Exploring Hegemony and Gender Disparity: A Textual Analysis of Mughal-E-Azam

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Abstract

This dissertation is a textual analysis for the movie of *Mughal-E Azam* and therefore, the research will also contain two scenes that are analyzing said movie. The method of research will be completed by using Gerald Pascoe's 7 Male Role Inventory (7MRI) to analyze two chosen scenes from the movie *Mughal-E Azam*. The general sense of gender disparity was discussed in an intricate manner. Starting off with Hollywood cinema, Hollywood movies, Bollywood cinema, Bollywood movies and then specifically narrowing down to the movie *Mughal-E Azam*. When focusing on the cinema industry, especially focusing on Bollywood, one can notice after careful observation that Bollywood represents gender disparity and hegemony in a repetitive way. This research is focusing on the research method which was a textual analysis discussing Bollywood and the progression of the entertainment business and how individuals and audiences are changing their mindset when it comes to viewing the gender disparity and hegemony that occurs, and their response to the viewing of the two themes. The result from this analysis made from the two scenes from *Mughal-E Azam* using Pascoe's 7MRNI is gathering information such as the fact that there is a sense of gender disparity and hegemony in movies occurring to this day.

Acknowledgment

Subdivision of the article

1.1 Research Questions

The study sought to find answers to the following research questions.

RQ1: What was the extent of gender disparity in Mughal-E Azam? There is a sense of inequality in the movie based on gender and the status that is demonstrated throughout the movie. This movie portrayed the romanticizing between a woman who is a commoner, and a man who was a prince, and the outcome of the movie which was considered a tragic loss because of the unknown.

RQ2: What was the direction of hegemony in Mughal-E Azam? Based on the hierarchy system, there is a sense of pride and a status and a sense of dominance over people especially being the leader of a country. Based on this direction of hegemony that occurred in the movie, one can say that to this day, it still occurs, and love stories are not always having a 'happily ever after' ending.

RQ3: What is the direction of the communicative accommodative strategy used by the characters in the movie *Mughal-E-Azam?* Based on the theory, it is certain individuals who are seeking their communication styles to match with the person they are conversing with, which develops especially in the movie industry through a time.

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1.1.2 Review of Literature

After interpreting the bibliographies, the discovered themes that have been discussed in the research are as follows: The existing body of research on the impact of gender disparity in India and more specifically Bollywood is extensive. This research will also address the body of literature on the impact of disparity, gender disparity and culture, economy, and religion. Not only does this impact the life of the citizens in India, but discussions of what the celebrities and Bollywood have done to change the old tradition mindset will be discussed as well. "The proceeding sections in this chapter aims to provide an overview of the theoretical framework of the Communication Accommodation Theory as well as discussing the diverse ways and frameworks in which people change or modify their linguistic style to be the same as or differ from their conversational partners" (Ramtally, 2019).

1.1.3 Gender Disparity and Hegemony in Films (Hollywood)

This part of the section will be discussing gender disparity films specifically occurring in Hollywood. To be narrower and more precise and the subject and or a year. The researcher will be choosing two movies that have occurred from 2010 to now, providing the illusion of current events to the audience regarding gender disparity and hegemony.

1.1.4 Gender Disparity in Hollywood

When it comes to gender disparity and hegemony in Hollywood, women are making a slow but steady progress toward equality and the film is being released. According to Broom (2020), "40% of the 100 highest grossing films featured a female protagonist – the largest percentage ever. Women accounted for 37% of major characters, up one percentage point of the previous year.

Figure 1. Percentages of Films Featuring Females, Males and
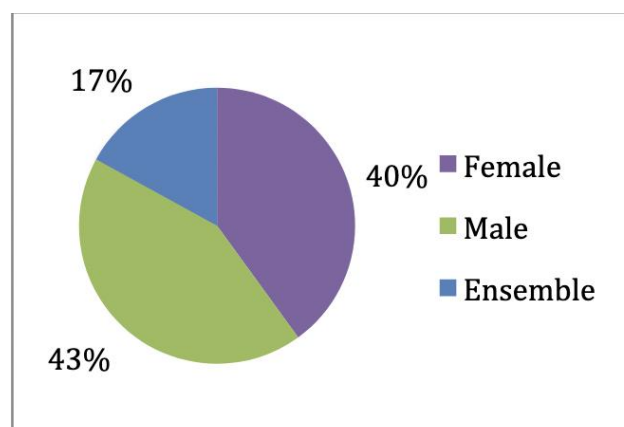
Ensembles as Protagonists (Lauzen, 2019).

