Approved for All Audiences: A Longitudinal Content Analysis of the Portrayal of Women in Movie Trailers

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Movie trailers are ever present in our society and impactful in the way society constructs views about various aspects of life. Trailers are unique in that they are specifically tailored and edited to entice audiences to buy tickets to the film. Further, prior research has indicated that in various forms of media, women are continuously underrepresented, disproportionately sexualized, stereotyped, and victimized. The present study examines the portrayal of women through a content analysis of 230 of the top grossing trailers across seven decades: 1950-2015. The research focuses on women’s representation, sexualization, gender roles, and violence. The analysis reveals that in the 65 year span of movie trailers, women’s portrayal has remained relatively constant over time, with little to no change. Trailers continue to have less overall screen time, less speaking time, and fewer roles for women. Women continue to be sexualized, stereotyped, and remain relatively absent from violence as well. These results highlight the need for more attention to changing the film industry’s institutionalized social construction of women’s portrayals to better fit reality.
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INTRODUCTION

Movies are a vital component of our culture and have been since their start. They are something familiar to us – familiar in dating, as a family activity, and as something done with friends. Motion Picture Association of America statistics reveal that, “movie theaters continue to draw more people than all theme parks and major U.S. sports combined” (MPAA, 2014, p. 10). Movies are, in essence, ingrained into our everyday lives. We also bombarded with advertisements for films constantly. We see movie trailers as television commercials and before a movie at the theater, as well as the advertisements for various film franchise products plastered with characters from the movies on them such as toys, make-up, books, and much more. We even hear movie advertisements on the radio, read about them in the newspaper, or see them online. Just as ever present as movies are the women that star in them and they are a crucial element in movie trailers, often used to peak interest in the film.

The present research focused on women in movie trailers, employing content analysis to explore the portrayals of women in trailers, over time. Movie trailers are generally the first thing audiences are exposed to when looking to see a film and are “the most specialized method…[and] influential form of motion picture promotion” (Devlin, Chambers, & Callison, 2011, p. 582). Trailers are the most common form of advertisement for films and are precisely edited to entice general audiences to watch the movie. In essence, trailers depict specific shots and scenes from the best moments in a film so audiences will pay to see it (Hixson, 2006; Johnston, 2008). Trailers have also been disparaged because they can create false expectations for films, delay the start of a movie in theaters, and can expose too much information about the film before people see it. Yet, most people will see a trailer for a film before they see the actual movie (Tyron, 2009).
Because trailers are so prevalent in society and used as a form of advertisement for the movie industry, the notion of social construction arises. The movie industry can tailor what they want audiences to desire and see in order to obtain greater financial benefit, which creates a distorted construction of gender with movies and trailers that could have impacts on the audiences that see the films. These views in film are mirrored back into society, and the changes in film over time can also reflect the changes that are seen in society to become social norms (Newby, 2009).

Trailers tend to be tailored toward young, white men and what is often depicted of women is stereotyped, hypersexualized portrayals as the love interest or sidekick, and not very often the lead (Reichert & Lambaise, 2006; Oliver & Kalyanaraman, 2006; Gilpatric, 2010; Smith et al., 2015). With the movie industry being so prominent in our society and trailers being so easily accessible, the sheer influence the industry could have on forming and manipulating both men’s and women’s social constructions of how women are “supposed to be” is insurmountable. This, in turn, impacts and fuels social norms as these underlying constructions are repeated through interactions. Essentially, with movie trailers being extremely popular and also tailored specifically to bring in paying audiences to see a film, if what is presented to the general public in trailers is an inaccurate portrayal of women, then the movie industry has the power to severely impact and limit an individual’s social construction of gender. Since these constructions are a product of interaction, the portrayals presented, whether inaccurate or not, inform societal norms toward how women should act, how they should behave, and could even limit their aspirations (Smith, 2007). Therefore, trailers are imperative to examine when researching how women are portrayed in them, which is what the proposed research seeks to explore.
The focus for the present research was on the frequency of women’s representation in movie trailers, women’s sexualization, gender role characteristics, as well as violence both against and perpetuated by women, over time. In addition, descriptive information, such as age, MPAA rating, and genre were also included. The primary goal of the study was to observe how the portrayal of women in movie trailers has changed over time. Because little research has been done on women in movie trailers specifically, the research will add to the lack of exploration in this area.

What follows, is a review of the literature regarding women’s portrayals in various forms of media such as movies, advertisements, and trailers as not much research has been conducted specifically on movie trailers and women. The theoretical background, social construction, and its prevalence with the research at hand will also be explained. Finally, the research questions in addition to the methodology, results, and discussion of the study are presented.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Movie Trailers and Women

Content analysis of the media has been often utilized to demonstrate how different groups, such as teens, men, and women, are portrayed in various forms of media regarding notions such as violence, stereotypes, and even risk behaviors. For women in particular, stereotypes are one of the most common topics for content analysis (Neuendorf, 2002). Women have been the focus of content analysis research in horror films (Cowan and O'Brian, 1990; Newby, 2009; Welsh, 2010), newspaper ads (Tien-tsung and Hsaio-Fang, 2002), Disney Princess films (England, Descartes, & Collier-Meek, 2011), James Bond films (Neuendorf, Gore,
Dalessandro, Janstova, & Snyder-Suhy, 2009), romantic comedies (Hersey, 2007; Pardos, 2008; Hefner & Wilson, 2014), and much more.

Although a significant amount of content analysis on this topic has been conducted on movies, newspaper or magazine ads, and commercials, there has been surprisingly little research conducted on how women are portrayed in movie trailers. The lack of research on movie trailers is surprising considering the prevalence and easy accessibility of them. Many of the trailers viewed in the analysis had hundreds of thousands of views, some in the millions. Trailers are also different from movies in that they are typically approved for general audiences and are manipulated strategically to depict the most interesting parts of a film and sometimes even include scenes that did not make it in the actual movie.

Further, movie trailers “have been generally overlooked in this field of study for more popular media such as television, video games and print advertisement. However, as a unique combination of advertising and entertainment, they offer invaluable insight” (Rozas, 2014, p. 1). Trailers are imperative as they provide individuals with a sample of the film to watch, enabling moviegoers to learn about the genre, plot, characters, and stars of the film from just a two and a half minute snippet (Hixson, 2006). An analysis of movie trailers can also reveal different approaches to looking at aspects which are generally focused on with movies (Johnston, 2008).

Movie trailers are everywhere – they are shown prior to a screening of a movie in a theater, they make up a large portion of television commercials, they are placed at the beginning of home media, they are easy to locate online, and there are even awards given for trailers (similar to the awards shows for the Oscars or Emmys) called the Golden Trailer Awards (Hixson, 2006; Johnston, 2008). Popular sites such as YouTube have been utilized as an
advertising and promotional tool by major media companies, and are a popular source for trailers as well (Tyron, 2009).

Moreover, movie trailers are one of the most common influencing factors to see a film, especially among college students (Devlin, Chambers, & Callison, 2011). Film trailers “are the most effective media used by movie advertisers to communicate to their target audiences” (Hixson, 2006, p. 214). Further, trailers work to convince and persuade prospective moviegoers to not only see a film, but also “to ‘buy’ into the film experience promised by the trailer” (Tyron, 2009, p. 157). It is what the creators and distributors of the film want to portray in order to peak the interests of the widest possible audience. Trailers can be tailored to specific fan bases as well, something that has been done for large franchises such as *Lord of the Rings* and *Star Wars* (Hixson, 2006; Johnston, 2008).

The film creators and distributors can tailor, edit, and place importance on any aspect of the film that will get people to pay to see it including manipulating cinematography, visual design, and sound design to construct specific illustrations “of how women and men are supposed to be” (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004). Because trailers are strategically edited to appeal to audiences, “nothing is truly ‘accidental’ in a carefully designed commercial or trailer/promo” (Scharrer, Bergstrom, Paradise, and Ren, 2006, p. 617). The popularity of Hollywood films developed in part due to the ability and skill in manipulating and editing of ‘visual pleasure,’ in fact, the most important part of a movie trailer is in the use of editing (Mulvey, 1975; Tyron, 2009).

Movie trailers have been around nearly as long as films themselves. Trailers were established around the 1920s; though, their popularity did not take off until around 1950 when they became utilized more for the pre-release of films to generate discussion of the films.
Trailers could run for weeks or even months prior to when a film was set to be released (Devlin, Chambers, & Callison, 2011; Parkinson, 2012). Movie trailers became important in allowing the prospective moviegoer to ‘sample’ the movie being advertised before they purchase tickets to see it, and have become “an integral part of the cinema-going experience” (Hixson, 2006, p. 214). Over the decades, trailers have had to adapt to myriad modes of change in the industry from television, home video, and the Internet to maintain the appeal of films for various audiences (Devlin et al., 2011). As Parkinson (2012) notes, "this adaptability has enabled the trailer to remain effective into the digital age of [digital video discs (DVDs)], websites, downloads, and apps" (p. 146).

With trailers shifting from being exclusive to theaters toward now being easily accessible online, it opened up the capability for an interactive component and allotted for new analysis techniques as viewers can pause, rewind, and re-watch a trailer as many times as they want (Johnston, 2008). Fans of a film or franchise can now tailor and edit released teasers or trailers to make fan videos, parodies, and to share online (Johnston, 2008).

Moreover, movie trailers have a certain formula about them with shared features, which makes them ideal for comparing across time and genre (Tyron, 2009). Films are meant to be coherent and complete stories, but trailers are generally incoherent as a story because the pieces of a trailer are strategically selected for their visual appeal to tell the audience about the film, often out of sequence. With the movie industry being so competitive, film companies have to create enticing trailers in order to persuade audiences and bring about considerable anticipation for the film. Movie “trailers must carefully balance novelty and familiarity in order to ensure that the advertised film will find an audience” (Tyron, 2009, p. 157). If this does not work then movie companies risk losing millions of dollars in the process.
In fact, there have been lawsuits against film companies due to ‘misleading’ trailers. That was the premise for the case of the movie *Drive* in which a Michigan woman sued a theater and distribution company for showing a film trailer that did not accurately depict what was in the film (State of Michigan Court of Appeals, 2013). When one repeatedly sees a movie trailer there are increased expectations of what is anticipated to be in the film (Hixson, 2006). A person cannot sue for being offended, however, the plaintiff claimed the movie trailer tried to draw in audiences employing unfair deception tactics with the trailer and falsely promoting it as a sort of racing film (State of Michigan Court of Appeals, 2013). Although the case was dismissed, it does depict the significance of movie trailers to the masses that see them and decide, from the trailer, to watch a particular film.

In addition, the importance of marketing for a film can be demonstrated just in the massive amount of money dedicated to it (Reichert & Lambiase, 2006). From the movie studio’s point of view, “all types of viewers have paid the same amount of money to experience the event” (Hantke, 2004, p. 86). Even though films have target audiences, marketing campaigns are generally focused on young white males, not general audiences. The focus on advertising toward young, white males impacts how movie studies tailor and edit trailers. Therefore, movies are framed and understood through peaking male interest in seeing a film. As Thompson (2014) observes of the movie industry:

In its desperate quest for audiences eager to show up on opening weekends, the film industry seemed bent on chasing young males around the globe with the simple-minded, visually dense, formula action fare, and in doing so at the expense of driving many other groups who love movies to television and other alternative screens (p. xi).

Movie studios tailoring trailers toward men is in conflict with more recent research which indicates young men are not the most common movie-going audience in attendance (Thompson, 2014; MPAA, 2014). In fact, women have constituted a larger portion of moviegoers consistently
since 2010, compared to the amount of male moviegoers which remained stagnant from years prior (MPAA, 2014).

**Representation**

In all aspects of film, both on and off screen, women are underrepresented or misrepresented. Hollywood features have always favored male roles over female ones (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004). Even today, many big budget movies of nearly all genres “still feature straight white male protagonists, while women and people of color are relegated to peripheral roles” or are not included at all (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004, p. 30). In addition, various film genres have consistently placed women in insignificant or stereotypical roles, generally not as the lead. For instance, in mob or gangster movies where men are in charge and wield weapons, women typically are framed as being either a lustful and sexualized harlot or the mob leader’s wife, a saintly mother figure. Westerns place women in few roles as well, typically a girl working at a saloon, implying prostitution; a moral schoolteacher; or a rancher’s daughter who is seen as a good girl whilst men are the ones able to have adventures.

In a recent study of 700 popular films from 2007-2014, women’s representation in movies was assessed (Smith, Choueity, & Pieper, 2015). Movies were chosen using the top-grossing domestic box office information provided by Box Office Mojo, a website that provides film information. For speaking roles in films, only 30% were female and only 11% of the 700 films analyzed had a gender balanced cast. In the top 100 films from 2014 specifically, gender balanced casts occurred in only 9% of the movies. In animated films in particular for 2014, fewer than 25% of speaking characters were female. Age also played a role in 2014, as there were no female actors over the age of 45 that performed either a lead or co-lead role. In fact, in all 700 films, only roughly 21% of the characters aged 40-64 were women, a ratio of 3.6 middle-aged
males to 1 middle-aged female. Even though there has been a significant amount of “activism and attention devoted to raising awareness on this topic in the popular press, the prevalence of girls and women on screen has not changed in over 50 years” (Smith et al., 2015, p. 7). The authors further observed that:

The findings for prevalence reveal that female characters were vastly underrepresented on screen in the 100 most popular movies of 2014. Despite comprising roughly 50% of the population, girls/women make up less than a third of all speaking characters on screen and less than a quarter of the leads/co leads driving the storylines. Less than one out of four characters in animated or action adventure movies were female. Clearly, the norm in Hollywood is to exclude girls and women from the screen (Smith et al., 2015, p. 8, emphasis in original).

This issue of underrepresentation and misrepresentation in films may impact children’s social construction of their identities regarding their views toward body image, or even how men and women ‘should’ act.

Further, in the Annenberg Report on Diversity, women’s representation was assessed by observing movies, television shows, and streaming series distributed by ten major media companies such as CBS, Sony, Disney, Amazon, and Hulu – similar findings emerged (Smith et al., 2016). Characters in a show that were either named or had a speaking role were observed to assess sexualization, demographics, role, and domesticity. Gender and race composition of the directors and writers behind these shows and movies were noted as well.

The ratio of males to females in the study was roughly 2:1, with female characters approximately comprising only roughly 29% of the speaking roles in film. In addition, women aged 40 or older were especially excluded compared to men in the same age range, with men having approximately 75% of these roles and women in the same age range comprising only 25% or fewer (Smith et al., 2016). Provided the prevalence of these illustrations of women in
films, it is reasonable to assume that similar results may emerge from an analysis of movie trailers as well.

To observe if gender role depiction has paralleled that of the feminist movement, Tien-tsung and Hsiao-Fang (2002) examined the portrayal of women in newspaper movie ads in 1963 and 1993. The year of 1963 was chosen due to the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* and 1993 was selected as it followed the ‘year of women’ in 1992 in which a significant number of women ran for office. Using movie ads from the *LA Times* for the content analysis, changes in gender roles, in the number of appearances of women, the treatment of women as sex objects, dominance and aggression, and ageism against women were examined.

There were some positive changes in the portrayal of women in newspaper movie ads over time, but it was limited, indicating that equality between men and women has yet to be reached. Female representation in ads actually decreased from the two years compared to male representation. Ageism against women was observed in the ads as well. There were more older men in comparison to older women, yet, there was a slight increase in the amount of older women in the 1993 ads as opposed to the 1963 movie newspaper ads.

*Sexualization*

A movie trailer needs to be more attractive than the hundreds of other trailers a viewer may see because the main purpose of a movie trailer is to draw the largest audience possible (Oliver & Kalyanaraman, 2006). And, in order to attract a larger audience, film companies may go to great lengths. Oliver and Kalyanaraman (2006) depict a scene from a movie trailer for *Charlie’s Angels: Full Throttle*, which was approved for general audiences, to illustrate this notion:
The quick pacing of the film cuts abounds with seduction: a close-up of three women's pelvises in bikinis and fishnet hose rocking their hips from side to side, two women surfers at the shore alluringly moving toward one another in an apparent kiss, a woman explaining to a male surfer that when his stick is 'big' she 'likes to ride it rough and hard.' (p. 13).

Movie producers for *Full Throttle* utilized the age-old notion of “sex sells” in order to attract a mass of male viewers. Overt sexual availability in a movie trailer is not only an attention grabber but also helps to ensure that the audience that trailers are tailored to, young males, are actually going to see the film (Reichert & Lambiase, 2006).

Further, “sex is added to programming to attract viewers, just as sexual appeals are added to advertising to attract consumers” (Reichert & Lambiase, 2006, p. 3). These sorts of “pleasurable images” are recurring and reproduced repeatedly in varied movie trailers “to attract attention, to spark controversy in order to attract attention, to offer pleasure, and, ultimately, to sell media products and consumer goods that may be connected to aforementioned pleasure” (p. xiii).

The Annenberg Report on Diversity reported the sexualization of women as well, noting that sexualization occurred far more for women than it did for men in the study (Smith et al., 2016). The research found that, “females were more likely than males to be shown in sexy attire (Females=34.3% vs. Males=7.6%), with some nudity (Females=33.4% vs. Males=10.8%) and physically attractive (Females=11.6% vs. Males=3.5%)” (p. 2). In a study of 700 popular films from 2007-2014, similar findings emerged. Speaking characters in the films were assessed for sexually revealing clothing, references of physical attractiveness, and nudity. In 2014 in particular, it was found that females of any age were depicted in sexy attire more than men, nearly 28% of women compared to 8% of men, findings that mirrored results over the years (Smith et al., 2015). Females were also more likely than males to be shown with some nudity.
(roughly 27% to 9%) as well. In fact, it was revealed that female young adults were just as likely to be sexualized as female teens in the study. Trends such as those depicted in the study “are problematic, as theory suggests and research supports that exposure to objectifying content can contribute to negative effects (e.g., self objectification, body shame) among some females” (Smith et al., 2015, p.10).

Oliver and Kalyanaraman (2002) conducted a content analysis of movie trailers on video rentals looking at both sexuality and violence. Films were randomly selected from the top-20 rental charts during 1996 with 47 videos sampled, which comprised of 107 movie previews in total. Marketing finances for the films, the amounts of violence and sexuality depicted in the movie trailers, and the violence and sexuality in comparison to MPAA ratings of the films were examined.

Sexuality was coded when sexual behaviors, such as kissing or intercourse, undressing or nudity, provocative clothing, and a person being sexually gazed at, were prevalent. The results indicated that with any type of sexual scene, 56% of the previews depicted sexuality in at least one instance, and sexual scenes most often occurred between males and females. Scenes depicting sexual situations were less frequently found on film rentals that were intended for younger audiences such as PG or G rated movies. This could indicate that there are more restrictions on sexual content than violent content in regard to movie previews.

