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Objectification of Women in Bollywood Item Numbers

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Objectification of Women in Bollywood Item Numbers

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
with a concentration in Strategic Communication Management
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ABSTRACT

Although sexual objectification is commonplace in media culture, music videos provide the most potent examples of it. The current investigation makes an important contribution to the relevant literature regarding the objectification of women in song lyrics while simultaneously broadening the content used to assess objectification. It reflects the ways of objectification of women in India by analyzing Bollywood rap and item songs. Based on objectification theory, one of the primary goals in the present study was to measure differences between visual and behavioral sexual objectification, drawing on theoretically derived indicators of sexual objectification. It also concentrated on measuring the change in the objectification patterns over the years. This was done by conducting a content analysis of 201 songs ($n=201$). The findings suggested that the visual objectification of women was higher than the behavioral objectification of women and that there is a shift in the common themes and the level of objectification over the decades.

INTRODUCTION

Cinema is a facet of the media, which is a large socio-cultural factor. It is seen as one of the most effective mediums of visual communications today. "In such instances, film is not even the final target of inquiry, but part of a wider argument about representation - the social process of making images, sounds, signs, stand for something - in film or television" (Turner, 1999). Bollywood cinema, in turn, has been as inspected as any other category of cinema. The term Bollywood is used for Indian cinema. Even though studies on Bollywood were not previously seen as viable, due to the escapist nature of the medium, the growing interest in India's development has led to an international concern over the media, especially their largest export, Bollywood cinema. There has been much research on Bollywood cinema as a whole (Sircar, 1995; Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 1998; Kabir, 2001; Pendakur, 2003; Ganti, 2004), mostly explaining what it is, how it works and the culture behind Bollywood, but very little in the area of Bollywood 'item songs' and their impact. The present study is aimed at understanding the ways in which females are objectified in today's Bollywood rap and item songs. Using objectification theory, we assessed the inclusion of body objectification, gaze and attractiveness themes in music videos and lyrics portrayed in Bollywood 'item numbers'. To understand this development the author will explore the history and Bollywood songs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

What is Bollywood? Origin of Bollywood.

Bollywood is the general name for the Hindi-language movie industry based in Mumbai (formerly Bombay). Amit Khanna, a journalist, is credited with having coined the term in the 1970s, as a fusion of 'Bombay' and 'Hollywood'. Since then Bollywood has surpassed Hollywood as a center of film production. It is now among the largest in the world. Cinema is the largest and most popular entertainment format in India, and Bollywood is the largest producer of product to satisfy its needs (Kujur, 2018). It produces an increasing quantity of films. At present, Bollywood is the film base that is producing the largest number of films around the world, ranging from 800-1000. It also sells the largest number of tickets (Kaveree, 2007).

The rise of Bollywood reflects the story of India itself. Combining ancient storytelling and dancing traditions, the struggles for political and economic independence, social problems, self-confidence, cultural vibrancy, and increasing commercialism at the expense of spiritualism, Bollywood has a presence on the world stage and screen (Kujur, 2018).

Hindi cinema has a long history and has its own unique set of aesthetics and conventions. The Indian film industry started in the early 20th century (Kaveree, 2007). The early 1920s saw the rise of several new production companies and most films made during this era were either mythological or historical in nature. Imports from Hollywood, primarily action films, were well received by Indian audiences, and producers quickly began following suit. It was in around 1947 when the industry went through significant changes. One could argue that it was during this time

that the modern Indian film was born. The historical and mythological stories of the past were now being replaced by social-reformist films, which turned an often critical eye on such ancient social practices as the dowry system, polygamy, and prostitution. Driven by a desire to offer a greater sense of realism and an understanding of the common man, the films during this era differed greatly from larger commercial productions, which were mostly colorful escapism. It was the latter that would eventually become the template for the Masala film, a mash of genres including action, comedy, and melodrama punctuated by approximately six song and dance numbers. The hodgepodge of action, romance, comedy, and musical numbers is a model that still dominates the Bollywood industry and is used for most contemporary Bollywood films (Kujur, 2018).

The techniques of marketing used to promote Bollywood and its films have become increasingly sophisticated. The costs of marketing films are becoming a rising percentage of the production budget. Many Indian producers complain of the rising importance of the marketing plan, which is often longer than the script and more costly than the production! In the highly competitive Indian and international market, often the best marketing determines the most lucrative films. In the early days of Bollywood, posters, handbills, print ads, and billboards around India were sufficient to lure mass audiences to cinemas. Originally, a Bollywood movie tried to pack as much general entertainment into a single film as it could, in anticipation of a massive audience and high box office return. Films were composite entertainments rather than being segmented into genres. In one single film, there might be songs, dance routines, melodrama, heroes and villains, family conflicts, special effects, adventure storylines, suspense, action, crime, and romantic triangles—to cater for all tastes and levels of society in a single screening. This generally maximized box-office takings. Combined with a limited media spend, such film distribution would result in excellent returns and audience numbers. With the advent of terrestrial television in India,

TV became an effective medium to advertise and promote Bollywood films. As television channels multiplied, the medium also became a market and distribution channel for Bollywood. With the rise of the Internet and social media, the marketing of Bollywood became even more sophisticated.

The Bollywood marketing technique of pre-releasing and promoting songs and trailers before the film is released took on new dimensions with social media and the Web. Product and fashion placement, a staple of Hollywood cinema marketing, is used more frequently in Indian cinema. Bollywood's influence on the lives of the Indian people cannot be overemphasized. Films drive both their popular music and fashion industry. For instance the film *Hum Aapke Hain Koun...!* (1994) transformed the nation's wedding attire (Kaveree, 2007). Indian as well as foreign companies marketing products in India exploit the popularity and star endorsement factor of Bollywood films and actors. Bollywood stars are themselves individual brands in India. They are marketing machines, highlighting world fashions in their films and appearing in print and television advertisements. It is safe to say that Bollywood and these film stars greatly influence the mass population of the country. Therefore, it is necessary to look have a closer look at the films and their content. A huge part of the film continues to be the songs that accompany the moves. But the make-up of these songs have changed over decades.

History of Bollywood songs

1950s

The black and white era of 1950s was marked by songs shot in static frames with all the action happening through the eyes and eyebrows of the lead actors. The only change that came about was an eventual slight 'movement' within the given frame. Therefore, from extreme close-ups of the face to some relevant cut-ins of the moon, the flowers and the rustling of leaves,

Bollywood songs welcomed more elements that added to the dynamics of the romance (The Express Tribune, The Indian Express, 2018).

1960s

The 1960s was rightly called the decade of pure dance. The female actors danced to the tunes. They were clad in sarees, and their dance was as pure as gold. The songs resonated not just the beauty of the actors but also the sanctity of songs of this era.

1970s

The 1970s was the cabaret or the disco phase in Indian Cinema. The placement of the songs highlighted the plot. This was the decade when 'Item Numbers' were introduced. This trend gained popularity and is still prevalent today. These numbers either were meant to entice the villain or were shot to add thrill to the climax. Actresses who danced to these tunes, made guest appearances. They were not a part of the entire screenplay. Most of these songs were filmed as party songs where the actresses danced their way trying to get through the main lead's heart with their piercing eyes or body movements, trying to hypnotize everyone watching them. Many zoom shots were used for the same, both on their faces and their midriffs. Rarely did that look odd (The Express Tribune, The Indian Express, 2018). This was called the golden phase of Bollywood not just because of its blockbuster films, but also for its legendary songs.

1980s

The only thing that changed in the 1980s was that that the film's female lead began doing exactly what the actresses who appeared as guests had done a decade earlier. They romanced the actors in a setting that perfectly fit into the smooth screenplay. Music and songs in this period were connected intimately to the storyline. They were written and woven as per the requirements of the film and in the respective situations. The structure of songs had a relative stability.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the songs had a dreamy set-up, making anyone fall in love. There was romance, longing, betrayal and confessions and every aspect was shot with a proper screenplay of its own (The Express Tribune, The Indian Express, 2018).

1990s

As the 1980s ended, the softness and subtle nuances of these songs began giving way to fast and orchestral forms. There was dance, a lot of it! There were celebrations, as onscreen romance became more fearless. There was open flirting as actors and actresses broke into a dance number at the drop of a hat. Luckily, none of it looked jarring. Among all of it, its manner of picturization also changed with more proximity between the actors.

As the curtains came down on the decade, and even the millennium, Bollywood songs became bigger. This era also had television opening up to private productions. The coming of VCR and cable networks not only affected the films but also their songs. The reach grew and so did the money that went into producing songs (The Express Tribune, The Indian Express, 2018).

2000s

In the 2000s, there was increasing skin show, quick moves and loud compositions. No film was complete without its dance number. Sometimes the songs were used to introduce a character, sometimes, in the end credits to show the “happily ever after”. They were all shot larger than life on a budget which would have been enough to produce a separate film altogether. This phase saw the canvas of songs grow to exorbitant levels (The Express Tribune, The Indian Express, 2018).

2010s

As the 2000s entered its second decade, the “item songs” were back and with more action. While the heroines kept twisting and turning, the debate around objectification of a female body kept intensifying. The lens zoomed in and out of their torsos and bellies, from their lips to their

hips. Filmmakers kept selling their movies on these songs and cinefans kept dancing to them at parties. In the 2010s, songs lost their storytelling role. The screenplay was not really developed. All the actors had to do was to get into some gymnastic-like dance, which was fast cut on the editing table. Moreover, before you could see their faces or judge their moves, the shot had changed 5 times. Romance, too, became indulging in the actual 'act'. Suggestive shots and symbolism vanished and Bollywood began propagating "see it to believe it" (The Express Tribune, 2018).

Nowadays, actors and actresses have a highly polished body representing a mannequin-ish frame onscreen. The songs emphasize their beauty as the camera moves in and out of their face to their chiseled appearance. Gone was the era when close-ups focused on eyes and the shyness that came with every glance. Today, close-ups mean seeing the flat abs and chiseled torsos.