Broom (2020) also indicated that while men continue to dominate action movies, women's roles are concentrated and horror films and drama, with only 60% of action character is portrayed by women."

"In 2019, females accounted for 37% of major characters. This represents an increase of 1 percentage point from 36% in 2018. Males comprised 63% of major characters. Females made up 34% of all speaking characters, a decrease of 1 percentage point from 35% in 2018. Males accounted for 66% of speaking characters. Overall, audiences were almost twice as likely to see male characters as female characters in the top grossing films of 2019" (Lauzen, 2019).

Pedace (2019) wrote an article that was reviewing and exploring the gender pay gap that occurs in Hollywood films. According to Pedace (2019), "Audiences were furious to hear that Michelle Williams was paid eight times less than Mark Wahlberg for her starring role in *All the Money in the World* and 1500 times less for re-shoots. Mark Wahlberg was paid $1.5 million for re-shoots, while she received less than $1000."

Gender disparity continued, there is a system. "Actress, writer, and producer Naomi McDougall Jones takes Hollywood to task in The Wrong Kind of Women: Inside Our Revolution to Dismantle the Gods of Hollywood.

Drawing on her personal experiences, hundreds of hours of interviews with industry professionals, and cold, hard research and data, McDougall Jones exposes the machinations behind Tinseltown's systemic exclusion of women from roles on and behind the camera. She also makes a business case for financing and producing films by female filmmakers. All that glitters on the red carpet sure as hell ain't gold for women working their damnedest to make an impact in the medium" ("11 Facts About Gender Inequality in Hollywood to Know for the Oscars", 2020).

The next set of the thesis will be discussing certain facts that are focused on gender inequality or gender disparity in Hollywood that occurs. "In 2017, of the one hundred top-grossing domestic films, only 24 percent had female protagonists, which is a 5 percent decline from 2016, when 29 percent of films had the same. This number rebounded in 2018 to 31 percent female protagonists, though this may have been a temporary up-trend in response to public pressure related to #MeToo, a phenomenon whose endurance remains heavily in question in terms of representation of women on-screen" ("11 Facts About Gender Inequality in Hollywood to Know for the Oscars", 2020). The 'Me Too' movement which was a local protest scheduled internationally which was a social movement against sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

11 Facts About Gender Inequality in Hollywood to Know for the Oscars (2020) stated, "The Geena Davis Institute revealed in another study that in 2015 films, male characters received twice the amount of screen time as female characters. This is consistent with the proportional amount of time female characters get to speak. According to an analysis by the University of Southern California's Viterbi School of Engineering, of a representative sample of 1,000 screenplays of films released in 2017, 4,900 male characters had 37,000 lines of dialogue, while 2,000 female characters had only 15,100 lines of dialogue. In 82 percent of films, at least two of the three characters with the most dialogue are male."

There is a sex discrimination that is occurring by discrepancy based on of the quality of the actor and the characteristics of the film. However, the gender pay gap for Hollywood actors is being discussed according to the researcher, in a timely manner. Although it is proceeding late, it is a 'better late than never kind of situation." Pedace (2019) continued stating that, "A recent national comparison of average salaries indicate that women in the US are in approximately 80% as much as met. But in the film industry, the gender gap is seemingly larger. In 2017, a comparison of the highest paid male and female actors revealed an average salary of $57.4 million for men and $21.8 million for women. That means that top female actors earn 38% as much as the top male actors"

Figure 2. An analysis of actor salaries for more than 100 movies released between 1984 and 2018 shows that male actors tend to receive more money.

