	0.04	52.04	<.001	.027

Note. All approaches used robust variance estimation corrections. Adjustment = approach used to adjust for selective reporting bias; *b* = mean effect size estimate; *SE* = standard error of mean; *df* = degrees of freedom for the mean estimate; *p* for mean = *p* value for mean differing from 0; bias test *p* = *p* value for evidence of selective reporting bias in the unadjusted estimate (e.g., significant published–unpublished difference); PET = precision-effect test; PEESE = precision-effect estimate with standard error.

estimate ($g = 0.26$). Most of the effect sizes (71%) came from published studies ($k = 197$ studies, including $n = 1{,}005$ effect sizes) rather than unpublished studies ($k = 60$; $n = 416$). The published–unpublished difference was significant, $F(1, 83.90) = 5.07$, $p = .027$. Additional exploratory analyses revealed that the published–unpublished difference emerged mainly in studies examining humiliating media content, whereas no significant difference occurred in those studies examining violent or pornographic media content (see Supplemental Materials J).

As shown in Figure 4, the visual examination of the contour-enhanced funnel plot provides little evidence for the potential censoring of small studies with small nonsignificant effects. In fact, the plot looks very symmetrical, and small studies were also reported when showing nonsignificant effects (see the white area representing effects with $p > .100$ in Figure 4). In summary, these publication bias analyses could not find evidence indicating publication bias in our meta-analytic results.

To explore whether selective reporting or selective publication pressures would operate differently for experimental versus nonexperimental study designs, we ran our set of sensitivity analyses two more times, separately for the experimental and the nonexperimental studies. As shown in Supplemental Material K, these additional sensitivity analyses yielded adjusted mean estimates ranging from $g = 0.16$ (for unpublished nonexperimental studies) to $g = 0.33$ (for the PET estimates for experimental studies), providing both small upward and larger downward adjustments to the unadjusted mean of $g = 0.26$. This range again supports the robustness of our results, with the upward adjustment from the PET and PEESE estimate among experimental studies implying that larger experimental studies had larger average effects, counterintuitively suggesting selective reporting bias *against* significant results.

Discussion

Association Between Misogynous Media Content and Hostility to Women

This meta-analysis found robust evidence for an association between exposure to misogynous media and hostility to women. Overall, the results, which are based on 47 years of experimental and nonexperimental research encompassing 257 studies and 132,933 participants, showed a significant and consequential positive association between exposure to misogynous media and greater hostility to women, $g = 0.26$. Exploration of the magnitude of the effects revealed that 41% were classified as small positive, 20% as medium positive, 11% as large positive, and 21% as small negative and 6% as medium to large negative. Moreover, in natural settings, effects cumulate over time given the repeated exposures due to the prevalence of misogyny in the media (Anvari et al., 2023; Funder & Ozer, 2019).

The overall effect was robust to adjustments for selective reporting bias. A series of publication bias analyses examining the potential for selective reporting bias in the relevant literature found adjusted mean estimates that provided both upward and downward adjustments (ranging from $g = 0.17$ to $g = 0.27$). These results support the conclusion about a small-to-medium misogynous media effect, given that even the most conservative adjusted estimate revealed a nontrivial misogynous media effect on hostility to women (e.g., greater than the 25th percentile of the empirically derived distribution of effect sizes in social psychology, $d = 0.15$; Lovakov & Agadullina, 2021). Thus, this meta-analysis provides consistent support for the principle that greater exposure to media that depict women in a hated, disliked, or prejudiced way relates to more hostility toward women.