In the past, Hindi film lyrics were penned with simple words and expressions, speaking about the deep spiritual truths about our existence and surroundings. There was pleasure in hymns and devotional songs, patriotic songs, those that celebrated life, love and romance. Solos expressed the impermanence of love and life. Some songs were presented with sound that echoed the depth of suffering that the music might heal.

Now, state-of-the-art music studios have made certain instruments redundant and the present day culture has made a mockery of the lofty standards with abstract and unintelligible lyrics. Item Songs are now added to the movie to sell more tickets at the box office rather than to add substance to the screenplay. The old charm seems to have died. Tangles of ordinary and extraordinary occurrences from daily life now make a heady cocktail, in a departure from form, meter and the symmetry of traditional poetry.

Definition (Item Number)

An item number or an item song, in Indian cinema, is a musical performance that is often shown as a part of the movie but most of the times without any importance to the plot of the movie. Although the origin of the term "item number" is obscure it is likely that it derives its meaning from the objectification of women. This is because item in filmy Mumbai slang is used by Indian men to sexualize women. The classic meaning of item number refers to highly sexualized songs with racy imagery and suggestive lyrics. The item number would feature an item girl who appeared in the film as a dancer, usually in a bar or nightclub, and was only in the film for the length of that song. In these songs a woman wearing provocative clothes is served as a sex object among many men through obscene lyrics. Women are the most frequent targets of objectification within music lyrics, and female artists are more likely than male artists are to objectify themselves (Holody, 2016). Songs play a very important role in Bollywood movies because one-third of the story is expressed by the songs of the movie. Portraying females as objects and using obscene words for them is not new in Indian songs and is getting worse day by day with the advent of the new trend of rap and item songs in Indian cinema.

Objectification Theory

Bollywood songs and movies have been encouraging eve-teasing and sexual objectification of women for a long period of time. Sexual objectification of females refers to treating the fair sex as object and not as person. Eve-teasing is a popular term in Indian English for public sexual harassment (Collins English-Hind) having its origins with the first female Biblical character. According to the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1797), "objectification involves the lowering of a person, a being with humanity, to the status of an object." Looking at a person merely as an object

for sexual pleasure or as an object for use is considered objectification involving beauty and appearance (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997). Fredrickson and Roberts (1970) developed “Objectification Theory” and postulated that women are sexually objectified and treated as an object to be valued for its use by the male gender and the media. Weskot (1986) stated that objectification “is the socially sanctioned right of all males to sexualize all females, regardless of age or status.” Objectification theory has been researched in a variety of media contexts, from music, magazines, and advertising to television, film, and video games (American Psychological Association 2007). When looking specifically at music content, a consistent finding in content analyses of music videos is that women are portrayed as sex objects in positions of submission who exist primarily to pleasure men (Conrad et al. 2009).

Worldwide Influence

Other countries apart from India also promote the culture of objectifying females in their songs, advertisements, TV series and movies. Due to the emergent Indian Diasporas all over the world, Bollywood has started to export more films and gain more western influence, which has also been a focal point that researchers have discovered and begun to explore. In the Western World, rap is often seen as explicit content with objectified and sexual portrayals of women. Conrad, Dixon, and Zhang (2009) performed a content analysis of the top rap songs of the late 2000s. They looked at two different elements: the video level and the character level. They further broke down the character level into the main performer and the supporting characters. In an effort to uphold a common criterion for main characters and supporting characters, a series of definitions were created for the coders to follow (Conrad, Dixon, and Zhang, 2009). In rap, more so than any other genre, the main performer is also the one who receives the gaze (Aubrey and Fisby, 2011).

The most important part of their research was creating coding that could be assessed in a quantitative fashion. They used frequency scales to keep track of how many times each theme occurred. Similar codes can be used to measure other genres, including Bollywood item numbers. Misogyny was an important theme in their findings. Not only did it note that men were portrayed as dominant over women, but it “included women being reduced to body parts rather than a whole person or used as props in the video” (Conrad, Dixon, and Zhang, 2009.) This is predicted to be a recurrent theme in Bollywood item numbers, especially in the case of objectifying women.

Another noteworthy aspect of their research is the expression of culture in terms of these themes. Conrad, Dixon, and Zhang (2009) looked specifically at African American cultures, as represented through this rap genre via insults, “yo mama” jokes, and verbal boasting. This is crucial to include when looking at the limitation of a study, as someone on the outside may take the wrong stance in a display of cultural relevance. Bollywood films and music are cultural representations of India, even if dramatized. We have the challenge of drawing a line between what is seen as cultural versus blatant objectification.

The significance of studying Bollywood has never been more pertinent, not only because of the growth of Bollywood as an industry but because of its following and significance in reading culture and making sense of society and its workings. Of late, focus has shifted from merely discussing Bollywood as a cinematic domain to the roles of women in Bollywood (Ramkisson, 2009).

Audience Impact

Item songs in Indian cinema get great appreciation from the audience but this only make the condition of females in the country deplorable. There is no link between item songs and the

story of the Bollywood movies, but these vulgar songs have become a compulsory part of the movies because of their popularity among people. In India, very little research has been done on rap and item songs are only few. There is a need to analyze these songs critically in order to understand ways in which women are objectified. This will ultimately help to ameliorate the condition of females in the country through other studies that help song makers understand the impact that this content has on masses. Movies, songs and advertisements have great influence on youth. Young boys and girls consider actors as role model and follow these superstars in a blindfolded manner. When these youngsters see their role models involved in eve-teasing and treating women as an object in songs and movies, they may try to emulate them. Actresses in the movie business themselves have been subjected to sexual harassment by male co-stars and many a time Bollywood celebrities open up about the dark side of showbiz. The celebrities who manage to make it to the top, sometimes open up about certain situations they faced as newcomers in the industry. Quintessential actress Swara Bhaskar opened up on being stalked and harassed by a director while shooting a film in her days as a budding actress. In a series of shocking revelations, Swara even said that she had been subjected to "catcalls during shoots and eve-teasing" while on the sets. Calling to mind an incident from her early days in the industry, she said that she had been "groped by a mob during promotions and during a 56-day outdoor at a remote location" (Mangar, Times of India). Actress Radhika Apte has proved time and again that she can stand her ground be it against trolls or even the male-dominated film industry. According to a report by the newspaper Mumbai Mirror, the actress opened up about slapping a southern superstar, who allegedly misbehaved with her. She was quoted saying, "It was my first day on the set and a famous South Indian actor started to tickle my feet. I was stunned as we'd never met before and I instinctively slapped him" (Mumbai Mirror). In a series of interviews, actress Tanushree Dutta recently alleged

that she was harassed on the set of 'Horn Ok Pleassss' in the year 2008 by the veteran actor Nana Patekar. The #TanushreeDutta has been trending on twitter ever since the story has been making rounds on various news channels (NDTV India, India Today, Zoom TV) and has been run by various tabloids (Mumbai Mirror, Times of India, The Hindu).

Elsewhere, it has also been found that male college undergraduates who viewed highly sexual hip-hop music videos expressed greater objectification of women, sexual permissiveness, and stereotypical gender attitudes than male participants who viewed less sexual hip-hop videos (Kistler and Lee, 2010). Ward, Hansbrough, & Walker, (2005) argued that an examination of music videos is particularly important because of their popularity among adolescents and young adults, who are likely to refine their schemata regarding gender and sexuality. Researchers have stated that the cultural practice of objectifying female bodies originated to create, maintain and express patriarchy (Connell, 1987; Khun 1985; Stoltenberg 1989). It was reported that objectification might occur in many ways ranging from sexual violence to sexual evaluation (Fischer, Vidmar & Ellis, 1993). Kaschak (1992) stated that the most subtle and deniable way in which objectification is enacted is through gaze or visual inspection of the body.

Portrayal of Women

Aubrey and colleagues (2011) suggest that sexual objectification can occur via visual representations of the body (e.g., mentions of skin exposure, body parts, sexy clothing) or behavioral representations of the body (e.g., sexualized dance, gestures, male/female gaze). In addition, when women engage in the sexual objectification of their own bodies (self-objectification), they encourage young men's belief that male gaze and attention is invited (Aubrey et al. 2011). Mulvey's (1975) notion of male gaze is a physical demonstration of a power

relationship between the gazer and the gazed. The person who receives the gaze is often meant to be a sex object for the gazer, particularly when the gaze is focused on specific body parts rather than on a person's face or overall person. Thus, the concept of gaze is also worthy of further research attention from an objectification perspective. Scholars have suggested that attractiveness plays an important role in the objectification process (Berberick 2010; Langton 2009; Zubriggen 2013). Zubriggen went as far to say that appearance 'forms the heart' of objectification theory (Holody, 2016).

Evidence from the previous research on mainstream films (Kuhn, 1985), visual arts (Berger, 1972) and music videos (Sommers-Flanagan, 1993) have made it very obvious that women's body is targeted for sexual objectification more often than men. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) reported that women who watch females as sex objects internalize to varying degrees an outsider view and begin to self-objectify by treating themselves as an object to be looked at and evaluated on the basis of appearance. Women's self-reported experiences of sexual victimization have been found to be greatly related to more self-objectification and body shame (Lindberg, Grabe, & Hyde, 2007). Researchers have also reported that 60 percent of music videos deal with sexual feelings or impulses (Gruber and Grube, 2000).

Looking at a quantitative analysis of 600 song lyrics from top Billboard hits in late 2000s rap, 56% of them had at least one sentiment objectifying women. Of these, 33.2% contained more than one matter of objectification (Flynn et al, 2016). The top objectification seen was on body image with women being more consistently referenced in terms of objectification than men. Statistically, women are also known to reveal significantly more body parts in music videos than male performers (Aubrey and Frisby, 2011). Objectification of women was skewed depending on the gender of the lead artist. Female artists are significantly more likely to objectify themselves

than males. Not only are others objectifying women in music, but female artists in Western music are portraying this objectification themselves.

