A Seminar Paper

THE LASTING EFFECTS OF NEGATIVE RAP AND HIP-HOP MUSIC
ON THE ADOLESCENT MIND

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THE LASTING EFFECTS OF NEGATIVE RAP AND HIP-HOP MUSIC ON THE ADOLESCENT MIND

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By
Shawn Jackson
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PREFACE

The Quiet Before the Storm

"Life is a storm, my friend. You’ll be basking in the sun one moment and smashed on rocks the next. What makes you a man is what you do when that storm comes!"

*The Count of Monte Cristo*

The Storm

I am not a man of many words, but what motivates me is this constant restlessness within my...my soul! This constant restlessness is inspired by my past actions. One past action, in particular! When someone tells you to put on your seat belt, DON'T THINK, JUST DO IT. My problem was, I thought and I didn't do it. "Life is not without a sense of irony," according to Laurence Fishborne. Because of that lack in judgment, my life would not stay the same. Life would be a lot harder, confusing, complicated, frustrating, endless, and nauseating. Life would be a lot like being born all over again. I was smashed on rocks! Let me explain.

I have tasted, smelled, seen, and felt death. Although I was never dead, one must understand, when dealing with something of that nature, something paranormal, just getting close to it is enough. At least it was for me! I was in a car accident on the weekend of October 17, 1997. This accident placed me in a deep coma for a month. When I say “deep” coma I mean, no motion, no response, no talking, nothing! And I was still in a coma for another half of a month. This part of the coma, I was awake but unresponsive. My eyes were open and I was
moving, but I was still unresponsive. Because of that, I was classified to still be in a coma. In a coma, a person is said to be brain dead, not having any function at all. I beg to differ! I heard things and saw things. I traveled to worlds people could only dream of at night. I DREAMED DREAMS. I lived my life over and over and over and over again. Come to think of it, I might be dreaming right now! If I am, that would explain this constant feeling of *déjà vu* that I feel from time to time, when I am in certain places. While in this coma I saw a lot and have come out a different person--a person that is in constant fear of what others are capable of doing, but more importantly, what I am capable of doing. People carry on throughout life without worry, without any type of concern. That is good, give it to God and let him take care of it. That is easy for most people, but not for me! When people talk about “bad things,” “evil things,” they are not encompassing the entire nature of the word, they can’t. When it all comes down to it, it is just a word to most people, with some feeling attached to it. If they could feel what I have felt, they would act differently. Now I really do know that there is a place that is classified as “hell.” And if what I’ve seen and felt is from there, then there has got to be a heaven! And a God! THERE HAS GOT TO BE! This is the main reason why I have found my way to a higher power, God’s power! It is God’s power that woke me up. It is God’s power that pushed me to graduate from high school, despite my situation. It is God’s power that has pushed me into college and made me graduate, despite my situation. It is God’s power that is pushing me to one year within my graduation date with a master’s degree in Adult Education, despite my situation. It is God’s power not ours! I believe it is God’s power that keeps my soul restless, always...I, I can’t explain it.
If I know anything that is God is the only answer! When I talk about God, I’m just not talking about a “being.” I am talking about a way of life—way of life that is harder, that still has a lot of “junk” to put up with, that will make me angry at times, and that will “test” me every way I turn. Nevertheless, it is worth it... compared to the things I have seen. God is worth it. That is a part of the main reason why my soul is restless. My soul is restless because I have something to do for life. I am writing this paper to hopefully change the world or at least one aspect of it—to ignite relevant thoughts within a couple of people or just one person. Hitler said, “What a great advantage it is that people don’t think for themselves.” I want and challenge you, the reader, to think for yourself. Don’t consider what I wrote about to be the truth, just think about it! Then, please make the appropriate adjustments. I am no better than the next person, but I am trying to be better than myself. I know there is a chance that this paper won’t change a thing within the world. I will still give it a shot, for God, for my children, and millions around the world, for a life that would really be free. One day soon, I will bask in the sunlight, we all will!
Abstract

THE LASTING EFFECTS OF NEGATIVE RAP AND HIP HOP MUSIC ON THE ADOLESCENT MIND

Shawn Jackson
Under the Supervision of Dr. Richard A. Rogers

Statement of the Problem

The world is a different place with different circumstances and situations. At the time of this study present statistics showed an extremely high number of single parent households, and teen pregnancy had increased. Over time things evolve into something, either good or bad, in respect to what they are concerning. Rap music in today's society has been “infected” by real life and has begun to develop new norms for the younger generation. Individuals more specifically, adolescents do not fully comprehend that music is a form of education, raising a number of questions. What certain types of mental effects does negative rap have on adolescents and their lives? How are different areas and relationships affected by the combination of negative rap and drug use? How drastic are the effects of negative rap music/hip-hop on a mind that is still developing? Furthermore, how will the influences in rap music/hip-hop affect adolescents later in their lives?

