

**Female Sexual Objectification in Music Videos From 2006 and 2016:
A Content Analysis Comparing Female and Male Artists' Music Videos**
การวิเคราะห์เนื้อหาการนำเสนอภาพผู้หญิงในลักษณะของวัตถุทางเพศที่ปรากฏในมิวสิกวิดีโอ
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Abstract

Given that music videos have often been a target of criticism for their highly sexualized content and for conveying the message that women are only valued for their bodies as sexual objects, this pervasive theme in popular music videos is dramatically distorting ideologies of women's sexuality. The present study aimed to explore female sexual objectification in popular music videos from 2016 compared to music videos from 2006. With a content analysis, the results showed that the occurrence of female sexual objectification in music videos were not different in the ten-year period. The results show that the occurrence of exposed body parts, provocative dress, sexualized dance and sexualized behavior, as well as composite female sexual objectification were not statistically significantly different in music videos from the year 2016 and those from the year 2006. Specifically, the sexual objectification of women in music videos has not increased, but at the same time, it has not decreased either. These findings reinforce that the contemporary cultural view that women are to a great extent valued by their physical appearance and bodies is still very relevant.

Keywords: Sexual Object, Popular Music, Content Analysis, Gender Equality

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บทคัดย่อ

มิวสิกวิดีโอฉบับเป็นสื่อที่ถูกวិพากษ์วิจารณ์ถึงการสอดแทรกเนื้อหาที่เกี่ยวกับเรื่องเพศ โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งการนำเสนอภาพเรือนร่างของผู้หญิงในฐานะของวัตถุทางเพศ ซึ่งทำให้เกิดข้อโต้แย้งเกี่ยวกับมุมมองหรือทัศนคติที่เกี่ยวข้องกับสิทธิของผู้หญิง งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการปรากฏของการนำเสนอภาพผู้หญิงในลักษณะของวัตถุทางเพศในมิวสิกวิดีโอ โดยเปรียบเทียบเนื้อหาในมิวสิกวิดีโอระหว่างปี พ.ศ. 2549 และ พ.ศ. 2559 ด้วยวิธีวิจัยแบบการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา ผลการวิจัยระบุว่าการนำเสนอภาพผู้หญิงในลักษณะของวัตถุทางเพศในช่วง 10 ปีดังกล่าวไม่มีความแตกต่างอย่างมีนัยยะสำคัญ ทั้งในด้านการเปิดเผยเรือนร่าง การสวมใส่เสื้อผ้าที่เร้าอารมณ์ รวมไปถึงการเต้นหรือพฤติกรรมที่ส่อไปในทางเพศ หรือกล่าวอีกนัยหนึ่ง มุมมองทางวัฒนธรรมในปัจจุบันยังคงให้คุณค่ากับรูปลักษณ์ และเรือนร่างของผู้หญิง และถูกใช้เป็นเครื่องมือในการนำเสนอผ่านสื่อต่าง ๆ

คำสำคัญ: วัตถุทางเพศ การวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา มิวสิกวิดีโอ ความเท่าเทียมกันทางเพศ

1. Research background

With regards to United Nations, 2016 is the first year of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. One aim is to support women to claim their right to equal treatment under the law and among many other initiatives such as sport, politics, innovation development, and arts (UN Woman, 2016). As media are main transmission of content, in particular, music videos have often been a target of criticism for their highly sexualized content and for conveying the message that women are only valued for their bodies as sexual objects (Coulson, 2014; Karsay & Matthes, 2020). Critics argue that by consistently portraying women as sex symbols that must submit to men's fantasies and wishes, this pervasive theme in popular music videos is distorting ideologies of women's sexuality (Jhally, 2007). Previous content analyses have pointed out that music videos indeed stress the importance of women's appearance and sexual appeal (Karsay et al., 2019). Content in music videos puts strong emphasis on stereotypical gender roles by depicting women in submissive roles, whereas men are typically displayed as sexually dominant (Andsager & Roe, 2003; Sommers-Flanagan et al., 1993).

Another consistent finding in research is that watching the sexualized and gender-stereotypical content in popular music videos has negative effects on adolescent audiences and particularly on young girls (American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007; Aubrey & Gerding, 2015). Exposure to the sexual imagery in music videos has been shown to reduce cognitive performance (Aubrey & Gerding, 2015), affect beliefs about women's sexual permissiveness as sex objects (Kistler & Lee, 2009), tolerance of sexual harassment (Strouse, Goodwin, & Roscoe, 1994), and acceptance of stereotypical gender attitudes of masculinity and femininity (Zhang, Miller, & Harrison, 2008).

