

Materialism Construction: Keyword Analysis of Bruno Mars' Song Lyrics

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*Received 21 January 2019; revised 26 June 2019; accepted 31 July 2019;
online 30 August 2019*

Abstract

Music has long been an effective way to communicate to the masses, and lyrics play an essential role in delivering this communication. Lyrics may contain an ideology and influence listeners. This study aims to conduct a keyword analysis to investigate the materialistic ideology connoted in Bruno Mars' song lyrics. The corpus of Bruno Mars' lyrics was compiled from lyrics of 30 Bruno Mars songs in three albums released between 2010 and 2016. The corpus was then compared against the British National Corpus (BNC) to obtain a keyword list. The top 100 keywords were selected based on their statistical values for further analysis. They were classified according to their part of speech, and concordance lines of each keyword were obtained so as to discuss the representation of Bruno Mars' songs. Materialistic concepts found in the corpus include an emphasis on, or preference for,

luxury objects, brand-name items, a lavish lifestyle, parties, economic power, physical appearance, and objectifying women.

Keywords: Aboutness, Bruno Mars lyrics, Keyword analysis, Materialism

Introduction

In this age of great technological advancement, popular culture (or pop culture) is widespread. As citizens of the globalised world, it is difficult for us to escape from the influence of mass media and popular culture (Monk, Winslade & Sinclair, 2008). The term ‘popular culture’ refers to the “aesthetic products created and sold by profit-seeking firms operating in the global entertainment market” (Grazian, 2010). Popular music, therefore, can be a good example of pop culture as most young people choose it as their main source of entertainment (Bennett, 2000).

Popular music is favored by a large group of people because it is easy to listen to, and its content is generally connected to the life stories of its listeners. Thus, to a certain degree, it influences the listeners and may lead people to an acceptance of particular beliefs, values, and attitudes. A study by Bennett (2000) shows that the presentation of popular music, including lyrics, sound and music videos, influences young people’s values and attitudes regarding gender roles, perceptions of love and romantic relationships.

Recently, the concept of materialism has been widely studied and investigated by researchers from different fields of study. Mostly, materialism has been discussed in terms of its negative impacts such as selfishness, self-centredness (Schudson, 1991), and

enviousness (Belk, 1985). Richins and Dawson (1992) define materialism as a personal value that is valid in a variety of situations. Materialism as a value not only influences preferences of goods purchased, but also influences the expenditure of time, money or labour. Belk (1985, pp. 267-268) proposes that there are three main personality traits related to materialistic people: possessiveness which is “the inclination and tendency to retain control or ownership of one’s possessions”; non-generosity which is “an unwillingness to give possessions to or share possessions with others”, and enviousness which is “the desire for others’ possessions, be they objects, experiences or persons”. Overall, Belk found a negative relationship between materialism and happiness in life. Later, Ger and Belk (1996) reported an interesting finding about materialism in their cross-cultural study implemented in Romania, France, the United States and Turkey. In the study, they modified Belk’s 1985 materialism scale and found that the Turkish subjects were simultaneously the most materialistic and the most generous.

In this study, we adopt Richins and Dawson (1992)’s approach on materialism because the characteristics that they propose are logically expressed and inclusive of other existing definitions. According to them, the four main characteristics of materialistic people are as follows. First, the desire to obtain wealth and possessions is significantly higher for materialistic people than for other groups of people. Second, materialistic people can be perceived as self-centred, as they lack concern for people other than themselves. Third, in terms of their emotions, materialistic people are overly invested in material goods. Finally, materialists can never have enough material wealth to satisfy themselves. They

always want more and more proof of material success. These traits support the hypothesis that materialists' preferences are to maintain their property for their own use, and they are less willing to share what they have in terms of their possessions with others. This unwillingness to share extends to those with whom they have close social relationships, such as friends and family members.

The rationale of this paper is based on our argument that pop music, as a significant artefact of popular culture, can embody materialistic ideologies of the present world and have strong effects on the people's behaviour, especially that of children and teenagers. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2009), exposure to violence, sexual messages and stereotypes, drugs and extravagance in musical lyrics should be of paramount concern for doctors and parents since such exposure might produce changes in the small children's behaviours and attitudes.

Bruno Mars is one of the most popular American pop singers according to his number of followers worldwide (information from KLEAR.com). The website shows that Mars has 120,610,424 fans that follow him on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. Also, his popularity and success can be confirmed by his winning of 11 Grammy awards since 2010. The impressive records undoubtedly reflect his popularity in modern society, both inside the US and outside. Upon a closer look into the content of his songs, the image he presents condones materialistic concepts and this emphasises the need to address Mars' musical lyrics and their possible influences on the audience. As reported by a number of researchers (such as Abrecht, 1954; Ballard, & Coates, 1995; Mason, Conrey & Smith, 2007;

Wanamaker & Reznikoff, 1989, among others), songs have different effects on their listeners. Abreht (1954), for instance, posits that negative content in media can become attractive to the audience because of the actors or the singers' attractive look. Ballard and Coates (1995) studied heavy metal and rap songs and how they could generate homicidal and suicidal tendencies on college students. Although the results were not clear-cut, they did however report that certain genres such as rap music could elicit more angry and aggressive responses.

Bearing those phenomena in mind, it is possible to argue that Mars' music can have manipulative effects on his fans and that his followers may adopt such materialistic concepts in their own lifestyles. Therefore, this study aims to illustrate that materialistic ideology can be conveyed through songs. The study limits its focus to lyrics, as they are the only source of verbal messages that songwriters use to communicate with listeners (Dallin, 1994). Keyword analysis is employed in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the keywords of Bruno Mars' songs compared to a general corpus?
2. What materialistic concepts of the songs do those keywords represent?

Keyword Analysis

Keyword analysis is one of the corpus-based approaches that many researchers use to investigate language use. Keyword analysis is a method that can help identify characteristics of texts.