Methods and Procedures

A review of literature related to research, studies, and anecdotal evidence of the history of learner persistence in adult education programs, and the impact that orientation processes have on student retention and learner outcomes overall, was conducted. The findings were summarized and recommendations made.

Summary of Results

This research identified the links between rap music/hip-hop, the youth (adolescent) brain development stages, repetition of messages and imagery, and the type of education youth are receiving throughout this process. This seminar paper outlined how “dead” hip-hop filters or infects the mind of an already unstable organism, an adolescent brain, changing traditional values, actions, and overall mindsets. This research showed how certain mindsets produce unhealthy streams of thought that sometimes become negative actions, actions that affect many lives.

Comments and recommendations focused on the evolution of society and the future of every individual being. Recommendations included how artists and the music industry should be regulated and focused on the message that is being given to consumers, how consumers should start to educate themselves on what information goes into the mind, how families should become
support of truly inspirational artists in the music industry should be strongly taken into account.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Evolution of Rap/Hip-hop Music

A number of different things evolve in society throughout time, things such as fashion and entertainment. Individuals like to change their minds about what types of clothes they wear, what types of movies they prefer to watch, and what types of music they prefer to hear, whatever happens to be in fashion. “Fashion is the reference to styles of dress (but can also include cuisine, literature, art, architecture, and general comportment) that are popular in a culture at any given time. Such styles may change quickly, and "fashion" usually is taken to mean the latest version of these styles. Individuals have worn everything from suits, to bell bottoms, to halter tops, and so forth. Individuals have listened to everything from blues music that is rooted in slave songs and spiritually uplifting music to the tunes of Ella Fitzgerald and jazz music, which developed from the blues and other African-American musical traditions at the beginning of the 20th century. Fashion is a concept that is and will be forever changing. The fashion of music, more specifically, rap music/hip-hop is something that has definitely evolved over time.

Rap music/hip-hop had blues and jazz music as an ancestor. Rap music/hip-hop started in the late 1960s to early 1970s and has been evolving ever since. The first recorded song that had all the attributes of rap music/hip-hop was a song entitled, “Here Come the Judge,” done by comedian Pigmeat Markham in 1968. Later at the start of the 1970s, Gil-Scott-Heron, a jazz poet/musician, wrote and released various songs such as, “The Revolution Will Not be Televised,” “H20 Gate Blues Part 2,” “We Beg Your Pardon America” and “Johannesburg.”
From here we move into the “Old School Hip Hop” of the 1980s, to the “Golden Age Hip Hop” of the early 1990s, to “Gangsta Rap” of the late 1990s until now. Rap music/hip-hop was a form of expression that didn’t always have a negative tone to it and didn’t degrade a specific group of individuals. A number of jazz musicians believed music was about freedom, about democracy, about freedom of speech. They believed the central theme in jazz (ancestor of rap) was to take freedom and use it to help other individuals get freedom. At the time of this study, rap music/hip-hop was giving a different message [the wrong message] towards women, authority, and life because it was altered by bad or worse feelings towards bad circumstances of a new age (generation) that had lost its original meaning. Negative rap music/hip-hop promoted violence and the disrespect of women and lacked sophistication and soul. The words and messages in some rap music/hip-hop music infiltrated the listeners’ consciousness and eventually affected their actions in certain situations.

The personal experience of the researcher might be helpful to the reader. Beginning as a regular listener of rap music/hip-hop and recognizing the negative effects of it, some of today’s negative rap music/hip-hop had lasting effects on this adolescent mind. Personal impressions were confirmed by research. A study on rap music/hip-hop did find some variations in the behavior of its subjects. Litman (1997) stated that those groups who listened to rap music/hip-hop with negative lyrics demonstrated slightly higher tendencies toward verbal aggression than the subjects in a non-lyric group and a non-music control group.

This researcher acknowledged the power of words in some music, more specifically rap music/hip-hop. Some other rap music/hip-hop had the quality and had the ability to change a person, for the better, from the inside out. It had the ability to inspire adjusting or making
improvements regarding any issue that attention should be and/or needed to be a focus. In so many words, such rap music/hip-hop was also a form of education. It had the ability to teach those listeners about that side of life or life in the way that the portrayers spoke of it. Rap music/hip-hop was not a medium for everyone, but it seemed to be the one that most of the young generation had chosen to engage. In the opinion of this researcher, rap music/hip-hop stood for "freedom of speech." To say it plainly, it stood for, "AMERICA!" However, the research showed that the concept of "freedom of speech" in music had very much altered from what it previously was and for what it was intended.