From a societal point of view, music videos are an important medium to investigate for multiple reasons. First, the availability of music videos is currently more unrestricted than ever before because of the emergence of video websites such as YouTube and various portable viewing platforms, including smartphones, laptops and tablets (Caramanica, 2005). Second, music videos have especially gained popularity amongst adolescents. Young men and women compose the age group that most frequently watches music videos, maintaining an average daily viewing time of music videos between thirty minutes and three hours (van Oosten, Peter and Valkenburg, 2015). Third, adolescent's high involvement with the medium in combination with previous findings regarding the influence of its sexual content, contributes to the relevance of analyzing music videos.

2. Objectives

The goal of the current content analysis is to investigate the sexual content in popular music videos by means of an analysis of female sexual objectification. In order to identify whether a shift in the occurrence of female sexual objectification is observable after

the call for gender equality (UN Woman, 2016), a comparison will be made between music videos from the years 2006 and 2016 in the present research. The research objectives can be proposed as the following.

2.1 To investigate the sexual content in popular music videos from the years 2006 and 2016 by means of an analysis of female sexual objectification.

2.2 To investigate whether female sexual objectification varies in music videos from male and female artists.

3. Literature Review

Since MTV launched mainstream music videos in 1981, the media genre has received considerable scholarly attention. Early content analyses focused on the sexual content found in music videos and its potential negative effects on viewers. Studies demonstrated that 40 to 75 percent of music videos featured sexual imagery (Baxter, De Riemer, Landini, Leslie, & Singletary, 1985; Gow, 1996; McKee & Pardun, 1996). Findings suggested that music videos stimulated stereotypical gender roles and acceptance of women as sexual objects (Baxter et al., 1985). More recent studies produced similar findings, indicating that female sexual submission and a strong emphasis on women's bodies by the use of revealing attire and skin exposure is proliferating (Conrad, Dixon, & Zhang, 2009; King, Laake, & Bernard, 2006; Sommers-Flanagan et al., 1993).

However, it can be argued that research on sexual objectification in music videos is in need of re-examination. The increased relevance of feminism in contemporary society may have led to change in the portrayal of female sexuality and objectification in music videos (Walby, 2002). Trends in the music industry have led to an increase in the visibility and success of female artists, like Adele, Beyoncé and Rihanna. This may have caused a shift towards less gender-stereotypical portrayals of women in music videos. By contrast, others argue that post-feminist female empowerment has increased the sexual objectification of women in media (McRobbie, 2004). Because of the limited amount of research on these trends, a research question is developed in the current study to investigate shifts in music videos in the last decade, utilizing female sexual objectification as a theoretical fundament.

Additionally, as van Oosten et al. (2015) discuss, research comparing sexualized content in videos from male and female artists is rare. Much of the criticism about sexual content in music videos and sexual objectification has been aimed at music videos from male artists, especially within the rap and hip-hop genre (Gan, Zillmann, & Mitrook, 1997). However, recent content analyses show that it does not automatically follow that female sexual objectification is absent in music videos by female artists. Andsager and Roe (2003) suggest that female artists utilize sexualized content in their music videos to depict themselves as in control of their sexuality. On the other hand, Frisby and Aubrey (2012) argue that sexualization of female artists in their music videos undermines female

empowerment by conveying the message that sexual objectification is an indispensable component of women's success. Since little research has focused on the issue, this study aims to explore how the amount of female sexual objectification differs between music videos from male and female artists.

4. Research Questions and Theoretical Framework

This study aims to find out the following research questions:

RQ1. Is there more or less female sexual objectification in popular music videos from 2016 compared to music videos from 2006?

RQ2. Is there more or less female sexual objectification in popular music videos by male artists compared to music videos by female artists?

In the current study, objectification theory by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) is used as a theoretical framework. Objectification theory posits that media encourage the position that women's primary value is evaluated by means of their appearance and bodies. Fredrickson and Roberts summarize: "The common thread running through all forms of sexual objectification is the experience of being treated as a body (or collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others" (p. 174). This definition forms the current foundation for the operationalization of female sexual objectification.

