Author: Lorie Sanders

Title: Hip Hop-It Don't Stop-What Effect Does Hip Hop Music Have on First Year African American College Students?

About the Author: I am currently a freshman here at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. My major is undecided, but I do plan on going to medical school after college, but after all of the papers that I have had the opportunities to write I believe that I would like to pursue a major in English.

Keywords: hip hop, minority students, African Americans, music

Abstract: I love music and the way that people can relate to it and its message. Music has a way of bringing out things in people that other people or things can not. The reason why I chose to conduct a research paper that focused on the effect of hip hop music on first year African American college students was because I love music and I can relate to a lot of what I am writing about. First year African American college students were surveyed and interviewed on their beliefs, likes, and dislike of hip hop music and in what way it has affected them in their daily lives if it has in anyway and how. On the other hand I also wanted to learn something new and that was when I decided to research hip hop, due to the simple fact that I am not a big fan of hip hop music. I believe that every current event that happens in the world has some effect on a person’s life whether they notice the effect or
not. Even though hip hop is not usually discussed on big news stations it is however discussed in the music industry and that has some type of effect on the artist and everyone associated with the artist in some sort f way, whether it be the producer, family, friends, fans, etc. While conducting this research I found out that hip hop music does have more of an effect on males than females and there are some that believe that hip hop has no influence on their lives what so ever. I got a chance to research something that I enjoyed and could relate to and it was a long tedious process that I enjoyed in spite of.

Initial Exercises:

Question: What effect, whether good or bad does hip hop music have on first year African American College Students? Is there a connection between college students and their daily lives and hip hop music and the lifestyles portrayed by it?

Plan: My original plan for the paper was to research how the hip hop culture has had an effect on different races and cultures. After attending writer’s workshop, I realized that my topic was too broad and I needed to narrow it down a lot. So I decided to try to research what effect does hip hop music have on African American college students, but
that topic was still too broad, so I decided to narrow it all the way down to What effect does hip hop music have on first year African American college students. Seeing as that could not be narrowed down anymore, I realized that I had a nice topic.

Data:

Appendix I

Is Hip Hop Dead?
By Walter Dawkins

In the article, *Is Hip Hop Dead?*, it is saying that hip hop has been reduced to a one note din. The only topics discussed in hip hop music are bling-bling materialism, violence, and disrespecting females. 50 Cent is on the cover of magazines talking about how he is Mastering the Art of Violence. And Eminem is threatening to kill his wife on his records. Back in the 80 s and 90 s even though groups had different approaches, they still worked together to speak about the black experience and create the melting pot that made hip hop refreshing and vital. There used to be diversity in hip hop, and now that doesn t exist anymore. There is an over-representation of the criminal aspects of black youth culture in music from the videos and the records. Themes that dominate today s rap music can be traced
directly to the rise of the crack epidemic in urban communities. The heavy influence of the crack trade changed many of the values of the black youth culture since mid-80. This mentality started reflecting in the music with the introduction of the group NWA (Niggas With Attitude). Their albums detailed a hard-core lifestyle of violence, drugs, sex and when sales exploded the themes in rap songs started to turn decidedly darker. Politically aware groups were pushed aside while record companies looked for groups that replicated the winning formula. Despite these problems with the music, some rappers are bucking the trend and being courageous enough to talk about more diverse themes (i.e. Common, The Roots, Talib Kweli, Mos Def, etc.)

What I learned while reading this text was that hip hop has changed so much over the years, hip hop started out as something positive that was described as a culture that branches out to include rapping, DJ skills, art, fashion and break dancing. Even though hip hop is still a culture that branches out to include all of these, it is now something negative. Hip hop reveals attitudes of violence, grievance, and promiscuous behavior. Bill Stephney’s opinion of hip hop’s drastic turn is that it can be traced back to the crack epidemic in urban communities. "The heavy influence of the crack trade changed many of the values of the youth black culture since the mid-'80s," Stephney says. "That's where you get the materialism, the guns, the absolute die-hard mentality for meaningless things. With one of my interview questions I ask if people think that hip hop music has the power to change their behavior, and by analyzing this text it suggest that hip hop gives people the mentality for meaningless things. What intrigued me about the text was that it reinforced why I don’t like listening to hip hop, because all that hip hop talks about is materialism, violence and sex."
These three subjects don't intrigue me at the least.

