

## **College Women's Attitudes about Imprisoned Women in Orange is the New Black And Real Life Women Prison Inmates**

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### **Abstract**

*Orange is the New Black (OITNB) has enjoyed prominence as one of the most watched shows on the very popular streaming video network, Netflix. As more women are held in U.S. prisons each year, conditions of incarcerated women remain a concern. Cultivation theory of mass media research is discussed as a traditional model for explaining the effects of how heavy viewing of OITNB impacts the way college women see the conditions and behavior of inmates in the series as the way women are treated and behave in real prisons. Sexual abuse, racial segregation, mental illness, substance abuse, and assault by correctional officials are addressed. The study concluded that the number of episodes of OITNB viewed by college women did not predict the extent to which college women saw similarity in the treatment of women in OITNB and real world prisons.*

**Keywords:** women in prison, prison mental health, cultivation theory, incarceration of women in media

### **1.0 Introduction**

Social justice issues are one of the most polarizing and controversial debates in the United States, including what should be done with the penal system. With the largest prison population and highest incarceration rate in the world, the American prison system has been under scrutiny for decades, particularly given its reputation for disparities in the racial makeup and treatment of prison inmates (Bandelet, 2018, ACLU; Nellis, June 2016). Increasingly, the treatment of women in prison has been the focus of research.

According to The Sentencing Project, the number of women incarcerated in U.S. prisons grew from 26,378 in 1980 to 215,332 in 2014, a 700 percent increase (The Sentencing Project, 2015). All total, more than four times that number of women are experiencing some form of supervision by the criminal justice system, including both incarceration and probation. While the number of men in prison is far more than women, the experiences of women prison inmates are as problematic as that of men and often specifically related to gender. Whether pregnancy and motherhood, rape, physical assault, substance abuse, or mental illness, the condition of many incarcerated women casts the prison system in a negative light and negatively impacts all of society (Bandelet 2018). Moreover, the experiences of women in prisons are often linked to experiences of victimization as children and youths (Asberg and Renk, 2013; Dehart, 2018).

How society perceives incarcerated women is key to establishing programs of intervention. As such, how women perceive the conditions of women in prison is significant. The perceptions of college women can be relevant in attitudinal assessments of imprisoned women as, regardless of socioeconomic status, women can have similar negative social experiences. Most American women cannot relate to the experience of actual incarceration. For them the depiction of women in prison through media is significant as a means of shaping the impression of what prison life is like. The "women in prison" film genre that emerged and thrived in the 20th century reinforced negative stereotypes about the condition and behavior of incarcerated women (Schwan, 2016).

New media tools and venues of the 21st century can extend those stereotypes, create new ones, or even serve as agents of change. While theories of cultivation effects of the use of the traditional television medium has had a significant influence on media studies going back to the 1960's (Gerbner, 1976), the model remains useful for exploring the cultivation of attitudes, including attitudes about women in prison today (Bryant and Miron, 2004).

*Orange is the New Black (OITNB)* is a Netflix television series loosely based on the true-life events described in the memoir of Piper Kerman (2010, 2013), who spent time in prison after being convicted of felony money laundering. The leading character of OITNB, Piper Chapman, a 30-something, white female played by Taylor Schilling, portrays Kerman's prison persona. Over the course of the first four seasons of OITNB, the series rose to prominence in popular culture. Television critics consistently reviewed the series as cutting edge (<http://www.metacritic.com/tv/orange-is-the-new-black>). Actors who played pivotal roles, and the series itself, received numerous awards in the television industry (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2372162/awards>). Like inmates in American prisons, the characters of OITNB are from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as gender. The women inmates are housed in Litchfield Penitentiary, a minimum-security correctional for-profit institution in Upstate New York. While utilizing the device of humor, OITNB depicted what might be considered dehumanization of women inmates. Some are victims of sexual assault, and substance and emotional abuse. Many of the inmates entered the prison facility suffering from trauma and are further damaged by institutionalization. But as the storyline of the series unfolds, it is questionable the extent that correctional officials intervene to effectively help the inmates deal with their conditions or behavior even as inmates are bullied and ridiculed by other inmates and correctional officers. Women inmates in the prison system are not allowed to be vocal when it comes to the mistreatment they receive from correctional officers. They are taught to respect the authority of correctional officers or face penalties or retaliation (Harner, 2012)).