Moreover, it has been found in other research that horror and action films depict women in a manner which women are helpless and need to be saved, and tend to sexualize women most (Cowan & O’Brien, 1990; Newby, 2009; Welsh, 2010). In fact, in these genres specifically, women are “primarily helpless victims waiting to be carried off by monsters or marauding madmen, so that they might be saved by patriarchal heroes” (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004, p. 219).
Newby (2009) observed horror films specifically to research changes over time in the treatment of gender and sexuality and whether those changes reflected general societal views. Using the notion of the ‘final girl,’ the last woman left in a slasher film who is typically a pure and virginal character, content analysis was conducted on characteristics and actions of the ‘final girl’ in various horror movies. These included categories of physical presence (the length of time in the film), sociability (how many relationships she had), nurturing (having children in her care), sexuality (revealing clothing, sexual activity, dating, etc.), independence (how often she calls for help), and aggression (physical harm to the killer). A total of 27 films from three franchises including *Halloween, Friday the 13th*, and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* were analyzed for the study.

A handful of the ‘final girls’ in the films were in relationships, all of which were heterosexual with the man being slayed by the killer, with only three final girls in total being noted as sexually active. In addition, it was found that only a small portion of final girls displayed nudity in the films compared to other female characters who were completely naked in some scenes. Though for the final girls it was generally never a fully nude section of their body and was more so a short moment with an uncovered leg or other body part. Men, on the other hand, were never seen fully nude in the films, if a man was depicted as bare at all (Newby, 2009).

Cowan and O’Brien (1990) similarly conducted content analysis research on gender in horror films. Contrastingly from Newby’s (2009) content analysis observing the portrayal of the ‘final girl’ in horror films, this study specifically focused on the roles of violence committed by and toward men compared to women in slasher films, the amount of sex in comparison to violence according to gender, as well as male and female survivors and victims. Various
categories were observed, such as provocative or revealing clothing, nudity, initiation of sexual conduct, provocation, masculine and feminine traits, and physical attractiveness.

Women were most likely to survive compared to male victims. Although, the women who did not survive were more sexual both in appearance, such as wearing revealing clothing, and sexuality, like initiating sex, in comparison to their male counterparts or even the surviving females. It was further noted that “in slasher films, the message appears to be that sexual women get killed and only the pure women survive” (Cowan & O’Brien, 1990, pp. 194-195).

Likewise, Welsh (2010) focused on slasher films to illustrate gender differences based on survival and sexuality in 50 films released from 1960 to 2009. Female characters’ sexual activity and the length of death scenes using a victim trait scale were observed to depict whether or not women who were more sexual in horror films were more likely to be killed. Similar to Cowan and O’Brien’s findings, these results indicated that the women involved in sexual activity were significantly more likely to be killed compared to women who refrained from sexual relations. The female characters who engaged in sexual activities also tended to have longer death scenes on average compared to those women who were not involved in any sexual activity. Finally, the women who refrained from sexual relations received a lower score on the victim trait scale compared to women who were involved sexually. These findings may have an impact for female viewers in how the ‘good girl’ and ‘bad girl’ dynamic is constructed as it depicts severe punishment, such as death, for violating traditional gender roles regarding a woman’s sexuality.

Furthering this idea of female sexualization in movies, a content analysis of women in 20 James Bond films looked at different ‘Bond girls’ regarding sexual activity, attractiveness, race, aggressive behaviors, and size of role in the film. James Bond movies tend to rely on attractive women in fantasy situations either as a sexual love interest or as an opponent in the film
In the Bond films over time, female characters became more sexually active, were more likely to receive physical harm, and had expanded roles. However, these were slight changes and could just be due to normal changes over time in society.

The physical portrayal of women in the Bond films has stayed constant over time: a slender figure with above average attractiveness. The women are also consistently young, leaving mature women out of these ‘Bond girl’ roles almost entirely. However, the women were generally racially diverse as well as diverse in hair color, length, and style. One of the most marked findings from the content analysis arose from women still being depicted in a limited manner regarding sex stereotyping, despite progress through the years in feminist rhetoric (Neuendorf et al., 2009). Over the years, Bond films further demonstrate the “continued sexualization, marginalization, and disposability of women” within the franchise with little change. Further, “the ultimate penalty for a woman in a Bond film – death – seems to accrue from promiscuity (often with Bond) and daring to threaten the ultimate iconic masculine hero, James Bond” (p. 758). With repeated exposure these unrealistic portrayals of women can impact viewers in that those who view the films may come to embody the portrayals presented in the franchise.

Further, in Rozas (2014) content analysis on risk behaviors in PG-13 movie trailers, sexual conduct was portrayed as cisgender, monogamous, and heteronormative, much like what Newby (2009) noted the relationships were in the horror films studied. Males were significantly more likely to engage in risky behaviors compared to women in the movie trailers. Interestingly, over half of the risk behaviors that women performed were related to sexual conduct, also the only category where women had more instances of risk behavior than men. Additionally, in
Tien-tsung and Hsaio-Fang’s (2002) content analysis on the portrayal of women in newspaper ads over time, women were significantly more likely than men to be treated as sex objects in the ads, even though the percentage had been decreasing slightly over the years.

The way women are depicted on-screen is perilous as they are often looked at as ‘eye candy’ and sexualized (Smith, 2007). Further, women “are more likely than males to be young, thin, and shown in tight or revealing attire. This prototype illuminates the hypersexualization of females in film, reinforcing a culture of lookism within the industry” (Smith, 2007, p. 1). Mulvey (1975) discussed this concept of ‘lookism’ in the industry, or the ‘male gaze’ as she defines. Females are passive, while the male gaze is active since women in films are seen as something on display “with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness” (p. 9).

Women typically have two roles in movies – either as an erotic object for a man in the film or as an erotic object for the male audience watching the film, and these roles are ever shifting. Film is different in that it does not just create a medium for women to be gawked at as a sexual object on screen, but it essentially “builds the way she is to be looked at into the spectacle itself” with the use of editing, music, story, camera shots, and angles (Mulvey, 1975, p. 14). In essence, women in film are eroticized and sexualized by the men who create films and for the men who are gazing upon them.

Gender Roles

Romantic comedies and musicals are two film genres that give men and women relatively equal roles and screen time, as they generally focus on a heterosexual couple for the duration of the narrative (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004). However, other elements in these films typically
maintain more traditional gender roles such as marriage, clothing, make-up, the man asking the woman out, paying for dinner, and more. There is also a genre comprised of what are considered “woman’s films” in which the entirety of the genre is supposed to be dedicated to women’s issues and women. These films, however, “were made (written, directed, produced) largely by men, creating stories that they thought would attract a female audience…Consequently, the woman's film usually presents conventional, patriarchal ideas about what it supposedly means to be a woman” (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004, pp. 219-220, emphasis in original). In essence, these movies were made and framed without women’s input and from what men think are women’s issues.

Moreover, just as horror films punish women for sexuality and deviating from social norms, romantic comedies punish women who attempt to create their own identities, outside of being a mother and wife (Pardos, 1998). Pardos observed gender relations and the distribution of power in romantic comedies, specifically in films depicting divorce and other marital crises. A similar conflict in these films is that each person in the couple has individual desires that may be at odds with the marriage and family dynamic, and this “inevitably brings to the foreground the issue of identity and particularly of how it is constructed within the sphere of gender relations” (p. 164). For women in particular in these films, disagreement may arise in a marriage where the woman’s individual desire to be independent and have a career conflict with traditional roles of motherhood and submission to their husband.

Three films from the 1990s were analyzed for the study – Mrs. Doubtfire, The War of the Roses, and The First Wives Club – to illustrate women who were dutiful wives and mothers, but may have wanted to explore other options, such as a career, and develop individual identities. This lead to conflict between the husbands and wives which ended in divorce, hectic events, and
even death as the women were attempting to construct their own individual identities. Even though some of the films have reverted back to stereotypes at the conclusion, they did appear to make an attempt at distorting the strict gender role categories with more fluid boundaries that can also be accepted (Pardos, 1998).

Similar to Pardos’s (1998) conclusions that gender roles in films may be becoming more fluid, Hersey (2007) observed portrayals of women’s final speeches in romantic comedies and the female characters more frequently being depicted as career women. The final, public speech women often give at the end of romantic comedy films, such as The Princess Diaries, Never Been Kissed, and Miss Congeniality “represent the heroine’s final public speech as a balancing act of romantic desirability and professional success” (p. 149). The recent shift that romantic comedies have taken toward big public speeches at the end of the films indicate that women can make a difference in the world through public speaking and that not all of their fulfillment will come from men.

With big public speeches in the final moments of these films, the women tend to illustrate various points aside from solely revolving around a love interest. For instance, in Legally Blonde the protagonist, Elle Woods, is giving a graduation speech as the head of her Harvard Law School class “which attacks traditionally masculine legal practice that relies on competition, backbiting, male dominance, and sexual harassment, and affirms a feminine legal practice based on empathy for clients and fair play between colleagues” (Hersey, 2007, p. 156). This changed the expected dynamic for the ‘typical’ ending of a romantic comedy – a final kiss with the male love interest. Instead of highlighting the love between two characters in the film and assuming that the character will have a career, the film emphasized Elle’s career first and left the love interest aspect as something to be assumed rather than shown. This shift toward women
achieving or attempting to achieve their personal goals, whether professional, educational, or others, has occurred in many recent romantic comedy films. There is no longer a spotlight on the romantic interest in the films, as the romance aspect is only part of the larger picture. Hersey states that this is the anticipated direction for such films to continue.

Similar to Hersey’s analysis, Smith (2007) also noted that female protagonists in films tend toward other aspects of life while romance tends to be curbed because the women did not have time to date. Further, in Smith et al.’s (2015) study of 700 popular films from 2007-2014, similar findings emerged. Domestic roles were observed for whether or not the characters were parents and if they were in a romantic relationship. Women were depicted as caregivers more often than males and were also more likely to be shown in a romantic relationship. These patterns “reveal that domesticated roles are still gendered in film” (Smith et al., 2015, p. 8).

Similarly, England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek (2011) conducted a content analysis analyzing the depiction of gender roles of princesses and princes in Disney films. Disney Princess films tailor ad campaigns to girls in order to get them to identify with a character and to purchase merchandise from the film. These films and the media tactics employed to attract girls to see the film and purchase merchandise may influence how audiences view and believe in gender roles and norms. Nine Disney Princess films released from 1937 to 2009 were observed, utilizing content analysis to examine gender role portrayals in the films and whether or not they change over time.

Over time, gendered stereotypes persisted in the films, although some changes were noticed. For instance, the princesses still maintained generally feminine traits and performed gendered tasks such as household chores and tending children, but in more recent years the princesses incorporated some masculine traits as well, such as assertiveness. However, even
though the women maintained feminine traits and added masculine characteristics over time, the plots tended to end similarly for the characters where they would be matched with a prince and return to family life rather than engaging in other opportunities (England et al., 2011). Hersey similarly observed that most Disney Princess stories end in weddings, when in other films, such as *The Princess Diaries*, being a princess requires extensive training and is considered a real profession, much more similar to what princesses would need to do and learn in real life.

The princes in the films also appeared to change slightly over time as well. Princes were originally rarely illustrated in the films, although, over time they came to have more prominent roles characterized by both masculine and feminine characteristics, rather than solely masculine. These gender role portrayals and depictions of love (heterosexual relationships, love conquering all, prince saving the princess, love in one day, and love with a victimizer) can influence the audience’s perception and construction of gender norms and behavior (England et al., 2011).

Likewise, Shrikhande (2003) researched stereotypes that currently exist in the portrayal of women in television commercials utilizing content analysis as the method of research. Stereotypes regarding age, occupation, stance, voiceover, product type, and product use were observed. The results illustrated that there are similarities in the stereotyping of women in television commercials, but the frequency at which women are stereotyped is decreasing. Women were virtually equal to men as having the primary role in a commercial, in being the representatives for a particular product, and in stance, however, this was not the case in most other aspects of the research. Although women were practically equal to men as having the primary role in a commercial, they were still central figures in advertisements about household and personal hygiene products, similar to previous research on the topic.
More women in the study were portrayed as ‘young’ in comparison to their male counterparts as well. Depicting mainly young women in ads is a “marketing strategy on the part of the advertisers as a young and beautiful face is likely to attract the attention of the viewer” (Shrikhande, 2003, pp. 46-47). Men were generally depicted as middle-aged or older, which gave the impression of more experience and maturity as opposed to the young portrayal of women. Additionally, men were still depicted in professional roles more often while women were primarily portrayed in roles at home and with family. Advertisements still fail in depicting the range of roles women have in society and men continue to dominate as the primary voiceovers in advertisements.

Moreover, gender roles were also assessed in Newby’s (2009) content analysis of the ‘final girl’ in slasher films. In the sample of 27 horror films it was observed that the final girl has generally been depicted as possessing both feminine and masculine characteristics and actions in slasher films over time. Masculine traits and actions would be those in which the character wields a weapon and kills the murderer, while stereotypically feminine traits were those in which the character hides or screams for help. Final girls tended to be both feminine and masculine in the films, regardless of when the film came out. What did change throughout the years, however, was the final girls being depicted with little or much in order to survive.

Further, the norm in the slasher film franchise does not allow for anything other than heteronormative ideology – heterosexual, cisgender individuals separated into male and female, and masculine and feminine. There were not any homosexual, transgender, or bisexual relationships, characters, or situations in any of the films in the analysis. Additionally, there was no point in which feminine and masculine traits or actions merged. Any time a masculine action was presented, such as wielding a weapon, feminine actions and characteristics were absent and
vice versa. Cowan and O’Brien (1990) similarly revealed that the surviving female in slasher films tended toward more androgynous traits, utilizing both masculine and feminine characteristics to survive. The surviving women also were seen as the ‘good girl’ in the films. Male non-survivors characteristically had negative attitudes and behaviors compared to the women, which was a detriment to their survival.

In addition, Gilpatric (2010) conducted a content analysis researching violent female action characters (VFAC) in 112 American action movies from 1991-2005. The research focused on gender stereotypes, such as masculine and feminine traits; demographic information to look at race, age, marital status, and occupation; as well as the quantity and type of violence, such as who it was against and for how long. Because “violence is typically associated with masculinity” (Gilpatric, 2010, p. 736), it was not surprising that many of the violent female action characters in the analysis were portrayed as either spouses or damsel-in-distress’ in order to promote the male hero.

In fact, “instead of breaking gender barriers and portraying empowering female roles, most VFACs were shown as sidekicks and helpmates to the more dominant male hero and were frequently involved in a romantic relationship with him” (Gilpatric, 2010, p. 743). The VFACs were also portrayed in more submissive roles compared to masculine ones with a popular feature of these action films being the woman sacrificing herself for the man at the end of the film. Again, considering the vast array of media that depicts women sexually, in gendered roles, and insufficiently represents them, it is not a stretch to observe how women are portrayed in movie trailers, considering their prevalence and magnitude in society.
Violence

Oliver and Kalyanaraman’s (2002) content analysis of movie trailers on video rentals observed both sexuality and violence. The number of aggressive scenes in the trailers were counted, including threat of force or actual use of force intentionally against animate being(s) in the 107 movie previews analyzed. Scenes in which guns or explosions were prevalent were also included. The results indicated that aggression was most commonly shown in the previews, followed by gun and explosion scenes, respectively. Over 75% of the previews contained at least one instance of violence and a little less than half of the previews featured a gun scene, indicating the sheer frequency and prevalence that violence plays in movie trailers. MPAA ratings for the film previews revealed that even with higher rates of aggression for R-rated films, “more than half of the previews on films for younger audiences contained at least one aggressive scene” (Oliver & Kalyanaraman, 2002, p. 295).

In a similar vein, Scharrer et al. (2006) conducted a content analysis on aggression in over 4,000 television commercials, specifically the intersection of aggression and humor. One week of commercials during prime-time television hours (8-11 pm) were compiled to research aggression, whether it was physical harm with or without intent, verbal, and even accidental aggression. Aggression in these ads were imperative to observe since there was a lack of research on the topic and children may be accidentally exposed to violent and aggressive content during prime time television commercials.

Roughly 12% of the television commercial content observed comprised of aggressive matter. In fact, out of the commercials that depicted aggressive material, half of them had humorous components. When other television show promotional commercials and movie trailers were removed to strictly observe commercials, over 80% of the commercials illustrated
humorous and aggressive aspects. There were also gender differences observed in the aggressive content as well. Men were both more likely to be the victim as well as the perpetrator of aggression in the television commercials observed for the analysis. These results reveal that “aggression is largely the domain of men, a scenario that can send a potentially harmful message to males in the audience about the ostensibly close connection between violence and masculinity” (Sharrer et al., 2006, p. 631).

Further, Rozas’ (2014) content analysis on popular PG-13 movie trailers researched how films targeted at teens depict risk levels and consequence. Various facets of risk behavior were observed including violence, tobacco use, alcohol, sexual conduct, body modification, as well as risk behavior consequences. Violence was the most common risk behavior in the movie trailers, with lethal violence being most frequently portrayed. The most common consequence to violence was generally mild in comparison, implying an asymmetrical and unrealistic illustration of the impacts from violence in PG-13 movie trailers. Tobacco, alcohol use, as well as body modification were surprisingly seldom used in the trailers, if at all, indicating they may not be popular choices in promoting teen films.

Moreover, returning to Gilpatric’s (2010) content analysis researching violent female action characters [VFAC] in American action movies from 1991-2005, the quantity and type of violence, such as who it was against and for how long was observed. Violence was typically masculine, while the women were depicted as wives promoting a love story, as someone that needed to be saved, or as sidekicks (Gilpatric, 2010). The female characters were portrayed in a gendered manner and not generally the aggressor or the one initiating or continuing violent acts. This is consistent with Tien-tsung and Hsiao-Fang’s (2002) examination of the portrayal of women in newspaper movie ads in 1963 and 1993, observing dominance and aggression. They
found that females were more likely to be dominated and less likely to be leaders compared to males, similar to Gilpatric’s (2010) findings. However this finding was slightly reduced over time as both males and females depicted more aggression in the more recent movie ads.

In addition, Neuendorf et al.’s (2009) content analysis of 20 James Bond films looked at different ‘Bond girls’ regarding aggressive behaviors as well. Mild and strong physical harm toward a Bond girl was observed which ranged from being injured to death. The number of guns used both by and against the women were coded as well as if the women attempted to kill Bond. A quarter of the women analyzed had been harmed by some character in the films, but when a Bond girl attempted to thwart and neutralize Bond, the ultimate ending for a Bond girl was death (Neuendorf et al., 2009).

Newby’s (2009) content analysis on the final girl in slasher films, generally the pure and virginal character that survives the end of the movie, also researched violence and aggression. Although most of the women did not actually kill the murderer at the end of the film directly, the ‘final girl’ was more likely to attack the murderer than to be harmed herself. Similar results arose from Cowan and O’Brien’s (1990) research on gender in slasher films regarding if a person’s sexual prowess lead to their death in these movies. Women were actually more likely to survive compared to male characters in the slasher films analyzed and were less likely to be victimized as well. The women who were more promiscuous were likely to be brutally murdered, however.

**Social Construction**

Social construction is the essential understanding that our realities, both objective and subjective, are constructed through social interactions, institutionalization, habitualization, as well as through primary and secondary socialization (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). People are
shaped by the society they are born into and individuals “cannot be adequately understood apart from the particular social context in which they were shaped” (p. 50).

