

GOOD BITCH, BAD BITCH: GENERATIONAL
RESPONSES TO BITCH MESSAGES IN POP
CULTURE

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GOOD BITCH, BAD BITCH: GENERATIONAL
RESPONSES TO BITCH MESSAGES IN POP
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Abstract: The way language is used impacts how people react to other people, groups, things, and places. As culture becomes permeated with pop culture media messages, can those messages be used to control how language is used to change these reactions? There is a growing trend in pop culture to use bitch as a positive honorific instead of an epithet. What makes these messages effective? Researchers will look at the impact of the pop culture messages on society; how language influences reactions and how different generations of women respond to those messages.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Gender roles shift as the world evolves. Ongoing fights for empowerment, equal rights and treatment are leading to a change in the way women refer to themselves and how the world refers to them. The language used to describe women is an indicator of feelings towards the gender. “The cultural climate is changing, particularly for women as we contend with the retrenchment of reproductive freedom, the persistence of rape culture, and the flawed if not damaging representations of women we’re consuming in music, movies, and literature, (Gay, 2014, p. IX).” Women are reacting to the changing climate and understanding how word choice can consciously or subconsciously influence society can help understand how language impacts culture.

Strong or aggressive women are sometimes referred to as ‘bitch’ in a derogatory way.

The common definition of ‘bitch’ includes “a malicious, spiteful” or “overbearing woman and something that is extremely difficult, objectionable, or unpleasant.” Originally used to describe female dogs; it is not new in its application to describe certain women.

Dictionaries traced the word in its derogatory form to the 15th century, (Grynbaum, 2007). The use of the word migrated from conversation and arguments to become a common part of pop culture, being used in movies, music, and television more and more frequently.

court ruling prevents the Federal Communications Commission from punishing networks airing content with the word. Following this ruling the New York Times reports uses of "bitch" on primetime TV tripled between 1998 and 2007, (Wyatt, 2009). This shift from vulgar curse to common slang is fascinating and has growing implications on society.

As words and meanings become more commonplace in media and pop culture then the definition and usage can evolve. Look at how rap and hip-hop artists use n***** in a different connotation than the original use of the word, the former slur is now commonly used in a positive way by the group it once denigrated. Media messages can impact the colloquial definitions people think of when they hear certain words and by extension change the reaction people have to those words.

Language as a tool for society impacts gender and perception. The way people use words can challenge societal norms. Can one gender control the change through language? "Over the decades, linguists have learned that pretty much every corner of language is touched by gender, from the most microscopic units of sound to the broadcast categories of conversation. And because gender is linked to power in so many cultures, necessarily, so is language, (Montell, 2019, p. 4)." Language used to describe different races or sexual orientation keeps evolving, gendered language is also undergoing a metamorphosis. The focus and success of that metamorphosis has larger implications on society.

Why is the language used about gender important?

Language impacts societal attitudes. The command of language can eventually manipulate individuals and institutions and generate subordination by shaping thoughts of

individuals using hegemony by way of power operated through language as a mechanism to persuade groups to subordination, (Castania, 2003; Descarries, 2014; Duranti, 2011). The language used by a group helps people create the attitudes they and others hold. If negative language is consistently used to describe one part of society, then there are more likely to be negative feelings about that portion of society.

Organizing a change in language to describe a group with a negative term can shift power and change ideas. “Cultivation theory, in particular, arose from concern about the potential effect that television programming might have on people’s world view and their related behavioral responses,” (Nabi & Sullivan, 2001). If words are being redefined in pop culture on platforms like television, radio, and the internet—what impact is it having on societal interpretation? Words and how they are used can change the world, can groups harness that power for their own benefit?

Language shapes messages permeating mass media

“We use language to make sense of the world and to share our perceptions with others. These shared perceptions of reality then became institutionalized. Thus, language is an important mechanism involved in both describing and creating social constructions of events, (Murnen, 2000, p. 319).” The power in language comes in the power to control the message.

While one group once controlled the message, over time developments in politics, technology and economics mean this power is now spread over a variety of groups. “Powerful groups can influence the way language is used and how these groups can exercise control over access to language, (Simpson & Mayr, 2013, p.2).” Now the

question is: is re-shaping these messages an effective way to use mass media to change perceptions?

First, look to those perceptions: how are women portrayed in mass media? Messages about women in pop culture predominantly present a negative image. "Just as women are frequently portrayed as 'bitches' in their work life, they are also frequently portrayed as mentally and emotionally unstable, if not outright crazy, in their personal lives and dealings, (Ezzedeen, 2015, p. 241)." Ezzedeen's research looked at a decade of popular films to collect a view of how women are portrayed to analyze correlations to societal norms about women. These pop culture characters do much to perpetuate stereotypes in society. The characters are the stereotypical tropes everyone expects to see: tough female bosses, ditzy women, and bimbo sex objects.

The impact these messages have on gender relationships is an ongoing debate. "Scholars as early as the nineteenth century have recognized the social and political influence of the mass media," (Couldry, 2004). Feminist film scholars particularly noted the effects of media portrayals on the self-perception and social regulation of women, (Ezzedeen, 2015). Are women fulfilling these tropes in real life because it is what they see in media?

In more recent pop culture content, the shift in some messages moved towards the idea that changing how society views common negative terms, like 'bitch,' could change those tropes and expectations. In these attempts to reclaim the language, Montell's research shows that "a word doesn't have to lose its negative meanings completely to be considered reclaimed, (Montell, 2019, p. 42)." Some women may feel empowered using

the word in a positive way, but all women don't have to feel the same way for the word to be considered reclaimed.

Parts of society can continue to use bitch in different, positive ways, but it will remain an epithet to other members of society. The entirety of society doesn't have to accept the attempts for change to happen. The attempts to change will be gradual and evolve with the groups leading the charge.

Reclaiming language to change ideas

The spread of pop culture led groups to use the medium as a tool to spread their specific messages- messages they've designed to re-shape ideas about 'bitch.' Anderlini-D'Onofrio (2003) wrote, "I became aware of how third-wave feminist activists... reclaim sexist slurs like "bitch," "witch" and "slut" as terms of empowerment denoting women who demand respect and authority," (p.44.).

During the 2008 presidential election Saturday Night Live writer and performer Tina Fey used an installment of the 'Weekend Update' segment to attempt to change the conversation about bitch being used to describe then-presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. "Maybe what bothers me the most is that people say that Hillary is a bitch. Let me say something about that: Yeah, she is. And so am I... Know what? Bitches get stuff done" (Fey & Poehler, 2008). Fey continued the skit with examples of historically 'bitchy' women considered accomplished, creating an image of a bitch as someone who is determined. She and her co-host also both proudly proclaimed themselves bitches at the end of the segment.

In 2015, pop star Madonna faced criticism for calling herself a bitch in the song, "Unapologetic Bitch." She responded in a *Billboard Magazine* interview defending her

word choice, “If I say to you, ‘I’m a badass bitch,’ I’m owning myself, I’m saying, ‘I’m strong, I’m tough, and don’t mess with me,’” (Lynch, 2015). Madonna argued calling herself a bitch just meant she saw herself as a strong woman, creating an image of a ‘bitch’ as a strong woman handling things on her own.

A *New York Times* op-ed published before the 2016 presidential election called Hillary Clinton the ‘bitch America needs’ and looked at how the word is both an epithet and an honorific for women. “The power of ‘bitch’ to shame is, with a perspective adjustment, also its power to shine. All that’s required to reframe the word is to point out that the things bitches are often guilty of can be both unexceptional and necessary: flexing influence, standing up for their beliefs, not acting according to feminine norms and expectations,” (Zeisler, 2016). This highlights one point of Montell’s research that shows the new connotation of a word doesn’t need to be accepted by everyone to have an impact.

Those women attempted to take the word and own it- turning it into a positive description and presenting it to the public. These are just a few examples of women attempting to reclaim the label and give it a positive definition. This isn’t the first time a group attempted to take back a word used to insult them, “some of the most triumphant instances of re-appropriated slurs come from our culture’s most repressed communities, (Montell, 2019, p. 39).” When repressed groups, such as women, people of color, LGTBQIA+ and others, start taking the slurs typically used against them and start using them as honorifics within their own communities then it can take away the power of those words, even if other people still use them as an epithet.

Helene Shugart's research into third-wave feminism and Generation X found the attitude of reclaiming the language is not uncommon. "They seem united in their rejection of earth tones and their exasperation with "traditional" feminist critiques of "male-defined sexuality" and "sexual objectification." 'We own it now,' they are likely to respond; 'it doesn't mean the same thing now,'" (Shugart, 2001). Those cases took part of the common definition and turned it into a positive label presenting it to the public in a different way.

Blowback over 'bitch'

Another *New York Times* editor had a different reaction to the previously mentioned op-ed and wrote a response criticizing the use of bitch in a headline, writing "The mainstream may someday apply this term to women who stand up for themselves and bust through feminine stereotypes. Until then, it remains an insult, degrading and misogynistic," (Spayd, 2016). Seeing these two op-eds, both written by women, with opposite responses to the use of bitch led to the focus of this research. What makes different women have different reactions to the use of bitch?

