

Gender Ideologies in Dance Sport Television Commentary:

So You Think You Can Dance?

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Abstract

The popularity of dance television series has risen in the United States. Sport media often produces gender ideologies that reflect hegemonic masculinity, which might limit female and male participation in physical activity such as dance. In this study judging commentary was examined, through the lens of the framing theory, toward dancers on the dance television series *So You Think You Can Dance?* Season 8. The amount of categorical comments and the content were analyzed to determine if either female and/or male dancers were marginalized. The findings support past sport media research and dance research showing the marginalization of female dancers through over-sexualization and highlighting femininity, while male dancers were hypermasculinized by highlighting strength and power.

Table of Contents

I. List of Tables.....	iv
II. Introduction.....	1
III. Review of Literature.....	2
A. History of Dance in the United States.....	2
B. Popularity of Dance.....	3
C. Sport Media.....	5
1. Patterns in broadcast print and television.....	5
a. Amount.....	6
b. Type.....	7
i. Newspaper coverage.....	7
ii. Television commentary.....	8
2. Patterns sustain male power and privilege.....	9
D. Applying Sport Media Analysis to Dance.....	10
i. Amount.....	10
ii. Type.....	11
E. Significance of Study.....	14
F. Hypotheses.....	16
IV. Method.....	18
A. Research Strategy.....	18
B. Role of Researcher.....	18
C. Population Selection.....	19
D. Dance Television Show Background.....	19
E. Data Collection.....	21
F. Data Analysis.....	21

V. Results.....	23
A. Physicality/Athleticism/Power.....	23
B. Emotional/Expressive.....	25
C. Aesthetic Style.....	27
D. Objectification.....	27
E. Competitive.....	29
F. Mixed Messages.....	29
G. Versatility.....	30
VI. Discussion.....	32
A. Limitations.....	33
Future Research.....	34
B. Conclusion.....	35
C. Summary.....	36
VII. References.....	38

List of Tables

I. Table 1: Categories for Coding Data.....	55
II. Table 2: Data Coding for Categories: <i>Amount</i>	56

Introduction

The popularity of dance has grown over time in the United States (Lockyer, 2012). One reason dance has grown in popularity is due in part to increased visibility of dance on televised media. For example, television series such as: *America's Best Dance Crew* on MTV (2008 – 2012), *Dancing with the Stars* on ABC (2005 – 2012), and *So You Think You Can Dance?* on Fox (2005 – 2012), emerged over the last few years. Dance, like sport, is accessible and can be empowering in promoting physical activity; it also provides the opportunity to challenge and reinforce gender ideologies (Dyck & Archetti, 2003). Sport media research contains a large literature related to gender ideologies (Berstein & Blain, 2003; Billings & Angelini, 2010; Cooky, Wachs, Messner, & Dworkin, 2010; Crossman, Vincent, & Speed, 2007; Daddario & Wigley, 2007; Kian, Vincent, & Mondello, 2008; Messner & Cooky, 2010), and those same theories can be utilized to examine televised dance shows. Framing theory, a common theory used in sports media research, provides a utilitarian lens to examine gender ideologies present in dance media for it helps researchers interrogate the construction of reality for viewers, as well as a way to determine what is important and meaningful culturally (Graber, 1989). Studying gender ideologies in dance can reveal, and in part help challenge, the current presence of male hegemony in the world of dance. Through framing, content organized by the producers for audiences can be understood (Goffman, 1974). Given the popularity of dance shows on televised media, very little research on sport media has included dance. No research to date in the area of sport media has employed framing theory to examine dominant gender ideologies in dance. The purpose of this study is to examine if

dance sport media challenges or reinforces dominant gender ideologies, which in turn can uphold or challenge masculine hegemony and male power.

Review of Literature

History of Dance in the United States

The popular appeal of dance as a social tradition is apparent in many cultures including the United States (Dyck & Archetti, 2003). Due to the continuous influx of immigrants into the United States dance continues to be influenced by other cultures in ways that alter dominant ideologies with the body in relation to dance. Dance styles continued to evolve and shift throughout the centuries beginning with social dancing, or group dances, which began during the Renaissance from the 14th to the 16th century. Social dancing progressed into ‘refined’ coupling dances, such as ballroom, from Europe in the 19th century (Nadel & Strauss, 2003). Ballet’s popular style in the United States stems from 18th century European ballet. Male ballet dancers dominated the European dance scene in the 18th century, while females occupied secondary (smaller or background) dance roles. Then the popularity of dance shifted during the Romantic era in the United States to the domination of the female ballerina on the dance stage due to the invention of lighter, shorter skirts and pointe shoes for females, and increasingly attracted the attention of the male audience (Burt, 1995; Polasek & Roper, 2011). Dance transformed from a world where males held the spotlight and positions of power, to a world where females began dominating the dance stage, however males continued to occupy important positions as choreographers and directors (Adair, 1992). Scholars argued that the male majority, in positions of power, began to shape the sexualization and

objectification of the female dancer for their enjoyment and benefit. The male gaze began to define the course of the gendered female dancing body (Polasek & Roper, 2011), and connected the ideas of gender in the form of social ideologies and the representation of gendered body relations in dance (Mulveys, 1989).

The 20th century brought informal, looser ragtime one-stepping and two-stepping dance styles followed by the overhaul of social culture etiquette and a return to elegance and beauty with the foxtrot ballroom dance style (Nadel & Strauss, 2003). A shift away from the structured, ‘proper’ ballroom and ballet styles occurred in the 20th century as modern dance styles began to become more prominent (Nadel & Strauss, 2003). The emergence of modern dance in the early 1900’s presented a method of movement lacking in technique initially, which provided an uncivilized approach to dance compared to the ‘refined’ ballet and ballroom styles. As the shifting of dance styles began to expose different approaches to movement, the popularity of dance in the United States continued to grow—especially as dance was introduced through mainstream media. The growing popularity of dance then provided new and increased opportunities for dominant gender ideologies to be both transformed and reinforced.

Popularity of Dance

The popularity of dance shows on mainstream broadcast television has exposed millions of viewers to a myriad of dance forms most would not otherwise have exposure to. It was not until the early 1930’s that dance was experienced, consumed, and promoted through televised media. The BBC presented dances from Margot Fonteyn (a famous ballet dancer who dominated British ballet for more than 40 years) in 1937 and promoted dance in a main media medium for the first time in Europe (Lockyer, 2012). The earliest

presence of dance on television in the United States began with the *Arthur Murray Show*, which aired on ABC originally in 1950 and closed on NBC in 1960, which hosted a variety of entertainments including ballroom dance performances (Internet Movie Database (IMDb), 2012). *American Bandstand* followed in the mid-late 1950's (1952 – 1957), which incorporated teenagers dancing to the popular music of the time (TV guide, 2012). A few years later *Hollywood A Go Go* (1964-65) appeared as a music and dance party series featuring *Gazzarri* background dancers (Freyler, 2012). *Soul Train* aired from 1971-2006 with a focus on a dance party to rhythm and blues, and hip hop music (IMDb, 2012). It was not until 1976 that a major United States television broadcasting station (PBS) produced a series highlighting only dance—the show was called *Dance in America*. The mid-1970's marked the first time the general public in the United States were exposed to dance on the screen and it became immediately popular (Nadel & Strauss, 2003). Since the appearance of *Dance in America*, dance shows began to appear more regularly over the decades including: *Dance Fever* (1979-87) where couples competed against one another with celebrity judges scoring them (Retroland, 2011), *Solid Gold* (Paramount 1980-88) with an emphasis on Hip hop music and dance (Pareles, 1986), *Club MTV* (MTV 1985-1992), and *Dance Party USA* (USA Network 1986-92) (IMDb, 2012). In the 1990's, *In Living Color*, introduced a variety comedy show highlighting a group of female dancers called *Fly Girls* (Fox 1990 – 1994). Most of these shows incorporated an aspect of dance in different styles and forms, but very few focused solely on dance as performance.

