

Sex, Aggression, and Music Videos: A Content Analysis

Purpose: This exercise is a partial replication of a study conducted by Sommers-Flanagan et al. (1993). It is designed to examine gender, power, sexuality, and aggression in music videos.

Instructions: Research has begun to focus on the aggressive and sexual content in rock music videos and the messages such videos send about gender, sexuality, and aggression. For this project, you will need to watch one hour of music videos on a station such as MTV, BET, OR VH-1. Using the data sheet on the following page, analyze the videos according to the coding system outlined below. Indicate the number of occurrences represented by each category. For each category, code the sex of the actor and the sex of the recipient.

Dominance: Code the power relationships. Place a check under the appropriate column for each occurrence of men and women exercising power (actors) or being subservient (recipients) to another person (man or woman).

Implicit Aggression: This category includes scenes suggestive of aggression or including pain and/or threat. The use of “before and after” scenes are commonly used to imply off-camera violence. A room might be shown in disarray or a victim of aggression might be shown crying or cowering.

Explicit Aggression: In contrast to off-camera aggression this category includes filmed acts such as slapping, pushing, etc., that are intended to harm another.

Aggression with Sexuality: This category includes aggression that is sexualized. Examples might include instances where a target of aggression responds in a sexual way or is seen to enjoy aggressive sex.

Objectification: Objectification usually involves focusing on body parts (e.g., stalking legs or undulating torsos) rather than the entire person. Head shorts or shots of the upper body and the face would not be included.

Implicit Sexuality: This category includes explicit sexual activity but includes acts such as licking of lips, suggestive dancing, stroking, etc.

Explicit Sexuality: This category includes explicit sexual touch (e.g., touching breasts or genitals) or simulated sexual activity.

In your paper, respond to the following questions:

1. Sommers-Flanagan and her colleagues found that men were more frequently engaged in dominant and aggressive behavior than were women. Compare and contrast your findings with these findings.
2. Sommers-Flanagan and her colleagues found that women were more frequently depicted as recipients of implicit aggressive behavior, sexual behavior (both implicit and explicit), and sexually aggressive behavior. Compare and contrast your results with these findings.
3. What messages are sent to those who watch videos about gender and sexuality? Gender and aggression?

Music Video Code Sheet

Category	Male Actor	Female Actor	Male Recipient	Female Recipient
Dominance				
Implicit Aggression				
Explicit Aggression				
Aggression with Sexuality				
Objectification				
Implicit Sexuality				
Explicit Sexuality				
Totals				
Percentages				