**Statement of the Problem**

The world is a different place with different circumstances and situations. At the time of this study, present statistics showed an extremely high number of single parent households and increased teen pregnancy rates. Over time things evolve into something, either good or bad, in respect to what they are concerning. Rap music in today’s society had been "infected" by real life and had begun to develop new norms for the younger generation. Individuals more specifically, adolescents did not fully comprehend that music was a form of education, raising a number of questions. What certain types of mental effects did negative rap have on adolescents and their lives? How were different areas and relationships affected by the combination of negative rap and drug use? How drastic were the effects of negative rap music/hip-hop on a mind that was still developing? Furthermore, how would the influences in rap music/hip-hop affect adolescents later in their lives?
Delimitations of Research

This research was carried out through studying various findings at libraries, more specifically, the M.A.T.C. Library (Milwaukee, WI.) and Karmann Library (Platteville, WI.). A number of searches were performed on the Internet using EBSCO host; database: Academic Search Elite, in order to find a number of scientific and objective articles on various key points that supported the central idea. Key points included the following: adolescent brain development, effects of hearing a repetitive message, and how adolescents understand. Google.com and Yahoo.com were also used to gather information on the previously mentioned areas. Various phrases and words were used to narrow the search such as “brain,” “adolescent,” “rap,” and “negative.” Such phrases as, “brain development,” “effects of hearing a repetitive message,” and “how adolescents understand” were also used.

Method of Approach

A review of literature related to research, studies, and anecdotal evidence of the history of learner persistence in adult education programs, and the impact that orientation processes had on student retention and learner outcomes overall was conducted. The findings were summarized and recommendations made.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

History of Rap Music/Hip-hop (Meaning Behind It)

History refers to concepts and/or ideas that take place in the past. It was assumed that the beginning of concepts and/or ideas started in a time previous to the present state of that concept or idea. This is referred to as the “origin.” Within the beginning or origin of certain concepts and ideas, there is a “pureness” that is present. This “pureness” is there because that concept is just beginning to take place within reality. The meaning of it is “true” and is “pure.” Over time, things get added to that concept and/or idea and it becomes transformed into a completely different meaning and sometimes, a completely different action. For instance, rap music/hip-hop at its origin started out as a pure form of self expression. Over time, all the way until now, many different things have greatly worked at transforming it. According to Ragini,

Rap music/hip-hop has greatly influenced people's life, people who are living and not living in US. Usually Rap is termed as a mode of trendy music consisting of improvised rhymes performed to a musical adjunct. Initially Rap songs were not popular and people did not want to enjoy such unorganized songs. Today it has become so popular that it is considered to be a mainstream music, everyone wants to listen and enjoy. (2007)

Although some people liked rap music, they were not aware of how harmful its effects could be within the lives of individuals. Individuals could claim that others were exaggerating on the issue, but the research showed that some stricter limitations must be placed on all forms of music, especially this particular one.
“Rap music/hip-hop touches the heart of all age people. Especially youth, they get pleasure from rap music/hip-hop with full magnitude” (Ragini, 2007). They set their lifestyle accordingly. Rap music/hip-hop sometimes boosted energy so that it was concentrated on work and provided better results. If the person had right aptitude for work and was sincere, a person usually performed better even though it involved dance and music. Some people needed a soothing environment, and rap music/hip-hop really provided that feeling.

“People go back to work with great enthusiasm. It cannot be denied that Rap music/hip-hop leaves harmful effect G on person G and P those who are very casual and do not have value of time” (Ragini, 2007). Overall, Rap music/hip-hop attracted people and most people at the time of this study enjoyed this music” (Ragini, 2007).

History is a phenomenon that sometimes seems to start out completely different than the way it ended. For whatever reason, it changes, it evolves into something that is seen and understood to be better. The reasons for evolution may vary from person to person. Rap music/hip-hop started out as a voice for the people of the time. It was a form of expression. At the time of this research, it still was a way to express joy, pain, frustration, hurt, and in some cases guilt. For a number of individuals, it was a creative way to speak or vent about the hypocrisy and unreasonable standards in life. The following three paragraphs provide a history of the songs and performers of rap music from 1979 to 2003:

The Sugarhill Gang's “Rappers Delight” in 1979 is widely held as the first rap single. Although regarded by many as little more than a novelty hit, it did show the commercial possibilities of the genre. Others were quickly to follow suit. Foremost in the first generation of rap artists were Grandmaster Flash, Afrika Bambaataa and Kool Herc,
all of whom initially made their name as DJs. Bamaataa’s planet Rock mixed rap with German synth pioneers Kraftwerk, while Grandmaster Flash was the first rap artist to introduce social comment with The Message. A host of small labels, such as Def Jam, sprang up too as Rap continued to diversify throughout the 80s. Run DMC stripped the backing down to thunderous beats and added rock guitars, before scoring a huge hit with its collaboration with Aerosmith on Walk This Way. Meanwhile The Beastie Boys, a trio of middle class white kids, mixed rap with their roots in punk and metal on their bestselling License To Kill. Whereas many rappers were content to resort to hip hop caricature, Public Enemy introduced radical politics along groundbreaking sonic collages of sampled beats and white noise. On the other hand De La Soul proved themselves masters of the art of sampling with Three Feet High and Rising, steering hip hop towards a softer, more peaceful vibe. (Lamarr, 2003)