Today dance shows focusing only on dance are more prevalent in prime time slots on major television networks than at any time in history including: ABC's *Dancing With*

The Stars (2005-2012) attracting 17.8 million viewers during the 2012 finale episode, MTV's *America's Best Dance Crew* (2008-2012) averaging 1.9 million viewers during their 2011 season, and Fox's *So You Think You Can Dance?* (2005-2012) with an average of 5.0 million viewers per episode during their 2011 season (Nielsen Television Ratings Data, 2012). Within the last decade, the dance television series populating prime time television have created a high level of acceptance for styles of dance rarely seen or covered in media, such as social or coupled dance styles (Bauknecht, 2009).

Dance as a physical activity has the ability to reflect and communicate existing ideas and institutions, stimulate decision-making in relation to social roles, and challenge or reinforce gender ideologies (Blacking, 1985), as well as incorporate physical activity movement in association with gendered roles (Frith 1978; Gerstner, 2002; McRobbie, 1984; Mungham, 1976, Polasek & Roper, 2011). Especially with the growing popularity and exposure to millions of viewers in mainstream media, dance as a relevant and important cultural institution has the ability to influence social roles and provide a medium for the creation and continuation of social behaviors (Dyck & Archetti, 2003).

Sport Media

Patterns in broadcast print and television. Past research on physical activity in the media related to gender has mostly focused on sport within two frames of study: 1) amount and, 2) type of exposure. Physical activity or sport in the media is a major institution and has the power to influence what society values and believes to be relevant and important (Gerstner, 2002; Koivula, 1999). When it comes to sport, the majority of spectators experience athletic events through the media (Koivula, 1999). The power of the media has influenced gendered activities even though it is not a true lived experience

(Hardin & Greer, 2009). Media constructs existing ideas about social roles and produces ideas about gender, thus positioning roles as either norms or ‘othered’ outsiders (Beck & Bosshart, 2003; Berstein & Blain, 2003; Blain, Boyle, & O’Donnell, 1993). Specifically, television has the power of producing implicit learning of stereotyped ideas about gender roles (Reber, 1989). From past sport media research two major patterns have surfaced where women are: 1) underrepresented or rarely seen in proportion to participation (Billings & Angelini, 2010; Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002; Crossman et al., 2007; Koivula, 1999; Messner & Cooky, 2010; Messner, Duncan, & Cooky, 2003), and 2) marginalized and sexualized, while physical competence and athleticism is secondary (Berstein & Blain, 2003; Billings & Angelini, 2010; Billings et al., 2002; Christopherson, Janning, & McConnel, 2002; Cooky et al., 2010; Daddario & Wigley, 2007; Duncan, Williams, Jensen, & Messner, 1990; Halbert & Latimer, 1994; Kian et al., 2008; Messner & Cooky, 2010; Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993).

Amount. Research focusing on the amount of sport media coverage in relation to gender has incorporated both media in the form of print and televised broadcasts (Billings & Angelini, 2010; Billings et al., 2002; Crossman et al., 2007; Koivula, 1999; Messner & Cooky, 2010; Messner et al., 2003). Based on the data from both print and televised media, women are consistently underrepresented compared to their male counterparts (Billings & Angelini, 2010; Billings et al., 2002; Crossman et al., 2007; Duncan & Messner, 2005; Koivula, 1999) and overall there is an absence of women’s sports coverage (Messner & Cooky, 2010; Messner et al., 2003).

In newspaper coverage, male athletes appear significantly more often, both in articles and photographs compared to female athletes (Crossman et al., 2007; Vincent &

Crossman, 2012). In televised sports coverage there is a lack of coverage and airtime for female athletes (Billings et al., 2008; Koivula, 1999; Messner et al., 2003), with little to no change compared to past research studies (Duncan & Messner, 2005; Messner & Cooky, 2010). In fact, in Messner and Cooky's (2010) research they documented televised sport media coverage on major news outlets of female athletes is at a historic low (1.6%). Specific to sports commentary, female athletes also receive less commentary focus than males (Billings & Angelini, 2010; Billing et al., 2002). Not only is the amount of coverage important, analyzing the quality of sport media coverage for both men's and women's sports is essential to discover patterns of social values, including gender ideologies, defined in sport contexts (Koivula, 1999).

Type. Sports media researchers have also focused on the type of coverage in print (pictures and text) and television (commentary), which have highlighted the female athlete through sexuality while minimizing athletic competence, therefore marginalizing and reinforcing traditional gender ideologies (Berstein & Blain, 2003; Billings & Angelini, 2010; Billings et al., 2002; Christopherson et al., 2002; Cooky et al., 2010; Daddario & Wigley, 2007; Duncan et al., 1990; Halbert & Laitimer, 1994; Kian et al., 2008; Messner & Cooky, 2010; Messner et al., 1993).

Newspaper coverage. Researchers have also examined the type of gender representation in newspaper coverage, and have found in order to be successful women must conform to expectations about femininity (Christopherson et al., 2002). The feminine stereotype reflected in the language is prevalent throughout newspaper coverage of women's sports such as descriptors used to associate women as sex objects such as, 'She must have played with boys to get that good', as well as comments about sexual

orientation, 'straight is great, but gay is nowhere' (Kian et al., 2008), therefore females are 'othered' compared to their 'normal' male counter-parts. Female athletes have been framed as 'young ladies of class' compared to males who play, according to reporters, with aggressive and progressive language such as, 'attacking the hoop', where the female basketball players only 'went to the hoop' (Cooky et al., 2010; Duncan et al., 1990).

Television Commentary. Sports media researchers, who study sport narrative or commentary in television coverage, have analyzed type of coverage with a focus on gender (Berstein & Blain, 2003; Billings & Angelini, 2010; Billings et al., 2002; Daddario & Wigley, 2007; Halbert & Latimer, 1994; Messner & Cooky, 2010; Messner et al., 1993). Not only does language appear in the newspaper coverage, but commentator language is also an important indicator of the reproduction of traditional gender ideologies such as referring to female athletes as 'girls' or 'young ladies', and male athletes as 'men' (Berstein & Blain, 2003).