This fits into my larger project because it pertains to hip hop. I asked lots of question about hip hop and young people's attitudes towards it, hip hop and its influence on young people's behaviors, hip hop and its effects on young people's moods. This particular text focuses more on the change of hip hop and its influence on society.

Appendix II

Media Scapegoat

A Feminist Reclaiming of Hip hop Culture

By Lisa Adams

This was the only article that I could find on IDEALS that dealt with hip hop. This paper was helpful in a few ways, more ways than one. In this paper she talks about hip hop and the ways in which women of color have been simultaneously both active agents and victims of damaging language imagery, and ideologies put forth by and about black women in hip hop music. She stated, My voice and my subjectivity has been molded by my hip hop upbringing. It was only listening to, writing and re-performing hip hop music that allowed me to escape. Even though I am doing a study about first year African American college students this paper will be helpful because it's talking about hip hop and the importance that it has in this young ladies life. I know that hip hop gives women a bad rap, and with my research paper I am trying to see how others really feel about that. Even though all women are not video models, a few are actual musicians but yet and still some are degrading themselves and not helping the situation at all. This certain issue could have a huge impact on first year female college students.
Appendix III

Hip hop Survey 2001
By Crate Digger

The reason why Crate Digger decided to conduct a hip hop survey for the year 2001 was because he said that hip hop has a great impact on his life and he has been a fan for ages. Despite the millions of fans behind hip hop, he still felt like there were not enough surveys about how the people really felt it. Most of the hip hop surveys that are conducted are either from magazines or award committees who would like to know what artist is the most popular at the time what songs. Just like me, he would like to find out fans (or non fans) real feelings towards hip hop. My research topic is, what effect does hip hop have on first year college students, and in his paper he asked questions such as what best describes hip hop to you, what personal characteristic of yours has been affected by hip hop, and what is the best and worse thing about hip hop? Our research papers are so much alike only thing is he is researching people 14-45 years in age and I am researching first year African American college students. I swear he should have attended school here so that his paper can be on IDEALS (lol).

Appendix IV

Rap’s Effect on Today’s Youth
A message board
Posted by Human_Target
This time I decided to analyze a message board in which a lady started by saying that there are a lot of things out there that contribute to the bad behavior of teens but for now she would just like to discuss hip hop music. One day while she was walking down the street she noticed a group of young man in hoodies standing on the corner slouched over. When a young lady walked out of the store and was waiting for traffic to pass while she walked across the street the older lady heard the young men talking about how they would f*** her and if she tried to restrain they would hit that b****. A lot of people responded to this blog saying that it was wrong and it wasn’t right how she blamed all bad behavior of young people on rap music. Even though I do believe that some young people do let hip hop music affect their behavior it is not as bad as she is making it sound. This would be beneficial to my paper because with one of my interview and survey questions I asked if the person felt that hip hop music has had an effect on their behavior and mood. There are lots of opinions out there about hip hop and they would be great for my research paper.

Appendix V

Interview Questions
What Effect Does Hip Hop Music Have on First Year African American College Students?

Do you listen to hip hop music?

What is your definition of hip hop?
How do you feel about the hip hop industry and the way that it is portrayed?

How does the media affect your view on hip hop music?

Do you notice a change in your mood when you listen to hip hop music? If yes, what kinds of mood change?

Has your behavior changed due to listening to hip hop music? Do you actually listen to the lyrics and try to act them out in your everyday life? If yes, why and how? In other words what personal characteristic of yours do you think has been affected by hip hop?

Do you feel like you can relate to hip hop? If yes, in what ways?

Do you feel like the hip hop industry portrays African Americans in a good or bad way? If yes, why or why not?

If you could describe hip hop in one word what would it be and why?

What is the best and worse thing about hip hop?