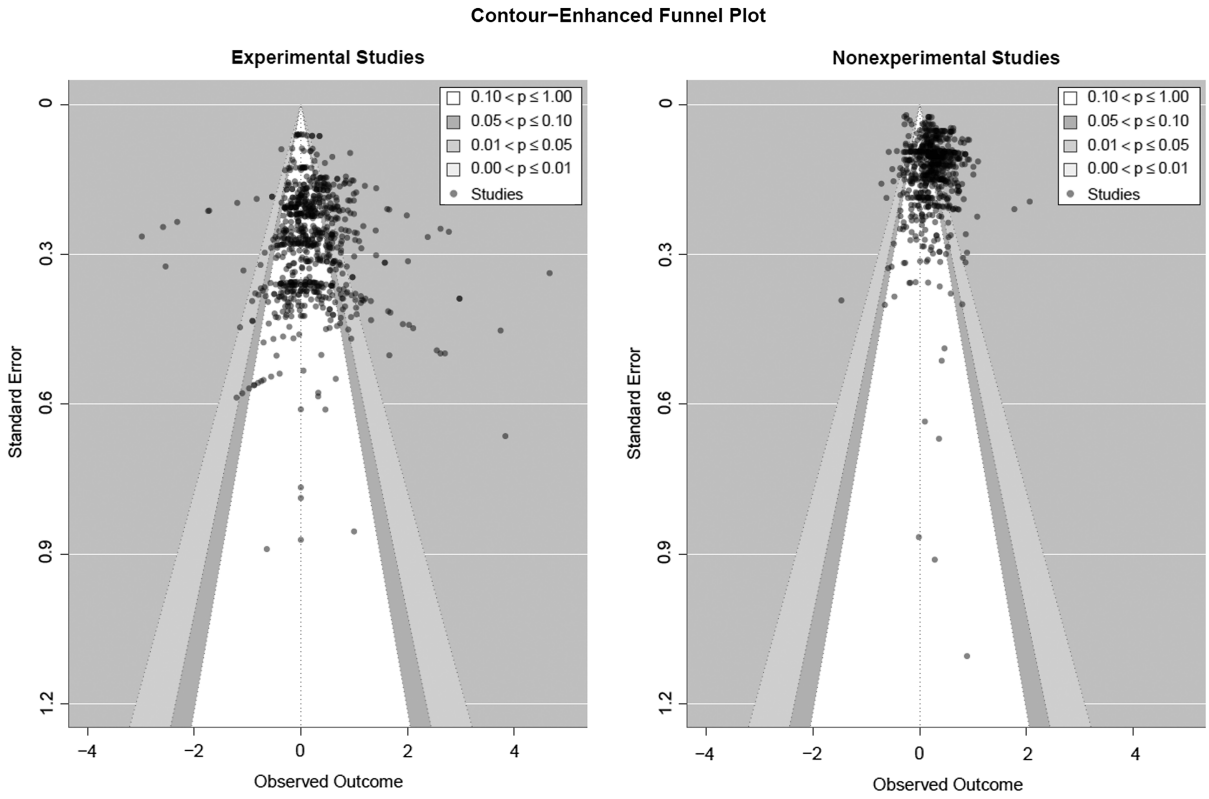
This key finding of our meta-analysis corresponds to the core prediction of learning models. Whereas the GAM (Anderson & Bushman, 2002) focuses on aggressive media content, the GLM (Buckley & Anderson, 2006) postulates that exposure to any kind of media content produces corresponding behaviors in observers. Consistent with these learning models, our meta-analysis confirms the relation between violent misogynous content and aggressive responses as postulated in the GAM. Also consistent with the GLM, learning applies to other forms of media content (i.e., misogynous media) and, thus, provides support for the broader claim of the GLM that all kinds of media content facilitate related behaviors in observers.

The inclusion of both experimental and nonexperimental studies, an important advantage of this meta-analysis, brings clarity to the issue of causality. The correlational aspect of the nonexperimental studies renders them vulnerable to the entirely plausible reverse causation argument that people who are more hostile to women are more likely to consume misogynous media. This opposite causal direction matches the classic selective exposure hypothesis in social psychology by which people select attitudinally congenital information (Hart et al., 2009). However, the experimental studies, with their random assignment, demonstrated forward causation from media exposure to hostile attitudes and thus suggest that the correlational findings are at least partly due to misogynous media exposure producing more hostile responses.

These findings not only answer the question of whether misogynistic media are related to hostility toward women but also contribute to ongoing debates in media psychology regarding the influence of media on attitudes and behavior (Valkenburg et al., 2016). As noted in the introduction, experts on media have remained divided on whether various forms of media, such as violent video games, social media, or smartphone use, shape aggression, mental health, and social attitudes. The present meta-analysis provides robust evidence that exposure to misogynistic media content is reliably associated with increased hostility to women and offers

Figure 4

Contour-Enhanced Funnel Plots Separately for Experimental and Nonexperimental Studies



Note. Effect sizes (*x*-axis) are plotted against their precision (*y*-axis) as a visual means to examine the potential censoring of small studies with small, nonsignificant effects.

meaningful support for the view that media exposure contributes to shaping social attitudes and behavior.

