

Girl in a Country Song

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Introduction

The goal of this study was to see how gender plays a role in the media in the form of country music. Specifically focused on how women are portrayed in country songs. Research has shown that nearly half of country songs in the study referred to female gender roles. In more than half of those songs, the lyrics were objectifying. (Rasmussen, 2017) This is a common problem with country songs today. Women are commonly treated as objects in lyrics. Being a problem as is it also can lead to men believing that can treat all women as objects in the real world. Another article pointed out that women are portrayed as staying the same mentally whereas men mature over time. (Richards, 2012) Hence in country songs, women are referred to as Baby, Baby doll, Girl. Another example from a study found that most country songs are about relationships in one way or another. Also, that women should take back their ex-lovers. (Saucier, 1993) This stereotype that women must be in a relationship and that they should take back the man can lead to unhealthy relationships. Another stereotype brought up in multiple studies was that women are seen as homemakers or as sexual bargains. (Rasmussen 2017 & Saucier 1993) Even though these studies were years apart similar characteristics still showed up in both.

Methods

In this study, I used my iPhone and my own Apple Music. After pulling up my music I selected the country genre. My first plan was to select the first twenty randomly shuffled songs. The songs that were chosen were represented multiple decades of country music. After I struggled with Little Big Town's song *Day Drinking* I realized that I should select songs that are by a solo artist, and also that talk about women. It happened very few times where I had to skip a song because I was not able to collect the data and information that I needed for this study. To analyzing I choose to use the lyrics of the songs instead of the music videos. Analyzing the lyrics I used the Sex-Role Theory to pull out the femininity traits.

My goal was to find 3 or more lyrics that stood out to me as having a feminine trait. As an example, if a male brought out a women's body, I would describe that as affectionate or compassionate for the most part depending on the surrounding lyrics. At some points difficult to analyze the lyrics. I would have similar lines for different songs one being positive where the other was seen as objectifying.

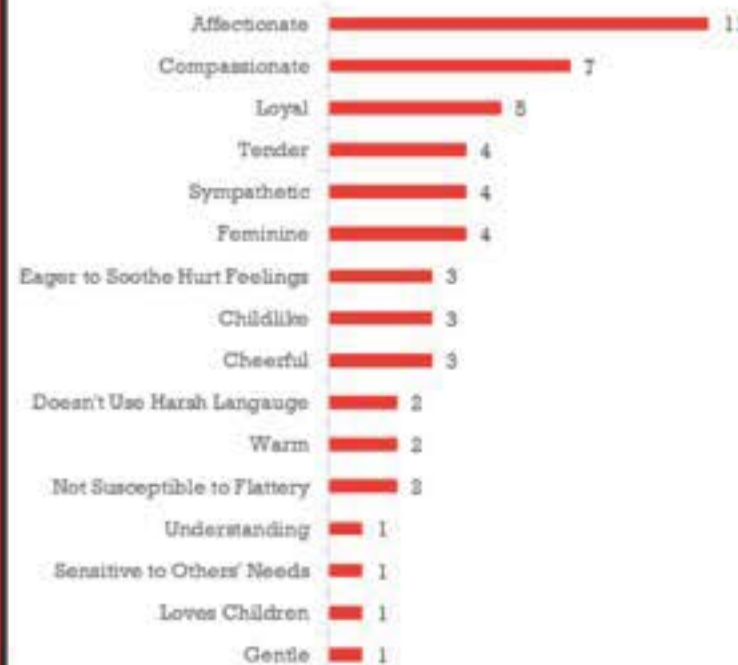
Lyrics were found through the websites: www.lyrics.com, www.azlyrics.com, and genius.com.

List of selected songs

She Thinks my Tractor's Sexy by Kenny Chesney
 Day Drinking by Little Big Town
 GIRL by Maren Morris
 Record Year by Eric Church
 You Look Like I Need a Drink by Justin Moore
 You Belong with Me by Taylor Swift
 In Case You Didn't Know by Brett Young
 H.O.L.Y. by Florida Georgia Line
 Homegrown Honey by Darius Rucker
 Dirty Laundry by Carrie Underwood
 Good as You by Kane Brown
 She Got the Best of Me by Luke Combs
 Blessings by Florida Georgia Line
 Rumor by Lee Brice
 Shotgun Rider by Tim McGraw
 Unforgettable by Thomas Rhett
 T-shirt by Thomas Rhett
 Flatliner by Cole Swindell
 Senorita by Jake Owen
 Single You Up by Jordan Davis

Result

The results of the femininity characteristic traits throughout the songs are shown in the bar chart below. The labels on the vertical axis are the traits that I found during analyzing the twenty songs. These labels were found on the femininity traits side of the Sex-Role Theory. According to the chart, it shows that Affectionate was found most often throughout the songs. In some cases, Affectionate was found multiple times in one song. An example of an Affectionate lyric would be from Thomas Rhett's song *T-shirt*. "Your hair messed like a Gator N' Roses video; Ooh ooh so hot" I then analyze it as: he is complimenting her for how she can be looking so good. In a moment that she has messy hair and nothing fancy about her, most likely no makeup.



Discussion

The key takeaways from this project are that over the decades of country music women are still not being treated as people. Also, country songs tend to be referring to a relationship of sorts. During my study I found that nearly all of the songs were about a relationship, only one song was not about a relationship. This follows along with the research found from a past study. Going back to the 2017 report that stated that over half of the lyrics were about women in an objectifying way. (Rasmussen, 2017) Women were mentioned not only as homemakers but also referred to in sexual ways throughout the songs in my study. We don't want young women to see themselves like this as they can be so much more. Even with the mistreatment of female gender roles throughout country music all genders still listen to it. Some female artists have taken a stance and played jokes about how they don't want to be a cook cut country girl. Past studies show that being characterized as affectionate is a common occurrence. Women are being highlighted for their physical appearance or beauty. (Richards, 2012) This line up with my study's results showing that affectionate was the most common character trait found.

Limitations of this study: I should have strictly done male country singers, but I selected two songs by female singers and one by a band. Using my personal Apple Music could lead to a bias considering that these are the songs that I enjoy. My reactions and interpretations are different some another person's relations to the lyrics. A final and major limitation is that I only focus on the lyrics of the songs and the music videos could change or add a great deal of information to the study.

Reference

Rasmussen, Eric E., and Rebecca L. Densley. "Girl in a country song: Gender roles and objectification of women in popular country music across 1990 to 2014." *Sex Roles* 76.3-4 (2017): 188-201.
 Richards, Ashley R. *Gender, hegemony, and country music*. Gonzaga University, 2012.
 Saucier, Karen A. "Images of Women and Men in Country Music." *All That Glimers: Country Music in America*. Ed. George H. Lewis. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State U Popular P (1993): 241-58.