Scott and Tribble (2006) suggest that keywords could be analysed through a computer program. In the statistical process, the computer program is used to measure which words are the keywords based on the frequency of their occurrence. William (1976, 1983) studied keywords in order to understand particular cultures. He described the meaning of a word by looking at how it is used in particular contexts. Francis (1993) studied the real language use in words as keys used in daily conversation in different social settings. The grammatical pattern was considered in this approach together with those words. However, this approach can cause some ambiguity, because the keywords can vary depending on the context. Furthermore, Baker (2010) proposed that keyword analysis can provide the possible lexical words by focusing on the text's structure. Keyword analysis can also provide some significant aspects that indicate the aboutness of texts. In addition, Baker (2006a) also states the three types of keywords: 1) proper nouns which are easily recognised as keywords by readers; 2) words that potentially contain the aboutness of the text, including lexical words such as nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives; and 3) grammatical words with high frequency, or the kinds of words that can provide the sense of "style" rather than the conceptual meaning.

Aboutness

The term "aboutness" is used to indicate the conceptual features that emphasise what the text is about (Scott, 1999). To analyse aboutness through keywords, researchers are required to investigate the meaning of individual keywords in detail (Baker, 2006b). Nevertheless, researchers must select the words that can

reveal the aboutness. Bondi and Scott (2006) suggest that the words that contain aboutness cannot be indefinite or general words (e.g. the, of, like). Researchers should focus on indicative and meaningful words, such as those that could describe what the text is about, in order to find the characteristics of texts.

Carreon, Watson Todd, and Knox (2013) studied the growth of medical tourism through an analysis of private hospital websites. They classified the keywords into three main themes which were cosmetic services, business matters and medical technology. However, at the broad level of keyword classification, literature in keyword analysis suggests that keyword results can generally be grouped into “aboutness” words (or words indicating what a corpus is about) and other closed-class words (Scott & Tribble, 2006).

Korsawapat (2016) conducted a corpus-based study to investigate the aboutness of a major English-language Theravada Buddhism book. He applied keyword analysis to identify keywords of the book, in order to investigate the key concepts and the core ideas of Buddhism. The results reveal that the key ideas of the Buddhism textbook were “belief”, “practice”, and “miscellaneous” with his further description.

Archer and Culpaper (2009) combined corpus annotation and keyword analysis to find the key of sociophilological usage in dramas during 1640-1760 and the result showed the features of the characters in the dramas based on their differences in age, sex and role. They categorised the keywords based on their status such as interjections, imperative verbs, personal pronouns and the politeness formulae. Then, the characteristics (aboutness) of each character in the dramas were discussed.

Previous studies of lyrics

An early corpus-based study of music was conducted by Logan et al. (2004). They carried out a semantic analysis of lyrics and analysed 15,589 song lyrics from 399 artists by using corpora and a probabilistic latent semantic analysis, an automated text analysis technique used to study semantic similarity. In their results, they indicated the most frequent words in the sub-corpora, and no interpretation of the lyrics was attempted. Nor did they present any statistical information on the corpus apart from reporting the number of songs and artists.

Taina (2004) employed corpus linguistic methods to find differences between the lyrics of five heavy metal subgenres, namely traditional heavy metal, thrash metal, death metal, black metal and power metal. She did a keyword analysis and part-of-speech tagging. The results describe the usage of function words and grammatical features.

In 2006, Schneider and Miethaner compiled a corpus of blues lyrics in order to study verb complementation patterns in earlier African American English, such as “a syntactic structure in which verbs are followed by ‘to’ and a verbal -ing form” (2006, pp. 233-234). They were successful in gaining some awareness of the syntax of the dialect, and concluded that blues lyrics can be a “valuable source of linguistic data” (2006, p. 251).

In the three studies of lyrics shown above, the researchers only focused on semantics, function words and grammatical features. Such studies aim to describe images that songwriters want to present through their songs’ lyrics. So, it is of interest for this study to investigate the aboutness of Bruno Mars’ song lyrics.

Methodology

Data collection

The main data for this study was compiled from a total of 30 Bruno Mars songs from the three successful albums he released between 2010 and 2016 (see Appendix C). All of the lyrics were obtained from <https://genius.com/artists/Bruno-mars>, a website which collects song lyrics and musical knowledge. All punctuation in the lyrics (for example, exclamation marks, semicolons, asterisks, parentheses and apostrophes) was deleted. The choruses of each song were retained to maintain the songwriter's original intent and emphasis. The repetition of the chorus parts was used to emphasise the particular messages that the writer conveys to the listeners. The spelling of the lyrics was checked before the lyrics were converted into text files to facilitate the machine analysis. As a result, the corpus of Bruno Mars' song lyrics in this study consists of 10,500 words and the length of each song ranges between 181 - 559 words (see Appendix C).

Data Analysis

The corpus of Bruno Mars' lyrics was compared to the British National Corpus (BNC) using the Key-BNC program developed by the School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand. From the program, a keyword list with log likelihood (LL) and odds ratio (OR) values was obtained. Log-likelihood (LL) and odds ratio (OR) are statistical calculations which generate keyness values based on different assumptions. LL highlights words which are relatively

common in general use to describe the genre of a text, while OR highlights more specialised words which are uncommon in a target corpus. Since the purpose of this study is to identify the characteristics of texts in relation to the concept of materialism, keywords with LL values were mainly considered.

To further explain the characteristics of Bruno Mars' songs, the top 100 keywords were analysed. The reasons for including the top 100 keywords were: 1) it was the point where the keyness values were getting significantly lower; and 2) the keywords beyond that point seemed to represent similar themes to those that the top 100 keywords had already presented (see Appendix A).

The top 100 keywords were classified according to their part of speech in order to gain additional understanding of their meaning. Concordance lines of each keyword were obtained from the Antconc freeware program and then the content analysis was conducted. The final steps were the interpretation of the meanings and the categorisation of the words based on their parts of speech to demonstrate the embedded materialistic concepts.