Some women choose to use bitch as a title of pride, other women are offended by it. What impacts these different reactions? Closer study is needed to understand the success or failure of positive bitch messages to change the meaning to women.

Research finds generation impacts how women identify in the different waves of feminism and how they think about feminist issues. Does a woman's generation impact her reaction to bitch messages in pop culture? Are different generations more open to changing ideas about language? By studying how different generations of women react to

the messages and identifying the trends that perpetuate this can help explain why positive bitch messages may or may not be successful in changing ideas about derogatory terms.

How will we look at it?

Examining the messages found in pop culture will help create an understanding of how some are using media to attempt to change ideas. Researchers compiled and analyzed a collection of positive bitch messages in a variety of mediums: television, songs, and print/digital. Those messages are compiled in audio and visual clips, as well as excerpts for the focus group to experience.

Researchers utilized three groups of women in specific demographics to get an overview of generational reactions. Those groups are Baby Boomer, Generation X and Millennials. These demographics are narrowed down based on data from the Pew Research Center. The non-partisan center “conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other data-driven social science research,” (2019). Pew defines generations as:

- Baby Boomer: born 1946-64
- Generation X: born 1965-1980
- Millennials: born 1981-1996

Once the group is formed, they will be given open-ended questions about feelings about the word bitch. The open answer structure allows freedom to expand on thoughts and share personal feelings. Next, the group members will be shown the collection of positive bitch messages in pop culture. The group will be given a questionnaire again. Their answers will be examined and compared to see any change following the exposure to the messages.

Researchers will examine responses based on the member's generation. Their answers will give an idea if the messages can lead to changes in different generations of women. Hearing the reactions these women have to these messages can help illustrate the effectiveness of these attempts. Understanding how women view attempts to change the meaning of bitch can illustrate roadblocks that could hinder attempts to change the attitudes of a broader population of society.

Summary

This research will examine how language is used to manipulate or change viewpoints and attitudes in society and show the overarching power of language. It will explore the links between language and power in society.

Research into how the generation of the audience impacts their reactions to attempts to reclaim language will create a better understanding of the potential power of changing ideas through language. Additionally, pop culture messages reach a wide audience and analyzing the impact of those messages on society will determine if they can be used to facilitate changing of ideas. Using a focus group, isolated pop culture messages and open-ended questions researchers can develop a clearer understanding of existing attitudes and the pliability of those attitudes in society.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Generational feminism:

Feminism is characterized by several waves as generations' focus evolves. Experiencing life as a woman is logically different at different periods in time and for different women, (Arnold, 2000). As feminism evolved researchers defined these 'waves' of the movement.

In her 2011 paper Helene Shugart defined them as: "The first wave is understood to encompass and be primarily defined by the suffragist movement, which culminated in the passage of suffrage in 1920; following that, the main women's organizations disintegrated, and feminism entered a long period of dormancy... Not until the 1960s did feminism, pioneered by the likes of Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, gain sufficient social momentum to warrant its identification as the second wave... The third wave of feminism appears to predicate itself on the categorical rejection of second wave feminism as they perceive it—as 'naive, obsolete or otherwise somehow lacking in relevance to their lives.'"

In recent years a fourth wave of feminism emerged in response to attacks on women focused on their gender and reproductive rights. This wave is organized on the internet and utilizes social media to communicate and spread ideals, also giving it the nickname “Hashtag Feminism” (Peroni, Rodak 2020). While this wave focuses on some of the same basic interests as previous waves of feminism, but pushes more into concerns about inequality, discrimination and violence, body autonomy and sisterhood itself. “In addition, the 4th wave of feminism includes the discussion of body positivity to empower men, women, and transgender people, promoting the acceptance of all possible bodies. Such an anti-essentialist approach makes 4th wave feminism open to the experiences of everybody,” (Peroni, Rodak. p. 75, 2020).

The echoes of all these waves are felt in current generations of women who identify with feminism in different ways and utilized different aspects of the different waves to suit their ideals. Researchers found a clear distinction between how third-wave feminists react to language. Third-wave feminists came after the 60s and 70s, “third-wave feminism is the idea that women can and should define their own womanhood,” (West, 2012). Third wave feminists reject traditional notions of feminism and are more likely to go against the norm when it comes to interacting with each other and society.

This generation of feminists are more likely to use negative language to describe themselves. Anderlini-D’Onofrio wrote (2003), “In third-wave feminist discourse sexist slurs like ‘witch, bitch, and slut’ are being reclaimed as terms of empowerment” (p. 47). To them it is taking ownership of the slurs used to describe them, “We own it now,” they are likely to respond; “It doesn’t mean the same thing now,” (Shugart, 2001, p. 131).

Examining the reasoning behind this generation of feminists' reclamation of sexist slurs is essential to help understand how similar messages may or may not reach all generations of feminists. Will age hinder the effectiveness of these positive bitch messages? "In sum, the data reveal significant generational differences in the association between ideology and feminist self-identification," (Schnittker, et al., p. 617).

What impact does this tendency to reject earlier feminist thoughts and feelings have on feminism or gender? "Members of the second wave generation were more likely to self-identify as feminists than were either younger or older respondents. We also find that three distinct measures of ideology associated with the feminist movement are significantly predictive of self-identification only for members of this generation," (Schnittker et al., 2003, p. 619).

Researchers are still examining the full extent, "The third-wave impulse to resolve the issue by rejecting all standards as constraining and adopting the issue by rejecting all standards as constraining and adopting instead an "anything goes" feminism may ultimately compromise the fundamental tenet of feminism: to expose and rectify the oppression of women," (Shugart, 2001, p. 164).

A better understanding of these generational implications of feminism can provide a better understanding of how the attempts to reclaim sexist slurs can impact a wide variety of audiences. Schnittker, Freese & Powell (2003) explained, "Results suggest that both male and female respondents whose political coming of age coincides with the development of the feminist movement are more likely to think of themselves as feminists than are their older or younger counterparts," (p. 614).

Researchers also found “in North American culture, sexist language may be symbolically important to young people who either consciously or subconsciously still believe in the superiority of men,” (Parks & Robertson, 2004, p. 238). Taking a closer look at how different generations react to feminist language in pop culture allows researchers to understand the effectiveness of attempts to change attitudes about language and why some generations appear more receptive to those attempts.

Life Course Theory:

Like generational feminism, Life Course Theory examines the impact that historical context, family history, education and work and the role that plays in social trajectories of individuals. Going further than examining just generational attitudes, it looks at how life experience, or the course of life, impacts how individuals develop. A Millennial and a Boomer could have similar outlooks or reactions based on their life course, despite the difference in their generations.

“Life course theory and research alert us to this real world, a world in which lives are lived and where people work out paths of development as best they can. It tells us how lives are socially organized in biological and historical time, and how the resulting social pattern affects the way we think, feel and act,” (Elder, Jr. p. 9, 1998). When it ties into feminism it can tie in how millennials who grew up through social movements can internalize and react to those events which then impacts how they react to things like bitch messages and sexist language.

Tracking human development through life course and historical context can also show how views can evolve. A person may react to one thing at a certain age and then as an older person with more life experience react differently- it is more than a generational

response, but one that hinders on aspects of the world, education, socio-economic status and family situations.

Sexism in language:

“We use language to make sense of the world and to share our perceptions with others. These shared perceptions of reality then become institutionalized. Thus, language is an important mechanism in both describing and creating social construction of events,” (Murnen, 2000, p. 319). The power of language in creating societal norms is unchecked. The Social Construction of Reality Theory finds “through language an entire world can be actualized at any moment. Language is capable of transcending the reality of everyday life altogether.” Words create the world. Changing the choice of words in conversation and pop culture media messages can go far towards changing ideas in the world.

“Scholars have noted that sexist language reinforces the superiority of men and perpetuates male privilege in society,” (Kleinman, 2002). Understanding the impact of language choice empowers members of society to change language, possibly impacting stereotypes and sexism. By choosing their words carefully, they can carefully change perceptions. “It is theorized that language is part of the ‘societal propaganda’ that communicates social roles for men and women in the realm of sexuality,” (Murnen, 2000, p. 319).

Language becomes propaganda unwittingly passed from generation to generation when people continue to use certain sexist phrases and terms. Sexist language “includes words, phrases and expressions that unnecessarily differentiate between women and men or exclude, trivialize, or diminish either gender,” (Parks & Robertson, 2004, p.233). This

also creates a clearer idea of the role language plays in creating and/or changing attitudes. Eliminating misogynistic language when it is a habitual part of language is a harder task, (Jing-Schmidt & Peng, 2018). Language goes far to create and perpetuate gender constructs across society.

Additionally, looking at ways the language is used illustrates these beliefs. “The practice of social labeling opens ‘a window on the construction of gendered identities and social relations in social practice,’” (Jing-Schmidt & Peng, 2018, p. 402). Examining the power of sexism in language is essential to understanding why certain language is used and additionally to understanding the historical context of the societal reality created by language.