Over on the west coast, gangsta rap brought to us by groups like N.W.A. that came from the disturbed inner cities, with a new kind of rapper that gave the imagery of the culture of guns, drugs and violence. The nihilism and attitude of gangsta rap lasted the storm, all the way to the emergent of the alternative rock scene, even as pop rappers such as MC Hammer took over the mainstream. Dr. Dre was one of the most influential figure in 90s rap music/hip-hop. Dr Dre is an architect of the radio-friendly Funk sound, co-founder of Death Row records and producer of albums for Snoop Doggy Dog and Blackstreet. On the east coast, Sean “Puff Daddy” Combs established an empire of his own, Bad Boy records. The bitter feud between east and west was blamed for the violence which claimed the lives of rap stars, Tupac Shakur and Notorious BIG, although
both Combs and Dre were quick to distance themselves from the fallout. Outside of the Death Row/Bad Boy circus, the violent battle of words and actions continued. With their blend of rap and soul, the Fugees achieved massive popularity, with the collection of New York style. The Wu-Tang Clan branched out with its own brand of urban street clothes and wide ranging solo projects. The Clan were a direct influence on such homegrown British units as So Solid Crew. Women also spoke their minds, against rap's dominated male culture, with Missy Elliot and Lil' Kim releasing albums of lively rap flavored rhythm and blues. (Lamarr, 2003)

One of the biggest rap stars of this time is white. Eminem, alias Marshall Mathers, There has been a lot of debate and worship in equal measure; but we cannot disprove his skill as a rap artist. Produced by Dr Dre, Eminem has become rap's biggest change since the Beastie Boys. Rap has gained a lot of attention and notoriety; you can look at Eminem's recent Oscar win for Best Original Song. (Lamarr, 2003)

The lyrics within some of the rap that has been created in the last 10 years does not consist of anything that is worthwhile for a mind to hold onto and take note of happening. "Since the days of constructive vibrations, rap has branched out and grown internationally as a part of popular youth pleasure, and a modern 'money making' business, said Williams. He also said that present day rap consists of trash talk and tabloid imagery. The lyrics are generally about 'getting brain' (sex), 'pushing weight' (drugs), 'busting caps' (killing people) and 'bling bling' (material possessions),” says Dr. Lance Williams, assistant director of the Jacob H. Caruthers Center for Inner City Studies (CCICS). (Shaw) The creative mindset of some recent rap artists has declined with
regards to the topic of discussion. The artists’ decline in effort and/or imagination has or will eventually affect the minds, behaviors, and actions of certain individuals, more specifically youth! Recent rap seems to hinder cognitive development and is starting to change various views within life and alter mature decision making. (Lamarr, 2003)

Why Youth Are Unarmed Against Rap Music/Hip-hop (General Reasons)

If persons are to experience something, it would be a good idea to be prepared for it. If not prepared for dealing with it, drastic outcomes may take place. Any information in reference to the subject dealt with must be sought for further clarification and understanding. Persons must “arm” themselves and their minds against certain types of invasions. Youth are not equipped to handle the suppressed effects of rap/hip-hop music. This may be due to their lack of intellectual knowledge, life experience, maturity, or ability to critically think about certain situations and/or ideas. Situations that are in other people’s hands and not in theirs may give them a sense of not having to be responsible for what they do and how they think. The combination of all of these effects may begin to take their place within the process of individual and societal evolution.

The fact is that things change over time; they evolve, but into what and why? The types of music within society had definitely evolved according to the individuals within them. A number of assumptions were considered in this study. It could have been that individuals felt the need to express themselves at levels they could not fully appreciate. It could have been that individuals wanted to accomplish something that had not been accomplished before in order to evolve musical realities. It could have been that individuals wanted to tell their personal stories in and through their music. It could even have been that major businesses had taken control of what was aired and directed a particular path within society. The musical content was very
influential and was primarily left to the interpretation of the listener. Music was mostly made for everyone to interpret.

A definition of the term “interpret” might clarify the point of this discussion. When a person hears something, whatever is heard sends a “message” to the brain. Then the brain “interprets” what is said/heard. The individuals that make music, more specifically, rap and hip-hop music, have a greater responsibility to society as a whole because of the large number of people who identify with this type of music. This researcher asked one relevant question: “What can be done to fix the problem?”