Results

As seen in Table 1, the top 100 keywords were classified according to their part of speech to aid in the interpretation of aboutness. While the findings of this study could have been presented differently, they were reported based on the classification of parts of speech since such a classification was objective and bound by English grammatical rules.

Table 1

Classification results of the top 100 keywords

Part of Speech	Word	Percentage (%)	Example	Type
Interjection	9	8.6%	yeah, oh, ooh, hey, damn, hallelujah, whaa, uh, woo	Function Word
Conjunction	2	2.0%	cause, til	10.6%
Noun	38	36.5%	Pronoun: you, I, me, my, your, it, ya, we Noun: baby, funk, girl, karat, girls, lovelies, finesse, what, treasure, natalie, brooklyn, love, goodbye, gorillas, phone, tonight, feelin, moonshine, fun, night, smile, versace, moon, thinking, playa, ya, aisha, darlin, liquor	
Verb	33	31.7%	Mental Verb: ain, tryna, goin, wanna, gon, know, don, gonna, feel, get, love, gotta, feelin, believe, thinking, want Active Verb: got, waitin, watch, run, let, tell, go, calling, lay, say, look, take, show, smile, messed, come, make	

Table 1

Classification results of the top 100 keywords (cont.)

Part of Speech	Word	Percentage (%)	Example	Type
Adjective	14	13.5%	like, just, all, uptown, straight, drippin, lucky, sexy, hot, warmin, slow, pinky, better, wild	
Adverb	8	7.7%	up, somewhere, too, here, so, now, away, never	
Total		100%		

Remark: There are four words that serve more than one function: *love*, *feelin*, *smile* and *thinking*. These words can be both noun and verb.

Based on the parts of speech, the keywords can be placed into two main categories, namely ‘function words’ and ‘content words’. Similar to the results from previous research on keyword analysis, function words occur significantly less often than content words (10.6% and 89.4%) in this study.

The findings from this study agree with Baker (2006a). Function words in Bruno Mars’ lyrics found in the keyword list provide a sense of “style” rather than conceptual meaning. In other words, they were used in order to make the songs more emotional and melodic. Also, the function words appearing as keywords in this corpus are there because they are repeated very frequently, to an extent that is unusual in general conversation. Examples of the interjection ‘yeah’ from a selection of songs, are shown below:

no no no Just say <i>yeah yeah yeah yeah</i>	yeah	And we'll go go go go go If you're
we'll be fucking like gorillas <i>Yeah yeah</i>	yeah	baby baby aw yeah You and me b
for too long Oh oh oh oh <i>yeah yeah</i>	yeah	Can I just stay here Spend the
keep on trying You all going to make it ah	yeah	do not give up Do not ever quit, try a
that's what friends are supposed to do, oh	yeah	If you're tossin' and you're tu

‘Yeah’ can be found in most of the songs as a vocal word to add some particular emotion to the songs. All of the function words appear to serve the similar purpose. Thus, they do not reveal the characteristics of the corpus. To know more of the aboutness of Bruno Mars’ songs, we must instead rely on the analysis and discussion of the content words.

Nouns

Nouns can be divided into pronouns and common nouns. Four types of pronoun keywords were found: first person pronouns (I/me/my), second person pronouns (you, ya, your), third person pronouns (it), and collective pronouns (we).

The concordance lines of all the personal pronouns show that the first person pronoun tends to be the centre of all. ‘I’ is used to refer to the singer, Bruno Mars in this case.

‘You’ is used to refer to a woman who is having a sexual relationship with ‘I’ (the singer). ‘We’ is used only to include ‘you’ and ‘I’.

banging on <i>my</i> chest bang bang gorilla	You	And <i>me</i> baby making love like
Ooh yeah		gorillas Ooh yeah

You are <i>my</i> treasure yeah you youyouyou	You are my treasure you are <i>my</i> treasure
are	You are <i>my</i>
I'm too hot hot damn Bitch, say <i>my</i> name	you know who I am I'm too hot hot damn
lkin' trips to Puerto Rico Say the word and	You can be <i>my</i> freaka Girl I'll be a fleeko
we go	mamacita
that smile I'm looking for Was that so	you ever need to smile again girl take
hard If	<i>my</i> card Razzle

‘You’ always occurs together with a first person pronoun. For sexual activities, the lyrics indicate that they are simply for immediate pleasure, as there is no accompanying mention of love or serious commitment. In addition, ‘you’ in the lyrics seems to be controlled by ‘I’. Thus, the songs suggest that the singer has the power, specifically economic power, to command ‘you’ (the woman) to do things. Taking Richins and Dawson’s four characteristics of materialistic people (1992) into consideration, we come to see that the power between “You” and “I” is not equal. The frequent deployment of “I” and “my” can possibly show the persona’s self-centredness where “I” and “my” explicitly assert the authority, ownership and self-importance whereas “You” can only be a part of “I” and serve as a property to be owned.

The pronoun keyword ‘I’, it can be said to indicate the materialistic traits of Bruno Mars. Mars uses the word ‘I’ to present three main aspects of his materialistic attributes as shown below:

Presenting his desire and economic power:

Lucky for you that's what I like that's what	I	like Sex by the fire at night Silk sheets and diamond
Hey hey hey	I	got a condo in Manhattan Baby girl what's hatnin'
Ooh	I	got a body full of liquor With a cocaine kicker
I'm looking at you Yeah you baby You got what	I	want I got what you want Girl you got what I
and drop it for a player Drop drop it for me	I	'll rent a beach house in Miami Wake up with no

Having sexual activities with a woman:

forty two Squeeze all of that into my coupe Girl	I	choose you Chunky Looking for them girls with the
smile want one smile, want one smile babe Once	I	lay besides you girl I will make you scream yeah
gorillas I bet you never ever felt so good so good	I	got your body trembling like it should it should
See I ain't tryinna' hurt you baby no no No	I	just wanna work you baby yup yup See I ain't
girl Now I unzip the back to watch it fall While	I	kiss your neck and shoulders No, don't be afraid
just turn down the lights And close the door Oooh	I	love that dress But you won't need it anymore No
butt You got a booty like Woah wait a minute	I	'm just playing with you Loosen them shoulders up

Focusing on his self-image:

hot damn Bitch, say my name you	I	am I'm too hot hot damn And
know who		my band '
sits alone talking to the moon I'm	I	'm famous The talk of the town
feeling like		They say I've
on Jesus Hashtag blessed They ain't	I	m a dangerous man with some
ready for me		money in my pocket

Mars mainly focuses on material objects and his physical appearance by using the word 'I' to portray his image, express his desire, objectify women and show off his possessions and economic power. These representations, once again, echo Richins and Dawson's materialistic characteristics of possessiveness and self-centredness.