In OITNB, if an inmate disrespects or disobeys a correctional officer, she gets a written "shot," and if those "shots" reach a certain limit, she goes to solitary confinement, "the SHU" (Security Housing Unit). While inmates in the series are penalized for disrespect or disobedience of an officer, the correctional officer appears not to receive adequate punishment for acts against an inmate. In a real prison, if a correctional officer sexually assaults a woman inmate, the inmate's credibility as a victim of the abuse is questioned. Moreover, the offending correctional officer is more likely to retaliate against the inmate with threats of physical or other harm (Harner, 2012). Victimization is a theme throughout the series, which is consistent with that of prisons in the United States. Many women inmates in U.S. prisons were victimized as children and youth, making them more likely to commit crimes, be incarcerated, and demonstrate more impairment in their functioning (Dehart 2008; Arnold et al., 2003). For example, women who grew up in violent environments and neglected by a parent or legal guardian tend to commit crimes to escape that abuse (Dehart 2008).

The characterization of imprisoned women in OITNB can be examined with respect to the perceived circumstances of women in real life incarceration. What emerges as most prevalent, in terms of the treatment of incarcerated women, are sexual assault, physical abuse, substance abuse, racial discrimination, and mental illness (Harner, 2012). This research focuses on college women's attitudes about the treatment of incarcerated women in real women prisons in relation to their attitudes about incarcerated women on the television series *Orange is the New Black*.

## **2.0 Cultivation Theory in the Age of Netflix**

Cultivation was advanced as a theory of television effects by George Gerbner in the mid-1960s and later expanded by Gerbner and Larry Gross in 1976. The theory addresses the influence of television viewing on audiences. Cultivation theory suggests that mass viewers of television are more vulnerable to media messages and the extent to which those messages reflect real life (Rosenberry and Vicker, 2009). Based on the theory, heavy television viewers are exposed to more violence and are affected by the "mean world syndrome," which is the belief of heavy television viewers that the world is more dangerous than it really is. Cultivation theorists prefer the concept of "cultivation" to "effects," as the former helps describe how viewing television can independently contribute to a viewer's conception of social reality (Bryant and Zillman, 2002). Television viewers are more likely to develop a conception of the "real world" based on the portrayals, ideologies and images seen through television (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999).

Over 117 million subscribers in over 190 countries subscribe to Netflix, making it one of the leading Internet entertainment services in the world (Netflix.com). Netflix offers over 140 million hours of television shows and movies per day. Netflix content includes original series, such as *Orange is the New Black* and *House of Cards*, two of its most heavily viewed shows. It also offers documentaries and feature films. As an Internet service, Netflix can be viewed on any digital device and its free viewing application is widely accessible. Netflix viewers can time-shift any Netflix content and watch television shows at their own leisure. Netflix customers frequently “binge” on its streaming content. In a survey conducted by Netflix in February 2014, 73 percent of people define binge watching as “watching six episodes or more of the same TV show in one sitting (West, 2014). It is within the context of wide accessibility to the Netflix service that the series OITNB thrives.

Netflix does not disclose its viewership data to the public (Pollak, 2015). But Time Inc. reported data from a new service provided by the Nielsen ratings company that showed that viewership of some of Netflix’s most popular shows, such as *House of Cards*, was comparable to top-rated shows on major television networks, such as ABC and NBC (Gajanan, Time.com, October 18, 2017; <http://time.com/4987243/netflix-nielsen-data-viewership/>). It is noted that Netflix disputes the comparison of the levels of viewership reported by Nielsen of its programming.