Pedace & Scripps' College (2019)

As you can notice by the previously stated statistics and facts, certain progress although being made, discrimination plays a big role in Hollywood.

1.1.5 Hegemony System in Hollywood

"Hegemony can be examined in terms of how power is contested and maintained in "negotiations between socioeconomic, ideological, and political forces," and one site of these negotiations is the entertainment industry" (Gledhill, 1994, p. 119). According to Clark (2015), The social theory of the hegemonic male gaze claims to the idea that there is a particular type of individual that our culture caters to and strives to be. When looking at the lack of gender and racial-based diversity in the U.S. film industry, I believe that this is a valid claim to make.

The hegemonic male is a white, cisgender, intelligent, handsome, and powerful man who has achieved great economic, political, and/or social status. He is the ideal and standard by which many in our culture aspire to

become — for good or for ill." When it comes to women, people of color, or members of the LGBTQ community to get a small piece of this competition considering their race, ethnicity, gender, and or sexual identification. This is indicating that while it does not match with the white, cis gender, and intelligent male therefore making it is therefore making it virtually impossible to have certain individuals live up to the social norms and expectations that are set before them.

"Imagine that you are a young woman sitting down to watch a movie on a Friday evening. If you were to pick at random from the 100 top grossing films from 2014, there is a 21.8% chance that you would choose one where your demographic possesses a role in which her speech contributes to the primary plotline. If you are a woman of color, this probability drops to just 3% and all the way down to zero if you are over the age of 45 or transgender. However, compared to just 8% of men, the chance that you will see your demographic represented sexually is 27.9% and doesn't fluctuate in the slightest if you are between the ages of 13-20 or 21-39 years old." *(The statistics can be found between pages three and five of Inequality in 700 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race, & LGBT Status from 2007 to 2014.) (Clark, 2015).*

The aim of this topic is to characterize what we are calling Hollywood aesthetic hegemony, through the block busters, to later realize how it affects its spectators in subjective scope. Next, we will identify different cinematographic movements, of different nationalities.

Cultural hegemony is not easily recognized. Culture is typically disseminated with relatively less resistance and opposition than other forms of hegemony. Compared to its importance, study on American hegemony in the cultural sector is rare. When we consider that interest regarding culture in international politics has existed for quite some time, the relative lack of empirical studies seems odd. The purpose of this article is to analyze empirically how American hegemony operates in the cultural sphere. Specifically, this article examines how American cultural hegemony is maintained via the cultural medium of film, and in what way American values are disseminated through films.

"The message from the film industry is clear: If you are not a cisgender white man, then you are not the standard in entertainment. Hypermasculinity drives majority culture and, in turn, is reinforced through Hollywood films catering to dominant culture—thus creating a cycle of hegemonic inequality" (Clark, 2015). When conversing about the representation of women in film, it is often in relation to how a particular gender is portrayed or affected: How are we influencing our girls? What are we teaching our boys? However, beyond the typical questions, an important thing to consider is how our masculine-dominated society is being reinforced overall.

Bollywood cinema is one of the oldest cinemas in the world, with a large, captivated audience. Based on the Hindi language explored in Indian cinema, Bollywood is the defined term of an industry based in Mumbai. Bowes (2013) states, "The term "Bollywood," though often inaccurately conflated with Indian cinema, refers just to the Hindi-language industry in the city of Mumbai. There are several different regional film industries throughout the country, each in a different language; the most prominent ones are Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, and Kannada languages."

The origin of the word 'Bollywood' derives from Hollywood, but B was chosen because of Bombay, a city on the West Coast of India. Grant (2018) states, "Indian cinema dates all the way back to 1913 and the silent film Raja Harishchandra, the first-ever Indian feature film. Most films made in the early era were related to mythological or historical events. As the years went on, the box office increased, as did the audience, which caused a skyrocket of the numbers of films being produced. Continuing, the success of the movies that were being released also developed in movie theaters being billed which resulted in a noticeable shift and audience attendance."