This researcher noted the power of words in some rap music/hip-hop. Rap music/hip-hop had the quality and had the ability to change a person for the better, from the inside out. It had the ability to inspire a person towards adjusting or making adjustments within any issue on which attention should be focused. In so many words, rap music/hip-hop was a form of education. It taught the listener about the side of life that individuals don’t usually talk about or that side of life in the specific way that the artist spoke about it. Rap music/hip-hop was not a medium for everyone but it seemed to be the one that most of the young generation had chosen. In its history rap music/hip-hop stood for “freedom of speech,” “freedom of choice,”—to say it plainly—it stood for America. This researcher noted that the concept of “freedom of speech,” in music had very much altered from what it previously was and what it was intended to highlight and emphasize.

Rap was more than personal experience. It was about the culture, the culture of young adolescents, at least in part. Adolescents saw themselves as being in control, but at the same time they were not in complete control. They were not in complete control of themselves, meaning
their actions, thoughts, words, etc. The reasons for this lack of complete control varied but affected how adolescents dealt with marketing, technology, the quality of advertisements, and other influences of the modern world. White and Cones concluded that, “Hip-hop culture has a great influence on American youth” (1999). The following was written by McCray “Hip hop is a catch-all term for a contemporary, urban-centered youth lifestyle associated with popular music, break dancing, certain dress and hair styles, graffiti, and street language,” (McCray, 2004).

Common sense recognizes that the brain controls actions, and each person controls his or her own actions. Human brains act as a void or medium influenced by interpretation. Individuals can control how the brain functions, develops, and operates; but only if one is aware of the psychological and “paranormal” operations that can overpower it, take over it, and eventually destroy it. If this information is understood, it is still hard for a fully developed brain to resist what things influence it to various degrees. This impact seems to be more crucial on a brain that is still within its critical, developmental stage.

“Music has strong effects on behavior and can do so by communicating moods and emotions” (Leeds, 2001, p. 5). Leeds indicated two studies that confirmed this conclusion:

As sound researcher Weinberger noted, “Numerous studies attest to music’s powerful influence on mood and emotion. According to a renowned pioneer in psychiatric aspects of music, Dr. Peter Ostwald of the University of California, San Francisco, music is a form of social behavior, symbolic emotional experience. Moreover, music may provide a form of nonverbal communication whose meaning is ineffable—it cannot be captured in words. Perhaps music exists because of the need for expression of emotions that can only crudely be measured or described in words.” “Therefore,” Weinberger concluded, “music
can rapidly and powerfully set moods and do so in a way not as easily attained by other means. (Leeds, 2001, p. 5)

At the time of this study, young brains in their developmental stages were perceived as having millions of issues. Issues such as school, drugs, teenage sex, violence, suicide, etc., were issues that might have had a significant impact on the mind of an adolescent (Leeds, 2001). Then the evolution of some rap music/hip-hop was put into the sequence of events. At the time of this study, rap music/hip-hop seemed to be the “gasoline” for an already burning, bright flame. Although the “gasoline” of hip-hop might not have been the cause of the flame, the flame still burned harder and spread further.

**Growing Up As an Adolescent**

In a 1989 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Dr. Brown reported the following:

During adolescence, teenagers are expected to develop standards of behavior and reconcile them with their perceptions of adult standards. In this context, music, a powerful medium in the lives of adolescents, offers conflicting values. The explicit sexual and violent lyrics of some forms of music clash with the themes of abstinence and rational behavior promoted by adult society. Identification with rock music, particularly those styles that are rejected by adults, functions to separate adolescents from adult society. Some forms of rock music extend well beyond respectability in fulfilling this definitional role. Total immersion into a rock subculture, such as heavy metal, may be both a portrait of adolescent alienation and an unflattering reflection of an adolescent’s
perception of the moral and ethical duplicity of adult society. Physicians should be aware of the role of music in the lives of adolescents and use music preferences as clues to the emotional and mental health of adolescents. (Leeds, 2001, p. 7)

This researcher personally realized how listening to rap/hip-hop had begun to affect cultural attitudes and lifestyle. Discomfort was the result of finding oneself absorbed into the "whole picture." This researcher wasn’t yet and didn’t want to become exactly as the events and people described in the lyrical content. The conclusion drawn was that being a follower of or avid listener to this form of music would eventually lead to an unpleasant conclusion unless the subject became conscious of it and began to use the brain to separate fact from fiction. To this researcher, the fiction was everything that promoted this lifestyle and made it seem glamorous. With conscious effort the brain started to develop a "hold" on actual reality.

How does the brain develop? How may music impact the developing brain? The repetition of messages may start affecting the ability of adolescents to hold onto "actual reality!" This "affecting of the brain" may last the course of time in a person’s life.

**How the Brain Develops Ways to Influence Interpretation**

Whether people realize it or not, their brains are able to do extraordinary things. A brain is a central unit that has the ability to develop, distribute, and create realities. It is also an entity that is constantly under influence from things such as environment, people, and experiences. Over time a brain matures due to experiences and other biological functions, but various influences may assist an immature brain to mature in a not so good frame of mind. A brain is constantly interpreting messages and creating the world around it. When an immature brain is
given a message, how does that brain know how to interpret it? Without a positive and supportive aid to help in brain development, how can it mature in a proper manner?

