

One Direction: Writing Stereotyped Pop Songs 101

Introduction

One Direction was, and arguably have remained, one of the biggest bands in the world. With 5 studio albums under their belt, 6 Billboard Music Awards, 7 AMAs, it's safe to say that One Direction has left a huge impact on the music industry. The group's genres were mainly Pop and Pop Rock. Many of their songs were love songs, which is evident in many pop songs (Moos, 2013). One Direction's target audience was adolescent girls, which is typical of most boy bands around the time Their innocent image helped contribute to creation of the adolescent fanbase (Hansen, 2018). This is important to note because, as stated, a ton of One Direction's discography is love songs. As Mark Duffett (2013) states, boy band members often created music with the intention of "seducing the audience" with the promise of a romantic partnership.

Methods

First, I found a Spotify playlist that contained all of One Direction's songs. I then hit shuffle on the playlist so I could get a random sample of 20 songs (see "songs used"). This random sample provided me with a wide range of songs from One Direction's discography. I made a new playlist with the songs and listened to them in order as I completed the portfolio posts. For each song I used the Sex Role Analysis to analyze each of the songs. The Sex Role Analysis states that there are characteristics that are stereotypically masculine, such as dominance, and stereotypically feminine, such as warm. For each post, I organized them by two categories: "Evaluating Masculinity" and "Evaluating Femininity." Through this evaluation I was able to see how each of the 20 songs portrayed gender stereotypes if at all.

Songs Used

1. Midnight Memories

2. Live While We're Young

3. Truly Madly Deeply

4. She's Not Afraid

5. C'mon C'mon

6. Stand Up

7. Ready to Run

8. Hey Angel

9. Kiss You

10. Gotta Be You
11. If I Could Fly

12. Steal My Girl

13. Spaces

14. Loved You First

15. Why Don't We Go There

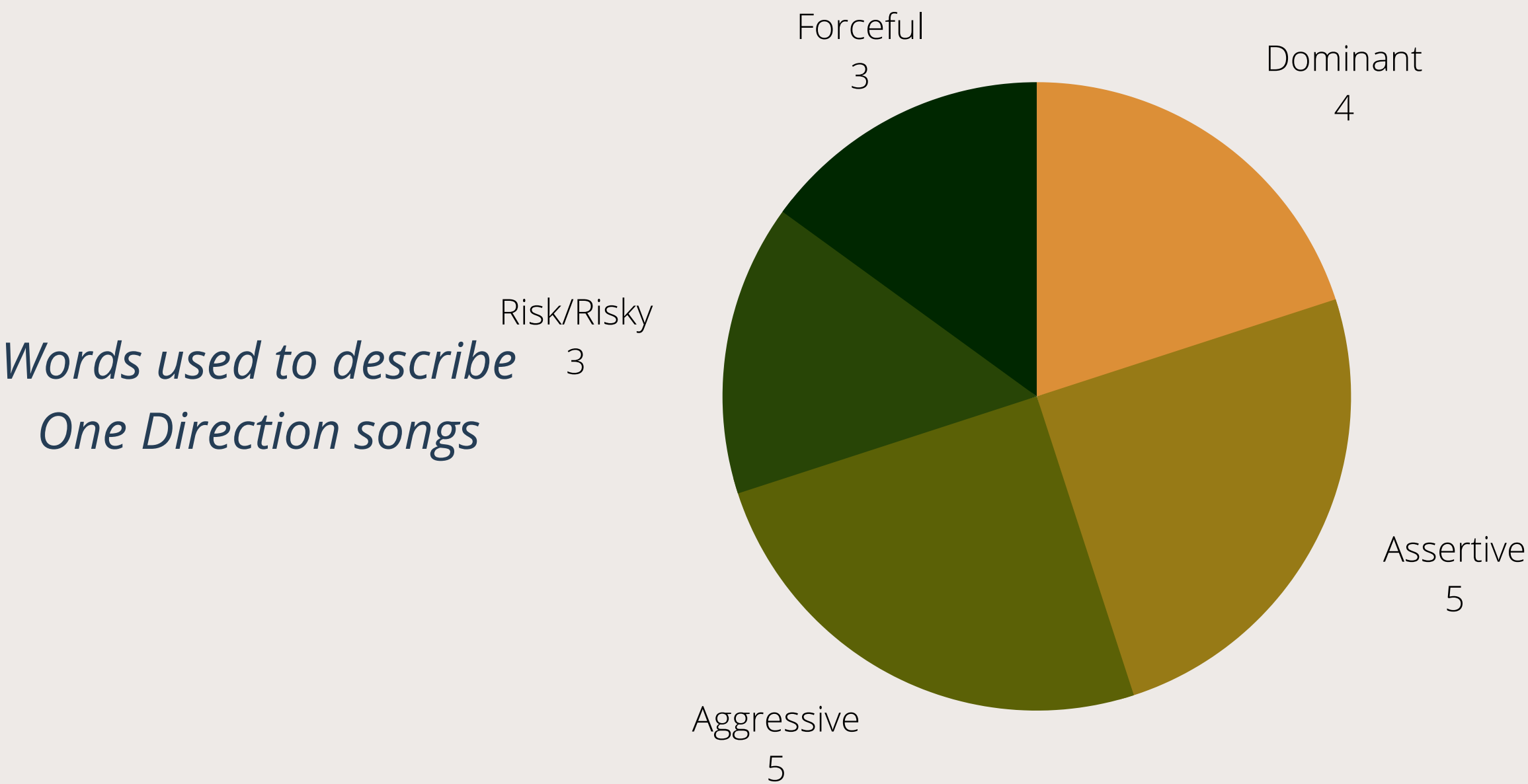
16. History

17. Right Now

18. Fireproof

19. Save You Tonight

20. Olivia



Results

A trend I noticed with the songs is that the more recent they were, the less stereotyped they were. This isn't true for all songs (i.e. "Steal My Girl" and "Midnight Memories") but overall this trend rang true. Most of One Directions earlier discography has very blatant stereotypes between men vs women. It often depicted men as being aggressive in their feelings towards women. The more recent music, namely off of *Four* and *Made in the A.M.*, the music explores different concepts.

The pie chart to the left is a count of the words that I used most often to describe the songs in terms of evaluating masculinity. A lot of the songs did not describe too much about femininity, so a chart for those words is not applicable.

Discussion

The evolution of One Direction's discography shows a certain degree of immaturity/innocence in their earlier music and more maturity in their later music. This gradual growth in maturity also mirrors the growth in maturity that their fans went through as many of them became fans of the group at a young age.

References

Duffett, M. (2013). Multiple damnations: Deconstructing the critical response to boy band Phenomena. *Popular Music History*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.1558/pomh.v7i2.185>

Hansen, K. A. (2016). Fashioning a post boy band masculinity: On the seductive dreamscape of zayn's pillowtalk. *Popular Music and Society*, 41(2), 194–212. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2016.1242994>

Moos, J. J. (2013). Boy bands, Drag Kings, and the performance of (queer) masculinities. *Transposition*, (3). <https://doi.org/10.4000/transposition.325>