The exact intended audience for *Orange is the New Black* is not published. But the creator of the show, Jenji Kohan, apparently understood the complexities of selling a program idea that instantly would be filtered through the lens of the “women in prison” genre with its concomitant stereotypical imagery (Schwan, 2016). As such, like Piper Kerman, Piper Chapman is not planted in a correctional facility as a representative of all incarcerated women. Her white, middle-class persona is inconsistent with the character expectations of the typical women in prison genre (Schwan, 2016, pg. 474).

“It is precisely Piper’s atypical viewpoint, conveyed through the conventions of comedy drama, and the show’s innovative use of genre that have the potential to bring issues around women’s imprisonment to a broader audience of viewers who are unlikely to consider them otherwise (Schwan, 2016, pg. 474).

The demographic on whom Kohan focused were “young, middle-aged, affluent, urban and predominantly white professionals” who were willing to stream the show from Netflix (Schwan, 2016). Yet the “broadening” of the audience for OITNB, with what Schwan (2016) would refer to as its bent toward post-feminism, opens windows through which audience heterogeneity can be considered. The OITNB viewer can be as diverse as the characters depicted in the show. The female point of view, whether white, black, Latina, Asian, highly educated, under-educated, economically poor or prosperous, straight or gay might potentially view, or even binge, the show. From the female point of view, theoretically, any of these groups can be subjected to the conditions of prisons.

Cultivation theory is relevant to this research to explore the extent that viewers of OITNB can have a sense of the experience of women inmates by depictions in the series. Heavier viewers of the series potentially can have stronger attitudes about the sameness of the treatment and behaviors of inmates in the television series and those of women in real life prisons compared with those who do not watch the series as much. The study of cultivation effects of audiences of different races and socioeconomic status in the age of Netflix can provide new perspectives on a time-tested media effects paradigm.

### **3.0 *Orange is the New Black and the Conditions of Women in Prison***

The title of the best-selling memoir of Piper Kerman is *Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women’s Prison* (2010, 2013). In its pages, Kerman explains her lesbian relationship with a woman in her mid-thirties who was involved in international drug smuggling. Five years later, broken up with her girlfriend and in a new relationship, Kerman reported to a Federal Correctional Institution in Danbury, Connecticut, for 15 months, and reunited with her ex-girlfriend upon her arrival. In 2013, Jenji Kohan created the Netflix series, *Orange is the New Black*, produced by Titled Productions in association with Lionsgate Television. Throughout each season of the show, main character Piper Chapman and other female inmates portrayed life for women inmates (Behind 'The New Black' 2013).

In her article in the *JSTOR Daily*, Jessica Pishiko reported that the history of the incarceration of women in the United States dates back to the early 19th century (Pishiko, March 2015). The first cases of incarcerated women consisted of housing in the same facility as their male imprisoned counterparts. Separate women’s prisons did not regularly appear until the 1870s, and were established based on a range of, often negative, attitudes about the psychological and social needs of women (Dodge, 1999).

But even with the production of separate facilities for imprisoned women, the living conditions and the expectations for the behavior of women in prison were, at best, very poor. Pishiko writes: "... a mid-1840s report from an Ohio women's prison reported that 'the women fight, scratch, pull hair, curse, swear and yell, and to bring them to order a keeper has frequently to go among them with a horsewhip'" (<https://daily.jstor.org/history-of-womens-prisons/>)(2016).