Studies also mentioned that women have been portrayed as sex objects by the use of revealing or provocative clothing, and exposing excessive amount of skin (King, Laake, & Bernard, 2006; Seidman, 1992; Smith, 2005). Pardun et al, (2005) found that music contained more sexual content than any other media. Music is used for recreational, social, educational, emotional, and spiritual purposes (Hays et al. 2002). Previous research has demonstrated music can serve as an informal learning tool by conveying normative values and gender-specific behaviors (Boutin-Foster et al. 2010). Additionally, there is growing concern about the impact of adolescents' exposure to messages that focus on objectification (Mischner et al. 2013; Mulgrew et al. 2014) (Holody, 2016).

Purpose

People are fundamentally social, and an important aspect of their sociality revolves around sex. Sexual objectification — seeing or treating another person as a sexualized object — has long been identified within philosophy as one of the darker sides of human sexuality. The psychology of sexual objectification has typically been studied from a clinical perspective, with a focus on how people view themselves, and the consequences of self-objectification for psychological wellbeing and psychopathology (Loughnan, 2014). There is now an extensive literature on the physical and psychological processes and costs of viewing oneself as a sexual object (Calogero, TantleffDunn, & Thompson, 2012; Moradi & Huang, 2008). However, limited recent research has quantitatively analyzed objectification within music lyrics, and there is no known content analysis of music lyrics that has examined objectification of men. For these reasons, the current

investigation makes an important contribution to the relevant literature regarding the objectification of women in song lyrics while simultaneously broadening the content used to assess objectification. Although objectification has been researched primarily by examining visual messages in music videos (Aubrey & Frisby 2011; Aubrey et al. 2011; Conrad et al. 2009), lyrics and costumes offer a unique and underexplored perspective on this topic. Cooper (1985) argued that lyrics, independent of visual aids, have a profound effect on the socialization of women's and men's attitudes toward women. Indeed, because lyrics are commonly mimicked and sung aloud by listeners, they have greater potential to influence listeners as a form of social bond.

Defining Sexual Objectification

When one is objectified, he or she has little agency and is typically acted upon by others. In contrast, a subject thinks, feels, experiences, and drives the action (Aubrey et al., 2009). Thus, to operationalize sexual objectification, the author revisited the conceptual definition offered by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997): "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). In this view, the definition suggested ways in which sexual objectification could be operationalized. First, an obvious way in which sexual objectification could be conveyed is through body exposure. The definition of sexual objectification specifically mentioned the representation of a woman as a "collection of body parts" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 174), suggesting that sexual objectification occurs whenever body parts are on display. The author focused on those body parts that are associated with sexual activity and/or the demarcation of biological sex (e.g., cleavage=chest, buttocks, and pelvis). This operationalization is in line with content analyses that have defined sexual

objectification as instances in which the focus is on isolated body parts (Seidman, 1999; Sommers-Flanagan et al., 1993). Thus, the first set of research questions focused on the visual objectification through exposure of bare skin and provocative clothing.

Second, the conceptual definition of sexual objectification stressed that women's bodies were "valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 174). Thus, to actually show that a body is vulnerable to "consumption" by others, another operationalization of sexual objectification was to measure if the artists were shown to being checked out (i.e., looked at or touched) by spectators in the video. This definition shared conceptual ground with Mulvey's (1975) notion of the gaze, which is invoked when camera shots linger on bodies or body parts instead of focusing on the face or the total subject. The gaze expresses an asymmetric power relationship between the gazer and the gazed; that is, one imposes an unwanted gaze upon the other. The emphasis on the body denies the subject human agency and instead relegates him or her to the status of objects. Our second set of research questions investigated the presence of objectification through behavior (dance moves, expressions and gaze).

Whereas the first two sets of research questions focused on visual and behavioral elements of sexual objectification, the third operationalization focused on a thematic element. Another way that persons can be valued primarily for what they look like is to function as decorative objects in music videos. For example, Gow's (1996) content analysis of music videos found that women were much less likely to be in the role of artists as they were to be in the roles of dancers and models. Thus, in the present analysis, the author examined the extent to which characters were seen in decorative roles.

Research Questions

After conducting a literature review of similar content and genre to Bollywood Item Numbers, the author has drawn two main areas of focus to answer the overall question: Do Indian Item Numbers objectify women.

RQ1: How do the visual representations in the ‘Item Numbers’ portray women?

- a. Are the lead female artists in the Item Numbers ‘provocatively dressed’?
- b. Do the women present in the Item Numbers ‘expose skin’?
- c. Do the lead female artists only have a cameo appearance in the movie for the Item Number?

RQ2: How do the behavioral representations in the Item Numbers portray women?

- a. Are the dance moves of the lead female artist sexual in nature?
- b. Are the expressions of the lead female artist sexually suggestive?
- c. Do the men sexually gaze the lead female artist in the Item Numbers?

RQ3: Is there a difference observed between the objectification of women visually and behaviorally?

RQ4: Does the gender of the director affect the visual and behavioral representation of women in the Item Numbers?

RQ5: Has the visual representation of women changed over the last three decades?

RQ6: Has the behavioral representation of women changed over the last three decades?

METHODS

Sample

To construct the sample, the author listed 100 Item Numbers that were released in each of these decades (1990-1999, 2000-2009, and 2010-2018). The songs that were chosen were the top 100 songs featured in the ‘Bollywood Greatest Item Numbers’ playlist from each decade available on the Saavn (Saavn is an Indian music streaming service and a digital distributor of Bollywood, English and other regional Indian music across the world). It is widely popular in India because of the large variety of Bollywood music available on it. The company has acquired rights over 45 million-music tracks in 15 languages.

A list was prepared which included the name of the song, the movie, the lead female artist, the year in which the song was released and the views it received on YouTube. Once the list was ready, the researcher randomly chose 67 item songs from each decade, totaling a sample size of 201 songs ($n=201$). There were a few inclusion criteria for the sample: First, the song had to be a part of a Bollywood movie. Not every song that was on the list was from a movie, some were from music albums, in which case the song was omitted from the sample frame. Second, the music video had to be available for viewing through YouTube, so that we could put a number to it, by seeing the amount of times it was viewed.

Procedure

Once the songs were selected, videos of all the songs were observed and viewed from YouTube. The audio was turned off to avoid any biases toward the lyrics, so that the author could solely focus on the visual aspects of the video. The data was analyzed in terms of instances of objectifying females. The appearance (costumes, amount of skin exposure, artist essentiality) and the behavior (dance moves, expressions, and male gaze) of the artists were observed. Content analysis was used for the interpretation of data. The presence or absence of the variables was taken into account and a comparison between the three decades was made. Three coders were used to code the data set to test the reliability of the coding scheme.

Units of Analysis

The music videos were coded on two levels: artist and overall music video. For four variables (provocative dress, essentiality, dance moves and expressions), the author coded the video on an artist level. In the cases where the artist was a solo artist, the artist was coded straightforwardly. In the case of musical groups or bands, the most visible person representing the band or group was coded, which is typically the lead singer and dancer.

For two of the variables (skin exposure, and male gaze), the author coded the overall video level, taking into account the entire narrative of the video from start to finish. This was a macro coding strategy, capturing the overall themes communicated by the video.

Coder Training

Two graduate students (one male and one female) and the author served as coders. Training took place over 2 weeks; each weekly session lasted between 1 and 2 hours; in addition, each coder

engaged in at least 1 hour of independent coding in between the training sessions. During these sessions, the coders practiced on the music videos that were not included in the random sample so that the researcher could identify and resolve problems with the coding scheme. After the coding scheme was modified based on these practice rounds, coding was independent. The coders were not aware of any of the author's expectations about the results.

Intercoder reliability was based on the coding of the two graduate coders plus the author. Reliabilities were computed based on the coding of 30 additional music videos (not included in the final sample; 10 videos from each decade were represented). The 30 videos were similar in content to the videos that composed the final sample; most of the songs came from the list the author had prepared in order to choose the random sample. In addition, each video in the reliability sample called for the use of the entire coding scheme. After reliability was achieved on each of the variables, the two graduate students and the author coded the final sample. Each of the coders was assigned one third of the list ($n=67$ songs each). In total, coding the final sample took approximately 70 to 75 hours.

Krippendorff's alpha was used to assess reliability. Coefficients ranged from .84 to 1.0 with an average of 0.94. Each coefficient is reported in the following coding sections.

MEASURES

Coding of Visual Representation:

Provocative Dress: On the artist level, we further coded the dress of the artist, judging the provocative nature of the artist's attire (hyper sexualization of the costumes). If the artist was wearing sexually suggestive clothing, the song was coded in the "provocatively dressed" category. All others were coded as not provocatively dressed. In India, wearing short dresses (above the knee) or exposing the midriff, thighs, hips and the cleavage is considered promiscuous. In addition, tight fitted dresses that accentuate the figure are often frowned upon. The author understands that the word 'provocative' is very subjective, thus, we categorized the clothing as provocative only if it showed skin. Here too, bare skin has been defined as cleavage, stomach, thighs and hips. This has been determined through comparison with the normal dress sense in India. E.g. if the camera zoomed on the lead female artist in the song who wore clothes exposing any of the following: the cleavage, stomach (midriff), thighs or hips, then the artist's costume was considered provocative or sexually suggestive. If the lead female artist did not show bare skin as mentioned, then the artist in the song was considered to not be dressed provocatively. (If the lead female artist is dressed provocatively, the coder coded it as 1, if the lead female artist was not dressed provocatively, the coder coded it as 0). ($\alpha=1.0$)

Skin Exposure: Camera angles play a pivotal role in the portrayal and focus of particular content in item numbers. Video shots of specific body parts, gestures, and objects, force the audience to view such images in a pre-planned way. By looking at the close-ups of bare skin, we

saw exactly how such images bring attention of the focus on women as the main object. To measure these instances, we performed a content analysis by noting the presence or absence of bare skin shown in a provocative manner. In this case, bare skin was defined as cleavage, stomach (midriff), thighs and hips. The author targeted these variables because they were considered to be the sexualized parts of the body. This did not include close-ups of the face, hands, or feet. There was very little bias to misconstrue the facts in this measurement. E.g. If the camera zoomed on any of the female artists in the song exposing any of these body parts (cleavage, stomach (midriff), thighs and hips), then it was considered as one that showed skin but if the song didn't expose the above-mentioned body parts then the song was considered as one that did not expose skin. (If the artists are shown to expose skin, the coder coded it as 1, and if the artist was not shown to expose skin the coder coded it as 0). ($\alpha=1.0$)

The difference between skin exposure and provocative dress is that the song was considered to expose skin if the camera zoomed on any individual in the song exposing any of these body parts (cleavage, stomach (midriff), thighs and hips). But in the provocatively dressed category, the focus was only on the artist. So only in circumstances where the camera zoomed on the lead female artist's exposing the mentioned bare body parts, was the song considered to show the artist to be provocatively dressed. So by default, any song that was considered to show the artist to be provocatively dressed was classified as a skin exposing number.