Can this traditional misogyny be changed? Researchers say this change starts with women. Putting the onus on changing the misogyny with the very group being targeted by it. “Critically, in order to ‘think their way out of patriarchal gender definitions and their constraining impact’ (Lerner 1993:220), women must first SPEAK their way out of those definitions by quitting complicity in verbal misogyny,” (Jing-Schmidt & Peng, 2018, p. 402).” This perspective creates an understanding of why some women are attempting to reclaim language to change perceptions, but also shows why some women and the rest of society are not doing the same and may be less receptive to the attempts.

Reaction to sexist language:

Researchers looked at how women who counter or react to sexist language used against them are perceived. Specifically, how likely are women to speak up when sexist language is used by someone talking to them and how are they judged for doing so? This treatment can highlight why some women are less likely to speak up or attempt to reclaim

language. Studies showed women are more likely to ignore the sexist language and internalize reactions. “Moreover, women may engage in cognitive distortions to explain sexism they personally experience by blaming themselves,” (Dodd et al., 2001, p. 568).

Examining why most women are less likely to speak up in response to sexist language can be a key in knowing if attempts to change sexist language can be successful. Research found when a woman reacted or talked back to sexist language then the way people perceived them changed. While other women admired them, the opposite was found for men. According to Dodd, et al (2014) “Our research also showed, however, that a woman who confronted a sexist remark—although not respected any less for confronting it—was liked less by male participants for doing so” (p. 574).

Understanding why men are less likely to have a positive view of women attempting to change sexist language can help determine how to approach the message of changing sexist language in a way that they would be more likely to respond. Further research examining the male response to positive bitch messages could give even more insight.

A better understanding of the impact of sexist language can be aided by looking at these reactions and examining who is more likely to use the language. “The results suggest that in North American culture, sexist language may be symbolically important to young people who either consciously or unconsciously still believe in the superiority of men,” (Parks & Robertson, 2004, p. 238). If younger generations perpetuate the habitual misogyny in language, then it is an added stair step in the attempt to reclaim and could impact the success of those messages.

For this research the audience is narrowed down the audience more likely to use positive bitch messages to give researchers a better idea of how messages need to be targeted to address the wider female population.

Popular culture influence:

Pop culture can be a trendsetter and influencer on attitudes of the mass audience. Examining the ways pop culture, including celebrity activists, film, and television, impacts how people think or react to feminism and sexist language can illustrate how those tools could also be used to change ideas. “Source credibility has long since been identified as an attribute that enhances the persuasiveness of communication messages with the potential to mediate attitude change,” (Franklyn). Previous research mentioned showed that women responded more positively to other women reacting to sexist language, also highlighting the importance of source in these bitch messages.

While source credibility can be a way to change ideas and attitudes, research also shows mass media is a political influencer to their large audiences Couldry (2004) contends, “Scholars as early as the nineteenth century have recognized the social and political influence of mass media” (p. 142). With such emphasis on the power celebrity and media have over changing attitudes and influencing people, a closer look at how films and pop culture portray powerful women or utilize sexist language gives an idea about the current image being portrayed and potential changes these mediums can facilitate.

Ezzedeen (2015) points out, “Feminist film scholars in particular have noted the effects of media portrayals on the self-perception and social regulation of women, (p. 241).” In that vein the most prevalent images of women in film can help form how people

view or relate to women in reality. Studies found some of the most common images of women in media are not always positive. “Parallel to depictions of women as competent and savvy, however, were frequent characterizations of women as ‘bitches’ – a term that essentially covers the women’s heartlessness, meanness, impatience, rudeness and promiscuity,” (Ezzedeen, 2015, p. 245). This negative connotation with ‘bitches’ and powerful women can influence how people view women. “Just as women are frequently portrayed as “bitches” in their work life, they are also frequently portrayed as mentally and emotionally unstable, if not outright crazy, in their personal lives and dealings, (Ezzedeen, 2015, p. 241).” If this is the image of women most seen by society then it becomes the expected reality.

In the same way the attitudes and ideas could also be changed by a different view of women being shown in film and pop culture. As mentioned, a 2008 skit on “Saturday Night Live” written by Tina Fey and Amy Poehler, both self-proclaimed feminists, discussed the use of the word ‘bitch’ to describe then-presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. The segment details the arguments about why some people, including women, don’t plan on voting for Clinton, “women have come so far as feminists that they don’t feel obligated to vote for a candidate just because she’s a woman,” (Fey & Poehler, 2008).

This highlights generational issues within feminism already mentioned in discussion of the third wave feminists. In contrast, earlier generations of feminists felt more inclined to support women based solely on gender, third wave feminist believe feminism allows them to support a man or woman without losing their feminist title.

As well as addressing issues men have with powerful women and her appearance. According to Fey (2008), “Rush Limbaugh, the Jeff Conaway of right-wing radio, said that he doesn’t think America is ready to watch their president quote ‘turn into an old lady in front of them.’ Really? They didn’t seem to mind when Ronald Reagan did that.” In the end the skit explains the positive traits of being a ‘bitch’ such as ‘getting stuff done.’ As more celebrities and pop culture platforms portray women and bitches in more positive manners, could it be a step in changing ideas about women and bitches?

By examining the implications of sexist language and the generational hurdles messages face when it comes to changing attitudes and the impact celebrity and pop culture have over the idea of reclaiming sexist slurs in language about women researchers develop a clearer idea of the effectiveness of attempts to change attitudes about language can be developed. This also can help determine the best methods of changing those ideas based on the audiences being targeted.

Following are the research questions to guide this study:

Research Question 1: What meaning do subjects associate with the word bitch?

Research Question 2: How does generation impact meaning associated to bitch?

Research Question 3: How does exposure to pop culture content shape meanings of bitch?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A focus group “is a socially oriented research method capturing real life data in a social environment (Babbie, 2016)” Focus groups allow respondents to speak openly about the topic being studied and can reveal a richer, more complex data than a survey or interview. Researchers felt focus groups spur conversations and can allow subjects more freedom to share their thoughts and feelings in a safe space.

When it comes to taking a closer look at how different generations of women react to positive bitch messages the focus group method will help researchers see attitudes and opinions across the generations and help offer insight into how the messages impact women of different ages. Researchers chose to combine the three targeted generations into one focus group to facilitate interaction and conversation within the different generations represented.

Key in this research is determining the impact positive bitch messages make on different women. Researchers created a focus group of 16 women from three generations. Researchers used guidelines from the Pew Research Center to identify generations:

- Baby Boomer: born 1946-1964
- Generation X: born 1965-1980
- Millennials: born 1981-1996

Researchers focused on these generations because it includes women born between 1946 and 1996, an age range covering a broad range of life experiences and finds women in a variety of life stages. These generations make up 62% of the United States population, including the key work force.

This segment allows researchers to see if age impacts the reaction to bitch messages in pop culture. The generations are shaped by the technology, political environment, and sociological situations of childhood. Utilizing generational research shows how those life experiences and childhood determine the reaction to the pop culture messages. The focus group included six Baby Boomers, five Gen X and five Millennials.

Researchers located group members through multiple Facebook posts seeking women in the specified age ranges. Through the posting and sharing of posts a group of women, some known to the researchers and some unknown, gathered for the focus group. Researchers did not tie an incentive to the focus group.

For collection purposes researchers only needed the age and gender of group members, no personal data necessary. Through recruitment researchers identified members as being from a variety of education levels and various career fields. Careers included within the group included: teacher, church manager, journalism, non-profit workers and stay at home mothers. Further researcher utilizing other key demographic data in addition to generation could add another layer to the findings.

The focus group took place over a Zoom teleconference on August 1, 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It lasted an hour and 16 minutes, including a pause for members to view the pop culture messages. Participants controlled how they were identified in the digital focus group. A moderator gave a neutral introduction explaining

the project looks at the relationship between messages in pop culture and how people think about things. The moderator recorded the Zoom for later transcription. The group knew the call was being recorded. Some chose to leave their cameras on, while others remained audio only.

The moderator asked initial questions to establish a baseline for initial ideas about both pop culture and the word bitch for the participants.

Questions include:

- What is a feminist?
- Do you identify as a feminist? Why?
- How much pop culture do you consume?
- Have you ever seen something on pop culture that made you think differently?
- Do you identify as a bitch? Why or why not?
- Can bitch be a good thing?

The moderator played a series of clips with bitch messages. Participants also read media interviews and op-eds with bitch messages. Messages included:

Saturday Night Live skit: Tina Fey and Amy Poehler discussed the 2008 Democratic presidential primary election and criticism of Hillary Clinton as a bitch. Discusses taking ownership of being a bitch, declares ‘bitches get stuff done.’ Highlights double standards in acceptable behavior with a political skew.

LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3vAVhalEIk>

“Unapologetic Bitch” by Madonna: Lyrics from the 2014 song includes lines: “It might sound like I’m an unapologetic bitch, but sometimes you know I gotta call it like it is.”

LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1qQz9enTk0>

“Bitch” by Meredith Brooks: Lyrics from the 1997 song include: “I'm a bitch, I'm a lover. I'm a child, I'm a mother. I'm a sinner, I'm a saint. I do not feel ashamed. I'm your Hell, I'm your dream. I'm nothing in between. You know you wouldn't want it any other way. So take me as I am. This may mean you'll have to be a stronger man”

LINK:

https://www.youtube.com/watchv=6ge53QaDpKQ&list=RD6ge53QaDpKQ&start_radio=1)

“Da Baddest Bitch” by Trina: Lyrics from the 2000 song include: “Cause I'm the baddest bitch, what? Who's bad? Who's, who's bad? Who's bad? Who's, who's bad? (Shit, I'm the baddest bitch)”

LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCdgytIPqys>

Vice article about impact of “Da Baddest Bitch.” Article examines the impact Trina had in using bitch in a positive way after hip hop used it in negative ways for years.

LINK: https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/ppmx3m/the-evolution-of-the-bitch-905)

NYTimes op-ed by Bitch magazine founder “Bitch America needs”: describes how bitch became an ‘epithet and an honorific’ for Clinton in her career.

LINK: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/11/opinion/campaign-stops/the-bitch-america-needs.html>)

The moderator planned to ask a second group of questions including some of the original questions and some additional ones.

Questions include:

- Had you seen any of these messages before?
- What did you think watching them?
- Did they make you feel something? What?
- Do you think being bitch can be a good thing?

Participants also had the chance to make any final statements based on viewing of the messages or the conversations spurred during the focus group.

Researchers analyzed the answers and statements to create a view of how the focus group reacted to the word bitch before and after viewing the selected messages. By examining pre and post reaction researchers got a clearer look at how attempts to change thoughts impact the women watching the messages.

Researchers also focused on the responses by generation but found the fostered conversations within the focus group enriching in seeing how their different views and experiences impacted each other's views.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

First question: “What is a bitch? Talk about what you think when you hear that.”

Boomers expressed mixed reactions. One initially called it a derogatory term but allowed leeway on their reaction based on the context. “It’s a derogatory term. It’s not usually used in a positive manner. It depends on if it refers to a person or a thing or a situation,” Boomer A said. Another, Boomer B, answered similarly, basing her reaction on “who says it and how it’s said.” This plays directly into the reaction to sexist language research, which shows women respect and like other women who respond to sexist language. It also ties in source credibility, the importance of ‘who’ is the one using bitch shows an increased focus on context.

Boomer-C referenced her own use of bitch in their reaction. “I don’t know, the only time I ever use it it’s usually a playful term used with friends. I feel like there’s sort of an ownership if it’s among women.” But it can still sting, “if someone really decides to hurt you, then it hurts,” Boomer-C added. Highlighting the focus on intention and context in the use.

Gen X-A initially referenced pop culture in describing her reaction to bitch, though she got the artist wrong. She cited the Alanis Morissette popping into her head as soon as she heard the question. This clearly shows pop culture messages can play a role in forming memories and ideas about bitch messages. But she expanded, “For me it’s a complicated issue. I’m used to hearing it in songs and you know friends calling each other using those terms, but at the same time if somebody was being aggressive toward me and used it towards, you know with a finger and the whole dynamic of negativity then the whole meaning changes for me.”

Millennial A said her reactions to the word are based on who says it. “I think the gender of the person using the word and the person it’s being used against makes a big difference. A man using it against a woman is rarely anything but meant to be derogatory, usually to take a woman down a peg who’s stepping outside of the gender norms of femininity. A woman using it with another woman is often playful, not always obviously there are sometimes women who use it in a derogatory way. But a woman or a man using it against a man is meant to make that man feel like less of a man because they’re likening him to a woman.”

Millennial B expanded on that, “I think it’s cultural to you, depending on where you came from and how you were raised... it’s not something I want to be called.”

Millennial C agreed saying she says the attempts to reclaim bitch, “try to make it like a cool thing, like you’re a badass if you’re a bitch or make it that way. I don’t know if I perceive it that way.”

Millennial D talked about knowing bitch clearly as an insult in her middle school and high school years, even in playful context. Now she sees the role context plays, “it depends on the situation.

The generation of the women did not alter the response to the word. Group members across all three generations highlighted the importance the speaker and the context had in their reaction to bitch. Younger generations initially mentioned awareness of attempts to ‘reclaim’ the word, but questioned its feasibility, stressing the importance of context in their reactions.

Second Question: What is a feminist? Do you identify as a feminist? Why?

Most group members admitted to identifying as feminist in some aspect. Boomer-B said it went further than self-identifying. “I’m a feminist because how could I be against my own best interests, right? You say that, but here’s the thing with feminism I also embrace: I don’t like a lot of other women’s positions, right? But as a feminist I still have to support other women who may not hold the same political or spiritual or any other values I hold... I am a feminist to that extent where I support women, I don’t agree with... which is really hard sometimes. And that sounds really good, and I don’t always practice that but that is my goal as a feminist.”

Gen X-B agreed, “I am squarely Gen X and I do try to support all women as much as I can whether it’s what I believe or not, what I agree with or not and I do feel like that is culturally shifted as well.” Gen X-A agreed, “there’s an intolerance I’ve noticed that my age doesn’t have in those who choose not to live the feminist lifestyle.” These generational shifts are drawn right from the third wave feminism and the idea of rejecting previous iterations of feminism not deemed extreme enough.

Millennial-C thinks feminism is nebulous, “I think I fall on two sides of this. I’m okay with tradition and conservatism and that kind of aspect of things. I’m not passionate enough to be like ‘that’s not right’, like I’m okay with that because I’m comfortable in my stance on feminism and I empower myself and empower other women. I’ve never considered myself a feminist, I just support women and being a woman. And I feel like I try to do my best to be a strong independent woman and also respect the position of a man’s role in religion or the corporate world or whatever.”

Millennial D highlighted pop culture as how she found feminism in a culture that was more male dominated. “I think especially when I was younger, I think feminism was something I sort of was seeking out for myself in pop culture without necessarily having a name for it. I grew up in a small town in rural Missouri where the culture there was very the male head of the household had the final say. So, while my mom was still a strong-willed woman and had her own opinions and was very educated when it came down to it a lot of things in the household my father’s say was the last say. I never felt oppressed as a woman in my family per se. I think sometimes in movies, and TV I was drawn to these strong female characters who would stand up for themselves and disagree with the men and not care. I feel like that was something I was subconsciously seeking for myself because I had self-confidence issues growing up and I feel like that helped me in a way.” Elements of the life course theory can be seen in Millennial D tying her subconscious choices to her childhood situation.

Gen X-C follows her mother’s example and is trying to instill that sense of equality to her sons. “I was raised primarily by my mother in a single income home, and she very much exemplified the woman who could do it all kind of things... not that it was

easy... fixing her car, working, taking care of the kids... lawn work too ... everything. She showed me 'oh well if you need something done you go do it.' You didn't have to turn to a man to fix anything for you. I learned that very quickly. I was never dreaming of big weddings or marrying somebody who was going to take care of me.

I'm careful about the way I talk about women and the man's role with my boys and my husband embraces the fact that I have the power tools in the garage and (I) have the honey-do list... and I think it shows our boys such a stark contrast than what media and other things might portray. Women are just as strong as men are... I'm a feminist in that way for sure."

Boomer E chimed in that education is a key in expanding feminist ideals to younger generations, "My dad made me, and my sisters learn how to change the oil in our car when we got our cars... he taught us a lot of different things, so I'd never have to depend on a man to do those things. So, for me I just do stuff. I teach my seven-year-old how to do things on her own, so she doesn't have to depend on people."

Gen X-B shared a story from her childhood that related to Boomer E's experience, "My mom took me to see Sesame Street Live at the Tulsa Convention Center and I was obsessed with shiny stuff and they had these prisms hanging, I said 'mom, I'm going to have those in my house some day when I grow up' and she said 'oh that's great Julie, you can marry a rich man and he can buy them for you' and I said 'I don't need a boy to buy them for me, I'm going to buy them for myself.' She said that's when she knew I'd be trouble for her."

Boomer-B shifted the conversation "I think when it comes to being a feminist, we have to be realistic. No matter how much we say 'I told my sons' or 'I told my daughters,

you can be what you want and do what you want in life' but there is still that reality, that glass ceiling, that fact that it is still a man's world. With every little step you take we are still waiting for permission from men to be equal. We can consider ourselves equal all day long, but if they look at us and say 'cute now go back to the kitchen and make me a sandwich' where's the feminism there? We're feminists and we all get to do what we do but there's still the fact that we're waiting for men to let us, too," she said.

"I'm an older millennial, I was raised by two boomers who I think would identify as feminists. I think that that's one thing that a lot of younger... and I've heard a couple of people say it today... I've heard younger feminist called 'less tolerant' or 'more hardcore' in talking about feminism and women's rights," said Millennial A. "One of the big differences—we always used to talk about equality when we would talk about any movement towards leveling the playing field between genders or races or whatever it is-- but now we talk about or we're moving towards talking about equity. Equality and equity are similar but they're not really the same. So, there may be laws on the books technically that make men and women equal in most things but when you're coming from a deficit handing two people the exact same thing doesn't level the playing field. It may raise them both up but they're still not on the same playing field.

Younger feminists are really looking at the idea of equity... like maybe legally we can do this, but we all know that things like sexual harassment in the workplace and things like that mean the playing field isn't equal, so how do we bring this group up to the playing field with everyone else."