During an interview with an African American first year male college student he stated that he does listen to hip hop music. His definition of hip hop is a rappers/master of ceremonies ability to express problems, concerns, and world issues in rymadical form. The hip hop industry has changed over the years and it’s not portrayed as a good thing by most people anymore. The media does not affect his views on hip hop. Hip hop music does have an effect on his mood, but it depends on the artist: 3-6 Mafia makes him upset, Nas keeps him focused, Soulja Boy makes him happy. His behavior has changed due to listening to hip hop music. He’s violent and does not like nice wholesome women anymore, but dirty women. He doesn’t listen to the lyrics and act them out. Hip hop has changed his demeanor, how he
carries himself, makes him more expressive hearing someone else express themselves encourages him. Yes he can relate to hip hop, with his with his clothing and other possessions. Hip hop portrays African Americans in a bad way because it seems as if black people sell drugs, do drugs, are money and whore hungry and disrespect women. He described hip hop as recovering. It was considered dead now it is regaining life. The best thing about hip hop is the collaborations. The worst thing about hip hop is the beef between rappers.

During another interview with an African American first year female student she stated that yes she does listen to hip hop music. She likes the rhythm, beats, and lyrics. She really does not care too much for hip hop. Hip hop does not affect her in any way. Hip hop does have an effect on her mood, when she hears the music she gets very cheerful and is ready to dance. Her behavior has not changed due to listening to hip hop music. No I can not relate to hip hop. No she can not relate to hip hop. She describes hip hop as dance because that is the first thing that a persons body will engage in when hearing hip hop. The worst thing about hip hop is the lyrics because now a day s people don t care what they say. The best thing about hip hop is the beats and rhythm in the music.

Appendix VI

Surveys
What Effect Does Hip Hop Music Have on First Year African American College Students?

I asked questions such as&
Would you describe yourself as a fan of hip hop?
Is there a connection between hip hop and violence?
Can hip hop be considered a culture?
Do you need to know urban culture in order to understand hip hop music?
Does hip hop influence today's youth?
In your opinion what were the greatest years of hip hop?
How much truth is there in hip hop?
In your opinion who is the greatest rapper of all time?
Who is the worst rapper of all time?
Who are your favorite three artist of all time?
During what activities do you listen to hip hop?
What is the most important element of hip hop?
Do you think that hip hop affects other races views of African Americans?
What is the best and worst thing about hip hop?
Is hip hop really dead?

The Results
6 out of 7 people are fans of hip hop.
2 out of 7 people believe that hip hop has a 3 point connection to violence on a scale from 0 -7. 1 out of 7 said 5. 2 out of 7 people said 0. 2 out of 7 people said 4.
6 out of 7 people said that hip hop can be considered a culture.
4 out of 7 people said that a person needs to know urban culture in order to be able to understand hip hop.
2 out of 3 people believe that hip hop has a 6 point influence on today's youth on a scale from 0-7. 2 out of 7 people said 4. 2 out of 7 people said 6. 1 out o 7 people said 5.
4 out of 7 people believe that the 80s were the greatest years of hip hop. 3 out of 7 people believe that it was the 90s.

2 out of 7 people believe that there is a 5 point truth in hip hop on a 0-7 point scale. 2 out of 7 people said 3. 1 out of 7 people said 5. 1 out of seven people said 4.

3 out of 7 people believe that the greatest rapper of all time is Tupac. 2 out of 7 people believe it is the Notorious B.I.G. 1 out of 7 people believe that it is T.I. 1 out of 7 people believe that it is Common.

No one agreed on the worst rapper they said people such as Young Mc, 50 Cent, Coolio, Lil Wayne, Chamillionaire, Biz Markie and P.Diddy.

3 out of 7 people said that Jay Z is their favorite rapper. 4 out of 7 said Tupac. 3 out of 7 said Biggie. 2 out of 7 said Ludacris. 1 out of 7 said Gucci Mane. 2 out of 7 said T.I. 1 out of 7 people said Jeezy. 1 out of 7 people said Lupe Fiasco. 1 out of 7 people said Common. 1 out of 7 people said Lil Wayne. 1 out of 7 people said Trick Daddy. 1 out of 7 people said Eminem.

7 out of 7 people said that they listen to hip hop all the time during most of their daily activities. (i.e. homework, exercise, cleaning, eating, walking, etc.)