"As many historians remember today, the golden ages of Indian Cinema took place between the 1940s and the 1960s. During that time, countless movies were released, which explored new storytelling techniques, social themes, and the epic productions of reincarnation, and more. This also popularized many Indian actors and actresses that gave the look of the era. The eye liner, the saris, the full clothes, bashfulness, and color" (History of Film, 2021).

"It was around 1947 that the industry went through significant changes. One could argue that it was during this time that the modern Indian film was born. The historical and mythological stories of the past were now being replaced by social Dash reformers films, which turned an often-critical eye on such ancient social practices as the dairy system, polygamy, and prostitution" (Grant, 2018).

Then added to the style of Bollywood came music and dancing. Wanting to offer a sense of realism and an understanding of the common man, the films in the era of the 1960's usually contain colorful escapism. Furthermore, the box office and the template started adding a genre of action, comedy, and melodrama, with multiple songs and dances that is still used for most contemporary Bollywood films.

Songs have most definitely had a change of style when it comes to the portrayal of heroes and heroines. "They say real music is a true combination of the resonance between lyrics and sound. Kabhi Kabhi is conceivably one of the greatest examples of such. With all due respect to the classic, for its place in time has already been etched neatly amidst Bollywood´s greatest melodies, needless of flashback memoirs, Kabhi Kabhi exemplifies how purposeful and touching lyrics can be brought to life in one important manner. That is to serve a film- its narrative- its subtle meanings- well. Indeed, Yash Chopra has identified how to do this, and he has used all his composers to do so. Khaiyyaam is the composer this time who brings to life several moods that take us through the many moods of Kabhi Kabhi which in its own irony is described by Yash Chopra as a love story that only happens ´sometimes´. Softly voyaging through the moods makes the strong point that Kabhi Kabhi is a soundtrack one can listen to not only sometimes but anytime" (PlanetBollywood)

'Kabhi Kabhi mere Dil Mein' (Sometimes in my heart...), the hero (Amithab Bachan) is laying in a garden with his beloved (Rekha) and she is laying on his arm, being the bashful woman she is, while listening to his words of endearment, and while he is confessing his feelings in the most innocent way. This song is considered a classic among those who have been blessed to view the golden era. The researcher themselves count themselves lucky because her parents had played these songs over and over, giving her a sense of this magical, fantasy type love.

Songs nowadays have the heroine being bold and stepping up to the plate. Making the guy gulp in intimidation and nervousness. For example, *'Do You Love Me'*, (released in 2020 for the film Bhaagi) the "item woman" in the song is being praised for her sexy avatar.

Table 1.4 displays the erotic look the heroine is displaying proving the difference in generational values that occur in Bollywood, India (Entertainment Unlimited, 2020).

The style of dancing in earlier Bollywood films was based on Indian classical dance or folk dances from various parts of India. "These dances included the classical art forms of Kathak and Bharata Natyam" (Rhythm-India).

Bollywood dancing styles changed in the 1970's. The Cabaret became more mainstream and were implemented in movies. Then the disco was added, which was not only popular in India, but worldwide. Once the 1980's hit, that is when Bollywood introduced the style of Western dancing skills in the era. Thenceforth, started the release of music videos with a certain number of musical tracks. Whereas now, the style includes Hip-Hop and music videos are more popular.

The scholars themselves have heard of Punjabi/Indian songs that contain English here and there. For example, the song "*Lagdi Lahore Di Aa*", sung by Guru Randhawa, and another song written by him titled "*Suit*". The first verse of that song lyric is, "Now whatever you want bae, you can make the whole room stare. But you know that my favorite is when you're rocking that Desi swag". This not only encourages Indian speaking people to become interested, but also, people from different ethnicities to become interested. Granted, they cannot understand the lyrics, but the music should be appealing enough to gain their attention.

1.1.6 Gender Disparity in Economy Bollywood

Sharma (2016) states, "Discrimination against women and girls is a pervasive and long-running phenomenon that characterizes Indian society at every level. India's progress towards gender disparity, measured by its position on rankings such as the Gender Development Index has been disappointing, despite fairly rapid rates of economic growth." Even with the pay gap, 'According to Monster Salary Index (MSI), the median gross hourly salary for men in India in 2018 stood at Rs 242.49, while for women it stood at around Rs 196.3' (Sharma, 2016).