Evening a playing field resonated with another millennial. "Feminism is not even just about women. I think of it as a gender role issue as a whole. And it doesn't have to be

a radical thing like burning bras... it can be as simple as wanting my husband to have the same options that I do... including when we're at Walmart and he needs to change the baby he can go in the men's bathroom and have a changing station. It goes to both sides, feminism, does to me."

Takeaways:

Life experiences and culture growing up played a large role in how members defined the role feminism played in their lives. They often shared stories from their childhood or pop culture in how they 'found' feminist ideas in their lives. Highlighting a subconscious influence from pop culture in their childhoods. Most found some tie or connection to feminism and their comments often showed ties to generational feminism impacting their feelings. Further exploration of the life course theory could highlight the impact life experiences have over just the age of the members.

A key difference that presented itself-- Older generations referred to behavior, taking on the 'man's work' in showing their feminist ideals, while millennials took a more nuanced approach in how society's laws and routines play into equity as part of feminism ideology. This also reiterates the research into generational research and the evolution of feminist waves.

Third Question: Researchers asked how much pop culture they consumed.

The beginning of the pandemic in 2020 very clearly impacted pop culture consumption of the focus group, beyond moving it from in person to zoom, many members agreed they consumed more now than prior to lockdowns and remote working situations. Members simply laughed, answered, "a lot" or chimed in, "tons since March."

Content varied across the generations. A Gen X member said, “I don’t watch the mainstream stuff, but I do watch a lot of pop culture, just not reality TV or whatever.” While a millennial immediately mentioned a popular reality show, “I have to plug the Bachelor.” Most agreed they were watching more longform content on different streaming platforms as opposed to social media.

Researchers did not specifically ask about social media, but no members mentioned it in their pop culture habits.

Fourth Question: Has something in pop culture made you think differently?

Older members of the group could not pinpoint a specific instance of pop culture changing their mind, Boomer A said it does have some impact, “I don’t that it’s made me change my mind, but it made me think. There’s lots of instances of that.”

Gen X-A went further citing pop culture as one of many things that influence how people think. “I don’t think for me I can direct it to any one song, or any one show, or any one instance. I just couldn’t deny that there isn’t an influence on how we think about things or the way we see or perceive things, I couldn’t deny that. I think it absolutely does have an influence. I don’t think I could specifically point to and say ‘this moment I changed my mind’ that’s not the way it works. There’s generally a whole group of things maybe that are changing perceptions.”

Gen X-C disagreed, saying she avoided pop culture not already aligned with her way of thinking. "I find myself drawn to things that enlighten me more to the thinking that I’m already thinking, maybe that’s not the way to do it. I’ll turn something off if I find it offensive or against my own opinions.”

Boomer B was the only member to share a specific incident she said made her change her political views, “I had kind of a revelation back in 2006, my son went into the Marine Corps and at the time I was a compassionate Republican, socially liberal but fiscally conservative and all that, and I had a son in the Marine Corps over in Iraq. The more I’m thinking and watching I started questioning and I listened to this song by Bruce Springsteen called ‘Who’ll be the last to die?’ and it’s from the John Kerry quote ‘Who’ll be the last to die for our mistake?’ and it was like ‘oh my god, that’s my child in that position.’”

While millennial members did not speak up in this conversation, previous answers showed some now see a subconscious role that pop culture played on forming their ideas, Millennial D discussed being drawn to “strong female characters who would stand up for themselves and disagree with the men and not care.”

Takeaways:

All generations expressed an inclination to think pop culture plays a role in how they think, whether they had specific examples or not. The key differences noted showed the power of that influence- making them think vs. telling them what to think.

Hearing some members express a connection to certain pop culture characters, specifically citing science fiction genre examples, and knowing her career as a research scientist did bring Ezzedeen’s research to mind. This pop culture consumer saw examples of strong women in the science field and grew up to study and work in the same field. In this case a positive female pop culture character became Millennial-D’s created reality.

Researchers played selected messages for the group and provided links to text examples

Originally researchers designed the post-view section to include follow up questions, but conversation organically began within the focus group that expanded on the same topics after the moderator asked what the clips made them think. This prevented the need for further questioning. Researchers analyzed the conversation.

Many started sharing memories of first seeing some of those messages in their original forms, Gen X-B led off, “I remember it being almost out of control when Tina Fey and Amy Poehler did that skit on being bitches, people flipping out that they’d call themselves bitches, they’d deign to do that. And that was in 2008!”

Gen X-A initially referenced an ‘Alanis Morrissette’ song when asked about her thoughts on bitch, she meant the Meredith Brooks song played for the group. “I remember when that came out, I was also in college at that time. I just remember it being an anthem. It was a ‘finally’ moment for people my age. It was just a big moment. I remember that so distinctly. All the girls, women at parties were screaming that song.”

Millennial A also remembered hearing the song and seeing the skit, she compared her reactions then and now, “I remember that song coming out and being like ‘oh my god this is the most empowering song I’ve heard in my whole life, this song is so me.’ It’s interesting to see it through my today lens because it’s just doesn’t seem that scandalous to me at all anymore. Not just because I’m in my 30s, I think it’s because now we have things like that Tina Fey sketch and it’s part of our culture that it’s just so not a big deal, so it’s interesting how that language has changed. I remember looking back thinking that song was about ‘owning her whatever’ but it’s really mild. It’s just a woman owning different aspects of her personality.”

Boomer B added an interesting note after hearing all the messages, “What’s interesting about that Meredith Brooks song is that it was one of the first times a woman used the word bitch. Before that, for those of you closer to my age, Elton John had “The Bitch is Back” and Hall and Oates had “Rich Girl” and the last line was ‘You’re a Rich Bitch Girl’ and growing up those songs were so taboo to my conservative Catholic parents. But those were men singing. But Meredith Brooks singing it and I was a mother, and it was so many things that I am.” This highlights research about sexist language that finds women reacting to sexist language can be more liked and respected by other women.

Some Boomers and Gen X members expressed regret at not feeling confident enough to say some of the things seen, Boomer B cited generational differences in her reaction to the Trina song. “I wished I owned myself the way younger generations have been able to own themselves and their sexuality in a man’s world.”

Gen X-B echoed similar thoughts, “I felt really old. It was really interesting, the different takes on the word bitch in those songs. Everything from Meredith Brooks, which felt like a really angry song in 1990... to ... the third song (Trina Baddest Bitch) I don’t think I’d ever heard that song, I was really surprised it came out in ‘99. I mean she just owned that and that’s not really something that you saw.”

Gen X-C found the Trina song troubling and said reading the text examples impacted her more. “The article about Hillary Clinton the last time she ran for president. My husband and I are almost exactly the same age, I’m 50. And I just remember one of the biggest arguments he and I ever had was over Hillary Clinton. I was angry and I told him I thought he didn’t like her because she was a strong feminist, and

he was incensed because he sees himself as a sensitive male. My argument back was he only likes a certain kind of feminist.

I still think to this day that she represents a type of feminism that's not accepted. If you're a quiet, demure, subversive feminist who works behinds the scenes, who isn't out in your face doing those type of things. So, then it really bothers me when they call that kind of feminist, like Hillary, a bitch. Then that is not appropriate from my perspective. It just brings up a lot for me."

For Boomer C all the messages made her think more and think about word choice in a different way. "I liked in VIBE they used 'power dynamic' and I do think that's what we're talking about here. I was thinking 'I used bitch in a positive way all the time, what do I do if I'm really mad at a woman? Then I call her a fucking bitch, that's how I know the difference.' I like the idea. Is the use of bitch still to this day involve power dynamics and who owns themselves and you know 'I'm in charge.'"

Millennial E concurred, "I feel like the word bitch, for me, is superfluid. Like you were saying, when I get called a 'fucking bitch,' I'm like 'ok, gloves are off.' But if I'm called a 'boss ass bitch' then I'm like 'cool,' I love being called a boss bitch."

Millennial B said she saw what the messages tried to do but didn't agree with the context. "I thought all the songs and the skits were using the word in an ownership thing, whether I agreed with what they were owning or not. I couldn't help but make the comparison to the N word as well. I feel both bitch and the N word are rooted in a negative, hateful, derogatory way, but pop culture is trying to spin that and make it something else now. But it's hard for me to move passed it being a negative thing. I

would never speak either of those words, but I can appreciate that it's become more of a strength thing now.”

Millennial E agreed to a degree, “It jumps back and forth so much, and I think that mimics what it does in popular culture too- where we see it jump back and forth in being used in so many different ways.”

Takeaways:

Hearing conversations amongst the generations showed researchers some of the key similarities and differences to how they reacted to the bitch messages. For older generations the messages brought nostalgic or somewhat positive reactions but didn't express any change in ideas or thinking from the messages. It helped them see how far language has evolved since they originally saw the messages to remember initial reactions compared to how they felt hearing them now.

Some millennials found the messages reinforced their ideas of power dynamics within language. For some it highlighted their use of a dual definition for bitch on a regular basis. Others acknowledged the attempt to reclaim bitch but were not swayed by the conversation or the pop culture messages.

Limitations:

This research focused specifically on women only and their generation as it relates to bitch messages, going forward there are several other options for further research.