Decorative role (Essential / Non-Essential): In the terms of the artist, the author coded for whether the lead female character played a merely decorative role in the music video and if they were just the present for the song and not the entire movie. In other words, the essentiality of the female artist's presence in the video was being coded globally as either yes, it is essential, or no, it is not. E.g. If the artist dancing or performing in the song was a part of the entire movie, then

the female character was essential to the story, if the artist did not appear in the movie other than a cameo appearance in the song, then she was considered as non-essential. (If the lead artist performing in the song is part of the movie, the coder coded it as 1, if the artist was not part of the movie, the coder coded it as 0). ($\alpha=0.96$)

Coding of Behavioral Representations:

Sexualized Dance Moves: The sexual nature of dance moves in item numbers was measured in a quantitative fashion. This contains some bias as what some consider to be non-promiscuous behavior, others may find overly sexual, therefore, it is important to define what is meant by the term “sexualized.” These provocative moves were defined as any time the lead female artist danced on a man, gyrated, or ‘presented’ areas considered private such as the buttocks, breasts, hips, and belly. If the song happened to show any of the moves defined as provocative (female dancing on a man, gyrating or ‘presented’ areas considered private such as the buttocks, breasts, hips, and belly), then the dance moves were considered sexually inviting. (If the lead artist is dancing sexually (mentioned in the above categories), the coder will code it as 1, if the lead artist is not dancing sexually, the coder will code it as 0). ($\alpha=0.94$)

Expressions: Facial expressions are very prominent in Bollywood culture and portray a number of emotions and mood changes throughout a piece. On the artist level, we coded a global ‘sexualization’ variable, defined as the artist's attempts to be sexually alluring. Operationally, this is defined by the use of seductive facial expressions. These expressions were classified under four main categories: Biting of the lip, pouting, whistling, and winking. E.g. If the artist expressed through any of these (biting of the lip, pouting, whistling or winking) then the song was considered sexually alluring. If the artists did not express through the mentioned expressions, then the song

was considered not to be sexually alluring. (If the lead artist used any of the above-mentioned 4 expressions, the coder coded it as 1, if the lead artist did not show any of the mentioned expressions, the coder coded it as 0). ($\alpha=0.92$)

Male gaze: Gaze is defined as an explicit instance of ‘checking out’ another’s body with a sense of sexual longing or lust. For the purpose of this study, male gaze was considered to have occurred on any occasion where male characters fawned over the lead female figure with expressions such as biting of the lip, pouting, or winking. This could be a group of men or a single man focusing his attention on the woman. This is a common occurrence and theme as seen in past literature. On a video level, we devised a way to measure just how prominent this was in item numbers. E.g. If the song showed any male ‘checking out’ the lead female artist’s body and expressing through any of the mentioned expressions, i.e. biting their lip, pouting, whistling, or winking, then the men in the song were considered to have been engaged in ‘checking out’ the female artist. But if the song did not show any men gazing at the female artist while biting their lip, pouting, whistling, winking or smirking, then they weren’t considered to have gazing. (If any male in the entire video looked at the lead female artist and gave any of the above mentioned expressions, the coder coded it as 1, if the men in the video did not look at the lead artist and give any of the mentioned expressions, the coder coded it as 0. In addition, if the men happened to give any of these expressions and gave them while looking at anybody else except the lead female artist in the video, the coder still coded it as 0). ($\alpha=0.84$)

The difference between expressions and male gaze is that the expressions in a song were considered as occurring only if the lead female artist was doing them, while male gaze was considered an appropriate category if the men in the video were expressing through the mentioned expression.

RESULTS

For the test, the researcher analyzed the data for 201 songs, 67 songs from each decade. Each decade was coded as numbers, 1990-1999:1, 2000-2009:2 and 2010-2018:3. The presence and absence of the measure was also coded as numbers, Presence: 1, Absence: 0. SPSS was used to statistically evaluate the data set. The frequency of the variables falling under visual and behavioral representations was measured individually and then cross-referenced with the mentioned decades. Since the researcher regarded all the variables as categorical, a chi-square independence test was conducted for testing if the two categorical variable were related or independent in some population. The researcher wanted to know if the visual and behavioral representative variables were related or independent of the decade the song was released in and the gender of the director. Later, the z test was used to determine whether or not the relationship was significant.

In answer to research question 1 (a, b, c) and 2 (a, b, c), the researcher ran a frequency test to examine how do the various categories under visual representations portray women in the 'Item Numbers'.

RQ1a examined whether or not the lead female artists in the Item Numbers were 'provocatively dressed'. Results showed that 180 songs from 201 showed the lead female artists to be dressed provocatively while 21 songs did not (Yes: 89.6%, No: 10.4%). These results are reported in Table 1 textually and Figure 1 graphically.

TABLE 1: Frequency Distribution for Provocative Dress

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	21	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Yes	180	89.6	89.6	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	100.0	

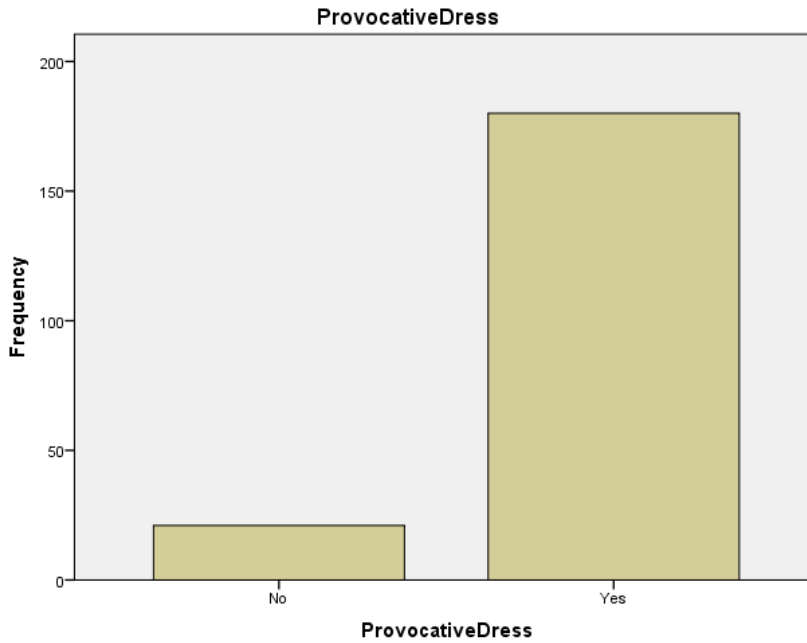


FIGURE 1: Graphical Representation of the Frequency Distribution for Provocative Dress

RQ1b examined whether or not the women present in the Item Numbers ‘exposed skin’. Results showed that 185 songs from 201 showed the lead female artists to expose skin while 16 songs did not (Yes: 92%, No: 8%). These results are reported in Table 2 textually and Figure 2 graphically.

TABLE 2: Frequency Distribution for Skin Exposure

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	16	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Yes	185	92.0	92.0	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	100.0	

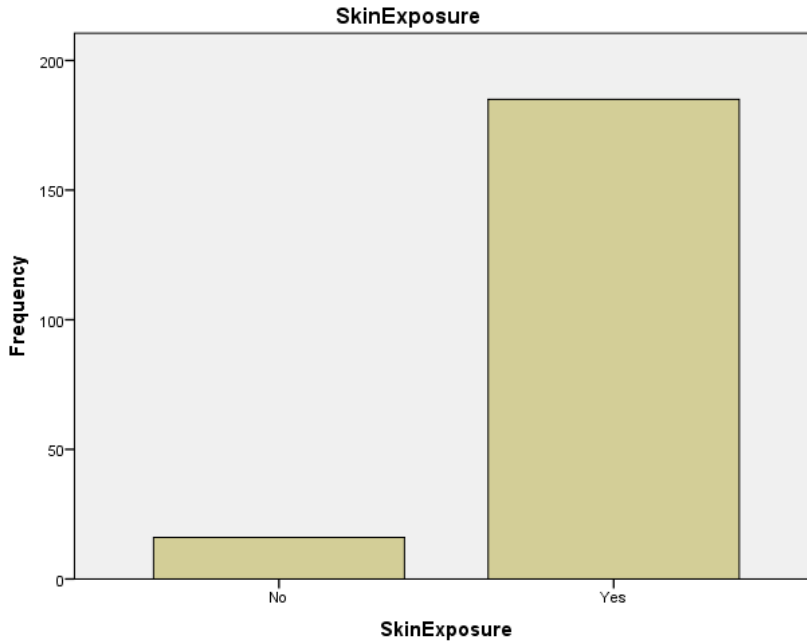


FIGURE 2: Graphical Representation of the Frequency Distribution for Skin Exposure

The skin exposure category is 2.4% higher than the provocative dress category (Skin Exposure: $n_1=185$, Provocative Dress: $n_2=180$) ($\{185-180\}/201 \times 100$), which implied that in an additional 5 songs showed the other women in the songs to be provocatively dressed and expose skin while the lead female artists in those songs were modestly dressed.

RQ1c examined whether or not the lead female artists only had a cameo appearance in the movie for the Item Number. This category determined if the artist was essential or not essential to the plot of the movie. Results showed that 107 songs from a total of 201 showed the lead female

artists to be essential to the plot of the movie while 94 showed that they weren't essential (Essential: 53.2%, Not Essential: 46.8%). These results are reported in Table 3 textually and Figure 3 graphically.