The research below showed that a person's adolescent years are very influential in regard to brain development:

During adolescence, brain organization and function enter a unique period of flux. As an individual makes the transition from childhood to adulthood, from dependence to independence, the changes in behavior are dramatic. Not surprisingly, so are the changes in brain function that give rise to these behaviors. As we will see, the circuits that coordinate our behaviors, help us make good decisions and control our impulses, react appropriately in different situations, govern our eating and sleeping habits, etc., are being remodeled during the teen years. Much of this remodeling is influenced by an individual's interactions with the outside world, a fact that makes perfect sense given the nature of adolescence as a stage of intense personal evolution that prepares one to survive on their own outside of the nuclear family. The brain of an adolescent is highly moldable by experience, more so than the brain of a full grown adult. (White, 2004, p. 1)

Much of who a person evolves to become happens at the peak of this remodeling stage in adolescence.

Successful TV commercials also provide evidence that media influences behavior, attitude, and beliefs. A commercial's main purpose is to convince the consumer that the product shown is worth the money and sometimes worth the hassle.

Commercial producers at the time of this study used a certain types of imagery that gave a repetitive message to the viewer, a type of brainwashing.
In psychology the study of brainwashing, often referred to as **thought reform**, falls into the sphere of "social influence." Social influence happens every minute of every day. It's the collection of ways in which people can change other people's attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. For instance, the **compliance** method aims to produce a change in a person's behavior and is not concerned with his attitudes or beliefs. It's the "Just do it" approach.

**Persuasion**, on the other hand, aims for a change in attitude, or "Do it because it'll make you feel good/happy/healthy/ successful." The **education** method (which is called the "propaganda method" when you don't believe in what's being taught) goes for the social-influence gold, trying to affect a change in the person's beliefs, along the lines of "Do it because you know it's the right thing to do." Brainwashing is a severe form of social influence that combines all of these approaches to cause changes in someone's way of thinking without that person's consent and often against his will. (Layton, 2008)

It made sense to engage in a form of "brainwashing," if one were trying to sell records, establish a musical personality, or get people to really “feel” the music. Keep in mind that brainwashing could be a good and a bad thing. Schools “brainwash” adolescents every day, but it is called “educating.” At the time of this study, American culture found nothing wrong with educating individuals to advance physical and mental processes.

Advertising followed the same blueprint as musical influence on an adolescent’s mind. Many kinds of music gave the listener a message. “The type of brainwashing, whether it’ll be, thought reform, compliance, persuasion, or education, depends mostly on the message they are developing for the listener” (Layton, 2008).
Dr. William Byrd, a Black clinical psychologist, pointed out that for young, impressionable people the mere fact that explicit gangsta lyrics are aired on the radio lends credence to their messages as truth. ‘When you bombard someone with those messages, it causes conflict, even with those young people who may have been taught other values. With these rap messages, not only are they being bombarded with radio, they also get video. So it’s what is heard and what is seen. It confirms that these are acceptable values in a subculture. Therefore, this “message bombardment” can be influential to impressionable youth. (McCray, 2004, p. 4)

Modern rap/hip-hop is impressionable, warping traditional values that have proven to be very useful tools in life. The messages that are being developed within music content constantly bombard adolescent minds with negative, tasteless, feelings/experiences and influence the natural course of the adolescent mind. Imagine the effects of these two variables, negative words and brainwashing. Do these two concepts work toward positive outcomes? Will there be damaging results? Are the damaging results powerful enough for us to take action, now? The answer is not so clear cut as it seems, especially if it is not the direct cause of the escalating problem.

When this researcher was an adolescent, there wasn’t so much violence. There wasn’t a powerful feeling and need to prove oneself. If a person did choose to prove personal value; it wasn’t with a gun or anything of that nature. Those adolescent years were seen to be the most stressful yet easiest years of one’s life. Most adolescent years were composed of school, after-school activities, and home, for the most part. Circumstances have changed. A student might now run the risk of dying by attending class…doing what one was expected/conditioned to do.
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), less than 1 percent of all homicides among school-age children happen on school grounds or on the way to and from school. The vast majority of students will never experience violence at school or in college. Still, it's natural for kids and teens--no matter where they go to school--to worry about whether this type of incident may someday affect them.” (Dowshen, 2008, p. 1)

Youth Today

Another relevant issue of being an adolescent during the 21st century is that it is a new time, and information is a click away and mass media is saturated with “all kinds of garbage.” Americans spend two-thirds of our waking lives consuming mass media. Be it television, movies, music, video games or the Internet, media consumption is the number one activity of choice for Americans--commanding, on average, 3700 hours of each citizen’s time annually. The average American child devotes 45 hours per week to media consumption, more time than she spends in school. (Dill, 2007)

This seemed to be the new reality for most adolescents, yet some adolescents have kept traditional values and continue to keep them. Those adolescents who continued to strive and maintained a strong, well-centered belief system deserve to be congratulated. As for other adolescents, the following conclusions and recommendations were developed.
CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Information

The information presented touched on a number of different issues and ideas that took relevance in respect to the lasting effects of negative rap/hip-hop music. The literature presented was mostly focused on rap/hip-hop music because of the sociological impact that it had on the individuals that were already within mental constraints that they might or might not be aware of in their lives. Youth were taking shape for the future to possess the power to make life better for the generations to follow. Doing the proper studies and taking the proper actions will make this learning experience very much worth it.