Berger and Luckmann’s (1967) concept of habitualization explains how these notions become sedimented in society. Habitualization is when a person repeats an action continuously, and then others repeat the action, until it forms a pattern, similar to a habit. The habit becomes established in society through the transmission of this knowledge, which is legitimated and institutionalized over time. In essence, it is through social interactions that these social constructions are cemented into people’s lives, informing societal norms of what is expected and desired.

These definitions of reality are maintained by dominant groups in society who have the power to eradicate any conflicting definitions or realities that come about. Institutions, “control human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct, which channel it in one direction as against the many other directions that would theoretically be possible” (p. 55). Institutions, in essence, are calculating and strategic in their manipulation of human conduct having individuals act in a specific manner in accordance with the dominant group’s interests. For the movie industry, the portrayal of women as weak, sexualized, and subservient become institutionalized in film.

Lorber (1994) furthers Berger and Luckmann’s notions by stating how gender itself is a social construction. Gender is “a process of social construction, a system of social stratification, and an institution that structures every aspect of our lives because of its embeddedness in the family, the workplace, and the state, as well as in sexuality, language, and culture” (p. 5). People are born men and women but they have to be taught and learn gender. There is no inherent femininity or masculinity and no correct way to be female or male, though, when gender is
recognized, people are typically held to those gendered norms and expectations (Lorber, 1994; Lorber, 2014). Although there is no correct way to be feminine or masculine, femininity is generally associated with traits of being emotional, nurturing, dependent, weak, complacent, and quiet while masculinity is typically noted as being unemotional, loud, large, and authoritative (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004). When society equates “being female with being feminine (dependent and weak), patriarchal culture is able to discourage women from gaining power on their own” (Griffin, 2004, p. 205).

Through socialization, this conceptualization of gender is reinforced while it is through the habitualization of these ideas that gender becomes institutionalized and internalized by individuals (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Lorber, 1994; Weitz & Kwan, 2014). Further, for men and women, “the social institution of gender insists only that what they do is perceived as different” (Lorber, 1994, p. 26, emphasis in original). Essentially, even if men and women do the exact same things, what matters in order to keep the social institution persisting is that what women and men do seems different. When people believe gender roles are due to biological differences rather than socially constructed categories, the categories tend to persist uncontested with few willing to challenge what is considered ‘normal’ because these ideologies become part of their self-worth and identity (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004; Lorber, 2014). Lorber (2014) posits that “these beliefs emerge from the imagery that pervades the way we think, the way we see and hear and speak, the way we fantasize, and the way we feel” (p. 23).

Those individuals or groups who are in the advantaged state “by the social institution of gender want to maintain the status quo” (Lorber, 1994, p. 10). One group, men, have been constructed as superior while the other, women, have been constructed as inferior in today’s society. Those who fit into the dominant, superior group definition have the ability to define
boundaries and subsequently exclude those in the inferior position. This is “like all other political processes, the social construction of women’s bodies develops through battles between groups with competing political interests and with differential access to power and resources” (Wietz & Kwan, 2014, p. xi). Lorber (1994) further maintains that –

The status of women and men is as much an issue of power and privilege as is the status of people of different races and social classes. To not ask why a social category called ‘men’ has power over a social category called ‘women’ is to accept the assumption that men’s domination is natural and to seek for natural causes (p. 284).

The dominant status men wield in society is not inherent. Essentially, gender inequality and the representations of men and women are social constructions as well as an issue of power within gendered institutions and social practices in a society (Lorber, 1994; Benshoff & Griffin, 2004).

With gender being a socially constructed institution, a discussion of how media, specifically movie trailers, depicts the portrayal of women is imperative to observe. The use of editing, sound design, visual design, and cinematography all blend to “construct images of how women and men are supposed to be” (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004, p. 203). This reinforces differences between men and women – if femininity is constructed as frail and weak then masculinity is the opposite of feminine and is strong, which secures individuals to strict, binary roles (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004; Lorber, 2014).

If gender is not a fixed and concrete reality, but is actually more fluid and can be changed then “the images presented in the media can both potentially reflect and strengthen their characteristics” (Colmenero, 1999, p. 10). In essence, if women are presented in a stereotypical manner in popular media, such as through movie trailers, then these views can be both reflected and strengthened is society by informing social norms of what is expected of women, what is desirable, and even what is beautiful. In fact, “a steady diet of consuming stereotypical
depictions of women as sexy or domesticated may facilitate the development and maintenance of attitudes, beliefs, and aspirations that are limiting” (Smith, 2007, p. 1).

Stereotypical images of women are depicted in advertising, on television, in music, books, and even seeps into our language (Colmenero, 1999; Benshoff & Griffin, 2004). Subsequently, “the media plays a powerful role in portraying this gender imagery. In its many varied forms, men and women are depicted in stereotypical ways that demonstrate socially constructed views of gender developing out of societal values and beliefs” (as cited in Colmenero, 1999, p. 10). The film industry is deeply pervasive in that “for over 100 years, movies have frequently defined what is beautiful, what is sexy, what is manly, and how men and women should 'properly' react in any given situation” (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004, p. 203).

Even though we have stopped requiring women to do painful things like use corsets or feet binding in order to shape their bodies to be desirable, we still tailor and use clothes, grooming products, exercise, and diets in order for women to attain and conform to what is considered as beautiful (Colmenero, 1999). Women have almost always felt pressure from society to conform to acceptable standards concerning their appearances and have been hyper-sexualized in film and advertisements (Weitz, 2014). Depicted in previous research of movies, television commercials, and newspaper advertisements, women are generally portrayed as younger and thinner than their male counterparts, as victimized, having fewer speaking or central roles, and illustrating ‘feminine’ traits such as being caregivers, being submissive, and dependent.

Further, women are portrayed differently depending on the type of film genre they are in. Movies typically mirror the dominant ideology of society at the time and do discuss social concerns; however, it is rare that these films challenge the status quo of the dominant ideology
that is pressured to be put into the films to begin with (Mulvey, 1975; Benshoff & Griffin, 2004; Parkinson, 2012). Even today, women are appointed sidekick roles while white, straight men generally get the leads (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004). Even in films where men and women are relatively equal, such as romantic comedies, gender roles are still reinforced through the relationship, make-up, clothing, and in marriage. Because many films are written, directed, and produced substantially by men, much of what is presented and portrayed, even in films meant for women, “usually presents conventional, patriarchal ideas about what it supposedly means to be a woman” (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004, pp. 219-220; Mulvey, 1975).

Observing women in American violent action films, Gilpatric (2010) observed that most female action characters are not empowering or using their femininity in a powerful manner and are do not present fluid gender boundaries. Rather, these women “operate inside socially constructed gender norms, rely on the strength and guidance of a dominant male action character, and end up re-articulating gender stereotypes” (Gilpatric, 2010, pp. 744-745). For horror films, what is portrayed as ‘normal’ is white, middle-to-upper class, and heterosexual, whereas the monster/villain is generally illustrated as opposite and threatens what is normal (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004). Women in slasher films are generally separated into two categories, constructed by the media, based on how sufficiently or how inadequately they conform to conventional gender role norms (Welsh, 2010). Women in horror film roles are either the ‘good girl’ who is pure, virginal, motherly, and wifely or the ‘bad girl’ who is sexualized and promiscuous. Depictions of women in these gendered roles are reinforced and influence how the audience reacts to female victims – “specifically, the victimization of women is apt to be downplayed or, in many cases, attributed to the woman’s own actions when the woman is perceived as violating the gender norms” (p. 764). If the woman is promiscuous in these films, then her death is
supposed to be seen as a result of her own actions in acting outside of the conventional gender norms that the industry has constructed for her.

These messages depicting the stereotypical portrayal of women are still rampant in our society and perpetuated through various means of the media such as television, movies, advertisements, and images in newspapers and magazines. What has not been looked at extensively, however, is whether these images persist in advertisements for the film industry, movie trailers, and any effects it may have. Hefner and Wilson (2013) conducted two studies to research effects on film audience’s construction of romance – a content analysis and an undergraduate survey studying what impacts romantic comedy films may have on audiences. What is appealing to audiences about the romantic comedy genre may be that young people use the films to learn about relationships and get dating tips (Hefner & Wilson, 2013). However, what people learn from romantic comedies may be unrealistic and idealized such as ‘love at first sight’ or that love can conquer all. Considering the popularity of the genre, this may become problematic because for individuals without much relationship experience, the unrealistic notions learned from these films may be viewed by audiences as the cultural norm (Hefner & Wilson, 2013; Johnson & Holmes, 2009). Essentially, if people are watching these films with an intent to learn about aspects of life, such as romance and love, then it may impact their social construction of what is considered normal and expected, for both women and men, in romantic situations in society.

For the first study, Hefner and Wilson conducted a content analysis on the themes presented in 52 romantic comedies from the past decade: 1998-2008. In addition to observing the overall theme of the films, four themes in particular were researched – soul mates, love at first sight, love conquers all, and idealizing of a partner – to study if those expressions/actions were
either punished or rewarded in the films. Even though the overall theme of the romantic comedies in the analysis appeared to be either love conquers all or soul mates, “counter to the popular assumption that romantic movies are purely idealistic, these films routinely feature direct contradictions to romantic ideals” (Hefner & Wilson, 2013, p. 161). Although, romantic ideals tended to be rewarded while challenges or contradictions to those ideals were punished. Even so, Johnson and Holmes’ (2009) content analysis on romantic comedy films found that being single was seen as a negative, consistently illustrating single individuals as insecure, miserable, and lonely. Again, considering the prevalence and popularity of these films in society, a frequent negative depiction of an alternative lifestyle compared to a commonplace portrayal of a heterosexual relationship may have an impact on one’s social construction regarding how men are women are ‘supposed’ to be.

The second study was an online survey of 335 undergraduate students in communication courses at a university observing media exposure, romantic and relationship perceptions, as well as control variables and demographic information (Hefner & Wilson, 2013). Compared to individuals who watch romantic comedies for reasons other than learning, those individuals who reported watching romantic comedies with the intention to learn (about relationships, to acquire information about dating, etc.) more firmly believed in romantic ideals. Particularly, those viewers “were most likely to endorse the belief in the idealization of one’s partner” (Hefner & Wilson, 2013, p. 169). These findings, along with the results from the first study indicated that romantic ideals are rewarded in the films and those viewers watching to learn may go on to endorse those beliefs, even if they are unrealistic. This finding depicts the importance of observing films and the possible impacts they may have on how one’s ideals are socially constructed in society.
Further, a study similar to Rozas (2014) research on risk behaviors which looked at
tobacco use prevalence in teen film movie trailers, Healton et al. (2006) conducted a content
analysis on all movie trailers shown on television in the United States for the span of a year from
2001-2002. Even though there have been restrictions on tobacco advertising since 1971, this
restriction has been undermined through the use of movie trailers. Movie trailers can depict
tobacco use on television by admired stars and for intense and action-packed shots in which there
is concern this illustration would impact a youth’s construction of tobacco use acceptance if there
was a high prevalence of tobacco use presented in movie trailers that youth would be exposed
and could impact a teen’s acceptance of smoking. Trailers depicting tobacco use could be
eliciting positive messages toward using those products, having teens think smoking is approved
of and accepted since it is associated with big stars and action sequences.

A total of 216 trailers were analyze and results revealed that over 14% of the trailers
depicted tobacco use, whether it was through a pipe or a cigarette (Healton et al., 2006). These
results, combined with Nielsen Media Research Council data, indicated that 95% of youth saw at
least one movie trailer on television that depicted tobacco use and roughly 89% of those
individuals saw at least one trailer upwards of three or more times. With most youth watching at
least one trailer, sometimes three or more times, depicting tobacco use, it is not improbable to
consider how that much exposure could impact a teen’s construction of tobacco use toward a
more positive light. Tobacco use prevalence also varied by rating of the film as it was found that
24% of R-rated film trailers illustrated tobacco use as did over 7% of PG-13 and PG trailers.
Considering the prevalence of tobacco use the authors observed in the movie trailers, even for
trailers aimed at younger teen audiences, indicate most teens had seen at least one trailer, perhaps
multiple times, depicting tobacco use and possibly having an impact on teens’ acceptance of
smoking. These findings differ from Rozas (2014) results indicating that PG-13 movie trailers did not depict tobacco use, though this may be due to the thirteen year gap between the analyses, indicating a possible negative shift in the popularity of movie trailers depicting the use of tobacco.

Research by Li (2014) observed golden age Hollywood, specifically the 1930s, by observing how women were portrayed at the time using the film *Grand Hotel*. The development of censorship boards and committees occurred during the 1920s-30s, creating a strictly controlled entertainment medium from growing concern that films had negative impacts on both adults and children. Due to changes in who was making films (i.e., the shift from women to men as directors and writers), women on screen were illustrated as having some independence and sass, “but not too excessively to threaten men’s dominance” (p. 306).

Women were also portrayed in a way that was conducive to the ‘male gaze’ for women in society to imitate, such as supplying different fashions and defining what ‘type’ of woman they are (Li, 2014). Women’s careers as well as their friendships were generally lacking in the films of this time as well, although that was slowly developing during the era. Films were made specifically to control the fashions women would like, coincidentally being ones that attract the male gaze, and women’s independence on film were controlled in order to depict women still being subservient to their male counterparts. These notions illustrate men’s advantaged state in society and their ability to delineate what is expected and normal for how women should dress, behave, and even speak (Lorber, 1994). These illustrations of women defined by men may impact one’s social construction as both men and women may come to think, believe, and feel that women are supposed to act in the particular manner that is set forth by those making films.
Further, in Smith et al.’s (2015) content analysis of 700 films, females were more likely than men at any age to be revealed in sexy or revealing clothing, more likely to be shown with nudity, less likely to be the lead, and more likely to be younger than men. Even in modern films from 2014, it was observed how:

The landscape of popular cinema...remains skewed and stereotypical. Across 700 films and over 30,000 speaking characters from 2007 to present, movies continue to distort the demographic reality of their audience. Film characters are overwhelmingly White and male, despite both population statistics and viewing patterns (Smith et al., 2015, p. 21).

These trends are important to observe as prior research as well as theory has indicated these types of portrayals of women can negatively impact them – from body shaming to self objectification. The focus on particular beauty standards (e.g., thinner body types) and younger actresses compared to men limits the roles that female actors can perform, the opportunities available to them, and the stories that could be illustrated from older women with occupational power, for instance (Smith et al., 2015).

Given the prevalence of these depictions in movies themselves, it is logical to look at movie trailers for analysis. Trailers would be expected to follow similar patterns of portraying women since they are advertisements for the complete films whose main goal is to get people to buy tickets. However, trends, such as the ones illustrated, “may contribute to beliefs that girls/women’s stories are not as important as boys/men’s. This may have the strongest effect on children, who may learn something about gender roles from repeatedly viewing motion picture content on DVDs” (Smith, 2007, p. 1). Further, trends such as women disproportionately being depicted as thinner and outfitted in sexy and revealing attire may impact audience’s body images, those who may try to parallel the unrealistic standards and thusly think that they cannot do so. In fact, once a woman has internalized the unrealistic standards set by the media, they may come to feel their self-worth and happiness is tied to their image and how desirable they are
(Benshoff & Griffin, 2004). On the other end of the spectrum, “heavy exposure to beautiful and thin females may teach and/or reinforce males’ unrealistic expectations about how the opposite sex should look or act” (Smith, 2007, p. 2).

People cannot ‘tune out’ all advertisements for films like they can with other forms of media (Oliver & Kalyanaraman, 2002). Even online media streaming sites, such as Hulu or YouTube, have film advertisements played both before and during the desired content. DVDs and Blu-rays generally have previews before getting to the film that cannot be skipped, and movie trailers still make up a significant amount of television commercials. This demonstrates that “advertising is a powerful tool for selling, but it can also be a powerful tool for attitude change and behavior. Hence, the danger of advertising which stereotypes women is that it can lead to forming notions that undermine women and their abilities” (Shirkhande, 2003, p. 3). In addition, some material that is rated inappropriate for certain age groups may still be seen by those audiences regardless (Oliver & Kalyanaraman, 2002). Those portrayals of women may impact how people construct their beliefs in gender, and subsequently impact societal norms as well. As Lorber (1994) notes, “human beings have constructed and used gender – human beings can deconstruct and stop using gender” (p. 297).

To summarize, previous literature has illustrated that women in media have generally been insufficiently represented, hyper-sexualized, gendered, and disproportionately depicted in violent situations. The portrayal of women as non-leaders, weak, subservient, and sexualized may become institutionalized through film. With this in mind and considering the prevalence of movie trailers in society, it is imperative to research how trailers portray women over time. Next, the research question and hypotheses follow along with the methods for analysis.
Research Question and Hypotheses

The overall research question that this study addresses is *how has the portrayal of women in movie trailers, in regard to representation, sexualization, gender roles, and violence, change over time?* Specifically, the hypotheses for the study are as follows, with the categories and measures to be described in-depth in the coding categories section.

Considering the previous research on the topic, the present research is interested in observing differences by gender for representation in movie trailers over time. Two studies observed the differences in women’s representation over time. Women tend to have few speaking roles in films, comprising of approximately 30% even though women are half the population (Smith et al., 2015). Research on the portrayal of women in newspaper-based film ads indicated that women are underrepresented in comparison to men in these ads as well (Tien-Tsung and Hsaio-Fang, 2002). Over time, female representation actually decreased in their sample compared to male representation. As such, the interest for the present study was in assessing the number of men and women on screen, the amount of time they are on screen for, and speaking roles, over time.

**H1:** The amount of time, in seconds, that women are in movie trailers increases over time.

**H2:** The overall number of women in movie trailers increases over time.

**H3:** The overall number of men in movie trailers decreases over time.

**H4:** Men have more speaking roles than women in movie trailers over time.

Women in films are more sexualized than men regarding attire, attractiveness, and in sexually explicit scenes (Mulvey, 1975; Cowan & O’Brien, 1990; Smith, 2007; Neuendorf et al., 2009; Newby, 2009; Welsh, 2010; Rozas, 2014; and Smith et al., 2016). There is a problematic trend in that women are continuously sexualized in films over time and more likely than men to be shown nude, referenced as physically attractive, and wearing revealing attire (Smith et al.,
The women in James Bond films, for instance, were generally depicted as more sexually active in those particular films over time (Neuendorf et al., 2009). Thus, for sexuality, the present study observed women’s attire and sexually suggestive behavior in movie trailers.

**H5:** The instances of women wearing revealing or provocative clothing in movie trailers increases over time.

**H6:** The instances of sexually suggestive behavior, involving women, in movie trailers increases over time.

The portrayal of women through stereotypical gender roles has persisted in films and television commercials over time (Shirkhande, 2003; Hersey, 2007; Smith, 2007; England et al., 2011; Gilpatric; 2010). However, research indicates that women may be presented with more counter-stereotypical traits and behaviors in contemporary films than in years past (Cowan & O’Brien; Shirkhande, 2003; Hersey, 2007; Smith, 2007; Pardos, 2008; Newby, 2009). The present study observed stereotypical and counter-stereotypical portrayals of women by measuring behavior as well as masculine and feminine characteristics.