The common noun keywords are mostly used to describe Mars' partying and playboy lifestyle and material wealth. For example, the word '*funk*' is used to mean a genre of party music; the words '*baby*', '*girl*', '*darling*' and '*girls*' refer to women who are having a fun time with him. Also, there are nouns which are used to portray his nightlife. Temporal nouns like '*night*' and '*tonight*' indicate the time for parties, and proper nouns for party beverages like '*moonshine*'¹ and '*liquor*' are listed as keywords of his songs. Furthermore, Mars frequently mentions other proper nouns such as '*Brooklyn*' and '*Versace*' to show off his luxurious and trendy

¹ A kind of whisky defined as "clear, unaged whisky" typically made with corn mash its main ingredient.

lifestyle in a well-known part of New York. All of his songs, together with their rhythms, can offer a sense of fun, amusement, enjoyment and entertainment to the listeners. However, at the same time, the songs may impart materialistic values.

Verbs

The verb keywords can be divided into mental verbs and active verbs. This group of keywords apparently yields a sense of actions and movements while the verb keywords represent materialistic concepts. The singer uses mental verbs to express his feelings, and desires. Those keywords usually appear in colloquial forms such as the keywords '*tryna*', '*wanna*', and '*gotta*'. Colloquialisms might be used in order to connote an informal, casual style. Furthermore, these verbs are presenting a commissive act. Therefore, they show the singer's plans for his future actions in the songs.

But your booty deserve a celebration	gonna	celebrate it all night long	Come
And I'm		on here and show	
your so delicious Like ice cream on	gonna	eat you before you melt away	
a sunny day		yeah Oh babe Is that	
You deserve it baby you deserve it all	gonna	give it to you Gold jewelry	
And I'm		shining so bright	
nna fight this fight for better days	gonna	make it This is the chance let's	
I know we're		take it Baby	

you Tell me baby tell me tell me baby	tryna	do Gold jewelry shining so
What you		bright Strawberry
you could just sit down and just sit	tryna	have a good time tonight let's go
still Aye we		over here It'
lay it back Alright Aye, now you got	tryna	have some fun tonight you just
it baby You		gotta follow
cheap beer That's why you can catch	Tryna	scratch my way up to the top
me here		Cause my job got
I wanna get down Yeah them the ones	tryna	recruit I'm looking at you Yeah
I'm		you baby

you want an autograph For you and	Gotta	do it in the penthouse That's
your friends		where I keep my
baby You tryna have some fun to-	gotta	follow these simple instructions
night you just		you ready You
up in the city Got Chucks on with	Gotta	kiss myself I'm so pretty I'm too
Saint Laurent		
work Throw some perm on your	gotta	relax ooh Let me show you what
attitude Girl you		you got to do
Can I preach Uh oh Can I preach Uh	gotta	show 'em how a pimp get it in
oh I		First take your

All the above concordance lines of the keyword ‘gonna’ came from different songs, namely ‘*Straight Up and Down*’, ‘*The Lazy Song*’, ‘*Natalie*’, ‘*Our First Time*’, ‘*Too Good to Say Goodbye*’, ‘*Liquor Store Blues*’ and ‘*Treasure*’. All the information around the commissive verbs agrees with what has been discussed in the noun section. Even when talking about future actions, Mars

generally mentions fun activities and luxurious objects. These verbs simultaneously display the singer's obsession with material wealth (*such as tryna scractch my way up to the top*), his tendency to assert his authority (*such as gotta do it in the penthouse*) and his relentless investment in material goods (*such as tryna do Gold jewelry shining so bright*).

Other mental verb keywords also indicate senses of happiness, women and sexual activities. Here are some examples:

moment that you kiss my lips You	feel	wonderful It's something
know I start to		incredible There's sex
Spend the rest of my days here Cause	feel	like I've been locked out of
you make me		heaven For too long
got it goin' on got it goin' on Don't it	feel	so good to be us ay Yeah we got
		it goin'

did it for fun Natalie she's	thinking	it's funny Telling everyone Well
probably out there		I'm digging a
Junior Gong I'm flying high like	thinking	that I run the whole block
superman And		I dunno if it's
, since you ain't thinking of me	thinking	of me baby Look what you're
since you ain't		making me do Pick

Active verb keywords in the lyrics also indicate the same characteristics which are 'fun', 'party', 'woman' and 'sex', in other words, representations of material possession and domination.

we look good together There's a reason why they	watch	all night long Yeah know we'll turn heads forever
me for me now girl Now I unzip the back to	watch	it fall While I kiss your neck and shoulders No
go they be like Ooh, so player ooh Now nownow	Watch	me break it down like Uh 24 karat 24 karat magic
gonna show you off When I'm walkin' with you I	watch	the whole room change Baby that's what you do
it down for me Take it nice and slow let me	watch	while you turn around Just back it up on me girl
one smile babe Once I lay besides you girl I will	make	you scream yeah yeah Girl let me take my time
Honey you're my golden star You know you can	make	my wish come true If you let me treasure you If
's right We out here drippin' in finesse It don't	make	no sense Out here drippin' in finesse You know it
here Spend the rest of my days here Cause you	make	me feel like I've been locked out of heaven For
wanna retire man I'm too hot hot damn Bitch,	say	my name you know who I am I'm too
's what I like I'm talkin' trips to Puerto Rico	Say	the word and we go You can be my freaka Girl
Uptown Funk you up Uptown Funk you up	say	whaa Uptown Funk you up Uptown Funk you up
many on my team for you to act so mean You	say	you wanna go and have fun, well you ain't the
's what I like that's what I like If you	say	you want a good time Well here I am baby here