Looking to past research specific to televised sports media narratives there is also evidence for gender roles emphasizing female sexuality and male superiority. Female athletes are presented in a sarcastic manner, as objects of ridicule such as 'gag sports', sexual objects, and only deemed newsworthy when physical violence or problems within the sport were involved (Messner & Cooky, 2010). The emphasis on male athlete superiority is constructed through language which incorporates strength and intelligence, as well as focusing on size and parts of their bodies, where females are typically consoled for their lack of experience and their backgrounds (Billings & Angelini, 2010; Billings et al., 2002). Women are rarely constructed as just athletes and primarily constructed as 'othered' such as wives and girlfriends, and losses are attributed to stress, nerves, and

anxiety, while males are emphasized for their power and strength in athletic performance (Daddario & Wigley, 2007).

Commentators continue to create differences between the languages used towards female and male athletes (Halbert & Latimer, 1994; Messner et al., 1993). Researchers have documented continued marginalization of female athletes in sport (Billings & Angelini, 2010; Daddario & Wigley, 2007; Kian et al., 2008; Messner & Cooky, 2010). Through the sports media complex, the lack of seriousness associated with the treatment of females in sport, pushes females to be ‘othered’ compared to males superior athletic abilities, disadvantages women, and reinforces the narrow views of gender norming in association with hegemonic masculinity (Berstein & Blain, 2003; Billings & Angelini, 2010; Billings et al., 2002; Christopherson et al., 2002; Cooky et al., 2010; Daddario & Wigley, 2007; Duncan et al., 1990; Halbert & Laitimer, 1994; Kian et al., 2008; Messner & Cooky, 2010; Messner et al., 1993).

Patterns sustain male power and privilege. Scholars argue that gender ideologies are often produced and reproduced in sport media (Billings & Angelini, 2010; Billings et al., 2002; Messner & Cooky, 2010). These social roles reflect dominant culture as a way of gaining control over people and maintaining the status quo (Dayan & Katz, 1992; Green, 1999; Johnson, 1992), and create a gendered hierarchy where men are privileged over women. Stereotypes are produced and are products of social systems in order to categorize and organize the dominating groups (Brandt & Carsetens, 2005). Categorizing physical abilities leads to idealizing bodies, specific to gender, based on standards as the accepted forms of hegemonic social conduct. Pressure to fit within these social constructs of gender force the hegemonic system of masculinity and femininity

(Buckley & Carter, 2005; Washington & Karen, 2001). Even males are expected to subscribe to the masculine domain within the sport complex, therefore subduing tendencies considered to be feminine such as sensitivity (Hargreaves, 1991; Kidd, 1990). Hegemony theory, coined by Gramsci, defines a form of control by a dominant group over another, which uses ideology to manipulate the subordinate group into accepting these 'natural' roles (Gramsci, 1971; Kian et al., 2008). Hegemonic masculinity, defined by Connell, relates Gramsci's hegemony theory to a gendered hierarchy of power relations where men hold dominance over women (Connell, 2005; Gramsci, 1971; Kian et al., 2008; Kian, Mondello, & Vincent, 2009). From past sports media research, female athletes have been underrepresented and over-sexualized, which lays a foundation for the reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity (Eitzen & Zinn, 1989; Halbert & Latimer, 1994; Kane & Parks, 1992).

Applying Sport Media Analysis to Dance

Amount. In the first decade of the 21st century dance has grown in exposure and prevalence in the United States. Dance has expanded to include more of a competitive arena for dancers not only in organizations such as *DanceSport* (a growing competitive ballroom dance organization), but also through media sources such as reality television series (*Dancing with the Stars*, *So You Think You Can Dance?*, and *America's Best Dance Crew*) and films (*Step Up*, *Pina*, and *Black Swan*) (Boyd, 2004; DanceSport USA Dance, 2012). Despite the increase of popularity of dance in the media, there is no research specifically looking at dance in the media in relation to gender and amount of coverage. Televised dance media has increased public awareness and exposure to dance and helped increase the popularity of dance (Bauknecht, 2009). Even though there is an

increased exposure and excitement around dance there might be a misconception of the representation of these dance forms, not only through the physical demand of the athlete, but the roles in which are produced (Bauknecht, 2009).

Millions of viewers absorb and are influenced by the interactions that occur on dance shows. Both the visual and lingual descriptors of dance re-create the viewer's experience of the body and the partnering conventions in relation to dancers interactions with one another (Goldberg, 2006). Dance media continues to grow as evidenced by television popularity, ratings, and viewership numbers (TV Guide, 2012; Zap to it, 2011). *Dancing with the Stars* had 17.8 million viewers for their result show in 2012, and 19.6 million viewers watched the result episode in 2011. *So You Think You Can Dance?* averaged 5.0 million viewers in 2010 and 2011 seasons. *America's Best Dance Crew* averaged 3.0 million viewers in their first season in 2008 and had about 1.9 million viewers in their 2011 season (Nielsen Television Data Rating, 2012). The popularity of dance television series continues to have the ability to reinforce or challenge gender ideologies.

Type. Of the small amount of research in dance media, researchers have uncovered similar constructions of gender ideology as evidenced in sports media, mainly in that male dancers dominate movement through hypermasculinity, power and muscle (Burt, 1995; Gard, 2001, 2006), while females are idealized through vulnerability, grace, and elegant stereotypes (Bauknecht, 2009; Christopherson et al., 2002). Two patterns have emerged from dance media research where females are framed in vulnerable or sexualized ways and male dancers are hypermasculinized (Goldberg, 2006; Koivula, 1999; Methany, 1965; Nadel & Strauss, 2003; Polaske & Roper, 2011; Risner, 2002).

Just as there are sex-appropriate and sex-inappropriate sport dispositions, dancers and dance styles are also typed as gender appropriate or inappropriate and the reproduction of dance styles is a normative part of training and performance (Koivula, 1999; Methany, 1965; Nadel & Strauss, 2003).

Female dancers attempt to remain delicate and articulate, while the male dancer is trained in choreography to have more wide stances and take up more space (Goldberg, 2006). The female dancer gender ideology is associated with grace and beauty, where beauty represents femininity (Dowling, 2000; Wachs, 2005). Ballet for example trains female dancers to be diligent and fluid for femininity and grace, while males take charge of the space, perform with aggressive strength, control, and support their partners (Nadel & Strauss, 2003). With relation to femininity and dance, the female dancer is represented by elegance and sexuality (such as gyrating hip motion or extensions of the legs) appropriate to the feminine ideology, whereas the male dancer who participates in the non-masculine domain of dance is subjected to the homosexual label by default (Knight & Giuliano, 2003; Polasek & Roper, 2011).