2 out of 7 people said that the most important element of hip hop is that it has a story that the listeners can relate to. The rest of the people said things such as the beats, lyrics, style, the creativity of the producers and the truth within it.

7 out of 7 people do believe that hip hop does affect other races views of African Americans. It makes it seem as if we are ghetto, uneducated human beings that are only concerned with money, drugs, shooting, and sex. Others don't know anything but what they hear in
hip hop music. White suburban kids may listen to hip hop and believe that African Americans really do act like that. Hip hop music feeds into the stereotypes of African Americans. 
3 out of 7 people believe that the worst thing about hip hop is how they degrade women. 1 out of 7 people said the cursing. 1 out of 7 people said that the worst thing about hip hop is how it has changed over the years from how it used to be. 1 out of 7 people said the violence. 1 out of 7 people said the hatred amongst rappers. 1 out of 7 people said the talent, newer rappers can not rap. 2 out of 7 people said that creativity is the best thing about hip hop. 2 out of 7 people said expansion. 2 out of 7 people said the beats. 2 out of 7 people said how its versatile and therapeutic, it makes them feel good when they dance to it. 3 out of 7 people said that hip hop is dead; the dream of the early rappers has died. 4 out of 7 people said that hip hop has not died; its just new, hip hop will never die.

Discuss:

Hip Hop-It Don’t Stop
What Effect Does Hip Hop Music have on First Year African American College Students?
By Lorie Sanders

Where words fail, music speaks (Hans Christian Andersen).
Music is said to be another way for people to communicate their feelings to the world in an artistic form which helps them to connect with the rest of society. Some people describe music as a way for
them to relate to others and another form of relaxation, when all else fails. Why it is that music has such a huge effect on people? What is it about the harmony, lyrics, melody, song and soul of a song that when all of these elements come together as one it has an effect on all humanity? With this question in mind I decided to conduct a research paper in which I could take one genre of music and research it within a certain group of people. I decided to research what effect (whether good or bad) does hip hop music have on first year African American college students.

Hip hop is a musical genre that is generally defined as vocalization over mixed music and beats; it is a culture that branches out to include rapping, DJ skills, art, fashion and break dancing. Hip hop is a collaborative culture that evolves as new generations add their interpretations to the lifestyle and the music. Hip hop is a popular urban youth culture, closely associated with rap music and with the style and fashions of African American inner-city residents. As aforementioned hip hop is described as a popular urban youth culture; but what is culture? Culture is the quality in a person or society that arises from a concern for what is regarded as excellent in arts, letters, manners, scholarly pursuits, etc. It's the behavior and belief characteristics of a particular social, ethnic, or age group. Hip hop culture is regarded as something that is excellent in the arts.

As a first year African American college student, I must admit that I am not too fond of hip hop music even though the music industry does have its times when it produces something pleasing. Hip hop has its times when the beats are nice, but I do not like the lyrics and personalities portrayed by rappers that are in the music industry. I would have to say that hip hop music has a bad effect on me as a first
year African American college student because it is bad enough that others have the many stereotypes and assumptions of African Americans as they do and for African Americans to perform songs condoning all of the negative stereotypes is unnecessary.

What used to be exciting, groundbreaking music seems to have been reduced to a one-note din. The only topics discussed are bling-bling materialism, how many guns you have, and ho’s (Dawkins, 1).

There have been tons of accusations about how hip hop music has changed so much over the years and how it is slowly but surely losing meaning, in more ways than one. Nas said it best when he said that hip hop is dead. Ever since Nas made this accusation there has been much debate about how much truth it actually holds. As stated in the quote above, hip hop music used to be exciting and groundbreaking, now it is a one-note disturbance. By looking at the lyrics of two different songs in the hip hop genre, it can be seen how much truth there is in the drastic change of hip hop music.

I said a hip hop the hippie the hippie to the hip hop hop, a you don t stop the rock it to the bang bang boogie say up jumped the boogie to the rhythm of the boogie, the beat now what you hear is not a test--I m rappin to the beat and me, the groove, and my friends are gonna try to move your feet see I am wonder mike and I like to say hello to the black, to the white, the red, and the brown, the purple and yellow but first I gotta bang bang the boogie to the boogie say up jump the boogie to the bang bang boogie let’s rock, you don t stop rock the riddle that
will make your body rock (Sugarhill Gang, Rappers Delight).