Ooh I	got	a body full of liquor With a cocaine kicker And I
Hey heyhey I	got	a condo in Manhattan Baby girl what's hatnin'
Oh come on girl Who cares if we're trashed	Got	a pocket full of cash we can blow Shots of
't let it ring too long or I'm gone I	got	Alicia waitin', Aisha waitin' All the eesha'swai
fun tonight Straight up and down This liquor	got	both of us faded so gone so gone so gone
terpiecesStylin' wilin' Livin' it up in the city	Got	Chucks on with Saint Laurent Gotta kiss
for dinner Julio serve that scampi Julio You	got	it if you want it Got got it if you want
side to side She got to have her own money She	got	her own money Shout out to the girls that pay
Show her how to lay it back	got	it baby You tryna have some fun tonight you
Alright Aye, now you	got	me feeling like I'm on top Feel-ing like I would
because Pineapple kush between my jaws Has	got	planned Ooh, girl your my de-sire your wish
r first time Clothes are not required for what we	got	to do You gotta lay it back Mat-ter of fact
you gotta relax ooh Let me show you what you	got	too many girls on hold for you to be so bold
I	got	what I want I got what you want Girl you got
recruit I'm looking at you Yeah you baby You	got	

Is that okay Girl no need to be	got	you all night don't you worry
nervous Cause I		about a thing no

Another interesting active verb keyword related to materialism is the word ‘*got*’. Mars uses this keyword to describe himself as the centre by focusing on his masculinity and economic power. Here are some examples:

From the concordance lines above, we can see the representation of his materialistic life style. Moreover, Mars presents his image as a playboy surrounded by many girls. He tries to seduce women by showing them that he has all the material possessions they want.

Adjectives

Adjective keywords in Bruno Mars’ songs are used to emphasise and describe his point of view on himself, things, and people, as well as to express the feeling of how much he enjoys his life based on what he owns.

name you know who I am I'm too	hot	damn And my band 'bout that
hot		money Break it down
Make a dragon wanna retire man	hot	damn Bitch, say my name you
I'm too hot		know who I am
it's not But I still look good though	hot	I bet you want an autograph
Hot comb		For you and your frie

instructions you ready You need	sexy	activate your sexy Silky, smooth
activate your		and snap silky
yourself You're wonderful flaw-	sexy	lady But you walk around here
less ooh you're a		like you wanna
Baby squirrel you's a	sexy	mother fucker Gimme your
		gimme your
laugh her laugh She hates but I	sexy	She's so beautiful and I tell her
think it's so		everyday Oh you
come show me Come on dance	sexy	then flaunt it Well it's Saturday
Jump on it If you		night and we

‘All’ is an interesting adjective found in this study, as it portrays the materialistic characteristics of Bruno Mars. Mars often uses this keyword to emphasise his material power and extravagance by providing things and showing his ownership of women. He also uses it to claim that he ‘owns the night’ for partying.

smile on it You deserve it baby	all	And I'm gonna give it to you
you deserve it		Gold jewelry
they don't understand You're all I	all	I had At night when the stars
had You're		light up my
shoulders No, don't be afraid to	all	I'll be right here ready to hold
show it		you Girl,
And held your hand Should have	all	my hours When I had the chance
gave you		
on her I'm a ooh Natalie she ran	all	my money And she did it for fun
away with		Natalie she's

I spend	all	my money On a big old fancy car For these bright
okay Girl no need to be nervous	all	night don't you worry about a
Cause I got you		thing no
roads steer me wrong But I still	all	night long All night long
drive them		All you young
deserve a celebration And I'm	all	night long Come on here and
gonna celebrate it		show me
Thirty seven twenty seven forty	all	of that into my coupe Girl
two Squeeze		I choose you
Now greetings to da world	all	of you Vye here is da one called
		Bruno Mars long
put yo' pinky rings up to the moon	all	trying to do 24 karat magic in
Girls what y'		the air Head

Discussion

The current study investigates materialism construction in Bruno Mars' song lyrics by applying keyword analysis and interpreting the words based on the characteristics of materialism proposed by Richins and Dawson (1992). Through his lyrical choices, his materialistic tendencies are explicitly demonstrated. The top 100 keywords and their surrounding contexts reveal the concepts of materialism in the songs such as material possessions, sexual objectification, physical appearance, lavish lifestyle, self-prioritisation, and economic power. These characteristics seem to coincide with the four aforementioned characteristics of materialism. To elaborate, Mars' messages in the songs capture a sense of self-centredness, ownership of goods and people (especially women),

obsession of material wealth and desire to possess and be recognised even more. Without doubt, they are the representations of a materialist. To put it more simply, a materialist values his/her place at the centre and is obsessed with owning material objects that represent his/her social image of wealth. In other words, people with materialistic beliefs highly prioritise their material success. They measure their quality of life and happiness through material possessions (Richins & Dawson, 1992).

Given how songs and other types of popular culture can produce negative effects on behaviour and attitude, it is important that the possible impact of materialism on society be discussed, which is a complex and even controversial subject. It is widely argued that materialism can induce many negative feelings such as lust, selfishness, and jealousy. These feelings, usually considered harmful and corrupt by social standards, can negatively affect both individuals and entire societies and a lot of research has been conducted to support the idea. As mentioned in the previous section, materialistic individuals are less willing to share what they have with other people, even their family members or friends because they want to be at the centre of everything. In contrast with what others might have said about materialism, Mars adopts highly materialistic contents in his songs. In so doing, the singer can be perceived as condoning to or even promoting an ideology that is controversial in today's global community.