TABLE 3: Frequency Distribution for Essentiality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Essential	107	53.2	53.2	53.2
	Not Essential	94	46.8	46.8	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	100.0	

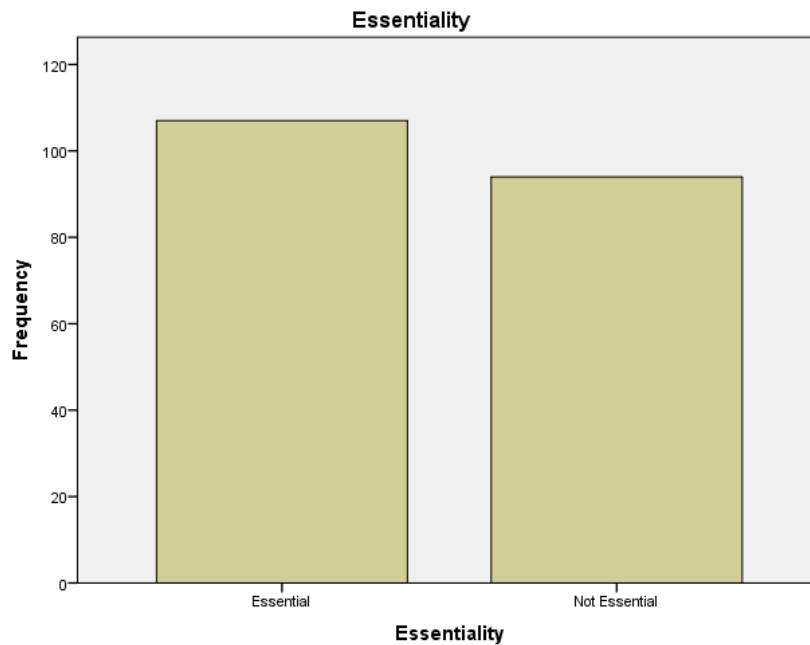


FIGURE 3: Graphical Representation of the Frequency Distribution for Essentiality

RQ2a examined whether or not the dance moves of the lead female artist were sexual in nature. Results showed that 176 songs from 201 showed that the dance moves of the lead female artists were sexually inviting while 25 songs showed that they were not (Yes: 87.6%, No: 12.4%). These results are reported in Table 4 textually and Figure 4 graphically.

TABLE 4: Frequency Distribution for Dance Moves

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	25	12.4	12.4	12.4
	Yes	176	87.6	87.6	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	100.0	

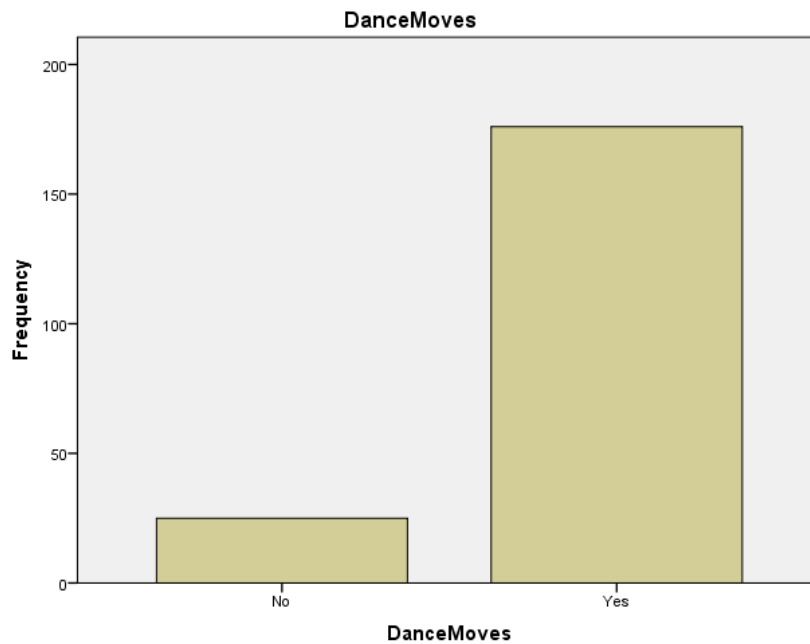


FIGURE 4: Graphical Representation of the Frequency Distribution for Dance Moves

RQ2b examined whether or not the expressions of the lead female artist were sexually suggestive. Results showed that 92 songs from 201 showed that the expressions of the lead female artists were sexually suggestive while 109 songs showed that they were not (Yes: 45.8%, No: 54.2%). These results are reported in Table 5 textually and Figure 5 graphically.

TABLE 5: Frequency Distribution for Expressions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	109	54.2	54.2	54.2
	Yes	92	45.8	45.8	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	100.0	

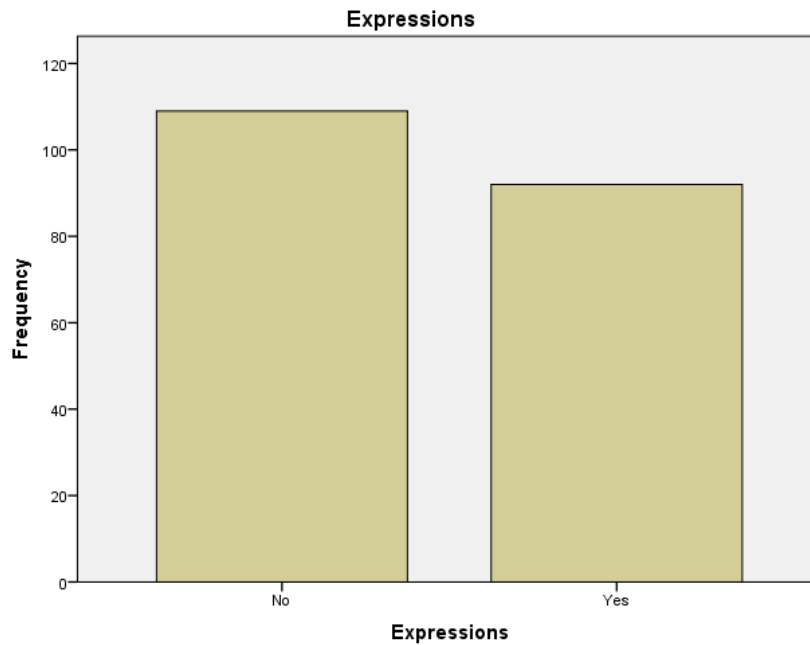


FIGURE 5: Graphical Representation of the Frequency Distribution for Expressions

RQ2c examined whether or not the men sexually gaze at the lead female artist in the Item Numbers. Results showed that 62 songs from 201 showed that the men in the video were sexually looking at the lead female artists while 139 songs showed that they were not (Yes: 30.8%, No: 69.2%). These results are reported in Table 6 textually and Figure 6 graphically.

TABLE 6: Frequency Distribution for Male Gaze

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	139	69.2	69.2	69.2
	Yes	62	30.8	30.8	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	100.0	

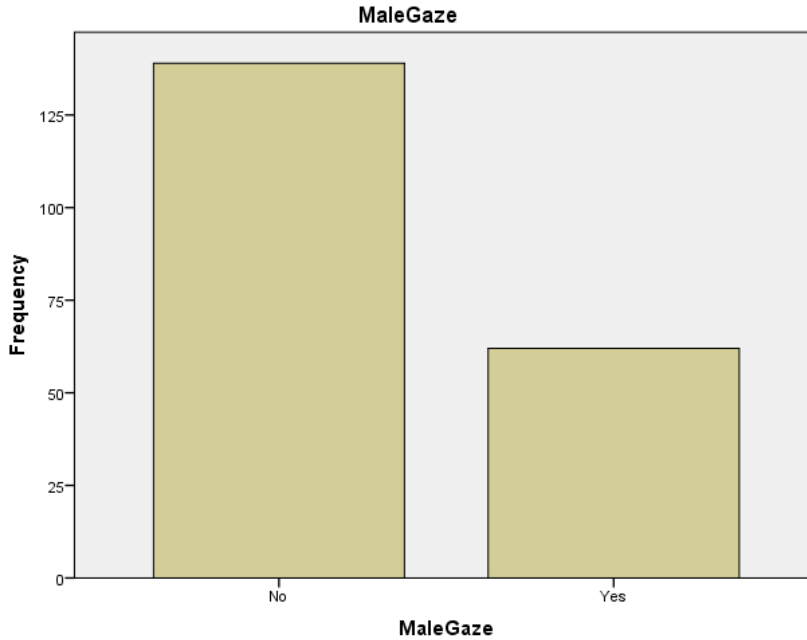


FIGURE 6: Graphical Representation of the Frequency Distribution for Male Gaze

Though both categories focused on the expressions of the artists (men and women), the lead female artists expressions were 15% (Expressions: $n_1=92$, Male Gaze: $n_2=62$) ($\{n_1 - n_2\}/201 \times 100$) more sexually suggestive than the male counterparts.

RQ3 examined whether or not there was a difference observed between the objectification of women visually and behaviorally. In answer to this question, first, the frequencies of the two

variables were compared and then the researcher ran a cross tabulation test to get a more detailed view.

Results showed that in 179 songs from 201 women were objectified based on appearance (visually) while only 109 songs showed behavioral objectification of women (Visual (Yes): 89.1%, Behavioral (Yes): 54.2%). These results are reported in Table 7 and 8 textually and Figure 7 and 8 graphically. A more detailed categorization can be observed in Table 9.