The first way in which sexual objectification can be conveyed is by body exposure (Frisby & Aubrey, 2012). This operationalization enables an analysis of the amount of skin revealed by women in music videos. The focus is geared towards the exposure of those female body parts that are linked with sexuality, such as cleavage and buttocks. Second, sexual objectification of women's bodies occurs through sexual attire. Previous content analysis acknowledges that women more often than men wear provocative clothing in music videos (King et al., 2006). Third, another way by which women in music video expose sexuality is by dancing in sexualized ways. This is operationalized as movements that accentuate sexual body parts (e.g., shaking buttocks), mimicking sexual acts (e.g., pelvic thrusts) or dancing whilst self-touching sexual body parts (e.g., crotch-grabbing) (Frisby & Aubrey, 2012). Lastly, female sexual objectification is operationalized by the exhibition of behaviors meant to elicit sexual arousal. Examples of this are caressing one's body, lip licking or French kissing (King et al., 2006).

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Sampling Method

A total of two hundred popular songs by male and female artists were selected to draw the sample for the current content analysis from. The list of Hot 100 Billboard songs was consulted to collect the hundred most popular songs from the year 2016 and the year

2006. Since this study aims to compare music videos by male and female artists, songs by bands or artist groups that contained both male and female artists were not included in the sample. The mentioned artist names on the Billboard websites provided enough information to check the gender of the songs' artists in most cases. If this was not the case, the gender of a song's artist was verified by watching a part of the associated music video. This way, we were able to draw conclusions about the gender of the artists for all two hundred songs. After the songs by mixed gender artist groups had been removed, the selection left a total of 55 songs from the year 2016 and 62 songs from the year 2006 to draw the sample from. Subsequently, these songs were stratified by the gender of the artists. The original ranking of the songs in the Billboard charts was maintained.

With regards to the concern on ecological validity, we used proportionate stratification to include music videos for the analysis. We selected 21 songs by male artists and 9 songs by female artists for the sample from the year 2016. We selected 22 songs by male artists and 8 songs by female artists for the sample from the year 2006. Thus, the sample contained more songs by male artists (71.7%, $n = 43$) than songs by female artists (28.3%, $n = 17$). This proportion is consistent with the trend in the music industry and previous content analyses that show that popular music charts are dominated by male artists' songs (Frisby & Aubrey, 2012).

5.2 Data Collection

To confirm the 90 percent of assumed level of agreement in a population of 117 songs, we decided to include a total of sixty songs in the sample of this study (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2014). Thirty songs from the year 2016 and thirty songs from the year 2006 were selected. We utilized systematic random sampling to draw this sample from the sample frames, whereby every second song starting from ranking number two was included in the sample until we obtained a list of thirty songs from each year. Two criteria were adopted in this selection procedure. First, every song in the sample must have an accompanying music video. Second, the music videos must be available on YouTube to ensure that all coders are able to view them. In case a selected song did not have an available music video the song ranked one place higher on the Billboard chart was selected to replace it in the sample.

Unit of Analysis: The coding was organized on the female character level per music video. Up to a maximum of five female characters were coded per music video. To improve the efficiency of the coding work, the authors decided prior to coding which female characters must be coded in each music video. The codable female characters were selected following three selection criteria, ranked in priority of importance. First, the female characters were selected based on the type of role they played in the music video. Three categories of roles were applied, also ranked in priority of importance. Category one is the female artist, defined as a female character that is mentioned as an official performer of the song and seen singing or performing in the music video. Category two is the female leading

actress, defined as a female character that is featured in the main portion of the music video, performing a role that contributes to the content of the music video to a great extent. Category three is the female supporting character, defined as a female character that plays a supporting role in the music video, for example as a background dancer.

Subsequently, the authors created a list of female characters that must be coded for each music video and attached it to the codebook. All the coding units were numbered and described in this list. Information regarding debut time and a supplementary character description were provided to help coders identify the codable female characters. Each codable female character was coded separately.

5.3 Coding and Inter-Coder Reliability

The author and two coders practiced on music videos coding that were not included in the sample of the study to identify problems with the coding scheme and to refine the instrument. Additionally, a pilot test was used to assess inter-coder reliability levels for the coding of the variables during coder training. All three coders were assigned to independently code five randomly selected music videos from the chart of Hot 100 Billboard songs from the year 2014 ($n = 30$ for coded female characters). Screenshots were added to the codebook for every variable to serve as examples of proper coding. The final codebook was made available online to all coders.

