

Student 6: High Not Achieved

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Women in the music industry – Is it harder than it is for men?

Within this assignment, I'd like to discover if there is any bias or subtle sexism towards women in the music industry vs. men in the music industry.

My personal opinion towards this is that women have a harder time "making it big" in the music industry world-wide than men do. But why is this? It is because women are seen more so to be eye candy, rather than seen for their musical talent itself? If I was to answer this without further study, I would say yes – women have it harder. I think when it comes to women, could you even class "female music" as a genre itself?

As a part of this assignment, I aim to include various surveys, graphs, former research and personal opinions of a variety of people to find the answer to my question.

Is there any proof that men have it easier in the music industry than women?

Looking at the Top-20 songs from 2000-2007 from various websites and the artist which made that song big, to distinguish if men or woman were more popular, than one another over a short or long period of time. I am aware of my sources not all being 'professional', but that was my intent – I like that these are opinions of everybody, not just 1 or 2 different polls.

2000 – 5 female artists in the Top-20

2001 – 8 female artists

2002 – 9 female artists

2003 – 10 female artists

2004 – 9 female artists

2005 – 6 female artists

2006 - 8 female artists

2007 – 6 female artists

From these statistics I was pretty shocked to find that the number of females was not too low, which did impress me, however there were still more male based groups/male artists than females and it wasn't 50/50. I think though, if I were to go back to the 70's, 80's, 90's I would find the music rather male dominated.

Music Survey

I surveyed a selection of 8 people of different ages, nationalities and a mix of male/female.

The survey consisted of these questions:

- 1) 30 seconds to name as many female musicians/bands
- 2) 30 seconds to name as many male musicians/bands
- 3) Selection of genre and preference of gender
- 4) Selection of instruments and preference of gender
- 5) Selection of female and male based musicians /10

6) Selection of female and male based bands /10

7) Top 5 favourite musicians and band

Overall results showed that people prefer to listen to music by male artists, over female artists especially for more heavy, bluesy or reggae music. Only one person prefers to listen to female rap music; all 8 prefer to listen to reggae from a male artist. 4 people prefer to listen to jazz by male artists. 6 did prefer female country artists over male.

Out of the 10 different genre surveyed, 7 preferred overall male artists and 3 preferred female artists.

In another survey/interview I also asked everybody their favourite bands or singer. Out of 40 favourites, 30 were male bands/singers – 5 were female singers and 5 were mixed bands of male and female. Even though there hasn't been a huge difference up until now with number statistics in my graphs and surveys, this shows that there is a massive kind of 'favouritism' in gender specifics of favourite bands. I personally am not surprised at this, as I think that females do have it harder in the music industry than males.

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One example is Britney Spears vs Michael Jackson ... Britney Spears went through a hard time in her personal life, losing child custody, shaving her hair off and caught lip-syncing at the Grammy awards. The media reports were all negative to Britney and very personal about her appearance. Her music sales suffered because of the negativity. Michael Jackson, on the other hand, also had personal problems, appearing in court on charges of sexual abuse towards young boys. He also bleached his skin white and had so much surgery on his nose that it would sometimes fall off. He was also judged by the media. But when he went on his final world tour, "This Is It", his shows sold out. When he died, his album sales shot to the top and millions of people mourned his death.

It is sad to think that female artists have in harder in the music industry than men, simply because well ... they're women?

Sometimes looked at as eye candy rather than for their musical talent, it's hard to get noticed and be more than just another singer without being scantily dressed or having a whacky hairstyle. On the other hand, I can also understand why Lady Gaga and Bjork do so well and it's great to see that they're not afraid to be themselves in the public's eye.

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Overall, yes women do have it harder in the music industry than men. It's harder to become known purely as a singer rather than by your looks first. Once famous however, there's not a huge difference in commercial success. It's good to see that in the Top-20 women average out to about a 7 or 8. I was surprised by that, to see women help dominate Top-20 hits over the 2000's.

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