In continuing with research focusing on how women react to bitch messages, additional layers of research could examine the reactions based on their socio-economic status, education levels, and race as it impacts their exposure and reaction to positive

bitch messages. Privilege likely plays a part in how women are exposed to and react to these messages. Culturally different races would also see a different impact and reaction to those messages.

Researchers could branch out from focusing on the female reaction and study the male response. After reading the research of how men react negatively to women who respond to sexist language it would be interesting to see if positive bitch messages impact their reactions in the same way. Researchers also find it interesting to see if there are generational implications in the male response as the generational waves of feminism are for women.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Positive bitch messages impacted women of different generations in different ways. It is clear to see generational feminism in call backs to their life experiences and family influence in how they address feminism issues.

Baby Boomers in the focus group had strong reactions, “It’s a derogatory term. It’s not usually used in a positive manner.” Gen Xers said context is key to their reaction, “It has to do with the emotion in the way it is used.” Millennials could see both sides, “I think for me it’s so fluid and it jumps back and forth so much, and I think that mimics what it does in popular culture too. Where we see it jump back and forth in being used in so many ways.”

Some millennials described how their Baby Boomer mothers reacted to the word, “I remember my mom, my household was incredibly liberal, my mom didn’t care about me using curse words flippantly. That song (Bitch) upset her. There was something about her age and her generation and that word was so weaponized against women that the idea of a woman trying to use that word in some kind of positive... I don’t even think a positive... it was just reality. One facet of that woman’s personality. Just the use of the word

was so upsetting. We had to have conversations about if that word was appropriate in that context.”

One of the most visceral rejections of the idea of reclaiming the word came from a Millennial who openly questioned if she could ever see the word in a positive light. Some Baby Boomers revealed they use the word and “own it.”

It’s also clear to see an impact of the Social Construction of Reality Theory as women of all three generations acknowledged pop culture attempts to make bitch positive. The power of language is clear in hearing the women talk first about their reactions to bitch and how angry it can make them or how empowered it can make them feel. As one millennial expressed, “when I get called a ‘fucking bitch,’ I’m like ‘ok, gloves are off.’ But if I’m called a ‘boss ass bitch’ then I’m like ‘cool,’ I love being called a boss bitch.”

Whether those attempts changed the impressions of all women is not key in gauging success. The awareness of those attempts goes far, “Both men and women saw the stigmatizing label *bitch* as less negative and supported female empowerment more after witnessing a woman label herself with this term than after witnessing another person label her with it,” (Galinsky et al., 2013).

Even if not all women are self-labeling as bitch positively, the more that some women do it and it is seen by other women then the more the message can permeate society. The act of some women choosing to self-label as bitch or use it as a term of endearment publicly or in pop culture is an ongoing influence in the use of bitch in society. This is not an all or nothing reclamation. Looking at both feminist research and the Cultivation Theory there are clear signs that pop culture is playing a role in how some

women are choosing to use bitch. While initially focusing on how exposure to crime in news and pop culture changed how viewers felt about crime or changed their perceptions of reality, the same ideas can be applied to see how a permeation of positive bitch messages will impact some aspects of societal perceptions.

Mixed messages and varied reactions don't hinder the effectiveness of positive bitch messages, Montell's research reiterated the word doesn't have to lose a negative connotation entirely. It is as simple as changing some minds, starting some conversations, and making people think about the word and how they use it.

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APPENDICES

Da Baddest Bitch by Trina (Lyrics)

I'm representing for the bitches, all eyes on your riches
No time for the little dicks
You see, the bigger the dick, the bigger the bank, the bigger the Benz
The better the chance to get close to his rich friends
I'm going after the big man, my G-string make his dick stand
Make it quick, then slow head by the nightstand
Like lightning
I want a n**** with a wedding ring, bank accounts in the Philippines
Blank note to take everything
See, I fuck him in the living room
While his children ain't home, I make him eat it while my period on
A little nasty hoe, red bone, but a classy hoe
Young jazzy hoe
And don't be scared, 'cause if you're curious, just ask me hoes

And yes, dick sucking comes quite natural
'Cause I'm the baddest bitch, what?
See, I hate hoes who take their niggas on talk shows and for hoes (y'all soft, fool)
See, if I'm ever crossed or ever caught up in the cross, and if it's your fault, hoe, I'm going
off, hoe
See, I'm unemployed with no boss, hoe
While y'all sucking dick for free, I'm broke off, hoe
See, it pays to be the boss, hoe
Shit (that's right), that's how you floss, hoes
X-rated, elevated, buck naked
And I'd probably fuck your daddy if your mammie wasn't playa-hating
'Cause I'm the baddest bitch (who's bad?)
I'm the baddest bitch (who's, who's bad?)
I got game for you young hoes, don't grow to be a dumb hoe
That's a no-no
See, if you off the chains, stay ahead of the game
Save up, buy a condo
Sell the pussy by the grands, and in months you own a Benz
Another week, a set of rims
See, if I had the chance to be a virgin again
I'd be fucking by the time I'm ten
See, off-glass is my motto, dick sucking in the auto'
Quick fucking 'bout to follow
On the back of the truck, or when I'm dead-ass drunk
But I don't get high though
I never took it up the ass, often tried, but I pass
And from what I heard, it ain't bad
I'm a curious bitch who took off to get broke off

From ya baby's dad, 'cause I'm the baddest bitch

Unapologetic Bitch by Madonna (lyrics)

Woke up this morning feeling that you were gone
I thought awhile, but I'm finally moving on
Said it, did it, hit it, quit it
Then you let it go
See you tryin' to call me, but I blocked you on the phone
It took a minute, but now I'm feeling strong
It almost killed me, but I'm better off alone
Now you sayin' that you're sorry, I don't wanna know
Better face the fact you had to go
It might sound like I'm an unapologetic bitch
But sometimes you know I gotta call it like it is
It might sound like I'm an unapologetic bitch
But sometimes you know I gotta call it like it is
You know you never really knew how much you loved me 'til you lost me
Did you?
You know you never really knew how much your selfish bullshit cost me
Well, fuck you
It might sound like I'm an
It might sound like I'm an
I know you'd like it if I stayed home and cried
But that ain't gonna happen, here's the reason why
When we did it, I'll admit it, wasn't satisfied
When the gun was loaded you were never on my side
I'm popping bottles that you can't even afford
I'm throwing parties and you won't get in the door
Said it, did it, loved it, hated it

I don't care no more

Tell me how it feels to be ignored

It might sound like I'm an unapologetic bitch

But sometimes you know I gotta call it like it is

It might sound like I'm an unapologetic bitch

But sometimes you know I gotta call it like it is

You know you never really knew how much you loved me, till you lost me?

Did you?

You know you never knew how much your selfish bullshit cost me?

Well, fuck you

“Bitch” by Meredith Brooks (lyrics)

I hate the world today
You're so good to me, I know, but I can't change
Tried to tell you but you look at me like maybe
I'm an angel underneath
Innocent and sweet
Yesterday I cried
You must have been relieved to see the softer side
I can understand how you'd be so confused
I don't envy you
I'm a little bit of everything all rolled into one
I'm a bitch, I'm a lover
I'm a child, I'm a mother
I'm a sinner, I'm a saint
I do not feel ashamed
I'm your Hell, I'm your dream
I'm nothing in between
You know you wouldn't want it any other way
So take me as I am
This may mean you'll have to be a stronger man
Rest assured that when I start to make you nervous
And I'm going to extremes
Tomorrow I will change and today won't mean a thing
Just when you think you got me figured out
The season's already changing
I think it's cool, you do what you do
And don't try to save me

Saturday Night Live skit transcript

FEY: And finally, the most important Women's News item there is, we have our first serious female presidential candidate in Hillary Clinton.

And yet, women have come so far as feminists, that they don't feel obligated to vote for a candidate just because she's a woman.

Women today feel perfectly free to make whatever choice Oprah tells them to. Which raises the question, why are people abandoning Hillary for Obama?

Some say that they're put off by the fact that Hillary can't control her husband, and that we would end up with co-presidents.

'Cause that would be terrible, having two intelligent, qualified people working together to solve problems. Ugh.

Why would you let Starsky talk to Hutch? I wanna watch that show, Starsky.

You know, what is it, America? What is it, are you weirded out that they're married?

'Cause I can promise you that they are having exactly as much sex with each other as George Bush and Jeb Bush are.

Then there is the physical scrutiny of her physical appearance.

Rush Limbaugh, the Jeff Conaway of right-wing radio, said that he doesn't think America is ready to watch their president quote "turn into an old lady in front of them." Really?

They didn't seem to mind when Ronald Reagan did that.

Maybe what bothers me the most is that people say that Hillary is a bitch.

Let me say something about that: Yeah, she is.

And so am I and so is this one. (pointing to Amy Poehler)

POEHLER: Yeah, deal with it.

FEY: Know what? Bitches get stuff done.

Like back in grammar school, they could have had priests teaching you but, no, they had those tough old nuns who slept on cots and who could hit ya and you HATED those bitches, but at the end of the school year you sure KNEW the capital of Vermont!

So COME ON Texas and Ohio get on board, it's not too late!