When the development of the codebook and coder training was completed, the three coders coded the final sample independently. Each coder was assigned to code twenty music videos. A subset of the sample was triple-coded to allow assessment of inter-coder reliability. This subset was sampled by means of simple random sampling and consisted of fourteen music videos ($n = 52$ for coded female characters), seven from the year 2016 and seven from the year 2006. Krippendorff's alpha was used to assess reliability. According to Krippendorff (2004), the Krippendorff's alpha requires a value of .80 or higher to be considered good. A value ranging from .65 to .80 is considered sufficient if tentative conclusions are deemed acceptable.

5.4 Operationalization of Coding Categories

Exposure of body parts. The occurrence of a female character's skin exposure was coded for whether she was naked or unclothed at any time during the music video for the following sexual body parts: cleavage, breasts with nipples exposed, fully or partially exposed butt cheeks, butt crack, stomach, legs from knees to upper thighs and shoulders (Frisby & Aubrey, 2012).

Provocative dress. The occurrence of a female character's provocative attire was coded for whether she was visible wearing the following sexually suggestive clothing at any time during the music video: tight top, tight dress, tight pants, attire revealing cleavage, short skirt, short shorts, lingerie, exposed thong underwear, skirt with slits, attire made out of see-

through material, bath towel only, bikini, tight one-piece bodysuit, (bed) sheet only and oversized men's shirt only (King et al., 2006).

Sexualized dance. We coded whether a female character danced in a sexually suggestive way at any point during the music video. 'Dance' was defined as rhythmical movement toward the music of the music video. Three types of sexualized dance were coded: dance movement meant to accentuate sexual body parts, dance movement meant to simulate sexual acts, and dance movement combined with self-touching sexual body parts (Frisby & Aubrey, 2012).

Sexualized behavior. We coded whether a female character was seen portraying or being involved in the following types of sexualized behaviors at any point during the music video: hugging or embracing, kiss on the lips, kiss on the cheek, kissing with tongue, removal of another person's clothing, groping of another person's breasts, straddling, groping of own genital area, groping of another person's genital area and long lip licking (King et al., 2006).

Composite female sexual objectification. To accumulate an overall estimate of the portrayal of female sexual objectification in the sample of music videos, we summed the four indicators of female sexual objectification to represent a composite of overall female sexual objectification in the music videos. For the exposure of body parts, we defined female characters that were coded as exposing three body parts or more as sexually objectified. For provocative dress, we weighted each of the coded pieces of clothing as either lowly or highly sexualized attire. For example, exposed thong underwear was regarded as highly sexualized attire, while tight pants were regarded as lowly sexualized attire. The lowly sexualized attire was valued with a value of one and highly sexualized attire was valued with a value of three. Subsequently, female characters that scored a value of at least three were defined as sexually objectified. For sexualized dance, we defined female characters that performed one or more type of sexualized dance as sexually objectifying. For sexualized behavior, the different behaviors were weighted as either lowly or highly sexualized. For example, removal of another person's clothing was regarded as highly sexualized behavior, while a kiss on the cheek was regarded as lowly sexualized behavior. The lowly sexualized behaviors were valued with a value of one and highly sexualized behaviors were valued with a value of three. Thus, in total the variable for composite female sexual objectification ranged from 0 (none of the indicators of female sexual objectification present) to 4 (all four indicators of female sexual objectification present).

5.5 Data Analysis and Statistics Used

Before analyzing the data, the variables that exhibited low inter-coder reliability ($\alpha \leq .65$) were excluded. In total, the items that remained were eight items that measured the exposure of body parts, fifteen items that measured provocative dress, three items that

measured sexualized dance, and ten items that measured sexualized behaviors. Additionally, four from the sixty coded music videos did not contain any codable female characters. Therefore, these music videos were excluded from the analysis.

To answer the research questions the author conducted two independent *t*-tests for gender and for year on the composite female sexual objectification variable. An independent-sample *t*-test was considered appropriate for examining female sexual objectification in different years and for gender of the artists, because all the coded female characters were assigned into two separate groups.

6. Results

Because we sampled a total of sixty music videos, we yielded a sample of 176 coded female characters. The selected music videos from the year 2006 yielded 83 coded female characters (47.2%). The selected music videos from the year 2016 yielded 93 coded female characters (52.8%). As previously mentioned, music videos by male artists were more frequently presented in the sample than music videos by female artists. The selected music videos by male artists yielded 112 coded female characters (63.6%). The selected music videos by female artists yielded 64 coded female characters (36.4%).