**H7a:** Instances of women exhibiting stereotypical behaviors decrease over time.

**H7b:** Instances of women exhibiting counter-stereotypical behaviors increase over time.

**H8a:** Instances of women being portrayed with masculine traits increase over time.

**H8b:** Instances of women being portrayed with feminine traits decrease over time.

Men tend to be more aggressive and perpetrate more violence than women in movies, commercials, and newspaper ads (Tien-tsung & Hsaio-Fang, 2002; Sharrer et al., 2006; Gilpatric, 2010). However, this difference may be decreasing over the years, with an increasing number of women in films and ads committing violent acts than previously (Cowan & O’Brien, 1990; Neuendorf et al., 2009; and Newby, 2009). The present research observed differences in gender for violence regarding male and female perpetrators and victims in the analysis.

**H9a:** Instances of women as victims decrease over time.

**H9b:** Instances of men as victims increase over time.

**H10a:** Instances of women as perpetrators increase over time.

**H10b:** Instances of men as perpetrators decrease over time.
METHODS

*Content Analysis*

Content analysis was employed as the method of analysis to determine how women are portrayed in movie trailers through representation, sexualization, gender roles, and violence. These categories were chosen for analysis based on previous content analysis research in which women were the focus. Content analysis for the present study is defined as –

> A summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity-intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing) and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 10).

It should be noted that not all content analyses rely on quantitative analysis, though, the present definition was kept broad as it encompassed what the research set to do more thoroughly than other definitions. In essence, content analysis is the analyzing of messages from various forms of media to make inferences (Weber, 2004; Schutt, 2012). It is suited for studying popular culture, such as movie trailers, as the goal is to develop inferences from various forms of media like books, songs, and movies (Schutt, 2012). Further, content analysis comes with little risk to subjects and is generally an unobtrusive method since the subject of interest often is not aware it is being analyzed, also known as mute evidence, which is the case with film trailers (Weber, 2004). The trend for trailers is that they are being presented online now, rather than just at the theater, so content analysis can be done with online videos, which allows for better review of the content through pausing and re-watching it as much as needed or desired (Johnston, 2008).

The top grossing box office films were chosen for the trailer analysis as these would have, presumably, been seen by the largest audience. Box Office Mojo (boxofficemojo.com) and data from Steinberg (1980) were utilized to attain the top grossing box office film information for the researched years. Box Office Mojo was chosen as the website of inquiry because it supplies categorical and historical information, such as earnings, genre, and people involved with the movie. However, Box Office Mojo only has film information dating back to 1980. Steinberg’s (1980) book *Film Facts* supplemented the missing top grossing data from 1950-1975, though, Steinberg’s information supplies only the top 20 movies, not the top 25. Therefore, analysis consisted of the top grossing 20 movies from 1950-1975, and the top grossing 25 movies for years 1980-2015. The movie trailers were viewed mainly on YouTube, though another website, Turner Classic Movies (tcm.com) was used in a few cases when YouTube did not have an adequate trailer.\(^1\) All but six trailers were located using the two websites,\(^2\) and those that could not be located were excluded from the analysis.

If more than a single trailer was depicted for a particular film, as does sometimes occur, then the most popular full-length trailer, noted by the number of views on YouTube, was chosen.

\(^1\) Turner Classic Movies was used for two movie trailers – *Who Was That Lady?* (1960) and *Can-Can* (1960) – when an adequate trailer was not found on YouTube.

similar to Rozas’s (2014) content analysis on PG-13 movie trailers. Teasers, tribute, fan-made, or television trailer advertisements were excluded from analysis as they are generally significantly shorter than regular trailers, do not contain as much information, and would not be an accurate representation compared to a full-length, studio released trailer. Further, movie trailers in which the film takes place in the distant past or the future (>10 years) were also excluded. The study is concerned with how women are portrayed in the present time the film was made, rather than how well the filmmakers can render how women in a certain era or decade are depicted for when the film is set to take place. Because filmmakers often strive toward making movies that are historically accurate, a contemporary film set in an historical era would portray women within the time period. Such a depiction would not necessarily embody how women are portrayed in present time.

Films that showcase a small portion of the past, such as through flashbacks, but mainly take place in the present time were included. However, if a trailer depicted some scenes from the past, those particular scenes in the trailer were not coded for the analysis, only the scenes illustrating the present time counted. If it could not be assessed whether a film takes place in the past or future from the movie trailer or information from the websites used (such as IMDb.com or tcm.com), then the trailer was excluded. Due to these exclusions, earlier decades required films from the following year supplemented to the sample to reach a minimum of at least 15 trailers per year in the analysis. Earlier decades already had fewer films in the analysis due to Steinberg (1980) only having the information for the grossing 20 movies for those years instead of the top 25. Further, the earlier decades also had more war films based on real wars that exceeded the distant past criteria. The films that were supplemented into the analysis were

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3 For example, *Jumanji* (1995) had scenes from the past, but much of the movie and trailer took place in present day. The past scenes were not coded, only the present day scenes counted for the analysis. This rule affected two films in the analysis – *Jumanji* (1995) and *The 40 Year-Old-Virgin* (2005).
treated as though they were part of the previous year (e.g., supplemented trailers from 1951 belonged to 1950).4

Film trailers in which the film only had animals, toys, or other inanimate beings as main characters were also excluded since only humans were researched for the study. Excluding films with these criteria is to protect validity of the research, not necessarily that the particular films do not relate to the research. In *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, there are half-goat/half-person characters and talking animals which would not be adequate to code for revealing or provocative attire, for example. If a trailer depicted a person exhibiting human-like features even if they were not human, such as Edward the vampire or Jacob who could turn into a wolf in *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse* (2010), then the instance of representation was still counted and the trailer was not excluded. Superhero films and other movies in which a person hides their identity, goes undercover, or plays multiple people (e.g., Eddie Murphy played 6 people in *The Nutty Professor II: The Klumps*), were counted as separate people in the analysis. The film trailers that were analyzed in accordance with their years are included in Appendix A.

**Validity and Reliability**

The trailers were viewed privately to ensure that nothing was missed during the recording of the notes or data, and trailers were paused when a lot of information needed to be recorded. In order to increase validity and reliability of the results, each trailer was watched several times for recording and re-watched a final time after all data was recorded to ensure nothing was missed.

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4 In total, 26 trailers were used to supplement the analysis: 2 trailers from 1951, 4 trailers from 1956, 1 trailer from 1961, 7 trailers from 1966, 6 trailers from 1971, and 6 trailers from 1976.
**Coding Categories**

**Frequency of representation.** Women and men between the ages of 13 and up were analyzed because people under 13 years of age would be inappropriate to code for a category such as revealing attire or sexually suggestive behavior, for instance. The analysis for representation included women and men who were in the trailer for at least ten seconds to count toward the overall number of women or men in the trailer. Because trailers are generally around two and a half minutes, a person portrayed for less than ten seconds may not be an imperative part of the film or may be a background extra.\(^5\) Therefore, this was to exclude individuals who may be extras or background characters, and not central roles or figures in the films. This is not to say that extras and background people are unimportant in films, they are just not part of the central analysis for the present study.

A stopwatch was used to measure, in seconds, the time women were on screen, rounded to the nearest second. The time was measured when it was clear or obvious that it is the same person if a scene switches. In some instances, scenes switched to far away shots where the researcher could not tell who was in the scene, and those scenes were not measured. Further, the number of men and women, meeting the minimum ten second criteria, in each trailer were counted for whether or not they speak as well. The measurement for men and women who were counted as speaking was modeled after Smith et al.’s (2016) research which coded a person as speaking if he or she “utters one or more discernible and overt words (of any language) on screen” and excludes nonverbal communication (p. 21).

**Sexualization.** Moreover, the clothing women were wearing in trailers was observed for instances of provocative/revealing attire. This was assessed using Downs and Smith’s (2009)\(^5\)

\(^{5}\) There were very few instances where people were close to the 10 second criteria but did not reach it. For example, one woman in *Kingsman: The Secret Service* (2014) was in the trailer for 9 seconds. Because this did issue did not arise very often in the analysis, it was not a limiting criteria.
definition, which was also utilized in Smith et al.’s (2015) analysis of 700 films from 2007-2014. Sexually revealing clothing was defined as:

Any garment that was worn in order to enhance, exaggerate, call attention to, or accentuate the curves or angles of any part of the body (from the neck to above the knee) and which, by design, would arouse interest of physical intimacy from others (Downs & Smith, 2009, p. 725).

The provocative/revealing clothing category was assessed by counting the instances of occurrence in the trailer. If a woman was wearing the same revealing/provocative outfit in multiple scenes, it was counted as one instance. Women who were mostly nude and only lightly covered with something such as a towel or blanket also counted as a revealing instance. As older decades differ from the present day in what is considered revealing, this was taken into account when coding instances for this category. For example, a dress revealing a portion of a woman’s knees may be considered revealing for a past decade, but are more commonplace today.

Further, for sexually suggestive behavior, a combination of components from previous literature helped to inform the focus. Oliver and Kalyanaraman’s (2002) research observed sexual scenes with four components – when one or more people were depicted engaging in sexual behaviors, such as kissing, petting, or intercourse; wearing revealing clothing; portrayed as undressing or nude; and when one or more persons were illustrated as the object of sexual desire. Welsh (2010) had similar definitions for sexual behavior, with one distinction; the author added scenes in which there was extended physical intimacy with another character in a scene which included foreplay, caressing of erogenous body parts either over or under clothes, and open-mouthed kissing. Neuendorf et al. (2010) noted a distinction between types of sexual contact in Bond films: mild sexual contact and strong sexual contact. Mild sexual contact included kissing, whether sitting or standing, while strong sexual contact was coded as implied sex or other sexual contact (Neuendorf et al., 2010).
For the present study, sexually suggestive behavior was counted as instances of women engaging in mild sexual behaviors\(^6\) which included: kissing (open or closed mouth); sexual gazing (a longing, seductive gaze); and exhibiting flirty behaviors such as playing with hair in a suggestive manner and seductive or suggestive touching (not including erogenous areas of the body). Instances of strong sexual contact were noted as suggestive touching of erogenous areas of the body and implied intercourse. Nudity and actual on-screen intercourse was not included as a variable as movie trailers do not generally include nudity or on-screen intercourse given that trailers are designed in order to be appropriate for general audiences (Rozas, 2014).\(^7\)

Instances were counted per scene in the trailer – if a woman conducted multiple sexually suggestive behaviors within a single scene in the trailer, it was only counted one time, unless the behavior shifted from mild to strong. If more than one woman conducted a suggestive behavior in a scene, then each instance was counted one time, provided the women met the ten second requirement. If a trailer cut to a different scene/shot during a sexually suggestive part, then cut back to the same sexually suggestive component, it was counted as the same instance. Each different instance of sexually suggestive behavior was counted. Obvious non-sexual behaviors, such as a mother kissing her son, were not counted toward instances of women engaging in sexual behaviors.

**Gender role characteristics.** The gender role characteristics in movie trailers were coded as either stereotypical or counter-stereotypical behaviors and feminine and masculine traits. The instances of stereotypical behavior were counted as behaviors in which a woman, meeting the minimum ten second criteria, exhibited behaviors or performed actions such as

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\(^6\) There was only one instance in the analysis of sexually suggestive behavior between two men for the film *Hitch* (2005) in which the male protagonists briefly kiss.

\(^7\) Red-band trailers, trailers that are approved for R-rated audiences and include explicit content, were not explicitly excluded from analysis, however, only one instance emerged for *Kingsman: The Secret Service* (2015), but it was not the most viewed YouTube movie trailer.
cleaning, taking care of the children, cooking, etc. Counter-stereotypical behaviors consisted of being career oriented, being handy, repairing objects in the household, etc.

The feminine and masculine traits assessed were modeled after similar research in content analysis observing gender characteristics, with some added aspects as well. Gilpatric (2010) defined gender traits related to stereotypically masculine behavior as courageous, decisive, forceful, competitive, independent, ambitious, and confident. For feminine stereotypes, the traits included emotional, submissive, chatty, affectionate, gentle, and sympathetic characteristics (Gilpatric, 2010). Cowan and O’Brien (1990) observed masculine traits as independent, assertive, cynical, conceited, as well as commanding while feminine traits were counted as passive, expressive, sensitive, and naivety or foolishness. Welsh (2010) additionally noted that there are stereotypical gendered behaviors such as wifely or motherly roles who are seen as the ‘good girls’ in films, while those who challenge those gendered roles are the women who are promiscuous and constructed as the ‘bad girls’ (p. 763). In England et al.’s (2011) content analysis on the gender roles portrayal of the Disney Princesses, masculine traits included being strong, adventurous, assertive, leader, independent, emotionless, courageous, athletic, intelligent, and intimidating. Feminine characteristics were observed as weak, submissive, sensitive, worrying about appearance, nurturing, emotional, frightened or scared, and helpful.

For women who met the ten second inclusionary criteria in the trailers, the present study counted the instances particular masculine or feminine characteristics were displayed. Masculine traits included: ambitious, adventurous, assertive, athletic, boastful/bragging, brazen, commanding, competitive, confident, courageous, egotistical, independent, strong, and unemotional. Feminine traits included: affectionate, apologetic, appearance concerned, asking
for help/assistance, compassionate, considerate, emotional, fearful, helpful, humble, nurturing, passive, sensitive, submissive, talkative, and weak.

Similar to England et al.’s (2011) study, the present research coded each instance a woman was “mentioned as possessing a certain characteristic or…exhibited the characteristic in their behavior” (p. 558). When a new behavior or trait was illustrated it was coded, although, if a trailer cut back and forth between scenes and a woman was continuing a particular characteristic from before the scene cut then it was not recounted. The definitions for the traits and characteristics are attached in Appendix B.

Violence. Instances of mild, moderate, and lethal violence were observed by the perpetrator and victims, according to gender. Therefore, the study looked at men and women perpetrators/initiators of violence and men and women victims of violence. The measures for violence in the present analysis were modeled similarly to Rozas’s (2014) research, which utilized measures from McArthur et al.’s (2000) content analysis observing the top 100 grossing movies of 1994 observing the prevalence of violence in scenes of movies.

Violence was separated into three categories (mild, moderate, and lethal) in order to depict differences between something small like a slap to something as major as murder. Mild violence, in accordance with McArthur et al. (2000) and Rozas (2014), indicates actions such as slapping, pushing, dousing with a non-lethal substance, and chasing not involving any weapons. Further, moderate violence was defined as hitting either with a weapon or a closed fist, although lacking enough force to be deadly. Lethal violence was defined as violence that is deadly or potentially life threatening, which could be accomplished either with or without a weapon. If a person shot at another individual then it still counted as lethal violence, even if the person was
not killed. Additionally, violence toward animals was rare and was either out of self defense or for hunting purposes.

Also analogous to McArthur et al.’s (2000) and Rozas’s (2014) research, threatened or implied violence was not coded; only violence that was depicted on-screen counted toward the number of instances. This is because trailers are short and utilize quicker cuts and scenes, so implied violence would be more difficult to assess. Perpetrators and victims of violence counted as long as one person involved in the violence met the 10 second criteria. If there was a change in violence level, it was coded, although, if a scene in the trailer cut and came back to the same previous scene of violence, it was only coded once. If violence switched people in the same scene such as one person punching a man and then the same person starts punching a different man in the same scene, then it was recounted. If it could not be assessed who the victim or perpetrator of violence was in a scene, then that particular aspect was left out, but whoever was involved still counted. For instance, in Rambo: First Blood Part II (1985), the main character was perpetuating lethal violence toward people who were far away and could not be assessed whether they were men or women. In that case, Rambo counted as a perpetrator of violence but there were no victims for some scenes that could not be assessed. Violent acts which were clearly accidental, not violence (e.g., slapping arm to get a bug off), or sports-related also did not count (Oliver & Kalyanaraman, 2002).

**Descriptives.** In addition to the four coding categories, the study also observed descriptive information as well. Age was included to observe the frequency of women of particular ages being portrayed in film trailers. Age was assessed generally through observation and context within the trailers; however, if age could not be assessed in this manner the film’s plot synopsis was observed. If age still could not be assessed, in a few instances, the actress’s
actual age at the time the film was released was used. The ages of 13-19 were teen, 20-39 were considered as young adult, 40-64 were middle-aged, and 65 and up were coded as older adult. What the study is observing deals with concepts, such as sexuality, that would not be applicable to anyone under at least teen age. MPAA ratings of the films, as retrieved from IMDb.com, were recorded for the movies as well. Because different ratings showcase what content is allowed and what is prohibited, it was important to note when comparing data. Finally, genre was also coded for the films. As the previous research indicated, women are portrayed differently based on the genre of the film as well. IMDb.com recognizes 22 genres with each movie consisting of one or more. There was also a notes section in the coding document to record any additional notes during the analysis of the movie trailers.

Analysis

The data were entered into a spreadsheet. Upon completion of the film trailer analysis, the dataset was imported into IBM Statistics SPSS 23 and analyzed using percentages, means, frequencies, chi-squares, crosstabulations, and correlations as appropriate for the respective hypothesis and variables’ level of measure. Graphs and tables of the results were then created. The coding sheet used for data collection is attached in Appendix C.

RESULTS

Descriptives

There were 365 movie trailers, with a total of 135 exclusions according to the exclusionary criteria. This left a total of 230 movie trailers for analysis. Of the 230 trailers included, the average trailer length was 145.5 seconds ($SD= 48.0$ seconds), or 2 minutes and 26 seconds. The most common trailer length was 149.0 seconds, or 2 minutes and 29 seconds, and
comprised of 8 trailers – *Fancy Pants* (1950), *Li’l Abner* (1960), *Scary Movie* (2000), *Miss Congeniality* (2000), *Wedding Crashers* (2005), *Despicable Me* (2010), *Spectre* (2015), and *Ant-Man* (2015). The shortest trailer length was 39.0 seconds for the film *Monkey’s Uncle* (1965) while the longest trailer was 391.0 seconds, or 6 minutes and 31 seconds, for *Psycho* (1960). The results for the average run-times of trailers over the years indicated that the earlier decades, 1950-1975, tended to have longer trailers than more recent decades (Figure 4.1). The year 1955 had the highest average length of movie trailers with 193.1 seconds, or 3 minutes and 13 seconds, while the year 1985 had the lowest average movie trailer length at 102.8 seconds, or 1 minute and 42 seconds. The relationship between trailer length and year is moderate, negative, and significant ($r = -.296$, $p < .01$). This relationship indicates that trailers are getting shorter over time.