While initially efforts emerged to create prison environments designed to cultivate more "refined" populations of incarcerated women who were housed in separate facilities, more and more women were convicted of violent crimes and assigned to women's facilities that were similar to that of men. In a study conducted by David Ward and Gene Kassenbaum (1964) on the California Institution for Women (CIW) and included in Pishiko's discussion, Ward and Kassenbaum concluded that women in a specialized facility of the 1960s required more emotional support than men and were more likely to develop same-sex relationships in prisons. They also found that during the 1960s, female correctional officers were less likely to use force in disciplining female inmates, deferring disciplinary actions to the male staff. An overall conclusion from the Kassenbaum study was the general sense that women inmates were "victims of fate," or less in control of their circumstances. But when Rosemary Gartner and Candace Kruttschnitt returned to the CIW in 1990 to see if the earlier findings of Ward and Kassenbaum still held, they saw that the situation was vastly different. There was a new emphasis in addressing imprisoned women, which now was from the perspective of "choice and reformation." In contrast with the 1960s, the incarcerated women of 1990 were seen as "inadequate, weak, emotionally needy, and dysfunctional" (Gartner and Kruttschnitt, 1990, in Pishiko, 2015). The evolution of female imprisonment in modern systems brought with it the imposition of policies and restrictions similar to those of imprisoned men. Of Gartner and Kruttschnitt, Pishiko writes, "...today's prison policies largely do not differentiate between men's and women's prisons" (Pishiko, 2015). The perception that philosophically the incarceration of women and men can be viewed as virtually the same opens the door to diminished differentiation in the treatment of women in prison, despite specific women's needs. The premise of diminished differentiation of imprisoned women can be linked directly to what is happening in women's prisons today.

#### **4.0 OITNB and the Women in Prison Film/Television Genre**

America's fascination with prison movies arguably can be traced back to Robert Montgomery's role as a fearful playboy who was sentenced to ten years in prison for a death caused by drunk driving. The difficulty of the survival of that character in *The Big House*, a "gangster" movie of the 1930s, was intriguing to filmgoers and helped spawn the prison movie genre (Gutterman, 2005). Countless films about the incarceration of men in prison have reinforced the images of violence, exploitation and abuse that define the genre. Melvin Gutterman (2005) gives examples of many of the successful films, including *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (1932), *Brute Force* (1947), *Cool Hand Luke* (1967), *Brubaker* (1980), *Murder in the First* (1995), *Sleepers* (1996), *The Birdman of Alcatraz* (1962), *The Last Castle* (2001), and *Shawshank Redemption* (1994). In his viewpoint, not only does the Hollywood prison film genre mimic the realities of real life prisons, but it also reinforces those realities through continual replication of prison brutalities. Gutterman asks:

"Why do our hearts shatter at the sight of the dead body of Abraham hanging from the pole in *Brubaker*, become outraged at Andy being attacked by the Sisters in *The Shawshank Redemption*, sicken by Lukes useless digging of ditches and forced placement in the sweat box in *Cool Hand Luke*? Perhaps it is because we have come to know them—Hollywood has allowed us to take this arduous prison journey with them. (Gutterman, 2005, pg. 10)

In the same sense that gratuitous violence dominates the typical prison movie genre where men are the inmates, the women in prison genre too often is characterized by sex. Judith Mayne (2000) analyzed several classic films from the women in prison genre: *The Big Doll House* (1971), *Black Mama*, *White Mama* (1973), and *Caged Heat* (1974), among others. In Schwan (2016), Mayne saw the exploitation of the differences between female inmates as a substitution for the relative absence of males. The relationships of women in their exploration of other women were divided along the lines of sexuality and race (Mayne 1974). Schwan saw OITNB in the same vein. The exploitation of the differences in the female inmates of OITNB is in terms of ethnicity, race, and sexual identity (Schwan, 2016). Like race and other demographic variables, the sexuality of women in OINTB is also diverse. For example, homosexuality, which is depicted in both male prison and women prison stories, is also highlighted in OITNB and elicits great interest by lesbian/gay/transgender viewers. It is a reminder that the real goal of the producers of OITNB is always to generate the widest audience possible.

### **5.0 Separation by Race and Inmate Behavior in OITNB and Real Prisons**

During the first four seasons of OITNB, women inmates were separated racially, primarily as white, black, and Hispanic. In the series, members of each racial group sleep, shower, eat, and work together in situations and environments approved by the managers and officers of the correctional facilities. Occasionally, the correctional officers specifically separate the inmates by race. More often it appears the inmates segregate themselves into racial groups. In OITNB, the inmates have the option to sit anywhere during meals, but they usually sit with members of their race. In the show, being racially divided appears to be an unspoken rule and can create conflict between the races. Conflict is exacerbated when correctional officers appear to grant favor and privileges to certain races more than others.

