

Positive and Negative Effects of Rap Music on Youth Today

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Rap music has had a positive and negative effect on the youth in our society since the dawn of rap. Music in general plays a large role when it comes to the development of children throughout their lives. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, in the early 1990s, a study done with 2760 Americans ages fourteen through sixteen listened to an average amount of forty hours a week (Impact of Music, Music Lyrics, and Music Videos on Children and Youth, 2009). This shows that music is something that takes up an abundance of time when it comes to adolescence. There is a large amount of effects that rap music can have on the youth in our society, some of them being positive and some of the being negative. Some of the negative impacts of rap music is the fact that they support the degradation of females, glorify criminal behavior and violence, and rap supports and encourages drug use. However, even though there are many negative influences that come from rap music, there are some positives that show society hope. Those positives include, but are not limited to, rap being used as a therapeutic tool and to express feelings, it brings everyone together, and brings forward a sense of empowerment to people when brining up issues that are happening in the world today. According to Lauren Brown in her article *How Does Rap Music Influence Modern Day Youth?* (2016), “the sheer popularity of rap music makes it nearly impossible for it to not influence youth culture” (pg. 1). Overall, rap music has influenced the youth in our society by a large amount, whether it be negative or positive is up to the type of rap that they listen to.

One major negative that rap music brings to light is the degradation of women. This is an issue due to the fact that music videos and lyrics show the youth culture that are listening and watching these things that it is okay to treat women like this. It is also showing girls that are watching this what your “acceptable” body type should be. An example in the rap culture is

Nicki Minaj, in all of her songs she is dressed scantily and uses that. In the video “Good Form” by Nicki Minaj (2018), she is dressed in lingerie the whole time and so is her whole dance crew. Everyone is twerking around and making sexual moves and using sexual lyrics, this is bringing to light a very negative influence onto the children watching this. According to Lauren Brown (2016), since there are not a lot of female rappers in the community, it is easier for the males to use females in any way that they want in order to raise their social status without having to face consequences. Overall, the degradation of women within the rap community has always been a problem, and it is being shown to the younger generations and making them think that it is acceptable.

A second negative that rap music brings into light with the youth crowd is that it glorifies violence. This is obviously a horrible thing due to the fact that it is making it seem that violence is something that you can do with no punishment. Through the music’s lyrics it is making it seem like it is also the best option when trying to win against someone or get something you want. An example is the song “Murder on My Mind” by YNW Melly (2018). In the song he says, “I didn’t mean to shoot ‘em, he just caught me by surprise / I reloaded my pistol, cocked it back, and shot him twice.” Also, in the video it shows kids with handcuffs and blood and gore everywhere, there are also guns all throughout the video. According to Davey D. (2006), “eighty percent of rap music that is currently on the top ten lists around the world contains violence” (pg. 1). This shows that violence is everywhere in the rap community, and obviously it is what the kids are listening to since it is on the top of the charts around the world. Violence is glorified all throughout the rap community and it is trickling down to the children of our future.

The last and final negative that influences the youth culture in our world is the fact that rap music in today’s culture encourages the use of drugs. This is an obvious negative to our

youth because it is influencing them to use these horrible things and that it is okay to do so. An example of the fact that drugs are a common theme in rap music and that the youth culture is being swayed towards drug use are because of artists like Lil Pump. In the video “Drug Addicts” by Lil Pump (2018), throughout the whole video he has a cup of lean with him. Also, there are scenes where he is hooked up to an IV that is giving him some more lean, and he is taking all types of pills. Honestly, a lot of kids know this artist and these songs. They know these songs word for word where there is lean and pill popping in the video and it is said that it is okay and the right thing to do.

There are a lot of negatives that come to our youth culture listening to rap music. However, there are quite a few positives, the first one being therapeutic help and to express themselves. Children that are not able to express themselves and the way they feel. But when it comes to being able to express yourself through music there were quite a few artists that showed that it was possible and okay the way that they felt were artists like Tupac. In the song “So Many Tears” by Tupac (1995), he is talking how he “suffered through the many years and shed so many tears” he then proceeds to say that he has “lost so many peers and shed so many tears.” This is a connection with all of the kids that are listening to this when they are going through a hard time makes a huge difference in their lives, for the better. According to Alexander Crooke and Raphael Travis Jr. in their article *The Healing Power of Hip Hop* (2017), “hip hop culture at its core, is built on its values of social justice, peace, respect, self-worth, community, and having fun” (pg. 1). Overall, rap music at its core is a way that people that are going through a hard time when they think that they are alone and have no one else.

The second positive that comes from rap music and its influence on the youth culture is due to the fact that it brings everyone together no matter what. This is huge because when kids

are listening to rap music, they are instantly bonded with the other people that listen to that type of music. According to Kaneemt Thornton in his 2015 article *The Positive Effects of Modern Hip-Hop*, it does not matter the “race, social class, gender or place of birth, modern day hip hop brings everyone together” (pg.1). There are so many different subgenres when it comes to modern day hip hop and rap, and it brings every single person together one way or another. Overall, rap music has the power to bring every type of person in this world together and it is already doing that right now. Rap music can be a huge positive in this world with it having the power to bring anyone in this world together and unify a broken world.

