Global Hegemony Maleness in Hip-Hop Music: Product Reference in Rap Music Depending on the Rapper's Gender

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ABSTRACT: This research included a content analysis of the top 50 hip hop songs from Billboard's Year-End Charts from 2008 through 2011, totaling 200 tracks. Songs were coded for a variety of factors, including the gender of the rapper(s), the amount of brand references, and the kind of goods referenced, all of which were guided by Hegemonic Masculinity. The amount of goods and companies mentioned differed considerably depending on the gender of the performers, which is particularly noteworthy given the fact that women are disproportionately underrepresented in hip hop music. Male vocalists had a considerably greater number of brands referenced in their songs than female singers. Re-searchers discovered that the kinds of goods referenced in hip hop music differed depending on the gender of the vocalists. Male vocalists cited brands and goods in the areas of cars, alcohol, fashion, and entertainment, while female musicians mentioned more brands and products in the categories of travel and entertainment.

KEYWORD: Brand Mention, Hip Hop, Marketing, Product Placement, Rap Music.

1. INTRODUCTION

The majority of rap music research has concentrated on two main areas: the depiction of women in rap music lyrics and videos, and the usage of brand names and product placement in rap music lyrics and videos. In previous research, it was discovered that rap music videos and lyrics mainly focus on the sexuality of women, and in some cases, address violence against women. However, it has been shown that brand mentions and product placement appear in at least 66 percent of popular rap song lyrics, according to a recent study. There has been no prior investigation on disparities in brand mentions depending on the gender of the musicians.

1.1 Product Placement:

Product placement is a kind of marketing communication and promotion that involves the placement of brands and goods inside entertainment items such as movies and television programmes in exchange for monetary or in-kind compensation on the part of the content's creator or distributor. Instead, product placement may be conceived of as the union of advertising and entertainment in its most basic sense. Product placement is intended to expose the interested audience to a product and/or a brand while they are naturally watching a specific media vehicle, such as a television programme or a movie, with the goal of increasing brand awareness[1].

One of the first documented instances of product placement may be found in the 1945 film Mildred Pierce, in which the main character can be seen drinking Jack Daniels whiskey in plain sight. There have been many instances of product placement assisting the sponsoring brand or product in terms of sales, exposure, and even brand recognition and identification. Products such as Reese's Pieces candy bars and Ray Ban sunglasses saw substantial increases in sales after notable appearances in films such as E.T. and Men in Black, demonstrating the efficacy of product placement.

Due to consumers' increasing resistance to conventional advertising, product placement has emerged as a rising subcategory of marketing communications aimed at reaching a more fragmented and more inattentive target audience. Product placement has been ingrained in popular culture and has grown into a multibillion-dollar business across the globe. The research group PO Media estimates that sponsored product placement in 2006 had a global worth of $3.07 billion, while unpaid product placement had a global value of $7.45 billion in 2006. With $2.9 billion in product placement revenue in 2007 and $3.7 billion in 2008, the United States is the biggest and fastest expanding product placement industry[2].

Marketing communications budgets currently account for 32 percent of total marketing communications budgets, according to study findings. Product placement and brand placement, according to researchers, has become a common practice in mainstream media, including movies, broadcast and cable television, video games, blogs, music videos, DVDs, magazines, books, comic books, Broadway musicals and plays, radio, the

internet, and mobile phones. It is successful because it depicts the brand being used or eaten in a natural environment, which makes it more memorable.

As a matter of fact, according to experts, the 2012 James Bond film SkyFall contains almost $50 million worth of commercial placement. Consider this: it represents almost a third of the film's production budget and one of the most lucrative product placement deals ever recorded in the history of the entertainment industry. While product placement is most commonly associated with traditional products and brands, some films, such as Sideways, have successfully promoted wine tourism in California's Napa Valley, and NBC's hit show ER featured characters prominently wearing pink ribbons during Breast Cancer Awareness Month. So far, the majority of product placement research has been on product placement in motion pictures and television shows. However, there is a growing corpus of study in the area of product placement in other media vehicles such as video games and music, which is becoming more prevalent[3].

1.2 Masculinity as a Hegemonic Feature:

The term "hegemony" refers to "leadership or domination, particularly of one state or country over another," according to the academics. It is the process by which one major social group must actively agree to the advancement of another important social group in order for that social group to achieve moral, intellectual, and political leadership. In the case of hip hop music, male rappers have consistently outperformed their female counterparts in terms of the quantity of songs released, their position on different popular charts, and their sales. When it comes to hip hop music, the culture and economics of the genre may lead one to think that there is a definite masculine domination. A large portion of what is referred to as "Hegemonic Masculinity" may be traced back to this.