**Figure 4.1: Trailer Length**
There was more variation than anticipated in the MPAA ratings of the film trailers in the sample, as recorded from IMDb. The MPAA did not establish the current rating system until 1968. Films before then had more variation in their ratings, with the majority of films simply receiving an “approved” rating. The “approved” rating would be similar to PG or PG-13 by contemporary standards. The ratings categories as a whole indicated that the most common categories were PG-13 ($N=60$), R ($N=50$), PG ($N=48$), and Approved ($N=34$). The rest of the ratings for of trailers comprised of less than 10 films in the sample (Figure 4.2). Generally, films pre-1968 were approved, not listed, or unrated, while films post-1968 (i.e., films from 1970-2015) were in four categories: G, PG, PG-13, and R (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.2: MPAA

![MPAA Ratings - All Years](image-url)
Genre was recorded according to what was listed for each film in IMDB for consistency. Each film had one to three genres, with 22 genres listed by IMDb in total. Each of the 22 genre types was included in the sample of trailers. The most common genre from the sample was comedy \((N=116)\), with the second most as drama \((N=74)\), and the third most common genre in the sample was action \((N=66)\). The sample also consisted of adventure \((N=58)\), romance \((N=51)\), thriller \((N=40)\), crime \((N=32)\), family \((N=30)\), sci-fi \((N=20)\), mystery \((N=18)\), fantasy \((N=17)\), musical \((N=12)\), horror \((N=10)\), war \((N=9)\), animation \((N=7)\), biography \((N=4)\), sport \((N=4)\), documentary \((N=3)\), history \((N=3)\), music \((N=3)\), western \((N=2)\), and film-noir \((N=1)\).

The results relating to age indicated that, of the women who were coded based on the minimum ten second criteria, the age of the women mainly fell into the young adult category. As Figure 4.4 shows, the young adult category for women ages 20-39 years old was more common than any other age category \((N=195)\) and comprised 73.3\% of the total number of women coded.
for age in the sample. The middle-aged category for women 40-64 years old was the second most frequent category (N=47) and comprised 17.6% of the number of women coded for age in the sample. The number of women coded in the teen category for ages 13-19 years old consisted of 21 women while the older adult category for women ages 65 and older was the least common age group with only 3 women from the entire sample being coded for that age range.

**Figure 4.4: Age**

![Number of Women in the Age Categories](image)

**Representation**

**H1: The amount of time, in seconds, that women are in movie trailers increases over time.**

Observing the length of screen time for women, the average screen time was 33.28 seconds ($SD = 37.98$), with a minimum of 0.0 seconds for 71 movies in the sample and a maximum screen time of 175.0 for one film, *High Society* (1956). When looking at the average screen time of women in trailers over time in the sample (Figure 4.5), it appears that the average screen time for women decreases over the years. There were slight peaks in the years 1975 and
1995, but the spikes were still well below the average screen times for women from earlier years in the sample. The relationship was moderate and negative \((r = -0.397)\) and significant \((p < .01)\), and is inconsistent with the hypothesis.

**Figure 4.5: Screen Time**

![Average Women Screen Time](image)

Because trailers in earlier years tended to have longer run-times, there is more opportunity for women to be in them, with more women speaking, and more women adding to the total screen time. Therefore, the proportion of women’s screen time to total screen time was observed to control for the differences in trailer run-time. The average proportion of screen time devoted to women in the trailers in the sample is .31, or 31% \((SD = .26)\), with 12 trailers missing as they did not include any women. When looking at the average length of women’s screen time in seconds, the average screen time appeared to decrease over time; however, the proportion of screen time devoted to women does not follow the same trend, depicted in Figure 4.6. Although there is still a large drop in the amount of screen time devoted to women proportionally in the
1970s, similar to the original average screen time results, the proportion of screen time devoted to women in later years increases to reach, and briefly surpass, levels from the earliest decades in the sample. There is no significant correlation between the year and proportional screen time ($r = -.055, p > .05$). Therefore, there is insufficient evidence to show that women’s screen time, when looking at proportions, changes in either direction over time.

Figure 4.6: Proportion Screen Time

One possible explanation for the dip in women’s screen time post-1970 was in the rise of male-dominated action films. In order to test if the decrease in women’s screen time was due to a rise in action films, a variable for any action movies was created. The proportion of women’s screen time variable was analyzed split by action films. Films which were classified as action or war movies were combined into the variable “any action.”

---

8 For the 1950s and 1960s, movies were more often categorized under just one genre. Because war movies are conceptually similar to action movies they were combined into the “any action” variable. None of the other film genres were logical to group into the variable.
The any action variable consisted of 72 movies, with 158 that did not count as action, nearly 1/3 of the total film trailers in the analysis. The average for the length of women’s screen time in any action movies was fairly low at 16.47 seconds ($SD = 25.59$) and women’s average screen time for no action movies was 40.94 seconds ($SD = 40.25$). Figure 4.7 illustrates no discernable pattern for the average proportion of screen time devoted to women when action movies are taken out, and the correlation is insignificant. When looking at Figure 4.8 depicting the average proportion of women’s screen time for any action movies, no discernable pattern can be observed. There are spikes in particular years, 1970$^9$ and 2000,$^{10}$ where roughly 27% and 46%, respectively, of the screen time in action film trailers for those years were devoted to women. However, the relationship was not significant according to correlation tests ($r = .023$, $p > .05$), indicating that action movies did not make a difference in the proportion of women’s screen time.

$^9$ The spike in the year 1970s average proportion of women’s screen time for any action films may have been due to two films in particular, Airport and On Her Majesty’s Secret Service. The women who counted for those films were in the trailers for a longer period of time and, in the James Bond film On Her Majesty’s Secret Service, the women were on screen for longer than James Bond.

$^{10}$ The large increase in the average proportion of women’s screen time for any action films in the year 2000 may have been due to several action films centered on a woman, or multiple women, protagonists. Charlie’s Angels and Miss Congeniality are action films comprised of women in lead action roles who, consequently, account for a longer amount of screen time than men in those films. The film Big Momma’s House centers around a man going undercover as a woman, and no men from the trailer for The Perfect Storm were in long enough to count, so only the woman in the trailer was assessed for trailer length.
Figure 4.7: Screen Time No Action

![Women's Screen Time For No Action Films](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PTimeWNo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>0.469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>0.419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>0.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>0.402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>0.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>0.323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>0.221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>0.360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>0.409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>0.357</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>0.464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0.560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.8: Screen Time Any Action

![Women's Screen Time For Any Action Films](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PTimeWAny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>0.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>0.229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>0.272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>0.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>0.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>0.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>0.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>0.204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>0.462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>0.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**H2: The overall number of women in trailers increases over time.**

For the overall number of women in trailers, the average in the sample was 1.18 ($SD = 1.19$), with a minimum of 0.0 women in 71 of the trailers and a maximum of 7.0 women in the film *Goodbye Charlie* (1965). Observing the average number of women in trailers over the years, Figure 4.9 depicts that the number of women appears to decrease over time, which is inconsistent with the hypothesis. The relationship between the variables was weak negative ($r = -.263$) and significant ($p < .01$).

![Figure 4.9: Number of Women](image)

To control for the varying number of people in trailers, the proportion of women were analyzed. The average number of women appeared to decrease over time, yet when observing the proportion of women in trailers, that trend does not appear so clearly (Figure 4.10). Although there is still a decrease in the proportion of women in trailers in 1975-1985, proportions in the 1990s-2010s are more similar to the proportions of the earliest decades. An insignificant
correlation ($r = -.020, p > .05$) indicates there is not a clear linear decrease in the proportion of women in trailers over the years.

![Figure 4.10: Proportion of Women](image)

Similar to the previous hypothesis, the any action variable was used to assess if a rise in action films may have caused the decline in the proportion of women in trailers. The average number of women in trailers for any action movies was $0.694$ ($SD = 0.82$) while for no action movies the average number of women was $1.41$ ($SD = 1.27$). There is no discernable pattern for both the no action group (Figure 4.11) and the any action film group (Figure 4.12). The correlations are not significant for both action ($r = -.044, p > .05$) and no action ($r = .078, p > .05$). Because the relationships are not significant, action movies did not make a difference in the proportion of the number of women in movie trailers over time.
Figure 4.11: Proportion No Action

Proportion of Women for No Action Films

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PWNo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>0.421</td>
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<td>1965</td>
<td>0.415</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>0.473</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>0.194</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>0.311</td>
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<td>1985</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>0.402</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>0.373</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0.440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>0.615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.12: Proportion Any Action

Proportion of Women for Any Action Films

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PWAny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>0.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>0.222</td>
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<td>1960</td>
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<td>1965</td>
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<td>1970</td>
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<td>1975</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>0.167</td>
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<td>1985</td>
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<td>1990</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>0.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
H3: The overall number of men in movie trailers will decrease over time.

In observing the overall number of men in movie trailers, the average was 2.183 ($SD = 1.67$) men in trailers. The minimum number of men in movie trailers was 0 with the maximum as 10, which was the case for two films in the analysis – *Mister Roberts* (1955) and *Guys and Dolls* (1956). The average number of men in movie trailers over the years included in the analysis indicates that, consistent with the hypothesis, the number of men in trailers does appear to decrease over the years (Figure 4.13). The relationship was weak and negative ($r = -.259$) and significant ($p < .01$). In order to control for the varying number of people in the trailers, the proportion of men was analyzed. Although the original data observing the number of men in the sample appeared to be consistent with the hypothesis, the average number of men proportion (Figure 4.14) indicates that may not be the case. In fact, the proportion of number of men actually increases in the 1970s then declines again to about the same proportion to where it started in the 1950s. There is not a significant correlation ($r = .020$, $p > .05$), which is inconsistent with the hypothesis.
Although the length of men’s screen time was not a hypothesis, the results indicate that the amount of screen time for men is also decreasing over the years. The average length of screen
time for men was 60.63 seconds ($SD = 50.95$) with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 553.0 seconds for the film *Psycho* (1960). The length of screen time for men in the trailers is negatively moderately correlated ($r = -.395$) and significant ($p < .01$). The proportion of screen time devoted to men appears to increase over time (Figure 4.15); however, the relationship is not significant ($r = .055$, $p > .05$). Figure 4.16 illustrates men’s and women’s average screen times over the years, showing that men, on average, have more screen time than women.

Figure 4.15: Men Screen Proportion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Men Screen Time Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
H4: Men have more speaking roles than women in movie trailers over time.

Looking at speaking roles, the results indicate that, consistent with the hypothesis, men have more speaking roles than women over time on average. The average amount of women to speak in a trailer was 1.0 ($SD = 1.0$), with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 5 in two films, *Goodbye Charlie* (1965) and *Pitch Perfect 2* (2015). The average number of men with speaking roles in the sample was 1.97 ($SD = 1.43$), with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 9 for one film, *No Business Like Show Business* (1955). Figure 4.17 illustrates the average number of men and women with speaking roles over the years appear to decrease over time. The number of women who speak was weakly and negatively correlated with year ($r = -0.143$) and significant ($p < .05$). The number of men who speak in the trailers was also weakly and negatively correlated with year ($r = -0.188$) and significant ($p < .01$).
The proportion of men and women with speaking roles compared to total speaking time in the trailers was assessed to see if men proportionally had more speaking roles than women as well (Figure 4.18). When looking at speaking time proportionally, men consistently have more speaking roles than women, though neither women’s proportional speaking roles ($r = .039$, $p > .05$) or men’s proportional speaking roles ($r = -.039$, $p > .05$) are significant relationships over time. These results are consistent with previous research concluding that women tended to have fewer speaking roles than men in films as well (Smith et al., 2015).
Sexualization

**H5: The instances of women wearing revealing or provocative clothing in movie trailers increases over time.**

The average number of instances where women are wearing provocative or revealing clothing in movie trailers was 0.870 ($SD = 1.47$), with the minimum being 0 and a maximum of 9 instances in one film, *Charlie’s Angels* (2000). Figure 4.19 illustrates the average number of instances of provocative and revealing clothing over the years in the analysis, and the relationship is both weak, negative ($r = -.228$) and significant ($p < .01$). These results are inconsistent with the hypothesis.

Additionally, because trailers with fewer women in them would generally have fewer scenes with women wearing provocative or revealing attire, the proportion of provocative and revealing attire was assessed. Some of the instances in the proportion were above one since one
woman could have multiple provocative and revealing scenes in a single trailer. Observing the proportion of provocative and revealing attire (Figure 4.20), the data reveals an indiscernible pattern with an insignificant correlation ($r = -.102, p > .05$).

Figure 4.19: Attire
H6: The instances of sexually suggestive behavior, involving women, in movie trailers increases over time.

Looking at each type of sexually suggestive behavior separately, the average was .67 instances \((SD = 1.10)\) for mild sexually suggestive behavior with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 6 for What’s New Pussycat? (1965). The crosstabulation (Table 4.1) indicated that mild sexually suggestive behaviors decrease over the years. Earlier decades have trailers which comprise of 60% or more of at least one instance of mild sexually suggestive behavior, while the years 2010 and 2015 have just 7% and 13%, respectively. The relationship between the two is significant, \(\chi^2 (df = 13, N= 230) = 37.097, p < .01\). This was moderate, negative, and statistically significant \((\gamma = -.355, p < .01)\) indicating that for mild sexually suggestive behaviors, the amount decreased over the years which was inconsistent with the original hypothesis. Figure 4.21 further exemplifies these results.
### Table 4.1: Mild Sexual

**Mild Sexually Suggestive Behavior x Year Crosstabulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
<td>(11)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(82)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 4.21: Mild Sexual

**Trailers Containing Instances of Mild Sexual Behavior**

![Graph showing the percentage of trailers containing instances of mild sexual behavior from 1950 to 2015.](image-url)
For strong sexually suggestive behavior, the average number of instances was .091 (SD = .3310), with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 2 instances for the films *Presumed Innocent* (1990), *Black Swan* (2010), and *Fifty Shades of Grey* (2015). There were relatively few instances of strong sexually suggestive behavior in the analysis. The crosstabulation (Table 4.2) revealed the highest percentage of trailers that depicted strong sexual behavior was the year 2000 with nearly 16% and the second highest was in 2010 with roughly 13% of trailers depicting strong sexual behavior. Most of the years comprised between 0% and 7% of trailers depicting the specific type of sexually suggestive behavior (Figure 4.22). The relationship between the variables was not significant, however, $\chi^2 (df = 13, N = 230) = 6.868, p > .05$; $\gamma = .253, p > .05$. Figure 4.22 illustrates the relatively consistent number of trailers that depict strong sexually suggestive behavior over time.
Table 4.2: Strong Sexual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent (N)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>13.3% (2)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>5.6% (1)</td>
<td>5.0% (1)</td>
<td>5.3% (1)</td>
<td>11.1% (2)</td>
<td>15.8% (3)</td>
<td>12.5% (2)</td>
<td>13.3% (2)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>7.8% (18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.22: Strong Sexual

Trailers Containing Instances of Strong Sexual Behavior
The instances of sexually suggestive behavior, of either type, involving women in trailers was generally low. Therefore, in order to assess this hypothesis a new variable, any sexually suggestive behavior, was created from both the mild and strong sexually suggestive behavior variables. The average for any sexually suggestive behavior was .76 instances (SD = 1.22) with a minimum of 0.0 and a maximum of 6.0 for two films, *What’s New Pussycat?* (1965) and *The Sandiper* (1965). The crosstabulation for any sexually suggestive behavior (Table 4.3) illustrates that any sexually suggestive behavior appears to decrease over time, with only a slight increase in 2000. The relationship between the variables is significant, $\chi^2(df = 13, N = 230) = 36.51, p < .01$. There was a moderate, negative correlation between the variables and was statistically significant ($\gamma = -.330, p < .01$). Figure 4.23 exemplifies this decrease in the amount of trailers which depict any type of sexually suggestive behavior over time. The results are inconsistent with the hypothesis when observing any sexually suggestive behavior as it decreases over time, rather than increases. The results are also inconsistent with previous research as well which indicate that sexually suggestive behavior has risen over time (Neuendorf et al., 2009).
Table 4.3: Any Sexual

| Any Sexually Suggestive Behavior x Year Crosstabulation |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percent                        | 60.0% (9) | 66.7% (10) | 73.3% (11) | 46.7% (7) | 40.0% (6) | 26.7% (4) | 27.8% (5) | 30.0% (6) | 21.1% (4) | 38.9% (7) | 63.2% (12) | 18.8% (3) | 13.3% (2) | 13.3% (2) | 38.3% (88) |
| (N)                            | (9) | (10) | (11) | (7) | (6) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (4) | (7) | (12) | (3) | (2) | (2) | (88) |

Figure 4.23: Any Sexual

![Trailers Containing Any Sexually Suggestive Behavior](chart)
Gender Roles

H7a: Instances of women exhibiting stereotypical behaviors decrease over time.

In observing the instances of women exhibiting stereotypical behaviors in movie trailers, the average was low ($M = .087$, $SD = .351$) with a minimum of 0.0 and a maximum number of instances of 3.0 for Cheaper by the Dozen (1950). Figure 4.24 depicts the average amount of instances of stereotypical behavior exhibited by women over time, which overall looks as if it is decreasing. Despite the data looking like it declines, due to a very higher average in 1950, there is not a statistically significant correlation ($r = -.047$, $p > .05$) between time and behavior to indicate that there is a negative relationship. Therefore, there is insufficient evidence to depict whether there is a decrease in women exhibiting stereotypical behaviors over time.

Figure 4.24: Stereotypical Behavior
**H7b: Instances of women exhibiting counter-stereotypical behaviors increase over time.**

The instances of women exhibiting counter-stereotypical behaviors in the sample revealed that the average number of instances was .083 (SD = .29), with a minimum of 0.0 and a maximum of 2.0 for the film *What Women Want* (2000). Average instances of women illustrating counter-stereotypical behavior over time are illustrated in Figure 4.25, where no discernable pattern is observed nor is there a significant correlation ($r = .011, p > .05$) between the counter-stereotypical behaviors and time. There is insufficient evidence to determine if counter-stereotypical behaviors increase over time. This is inconsistent with prior research that indicates women exhibit more counter-stereotypical behaviors over time (Cowan & O’Brien; Shirkhande, 2003; Hersey, 2007; Smith, 2007; Pardos, 2008; Newby, 2009).

**Figure 4.25: Counter-Stereotypical Behavior**

![Average Instances of Counter-Stereotypical Behavior](image_url)
**H8a: Instances of women being portrayed with masculine traits increase over time.**

The instances of women exhibiting masculine traits in the sample revealed that the average number of instances was .652 ($SD = 1.44$), with a minimum of 0.0 and a maximum of 13.0 for the film *Charlie’s Angels* (2000). Figure 4.26 illustrates the average number of instances of women being portrayed with masculine traits over time. The figure reveals no discernable pattern and there is no significant correlation ($r = .003$, $p > .05$) between the instances of masculine traits and year. Therefore, there is an inadequate amount of evidence to depict if the amount of women portraying masculine traits increases over time, which is also inconsistent with prior research (Cowan & O’Brien; Shirkhande, 2003; Hersey, 2007; Smith, 2007; Pardos, 2008; Newby, 2009).

![Figure 4.26: Masculine Traits](image)

**H8b: Instances of women being portrayed with feminine traits decrease over time.**

The instances of women exhibiting feminine traits in the sample revealed that the average number of instances was .909 ($SD = 1.35$), with a minimum of 0.0 and a maximum of 7.0 for the
film *Erin Brockovich* (2000). The average number of instances of women being portrayed with feminine traits appears to decrease over time (Figure 4.27), consistent with the hypothesis. This relationship is negative and weak ($r = -.238$) as well as significant ($p < .01$).