Throughout this learning experience, the research has noted some points or aspects about the lasting effects of negative rap music/hip-hop on the adolescent mind. This seminar paper stated the history of rap music/hip-hop and how this music came to be where it is at the present time. Research was indicated that the brain is a fragile medium that is somewhat influenced by interpretation. Brains can be influenced with interpretation, using words and other forms of "brainwashing" or "marketing." Research showed that youth development and the combination of music are critical influences in an individual's life. Kevin Powell, hip hop historian-author, leaves a clear image on the brain and consciousness with his opinion, "The music sucks now." Knowing the effects of repetition on learning, Christian stated, "Any city that you go to you'll hear the same 10 to 12 songs over and over again. Much of it sounds alike" (2007). Much of it
sounds alike. Is that a beneficial attribute, when so much of the music is filled with the negative type of lyrical content that previously mentioned within this paper?

**Identification of Definite Correlations**

Everything is connected to everything and definite correlations were painted into place in trying to examine the overall picture. This picture is somewhat of an abstract piece of work. The closer one gets to it, the more it is understood and able to be seen. Correlations connect the dots and create understanding. They eliminate lies and help to produce a way of being that is truly authentic.

One must see and understand some of the links between rap music/hip-hop, youth (adolescent) brain development stages, repetition of messages and imagery, and education. To a lot of people, rap music/hip-hop is dead. “Dead” meaning, the substance within some rap music/hip-hop. Hip-hop historian Davey D said the following:

> Hip-hop is dead because all Black music feeds off past generations and lays down the foundation for future generations. And with consolidation and separation of audiences by age, what we have is [that] we don’t have the generations speaking to one another.

(Christian, 2007)

This “dead” hip-hop filters or infects the mind of an already unstable organism, an adolescent brain, changing traditional values, actions, and overall mindsets.

When you bombard someone with those messages, it causes conflict, even with those young people who may have been taught other values. With these rap messages, not only are they being bombarded with radio, they also get video. So it’s what you hear and what
you see. It confirms that these are acceptable values in a subculture. Therefore, this “message bombardment” can be influential to impressionable youth. (McCray, 2004)

This constant flow of messages produces unhealthy streams of thought that sometimes become actions, actions that affect many lives.

During adolescence, brain organization and function enter a unique period of flux. As an individual makes the transition from childhood to adulthood, from dependence to independence, the changes in behavior are dramatic. Not surprisingly, so are the changes in brain function that give rise to these behaviors. As we will see, the circuits that coordinate our behaviors, help us make good decisions and control our impulses, react appropriately in different situations, govern our eating and sleeping habits, etc., are being remodeled during the teen years. Much of this remodeling is influenced by an individual's interactions with the outside world, a fact that makes perfect sense given the nature of adolescence as a stage of intense personal evolution that prepares one to survive on [one's] own outside of the nuclear family. The brain of an adolescent is highly moldable by experience, more so than the brain of a full grown adult. (White, 2004)

Rap music/hip-hop may be compared to cigarettes. Like cigarette's, rap music/hip-hop is driven by money, until it becomes pointless. Pointless, meaning, if it wasn’t here, the human race would not miss it. Cigarettes also hurt people on the inside. The damaging effects of rap and cigarettes will last throughout time unless a conscious effort is made to stop further damage. Conscious effort is made more difficult when considering the strong cultural influence on attitudes caused by advertisements and commercials.
Negative lyrics in rap music/hip-hop have been defended as being important to creativity. When the last word of “creativity” has been established, the culture will be struggling to make sense of why things went wrong. In a world we all have to live in together, we should avoid influences of everything that encompasses deviant behavior.

The various transitions rap and hip-hop have made are human-generated. The change to negative lyrics causes further damage to the spirits of God-owned, breathing, loving children that must sustain life instead of living life. Notice that the issue goes deeper than physical distress. “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (The Bible, Epeshians 6: 12).

As an adolescent, this researcher recognized various outside influences and absorbed and dealt with them independently. These influences came from relevant areas of my life such as family, friends, church, and school. However, a lack of awareness existed about changes that resulted from types of movies and types of music. Not admitting to these influences was related to a desire to be in control of the self, a condition that affects other adolescents as well.