Moderation of the Association Between Misogynous Media Content and Hostility to Women

In our meta-analysis, the heterogeneity of the effects was large, with the estimated prediction interval ranging from $g = -0.52$ to $g = 1.04$, making the consideration of moderating variables especially important. The inclusion of a wide range of misogynous media content and hostile outcomes in this meta-analysis enabled the identification of several moderators that proved to be significant, although only in nonexperimental studies: (a) Exposure to misogynous media related to greater hostility more strongly among men than women, and this gender difference was larger for violent than humiliating or pornographic content, and (b) the effect of media on hostility was larger for studies with higher similarity between media content and hostile responding.

These findings support the assumption of the GAM that exposure to violent content increases aggressive behavior (Bushman & Anderson, 2021) but also the broader assumption of the GLM that the learning process occurs as well in additional domains. Thus, nonviolent misogynous content also increased hostility to women. Moreover, the heterogeneity of the effects allowed the identification of additional moderators that contribute to prediction.

Moderating Effect of Participant Gender

Learning models postulate that personal factors, such as gender and age, can moderate the relationship between exposure to media content and related responses (e.g., Bushman & Anderson, 2021). Supporting these assumptions and our hypotheses, the meta-analytic effects tended to be stronger for men than women (and significantly so in multivariable models), and this difference was especially large for violent content. The direction of this effect is interpretable in terms of the differing implications of misogynous stimulus content for women and men (Bushman & Anderson, 2021). Thus, the more hostile response on the part of men might be explained by multiple active and passive psychological processes. In particular, male observers would experience a greater similarity between themselves and the (typically male) actor of harmful behavior to women (e.g., Bandura, 2001). An alternative explanation for this finding might be ingroup favoritism in that individuals treat their own group (e.g., gender) more favorably (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Moreover, female observers have good reason to resist hostility to their own identity group, especially when misogynous media content is easily recognizable as such. Yet, previous meta-analytic research provided no evidence for such a moderating effect. Specifically, investigating exposure to violent and nonviolent sexualized media in experimental and nonexperimental studies, Burnay et al. (2022) did not find that aggressive responses differed in male and female

participants. Similarly, in their meta-analysis on the effect of pornography consumption on sexual aggression, P. J. Wright et al. (2016) reported similar effects on men and women. However, due to the narrower scope of these meta-analyses and the focus on male participants, the analyses of gender as a moderator rested on few cases (e.g., $n = 21$ male samples and $n = 7$ female samples in P. J. Wright et al., 2016). Also, other meta-analyses did not provide analyses of participant gender due to limited statistical power (e.g., Hedrick, 2021). By including more than 400 effects for female samples and more than 700 effects for male samples, our meta-analysis supersedes the prior, more limited findings regarding the moderating effect of gender. In fact, our broad analyses reveal that gender differences exist but are largely dependent on the context and type of study. Specifically, the fact that men showed relatively stronger responses in nonexperimental studies but not in experimental studies (see Supplemental Table SI2) suggests that especially long-term or repeated exposure underlie these effects. Moreover, men showed relatively stronger responses than women for violent and pornographic content but not for humiliating content, suggesting that effects might depend on how easily recognizable content is as misogynistic.

One incidental finding was that effect sizes for mixed-gender samples ($g = 0.31$) were typically larger than for all-female samples ($g = 0.20$) or all-male samples ($g = 0.27$). This finding is difficult to interpret because it derives from an unrepresentative minority of studies whose effects remained aggregated across participant gender, despite our efforts to obtain the relevant gender information from their authors, thus precluding a more nuanced analysis of gender. The unclear sample characteristics of these mixed samples, thus, speak against interpreting this incidental finding and point to the critical importance of fully reporting results disaggregated to enable nuanced analyses and interpretations.