![Average Instances of Feminine Traits](image)

*Figure 4.27: Feminine Traits*

**Violence**

**H9a: Instances of women as victims decrease over time.**

Observing each individual level of violence for female victims, the data were dichotomized in order to assess whether or not there were female victims of a particular violence level and if there was a relationship when comparing over time. For female victims of mild violence, the crosstabulation (Table 4.4) appears to decrease over time with the year containing the highest amount of trailers depicting a female victim of mild violence in 1960 at nearly 27% and the lowest being 0% in years 1985, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2015. The histogram (Figure 4.28)
further depicts the number of instances of female victims of mild violence over time which remains relatively low, the highest being four instances in 1960. The association between the female victims of mild violence and year is not significant, \( \chi^2 (df = 13, N = 230) = 20.900, p > .05; \gamma = -.467, p < .01. \)
### Table 4.4: Female Victims of Mild Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent (N)</td>
<td>13.3% (2)</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>26.7% (4)</td>
<td>13.3% (2)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>16.7% (3)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>11.1% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>6.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>9.1% (21)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 4.28: Female Victims of Mild Violence

![Female Victims of Mild Violence](image-url)
Observing female victims of moderate violence by year, the crosstabulation (Table 4.5) reveals what appears to be an increase in the amount of female victims over time, with the year 2000 having the highest percentage (roughly 26%) of trailers depict at least one female victim of moderate violence. The relationship is significant, \(\chi^2 (df = 13, N = 230) = 25.487, p < .05\), however the gamma (\(\gamma = .234, p > .05\)) indicates that these variables do not form a linear relationship over time. This may be due to the large number of trailers in the year 2000 compared to the other years which remain relatively stagnant. Figure 4.29 illustrates the relatively low amount of trailers that depict this particular type of violence with female victims over the years, with half of the years in the analysis containing 0 trailers that showcase moderate violence with female victims.
Table 4.5: Female Victims of Moderate Violence

Female Victims of Moderate Violence * Year Crosstabulation

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent (N)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>13.3% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>5.6% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>5.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>26.3% (5)</td>
<td>6.3% (1)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>5.2% (12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.29: Female Victims of Moderate Violence
For female victims of lethal violence by year, the crosstabulation (Table 4.6) indicates that the number of trailers containing this particular type of violence with female victims remains consistently low over the years, the highest being 1990 with roughly 11%. The Pearson Chi-Square reveals the relationship between lethal violence and year is not significant as well, \( \chi^2 \) (df = 13, \( N = 230 \)) = 9.653, \( p > .05 \); \( \gamma = .168, p > .05 \). Figure 4.30 portrays how less than half of the years in the analysis even have trailers with female victims of lethal violence, and those that do are a relatively small amount.
Table 4.6: Female Victims of Lethal Violence

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent (N)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>5.6% (1)</td>
<td>5.0% (1)</td>
<td>10.5% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>5.3% (1)</td>
<td>6.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>3.0% (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.30: Female Victims of Lethal Violence
As the number of instances for each of the violence variables were generally low in the sample, each type of violence (mild, moderate, and lethal) was combined in order to compute a new variable with women as victims of any type of violence. The crosstabulation observing the relationship between women victims in any type of violence appears to fluctuate over time, with no discernable direction either way (Table 4.7). The Pearson Chi-Square indicates that the relationship is not significant and the histogram (Figure 4.31) depicts that the frequency in which trailers depict women as victims of any type of violence remains steadily low over time, $\chi^2 (df = 13, N = 230) = 10.871, p > .05; \gamma = -.168, p > .05$. 
Table 4.7: Female Victims of Any Violence

Female Victims of Any Violence * Year Crosstabulation

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
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<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
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<td>(2)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.31: Female Victims of Any Violence
**H9b: Instances of men as victims increase over time.**

Observing individual levels of violence, the crosstabulation for male victims of mild violence (Table 4.8) indicated a slight decrease for the years 1965-1980, but then increases in the decade 1985-1995, where 25% or more of the trailers in those years portrayed a male victim of mild violence. The highest was in year 1960 with nearly half of the movie trailers depicting a male victim of mild violence. The histogram (Figure 4.32) depicts that the number of trailers portraying male victims of mild violence fluctuates over the years. The relationship between male victims of mild violence and years is not significant, $\chi^2 (df = 13, N = 230) = 17.115$, $p > .05$; $\gamma = -.264$, $p < .01$. 
Table 4.8: Male Victims of Mild Violence

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>40.0% (6)</td>
<td>40.0% (6)</td>
<td>46.7% (7)</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>13.3% (2)</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>11.1% (2)</td>
<td>25.0% (5)</td>
<td>26.3% (5)</td>
<td>27.8% (5)</td>
<td>21.1% (4)</td>
<td>18.8% (3)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>23.0% (53)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Figure 4.32: Male Victims of Mild Violence
The crosstabulation for moderate violence with male victims (Table 4.9) also indicated a fairly consistent amount over the years, where most of the years were 30% or higher in the amount of trailers that depicted a male victim of moderate violence. The lowest was in 1950 with only 13% while two years, 1965 and 2010, had the highest amount of trailers depicting a male victim of moderate violence at roughly 50%. The histogram (Figure 4.33) shows that the number of trailers depicting this type of violence with male victims has stayed relatively constant over the years, however, the Pearson Chi-Square revealed that the relationship was not significant, $\chi^2$ (df = 13, N = 230) = 9.381, p > .05; $\gamma$ = .147, p < .05.
Table 4.9: Male Victims of Moderate Violence

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.33: Male Victims of Moderate Violence
Looking at lethal violence with male victims over the years, the crosstabulation (Table 4.10) indicated an increase from the low levels in 1950-1960, but then remained relatively consistent in later years, with a slight decrease in 2005-2010. The year 1985 contained the highest amount of trailers with male victims of lethal violence at 40%, while both 1950 and 1960 contained no male victims of lethal violence. The histogram (Figure 4.34) depicts the relatively consistent number of trailers that contain a male victim of lethal violence. The Pearson Chi-Square indicates that the relationship between male victims of lethal violence over time was not significant, $\chi^2 (df = 13, N = 230) = 19.305, p > .05; \gamma = .166, p > .05$. 
Table 4.10: Male Victims of Lethal Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Victims of Lethal Violence * Year Crosstabulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
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</table>

Figure 4.34: Male Victims of Lethal Violence
The violence variables had a generally low number of instances for male victims; therefore, each type of violence was combined to compute a variable depicting men as victims of any type of violence. The crosstabulation (Table 4.11) reveals that the number of films that have male victims of any type of violence stays generally consistent over the years. Many years were approximately around 50% indicating that there were nearly just as many movies with male victims of any type of violence as there were without. The histogram (Figure 4.35) illustrates how many trailers depict male victims of any type of violence over the years portraying how it stays fairly steady, with a slight increase in the 1980s; however, the Pearson Chi-Square reveals the relationship is not significant, $\chi^2 (df = 13, N = 230) = 3.902, p > .05; \gamma = -.024, p > .05.$
Table 4.11: Male Victims of Any Violence

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.35: Male Victims of Any Violence
**H10a: Instances of women as perpetrators of violence increase over time.**

Observing mild violence with women perpetrators, the crosstabulation (Table 4.12) indicates that the number of trailers with a female perpetrator of mild violence over the years stays relatively low, with many years containing only 0-7% of the trailers in those years. The highest year was 1950 in which 20% of the trailers depicted a female perpetrator of mild violence. The histogram (Figure 4.36) further illustrates just how few trailers over time depict a female perpetrator of mild violence over time. The chi-square revealed that this relationship was not significant, $\chi^2 (df = 13, N = 230) = 11.143, p > .05; \gamma = -.121, p > .05$. 
Table 4.12: Female Perpetrators Mild Violence

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent (N)</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>5.6% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>5.3% (1)</td>
<td>11.1% (2)</td>
<td>10.5% (2)</td>
<td>12.5% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>6.5% (15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.36: Female Perpetrators Mild Violence
The crosstabulation observing female perpetrators of moderate violence (Table 4.13) illustrates an increase in the number of trailers which depict that in the years 1965-1975 and 2000-2015, while the rest of the years remain relatively low. Four years contain 0 trailers depicting female perpetrators of moderate violence while the highest was in 2000 where roughly 32% of the trailers in that year contained a female perpetrator of moderate violence. The histogram (Figure 4.37) exemplifies the relatively low number of trailers that showcase this as well. The Pearson Chi-Square reveals that the relationship is significant, $\chi^2 (df = 13, N = 230) = 23.661, p < .05$, while the gamma indicates a positive and weak relationship ($\gamma = .184, p > .05$). However, the gamma is not significant indicating that while there are differences in the crosstabulation that are significant, those differences do not form a linear relationship over time. This may be due to the higher amount of trailers depicting moderate violence with female perpetrators in certain years while the rest of the years remained relatively constant.
Table 4.13: Female Perpetrators Moderate Violence

Women Perpetrators of Moderate Violence * Year Crosstabulation

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent (N)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>13.3% (2)</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>5.6% (1)</td>
<td>5.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>31.6% (6)</td>
<td>18.8% (3)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>13.3% (2)</td>
<td>10.0% (23)</td>
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Figure 4.37: Female Perpetrators Moderate Violence
The amount of trailers depicting women perpetrators of lethal violence over the years remains relatively low when observing the crosstabulation (Table 4.14). The highest amount of trailers containing women perpetrators of lethal violence is in the year 2000 with nearly 16% and the second highest being in 1970 with roughly 13% of the trailers in that year depicting a woman perpetrator of lethal violence. The histogram (Figure 4.38) further demonstrates that many of the years do not portray a woman perpetrator of this type of violence at all, with half of the years at 0. The chi-square reveals that this relationship is not significant, $\chi^2 (df = 13, N = 230) = 15.105$, $p > .05$; $\gamma = .191$, $p > .05$. 
Table 4.14: Female Perpetrators of Lethal Violence

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent (N)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>13.3% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>11.1% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>5.6% (1)</td>
<td>15.8% (3)</td>
<td>6.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>4.8% (11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.38: Female Perpetrators of Lethal Violence
Since there were relatively few instances of women perpetrators in each of the violence variables in the analysis, the types of violence (mild, moderate, and lethal) were combined to test for women perpetrators of any type of violence over time. The crosstabulation (Table 4.15) revealed that female perpetrators of any type of violence fluctuates over the years, the highest being in 2000 where roughly 40% of the trailers in that year depicted a woman perpetuating any type of violence. The histogram (Figure 4.39) shows that the number of trailers depicting women as perpetrators of violence is relatively low, with many years having 0-5% of trailers depicting a woman perpetrator of violence. The relationship between the variables is not significant, $\chi^2$ (df = 13, $N = 230$) = 19.553, $p > .05$; $\gamma = .082$, $p > .05$.

Due to the lack of significance for any of the variables in the analysis of women perpetrators, there is no evidence to support the hypothesis that women perpetrators have increased over time. This is inconsistent from prior research that has suggested women are increasingly becoming perpetrators of violence over time (Cowan & O’Brien, 1990; Neuendorf et al., 2009; and Newby, 2009).
Table 4.15: Female Perpetrators of Any Violence

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
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<td>(7)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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Figure 4.39: Female Perpetrators of Any Violence
H10b: Instances of men as perpetrators decrease over time.

Observing individual levels of violence, the crosstabulation for male perpetrators of mild violence (Table 4.16) reveals that the amount of male perpetrators appears to be decreasing over time. There was a peak in 1955 and 1960 in which 60% and 53% of the trailers, respectively, in those years contained at least one male perpetrator of mild violence and a low in 2010 with only roughly 7%. The histogram (Figure 4.40) further exemplifies the trend of trailers depicting male perpetrators of mild violence decreasing over the years. The relationship is significant, $\chi^2$ (df = 13, $N = 230) = 26.337, p < .05$, and the gamma reveals it is moderate and negative ($\gamma = -.360, p < .01$).
Table 4.16: Male Perpetrators of Mild Violence

Male Perpetrators of Mild Violence * Year Crosstabulation

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
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<td>(6)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(60)</td>
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Additionally, the crosstabulation for moderate violence (Table 4.17) indicates that the amount of trailers depicting at least one instance of male perpetrators of moderate violence has remained relatively steady over time. The lowest was in 1950 in which nearly 7% of the trailers in that year depicted male perpetrators of moderate violence, while the highest was in 2010 at 40%. The histogram (Figure 4.41) further exemplifies that the amount of trailers depicting male perpetrators for this type of violence has remained fairly constant over the years. The chi-square reveals that the relationship is not significant, $\chi^2 (df = 13, N = 230) = 8.689, p > .05$; $\gamma = .203, p < .05$. 
### Table 4.17: Male Perpetrators of Moderate Violence

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent (N)</td>
<td>6.7%  (1)</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>33.3% (5)</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>26.7% (4)</td>
<td>33.3% (6)</td>
<td>25.0% (5)</td>
<td>31.6% (6)</td>
<td>27.8% (5)</td>
<td>42.1% (8)</td>
<td>31.3% (5)</td>
<td>40.0% (6)</td>
<td>33.3% (5)</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>230</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 4.41: Male Perpetrators of Moderate Violence
Observing lethal violence in which there were male perpetrators, the crosstabulation (Table 4.18) reveals that the amount of trailers containing this type of violence with male perpetrators starts off low, with years 1950-1960 comprising of this in roughly 7% of trailers in each year, with a peak in 1985 and 1990 where, respectively, 35% and nearly 37% of the trailers in those years had at least one male perpetrator of lethal violence. The histogram (Figure 4.42) exemplifies this increase in trailers depicting male perpetrators of lethal violence as well, with later years decreasing. The chi-square reveals that this relationship is not significant, $\chi^2 (df = 13, N = 230) = 17.101, p > .05; \gamma = .110, p > .216$. 
Table 4.18: Male Perpetrators of Lethal Violence

Male Perpetrators of Lethal Violence * Year Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>33.3% (5)</td>
<td>22.2% (4)</td>
<td>35.0% (7)</td>
<td>36.8% (7)</td>
<td>33.3% (6)</td>
<td>15.8% (3)</td>
<td>12.5% (2)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>26.7% (4)</td>
<td>20.9% (48)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.42: Male Perpetrators of Lethal Violence
The number of instances of male perpetrators in all of the violence categories was generally low; therefore, each type of violence was combined to observe the number of trailers depicting male perpetrators in any type of violence over time. The crosstabulation (Table 4.19) exemplified the relatively constant number of trailers in each year containing male perpetrators of any type of violence. Many of the years had 40-50% of the trailers depicting male perpetrators of any type of violence. The highest years – 1955, 1980, and 1995 had nearly 67% of the trailers in those years containing male perpetrators of any violence. The histogram (Figure 4.43) further illustrates how relatively consistent the number of trailers that contain male perpetrators of violence are over the years. The chi-square revealed that the relationship was not significant, $\chi^2 (df = 13, N = 230) = 10.355, p > .05; \gamma = -.013, p > .05$.

Because the relationship for male perpetrators of mild violence was significant, and moderately negative, the number of instances of male perpetrators of mild violence does affirm the hypothesis that it decreases over time. However, the amount of any violence, moderate violence, and lethal violence were not significant which means that there is not sufficient evidence to support that the amount of male perpetrators decreases over time with those categories.
### Table 4.19: Male Perpetrators of Any Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent (N)</th>
<th>Total Count (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>40.0% (6)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>66.7% (10)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>60.0% (9)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>40.0% (6)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>33.3% (5)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>46.7% (7)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>66.7% (12)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>55.0% (11)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>47.4% (9)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>66.7% (12)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>47.4% (9)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>43.8% (7)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>40.0% (6)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>53.3% (8)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50.9% (117)</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 4.43: Male Perpetrators of Any Violence

[Bar chart showing the percentage of male perpetrators of any violence over the years from 1950 to 2015.]
Overall, most of the hypotheses were not supported by the data either due to results indicating the opposite or there being insufficient evidence to support them. Table 4.20 summarizes the conclusions of each hypothesis.

Table 4.20: Hypothesis Summary Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 1</td>
<td>Women’s amount of time on screen increases over time</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2</td>
<td>The overall number of women in trailers increases over time</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 3</td>
<td>The overall number of men in trailers decreases over time</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 4</td>
<td>Men have more speaking roles than women in movie trailers over time</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 5</td>
<td>Instances of women wearing revealing or provocative clothing increases over time</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 6</td>
<td>Instances of sexually suggestive behavior, involving women, in trailers increases over time</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 7a</td>
<td>Instances of women exhibiting stereotypical behaviors decrease over time</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 7b</td>
<td>Instances of women exhibiting counter-stereotypical behaviors increase over time</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 8a</td>
<td>Instances of women being portrayed with masculine traits increase over time</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 8b</td>
<td>Instances of women being portrayed with feminine traits decrease over time</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION

The representation, sexualization, gender roles, and violence both by and against women were assessed in order to research how the portrayal of women in movie trailers changed over time. Prior research has indicated that women are hypersexualized, underrepresented, stereotypically portrayed, and often the victims of violence in media (Mulvey, 1975; Cowan & O’Brien, 1990; Tien-Tsung & Hsiao-Fang, 2002; Shirkhande, 2003; Smith, 2007; Pardos, 2008; Neuendorf et al., 2009; Newby, 2009; Welsh, 2010; Gilpatric, 2010; Rozas, 2014; Smith et al., 2015; and Smith et al., 2016). There has been a plethora of research on women in various media outlets such as films, newspaper ads, and television commercials, but surprisingly little attention on a form of media that people see just as frequently – movie trailers. What makes this so imperative to study is the potential influence of mass media realms, such as movie trailers, have on an individual’s social construction of how people and genders are supposed to behave or act.

**Descriptives**

The present research observed 230 movie trailers from 1950-2015 utilizing content analysis in order to analyze the portrayal of women over time. Women were most frequently

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis 9a</th>
<th>Instances of women as victims decrease over time</th>
<th>Not Supported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 9b</td>
<td>Instances of men as victims increase over time</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 10a</td>
<td>Instances of women as perpetrators of violence increase over time</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 10b</td>
<td>Instances of men as perpetrators decrease over time</td>
<td>Mild Violence: Supported Moderate, Lethal, &amp; Any Violence: Not Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
depicted in the young adult category at 73% of the total amount of women in the trailers. Surprisingly, the middle-aged category was the second most frequent with approximately 18% of the total women in the analysis, the teen category third with roughly 8% and finally only 3 women were in the older adult category at .01% of the trailers in the analysis. This is consistent with prior research indicating the most frequent age groups women are shown on screen are young adult and middle-aged, with older adults the least frequent age depicted (Smith et al., 2015).

These findings suggest that the majority of trailers present women between the ages of 20-39, presenting a disproportionate illusion to what the population of women is in the real world. Movie trailers are advertisements that are meant to attract people to see a film. By having a disproportionate amount of women aged 20-39 in the trailers, the film industry is constructing a social reality in which women are no longer attractive past a certain age, and are no longer relevant in films at that point either.