Adolescent years are the turning points of life. Heavily into rap music/hip-hop by the age of 16, this researcher became watchful of influences in life, especially messages in music. During the 1990s the content became disturbing. Then on the weekend of October, 17, 1997, a car accident erased a month and a half of life, this researcher's brain was in a coma for six weeks. When hearing the musical content in rap after going through this accident, it took a while to redevelop concepts and ideas; however, once again damaging words were recognized. Since then, this researcher has developed an ear for sound that is free from the useless, unsophisticated content that influences young minds and warps traditional values.
Future Recommendations for Music

No one has the right to tell others what they should or shouldn’t do with their lives. The right to try to persuade consumers, producers, artists, and executives does exist though. This study should not be interpreted as hatred for rap/hip-hop music; it should be taken as an empowering effort to try to make our words (song lyrics) be infused with transcendence. There are great minds that make great music and there are great minds that make not so great music. Is this my opinion or is this a fact? Young people look at the facts and tell me!

“Young people of any age are the first to move in any great number, when evolutionary time and space so dictate,” Dr. Timothy Leary, (Audio reference). How will the adolescent mind evolve with this evolution of negative rap and hip-hop? What political and sociological issues will arise due to the fact that big industry and major businesses have taken the same negative direction as the evolution of rap and hip-hop music? What can be done to combat this “well oiled” and “carefully tuned” machine called sales? These are a couple of questions on which society should be focused before trying to deal with the aftermath of this particular evolution.

Famous and well noted rapper, Chuck D, part of the rap group, Public Enemy, said that hip-hop is dead because

[T]he mainstream media keeps promoting corporate hip-hop, which basically appeals to the messages of death and destruction for our people...Too often we’re weighed by the commercial of what sells and what’s popular in America as opposed to something that supports us. Their judgment call on us is the best Black rap music/hip-hop is what sells and the ones that don’t sell are the worst. (Christian, 2007)
This statement puts some of the blame on the consumers. The consumers are the ones that “promote” sales and “push” the evolution process of music. Many think the same way as Chuck D does. Too often society is weighed by the commercial of what sells and what is popular in America. Not enough focus is placed on what really matters, the core of who we are and what we are striving for. Record labels and consumers need to take the love of money, the pursuit of money, and artificial happiness away from their lives and replace it with strong, good values and standard ways of life.

As consumers we must also understand that this whole industry is composed of ways to make money and will continue to do so. “The industry is designed to make money because it’s a business,” said Mark Pitts, president of Urban Music at Zomba Label Group. Artists are fighting, keeping it real; but by being commercial and trying to compete with the way the music industry is going, some people get lost, according to Pitts, who managed the late Notorious B.I.G. “Back then people didn’t think about making radio records. People just made records and made it happen. Now people are trying to keep it real and stick with their roots, but also focus on the business, because we’re in the business” (Christian, 2007).

What can be done? Is civilization doomed to continue with the same course as things are going? Many people want the answer to be, no. But the actual answer is that nothing is 100 percent except death. Some young people will begin to educate themselves and/or realize that what they are listening to and hearing is something that is or can be very harmful to them and others. Some young people will continue to listen to and promote rap music/hip-hop that is useless and unsophisticated.
The whole problem is not just the artists’ or the businesses’ fault. First, some of the blame comes from the family unit and how it functions. However, some of the problem within the family unit’s functioning can be cycled around to rap music/hip-hop. It becomes one gigantic cycle of confusion called earth, and no one knows where to begin solving the problem.

Young people’s proper growth starts at home. They need to start and continue with a set of values that help to guide their lives towards positive outcomes, for instance, God/church. “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood but the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms,” (Ephesians 6:12, The International Bible Society, p. 668). The issue of rap music/hip-hop can be a very harmful entity when dealing with the human soul. Consider or just understand God, and he will make room for wonders. God/church is meant to be enjoyed and practiced every conscious moment of our lives. When God is understood or thought of while “practicing” action, this practice can develop a healthy need and desire to better ourselves from the inside out. Such a practice produces values that help to enrich existence instead of corrupting it.

Another way to possibly fix the problem can be performed by the music artists and the big music labels. Some artists are taking a fresh look at their words and meanings, actually realizing the possible effects of them. Responsibility is a concept that is not welcomed by everyone, especially when there are a number of tangible and non-tangible factors attributed to the problem. If everyone takes responsibility for their actions and words, this current issue will shortly run the course of its existence.

Finally, people need to continue to support and promote, true rap and true hip-hop. True rap and true hip-hop is heard from artists such as Jay-z, Kayne West, Lupe Fiasco, Q-tip and various other underground performers.
Sometimes things are only as bad as we make them to be, with respect to exaggeration. On the other hand, sometimes things are exactly the way we make them to be. People need to start using their administered resources to express themselves on issues that more attention needs to be brought to. Now...that is true rap/hip-hop!
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