Exposure of Body Parts

The results of an independent-samples *t*-test showed the average number of exposed body parts did not statistically significantly differ by year, $t(174) = -.35, p = .73$ (see Table 1). The average number of body parts exposed by female characters in music videos from the year 2016 ($M = 1.87, SD = 1.89$) did not significantly differ from the average number of body parts exposed by female characters in music videos from the year 2006 ($M = 1.78, SD = 1.41$).

Next, it was explored whether the number of exposed body parts by female characters varied by the gender of the artist of the music video. Results showed that the average number of exposed body parts did not statistically significantly differ by gender of the music videos' artists, $t(174) = .85, p = .40$ (see Table 2). That is, the average number of body parts exposed by female characters in music videos by male artists ($M = 1.91, SD = 1.71$) did not significantly differ from the average number of body parts exposed by female characters in music videos by female artists ($M = 1.69, SD = 1.62$).

Provocative Dress

We investigated whether there were differences in female characters wearing sexually suggestive attire in music videos from the years 2016 and 2006. The results of an independent-samples *t*-test showed the average occurrence of worn provocative clothing items did not statistically significantly differ by year, $t(174) = -.96, p = .34$ (see Table 1). The average occurrence of sexually suggestive clothing worn by female characters in music videos from the year 2016 ($M = 3.10, SD = 3.24$) did not significantly differ from the average

occurrence of sexually suggestive clothing worn by female characters in music videos from the year 2006 ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 2.50$).

Subsequently, we explored whether there were differences in provocative dress worn by female characters in music videos by male and female artists. Results showed that the average occurrence of worn provocative clothing items did not statistically significantly differ by gender of the music videos' artists, $t(174) = -1.70$, $p = .09$ (see Table 2). That is, the average occurrence of sexually suggestive clothing worn by female characters in music videos by male artists ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 2.65$) did not significantly differ from the average occurrence of sexually suggestive clothing worn by female characters in music videos by female artists ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 3.29$).

Sexualized Dance

We investigated whether there were differences in the occurrence of sexualized dancing by female characters in music videos from the year 2016 compared to those from the year 2006. The results of an independent-samples t -test showed the average amount of sexualized dance did not statistically significantly differ by year, $t(174) = .21$, $p = .84$ (see Table 1). The average amount of sexualized dance by female characters in music videos from the year 2016 ($M = .57$, $SD = 1.11$) did not significantly differ from the average amount of sexualized dance by female characters in music videos from the year 2006 ($M = .62$, $SD = 0.96$).

In addition, we examined whether there were differences in the occurrence of sexualized dancing by female characters in music videos by male artists compared to those from female artists. Results showed that the average amount of sexualized dance did not statistically significantly differ by gender of the music videos' artists, $t(174) = -1.14$, $p = .26$ (see Table 2). That is, the average amount of sexualized dance by female characters in music videos by male artists ($M = .52$, $SD = 0.97$) did not significantly differ from the average amount of sexualized dance by female characters in music videos by female artists ($M = .70$, $SD = 1.15$).

Sexualized Behavior

We investigated whether there were differences in female characters portraying sexualized behavior in music videos from the years 2016 and 2006. The results of an independent-samples t -test showed the average portrayal of sexualized behaviors did not statistically significantly differ by year, $t(174) = .56$, $p = .58$ (see Table 1). The average portrayal of sexualized behaviors by female characters in music videos from the year 2016 ($M = .29$, $SD = 1.16$) did not significantly differ from the average portrayal of sexualized behaviors by female characters in music videos from the year 2006 ($M = .39$, $SD = 1.10$).

Subsequently, we explored whether there were differences in female characters portraying sexualized behavior in music videos by male and female artists. Results showed that the average portrayal of sexualized behaviors did not statistically significantly

differ by gender of the music videos' artists, $t(174) = .62, p = .54$ (see Table 2). That is, the average portrayal of sexualized behaviors by female characters in music videos by male artists ($M = .38, SD = 1.20$) did not significantly differ from the average portrayal of sexualized behaviors by female characters in music videos by female artists ($M = .27, SD = 1.00$).