Needing a Bollywood hero on our side, the researcher's personal favorite Aamir Khan has stated, "We don't see women as heroes. We start planting these thoughts in our heads since childhood. There must be a paradigm shift in that. I am someone who strongly believes in disparity whether you are a man or a woman. But ultimately in the economics of cinema anyone who pulls people in will be paid higher. There is no question about it". (Sharma, 2016).

Moreover, 'Asked whether he would be okay if his female co-actors got a bigger pay cheque than him, Ab said, "Anyone who can fill seats gets a bigger share in the fee. So, the day she (Zaira Wasim who has acted with him in both films) will be able to fill more seats than me I won't mind her getting a bigger paycheck than mine." That is not going to be determined by her gender, it is the market itself that will determine that. As a producer, I will want her if she is benefiting my film, gender doesn't matter. I will give her value, from a purely economic point of view," he added (PTI, 2017).

In Bollywood, much like any industry, the rate of change in people's outlook to cinema can only be gauged by the amount a film grosses at the box office. If a film with a female protagonist could fetch a multi-million hit, there would be no need for convincing anymore. Future looks promising for actresses that no longer fit the mold or conform to social conventions. Rajshree, Trimala and many others have played roles that will forever be spoken about for the mere fact that they broke all redundant aspects of femininity (Sundar, 2020).

The Indian cinematic industry has been among the nation's most popular source of entertainment, spanning decades of performances since its inception in the 1930s. Despite the masses flocking to the theatres and blockbusters making it big, most of the films released have something in common men are portrayed with characters that meet the society's definition of masculinity while female roles are reduced to misogynistic ideals. As a result, the lack of disparity both on and off-screen has raised questions on gender stereotyping, the quality of media being viewed by the public, and the misinterpretation of a balanced society (Deshmukh, 2020).

This section of the thesis explains how the change of cinematic industry over the past decades all come down to a common denominator: men and women are shown as men and women on the silver screen. The portrayal of their identities is at times stereotypical sexist, and yet, it's considered a form of entertainment! Which is just proving that the power to fight for gender equality has a long way to go, but certain improvements are made little by little, year-by-year, decade by decade, actress by actress, and demonstration of feminism.
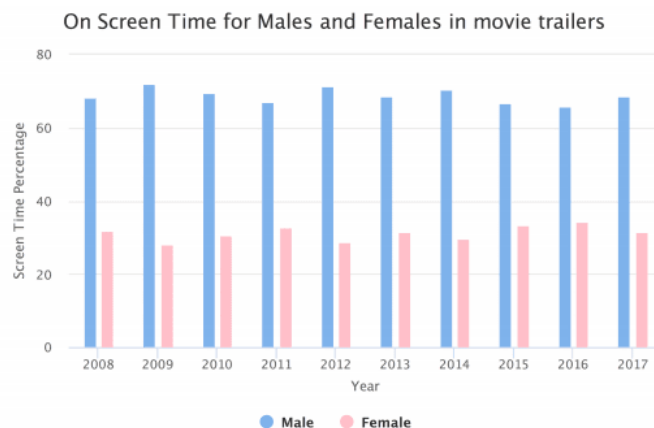

Table 1.5 Percentage of screen-on time for males and females over the years. (Credits: Analyzing Gender Stereotyping in Bollywood Movies. (Madaan, 2017).