Another main theme of his songs is male authority and sexual objectification of women. The songs commonly present the concept of 'having fun' with women, and the women of his songs can be 'bought' with his money and/or expensive objects. In

addition, the songs only connote short-term sexual relationships, and 'love' goes unmentioned. Also the preferred types of women in his songs are clearly those with physical beauty (e.g. 'boobs', 'booty', and 'sexy ass'), with no concern shown for their inner qualities. While poetic license may be in place for an artist, Mars' daring portrayal of patriarchy and subjugation of women may raise difficult questions as to what sort of ideology his songs are imparting and what damage such an ideology can do to society at large.

Mars is a popular and successful artist. Even though his songs may be treated purely as a form of entertainment, they, as other types of media have demonstrated, can play influential roles in people's behaviour and attitude and yield consequences that are unpredictable. To illustrate, regular listeners may see gender inequality as 'another' common practice whereas women have been in a long, well-documented struggle to combat such injustices. It could potentially create yet another harmful gender stereotype if Mars' female fans embraced the idea of being 'sexy' or having 'big boobs' and believed that their physical assets alone would reward them with materialistic luxuries.

Apart from the issue of the objectification of women, the songs may also romanticise material success, giving listeners the impression that wealth brings a luxurious, fun and laid-back lifestyle. This may lead to the negative effects of both societal destruction and self-destruction. Some materialists are likely to base their satisfaction on material possessions. However, physical goods only act as a temporary placeholder to momentarily satisfy one's desires. They can be shallow, impermanent and external. When people make

material success their sole aim, they may be more competitive and more selfish, have a reduced sense of social responsibility, and be less inclined to join in demanding social activities. With unawareness of its dangers, materialism could negatively impact people's attitudes and lifestyles.

This paper is a small-scale study that only investigates the lyrics of 30 songs of Bruno Mars. It may not be generalisable. Also, the researchers do not intend to argue that the listeners will become materialists. The paper only shows that the songs may convey materialistic ideologies that can manipulate people to perceive things in a certain way. As songs can have a significant impact on their listeners (Suddreth, 2009), the listeners should have an awareness of the ideologies being presented to them.

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APPENDIX A

Top 100 Keyword lists of Bruno Mars' song lyrics
compared to BNC

Item	Keyword	Frequency	Frequency BNC	Log Likelihood	Odds Ratio
1	you	586	667200	1410.207445	8.386720019
2	i	486	877833	805.439747	5.270054048
3	baby	101	8856	764.4304568	107.8740139
4	me	200	131658	753.6671025	15.065083
5	cause	83	13078	558.7063271	62.42410976
6	yeah	133	83020	454.1272982	14.52002211
7	my	153	146745	446.4191127	10.053592
8	oh	114	66908	444.6934593	16.48965508
9	uptown	29	43	431.6695484	6153.212969
10	funk	29	201	354.4930753	1316.35691
11	girl	58	14822	301.4608978	35.79166048
12	ain	34	3628	289.0411559	100.6899992
13	ooh	40	4556	271.1132688	80.17996517
14	babe	22	206	256.4628038	973.7543492
15	up	144	221520	234.3207093	5.518157774
16	your	108	134455	227.3824728	7.096279439
17	it	309	1053342	212.4601853	2.681584617
18	tryna	12	1	211.7356344	109314.9641
19	karat	12	1	211.7356344	109314.9641
20	straight	38	9880	203.3661759	36.04411433
21	like	100	151822	191.4619047	6.039543732
22	drippin	12	9	190.1061759	12146.10615
23	goin	18	345	185.0179041	475.5411716
24	got	74	86498	182.9445881	8.044020005
25	girls	34	9143	180.424729	34.94220833
26	wanna	24	2599	173.9360528	87.72760655
27	waitin	6	34	165.9890776	3215.144941
28	lovelies	5	9	156.0369897	10119.90826

Item	Keyword	Frequency	Frequency BNC	Log Likelihood	Odds Ratio
29	gon	17	29	153.5070148	3455.041823
30	just	80	126467	144.3190097	5.718222251
31	watch	29	9241	138.3553475	28.62934529
32	know	75	119046	138.0644245	5.765413668
33	hey	19	1756	136.5913059	98.62733926
34	finesse	12	151	133.1132296	723.9390721
35	run	38	23789	132.5971985	14.58256307
36	what	100	240631	132.4373982	3.999348537
37	don	89	95543	127.9638738	6.221605297
38	let	41	33557	127.6748931	11.42902104
39	treasure	15	985	117.9343849	138.761192
40	gonna	26	12439	115.7745888	20.53295002
41	til	10	101	115.1344877	901.7731724
42	somewhere	23	6651	114.039475	31.53163327
43	tell	35	29085	108.7056582	11.29685102
44	go	54	88096	100.4244831	5.704648175
45	feel	35	25401	97.65679823	11.49424178
46	calling	10	4324	95.71867902	37.94060249
47	natalie	9	152	94.72067513	539.2346167
48	get	51	96284	92.45068623	5.21909591
49	lay	22	9886	90.4874572	20.28868559
50	brooklyn	9	202	89.74020861	405.7604985
51	too	41	67207	87.39090717	6.11383401
52	love	28	22834	84.0726531	11.1843202
53	say	43	67201	83.80670065	5.977958
54	look	35	52463	82.62125732	6.78504726
55	damn	12	1920	81.47927419	61.68389324
56	goodbye	12	1404	80.70045826	77.85856686