**Representation**

Trailers were found to be getting shorter over time and as a consequence, the results for women’s representation were impacted by the decline in trailer length over the years. The following discussion centers around the proportional analyses used to control for varying trailer lengths and the consequences from it with less screen time, less time for speaking, and fewer people in total.

The proportion of screen time devoted to women revealed that women’s time on screen appeared to be more consistent over the years than was observed with the original analysis, which did not support the hypothesis. The decrease in trailer length over time appears to have
accounted for the decrease in women’s screen time for the original analysis. Although there is insufficient evidence to show whether women’s screen time changes over the years in any direction, these results indicate that screen time for women does not appear to be decreasing as originally hypothesized. Similar results for the proportion of the number women in trailers over time were revealed, indicating that the number of women has remained relatively consistent over the years, inconsistent with the hypothesis.

The results for the number of men in movie trailers revealed insufficient support for the hypothesis that it would decrease over time. Analysis for the proportion of the number of men in trailers over time showed that there was no significant correlation between year and proportion of men. Similar results arose when observing the length of men’s screen time over the years as well. Proportionally, the relationship between men’s screen time and year was insignificant. Similar to the number of women and women’s screen time hypotheses, this could be in part due to the decrease in the run-time for trailers in later years.

Men consistently had more speaking roles than women in trailers over time, which supported the hypothesis. Proportionally, men’s and women’s speaking roles over time were not significant, indicating that there has not been much change in speaking roles over the years. This result is congruent with other research which has found that, in films, women have fewer speaking roles compared to men in any genre or type of film, and women generally only comprised of roughly 1/3 of the speaking roles overall (Smith et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2016). The cumulative average of all trailers examined in this study show a ratio of 1.97 speaking roles for men to 1.00 speaking roles for women.

One potential cause for the relatively little change shown in the results is the composition of the film industry itself. The movie industry has remained male-dominated. Women’s
representation could be limited as they are still generally delegated to minor roles while men are still the majority of lead roles in films (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004; Smith, 2007; Smith et al., 2015). The standard in the theses trailers appears to be the exclusion or limitation of women’s time, the number of women, and women’s speaking roles in film, consistent with other research on women’s portrayal in films (Smith et al., 2015). Even in trailers for films about a woman specifically, such as Mary Poppins (1965), the woman had less screen time than the men in the trailer. Another instance in which a film, All About Eve (1950), was about women, the voiceover for the film added that “All About Eve is all about women…and their men!” This reveals that even in movies and trailers that have women as the lead and protagonists, men still dominate the discussion. In the span of years in the analysis, not much has changed in regard to women’s or men’s representation other than a perpetual bias toward there being more men than women in trailers. With trailers maintaining a severe underrepresentation of women over time in comparison to men, it could lead to a socially constructed idea that women are inferior or insignificant compared to men and impact individual’s views toward gender.

**Sexualization**

Women’s sexualization was also impacted by the decrease in trailer length over time in that less trailer time would mean less opportunity for sexually revealing attire, for instance. Therefore, proportional analyses will be the focus of the discussion as they were used to control for that effect. The proportional results for women wearing revealing or provocative clothing did not support the hypothesis that it would increase over time. These results are inconsistent with previous research that has indicated the percentage of films that show women in sexualized attire increased slightly over time (Smith et al., 2015). These results may have been impacted by what
the researcher interpreted as revealing and provocative clothing in the earlier decades of the analysis, where the count was higher in the 1950s and 1960s than in other years of analysis and may not be as reflective of the overall results.

Due to the relatively low number of sexually suggestive instances for each type (mild and strong), the discussion on sexually suggestive instances is regarding the any type of sexually suggestive instances analysis. Results for any type of sexually suggestive instance indicated a significant, moderately negative relationship between any sexually suggestive instances and time. These results are inconsistent with the hypothesis and previous research which indicate that sexually suggestive behavior has increased over time and that women generally engage in more sexual risk behaviors (Neuendorf et al., 2009; Rozas, 2014).

The low number of trailers utilizing sexually suggestive scenes with women may be in part because trailers are typically for general audiences to see and have to be tailored as such, therefore sexual scenes may not be included for that purpose. Moreover, the fact that the amount of sexually suggestive behavior is decreasing may also be partially due to the popularity of PG-13 films. Movie companies must tailor and edit trailers to get the most people to see a movie, and the most general audience is for PG-13 films because a diverse age group of people can attend. However, with PG-13 films there are stricter requirements on the amount and type of sexual behavior that is allowed. With over 25% of the total trailers being rated PG-13, it may have had an impact on sexually suggestive behavior.

Although not tested in the present research, other studies reveal that women are consistently treated as sexual objects and sexualized more than men in various media outlets over time (Tien-tsung & Hasiao-Fang, 2002; Smith, 2007; Smith et al., 2015, Smith et al., 2016). Even though the any sexually suggestive instances variable decreased over time, these results
still depict the hypersexualization of women. Women were consistently described in sexual manners such as “luscious” or as “the sexy secretary” (Li’l Abner, 1960), that “the girls are willing” and fall for James Bond’s charm (The Man with the Golden Gun, 1975), and that women with a reputation are “working hard to keep it” (Caddyshack, 1980). The film trailer for Charlie’s Angels (2000) in particular illustrated multiple scenes where the women were dressed provocatively and hint at sexually suggestive innuendos such as “I signed that release form so just feel free to stick things in my slot” while answering the door for a postal worker in her underwear. The same character also said in a different scene that “I’m like a virgin, you know? I mean…it’s my first time here!” Further, there was no change evident in the instances of provocative or revealing clothing over time, indicating that women are still being presented similarly in trailers in 65 years in the analysis, with no significant improvement.

These findings reveal that the main illustration of women in trailers is that they have continued to be sexualized over time. Although the results noted improvement in the moderate decrease of sexually suggestive instances for women’s portrayal, there is still more that can be done because other research indicates that women continue to be sexualized more than men in media. Prior research has shown that these sexualizations in media can also have dire results, such as death, if women move outside of the boundaries of traditional sexuality (Cowan and O’Brien, 1990; Newby, 2009; Welsh, 2010). Therefore, these over-sexualized illustrations of women can lead to distorted constructions of how women are supposed to look, and limit how they are to act and behave as well.
Gender Roles

Results for stereotypical behavior revealed no statistically significant relationship between instances of women exhibiting stereotypical behavior over time. These results may be due to several factors. First, there were relatively few instances of stereotypical behavior in general, which may have been a factor as women were not often shown performing behaviors such as cooking or cleaning in the trailers. Perhaps those behaviors would be somewhere in the entire film, but because trailers need to entice audiences to see a film in the short time of a trailer, then scenes depicting those sorts of behaviors would be excluded. Additionally, the average amount of instances in 1950 was much higher than most other years. With so many female stereotypes linked to post-WWII and 1950s society, with a nuclear family, and a stay-at-home mom who cooks and cleans, 1950 being the peak year for stereotypes is unsurprising.

The results for instances of women exhibiting counter-stereotypical behaviors also did not support the hypothesis. Prior research revealed that, over time, women have exhibited more counter-stereotypical behaviors in horror films, television advertisements, and even romantic comedies (Cowan & O’Brien; Shirkhande, 2003; Hersey, 2007; Smith, 2007; Pardos, 2008; Newby, 2009). The results for the present study indicated that there was no significant correlation between counter-stereotypical behaviors and years in the analysis. Similar to stereotypical behaviors, this could be due to the relatively low number of counter behaviors being presented in the trailers at all. Many trailers did not portray women performing counter-stereotypical behaviors, but the ones that did show women conducting those behaviors had it as a general point that the woman was ‘different’ and ‘sassy.’ For instance, there is a large spike in the average instances of counter-stereotypical behavior in the year 2000 which is from 4 films – What Women Want, Erin Brockovich, Miss Congeniality, and Gone in 60 Seconds. In each film,
the woman is depicted as a strict career woman or a woman who knows her way around cars. Many of the women are illustrated as workaholics who have to try and prove themselves to the men in the films and trailers.

The results for masculine traits revealed that women did not exhibit more instances of masculine traits over time. There was not sufficient evidence to illustrate whether women being portrayed with masculine traits increases or decreases over time. There once again was a large spike in the instances for the year 2000. Several films in this particular year were women-centered with the protagonists exhibiting many traits that would be considered masculine. For example, the film *Miss Congeniality* is about a woman detective who “is tough as nails and completely unpolished” but when it comes to an assignment in the Miss United States pageant, the voiceover states that “the only man for the job is a woman.” It is further stated that she “does not act the part,” signifying she does not act ladylike. Another trailer which contributed to this large peak was *Charlie’s Angels* in which three women are consistently portrayed performing athletic feats and getting into fights with other people.

The relationship between feminine traits and time was weak and negative, indicating that the amount of feminine traits women exemplify in trailers is decreasing over time, which supports the hypothesis. These results are congruent with previous research indicating that women being portrayed with feminine traits in various types of films and media (such as horror movies, romantic comedies, Disney Princess films, and television ads) decrease over time (Cowan & O’ Brien, 1990; Pardos, 1998; Shrikhande, 2003; Hersey, 2007; Newby, 2009; England et al., 2011).

Although the belief was that feminine traits would decrease because of an increase in masculine traits, the results show otherwise. The average amount of feminine traits may have
been influenced by the larger number of feminine traits in the 1950s than later years for similar reasons as the stereotypical behavior hypothesis. Also, observing the number of feminine traits reveals that trailers depicted women with feminine traits, on average, more than masculine traits. This indicates though women are being portrayed with feminine traits less often than in previous years, it still has more to go.

The results from researching the gender role portrayal of women in trailers indicates that women continue to be portrayed similarly over the years in regard to gender roles. The span of trailers over the decades did not reveal significant changes in how women were portrayed stereotypically, counter-stereotypically, and with masculine traits. Even though women are being depicted with fewer feminine traits over time, the film industry still presents dire punishments for women if they deviate too far from the dependence of their husband which results in divorce and death (Pardos, 1998).

**Violence**

None of the results for women as victims of violence, in any form, supported the hypothesis that the number of women victims would decrease over time. This is inconsistent with previous research that indicated women victims of violence decrease over the years (Tien-tsung & Hsiao-Fang, 2002). These results may be due to the relatively low number of female victims of violence that there were in the trailers to begin with. The highest percentage of trailers depicting women victims in total was for mild violence (9.1%) for actions such as pushing or a slap. Many years did not even have women as victims of different forms of violence, indicating that this may not be as prominent in trailers as originally thought.
The relative lack of women as victims could also be due to little interest in general audiences paying to see films with women being victimized. For the movie industry, selling a film which accurately illustrates women victims of violence, of any type, would be fairly difficult as people typically do not like to be reminded of those types of realities when paying to see a film. This may partially account for why women are relatively absent from violent situations in the trailers in the analysis.

Mild, moderate, lethal, and any type of violence with male victims revealed insignificant relationships over time, which did not support the hypothesis. The highest percentage of trailers in total depicting men as victims was for moderate violence (nearly 32%). Men were victimized in all forms of violence at higher percentages in trailers in total than women. These results indicate that, although the hypothesis was not supported, men tended to be victims of violence in trailers more than women, which is consistent with previous research that reveals women are less likely to be victimized compared to men (Cowan & O’Brien, 2009). It was also found that men on average had more screen time and speaking roles than women, which may have played a factor in women not being victimized as often. This type of result may be in part due to society’s social construction in which women are delicate creatures who should not be hit while men are tough and solve issues through violence. Further research would be needed in order to test that, however.

Previous research on gender and violence have revealed that men tend to perpetuate more violence and are more aggressive than women in general (Tien-tsung & Hsaio-Fang, 2002; Sharrer et al., 2006; Gilpatric, 2010). Other research has shown that the difference between men and women may be decreasing with more women committing violent acts than in previous years (Cowan & O’Brien, 1990; Neuendorf et al., 2009; Newby, 2009). However, the results from the
analysis indicated the hypothesis of women perpetrators increasing over time, for mild, moderate, lethal, and any type of violence, was not supported. Similar to the results for women as victims of violence, the frequency at which women were perpetrators of violence in the trailers in the analysis remained relatively low as well. Considering that women’s portrayal as both victims and perpetrators of violence were not as commonly seen in the trailers in the analysis, it may be that women are generally left out of scenes in which violent situations occur.

The results for male perpetrators of mild violence indicated support for the hypothesis in that the number of male perpetrators of mild violence decreased over time. The hypothesis was not supported, however, for moderate, lethal, or any type of violence in the analysis. These results may be due to mild violence being the most appropriate type for a trailer that is intended for general audiences. A shove or a slap would be more acceptable in a trailer than perhaps someone being murdered with a gun, especially when trailers are intended for the most amount of people to be able to see them.

Further, the percentage of trailers depicting male perpetrators, in all cases of violence, were much higher than the percentage of trailers depicting female perpetrators in all cases. This again leads to the notion of the social construction of what women and men should act like or how they should behave. It could pose destructive messages to men that violence is how they are “supposed to” handle situations while women are left out of these violent scenes because it is commonly thought that men solve things with violence while women do not.

Social Construction

Observing trailers was important to study due to the sheer pervasiveness that a mass media market, such as movie trailers, has in our everyday lives through television commercials,
online content, DVD or Blu-ray previews, and even previews at movie theaters. Many of the movie trailers analyzed in the study had hundreds of thousands, sometimes even millions of views on YouTube, illustrating just how popular trailers are as a media source. With movie trailers being so popular to watch, discussing how women are portrayed in them becomes important since previous research has shown women to be depicted in films stereotypically, sexualized disproportionately, underrepresented, and victimized. The present research indicated that there was little change in women’s portrayal in the seven decade span of the study, showing that this continues to be an issue and these portrayals could have an impact on social constructions in how women, or men, are to behave, act and be treated.

Many of the hypotheses in the analysis showed insufficient evidence of any significant changes in women’s portrayal in movie trailers from 1950-2015. This conclusion is dismal in that, in the span of 65 years of movie trailers, there has not been much change for women in their representation, sexualization, gender role, and violence. Due to prior research and the strides women have made over the years, it was originally hypothesized that much of women’s portrayal would improve (i.e., converge with men’s portrayal) throughout the years, but overall that does not seem to be the case as there was not enough evidence in the analysis to determine change in either direction for many of the hypotheses. The relative lack of change over time with these results perpetuates the notion that men and women are clearly and distinctly different from one another.

This lack of change over time may be in part due to the composition of the film industry and the relatively little change within it. The film industry is well-known for being a male dominated arena and this has been relatively constant over the years as well. For instance, when observing the Academy Award Best Picture nominated films from 1977 to 2006, women are
outnumbered – 5 men to every 1 woman – for the much revered roles in the film industry such as
director, writer, and producer (Smith, 2007). With the lack of women behind the scenes and in
important roles in the film industry, the portrayal of women seems to have remained relatively
unchanged over the years and perhaps contributing to the static or fixed ways women are also
depicted in the trailers for those films.

There could be a perpetual cycle of women’s portrayal in mass media realms in which
people see women being depicted a particular way throughout their lives, impacting their social
construction on how a particular gender may act or behave. In essence, the lack of change in
movie trailers over time illustrates the institutionalization of women’s portrayals in society. The
depictions of women are habitualized through continuous repetition in trailers since individuals
go on to make films, ads, and trailers, further illustrate similar portrayals of women. Since the
movie industry has remained dominated by men, these definitions of reality are maintained by
them as they have the power to define and eliminate portrayals that conflict with their dominant
definition (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Lorber, 1994; Weitz and Kwan, 2014). And, over time,
these portrayals of women being underrepresented, sexualized, stereotyped, and less violent
become institutionalized in societal norms of how women are supposed to act, feel, behave, and
think (Lorber, 1994).

Additionally, the presentations of women that movie trailers depict can be both reflected
and strengthened by those individuals who watch them, which is problematic because gender is
not definite and fixed but rather has more fluid bounds than what is depicted by trailers
(Colmenero, 1999). Future research should focus on or add to the body of research observing the
composition of the film industry over time and what impacts that may have on people’s social
cstructions.
Further, it could be the case that trailers are inherently different from movies and advertisements. Much of the previous research focused on films or television and newspaper advertisements because not much research had been conducted on movie trailers in general. The prior research involving women’s portrayal in representation, sexualization, gender role, and violence generally indicated that, over time, women’s portrayal was converging with men’s portrayals in those areas, which was not illustrated in the results from the present study.

Movie trailers may be different in that they are meant for general audiences to see and need to be edited as such to be shown to the widest audience on television, on DVDs, online, etc. They also differ in that trailers typically show exciting scenes to get people to want to see the film, which may inherently exclude ‘boring’ scenes that include women. For instance, the analysis revealed there were not many instances in general of women exhibiting stereotypical or counter-stereotypical behaviors in trailers, such as cooking and cleaning or repairing objects. These types of tasks may not be enticing for audiences to want to see the movie, but may be part of the film nevertheless. It would be interesting to see how the results from the present analysis compare to an analysis of the same movies in their entirety and whether perhaps, women are portrayed differently when looking at the films as a whole.

On the other hand, the previous research tended to focus on smaller areas of interest such as a specific genre, film rating, or series of movies rather than painting an overall picture for movies and advertisements in general. For instance, one study focused on women’s representation in James Bond films over time, another study researched women’s portrayal in Disney Princess films, some looked at romantic comedies, and others observed horror films and horror film franchises (Cowan & O’Brien, 1990; Hersey, 2007; Johnson & Holmes, 2009; Neuendorf et al., 2009; England et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2015). Although observing women’s
portrayal may be improving in those specific areas, perhaps that is not a case for the whole of movies or movie trailers. As the present study observed trailers overall and not a specific genre, rating, or franchise, this perhaps may account for the differences in the results compared to previous research on how women are portrayed in media over time.

In any case, women’s portrayal has not changed much over time in trailers, regardless of whether the movie industry has remained a male dominated field, whether trailers are different from movies, or whether researching trailers overall may be different than observing a franchise or smaller market. Women are still underrepresented in comparison to men in screen time, number of people on screen, and in speaking roles, and there has been generally no change in women’s portrayal in representation, sexualization, gender roles, and violence in the span of 65 years in the analysis. With little to no change in women’s portrayal over the years in movie trailers, the social construction of how women are to be treated, how they are to act, and how they are to behave may also be unchanging and be continuously perpetuated until actual change does occur to improve women’s portrayal in movie trailers and films themselves.

**Limitations and Future Research**

Although this research focused on a realm of media that is generally understudied, there were limitations to this study that could be improved on for future research. The generalizability of the research is limiting since the study focused on the top box office grossing films domestically from particular years from 1950-2015. Future research should expand and include top grossing films worldwide.

In addition, the study focused on two years in each decade between 1950-2015 for the analysis. A larger sample including more years, perhaps starting when trailers began, and
expanding the amount of years in each decade would be beneficial for future research. Even though the analysis consisted of 230 trailers in total, due to exclusions many years had only 15 trailers in it, which was limiting. One of the drawbacks of the study was the relatively low number of instances recorded in some of the variables, and an expanded study with a larger sample may provide a more well-rounded picture. This could also apply to increasing the amount of movies viewed in each year as well, rather than just the top grossing 25 films.