According to the researchers, feminist musicologists who began researching female composers and musicians in the early 1970s were chastised for not having a thorough knowledge of a genre that was dominated by male artists and performers. In addition, other musical aspects such as women's voice music and song lyrics have received less academic and societal recognition than men's musical abilities. As the multibillion-dollar music industry in the United States continues to expand its global reach, this dominating hegemony is becoming ever more widespread[4].

In conjunction with this expansion comes the promotion of dominant ideas such as those of race, class and gender, as well as stereotypes and sexuality, and ultimately, pictures of women. According to the researchers, "Hip hop predominates in the sexualization and stereotyping of women, and it has sparked intriguing debates on the complex links between race, gender, sexuality, class, and nationality." While there are some female rappers who have embraced the stereotypical image of black female hyper-sexuality, such as Roxanne Shante, who in 1984 released her hit single Roxanne Roxanne and essentially started the feminist movement in hip hop, other popular female rappers such as Lil' Kim, Beyonce', and Foxy Brown have embraced the stereotypical image of black female hyper-sexuality and have become extremely successful as a result.

In hip hop music throughout the 1980s, there was a significant feminist movement. Yet a significant number of well-known female rappers nowadays seem to be playing into the stereotypes that have been established by society and male rappers, contributing to the dominating masculine hegemonic undertones that are ever-present in contemporary hip hop music, regardless of the rapper's gender. Despite an increase in the number of female rappers as well as their popularity, male rappers continue to predominate in the industry[5].

Power relationships are at the heart of hegemony. It is all about how the subordinate group perceives power and how the dominant group exerts influence on the subordinate group. It is possible that the subordinate group may seek to imitate the dominant group in order to enhance their own authority as a result of this impression. In the words of the researchers, "hegemonic masculinity is the configuration of gender practice that reflects the presently accepted solution to the issue of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which ensures (or is presumed to guarantee) the dominating position of males and the subjugation of women."

Product adoption is unequally distributed across consumers over time, according to experts. This is particularly true for technology goods. Male and female consumers are often targeted in various ways by marketers. The social environment has a significant impact on these targeted methods. As an example, during their first marketing campaigns in the 1950s, hi-fi systems and TVs were targeted exclusively at both men and women[6].

As a result of these disparities in marketing tactics, men and women adopted these goods in very different ways. Because of its design and the fact that they provided passive amusement, televisions were seen as a

more feminine product. Hi-fi systems, on the other hand, were designed with exposed circuitry and an open design, making them easy to work with and manipulate, and therefore a stereotypically masculine product.

According to research, some goods are marketed differently to men and women based on how men and women view the same product or service. Marketing professionals recognize that males have a unique connection with their vehicles, and as a result, most automobiles are sold especially to men in most cases. Often, products are sold in different ways to different parts of society because they have a distinct meaning to different elements of society.

These groups may be further subdivided based on factors such as income, gender, age, and so on. The purpose of this research is to determine whether or not this kind of behaviour seems to be mirrored in rap music lyrics as well, particularly in terms of the gender of the rappers. We investigate if gender distinctions in rap music lyrics are represented in the same way as some goods are more connected with a certain gender in society[7].

More precisely, this research seeks to determine if there are variations in the number and kinds of goods referenced in the lyrics of songs depending on the gender of the musicians participating in the study. It may be claimed that there are additional constructions that can be utilized to assess relationships to hegemonic masculinity in addition to the one described above. However, only the ones that are linked to product categories and the quantity of brand references within the lyrics of rap music are used in this research.

1.3 Product Placement:

Product placement and brand mentions have made their way into popular music throughout the course of the last several decades. When it comes to music, the first documented instance of brand reference can be traced back to the 1908 popular song Take Me out to the Ball Game, in which the brand Cracker Jack was prominently featured and named several times. The second aspect that distinguishes brand mention and product placement in music from other forms of advertising is that nothing is known about the actual financial transactions that take place.

Sometimes, brand mention in music is the consequence of a purely financial transaction, while other times, brand mention occurs as a result of an association that leads an organization to pay the musician in order to formalize the connection. Take, for example, the time when Run DMC first launched their song My Adidas, there was no recognized business relationship between the artist and Adidas. However, as a result of the song's popularity, Adidas chose Run DMC to be the face of their Adidas footwear[8].