As summarized previously, in the 19th and much of the 20th century, dance in the United States was thought to be a dominantly feminine practice, which defined dance norms and ideologies for dance to be associated with beauty and femininity. Male dancers began to become associated with beauty in a non-masculine way, which translated into being associated with homosexuality (Crawford, 1994; Gard, 2008; Hanna, 1988; Kraus, Hilsendager, & Dixon, 1991; Risner, 2002; 2007; 2009; Williams, 2003). Labeling and stereotyping male dancers as homosexual was done to reassert male heterosexual power. To counter allegations of being feminized through dance practice,

male dancers were forced to face the gender discourses that follow traditional gender ideologies of masculine physicality and movement, such as being regarded as aggressive, strong, and muscular (Koivula, 1999; Methany, 1965). Male dancers are forced to find a balance between the feminized movement of dance and their masculine performance (Yamanashi & Bulman, 2009). To support the ideas of masculinity, male roles in dance have now become about power and aggression to highlight and construct traditional notions of masculinity in an attempt to rid the image of effeminacy and justify and normalize the heterosexual male involvement in dance (Nadel & Strauss, 2003; Polaske & Roper, 2011; Risner, 2002). By marginalizing the female dancer and homosexual male dancer the dominate group of heterosexual males, continue to assert power and privilege in social discourse, and limits the movement of bodies by surveillance of gendered norms (Drummond, 2003; Mulvey, 1989; Wachs, 2005).

Specific to sports media, television commentary, which is a common element of broadcasts, constructs meaning and experience for the viewers pertaining to the performance and performers (Billings et al., 2002). Commentators are people in power of verbal interpretation of the sport and frame the action to suit the audience's expectations and understandings of the sport (Desmaria & Bruce, 2010), thus organizing content to create perceptions of reality (Goffman, 1974). In this research I examine how commentary on televised dance programs reinforce or challenge gender ideology. The overarching goal of this project is to prove or disprove that male power and privilege, hegemonic masculinity, and patriarchy is being upheld or challenged in televised dance through the presence or absence of gendered language.

Significance of Study

Millions of viewers are watching and absorbing dance television series and currently a lack of research exists with a focus on commentary and how commentary influences the representation of gender ideologies. As a form of physical activity, dance can be used as a tool to promote health and wellness by reducing relative risk of death and chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease through improved body composition (Haskell et al., 2007; Warburton, Nicol, & Bredin, 2006). Dance provides an enjoyable alternative to traditional forms of sports and provides an appealing outlet for youth and adults. Unlike playing traditional team sports, dance requires minimal skills, most people can participate, and it is very accessible as it requires minimal equipment (Flores, 1995). Through the marginalization based on gender norming and the effeminate nature associated with dance, female dancers risk the continued sexualization of their bodies, while male dancers risk being associated with homosexuality. Therefore, both populations of dancers must conform to dominant gender ideologies to thrive and survive in mainstream popular dance. The over-sexualization of female dancers limits female dancers from being taken seriously as dancers and athletes. The hypermasculinity of male dancers also limits what is considered to be appropriate or inappropriate dance styles for dancers. As a result, accepting or not challenging gender stereotypes, the perception of dance might be limiting male and female participation and opportunity, thus the benefits provided through participation in dance as physical activity fail to accrue.

In this study televised dance media commentary toward dancers using framing theory (Goffman, 1974) was examined to help answer the question of whether the dance televised series either reinforced or challenged gender ideologies. People in positions of

power use language to frame or shape the ways in which the audience experiences the sporting event, highlighting what is considered important (Entman, 1993). The media have the power to control messages by deciding how to portray an event, or to cover or to not cover an event, which renders certain events or athletes as important or less important (Entman, 1993; Martin, 2004). Commentators in judging positions are influenced by their drive to be subjective to the technique of the sport, while maintaining a dramatized, entertainment aspect in which the producer or network sets as an agenda (Billings & Angelini, 2010; Goffman, 1974). Categories specific to gender ideologies through sport performance can be constructed through language (Mean & Kassing, 2008; Potter, 1996). People decide how to act according to their understanding of reflected behavior (Bandura, 1989). The imitation of gender is based on observational learning or modeling, which extends the idea of absorbing behavior through the act of observation or reception of language (Bandura & Wood, 1989; Bryant & Oliver 2009; Charlesworth, 1994). Media provides powerful public representations of gender roles, which can have a positive or negative impact on the social norms and can reinforce or challenge stereotypes associated with gender (Bryant & Oliver, 2009; Van Evra, 2004). The power of framing what audiences hear and see manipulates audience interpretation of the media program and influences the accepted or unaccepted social roles in relation to gender.

Understanding the representation of gender ideologies is important as dance television series increase in popularity and target viewers across different ages and cultures, while attempting to promote physical activity, dance styles, and entertainment. This research contributes to the literature as, to date, few researchers have focused on the amount and type of commentary of televised dance media using framing theory. This

research will add to the little dance media research that is currently available. Does dance sport media challenge or reinforce dominant gender ideologies that may marginalize female dancers and highlight the masculinity and heterosexuality of male dancers, thus marginalizing gay male dancers to sustain heterosexual male power? To answer this overarching inquiry, the following research hypotheses will be tested.

Hypotheses

H1a: Male dancers will receive more positive feedback than female dancers for physicality of dance in relation to power and athleticism.

H1b: Male dancer's positive feedback for physicality of dance will highlight masculinity to counter the perception of the stereotype of gay male dancers, while weakening female dancer athleticism by highlighting femininity. Past research has framed female athletes as weak compared to male athletes who are strong and powerful (Cooky et al., 2010; Daddario & Wigley, 2007). Within dance roles male dancers support their partners with strength, while the female dancers carry feminine characteristics such as grace and elegance (Nadel & Strauss, 2003). Highlighting masculinity pushes male dancers away from feminine traits and therefore away from non-masculine traits associated with homosexuality (Hargreaves, 1991; Polasek & Roper, 2011).

H2a: Female dancers will receive more positive feedback than male dancers for emotional/expressive aspects of performance.

H2b: Female dancer's positive feedback will highlight femininity and reinforce the stereotype of the female as being emotionally weak.

H3a: Female dancers will receive more positive feedback than male dancers for the aesthetic style of dance.

H3b: Female dancer's positive feedback will highlight beauty, grace, and elegance to reinforce the stereotype of dance as a form of feminine practice. Within the United States dance became associated as a feminine practice, therefore linking traits of the popular styles of dance in the United States, such as ballet, to feminine characteristics such as grace, elegance, and beauty (Bauknecht, 2009; Christopherson et al., 2002; Wachs, 2005).

H4a: Female dancers will receive more positive feedback than male dancers for their attractiveness.

H4b: Female dancer's positive feedback for their attractiveness will emphasize the stereotype of femininity in association with sexualization as a way to counter ideas of masculinization due to athletic participation and to minimize athleticism and dance skill. Past sport media research has shown that female athletes continue to be represented as sex objects by emphasizing sexuality within sport media commentary (Kian et al., 2008; Messner & Cooky, 2010).

H5a: Male dancers will receive more positive feedback than female dancers for being competitive.

H5b: Male dancer's positive feedback for being competitive will reinforce the stereotype that males are more aggressive and are inherently more competitive than female dancers.

Method

Research Strategy

Does dance sport media challenge or reinforce dominant gender ideologies?