In real prisons, race does not appear to be an adequate predictor of inmates' misconduct (Berg and Delisi, 2006). Behavior in real prisons is less related to race than with the inmate's motives. In the Netflix series, however, the assumption seems to be that blacks and Hispanics are more violent than whites. Another difference of note is that real life women inmates are less likely to be racially divided (Prisons: Prisons for Women <http://law.jrank.org/pages/1804/Prisons-Prisons-Women-composition-women-s-prisons.html>). Women inmates are generally integrated throughout their daily routine, whether it is housing or working; they form relationships that are outside racial lines. Although inmates are racially diverse, correctional officers are usually not (Prisons: Prisons for Women). This also can be seen in *Orange is the New Black*.

### **6.0 Drug Addictions and Mental Illness in OITNB and Real Prisons**

The first four seasons of OITNB included women inmates with drug addiction and mental illnesses. The characters Lolly (Lori Petty) and Suzanne "Crazy Eyes" (Uzo Aduba) suffered from mental illness while in prison. "Crazy Eyes" receives medication while Lolly refuses to take her medication, which causes hallucinations. Viewers may not be certain of the type of mental illness Lolly and Crazy Eyes have, although Jackie Strause of the *Hollywood Reporter*, identifies Lolly as paranoid schizophrenic (July 8, 2016). It seems evident, however, that mental health issues of the inmates are not being systematically addressed. The character Lorna (Yael Stone) also suffers from a mental illness. She appears to live in a delusional fantasy world and in constant need of attention.

Characters Tiffany "Pennsatucky" Doggett (Taryn Manning), LeAnne Taylor (Emma Miles), Nicky Nichols (Natasha Lyonne) and Tricia Miller (Madeline Brewer) all suffer from drug addiction while in prison. Pennsatucky and LeAnn are addicted to methamphetamine. Nicky Nichols was a heroin addict and struggles with her addiction while in prison. It is not evident the specific narcotic to which Tricia is addicted, but we see her obtaining drugs from correctional officers and willing to do whatever it takes to get the drugs. In season one, Tricia overcame her addiction after being sent to the SHU, but later relapsed and died from overdosing on Oxycontin. In Litchfield prison, there are counselors who are part of the correctional staff. The women inmates confided in one staff member, Mr. Healy. Although Mr. Healy had the trust and best interest of the inmates at heart, he was ill equipped to properly intervene in their struggles with mental and drug issues, as he was dealing with his own mental illness.

As of May 2017, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) was responsible for 187,910 inmates who were receiving medical and mental health care, of which 7,831 (or 4.2 percent) have mental illness that is considered serious (GAO, Feb. 15, 2018 <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-18-182>). Many of the mental illnesses from which women inmates in real prisons suffer are because of occurrences prior to their imprisonment (Harmer, 2012). With the increase of women inmates, mental illness programs are limited and only offered to certain inmates and at certain prisons. As such, many inmates do not receive the opportunity to be relieved of their mental conditions (Harmer, 2012). Yet the prison systems on the state and federal levels maintain specific guidelines for identifying and addressing mental illnesses (GAO, Feb. 15, 2018). Teen depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and drug addiction are what most women inmates suffer while incarcerated. Women inmates feel invisible and vulnerable because they are absent from their families and social networks; they worry about their well being (Harmer, 2012). Women inmates deal with stress differently from male inmates and women who are not imprisoned. Many women inmates believe that illegal drugs will help them better cope with their stress (Mooney 2007).