TABLE 7: Frequency Distribution for Objectification Appearance (Visual)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	22	10.9	10.9	10.9
	Yes	179	89.1	89.1	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	100.0	

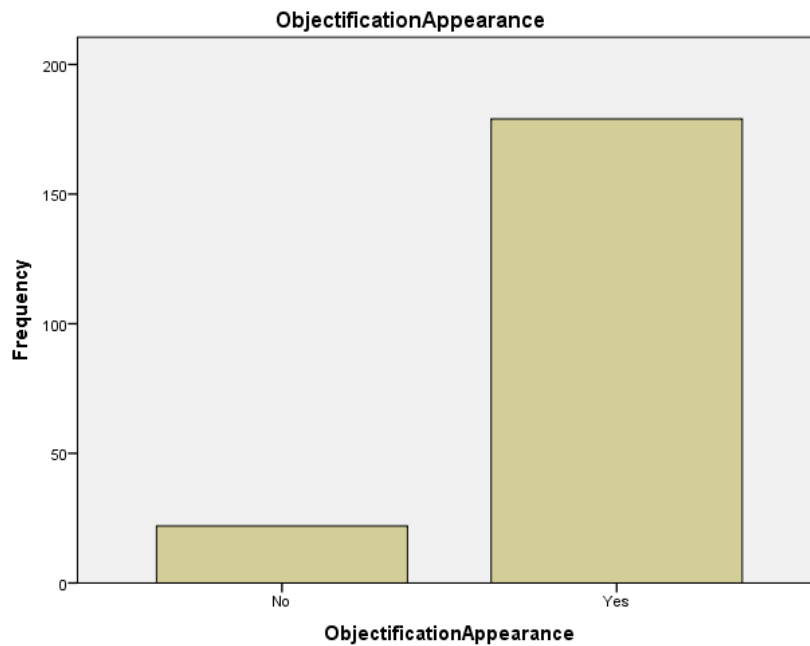


FIGURE 7 (on previous page): Graphical Representation of the Frequency Distribution for Objectification Appearance (Visual)

TABLE 8: Frequency Distribution for Objectification Behavior

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	92	45.8	45.8	45.8
	Yes	109	54.2	54.2	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	100.0	

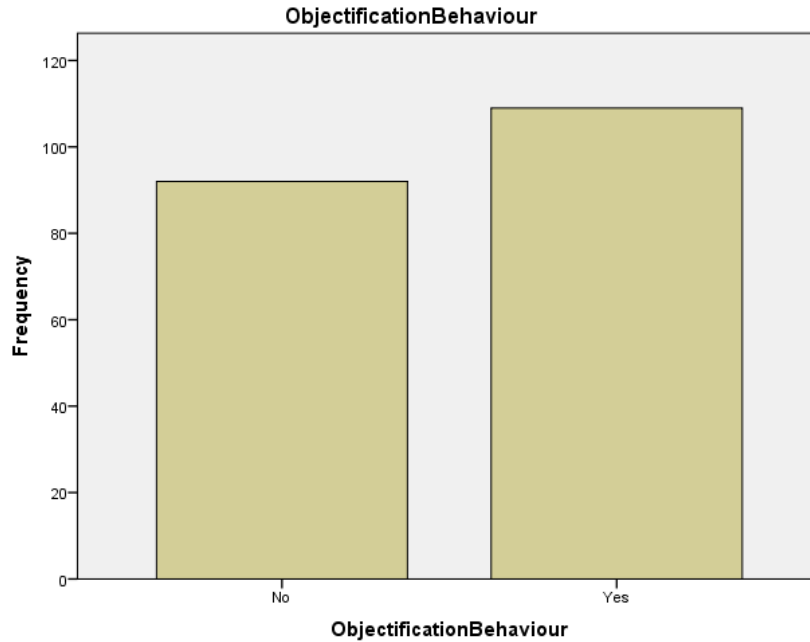


FIGURE 8: Graphical Representation of the Frequency Distribution for Objectification Behaviour

TABLE 9: Objectification Appearance * Objectification Behavior Cross Tabulation

		Objectification Behavior			
		No	Yes	Total	
Objectification Appearance	No	Count	16	6	22
		% of Total	8.0%	3.0%	10.9%
	Yes	Count	76	103	179
		% of Total	37.8%	51.2%	89.1%
Total		Count	92	109	201
		% of Total	45.8%	54.2%	100.0%

The 8% ($n=16$) of the total number of songs ($n=201$) did not objectify women at all, 37.8% ($n=76$) of the total number of songs ($n=201$) objectified women visually but not behaviorally, and 3% ($n=6$) of the total number of songs ($n=201$) objectified women behaviorally but not visually. Moreover, 51.2% ($n=103$) of the total number of songs ($n=201$) objectified women both, visually and behaviorally.

So yes, there was a difference observed between the two categories. The visual objectification of women was 34.9% higher than the behavioral objectification of women (Visual: $n_1=179$, Behavioral: $n_2=109$) ($\{n_1 - n_2\}/201 \times 100$).

RQ4 examined whether or not the gender of the director affected the visual and behavioral objectification of women in the Item Numbers. In answer to this question, the researcher ran a cross tabulation test and then conducted a chi square test to find out if there was a significant difference between the two categories.

The null hypothesis for this test was that there was no relationship between the gender of the director and the visual and behavioral objectification of women. The alternative hypothesis was that there was a relationship between the gender of the director and the visual and behavioral objectification of women. (E.g., there was more objectification of women in male directed movies than in female directed movies). (H_n means null hypothesis, H_a means alternate hypothesis)

H_n = Assumes that there is no relationship between the gender of the director and the visual and behavioral objectification of women.

H_a = Assumes that there is a relationship between the gender of the director and the visual and behavioral objectification of women.

Significance Level: The researchers chose a significance level equal to or less than 0.05.

Since the p value ($p = .383, p > 0.05$) is more than the 0.05, there was no statistically significant relationship between the gender of the director and the visual objectification of women portrayed in the Item Numbers.

Similarly, since the p value ($p = .297, p > 0.05$) is more than the 0.05, there was no statistically significant relationship between the gender of the director and the behavioral objectification of women portrayed in the Item Numbers.

These results are reported in Table 10 and 11 for the visual objectification and 12 and 13 for the behavioral objectification.

TABLE 10: Gender of the Director * Objectification Appearance Cross Tabulation

			Objectification Appearance		Total
			No	Yes	
Gender Of The Director	Male	Count	22	173	195
		Expected Count	21.3	173.7	195.0
	Female	Count	0	6	6
		Expected Count	.7	5.3	6.0
Total	Count	22	179	201	
	Expected Count	22.0	179.0	201.0	

TABLE 11: Chi-Square Test for Gender of the Director * Objectification Appearance

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.760 ^a	1	.383		
Continuity Correction ^b	.043	1	.835		
Likelihood Ratio	1.414	1	.234		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.494
Linear-by-Linear Association	.756	1	.384		
N of Valid Cases	201				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .66.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

TABLE 12: Gender of the Director * Objectification Behavior Cross Tabulation

			Objectification Behavior		Total
			No	Yes	
Gender Of The Director	Male	Count	88	107	195
		Expected Count	89.3	105.7	195.0
	Female	Count	4	2	6
		Expected Count	2.7	3.3	6.0
Total	Count	92	109	201	
	Expected Count	92.0	109.0	201.0	

TABLE 13: Chi-Square Test for Gender of the Director * Objectification Behavior

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.088 ^a	1	.297		
Continuity Correction ^b	.393	1	.531		
Likelihood Ratio	1.094	1	.296		
Fisher's Exact Test				.415	.265
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.083	1	.298		
N of Valid Cases	201				

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.75.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

RQ5 examined whether or not the visual representation of women has changed over the last three decades. To answer this question, the researcher ran a cross tabulation test and then conducted a chi square test and z- test to find out if there was a significant difference between the visual representative categories (provocative dress, skin exposure and essentiality) and the decade of release.

5a: The null hypothesis for this was that, that there was no relationship between the provocativeness of the dress of the women in the Item Songs and the decade in which the songs were released. The alternative hypothesis was that, that there was a relationship between the two.

(E.g. the women were more/less likely to be provocatively dressed in a specific decade). (H_n means null hypothesis, H_a means alternate hypothesis)

H_{n1} = Assumes that there is no relationship between the provocativeness of the dress and the decade of its release.

H_{a1} = Assumes that there is a relationship between the provocativeness of the dress and the decade of its release.

Significance Level: The researchers chose a significance level equal to or less than 0.05.

Since the p value ($p < 0.01$) is less than 0.05, there was a statistically significant relationship between the provocativeness of the dress and the decade of its release. The women were significantly more modestly dressed in the songs released between the years 1990-99 (7.5% from a total of 33.3%). There was no significant change in the dress in the years 2000-09. Moreover, all the songs between the years 2010-18 portrayed the women to be provocatively dressed. This was determined by the change in the subscript letter that denoted a subset of Provocative Dress categories whose column proportions differed significantly from each other. These results are reported in Table 14 and 15.

TABLE 14: Decade of Release * Provocative Dress Cross Tabulation

		Provocative Dress		Total	
		No	Yes		
Decade Of Release	1990-99	Count	15 _a	52 _b	67
		Expected Count	7.0	60.0	67.0
		% of Total	7.5%	25.9%	33.3%
	2000-09	Count	6 _a	61 _a	67
		Expected Count	7.0	60.0	67.0
		% of Total	3.0%	30.3%	33.3%

TABLE 14: Decade of Release * Provocative Dress Cross Tabulation Continued

2010-18	Count	0 _a	67 _b	67
	Expected Count	7.0	60.0	67.0
	% of Total	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%
Total	Count	21	180	201
	Expected Count	21.0	180.0	201.0
	% of Total	10.4%	89.6%	100.0%

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Provocative Dress categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

TABLE 15: Chi-Square Test Decade of Release * Provocative Dress Cross Tabulation

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.186 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	22.935	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	17.857	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	201		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.00.

5b: The null hypothesis for this was that there was no relationship between the skin exposed by the women in the Item Songs and the decade in which were released. The alternative hypothesis was that, that there was a relationship between the two. (E.g. the women were more/less likely to expose skin in a specific decade). (H_n means null hypothesis, H_a means alternate hypothesis)

H_{n2} = Assumes that there is no relationship between the skin exposed by women and the decade of its release.

H_{a2} = Assumes that there is a relationship between the skin exposed by women and the decade of the song's release.

Significance Level: The researchers chose a significance level equal to or less than 0.05.