Through the analysis of judges commentary directed toward dancers on the dance television series: *So You Think You Can Dance?* Season 8, in this study I used a postpositivist worldview lens due to the constructed knowledge based on observation in relation to my role as a researcher (considering my experience and background) searching for and interpreting a truth, as well as the lens of the framing theory (Goffman, 1974), as the judges commentary was created for and consumed by the viewers (Creswell, 2009). In this study a textual discourse analysis, a qualitative method, was employed. More specifically, a critical discourse analysis was utilized because relationships of dominance, power, and control through the lens of gender ideologies in association with language was being analyzed (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). This approach offered the best methodological fit and helped to understand and answer the research question of how dialogue might reinforce or challenge gender roles.

Role of Researcher

Through a qualitative approach, interpretation of data played a significant role in data analysis of emerging themes (Creswell, 2009). My background involvement in dance in the United States as a professional dancer, dance instructor, and choreographer, as well as, my B.S. degree in Kinesiology helped to bring a directed focus to this research. Through my hands-on experience in dance and my educational and research experience, specifically in gender representation in sports media, there was a connection

between the gap of research on dance media and the growing domain of sports media research.

Population Selection

One of the most popular dance television series: *So You Think You Can Dance?* (*SYTYCD*) Season 8 was analyzed (Zap to it, 2011)—ranked the 19th most popular television series by TV Guide in 2012. The television show selected was based on purposeful selection of popularity (Creswell, 2009), and the incorporation of multiple styles of dance representation within the dance television show. The show incorporated competition, verbal judging, and dance in the form of solo, group, and coupled dances. The most recently aired season of *SYTYCD* was analyzed based on the most recent exposure and representation to the general public (Season 8, May 2011 – August 2011). Each week the program aired two episodes, the first episode represented the ‘voting’ and the second episode represented the ‘results’. Only the ‘voting’ episodes of each week were analyzed based on the emphasis of viewership judgment, while the ‘results’ shows, which aired the night following the ‘voting’ episodes, were not analyzed. Commentary of the judges, which followed a coupled dance performance (male and female partnering), was analyzed based on the emphasis of competition and voting time for the viewers of these specific dance performances, and the focus on gender interaction in performance. A census of all of the Season 8 ‘voting’ episodes helped to gather the most thorough understanding of the season’s representation of paired gender performance.

Dance Television Show Background

So You Think You Can Dance?, (broadcasted by Fox Television), is a dance television series that incorporated open auditions and audience voting to select one final

winner who is named ‘America’s favorite dancer’ (Fox, 2012). This particular season *SYTYCD* incorporated a range of dance styles including: Disco, Contemporary, Hustle, Broadway, Cha-cha, Stepping, Hip Hop, Hip Hop Lyrical, Paso Doble, Samba, Combat Jazz, Waacking, Jazz, Quickstep, Jive, Waltz, Argentine Tango, Viennese Waltz, Bollywood, Fox Trot, Tango, Mambo, African Jazz and Latin Jive. The show began with an open audition process in major cities across the United States (Salt Lake City, UT; Los Angeles, CA; and New York City, NY) and a second ‘call-back’ audition in Las Vegas, NV for those who qualified. The process ended with the selection of 20 dancers (10 female and 10 male) who competed on the official television show. Each of the dancers claimed a style of dance as their area of expertise upon entering the competition, where the challenge of the show forced the dancers to perform styles of dance they had little experience with. The television series consisted of twenty episodes (two episodes per week for 10 weeks), where each week two of the dancers (one male and female couple) were voted off and eliminated from the competition.

To begin the show the 20 dancers were paired together in a female-male partnership where they performed together each week until 10 total dancers were left. The remaining 10 dancers were then paired off again with special ‘all-star’ dance partners of the opposite sex. The show was broken down into two separate episodes per week. The first episode that aired each week (the ‘voting’ episode) consisted of a group dance and duets of each of the pairs of contestants, in which the viewers then voted on their favorite dancer. The second episode that aired each week (the ‘results’ episode) a day later consisted of a range of performances of groups, duets, and solos; and ended with two dancers being eliminated based on the voting from the previous night. Following each

coupled performance the dancers received feedback and critiques from two main judges (Nigel Lythgoe and Mary Murphy), who have an extensive background in dance, and either one or two guest judges with some form of connection to dance as a profession. Season 8 guest judges included: Christopher Toler, Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Sonya Tayeh, Katie Holmes, Kenny Ortega, Megan Mullally, Lady Gaga, Debbie Reynolds, Carmen Electra, Travis Wall, Neil Patrick Harris, Rob Marshall, Christina Applegate.

Data Collection

Each ‘voting’ episode of *SYTYCD* Season 8 was collected. *SYTYCD* Season 8 had 20 episodes (2 episodes per week), the 10 ‘voting’ episodes were analyzed in total; the 10 ‘result’ episodes were not analyzed. The videos were downloaded from a television media source (TV-links, 2012) and audio recorded with Sound Studio software.

Narratives from the judges, which took place after each paired couple performed, were then transcribed resulting in 99 single spaced pages of dialogue. After each paired couple performed there was a section in each show where the judges critiqued the dancer(s) and gave them verbal feedback. For each episode there were two main judges plus one or two guest judges. The transcribed data was organized into tables where gender of dancers in association with the judge’s commentary were documented.

Data Analysis

To begin as suggested by Cresswell (2009), the data was read through in its entirety to gain a general sense of the narratives in which themes were created. The deductive theme structure (Berg, 2001; Thomas, 2003) was based on the categories used in Billings, Halone, and Denham (2002) study, which stemmed from research by Kaid and Wadsworth (1989) and Eastman and Billings (2001). Upon a second reading and

analysis of the data, 10 categories were constructed, 6 stemming from the Billings et al. (2002) study: (a) physicality/athleticism/power, (b) non-physicality/mental/power, (c) hard work/effort/determination/motivation, (d) positive consonance, (e) negative consonance/criticism, and (f) versatility/overcoming barriers, while the other 4 were inductively created based on reoccurring themes more specific to dance (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Thomas, 2003): (g) grace/beauty/elegance, (h) objectification, (i) competitive, and (j) technique/ability. The data was then coded and labeled with these 10 categories. After further analysis of the data and peer debriefing (Cresswell, 2009), 10 categories were restructured to reflect 8 main categories with the addition of coding each category as positive, negative or constructive feedback.

This analysis process included constant reflection of the themes and their definitions as they related to the data to reassure drifting (Schilling, 2006) did not occur. Each theme was defined and described with examples to ensure accurate coding of the data (See Table 1). Using the 8 theme coding schema, two coders analyzed 20% of the data to ensure inter-coder reliability (Cresswell, 2009). The inter-coder reliability rate was acceptable (80%), and disagreements were discussed to 100% consensus. The remaining data was then coded by the primary investigator.

The data was analyzed both quantitatively (the *amount* of times a theme was said) and qualitatively using critical discourse analysis, to determine the *type* of language used. Data was compiled and analyzed based on rejection or support for hypotheses, and emergent themes were noted. An external auditor reviewed and monitored the entire project to validate procedures and data analysis (Cresswell, 2009).