## 7.0 Sexual Abuse and Mistreatment

Throughout the series, OITNB has shown the correctional officers mistreating the women inmates. Many inmates have experienced sexual harassment, abuse, and bullying by correctional officers. The correctional officers abuse their authority by dehumanizing the women inmates and having them under their control. For example, during season one of OITNB, Correctional Officer George “Pornstache” Mendez was the correctional officer that the women inmates hated the most. He would touch them inappropriately and smuggle drugs inside the prison for the inmates. He also would give women inmates drugs for sexual favors. He appeared to use every opportunity to sexually harass and/or humiliate the inmates. Eventually in the series, Mendez was fired and arrested, apparently for impregnating an inmate. After Mendez’s departure, new correctional officers were hired at Litchfield.

Correctional Officer Desi Piscatella was hired and assigned to be the lead correctional officer. But, the women inmates despised him more than they did Mendez because Piscatella used his authority to intimidate and exploit the inmates. He is overtly racist and hides crimes his fellow correctional officers commit against the inmates.

Correctional Officer Charlie Coates had no experience as a correctional officer, but still abused his power when he raped one of the inmates. Correctional Officer Thomas Humphrey enjoys making an example of inmates, ostensibly demonstrating they are powerless and worthless. Correctional Officer Baxter Bayley was the youngest correctional officer at Litchfield. Unlike the other officers, he does not find pleasure in torturing the women inmates. But he involuntarily killed one of the main characters of the series, Poussey Washington. In the final episode of season four, Bayley presses his knee into Washington’s back and holds her down on the floor, not responding to her struggle for air, distracted by the commotion. He did not face any penalties for her death.

Arguably, real correctional officers exhibit similar behavior as that shown in OITNB. Minority women inmates have reported being victims of name-calling, job and program discrimination, and unfair disciplinary practices. Black women are found to be more likely than other women to be cited for disciplinary infractions (Prisons: Prisons for Women). One out of 20 women inmates has been raped by their correctional officers and contracted a sexually transmitted disease or HIV (Mardorossian, 2012). Women inmates who have been sexually assaulted are not always reported because they are not considered victims. It often comes down to a matter of credibility (Mardorossian, 2012).

## 8.0 Methodology

The focus of this research is college women’s attitudes about the treatment of incarcerated women in real women prisons in relation to their attitudes about incarcerated women on the television series *Orange is the New Black*. The following hypotheses were posed.

- H1: College women believe that women inmates in OITNB and in real prisons are separated by race.
- H2: College women believe that drug addictions and mental illnesses of inmates in OITNB and women in real prisons are not adequately addressed.
- H3: College women believe that correctional officers are not held accountable for abuse of women inmates in OITNB and in real prisons.
- H4: Attitudes of college women who watch more episodes of OITNB are more strongly related to their attitudes about the treatment and behavior of women inmates in the television series and the treatment and behavior of women inmates in real prisons.
- H5. Demographic factors such as race, age, and socioeconomic status do not relate to attitudes about inmates in OITNB and women in real prisons.

After information was shared on social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) about the research project, we distributed a survey to women students attending Elizabeth City State University in northeast North Carolina in the fall semester of 2016. As such, a convenience sample was used to identify participants for the study. A requirement for participating in the survey was that each person had to have watched at least one episode of *Orange is the New Black*. Seventy (70) women participated in the survey.

The survey design included identifying a diverse sample of respondents, as the demographic breakdown of students attending ECSU includes 70 percent African American, 20 percent white, and 10 percent other races. In addition to race, the questionnaire also allowed respondents to indicate their age (18-20, 21-24, or >24) and economic status (low, middle, or upper income levels).

The respondents also indicated the level of viewing of OITNB on an ordinal scale (few, more than a few, many episodes, or most all episodes). The demographic and level of viewing data served as the independent variables in the study.

Dependent variables were assessed as Likert Scale responses, including attitudes about a) racial division/separation of inmates daily, either by the correctional officers or the inmates themselves; b) extent to which the inmates were perceived to receive proper treatment for drug addiction and mental illnesses, c) whether the inmates are developing drug addictions and acquiring mental illnesses while in prison, d) the extent to which correctional officers are believed to assault/sexually abuse/humiliate inmates, e) extent that the college women believe the officers are held accountable for their treatment of the women inmates, and f) whether inmates report the mistreatment of their correctional officers.