Sugarhill Gang’s song entitled Rappers Delight is a song that everyone grew to know and love during the late 70s and for those like myself who were not born yet grew to know and love in the early 90s; And even today this song is still a hit among music listeners thus far. As explained in the song all that Sugarhill Gang was trying to do was to get everyone in the dancing mood so that they would be able to have a nice time and sing and dance their issues away for the moment. It’s a classic that has funky lyrics and a fresh beat, but the lingering question is how did rap go from Sugarhill Gang’s Rappers Delight to 50 Cent’s I Will Still Kill?

(Gun Shots) Oooo don’t even look at me wrong when I come through the hood. Ain’t nothing changed still holly at my homiest. Oooo and when I hit the block I still will kill. And I don’t want to, nigger but I will if I got to kill if niggers get to f***ing around (yeah). If niggers get the f***ing around (50Cent, I Will Still Kill).

By analyzing the lyrics above readers can see how rap music has had a considerable change over the years; it went from easy listening to hard core listening. I’m not suggesting that all rap music back then was authentic; rap music from its early years unquestionably had its
fair share of hard core lyrics, although they weren't as bold and violent as the lyrics and rappers are in present day hip hop.

What better way can I find out how the hip hop culture affects African Americans than to conduct surveys and interviews? While conducting these surveys and interviews I found out some very interesting opinions that African Americans had towards and for hip hop music. While interviewing interviewee #1 I asked him what his definition of hip hop was, if hip hop music has had any effect on his mood and behavior and what is it about hip hop that he likes and dislikes.

My definition of hip hop is a rappers/Mc's ability to express problems, concerns, and world issues in a rymadical form. Hip hop music does have an effect on my mood, but it depends on the artist, for example- 3-6 Mafia makes me upset, Nas keeps me focused, and Soulja Boy makes me happy. My behavior has changed due to listening to hip hop music. I am more violent and I am not interested in nice wholesome women, but dirty women. Hip hop has changed how I carry myself, it makes me feel more expressive hearing someone else express themselves encourages me. The best thing about hip hop is the collaborations and the worst thing is the beef between rappers (interviewee #1).

Interviewee #1 has a very interesting definition for the word hip hop; he says that it is a rappers ability to express problems, concerns and issues in a rymadical form. If a person were to listen to a present day hip hop song and then read this definition they would think that the
problems and concerns of the world are to become millionaires, to have as many women and as much bling as possible, and to solve majority of their problems with violence. I found it interesting how interviewee #1 said that hip hop music has made him less interested in nice wholesome women and more interested in dirty women (as he calls them). Interviewee #1’s opinion of the worst thing about hip hop is the beef between rappers. I remember watching Tyler Perry’s play Madea’s Class Reunion, and while sitting in the restaurant setting she said that it was a shame how music artist in present day have to have a gimmick such as causing confusion amongst each other in order to become successful.

Hip hop music has a different effect on different people and different people have different opinions of what they like and dislike about hip hop and effects on their mood and behavior. I asked interviewee #2 the exact questions that I asked interviewee #1 and of course they had diverse answers.

I really don’t care too much for hip hop. It does not affect me in any way; however it does affect my mood. When I hear it I began to be very cheerful and ready to dance. The best thing about hip hop is the beat and rhythm of the music. The worst thing about hip hop is the lyrics because now a day’s people don’t care what they say (interviewee #2).

I agree with interviewee #2, I must admit that I am not too fond of hip hop music either even though it does have its times when the beats are nice, but I do not like the lyrics and personalities portrayed by rappers that are in the music industry. Even though I have these
feelings towards hip hop music, it still has a tendency to produce nice beats that will strike a nerve that will make a person want to dance.