Item	Keyword	Frequency	Frequency BNC	Log Likelihood	Odds Ratio
57	here	42	67913	79.51159508	5.780276535
58	gorillas	7	77	79.45384174	827.7653726
59	gotta	14	3677	79.17586791	37.1705435
60	so	81	242487	78.16349203	3.168806646
61	take	43	70695	76.67141256	5.552655401
62	show	28	26473	76.59615641	9.646562772
63	hallelujah	6	53	70.60745546	1030.708402
64	lucky	14	4001	69.73434295	31.88010322
65	sexy	9	642	69.29272103	127.6686284
66	hot	18	9404	68.90519134	17.44436588
67	phone	12	7951	68.63189326	19.48449449
68	tonight	16	6577	68.52185314	22.16769044
69	feelin	5	16	68.1117666	2844.926249
70	warmin	4	1	67.92497499	36411.74104
71	slow	15	6071	64.6833082	22.51240501
72	moonshine	5	24	64.50405381	1896.617348
73	now	54	139361	63.8280289	3.670165555
74	fun	13	5161	62.87186379	24.71435978
75	night	28	36164	61.26537751	7.060852223
76	smile	15	6905	61.00939848	19.79314539
77	no	85	232186	60.60618885	2.91304233
78	whaa	4	5	60.56456996	7282.347916
79	uh	7	319	60.07304604	199.8049504
80	versace	5	41	59.5422653	1110.214844
81	messed	6	162	57.65920228	337.2067015
82	believe	21	20535	56.18248224	9.321599261
83	moon	11	2960	56.07277274	33.8490781
84	pinky	5	61	55.76094534	746.2098274

Item	Keyword	Frequency	Frequency BNC	Log Likelihood	Odds Ratio
85	better	26	35112	54.90815478	6.751784045
86	away	30	48201	54.62440886	5.676331529
87	come	35	66776	54.02176801	4.781540671
88	thinking	11	13027	52.97493181	11.89171245
89	woo	6	310	50.00815925	176.2174344
90	playa	2	26	49.37402563	1400.451228
91	ya	8	1260	49.13298461	57.81677301
92	aisha	2	29	48.55916697	1255.576925
93	want	32	55182	48.04561345	4.95787964
94	we	89	350867	47.99975533	2.318883941
95	wild	12	5759	47.86034998	18.980493
96	make	37	78864	47.85390396	4.164194442
97	all	78	289766	47.43548137	2.459838448
98	darlin	4	37	46.72228217	984.1007544
99	never	29	53499	46.30870562	4.943017275
100	liquor	6	429	46.16755671	127.3364558

APPENDIX B

Keyword lists in each Part of Speech

Item	Keyword	Frequency	Frequency BNC	Log Likelihood	Odds Ratio	Part of Speech
1	yeah	133	83020	454.127298	14.5200221	Interjection
2	oh	114	66908	444.693459	16.4896551	Interjection
3	ooh	40	4556	271.113269	80.1799652	Interjection
4	hey	19	1756	136.591306	98.6273393	Interjection
5	damn	12	1920	81.4792742	61.6838932	Interjection
6	hallelujah	6	53	70.6074555	1030.7084	Interjection
7	whaa	4	5	60.56457	7282.34792	Interjection
8	uh	7	319	60.073046	199.80495	Interjection
9	woo	6	310	50.0081593	176.217434	Interjection

Item	Keyword	Frequency	Frequency BNC	Log Likelihood	Odds Ratio	Part of Speech
1	cause	83	13078	558.706327	62.4241098	Conjunction
2	til	10	101	115.134488	901.773172	Conjunction

Item	Keyword	Frequency	Frequency BNC	Log Likelihood	Odds Ratio	Part of Speech
1	baby	101	8856	764.430457	107.874014	Noun
2	funk	29	201	354.493075	1316.35691	Noun
3	girl	58	14822	301.460898	35.7916605	Noun
4	karat	12	1	211.735634	109314.964	Noun
5	girls	34	9143	180.424729	34.9422083	Noun
6	lovelies	5	9	156.03699	10119.9083	Noun
7	finesse	12	151	133.11323	723.939072	Noun
8	what	100	240631	132.437398	3.99934854	Noun
9	treasure	15	985	117.934385	138.761192	Noun
10	natalie	9	152	94.7206751	539.234617	Noun
11	brooklyn	9	202	89.7402086	405.760499	Noun
12	love	28	22834	84.0726531	11.1843202	Noun
13	goodbye	12	1404	80.7004583	77.8585669	Noun

Item	Keyword	Frequency	Frequency BNC	Log Likelihood	Odds Ratio	Part of Speech
14	gorillas	7	77	79.4538417	827.765373	Noun
15	phone	12	7951	68.6318933	19.4844945	Noun
16	tonight	16	6577	68.5218531	22.1676904	Noun
17	feelin	5	16	68.1117666	2844.92625	Noun
18	moonshine	5	24	64.5040538	1896.61735	Noun
19	fun	13	5161	62.8718638	24.7143598	Noun
20	night	28	36164	61.2653775	7.06085222	Noun
21	smile	15	6905	61.0093985	19.7931454	Noun
22	versace	5	41	59.5422653	1110.21484	Noun
23	moon	11	2960	56.0727727	33.8490781	Noun
24	thinking	11	13027	52.9749318	11.8917125	Noun
25	playa	2	26	49.3740256	1400.45123	Noun
26	ya	8	1260	49.1329846	57.816773	Noun
27	aisha	2	29	48.559167	1255.57693	Noun
28	darlin	4	37	46.7222822	984.100754	Noun
29	liquor	6	429	46.1675567	127.336456	Noun

Item	Keyword	Frequency	Frequency BNC	Log Likelihood	Odds Ratio	Part of Speech
1	you	586	667200	1410.20745	8.38672002	Pronoun
2	i	486	877833	805.439747	5.27005405	Pronoun
3	me	200	131658	753.667103	15.065083	Pronoun
4	my	153	146745	446.419113	10.053592	Pronoun
5	your	108	134455	227.382473	7.09627944	Pronoun
6	it	309	1053342	212.460185	2.68158462	Pronoun
8	ya	8	1260	49.1329846	57.816773	Pronoun
9	we	89	350867	47.9997553	2.31888394	Pronoun