Female Sexual Objectification in Popular Music Videos

The first research question examined the extent to which there was more or less female sexual objectification in popular music videos from 2016 compared to music videos from 2006. Overall, the results of an independent-sample t -test showed the average number of composite female sexual objectification did not statistically significant differ by year $t(174) = .33, p = .74$ (see Table 1). That is, the average number of female sexual objectification exhibited in music videos from 2006 ($M = 1.12, SD = 1.18$) did not significantly differ from the average number of female sexual objectification exhibited in music videos from 2016 ($M = 1.06, SD = 1.06$).

The second research question investigated the extent to which there was more or less female sexual objectification in popular music videos by male artists compare to music videos by female artists. The results of an independent-sample t -test showed the average number of composite female sexual objectification did not statistically significant differ by gender $t(174) = -.45, p = .66$ (see Table 2). When it comes to the gender of the artist, the average number of female sexual objectification exhibited in music videos by male artists ($M = 1.06, SD = 1.13$) did not significantly differ from the average number of female sexual objectification exhibited in music videos by female artists ($M = 1.14, SD = 1.10$).

Table 1 T-Test Results Comparing Music Videos from the Years 2006 and 2016 on Female Sexual Objectification

Variable	Year						<i>t</i> value
	2006 (<i>N</i> = 83)		2016 (<i>N</i> = 93)		95% CI		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Lower	Upper	
Exposure of body parts	1.78	1.41	1.87	1.89	-.59	.41	-.35
Provocative dress	2.67	2.50	3.10	3.24	-1.29	.45	-.96
Sexualized dance	.62	0.96	.57	1.11	-.28	.34	.21
Sexualized behavior	.39	1.10	.29	1.16	-.24	.43	.56
Composite female sexual objectification	1.12	1.18	1.06	1.06	-.28	.39	.33

Table 2 T-Test Results Comparing Music Videos by Male and Female Artists on Female Sexual Objectification

Variable	Gender of Artists						<i>t</i> value
	Male (<i>N</i> = 112)		Female (<i>N</i> = 64)		95% CI		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Lower	Upper	
Exposure of body parts	1.91	1.71	1.69	1.62	-.30	.74	.85
Provocative dress	2.62	2.65	3.39	3.29	-1.67	.12	-1.70
Sexualized dance	.52	0.97	.70	1.15	-.51	.14	-1.14
Sexualized behavior	.38	1.20	.27	1.00	-.24	.46	.62
Composite female sexual objectification	1.06	1.13	1.14	1.10	-.42	.27	-.45

Note. M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation. Exposure of body parts ranges from 0 (no body parts exposed) to 8 (all sexualized body parts exposed). Provocative dress ranges from 0 (no provocative dress present) to 15 (all types of provocative dress present). Sexualized dance ranges from 0 (no sexualized dance occurred) to 3 (all types of sexualized dance occurred). Sexualized behavior ranged from 0 (no sexualized behavior occurred) to 10 (all types of sexualized behavior occurred). Composite female sexual objectification ranged from 0 (no female sexual objectification occurred) to 4 (all types of female sexual objectification occurred).

7. Discussion

This study investigated physical and behavioral features of female sexual objectification based on objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). The first important finding of the present study is that female sexual objectification in music videos has not significantly increased in the last decade, but at the same time it has not significantly decreased either. It remains to be a prevalent element in music videos. Most of the female characters in the sample (58%, $n = 102$) showed at least one of the indicators of female sexual objectification. These findings reinforce that the contemporary cultural view

that women are to a great extent valued by their physical appearance and bodies is still very relevant. The findings align with a previous study that examined sexual objectification in music videos between 1995 and 2016 which indicates that the depictions of sexuality and sexual objectification in music videos does not change and have continued to be pervasive in mainstream music culture (Karsay et al., 2019). In line with objectification theory, women that play a role in the music industry appear to exist for a large part for the use and pleasure by others. Given that previous research has pointed out the negative effects of sexualized media content on adolescent audiences and especially young girls, the findings from this content analysis underline the need for future research to analyze the ways that female sexual objectification in music videos affects adolescents' self-perceptions and to reveal the affective processes that underlie the effects of sexual music videos.

Another important finding is that the results demonstrate no significant difference in the occurrence of female sexual objectification in music videos by male and female artists. The findings show that it is not the case that female sexual objectification only occurs in music videos by male artists. On the contrary, it appears to be a common practice in music videos by female artists as well. An implication of this finding is that it is worth investigating how female viewers interpret the choice of many female artists to sexually objectify themselves, as well as other women who play a part in their music videos. Even though more and more popular female singers claim women's equality to men and express their ambition to break down gender stereotypes in the music industry, it seems that at the same time they are still sending their female audiences the contradictory message that women are more appreciated for their sexual appearance than for their talents. Critical feminist scholars argue that this way, female artists undermine their authority to challenge the common gender stereotype (Oware, 2009).

