

The Connection Between Rap Music and Emotional Well-being

Colin Burt

Reasons for Researching

- Noticed rap helping students despite stigma
- Continuing research from last year on rap music therapy



Rap Music's History

- Gangsta rap born in the mid 1980's
 - lyrical themes of crime and gang involvement
 - made by producers pulling samples from records
- Rap from the 2000's onward
 - lyrical works ranging from negative influences to prosocial themes
 - made with DAWs that allowed more creativity



Music Benefits and Role Models

- Music has been proven to be beneficial in peer groups¹
- Positive role models and negative role models influence music listeners
 - Perceptions formed in artists' music and real life
 - Positive role models more effective than negative²



False Stereotype

- Stigma claims that rap encourages negative behavior
 - lyrical content pre-2000's contained crime, gangs
- Study done relating drug use and rap music listening
 - No correlation found³



Academic Implementation

- Rap music used in the classroom to teach German
 - Includes topics from friendships to racism⁴
 - Program has been successful



Methods

- Anonymous online survey of 201 responders
 - basic information, genre, daily listening, reasons
- If rap selected, survey continued
 - Artist of choice
 - How that artist is a role model



Methods

- Interview with Seven Bailey
 - Producer, engineer from Compton, CA
 - Has worked with rappers including Kendrick Lamar
 - Provided his expertise on industry and shift in song themes




Results

- Rap majority of sample size, 135 out 201
 - 74 selected “I use it to take away tension at the end of the day”
 - 79 selected “This genre acts as an outlet of my frustrations”
 - 74 selected “Rap music helps me think”
 - 81 selected “This genre helps me build better connections in friendships”



Results

- Open ended question about stereotypes
 - 102 of 135 indicated knowledge of at least one
 - Answers ranged from a simple to complex answers
 - “people think rap is a bad influence”
 - “rap takes on topics that high school does not teach”
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Results

- Main takeaways from interview with Seven Bailey
 - Negative images not appealing
 - “genuineness that people relate to”



Conclusion


- Rap music has become more accessible
 - more subgenres, shift away from gangsta rap
- High school students have overall benefitted
 - reports of positive experience
 - lyrical themes discuss everyday life



References

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