

CA-LEND Leadership Project Final Presentation

Media Representation of Autistic Females Research

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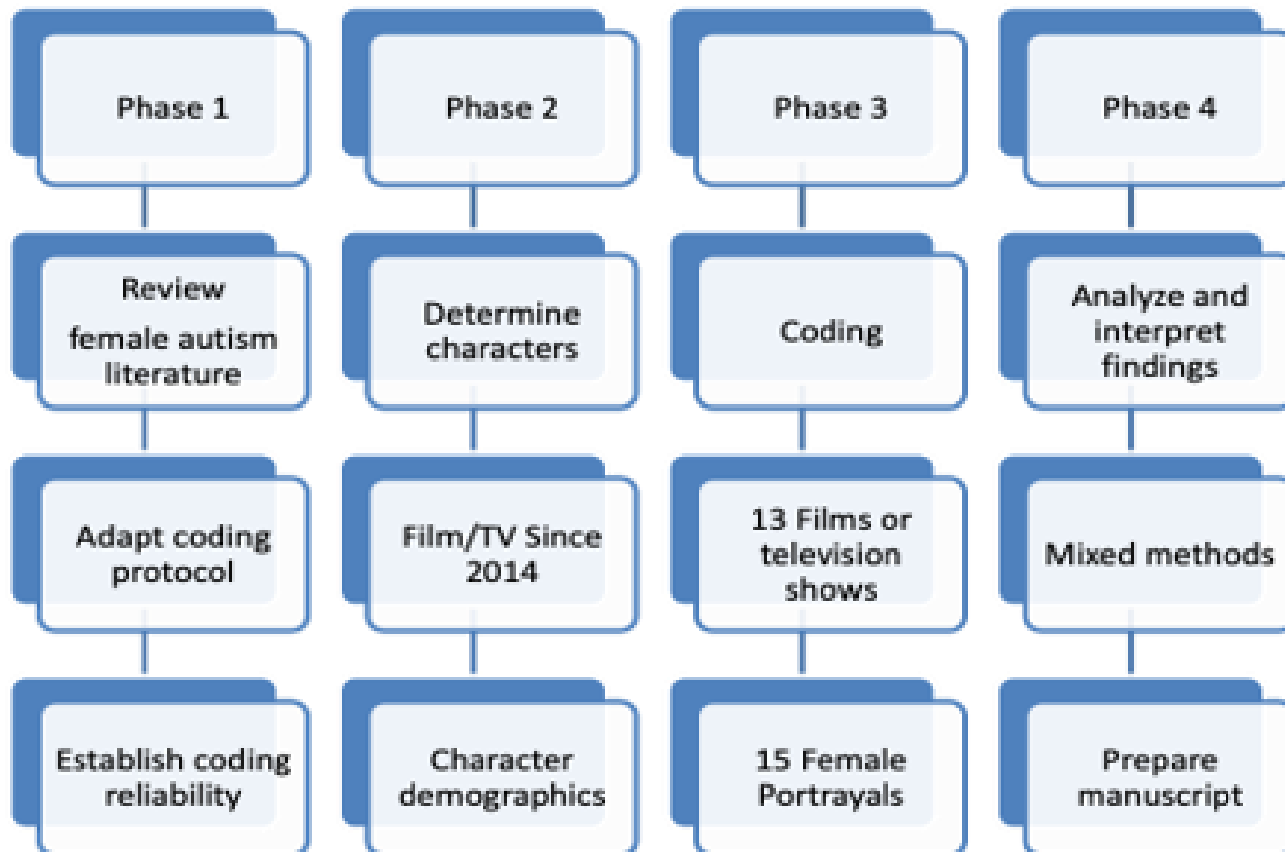
Brief Rationale

- Fictional portrayals of autism have been used as educational tools in clinics and professional development settings
- Also, film and television shows can extend awareness and messaging about autism by reaching an audience that far exceeds academic journals/settings
- Exposure of media portrayals of autistic females to the public will influence their perception of female autistic lifeworld
- Media portrayals of autistic females provide an opportunity to destigmatize autism and address female underdiagnosis and underrepresentation, as well as a lack of presentation of intersectionality due to the masculinization of autism. Media representation provides an opportunity to convey female autistic experiences, important for better understanding of female autistic lifeworld leading to greater understanding and acceptance