The last positive of the youth listening to rap music is the fact that it empowers the writer and the listeners to learn and deal with issues that are going on around the world at the time. A major example is the song “White America” by Eminem (2002), in the song Eminem talks about race issues amongst the country. He says, “If I was black I woulda sold half” which is him talking about the issue of racism. Overall, rap music has a free style to it and allows things that are problems in this world be talked about. According to Kaneemt Thornton (2015), there are many rap songs that talk about the continued tension between African Americans and the white class. Overall, rap music in today’s society has a great influence on youth because it is bringing to light the issues that otherwise would not be talked about.

Rap music in general is a strong case of positive and negative effects on the youths in our society today. There are negative aspects that we will never be able to shield the kids from in our world that are expressed through rap music. For example, the degradation of women, glorifying violence, and the use of drugs for recreational purposes. A majority of people think that rap music is all one big ball of negative influences. However, they could not be more wrong. Rap music has the power to help someone when they feel that they are alone and have no one to turn

to. Rap music has the power to bring people from different races, social classes, and political standard together. And rap music has the power to empower the people in our world today.

Without rap music, children in today's society would feel alone and not create their own voice.

Rap music does have its negative effects, but it is also a very good influence on children in our world today.

Annotated Bibliography

Brown, L. (2016, December 1). How Does Rap Music Influence Modern Day Youth? Retrieved from <http://www.ecojazz.com/2016/12/01/how-does-rap-music-influence-modern-day-youth/>

This article brings to light the fact the positive and negatives aspects to rap music on the modern-day youth in our world. Brown says that teenagers are attracted to the controversy that comes along with this music genre. She also states that the two positive sides of rap music are that it is entertainment to the youth as well as the fact that it brings to light many important events and issues that we have going on around the world. However, on the flip side, Brown states that the major negatives that make rap music a bad influence is the fact that they glorify the degradation of women as well as glorifying criminal behavior. Brown explains that there are both positive and negative sides to rap music and the effect that it can have on the modern-day youths in our world. Overall, this is a great source to use because it gives details about both sides of the argument as well as good reasoning behind it.

Crooke, A., & Jr., R. T. (2018, September 19). The healing power of hip hop. Retrieved from <http://theconversation.com/the-healing-power-of-hip-hop-81556>

This article presents to the reader that rap music has a healing power. Crooke says that rap music provides a sense of therapeutic relief. Rap having predictable beats and repetitive lyrics, or phrases bring a sense of safety to the soul of the person. Rap music also brings forward a strong sense of empowerment. Overall, this article is a majorly helpful source due to the fact that rap music is such a therapeutic tool to all of the community, especially the youth.

D., D. (2015, May 01). Is Rap Actually Music or is it a Bad Influence? Retrieved from <http://hiphopandpolitics.com/2006/08/23/is-rap-actually-music-or-is-it-a-badT-influence/>
This article brings to light the reasons as to why rap music is a bad influence on the society today. It said that a majority of rap music glorifies violence. The article says that causing pain to others, even sometimes killing, is okay. Another thing that is a negative about rap music is the fact that it portrays a negative connotation about women. This article is a great source to use because it shows major negatives that are very important in our society.

Eminem. "White America". (2002).

Impact of Music, Music Lyrics, and Music Videos on Children and Youth.

(2009). *Pediatrics*, 124(5), 1488-1494. doi:10.1542/peds.2009-2145. Retrieved from <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/124/5/1488.full.pdf>

This article presents the impact that music, their lyrics, and their videos have on children and youth in our society. They bring up many studies that explain the effect that the music has on behavior and emotional state. The authors proceed to explain the changes that certain genres, music types, and key items in music videos can do to children today. This is a very helpful source for getting to know the lasting effect that the umbrella of music has on our society's children.

Lil Pump. "Drug Addicts". (2018).

Nicki Minaj. "Good Form". (2018).

Thornton, K. (2018, November 06). Thornton: The positive effects of modern hip-hop. Retrieved from https://www.dailyemerald.com/opinion/columns/thornton-the-positive-effects-of-modern-hip-hop/article_6b6cc4a6-2b6f-550a-9e41-d2834914eff5.html

Positive and Negative Effects of Rap I

This article presents the positive side of the rap world. Even though, a negative effect is brought up, the fact that glorified rape is talked about a lot, there are many positives that are talked about. Thornton says that rap is a unifying force that bring so many people together all around the world. He also talks about how rap music has so many subcategories that anyone can find at least one song that they enjoy. This article is so helpful as a source with both the positives and negatives of rap music in the society that we live in today.

Tupac. "So Man Tears". (1995).

YNW Melly. "Murder on My Mind". (2018).