The categories were as follows (see Table 1): (a) physicality/athleticism/power (physical strength (such as lifts), physical ability, and physical power), (b) emotional/expressive (expression, emotions, attitude, character, personality traits (swagger of personality or acting)), (c) aesthetic style (beauty of style, grace, or elegance of body (in reference with technique)), (d) hard work/effort/determination (trying, practicing, putting in work, not giving up, powering through, perseverance, committed), (e) versatility (he/she does it all, difference styles), (f) objectification (sexualization of body, objectively feminine or masculine, beauty of body (non-dance technique reference), maturity), (g) competitive (fight, battle, animalistic (beasts), feisty), (h) technique ability (displaying proper form of dance style, experience, training, swagger specific to style/technique of movement). Each category was selected based on deductive reasoning (Berg, 2001) from previous sports media research based on gender representations in association with the male gaze theory (Polasek & Roper, 2011; Mulveys, 1989), and hegemony theory (Connell, 2005; Gramsci, 1971; Kian et al., 2008, Kian et al. 2009), as well as inductive reasoning insights to new emerging themes from the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Results

Physicality/Athleticism/Power

H1a predicted that male dancers would receive more positive feedback than female dancers for physicality of dance.

Of the total judging commentary, male dancers received 28 positive comments related to physicality, athleticism, and/or power, while female dancers received 30

positive comments (see Table 2, theme a). Even though male and female dancers received relatively the same *amount* of positive feedback on physicality, athleticism, and power of dance, the type and content of feedback differed.

H1b predicted that male dancers would receive positive feedback for physicality highlighting masculinity to counter the perception of the stereotype of gay male dancers, while marginalizing female dancer athleticism by highlighting femininity.

Positive feedback for male dancers focused on helping or supporting the female dancers such as, “Tadd you had a lot of strength in those kind of flips when you had her on both sides of you. Um I thought it was just really, really strong,” and, “It was so high, all the lifts you did. You supported her.” While comments directed to female dancers mentioned strength surrounded by character such as, “...so much more animalistic, so strong, deep in character the whole time.” Male dancers also received comments focused on athleticism, power, and ability such as, “Your moves were fearful fierce,” or, “...in that last overhead lift where you didn’t get straight up with a straight arm and you were stuck for a second and then you’re sheer strength took it to a straight arm that was really good of you.” Comments toward female dancers focused on athleticism, passion, and beauty such as, “...you are so strong, dynamic, your extensions, your center, the power that you have...”; “So, so strong, I mean girl those legs are ridiculous,” and, “There’s something so athletic and so passionate and so beautiful...”.

The language focusing on power, athleticism, and support of partner for male dancers supports the idea of highlighting masculinity for male dancers, compared to the passionate and beautiful physicality of the female dancers. These results support similar findings from past sports media research where male athletes have been associated by

strength and power (Billings & Angelini, 2010; Billings et al., 2002; Daddario & Wigley, 2007), and dance research findings where males have been hypermasculinized in roles of support and strength (Buchbinder, 2004; Burt, 1995; Gard, 2001, 2006) to counter the homosexual label (Knight & Giuliano, 2003; Gard, 2008; Williams 2003), while female athletes abilities are weakened by association with feminine traits such as grace and beauty (Bauknecht, 2009; Goldberg, 2006).

Emotional/Expressive

H2a predicted that female dancers would receive more positive feedback than male dancers for emotional/expressive aspects of performance.

Of the commentary female dancers received 37 positive comments related to emotions and/or expressions, compared to 36 for the male dancers (see Table 2, theme b). Even though there was no significance in *amount* between female dancers and male dancers, the type of language used diverged.

H2b predicted that female dancer's positive feedback would highlight femininity to reinforce the stereotype of the female as being emotionally weak.

Comments displayed emotions as a strong, natural feminine characteristic for female dancers, such as, "...these girls immerse themselves in these characters and they're going to be so strong. The guys have got to come up to that level." Emotions for female dancers were also not only strong, but real and natural, "...something has hurt you and I thank you for sharing that with us for being that courageous to show us through your body what you've felt in your life," versus expression and emotions created for performance through acting for male dancers, "...I didn't feel like you were um acting for the sake of acting I felt like you really meant it...".

Although emotions and expressions were targeted at both female dancers and male dancers, the link between femininity and emotions was strong compared to the concept that the male dancer must learn how to express and attributed emotions to acting. Linking females to emotions as a fault for success or failure is similar to past sports media research where female athletes' emotions such as stress and/or nerves are highlighted compared to male athletes strength (Daddario & Wigley, 2007).

Another emerging theme in the category of emotional/expressiveness of performance involved personalities. Male dancers struggled with mixed messages concerning personalities. Outgoing, smiley, or sweet personalities for male dancers were promoted and demoted throughout the episodes with some judges who liked their personalities, "...what I think is really difficult for you is that you have the sweetie pie factor and it's built right into your x factor," while one judge disapproved, "...but I did find him a little too sweet." One specific male dancer struggled with his personality in which he frequently enjoyed yelling, "Who-hoo!" to the audience and constantly had a smile on his face. The main male judge commented, "...you've possibly got the biggest personality out of all of the dancers this year. Now that could go for you and obviously is this evening or you could lose people with that too. They might get annoyed with whoo every five minutes. Don't forget this is *SYTYCD* not so you think you've got a great personality, which you've got," however, the main female judge frequently yelled, "Who-hoo!" when she got excited, "Let me hear it...Let me have a Who-hoo...now here's one for you, Who-hoo." The sweetie pie and expressive "Who-hoo" aspects of the male dancers personalities reflected a feminine nature that was clearly questioned by the

judges. Personality issues never surfaced pertaining to judge evaluations of female dancers.

Aesthetic Style

H3a predicted that female dancers would receive more positive feedback than males for the aesthetic style of dance.

Of the commentary female dancers received 19 positive comments on beauty of style, grace, or elegance of the body (in reference to technique), compared to 14 for the male dancers (see Table 2, theme c).

H3b predicted that female dancers positive feedback would highlight beauty, grace, and elegance to reinforce the stereotype of dance as a form of feminine practice.

Although female dancers received slightly more comments than the males, there were relatively no differences between the types of comments given to the female dancers and the male dancers such as, “You made it look so beautiful and elegant and stylish,” spoken to a male dancer and, “...so elegant and beautiful. I love your arms and how you finish everything out with your hands. Always so elegant and beautiful,” directed toward a female dancer. These references to beauty reflect that dance continues to be associated with the feminine characteristic of beauty no matter if a male or female performs the skill. Past dance research has shown dance to be a feminine practice in the United States since the late 19th century and has continued to be associated with feminine characteristics such as grace, beauty, and elegance (Dowling, 2000; Wachs, 2005).

Objectification

H4a predicted that female dancers would receive more positive feedback than male dancers for their attractiveness.

Of the 46 positive comments in association with the category of objectification, 44 comments were directed toward female dancers, and only 2 for male dancers (see Table 2, theme f).