Literature Review Summary

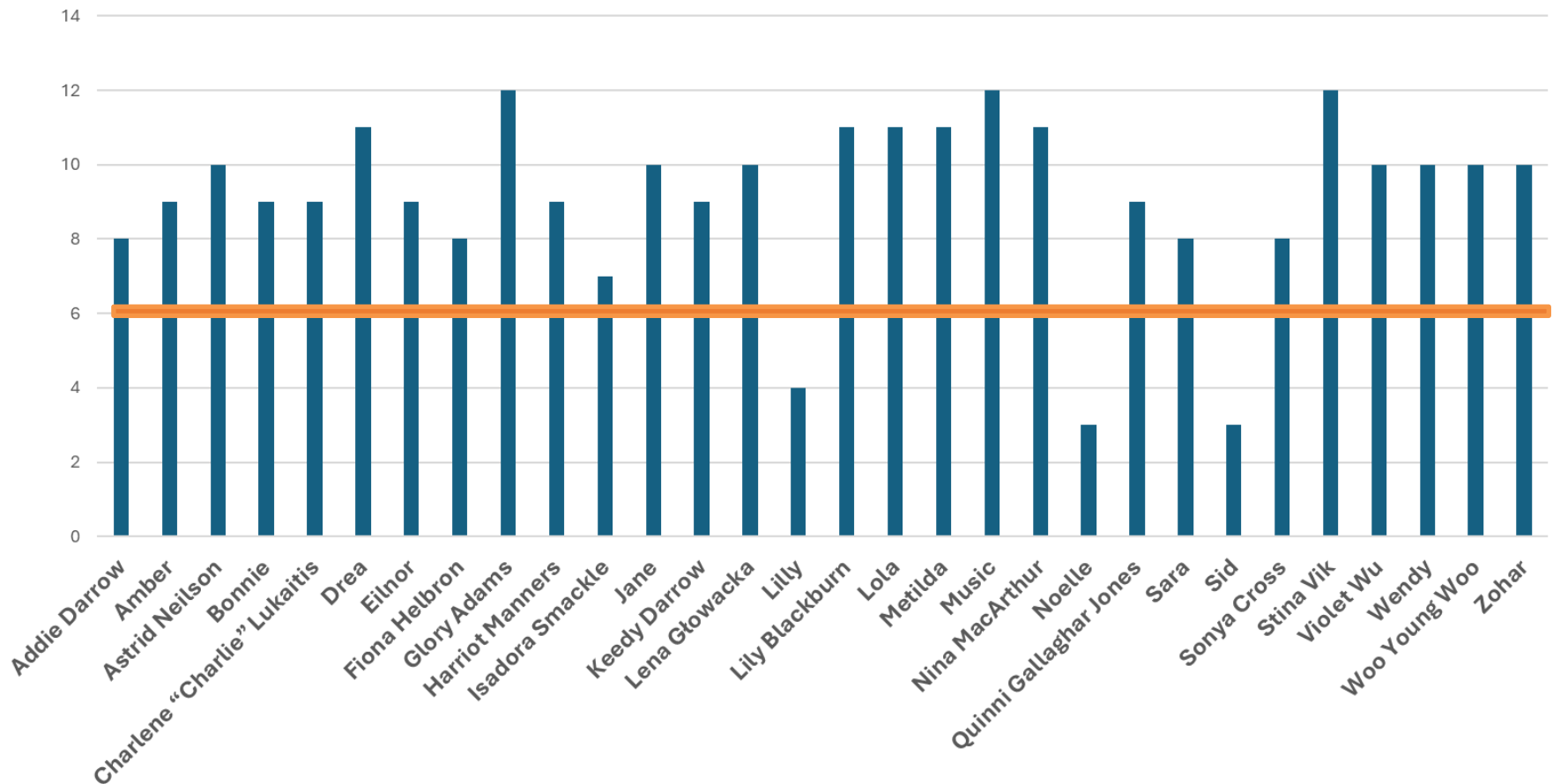
- Females are consistently diagnosed with ASD later than males
- Autistic females are more likely to camouflage which can lead to later diagnoses
- Autistic males are more likely to have restricted interests at a young age; females often present later due to difficulties with social relationships
- Educators are more likely to identify males than females as potentially autistic
- There is likely a large overlap between autistic eating behaviors and disordered eating behaviors in autistic females