Since the p value ($p < 0.01$) is less than 0.05, there was a statistically significant relationship between skin exposure and the decade of the song's release. The women were significantly less likely to expose skin in the songs released between the years 1990-99 (6% from 33.3%). There was no significant change in the category in the years 2000-09. Moreover, all the songs between the years 2010-18 showed the women to expose skin. This was determined by the change in the subscript letter that denoted a subset of Skin Exposure categories whose column proportions differed significantly from each other. These results are reported in Table 16 and 17.

TABLE 16: Decade of Release * Skin Exposure Cross Tabulation

			Skin Exposure		Total
			No	Yes	
Decade Of Release	1990-99	Count	12 _a	55 _b	67
		Expected Count	5.3	61.7	67.0
		% of Total	6.0%	27.4%	33.3%
	2000-09	Count	4 _a	63 _a	67
		Expected Count	5.3	61.7	67.0
		% of Total	2.0%	31.3%	33.3%
	2010-18	Count	0 _a	67 _b	67
		Expected Count	5.3	61.7	67.0
		% of Total	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%
Total	Count	16	185	201	
	Expected Count	16.0	185.0	201.0	
	% of Total	8.0%	92.0%	100.0%	

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Skin Exposure categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

TABLE 17: Chi-Square Test Decade of Release * Skin Exposure Cross Tabulation

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.211 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	18.386	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.595	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	201		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.33.

5c: The null hypothesis for this was that, that there was no relationship between the essentiality of the lead female artist portrayed in the Item Songs with the decade in which the song was released. The alternative hypothesis stated that, that there was a relationship between the two. (E.g. the women shown in the song were more/less likely to be essential in a specific decade). (H_n means null hypothesis, H_a means alternate hypothesis)

H_{n3} = Assumes that there is no relationship between the skin exposed by women and the decade of its release.

H_{a3} = Assumes that there is a relationship between the skin exposed by women and the decade of its release.

Significance Level: The researchers chose a significance level equal to or less than 0.05.

Since the p value ($p < 0.01$) is less than 0.05, there was a statistically significant relationship between the decade in which the song was released and the essentiality of the women who performed in it. The women were significantly more likely to be essential to the plot of the movie in the songs released between the years 1990-99 (27.4% from 33.3%). This figure is nearly twice the amount as existed in the case of songs that portrayed the women to be essential to the plot of the movie between the years 2000-18 (12.9% from 33.3%). This was determined by the change in the subscript letter that denoted a subset of Skin Exposure categories whose column proportions differed significantly from each other. These results are reported in Table 18 and 19.

TABLE 18: Decade of Release * Essentiality Cross Tabulation

		Essentiality		Total	
		Essential	Not Essential		
Decade Of Release	1990-99	Count	55 _a	12 _b	67
		Expected Count	35.7	31.3	67.0
		% of Total	27.4%	6.0%	33.3%

TABLE 18: Decade of Release * Essentiality Cross Tabulation Continued

2000-09	Count	26 _a	41 _b	67
	Expected Count	35.7	31.3	67.0
	% of Total	12.9%	20.4%	33.3%
2010-18	Count	26 _a	41 _b	67
	Expected Count	35.7	31.3	67.0
	% of Total	12.9%	20.4%	33.3%
Total	Count	107	94	201
	Expected Count	107.0	94.0	201.0
	% of Total	53.2%	46.8%	100.0%

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Essentiality categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

TABLE 19: Chi-Square Test for Decade of Release * Essentiality Cross Tabulation

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	33.613 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	35.830	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	25.085	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	201		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 31.33.

RQ6 examined whether or not the behavioral representation of women has changed over the last three decades. In answer to this question, the researcher ran a cross tabulation test and then conducted a chi square test and z- test to find out if there was a significant difference between the behavioral representative categories (provocative dress, skin exposure and essentiality) and the decade of release.

6a: The null hypothesis for this was that, that there was no relationship between the dance moves in the Item Songs and the decade in which the song was released. The alternative hypothesis stated that, that there was a relationship between the two. (E.g. the song was more/less likely to have

sexual dance moves in a specific decade). (H_n means null hypothesis, H_a means alternate hypothesis)

H_{n4} = Assumes that there is no relationship between the presence of sexual dance moves and the decade of its release.

H_{a4} = Assumes that there is a relationship between the presence of sexual dance moves and the decade of its release.

Significance Level: The researchers chose a significance level equal to or less than 0.05.

Since the p value ($p < 0.01$) is less than 0.05, there was a statistically significant relationship between the decade in which the song was released and the dance moves of the women who performed. The dance moves were significantly less likely to be sexual in nature in the songs released between the years 1990-99 (10.4% from a total of 33.3%). That is nearly 20 times the amount of songs that portrayed the women to be not dancing sexually between the years 2000-09 (0.5% from a total of 33.3%) and 7 times the amount of songs between 2010-18 (1.5% from a total of 33.3%). This was determined by the change in the subscript letter which denoted a subset of Dance Moves categories whose column proportions differed significantly from each other. These results are reported in Table 20 and 21.

TABLE 20: Decade of Release * Dance Moves Cross Tabulation

Decade Of Release		Dance Moves		Total
		No	Yes	
1990-99	Count	21 _a	46 _b	67
	Expected Count	8.3	58.7	67.0
	% of Total	10.4%	22.9%	33.3%
2000-09	Count	1 _a	66 _b	67
	Expected Count	8.3	58.7	67.0
	% of Total	0.5%	32.8%	33.3%

TABLE 20: Decade of Release * Dance Moves Cross Tabulation Continued

2010-18	Count	3 _a	64 _b	67
	Expected Count	8.3	58.7	67.0
	% of Total	1.5%	31.8%	33.3%
Total	Count	25	176	201
	Expected Count	25.0	176.0	201.0
	% of Total	12.4%	87.6%	100.0%

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Dance Moves categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

TABLE 21: Chi-Square Test for Decade of Release * Dance Moves Cross Tabulation

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	33.256 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	32.756	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	22.091	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	201		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.33.

6b: The null hypothesis for this was that, that there was no relationship between the presence of sexual expressions by the lead female artist in the Item Songs and the decade in which the song was released. The alternative hypothesis stated that there was a relationship between the two. (E.g. the artist was more/less likely to give sexual expressions in the song in a specific decade). (H_n means null hypothesis, H_a means alternate hypothesis)

H_{n5} = Assumes that there is no relationship between the presence of sexual expressions given by the lead female artist and the decade of a song's release.

H_{a5} = Assumes that there is a relationship between the presence of sexual expressions given by the lead female artist and the decade of a song's release.

Significance Level: The researchers chose a significance level equal to or less than 0.05.

Since the p value ($p=0.001$) is less than 0.05, there was a statistically significant relationship between the decade in which the song was released and the expressions of the women who performed. The expressions of the lead female artist, which were sexual in nature, were significantly less likely to be present in the songs released between the years 1990-99 (21.9% from a total of 33.3%) and 2000-09 (20.4% from a total of 33.3%). On the other hand, the expressions of the artist which were sexual in nature were two times more likely to be present in the songs between the years 2010-18 (Yes= 20.4%, No= 11.9% from a total of 33.3%). This was determined by the change in the subscript letter which denoted a subset of Expressions categories whose column proportions differed significantly from each other. These results are reported in Table 22 and 23.

TABLE 22: Decade of Release * Expressions Cross Tabulation

Decade Of Release		Expressions		Total	
		No	Yes		
1990-99	Count	44 _a	23 _b	67	
	Expected Count	36.3	30.7	67.0	
	% of Total	21.9%	11.4%	33.3%	
	2000-09	Count	41 _a	26 _a	67
		Expected Count	36.3	30.7	67.0
		% of Total	20.4%	12.9%	33.3%
	2010-18	Count	24 _a	43 _b	67
		Expected Count	36.3	30.7	67.0
		% of Total	11.9%	21.4%	33.3%
Total	Count	109	92	201	
	Expected Count	109.0	92.0	201.0	
	% of Total	54.2%	45.8%	100.0%	

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Expressions categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

TABLE 23: Chi-Square Test for Decade of Release * Expressions Cross Tabulation

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.991 ^a	2	.001
Likelihood Ratio	14.104	2	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.966	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	201		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 30.67.

6c: The null hypothesis for this was that there was no relationship between the presence of male gaze in the Item Songs and the decade in which the song was released. The alternative hypothesis stated that there was a relationship between the two. (E.g. the men were more/less likely to give gaze at the female artist in the song in a specific decade). (H_n means null hypothesis, H_a means alternate hypothesis)

H_{n6} = Assumes that there is no relationship between the presence of male gaze and the decade of a song's release.

H_{a6} = Assumes that there is a relationship between the presence of male gaze and the decade of a song's release.

Significance Level: The researchers chose a significance level equal to or less than 0.05.

Since the p value ($p = .225$) is more than 0.05, there was no statistically significant relationship between male gaze and the decade in which the song was released. These results are reported in Table 24 and 25.

TABLE 24: Decade of Release * Male Gaze Cross Tabulation

		Male Gaze			
		No	Yes	Total	
Decade Of Release	1990-99	Count	49 _a	18 _a	67
		Expected Count	46.3	20.7	67.0
		% of Total	24.4%	9.0%	33.3%
	2000-09	Count	49 _a	18 _a	67
		Expected Count	46.3	20.7	67.0
		% of Total	24.4%	9.0%	33.3%
	2010-18	Count	41 _a	26 _a	67
		Expected Count	46.3	20.7	67.0
		% of Total	20.4%	12.9%	33.3%
Total	Count	139	62	201	
	Expected Count	139.0	62.0	201.0	
	% of Total	69.2%	30.8%	100.0%	

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Male Gaze categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

TABLE 25: Chi-Square Test for Decade of Release * Male Gaze Cross Tabulation

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.985 ^a	2	.225
Likelihood Ratio	2.931	2	.231
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.228	1	.136
N of Valid Cases	201		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 20.67.

Therefore, in answer to research question 5, the test results show that the visual representations of women has changed over the three decades. The objectification has significantly increased, which can be observed in all the different categories (provocative dress, skin exposure and essentiality).