One of the limitations of research was in choosing the trailers themselves. The top 25 movies of the years in the analysis were chosen as they were presumed to be the films the widest audience would have seen. As previously stated, movies are generally written by men, made by men, and made for men as the general audience, therefore the top films may be reflective of that. Films that may not be in the top box office charts as often, such as romantic comedies or romance films, for example, may be tailored to specific target audiences like women. Future research should investigate this possibility.

Further, it would also be valuable to assess all of the films that the movie trailers used in this study. This would be beneficial to observe how the trailers relate to the film and the portrayal of women comparing both to see if women are being represented similarly or differently in the actual movies. This could illuminate whether the marketing of films is the reason for the results found in the present study or the films themselves. Observation of whether or not the results for trailers change in a different manner from the films, or if they also follow similar patterns in women’s representation would depict this difference. Also observing trailers in the years shortly after feminist movements or big moments for women would be something for future research to focus on. For instance, Tien-tsung and Hsiao-Fang (2002) observed gender role depiction in newspaper advertisements shortly after a year when a significant number of
women ran for office and the year after the book *The Feminine Mystique* was released. A similar study would be beneficial in adding to future research for women’s portrayal in movie trailers.

Although not assessed by the present study, observing changes in the MPAA ratings over time may be a benefit to future research. The rating criteria for films does change over time and generally is known to become laxer on aspects such as swearing, nudity, sexual encounters, and more. This may subsequently have an impact on what is allowed to be shown in general audience trailers over time. This was not a central component of the present study, but should be noted for future analysis.

The definitions and categories utilized in the analysis may have limited the research as well. For instance, the definitions in the gender role category could be expanded to include more traits and behaviors in future research. Traits also proved difficult to assess in the trailers as people are often portrayed in a short period of time and without much context for what they are doing since trailers are typically out of sequence and the scenes are short. These drawbacks with the gender role variables would need to be taken into consideration for future studies. Another variable that may have been limiting was observing women’s ages. The categories were assessed and made similar to previous research; however, some films had mothers and daughters in the same category.

Finally, observing background aspects such as who writes, produces, and directs films and film trailers would be of great benefit to add to the body of research. Future research could compare film trailers in which the films are made mainly by women to those made mainly by men and observe how women are portrayed in either. Researching who is behind making the films themselves may have interesting results in observing women’s representation, their sexuality, gender roles, and violence.
CONCLUSION

Women’s portrayal in various forms of the media – such as movies, video games, and television advertisement – have been the focus of much research. Surprisingly, there has been little research on how women are portrayed in movie trailers considering their prevalence and easy accessibility within society. Trailers have to be precisely edited and tailored to entice audiences to see a film, and in that case they are both an advertisement as well as a form of entertainment (Rozas, 2014).

The present research sought to observe how women’s portrayal in this form of media, movie trailers, changed over time, regarding representation, sexualization, gender roles, and violence. Overall, much of the results from the 230 movie trailers analyzed revealed that there has been little change in women’s portrayal from 1950-2015. The amount of screen time and the number of women have remained relatively constant in seven decades of research, and women continue to be underrepresented in speaking roles compared to men over time. There was little change in the instances of women wearing provocative and revealing attire. There was, however, a decrease in the instances of sexually suggestive behavior over time.

The only change for women’s portrayal in gender roles was in feminine traits decreasing over time, in all other instances (stereotypical behavior, counter-stereotypical behavior, and masculine traits), women’s portrayal remained relatively unchanged. Further, women were consistently less likely than men to be victims of violence and less likely to be perpetrators as well. Most of these results are inconsistent with other research which has shown that the portrayal of women has generally improved to be more equal to men in recent years, especially in regard to gender roles and violence (Cowan & O’Brien; Shirkhande, 2003; Hersey, 2007; Smith, 2007; Pardos, 2008; Neuendorf et al., 2009; and Newby, 2009).
These differences from the present study and previous research may be due to the differences between movies and movie trailers. Trailers are a marketing tactic which may not have progressed similarly to films as a whole because more people see the advertisements for movies than the entire films. The differences could also be due to the reality of women’s portrayal, such as women’s victimization, being more difficult to sell to general audiences. Considering that comedy films were the most frequent genre in the analysis, it could explain why an aspect like women’s victimization remained relatively absent or was inaccurately depicted in the trailers, as it would not be something entertaining to pay to see by audiences.

The present study can inform other research observing understudied forms of media and its impacts on society. This can be observing anything from women’s portrayal in trailers in which films were made primarily by women compared to films made by men, or even other forms of movie media altogether such as film synopses or movie posters. In observing other understudied forms of media and the trends of gender portrayals over time, perhaps this research and future studies could inform discussion on how the movie industry can depict more accurate portrayals of both women and men.

In the 65 year span this study analyzed, it is surprising that the portrayal of women has stayed relatively constant, with little to no change. In that length of time women have made numerous strides in equality, but this has not been reflected in movie trailers as men continue to dominate the profession and women remain underrepresented, sexualized, and stereotyped. These results should not be taken lightly considering the potential that a mass market such as movie trailers could have in institutionalizing these portrayals in film. The social constructions the film industry dictates and defines for women’s portrayals can severely impact the audience’s social constructions of how women should think, act, behave, and be treated. The very fact that
the portrayal of women has stayed relatively constant in movie trailers over a 65 year span highlights the need for more attention to changing the social construction of how women are viewed in media to better fit reality.
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APPENDICES

A. MOVIE TRAILERS

(Steinberg, 1980)

1950:
1. Samson and Delilah***
2. Battleground
3. King Solomon’s Mines
4. Cheaper by the Dozen
5. Annie Get Your Gun***
6. Cinderella
7. Father of the Bride
8. Sands of Iwo Jima
9. Broken Arrow***
10. Twelve O’Clock High
11. All About Eve
12. The Flame and the Arrow***
13. Francis
14. On the Town
15. Adam’s Rib
16. Three Little Words
17. Black Rose
18. The Great Lover
19. The Duchess of Idaho
20. Fancy Pants

1951:
1. David and Bathsheba***
2. Showboat***
3. An American in Paris
4. The Great Caruso***
5. A Streetcar Named Desire

1955:
1. Cinerama Holiday
2. Mister Roberts
3. Battle Cry***
4. 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea***
5. Not as a Stranger

6. The Country Girl
7. The Lady and the Tramp***
8. Strategic Air Command
9. To Hell and Back***
10. The Sea Chase
11. A Star is Born
12. Blackboard Jungle
13. East of Eden***
14. Pete Kelly’s Blues***
15. The Seven-Year Itch
16. The Bridges at Toko-Ri
17. A Man Called Peter***
18. No Business Like Show Business
19. To Catch a Thief
20. Vera Cruz***

1956:
1. Guys and Dolls
2. The King and I***
3. Trapeze
4. High Society
5. I’ll Cry Tomorrow***
6. Picnic

1960:
1. Ben-Hur***
2. Psycho
3. Operation Petticoat***
4. Suddenly, Last Summer
5. On the Beach
6. Solomon and Sheba***
7. The Apartment
8. From the Terrace
9. Please Don’t Eat the Daisies
10. Oceans 11
11. Journey to the Center of the Earth***
12. The Bellboy
13. Elmer Gantry***
14. The Rat Race
15. Portrait in Black*
16. Li’l Abner
17. Visit to a Small Planet
18. Home from the Hill
19. Who Was that Lady?
20. Toby Tyler, or Ten Weeks with a Circus***
21. The Big Fisherman
22. Can-Can

1961:
1. The Guns of Navarone***
2. The Absent Minded Professor

1965:
1. Mary Poppins
2. The Sound of Music
3. Goldfinger
4. My Fair Lady
5. What’s New Pussycat?
6. Shenandoah
7. The Sandpiper
8. Father Goose
9. Von Ryan’s Express
10. The Yellow Rolls-Royce
11. How to Murder Your Wife*
12. Cat Ballou
13. The Sons of Katie Elder
14. Help
15. Sex and the Single Girl
16. In Harm’s Way
17. The Americanization of Emily
18. Monkey’s Uncle
19. The Train
20. Goodbye Charlie

21. Operation Crossbow

1966:
1. Thunderball
2. Doctor Zhivago***
3. Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?
4. That Darn Cat!
5. The Russians are Coming, the Russians are Coming
6. Lt. Robin Crusoe, USN
7. The Silencers*
8. Torn Curtain
9. Our Man Flint

1970:
1. Airport
2. M*A*S*H
3. Patton
4. Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice
5. Woodstock
6. Hello, Dolly!
7. Cactus Flower
8. Catch-22
9. On Her Majesty’s Secret Service
10. The Reivers
11. The Adventurers
12. Beneath the Planet of the Apes
13. The Out-of-Towners
14. Z
15. They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?
16. Anne of the 1,000 Days
17. A Boy Named Charlie Brown*
18. 101 Dalmatians (reissue)
19. Chisum
20. A Man Called Horse

1971:
1. Love Story
2. Little Big Man***
3. Summer of ‘42***
4. Ryan’s Daughter***  
5. The Owl and the Pussycat  
6. The Aristocats***  
7. Carnal Knowledge***  
8. Willard  
9. The Andromeda Strain  
10. Big Jake***  
11. The Stewardesses  
12. Shaft

**1975:**
1. Jaws  
2. The Towering Inferno  
3. Benji  
4. Young Frankenstein***  
5. The Godfather Part II***  
6. Shampoo  
7. Funny Lady***  
8. Murder on the Orient Express***  
9. Return of the Pink Panther  
10. Tommy***  
11. The Apple Dumpling Gang***  
12. Freebie and the Bean  
13. Lenny***  
14. Island at the Top of the World***  
15. The Man with the Golden Gun  
16. The Great Waldo Pepper***  
17. The Three Days of the Condor  
18. Mandingo***  
19. Escape to Witch Mountain  
20. The Other Side of the Mountain***

**1976:**
1. One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest***  
2. All the President’s Men  
3. The Omen  
4. The Bad News Bears  
5. Silent Movie  
6. Midway***  
7. Dog Day Afternoon  
8. Murder by Death

**Box Office Mojo**

**1980:**
1. Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back***  
2. Nine to Five  
3. Stir Crazy  
4. Airplane!  
5. Any Which Way You Can  
6. Private Benjamin  
7. Coal Miner’s Daughter***  
8. Smokey and the Bandit II  
9. The Blue Lagoon***  
10. The Blues Brothers  
11. Ordinary People  
12. Popeye  
13. Urban Cowboy  
14. The Shining  
15. Screens Like Old Times  
16. Cheech & Chong’s Next Movie  
17. Caddyshack  
18. Friday the 13th (1980)  
19. Brubaker  
20. Little Darlings*  
21. Dressed to Kill  
22. The Jazz Singer*  
23. Flash Gordon  
24. Lady and the Tramp (Re-Issue)(1980)***  
25. The Elephant Man***

**1985:**
1. Back to the Future***  
2. Rambo: First Blood Part II  
3. Rocky IV  
4. The Color Purple***  
5. Out of Africa***  
6. Cocoon
7. The Jewel of the Nile
8. Witness
9. The Goonies
10. Spies Like Us
11. Police Academy 2: Their First Assignment
12. Fletch
13. A View to a Kill
14. European Vacation
15. Mask
16. The Breakfast Club
17. White Nights
18. Pale Rider***
19. Pee-Wee’s Big Adventure
20. Brewster’s Millions
22. Jagged Edge
23. St. Elmo’s Fire
24. Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome***
25. Commando

1990:
1. Home Alone
2. Ghost
3. Dances with Wolves***
4. Pretty Woman
5. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
6. The Hunt for Red October
7. Total Recall***
8. Die Hard 2: Die Harder
9. Dick Tracy***
10. Kindergarten Cop
11. Back to the Future Part III***
12. Presumed Innocent
13. Days of Thunder
14. Another 48 HRS.
15. Three Men and a Little Lady
16. Bird on a Wire
17. The Godfather Part III***
18. Flatliners
19. Misery
20. Edward Scissorhands
21. Problem Child
22. Arachnophobia
23. Awakenings***
24. Look Who’s Talking Too
25. Hard to Kill

1995:
1. Toy Story***
2. Batman Forever
3. Apollo 13***
4. Pocahontas***
5. Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls
6. Golden Eye
7. Jumanji
8. Casper
9. Seven
10. Die Hard: With A Vengeance
11. Crimson Tide
12. Waterworld***
13. Dangerous Minds
14. Mr. Holland’s Opus***
15. While You Were Sleeping
16. Congo
17. Father of the Bride Part II
18. Braveheart***
19. Get Shorty
20. Grumpier Old Men
21. The Bridges of Madison County***
22. Mortal Kombat
23. Nine Months
24. Outbreak
25. Heat

2000:
1. How the Grinch Stole Christmas
2. Cast Away
3. Mission: Impossible II
4. Gladiator***
5. What Women Want
6. The Perfect Storm
7. Meet the Parents
8. X-Men
9. Scary Movie
10. What Lies Beneath
11. Dinosaur***
12. Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon***
13. Erin Brockovich
14. Charlie’s Angels
15. Traffic
16. The Nutty Professor II: The Klumps
17. Big Momma’s House
18. Remember the Titans***
19. The Patriot***
20. Chicken Run***
21. Miss Congeniality
22. Gone in 60 Seconds
23. Unbreakable
24. Me, Myself and Irene
25. Space Cowboys

2005:

1. Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith***
2. The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe***
3. Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire***
4. War of the Worlds
5. King Kong***
6. Wedding Crashers
7. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
8. Batman Begins
9. Madagascar***
10. Mr. & Mrs. Smith
11. Hitch
12. The Longest Yard
14. Chicken Little***
15. Robots ***
16. Walk the Line***
17. The Pacifier
18. Fun with Dick and Jane
19. The 40-Year-Old Virgin
20. Flightplan
21. Saw II
22. Brokeback Mountain***
23. Monster-in-Law
24. Are We There Yet?
25. Cheaper by the Dozen 2

2010:

1. Toy Story 3***
3. Iron Man 2
4. The Twilight Saga: Eclipse
5. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1***
6. Inception
7. Despicable Me
8. Shrek Forever After***
9. How to Train Your Dragon***
10. Tangled***
11. The Karate Kid
12. Tron Legacy
13. True Grit***
14. Clash of the Titans***
15. Grown Ups
16. Little Fockers
17. Megamind
18. The King’s Speech***
19. The Last Airbender***
20. Shutter Island***
21. The Other Guys
22. Salt
23. Jackass 3-D
24. Valentine’s Day
25. Black Swan

2015:
1. *Star Wars: The Force Awakens***
2. *Jurassic World*
3. *Avengers: Age of Ultron*
4. *Inside Out*
5. *Furious 7*
6. *Minions***
7. *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2***
8. *The Martian***
9. *Cinderella (2015)***
10. *Spectre*
12. *Pitch Perfect 2*
13. *The Revenant***
14. *Ant-Man*
15. *Home (2015)*
16. *Hotel Transylvania 2*

17. *Fifty Shades of Grey*
19. *Straight Outta Compton***
20. *San Andreas*
21. *Mad Max: Fury Road***
22. *Daddy’s Home*
23. *The Divergent Series: Insurgent***
24. *The Peanuts Movie*
25. *Kingsman: The Secret Service*

*** Indicates movie trailers that were excluded from analysis

*Indicates movie trailers that could not be located.
## B. GENDER ROLE TRAITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ambitious:</strong> Desire to achieve a goal.</td>
<td><em>Affectionate:</em> tender, warm regard toward another person, object or animal (England et al., 2011). Saying “I love you,” or physically displaying attachment through an embrace or kiss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adventurous:</strong> Exploring and searching something new and/or unknown.</td>
<td><em>Apologetic:</em> Expression and/or excuse for a fault, insult, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assertive:</strong> “Insistence upon a right or claim, the action of declaring or positively stating…a strong, direct assertion of a position or idea” (England et al., 2011, p. 559).</td>
<td><em>Appearance Concerned:</em> “adjusting physical appearance for the purpose of making it look better or to draw attention to it” (England et al., 2011, p. 559).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Athletic:</strong> Actions which requires physical abilities in order to accomplish, such as running or swimming.</td>
<td>* Asking for Help/Assistance:* Asking for guidance or help with something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boasting/Bragging:</strong> Excessive pride and exaggeration of oneself or of an object.</td>
<td><em>Compassionate:</em> Feelings of concern or sympathy for others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brazen:</strong> Brash, bold, shameless</td>
<td><em>Considerate:</em> Respectful of others, their situations, feelings, and commitments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commanding:</strong> Intimidating or imposing, authoritative, a leader.</td>
<td><em>Emotional:</em> Illustrating excessive emotions/feelings, positive or negative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competitive:</strong> Desire to compete against others to succeed at a goal.</td>
<td><em>Fearful:</em> Frightened, anxious, scared, skittish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confident:</strong> Self-assured in own abilities.</td>
<td><em>Helpful:</em> Offering assistance to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confident:</strong> Brave, daring, no fear.</td>
<td><em>Humble:</em> modest, respectful, and unassuming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egotistical:</strong> Conceited, vain, selfish</td>
<td><em>Nurturing:</em> Motherly, caretaking, comforting another, gentle, kind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent:</strong> autonomy; not controlled by others or not following the authority of another; not dependent or reliant on others.</td>
<td><em>Passive:</em> Being influenced or inactive, not participating or influenced to action through other means such as another person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strong (physical):</strong> exerting power/toughness physically onto or towards another or an object (England et al., 2011).</td>
<td><em>Sensitive:</em> Perceptive awareness/knowledgeability toward issues and emotions (England et al., 2011).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemotional:</strong> “Repression of emotion, indifference to pleasure or pain…unemotional in response to something that may seem to warrant an emotional response, such as death” (England et al., 2011, p. 559).</td>
<td><em>Submissive:</em> Obedient, compliant, surrender to authority or of another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talkative</strong>: Verbally communicating in an excessive manner; chatty, gossipy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weak (physically)</strong>: Frail, lacking body strength.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. PROTOCOL CLEARANCE LETTER

Date: February 5, 2016

To: Whitney DeCamp, Principal Investigator
Brooke O’Neill, Student Investigator for thesis

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: Approval not needed for HSIRB Project Number 16-02-11

This letter will serve as confirmation that your project titled “A Content Analysis on Women’s Portrayal in Movie Trailers over the Years” has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB). Based on that review, the HSIRB has determined that approval is not required for you to conduct this project because you are not collecting personal identifiable (private) information about individual and your scope of work does not meet the Federal definition of human subject.

45 CFR 46.102 (f) Human Subject

(f) Human subject means a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains

(1) Data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or

(2) Identifiable private information.

Intervention includes both physical procedures by which data are gathered (for example, venipuncture) and manipulations of the subject or the subject’s environment that are performed for research purposes. Interaction includes communication or interpersonal contact between investigator and subject. Private information includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, and information which has been provided for specific purposes by an individual and which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (for example, a medical record). Private information must be individually identifiable (i.e., the identity of the subject is or may readily be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information) in order for obtaining the information to constitute research involving human subjects.

Thank you for your concerns about protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects.

A copy of your protocol and a copy of this letter will be maintained in the HSIRB files.

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