This table is depicting the on-screen time that both male and female celebrities have encountered over the years, representing gender disparity. In India, men are more likely to have on screen time, illustrating the disparity of sexes based on their role and most importantly, gender in India and Bollywood.
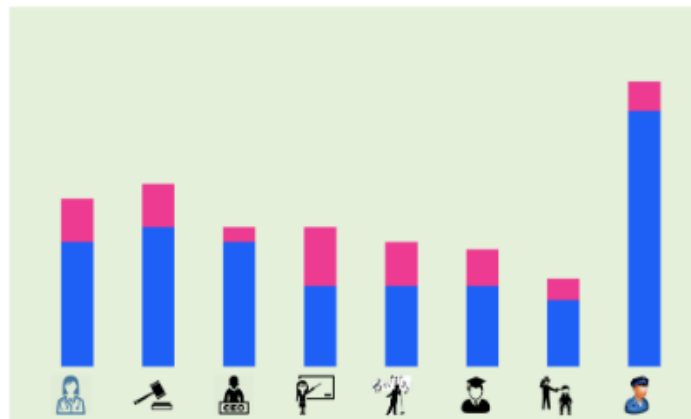
Table 1.6 A combined plot of percentages of male and female having the same occupation. This plot shows that when it comes to occupations like" teacher" or" student", females are high in number. But for" lawyer" and" doctor" the story is totally opposite (Madaan, 2017).

This table is demonstrating the occupation that occurs in the movies according to the male and female statistics. It is shown that the more manly occupations are the ones that the heroes of the movie, the males, or assigned to. Meanwhile, the female heroines are assigned as a small occupation like a teacher or a student. This allowed the researcher to explore how social ste2reotyping, or gender disparity affect the themes of entertainment occurring in Bollywood.

1.1.7 Gender Disparity and Hegemony India/Bollywood

The word "gender" is a broad term which is used to signify the difference between humans because of the masculinity/femininity dichotomy (Oyewumi, 2011). It is usually used interchangeably with "sex" to denote the male-female divide in the society (Oni, 2011). With the occurrences in the world, there is no place where women make more money than men. Even in Bollywood now, women overall still make 25% less than men, and as many as 68.5% of women in the Indian workforce feel they have experienced wage inequality (D'Cunha, 2017).

Even with the equal efforts inserted, heroines in Bollywood continue to get paid less than the heroes. "Priyanka Chopra and Deepika Padukone, for example, are paid much less than their male co-stars, despite being eminently bankable actresses with truckloads of critical acclaim and box-office reputations" (D'Cunha, 2017).

A culturally ingrained parental preference for sons — emanating from their importance as caregivers for parents in old age — is linked to poorer consequences for daughters. The dowry system, involving a cash or in-kind payment from the bride's family to the grooms at the time of marriage, is another institution that disempowers women. The incidence of dowry payment, which is often a substantial part of a household's income, has been steadily rising over timeacross all regions and socioeconomic classes. This often results in dowry-related violence against women by their husbands and in-laws if the dowry is considered insufficient or as a way to demand more payments (Sharma, 2016).

Furthermore, Sharma (2016) also stated, "This reinforces the inferior status of Indian women and puts them at risk of violence in their marital households. According to the National Family and Health Survey of 2005-06, 37% of married women have been victims of physical or sexual violence perpetrated by their spouse." With this ongoing issue in India, the actresses are continuing to fight for the rights of women, a right that they did not have years ago. For example, Indian fashion mags are taking a conscious stand to empower women through strong stars like Anushka and Sonam.

Staff (2017) declared, "Anushka Sharma is a vocal feminist. She has said it time and again in her interviews. Featured on the cover of Vogue's March issue, the actress is seen wearing a Dior tee which reads: 'We should all be feminists.' Given her stand on feminism, the actress' pro-women request people to exercise disparity across the board. "Feminists are fighting for equal rights for women because we are at a disadvantageous position. Plus, in that sense, I identify with being a feminist, because I am a liberal and free-thinking person," she had told Hindustan Times".

Another example of gender disparity in India's Culture is regarding the statement of another Bollywood actress stating, another fierce, independent soul in Bollywood who isn't afraid to speak her mind, Sonam Kapoor embraces feminism wholeheartedly on the cover of Femina India.

Wearing a dress of varying lengths which reads, "Easy, item, *bhenji*" Sonam quickly opposes the biases with text that reads: The length of my skirt does not define me. It shows your mindset" (Staff, 2017).