H4b predicted that female dancers would receive positive feedback highlighting their attractiveness to emphasize the stereotype of femininity in association with sexualization as a way to counter ideas of masculinization due to athletic participation and to minimize athleticism and dance skill.

Objectification language toward female dancers consisted of remarks about having a sexy body, "...very sexy and sassy and beautiful. Beautiful legs, loved it," and, "Is there anything that little body can't do I mean it's so pliable?" The male dancers received a couple of statements such as, "Well Tadd you brought sexy back for sure," but never received remarks pertaining to specific body sexualization.

One female dance contestant specifically struggled with gaining the judges approval on sex appeal. Her smaller, lankier body did not come off matured enough, "...you seem to dance young and I don't mean that you're inexperienced and that you're but you're lanky form and your age it's hard sometimes for you I mean you're lean and it's, it's kind of hard to take you super seriously." Until she performed a Tango number where she was wearing a revealing costume, "She's so hot. You shouldn't be that hot you're just a baby. Don't be that hot it scares me it makes me feel uncomfortable," the judges even claimed that she became a woman, "...you came of age tonight. You showed us how mature you can be. Please keep hold of that now I thought we'd found that with your Argentine Tango we've now found it here. You so many people look at you and just go she's pretty girl. They don't know what a brilliant dancer you are you showed that

tonight.” These findings suggest that female dancers needed to be sexier and reflect a more matured, womanly appeal in order to be taken seriously and become successful. These results support past sports media research in which female athletes have been presented as sex objects (Kian et al., 2008; Messner & Cooky, 2010).

Competitive

H5a predicted that male dancers would receive more positive feedback than female dancers for being competitive.

Neither male dancers nor female dancers received scarce commentary directly related to competitiveness (see Table 2, theme g).

H5b predicted that male dancer’s positive feedback would highlight aggression and competitiveness as a stereotype for males.

Because there was not much commentary directly related to competitiveness, this theme did not emerge.

Mixed Messages

One theme that developed inductively throughout the analyzed commentary addressed the female dancers in contradicting terms such as, “You were so much more animalistic...I mean my goodness kid,” and, “You just turned into this warrior vixen sister.” The first example incorporates a beastly or animalistic text while also referring to the female dancer as a child. The second example has a strong intention of a warrior, but follows it with vixen sister denoting the strength and power behind the warrior.

Comments targeted at female dancers incorporated language such as, “tough girls,” “beasts in the girls,” and “kid.” This language weakened, marginalized, and “othered” female dancers. This is similar to past sports media research which female

athletes were weakened by contradicting language such as being addressed as ‘ladies’ and ‘girls’ (Berstein & Blain, 2003; Cooky et al., 2010; Duncan et al., 1990).

Another theme relating to contradicting terms emerged in which female dancers were labeled and constructed as “beasts.” Female dancers constantly were referred to as “beasts” with no mention of specificity as to why, “Not only are you the original beast in this season...you are a brilliant actress as well as an incredible dancer.” The main male judge even nominated one of the female dancers to be “queen of the beasts.” One beast reference was made toward a male dancer and was immediately associated with aggression and power, “Marko they, they keep referring to the women as the beasts, my friend you are a beast and your uh your aggression was just so beautiful and powerful and palpable...” and, “Marko you’ve always been a beast...you’re not afraid of anything.”

Referring to the female dancers as beasts dissociates them as women or being feminine and is a mechanism for containment or being “othered” (Duncan, 2006; Kane, 1995). Past sports media research has found that female athletes continue to be framed with contradicting and even ambivalent terms such as being called “girls,” “little sister,” and, “girl next door,” while male athletes are referred to as, “men” or “guys” (Daddario, 1994; Duncan, 2006; Koivula, 1999). This ambivalent approach at representation juxtaposes positive terms and language that belittle female athlete’s success (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988).

Versatility

A second theme that emerged inductively involved commentary that highlighted male dancer’s ability to perform different styles of dance other than their expertise style. Even though males and females both performed styles they had never learned before,

males received 27 positive comments focused on versatility, compared to only 8 for females (see Table 2, theme e). Male dancer's ability to perform new styles claimed success from hard work, "...and you know we've just seen another hip hop boy...do this wonderful sort of jazz Broadway routine...he told me how hard you worked and how much you wanted to learn," while females were successful because they were confident and sexy, "It's not your style either, but you were spicy, you were hot. You're weight was in all the right places. You were really taking care of yourself."

A huge aspect of highlighting the male dancers' ability to be versatile involved the questioning of their intelligence by the judges. Many times male dancers were asked if they even knew the style of the dance they had performed or the correct technical names of the dance movements, "...so you pick it out and you read it and you go Viennese Waltz? What did you think...seriously? No, no Viennese Waltz. Do you know what the Viennese Waltz is?" and even compared a male dancer (whose expertise was hip hop) to new choreography, "We've got to remember that you're not hip hop. You're a bboy {break dancing} and bboy's normally do a trick, do a few six steps and take a break and then come back. There is not the choreography brains of remembering routines in bboy's and yet everything we that we throw at you, you pick up." These comments support the idea that females can be successful based on sexualization and confidence, compared to males who work hard. Male dancers whose expertise were mostly hip hop, which is a dance style considered unsophisticated compared to more refined dance styles such as ballroom dance styles, had success in performing other dance styles, but were poked fun by the questioning of their dance intelligence as if the styles of ballroom they were performed were on a more sophisticated level.

Discussion

In this study televised dance media commentary pertaining to dancers were analyzed. The purpose was to determine if dance sport media challenged or reinforced dominant gender ideologies that may marginalize female and/or male dancers. Similar to past research within sports media, themes emerged from the analyzed data, which implicate that females continue to be marginalized due to over-sexualization and feminine stereotypes, while males are critiqued for a lack of masculinity and engendering feminine personality traits.

Female dancers were targeted within judge commentary for being athletic in relation to passion and beauty, while male dancers were athletic and powerful for doing tricks and supporting their partners. These findings support H1b by highlighting masculinity of male dancers, similar to past dance research where male dancers have been known for dominating movement through power and muscle (Buchbinder, 2004; Burt, 1995; Gard 2001, 2006). In association with emotions and expressions male emotion constituted acting, where female dancer emotion was real and natural, supporting H2b by highlighting emotion and expression with femininity. Dance styles were also associated with aesthetic of beauty of dance technique no matter if male dancers or female dancers were performing, which did not support H3b by associating beauty with only female dancers. Success in performance equated to hard work for male dancers, while female dancers were successful based on projecting confidence and sexual confidence.