Moderating Effect of Age

Also consistent with theory and our assumptions, the results revealed that adolescents expressed greater hostility to women after exposure to misogynous media content than did participants in their midlate adulthood. This overall finding is consistent with past meta-analyses showing stronger effects in younger samples (for sexualized media content, Coyne et al., 2019; for violent video games, Burkhardt & Lenhard, 2022). This greater susceptibility might reflect adolescents' lesser life experience (Visser & Krosnick, 1998) or the maturational trajectories of brain regions relevant to social interactions such as the prefrontal cortex (Crone & Konijn, 2018). Of interest in our meta-analysis is the additional finding that the greater hostility among adolescents was stronger in nonexperimental studies surveying participants' freely chosen consumption of misogynous media. In contrast, the experimental studies yielded no difference between adolescents and participants in their midlate adulthood, although the small number of studies of adolescents ($k = 8$) limits interpretation. Likely for ethical reasons, researchers rarely conducted experiments that purposefully exposed minors to misogynous content. Finally, in subgroup analyses, the significant moderating effect of age appeared only for pornographic content, which could reflect low statistical power for violent content where there were relatively few studies.

These age findings are of high practical relevance because they reveal that especially younger individuals may be vulnerable to the negative effects of media consumption. Thus, adolescents deserve protection from exposure to misogynous media content; remedies include stricter harm-to-minors laws restricting media content such as pornography. This recommendation is consistent with earlier evidence of the amplification of media effects on younger people (e.g., Bushman & Huesmann, 2006). Also helpful would be additional research on educational interventions that could buffer the potentially negative effects of pornographic content in youth (e.g., Isaacs & Fisher, 2008).

Moderating Effect of Stimulus–Response Similarity

Consistent with our reasoning about stimulus–response similarity between content and response, this meta-analysis identified a moderator not included in the theoretical framework of learning models. Specifically, the greater the similarity in the meaning of the media content and the assessed responses, the more hostile the response to women. Consistent with the extensive research on stimulus–response similarity (e.g., Fischer et al., 2011; Shepard, 1958), it is not surprising that the general principle seems to apply to misogynous media. Adding nuance to the current knowledge, additional analyses found that the stronger effects with greater similarity were mainly due to pornographic content.

Influence of Type of Consumption and Perpetrator Gender

The results of this meta-analysis provided no evidence of a moderating influence of type of consumption (active vs. passive consumption) or perpetrator gender (gender of the person who disseminates the misogynous content). This absence is partially consistent with earlier meta-analyses (e.g., Burnay et al., 2022) but not with others (e.g., Fischer et al., 2011). Complexities derive from the intertwining of variables such as active versus passive consumption with other media properties, such as media type. An inherent feature of video games in natural settings, for example, is that they allow variable degrees of player immersion in the game, whereas experimental studies generally control immersion (see Tal-Or & Tsfati, 2018, for a rare study of this type).

Influence of Media and Response Content

The broad scope of our meta-analysis allowed assessment of the predictive value of the GAM and the GLM. Consistent with the assumptions of the GAM (Bushman & Anderson, 2021), exposure to violent content increased aggressive responding. In fact, one of the strongest effects in our meta-analysis occurred on aggressive responses (e.g., approving or engaging in sexual and/or physical violence against women). The GLM also postulates that additional content (e.g., prosocial content) can be elicited by corresponding behavior (e.g., prosocial behavior; Greitemeyer, 2022), a generalization that our findings supported thereby providing evidence for the broad applicability of the GLM. Our findings show that the effects also generalize to outcomes that do not clearly or precisely correspond to the observed content. For example, our analyses revealed relatively strong effects of objectification and smaller effects of endorsement of demeaning stereotypes, even when controlling for stimulus–response similarity. In addition, research has shown that the objectification of women is associated with a wide range of negative outcomes, including denial of their full

mental capacities, lived experience, and sense of agency (Moradi & Huang, 2008), reactions that can justify negative and violent treatment of women (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014).

In sum, our results support the GLM principle that nonviolent as well as violent content produces corresponding behaviors and attitudes. None of the examined additional exploratory moderator variables had a significant effect on the strength of hostile responses, that is, results showed no moderation by media type (e.g., films vs. music vs. text), participant regional location, or gender of the first author.

