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Aggression and Violence Provoking Music: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The increasing popularity of music among young people establishes its importance as an influential factor in their life. Many research studies point out to a linkage between music and behavior. This paper focusses on the role of violence provoking music and its relation to the deviant behavior in adolescents and young adults. The present study investigates the effects of violent music on the aggression level of adolescents and young adults. A sample of 100 individuals i.e. 50 adolescents of 15-18 years of age and 50 young adults of 19-21 years of age were taken. A self constructed music preference questionnaire was used to assess the music preferences of the sample. Buss and Perry (1992) aggression questionnaire was used to assess the aggressive tendency. The results clearly establish that violence provoking music can lead to increase in aggression levels in both adolescents and young adults. However, the effect of such music is similar for both age groups with no significant difference in aggression levels between adolescents and young adults who listen to violence provoking music.

Key words: Violent Music, Aggression, Adolescents and Young Adults

Introduction

From the mother's womb, every individual responds to music even before they have learned any language. Mother's lullaby is the first form of communication which a child receives. Hence music plays a pertinent role in our lives from conception to adulthood. Whether as a part of culture, religion, or emotional expression, music has always been the center of our society. Music is an eloquent vehicle for emotional expression like love, anger, ecstasy etc. There are various elements of music such as rhythm which is the element of time, dynamics which is related to the relative loudness or quietness of music, melody is the linear or horizontal presentation of pitch whereas pitch is the highness or lowness of a musical sound. Different genres of music may use or omit some of these elements. The formation, presentation and even the explanation of music differ according to social and cultural context. Music can be divided into genres (e.g. rock music) and sub-genres (e.g. heavy metal). Genres could be characterized as the marker of music content. Music genres comes in various types and styles such as alternative, blues, electronic, country, classical etc.

The dividing lines between music genres are precise and depend upon individual perceptions that may be controversial. There are various mediums through which music can be heard or played; it can be through live performances, audio devices, radio or television shows and social media.

The kind of music adolescents listen to effect their behavior as they are most vulnerable to the effects of music due to their impressionable minds (Hendricks, Bradley, & Davis, 1999). On an average, nine hours a day are spent by teenagers watching television and listening to music despite all new options (Wallace, 2015). In the recent decades, music is much more easily accessible than past decades because of technological advances and lowered costs. Also as an accessible medium, music has a profound ability to influence attitudes and emotions (Juslin & Sloboda, 2010) (Wheeler, Sokhadze, Baruth, Behrens, & Quinn, 2011).

Listeners are attracted towards music genres that have a positive impact on their mood (Saarikallio, 2011) (Thoma, Ryf, Mohiyeddini, Ehlert, & Nater, 2012) (Papinczak Z, Dingle, Stoyanov, Hides, & Zelenko). All genres of music have a powerful effect on their listeners. It is up to the music producers and creative team to determine how different genres influence the listeners. Few particular genres of music have been labeled as problematic and have been identified as harmful in the long run. (North & Hargreaves, 2006). A noteworthy discussion in the ongoing years has been the issue that music encourages problematic and violent behavior (Hoga & Bar-on, 1996).

According to critics, prominent negative themes in music such as substance abuse, suicide, murder, Satanism, and sexual violence adversely affect teenagers because they are repeatedly exposed to them. This is heavily reinforced because of how frequently they are portrayed in pop culture (Christenson & Roberts, 1998). Rap music and heavy metal music are under much criticism due to the nature of their lyrics, which are believed to glorify violence. While explicit topics such as sex, drugs and violence were not a common theme in music of the past, there has been a steep increase in the occurrence of such topics in music lyrics in the