Female dancers continue to face over-sexualization of their bodies, supporting H4b by reinforcing femininity to counter the athletic participation, which is

stereotypically deemed masculine. Surprisingly competitiveness was not a huge theme found throughout the commentary, which did not support H5a or H5b. However, female dancers continued to be “othered” in themes such as, being named “beasts,” which push female dancers into a type of contained category neither feminine nor masculine in nature. Female dancers also faced mixed messages of strength and weakness in addressing commentary such as, “strong kid,” or “warrior vixen sister.” These terms demote the abilities of female dancers and reproduce traditional gender ideologies (Berstein & Blain, 2003). Male dancers also faced mixed messages directed toward their feminine personality traits highlighting the push for male dancers to rid themselves of these characteristics in order to win over the voters. Although male dancers were celebrated for their masculinity and versatility, many were questioned of their intelligence based on their backgrounds in more unstructured or less sophisticated dance styles such as hip hop and break dancing. Even though their intelligence was questioned, their abilities to be versatile were celebrated, while female dancers versatility was rarely mentioned highlighting the idea that dance is a feminine practice in which females can easily do.

Limitations

This study analyzed one season of one televised dance show, which was purposefully selected based on popularity rather than through random selection. This study used past research in dance, as well as in similar areas such as physical activity and sport, to lay a foundation. This study took a new approach to dance media commentary through the lens of the framing theory. This study focused solely on commentary directed at dancers from people of power (judges). The data collection and analysis was conducted

through self-reported data, which was monitored and checked, but is subjected to human error. Ethical and political considerations for this study address the people who produce, fund, and support this specific televised dance show, as well as how the dancers were treated in the process of producing this television show and during their training and rehearsals.

Future Research

Due to the popularity of dance television series, future dance media research is pertinent to continue reflecting on the impacts of gender ideology reflection. There are many perspectives and areas of research (which include commentary) that could help interrogate the representation of gender within dance media. This research study purposefully selected a popular dance television series out of many that are currently available. Only one season of the particular dance television series was analyzed, limiting the overall scope of how gender representation might have changed over the course of the production of the show or across different types of dance media.

There are many areas of research that could be involved in analyzing gender representation within dance sport media, which future research could look into including commentary, styles of dance (as dance styles from different cultures might host an exotic masculinity or femininity), behind-the-scenes videography of rehearsals, portrayal of personality of dancers (video bios of dancers), costuming, viewership feedback, winner's profiles, choreographic themes, and gender of judge and feedback given to dancers, to name a few. Within the frame of representation of the body in dance sport media, observation of sub textual meanings through an intersection of gender, race, style of dance (stemming from different cultures), and costuming could add to the position of

dancers bodies and the meaning of content for dance performance. It is also important to note the potential ethical and political considerations that might influence the production of such dance television shows. People in positions of power who fund, support, and produce these shows could influence the messages projected. These areas of research could add different perspectives and layers onto existing and future research. Encouraged continued research within dance sport media will help to gain a better understanding of gender representation and the reflected impact upon consumers.

Conclusion

Implications derived from the analyzed data suggest that male dancers were hypermasculinized with the associations of power and strength in ability, hard work, and versatility, while the male dancer's feminine characteristics, especially personality traits, were questioned due to the relation of male feminine characteristics as homosexual. Dance is associated as a feminine practice, therefore males involved in dance are subjected to automatic association with homosexuality. To counter such claims hypermasculinity in male dance performance was highlighted. Interestingly the male dancers intelligence was also questioned for their lack of sophisticated dance knowledge, with dance styles such as ballroom dance styles, compared to many of their backgrounds in more unstructured dance styles, such as hip hop and break dancing.

Female dancers were subjected to over-sexualization, "othered" as beasts, and framed as weak and vulnerable in association with stereotypical feminine traits such as passion, beauty, and less maturing terms such as "girl." Athleticism is associated mainly

as a masculine trait, therefore when female dancers project strength in performance they were associated with a non-masculine, non-feminine way such as using the term “beast.”

These findings are similar to past sport media and dance research that further supports the reinforcement of gender ideologies (Buchbinder, 2004; Goldberg, 2006), along with numerous sport media research that highlights the continued marginalization of female athletes in relation to sexualization and physical competence (Berstein & Blain, 2003; Billings & Angelini, 2010; Cooky et al., 2010; Daddario & Wigley, 2007; Messner & Cooky 2010), as well as the hypermasculinity of male dancers to rid association with homosexuality (Knight & Giuliano, 2003; Polasek & Roper, 2011; Crawford, 1994; Gard, 2008; Hanna, 1988; Kraus et al., 1991; Risner, 2002, 2007, 2009; Williams, 2003).

Summary

It is evident that the popularity of dance television series is reaching millions of viewers of different ages and across different cultures. Dance as an accessible tool can promote physical activity and enjoyment. Commentary analyzed of *So You Think You Can Dance?* Season 8, through the lens of the framing theory and hegemonic masculinity, revealed that dominant gender ideologies for both female dancers and male dancers were reinforced, which uphold masculine hegemony and marginalize female dancers by highlighting sexualization and femininity, and male dancers through hypermasculinity and heterosexuality, to sustain male power. Considering the finding that *So You Think You Can Dance?* Season 8 upheld masculine hegemony, the popularity of the dance television show might be a result of a current swing to a more conservative political climate as evidenced by the rise of grassroots conservative groups such as the

Tea Party in the twentieth century (Thompson, 2012), therefore supporting the reinforcement of traditional gender ideologies. This research adds to the current lack of dance media research and literature. The more we can learn and understand about gender ideology representation in dance sport media, the better we can understand the ways in which dance media can be a tool in providing a productive and progressive role where dance athletes are not marginalized based on gender and provide opportunities to inspire viewers to expand their associations of dance in the United States.

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Table 1
Categories for Data Coding

Category	Definition	Dialogue Example
Physicality/Athleticism/Power	physical strength (such as lifts), physical ability, physical power	“To show that and you’re small, to show that kind of power and strength”
Emotional/Expressive	expression, emotions, attitude, character, personality traits (swagger of personality or acting),	“You are an actress, you are really an actress. I got every emotion, I believed everything.”
Aesthetic style	beauty of style, grace, or elegance of body (in reference with technique)	“Everything is beautifully placed.”
Hard work/Effort, Determination	trying, practicing, putting in work, not giving up, powering through, perseverance, committed	“...told me how hard you worked and how much you wanted to learn”
Versatility	he/she does it all, different styles	“...these are dance steps that he would never have ever heard of as a hip hop guy and here he is...doing it really well”
Objectification	sexualization of body, objectively feminine or masculine, beauty of body (non-dance technique reference), maturity	“My god you were sexy up there”
Competitive	fight, battle, animalistic (beasts), feisty	“You are a magnificent warrior”
Technique Ability	displaying proper form of dance style, experience, training, swagger specific to style/technique of movement	“You’re pirouette that went down to the floor and came back up again was absolutely tremendous to watch.”

Table 2
Data Coding for Categories: Amount

Category	Positive		Negative		Constructive	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
a. Physicality/Athleticism/Power	28	30	3	0	0	0
b. Emotional/Expressive	36	37	9	9	5	1
c. Aesthetic style	14	19	0	0	0	0
d. Hard work/Effort, Determination	6	3	2	3	0	0
e. Versatility	27	8	3	0	0	0
f. Objectification	2	44	1	0	0	0
g. Competitive	4	11	0	0	0	0
h. Technique Ability	51	57	11	10	8	4