The ordinal measures of the items on the Likert Scale were converted into interval data for the purpose of analysis of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variables in the research. The Pearson Coefficient of Correlations (*r*) was calculated to assess relationships between the attitudinal measures and demographic factors and to test the hypotheses of the study. Significance of the correlations was evaluated at both the .05 and .01 levels for 2-tailed tests.

### 9.0 Results

While the convenience sample collection was designed to achieve equitable distribution of the racial makeup of the university at large, this was not achieved. As a result, 91.4 percent of the respondents were African American women (See Table 1.). This essentially, heavily skewed the responses to those of African American women and virtually nullified any implications for the findings of the study that might be attributable to differences in race. Demographic variables for age were more equally distributed.

**Table 1. Descriptive data for age**

Age	Frequency	Percentage	SD
18-20	32	45.7	
21-24	36	51.4	
>24	2	2.9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>.554</b>

**Table 2. Descriptive data for race**

Race	Frequency	Percentage	SD
Black/ African American	64	91.4	
Other	6	8.6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>.846</b>

**Table 3. Descriptive data for socioeconomic status**

SES	Frequency	Percentage	SD
Low	16	22.9	
Medium	54	77.1	
High	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>.423</b>

**Table 4. Episodes of OITNB watched by the sample group**

Episodes Watched	Frequency	Percent	SD
Few	12	17.1	
More than a few	6	8.6	
Many episodes	16	22.9	
Most all episodes	36	51.4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.139</b>

**Table 5. Correlations N=70**

	Age	Race	SES	Episodes	SepDaily	SepOfficer	SepSelves	NoDrugMent	PrisDrugMent	SexAbuseOff	NoReport
<b>Age</b>											
Cor.	1	.053	-.548**	-.217	-.182	-.394**	.163	.299*	.008	-.012	.055
Sig.(2-t)		.663	.000	.071	.132	.001	.177	.012	.948	.919	.653
<b>+Race</b>											
Cor.	.053	1	-.076	-.023	-.114	-.026	.235	.016	-.134	-.063	.043
Sig.(2-t)	.663		.530	.849	.349	.832	.050	.893	.269	.605	.724
<b>SES</b>											
Cor.	-.548**	-.076	1	.282*	-.065	.146	.014	-.029	.069	-.039	-.029
Sig.(2-t)	.000	.530		.018	.592	.228	.907	.811	.573	.750	.814
<b>Episode#</b>											
Cor.	-.217	-.023	.282*	1	.155	.189	.021	.051	.048	-.142	.170
Sig.(2-t)	.071	.849	.018		.200	.117	.862	.673	.694	.243	.159
<b>SepDaily</b>											
Cor.	-.182	-.114	-.065	.155	1	.391**	.390**	.351**	.461**	.521**	.349**
Sig.(2-t)	.132	.349	.592	.200		.001	.001	.003	.000	.000	.003
<b>SepOff</b>											
Cor.	-.394**	-.026	.146	.189	.391**	1	.245*	.221	.225	.478**	.126
Sig.(2-t)	.001	.832	.228	.117	.001		.041	.066	.061	.000	.298
<b>SepSelf</b>											
Cor.	.163	.235	.014	.021	.390**	.245*	1	.364**	.058	.328**	.176
Sig.(2-t)	.177	.050	.907	.862	.001	.041		.000	.636	.006	.144
<b>NoDrMt</b>											
Cor.	.299*	.016	-.029	.051	.351**	.221	.364**	1	.614**	.485**	.265*
Sig.(2-t)	.012	.893	.811	.673	.003	.066	.002		.000	.000	.027
<b>PrisDgMt</b>											
Cor.	.008	-.134	.069	.048	.461**	.225	.058	.614**	1	.563**	.283*
Sig.(2-t)	.948	.269	.573	.694	.000	.061	.636	.000		.000	.018
<b>SexAbOff</b>											
Cor.	-.012	-.063	-.039	-.142	.521**	.478**	.328**	.485**	.563**	1	.290*
Sig.(2-t)	.919	.605	.750	.243	.000	.000	.006	.000	.000		.015
<b>NoReport</b>											
Cor.	.055	.043	-.029	.170	.349**	.126	.176	.265*	.283*	.290*	1
Sig.(2-t)	.653	.724	.814	.159	.003	.298	.144	.027	.018	.015	