Item	Keyword	Frequency	Frequency BNC	Log Likelihood	Odds Ratio	Part of Speech
1	ain	34	3628	289.041156	100.689999	Verb
2	tryna	12	1	211.735634	109314.964	Verb
3	goin	18	345	185.017904	475.541172	Verb
4	got	74	86498	182.944588	8.04402001	Verb
5	wanna	24	2599	173.936053	87.7276066	Verb
6	waitin	6	34	165.989078	3215.14494	Verb
7	gon	17	29	153.507015	3455.04182	Verb
8	watch	29	9241	138.355348	28.6293453	Verb
9	know	75	119046	138.064425	5.76541367	Verb
10	run	38	23789	132.597199	14.5825631	Verb
11	don	89	95543	127.963874	6.2216053	Verb
12	let	41	33557	127.674893	11.429021	Verb
13	gonna	26	12439	115.774589	20.53295	Verb
14	tell	35	29085	108.705658	11.296851	Verb
15	go	54	88096	100.424483	5.70464818	Verb
16	feel	35	25401	97.6567982	11.4942418	Verb
17	calling	10	4324	95.718679	37.9406025	Verb
18	get	51	96284	92.4506862	5.21909591	Verb
19	lay	22	9886	90.4874572	20.2886856	Verb
20	love	28	22834	84.0726531	11.1843202	Verb
21	say	43	67201	83.8067007	5.977958	Verb
22	look	35	52463	82.6212573	6.78504726	Verb
23	gotta	14	3677	79.1758679	37.1705435	Verb
24	take	43	70695	76.6714126	5.5526554	Verb
25	show	28	26473	76.5961564	9.64656277	Verb
26	feelin	5	16	68.1117666	2844.92625	Verb
27	smile	15	6905	61.0093985	19.7931454	Verb
28	messed	6	162	57.6592023	337.206702	Verb
29	believe	21	20535	56.1824822	9.32159926	Verb
30	come	35	66776	54.021768	4.78154067	Verb

Item	Keyword	Frequency	Frequency BNC	Log Likelihood	Odds Ratio	Part of Speech
31	thinking	11	13027	52.9749318	11.8917125	Verb
32	want	32	55182	48.0456135	4.95787964	Verb
33	make	37	78864	47.853904	4.16419444	Verb

Item	Keyword	Frequency	Frequency BNC	Log Likelihood	Odds Ratio	Part of Speech
1	uptown	29	43	431.669548	6153.21297	Adjective
2	straight	38	9880	203.366176	36.0441143	Adjective
3	like	100	151822	191.461905	6.03954373	Adjective
4	drippin	12	9	190.106176	12146.1062	Adjective
5	just	80	126467	144.31901	5.71822225	Adjective
6	lucky	14	4001	69.734343	31.8801032	Adjective
7	sexy	9	642	69.292721	127.668628	Adjective
8	hot	18	9404	68.9051913	17.4443659	Adjective
9	warmin	4	1	67.924975	36411.741	Adjective
10	slow	15	6071	64.6833082	22.512405	Adjective
11	pinky	5	61	55.7609453	746.209827	Adjective
12	better	26	35112	54.9081548	6.75178405	Adjective
13	wild	12	5759	47.86035	18.980493	Adjective
14	all	78	289766	47.4354814	2.45983845	Adjective

Item	Keyword	Frequency	Frequency BNC	Log Likelihood	Odds Ratio	Part of Speech
1	up	144	221520	234.320709	5.51815777	Adverb
2	somewhere	23	6651	114.039475	31.5316333	Adverb
3	too	41	67207	87.3909072	6.11383401	Adverb
4	here	42	67913	79.5115951	5.78027654	Adverb
5	so	81	242487	78.163492	3.16880665	Adverb
6	now	54	139361	63.8280289	3.67016556	Adverb
7	away	30	48201	54.6244089	5.67633153	Adverb
8	never	29	53499	46.3087056	4.94301728	Adverb

APPENDIX C

30 Songs List of Bruno Mars

Song	Name	Year	Album	No. of Word
1	The lazy song	2010	Doo-Wops & Hooligans	363
2	Just the way you are	2010	Doo-Wops & Hooligans	312
3	Count on me	2010	Doo-Wops & Hooligans	279
4	Moonshine	2010	Unorthodox Jukebox	328
5	Our first time	2010	Doo-Wops & Hooligans	409
6	Liquor store blue	2010	Doo-Wops & Hooligans	411
7	Locked out of heaven	2010	Unorthodox Jukebox	313
8	Marry you	2010	Doo-Wops & Hooligans	362
9	Somewhere in Brooklyn	2010	Doo-Wops & Hooligans	238
10	Rest of my life	2010	Single	181
11	Runaway baby	2010	Doo-Wops & Hooligans	398
12	Talk of the moon	2010	Doo-Wops & Hooligans	229
13	It will rain	2011	Single	327
14	Gorilla	2012	Unorthodox Jukebox	419
15	Natalie	2012	Unorthodox Jukebox	450
16	If I knew	2012	Unorthodox Jukebox	192
17	Young girls	2012	Unorthodox Jukebox	315
18	Don't give up	2012	Single	291
19	Treasure	2012	Unorthodox Jukebox	274
20	When I was your man	2012	Unorthodox Jukebox	318
21	Uptown funk	2014	Single	540
22	Finesse	2016	24K Magic	472
23	That's what I like	2016	24K Magic	559
24	24K Magic	2016	24K Magic	484
25	Versace on the floor	2016	24K Magic	288
26	Chunky	2016	24K Magic	355
27	Perm	2016	24K Magic	523
28	Too good to say good bye	2016	24K Magic	428
29	Straight up & down	2016	24K Magic	442
30	Calling all my lovelies	2016	24K Magic	381