Methods

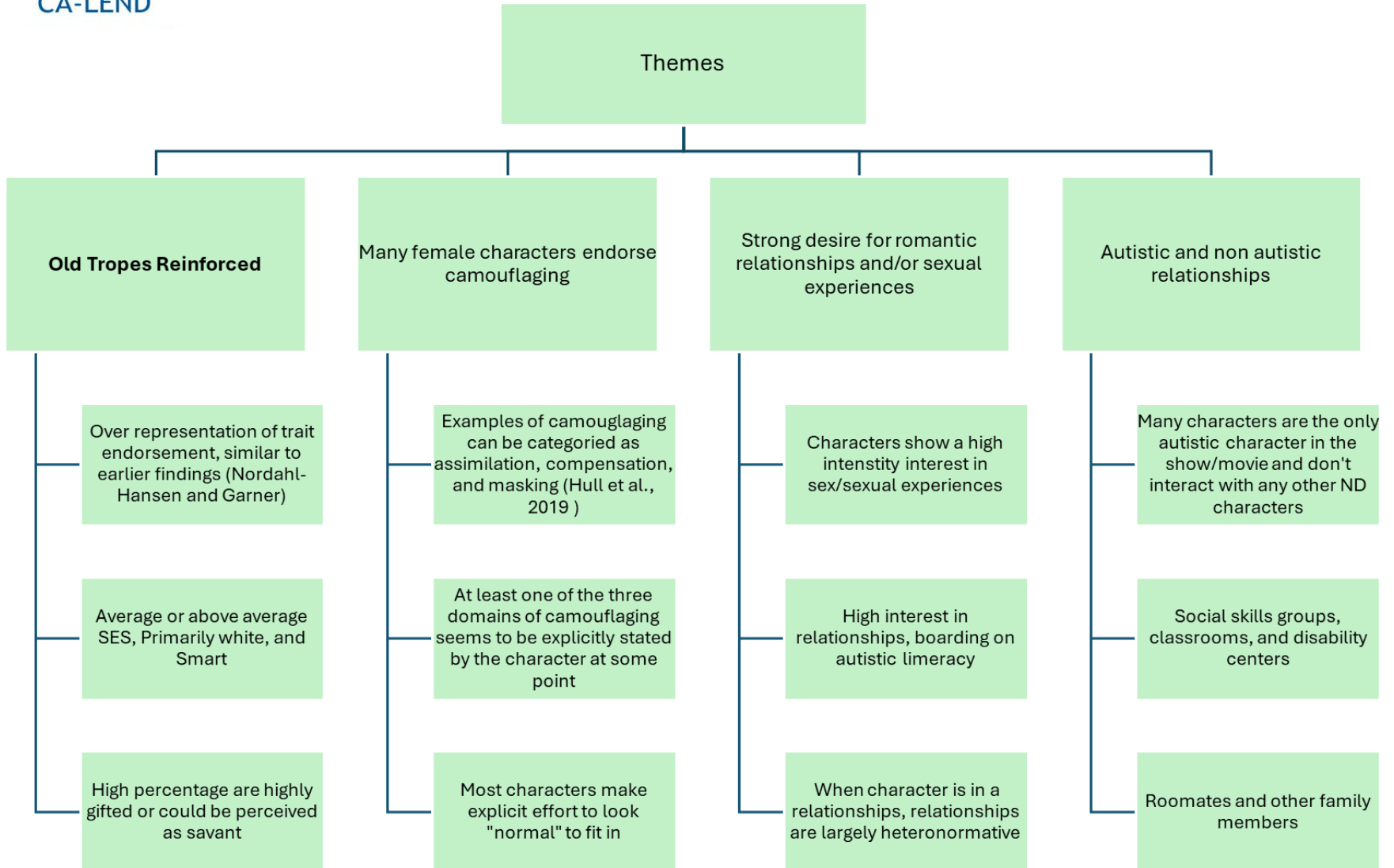


Results

Autism Score



Results





Alignment with LEND Values (Consultation w/ SA, FS, DEI)

- Incorporating "Nothing about us, without us" in a research co-production gives space for advocacy and reflection, illuminating how inclusivity connects findings in an ethical way directly to the community involved and represented
- From a personal perspective, examining autistic coding of women and girls and their media representation is deeply resonant. As an autistic woman, mother of an autistic daughter, and a member of a marginalized community the chance to participate in research in such an equitable and culturally responsive environment is empowering. The CA-LEND LP is more than just research, it is a platform to disseminate issues and ensure that outcomes are inclusive of us rather than done to us; this aligns strongly with LEND values

Alignment with LEND Values DEI and Health Equity Perspectives/issues

- Addressing the male vs female portrayal of autistic characters in media
- Addressing the disparities between the common portrayals of autistic females in media and actual clinical presentations of autistic females

Community (Title V) Agency Interface

- Collaboration with the LADPH and the Department of Education
- California Film Commission and MPAA
- Writers Guild of America

Lessons Learned/Next Steps

- 1) Current media trends included:
 - Characters w/o a broad spectrum of autistic traits
 - Limited interactions of autistic individuals with other ND individuals (friendships)
 - Poor representation of and lack of intersectionality with other demographics including gender identity, sexual identity, SES, and race/ethnicity
- 2) Further research could include comorbid conditions with autism, such as ADHD, anxiety, IDD, and PTSD. Also, ideally would include a more diverse research team
- 3) Next steps include bringing our findings to the film and tv industry

Questions for Audience/Invitation for Feedback

- 1) How can our findings be disseminated in other ways (besides a manuscript/literature) to reach different audiences?
- 2) Any feedback is welcome :)

Acknowledgments

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