An interesting question that arises from the findings is what may serve as an explanation for the absence of significant differences in female sexual objectification between music videos by male and female artists. On the one hand, it is important to note that an artist's record label and the commercialized music industry in general have a large influence on the image of female artists that is communicated to their audiences (Fitts, 2008). Therefore, it may be the case that female artists have less of a say in how they are presented to the public than viewers may assume. On the other hand, post-feminists argue that a female artist's decision to present herself and other women in highly sexualized ways in music videos must be interpreted as empowerment by embracing and owning one's female sexuality (Gill, 2007). Future research may explore this issue by investigating whether audience's perceptions of female artists who sexually objectify themselves are different compared to perceptions of female characters that are sexually objectified in music videos by male artists.

8. Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. Firstly, inter-coder reliability testing indicated that some coded variables had unacceptable Krippendorff's alpha values. This can be explained by the fact that due to time limitations, we were unable to optimize the coding instrument and resolve all coder doubts regarding appropriate coding. Another round of improvements to the codebook for challenging variables and accompanying coder training could have prevented this issue. Since some variables did not show up during the pilot testing of the codebook, we were not able to refine all of the variables in the codebook sufficiently before we started collecting data. Additionally, if time would not have posed a restriction, a bigger reliability sample might have resulted in a less harsh result for some of the coded variables. Especially for variables that occurred rarely, just one coding deviation could result in an unacceptable Krippendorff's alpha value. This problem can be addressed in the future by increasing the amount of music videos that are incorporated into the reliability sample.

Furthermore, in this study we had to drop variables from the analysis due to their low ratings on inter-coder reliability, which may endanger the validity of our measurement. In future studies, researchers should prevent this issue by enlarging the amount of music videos that are selected for the sample of their study and ensure that each variable in the codebook is sufficiently tested and improved before collecting data. If time and budget form no restrictions, recruiting a team of more coders that are amply trained would be the solution for this issue.

Finally, the selection of coding units can be improved in further studies. In this study, music videos are investigated at the female character level and maximally five female characters were coded per video. However, it can be argued that music videos that included more than five female characters that were highly sexually objectified led to underreporting of female sexual objectification. Therefore, future research could benefit from considering this factor and eliminate a limit on the amount of female characters that must be coded on female sexual objectification. In addition, time length of performance of a female character also accounts for the salience of sexual objectified portrayal. Other portrayals such as lyrics or storytelling styles might explain differences of female sexual objectification in the music videos.

9. Recommendations for Practical Use and Further Research

The current study serves as an interesting motivation for future research to extend our understanding of the prevalence and effects of female sexual objectification in music videos. Future studies could compare latest music videos released in 2020s with the popular music videos in the past. In addition, future studies could address the role of male characters in female sexual objectification by investigating men's interaction and treatment

of women in music videos, and the ways in which men exhibit the use of women as sexual objects. Additionally, a new light may be shed on the origin of artists, and more intricate aspects of female sexual objectification by exploring the occurrence of female sexual objectification in music videos for various musical genres or comparing the amount of sexual objectification between male and female artists to identify potential differences.

10. Conclusion

The goal of this study is to explore female sexual objectification in popular music videos. With a content analysis we investigated to what extent there is more or less female sexual objectification in music videos from 2016 compared to music videos from 2006. However, there appears to be no significant difference in female sexual objectification between the two compared years. The results show that the occurrence of exposed body parts, provocative dress, sexualized dance and sexualized behavior, as well as composite female sexual objectification were not statistically significantly different in music videos from the year 2016 and those from the year 2006.

Additionally, we examined to what extent there is more or less female sexual objectification in music videos by male artists compared to music videos by female artists. However, the results indicated there is no significant difference in female sexual objectification between the two compared artist genders. The occurrence of exposed body parts, provocative dress, sexualized dance and sexualized behavior, as well as composite female sexual objectification were not statistically significantly different in music videos by male artists and those from female artists.

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Appendix

In order to get access to the codebook as well as the list of music videos from 2006 and 2016, please scan the QR code below.