Influence of Study Design

Our meta-analysis further found that the overall strength of the effect of misogynous media on hostility did not differ between the experimental and nonexperimental studies. This consistency of our meta-analytic estimates across the different methods validates the generalizability of the laboratory results in this research literature. Nevertheless, robustness checks computed separately on experimental and nonexperimental studies revealed a nuanced and interesting pattern of findings.

First, these two study designs differed in both their typical misogynous media content and assessed hostile responses. As shown in Table 3, the most common type of media content was humiliating in the experimental studies and pornographic in the nonexperimental studies. In addition, the nonexperimental studies of pornographic content usually examined only the responses of men. Moreover, experimental studies often examined relatively mild forms of hostility to women, such as participants' estimates of how much hot chili sauce should be given to a woman who dislikes spicy food (Fischer & Greitemeyer, 2006). In contrast, nonexperimental studies more often focused on severely hostile responses, such as estimates of the likelihood of using force to obtain sex (Boeringer, 1994).

Exploratory findings from robustness checks revealed that our hypothesized age and gender differences emerged in the nonexperimental research studies, in which respondents voluntarily chose to consume this content yet were weaker and nonsignificant in the experimental research studies, in which both women and men, as well as people of different ages, were exposed to misogynistic content. This consideration suggests that self-selection and conscious decisions to consume misogynous media are likely important determinants of hostile responses to women that should be investigated in future research.

Finally, the robustness checks on whether men reacted with greater hostility than women when exposed to violent (vs. pornographic or humiliating) content revealed new insights. Consistent with learning models' predictions that personal factors, such as gender, can moderate the impact of media exposure, women more than men resisted blatantly misogynous messages, probably because they identified with the female victim, a process that would counteract hostility to women. In fact, the greater gender difference for violent than pornographic content was robust in the experimental studies. Yet, unexpectedly, robustness checks revealed that women showed stronger responses than men when exposed to pornographic content in experiments. Thus, in the absence of choice, women assigned to watch pornography, with its objectification of the female body and strong focus on male pleasure (Fritz & Paul, 2017), showed relatively stronger negative responding than men, perhaps because of their less direct experience with this type of content (Ceci, 2023; Hald, 2006) and their consequent tendency to be more offended by it.

Limitations and Future Directions

In summary, this meta-analysis found a small overall effect of misogynous media content with a large heterogeneity of the effects. As argued by methodologists of meta-analysis (e.g., Tipton et al., 2023; Williams et al., 2022), meta-analytic measures of central tendency remain informative, even in the presence of substantial heterogeneity. Even though consideration of moderating effects is especially important in such cases, the moderators included in our meta-analysis accounted for only part of the observed heterogeneity. It follows that future research likely will identify additional moderators of the association between exposure to misogynous media and hostile responses to women.

Reflecting another limitation, our meta-analysis examined the relationship between misogynous media exposure and hostile responses but did not examine the reasons why individuals are exposed to such content in the first place. Of relevance is the debate in the violent video game literature (e.g., Ferguson & Colwell, 2020) suggesting that factors beyond the moderators considered in our analysis may predispose certain individuals to seek out or self-select into exposure to misogynous media. For example, in research on violent video games (Greitemeyer, 2015), everyday sadism predicted violent video game preferences, which may suggest that misogynistic people are especially attracted to consuming misogynous media content. This issue also relates to our exploratory findings showing that in nonexperimental studies (in which people usually choose to consume this content), the effects were stronger than in the experimental studies (in which people were forced to consume this content; see Supplemental Table SH2).

The broad scope of this meta-analysis encompassing differing media types, media contents, and types of hostile responses required making some simplifying assumptions. In particular, guided by multiple content analyses, we treated pornography as misogynous unless stated otherwise, such as in female-friendly pornography made explicitly for women (Bridges et al., 2010; Fritz & Paul, 2017; Klaassen & Peter, 2015). Also included were nonexperimental studies on exposure to different types of music if the authors of the original studies framed their research as studying effects of misogynous music. This approach seems warranted given numerous content analyses documenting misogyny in music (e.g., Avery et al., 2017; Baker-Kimmons & McFarland, 2011; Flynn et al., 2016). Our inclusion of such studies might have weakened the effect of misogynous media on hostility to women, in which case the overall effect would be underestimated.