BITCH IS THE NEW BLACK!

“The Bitch America Needs”

There are so many ways to be a bitch when you’re Hillary Clinton. You can refuse to give up a thriving law career when your husband is elected governor of Arkansas. Later, when he becomes president of the United States, you can infuriate housewives across the nation with a dismissive reference to baking cookies.

You can be too loud, too ambitious, too emotional, not emotional enough. You can say things and do things that are still considered the exclusive realm of white men. You can rally millions of people to vote for you. You can do anything and everything, and it doesn’t matter: The word “bitch,” more than almost any other, will cling to the back of your smart pantsuits forever.

But what if that’s not a bad thing?

The fact that “bitch” has become both an epithet and an honorific for Mrs. Clinton has turned out to be one of the least weird things about this election year. In a race that is indelibly colored by gender and sexism, it’s also potentially transformative. Few of the women who choose to venture into the male-dominated sphere of American politics are hothouse flowers, of course, but Mrs. Clinton’s long journey to the center of presidential contention mirrors a larger impatience with a time-honored tradition of going along to get along. This is not just in politics either: From film stars to athletes to teenage activists, outspoken women from all arenas are increasingly visible, much to the concern of sexists everywhere.

“Bitch” has long been an effective way to silence women because so many of us have been brought up to believe that remaining likable to others — even those we ourselves don’t like — is paramount. For instance, after the candidates’ forum on national security on Wednesday, Reince Priebus, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, included this in his criticism of Mrs. Clinton’s demeanor while she answered questions: “No smile.”

For more than 20 years in American politics, Mrs. Clinton has embodied what we might call Classic Bitch. She’s perceived as an interloper who challenges or threatens masculinity, entitlement and a status-quo worldview; she’s the scandal magnet who can seem as heartless and venal as any old-boy’s-club member. Worst of all, she’s the woman who accepts that she will be disliked and carries on anyway.

As a first lady, a senator and the secretary of state, Mrs. Clinton had bitch bona fides that ran counter to her husband’s public image as a genial, thumbs-up Bubba of the people. As a presidential candidate, they’ve proved cartoonishly polarizing. “How do we beat the bitch?” a woman asked at a John McCain rally in 2007, to an eruption of applause. (Senator McCain himself called it an “excellent question.”)

This time around, the giddiness of bitch-slapping the candidate is at the forefront of her current opponent’s campaign. Donald J. Trump supporters sell T-shirts emblazoned with “Trump That Bitch!” One reporter noted that mentions of Mrs. Clinton at a Trump rally in Greensboro, N.C., were greeted with gleeful shouts of the word; this summer, a “school-age” child yelled, “Take the bitch down!” repeatedly at another rally. When

asked where he might have picked up such language, his mother answered, “Democratic schools.”

But there’s a whole other group of people embracing and amplifying Mrs. Clinton’s bitchiness. The person showcased and celebrated in Tumblrs, photo captions and satirical statements from the candidate herself is revolutionary not just for her political stature, but for demonstrating that likability is no longer the heaviest cudgel a woman can wield.

The power of “bitch” to shame is, with a perspective adjustment, also its power to shine. All that’s required to reframe the word is to point out that the things bitches are often guilty of can be both unexceptional and necessary: flexing influence, standing up for their beliefs, not acting according to feminine norms and expectations. Mrs. Clinton’s efforts to address her rigid persona have been cringeworthy, to put it mildly; watching her gamely do the Whip with Ellen DeGeneres or awkwardly spoof herself alongside her “Saturday Night Live” doppelgänger Kate McKinnon is doubly painful because it seems so unnecessary.

She’s not a comedian, definitely not a dancer, not even someone who can — unlike her husband — look authentically excited amid a shower of balloons. The bitch in dark glasses and pursed lips who became an internet sensation, the bitch who sighed and brushed invisible lint from her shoulders while being grilled on Benghazi, the bitch who cares deeply about winning and doesn’t care who knows it — that’s the candidate we need.

Aligning Mrs. Clinton with “bitch,” a term that’s retained its potency through countless reclamations and adoptions across race and gender, turns out to be the one thing people can agree on at the moment. For those who hate her, no other word will do (though the truly dedicated don’t hesitate to throw in other derogatory options for further emphasis). She aggravates their longstanding discomfort with a woman whose power isn’t situated within the private spheres of marriage or family.

For those who want her to be president, which is not synonymous with liking her, she’s the human embodiment of a shrug emoji, dodging flamethrowers from both sides and continuing to take care of business. Her supporters know that worrying about other people’s discomfort with powerful women has never served female politicians — or any woman — very well.

It’s not just that “Bitches get stuff done,” as Tina Fey and Amy Poehler pointed out in a hilarious defense of Mrs. Clinton back in 2008. It’s that they reject the expectations, assumptions and double standards that have always dogged women in the American political system. As one of the memes Mrs. Clinton inspires might put it, we need a bitch who can do both.

“The Word a Headline Didn’t Need”

You can buy “Trump That Bitch” buttons and T-shirts on Amazon to show your disdain for Hillary Clinton. You can hear the word shouted at rallies for Donald J. Trump and spread across Twitter. At one event last month, a school-aged boy standing with his mother yelled out, “Take the bitch down.”

Now, you can see the word applied to Clinton in a headline on the Opinion pages of The New York Times: “The Bitch America Needs.”

Those words appeared over the weekend above a piece that tried to reclaim that particular bit of obscenity from those trying to degrade women with it. “For more than 20 years in American politics, Mrs. Clinton has embodied what we might call Classic Bitch,” wrote Andi Zeisler, founder of a feminist organization, appropriately named Bitch Media. “She’s perceived as an interloper who challenges or threatens masculinity, entitlement and a status-quo worldview; she’s the scandal magnet who can seem as heartless and venal as any old-boy’s-club member. Worst of all, she’s the woman who accepts that she will be disliked and carries on anyway.”

Zeisler wrote a provocative piece, with plenty of good political history on the word, including its use against Clinton back in 2007, when someone at a public forum asked Senator John McCain, “How do we beat the bitch?” McCain responded, “Excellent question.”

Zeisler’s piece was an interesting read, strongly pro-Clinton, and pro-feminist. But several readers took issue both with the headline and the editors’ decision to use it.

This one from Paula DiPerna of New York City was typical: “I know the piece is mere opinion, but it nevertheless represents a new low in titillation journalism, as if written by a gleeful child who just got permission to use curse words. It is a disservice to the idea of public good in that, disguised as feminism, it actually delivers nothing but tweet fodder to anti-Clinton forces.”

I sought out the Opinion editor Rachel Dry to ask her how the essay came about as well as the concerns highlighted in DiPerna’s letter, some of which I share. Dry says she commissioned the piece because she wanted someone to wrestle with how this particular profanity is being used against Clinton. “Certainly the word focuses one’s attention,” Dry said to my questions about its use in the headline and so frequently in the story. “But that’s what the essay is about.”

I did find the essay readable and smart, and given that the Op-Ed pages are intended to throw out the welcome mat to all views, it’s hard to argue that this wasn’t a worthy offering. But I too was jolted by the headline. Have we really reached the point that it’s O.K. for The Times to refer to Clinton in bold type as “The Bitch America Needs”?

Dry said she was unaware of a previous time when the word was used in a headline.

What bothered me about the headline was that it seemed to come from the voice of The Times, at least when you come on it cold, as all readers do. It’s one thing for an author,

under her own byline and in the context of her ideas, to write the type of opinion piece Zeisler did. But the word bitch — particularly when it's lobbed at you across a room or on the street or in social media — is surely intended as crude and demeaning. I suspect that's the same way Trump supporters use it. And it seems to be the way the Clinton campaign takes it, as it has made clear in the past.

Dry says that when opinion editors write the headlines, they are distilling the author's perspective, not the view or the voice of The Times.

That may be, but referring to the first female presidential nominee as the right bitch for the job brings an air of legitimacy to the word that seems beyond where we are at this moment in history. The mainstream may someday apply this term to women who stand up for themselves and bust through feminine stereotypes. Until then, it remains an insult, degrading and misogynistic.

“How Trina’s Sex Positivity Paved the Way for a Generation of Raunchy Rap”

Trina may have the most iconic introduction to rap of all time. On 1998’s, “Nann Nigga,” a high-pitched unfamiliar voice infiltrates the speakers in a battle of the sexes between Miami rappers Trick Daddy and then 18-year-old Katrina Taylor. The woman with the piercing voice immediately makes her presence known, as she spars with Trick with a veracity that demands attention, refuting every one of Trick Daddy’s claims. He leads the song with insults, ones that would be problematic today, including “I’ll fight a bitch like you,” but she upped the ante. Pushing it further and filthier than any newcomer—man or woman—would have the guts to, Katrina “Trina” Taylor was “da baddest” from the beginning. Who else was cutting down the male ego and bragging about their ability to “fuck five or six best friends” in the first four bars of their first song? Trina was already teaching her course in savagery twenty years ago, long before that became Rihanna and other sex positive stars’ ministries.