Similarly in answer to research question 6, the test results determine that there is a change in the behavioral representation of women. The behavioral objectification has increased in two of the

categories (dance moves and expression) but there was no change recorded in the third category (male gaze).

DISCUSSION

Content analyses of music videos have certainly dwindled since an explosion of research in the 1980s and 1990s. Rather than dismissing the cultural importance of music videos, the author argues that they can still be a rather potent medium, especially for young viewers, because they provide rather salient imagery related to norms regarding gender and sexuality (Jhally, 2007). The issue is not how much the audience are exposed to music videos but whether they are exposed at all (Seidman, 1992; Sommers-Flanagan et al., 1993; Vincent, 1989; Vincent et al., 1987). Thus, one of the main goals of the present study was to update content analytic work that has been done on music videos, and focus on the sexual nature of them by narrowing the focus down to a certain genre. Whereas much of the previous research examined broad themes related to how female characters are portrayed in music videos, the present study examined specific visual and behavioral features of sexual objectification that were based on the objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). The present research suggests that female artists in Bollywood item Numbers regularly use sexual objectifying behaviors (e.g., dance) and styling (e.g., dress) to portray themselves. Thus, one implication of the current research is the need to further consider how audiences might interpret the apparent choice of female artists to sexually objectify the self. Sun & Lull (1986) argue that a focus on the artist is important because music videos allow viewers a glimpse of the musicians, not only augmenting the potential for adoration and idolization of the performers, but also increasing the meaning viewers attach to their actions (Sun & Lull, 1986).

Thus, the message of these music videos to viewers who idolize these artists might be that female artists are appreciated more for their bodies and their sexual attractiveness than for their talents.

Summary of Key Findings

Based on objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), one of the primary goals in the present study was to measure differences between visual and behavioral sexual objectification, drawing on theoretically derived indicators of sexual objectification. The findings suggest that the visual objectification of women was 34.9% higher than the behavioral objectification of women. The earliest feminist theorizing about sexual objectification often argued that gender — specifically, being male — played an important part in whether someone engaged in objectification. Interestingly, the evidence for this very basic and longstanding claim is somewhat mixed. Research certainly has found that men engage in more objectification than women (Loughnan et al. 2010). Gervais, Holland, and Dodd (2013) recently found that music videos were more likely to engage in visual objectification of women rather than behavioral, because behavior results in consequences. And also visuals act as subtle cues which make it easier for the film to pass a certification and censorship panel (Dodd, 2013).

The results of the study suggest that 89.6% of the songs show the lead artist to be provocatively dressed. This may be because we generally live in a society where subtlety shown through clothing appears prude and unglamorous, and only the most overt expressions of sexuality can now be noticed, and what better way to show it than costumes. Costumes are an integral part of a film. They add the needed character, flair and glamour to the on screen portrayal of the story. They reflect the visual style of the production and help actors portray their characters on their journey through the play's action. But most importantly, they add to the aesthetics of the scene.

Moreover, since directors achieve more profits by adding an Item Number, they tend to increase the 'glamour quotient' in the song by making the artist wear provocative clothing and expose more skin. This has been seen as an increasing trend in the 2000s. The results suggest that the artists were more likely to be provocatively dressed in the 2000s (2000-18) than in the 1990s (1990-99). In the 1980s Bollywood fashion was modest, understated and formal. Showing skin was considered overtly sexual and clothing that exposed skin was frowned upon. The 1990s saw a shift in fashion. Pants gave way to skirts, and flaunting skin was no longer a taboo. But since Bollywood had just entered the zone and though the audience were more accepting compared to the 1980s, it would take some time to get accustomed to the nuances. Therefore, a lot of the songs had actresses clad modestly. The 'glamour quotient' was added through the dancers exposing skin in the background (difference of 2%). In the end, filmmakers produce art to please an audience, and the art usually reflects the accepted norm in a society. As soon as the costumes that exposed skin (dresses above the knee, exposing the cleavage, midriff and hips) started to be accepted and appreciated, they were considered the new 'normal', and thus started the trend of women in item numbers being scantily dressed.

Earlier, in the 1990s, the artists who performed in the songs were also an essential part of the movie and the songs contributed to the plot. This is evidently seen in the results where 27.4% of the songs released in the 1990s featured artists who were an essential part of the film. No longer is a Bollywood Item number a playful and fun dance number. These item songs are now being used as tools to attract audiences and to increase the box-office collections. They attract male viewers as they show women dancing to please the men – or the male lead. No woman, in any of these songs that have been recently released, have been shown to dancing out of her own joy or accord. An article by Amita Nijhawan (Times of India, 2012) discussed the ways in which item

songs worked as big budget revenue collectors rather than songs used in order to enhance a movie. The main reason an item song is included in a film is because the artist performing in the song is usually a popular actress of the time and so the song is released in order to generate buzz for the film without paying for marketing. In the modern era of YouTube, these songs are repeatedly viewed by people all across the country and, thus, it further helps with the publicity. A controversy about the song ends up helping the movie as it starts getting large slots and footage in the news. Item songs these days have become an integral part of the movie – which is surprising since they seldom have anything to do with the actual plot of the film. The songs are a vital part of the film is marketing strategy. Moreover, filmmakers seem to have adapted this formula as a no-brainer now. The Indian Film Industry is highly dominated by male directors. And, the few female directors we have also fall into the trap of creating content that sells. Since the catchy and upbeat tunes of the songs earned the producers a large amount of money in the 1990s, the filmmakers adopted this scheme and made it a trend in the 2000s. Many top stars in Bollywood and many newcomers entering the industry find item numbers a more amenable shortcut to success, as opposed to more traditional roles with no guarantee of eventual stardom. The more indecent the song is, the more innuendo-filled the lyrics are – the catchier it becomes. The formula of combining these provocative lyrics with a super catchy tune is being followed so blindly, that the producers and viewers fail to see the impact it is having on the society and the women.

People are impressionable, we learn from movies. People may mock the female artists. They may argue that movies are just movies and have nothing to do with perpetuating the objectification of women. Nevertheless, the fact remains that film is a soft medium capable of being very influential on people's opinions. This is evident in the high number of crimes against women reported in India each year. The rape cases went up from 240 to 243, and molestation cases

have seen a marginal increase from 315 to 378 (comparison data from 2016 and 2018) (Financial Express, December 2018). This is evident in the fact that Indian men especially find it acceptable to post misogynistic polls and body shame the actresses (the replies of men to the #MeToo controversy on twitter). One of the reasons for this online abuse towards women is the portrayal of women in Bollywood film and songs as flimsy, and willing to fall into the arms of men. This is a dangerous narrative that Bollywood continues to put forward in order to maximize profits.

Future Direction

The problematic representations of women in Bollywood songs deserve further research attention because they likely affect other attitudes and self-perceptions as well, including attitudes toward sexuality, conceptions and understandings of masculinity and femininity, and women's rights. From the research, this study can go in multiple directions. Each category can be looked into rather deeply. The level of variance under provocative dress and skin exposure can be measured. We have formulated a way to gauge whether the content does indeed objectify women, but not what impact it has on viewers.

Further studies could be conducted on how Item Numbers translate to the real lives of individuals consuming such media. Do men treat women worse after viewing these numbers? Do women view themselves as inferior or superior? Studying these effects with a real audience will shed light on real world consequences. Along this same path, objectification tends to be seen in an unfavorable light. Could it be possible that for some people it has aided in personal growth to view such content? A study should be conducted comparing the positive and negative self-consequences of consuming this content. Women have typically been viewed as the victims of objectification, but even less research has been focused on the objectification of men.

Indeed, analyzing popular images of gender within the music video context contributes to an understanding of gender in contemporary media, and such analyses may ultimately contribute to how young people, especially girls and women, are socialized to see themselves. This research is a pathway to bridging Item Number content analysis to other genres of music. Rap, Hip-hop, R&B, and Country have been greatly delved into for various analyses. There are many fewer findings on Item Number studies. In terms of cultural awareness, it is hard for an outsider to gauge what objectification may look like for one person but be a cultural norm to another. This study will serve as an example to compare with other genres in the future.

Limitations

The biggest limitation, as we saw with this proposal, is the lack of generalizability. While this study seeks to uncover objectification in the top 201 Indian Item Numbers, it could not serve as a standard to all item songs. In addition, the sample frame was limited by the relatively narrow period the author chose to analyze (1990-2018). The trend of ‘item numbers’ started in the early 1950’s. Therefore, the study is missing nearly 4 decades. This study also included many opinionated factors- what one may see as objectification, another may see as a compliment. For this reason, it was important to have multiple coders review the content with a well-defined set of rules on what may be considered objectification to keep the study consistent. Along with this, another limitation was the cultural barrier. Where something may seem lewd to one, it may be normal to others. However, the span of India is so diverse that the cultural preferences are inconsistent. India is also becoming highly westernized; changing viewpoints across generations, with Hollywood movies that carry their own biases intermingled with Bollywood content.

CONCLUSION

The present study reflected the ways of objectification of women in India by analyzing Bollywood rap and item songs. Obscene words and lewd remarks about women are frequently used in such songs and thus it has become normal for both men and women to hear them. Most of the women and young girls do not even realize that they are being objectified by the indecent words prevalent in the songs. Studies focusing on the objectification of women such as the present one will help in spreading awareness among both men and women that females are being treated as mere objects or sex objects and not as a person. Directors, producers and lyrics composers need to reflect on the content of movie and songs and video songs where women are served as sex objects in order to please others. Both Noll (1997) and Sioux (2008) recommend that parents should encourage and assist young women in non-appearance related activities such as school achievement and community activism and teach them to value their bodies for strength and effectiveness, not only appearance. The results of this study help to offer a more comprehensive view of what is occurring in Bollywood Item Numbers. In the past, there was much debate over what was actually being seen in these videos and if these videos really objectified women. This analysis helps to clarify this debate showing that the common themes found in videos of the past are shifting, and it is important to understand how shifts in society reflect those found in music videos.

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