According to rap music experts, the most common reason for rap music lyrics to feature multiple brands is because those brands are preferred by the artists, and it's a part of their creative song-writing process to demonstrate taste and success, which frequently includes mentioning high-end designer brands in their songs. There have also been instances in which music record labels and musicians have become engaged with businesses and promoted them via their music. Roc-A-Fella Records, which belongs to rapper Jay-Z, purchased Armadale Vodka, and the brand was prominently promoted in the music of Jay-Z as well as other musicians signed to the label, such as Cam'Ron, for a period of time thereafter.

Since then, product placement and brand mentions in music have only proceeded to increase in popularity, with rap music being the most prominent and important example of this development. A research carried out by de Gregorio and Sung (2004) discovered that brand references in song lyrics increased significantly in the second part of the 1990s when compared to the preceding fifteen years, according to the authors. In a similar vein, researchers examined the lyrics of the top 100 songs from each of the five most popular music genres in 2004 and discovered that 21.21 percent of all songs contained brand mentions, with rap songs accounting for 61.42 percent of all brand mentions and country music accounting for 20 percent of all brand mentions (14.35 percent).

In another study, the researchers analyzed the lyrics of the top 60 songs from the five most popular music genres in 2010 and compared that data with the top 100 songs from the five most popular music genres in 2004. They discovered that brand mention in all music had increased from 21.21 percent in 2004 to 26.92 percent in 2010, with the highest percentage being 26.92 percent. They also discovered that brand mentions had risen across nearly all genres, which was encouraging. While brand mentions rose from 61.42 percent in 2004 to almost 82.98 percent in 2010, they increased even more for the country music genre, where they went from 20 percent in 2004 to 21.67 percent in 2010, and from 14.35 percent to 22.73 percent for the pop genre, respectively[9].

2. DISCUSSION

This study was intended to contribute to the growing body of knowledge and offer further insight into how rappers reference companies and goods in their songs, which is a relatively new topic of investigation in the industry. To be more specific, researchers were interested in determining the connection between brand mentions in rap songs and the gender(s) of those who performed them. While there has been debate in the research as well as in the popular news regarding the impact of these product mentions and placements, this study focuses on analyzing the disparities based only on gender differences.

Male and female rappers utilize brand references in the lyrics of their songs to reflect their gender roles in society, according to the findings of the research, which was also based on the theoretical basis of hegemonic masculinity theory. Considering that popular rap music has traditionally been considered the domain of male rappers who brag about their accomplishments, which have included both sexual and material exploits, this article investigates whether this phenomenon is limited to male rappers or whether female rappers use music to express exploits of a similar nature.

The results of the study showed that there are statistically significant disparities in terms of brand mentions between male and female musicians. Male rappers, whether performing alone or in a group with other male rappers, mention a much greater number of companies than their female counterparts. Also discovered was that, according to the cliché "boys love their cars," male rappers sing much more about automobiles than do female rappers, who mention a broad range of companies in a wide variety of product categories, including entertainment and travel, than do male rappers[10].

Regarding hegemonic masculinity, it seems that male rappers are concentrating their efforts on product categories where women are often objectified in society, according to the data discovered (like vehicles, especially in relation to advertising). Male rappers were also rapping about items that demonstrated their social status as well as a joyful way of life: clothes and alcoholic beverages. Female rappers, on the other hand, did not seem to depend as much on goods and brands in general, but they did sing about travel-related labels, which appeared to be less closely associated with subjective power dynamics in society. Although collapsing just female or only female-rapper-only songs shows substantial brand mention (although considerably less than for male rappers), only one song had a travel brand mentioned 28 times, which may have caused the findings to be biased as a consequence of the collapsing.

3. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to determine if there are any variations in brand references and product categories within the lyrics of rap music depending on the gender of the performers. To investigate the various ways in which male and female rappers utilize brand references and product placement inside their song lyrics to reflect their gender roles in society, the researchers employed the theoretical basis of hegemonic masculinity theory. When analyzing these disparities, the authors mainly relied on quantitative data, and the structures utilized to assess these differences were the kinds of goods and the frequency of brand mentions.

Despite the fact that the purpose of this study was to create a knowledge baseline for future research in the field, the authors admit that this is a significant drawback of the study in their conclusion. Additional applications of hegemonic masculinity may be explored in future research, as well as the identification of many other constructs that can be utilized to compare and contrast the differences between male and female rappers and their music. Perhaps in the future, academics will undertake in-depth interviews with rappers and song writers to better understand the effects on their song writing process and to determine whether or not hegemonic masculinity is at play when rap songs are created.

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