While at the time rap’s other leading ladies were using cleverly placed euphemisms to refer to their sexual prowess, Trina just said what she meant. It didn’t get more raw than her telling the world, “I let him eat it with my period on.” She was unfiltered in her delivery, a technique she’s carried throughout her career. With nine albums, she’s released more albums than any of the women critics pitted her against, or any men for that matter. Of those releases, the one to receive the most acclaim since her debut is *Still Da Baddest*, which turns 10 this month. With *Still Da Baddest*, Trina strengthened the legacy she had cemented in hip-hop culture but with brash, unselfconscious lyrics that were straightforward about sex and paid no mind to the male gaze.

Still Da Baddest opens with a futuristic rendering of Trina’s genetic makeup on the intro, referencing her full hips and the fat ass that caused men to pull over. It may be slightly superficial but it’s an accurate depiction of the way Trina manipulates different elements of herself on the album. She talks recklessly about her past with Lil Wayne (“It ain’t over ‘til I say we’re finished”), and conjures up X-rated imagery like her previous efforts, but this album had more to offer. Appropriately named, it is an extension of the Trina we’d met in 2000 with *Da Baddest Bitch*, but at 29 she had a different sense of who she was as an artist and what she represented than she did at 21.

Da Baddest Bitch, the prequel to *Still Da Baddest*, was Trina’s hustler manifesto. It’s what made her not just a bad bitch, but the baddest of all. The title single was her blueprint for how to scheme to the top, “Don’t grow to be a dumb hoe, that’s a no-no/See if you off the chain/Stay ahead of the game, save up and buy a condo,” she raps. On “Pull Over,” another single, she adopts the energy of Miami’s rhythm helmed by Uncle Luke. But it’s on deep cuts like “69 Ways” and “I Don’t Need You” that Trina reestablishes her risqué reputation we’d previously seen on “Nann Nigga.” Her presence on the song showed that rap didn’t just cater to a male audience. “I was trying to figure it out. Like, do all these women talk like me?” Trina asked in a 2017 interview with *Miami New Times*. “...My verse, it’s very provocative, it’s Luke’s Miami, it’s strip clubs, it’s all of that. That’s the culture.” Her debut laid the groundwork for *Still Da Baddest*, which was released in a drought of female perspectives. Hip-hop’s invisible rule suggests only one woman can reign at a time, and in 2008 Trina’s lane was clear. Remy Ma and Lil Kim were facing legal trouble at the time, rendering them ineligible. *Still Da Baddest* peaked

at No. 1 on Billboard's Rap Chart and Trina was at the top of her game. There was a market excluding the wants and needs of women.

Still Da Baddest picked up where Da Baddest Bitch left off, rightfully earning its parental advisory sticker. "Phone Sexx," an ode to phone boning, is buried low in Still Da Baddest's tracking but "Look Back at Me" is as close as it gets to audible porn. With moans interspersed with Killer Mike's vocals on the hook, "Look Back At Me" is not for the faint of heart. Trina cloaks her sexual requests in brash metaphors and similes that can't help but summon smirks. She opens the song with "I got an ass so big like the sun/Hope you got a mile for a dick, I wanna run." For four minutes, she compares herself to the best parts of nature, as she does in her demand for cunnilingus with "Smell it like a flower, my pussy is a rose/Come a little closer, I wanna fuck your nose." The best part of "Look Back at Me" isn't Trina's prose, but the agency in which she stands in her sexuality. Women in hip-hop are often used as accessories for how men assert their own sexual endeavors, but Trina makes it clear that she's not a prop. "Look back at you for what?/I'm trying to concentrate on bustin' me a nut," she says, proving orgasms aren't reserved just for men. Before she exits, she clowns her partner for what she feels was a subpar experience. "Wasting my time fucking all offbeat/Pussy nigga next time when you see me don't speak." It's a pretty wild song, but under the shock value of her lyrics is the ability for women to control their own sex lives, whether you get a call back or not.

Trina was the template for the sex positivity that permeates not only rap culture, but pop culture today. She's present in the NSFW nature of Chicago rapper CupcakKe. With songs like "Vagina" and "Spider-Man Dick." CupcakKe follows Trina's lead in leaving nothing to the imagination. "I want to eat yo' dick/ But I can't fuck up my nails/ So I'mma pick it up with chopsticks," CupcakKe raps on "Depththroat." Trina's legacy is about more than just being overtly sexual and resonates in the careers of other women we've come to love. On Sucka Free, Nicki Minaj's sophomore mixtape, she flipped "Still Da Baddest," the only original female song to live on that compilation. Minaj even took a page from Trina's book when she broke headlines with "Anaconda." Trina's hustler mentality is present in the grind of Liberty City newcomers City Girls, as they plot and scheme their ways through the pockets of men on their strip club inspired "Where Da Bag At?" And though Rihanna may not formally be a rapper, she channeled Trina's "diamond princess" persona for the visuals like "Pour It Up" and boasts about her savagery to a Miami backdrop on "Needed Me." Without Trina, there would be no CupcakKe, no City Girls, and maybe no post- Rated R Rihanna. But never forget Trina did it first. She was once the baddest, and even still the baddest, but most importantly, always the baddest.



Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 02/28/2020
Application Number: IRB-20-64
Proposal Title: Good Bitch. Bad Bitch: generational responses to bitch language in pop culture

Principal Investigator: Katy Huggins
Co-Investigator(s):
Faculty Adviser: LORI MCKINNON
Project Coordinator:
Research Assistant(s):

Processed as: Exempt
Exempt Category:

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in 45CFR46.

This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which continuing review is not required. As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Sincerely,
Oklahoma State University IRB



School of Media and Strategic Communications

Project Title: Good Bitch. Bad Bitch: generational responses to bitch language in pop culture

Investigator: Caitlin Huggins

Purpose:

This study will research how women of different generations react to language attempting to redefine 'bitch' as a positive thing. Women of three different generations are being focused on to see how their age and life experience impacts the reaction to the messages.

Duration of Study:

The study will take place over 2-3 hours in one day.

Background Information

You are invited to be in a research study of reaction to messages in pop culture. You were selected as a possible participant because of your gender, generation and willingness to participate. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

This study is being conducted by: Caitlin Huggins, under the direction of Dr. Lori McKinnon.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

You will take part in a 30-minute focus group and be given a series of questions, following that you will be shown selected bitch messages from pop culture and asked another series of questions.

The focus group setting will allow you and other participants to interact and share ideas about the messages and reactions.

The focus group will be recorded on video to allow the researcher to examine their responses. The video will be of the full room, no close-up shots of you or any participants, but your face will be recorded. The videos will be transcribed by the researcher and deleted within a month of the focus group.

Participation in the study involves the following time commitment: The study will take place over 2-3 hours in one day.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

The study involves the following foreseeable risks:

You have the risk of emotional distress, sensitivities of hearing curse words, and any inconveniences of attending the focus group.

There are no direct benefits to you. More broadly, this study may help the researchers learn more about gender and pop culture and may help understand how pop culture can be used to break stereotypes and stigmas.

Compensation

You will receive no payment for participating in this study.

Confidentiality

Data will be stored on a private laptop owned by the researcher and no one will have access beyond the researcher. Data will be reported qualitatively in analysis of the reaction to the pop culture messages.

Because of the nature of the data, I cannot guarantee your data will be confidential and it may be possible that others will know what you have reported. The researchers will make every effort to ensure that information about you remains confidential but cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your identity will not be revealed in any publications, presentations, or reports resulting from this research study. However, it may be possible for someone to recognize your particular story/situation/response. While we will ask all group members to keep the information, they hear in this group confidential, we cannot guarantee that everyone will do so.

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in research.

It is unlikely, but possible, that others responsible for research oversight may require us to share the information you give us from the study to ensure that the research was conducted safely and appropriately. We will only share your information if law or policy requires us to do so.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time. The alternative is to not participate. You can skip any questions that make you uncomfortable and can stop the interview/survey at any time.

Contacts and Questions

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human research participants at Oklahoma State University has reviewed and approved this study. If you have questions about the research study itself, please contact the Principal Investigator at 918-906-1774 or Caitlin.huggins@gmail.com. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer or would simply like to speak with someone other than the research team about concerns regarding this study, please contact the IRB at (405) 744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have my questions answered. I consent to participate in the study.

Indicate Yes or No:

I give consent to be videotaped during this study:

Yes No

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

Date: _____

VITA

Caitlin Huggins

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: GOOD BITCH, BAD BITCH: GENERATIONAL RESPONSES TO BITCH MESSAGES IN POP CULTURE

Major Field: Mass Communications

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Mass Communications at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2023.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Communications at University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma in 2004.

Experience:

Digital Director, KJRH: 2020-present:

- Won Great Plains Journalism award for coverage of Julius Jones exoneration, Tulsa Race Massacre centennial

Digital Content Manager: FOX23: 2014-2020:

- Won Edward R. Murrow Award for digital coverage of officer-involved shooting in Tulsa.

Digital Content Producer: FOX23: 2011-2014:

- Lead digital to a station National Murrow Award for coverage of a deadly tornado in Moore, Ok.

News Producer: FOX23, Tulsa: 2003-2011:

- Nominated for two regional Emmy awards.
- Won a Murrow award for medium market newscast.