I believe that every current issue in the world that happens has an effect on a person both knowingly and unknowingly. That's why I say that even though I do not listen to hip hop music it still has an effect on my life. Not only as an African American college student, but just as an African American hip hop music has a bad effect on me, and the reason why I say this is because if a person of another race who has not grown up or been around African Americans, they might meet me for the first time and think that I am just like those women in the music video or just like the women that are described in the lyrics. I've heard that even though some people may not base their first impressions on stereotypes, they still have these certain stereotypes in the back of their mind and it has an effect on their judgment of other people. While conducting surveys amongst seven individual African American first year college students I asked them if they believe that hip hop music has an effect on how other races view African Americans. The results were as follows:

All of the survey participants believed that hip hop does affect other races views of African Americans. Hip hop portrays us as being ghetto, uneducated human beings that are only concerned with money, drugs, shooting and sex. Others don't know anything about African Americans but what they hear from hip hop music. Caucasians listen to hip hop music and think that African Americans really act in that way. Hip hop music feeds into the many stereotypes of African Americans (survey participants).
It would be a rare occasion for a rapper to come out with a song aside from the outline that it has to follow in present day in order to sell.

It's certainly harder to find. And offering it may take courage. When everyone else is talking about violence and riches, it's tough to talk about more cerebral issues without being laughed at by your peers and being called soft. "It is more difficult to try and make the masses buy it," says Common, one of hip-hop's most positive thinkers (Dawkins, Is Hip hop Dead).

With this being said, I wondered who it was that people believed were the best rappers and during what years was hip hop the best. The greatest years of hip hop would have to be when hip hop was first introduced; the industry was brand new and innovative and had not yet been tainted by a get rich quick scheme. Hip hop stepped onto the scene in the 70s and has evolved so much over the years, but with the evolution of hip hop what years do people believe were the best years of hip hop? Of course I asked the survey participants this questions and the results were as follows: 4 out of 7 people believe that the 80s were the best years of hip hop and 3 out of 7 people believe that the 90s were the best year s f hip hop.

In conclusion, it was a long and tedious process researching such a diverse and opinionated topic, but in the process I had fun learning new things and having the opportunity to strengthen my writing skills. Hip hop music is something that some consider dead and others consider alive and vibrant. As long as there are fans of hip
hop music it will never die. Hip hop music has different effects on different people and knowing what those effects are beneficial not only for me towards my research paper but also for others who will be reading this in the future.

EUI Links:


Reflect:

I am the type of person that loves to write, it makes me feel as if I get the chance to express myself and for some reason to be able to express myself on paper makes me feel like I am entitled to my own opinion and no one can take that control away from me. When I found out that we would have to submit a research paper at the end of the semester, I wasn't too happy, because even though I love to write I never really liked writing research papers; but as I continued this process I became fonder of research papers. I am ever so grateful for my teacher dividing the research process up over the weeks, because it helped me not to procrastinate, and it gave me the opportunity to build up ideas and to be able to let them marinate on my mind in order to know if the information that I was in taking would be beneficial to my research paper. When the research paper was first introduced I did not know what I would write about, I had so many ideas in my mind but they were all just floating around and I couldn't put the ideas together to make one topic. At first I wanted to write about how and why people
discriminate against their own race, but I had a hard time trying to put my ideas together for this certain topic, so I changed it. With that topic in the garbage I decided to try to write about unnoticed discrimination on campus. I became interested in this topic because of all the different groups on campus that are mostly geared towards a certain race of people. Even though this is an excellent topic, I did not have a real interest in researching it and I would have been totally stressed out trying to find out what I would write about for 7 pages without a lot of repetition. Finally I came up with the idea to conduct a research paper in which I could research the effects that the culture of hip hop music has on different races/cultures. After attending writer’s workshop, it was made obvious that this was too broad of a topic and that it would take years of research in order to be able to write an effective research paper. Due to the fact that I love music and I was not going to let anything detour me from this topic I asked how I could narrow my topic down and I came up with this—What Effect Does Hip Hop Music have on First Year African American College Students. I love this topic because it is something that I can relate to and also something that I can learn something new from. I must admit that I did have my research paper done well in advance to its due date but, for some reason two days before the research paper was due I decided to rewrite the entire paper, the reason being was because after reading the paper I realized that I could do a lot better, so I decided to start from scratch the day before the paper was due. I know that it sounds crazy but now that I have redone the paper I see that I am satisfied with the new outcome and my new paper. In aspirations of receiving not only an A on this paper but also an A in the course is my motivation to be the best writer that I can be.