A promising avenue for future research concerns social media outlets. In our meta-analysis, the currently small numbers of studies examining effects of misogyny in social media (e.g., TikTok) disallowed comparing its effects to those in other media. Yet, given the prevalence of misogyny online (e.g., Gov.UK, 2022; Willingham, 2022) and the critique that social media content is insufficiently monitored for misogyny and devaluation of other groups (Barker & Jurasz, 2019; Flew et al., 2019), future research should investigate the effects of exposure to misogynous social media content in both the digital space and natural settings.

This meta-analysis raises the possibility of examining media devaluation of individuals with other identities. Although less prevalent than misogyny, the devaluation of men by the portrayal of fathers as foolish and incompetent (Scharrer, 2013) or dangerous and violent (Consalvo, 2003) may elicit negative reactions to men in general. Considerably less common is research on media content targeting individuals with intersecting identities, such as Black and White women (e.g., misogynoir; Bailey & Trudy, 2018), or nonbinary and transgender identities. As studies cumulate for these additional identity groups, meta-analyses could follow.

Our approach in this meta-analysis to quantify evidence concurs with omitting qualitative studies that did not contain quantitative data, but such studies are no doubt worthy of further examination and review. Also, consistent with our preregistered protocols (see Supplemental Material C), this meta-analysis did not include vulnerable populations (e.g., delinquent adults) and children because it intended to produce conclusions for the general adult population. Moreover, the research included in our meta-analysis allowed for only limited analysis of cultural variability in the misogynous media effect. As illustrated by the heat maps in Supplemental Material G, most of the included studies were conducted in either North America (66%) or Europe (27%), reflecting the general problem of unrepresentative and selective samples in social science research (e.g., Henrich et al., 2010). Research with samples from a wider range of nations is essential to determining the generalizability of the effects across cultures.

Finally, a methodological limitation is our inability to adjust effect sizes for measurement error or range restriction, given that most studies did not report the information needed to perform such adjustments (e.g., outcome reliability; Wiernik & Dahlke, 2020). However, this limitation does not seriously compromise our conclusions about the overall magnitude of misogynous media effects because measurement error would bias effect sizes toward zero, leading to underestimation. Hence, from this perspective, the estimated media effects are conservative. Measurement error could also affect moderator conclusions if outcome reliability covaried in systematic ways with the examined moderators (Wiernik & Dahlke, 2020). For instance, if behavioral outcomes had higher reliability than nonbehavioral outcomes, those different reliabilities could explain why behavioral outcomes showed larger effect sizes. Nonetheless, in general, there is little reason to suspect that reliability would systematically vary across the core confirmatory moderators of interest (e.g., media content), thus minimizing this concern.

Conclusions

Based on 47 years of experimental and nonexperimental research encompassing 257 studies and 132,933 participants across 26 nations, this meta-analysis yielded the most comprehensive test to date of the association between misogynous media content and hostility to women. Results revealed a significant and meaningful effect whereby more exposure to misogynous media content related to greater hostility to women. The inclusion of a wide range of misogynous media content and hostile outcomes allowed the identification of moderating conditions. For instance, our meta-analytic effects tended to be stronger for men compared to women, and this difference was especially large for violent content. Moreover, the effect was more pronounced among adolescents than participants in their midlate adulthood. In addition, combining a broad swath of media and showing that their content consistently produced hostility toward women sends a powerful message that speaks to the continuing struggles for women to attain gender equality.

Our findings contribute to the ongoing societal debate on the potential harm produced by misogynous media content, a matter that is especially timely given recent political shifts to the right and a growing masculine-focused movement (i.e., the "manosphere"). Based on the findings of this meta-analysis, an obvious recommendation for decreasing hostility to women would be to encourage media producers to reduce the portrayal of women in misogynous, discriminatory, and negative ways—as the United Nations Economic and Social Council (2019) has already recommended. Reducing misogynous portrayals of women in the media also has the potential to change social norms concerning the acceptability of such content, thus further reducing the incidence of misogynous content. In addition, education and prevention programs could teach adolescents in particular to recognize content derogatory to social groups and to understand the harms it may produce. To accelerate such efforts, it is important to increase awareness of the harmful impact of exposure to misogynous media content.

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