\*\* Correlation (r) is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation (r) is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

+ Race is heavily skewed toward African American

For hypothesis one, Table 5 shows that there were statistically significant correlations between the variable, “inmates are separated daily” and the other two separation variables, “inmates are separated by officers,” and “inmates separate themselves.” The perceived “separation” variables also significantly correlated with all of the variables that addressed perceived substance abuse and mental health issues and the lack of an adequate response, as well as sexual abuse and not reporting abuse. Hypothesis one was supported.

For the second hypothesis, as respondents saw drug and mental health issues occurring and not being addressed, they also saw drugs being acquired in OITNB and in women prisons; sexual abuse occurring and unaddressed; and sexual abuse not being reported. Hypothesis two was supported.

For the third hypothesis, there were two attitudinal variables assessed: whether correctional officers are believed to sexually assault and abuse women inmates in both the series and real prisons and whether inmates adequately

reported such assaults and abuse if they occurred. As Table 5 shows, the stronger correlations were within the attitudinal measures themselves and suggested that, in most cases, respondents linked their beliefs about the abuse of inmates with perceived negative drug use and inadequate mental health intervention. Hypothesis three was supported.

The fourth hypothesis, which specifically assessed the cultivation theory effect, was not supported. Attitudes of women who viewed higher numbers of episodes did not significantly correlate with any of the attitudinal measures about OITNB and real women's prisons. Hypothesis four was not supported.

For the fifth hypothesis, the demographic variables age and socioeconomic factors were not correlated with attitudes that college women believe inmates in both OITNB and in real prisons are separated by race. In Table 5, the *r* values for all demographic measures are insignificant for positive relationships with all separation variables: "separated daily," "separated by officers," "separate themselves." The age of respondents did significantly correlate with the separation of inmates by the officers, but in the negative direction. The suggestion here is that the younger the respondents were, they more greatly saw connections between the separation of inmates by correctional officers in the show and what they believe occurs in actual women prisons.

The age of the respondents positively correlated with the variable that measured attitudes about whether drug abuse and mental illnesses were being addressed. An *r* of .299 was significant at the .05 level, suggesting that older college women associated insufficient drug and mental health intervention with both the show OITNB and real women's prisons. But again, no other demographic factors appeared to significantly predict college women's attitudes about OITNB and real women prisons. Hypothesis five was rejected.

## 10.0

This study was conducted on thesis that cultivation effects could be used to explain how women who watch the Netflix television series *Orange is the New Black* can have the same sense of the reality of what women inmates experience in real prisons as that of what inmates experience in the show. Such an assessment is considered helpful in further building a time-tested theory of media effects within the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century television viewing experience.

This assessed college women's attitudes about the treatment and behavior of women inmates in OITNB, as women, regardless of socioeconomic background, likely constitute a significant following of the show. While the study found perceived significant relationships between attitudes about sexual and drug abuse by the inmates and correctional officers in women's prisons and in the Netflix series, the study did not see "cultivation" effects similar to that addressed by Gerbner's theory (1976). Neither did the study find demographic factors as consistent predictors of college women's attitudes about *Orange is the New Black* and real women's prisoners. One significant factor impacting results of the study was the inadequate representation of different races of the women in the sample. In future studies, care should be taken to ensure that race is adequately represented if race is to be measured as a factor in the study.

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