Final example is, "Sonakshi Sinha is fearless. From taking up sexist and body shaming Twitteratis to promoting a positive body image, this actress calls for #ShameTheShameless with a #SorryNotSorry attitude. In fact, she recognises as a feminist and told Cosmopolitan India, "I'm all for disparity. Women are doing great work in every field, and there's a dire need to fill the gender pay gap now. But I don't believe in male-bashing in the name of feminism, or even playing up the feminist card to one's convenience' (Staff, 2017).

This is stating even since the gaining of independence, India has this mindset of being a country of sexist 'men' who just see women as an object who are made to bear children.

Significance of Study

This study unveils the differences in gender disparity of those who have grown up watching Bollywood cinema compared to Bollywood movies in today's era mainly by accentuating the movie, *Mughal-E-Azam*. It highlights the multiple scopes of uses from costume design changes, dialogue changes, to performance changes. Furthermore, to the existing cinema in gender disparity, which is beneficial to societal advancements, this movie serves to emphasize and appeal for the necessity of crucial collaboration of both men and women in society, building through the theoretical framework of Bollywood evolution. The final theme of discussion is hegemony, which is the belief of having superior dominance over social groups, races, countries, etc. The result and finding of this study fill the gap of existing cultures on the impact that modernizes the and shapes the future gender disparity and hegemony in Hindi cinema.

Findings

"The seven theoretically deride norms of traditional masculinity ideology measured by the MRI and I, as previously mentioned, were developed a measure of traditional and nontraditional attitudes toward masculinity. The MRNI uses 57 normative statements measured on a seven point likely-type scale. After 57 statements higher scores on 45 of the statements indicate adherence to traditional masculinity ideology, while the remaining statements belong to the non-traditional sub scale for masculinity ideology" (Pascoe, 2015).

"The 'real' world norms used within this study were taken from those that were developed for the Male Role Norms Inventory (MRNI) by Levant et al (1992)". Interestingly, it was also used to analyze the representation of masculinity in the action and romantic comedy genre in Pascoe's research" (Pascoe, 2015).

The seven norms of masculinity are as stated: "The Male Role Norms Inventory also known as the MRNI was developed to assess masculinity across culture, race, and gender to determine which kinds of masculine behavior is expected from and perpetuated by, individuals of different backgrounds and social contacts. The seven theoretically divide norms of masculinity used in the Male Role Norms Inventory (MRNI) are:

1. The avoidance of femininity
2. Fear and hatred of homosexuals
3. Self-Reliance
4. Aggression
5. Achievement/status
6. Non-relational attitude toward sex
7. Restricted emotionality

Limitations of Study

The limitations of when completing a text analysis would be the inability of communicating with specific writers and specific caste members from the movie who can give the researcher a better in-depth/ intricate detail about the movie and therefore providing more information, which would aid in the researcher's completion of textual analysis.

Summary

It is emphasized in the study that there are different variations of masculinity that are represented. The main field discussed and stated the version of masculinity that has a range of masculine behavioral characteristics but at the same time, contains an internal, intimate, unrevealed emotion.When it comes to the film industry, specifically in Bollywood, demonstrating gender disparity and hegemony that occurs. It can be argued that the part of the audience or the individual's social vision can be considered a part of acculturation, socialization, camaraderie, involvement with other individuals.

Pascoe's (2015) work states, "If character representations are considered as social constructions, it can be argued that masculinity in the 'real' world is also complex with numerous variations in characteristics. Furthermore, future representations of masculinity on film should continue to be broad and complex to keep the thematic myth relevant to audiences, thereby keeping audiences interested and ensuring audience engagement."

This part of his work is signifying that the world is proceeding and continuing to provide entertainment for spectators by including gender differences little by little to the point that the people watching stay captivated and are content with the modifications that are ensuing when it comes to equality in Bollywood. With the discussion of homosexuality, feminine powered roles, taboo topics discussed, status system being disregarded, and explaining the construction of desire, subjectivity, and enjoyment of stating the old and recent Indian films which contains the behavioral observations that have occurred since the movie *Mughal-E-Azam*.

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